

Unit 6:

## Church Planting Methods

Twelve Models of Church Planting

(from Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, pp. 59-75)

<p><i>Modality Models</i></p> <p>All of these models involve the idea of one church giving birth to another.</p>	<p><i>Sodality Models</i></p> <p>All of these models involve a denominational agency or parolocal church group giving birth to a church.</p>
<p><b>Hiving Off:</b> A nucleus for a new church is formed from members of another established church.</p>	<p><b>The Mission Team:</b> A team of missionaries is sent out to form a new church.</p>
<p><b>Colonization:</b> Like hiving off, except the nucleus actually moves to a new geographic area to form the new church.</p>	<p><b>The Catalytic Church Planter:</b> This person starts a new church, and then leaves for another area (Paul is the model for this).</p>
<p><b>Adoption:</b> An older denomination or church establishes a relationship with a recently established church.</p>	<p><b>The Founding Pastor:</b> The sending agency designated the one being sent as the founding pastor who stays with the church once it has been planted.</p>
<p><b>Accidental Parenthood:</b> As a result of a church split (for whatever reason), two churches are formed.</p>	<p><b>The Independent Church Planter:</b> These people operate apart from any agency (they serve as their own agency). They may follow any of the models listed, but operate on their own.</p>
<p><b>The Satellite Model:</b> A new church is (or new churches are) formed which has a semi-autonomous relationship with the mother church.</p>	<p><b>The Apostolic Church Planter:</b> Among groups which recognize the gift of apostleship, an apostle is sent out to plant a new church.</p>
<p><b>Multi-congregational Churches:</b> Many different (usually ethnic) congregations share the same facilities.</p>	
<p><b>The Multiple Campus Model:</b> One congregation, having one staff, one budget, and one membership roll, has more than a single facility.</p>	

## **Multiple Church Planting by Means of Teams** (from Ben Sawatsky)

1. The core of the team church planting strategy:

"A team of missionaries (and eventually nationals) representing a constellation of complementary gifts, skills, training and experience, will work together to achieve a common objective, the equipping of a plurality of locally based church planting teams which in turn will plant local churches (Sawatsky, "A Church Planting Strategy for World Class Cities", *Urban Mission*, November, 1985, p. 8).

2. The definition of the concept:

"The team approach to multiple church planting involves an established parent church, an experienced church planting team leader, and a team of committed church planting team trainees. Rather than think in traditional terms of a single church planter, this approach seeks to mobilize a team of church planters, an approach which will greatly accelerate the church planting process. With this approach, multiple church planting, i.e., planting two or more churches simultaneously becomes feasible. The team trainer focuses time, energy, gifts, and skills on the development of a team of approximately eight members. The team, in turn, concentrates time, energy, gifts, and skills on the establishment and development of the congregation. Relieved of extensive congregational involvement, the team leader can devote himself to more than one church planting team" ("The Team Approach to Multiple Church Planting", p. 1).

3. The people

a. The parent church

i. The *role* of the parent church

- (1) *Nurturing* and *propagating* the vision of planting churches as a normal part of its ministry in the community. This vision needs to belong to the whole church, not just a few of the members.
- (2) *Giving* generously (of its members and money).
- (3) *Examining its own motive* in desiring to plant churches. If it is only responding to pressure, or wants to plant to glorify itself, the strain of resources required may cause it to flag in its efforts.

ii. The *responsibility* of the parent church.

- (1) Choosing the church planting team leader. Once he has been chosen, he must be supported, encouraged, and assisted by the parent church.
- (2) Choosing the church planting team members. Bear in mind that these are people who will be "lost" to the parent church, and who will be the leaders of the new church. This team should include at least two women.
- (3) Commission the team to its task publicly. This commissioning must be seen by the parent church as a "farewell" to the team members, and they are to be absolved of their previous duties in the parent church (so that they may devote their full energies to the new church).
- (4) Commit itself to prayer, moral, and (when necessary) financial support.
- (5) Choose the target area for the new church. This must be done carefully, as you will be committing a team of several people to several years of work in that area.

b. The team trainer

- i. Responsibility: to establish and develop the church planting team for its task of planting and shepherding a new church.
- ii. Qualifications
  - (1) The gift of faith to believe God for the development of the church planting team members.
  - (2) The gift of servant-leadership, so that he can lead the team to formulate goals for the growth and development of both the team and the new church.
  - (3) The gift of pastoring so that he can effectively shepherd and nurture the team of planters.
  - (4) The gift of teaching so that he can effectively train the team of planters.
- iii. Role
  - (1) Pastor, teacher, trainer, advisor, evaluator, and resource person to the team.
  - (2) Training the team members how to lead and feed the new flock.

c. The church planting team

i. Their role in selection:

- (1) Pray to discern whether or not God would have them be part of the team.
- (2) Seek to know as much as possible what will be expected of them as part of the team.
- (3) Be willing commit themselves in six practical areas:
  - (a) Commitment of time--at least three years!
  - (b) Commitment to be taught and trained by the team leader.
  - (c) Commitment to discover, develop, and use his spiritual gifts.
  - (d) Commitment to the mission of planting a church.
  - (e) Commitment to planting a church in the target area.
  - (f) Commitment of their finances (at least a tithe) to the new work.

- ii. Their responsibility will be to take on the tasks of leading the new congregation as it forms and develops. They should have five to seven months of training before the actual gathering of the new congregation begins.

4. The schedule

a. Phase one: establishing the team

i. Objectives of phase one:

- (1) To achieve team unity and solidarity
- (2) To engage in team study and training
- (3) To discover and develop spiritual gifts
- (4) To make contacts for evangelism in the target area
- (5) To establish goals, objectives, and strategy for the emerging work.

- (6) To conduct periodic sessions of team worship
- ii. Time of phase one: five to seven months
- b. Phase two: team development and congregational establishment
  - i. Objectives of phase two:
    - (1) Further training of the team, especially in the areas of ministry and administration (including areas such as preaching, counselling, interpretation, Bible study tools, basic apologetics, church growth, pastoral duties, etc.).
    - (2) Initial establishment of the new church (in this phase, focus is kept primarily on the worship and basic instructional ministry of the church).
  - ii. Time of phase two: twelve to eighteen months
- c. Phase three: team appointments and congregational organization
  - i. Objectives of phase three:
    - (1) Appointing the team members to leadership offices in the new church.
    - (2) Drafting a constitution for the new church and organizing to meet the needs.
    - (3) Dissolving the church planting team (as this is now a fully functioning church).
  - ii. Time of phase three: the appointments may be ready by the first anniversary of the new church, or may take longer. Circumstances vary, but this should be accomplished by the end of the second year.
- d. Phase four: reproduction

At this stage, the congregation should begin the task of assuming its own share of choosing, commissioning, and sending off its own church planting team.

### Cummins Simplified Church Planting Method for Africa

Harold Cummins describes a seven-step church planting method for African settings (*Guidebook for*

*Starting New Churches).*

1. Step one: Pray and plan.
2. Step two: Enlist at least two helpers. The requirements are:
  - a. They must be truly saved
  - b. They must live clean lives
  - c. They must have the power of the Holy Spirit
  - d. They must be willing to work hard
  - e. They should pray together with you often.
3. Step three: Survey the areas. Twelve questions that you can ask are:
  - a. How many people live in this area?
  - b. What languages do they speak?
  - c. Are more people coming to live here?
  - d. What churches are in this area?
  - e. What roads, schools, and shops are there?
  - f. What are the needs of the people in this area?
  - g. Who are the important decision-makers here?
  - h. Do relatives and friends of our members live here?
  - i. Have any of our church members moved to this area?
  - j. How can we win people to Christ?
  - k. Is there a place where people can meet for worship or Bible study?
  - l. Do we need permission to have religious meetings here?
4. Step four: Visit families.
5. Step five: Find a meeting place. Possible places include:
  - a. In a home
  - b. In a school
  - c. Under a tree
  - d. In a shop
  - e. In a community building
  - f. In a small and inexpensive first unit.
6. Step six: Begin the meetings. These do not have to be worship meetings to start; they may be Bible reading meetings, Bible studies, prayer meetings, etc.

7. Step seven: Find and train a leader with the help and guidance of God and the local church.

**Initiating Church Planting Ministries in Africa:  
A Report on Methods Used by Missions Active in Africa**  
for  
Africa Mission Fellowship - Strategy Group  
Department of Missions Abilene Christian University  
by  
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February 1992, Abilene, Texas

The urgent call to take the gospel to the whole world demands a swift response by today's church. That response, however, must occur intelligently and prayerfully. We must pay sufficient attention to the lessons learned by yesterday's church and by others who are trying to accomplish similar tasks today. The African Mission Fellowship Strategy Group is convinced that a swift response demanded by the urgency of the task is slowed by a failure on the part of missionaries to listen to and learn from the experiences of others. In our desire to be busy in the kingdom, we easily fall into the trap of "reinventing the wheel," of repeating mistakes or ignoring possibilities because we have not been open to the market place of missiological ideas. It is our desire to learn from and share with others. One aspect of this networking is a series of short papers summarizing responses given by churches and mission agencies who are engaged in work on the continent of Africa.

As much as we like to think that we are on the cutting edge of missions, the truth is that, with rare exceptions, we go where someone else has already gone. Still, we go because Christ calls us to go. We reach people that have not been reached and hope- fully, where there is a need, we present a more biblically faithful and culturally relevant message. Because mission groups' experience in these lands is varied it seems wise to listen to what each other are saying. We are free to accept or reject advice, but we do need to hear each other.

Some of the most pressing questions facing new missionaries are, What do we do when we step off the plane? How do we avoid mistakes which might plague our work for years to come? How do we lay a sure foundation for which future generations will be grateful?

This report is the result of research conducted during the Fall Semester 1991 at Abilene Christian University. The research centered around the desire to learn ways which others have found effective in initiating a work in Africa. A response form was sent to thirty mission agencies who sent new missionaries to Africa between 1983 and 1990. Of the thirty organizations, nine returned completed forms. It is hoped that sharing this information will inspire other agencies to contribute to further requests for sharing information and insights.

The survey requested information concerning six areas of interest to new church planting teams: level of living, language learning, cultural adaptation, initial teaching and evangelism (audience, methods, content), identifying leaders, and maturing leaders. With each category, respondents were asked to describe the method/approach used by their mission, their evaluation of that approach, their recommendations for future missionaries, and to list supplementary resources. This report is a summary and evaluation of their responses. Below is a list of respondents and the mission with which they are associated. References in this report will site only the last name of the respondent.

*Respondents to Survey*

Howard E. Brant International Coordinator for Evangelism and Church Growth, SIM International	Dick Sollis, Chairman Research and Planning Department, New Tribes Mission
Don Congdon (with Stewart Snook) The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)	E. Spurrier Brethren in Christ World Missions
Ray A. Giles Christian Missionary Fellowship	Paul L. Swauger Director, Special Ministries, Wesleyan World Missions
David W. Shenk Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities	Carl Wilhelm Presbyterian Church in America, Mission to the World

*Level of Living*

The difficult issue of living standards confronts new North American missionaries to Africa. Some have enough missions training to understand the importance of an incarnational, identificational approach. Still, they wrestle with their own cultural baggage. The majority have grown so attached to conveniences that to give all of them up would psychologically disturb them to the point of incapacitating them on the mission field. Many technological and hygienic aids are a genuine blessing on the mission field and should not be rejected outright. Other western amenities might place barriers between the new missionary and those he has come to serve.

Those responding to the survey aimed for a balanced approach toward living standards, but the common consensus was that simplicity is important. Some said that living "on par with locals" is "the only way to do it" (Shenk), while most suggested a moderated approach with some conveniences, such as indoor toilet and running water (Giles, Sollis, Cousins). In racially segregated South Africa, Stewart observes that "white standard of living can be an obstacle to testimony among blacks." Brant observed that those who go too native "usually breakdown in health." Workers should be prepared for the added stresses that stem from life in a village, particularly from the lack of privacy (Spurrier). Giles' statement is a good summary, "protect the health and welfare of the family with adequate housing while emphasizing the need to keep it simple."

Sollis noted that, though some go to the extreme "going native," today's missionaries are more likely to tend toward the extreme of "trying to live at the standard to which they have become accustomed before beginning their tribal work--i.e., a higher standard than is conducive to close rapport with the local people." Giles mentioned that a steady drift often occurs toward improving one's lot materially so that more and more insulation occurs.

It is recognized that not all mission works in Africa are among the rural or urban poor. Work among

the middle or upper classes requires a higher standard of living on the part of the missionary (Brant).

Wilhelm noted that the Mission to the World has seen growth due to their helping the poor of Abidjan and especially in half-way houses for Muslim converts. This ministering to the physical needs of a populace will help to alleviate some of the pressure on missionary standard of living.

The Metro-Move manual is a resource published by the Special Ministries Department of the Wesleyan World Missions which details their principles and procedures in urban centers. The manual can be purchased from the Wesleyan World Mission for ten dollars (Swauger).

### Language Learning

For many anticipating entrance into a new mission field, language learning is the most intimidating aspect of the initial phase of the work. This is especially true for unreached areas where a national language other than English, as well as local vernaculars, are used.

Those responding to the survey placed much emphasis on the importance of learning the vernacular of the target people. Sollis and Cousins mentioned that their agencies require some fundamental training in linguistics for all recruits. All those with missionaries in the former French colonies send their missionaries to language school before arrival on the field, in most cases to France. The concentrated full time schools in France greatly accelerate learning, Brant reported. Those who attempted acquisition of French in Africa were not satisfied with the results (Wilhelm). Cousins recommended 12-18 months study of French. Christian Missionary Fellowship (CMF) recruits to Benin will spend 9-10 months in Albertville, France and seek fluency in French during their first year in Benin before entering the vernacular (Giles).

For vernacular language learning, both informal (Spurrier, Shenk) and structured (Wilhelm) approaches have been used (Congdon/Snook). The LAMP method, developed by Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster, was mentioned and recommended (Spurrier, Giles). Some spend as much as one year living with a local family in order to learn the local language (Shenk). Though they did not mention a specific time frame, Congdon and Snook recommended that "long enough" be taken for language learning; "It takes prayer, hard work, and lengthy exposure."

Missionaries with New Tribes Mission (NTM) dedicate virtually all of their first four-year term to language and culture learning, first on a national and then on a tribal level. Each NTM team has veteran missionaries who work with them as "language and culture consultants" to "supervise, assist, and regularly evaluate the language and culture learning progress for new field personnel." In most cases, missionaries are not allowed to begin evangelization, discipleship training, or Bible translation until reaching a level 3 (on a 1 to 5 scale) in both national and tribal languages (Sollis).

Brant recognizes that flexibility is a must in advice given to missions candidates. The LAMP method of language learning is good in principle, but few see it through to the higher levels of fluency.

Discipline is required during language study. To Spurrier, motivation and exposure are key. Because no one holds a stick over the missionaries' heads, different missionaries achieve different results. Cousins warned of distractions and demands that can hinder "pioneers." Language learning can be one of a missionary's greatest frustrations, but it must receive priority attention (Cousins, Shenk, Congdon/Snook).

### Cultural Integration

This area, because of its close connection with language learning (Giles, Congdon/Snook), received

fewer specific recommendations than the previous two. Respondents emphasized the importance of living among the host people (Giles, Wilhelm) and developing personal relationships (Sollis). Again, the progress of NTM missionaries is observed and guided by veteran missionaries serving as church planting consultants (Sollis). Congdon and Snook recommended the use of literature, written by both nationals and anthropologists, in learning about the host culture.

Cultural identification has its hazards. In some cases, cultural identification may jeopardize the distinctiveness of the gospel message (Spurrier). The stress experienced during this period requires mobility and adaptability (Wilhelm, Cousins).

Brant says that SIM's on-field orientation sessions are extremely helpful in allowing new missionaries to obtain the mission's collective knowledge of the target culture. He also suggests that a long term mentoring is most beneficial. Being introduced to opinion leaders, government officials, and being careful not to promise more than you can deliver are guidelines which foster acceptance and interaction in an African culture.

At Abilene Christian University's Missions Department Church of Christ missions candidates to Africa are taught a culture seminar approach to culture learning. This method was introduced by a team which settled in Eldoret, Kenya and has been followed by many more. Teams divide aspects of a culture among team members. They do field research on the topics by means of interviews and observation than report their findings to the entire team in a seminar. The findings are tested by all members of the team.

#### Initial Teaching

Recommendations concerning initial teaching strategies ranged from highly individualistic to mass appeal techniques. Giles recommended beginning to teach adult men, then families, while Spurrier recommended individual and small group studies as well as the Jesus film. Spurrier's agency has found their target group of mature men difficult to impact; young people are more ready for change. Wilhelm mentioned correspondence courses, one-on-one evangelism, and friendship evangelism as methods which have yielded "success beyond expectations" among Muslims in Abidjan. Congdon and Snook were pleased with their agency's experience using tent meetings, loud speakers, and door-knocking techniques in South Africa.

Brant contains that motives can be mixed by those who might respond, so one could "draw the net too soon." Group conversion may bring a more solid commitment.

Story-telling was recommended as a methodology by Shenk and Sollis. Because Sollis described the approach taken by NTM in detail, his remarks are included here in full.

During about the last fifteen years, we of NTM have taken an entirely different approach to evangelization than was generally used previously. Beginning in the early 1970's, we of NTM's Research and Planning Department began to take a close look at the way our missionaries were evangelizing in cross-cultural situations. To summarize and simplify a rather complex finding, we basically determined that the gospel message of salvation was too frequently being presented without first providing an adequate Biblical foundation to give the Gospel proper Scriptural meaning. For example, often there was a basic misunderstanding of the Person of God (who He really is), and a cultural definition (rather than a Biblical definition) of sin. It wasn't that our missionaries overtly taught

error. The problem was that they simply had not taught long enough and clearly enough to provide an understanding of the basic Scriptural foundational truths necessary to provide a meaning for the Gospel. In other words, people were being asked in evangelism to accept/believe the Gospel message, but too often without first having a clear understanding of its Biblical logic, content, and context.

Rather than using a traditional evangelistic sermon approach to evangelism, our personnel now use an extensive teaching approach which we term the "chronological approach." This involves extensive, but carefully selected Old Testament teaching beginning with Genesis. The teaching proceeds in a prescribed manner aimed at providing a step-by-step, foundational, thematic/historical understanding of basic Biblical conceptual components on which the Gospel rests. This is done prior to moving on, in teaching, to the New Testament fulfillment of God's revealed plan for man's salvation through Christ and His sacrifice. In this way, the gospel presentation is placed upon its carefully constructed Biblical foundation. That which God does in Christ, although climatic, is clearly seen as God's long predicted and meticulously planned for way of salvation.

#### Identifying Leaders

Leadership identification requires that the missionary be culturally sensitivity. Those who appear eager and outgoing to the outsider, may themselves be cultural outsiders. Those with greatest influence within the host culture may be virtually unknown to the missionary. The dangers are so great that Cousins warned, "Be prepared for let downs and disappointments."

Although the Presbyterian church uses a formal hiring and selection process in their Kenyan work (Wilhelm), most who responded emphasized the natural emergence of leaders within the cultural setting (Shenk, Cousins, Congdon/Snook). According to Sollis, "We teach the church concerning the Biblical duties and qualities of leadership and then watch to see who rises to the surface, and then encourage the church to officially recognize those who meet the qualifications in their personal beliefs, lifestyle, and church function." Congdon and Snook identified three contexts in which these leaders most often emerge: 1) churches; 2) training institutions; and 3) Theological Education by Extension (TEE) classes. In these situations, missionaries observe those who take the lead and, in the case of students, are active outside of the structured environment.

Cousins and Sollis stressed the importance of training in discipleship for leaders. New Tribes Mission applies the leadership criteria found in the books of Timothy and Titus. Missionaries look for those who consistently practice a Christian lifestyle, who reproduce themselves in others, and who are accepted by other believers as leaders (Sollis).

At Abilene Christian University congregational maturation is emphasized. While a congregation is being taught how to "build each other up in love," national leaders will surface. When special leadership meetings or training sessions are conducted, the new missionaries are encouraged to solicit congregations to send those they recognize as leaders. The choice is with the congregations, not the missionaries.

#### Maturing Leaders

Very few methods were suggested for the maturation of church leaders. As Congdon and Snook noted, the key seems to be "as much attitude as method." Several respondents mentioned both formal and

informal discipleship training (Spurrier, Sollis, Wilhelm, Cousins). There was also an emphasis on close, personal contact with the missionaries (Spurrier, Shenk, Wilhelm). Leaders should be given authority as they demonstrate responsibility (Spurrier, Congdon/Snook). Most did not discuss the question of whether national leaders should be paid, but Congdon and Snook mentioned the need for "respectable remuneration." While I question whether it is the responsibility of the mission to provide remuneration, Congdon and Snook's suggestion needs to be heard in its context: "Win for them what we would want: genuine responsibility, respectable remuneration, demonstrated trust, a sincere audience when they give us their opinions and councils."

Brent added that special attention must be paid to non-literate leaders. He suggests cassette ministries, drama, and music as media which can carry teachings into their hearts and minds.

### Conclusion

Even though many of the ideas presented here will not be new to the reader, their affirmation by those who speak from experience is valuable. By hearing the opinions of others, we broaden our own perspectives. Strategies which arise out of prayer, planning, and praxis and in interaction with other cultures are likely to be theologically and pragmatically sound. This paper might be used profitably as a discussion stimulus in Missions training.

