



CHURCH PLANTERS & LEAD ELDERS

PLANTING, TRANSITIONING & LEADING A LOCAL CHURCH

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CHURCH PLANTERS & LEAD ELDERS: Planting, Transitioning and Leading a Local Church

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CHURCH PLANTERS & LEAD ELDERS

Planting, Transitioning & Leading a Local Church

by New Covenant Ministries International

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI) *Lead Elders* course. This course is designed to equip those who:

- (1) are going to plant, or are in the process of planting a church;
- (2) are going to, or are, in the process of transitioning a church;
- (3) want to lead their local church better and develop their church into a healthy base church.

The desire of NCMI is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. We long for the world to see and hear about Jesus and His finished work, and to see the Kingdom of God advancing and extending in every possible way.

Our heart is also to help in strengthening local churches. Our hope is based on the endeavour to encourage, equip and build up the local church. (Ephesians 4:12.) We do this from two basic foundations which we assume you agree on before we continue this course:

1. THE CHURCH IS ABOUT JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM

Everything we do accomplishes bringing glory to Jesus. The church is the only thing Jesus is building and we believe the church is God's 'A' plan! (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:10.) **Planting New Testament churches is the primary vehicle God has chosen to evangelise the world and extend His Kingdom. And New Testament Churches are about Jesus and only Jesus. He is the centre of all our activity and ministry.**

2. THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED AND AUTHORITATIVE WORD OF GOD

It is the only acceptable standard for life, ministry, and conduct in the Church. (2 Timothy 3:16.) This standard is applied, as best we know how, to all that we do in partnership with churches

INTRODUCTION

worldwide. It has practical implications for the way in which NCMI team members and partnering pastors are accountable to one another and to their own churches. We are committed to allowing this standard to direct our lives, both individually and corporately and in all our local church partnerships, in order to see God's truth established in our lives and in the world.

NOT TECHNIQUES, BUT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

This course is not about techniques, styles, methods, or church growth tactics. While these things are not necessarily bad, we believe that if we focus on what the scriptures focus on we will do far better in planting and growing healthy, God glorifying churches for the long haul. Fads come and go and what works in one culture does not work in another. Even in the same nation, cultures can vary from city to city, town to town. Therefore, what God has given us in the scriptures is good enough to accomplish His purposes in and through our local churches: and in and through you, whether you are planting a church, transitioning a church, or developing it into a base church.

HOW THIS COURSE HAS BEEN MADE UP

We've put together this course from years of NCMI church planting training and leadership resources throughout our history, up until the present. For more resources and discussion around church planting, transitioning a church, and leading a local church better, visit www.ncmi.net.

PART 1:

PLANTING A CHURCH WITH THE APOSTOLIC

"Vision is something people produce, revelation is something people receive." - Henry Blackaby

We don't plant churches in response to someone else's vision or exhortation, or even our own desire, no matter how pure or noble that desire may be. Rather, we plant churches in response to a **revelation** from Jesus. Or, even better, a revelation **of** Jesus.

- A revelation of His Lordship
- A revelation of what He has been doing for 2,000+ years, and is still busy doing now - **advancing His Kingdom by bringing people back into a living relationship with His Father through faith and trust in Him.**

The ultimate reason for church planting is to see the lost saved and God's Kingdom advanced. When churches start for other reasons there is trouble ahead. Without a settled, sound biblical theology for church planting, a local church is nothing more than a good idea which will only last as long as it takes for an even better idea to come along and distract.

WHY DO WE PLANT CHURCHES?

1. TO MAKE DISCIPLES

- In order to fulfil the Great Commission (Matthew 28) by obeying the Greatest Command (Matthew 22).
- This defines our **mission** (partnering with the Holy Spirit to make disciples) and our **motivation** (an unrivaled love for God that overflows into loving others as we rightly love

ourselves).

- It's clear from reading the New Testament (especially Acts and Paul's letters) that this is what the early church gave themselves to. They would:

A. GO (assumed in Matthew 28:19)

- In the original language, "GOING" within the Great Commission is assumed and that is how the early church lived.

B. In GOING the early church would be WITNESSES (commanded in Acts 1:8)

- Wherever they would go, they would testify of - and continue to do - that which Jesus began. And this they would do under the power of the Holy Spirit.

C. The early church partnered with the Holy Spirit to MAKE DISCIPLES

(The command in Matthew 28:19)

- If the "going" was assumed, the "be witnesses" and "make disciples" are the commands - to make disciples by teaching others what Jesus taught and baptising in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Both teaching and baptising imply new believers being incorporated into the worshipping community where there is clear **walking alongside one another** and **accountability**.

D. By GOING / BEING WITNESSES / IN ORDER TO MAKE DISCIPLES, the early church would plant other churches (Acts 1-28)

For example, **Acts 14:27** –

"On arriving there [back in Antioch], they [Paul and Barnabas] gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them [all the churches that had been planted] and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles."

Like the early church, we need to rediscover the breathtaking privilege and power of being part of the local church, and the mandate to plant other churches in order to advance the Kingdom of God. "The chief need for every city, town or village is the gospel of Jesus echoing from a

planted church.” (Jeff Medders.)

Ephesians 3:

“10 His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

i. What eternal purpose? (vs 11)

- This is answered in Ephesians 1:10 - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. This purpose is supremely manifest through people coming into relationship with Jesus, under His Lordship.

ii. How will the world see that this is God’s purpose? (vs 10)

- **“His intent (God’s plan) was that now...”**. The use of the word ‘now’ in this verse is significant. **Now** is a **now** word! It means that this was true 500 years ago, is true today, and will be true 500 years from now. This has always been and always will be God’s plan.
- **“... through the church...”**. The Church alone is the body of Christ, so it alone is called to show that Jesus is Lord.
- **“... the manifold wisdom of God...”**. Think of a prism. The manifold wisdom of God is shown through the individuals who are part of a local church and the multiple churches reflecting the glory of God in a city, a region, a nation, the world!
- **“...should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”**
This is of cosmic importance!

2. TO MULTIPLY

While the idea of being “missional” is quite popular today - the idea that we should adopt the posture of a missionary where we live, work, play etc. to reach people with the gospel - **we often**

think of mission as the thing we do for God in a way that undermines how God has always been on mission long before any of us arrived on the scene.

The Bible is clear. **God** is the one who is on mission to extend and further advance His reign and rule, and He does so by sending us with the mandate to multiply - to produce after our own kind.

i) God to ADAM and EVE: “Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, rule over and subdue it.” (Genesis 1:28.)

ii) God to ABRAHAM: “I will bless you so that you can be a blessing... all nations will be blessed through you... you will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky as the sand on the sea shore.” (Genesis 22:17.)

iii) Jesus in John 15: “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

We must remember that we are a people SENT by God under His authority with a MANDATE TO MULTIPLY — and this is essential to our identity.

The Church hasn’t given birth to mission, but God’s mission has given birth to the Church.

This is a significant distinction. When a local church gets this wrong its mission becomes self-serving and incredibly stressful to accomplish. We ask, “How can we bring the world to us because we have to grow?” rather than, “How can we go into the world to seek and save the lost, and in doing so, advance God’s Kingdom?”

Generally speaking, the Church has too many times in history made the mistake of embracing a self-serving view of mission and in doing so it becomes increasingly ATTRACTIVE, trying to get people to come to us in order to fill churches on Sundays rather than to live as the SENT PEOPLE OF GOD. Statistics show that this does not enlarge a church in the long run.

Contrast this to the New Testament church who lived with a deep revelation of their “SENT-NESS”.

PLANTING A CHURCH WITH THE APOSTOLIC

It grew in AD33 to 500 people; in AD100 to 25,000 people; and in AD300 to 20 million people!

- These churches didn't own BUILDINGS
- This was before SEMINARIES and Christian schools, and therefore before PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED LEADERS
- This was before endless church MINISTRIES, PROGRAMS and MISSION ORGANISATIONS
- This was before SOCIAL MEDIA
- This was at a time and place where it was ILLEGAL to be a Christian

None of these things are wrong but imagine if we understood and embraced the explosive power of the early church along with a wise and winsome outreach approach that speaks to our culture and context. That's how we'll begin to fulfil this MANDATE TO MULTIPLY.

3. TO CLAIM OUR INHERITANCE

After crossing the Red Sea, Moses leads Israel in a time of exuberant worship and celebration (Exodus 15). He asks:

"Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

Then he says in verse 17:

"You [God] will bring them [the people of God] in [to the promised LAND] and plant them on the MOUNTAIN of your inheritance — the place, Lord, you made for your dwelling, the SANCTUARY, Lord, your hands established."

This points to our inheritance, symbolised by a LAND, a MOUNTAIN and a SANCTUARY.

1. LAND

Has God set aside physical land for us like He did for Israel? No, that was a picture of His greater promise. It was a stepping stone to impacting the NATIONS.

There are many examples of this. God, in response to the bad report from Canaan in Numbers 14:21, says, "as surely as I live, the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth." Note He does not say that "as surely as I live, the land will be inhabited." There's a prophetic shift to something bigger through what He was doing with Israel.

Some Christians get overly consumed and caught up with the few square miles in the Middle-East that make up the nation of Israel, but we often do the same thing with the few square miles that make up our neighborhood or city, and we forget that God has something far bigger for us. He wants us to impact NATIONS!

2. MOUNTAIN

"The MOUNTAIN of the Lord" or, often, called the CITY of God. Zion is the Old Testament language for the gathering place of the people of God. This is the local church in the New Testament!

Our INHERITANCE is to go into the LAND (NEIGHBORHOODS and NATIONS) to gather people to God at the MOUNTAIN / CITY OF GOD. This means: to gather them within LOCAL CHURCHES where we live as a CITY ON A HILL (Matthew 5) showing the world what it looks like when Jesus is King.

3. SANCTUARY

Upon the mountain, within the city, the defining characteristic of the local church is the TEMPLE / SANCTUARY of the Lord. His presence and His nearness and His power is manifest as God's people gather in worship.

Revelation 21:

"22 I did not see a [physical] temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and

the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."

If there is one thing that a local church is, is that it's a FORETASTE OF HEAVEN. Jesus is our LORD; Jesus is our KING; Jesus is radiating His GLORY and brilliance; Jesus is our FIRST LOVE and He's building His CHURCH and has graciously called and invited us to work with Him to impact NEIGHBORHOODS and NATIONS by planting LOCAL CHURCHES of which He is at the CENTER.

"The vigorous, continual planting of new churches is the single most crucial strategy for the advancing of God's Kingdom, the numerical growth of the Body of Christ and the renewal and revival of existing churches in any city and nation. Nothing else – not evangelistic crusades, church conferences, revival events, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches or church renewal initiatives – will have the consistent, Kingdom-advancing impact of dynamic, extensive church planting."

- Tim Keller

PARTNERSHIP WITH A TRANSLOCAL TEAM

Now, the question for you, as a church planter and future or current lead elder of a local church, is this:

Are you doing this alone?

If so, you're doing it wrong.

All over scripture, God shows us the tremendous importance of partnering with others in accomplishing the call. **In order to experience New Testament results we must go back to New Testament patterns and principles.** The New Testament pattern includes two overarching realities:

A) IT IS ALWAYS ABOUT JESUS

- Our churches are about the King and the Kingdom. We are not establishing conference centres, preaching halls, or meetings.
- When you establish a church you establish a community of people who are all about knowing Jesus and want to make Him known. How that looks in the details will change depending on culture and context and even your own style and specific theology.
- If it's not about Jesus then you are no longer a church but are something else.
- If we claim to be Bible-based, then we must emphasise what the Bible emphasises, which is Jesus. He is the head of all things! (Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3.) He is the head of the Church universally and therefore the head of the local church you are going to plant or transition. There is no other Lord except Christ.

"The most revealing thing about your church will be your ideas about who Jesus is." - Tyrone Daniel.

b) RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABSOLUTELY CENTRAL

As a leader of a church, you need to:

- Have a shepherd's heart.
- Love people and want to see them become all God has for them.
- Truly love the people in the city or town or area where you plant.
- Build a leadership team from the beginning who love people just as much and just as well!
- Have a healthy relationship with a team outside of your church who can encourage you, bring accountability and stability, and come alongside you in this endeavor.

The church is a:

Relational, organic body of people living in, and out, God's love, centred around Jesus Christ, declaring and living out the message of His gospel.

The church is not:

An institution or an organisation; a building; a website; a meeting; a public speaking hall; a music venue; a social justice activator; or anything else you can think of.

It is its people. While it engages in many activities, its activities do not define what it is.

Therefore, relationships are central. **But a church's relationships need to extend inwards and outwards, especially as it understands its mandate to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. A church therefore needs to partner with a team outside of itself.**

PAUL DID NOT PLANT ALONE

It appears that Barnabas, Silas, John Mark, Timothy and Titus were part of Paul's team. (See Acts 13-16, Acts 18:5; Galatians 2:1; 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus 3:12-15. Silas appears to also work with Peter, see 1 Peter 5:12-13.) We also see others join Paul who seem very much a part of his team: Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians: Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe; and the Asians: Tychicus and Trophimus. (See Acts 20:4, Titus 3:12-15 2 Timothy 4:10,12; Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:7.) There is also Priscilla and Aquila, who we see in Acts 18, who help Paul establish a church in Ephesus (which became Paul's base church).

Paul and his team were a translocal team with an apostolic-prophetic heart.

a) What we mean by a 'translocal team' is individuals who work out of a local church into the nations. We see Paul and Barnabas did this out of Antioch and later out of Ephesus. (See Acts 18 - 20.) This is not just an 'itinerant' team who travel and preach. It is far more than that.

b) What we mean by 'apostolic' is that it is a going, pioneering team that look to establish and strengthen local churches, 'beach heads' of the gospel. Again, we see Paul and Peter do this throughout the New Testament.

c) What we mean by a 'prophetic heart' is that it is a team that strives to hear from God, establish vision from what it hears, and work towards what God has said.

WE SEE IT EVERYWHERE

By studying the book of Acts, you cannot come away without noticing a clear apostolic heart and pattern and a clear understanding of team and partnership, centred around Jesus, with love toward each other and the world which needs saving. We see the heart of this partnership very evidently in Paul's letters to the churches.

1. PARTNERSHIP IN PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 1 (NIV)

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1 above is a wonderful scripture showcasing the *heart* of partnership. Look at the beautiful language Paul uses and the affection he has for those who have partnered with him and his team. Here are some highlights for our purposes:

a) Note that it is a partnership in *the gospel* (vs 4).

This is not about personal ministry. No man or woman with a certain gift or capacity can do this alone. Not even Jesus did it alone! Paul recognised this clearly.

b) God's way is about us being stronger together, despite the issues that sometimes come with relationships.

Look at Paul's heart – "I thank my God every time I remember you." (vs 3.) "I have you in my heart." (vs 7.) May we say that about each other!

c) We cannot love people, cities, our towns, or our church unconditionally in our own strength!

Here is a wonderful picture of sharing life and ministry together. See verse 7 and 8. We can love each other through the 'affection of Christ Jesus', not our own. We love our cities, churches, and people with Jesus Christ's love – the love He gives, the love we enjoy in Him.

d) Make everything about Jesus and you're going to keep loving.

Make it about the Church and this won't happen. If we long with Christ Jesus' affection we will not abuse the sheep. We will not need her (the Church) for *us*. Let this love "abound more and more" to the praise of God (vs 9).

2. PARTNERSHIP IN 2 CORINTHIANS

2 Corinthians 10:

12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. 14 We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. 15 Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, 16 so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory. 17 But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." 18 For it

is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

a) First things first. The apostles were not devoted to social justice or to being "cultural architects". All these other things are not the main thing and not the main role of the Church that we see in scripture. We are not here to join the social justice mission but to transform the nations through the power of God's Word, the gospel of Christ which cuts to the heart and changes hearts, transforming us into people of His love and restoring us to a living relationship with Him. (See verse 15 above.) We are not anti-social justice, but this is about first things first. We must spend our time doing what God has called us to do and use discernment, otherwise we will be distracted and pulled all sorts of directions.

b) Isn't it crazy that people would measure themselves by themselves? (vs 12.) But you must ask yourself honestly: do you do this?

c) Paul is clearly not just talking about his own team in verse 13 but of all of them together. This displays a heart of taking ground together. That's partnership.

14 We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. 15 Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, 16 so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory. 17 But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

This is about being partners in the gospel. We can see here that multiplication, growth, increase and expansion is on the heart of God. This is the language of the Kingdom. Not division! Not lone rangers! It's about doing this *together*.

When we read this text, two things are guaranteed to happen with increased growth:

- 1) Increased responsibility and burden;**
- 2) Increased reward and blessing.**

These scriptures are giving us a key to how partnership works.

3. TRANSLOCAL TEAM IN EPHESIANS 4:11

Ephesians 4

8 This is why it says:

*"When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people."*

9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- a) Apostles govern** (They set foundation of Christ as the center and help people and leaders and pastors do what they do and what they are gifted to do.)
 - b) Prophets guide** (love for God's presence and power etc.)
 - c) Evangelists gather** (gathering, giving us a love for the lost)
 - d) Pastors guard** (give us a love for the church)
 - e) Teachers ground** (love for truth, the Word)
- Signs can follow each of these. It's not just the apostles and prophets and evangelists who work in signs and wonders.
 - Christ gave these gifts. It was not in his descending that he gave the gifts, but in his *ascending*. **These are Christ-exalting gifts. Christ gets the glory, not the gift – not the person with the gift.** When Christ is the cornerstone, partnership thrives.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS / TRANSLOCAL TEAM

a) Equip (Ephesians 4:12)

The gifts are for equipping the Church, not for the person with the gift. The Church is to do "the works of service" not watch the person with the gift do the work of service. Maturity is the result of genuine equipping – true, genuine translocal ministry brings genuine maturity, people who grow up in Christ.

b) The person with the gift is not to just function in the gift but is to equip the saints on how to function in the gift. What's far more important is what happens when a person with a gift has ministered at a church and left, not what happens when they are there, because that is how we can test the real fruit of their ministry.

For example: Apostles equip the saints on how to govern properly. Prophets equip the saints on how to hear God for themselves. Evangelists equip the saints on how to win people for Jesus.

Pastors equip the saints on how to love the sheep. Teachers equip the saints on how to read and study the Bible for themselves. None of these gifts exist for themselves, to make the saints sit in awe at how amazing the gift is!

c) Effective equipping is done in person. "I long to see you," said Paul, "so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong." (Romans 1:11.) Those with the gifts must be with churches and leaders, in person, and equip them this way. You must invite them to personally come to your church. Much more is received than just a teaching or an idea when we are physically together. Equipping of the saints is not done over the Internet.

d) Edify (Ephesians 4:12)

The team builds a local church up, and you as the leader of that church. It does not come to tear things down or take over. The team's authority in your church is an *invited* authority.

e) Enlist (Ephesians 4:12)

The team's responsibility is to help enlist the saints for works of service - to walk in ministry and do things together, not just hear a message or read a book or go to a conference.

f) Enlarge (Ephesians 4:15)

Multiplication, growth, increase and expansion is on the heart of God. See 2 Corinthians 10:12-18.

g) Unify (Ephesians 4:13)

The only time we'll see full unity of the faith is when Jesus comes back. So how does the translocal team bring unity? By emphasising Jesus and the Kingdom. Jesus preached more about the Kingdom than anything else. The rule and reign of Christ is the message of the Kingdom.

The team also brings unity by bringing people into the Matthew 24:14 call - to preach this Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world, "and then the end will come."

h) Bring maturity (Ephesians 4:13,14)

Maturing is still God's plan. He rescues sinners and has a plan to bring His people to maturity. When our people are mature they are no longer "blown here and there by every wind of teaching", as so much of the Church is today. Two questions emerge here:

(1) Where are your people getting fed the Word?

(2) Where are *you* getting fed the Word? We must use discernment. We need to know what teaching is out there, but we must know how not to get distracted by fads and hype and controversial teachings!

i) Bring stability (Ephesians 4:14)

Translocal ministry really does bring stability. Do not back away from translocal ministry if your church is shaken up. God gave us translocal ministry to bring stability in such times! Too often leaders only want to partner with the translocal team when their church is doing well, but when it is not doing well they back away.

You also need stability in your own life. As a leader in the Church you must know how to have your own "sheep-needs" met. Otherwise we go to the sheep – God's people – to fulfil our needs. Let the Great Shepherd, Jesus, take care of your "sheep-needs"!

j) Bring honesty and integrity (Ephesians 4:15)

We value covenant relationships. This takes honesty and integrity. It means we "speak the truth in love" to each other and are committed to doing that. We make an effort to put things in place that ensure we are connecting and friendships are forming. Friendship happens in and out of what we're doing together.

Team is our lifeline. Why would you want to do this alone? You can't do this without team. Be slow to judge motives. Good luck leading with suspicion! Rather guard your heart and even go so far as to be naïve about others.

k) Strengthen (Ephesians 4:15,16)

Speaking the truth in love and doing the aforementioned leads us to grow and be built up in love – strengthened and "joined and held together by every supporting ligament... as each part does its work."

II. HOW THE NCMI TEAM AND ELDERSHIP TEAMS FORM DOCTRINE

For many churches that partner with NCMI, questions often arise around matters of doctrine. Does the NCMI team have a specific theology? What are the non-negotiables? What is it that unifies the NCMI team and churches that partner with the team?

Here we will offer a brief way of understanding the doctrinal dynamic within the NCMI team and partnering churches. It's important to note that what follows is not a constitution, a confessional statement, or a formal statement of belief. It is also not a detailed apologetic for every doctrine. *Rather, we will simply highlight how the NCMI team functions doctrinally and what the shared values of the NCMI team and partnering churches are.*

The question of "how" doctrine is formed precedes "what" doctrine is believed, as the "how" sets both the context and method for forming doctrine.

HOW DOCTRINE IS FORMED

NCMI had its beginnings in South Africa in the early 1980's and converges with the charismatic renewal movement of the time, which incorporated many people from many different doctrinal backgrounds. As many scholars have noted, Pentecostal/charismatic unity has historically centred around a *shared experience* of the Holy Spirit rather than on formal creeds or confessional statements. What is fundamental to pentecostal and the subsequent charismatic movement is *"a personal, experiential encounter of the Spirit of God."*¹

This does not mean that experience is placed over doctrine. As Keith Warrington observes:

¹ See Keith Warrington at the Pneuma Review, <http://pneumareview.com/quest-for-a-pentecostal-theology-by-keith-warrington/2/>

“Revelation is not just intended to affect the mind but also the emotions; theology is not explored best in a rationalistic context alone but also with a readiness to encounter the divine and be impacted by one's discoveries in a way that will enlighten the mind but also transform the life. Indeed, Pentecostal theology may be best identified as a theology of encounter—encounter of God, the Bible and the community.

“When [David] du Plessis was asked to identify the difference between him and the other Christian ecumenical leaders, he responded, 'You have the truth on ice, and I have it on fire.'”²

Historically, NCMI and our partnering churches have largely incorporated this approach to doctrine. Since charismatic spirituality seeks to be Spirit-led (pneumatic), it is *dynamic*. **Theology, therefore, is not unimportant but must be experienced.**

An experience does not make a particular doctrine absolutely true, but what it does mean is that when we share an experience we are essentially on “a journey together”—the relationships we have are key in forming our doctrine. This is the approach we see outlined in the Bible, particularly in the book of Acts.

What is also to be experienced is an encounter with the **Trinitarian God of the Bible**, which revolves around Jesus Christ as God's good news to mankind. The role of doctrine is to help lead people to such an encounter. This is why discussions around being “Word-based” or “Spirit-based” are seen to be superfluous. Rather, we are Word AND Spirit based.

Given the dynamic nature of this approach, the doctrine shared by the NCMI team and partnering churches is likewise varied and dynamic, and the checks and balances required both theologically and practically come through the **strength of our relationships**. It is through relationships that theology is primarily done. Even an approach to formal education is primarily relationally-based. These relationships include not just the relationships between individuals but also leadership teams and churches working together.

² See previous footnote

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY

In addition, our historical concern within the broader Church has been the restoration of New Testament patterns, forms and norms into the Church, most notably the restoration of the “five-fold gifts” of Ephesians 4:11, functioning not only locally but also translocally and in covenant partnership. The restoration and practice of New Testament patterns is what is generally defined as a “New Covenant” Christianity or more broadly, “apostolic Christianity”.

“Apostolic” means to follow the teachings and the practices of the original apostles (“orthodoxy” and “orthopraxy”, Acts 2:42) and to “go” with the gospel to “Jerusalem, Samaria, and the ends of the earth” (Matthew 28). Therefore, what NCMI seeks to implement through its relationships is not only the **doctrine** (orthodoxy) of scripture but also its **patterns** (orthopraxy—the “ways” or “practices” of scripture). An analogy could be drawn by thinking about the difference between God’s *Will* and God’s *Ways*, which naturally converge. Knowing God’s Will is certainly important, but knowing *how* He implements His Will is just as important.

WHAT UNIFIES THE TEAM

To summarise, then, what broadly unifies the NCMI team and its partnering churches is:

1. A shared, lived encounter of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of the Bible, through the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. Our shared (covenant) relationships
3. A shared apostolic call (mission)
4. Our shared values

These four aspects can summarise what we see to be a New Testament pattern of ministry. Our ecclesiology essentially creates and fosters and serves our relationships and our unity. The translocal team, made up of the Ephesians 4:11 gifts, and functioning with an apostolic-prophetic heart, works with local churches to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and build the Church up in love; creating and fostering unity, partnership and love between churches

and leaders; bringing churches to maturity; and encouraging a pioneering and apostolic spirit where the gospel is preached in regions “beyond” and new churches are established. These are, to summarise again, New Testament practices.

Therefore, what tends to matter more than specific matters of doctrine is simply *how* we are working through our doctrine together to fulfil the mandate of making disciples of all nations. It is not that doctrine is unimportant, only that *doctrine is not very useful if not practiced according to scripture*—and the practice of scripture is to work out doctrine together—**in team**—in love and unity.

Our relationships are paramount in both the forming and outworking of our doctrine. This will mean there will naturally be diversity and differences of opinion, but so long as the opinions are shared and taught with humility in a culture of mutual submission, love, and team, understanding that we still see through a mirror darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12), and respecting the role of functions and the authority that comes with such functions, we can move forward, together.

It's important to note that this is not just how we see the NCMi team function theologically, but also how eldership teams form theology together. The values and commitment are the same.

THE DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS IN THE CHURCH

With our understanding of what a translocal team does in the previous section, the first question often asked is what this means for local churches. After all, this is where Christianity is primarily worked out.

Philippians 1:1

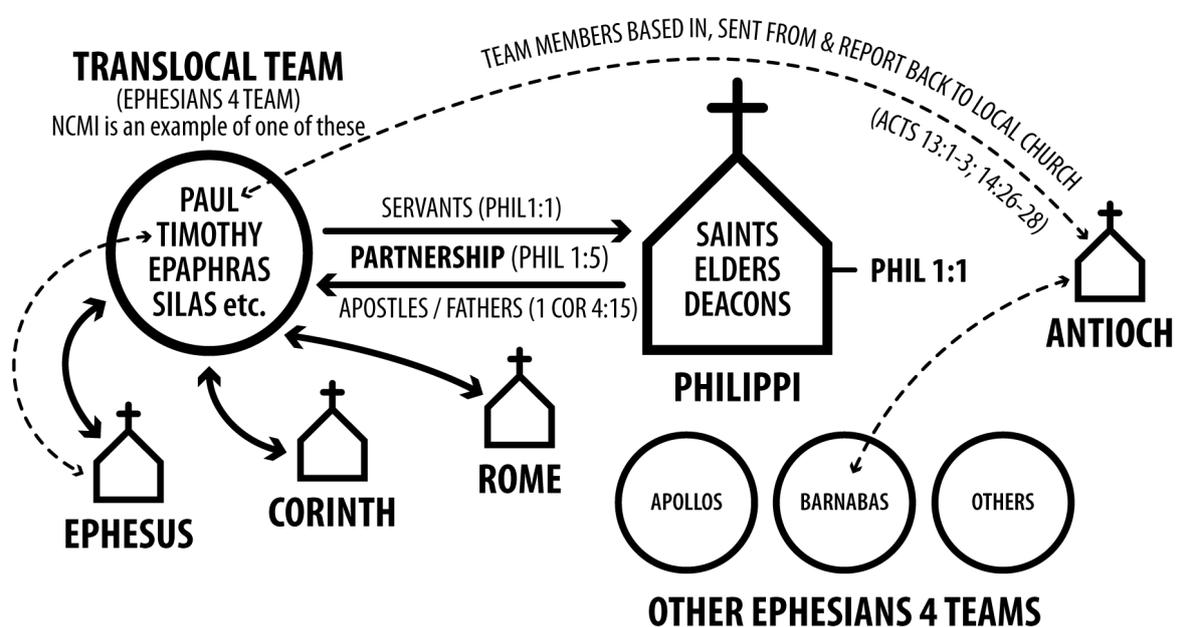
“From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.”

In this scripture above we see four different functions of leadership in and through the church.

PLANTING A CHURCH WITH THE APOSTOLIC

- A. Paul and Timothy** - an apostolic-prophetic, translocal Ephesians 4 team
- B. The saints** - the Church universal
- C. Overseers** - church elders (male)
- D. Deacons** - ministry team leaders

The diagram (below) illustrates these leadership functions and how they work together.



- Paul's team was in partnership with the saints, elders and deacons in the local churches of Ephesus, Corinth, Rome and Philippi.
- In particular Paul had been sent out of the church in Antioch for translocal ministry, and he reported back to that church (Acts 13:1–3; 14:26–28).
- Likewise, Timothy was part of the church in Ephesus but was on Paul's team.

- Barnabas was sent from Antioch, although later he forms his own team. It also seems that Apollos had his own team as well.

From this relationship we can begin to see the following ways the New Testament tends to frame how local church leadership structure looks.

1. The human leadership governing authority in any local church is that church's eldership team.

Acts 20:17–28 showcases the relationship between Paul (a leader of a translocal team) and the Ephesian church. Paul, as an apostle, did not govern local churches where / when he was not an elder in those local churches. This is also seen by the humble way in which he exercises authority in his epistles, particularly 1 & 2 Corinthians. It is also seen in how Peter and John exercise apostolic authority in their epistles.

While the apostles certainly carried an authority in the first century Church, the authority was not imposed upon local churches—even those churches that were planted by that apostle and his team (Paul and his team were involved in planting Philippi (Acts 16), Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17) and Corinth (Acts 18)).

Acts 14:21–28 is more specific on the role of a translocal team.

21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no

little time with the disciples.

Here we see the translocal team were responsible for:

- A. Preaching the gospel and making disciples (vs 21 - this is all of our responsibility, but in line with Ephesians 4, the team is *part* of equipping / training the local church to do so)
- B. Strengthening and encouraging the disciples (vs 22) and teaching about the Kingdom of God (vs 22)
- C. Ordaining /appointing elders (vs 23) (male) (Also see Titus 1:5–9)
- D. Traveling to churches (vs 24 - 25, in-person travel is still paramount)
- E. Reporting back to their local churches (vs 21; vs 26,27)
- F. Spending time with the disciples (vs 28) (This also showcases the importance of in-person relationships and spending time together—making use of new technology to meet but not making that technology replace in-person meeting).

As will be noted, there is no governmental oversight mentioned in these scriptures. There is also no imposed authority in Ephesians 4:11 from the gifts listed in that portion of scripture. In the previous section we noted nine aspects of translocal ministry from Ephesians 4, but note that none of those were governmental. This does not mean to say that translocal team members cannot be invited into certain governmental decisions of the church (when planting, inviting the team to be part of the plant will necessarily include this) and it does not mean that the Ephesians 4 gifts carry no governmental authority in themselves (we will explore this thought later), but it is to **note that the gifts are given to equip the church and not to rule over her.**

Local congregations are, as 1 Timothy 5:17 says, ruled by **elders**. (The word for “rule” is *proestōtes*, which means to “oversee, manage, or superintend”.) This is a male role as outlined by 1 Timothy

3:1–7 (also see Titus 1:6), although married elders work with their wives (Acts 18:24–26).³ This is also ideally a **plurality** of elders with one of those elders being given the function of leading the eldership team. This is explained more below. Also see PART 3 (How a Lead Elder Leads).

We summarise the authority of elders by saying that they are responsible for the *discipline*, *doctrine* and *direction* of a local church. We tend to prefer to use the noun “elder” as it’s usually more biblically appropriate as the noun “pastor” has come to mean many roles in the Church today, as well as the fact that the pastoral gift in Ephesians 4:11 appears to be more broad than local church governmental leadership.

2. This necessarily implies that local churches are autonomous.

NCMI is therefore not a denomination, a network or movement. In itself it is simply a name given to a group of Ephesians 4:11 translocal gifts who carry the same heart, but through our relationships and partnerships it becomes larger than just this group.

It is a **translocal** team, meaning that every member of the team is also accountable to and under the leadership of the elders in their local church, and they are sent from and through that local church to the nations to conduct their apostolic-prophetic, translocal ministry.

3. Accountability works both ways

The doctrine of each translocal team member, therefore, is under the accountability of elders; while at the same time, doctrine taught by elders is under the accountability of the translocal team, particularly those members of the translocal team that the eldership team have decided to have a relationship with.

This showcases the importance of our **relational strength** and also our **shared values**—we have to agree to build this way.

³ This is a very broad topic, but space permits us from going into much more detail here, and this section is not an apologetic for every doctrine.

4. Theology lies with the local church

Given the nature of the local church stated briefly above, three implications are immediately clear:

A. Eldership teams must work together. The process and shared values listed above work similarly on eldership teams. Theology is formed through going on “a journey together” as a team, and mutual respect of gifts and functions and the authority that comes with those functions.

To repeat the above but to contextualise it, what is shared on eldership teams are:

1. A shared, lived encounter of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of the Bible, through the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. Shared (covenant) relationships (apostolic/translocal relationships, relationships with the eldership team, relationships with the community)
3. A shared apostolic call (mission)
4. Shared values

HOW THE LEAD ELDER FACILITATES THIS

The leader of the team has a particular function of imparting vision and keeping the team centred on the vision; facilitating the development and discipleship of each person on the team; to recognise, raise up and release new elders; and take ultimate responsibility for the local church.

The latter point means that the lead elder is ultimately responsible for the doctrinal direction of the local church, in the same way that he is also ultimately responsible for the discipline and direction, and he and his team should work on what is viewed to be of primary importance doctrinally and what is viewed to be of secondary importance.

As above, this is worked out relationally and ultimately depends on the strength of the relationships. It is the team leader who will ultimately be responsible for the relational culture of his team and the local church he leads with the team.

Furthermore, the whole eldership team should have a relationship with the translocal team. It is not enough for only the team leader to have this relationship. Access to translocal ministry (the translocal team) must be for the whole eldership team.

B. The local church is responsible for theological formation, not a centralised seminary or study program. Seminary or formal education is not discouraged, but it is the primary responsibility of elders to help form the theology of their church. (This is not to downplay the role of the Holy Spirit, but is in the context of the authority of the local church.)

It is not the role of the NCMI team to form the theology of local churches, but local church elders should recognise the gifts in the translocal team as gifts that help them form doctrine in their church. After all, part of the process of equipping the saints as per Ephesians 4 naturally involves teaching. Teaching can take many different informal and formal forms.

While we are all individually responsible to God for our doctrine, doctrine is not formed individualistically but is formed together, through discussion, study together, teaching, etc. It is not the New Testament pattern to form doctrine alone and in a vacuum.

C. Likewise, church planting is the responsibility of the local church, not a church planting organisation and not even NCMI. In both (B) and (C), the responsibility of the NCMI translocal team is to help leaders of churches (and their churches) to form their doctrine and plant churches (to bring the saints to maturity, as per Ephesians 4)—but given that this is not an imposed ministry but an invited one, it is up to the local elders to decide who on the NCMI team they will invite to help form doctrine and church planting

—two important aspects of the mandate we've been given.

While no church is under obligation to invite anyone on the NCMI team, it makes no sense to claim partnership when there is none. Elders should be able to invite who they believe is best for their church, but given the importance of our relationships and what partnership actually means, if there is no-one on the NCMI team invited to minister or speak into a church and its leaders (naturally including the eldership team and its leader) whatsoever, then it makes no sense for a church to claim any real form of partnership. If there is no mutual respect for the authority of translocal team and the authority of elders, there is no realistic partnership happening. This would include single churches or “site” churches. (Each site of a particular group of churches should be equally connected to the translocal team and apostolic ministry.)

5. Theology is therefore dynamic

Taking all these factors into account, it stands to reason that it should be expected that doctrine within the NCMI team and eldership teams in NCMI partnering churches will be varied, dynamic, and strongly relational. Theology is formed mainly through our relationships with each other, our journeying together, and our partnership in the Great Commission, and not through our structures.

Having stated this, it is obvious that a certain kind of structure will lean towards facilitating this relational, covenantal, apostolic approach. It will need to, however, be an organic structure—flexible and changeable. To use a biblical analogy, we need to have “flexible wineskins” (Matthew 9:16–17; Mark 2:21–22; Luke 5:36–39).

This then leads us to looking briefly at how we, to the best of our ability, see a New Testament leadership model worked out in and for the local church. For many with a history with NCMI, what follows might not be new. However, it is good to think about how this leadership model speaks to how doctrine is formed.

THE LEADERSHIP MODEL

Throughout church history we've mainly experienced three different types of Church leadership models: **Episcopal**, **Congregational**, or **Phantom**. We believe that each of these have had weaknesses that have worked against healthy churches forming and against the apostolic mandate given to the Church. We are aware that our criticism below is brief and doesn't take into account nuance, but this document is not intended as a deep study on church leadership.

Episcopal Model



In a national government, this would be a monarchy, where the king or queen has all power and authority. In the Church, this may be when the leader has all authority, and this authority trickles down through the structure. It creates a dictatorial environment with the result of people being *controlled* rather than *served* and *led*. Sometimes, it isn't even the leader at the top that is being dictatorial, but through politics and influence and so forth, the group that wins the power struggles "at the top" dictate to the leader and other leadership groups.

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This model often produces either *robots* or *rebels* in the Church, and in every case it always becomes about power struggles. People become rebels when they are continually held back, held down, and denied opportunities; or they can become robots who just toe the line.

Abuse of this model produces bitterness and hurt. It often creates an environment where people become suspicious and church leaders become more concerned with holding on to their positions of authority than the Word and ministry. This model is also not organic and flexible, which are integral to seeing the Spirit move and the Church infiltrate different cultures.

Congregational Model

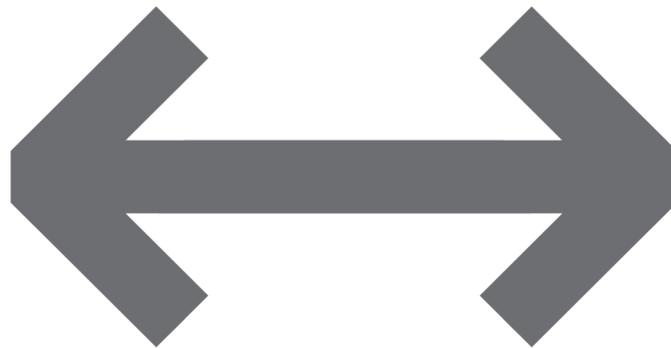


In a national government, this would be seen as a democratic model where leaders are voted in and out. Ultimately, “the people” have all the power and authority. In the Church, it can be said that this model came about as an over-reaction to the Episcopal model. Under this model, leaders can become very disempowered, even oppressed, and turn into mere employees who are appointed or fired by the people. Leaders therefore cannot challenge with the Word of God

LEAD ELDERS

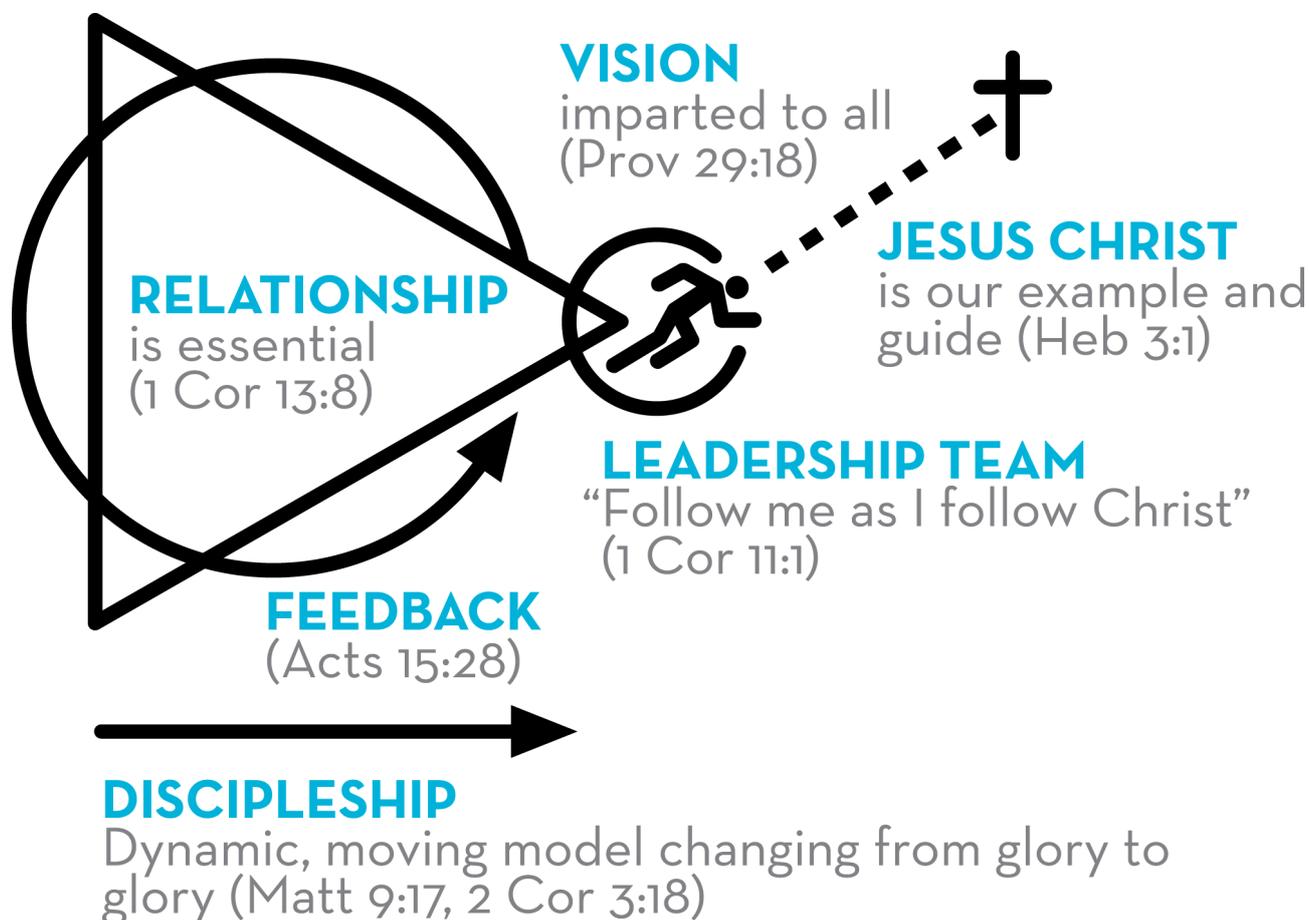
but must submit to what the culture perceives as truth and / or whoever has the most influence, which is very often those who give the most money to the church. In this way, the congregational model can also create class structures within the Church and be very difficult to manage realistically in places where there is a wide variety of socio-economic conditions. This all therefore creates an environment where church leaders become politicians rather than godly leaders as you can't keep everyone happy.

Phantom Model



This means there is no government and no authority, and therefore no leadership. In the Church, some have adopted this model as an over-reaction to the excesses and disappointments of the Episcopal and Congregational models. Sadly, people who are very critical of the Church often take up this model and spend years in a wilderness. In this model there is no obvious authority or government; all believers are considered to have equal authority in their function. The result of having no clear leadership is often a lack of vision. There is no one to take you anywhere (it's leaderless) and therefore nothing is achieved (Proverbs 29: 18 says, "Without vision the people perish.")

Apostolic / Prophetic Model



- This model is built on servant leadership. Leadership is a *function*, not a *position*. Authority is about serving and not being served. This model helps people understand authority and allows biblical authority to function in their lives.
- It is “apostolic” as it is about conforming to the teaching and practice of the New Testament apostles and going to the nations, making disciples (Matthew 28).
- It is “prophetic” as the objective is to lead from the front, to hear from God, have a vision, and move towards it.

LEAD ELDERS

- Here the leader and their leadership team neither dictate nor are dictated to. It's a model of *participation* and *partnership* that relies on *committed, covenantal relationships*.
- Under this model, we can all be involved in achieving the goals and vision of the local church as we fulfil our personal call and function.
- It's a model of *team leadership*. One person leads the team (otherwise you get two visions, ie. "di-vision") but this role is a *function*, not a position or a title. This creates space for healthy relationships to form as the whole church becomes the "team" and must practice grace, acceptance of each others' gifts, and commitment.
- The key to effective discipleship is to train others to take your place. We've always got to build away from ourselves. This model is 'forward-moving', creating momentum and space for the next generation to take up the baton.
- Practically, the tip of the triangle is the lead elder of the Church, who leads the eldership team. The leadership of this team is facilitated by the deacon team (who lead ministries) and all the Saints take responsibility for the local church, providing feedback and working out their individual calls. Through discipleship, the whole church moves forward.

We see this as a New Covenant model of leadership and it is one of our core shared values as NCMI. It is a relational, committed partnership functioning under servant leadership, functioning under the authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gives vision and direction, with the Bible as our final authority in matters of life and doctrine, in seeing the nations discipled and the gospel taken to the world.

The NCMI team is responsible for teaching this and working this out with elders and churches, helping them implement a New Testament ecclesiology, dispensing these values. Equally so, eldership teams are tasked with modeling the New Testament heart and teaching these values to their churches.

The NCMI team practices this model as well. The team is led by a leader who is part of a local church and accountable to that eldership, serves the function of imparting vision and keeping the team connected relationally, and works with local churches, as well as training and releasing new leaders onto the team.

SHARED VALUES

The desire of NCMI is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. We long for the world to see and hear about Jesus and His finished work, and to see the Kingdom of God advancing and extending in every possible way.

Our heart is also to help in strengthening local churches. Our hope is based on the endeavor to encourage, equip and build up the local church. (Ephesians 4:12.) We do this from two basic foundations. These foundations also form the foundations of our shared values.

1. The Church is about Jesus and His Kingdom. Everything we do accomplishes bringing glory to Jesus. The church is the only thing Jesus is building and we believe the church is God's "A" plan! (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:10.) Planting New Testament churches is the primary vehicle God has chosen to evangelise the world.

2. The Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. It is the only acceptable standard for life, ministry, and conduct in the Church. (2 Timothy 3:16.) This standard is applied, as best we know how, to all that we do in partnership with churches worldwide. It has practical implications for the way in which NCMI team members and partnering pastors are accountable to one another and to their own churches. We are committed to allowing this standard to direct our lives, both individually and corporately, in order to see God's truth established in our lives and in the earth.

As summarised by Nigel Day-Lewis:

"The Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant record of all God's revelation to mankind, and is our final authority in all matters of life and doctrine. It contains everything we

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need to know for salvation, and nothing can or must ever be subtracted from or added to it."

Therefore, how the NCMI team works theologically is to place primary authority in the Bible. We agree that we are all learning to understand and live out the Bible correctly.

- Therefore we call for humility in addressing matters of doctrine.
- The Bible has the highest authority in the believer's life and is the only acceptable standard for life, ministry, and conduct in the Church. (2 Timothy 3:16.)
- This standard is applied, as best we know how, to all that we do in partnership with churches worldwide. It has practical implications for the way in which NCMI team members and partnering pastors are accountable to one another and to their own churches. We are committed to allowing this standard to direct our lives, both individually and corporately and in all our local church partnerships, in order to see God's truth established in our lives and in the world.
- Specific matters, therefore, around literal or allegorical readings of the Bible are matters of local church eldership, who set the doctrine, discipline and direction of local churches.

From these two foundational values, it would be good to summarise NCMI's more broader values. These are shared values, which means that subscribing to these are core issues of unity.

These are:

- To love and know Christ (Philippians 3:10; John 17:3; and many others)
- To make Christ known and be committed to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; and many others)
- To love each other and be committed in our relationships, submitting to each other (Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 5:21)

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- To implement a New Testament, New Covenant ecclesiology (Acts 2) and faithfully teach it (Titus 2:1)
- To understand and live out Biblical authority (Hebrews 13:17)
- To plant churches and be committed to doing so, also engaging in translocal ministry from our local congregations out to the “ends of the earth” as the Holy Spirit leads and calls and directs, and as the New Testament guides us to do (Luke 14:23; Acts 2; and many others)
- To honour the unique call and giftings God has on each of us as individuals and as churches, and to recognise, raise and release leaders (1 Corinthians 12,13; Romans 12), being faithful as we can in our call.
- To hold each other accountable (Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:1–5; James 5:16)
- To have humility and conviction in addressing matters of doctrine and practice. (Philippians 2:3–4; Matthew 18:1–4; Matthew 23:10–12; Galatians 1; 2 Timothy 2:14; 24–25; Acts 17:11)
- To be open to the moving of the Holy Spirit (to be “wild” but not “weird”) (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 14:26; Ephesians 4:30)
- To be passionately committed to scripture, faithful to the teaching of sound doctrine (Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 3:16; Acts 17:11; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:14)
- To be organic and flexible, creating organic structure, not organisations and institutional legacy (“flexible wineskins” being held together relationally) (Matthew 9:14–17, Mark 2:18–22 and Luke 5:33–39)

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- To live a devoted lifestyle (Acts 2:42)
- To be generous with our time, our talents, and our treasures (money and resources) (2 Corinthians 9:6–15; Proverbs 11:25)
- To live for the glory of God and not for our own glory (working against creating or fostering 'celebrity culture') (1 Corinthians 10:31; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 5:16), always pointing to Jesus and not to us (even as a group)
- To strive to represent the Father Heart of God (Luke 15:11–32; 1 John 1:7–9)
- To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and faith in Him alone, knowing that the true power of the gospel lies in God and not in Man (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8–9)
- To work with the Holy Spirit towards scriptural holiness and Biblical character (Galatians 5:22; 1 Peter 2:12; Matthew 5:16)
- To work for the strengthening of family and biblical marriage (one male, one female) in our societies and cultures (Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 22:6; 1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5; 2 Timothy 1:5)
- To preach the 'priesthood of all believers' - that all are called to minister, and that all callings are legit ministries, and no calling is more important than another (1 Peter 2:4–5)
- To be open to hearing God and moving where he wants us to go prophetically, refusing to build monuments to our past and get stuck with "the way we have always done things" (John 3:8; Matthew 17:1–8)
- To multiply the work of God through discipleship and continuity into, and from, generation to generation (2 Timothy 1:1–14; 2 Timothy 2:2)

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- To resolve conflict biblically (Matthew 5: 23–24; 18: 15–17)
- To journey together in the upward call of Jesus (Philippians 3:14)
- To commit to building team and functioning as a team, serving one another out of love (Galatians 5:13)
- To remember the gospel is for all nations and that God's "household" is made up of all ages, ethnic groups, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds (Matthew 21:13; Ephesians 1:5; Ephesians 2:19; Galatians 3:28; Revelation 7:9–17) and to faithfully preach this gospel to all who will hear, never favouring any one due to their class or ethnicity
- To partner faithfully!

Jesus is the Head of the Church and we are his Body (Colossians 1:24), which means we're in a covenant relationship with Him and therefore with one another. These relationships are based on grace, acceptance and commitment, and are rooted in love, friendship and a strong sense of family. These are our values.

III. INVITING THE TRANSLOCAL TEAM INTO YOUR CHURCH

a) YOU NEED ALL FIVE GIFTS

Christ gave us all five, so we should use all five. The translocal team is apostolic in heart (GOING and breaking open new regions) and prophetic in heart (looking to the future) but "five-fold" in how this is done. Do not invite only those gifts that you understand or which you seem to get along with more easily. If you gravitate towards teaching, don't just be all about teaching and only inviting teachers in! You will stifle your people and not allow them to grow in the gifts God has for them as well. It is ALL the saints that need equipping, not just those you like or understand!

b) DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE GIFT TO YOUR CHURCH IF YOU HAVE IT

Perhaps you function very well apostolically, and might even be part of a translocal team with that gift, but you need to bring others into your church with that same gift. You cannot be the pastor and the translocal gift for your own church. That does not work. You are their pastor / elder, not their apostle. It is "one body many parts" (1 Corinthians 12) for a local church and a translocal team.

Perhaps you have all five gifts on your eldership, but your church will see them as their *pastors*, not as translocal gifts. This happens quite naturally and is a good thing. So you must invite translocal gifts from the outside, in.

Invite the translocal team in from day one of your church, not when you're a big base church and everything is in order. They are here to lay the foundations. Also, remember the strength of diverse gifts – invite others to your church that don't have the same gift as you!

Through a translocal team you will see growth CATAPULT, truth CONFIRMED, CREATIVITY encouraged, CHECKS and balances put into place, CONSISTENCY in your church, CALLINGS fulfilled, and burn-out COMBATED. We are here to pick each other up.

PARTNERSHIP IS NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA

a. From the beginning, you should be looking to form a team of leaders and elders in your church. Elders (plural) are the highest local church authority, not an elder on their own. You are not called to plant and lead a church alone. That may be for a season, but do whatever you can to move that season along.

b. From the beginning, you should be forming partnerships with a translocal team (made up of Ephesians 4:11 gifts). This team provides you with accountability, encouragement, ministry, and all we listed above.

Also note that all the elders of a local church must partner with a translocal team, not just the elder leading the eldership team of that church (which would be you in this case). All of the eldership team needs to have access to a translocal team.

SIX FOUNDATIONS OF PARTNERSHIPS

NCMI is a translocal team with an apostolic-prophetic heart made up of Ephesians 4:11 gifts. From the two texts above (Philippians 1:3-11 and 2 Corinthians 10:12-18) we can see six main themes that highlight the foundations of partnership, which we believe sums up how we see partnership worked out.

- 1. Recognition**
- 2. Revelation**
- 3. Relationship**
- 4. Resources without reservation**
- 5. Responsibility**
- 6. Reward**

1. RECOGNITION

Partnering with NCMI means you:

a) Recognise the Biblical value of translocal ministry

You must recognise that your church needs the Ephesians 4:11 gifts. Many leaders say they partner with NCMI but never invite anyone from the NCMI team to their church. It's not enough to just attend NCMI Equip conferences and the like. We are not a conference movement or an itinerant team. You must **believe the Biblical value of inviting people with Ephesians 4:11 gifts to your church and recognise our need for each other.**

b) Recognise the value of the NCMI team providing governmental input

If you partner with NCMI, then the NCMI team must be able to also provide input into the

discipline, doctrine, and direction of your church. Church elders are the highest governing authority in local churches but the translocal team is there to provide input into this governance. It is an *invited authority*.

c) Recognise the reality of a primary partnership

It's not realistic to partner with NCMI and other teams at the same time. This is not a legal rule but we have to be honest and realistic about how this does not result in an effective partnership. We will never say you cannot bring anyone else into your church or work with someone else, but you need to be realistic about your own limits in time and resources, as well as the limits of your leadership team and church. Focus will often bring greater effectiveness.

d) Recognise the need for your whole leadership team (and church) to partner

Partnership does not mean that NCMI only has a relationship with the leading elder of your church. Rather, it means NCMI partners with all your church's elders and deacons and church leaders and has a relationship with them. If something happens to you as the leader then the church knows who they are partnered with. This ultimately brings security to everyone.

e) Recognise NCMI's gifts

If you don't recognise the Ephesians 4:11 gifts in the people on the NCMI team then it does not make sense for you to partner with this team. Partnership is not just 'guest ministry'. You can invite anyone you want to minister in your church, of course, but if you're not inviting the NCMI team amongst that then we are friends, not partners.

2. RELATIONSHIPS

a) We believe in friendship

NCMI is very relational and believes in friendship. Our heart is relational - it's what we do. Relationships are vital and this is a value the devil attacks all too much.

b) Relationship finds its rightful place in partnership

While relationship is a high value for NCMI, it is not our only value. Relationship finds its rightful place in partnership. We are on a mission together for the Kingdom of God. We are not on a

mission for friendship's sake.

c) Friendship, not just function

Friendship is not our *function* as a team. Friendship is not a functional thing. But we also cannot have 'friendship before function' as we have to ask: when can we begin to function and do things together?

d) We believe in covenantal relationships

We are mutually committed to each other. We are submitted to each other. We serve each other and preserve our relationships.

3. REVELATION

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3 KJV)

We need to agree on many things. We can't just agree on the basics of the Christian faith. Ephesians 4 speaks of unity in theology and heart and diversity in the gifts in grace. Therefore, we must have the same heart and agree to go together. We cannot partner and disagree on certain things.

We therefore have to agree on:

a) Doctrine surrounding church governance and translocal partnership

b) Theology and some of our methodology

It's important to remember the distinctions between (i) what is biblical, (ii) what is unbiblical, and (iii) what is a-biblical. (For example, church names.) Have discernment here.

c) The values we contend for

For example: if you do not believe that elders are the highest human governing authority for local churches, or if you don't believe in a plurality of elders, we can be friends but we're not partnering. As another example, if you don't believe in team ministry, then how can we walk

together?

d) The mandate God has given us as NCMI

NCMI was called by God over 30 years ago with a specific mandate. We embrace what others are doing and learn from others all the time (may we always be learning!) but we must stay true to who God has called us to be and what He has called us to do. We are not trying to be like anyone else or do what others are called to do. We embrace who we are.

This goes down to a local church level. Those who partner with us must be free to be who God has called them to be, within the context of who God has called us to be. Be truly you, we'll be truly us, and together we'll be true to the King.

4. RESOURCES WITHOUT RESERVATION

Partnership means: "what is yours is mine and what is mine is yours."

Friendship means: "you have yours and I have mine".

Friends have reservations. Partners do not.

a) We all have access

There is no region, no church or place on this planet that God has entrusted to NCMI that those who partner with us have no access to. Likewise, our partnership means that where you are working into, we can work into as well.

b) NCMI resources are for churches

Without reservation. We do not charge fees for being part of NCMI. We give our best to churches. We fly at our own cost around the world to help equip and strengthen churches. We open up doors and have an open hand.

c) Partnering churches provide their resources

Without reservation. Resources includes your "time", your "treasures", your "trophies", your "talents." Can you imagine how effective we would be in the future if we all had a heart to share

our resources with each other without reservation?

5. RESPONSIBILITY

We all take ownership of our mission and mandate and ministry and message together. Jesus said, "The harvest is ripe but the workers are few," (Matthew 9:35-38). It will always be like that. If you want to go somewhere quickly you go alone, but if you want to go somewhere far, you go together with someone else. We cannot fulfill the Great Commission on our own. The scriptures speaking of 'one body, many parts' (1 Corinthians 12:12) refer not only to a local church but to the translocal as well.

We have three core responsibilities together:

a) Mission

The mark of a successful church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity. Church planting is on the heart of God. We are not a church planting team, we're a "King and Kingdom" team, but we recognise the most effective way of advancing the Kingdom is church planting. It's not exclusive, but it is important. God calls others in other ways, too, such as business leaders and so on.

Everyone should be involved in church planting in some way. Church planting is about a culture. The way we develop it is by doing it. Develop it early in your church. If your heart and eyes are just on your local church then you need to think carefully about that.

b) Ministry

This is not about flying the NCMI ministry flag or your church's ministry flag. We have a shared responsibility of God's ministry, which we do together. We have to ask questions such as: "If we do this, how will it benefit us all and not just our church?"

c) Message

We contend, together, for this message of the King and Kingdom.

Romans 15:20-21

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Some people say they hear the Gospel every week, but there are so many who have never heard it once! We talk of the second coming, but most have not heard of the first coming! This gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16). It's a peculiar and particular message. But it does have restrictions: it cannot be believed until it's been heard. And it cannot be heard until it has been preached. We have a shared responsibility to ensure it is preached and it is heard.

6. REWARD

a) Your breakthrough is our breakthrough. Our breakthrough is your breakthrough.

We rejoice together. We share in God's blessings and rewards! Here are some examples to show what is meant by this:

- If someone you might not even know manages to break into a new country, that is also your break-through, even if you never manage to send anyone there.
- When someone's marriage is restored in your church, that is also our break-through.
- When cities are impacted, that is our break-through together.

b) If you fall, we fall with you

The converse of the above is also true. When you are in pain, we are in pain with you. When there's a split in a church, that split is a split amongst us. Lord, may there not be a split in your church!

c) Partnership is more difficult

Since we share in the costs and the pain, partnership is more difficult. But it is also more rewarding as we share in the joys of our ministry together. We are stronger, together.

d) You must be called to this

You must be called to us and added to us. If you walk with us under God we will do you good. And if we walk with you under God, He will do us good.

CONCLUSION

Partnership is God's way all throughout scripture. We see that local churches partnered with Paul, who had a translocal team made up of different Ephesians 4:11 gifts. As local churches we must not go at it alone, and you as a church planter and / or lead elder are not called to do this alone. From the outset, partner with a translocal team, and build a team of leaders in your church from the very beginning. We believe that, together, we will fulfil God's mandate to His Church!

PART 2:

ANSWERING THE CALL

What is a local church?

It may surprise you how many church planters and even lead elders of a church don't think about this question - and how many people can't give a concise, biblical answer.

Obviously, the question requires some careful thought, and we will unpack this in detail throughout this course. Before you carry on, write down the most concise answer you can. Then, at the end of the course, come back to it and see if your thoughts have changed or at least become more clear.

What is the gospel?

This is also, surprisingly, another question many Christians struggle to answer. If you were to ask some of your Christian friends or those in your church this simple question, you will generally find a wide variety of answers. This is often because of how people evangelise - they think they need to tell people how Jesus will make them better and make their life better, or they see the gospel as some sort of self-improvement programme. They assume that Jesus is all about making people more moral. Some feel that topics such as sin and judgement are irrelevant, and the gospel is all about some modern (or rather, post-modern) notion of love and justice; others think that the gospel is *only* about sin and judgement and not doing things that anger God.

Hebrews 6:

"1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits."

As a church planter and / or lead elder, you should be at a place where we don't need to cover the 'elementary doctrine of Christ' in this material, because it is so ingrained in you and a part of your life. However, as human beings we often do need to remind ourselves of the simple basics to help us focus and understand what it is we are actually called to do. **This is important because we can get so sidetracked with the many activities of a church that we forget what it is we're actually even supposed to be doing.** All the preaching and the events and the many different kinds of ministries and the counseling and everything that seems to be (or is, in fact) important can make us believe that a local church is a centre of activity for talent, personality, leadership, life-skills, becoming better, tapping into the potential of human-kind, events, music, and a thousand other so-called community activities that actually have very little to do with the gospel or actually truly forming healthy Christ-and-people-loving communities.

As the lead elder of a local church, you can get overwhelmed with the feeling that you are not a success if your church doesn't have access to massive resources that can help you put on big events and run ministries of 'excellence' that rival the best the world (and other churches) can put on.

Perhaps you dream that one day you will have a church that is equal on the scale of respect to some of the big and well-known churches of today. We believe that base churches are imperative - but what we mean are churches that are apostolically-focused, Christ-loving, and relationally strong. We have no problem with big churches and would love to see more in our midst. **But size and resources are not as important as heart and call.** Biblically speaking, excellence is a value that must come *second* to faithfulness to Christ and the call. In fact, you cannot truly do anything excellently for God unless it is done out of faithfulness to Christ. Otherwise you will be advancing the wrong Kingdom — usually your own!

Your church will never actually influence the culture if you place excellence and production and functioning above faithfulness. The gospel of Jesus changes people; the Spirit does the work. As Paul said:

1 Corinthians 3:6

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

You're going to have to deal with your ideas of success before you plant, and keep going back to what you have resolved now, during this course. Otherwise you will be pulled a thousand different directions.

What is an elder / pastor?

This is a third question that you might be surprised to find many elders / pastors, who may have even been pastors for years, cannot actually answer with clarity. As the lead elder of a church you might see yourself as pastoral or you might see yourself as more of a "visionary". Perhaps you've been told you have to be one or the other, and you have to fit into some sort of box. We hope that, by the end of this course, you will be happy to be yourself.

What is important is if you are as ready as you can possibly be for this. What is important is if your character and heart are in a place to sustain the immense spiritual and emotional and even physical pressure that will be coming against you. Are you ready for the loneliness? Are you ready for the praise? Are you ready to have some of your best friends get offended and abandon you? Are you ready for many new people to think you are the best thing that has ever happened? Are you even ready for success and the pressures and temptations that success brings? All of these and more will test your character, and while you don't need to be perfect, you need to be at a place where you know yourself well enough and know people well enough and know Jesus well enough so that you can handle it maturely and with the love of Christ.

The answers to these three questions will help ground you in knowing how you are to function. But we cannot answer them without first asking you, personally, the most relevant question of

all:

Are you called to do this?

This seems obvious. Yet it's profoundly difficult to grapple with.

In this section we're going to help you grapple with the call. For both planting and transitioning, this is imperative. You need to be as sure as possible that it is God who has sent you to do this. This is even imperative if you are just wanting to lead your local church better, as you need to take stock of the things God has said and come back to those things when things get rough (or are even going well!).

HAS GOD SPOKEN?

The book of Matthew is an excellent foundation for understanding the apostolic call of the Church, and even how God works this call out with individuals. In Matthew we can see that God speaks:

- A. Through dreams (Matthew 1:20; 2:13)
- B. Through the prophets (Matthew 2:5-6)
- C. Through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1)
- D. Through the Word of God (Matthew 4:4)
- E. Through other believers (Acts 13:2; 21:10-11).

How has God called you? Think about each of these ways in which He speaks, and write down what it is that He has said to you - now and over the years.

DISCERN THE CALL

Each of these ways of speaking require discernment and understanding, wisdom and help from the Holy Spirit.

The foundation for each is certainly the Word of God, where we find these ways of speaking anyway. We know from scripture that God does call church planters and lead elders and He wants to see churches planted. If that is not clear to you then you are not ready for this. If it is clear, then, in that sense, we don't have to actually ask, "Would God call me?" but rather ask, "Is he calling me *now* to *this* specific task?"

We can see in this that two things are important: (a) the actual task you're being called to, and (b) the timing.

THE DEVIL'S MAJOR STRATEGIES:

In the book of Matthew we also find that the devil uses three major strategies against Jesus, which we can safely assume he will use against us as well:

- A. Doubt
- B. Distortion
- C. Diversion

These three we see at play in Matthew 4:1-11. The devil casts doubt on Jesus' call and identity; he distorts scripture's true meaning; and he tries to divert Jesus away from the Kingdom by claiming he will give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world - trying to provide out a short cut, as it were, that would be easy and without suffering and battle. Do not believe short cuts! They will always end in despair!

YOUR CALL WILL BE TESTED

You will find that your call will be tested, much like Jesus' call was tested in the wilderness. It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness to be tested (Matthew 4:1). It wasn't the devil who did it! It wasn't Jesus' idea to prove Himself or become holy! It was God who decided that He must be tested.

Surely a servant is not greater than his master (John 15:20), so we can expect testing too. This

testing is imperative, valuable, and is what you *need* to do this church leading thing, because you're in it for the long haul. If you are going to be faithfully persistent with this call, you need to have developed endurance and confidence, which comes through testing. We listed above the main ways we see Jesus tested through the temptations of the devil. Let's look at these in more detail.

A. Doubt

You will doubt, doubt, and doubt, again and again, that God has really called you. Most of your doubt will come from your identity. You will wonder if you're the right person for the job, have the right personality and characteristics, are outspoken enough, or thoughtful enough, or clever enough, or charismatic enough, or deep enough, have the right resources, if your family has the right characteristics, etc. And after you conclude it's all good, you will find yourself suddenly doubting one day again!

B. Distortion

This is where things get more subtle. The devil will try to distort the ways in which God speaks to you, try to get them to mean something else, or distort what the call means. Here are some things you can expect:

i) Distorting prophetic words

- Many well-meaning people will provide you prophetic words that are not really from the Lord, but from their own emotional connection with you. They want to somehow give you the key to make you feel better and be sure of where you're going. They hope their word to you will be what you need to kick a door open. They want to encourage you, and that is fine, but you cannot take every prophetic word at face value. You will need to develop discernment to know what is truly from the Lord and what is just from well-meaning people who want to see you do what God has called you to do and are excited about your call.
- It is important to note that prophetic words from people in this vein are not from the devil, only from well-meaning people who themselves haven't developed their

discernment to know when a word is from the Lord or when it is from their own emotions. However, the devil will use this opportunity to sow all sorts of things into your own heart - whether it's doubt of God or doubt of people or despondency when prophetic words don't come true (or the very opposite of the prophetic word happens). *Therefore, guard your heart.* Do not get offended; do not put too much stock in every prophetic word that comes your way; do not get depressed when things don't work out like you thought it would; but submit it all to the Lord to work out. By all means, **never despise prophecy**, but just use discernment!

- In some cases, you might receive a flat-out false prophetic word *designed* to discourage you. If a prophetic word does not encourage you or give you insight or confirm something already on your heart, then it is not of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14:3 shows us that New Testament prophecy strengthens, encourages, and comforts. This is how we primarily define New Testament prophecy.

ii) Distorting scripture

- You will notice that the devil quoted Bible verses to Jesus in the wilderness, but distorted them through not providing the proper context, or not putting them in the context of the larger "big picture" truth of the scriptures. He will do this to you too in several ways.
 - As you decide to plant (or are entering into a transition) you will find yourself reading a lot of books and hearing a lot of opinions. You probably are experiencing this already! Will you be a "simple church"? A "mega-church"? A "sites-church"? And will you build appropriately to achieve this? All the opinions can become very confusing and wear you down. And worst of all, so many of them seemed based in scripture! Do not be intimidated by all the information. Much of it will distract you from your specific, personal call from God. You have a relationship with the Lord yourself — you don't need so many books telling you what to do and what to think and who to be!
 - Do not be intimidated by so-called "church growth" strategies that insist a church can only be grown through the employment of such a "biblically-based" strategy

ANSWERING THE CALL

(and insist on a certain definition of success that isn't true to the Bible). Many of these are written in contexts that don't apply to you. The Holy Spirit draws people to Jesus - if you keep things Christ-centred He will draw people to Jesus through your church. Furthermore, you will find the Holy Spirit reveal unique strategy to you for your time and place, if you continue to trust Him. Use those around you that you trust and the translocal team for insight and wisdom and encouragement!

- You might be sidetracked by a false theology or a new theological fad (that may actually even be true) and want to make that theology what your church is all about. For example, a "grace" theology or a "holiness" theology or a "missional" theology or a "culturally-relevant" theology or a "new charismatic" theology. That is not really a good reason to plant. There might even be nothing wrong with the theology, but a local church does not exist for your pet doctrine or favourite theology. It exists for Christ and Christ alone! Don't let some new theological fad distract you and cause you to build foundations that will fade away as the fad fades away!
- Beware of planting out of your current home church simply because it does not emphasise what you want emphasised or do things in a style you prefer. This is not a good reason to plant! You do not plant out of a reaction to something you don't like! Likewise, if you are transitioning from a previous leader, don't suddenly change the vision, mission, direction, name, style, and everything about the church in reaction to something you didn't like about the previous leader! (You may need to do significant changes if you are transitioning a church from a different model to an apostolic-prophetic model, but this is a different story.) You will not be able to sustain a church for the long-haul if this is your reason for planting or transitioning! (While we should deal with false doctrine, don't let secondary doctrinal or stylistic issues come in the way of your relationships. Rather deal with the issue at home. Remember, how you treat your leaders now is indicative of how your new leaders will treat you when you are leading a church!)
- In all the above, the devil can sometimes take truth and just distort it enough to distract

you. It only takes a slight bit of wrong emphasis, a slight bit of tweaking. You must be aware, discerning, and realise that this can happen to even you - despite your conviction that you are theologically sound and unable to be distracted.

iii) Distorting feelings

- By now you would have realised that your emotional health is an important component of leadership. You must be both emotionally and spiritually healthy to plant and to lead a church. Obviously, you don't have to be perfect, but you must have a good idea on where you're at and what you're going to do about your emotional and spiritual life.
- The devil will use your emotions to distort your call. One day you might feel as if you can plant a church, and another day you might feel as if you should never be in leadership in the first place! This emotional rollercoaster was experienced by many in the Bible. (Elijah, David, Moses, Peter, Gideon, to name a few.) The point is not how you feel about yourself, but how God feels about you! Hence, he says to Gideon, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!" (See Judges 6:11-18.)

C) Diversion

- When things are moving slowly or going badly, you might be tempted to find easier ways out or go through what appear to be open doors but are in fact just diversions.
- For example, perhaps you feel called to plant in a particular nation, but at that moment an amazing job offer opens up locally that you need to commit to for quite a long time. You might say, "Well, this job could open doors into this nation," or, "This job can make us financially secure, so we can be ready to plant." In some cases, doors of ministry might open up in other areas or in a different nation, and if you're itching to go, you might just take them. Be careful! It could be a strategy to divert you.
- Often with diversion, like with the devil's tempting, it isn't an irrational offer. The devil told Jesus that he could fulfil Jesus' call to establish the Kingdom easily. If He worshipped the devil, the devil would hand over the world's kingdoms. Imagine what you would think?

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You probably would convince yourself that you would be a good ruler of the world and would establish peace and order. Perhaps you even would. But it would come at the wrong price! Jesus knew the right price to pay!

THE REALITY OF SUFFERING FOR THE CALL

Acts 14:22

"We must go through many sufferings to enter the kingdom."

With Paul, we can see he underwent several hardships in his ministry:

- A. Stoning (Acts 14:19)
- B. Shipwrecked (2 Corinthians 11:25; Acts 27; Acts 13:13)
- C. Imprisonments (2 Corinthians 11:23; 2 Corinthians 6:4-5; Acts 16:22-23; Acts 17:9; Romans 16:7, 2 Timothy 1:16-17; Ephesians 6:20; Acts 24; Acts 28:30)
- D. In trouble with authorities
- E. Floggings and beatings (2 Corinthians 6:4-5; Acts 9:29; Acts 13:50; Acts 17:9; Acts 18:12-17; Acts 19:9; Acts 16:22-23; Acts 19:23-41)

Was Paul called? Obviously, yes! Yet he underwent so much hardship. With this hardship there must have come doubt, distortion, and diversion.

This means that a call does not always mean plain sailing. Doors will close. Hardships will come. Doubt will be there. Mistakes will be made. Relationships will be tested and in some cases fail.

WHEN DOORS ARE CLOSING

What do you do when you have received several prophetic words, feel as if this is the call of God, but doors keep closing, and things just seem to go the wrong way?

Working out your call, especially with church planting, can be a taxing, emotional process, that

will test you, your marriage, your relationship with your kids and other family, your relationship with your church and its leadership, and even your understanding of yourself. Not to mention it will test your faith in God! It will take your head and your heart to get around it. And even when you're packing your bags and heading out to a new adventure, it's not over yet. You're still going to be working these things out for a long time. And then one day, you're going to be working them out in a different way as you approach transition and the time has come to hand over the leadership of your church to someone else.

YOU CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT GOD'S CALL

Luke 6:

12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Romans 1:

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...

- **We must note that in every aspect it is always God who calls.** He is the one who called His disciples, and then chose the twelve. God is the one who initiated the call with Moses and the burning bush. It was God who decided that David should be anointed king of Israel. God was the one who sent his angelic messenger to call Gideon. Even Jesus understood it was the Father who called Him, saying eventually in the garden, "Not my will, but your will." Is there a single example in the Bible where God did not initiate the call first?
- **We do not call ourselves and then ask God to approve of it and bless it.** Did James not say, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a

year there and trade and make a profit'— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:13-15.)

- **A call is recognised by others, but not given by others.** When Paul and Barnabas were sent on their apostolic, translocal mission to the nations, the Antioch church sent them in response to the Holy Spirit setting them aside. It appears that when it happened, neither Paul nor Barnabas were all that surprised. They must have known this was going to happen sooner or later. It was a confirmation of what God was already doing in their heart. Ultimately it is not your church, or a translocal team, or a culture you've grown up in, or a culture that's developed in your church or with churches you're partnered with, or your spouse, or anyone else in all the world that is planting you. It is God who is planting you.
- **While your church will send you, and a translocal team will send you, neither of these can answer the question of whether you're called.** They are here to help you find the answer - to provide wisdom and insight and help - but you need to answer the question yourself.
- **You cannot have your spouse answer the question.** You need to answer it yourself.

CALLED AS A COUPLE

- Often a wife will church plant or agree to transition a church in response to a call her husband has received. She will feel that she must plant in order to honour her husband and submit to his leadership. But she has not felt the call herself! This is not sustainable and sooner or later things will go wrong! When the challenges come, she doesn't have the necessary tools to stay the course. It's simply not possible to remain in this sort of emotional state!
- Often a husband might run ahead of his wife, not giving her the time and space to work out this call. This is not fair on her. Don't put your wife through the immense challenge of church planting or transitioning just because you are impatient or ambitious. Take stock of your ambitions and whether they are godly! You are called to love her! You are called to lead a local

church, yes, but you are also called to love your wife like Christ loves the church and therefore be patient and gentle with her! Your ambitions can destroy her if they are selfish and ill-timed, and that will then also destroy your call!

- **You are called together as a team! If both of you have not worked this calling out, it is not good enough. Both of you must know you're called and experience the reality of this calling. Both of you are going to step into this calling together.**
- Your marriage is a prophetic image of God's love for the church and the world - it reveals God's love to your local church and others you minister to. It is not a 'tag on'. It is not there to refresh your ministry, but is in itself a significant message of the gospel. Nurture it, nourish it, and make it strong - because when leading a local church gets rough, you need to know that things at home are stable, secure, and good. Sheep bite! You need to know that you can rely on each other not to bite! Love each other and build each other up in the Lord.
- The same goes with your children. God thinks in generations, not just your lifetime. This call is a call of God on their lives too and is for their future, even if they do not understand it yet and cannot make their own decisions. God is not just calling *you* to go somewhere or do something, but your whole family. He calls you to love your family, so make decisions that reflect this love as well as the call!

BASICS OF CHURCH PLANTING

NUMBERS 13

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them." 3 So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel. 4 Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of

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Hori; 6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph, that is, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

17 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18 "and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; 19 "whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; 20 "whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. 22 And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs. 24 The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster, which the men of Israel cut down there. 25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

26 Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 "Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the

descendants of Anak there. 29 "The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

COMING TO GRIPS WITH CHURCH PLANTING AND TRANSITIONING REALITIES

Planting churches is to "possess the land" that God has ordained to bring under His rule. From the life of Caleb we find that there are two essentials in order to "possess the land" successfully.

1. To face the reality of the situation. We see the returning spies did this in Numbers 13. This demanded a realistic look at both the encouraging "milk and honey" aspects, as well as the daunting "fortified cities" and "the sons of Anak" (giants).

2. An attitude of faith and courage born out of knowing the will of God. Caleb demonstrated this with a "different spirit" from the rest. His words were "We can certainly do it... the Lord... will give it to us..." (Numbers 13:30, 14:8). He knew God had called them to this.

It is only too easy to fail to reckon with the realities, and especially the negative ones, which are always present. This in turn can result in an enthusiasm misconstrued to be faith, but which rapidly disintegrates as the realities of the situation unfold, leaving well meaning folk discouraged and disillusioned. This is not an unusual phenomenon and has been the experience of many church planters and missionaries and those transitioning a church.

In many cases coming to grips with reality is a difficult and painful process, especially for those who are pioneering a plant into a region where there is literally no one they can connect with on a weekly or even monthly basis. We thank our Lord for His grace, which has enabled many of these planters in our midst to have paid the price, endured the pain, and to press through and on to success. We must, however, learn from their experience and make it easier for successive planters.

THE SOURCE OF UNREAL EXPECTATIONS

Two kinds of unreal expectations affect church planters and anyone transitioning a church. These are:

1. Unreal expectations about ourselves (especially for leaders).
2. Unreal expectations about where we are planting / what we are transitioning.
3. Unreal expectations about growing an apostolic-prophetic-covenantal church.

1. UNREAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT OURSELVES

These arise from:

- **Ignorance concerning the truth about our own abilities, our gifting, and levels of maturity and experience.**

Only the test of life can help us discover these truths. Where we have not had adequate opportunities to test ourselves we have to be careful to remain sober and humble about the unknown.

Lead couples need **to ask** such pertinent **questions** of **themselves** such as:

A. "Am I prepared to actually *pay the price financially* that may be required of me? Especially in cases of foreign plants.

B. Again in foreign plants (or transitioning a church in a different nation than yours): "Will I really be able to *embrace the culture* I am going into, and to infiltrate it and get through to the people?"

Most of us think we understand a nation but discover plenty of surprises when we get there! We can educate ourselves as much as possible, but it's not until you get there that you begin to really get it.

C. "Can I draw people, make friends with them when I am an outsider?"

To quote one planter: "Man, when you start nobody trusts you, you don't have a reputation at all, nobody knows you from Adam and in fact nobody really wants an outsider! You have got to infiltrate people's lives!"

- **Unreal expectations also result from past personal successes due to positive factors we failed to identify at the time.**

A. A favourable "stage" where we made it, such as **career or business** contexts or ministry **and eldership successes** in a good home church. It is easy to conclude that we have "got it" when in fact we were supported by others and basked in the sunshine of the anointing of men and women who covered us and led the way.

B. The deception of the false conclusion that "it's easy". This is an easy conclusion to make as we observe other leaders who seem to achieve success so effortlessly, especially when they seem to *be such ordinary people!* They often do not even have the gifts we have! We overlook the fact that we are probably observing the **anointing** at work and **the grace of God compensating** for human weakness. We also do not see the **behind-the-scenes-struggle** of **prayer and preparation**, and the years of God's handiwork and training in their lives.

C. The erroneous deductions we make as we observe successful leaders, such as assuming that their success is based on their **methods**, when it is in fact based on their **obedience!**

D. **The effect of the unreal expectations others have of you**, especially if you are the lead couple of a church going out to plant! The expectations of the folk at the home church, who do not know of, or understand the price already paid for the existence of what they enjoy, and expect you to produce the same in no time at all!

E. The same goes for those who form part of the **planting team**, and their expectations of the lead planting couple. All these expectations can catapult planters into an unreal dream of what can be achieved.

- **The excitement and enthusiasm generated by the whole "discipling nations / church planting" vision**, imparted by our preachers, by our militant songs, by the reports of all who are preparing and hoping to go out, and by the enthusiastic reports by those who return from outreaches.
- A dream world can emerge and sweep us up beyond the bounds of reality, where presumption takes over to the point where there is no room for "*fortified cities*" and "*sons of Anak*" in our expectations. There is then no urgent call for genuine faith to face those issues!

2. UNREAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WHERE WE ARE PLANTING / TRANSITIONING

These come from overlooking the reality of:

A. What is involved in bringing men and women to Christ and integrating them into a local body of believers?

- Quick, clever, instant "marketing techniques" have influenced us. We don't reap unbelievers off the street like picking apples! The reality is that in most cases it takes years of encounters with God, His Spirit, and His people before someone comes to a genuine point of conversion.
- If we were honest, most of us would come to the same conclusion about our own

conversion. The rate at which we can win unbelievers may well depend on how much "pre-evangelism" has already taken place in the community where we plant. There is a vast difference in this factor between communities in the U.S. and South Africa on the one hand, and Australia and some Asian countries on the other. We must have expectations that take this reality into consideration.

B. The socio-economic climate of a nation

- Easy living standards make it more difficult for people to seek God.
- However, in facing the realities mentioned above we must not lose sight of the great adventure of working in partnership with the Holy Spirit, in winning men and women regardless of the time it takes; nor should we lose sight of the power of God to accelerate the process of bringing people to salvation. Furthermore, we must also remember and look for the possibility of a powerful move of God, which capitalises on negative socio-economic-political conditions to bring in a big harvest quickly, a factor which is fast becoming a global reality!

3. UNREAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT GROWING AN APOSTOLIC-PROPHETIC-COVENANTAL CHURCH

A. The difficult and lengthy process necessary for people to convert their thinking from traditional concepts to the Prophetic-Apostolic church model of the Bible, as espoused in the first part of this manual.

- Although our very first priority is to win the lost and make them disciples of Jesus, we cannot help the reality of those who come to us from other Christian groups. Many of these folk are out of fellowship and "scattered" as described in Ezekiel 34. We are all aware of how much more difficult it is to unlearn things than to learn them initially.
- Furthermore, we may be transitioning a church with a long-standing tradition that is coming against an apostolic-prophetic model. It seems that to convert from an institutional type of Christianity to one of organic life and covenant relationships requires

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a greater transition than that of conversion from legalism to grace, or from cessationism to a charismatic theology. This may be true of individuals coming to your church plant as well.

- The reason for this is that these changes affect every aspect of the Christian life, the church, and what would be traditionally called *missions* for such individuals. Church planters and anyone transitioning a church from a different model have to face this reality, and the time, patience and effort it takes for such people to embrace the revelation necessary to make a genuine heart conversion.
- It is in this context that the immense value of an accompanying team sent out from the home church is so significant. Such a group of men and women represent years of biblical truth, training and practice already invested in their lives. Where no such team is present, or very small, planters or anyone transitioning has to face the realities of the situation. However that would not make a plant any less legitimate or important.

Some truths about planting and building an *Apostolic-Prophetic* church, which is also “covenantal” in its relationships:

- **Such a church is not a comfortable one!** It demands involvement, participation and sacrifice rather than offering all the attractive things that pander to the needs of the individual, who is already conditioned to be self-centred in a humanistic age. It seeks to get people healed and trained for war!
- It is ***Prophetic*** because it seeks to see God's future for us, to prepare for it, and to become it. That is life changing. It is "*future changing*" as some, preparing for retirement, discover!
- It is ***Apostolic***, because God is apostolic, sending His Son, who in turn sends us to the nations - not a very convenient self-pampering proposition.
- It is ***Covenantal***, demanding committed and unconditional relationships with God, with

LEAD ELDERS

leaders, with one another, with translocal teams, with churches locally and internationally. Relationships demand self-sacrifice, vulnerability, getting hurt and healed, loving unconditionally, and laying down our lives for our friends... not quite the thing most people want!

The reality to be faced by church planters or transitioning a church is that seeking to establish such a church will not find the entire world rushing to be part of it! Planting and / or building this kind of church takes serious partnership with the Holy Spirit, empowered by a genuine faith, to bring about divine contacts with the right people.

B. The nature of "God making His men and women"

- God's leaders are essential to His global purposes. They are rare, and they don't come ready-made! They are produced in the heat and struggle of everyday life, and by the hand of God, and there are no short cuts! Their training and character-forming is a priority with God. It embraces the whole person including relationships and family life. God does not wait until they are complete, but trains them on the job.
- God will slow down the growth of the church in order to allow for the growth of the leaders! Church planters, and especially the lead couple, seldom take this factor into account in their growth expectations for the plant. It is easy to be so preoccupied with the plant and its apparent slow growth that one is blind to the amazing rapid growth in character and faith that is personally taking place!
- Leaders, planting teams, home churches, and supporters need to bear this in mind! To bypass this process is to produce greater shipwrecks later on of both leaders and people!

HAVING AN ATTITUDE OF FAITH

You need to know the truth about yourself and church planting / transitioning.

- Have you faced all the realities about this?

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- Do you have a genuine heart of faith rising within, because you know who has called you and that He will enable you to achieve His purposes?

To quote a church planter:

"Each church planter must have the church they desire inside of them. You can only become what you are; you can only reproduce after your own kind. We floundered around wasting energy and time, looking out into the distance for some mighty move of God to confirm all He had promised us, listening to prophecies, reading letters coming from everywhere. But it was only when things settled that we started to dig within ourselves. We asked: God, what are we doing here? Why are we here? What is our next step? Then we started to make headway. Church planters must find themselves so that they can truly say that they know the hope to which God has called them; that they know why the Holy Spirit has put them where He has put them, so they can operate from a level of faith to see the call fulfilled."

Like Caleb, we must have God's purpose, not ours, in our hearts! We can only produce what we are and what is in us.

You may have to:

- Go back and **verify** God's guidance and call about His purpose for us, the plant, the locality and the timing, etc.
- Be **honest** about our expectations: were they real or not?
- **Let unreal expectations go** and embrace expectations that are real and born out of what God really has said; and out of an honest look at the realities of life.
- **Work hard** at building a genuine faith for that to which God has called us. It will encourage us to lead with confidence, avoiding presumption and exaggeration.
- Faith has to be **generated** by the Word of God (Romans 10:17), by the Spirit of God, and by means of a concerted effort on our part. It is a priority crucial to achieving the purposes of God.
- We have to put the breastplate of faith on (1 Thessalonians 5:8) and keep it on! "...the

righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). It is a living thing, that can be born, can die, be strengthened and it can be weakened. It needs to be guarded, protected, nourished and built up.

- Faith is the only way we can please God (Hebrews 11:6). So often we resort to all kinds of other things to try to please Him.
- Faith is the only way we are able to inherit the promises of God (Hebrews 6:12) that include His purposes for us.
- Faith is always active (James 2:7). If it is not accompanied by action, it is dead.

YOU'RE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Those called to plant a church must give serious thought to the long-term aspect of planting. Those transitioning a church must realise this will take some time! It is a strange fact that many do not. For them the idea is to get "this church off the ground and then move on to another". Now that may be possible for some, especially the experienced who find themselves in favourable settings that facilitate growth, but for most it is a long-term commitment. When you have gathered a group of people who have come to trust and depend on you like a flock of sheep does on a shepherd, one cannot just walk away and abandon the King's children while looking Him in the eyes!

Something of the characteristics of the long haul is necessary for those who plant churches. In our modern world of "instant" everything, the qualities of endurance and patience are not necessarily part of our thinking. Then there is the euphoria and excitement generated by the motivation and inspiration of the NCMI vision, the reports of churches being planted, and folk relocating. Very little of the "sweat and blood" experience of those who have planted is made known to wider circles. A number of planters have woken up, after a year or two of struggle and sacrifice, to the sudden reality that they are in it for the long haul! There is also very little chance of getting out given the conviction and call of the Lord on their lives!

For some this is an overwhelming realization! There is no one who can take over! And it is obvious that it is going to take some time and expertise to identify, train and release the individuals who can. The precious lives God has given them, some snatched from the fire, cannot

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be abandoned, nor can they be sent away! The evidence of God at work and all the provision, protection, and victory over the forces of evil seal the project as being of God. How do you get out of that? How many years still lie ahead of leading, working, ministering, listening, advising, confronting, hurting, grieving, making decisions, teaching, and finding another message for the coming Sunday, in addition to the hundred or so already sought from God with sweat (and at times, tears!) during the past year? We know, however, that patient endurance is a key characteristic of those who have successfully served the purposes of God.

Paul the apostle saw his ministry as a life work, only to end when he was released from his "earthly tent" (Philippians 1:23). George Whitfield had no short-term thinking in his service for God, nor Martin Luther, Charles Wesley, William Carey, C.T. Studd, or Billy Graham!

We are not busy with mere earthly matters. We are busy with eternal issues, the Kingdom of God, the bride of Christ, the eternal Church and the "great multitude that no one can count." Such things demand and deserve everything we have in terms of sacrifice and endurance, and they do have their reward!

To serve the King is to live "being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father," (Colossians 1:11-12) and to have as our expectation to "keep hauling" until the "trumpet sounds and time shall be no more".

For those who feel the stirrings of God in their hearts to plant, give heed to the requirements, and get ready for the long haul! Use the waiting time to build into your lives the qualities of patience endurance!

PART 3:

PERSONAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH PLANTING

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE'S WORK?

Write down the answer to this question and consider it closely.

As you embark on planting a church, you may be tempted to believe that this church will be your life's work. You may look at a church to transition and believe it is your life's work. You may look at your ministry translocally and believe that, however it looks, THAT is your life's work.

While you will spend your life in ministry - whether full-time, part-time, or bi-vocationally - it is important to remember that your ministry is not your life's work. **Your life's work is to know Jesus.**

Matthew 7

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to

them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Regardless of your particular soteriology, the above scripture certainly serves as a healthy reminder that we can perform amazing works and still not know the Lord. What is the will of the Father? That we would come to know Jesus. It is only out of our knowing Him that we will ever be able to make Him known. How could you even make Him known if you don't even know Him?

We cannot be sidetracked about this work. If we do not make knowing Jesus our life's work, our ministry will develop very little, or no, fruit. None of us wants to be another pastor who has fallen in some moral way because we began to make our ministry, our success, our church, our reputation, and a myriad other things our main concern.

SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The great evangelist D.L. Moody was once asked who it was that he had the most trouble with in his ministry. He replied, "I have the most trouble with D.L. Moody."

Our greatest enemies may not be external (demonic, people, circumstances) but could very well be internal (temperament, personality dysfunction, laziness, poor emotional intelligence, poor conflict resolution history, carnal ambition, poor people skills, etc.). Spurgeon said: "Beware of no man more than yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us."

Our intention is to impact our generation through planting and raising healthy New Testament, Biblically-functioning, Christ-centred communities in every village, town and city. Our intention is to drive back the forces of darkness. Our intention is to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. But good intentions do not always go anywhere! In fact, prophetic words spoken over us are not usually without condition. Steve Farar claims in his book, "Finishing Strong" that one in ten who start in ministry at 21 are still on track by the age of 65. Finishing is not guaranteed. The anointing will never be enough. Gifting will help you even less. The adulation of the crowd will not carry you to the finishing tape. Partnering with a translocal team is good and Biblical, but even that is not enough. Accountability relationships have their limitations.

The race is not to the swift or the strong! The race is to those who paid attention to their faith. Saul is a good example of someone who never finished because he never paid attention. He was called, he was anointed, he was gifted, he prophesied – and yet he died a grotesque, suicidal death.

LEADERSHIP STARTS WITH YOUR LIFE

If you can't lead your own life then you can never lead others. Longevity is essential for a testimony of the faithfulness of God, but we tend to underplay it. We see many start well, do great things – big things - but at the end of the day they bomb out, they somehow lose their way.

While there is such a thing as godly ambition and we need to pursue the things God has called us to do, too often we reflect on the things that don't even matter at the expense of what matters most. Self-leadership determines everything about our longevity. Too many leaders are trying to make their ministry great, but if your life is in the right place and you are living it correctly, your ministry will flow out of your life and you will stay the course.

So what is meant by paying attention? It means to be looking to the little things that require daily nourishing, nurturing, and discipline.

MINISTRY IS THE DELIVERY OF YOU

We do tend to reproduce after our own kind. Healthy leaders produce healthy congregations. Who you are bleeds through your leadership and people are influenced positively or negatively. This is why we cannot be orphaned in spirit. There is ample human carnage and debris that stands as awful testimony to the incredible damage orphaned leaders do. Like urchins they scarp for bits of air time, self-promoting, self-protecting, and stomping over people. They have yet to learn that God will make their name great – in His time and when He is satisfied they have learned the necessary lessons in life.

It takes a lot more than a sound system, a rented hall, a few pamphlets and much zeal. It

could be that God is more interested in doing a big work in us than in our doing a big work for Him. This is a lifetime reality: the making of you, conforming you into the image of His Son.

PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO YOURSELF

Acts 20:

28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

How quickly we gloss over the first five words of this scripture as we rush headlong – sometimes like lemmings – into the rough and tumble adventure of shepherding God's flock.

We are also urged to 'be alert' (verse 31). We are to not let our guard down on this. Are you paying attention to your life and ministry? To your emotions? To your physical health?

We must 'be alert' against:

- Internal things (heart, motives, attitudes, insecurities, dysfunction, self-promotion, depression, disappointment, our definitions of reality like what constitutes success, comparison).
- External things (savage wolves, deceitful brothers, betrayal "from your own number", people pressures, time pressures, unrealistic expectations of others).

In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul tells Timothy this:

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

You must watch your life *and* your doctrine. Many leaders pay only attention to their doctrine and, while it may be good and solid, it is not enough to keep them from bombing out! Also don't just be good at watching everyone else and their life and doctrine either, but watch your own!

EMOTIONAL MATURITY GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Many leaders believe they are spiritually mature, but their emotional life is quite a mess. Sometimes they don't even know it because they are either focused so much on spiritual *doing* (prophesying, preaching, running events at church, etc.) that they are ignoring the lingering internal problems that are creating far bigger issues.

Our culture often likes to divide the 'secular' and the 'sacred', the 'material' and the 'spiritual', and a great deal of our Christian teaching often leads this way. The Reformation was partly all about breaking this barrier down. Dividing the world in this way has more to do with the age-old heresy of gnosticism than Christianity. While many leaders might not claim to see the world this way, we still find these leaders failing to *integrate* their lives. For example:

- We cannot say we are spiritually mature and yet have shocking people skills.
- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature and yet chase after trends or pursue endless programs.
- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature and yet have a shallow definition of success, borrowed from the world.
- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature and yet be highly-driven, highly ambitious for our own glory or the glory of our ministry.
- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature and yet focus on *doing* instead of *being*.
- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature yet we rush headlong into the fray of ministry with little regard to our own clay-footedness.

- We cannot claim to be spiritually mature and yet have very little focus, both personally and in our ministry, on internal issues.

The pastoral profession has one of the highest burn-out rates. Why? If you will finish well, decide today that you will be a lifelong student of the Word and a lifelong attender to your inner issues – the “below the waterline” issues. These are important and you ignore them to your peril. It is simply not sustainable to lead without attending to your emotional life. You will fail, sooner or later, in some way or another. Both emotional maturity and spiritual maturity work hand-in-hand.

Swiss psychologists Salovey & Mayer coined the phrase “emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ)” to describe qualities like understanding one’s feelings, empathy for others, and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living. The basics of EIQ include:

- Knowing your feelings and using them to make life decisions you can live with;
- Being able to manage your emotional life without being hijacked by it – not being paralysed by depression or worry, or swept away by anger;
- Handling feelings in relationships with skill and harmony;
- Persisting in the face of set-backs and channelling your impulses in order to pursue your goals;
- Empathy – reading other people’s emotions without their having to tell you what they are feeling.

As you can see, these are qualities inherent in Biblical leadership. We want to love our people and take care of them well, with skill and grace. We cannot do so if we are emotionally immature. Emotional immaturity leads to relationship breakdown, infighting, jealousy, and much more besides.

The ministry (particularly those who are paid elders and wives) is a brilliant place to hide out. Paul says he is a father to the Corinthians, and not an instructor. It is possible to minister out of “instructor mode” and the very transmission of information to another becomes a barrier

between the two.

The pulpit is a great place for dysfunctional people to hide away – but not for long. You could in days gone by hide behind the “don’t touch God’s anointed” defense mechanism. Fortunately, the culture of today won’t put up with that any more.

“On our journey to God, the emotions are the feet that either lead us to God or carry us further from Him.” - St Augustine

PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENSURE SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

1. CARE ABOUT YOUR INWARD LIFE

Too many churches get busy with endless events and things to do, but there is very little talk of our inner life. Subjects such as holiness and character formation and spiritual disciplines are agreed upon, but we don’t really do anything to get there, or teach people how to get there, or even talk about these things much. We’re too busy doing things to actually slow down and focus on our inner life! A couple of points with this:

- **As an elder / pastor, and especially the lead elder of your church, you will struggle with wanting to see results — wanting to know you’re being productive.** The development of your inner life and the inner life of others is one that you can’t measure on a spreadsheet or see in an auditorium. That creates a difficulty for you that you need to deal with in a healthy way - not by loading you (and others) with endless activity.
- **This is why we can get obsessed with ‘numbers’ - the amount of people attending our latest meeting - and events and projects.** These things make us all feel productive. We want to be able to measure our productivity to feel good about ourselves and our work. But Jesus did not seem as concerned with His productivity as with relational fruit with the Father. There were times He just disappeared and no one could find Him! He was happy to send people away who would not come to grips with needing to feed on Him (John 6).

- **Whatever our church is doing ought to be for the growing of its people into Jesus - to help them grow spiritually, emotionally, and in their ministry, loving Jesus more.**
Your events, your projects, and all these things which can be important and good, are not the be-all and end-all. If all these things are doing is keeping your people (and you) busy then this is not representative of the Kingdom of God, but just representative of our noisy, ever-busy, never-stopping culture.
- **As you plan a church's activities you must always be aware of the tendency to slip into this.**

2. STAY CLOSE TO THE FATHER AND KNOW HIS APPROVAL

There is nothing more stabilising and encouraging than the presence of God. We are not merely the recipients of some divine job description – we are the apple of His eye. When you live for His approval and not man's you will be healthy.

But if you are moved by men's compliments, you'll be crushed by their criticism. Rather, be moved by the approval of your ever-loving Father.

3. ADMIT YOUR HUMANITY

You are a work in progress, you are not Michael the Archangel incarnate. You have your own "sheep-needs". You have areas of personal dysfunction. You are the product of your background – good and bad stuff – and the bad stuff needs to be attended to. The assumption of perfection is not only stupid but dangerous. Do not be seduced by the lie that you are invincible!

Part of being a leader in the Church is that we have to go to Jesus to get our sheep-needs met. It's wrong for leaders to get their sheep to meet their sheep-needs! They never will! That leads to abuse! We'll never graduate from our needs so we need to know where to go and where to get them met.

4. BECOME A SCHOLAR OF YOUR EMOTIONAL PROFILE

Know thyself!

- Know your limits
- Know your boundaries
- Know your body
- Know your mind
- Know your rhythms

5. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

Acts 20:36-38

36 And when [Paul] had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

What a wonderful picture of the friendships and partnerships in the early church! It is in the context of deep intimacy we see this happen. Paul deeply loved these elders he was speaking to in Acts 20, even though he only knew them for three years. And they certainly loved him in return!

For fathering to be effective, children need to get close to the father. That's a proven and documented psychological fact. Dysfunctional leaders, however, are not happy with people getting close to them. But we need people close to us! A friend or a spouse to help the watching-over-ourselves process is a great blessing. You are not an island. You will fail if you do this on your own! Develop friendships with folk inside and outside the congregation. Develop friendships with the NCMI team. Learn to be vulnerable.

6. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN A CULTURE OF GRACE

Acts 20:32

And now I [Paul] commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Notice how Paul commits these elders to the word of God's grace. This word, this gospel, is a word of grace, not of performance.

- Grace that teaches you to say no to ungodliness (Titus 3:11). These include the sins of self-abuse, sins of timidity, sins of self-promotion, sins of self-pity, sins of comparison.
- Grace teaches us to press on when we feel like giving up.
- Grace builds us up so we can pour out our lives in ways we never previously thought capable. We can run with the horses! (Jeremiah 12:5).
- Grace gives us an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- Grace will help you live out your calling with the same people for as long as God needs you to be there.
- Grace helps you work within the rhythms of His approval.
- Grace likes the sound of the wheels on the track that remind us, "His yoke is easy, His burden is light; His yoke is easy, His burden is light."
- Grace teaches us to take ourselves lightly and Him seriously.
- Grace instructs our hearts in the disciplines of joy.

7. TALK TO YOUR HEAD AND PROTECT YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:23 - guard your heart with an aggressive, pro-active posture.

8. DEVELOP A SENSE OF HUMOUR

Lighten up.

9. EXERCISE CONTROL OVER YOUR DIARY

Are you at the mercy of another's agenda? Or even worse, do you have an inordinate need to be needed? Not only is that immature, it is just plain dangerous. We often fall into busyness just because it makes us feel important – people want our input and our skill. But is that effective for the Kingdom of God?

Be pro-active with your diary!

10. NEVER FORGET THAT THE PEOPLE DO NOT BELONG TO YOU

We take care of another's bride. It is not "your" church, where you own it and, therefore, the people! It is "your" church where you are a part of the people!

11. PRAY FOR DISCERNMENT

The gifts of the Spirit should be operative in our every day lives and they should keep us from making wrong choices, accepting wrong invitations. Always ask, "What's really going on here?"

12. DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE SKILLS

We are in the people business - discover and practice the art of successful interaction with people.

13. TRUST GOD TO VINDICATE YOU

Remember 1 Peter 2:21: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."

14. PRACTICE HUMILITY

In your dealings with people and in your own thoughts, serve by example. Remember, we come to serve and not be served!

15. GET A TRULY BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF PASTORING

See Isaiah 61. The broken, confused, marginalised, abused, lonely people are to become the plantings of the Lord - the repairers of the broken cities. If you find a congregation where the basket-cases remain basket-cases year after year, you will also find absolutely finished leaders; emotionally wasted people; who never knew that the end of pastoring was that Jesus would be glorified.

16. IN DEALINGS WITH OTHERS ALWAYS BE ABSOLUTELY TRUTHFUL

Living honestly is living healthily.

17. ALWAYS, ALWAYS GET THE FACTS FIRST

The book of Proverbs often reiterates that if you run ahead without the facts you're basically an idiot.

18. SUBMIT TO GOD'S PROCESS FOR YOU

Don't try to be somewhere else in God. Unbridled ambition, continuous comparison with other leaders or other congregations, will eventually kill you. Enjoy the moment God has you in now – savor it – because promotion will come and when it does you'll wish you were back at square one.

19. DON'T DUMP PROBLEMS YOU HAVE WITH OTHERS ON YOUR SPOUSE

That is if you are married, or on friends if you're not.

THINGS WE HAVE TO REJECT

1. WORLDLY DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

How do you know when you are successful? By what criteria do you measure that success?

It is one thing to pour out your life as a drink offering, it is quite another doing so for the wrong reasons. In a University of Boston study, successful business people in America were studied and the following was identified:

Four Common A's of Success

- Aloneness (successful people were lonely people, whose very success had made them pull away from others),
- Arrogance (their success lifted them head and shoulders above the pack and they exhibited tendencies of unteachability),
- Addiction,

- Adultery (attributed to post-adrenaline depression, the final, ultimate act of self-abuse).

Let's be successful, but let's let the Father define what that success looks like! Because it certainly doesn't look like the above!

2. SANCTIFICATION-FREE THEOLOGY

- This is the notion that we come with batteries included; that we arrive as fully orbbed, totally whole leaders just ready for a place to unload our gift to the world.
- It is possible to organise the wineskin (our local church) in such a way that the illusion / perception of our perfection is created and the myth sustained.
- God's plan is to conform us into the image of His Son. Sanctification is given to us yet it is also growing in us.

3. HIDING BEHIND OUR POWER TALK

- Paul writes to Timothy and exhorts him to "follow the pattern of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13).
- Eugene Peterson in *The Unnecessary Pastor* says, "Wrong thinking leads to wrong living. Words are important. When words are wrong – diseased – they cause illness, they infect the soul. Sound, healthy words equal Godly living."
- It is possible to hide behind a myriad defences – words, concepts, theologies, we're-the-head-and-not-the-tail charismatic positivism. Honesty is far better for you and everyone!

4. GnosticisM

- Dividing your life up too much, especially dividing your spiritual life from everything else.
- This is not the same as developing healthy boundaries, but this is pretending everything is okay because, for example, you read your Bible every day, but yet you mistreat your spouse!

5. ILLUSIONS OF INVINCIBILITY

It is unwise to think you are invincible. It is unwise to think you are unsusceptible.

FAMILY LIFE

1. MARRIAGE

If we are married we plant with our wife and with our children. This makes it both possible and yet dangerous.

- **It makes it possible because two are better than one.** No one knows you like your spouse does (and still loves you). The family brings its gifts which enrich the plant. And the family is drawn closer together – often for survival sake!
- **But it's dangerous because of the demands.** Demands like time, people challenges, pace, programme, unprocessed discouragement, mismanaged stress, unmet expectations, a calendar full of appointments.
- Dangerous because if some people get their needs for affirmation met outside the home, they may neglect the home.
- Dangerous because of your stress levels, as both you and your spouse may very well have to have another job outside of your church.
- Dangerous because you are in a different culture. The children have left their comfort zone and, depending on their age, temperament and the nature of your relationship with them, there may be adjustment difficulties or things you just didn't know about the culture infiltrating into your lives!

2. PAY ATTENTION

- Stay close together,
- Work at romance and pay attention to the sexual side of your marriage,
- Pray together,

LEAD ELDERS

- Remind each other why you are doing this plant – often,
- Encourage each other, regularly,
- Celebrate the victories, especially the little ones,
- Be careful how you talk of difficulties in front of the children,
- Take time out together,
- Wife, search your heart for any ungodly and ambitious agenda for your husband's ministry future. Sometimes the husband has that sorted but the wife hasn't really thought of sorting that out!

3. CHILDREN

- Children must be taught from an early age that God has called the *entire* family to this, and it is an ENORMOUS PRIVILEGE.
- They must learn that you are not a "normal family" but a "Kingdom family". We are people of destiny and purpose, which means we will pay a price. But the privilege far outweighs the price.
- The children will feel neglected if you are not paying attention; not living your own Christian life out in an authentic way; are not working hard to fill in the gaps; and make 'church' such an unhealthy priority that they feel the Church has stolen their parents!

4. STRESS MANAGEMENT

A little stress is good for you, and too much stress is bad for you. Stress can originate in

YOU: Self-induced stress because you have unrealistic goals, you do not have a sober view of yourself and your gifting. You are frustrated because you do not have a clear understanding of who you are and what your mandate on the earth is. You are not maintaining devotional integrity and are listening to voices that are not from God. Or your management style is unbiblical (see Moses and Jethro).

OTHERS: you may have become indispensable to people and they run you ragged. You carry them and are perpetuating their adolescence and shortening your life! Ministry is demanding enough!

REMEDY

In addition to all the above on emotional development, here are some last things to consider:

- Watch your health (exercise)
- Watch your theology. The greater the ignorance about what God's job is and what your job is or isn't, the greater your levels of stress will be.
- Make sure you maintain margin in your life. Margin means you are not totally depleted in your resources (emotional, physical, spiritual, financial). Create enough time in your schedule for emergencies, traffic jams, admin surprises. Put margins in financially. Pace yourself appropriately. Give yourself enough time to clear your head and to think.
- Re-assess your values. Look again at what you truly value and see where or what is clashing with this, and address it.

DEALING WITH GOD'S TIMING

1 Peter 4:12

"Dear friends, do not be surprised when the fiery trial comes upon you, as if you're going through something strange."

The Christian life is full of tests, and the testing of your call is certainly one of the biggest you will face.

David was called to be king and anointed for the task, yet it took twenty years before he could walk in it. However, in the interim he learned valuable skills and character development. Furthermore, his character was tested and shaped. He had to mature. And in the interim, he actually was living out his calling to a degree and in the best way he could at the time, by the way he led his band of men. God gave him things to do and people to lead while he was waiting for the ultimate fulfilment of the call, and he was quite faithful with the tasks he was given, which was imperative. Then when the timing was right, God fulfilled the call.

God's timing can be incredibly difficult. It can often seem vague, as if God Himself is keeping quiet about it! But you are not going through something strange! Here are a few things to remember:

1. Like David, **this is a time of up-skilling you.** Use it for your benefit.
2. Like David, **this is a time of forming your character to conform more to Christ.** Use this process to walk deeper with God and know Him better.
3. Like David, **this is a time to test your faithfulness in the smaller things, before you can be given the bigger things.**
4. Like David, you need to realise that the **tasks and responsibilities you have right now are part of the call.** Sometimes we are so future-focused we don't see the beauty, the responsibility, the excitement and the privilege of where we currently are!

You will not know the full extent of God's plan yet. You will make plans, only to find them fall through, or the opposite happen. Many people feel God is calling them to a particular nation, and to a particular city in that nation, only to find out that *even when they get there, circumstances lead them to a different city.* Many people will give you all sorts of prophetic words, and often it's well-meaning, although not necessarily true. You must also remember that you will no doubt encounter much spiritual attack as you follow this call in your life.

All this is entirely normal. Remember Paul's Macedonian call. (Acts 16.) He felt he was to go one way, and God did not reveal otherwise, until he finally got there and God showed him the real plan. Sometimes God uses 'catalysts' to get you going off in a certain direction but the exact end-goal will be very different.

How you (and others) deal with plans needing to change and a developing vision is very important. If you were to be deployed by your company CEO into one nation, but when you got there you were suddenly redeployed into another for some reason, would you think there was something wrong with you? Would others deem you a failure? No, we would understand that the boss moved us on. In our case, we must understand we are under the authority of a King - Jesus - and He can deploy us wherever and whenever and however He wants!

On the other hand, if it's you doing the deploying because you are bored, cannot commit, can't persevere, or are running away from your mistakes and relationships, that's an entirely different story. These are not good reasons to plant or to relocate. If pioneering is in your blood, let God send you in His timing.

HOW A LEAD ELDER LEADS

Before we look at how a lead elder leads, we first need to understand that this is, indeed, a biblical role to fulfil.

1) Governance

Acts 7:10 (KJV)

"...and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor (*hegeomai*) over Egypt and all his house."

The Greek word "hegeomai", (hayg-eh'-om-ahee) is used in the New Testament to identify those who were leaders of leaders. It is used of both godly and secular leaders.⁴ From this verse we can begin to unpack its meaning, and we can see that leadership entails *governance*. Governance is a good thing and God has instituted it. Later we will see the difference between godly governance and ungodly governance.

2) Paul the Chief speaker

Acts 14:12 (KJV)

4

Strong's Lexicon gives the meanings of this word as follows:
To lead, i.e. command (with official authority).
To (be) chief, governor, judge, to have the rule over

"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief [hegeomai - leading] speaker."

This verse implies very strongly that, in a team, someone must take the *main* responsibility of preaching. Teaching is certainly the work of an elder, yet not all elders preach as well as teach (1 Timothy 5:17). Given the nature of preaching, the one who takes the main responsibility of preaching in a local church will invariably be the one who communicates the vision and direction.

3) Angels of the churches

In Revelation 2 - 3, each of the letters to the churches in Asia Minor are written to the 'angel' of each church ("to the angel in the church in Ephesus..."). These are not "angels" as we would understand the word, but "messenger" as the word was used in its broader sense in the New Testament and Greek culture of the day. It is not logical for God to give a human a message to give to an angel to give to humans! Nowhere in Scripture does He operate that way. Therefore, it is clear that the messages are addressed to someone who is the main messenger or spokesman to the congregation. This is implied by the way the rebukes and warnings are addressed to such individuals with the implied responsibility to both communicate to the congregation and to see that something is done about it.

4) Timothy the lead elder

Paul wrote to Timothy and not to all the elders of the church at Ephesus. Timothy was not the sole elder at Ephesus (see Acts 20:17-28). Yet Paul writes to Timothy to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine" (see 1 Timothy 1:3) and "put these things [what Paul is teaching] before the brothers" (1 Timothy 4:6). Paul also told Timothy to "command and teach these things" (1 Timothy 4:11) and "teach and urge these things" (1 Timothy 6:2). It was ultimately Timothy who was to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:1-2) although it is clear that Timothy was not to be the *only* one to do so.

All this certainly implies that Timothy was to lead that church even though it was ultimately led by a plurality of elders. He was to lead that eldership team, as it were.

5) Church leadership in history

We do not have the space to highlight how leadership has worked throughout the church's history, only to note that it seems that the idea of having a leader who ultimately takes responsibility for a church appears to be the most common example we see.

6) Scientific research

Even methods of leadership based on scientific research show that leadership is best facilitated when there is someone who is individually responsible for moving things forward, providing vision and insight, and mentoring others in their various roles and responsibilities. It is almost inevitable that a leader will always emerge, even in a group of strong leaders. How we facilitate that process is very important and we do so mainly through recognising such a call.

HOW JESUS SAID WE SHOULD LEAD

Leading a church is an amazing responsibility - one that God will hold us accountable to. Jesus was clear that leadership in His Church should look very different to how it is practiced in the world. Governance is good but it must be godly governance.

Luke 22:

24 A dispute also arose among them [the disciples], as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And [Jesus] said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader (hegeomai) as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Matthew 2:6

"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler (hegeomai) who will shepherd (poimainó) people Israel."

The way in which Jesus describes leadership in both these examples is to link it with (a) *servicing*, and (b) *shepherding*.

Philippians 2:3

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

This is how we, as the people of Christ, influence others: through serving them. **Humility and pure motives are essential from you, the lead elder of a church.** This is about faithfulness, not your ambition! Be careful of selfish ambition reinforced by ignorance and idolatry. Idolatry in the human nature elevates lead *positions*. It wants:

- *The glory without the grunge*
- *The privilege without the price*
- *The popularity without the problems*
- *Importance without the responsibility*
- *The performance without the perspiration*

When we are faced with having to exercise spiritual authority, we will very often revert to the two techniques of the world:

- A. We abdicate, becoming too democratic, allowing others to sway us too heavily; or
- B. We resort to a legalistic, authoritarian attitude.

Both of these always end badly. The results will be:

- People rebelling against heavy authority;
- People who get deeply hurt and eventually may never be part of a local church again;
- People who remain rebellious because they have never been confronted due to an abdication of authority. They never learn how to submit to others, work in a team, and

their character flaws and their own styles of leading are never addressed. They go on to hurt people, and hurt people, hurt people.

Renew your mind about the perceptions commonly attached to leadership. The world likes to speak of rights and entitlement, but the Bible speaks of privilege and service. *In the Kingdom obedience is important, not reputation, position, or performance.* You are fulfilling a *function* as the lead elder of your church (or in any leadership space), you are not filling a *position*. There is no positional leadership only leadership defined by a God-given function.

Mark 9:35

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

We must not underestimate the tremendous ease with which we can take advantage of our function God has put us in, the loyalty and commitment people have shown us, the power we have because we are anointed and because God has blessed the people through us. It takes a lot of maturity and control not to abuse this or allow our human natures to subtly exploit this, or to allow our human weakness and immaturity to carelessly hurt and abuse people.

Here are some of the ways we can 'lord it' over others:

A. Lording it, out of position or rank

The danger of assuming that you have the right to exercise authority, i.e. structural/organisational thinking. This is the easiest source of authority to turn to but produces a negative harvest in the end.

B. Lording it, out of egotism

Here is the strongest temptation to human nature and its desire to rebel and become king.

C. Lording it, out of ignorance

e.g. Disciples wanting to call fire down on the Samaritans.

D. Lording it, out of insecurity

- Feeling threatened
- Aware of inadequacies
- Some give orders instead of training
- Parents who give commands instead of counsel

E. Lording it, out of ability and experience

When we delegate there are times when it's easy to abuse our authority. We may easily fail to honour the individual to whom we have delegated by overriding the given authority that the person being delegated to should have. For example, we might:

- Bypass that person's authority to those beneath them, giving orders etc.
- Take over and do it ourselves when we see them struggling and fumbling with it.
- Just take over without really thinking about it! (When they are not around and not doing it!)
- Take over and do it ourselves out of frustration when they fail, and to show them up and make them feel bad. That dishonours them. It is the wrong technique and produces hurt and a feeling of being distrusted in the individual. The proper channel is to go to them privately, not in front of others, and take the time to teach them, or go over the operation with them, analyse it and help them to improve their performance, appealing to such things as their accountability to the Lord and the opportunity they have and might be throwing away to serve the King.

AS A LEAD ELDER THEN, YOU:

1. Need to have biblical motivations

- First you need to be self motivated, and be able to make things happen, not wait for someone else to always take the initiative.
- But you need to have Godly motivation and not be motivated out of selfish ambition.
 - Not to self promote.

- Not to try and live up to expectations of others or even your own perfectionism.
- It requires self-denial, laying down our lives and taking up the cross / the purposes of God for others.

2. You must be able to gather people, especially if you are to lead the flock of God.

Shepherds gather people by their ministry. Ezekiel 34 declares that the people scattered because the shepherds were not real shepherds doing their work properly. This is a godly anointing and He will anoint you for the task of gathering.

3. You must be able to hear God properly, and discern His voice in your heart and His hand in your affairs

We have no right to lead the people of God if we cannot hear Him and get His instructions.

4. You must be able to develop and impart vision to your people

- Vision is an integral part of effective leadership. It is that what produces goals and direction and outcomes.
- Visionary leadership must be submitted to a Kingdom vision. You have to watch and make sure that what you claim is a "Kingdom vision" for your church is not ultimately your own ambitions for your ministry! You want a big auditorium, for example, because it makes you look good!
- Godly visionary leadership frees others to become the people God has called them to be. Ungodly visionary leadership enslaves others to an ungodly vision, which is always human-centric and not Christ-centric. You must make sure you know the difference between what you want and what God wants! Beware of manipulating people to give everything to your vision under the guise of it being a "Kingdom vision." It's very easy to say the vision is a Kingdom vision, but is it? People then serve you rather than God! We can even get human-centric when we want to talk about "What we will do for the Lord" rather than ask "What is the Lord doing, and how can we be a part of that?"
- Vision is not dictated to the church by you, but shaped with your leadership team. Visionary leadership invites and encourages input from other leaders. Do not assume God only speaks to you or that He is only going to tell you what He wants to do through

your local church! God is about team, not superstars! He is not about lone rangers! You do not come up with a vision without input from a team. You are an *equal* part of the team with the task of leading that team. Even though you have taken the risk to pioneer the church plant, you do not own the church, its people, or its vision. It is owned by God.⁵

- Developing vision for the church starts with knowing what Jesus is building and knowing God's plan throughout the Bible's revealing of His will and ways. It is not coming up with a great idea, or trying to bring balance to something in the past, or getting on board with new trends, or pursuing 'excellence' rather than faithfulness to God's actual mandate revealed in the scriptures, or any other idea.

5. You must have faith in God's Word and His ability to make it happen

- Do you have a strong theology of God's Word? Do you believe God's Word has power, accomplishing all He sets it out to do? (Isaiah 55:11.) Do you realise it is the message of Christ - the gospel - that is actually the power of salvation (Romans 1:16,17) and not our programs or ideas or anything else?

6. You need to be disciplined in prayer, intercession and spiritual warfare

- Ultimately, you need to find how to strengthen your own faith. You will not be able to rely on others to uplift you like you used to be able to - especially if you're planting in a city or town where there is no one connected with NCMI.
- You need to have your own disciplines in place for prayer.
- You need to be able to lead others in prayer and in their own discipline of prayer.

7. You need to be disciplined in the reading and study of scripture

- You need your own disciplines in place.
- You need to be able to lead others in equipping them in the Word and putting their own disciplines in place.
- You have to be rich in the Word of God, feed on it continually and be able to feed God's people with it.

⁵ For more on this, see Dudley Daniel, *A Servants Heart and Skilful Hands*, pg 104. Available freely at ncmi.net.

8. You need to be bold enough to tackle the odds and make it happen, to go against the conventional and bring change

- Bold enough not to bow to the whims of the people, to stretch them but not break them!
- Strong enough in your faith because of your confidence in what God has called you to do, to ignore the fears, pessimism and unbelief of those who can't see what you are doing, while still being teachable and open to the concerns and criticisms of others.

9. You need to be able to take people with you, work with them and live with some of their inadequacies and still help them to succeed

- We cannot be idealistic or expect people to be perfect. We have to be real and accept people where they are at, and develop the skills of winning them over and taking them from where they are to where they ought to be. The love of God is a big factor in our lives towards accomplishing this. We have to love people with the love of God or we will not be able to cope.

10. You need to learn how to exercise spiritual authority in a biblical manner

- In leading and directing folk.
- In delegating and overseeing others.
- In confronting people with their sin and failure.

11. You need to be able to discern personality and biblical character traits that make leaders, to identify the right ones, train them and bring them through to effective leadership

- Much of this ability comes through knowing the scriptural foundations for leadership and the kind of character God wants from leaders. It is also a combination of experience and the discernment produced by the Holy Spirit. You need to work on this because sometimes your decision on leadership could have more to do with your personality preference and cultural preference than God's call on their lives. We must trust God for this anointing and to show the way.

12. You need to be able to take responsibility for the whole thing

- Accept it when the buck lands with you.
- Take responsibility for others, especially leaders, for their welfare, when you bring them in from other careers to serve the people of God.
- For their financial provision - "A workman is worthy of his hire." (Matthew 10:10; 1 Corinthians 9:9).
- For the discipling of leaders, character building etc.
- To trust God for growth.
- To intercede in prayer for the whole family for protection.

13. You have to be prepared to take calculated risks in God, and handle any negative results

- Things don't always run smoothly, nor are circumstances ideal. We often have to take what we have got and do what we can, both with people and opportunities. A certain amount of risk is involved. We cannot always stay where it is "safe". We cannot discover new lands if we are never prepared to leave the harbour! This takes courage and a willingness to handle the consequences if they are not favourable.

14. You have to be able to handle failure - your own and that of others

- It has been said that every failure is a stepping-stone to success. We have to see it that way and humble ourselves sufficiently to own up to our own failures and use them as teaching points. Again we have to operate out of a "shepherd's heart" and cope with the failures of others, not "write them off" but help them get up again and try again.

15. You have to be able to endure against the odds because you know what God has told you

- Once we have heard God and begin to do what He has said, we encounter resistance from people, from Christians, and from the devil. We have to press through out of a heart conviction that God has said it and we will do it, and that settles it!

16. You must be able to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven

- To pour your own material resources into it to make it happen because you have heard God and know He is no man's debtor. (Matthew 19:29.)

17. You must be willing to be a model for others to follow

- This includes your marriage and family life, your personal life etc. twenty-four hours a day. You need to be yourself, but you need to make sure you are aware how others may stumble because of something you feel you are free to do.
- To manage your life, your home, your family, and your church all at the same time, and not avoid anything!

18. You need to be a disciplined person, in all areas of your life. You will not be able to cope with the pressure, demands, and stress of being a leader if you are undisciplined

- Discipline is actually having control over that which God makes us responsible. To lose control of our minds, emotions, bodies, appetites, desires, and even our time is to become vulnerable to attack and to stress and burnout. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). Stay in Him!

19. You have to be willing to endure a certain amount of loneliness

- Although you build and work in team, there is a whole world of things that others will not and can not understand. The closer we get to the "front" of the "arrow" of church leadership, the narrower the parameters of whom we spend time with and who we can share our inner experiences with. At times there may be no one. Then a good covenant marriage built in God makes all the difference.

20. You need to have learnt to live out of a positive optimism grounded in faith

- You must be a content, grateful and a rejoicing person in all circumstances or people will not follow you. You cannot be critical, pessimistic, complaining, or negative or minister out of your frustrations, anger, depression or discouragement.

21. You need to have "found the Kingdom"; sold everything you have and got a hold of it in

your heart. (Matthew 13: 44-46.)

- You cannot build and lead subjects of the Kingdom if you don't have it in your heart. Otherwise you will build towards yourself, and your own kingdom.

22. You should keep abreast of your culture and its current trends, values and philosophies, spiritual and secular, and bring correction with the word of God

- You don't need to turn into a philosopher or become an intellectual, but you cannot shut yourself off from the world. You need to know what cultural influences are dominating your people and be able to discern how to use God's Word in breaking those arguments down that come against Him.
- You need to also know what to take from a culture that is good and can be used for God's glory.

23. You have to have thought through this and committed yourself to the long haul!

- Your commitment is a long-term one. You will find it may take a very long time - years upon years even - before you see the kind of fruit that you would like to see.

PART 4:

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH WILL YOU LEAD?

WHAT IS A CHURCH?

It is always helpful to ask this question, and to keep asking this as time goes by. As success comes or you grow bigger as a community, you will be tempted to make church something other than what it is.

A church is a:

- relational, organic body of people living in, and out, God's love, centred around Jesus Christ, declaring and living out the message of His gospel.

A church is not:

- an institution or an organisation; a building; a website; a public speaking hall; a music venue; a social justice activator; or anything else you can think of.

A church is its people. While it has many activities, its activities do not define what it is. It is more than just its activities. But it certainly does engage in activities.

THE ACTIVITIES OF A CHURCH

There are four activities we find in scripture that are 'go-to' activities for your local church. These

activities provide you the basis for your meetings as a community and help to remind you what it is you're doing. **Remember, we do not plant meetings - we plant churches!** However, churches are to meet. You can decide what sort of meetings to have and what you are going to do and how you are going to do it based on these four scriptural activities outlined in **Acts 2:42:**

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Here we can see the four activities, which are:

- Devotion to the apostles teaching (the Word of Christ; the scriptures; the gospel)
- Devotion to the fellowship (community)
- Devotion to prayer
- Devotion to the breaking of bread

Traditionally these four form part of what is called the 'means of grace'. Most basically, these activities are seen as guaranteed places / moments where God's grace is poured out. We can always know that when we are reading, studying, and attending to scripture that the Lord will pour out His grace on us. We can always know that he will pour out His grace when we live in community with God's people. We can know that when we pray, we meet God, whether we feel it or not. And so on. God has promised to do so.

This is why these four activities will guide you into knowing what to be doing week on week. They work together and cannot stand on their own. For example, the breaking of bread is an act of worship grounded in the reality of the gospel, the Word of Christ. We, as the scripture says, 'participate' in Christ's sacrifice, proclaiming the gospel when we break bread. (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:26.) The breaking of bread is both a proclamation of the gospel (it is a form of visible preaching) and a deepening of it in our own lives. It is vital for sanctification. It incorporates prayer, fellowship, and a devotion to the teaching of Jesus. You can see how each of these link and you cannot be focused on just one without the other.

Through this we can outline four basic elements of every church meeting:

1. It must be about the message of Christ. It must make the Word of Christ more clear, more louder, more deeper in our lives. As leaders we must understand the power of the Word in order to understand the importance of this activity. The Holy Spirit and the Word work together. (Ephesians 6:17; Romans 10:17; John 6:63.). You cannot just have “soaking meetings” and expect people to know God better, to change, and find their purpose, etc. God promises that His presence is found in His Word and does not promise His presence will be found in music. Music and such things are helpful for worship and our emotional connection and may even be necessary in the right context, but they are not imperative. His Word, however, is imperative.

This is why we preach on Sunday mornings and why we should have Bible studies happening in our church on some level - whether a dedicated evening to it, or an intentional Bible study in our smaller home groups, or whatever will be effective in your time and place. Teaching and preaching are integral to the life of the local church and should not be neglected. It is not good enough to claim you are not a ‘book’ person or that people are ‘not interested in reading’. As Dudley Daniel said,

“We need to have an adequate grasp of theology in order to lead a church effectively... There was, however, a time when theology was almost a curse or a swear word in the body of Christ, especially amongst Charismatics and Pentecostals. We considered theology to be something that brought death when, in fact, good, sound theology brings life and keeps life. For that reason, we all need to study the Word.”

Therefore, create meetings around preaching and teaching the Word, and encourage people on its importance.

2. We must gather together. We cannot be devoted to the fellowship through the Internet or social media or chat groups or using whatever other tool is popular today. We must have community and we must be personally connected, with face-to-face, in-person meeting

together and enjoying each other. Studying theology on the Internet can be helpful, but it cannot be lived out unless we are actually engaging in intra-personal relationships. We must integrate and function in a *local* church, not a cyber-church!

This is vital for today's ever-increasing individualism. Ask yourself: do you trust a doctor on the Internet or the doctor you go and see? Likewise, the Internet is helpful for resources, but without personal relationships we will only have surface-level Christianity.

Therefore, create meetings that encourage and facilitate fellowship - and encourage your people to fellowship outside of any formal meetings as well! And in all your other meetings, try and create them in such a way that fellowship is encouraged. (Also, please do not overload your people with too many formal meetings so that they cannot fellowship with each other or others because they are too busy with your meetings!).

3. We must be people full of prayer. Prayer meetings are highly recommended. God does amazing things in them, and prayer changes things. You can have a prayer meeting every day, once a week, once a month, or whatever will work for your time and place. You can also get your small home groups to pray. Be intentional about this! We do not automatically pray. It requires years of practice and getting into the habit! Just because it's easier for you today to do it (hopefully) doesn't mean it's easy for everyone! We must get people to mature in this. Prayer is not just spontaneous but it is also organised and disciplined. Likewise, it is not just a discipline but is a life lived with God in spontaneous, moment-by-moment conversation.

Being a people full of prayer also indicates that we must be a spiritual people. Too many churches get overly pragmatic and focus on 'getting things done', but they begin to starve spiritually because there is nothing in place to actually grow people in prayer and relationship with the Lord.

4. We are a people of worship. Incorporate a form of worship in your meetings. Teach people how to worship privately and corporately. The worship of God together is powerful!

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- *This does not always mean music, but it obviously can include that.* This is important for church planters to know: *music is helpful and wonderful and Biblical, but not the be-all and end-all of worship.* If anything, the New Testament highlights the *breaking of bread* as the most basic form of worship in our times together. As a church planter, **do not feel under pressure to have an amazing band.** Do not watch videos of large churches with amazing access to resources and compare yourself to that. Do not make your musicians feel as if they have to be on the same level as professional musicians who do this full time! If you do not have musicians, do not feel bad about it. You can focus on the breaking of bread and prayer, and even find tools to help you facilitate a music time (lyric videos, karaoke software, and others.) Believe it or not, God speaks with or without music!
- Many leaders do not understand the time and emotional energy it takes a musician to practice, facilitate, and lead a worship time. So do not tire out your musicians by expecting a full band at every meeting every time. It is not practical and neither is it necessary.
- We can claim we are not 'liturgical' in our approach to worship, but in actual practice we can be more liturgical than openly liturgical churches. How so? We can be stuck to a certain musical style that represents our tastes, our generation, and our culture. We can insist that we must have songs at every meeting, and we must have two 'fast songs' and two 'slow songs'. Many leaders have no idea how to lead a meeting without music, or have no idea what to do when the band makes a mistake, because their liturgy has become so entrenched!
- Watch out that you do not place too much emphasis on the style and content of your worship times rather than just being open to the Lord. Draw from the experience of the Church throughout the ages with worship, not just your preferences. Sure, you don't want to be a liturgical church but you better learn from the rich liturgy of the Church through the ages! Encourage the arts in your church and the artists. Help them to find their call in this. Keep it free though – while we want the arts encouraged, we don't want to set the bar so high that only professionals with years and years of experience can volunteer to

lead our worship! Be open to different styles, ideas, and methods: worship is an expression of love and gratitude and praise, not a technique. So long as we make space for the Spirit and keep it Biblical, focusing on Jesus, we will do well.

ORGANIC LIFE

Everything about the Bible shows us that God, while He is organised, does not administrate an organisation. His life is organic, and that is what we should see in the Church.

God sees His Church as a living, growing organism and not as an organisation. Yet, when you look at the Church today, we see that much of Church life is organised and very little is organic. We must make sure that we are able to recognise the difference between organic and organisational life and know how to apply this as a local church grows.

If something is not alive, all the organising and planning in the world will not make it live. So many churches try to introduce and implement things that others are doing, hoping the church will 'come alive', but it continually just 'fizzles out'. God alone is the author of life! In order to stay alive we must remain plugged in to the Source. It is the Holy Spirit who breathes life into the Church - into a local church!

The symbols used in the Bible of Kingdom life and of the Church are organic. These include:

- The new birth. Conception and birth is organic, no matter how we try to organise it.
- New Testament symbols of the Holy Spirit: wind, water, breath, fire and oil.
- Reference to the Church as the Body of Christ.
- Vine and branches.
- Wine and wineskin. Old wineskins are inflexible.

It is very difficult to organise a birth. It is very difficult to organise the consuming fire that God is. It is very difficult to organise water or wind. The wind blows where it pleases. It can be experienced, but you do not know where it has come from and you do not know where it is

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going. The Holy Spirit administrates, but He is anything but organisational.

A church is organic when the life of God is given first place (top priority) in our lives, no matter what comes with it. Be it delight or difficulty, pleasure or pain, promotion or temporary demotion, all are completely embraced and never avoided.

A church is organic when it recognises that God is the source and sustainer of all God-life (which is true spiritual life) and that He is good. Organic life is “grace spreading through the many” – 2 Corinthians 4:15.

1. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ORGANIC LIFE, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT LIFE THAT:

- **Recognises organic team ministry.** (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). We should always work together on what He is doing.
- **Recognises that some things are only for a season and are not permanent.** (See 2 Corinthians 3:17-18.) People who resist this will struggle when the time comes for a change or a moving on. We often make the mistake of holding on to things that we enjoy, or that are working, and fail to realise that God only intended them for a season. If this is how we operate, He will eventually move on and we will be left behind. When we are able to see the moves of God and the life of the Church as organic, we are able to move when He moves and bear the right fruit in the right season.
- **Recognises that some sow, others water, but only God gives the increase.** If we truly understood this then we would not have the problem that we do have with some people striving to be superstars in ministry. Only God makes a thing grow. Only God imparts life into a church through the gifts of others. The gifts themselves will not grow your church or bring life, the Holy Spirit does. He does through people, but it is ultimately His work in and through them that blesses you, not them and their gift. “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain”! See Psalm 127.

- **Recognises that there is therefore no competition between those who have different roles.** This comes as a result of recognising the value of team. Anyone who is competing with another and is trying to promote himself or herself has not understood organic life. They may talk and teach healthy church life with their mouths, but they are not living it until they see (they get revelation) that the Church is organic and not an organisation. Once we understand organic life, there will be room for every person to play their part because the whole team is needed in order to do the work.
- **Recognises that promotion only comes from God (Psalm 75:6).** As long as people try to promote themselves they will remain where they are. Only God can do the promotion. Where there is organic life there is no one striving to be on top or to be noticed.
- **Is willing to deal with every subculture that we have developed in the church as something that must be both repented of and broken.** There are subcultures wherever something receives an emphasis it is not meant to have, even if it is a legitimate part of what God is doing. This could include things like music, or discipleship programs, or speaking in a 'King James Version' English, positive confession, faith, deliverance, inner healing, intercession, the Charismatic, Pentecostal and para-church subcultures, fundamentalism, etc. Some of these (not all!) are truly things that God was or is doing in the Church, but none of these was ever meant to receive an emphasis that makes it a primary expression of the culture of any church. The only culture that we should have is the culture of the King and Kingdom, and that will embrace everything that God does, without giving it any more emphasis than what we see the Holy Spirit give it in the Bible.
- **Is flexible and embraces God-inspired, Spirit-directed adjustments (Matthew 9:14-17; Ephesians 5:18-20).** It seems to be in the nature of most human beings that we resist change, but change is required in order for us to become more like Jesus. We are going to be in the process of change until Jesus comes back, not only as individuals but also as the Church corporately.
- **Is willing to be stretched outside of comfort zones.** Organic life can cope with what

makes us uncomfortable, in order to accommodate more of the Spirit of God.

- **Captures, embraces and accommodates the momentum of the Holy Spirit.** When we embrace organic life, we find a church does not give in to the preferences, preconceptions, prejudices, fears or comfort zones of the people. Organic life keeps in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). In order to keep in step with someone we have to move when they move and stop when they stop. This is well illustrated by the Israelites in the desert, who were required to move with the cloud and the pillar of fire (Numbers 29:15-23, Isaiah 20:2-4, Hosea 1:2-3).

2. ORGANIC LIFE DOES NOT MEAN WE SETTLE FOR CONFUSION OR CHAOS

- Organic life does not mean that anything goes, and we can arrive at meetings when we like, do what we like, or are sloppy in our way of life. God is a God of order, not confusion, even if He does not work organisationally. **We must be careful not to confuse administration with organisation.** The word 'administration' is used four times in the New Testament. The word 'administrator(s)' is used fifteen times. 'Organisation' is never used in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. There is a Kingdom to administrate, but it has to be administrated organically, flexibly, catching what it is that God is doing and changing all the time.

3. ORGANIC LIFE IMPLIES THAT WE MAKE ROOM TO ALLOW GOD TO DO WHAT HE WANTS TO IN MEETINGS

- It is not always going to be what we planned, but we should always remain open and available to do it His way. When the power of God and presence of God has been manifest in an awesome way, we sometimes think that if we sing the same songs and do the same things we can recreate that event. Then, when God does not 'show up' according to our expectation, we go home feeling as if something was missing. The truth is that He will not always want to do things the same way at every meeting. We are the ones who want to keep things the same, and many times we do that, even if it means

ignoring what God wants.

- Most churches could, and many do, have church Sunday to Sunday without God. They get so used to doing the same things they always do that they have no clue something is missing. If they did feel that something was missing, they would not know that the 'something' that was missing is God Himself! If God did actually show up, that would be a dilemma. So much preaching in churches on Sundays is by sincere men and women who have learned the truth of the Word and the 'tricks of the trade' but there is no presence of God.

4. ORGANIC LIFE PLACES A STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN EVERY SPHERE OF CHURCH LIFE, INCLUDING CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- When there is a genuine sense of the presence of God, then the government of God does not hurt people. It builds, it helps, and it catapults people and the work forward. The presence of God brings greatness. When there is no presence of God, even if we are doing the right thing, then we hurt others and we diminish in terms of our sphere of influence. It is also more probable that we will become dictatorial.

5. ORGANIC LIFE GOES TO THE WORD OF GOD TO SEE WHAT MUST BE DONE, AND THEN DOES IT

- We cannot organise according to constitutions. We must live according to the Word and what God is continually revealing to us.
- We have to be careful that, in church government, we are making sure that the presence of God is there. It is almost better (but only *almost*) not to exercise government at all than to do so without His presence, because when we do, we are going to ruin people's lives. Making sure that God's presence is there is more than simply following a prescribed way. The Bible does give us that, but godly government is more of a heart attitude toward the presence of God than simply doing Bible things.

THE DNA OF ANY CHURCH

What we would like to examine now is what we call the common “DNA” of a local church. The DNA will help you assess your values as a church and understand the most effective activities to be involved in.



1. CHRIST-CENTRED

- Christ is the foundation, the whole reason why we’re doing this. From the beginning, make it clear that Christ is the cornerstone of your church. (Ephesians 2:20; Matthew 16:18.)
- If you do not keep Him at the centre, you are no longer a church, you are something else.
- Do not plant or transition a church for any other reason other than Christ! Not for pride,

for recognition, for fame, for money, to find meaning in life, etc., or even to love a community, or to establish social justice / upliftment.

- Every major move of God in history starts with a personal encounter with Jesus. Look at Moses, Peter, Paul. Look at historical figures like John Wesley at Aldersgate where he said, “My heart was strangely warmed,” or Martin Luther’s famous “tower experience”.
- Christ is the message we proclaim. We have nothing to offer but Christ! There is only one gospel worth proclaiming and that is the gospel of Christ.

2. SPIRIT AND WORD-EMPOWERED

- Acts 1:8 shows us that after the Spirit was given, everything changed. The early church suddenly exploded with life and grew dramatically once the Holy Spirit arrived.
- You cannot understand any other revivals in history without understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the individuals, the pastors, the leaders, and all the people involved.
- The Holy Spirit holds a local church, as he holds the Church universal. A local church is not held by its venue, by its activities, or by its personalities. It is held by the Spirit who empowers, who draws, who convicts, and who keeps our relationships together in love. People were drawn to Jesus and neither He nor they seemed to care about the venue He preached in or whether His children’s ministry had all the best facilities. (This doesn’t mean excellence is a bad thing, only that it is not everything.)
- Without the Holy Spirit, there is no church, because a church is a community of the Spirit.
- It is the Holy Spirit that is involved in the establishment and continued growth of churches, and He must be involved in yours. If you plant or transition it in your own strength you’ve got to maintain it in your own strength, and you will soon run out of strength! Church planting or transitioning is hard work and you can not, and should not, attempt it in your own strength and understanding. Remember, our enemies are not flesh and blood but spiritual powers (Ephesians 6:12) – do you really want to go against that on your own? Your clever strategies are not enough to go against our enemy!
- It is the Holy Spirit that convicts people of the gospel through the Word of God. You cannot separate Word and Spirit. The Spirit convicts and transforms through the power of

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the Word, and the Word is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). It is the words of Jesus that are Spirit and life (John 6:63). It is the Word that saves our souls (James 1:21) and works effectively in us who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13). “‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord, ‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’” (Jeremiah 23:29.) There is no such thing as a “Word” church or a “Spirit” church. It is Word and Spirit.

- Therefore, when you look at your local church, it is helpful to think of it as a place where the Word of God is planted in your city, neighbourhood, etc. You do not plant a venue or a meeting, but you plant the Word – the good news - and a community gathers around this Word that gives life.
- We need the indwelling power of the Spirit and the power of the Word to sustain us and ground us when we plant and as we lead our churches.
- Encourage the spiritual gifts in your church from the beginning! God has given us the gifts to strengthen, encourage, and to grow! Do not be scared of the gifts, but embrace them!

3. PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

- At Pentecost we see 3,000 people added to the church in a day. These then meet in homes where ordinary believers led the meetings. We see nothing of full-time pastors, priests or deacons or paid staff leading those meetings. All are priests before God (1 Peter 2:5,9) and carry an anointing and call to be involved with leading in some capacity in the local church and to be agents for Christ outside of it. There is nothing more powerful than ordinary men and women doing the work of the Kingdom.
- Again, history shows us that the greatest revivals leaned on the strength of ordinary people (‘lay leaders’) to do the work, as opposed to ‘ordained clergy’. John Wesley: *“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.”*
- We need full-time ordained pastors/elders and “ordinary people” to work together in church planting, partnering with a translocal team.
- The doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers does not just teach that all can be leaders

in the Church, but *that all kinds of work are holy, acceptable, and even a calling from God*. People need to understand their calling in their local church, in translocal ministry, and in their jobs / career / vocation. We do not separate sacred from secular, insisting that the only work that matters is the work done in the church. We must encourage our people to lead for the Kingdom in all their various roles and spheres. It is part of your job as a leader to help people discover their various callings in Christ and to grow in their calling. Too many leaders use the doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers to burden people with volunteering in too many activities in the local church because those leaders want to see 'their thing' working well, making these people far less effective in the Kingdom and their own call in God.

- Build your church from the beginning on a model that empowers others and releases them for ministry in your church and outside of it, and for evangelism wherever they go.
- Build your church in spiritual gifts which God gave to edify and grow His church. Find ways to consistently 'fan into flame' the gifts of others, in your meetings, in leadership development, in outreaches, in partnerships with other churches and the translocal team.

4. INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

- You must be intentional about how you and your church will grow people in Christ, which is what is meant by making disciples. We do not make just converts to Christ but disciples of Christ!
- Disciples are made through developing a biblical, Christ-centred, relational and authentic community of love.
- Disciples are made through devotion to the apostles' teaching (the Word), the fellowship, prayer, and the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42).
- Note how in Acts they met in homes. Small meetings in homes (or public spaces in some cultures) are imperative! Whenever and wherever the model of meeting in smaller discipleship groups (home groups, life groups, whatever they may be called) is emulated there is growth.
- These groups are for spiritual growth, for accountability, for protection, for intimacy, for prayer, for attending to the Word, for breaking bread together.

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- Smaller groups actualise spiritual formation much more than larger groups gathering only at a Sunday meeting. Remember, we plant churches not meetings!
- Christian community is not just about friendship but partnership – we share our lives. We partner together in the gospel. It is not just function without friendship, but there can be no deeper friendship than partnership.
- Preaching is not enough to keep people in the faith, although it is important. There must be active engagement with the people face-to-face. There must be times of laughing together and crying together. When we share in Christ's love together we find the Christian life comes alive.
- In some cultures it may be difficult to establish a small group, but it's best to find a way.
- Discipleship also happens through the active practice of the spiritual gifts. Encourage your people in these! Smaller groups are perfect spaces for people to grow in the spiritual gifts.
- Discipleship does not happen through meetings. It happens through relationships. Meetings facilitate relationships, but relationships do not exist for the meetings. Foster relationships in your church and find ways to get people involved in each others' lives.

5. SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

- Spiritual practices include encouraging the prophetic in your church. You are a prophetic community! You, as the lead elder, and your eldership and leadership team must be a prophetic people who take the church to where God wants to take it. And this prophetic nature must be encouraged in your church. Prophecy always strengthens, encourages, comforts, and builds up a local church. (1 Corinthians 14.)
- Spiritual practices include baptism. You must be a baptising church! A church is marked by its practice of baptism. A church that does not practice baptism may not, in fact, be a church!
- Spiritual practices include the private devotional lives of you and your team and your church. We must have rhythms of grace that keep us connected to God, helping us walk with Christ and grow. We all have our habits, routines, and rhythms. Christ must form part of our daily rhythms, but how? A local church helps to answer the 'how'.

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- This requires a slowing down and living on God's time.
- This requires we learn the voice of God and understand how He speaks. How will you lead prophetically if you cannot hear God speaking?
- Spiritual practices are about knowing both the *will* of God and the *ways* of God. It's not just about knowing what God wants but also knowing how He does things.
- Spiritual practices are about worshipping God in spirit and in truth and 'practicing' His presence, abiding in Him, and getting your church community abiding in Him.
- Just as physical exercise promotes physical growth and strength, so spiritual exercise promotes spiritual growth and strength: in godliness, in grace, in faith, in holiness, in knowing God better. (1 Timothy 4:7.)
- Think of how to integrate people into the gospel practically through how you promote and represent spiritual practices in your local church.
- Think carefully about your corporate worship and if your worship time nourishes and teaches biblical spiritual practice, or if it's all about "the band" and "the preacher" and "how cool it was" and the "experience". Is it genuinely about bringing your people closer to Jesus? Or is it about separating yourself from the other churches in the area as a 'place' that's more 'cool' and 'vibey' and has better music and experiences?
- Spiritual practices are practiced corporately, personally, and in the lives of families. How will you help your church community to integrate Jesus into their daily lives authentically? How will you help them integrate the Word and Spirit into their family's lives? Think of Acts 2:42, of practices such as contemplation on the Word, different ways of worship, and so on.

6. APOSTOLIC MISSION

- Emil Brunner: *"The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning."*
- We have an apostolic call to the world given to us by Jesus. We are to make disciples of all nations!
- Integrate the apostolic / missional call into your church from the beginning. Encourage people in their gifts to fulfil the mandate of Christ to make disciples of all nations.
- Through your servant leadership, founded on your love of Christ and your love of people,

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others will follow. How much you care about the apostolic mission will reflect onto your people. Lead by example, too!

- We build bridges between people, tearing down walls of hostility. “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.” (Ephesians 2:14.) That’s what the gospel does!
- Think carefully about how you and your church will love your neighbour, unchurched communities, sub-cultures, and those that will oppose you.
- Think about practical methods to love communities – cleaning up a park, hosting an art exhibition, doing the kind of work in a neighbourhood others don’t want to do, finding ways to serve from the beginning. This will create a culture of service in your church from the get-go.
- Think of biblical hospitality. See Romans 12:13, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8, 1 Peter 4:9. Hospitality literally means the “love of strangers.” Create a culture of hospitality early on in your local church community. Hospitality is about sharing our gifts with others. This is often sorely lacking in churches across the world.
- Organise trips to other places or nations as soon as you can, and organise these regularly. Encourage as many as possible to go on these trips. Partner with other churches, with NCMI, in going into the nations. Find where NCMI partnering churches are working into and see how your church can partner and help. We have a world to reach!
- From early on, organise a ‘mercy’ component of your church – how you will help those in need, how can you meet the specific needs of your community practically and realistically, without losing the gospel message. We are not all about ‘needs’ as that can run us ragged and the scriptures never talk about the church as a sort-of social upliftment program. But yet we are to love and care for the poor as best we can. You will need wisdom and guidance! Speak to others who are doing it right and find out how to get it right from the start! Ask God to send the right people to join the leadership team who God has anointed for this task.

7. REPRODUCING

- From the beginning, your job will be to create a reproducing culture – a culture of

church planting. We are about reproducing ourselves as leaders and reproducing ourselves as churches.

- If your church has lost this aspect of being a church, you must kick-start it. Partner with other churches who are planting. Get behind a couple on the NCMI team or from another church who is planting. Make it visible and clear to your church community that planting is important.
- The gospel will always grow and multiply. Let the growth happen and send out your best to plant!
- Revival happens when we plant! Planting does not happen because of revival! You cannot wait for revival to hit your church before you plant!
- Dream together with others about your city, your town, and about the world.
- Integrate a pioneering spirit in your church, especially from the beginning, so that 'going' and pioneering and planting are part of your very DNA as a church.
- Tie into the NCMI team and other church planters or people with an apostolic / missional heart in your area, to help keep your own heart alive for the call and mandate and mission of the Church, and help you create this sort of culture in the people of your church.
- Invite the NCMI team into your church to preach, teach, encourage, and spend time with you and your leadership team.
- Trust and expect for growth because God is about growth. *"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."* (Matthew 13:31,32.)

CULTURAL CONTEXTUALISATION

Having understood something of what every church's DNA ultimately looks like, it is now time to address the topic of cross-cultural ministry. Here are a few pointers:

- Every culture consists of good and bad elements.
- As a church planter and as a lead elder you need the gift of discernment to know what

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elements of the surrounding culture (be it a city culture, a national culture, or the cultural make-up of those in your church) ought to be rejected outright and which are not all that bad and can be incorporated to make your reaching out to the culture more effective.

- This can be a difficult process that many church leaders miss. They simply do not account for their own culture and the culture they plant into. You have to account for the following if you head out to plant or if you are transitioning a church:
 1. Your own particular national culture that you are coming out of.
 2. Your own particular city / town culture that you are coming out of.
 3. Your own particular church culture that you are coming out of.
- There are elements of each of these that you might take for granted are biblically-based, but in fact are not. There may be negative elements of your own culture that you take with you that you're not even aware of. Other elements may not be negative, but you take them for granted and don't quite understand why another culture doesn't get it. Then there are positive elements of these cultures which you can use for greater effectiveness.

After you've assessed your own cultural background you then have to assess:

- A. The national culture you are going into
- B. The city / town culture you're going into
- C. What values you want your church to represent, and which of these are made up of your own personal preferences (based on 1 – 3 above) or are influenced by the new culture you're planting into (A and B above), and which of these are truly biblical and Kingdom-focused.

You also need to assess your own prejudices. Many people do not think they have prejudices until they're faced with people who are different to them. Sometimes our prejudices are along economical lines, and sometimes they are along cultural lines, and sometimes they are along racial lines. Many times these prejudices are hidden even to ourselves. Sometimes we may even be prejudiced along the lines of simple things such as what our hobbies are or what sports we

like. Given that the gospel is for all people and the great promise of God in the scriptures is that all nations are called to be a part of His church, we have to address any prejudices we might have – and constantly. It's no use being defensive about this! You need to be open to hear where you might be prejudiced.

EXAMPLES

You might be planting out of a predominantly white, South African church into the Caribbean islands. This will be a culture shock for you and your family personally. It will be a culture shock from a church perspective too.

- You will need to question your own prejudices and assumptions about Caribbean culture.
- You will need to rethink your music and style preferences for church worship.
- 1. When considering others for leadership, you have to think carefully about your own personality and cultural prejudices. Sometimes charismatic leaders only consider charismatic people to be leaders (or quiet leaders only consider quiet, thoughtful leaders). Sometimes we only sub-consciously choose leaders who are in the same economical bracket as we are.
- The key strategy is to actually involve yourself with the people and understand that certain aspects of culture you might consider strange (for example, the food they eat) is considered 'normal' for them. You will probably have to give up certain (not all) aspects of your culture and adopt aspects of the new culture.
- If you avoid thinking about these sorts of things you may end up simply trans-planting your home experience into your new culture, and the only people you will really reach will be expats from your own culture.
- Of course, certain aspects of the new culture you find yourself in may be unbiblical. You will need to exercise discernment and wisdom.

It's easier to spot these things when the differences are obvious. But when they are more subtle, that's when you need tremendous discernment!

CONTEXTUALISATION

The keyword in this process of discernment is *contextualisation*. You must understand **your** context **and** the **context you are planting into**. Both are important to know! 1 Corinthians 9 gives us a basic biblical basis for contextualisation.

1 Corinthians 9

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

We have to take every culture and examine its details in light of the gospel. In doing so, we have to keep in mind three points:

- A. Some things are biblical
- B. Some things are unbiblical
- C. Some things are a-biblical

We do not compromise on those things that are biblical and those that are not, but we can compromise on what is *a-biblical*.

- Easy examples of things that are a-biblical are a church name, dress codes, hairstyles, music preferences, language, certain staff appointments (cleaning staff, kitchen staff, etc.), and so on. The Bible has no real prescribed code for these sorts of things.
- Some cultural taboos are not necessary unbiblical, but we would do well to avoid them so that we do not offend anyone unnecessarily.
- Other cultural taboos or prejudices may very well be unbiblical. For example, how that

culture might treat women. In such a case, you need wisdom on how to create a change of mind in the people you build within that culture. You may not be able to make drastic changes straight away. You can't just always bomb people with the truth but rather be "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16) so that you may gain them.

- Another good example is the shifting change in Western culture toward homosexuality. The Bible affirms all people as having value but it does not affirm same-sex marriage. How will you reach a culture which cannot separate these two concepts? You have to stand for what the whole Bible says. It would be unbiblical to support same-sex marriage in your church but it would also be unbiblical to hate or despise or marginalise anyone struggling with same-sex attraction. This may take a long while for people to understand but you should be clear and upfront about it. One way to avoid the issues is to ensure your church knows when and how to stay out of politics.

FOUR COMMON THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO CULTURE

As a lead elder, you may be wondering how to actually influence the culture you're going into, or be wondering if that is actually what God expects. You might be wondering how to address concepts such as your ministry to different socio-economic backgrounds, especially ministry to the poor, and are also wondering about things such as media and marketing.

What follows are the four common theological approaches to culture.⁶ This may be slightly technical but it is useful in (a) assessing which model you might already lean towards (and might have assumed was the only model) and, (b) using the strengths (and knowing the weaknesses) of each model for your benefit.

1. THE TRANSFORMATIONIST MODEL

Examples range from the abolitionists on the more balanced side to the more extreme Reconstructionist / Dominion theology of the U.S. "Christian Right."

⁶ This section mainly summarises Tim Keller's work in this area, with a few additions and alterations of our own. Special thanks to Anthony Jerome Burgess for additional insights. See <https://www.anthonijeromeburgess.com/four-models-of-cultural-engagement-according-to-timothy-keller.html>

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- This model assumes a negative view of society
- This assumption is based scripturally on the fallenness of humanity
- It adopts an *active* role in influencing culture
- It is generally *optimistic* about seeing cultural change, understanding the prayer “Your Kingdom come” to be the church’s responsibility to make a reality.
- It primarily influences / engages through political engagement and education, supporting Christians working in business, the media, art, universities, activism, government etc. - in all these fields, Christians must be pushing for social change that lines up to biblical values.

Positives: People are encouraged to go into the culture and use their work and their jobs to make a tangible change in legislation and systems and processes. The outcomes have often been very good. The church is seen as a community where people are given the tools to make changes and to understand the cultural change that is needed. It places emphasis on not only a calling to church ministry but that all kinds of work are a calling, which gives purpose and importance to all in the Church.

Negatives: This approach may often get overly involved in politics and social efforts, bringing with it all the negatives of politics, including preachers telling you who to vote for. It can assume that cultural change comes through legislation, but this is not usually true and can often create very negative results. Taken to its extreme, it assumes that the role of the Church is to create a type of theocracy where the Church rules and governs the State. This would undo the work of the Reformation. Paul also did say that a soldier does not get involved in civilian affairs (2 Timothy 2:4).

SUMMARY: Can be referred to as as SEND and BEND. *Send* into the culture and *bend* it toward Christ.

2. THE RELEVANCE MODEL

Examples would include the ‘seeker-sensitive’ model to church on the more balanced side,

with liberation theology (very socially active, and generally affirms same-sex marriage etc.) on the more extreme side.

- This model assumes a *positive* view of society, believing that many cultural trends can be used for the gospel and that the gospel brings “human flourishing” and “common good”.
- Adopts an *active* role in influencing culture
- *Optimistic* about seeing cultural change, believing God works not only in the Church but outside of it.
- Primarily influences through the arts, social service, and justice.
- Is very concerned with adopting trends and modern media etc. and using these trends for the benefit of the gospel.

Positives: Trying to be relevant to a culture has a biblical basis to a degree, and seeker-sensitive ideas certainly have their place. These ideas consider culture closely and try to draw people in through active engagement and discussion. The Relevance model puts emphasis on using trends in marketing, technology, the arts, and even philosophy and psychology to express the gospel. It can be very in-touch with the arts which help drive cultural change. Overall, the New Testament and history does seem to indicate that a pluralistic, tolerant society creates an easier platform for the gospel. Plus, understanding trends and using them skilfully is immensely helpful for effective apologetics and evangelism.

Negatives: If followed too far, the Relevance model begins to jettison Biblical morality and other Biblical foundations in the name of relevance or ‘progressive revelation’ or some or other justification. It becomes so concerned about relevance that it just blends into the world. Churches become motivational speaking halls. Worldly morality can be easily adopted. Also, like the Transformationist model, the Relevance model can bring too much politics into the Church and can become so much like the culture that people have no idea why they should even bother having a church. Lastly, it loses the gospel as Jesus becomes merely an “example” to follow rather than a Saviour who we must put our faith in and a Lord we must obey.

SUMMARY: Can be thought of as TREND and BLEND. Note the trends and see how to blend into the culture to have a voice within it.

3. THE COUNTER-CULTURALIST MODEL

Examples would include “simple church” models (very basic forms of church, a focus on community, Jesus-people, Anabaptist sort of movements) on the more balanced side, to the Amish on the more extreme side.

- Assumes a negative view of society based on the fallenness of humanity and the call to “come out of her [Babylon]” and separate the church from society.
- Adopts a *passive* role in influencing culture.
- *Pessimistic* about cultural change, but not pessimistic about the value of community and people.
- Emphasises the counter-cultural aspects of the gospel as well as simple living, self-denial, and the power of community.
- Primarily engages through charity, justice, and community; altruism and abstention.

Positives: The call to be counter-cultural is real and the Kingdom is usually counter-cultural and ‘upside down’ to the world’s values. This model emphasises this rightly and seeks to create healthy communities that are purely based on a Kingdom culture and which emphasise the love of others. Its charity work and simple ways of doing things and creating community can be beautiful and inspiring. Church is often simple, low-key, authentic, passionate, and genuine. The value of this view and how it’s lived out cannot be understated as the church is meant to be different – a unique people that truly love others, especially the poor, and can be found in the simple places and spaces of life. As the Bible says, we are ‘aliens and strangers’ in this world.

Negatives: It can result in a sort-of inward-focused “Jesus Club” where people only have time for their church but never for anything or anyone else. Judgemental / legalistic attitudes towards the unsaved or those that are different can occur. If taken too far, full-blown separation from the world is the result. This leads to a rejection of the call to “go into all the world” and the community will not grow beyond one generation or culture. Cultish activity and manipulation can also result as it is a perfect space for charismatic leaders to take advantage of others, especially as greater “separation” from society occurs.

SUMMARY: REND and FEND. *Rend* the church from the culture and *fend* off the culture's influence by creating authentic communities.

4. THE TWO KINGDOMS MODEL

This model is generally the Protestant/secular model of 'separation of Church and State' (the original meaning of the word 'secular'). It speaks of 'two Kingdoms' - God's Kingdom and civil society. Examples are difficult to pinpoint as people generally adopt this view to one degree or another, although they are seldom consistent with it. The Lutherans adopt the view wholeheartedly with a more extreme side seen in some Reformed circles.

- Assumes a *positive* view of society - God is effectively behind the wheels and cogs of society and sustains it to a degree through the institution of authority - governmental authority, church authority, etc. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's." Romans 13 is also a good example.
- Adopts a generally *passive* role in influencing culture. Primarily engages through conventional vocations and common involvement (i.e. playing your role in society well and according to biblical standards).
- Approaches culture with a *moderate* expectation of cultural change.
- Emphasises God's 'common grace' to all.

Positives: The Two-Kingdoms view was originally espoused by Martin Luther to further explain the dialectic of Law and Gospel, and as it developed it created secularism (the separation of Church and State) which was a necessary part of the Reformation. Calvin and Zwingli developed the thinking in their own ways. Basically, this meant the Church would no longer control the State and the State would no longer be part of the Church. Luther envisioned that the Church would be seen as an independent yet necessary part of society and so it would engage government independently, and government would look to it for input. This separation is incredibly helpful and important and helps Christians to understand how to frame difficult modern day concepts such as same-sex marriage being legal. It encourages Christians to be a

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positive, godly contributor towards society in their work and different spheres of life.

Negatives: Taken to an extreme, this view can:

- (a) lead to complete disengagement from cultural problems – ignoring issues of injustice because it can claim that “the Church is all that counts” or that “saving souls” is all that matters;
- (b) Not engaging or trying to change moral slide in society;
- (c) See the Church as the Kingdom (believe they are the same thing) which often results in an institutionalised church.
- (d) Lead to something like Calvin’s “Geneva Experiment” - since the Church is a more legitimate Kingdom, the Church should become an institution that overshadows government.

SUMMARY: LEND and MEND. It recognises our distinction and our compatibility as the church and *lends* gifts and abilities to help *mend* (heal) culture.

BLENDING THE INSIGHTS

It is helpful to know that you will probably be drawn to one of these models more than the other, and that is fine. However the best thing we can do is try and be balanced in our approach as it would be unhelpful to go to an extreme on either as neither of the extremes serve the Kingdom very well. If we blend these we may come up with four major insights about the Church’s approach to culture:

1. The Church is to have a distinctive worldview (Transformational model).
2. The Church is to seek the common good of all and seek to meet people where they are at (Relevance model).
3. The Church is to be counter-cultural in those things that matter (Counter-culturalist model).
4. The Church is to pursue humble excellence in all it does, playing its very distinctive role in the development and ongoing life of individuals and of society (Two-Kingdoms model).

You no doubt can find other insights from each model above to use to your advantage. It would be helpful to explore each in detail in further reading.

KEEPING THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

1 Corinthians 1:

22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Our highest value must be Christ and his gospel – the proclamation of Christ crucified and risen. The gospel both offended Jews and Greeks, yet at the same time also drew them to Christ. Those Greeks who came to believe realised that Christ is the ultimate wisdom, while the Jews came to understand how the crucifixion is true power. How? As Tim Keller says:

“It is striking, then, to see how Paul applies the gospel to confront and complete each society’s base-line cultural narrative. He does this both negatively and positively. He confronts each culture for its idols, yet he positively highlights their aspirations and ultimate values. He uses the cross to challenge the intellectual hubris of the Greeks and the works-righteousness of the Jews. But he also affirms their most basic collective longings, showing that Christ alone is the true wisdom the Greeks have looked for and is the true righteousness that the Jews have sought. Paul’s approach to culture, then, is neither completely confrontational nor totally affirming.”⁷

As a church leader, then, you must keep the gospel central to your thinking around culture. It’s all about Jesus! It really is as simple as that, although working that out will take your lifetime!

7 Tim Keller, Center Church, Chapter 9: Biblical Contextualisation, page 238. Digital Scribd version.

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PART 5:

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

In this section we will cover three practical aspects of a local church – preaching, bi-vocational ministry, administration, and media.

A. PREACHING

There is nothing we can say here that hasn't been said already and said better in the many books on preaching you can find. Our aim here is to inspire you to take up *preaching*: knowing just how great the task is that you are embarking on.

YOUR PREACHING IS PIVOTAL

There is a lot that goes on in pulpits that is not preaching, and a lot of true preaching doesn't actually happen in a pulpit. Christianity primarily spreads through preaching – 'a farmer went out to sow the word...' (Luke 8:5) says a pinnacle parable describing the kingdom. **When you preach you are getting something done.** You are not merely explaining how a seed is sown and showing people the principle of sowing a seed, but you are actually sowing a seed.

Real preaching doesn't just explain God to us. Real preaching has us confronted by God. We aren't just taught about faith but are presented with a God to *believe* in. The Holy Spirit brings the hearer face to face with the Lord about whom we speak. He convinces the hearers of what

you are saying, says John 16:8.

- **Preaching is not lecturing.** Preaching should not be lecturing although it should inform the mind and prick the intellect.
- **Preaching is not speech-making.** While it should be clear and understandable, it should not be a Bible analysis, a Bible survey, or a Bible-less motivational talk.
- **The test of true preaching is what it does to the hearers.** What do they say about the message? "Interesting" or "food for thought"? Or "what must we do!?" (Acts 2.) It is not preaching until people's hearts are being touched and convicted about the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 is Paul's quick description of true preaching: "*Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction*". These are two key ingredients to true preaching. Preaching has to do with **(1) sound words** and **(2) powerful words**.

1. SOUND WORDS

We should first ask ourselves what our primary responsibility for preaching is, as this will determine our preaching content.

- If you believe your job is to find a God-given vision and get people there, you will be a certain kind of preacher. You will find yourself choosing texts and passages that lead people on to achieve the vision.
- If you believe it's your job to help the church grow up, heal and mature, you'll again be making certain decisions on sermon content.
- If you believe that your role is to create a place where non-Christians feel very comfortable and you are to give them little bits of the gospel at a time, that'll obviously determine your content.

Your job is not to *use* the Bible to get the vision done but to explain the Bible's message to the people and trust for God's power as you do it. **This is because it is God's Word that has power.** All we need to do is decide which portion of the Scriptures we will try to make clear.

A. WHAT WE PREACH

- In Acts 20:27, Paul claims that he taught the 'whole counsel of God'.
- In Paul's exhortations to Timothy, he speaks of preaching the Word (2 Timothy 4:2) and passing down what he heard Paul say to others - "faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." (2:2.)
- In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul outlines the main content of preaching:

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

*22 For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom, **23 but we preach about a crucified Christ**, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. 24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

- **In all these cases, and others, we can note that the main subject of preaching in the New Testament is Christ, and Christ crucified.** Many preach wisdom today and many preach signs and wonders, and while both are good they are not ultimately what we are to preach. Many preach that Christ will make life comfortable and bring blessing to our lives. Many preach 'spiritual principles / laws' for blessing, while others preach laws for morality. Many only ever preach vision and nothing but vision. But this is not what we preach! Christ is what we preach! (Preaching vision has its place, but not week after week, otherwise how will people ever hear the gospel?).

B. HOW WE PREACH IT

i. Expository Preaching

- John Piper once said that his preaching changed when he realised the Bible was not a book of loosely connected thoughts but a solid set of arguments and proofs and persuasions. These arguments need to be built and explained and proven.
- The famous Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said in an interview he only became a preacher when “he was convinced he had and knew the message”.
- How do we combat the many false doctrines and wrong emphases of our day through our preaching? The answer is to stick to the Bible, which means expository preaching ought to be our main method.
- Expository preaching doesn’t necessarily mean a few verses at a time, as some believe. It really means to bring to light the meaning of texts. As Alec Motyer says, “Exposition is the restatement of Scripture – whether a word, verse a chapter or book – so that *its message* emerges with clarity.⁸” He then says that expository preaching is to ‘bring out what is *there*! **That’s the key – bringing out what is there.** The letter, chapter or verses tell you what to say. They give you the content, attitude, scope and teaching – *you simply are to state it so that the people listening can grasp it clearly, and therefore obey it!*
- Sometimes the text will call for people to **know** something, **believe** something, or **do** something. It’s the text that determines what we say it should not be the other way round. If many preachers were honest they mostly know what they want to say and find verses to make it look biblical. This is the wrong way around and it does very little, if anything, for both the people and the preacher themselves.

ii. Through work

- There is not one preaching book that doesn’t say preaching is 90% perspiration and 10% inspiration. Preparation is a lifetime of work. How much you lean on other scholars depends on your giftedness and desire but preaching well requires work, it always will.

8 Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching, by Alec Motyer

It's much easier when *you* decide what the Bible says and preach your own ideas. But how would that ever bring life to anyone? It takes a huge amount of work to try and figure out what the Bible actually says and if you're right! And that's your work!

- Be prepared to read and read a lot. Remember the primary task is to make sure we understand the texts well. **Content is more important than delivery.** People can be "wowed" by your inflections, jokes, pauses at just the right place, a smile in the right moments, but they will leave with nothing. What good will that do? Give them the Word and they will leave with everything!

2. POWERFUL WORDS

The link between the preacher, the prepared or unprepared message, and power, is admittedly mysterious. The standout characteristic of true preaching is the people know they are hearing from God.

The Holy Spirit can do as he pleases and anoint any talk anywhere. Within this truth, however, many preachers attest to the Holy Spirit seemingly expressing greater power when they noticed the following:

a. The content was biblical. Again, content is more important than delivery.

b. They were deeply aware of what they were doing. They were aware of the great potential of the occasion, of how God's Word has power to save.

c. They were free. They were open to the Holy Spirit and not following strict protocols with their own notes or the occasion. It is said that at one time Martyn Lloyd Jones preached longer than the time allowed for a T.V. live preach. The producers were furious. He said he was inspired and wouldn't stop. People called in asking that they show the rest of the sermon they cut off!

d. They were themselves. Humour, excitement, charisma can all be copied and often are. Many

a preacher thinks they will be better if they do it someone else's way, but over the long term it never works. Go through the task of being comfortable developing your own style, while taking good constructive criticism into account.

e. They were aware of the people there. They desired to explain the deepest truths so the simplest person could understand. *It was the very lives in front of them that they were engaged with.* They weren't preaching for the T.V., a recording, or whoever else might listen. They weren't preaching while thinking about another preacher they're competing with or comparing themselves with. They wanted simply to pierce every heart sitting there – ten people or 5,000 people.

PROPHETIC PREACHING

Charles Spurgeon seemed to be fond of preaching prophetically. As Spurgeon himself once said:

"I could tell as many as a dozen similar cases in which I pointed at somebody in the hall without having the slightest knowledge of the person, or any idea that what I said was right, except that I believed I was moved by the Spirit to say it; and so striking has been my description, that the persons have gone away, and said to their friends, 'Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; beyond a doubt, he must have been sent of God to my soul, or else he could not have described me so exactly.' And not only so, but I have known many instances in which the thoughts of men have been revealed from the pulpit. I have sometimes seen persons nudge their neighbours with their elbow, because they had got a smart hit, and they have been heard to say, when they were going out, 'The preacher told us just what we said to one another when we went in at the door.'⁹"

Prophetic preaching can look like this, but not always. At its most basic, prophetic preaching means that you preach a special message that God powerfully anoints for that moment. It could easily mean God anointing His already written message in the Bible so the people hear the Word

9 Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon* [London: Curts & Jennings, 1899], 2:226-27

written thousands of years ago as though it was written right now for them. Is not the entire Bible prophetic? Isn't it always God talking to us? Aren't the prophetic letters still called prophetic letters even though they are so old? Often when we just preach a passage we find people say, "Wow, that was just for me." God works that way.

TOPICAL PREACHING

The call to expository preaching is not saying that topical preaching is wrong. There is however a right way and a lazy way to go about topical preaching and creating a series. True topical preaching is actually more hard work than systematic preaching through the scriptures, as topical preaching will require a good systematic study. This should involve a literature review of current and historic thought on the subject, a reading and exegesis of every verse relevant to that topic, a summary of the principle teaching and presentation of the topic, and a systematic way of putting it all down and organising the series so that each follows on well from the other, while each individual preach itself has the gospel in it and can be heard on its own. For a sermon series all that background work should be done. Again, as said earlier, people will take their cue from us about God. What if you call something free that is actually sin? Best we do our homework as best we can.

BEATING YOURSELF UP

A few paragraphs on "preaching blues" will serve any church planter and elder well. You are not alone. Spurgeon would talk of 'the minister's feinting fits'. The solutions are quite personality dependent. Here are the top helps from preachers battling just like you:

A. Have a rational talk with yourself.

Ask yourself relevant questions, answer them and then put the talk to bed.

- o - Did you exposit the text as clearly as you could?
 - o - What did you learn while preaching?
 - o - Did you exaggerate, lie or pretend?
-
- Once you've answered these then say to yourself... "Now leave the rest to God, either he

called you or he didn't." Leave your future in his hands as a preacher.

- Pray that God will help you be secure. Common 'blues' are insecurity about whether *your* style, thinking, prayer, talking, preaching and proclaiming can or will be used. We are often tempted to think "It would all be better if I were more like..." and then we insert names and other things that are not really relevant!

B. Expose your expectations and evaluate if they're realistic or not

- Are you expecting that which has only happened a few times in world history? Do you want God's sovereign acts to be your every day experience?
 - What are the illusive 'signs following' you're looking for? Are they realistic?
- Get busy with the next preach
 - Start to look at the next sermon straight away – just move on.

Maybe some words from the wise and well-preached late Michael Eaton will help in general:

Just remember that when it comes to preaching, people like Lloyd-Jones said, "I have a feeling I have only ever really preached twice – and on both occasions I was dreaming". Spurgeon said, "I would not cross the road to hear myself preach!"

Preaching is a bit miraculous. No one ever really learns how to just switch it on.

The important thing is to GROW. You sit looser and looser with your notes. You talk more and more DIRECTLY to the people. You don't speak much to their intellects; you speak more to their CONSCIENCES. You pray for anointing. And you leave the result with God.

Liberty and power are not always the same thing. Sometimes you have power when you are not enjoying yourself and not having too much liberty. It is nice when you have both at the same time.

Giftedness varies a lot. Few people are as gifted as Spurgeon or Whitefield or Lloyd-Jones. But we have to be content with the level of gifting God gave us, seeking God's blessing on what we ARE. It is important to be ourselves and develop our own style.

Sometimes we get a surprise. The man who was the preached in the June 1630 revival in UK was not a very good preacher. But suddenly God came down in power and the Kirk O Shots revival took place – 500 saved in one sermon and their conversions lasted for ever.

Sometimes a feeble sermon changes the world. In the early nineteenth century the man who preached on Isaiah 45:22 (KJV) in a snowy winter in a Primitive Methodist church preached a bad sermon because the appointed preacher did not arrived. He was not used to preaching at all. No one knows who he was - but Spurgeon was saved that morning.

There is quite possibly nothing more important in your church than your preaching. This is just a tiny primer on the task. From this session may you appreciate the weight and potential of preaching in the local church.

B. BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

Bi-vocational ministry refers to elders, especially those leading a church, who are equally involved in church ministry and in some or other kinds of work at the same time – be it running a business, working for a company, freelancing, and so on.

Bi-vocational ministry can be either

- (a) by necessity (your church cannot support you financially), or
- (b) by choice (you feel God has called you to it).

A 'vocation' or 'calling' from God is frequently described as **where the world's needs, your joy, and your skills intersect**. However, many people don't think of bi-vocational ministry in these terms. Instead, they see it as having two different jobs where one gives you joy and life and a sense of purpose, while the other just gives you a paycheck and is therefore a 'necessary evil' until such time as you don't have to do it anymore and your church can support you and you can do what you feel you are *really* called to do.

However, it's important to note that even if God is calling you to work in the marketplace for a season until your church is able to financially support you, that season is still a calling from God. Perhaps it doesn't feel that way, but God still has you there for a reason. Be faithful with it and trust God will make something of it!

Bi-vocational ministry then, by definition, is when you essentially have two calls – one as a church planter and/or leader of your church, the other as a business person or business owner or an artist, or something or other. For some this is even a life-time call that gives them purpose and joy. We say *bi-vocational* because this 'dual-call' will take considerable time, creativity, and energy – enough to claim you really have 'two' (or more) jobs to do.

Bi-vocational ministry is becoming more frequent and strategic in the 21st century. It is certainly a growing trend going forward. There are many benefits to bi-vocational ministry that are worth thinking about. These will encourage you if this is only a season, and it will encourage you if this is a life-time call. Some leaders who have been 'full-time' church paid elders or deacons for many years and now want to plant can find going back into the workplace daunting. It need not be. This is, in fact, a fantastic opportunity for you and your local church. It does not need to last forever but while it is happening, you can find God's hand in it.

So what follows is essentially for both groups – those who are bi-vocational by necessity and those who are bi-vocational by choice.

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

Paul was often bi-vocational. Acts 18:1-3 and 20:32-34 shows us how Paul was a tent maker,

which allowed him to pay his own way for ministry. This seemed to be a necessary thing to do in certain cities or regions. In these circumstances, Paul said he did not want to be a burden to anyone (1 Thessalonians 3:8). He felt that by working as a tent maker he was being a good testimony to others and winning them over, even though he certainly believed that no-one should “muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain” and “a worker deserves his wages” (1 Timothy 5:17,18).

It is important to note in this instance that Paul was not *always* bi-vocational, but he was in certain instances. In the season of being bi-vocational there is an aspect of calling to it, but it may not be for all of your life.

THE BENEFITS OF BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

1. Bi-vocational leaders can serve the church without being dependent on income. There is some freedom in this as it allows you to build a culture of kingdom finances and generous giving at a pace that may be more realistic in the culture you find yourself in. **Furthermore, when it comes to church transition,** it can make some relational problems easier. People get very uppity about money! Their impression of you can change if they don't feel as if you're trying to extract something from them. Of course, this was never your heart, but you can avoid misunderstandings. No one can blame an elder who is working another job for not being committed or just making decisions based on his paycheck!

2. It realistically connects you to non-believers. Sometimes when you are a church-paid elder your life is mostly surrounded by Christians and those from your church, and you lose your connection with non-believers. Being bi-vocational can force you into situations where you are connecting with non-believers, giving you realistic opportunities to evangelise and share your faith (opportunities which you can learn from and teach your church about). This is helpful for church planters who need to make friends, connect with others, and also understand the culture.

3. It can free up your church finances to focus on other things that matter for that season. Your church may be able to give more to apostolic work or to venue maintenance needs, and so

on. Beware, however, that you watch this closely. If you do not always want to be bi-vocational it would be difficult to change the way a church's finances work to incorporate a salary for you if your church has, for years, never had to bother about it. Putting the elder's salary last can become a culture that is hard to break. This may be something only for a season and that needs to be clear!

4. It encourages others to see their work in their marketplace as strategic for the kingdom.

We want to see more business people, artists, and people in all different fields partner with the church in church planting, translocal work, apostolic ventures etc. If you are able to lead by example and realistically be that sort of business person, you are doing far more than just preaching about it.

5. It teaches you to delegate and ask for help. Since you're in the same boat as everyone else in terms of your time and resources, there is more reason to share the load. What 1 Corinthians 12 teaches about the body of Christ becomes a day-to-day reality. Church planting and leading a church cannot be done without others. You have to learn that quickly if you are bi-vocational, and so do those in your church! Otherwise you (and they) might burn out! Fortunately, if they see you are also working another job, they are often more keen to actually help out – or, it's easier to ask for help!

6. It encourages others to see all of life as ministry. Since all of your own personal life is ministry, others will follow your example. This would encourage them probably to get more involved with your church and also think differently about their approach to both their work and their church.

7. It helps you understand the culture and struggles of your town / city / nation better.

Since you will be connecting with people who aren't necessarily in the church, you'll soon start understanding what their struggles are — as you might start having those same struggles yourself! This will also help you be more realistic and caring when it comes to the time and resources you ask from your people.

BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS

Having mentioned the benefits, you need to be aware of the possible pitfalls, so that you do not fall into them!

1. Bi-vocational ministry will require extraordinary leadership skills. You have to be able to say no. You have to be strong with delegating. You have to be able to see the big picture constantly and inspire others frequently. You need to be able to focus quickly on your church responsibilities and your other work responsibilities, and be able to switch between these fairly easily.

2. It takes a lot of time. You need to be the boss of your calendar in new, creative ways. Remember, your family is another calling that you must attend to! Without you attending to that calling, your other callings will suffer and ultimately fail!

3. It requires tremendous head space. Often our problem isn't so much as 'time' as much as it is simply having quiet moments in a day to think and assess, dream, or take stock. We all need sufficient head space to lead effectively, but if it's clouded with too much to do or too many things to worry about, you will need to learn much more than others how to clear your head.

4. It requires tremendous life management. You need enough buffer in your life to manage your emotions, to simply be with God, and also enjoy hobbies and things unrelated to work. How will you unwind? And how will you do it when you also have to manage your children and their expectations, their school commitments, and so on? You need to put measures in place from the get-go to help you with this.

5. It requires tremendous emotional intelligence. Leading a church requires enough of this as it is, and now it is compounded with another job! Take your emotional needs seriously and work on them meticulously. You'll probably have to be considerably more vigilant with this than others!

6. It requires considerable introspection. If you're managing a successful business and making

good money, but the church you are leading is not being shepherded well, and the only realistic solution is to transition your business or lay it down, what will you do? God may be telling you that the time has come to stop being bi-vocational. But can you lay it down?

7. It requires a strong identity. Your identity is not wrapped up in your job or what you do. It is found in Jesus. Bi-vocational ministry requires a lot of work, which can make you feel that your identity is wrapped up in all this work — and what happens when you are no longer as sought-after as you once were? Or when your business is no longer doing well? You cannot have an identity crisis when things have to change!

TRUST AND PRAY AND BELIEVE

For those who are simply going through a season of bi-vocational ministry, know that it is not forever. Trust God for growth in your church, for a kingdom view of finances in your church, and lean on the translocal team for advice and help. For those who want to take up some sort of bi-vocational ministry for life, trust that God is going to grow your church even if you can't be as involved as others. In both instances, God is faithful and He is building His church – and taking care of you!

C. ADMINISTRATION

For many pastors / elders the word “admin” is as bad as a swear-word. When we want to talk about administration, we want to leave that to “those who are gifted” or we say things like, “just give me the big picture” and so on. Many elders, especially lead elders, consider themselves “visionaries” and feel that “admin” can stifle the vision (and their energy) and bog things down with too many details, or create hierarchy or make the church too ‘organisational’ or executive. We don't want an executive-run, organisational, hierarchial church. But this is not the heart of true administration. In fact, proper godly administration helps you to achieve the kind of organic life you're looking for.

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION

Surprisingly, administration is listed as a spiritual (charismatic) gift and the original Greek word used, *kubernesis*, is a unique term that refers to a “captain” or “shipmaster” and literally means “to steer” or “to rule” or “to govern” or to provide “guidance”. One could also translate it as a “director”.

1 Corinthians 12:28

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating (kybernēsis), and various kinds of tongues.

While we understand that each person has a particular gifting that leans one way or another, we also understand that each person has a certain responsibility to express all the gifts available. While not all of us are apostles or prophets, we all need to be apostolic or prophetic, to one degree or another. Likewise, while some clearly have a strong gift of administration, we all carry this gift to one degree or another. Therefore, we should all exercise this gift to a certain degree – just like we would encourage others to exercise the other spiritual gifts.

This also shows that ‘administration’ is not merely the work of deacons. While it is true that deacons were appointed in Acts 6 so that the apostles / elders could devote themselves to the word and prayer, it is not true that this means only deacons are responsible for administration and elders are not. Elders are responsible for ‘directing’ the administration and providing governance over it. Furthermore, there is a place for this gift in a translocal team.

IT IS NOT ORGANISATION BUT ORGANIC

Everything about the Bible shows us that God, while He is organised, does not administrate an organisation. His life is organic, and that is what we should see in the Church.

However, we often get confused with ‘organisation’ and ‘administration’. Organic life does not mean:

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF A CHURCH

- that we settle for confusion or chaos,
- that anything goes,
- that we can arrive at meetings when we like,
- that we can ignore the finances or just spend as we like and 'in faith' believe that 'God will sort it out',
- that we don't bother putting a calendar together,
- that we commit to something without checking with others (especially if those people are the ones who need to make it happen!),
- that we don't leave adequate paper trails, use proper filing methods, and our electronic systems are a mess (ignoring such things can often place you in danger, legally. Do not ignore what the law requires for you as a church to keep on record, etc.)

God is a God of order, not confusion, even if He does not work organisationally.

THE BENEFITS OF GOOD ADMINISTRATION

For the organic, freeing life of God to be in your church you actually need your administration to be good. There are so many benefits to doing this right:

- Good administration gets the vision done. As a lead elder, you can be as visionary as you want, but if you are vague with how you're going to get there and who is going to do what, the vision will simply remain a vision and never turn into a reality.
- Good administration brings clarity. Everyone knows what they're supposed to be doing and how they will do it. When there is clarity you won't run into a situation where some people are working harder than others and, subsequently, burn out because they are carrying too much responsibility.
- Good administration helps everyone out with expectations. We know what to expect from each other and what to expect at an event or a Sunday morning. Clear, voiced expectations help relationship to flourish.
- Good administration gets your finances and paperwork in order. When authorities come knocking, no one is having sleepless nights.

LEAD ELDERS

- Good administration benefits the apostolic. When your finances are in order you can begin to plan how and where you will give, while not putting unexpected strain somewhere else.
- Good administration helps everyone to plan their own time effectively. There is nothing worse than a vague calendar full of commitments you can't even remember committing to, or with commitments others have committed you to! Double-booked appointments and too many events in a calendar strains relationships and the mission.
- Good administration sorts out bottlenecks. Without it, we can be quite clueless as to why certain things aren't getting done right or on time. If we have a good process in place we can understand where there is a shortfall on the team and what can be done about it.
- Good administration keeps you free to do the apostolic, rather than bog you down with details or having to 'put out fires' or deal with emergencies that could have been sorted out ahead of time if you just planned. If the little parts are sorted the big parts can function effectively, seamlessly, and freely.
- Good administration gives a church a great testimony of faithfulness. If you are faithful with the little, God can make you faithful with the much!

ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE:

- Flexible. An inflexible administration has the tail wagging the dog.
- Relational. Ultimately, everything that needs to be done has to be done by a person. Administration helps relationships to flourish as everyone knows what to expect from each other. Administration helps conversation to happen. Administration helps to build team.
- Fun. With administration in place, the spontaneous has space to happen. Everyone effectively doesn't have to worry about the admin anymore because it's done.
- Responsible. Things are above-board and transparent.
- Apostolic. It's not just about administration for your church but also administration in your partnerships with other churches and the NCMI translocal team.

TIPS FOR A LEAD ELDER:

It would not be helpful or healthy for any lead elder to be bogged down with too many details and tasks, especially as a church grows. But equally so, a lead elder needs to take ultimate responsibility for governance. Elders provide doctrine, direction and discipline, and the lead elder's task is to lead the eldership team in this. When it comes to 'direction', then, the lead elder provides administrative direction to the team. If administration drains the lead elder they still do need to provide this direction, but find a way where it can be done most effectively and without taking too much wind out of their sails. If a lead elder does not give this direction or does not get involved administratively to some degree, then the other elders / deacons / leadership team will take it up – but this can create problems.

A. Without clear guidance from you as the lead elder and clarity around expectations, there will be a disconnect between you and your team that could have been avoided. The team will make decisions you may not like or you may have had a different expectation. When you arrives at an event or a Sunday morning and things don't run according to your expectations, you might voice his disagreement, which will annoy the team because you made it clear you did not want to be involved in making decisions but are now indicating you are unhappy with the decisions made. How can you be unhappy when you aren't clear about what you expect? This would be unreasonable on your part.

B. This disconnect can be dangerous also in terms of how people see their roles. If others are doing all sorts of work but you just want to dream and envision, your team may begin to despise you as it seems as if you're not working nearly as hard as they are!

C. Furthermore, not being involved administratively on some level disconnects you from the day-to-day life of your church, which creates an unhealthy separation from your team. Your role as the lead elder either becomes despised or revered, and in both cases you are seen as untouchable and unapproachable, which is unhealthy!

So here are some tips to help you do this better:

LEAD ELDERS

- Find the right person(s) to help you.
- Talk openly about what frustrates you in this process and work on a solution with your team.
- Talk openly about your weaknesses in this area.
- Don't be intimidated. Admin is here to help you not hinder you!
- Keep it relational.
- Play to the strengths on the team. Let peoples' gifts come out and shine. This creates a better, stronger team!
- Participate administratively but hold things lightly. Teach your team to do the same.
- Be clear about your expectations and how you see each others' roles.
- Keep the big picture in mind, especially when it comes to finances. Don't let the finances rule you, but rule the finances!
- Trust and have faith that the Lord will provide wisdom to you and your team.
- Have fun.

D. MEDIA

Many church planters and lead elders look at the big churches of our world and try and copy what they do in their context. It usually doesn't work. Your context is different. Not only is your culture probably going to be different, but also your access to resources, technical skills (yours and others), the time people have, the look of your venue, and so on, will all be different. When it comes to how you use media you have to take your context into account and use it well for your own purposes.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MEDIA?

For our purposes here, 'media' is a catch-all term for any visual element or resource of your church that incorporates:

- The use of slides or video in your preaching / teaching
- The development of resources (study resources, books, etc.)
- The decor, set-up and visual elements of your venue

- Your 'online presence' - your website, social media accounts, podcast (sermon uploads) and any other online tool you may use
- The development of the arts in your church

WHY USE MEDIA?

- Media is a communications tool that enhances what you do.
- Media is a tool to help you develop the culture of your church. (A lack of media will also communicate something about you and form a specific culture in your church. Therefore, you can't ignore media and think it does not affect you.)
- Media serves your preaching, it does not replace it.
- Media serves the church, the church does not serve the media.

In this section we cannot provide detailed and comprehensive help on all the tools to help you do media well — where to get images, how to use Photoshop, etc. What we will do, however, is simply provide relevant pointers on how to use media effectively **so that it works for you, rather than you work for it**. There is a good way to use it, a bad way to use it, and a way to use it that actually just wastes everyone's time.

1. THE FIRST THING TO DO IS EXAMINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Using media or certain types of media (like social media) because 'everyone else is doing it' is a poor reason to use it. It will not serve you effectively and will, quite frankly, become a pain. Even more concerning is that if you use media like other churches use it you will actually inadvertently be communicating *their* values and identity through your media rather than your own.

You have to be clear about *why* you want to use it. Knowing the *why* will help you decide *how* you're going to use it, and which tools you're going to use.

The following points will help you determine your objective.

A. Media always communicates *values*

You can say things that are denied by the imagery you use. Two examples:

i) if your social media always has pictures of the band and the preacher and cool lighting and your latest event, the value you are broadcasting to those looking in and those part of your church is that the band and the preacher and the cool lights and events are what really matters. You can add a comment on a post or on your website that “it’s all about Jesus” but the visual communication denies this. It actually can make the phrase “it’s all about Jesus” cheap. The unspoken value in your church will become that what matters is being a preacher or a musician in the spotlight. This doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t have pictures of the band or the preacher.

What you consistently emphasise visually is what you are communicating as important.

You should be clear about what values you want to represent through your media and be consistent with doing this.

ii) If you stylise your venue like a movie theatre, are you surprised that the majority of your church just come and watch the preacher and the band ‘do their thing’? The way you decorate your venue and what you put up as its visual elements communicates something to the people there, even when they do not know it. There are reasons why cathedrals are decorated with so much imagery, because even back then they understood that visual elements communicate something.

Therefore, your primary objective is to communicate who you really are. So think about the following:

- Post pictures on social media or hang pictures up (where relevant) of the *people* of your church – maybe having coffee together, or connecting in a small group, or worshipping, or when you did something wonderful together, like a community event, or a small group meeting.
- Think of ways in which the scriptures can be incorporated in your venue and online presence. Perhaps scriptures that line up to your current sermon series printed on a poster as you walk in. And post these online the week before or after the sermon is preached.

- Post pictures of families online and talk about their breakthroughs. (Be careful of posting little kids on your website or social media, especially if you do not have parents' permission).
- Make your website reflect your values. Summarise your values into three to five core values and put these values front and centre, rather than make your values a difficult page to find.
- Make sure your website, your social media, and any other online platform you use is clear as to how people can find you (your venue address) and how they can contact you. (It will amaze you how many people forget to put a phone number and address on a website!).
- Have pictures or graphics up of nations and cities. This communicates that the apostolic call is important to you.

These ideas should be able to help you thinking along different lines to the usual or what you see other churches doing on the internet. You want your church community to have its own identity through media, displaying its own values. Hopefully this has given you some ideas on how you can do that.

Is social media and a website worth it?

Website: Yes. People do look for a church in their area online and will find you this way. Even just a basic website with details of who you are where people can find you. Also, have your church listed on Google Maps (just click on 'add a missing place' at the address on Google Maps).

Social media: Don't feel under pressure if this is not 'your thing'. It's useful but not required. Find someone else to help you, and if there is no one, don't worry too much about it until you do find someone. Social media is a trend that is changing and morphing all the time and it's impossible to keep up with it if you are not involved in PR. Use it for your purposes, don't let it use you for its purposes!

B. Professionalism is not the goal

The pursuit of 'excellence' is not the goal of a church, although it's good to do everything in an

excellent way. 'Excellence' does not mean perfection! We pursue Christ and if we are faithful in worshipping, proclaiming, presenting, and preaching Christ, excellence in how we do that will follow.

If you worry about the professionalism of your media you create a culture of professionalism where excellence becomes your highest value. When that happens, Jesus, the people, the nations, the call, family, and everything else a church is called to become secondary (or non-existent) to the need to always keep things slick, to keep the hype going, and to put on a good production.

Your meetings are not 'productions' or 'shows' or 'experiences'. They are about the people gathering together to worship, to have the gospel proclaimed, to love and to grow. While you will (in time) have many visitors coming to your meetings, and you might want to employ "seeker-sensitive" techniques, remember that there is an extreme to "seeker-sensitive" that even Bill Hybels, who invented the term, repented of. In Bill Hybels' findings, a highly programme-driven, professional church decreased participation — and that's not what you want.¹⁰

The use of media requires wisdom and it's usually good to get someone in your church who has experience or interest in media to help you. While professionalism is not the goal, lean on those who are professionals, if you can!

C. Do not worry too much about trends

We live in a technological age where certain aspects of media are expected. Many preachers use slides to go along with their preach, and some incorporate video and music and other elements into their preach. You must find your own style of preaching and don't feel under pressure to keep up with the trends because, once you've caught up, the trend has usually changed!

D. Do not delegitimise yourself by ignoring copyrights

- Pay attention to the licencing and copyright notices on any media that you are looking at.
- Just because it's on the Internet it doesn't mean it's free to use as you please. Generally,

10 See <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2007/october-online-only/willow-creek-repents.html>

most images, video and written material on the Internet are copyrighted.

- Many leaders feel that because they're using material for a church, which is a non-profit, that it's 'fair use' to use without permission. It's not. You are stealing from others by using it as you please.
- By using copyrighted material without permission you communicate that integrity is not a value you hold dearly. You can say integrity is a high value, but your actions betray you.
- By using copyrighted material without permission, you discredit yourself with artists and professionals who work in this field. Graphic designers, photographers, artists, writers and other creatives are frequently abused by companies and individuals who use their work for their own benefit without compensation. If you do that as a church you are adding to this problem.
- It doesn't matter that 'since you're small' you will probably not have anyone sue you for using their material. The point is not whether you can get away with it. The point is that it's actually illegal. You are breaking the law and compromising your integrity.

Examples:

- Photocopying books or material and distributing this at a Bible study, without permission from the original author.
- Taking YouTube videos or a movie clip off the internet and playing them in church without permission from the original creator.
- Playing a film in church without a license.
- Copying and pasting material from other sources and pasting this into your Bible study / other material, without permission or attributing the source properly
- Buying material for a course (such as "Alpha") and then photocopying or printing the material and distributing it widely to your church, when the licensing of the material restricts you from doing so.

The area of media copyrights and intellectual property can get quite technical but the general rule is that any media (photos, graphics, fonts, music, videos, books, courses, articles etc.) is automatically owned by the creator of the media. You can't publicly display or use anything created by another person in your own work unless you obtain their permission. This permission

can come in the form of licensing the media from media libraries (these can be paid-for or free) or requesting permission from the owner of that intellectual property directly.

- For worship music, a CCLI license allows you to display the lyrics of songs in your church and print out chord charts (we recommend every church to have a CCLI license. Without a CCLI license, it is illegal to distribute chord charts or display lyrics.)
- A CVLI license permits you to play certain films on your property (however, you are not allowed to charge an entrance fee) and to use movie clips for preaching illustrations.
- For written media, you can quote from other people's work within "fair use" boundaries but you *must* attribute the quotation to the original author.
- If you create the media yourself, you are obviously free to use it however you wish. We recommend you license your own work under a Creative Commons license if you want to make the use of your work less restrictive. See creativecommons.org for more details.

There are many legal free media libraries available that you can find. Here are some examples as of 2018:

Photos:

<https://www.pexels.com>

<https://unsplash.com>

<https://www.lifeofpix.com>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Video:

<https://videos.pexels.com>

<https://www.stockfootageforfree.com>

Music and sound effects:

<https://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary>

<http://ccmixter.org>

<https://www.bensound.com>

Vector graphics:

<https://www.vecteezy.com>

<https://www.freepik.com>

<https://www.freevector.com>

Graphic design apps:

<https://designbold.com>

<https://canva.com>

<https://snappa.com>

Church-specific media:

<https://churchmediadrop.com>

<https://open.life.church>

<https://www.churchmediaspot.com>

Media licenses for churches:

Worship music: <https://ccli.com>

Movies and film: <http://cvli.com>

2. ENCOURAGING MEDIA AND THE ARTS IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Those who work in the media and arts space — musicians, designers, artists, writers — frequently find it difficult to be part of a local church. They often think differently and don't always fit in very well. Most often, our ministries do not find a way to encourage these people in their call. The church often wants artists to conform to something they (the church) feel comfortable with. For example, if a musician doesn't make "Christian music" then their call in the music industry is not seen to be legitimate; if an artist or a writer creates something that expresses the dark and difficult moments of life this is shunned as 'not positive enough' or even sometimes 'evil'. Everyone, you included, have struggles. The nature of being a creative person is putting life's experiences into your work, and that work is often public. This is not a bad thing, it's actually a very positive thing, as it encourages discussion and honesty and transparency around

real issues that everyone goes through.

NB: LEAN ON THE NCMI TEAM

As you may have noticed, when we're dealing with practical aspects of a church, things can get very technical and complex very quickly. Perhaps you have questions on how to register your church as a non-profit? Or what kind of by-laws do you need to have? Or what should your church constitution look like?

This section can't provide all these answers because things change depending on the nation or place in question. We've provided more the heart of the practical aspects than the details. The benefits of partnering with a translocal team such as NCMI can be practically seen here. You can lean on various members of the team and other church leaders with more experience who can help you navigate through these waters. Many members of the NCMI team have worked professionally in law or media or just have a lot of experience. So it's good to make use of our partnerships.

PART 6:

BUILDING A TEAM

WHY TEAM?

We hear a lot about “team” both in the church context and the corporate world. It is clearly the best way to operate, as is illustrated in **Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12**:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken”.

Or **Deuteronomy 32:30**

How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?

Let’s examine team in the light of Joshua and Moses.

Exodus 17:8-16

8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the

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top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. 14 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, 16 saying, “A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

The objective here was to defeat the enemy. This was done within the context of a team. Many players worked towards the one purpose with different roles to fulfil:

- Moses (on the hill) saw the big picture – THE VISIONARY
- Joshua (in the valley) leading the army – THE GENERAL
- Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ arms – MOSES’ SUPPORT TEAM
- Some chosen men fighting in the Valley – THE FIGHTING PRIESTHOOD
- The rest of Israel, praying and supporting – THE SUPPORTING PRIESTHOOD

- Victory was ensured as long as there was team.
 - i. Insight – they had heard God
 - ii. Oversight – the leader and the whole team had the responsibility to implement what God said.

- Each part did what was required:
 - Trust in God (faith)
 - Trust in each other
 - Celebrating the differences

- Giving glory to God

- Who won the battle?
 - Joshua won the battle against the enemy in the valley with the sword.
 - Moses won the battle on the mountain top with his hands raised.
 - Aaron and Hur won the battle as they supported Moses by finding a rock for him to sit on and holding up his arms.
 - The nation of Israel triumphed in battle because God was their banner, Jehovah Nissi.

So they all won the battle – a victory given to them by God Himself!

When planting a church, you need to form several teams as soon as possible. You might have to rethink your teams when transitioning as well. There will be your general leadership team, your deacon team, and your eldership team. Biblically speaking, there are only two ordained authorities in a local church – the elders (pastors) and the deacons.

1. TEAM BEGINS FIRST WITH THE NATURE OF GOD

- Your team is meant to reflect who God is to the world.
- God is "agape" - sacrificial, unconditional love! He shows covenant love (1 John 4:16.)
- Out of agapé come relationships, which are a top priority.
- Therefore He desires to work with those who are in relationships, which equals "team".

2. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO WORKED IN TEAM

A. God works in team (The Trinity)

- It never was His idea to be independent and individualistic. That is the result of rebellion, and the kingdom of self.

B. God instituted team in the beginning with marriage

- Male and female working together as one (Genesis 1:27,28).
- Husbands and wives were meant to work in team and also with their children. Team must work in the home first and then in the church.
- As God is love and works in team, marriage is covenant love and is the first great example of team on earth. (Ephesians 5:31-32.)

C. Moses & Aaron, Joshua, David and Nehemiah all worked in teams

D. Jesus worked in team

- The disciples = team
- It took patience and wisdom to involve them and train them to work in team.
- Jesus did not send them out alone but in teams of two! (Luke 9:1, Luke 10:1) They could have covered a greater area alone, but as teams of two they were more effective.
- **Jesus wants us to work in team with Him. (See John 15.)**

E. Paul worked with teams

Some of those on his team were:

- Barnabas (Acts 14:14)
- Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7)
- Silas (Silvanus)
- Timothy (to whom Paul gives instructions to carry out apostolic correction – 1 Thessalonians 2:6 / 1:1)
- James (Jesus' natural brother – Galatians 1:19)
- Possibly Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:9, 6)
- Titus (he had to appoint elders in every city – Titus 1:5)

These were all apostles and then there were others too: "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers". (Philemon 24.)

3. TEAM CONSISTS OF MEN AND WOMEN

One of today's global problems remains the war of the sexes. Discrimination, feminism, competition... this is the result of failure to work in team. Leadership must involve women! It was so from the beginning. God is much wiser than men and He said, "It is not good for man to be alone." (Genesis 2:18.)

There are many Biblical examples of the involvement of women:

- A. God called both men and woman to rule over all of creation together (Genesis 1: 27, 28).
- B. Because of Lydia's business, Paul was able to establish a base in Macedonia.
- C. Check out Romans 1:1-16 and see how many women Paul affirmed that were part of what God did in that time.
- D. The fallen nature always tends to take advantage of any weakness or opportunity offered by tradition, culture, or circumstances. In terms of involving women, history presents a poor track record by Christian leaders.
- E. It was God's idea from the beginning for there to be a vision of shared values, where everyone feels that he or she has a part to play and a stake in the ultimate outcome.
- F. Men and women will never be able to achieve what God wants of us without each other.
- G. We do not need to rob ourselves of the richness we will find when we join together as co-labourers in the Kingdom as men and women. God is calling men and women back to Biblical truth, to work in team in these days, to bring in the fullness of His glory.

For husbands and wives:

- Perpetrate the philosophy of team in your marriage and in the home.
- Become team minded.
- Show your family from the Bible that it is God's way. Teach it – help them to get excited about it.
- Regularly evaluate, discuss and plan together.
- As a couple ask yourselves how are you doing. And as a family. Talk about it. Pray it

through.

- Demonstrate it – as husband and wife, both pulling the load of housework and home together! Look for opportunities to demonstrate it. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you, pull you up and open your eyes.
- Train your children to do their part to keep the home running smoothly. It is their home, not just mom and dad's!
- Getting team to operate in marriage and home will get everybody to grow up and mature in a thousand ways, including spiritually!

4. THE WHOLE CHURCH IS A TEAM

- An eldership is a team
- Eldership and deacons are a team
- Leadership and the rest of the people are a team

TEAM IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Note that the following is not a full treatment of how team should operate, but a helpful summary. When we speak of 'team' we want to include the church as well as the family in our thinking.

1. Each part = part of the whole

- Paul saw the church as a body with many parts. It's a team! (Vs 12-31.) One body part or a heap of parts is not a body!
- No "them/us" attitudes.

2. Each part belonging. That is team!

(1 Corinthians 12:14-17,20)

- Children are born into our homes by God's will, not by accident. They are not victims of circumstances, but children of destiny!
- Likewise, being in a particular local church should be by God's will. You are 'added' to a

church by the Lord.

- Usually everyone pulls their own weight in a family. Dad towards his ministry, Mom towards the children, or home, or her own ministry, and each child to his or her little world! Likewise, the church operates like a family – we all do the dishes, we all bring a part to make it work.
- Everyone represents the whole team, in the family and in the church.
- Everything concerns everyone, in the family and in the church, because you are a team.
- Philippians 2:4: “each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others”.
- We cannot walk away from the family; we are always part of it. When we leave a local church to go and plant, or to live somewhere else, or when God leads us to another church we should:
 - i) Make sure we leave with blessing as far as it is possible
 - ii) Always honour the church – no bad mouthing
 - iii) Always honour the leadership – no unfinished business

3. Each part needs the others and the rest of the body

- There can be no independence. We encourage interdependence, but not independence and lone ranger mentality.
- No dishonouring of the rest.
- No despising of the rest.
- No despising the little brother, or the old grandmother, the poor or the handicapped one in the church family.

4. Each part is as important as the others – that is team!

(1 Corinthians 12:22)

- We do not use, abuse, dominate, exploit or manipulate them for our benefit.
- Each part working together with the others for the benefit of the whole – that is team! (See also Ephesians 4: 15-16.)
- We must be willing to pace our lives, to keep in step with each other — husbands with wives, older brothers and sisters with the younger, leaders with their people. Leaders

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should be careful of setting up over-ambitious church programs with the overworked stressed congregations in some of our large cities!

- Resist the temptation to run with your thing – home, children and ministry, whatever. It is a partnership! 1 Corinthians 11:33 says, “So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other”.
- Prune your activities to cope with the lives of those God has put you in team with. Often our schedules are overloaded with things of our own ambitions and desires.
- Resist the temptation to "drag your feet" when it is in the interest of the other person.
- Take up the vision of the whole!
- Teach everyone in the family to carry the load together and demonstrate it yourself!
- We all work together to keep our home going and our church family serving the purpose of God in bringing in the Kingdom!

“The Biblical pattern for an eldership team is a team of equals who perform different tasks at different times. Leading this team is one of those tasks and, although this may be the responsibility of one particular individual, that person is still an equal member of the team. The fact that a team is made up of equals who each bring their strengths and abilities to that team is one of the outstanding benefits of team.” - Dudley Daniel¹¹

- If you lead a team, make sure you are not running on your own as that will shipwreck you. No lone ranger leadership! Lone ranger leadership is not visionary leadership!
- The team leader plays a primary role in determining the way in which a team will operate. This means the team leader has the most influence in determining whether a team operates according to a hierarchy or not. According to the Biblical pattern, there is no positional leadership, only leadership based on different *functions* and *gifts*, working together without the hindrance of hierarchy.
- “When we place ourselves outside of the team in any way our body language says, ‘I don’t really believe this stuff, but it is convenient for me to teach it.’ We have a team but our attitude says, ‘I am the team leader and that is my team.’ This is not how it should be. Our

11 Dudley Daniel, *A Servant’s Heart and Skilful Hands* (2nd Edition), pg 92, 93. Available freely at ncmi.net.

attitude should be, 'This is the team and I am an equal part of it, I am in it!' When I acknowledge that I am part of the team I lead, the team can always speak to me, challenge me, correct me and encourage me. When I consider myself to be outside of it in any way this cannot happen, and I will essentially be unaccountable."¹²

- "We must level the ground within eldership teams without compromising the significance of the team leader's role" - Dudley Daniel.¹³

5. Each part working in cooperation with the others for overall efficiency – that is team!

(Ephesians 4:15-16)

- An essential requirement is to keep communication open. 1 John 1:7 says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another."
- Inform others concerning that which affects them.
- Let others know in good time to avoid inconveniencing them.
- Let your wife know well ahead of time about the invitation you have given, or one you have received in terms of visits, meals etc.
- Wives may need to learn to communicate more specifically with their husbands! He does not need to hear all the details that you would normally consider important!
- Teach the children to inform parents and siblings about their affairs that will affect the others.
- Teach your children to communicate their feelings, their plans and commitments.
- Have a central home-calendar – especially when there are teens in the family. Train everyone to record their commitments on it on a daily basis so that everyone knows what the others are doing and where they are going.
- Have a church calendar and be realistic with how much goes on it.
- Elders must be informed about what is happening, and also inform the lead elder and his wife of their activities.
- Plan and discuss your day/week/month with the others.
- Involve your children wisely in those decisions that they can participate in. Share plans and the will of God with them. Ask them to pray and to seek God's will together as a

12 Dudley Daniel, *A Servant's Heart and Skilful Hands* (2nd Edition). Page 104. Available freely at ncmi.net.

13 Dudley Daniel, *A Servant's Heart and Skilful Hands* (2nd Edition). Page 102. Available freely at ncmi.net.

family.

- Everyone must be "owning it", not resisting or fighting it.
- Loyalty – We don't tell the whole world what goes on in our homes or our church family. We don't expose each other and humiliate one another in front of others. Romans 12:10 says, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves".
- **Bear with each other.** Ephesians 4:2 says, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Remind your people to bear with the young inexperienced preacher who preaches while you are away. They will be participating in his development and bring him to fullness for the Glory of the King, and the benefit of His body.)
- **Compensate** for each others' weaknesses / limits – age, physical, and gender.
- **Complement** one another with your gifts.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses and have confidence in God to use them at the right time and also to develop them.
- Observe others and learn to identify their strengths.
- Give way for others to step in, and even draw them in where necessary.

6. If one part suffers

- If one starts becoming bitter, discouraged and falling away, it affects the whole family and the whole body of Christ.
- If one part falls into sin it affects the whole family and the whole body of Christ.
- Each part should care for the others. See 1 Corinthians 12:22-26. Older children for the younger, parents for the children, children for the parents; lead couple for the other elders and wives, the elders and wives for the lead couple; the leaders for the people, people for the leaders, individuals for one other.
- Each serve each other. Galatians 5:13 says, "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love." Serving is a basic character trait of true Biblical Christianity, Jesus being our supreme model and example.

7. A team always needs a leader

- We are to recognise God's choice of leaders, appreciate them, honour them, pray for them and submit to them for God's sake and our sake! Why? Because *God* chooses, calls, and anoints them. If that is not the case they will not last. Matthew 15:13 says, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots."
- If things go wrong they are accountable to God. Leaders cannot be held responsible in the end if they do not have the liberty to make decisions and lead the best they know how.
- "Remember – obey, submit to your leaders" (Hebrews 13:7,17.)
- Pray for them that they will mature and be good leaders, full of wisdom, totally devoted and loyal to Jesus, for God's sake, the Kingdom's sake, and your sake!
- However, leaders must lead responsibly under God!

THE RESULTS OF NOT WORKING IN TEAM

When we try to work with others and still be independent, we become less effective. When this is how we view leadership, we'll actually take that view into our home, encouraging an unhealthy independent spirit with our kids, a breakdown in communication, children not talking, sharing or submitting their ideas, and who struggle with personal problems that parents are oblivious to. Authority is seriously weakened resulting in insubordinate and insecure children and eventually insecure adults.

People in the church very quickly and easily embrace the individualistic models of today. It is close to their fallen human natures and it suits the tendencies of the sinful heart. But they soon become insecure, feeling justified for not working as a team, which leads to problems in the leadership team with leaders doing their "own thing" and, at the very least, little cliques forming in the church and eventually full-blown division. Division does not just effect a church but also brings issues into families involved in the church.

The one-man show will never work. God will not bless it. If you are not working as a team face up

to it and make a decision. Take time to consider this. Plan to learn how to become a Biblical team player with the help of the Spirit, by faith and obedience to the Word of God.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ELDERSHIP TEAM

Eldership is about seeing people loved and cared for and equipping **them** to fulfil the calling and potential God has put inside of them, and to know that "*to whom much is given...much shall be required.*" (Luke 12:48.) It is important to note that, as the lead elder, you will be responsible for setting the vision of your church, which would place you at the front and centre of the church's identity, if you're not careful. A church plant or a church transition can very quickly become your thing because others will also see it that way. You can very easily gain an identity and security from this. You can then very easily begin to build it around your own gifts. **But it is not your church, it is God's church!** And building in this way will not be sustainable and, if it doesn't burn you out, it will eventually not last beyond your generation.

In order to avoid all this you need to put elders in place as soon as possible. A local church is governed by a plurality of elders. Eldership is a high and holy calling with wonderful rewards and awesome responsibilities. Perhaps you have had some years as an elder at your current church, or you may have not (it's not only elders who plant!). Regardless, if you don't have a clear idea on what the responsibilities of elders are you will not lead yourself very well, nor will you be able to raise up a team of elders in your church very well.

ELDERS HAVE THREE RESPONSIBILITIES

Elders are overseers. Eldering is essentially a verb, a *doing* word (1 Timothy 3). It's a noble **TASK**, not a position. When you don't do the task you cease to be an elder. Elders are shepherds – this is what they do.

1) Elders GUARD

- Elders please God, not man. They give an account to Him (Jesus) for her (the Church), not to her for Him.
- Therefore, elders are sensitive to the Spirit, not sensitive to the seeker.

- Elders guard the Gospel of the Kingdom – the message, the mandate, the ministry and the mission of God.

a) They guard the MESSAGE of the Kingdom

- Jesus is the central message! Faith in Jesus is all we need to have for eternal life. The message of the Kingdom is not about rules and regulations but about a loving God. It's not about the centrality of man but the centrality of Christ! Elders must guard the message of the Kingdom and discern correctly between what is the message of the Kingdom and what is not.

b) They guard the MANDATE of the Kingdom

- A church not focused on the WORLD for evangelism is a church not found on the WORD.

c) They guard the MINISTRY of the Kingdom

- The power and presence of Jesus changes hearts and brings life. We are Word and Spirit people, not just one or the other!

d) They guard the MISSION of the Kingdom

- Everything is done in the context of the King and His Kingdom. Elders are not about making a church's name great or their own names great. They are about the Kingdom and His Kingdom and they are about maturing and equipping the Saints to be about the King and His Kingdom. For this they labour.

Colossians 1:28, 29:

"28 [Jesus] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I (Paul) toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

2) Elders GATHER and GUIDE

- Elders are about shepherding the flock.

1 Peter 5:1-4

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Psalms 78:72

"And David shepherded them with INTEGRITY of heart; with SKILFUL hands he led them."

- Elders PRAY for the flock and with the flock. "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." (E.M. Bounds). *Prayer sustains our love for people.*
- Elders serve the Church but the Church is not their master
- Elders will give an account to Jesus for the Church. They don't give an account to the Church for Jesus!
- Elders have authority over the Church but they do not lord this authority over her.
- Elders fight the enemy but never the bride!
- Elders BUILD UP the Church.
- Elders must be familiar with the Great Shepherd and bring people to the Great Shepherd.
- Elders must be with the sheep. Elders must study and prepare for preaching but their primary responsibility is to be with the sheep!
- See also Ezekiel 34, John 10.

3) Elders GOVERN

- **All elders govern.** This is not the responsibility of only certain elders with a gift.
- Elders are on the forefront and LEAD the mission. They LEAD; FEED; LOVE the sheep.
- Part of an elder's responsibility is to be involved with the city eldership – loving and

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honouring other churches and leaders.

- *Elders also involve the translocal to disciple nations. It's not all about the translocal and not all about the local, but both!*

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- isn't to keep people happy but to keep people moving, which often times makes them unhappy!
- isn't to get something out of people but rather to invest in them!
- isn't to DO all of the work, but to DELEGATE the work to the right people who can do it better than them anyway.
- isn't to declare what we are against but rather define what we are for.
- isn't to model perfection but rather to admit weaknesses, mistakes and shortcomings.
- isn't to tear down but rather to build up.
- isn't to be envious but rather to be a student of all that God is blessing.
- isn't to be secluded but rather to surround ourselves with the right people.
- isn't to be original but rather to understand that there really is nothing new under the sun!
- isn't to restrain the people we work with but rather to figure out how to RELEASE them!

CHOOSING ELDERS

Isn't it striking that Jesus Himself formed a team and relied on it?

Luke 6:12-13

12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles.

Mark 3:13-19

13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so

that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons. 16 He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

- Putting a team together requires **prayer**. Jesus prayed all night, then called and appointed His team. Don't just choose on a whim or based on what you see with your own eyes! Get the Lord's perspective!
- The leader chose those He desired or wanted.
- He appointed them so that they might be with Him and send them out to preach
- Relationship came first. They were to "be with Him". Only after being with Him does He send them out to function in their preaching capacity.

1. They should be people who are "with Him" (Jesus)

- They should know and be actively learning the will and ways of God.
- They should be full of faith in Jesus, knowing his forgiveness and his empowering.

2. They should have a good reputation

- "Above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)
- "Respectable" (1 Tim. 3:2)
- "Well thought of by outsiders" (1 Tim. 3:7)

3. They should be faithful to their spouse and be a good example of godly marriage.

- "The husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)

4. They should be intentionally managing their household well

- "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive" (1 Tim. 3:4)

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- "His children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination" (Titus 1:6)

5. They should have self-control

- "Sober-minded" (1 Tim 3:2)
- "Self-Controlled" (Titus 1:8)
- "Not greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7)
- "Not quick tempered" (Titus 1:7)
- "Not quarrelsome" (1 Tim. 3:3)
- "Not a drunkard" (1 Tim. 3:3)
- "Disciplined" (Titus 1:8)

6. They should have good relational and communication skills.

- "Gentle" (1 Tim. 3:3)
- "Upright" (Titus 1:8)
- "Not quick tempered" (Titus 1:7)
- "Not quarrelsome" (1 Tim. 3:3)
- "Not arrogant" (Titus 1:7)
- "Able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:3)
- "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4)

7. They should be hospitable and loving.

- "hospitable" (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)
- "a lover of good" (Titus 1:8)

8. They should have personal integrity

- "Above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)
- "Being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3)
- "Not greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7)
- "Upright" (Titus 1:8)

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- "Hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught" (Titus 1:9)
- "Holy" (Titus 1:8)

9. They should have spiritual maturity

- "Not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6)

10. They should have good, sound theology.

- "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9)
- They shouldn't be latching on to the latest fad or idea, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but consistent with their theology and honest and open when their theology changes.

11. They should be good examples.

- "Being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3)"

12. They should be faithful and hard working

- See how faithful and hard working Joseph was (Genesis 39:1-6).
- The person who can be trusted with little can be trustworthy with much. (Luke 16:10-12).

13. They should love people and have shepherd, servant-hearts

- The example of Jesus! The Son of Man came to serve and not be served!
- Jesus says, "feed my sheep." (John 21:17)

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING IS NOT MENTIONED:

1. Personality traits

We are to be interested in *character before charisma*. There is no Biblical precedent for leaders to

be highly sociable or extroverted. Likewise, there is no Biblical precedent for leaders to be highly introspect and introverted. God gifts all differently to form part of a team, but He makes no prescription for personality when it comes to leadership. All the above points do not talk about personality traits. Some of Jesus' team appeared to be loud-mouthed and spontaneous (Peter) while others appeared to be quieter and more thoughtful (Andrew).

2. Cultural background

We do not only bring those onto a team who share the same culture as us, the same likes and dislikes, dress sense, or sub-culture. It's not about forming a team of individuals who you feel comfortable around. Note that Jesus picked tax collectors, fisherman, zealots, and quite a diverse group of people! He didn't choose a bunch of rabbis. It's also important to note that what one person deems a leader in one culture is different in another, and if you don't know about these differences you may end up with a very homogenous leadership team because you did not think other cultural views of leadership are valid or did not even consider the differences. (I.e. you assumed your cultural views of leadership are 'biblical' when they are only cultural. This is important when you plant in different culture.)

3. Economic background

There is no biblical precedent for choosing people on a team who have access to certain kinds of resources. Sometimes we only choose those of the same economical background as us because we are comfortable being around with people in that economical bracket. Sometimes leaders don't realise that they make access to resources a prerequisite for leadership by the way they arrange meetings, or how they emphasise travelling, or always see going out to eat as good hospitality, etc. These are examples to be aware of.

CHOOSING DEACONS

The characteristics to look out for in choosing deacons are much the same. Deacons form a different function to elders – usually (but not always) a more administrative function, while elders are about *governance*. Nevertheless, deacons are to be “full of grace and power” like Stephen, who also did great signs and wonders among the people (Acts 6:8). Deacons are not

just 'home group leaders' or people who you get to pick up your kids from school. Elders bring discipline, doctrine, and direction, whereas deacons play a role within those decisions made by the elders. In our day and age we may need to elevate the office of the deacon to its more biblical function, otherwise we will not get nearly as much done as we might hope.

Choose deacons as soon as you can!

LET THEM BE TESTED

"And let them also be tested first; then let them serve..." (1 Timothy 3:10a)

UNITY OF THE TEAM

- Jesus shows us the kind of humility and relational heart we need on team. Out of the security of our relationship with God we can have a heart for each other. This is a high value of team! But the bigger a church gets, the more relationships are tested, and quickly they can become merely functional or even non-existent.
- **Unity is God's way and therefore unity is our way!** Covenantal relationships imply commitment, dedication and being intentional – *working out our salvation with fear and trembling!*

Philippians 1:18b – 2:30

1:18 ... Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the

faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

*27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in **one** spirit, with **one** mind striving **side by side** for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is **a clear sign to them** of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, 30 engaged in the same **conflict** that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

*1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, being in **full accord** and of **one mind**. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant than yourselves**. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he **humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to **will** and to **work** for his good pleasure.*

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. 17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and **rejoice with me**.

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For **I have no one like him**, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's **proven worth**, how as a son with a father he has **served with me in the gospel**. 23 I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you **Epaphroditus** my **brother** and **fellow worker** and **fellow soldier**, and your **messenger** and **minister** to my need, 26 for he has been **longing for you all** and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may **rejoice at seeing him again**, and that I may be less anxious. 29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and **honour such men**, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

- Paul looks forward to fruitful labour (1:22) together with the Philippians. He wants their relationship to cause them to progress in the faith and have joy in it, and ultimately to glory in Christ Jesus (1:25-26). Would it be that our relationships on our team cause us to do that!

- But he is clear that their manner of life must be worthy of the gospel of Christ, and he indicates what this means: that they are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel (see 1:27-28).
- This means they will not be frightened in anything by their opponents. He says unity is a clear sign to opponents of their own destruction, and of the salvation of those in Christ.
- Our enabling for unity comes from our relationship with Jesus (2:1). We enjoy:
 - Encouragement in Christ
 - Comfort from the love of Christ
 - Participation in the Spirit
 - Affection and sympathy from Christ, who suffered as we do, but without sin
- **When there is relational harmony and unity, there is joy! How? (2:2-8)**
 - By being of the same mind
 - Having the same love
 - Being in full accord
 - Being of one mind
 - Doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit
 - In humility counting others more significant
 - Looking not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others
 - Having this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus:
 - i) Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped
 - ii) He emptied himself
 - iii) He took on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men
 - iv) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross
- **The results of relational harmony and unity (2:9-11)**
 - God will exalt us as He did Jesus. I.e. the exact opposite of us exalting ourselves!
 - God gets the glory
 - Working out our salvation with fear and trembling, (God giving us the will and ability to

do so), is in the context of relational harmony and unity (2:12-13)

- Doing all things without grumbling or disputing. Why? Because this is Christian maturity - **“that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.”** (2:14-18)

An example of relational harmony and unity – Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-29):

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For **I have no one like him**, who will be **genuinely concerned for your welfare**. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's **proven worth**, how as a son with a father he has **served with me in the gospel**. 23 I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you **Epaphroditus** my **brother** and **fellow worker** and **fellow soldier**, and your **messenger** and **minister** to my need, 26 for he has been **longing for you all** and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest **I should have sorrow upon sorrow**. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may **rejoice at seeing him again**, and that I may be less anxious. 29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and **honour such men**, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

HOW A TEAM SHOULD THEN LOOK

A. We must have genuine love one for another

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- B. We must love before we worry about skills and function
- C. Our love must be verbalised!
- D. Our love must be demonstrated!
- E. We forgive each other generously
- F. We believe the best of each other always. Always assume the best!
- G. We deal with issues – fall-outs, misunderstandings and perceptions.
- H. We pre-empt possible confusion and are clear about where we're at or why we're doing something.
- I. Conflict is good, if handled correctly, in love
- J. We don't get hurt easily
- K. We 'push in' with each other. Encourage your elders to 'push in' with you as the leader, not always the other way around! You must have an open door for people to do this.

COMMUNICATION IN AN ELDERSHIP TEAM:

- Use every means possible to communicate.
- Encourage your elders to share news and personal stuff with you and your wife. It hurts when it's heard from others because that's not team.
- You can't force accountability and transparency, but if it's not there, then there is a concern.
- Speak to each other about preaching and teaching and doctrine. Where are you at? Don't just go and change your doctrine overnight without discussing it and being accountable to your team — and likewise, your team must communicate to you where they're at, where they have a different mind, etc.
- Speak to each other about where people are at in the church and any counselling going on. Encourage your leaders and elders to share with you where people are at, and you do likewise. This will help when some people go to different elders about the same issues, or choose an elder they think will always tell them what they want to hear.
- However, remember that the eldership team should be confidential about all matters relating to their people. When someone calls for confidentiality, it needs to be explained that the elders hold everything in confidence and, if necessary, they will need to be told.

BUILDING A TEAM

- The collective wisdom of team is a huge benefit. Use it!
- Speak to each other about your dreams and aspirations
- If an elder has been taken into someone's confidence about a matter, and it impacts on the life of the church, they need to share it with the team.

DECISION-MAKING IN AN ELDERSHIP TEAM:

- Team decision-making is not a democracy. We do not give our opinions then vote. The team, led by the team leader, comes to a consensus and makes the decision together.
- A team does not need a "balancing factor" on team – someone who always chooses to contradict for the sake of making sure there is 'balance'. This is not helpful.
- You don't need 'yes' men on a team. People should have an opinion. Deal with disagreement properly. Often 'yes' men are saying 'no' in the background.
- The team must own all the decisions made, even if someone personally doesn't agree with the decision.
- The lead elder (you) are an equal part of the team. You do not come with your vision but allow the vision to be shaped together with the team.

Pray for each other! Strive for unity, keeping the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:3

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Peacemakers are in short supply!

FAITHFULNESS, THE WORK ETHIC REQUIRED ON TEAM

2 Timothy 1:1-2:7

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your **sincere faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. 9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a **herald** and an **apostle** and a **teacher**. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have **believed**, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have **entrusted** to him until that day.

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with **faith** and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was **entrusted** to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17 On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18 May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he

*helped me in Ephesus. 2:1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 **And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable (faithful) people who will also be qualified to teach others.** 3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5 Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.*

- The historical context is Acts 19-20, where the whole region was impacted with the Gospel through Paul teaching there for three years.
- Note the element of faithfulness in this scripture. It's about passing on the baton. In 2:2, four generations are mentioned. Paul could see three generations coming through! That's a true father.
- **Timothy is the object lesson, and he had a father, and was encouraged to raise up sons, who would raise up others.**
 - 1:13 — Timothy was encouraged to follow the pattern of the sound words he was taught by Paul
 - 1:14 — Timothy was instructed to guard the good deposit God that God has entrusted to him – the Gospel (2:8-13)!
 - 1:15-18 — All in Asia had turned away from Paul, except for Onesiphorus!
 - 2:7 — Paul encourages Timothy to meditate on what he has just taught, and that God would give insight! Paul's subject matter is **faithfulness, stickability, continuity** and **multiplying**. How do we develop disciples that will not turn away or turn back?
 - Paul compares Phylegus and Hermogenes to Onesiphorus. Then Paul teaches Timothy the qualities of good leadership characteristics that he must model and pass on. This will develop more people like Onesiphorus.
 - Paul is teaching Timothy, his dear son, to replicate or multiply faithfulness – a heart after God!!!

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- We should spend more time with those who are faithful, ensuring continuity.
- If there are no faithful men following you, perhaps it is a result of you not being faithful yourself
 - Make the correction yourself
 - Teach it to others by your example
- Faithfulness is then something that is celebrated, and will ensure continuity

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1:3-5 Faithful in our relationships

- v3-4 With God
- v5 With our leaders
- v5 With our family – the faithfulness DNA is passed on from one generation to another. Timothy was the third generation of faithfulness in his family!

1:6-7 Faithfulness with the gift/deposit from God when we are called and ordained (the talent, or grace deposit)

1:8-12 Faithful with the Gospel

- The Gospel is our salvation, our conduct for life and our message.
- It is the power of God
- It is the grace of God
- The result of it is a calling to a holy life (godly character)
- We will have to pay a price for the preaching of it

1:13-14 Faithful to what God has put in us through discipleship

- Having a pattern of sound teaching
- Being faithful with a deposit of grace given to us to give to others

1:15-18 Examples of faithfulness

BUILDING A TEAM

- Paul teaches on being reliable against the back-drop of real events. There was real pain and disappointment in his heart! He may have been knocked down, but he wasn't knocked out! We see a man hopeful, full of perseverance, risk and optimism – still trusting! We cannot afford to lose our momentum in God. We deal with the real issues, but we carry on building positively and joyfully in God!
- V15 — Bad examples, Phygelus and Hermogenes who deserted Paul
- V16-18 Onesiphorus, a good example
 - Often **refreshed** Paul
 - Was **not ashamed** of Paul's chains. The Roman prison where Paul was held prisoner was called 'the house of darkness'. It was subterranean, dirtied with filth from the street (manure, dirt & urine), dark and sinister. Visitors were at the mercy of the guards, could be implicated and kept there for some time. Not a pleasant thing!
 - He **searched** hard for Paul until he found him
 - NOTE: The good shepherd searches for the one lost! Not the believers but the one lost!
 - How well and in many ways he **served** (**helped** NIV) Paul and the church in Ephesus.

2:1-2 Call to replicate faithfulness

Ensures that sons are raised up, and there is continuity!

- Deep relationships – he calls Timothy “my dear son”! (1:2)
- Strong faith in God – be strong in God's grace!
- Entrust the baton to reliable men
 - Entrust – to teach and to charge with that teaching
 - Body of truth – things Paul taught in the presence of many witnesses
 - Qualified to teach others – same faithfulness as Timothy and Onesiphorus
 - Four generations in mind

2:3-6 Pictures of faithfulness

- A good soldier:
 - Does not turn back
 - Pleases the commanding officer – Jesus

- A competing athlete:
 - Competes according to the rules
 - Competes to win – run the race to reach the finish line

- A farmer:
 - Is hardworking
 - Has long term vision
 - Is faithful through the seasons
 - Enjoy the fruit of their labours. God rewards faithfulness!

2:7 Act on the truth of this teaching

- Reflect and meditate on these things
- God will give you insight

CULTURE AND VALUES

1 Timothy 3:14-15

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, 15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

The church reflects and is an example of

- A living God
- A pillar and foundation of truth.

These are Kingdom values. We are to behave according to Kingdom values and not the values of the world.

Matthew 28:18-20

BUILDING A TEAM

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- We are called obey those things (Kingdom values) that Jesus has commanded us to obey
- We have to therefore be intentional about forming and continuously developing and practicing Kingdom values in our local church.
- If we are not intentional about this, your church will develop a culture of its own, and invariably such a culture will reflect the values and the culture of your city and nation, or the predominant nation or people group of the church, rather than Kingdom values.
- This is not to say that every aspect of the culture of a city or a people group is bad, but that it is your job to discern and develop the right culture.

What is culture, generally?

- A first response or default
- Comes naturally
- Defines us
- Unites us
- Celebrated / practiced by everyone

What shapes culture, generally?

- Society and family traditions around us
- Historical values – we've always done it this way
- Preference
- Weakness
- Peer pressure
- Pressure to conform
- Doing nothing

What is Kingdom culture?

- Our default behaviour and values, which should reflect Jesus and the Kingdom
- Our celebration of Kingdom life
- Culture is a heart, not just a practice, but not less than a practice
- They define and unite the heart, foundation and boundaries of community
- Our biblical 'house rules', the way we do things
- We can never over-communicate when building culture

What shapes Kingdom culture?

- Scripture
- Obedience
- Faithfulness and perseverance
- The leading of the Holy Spirit
- Our agreement, unity, consistency and celebration of these values.

CREATING KINGDOM VALUES IN YOUR CHURCH

- You must therefore think carefully and deliberately about the values you want to set in the foundational stages of the church.
- You must know what scriptural values are. If you do not, you need to spend time discovering them before you plant. You do not want to plant a church that represents:
 - your values
 - your pet doctrine
 - your issues
 - your emphasis
 - your preferences
 - your calendar
 - your family
 - your heritage
 - your culture

- your prejudices
- Biblical values involve making Christ central and for there to be team, love, forgiveness, grace, obedience, and much more besides. **It is here that the translocal team can help you form solid foundational values as you set out to plant or transition.**

UNSPOKEN, UNWRITTEN VALUES

We must take great strides in being clear about the values of our church and how these values are practiced. You cannot put a set of values on a website and expect them to be lived out by your eldership team, deacons and people. Even you will fall short of them. You have to constantly assess your values as an individual and as a team with the reality, and adjust yourselves as necessary.

Unspoken values are the values that develop alongside the spoken, 'official' values of your church. They are 'unspoken' or 'unwritten' because they are, well, not written down anywhere, and people often don't speak about them or can't quite articulate them, yet they live them out. **Unwritten or unspoken values can be positive and negative, and it's your job to cultivate the positive and root out the negative.**

The negative unspoken values will frequently contradict or conflict with set values of a church, while the positive unspoken value will enhance these.

Example of a positive unspoken value:

- When someone is severely ill or someone has a baby, the church always organises meals for two weeks. This is an unspoken value. You won't find this specifically written down anywhere or some sort of rule or principle everyone must follow, or face discipline if they don't. But this is a helpful, godly value that lines up to your overall value of hospitality and how it is practiced in your community.

Examples of a negative unspoken value:

- You might claim to value grace very highly as a church, but in some instances grace flies out the window in the name of pragmatism. Or perhaps certain sins that people struggle with are graded as worse than others – i.e. you ignore selfish ambition or have grace for people struggling with it, but actively snub those struggling with homosexuality.
- You might claim to be relational and seeing functions as second to relationship, yet your preaching, your pastoring, your volunteering, and your church calendar is all about function, and there is very little being done about cultivating friendships or giving people the time to do so.

These negative unspoken values will contradict your spoken values and create confusion, tension, and relational breakdown. Many times people can't articulate what the problem really is, but they *feel* that something is 'wrong' or 'off' or there is a miscommunication in expectations. It's up to you to be aware of your shortcomings as a leader and as a team in living up to your stated values and sorting it out. Don't think you are exempt, these things are like 'little foxes' that creep in.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR TEAM IN LIVING OUT YOUR VALUES

As the leader of a local church, it is in your eldership team where your values are most tested and most cultivated. If the values are being lived out by your eldership team it will be easier to develop the values in the hearts and minds of the people of your church. But if the values are being contradicted in your team and its dynamics, this break-down will spill over to your people.

Ultimately, it is you yourself who has to be clear about values and discerning about the unspoken values and any contradictions. For example, if you claim to always have an open door and to be highly relational to your elders and leaders, but in reality you are simply never around, or only have time for brief conversations that stick to the point, or only like to focus on function, that will create an unspoken, unwritten value in your eldership team that will invariably be passed down to your deacons and ultimately your people.

Addressing such values can be incredibly painful and difficult for all parties involved. We

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are inclined to get very defensive when it turns out we are not living according to what we say. Sometimes we know that we're not, but often we simply didn't have a clue. These things often develop without us even realising their development.

Therefore:

- As the lead elder of your church, you must be discerning.
- You must continuously re-assess your values (personal values, leadership team values, church values) in light of the reality.
- You must **listen to your team and the people**. You cannot make assumptions about your own behaviour or the behaviour of others.
- You must remain teachable, open and honest.
- You must think the best of others and cultivate that in your team.
- You must acknowledge when you and others fall short, and apologise (yes, even publicly) where necessary.

You can circumvent the establishment of a Kingdom culture in your church if you do not attend closely to values and culture. Many leaders are oblivious to the unspoken values of their church. Unspoken values develop in every organisation, every community, and every church. It is part of human nature. You will not be exempt from this reality – it's all about how you deal with it that counts.

PART 7:

BASE CHURCH DEVELOPMENT, TRANSITIONING, AND REPRODUCING

Dictionary definition of 'base'

- A military base – provides shelter, military equipment and personnel, a place used as a centre of operations by the armed forces or others, a headquarters.
- A conceptual structure or entity on which something draws or depends.
- A place from which a particular activity can be carried out.

Love boat or battle cruiser?

- God's desire for every church is for it to be a base church, living out its apostolic-prophetic identity and calling; impacting according to God's way and grace.
- **A base church is not dependant on size or age, only on biblical maturity.** And so it is for every one who is in a base church. It is not about gifting and age, but biblical maturity!
- The problem we are faced with today is what kind of ship do we want to be? An ocean liner or cruise ship hitting all the holiday destinations (the love boat)? Or do we want to be a battle cruiser – an aircraft carrier designed with purpose and focused on battle?

We want to change from "The three B's of church growth":

- Bums in seats (a full auditorium)
- Bucks in the bank
- Buildings

To a mobilised priesthood.

- Do we want spectators and consumers? Or a mobilised priesthood?
- Do we want seeker sensitivity? Or come and die for your faith?
- Do we want our show? Or His show?
- Our strength? Or His anointing?
- We become famous? Or He gets the glory?

"I bet you'd agree that a group of talented, charismatic leaders can draw a crowd. Find the right creative team, musicians, and speakers, and you can grow any church. It doesn't even have to be a Christian church. The fact is that without making a conscious choice to depend on the Holy Spirit, we can do a lot. (Although without the Spirit, we wouldn't actually be drawing our next breath—but I am talking about cognisant and intentional dependence on our part.) My point is that a growing and energetic gathering is not necessarily evidence of the Holy Spirit's work." - Francis Chan.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 16:18

I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Isaiah 54:3

For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

- We are called to be careful how we build. Not with wood, hay or stubble. It will be tested!
- We are called to be master builders. How? Let Jesus build His church.

BASE CHURCH CHARACTERISTICS FROM ACTS

It started with Jerusalem and the outpouring of God's Spirit. Then, Antioch was planted when persecuted Christians went out from Jerusalem preaching the Gospel. Antioch hears from God and plants Ephesus, and they reach the whole of Asia and beyond.

1. Ephesus

Acts 19:1-27

1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. 4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of

Asia heard the word of the Lord.

11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour. 18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. 19 A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas (135 years worth of salary!). 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen.

25 He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. 26 And you see and

hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. 27 There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

Ephesus serves as a fantastic example of the characteristics of a base church.

a. It was a gospel preaching centre (v1-7)

- Paul helps the twelve disciples he meets by ensuring they understand the elements of the gospel and immerse themselves in it!
- Forget about traditions and sentiment, furthering the name of a cause or church – it's all about Jesus!
- The gospel is our central message. It is the "Word of Christ", the message of who He is and what He has done. It must be continually preached, understood in deeper ways, personally applied on an ongoing basis, and proclaimed in and through us to our community and region. We don't have another message except Christ and Christ having come, having healed, having been crucified, raised, ascended with all authority, and to soon come back!

b. A teaching centre (v8-10)

- The Kingdom of God was taught. The whole geographic region was influenced through this teaching.
- Truth was unpacked and focused on as a priority.

c. A discipleship centre (v9)

- Paul disciplined this group of twelve and others. From this group many went out through Asia and further afield ministering the word and planting churches. The seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 seem to have been the fruit of this.
- Discipleship isn't discipleship without the actioning, sending or practical component.

Jesus sent His disciples out. Paul keeps going and keeps sending his disciples out. Our discipleship techniques must transcend Bible studies or the cerebral only, and see this practical element as the other side of a two-edged sword.

d. A healing / power centre (v11-12)

- Extraordinary miracles were done
- They weren't a "Word" or a "Spirit" church. This is a foreign concept to Scripture! They never knew a gospel without power. They understood that power was for the gospel! Acts 1:8 says we *will* receive power! We *will* be witnesses.
- It says of Jesus in Matthew 4:23-25 that Jesus went about teaching, preaching and healing. Signs and wonders follow and confirm (Mark 16:20) the preaching of God's word. This translates to:
 - Baptism in the Spirit
 - Staying filled with the Spirit
 - Operating in the gifts of the Spirit
 - Looking to preach a Gospel of power
 - Having faith in God for the promised signs following
 - Powerful, anointed preaching

e. A power and authority centre (v13-20)

- The Kingdom is one of power, and the King of this Kingdom, Jesus, is all powerful. Of His government there is no end. (Isaiah 9:6-7.)

f. A worship centre (v17)

- The whole city is impacted through the name of Jesus being lifted up.
- The name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour (vs 17).
- Missions exist because worship doesn't.
- God gets the glory. It's all about Him and not us! Are we full of ourselves or Him? When it's about Jesus there are signs of life everywhere.

g. A sending and church planting centre (v10 inferred and v21-22)

- As we know from Paul's strategy, the only way to get the gospel out, obeying the great commission, is to make disciples of all nations, planting New Testament churches in every village, town and city.
- Paul sends his team *out*. We need to develop both a church planting culture and a culture of sending out our people to encourage, build up, strengthen etc. other churches.
- See also 1 Corinthians 16:8-9: *"But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me."*
- Churches were planted throughout the region from his teaching over these two years. There is a time for apostolic bedding down to influence a whole region with church planting.

h. A leadership training centre

- Multiplication and continuity are essential to every local church. It is the proof (and fruit) that we are alive. At Ephesus we saw Paul multiply his apostolic heart into several young men through daily teaching. These go on to plant through the length and breadth of Asia. (His teaching appeared to be more discussion, not lecturing. See the use of the original Greek word *dialegomai*.)
- Paul trained up many young sons who went out into the region, spreading the gospel and planting churches.
 - There are too few leaders who are interested in the generations coming through and setting a godly example of faithfulness.
 - Every local church is required to recognise, raise, and release leaders.

i. An impact centre (v20-27)

- The impact of the gospel is seen as the word impacts (v20).
- The city and business was impacted. Idolatry was overthrown!
- Ephesus was planted with Priscilla and Aquila, a couple involved with business (they appear to be very wealthy) who were brought by Paul and who stayed at Ephesus to help grow the church. This is a great model for how business people can help churches be planted and to be grown!

- Subsequently, through the gospel taking root, the work of the enemy was overthrown (v23-27). They rocked the city with the gospel resulting in a new, Kingdom way of doing business!
- God's ethical values will impact every area of life. The wisdom of God must come through the church. We take the ways of God and translate them into practical life lessons!
- The gospel was the transforming message!

j. A resource centre (inferred)

- To impact Ephesus and the surrounding area, men and women were teaching the gospel and providing the supporting resources to do this. These were sent out from Ephesus.
- We are a resource centre when we are others' centred!

k. Model centre (inferred)

- They became a model of Kingdom and local church that others could point to, and people could visit to see what a New Testament church was all about! Scripture contains the example of the church in Ephesus for this reason! Even today, we learn from their example.

l. The importance of our love for Jesus

- Later on, Ephesus is rebuked for losing its first love in Revelation 2. Ephesus is an example of how base churches can lose their first love as they get busy with many activities. The work is good but the love is no longer there. Often when churches get very big they can get very functional, but they must come back to a relational heart that loves Jesus above all.

2. Jerusalem

Jerusalem can pioneer our understanding of a New Testament church. We see many Kingdom values displayed at this church.

a. Team leadership

- Peter became the main spokesperson initially, but he was not alone nor doing things alone.
- *“But Peter, **standing with the eleven**, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.” (Acts 2:14*
- Later issues were discussed together as a team (Acts 15:2-35, 21:18). It appears that James was leading the Jerusalem church while Peter was the prominent translocal apostolic gift.

b. Kingdom culture

- A culture of response
 - *“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37)*
- A culture of devotion
 - *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)*
- A culture of community
 - *“And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.” (Acts 2:45,46)*
- A culture of meeting regularly
 - *“And **day by day**, attending **the temple together** and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.” (Acts 2:46)*
 - i) They met congregationally in the temple
 - ii) They met in small groups in homes
- A culture of growth. Growth by thousands as miracles were performed in the name of Jesus. We see God added to their number daily. Because of the way they built, God could add to their numbers regularly.
 - Conservatively speaking they had reached 20-25% of the city (24-30,000 people)

- A culture of doing whatever is necessary to ensure that the ministry of God's word is not compromised or reduced in importance (Acts 6).
 - A heart for the city.

c. A warning about becoming insular

- Unfortunately, Jerusalem also show us how a church dies, because they kept the gospel in their culture, language and pre-conceived religious mindset. God's intention was that the gospel would go out from them (Acts 1:8) but increasingly they struggled with this. This points to:
 - i) The danger of cultural uniformity
 - ii) The danger of legalism
 - iii) the danger of exclusivity
- It took persecution for the people to be scattered and the gospel to go out.
- From this the church at Antioch was planted. The baton was handed over.
- The Jerusalem church teaches us many amazing things about New Testament church, but unfortunately it also teaches us how a church dies. After the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70AD, Jerusalem is never raised up again as a Jewish church. In 135AD, when Jerusalem was rebuilt, the church was wholly a gentile church.

3. Antioch

Antioch was planted through the preaching of those who were scattered after being persecuted in Jerusalem. Here are Kingdom aspects of this New Testament church:

a. Translocal gifts

- They were a church who introduce us to more of the Ephesians 4 translocal gifts: prophets and teachers, along with apostles. (Acts 11:27,28; 13:1; 21:10-11.)
- Paul and Barnabas are sent from this church, showing how teams were sent out apostolically / translocally. (Acts 13:3.) They sent out their best!
- Teams go out and teams return. (Acts 14:21-28.) They could sustain church without the 'big' gifts present.

- The Antioch church planted the Ephesus church, through the ministry of Paul and Priscilla and Aquila, business people who ended up staying in Ephesus and helping the church there grow.

b. A heart for the nations

- They were a church that prayed and fasted, and from the context, for the nations (Acts 13:2-3).
- They were established on the message of the gospel (Acts 11:19-26). God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles through them.
- They were others-centred. They were a church that knew how to hear from God, and follow through with obedience. Acts 11:29 shows how they responded to prophecy by sending resources to those who were in need (despite their own needs!) *“Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea.”* (Acts 11:29).
- They were diverse and culturally involved. Acts 13:1 gives us a list of the teachers at Antioch. Simeon came from Africa, Manaen was a friend of King Herod, and Barnabas and Saul were Jewish. It appears the church was founded by Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene, but we’re not given an indication on exactly who they were. (Acts 11:20.)

4. Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because *our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.* You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 *You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.* 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 *The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere.* Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how

you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead —Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

- There are many misconceptions about what it means to becoming a base church. This short passage from 1 Thessalonians gives us some insight. We can see that this was a model to the believers, with the Lord's message ringing out from them in their province (Macedonia) and their neighbouring province (Achaia). The faith in God had become well known. They were fruitful (faith, hope and love) even under severe persecution!

a. It has more to do with heart, identity and maturity.

- It has less to do about numbers, bank balances and facilities!

b. They modelled the gospel

- Their faith in Jesus was well known
- They turned from idols and served the living and true God
- They made this gospel known
- They had hope in the second coming of Jesus!

5. Corinth

See 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians 10:16

- They were a faltering base church that battled to reflect New Testament biblical values.
- However, they were a church keen on experiencing God's power and gifts, even though out of control.
- Paul also saw them as base to reach the regions beyond them.

Corinth teaches us:

- To have a passion and desire for the outpouring of God's Spirit
- To not allow our own culture to dominate Kingdom culture

6. Philippi

See Acts 16

- They were a church planted through the miraculous conversion of a jailer and his family, and a businesswoman, Lydia, and her household.
- They were a church called to rejoice under harsh persecution. A church that punched way above its weight, giving generously out of their extreme poverty!

Philippi teaches us that: -

- Base churches are resource churches, not because of our great riches, but because of our responsive hearts.

7. Rome

See Romans 15:24, 32

- They endured under severe persecution.
- Paul saw them as a base to launch from into regions beyond them, like Spain, and that they would resource him!

Rome teaches us: -

- The importance of remaining steady under all kinds of persecution, and not taking our eyes off the apostolic call of God.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A BASE CHURCH

Taking all the above into account, we can create both a summary with some additional points from what we can see in other parts of scripture that are characteristics of a healthy base church that has a culture of multiplication, reproducing, and church planting.

1. A base church sees Jesus as Lord

- Without diminishing the fact that Jesus is Saviour, the early church understood and ordered their lives around the reality that Jesus is Lord — the ascended and glorious King ruling over His ever-increasing Kingdom.

2. A base church has relational maturity

- It's a connected church that is fully integrated and functioning, each contributing to the Kingdom cause.
- People live healed, forgiving as Christ forgave, even in advance.
 - It's a church that understands what partnership in the gospel means (Philippians 1:5)
 - It's a church that understands translocal partnership (Philemon 17)
 - It is a church of unity – having a Psalm 133 anointing. ("Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!")

3. A base church is a Word and Spirit church

- Scripture is our final authority
- Do we want to be a voice for truth or an echo of our own culture (or even a Christian sub-culture); an echo of the past (the good old days); an echo of what the people want to hear?
- We preach and teach the Kingdom of God. This word grows in power, authority and reach, as we take all areas of Acts 1:8 for the Lord.
- Jesus-centred, where the gospel is the foundational and central truth. (Philippians 1:5; Romans 1:16.) Everything flows from the gospel. We don't add gospel to community, we build community around the gospel.
- Signs and wonders follow the preaching of the word. E.g. Salvation, healing, deliverance, transformation, renewal.
- The spirit works through the word (John 6:63; Hebrews 4:12) and the word is the sword of the spirit (Ephesians 6:17). If you emphasise one without the other you will become a crippled church.

4. A base church is a church of prayer

- *'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of*

robbers', Matthew 21:13.

5. A base church is a church of compelling, heartfelt worship in community

- Not reliant on good music or limited to a half-hour worship session on a Sunday morning. Rather, it is about a lifestyle of worship.
- Not about us feeling good. We don't advertise our worship 'experience', as if we are competing for a better 'experience' than the church down the road. What is that all about?
- Learning to offer our bodies as living sacrifices! (Romans 12:1)
- In the early church, community wasn't formed for community sake (this idea of "doing life together") but formed out of being on mission together with God.

6. A base church sees a priesthood set free and sees itself as a sent-people, as the body of Christ

- Leaders set the people free and keep the people free!
- The priesthood (all those in the church) have the responsibility of the ministry of the gospel (Romans 15:15-16) and growing a church.
- Everyone has a calling / vocation from God, and God works through them both in their church and out in their world of work / university / school / society / family etc. All of life is a calling!
- The early church lived with the conviction that every day they stepped out into the world they were being sent by Jesus to continue the work He had started — the work of advancing His Kingdom.
- The early church emphasized the importance and power of a called, trained, gifted, empowered and mobilized body of Christ — a Kingdom of priests — over a dependence on human leadership (we have such a leadership-dependent culture).

7. A base church is prophetically led

- A lifestyle of inquiring of God. Revelation 2 & 3 — hear what the Spirit is saying to the church, and then put it into practice!
- Health comes from our ability to make transitions (Joshua 1-5) and make wine skin changes

(Matthew 9:14-17).

- 'Stretch out' as God encourages. (Isaiah 54:1-3)
- Course correct as God's light illuminates. (Acts 3:21)
- God's encouragement to Joshua in Joshua 3:4 *'you have never been this way before'* should motivate us forward from glory to glory. The antithesis is also true, for if we have been this way before, then we are going around the same mountain again!

8. A base church is others-centered

- Jesus never came to be served, but to serve!
- Give of everything: gifts, resources, finances, to community, brothers and the world!
- A church's resources are available to all. That means its people, its things, its finances, its skills, its facilities.
- All are welcome, and they know it!

9. A base church is increasingly apostolically orientated

- Understands translocal partnership
- Moves from program to culture
- All look at their careers, vocations, and ask how it can benefit God's kingdom
- Can sustain growth, maturity and effectiveness even when the main ministry gifts are away for extended periods of time (lead elder, worship leader, key deacons, etc.). Paul and Barnabas were away for eighteen months in Galatia and when they returned the church was still there and flourishing!
 - The true test of what you build is when you go. Like with Jesus.
 - We don't glory in man – God gives the increase!
 - We don't build our church from a platform ministry
 - We don't build towards or are dependant on a man, but on Jesus! We build away from ourselves!
 - We build towards team and not one dynamic individual!
- We plant new churches while building up and maturing the local church
- We have an effective testimony in the community, city, nation and nations.

10. A base church recognises, raises and releases new servant-leaders

- The early church was characterized by servant-leaders operating in their God-given spiritual authority.
- We raise leaders for the local church (where we are now and into the future), next generation (risking with youth but not bad character) and the nations (plants locally and internationally)!

11. A base church uses homes

- The early church used their homes as the central building, not as castles we escape to, to get away from the world.

12. A base church lives on the edges

- Kingdom advancement and growth of the early church happened on the edges; i.e. church gatherings were the primary place for worship, prayer, teaching, strengthening and encouraging, but the majority of salvations and displays of God's power happened out in the world.

13. A base church wants God alone to get the glory

- Christ is preached, Christ is honoured and Christ is glorified!
- People should know our church is Christ's church through our language and actions.
- 1 Corinthians 4:2 — Proving faithful with the trust we have been given!
- Are we full of ourselves, or full of Christ?

14. A base church believes and lives in the power of God

- The power of God flowed visibly through the lives we see in the early church.
- When we live like this, church plants are a natural by-product of Kingdom living. Church plants are a natural fruit of Kingdom-minded, Jesus exalting, gospel preaching, Spirit-honouring churches.
- We do not establish a church planting culture by only raising up church planters but rather raising up an equipped, trained, mobilized and empowered priesthood to do the work of advancing the Kingdom of God.

TRANSITIONING

Isaiah 54:1-3

1 "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labour! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the Lord.

2 "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.

3 For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

- Isaiah 53 is about Jesus, and Isaiah 54 about His church. Verse 1 – 2 is about prophetically preparing for the growth and fruitfulness that God will bring us. Then verse 3 gives us detail on how we should focus.
- We can see here that God's plan is about multiplication and continuity, and cities and nations. Note the imperatives of God:

1. You **will** spread abroad to the right and the left (MULTIPLICATION).

2. Your offspring (CONTINUITY) **will** possess the **nations** and will people the desolate **cities**.

- Health comes from our ability to change. When we are stagnant or believe we've made it, then the slow process of death and decay begin to set in. Examples of this are the churches at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) and Laodicea (Revelation 3:9-14).

As leaders, we will be in the process of transition all the time. It must actually be a way of life:

- Ever looking forward
- Going from glory to glory, faith to faith, and strength to strength!

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- Taking new ground
- Changing seasons, where pruning leads to new seasons of increased fruitfulness.
- Wineskin changes
- Stretching the tent curtains wide
- From one leadership to the next

Change in God ensures momentum and brings life

- Make transitions (Joshua 1-5). Joshua 3:4 says “you have never been this way before.” The goal is to take our inheritance!
- Make wineskin changes (Matthew 9:14-17). The goal is to get the wine to those who need it!
- Allow God to prune us (John 15:1-11). God is interested in fruitfulness, that we bear much fruit (v8). Therefore, He will cut off the dead branches and prune the fruitful branches! That means only the vine remains – Jesus!
- Stretch out as God encourages (Isaiah 54:1-3). The goal is to see increased capacity, multiplication and continuity into cities and nations!
- Course correct as God’s light illuminates (Acts 3:19-20). This brings refreshing and revival!
- Allow Him to change us from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:17-17). Ultimately, to become more like Jesus!

Momentum comes from

- Continuity and multiplication
- Keeping the ground you have taken and taking new ground
- Team!

CONTINUITY IS KEY FOR MULTIPLICATION

God is a God of continuity. Whatever God calls us to do should span the generations! Therefore, our ability to raise up the next generation and hand over the baton is of paramount importance to multiplication.

'Abraham, Isaac and Israel' is mentioned 17 times in the Bible. (See 2 Kings 13:23; Acts 7:32.) 'Generations' is mentioned 80 times in the Bible. (See Psalm 33:11.) God's desire is to forgive and bless from one generation to the next. (See Exodus 34:7; Deuteronomy 7:9.) Yet so many of our revivals in the past never seem to go beyond the second generation.

Why is that? We do not seem to know how to hand on the baton to those coming through, so that what God is doing may be sustained and continue. Here are some of the reasons why that might happen:

- You simply don't want to
- You don't know how to
- You keep moving the goal posts
- You don't know how or why the next generation should be raised
- You don't have God's agenda of continuity in your mind or heart
- We become more important than what God is doing
- We fail in the attack of the enemy before, during, and after a transition
- We don't know how to move through or manage a transition

A bad example

Judges 2:6-16

6 When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. 7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. 9 And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. 10 And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. 11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went

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after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. 15 Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. 16 Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

It doesn't seem as if the generation that took the promised land handed over very well to the next generation. For there to be continuity, we need to know how to handle transitions God's way.

God's plan is: -

- Abraham – Isaac – Israel (multiplication). See Genesis 26. The encouragement is to keep the old wells open and dig new wells.
- 2 Timothy 2:2 says, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." God wants this to happen!

Examples of transitions in our church will include:

- Handover of lead eldership
- Changing from season to season
- Buildings
- Seasons of correction and pruning for greater fruitfulness
- Time of increased prophetic outpouring
- A rising in obedience to the apostolic call on the church

Note there are seasons of transition! Transition doesn't just happen once and then it's over – we are in constant transition. **So how will you manage these?**

Joshua 1

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess."

12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valour among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, 15 until the Lord gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the Lord

your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

16 And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you, as he was with Moses! 18 Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous."

Joshua 3

1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2 At the end of three days the officers went through the camp 3 and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. 4 Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." 5 Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." 6 And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

7 The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. 8 And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" 9 And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." 10 And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from

each tribe a man. 13 And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

14 So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), 16 the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. 17 Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

The key is in the last verse of chapter 1, v14, the flock! It's not about *me*: do *I* have a position? Am *I* inconvenienced?... etc. The enemy attacks at the vulnerable points of transitions, and he doesn't need any help from us! Therefore, we sort out the issues of our hearts that cause us to stumble.

KEY POINTS TO TRANSITIONING

1. The heart

- Transition is preceded and followed by dealing with the heart.
- 1:5 — Consecrate yourselves.
- 5:5 — Circumcision.
- Deal with the heart, because this is where it has great potential to go wrong.

2. Consolidation

- 1:1 — They camped before crossing over.

- Before we launch ahead, we must consolidate and stabilise all we are and have. I.e. our vision and values.

3. Communication

- 1:2 The officers went throughout the camp giving orders to the people.
- Everyone must be in the loop and know what to do at this vulnerable time. We cannot afford to underestimate the value of good, clear communication.

4. The leaders led

- 1:2 — The officers went throughout the camp giving orders to the people.
- 1:6 — Pass on ahead of the people.
- 1:8 — Go and stand in the river.
- We are to follow the leaders, and the leaders are to lead through transitions. They go on ahead.

5. Follow God's Presence

- 1:3 — "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, follow it!"
- The way forward is to follow God's presence. We only break camp and move forward when God leads us to do so! The way forward is simple, God's leading us forward.

6. The importance of the prophetic

- 1:4 — "Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before."
- The previous generation knew what it was like to 'have been this way before' over and over again! They marched around the same mountain for 40 years, and then died in the wilderness. When we walk with God He wants His Kingdom to advance in and through us always: -
 - i) From faith to faith
 - ii) From strength to strength
 - iii) From glory to glory

7. God will endorse the new leader

- 1:7 — “And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses.’”
- God uses leaders – it's His way. Therefore, He will encourage everyone with His hand of approval on the new leadership couple!

8. The importance of God’s word

- 1:9 — “Joshua said to the Israelites, ‘Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.’”
- Our security, strength and boldness come from God’s word and prophetic promises. They build our faith in God for the way forward. “1:10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and He will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites...” etc.
- Our authority is to obey everything just as God has commanded.

9. Break camp

- 1:14 — “So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan...”
- Once we have the above in order, we need to pro-act and move on with God has shown us.
- The enemies are procrastination and apathy, where our Christianity has become very theoretical. If the vision has been declared, go for it! For those of us who are all too familiar, and perhaps bewitched by constantly travelling around the mountain, we need to break camp. The good old days are gone! These are now the new good old days!

10. Good shepherding

- 3:17 — “while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.”
- Good leadership, or godly shepherding, ensures that the whole nation passes through. Avoid the extremes:
 - i) Running too far ahead of the sheep and they have no clue where you are going. There’s no need to rush! Rushing will lead to problems.
 - ii) Being too slow or not moving forward at all.
- 3:17 — “The priests ... stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all

Israel passed by.”

- Leaders (shepherds) secure the way forward, and from that place of having forged ahead, they lead the people through the transition. I.e. They pay the price, they lead strongly and they lead from the front!

Conclusion

- The individual responsibility in the corporate picture is to intentionally embrace the new way forward, as God has declared. Israel succeeded and God exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel (4:14) and only then did the real battle and tests of faith begin as they fought for the inheritance God promised.
- The training for the battle ahead (God’s promised land) was the transition. Too many shipwrecks are strewn in the waters of transition! In obedience following hard after God’s presence and the leaders He has given, you can pass through a transition and see His Kingdom advance in and through you!

TRANSITIONING LEADERSHIP THAT BRINGS TRIUMPH

When is a good time to hand over your leadership of your eldership team and church to someone else?

A. When you are not able to take the church into the next season, your time might be up! Have you got the energy, giftings, call, etc.? You need to be realistic and honest with yourself!

B. When it’s doing really well!

1. WHO?

Through both keen observation and revelation from God, you need to identify the right person. The function of leading the eldership team is not earned but God-given.

They need to have the same heart, but not really the same gifting, otherwise the church can split and move into chaos. You can’t put someone else in there with a totally new value system! They

need to:

- Have a similar value system – as in biblical culture. This will lead them to take the church in a totally different direction!
- Be shepherd-hearted – must love people more than anything else!
- Be a “son” – represents you, your heart, your spiritual DNA!
- Be a visionary – not an administrator, but one who will see where the church needs to go – greater and further. (This where a movement becomes a monument, when we hand over to an administrator.)
- Be big thinkers
- Be secure in who they are
- Be responders and not reactors. Reactors are dangerous!
- Be men of grace and redemption. Live in grace and extend it to other people.
- Be sacrificial – pay any price. They ought to not be asking about their salary before they take up the new function!
- Be examples – living the message out. Example has more followers than reason.
- Have a good marriage and strong family – we don’t put enough emphasis on marriage! Make sure you are working on your marriage. A lot of lead elders have the worst marriages in the church! Is family important to them? How does your successor care for your family?
- Have experience. Not just good potential, but some experience somewhere. Obviously, they can’t be experienced in absolutely everything, and often they will be younger than you!
- Do they understand the culture where they are ministering? The national culture, type of people in the church, etc.?
- Are they generous in all things? Not just finances. Are they open-handed? Generous in heart, encouragement, time?
- Are they under authority? Do they understand authority?
- Are they a team player? Do they really know how to play team? Not “when they take over they will learn.” Nobody wants to follow an individualist.

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- They must have a relationship with the translocal team.
- They must have an understanding and appreciation of the prophetic history of the church they will be leading.
- They must be a man of humility.
- They should have a connection with the sheep, and the sheep with him – the sheep come first.
- They must be absolutely convinced of their call.
- They should have capacity for now and into the future.
- They should actually be readers with a good grasp of theology.
- They should have demonstrated a caution about jumping on board fads — they should have consistency, sustainability, and stickability.
- Must be a man of faith.
- Must be a man of the word.
- Must be teachable.
- The husband could be the gatherer, and the wife scatters (or the opposite)! The couple together must be gatherers.
- They should have persistence.
- They should be good communicators – demonstrating integrity by the way they communicate and their willingness to do so.
- They should be very clearly emotionally stable and demonstrate a fairly high emotional intelligence.

Remember, there are not guarantees, so we must listen to God!

2. THE TEAM(S) THAT ARE PART OF THIS PROCESS

A. Invite the translocal team to be part of this process before you chat to your elders.

- Everyone doesn't have to have a say, but has to be involved with the process – speak and ask questions. Outsiders can give some clarity and wisdom. However, the more

guys you involve, the more perspectives you will get and this can be confusing. Involve two or three maximum.

- You are looking for perspective, not permission.

B. The eldership team needs to be on board! If they react negatively it may be that it's not the wrong guy, but the wrong time! But you go to your elders before anyone else in the church.

C. Then, speak to your deacons before telling the church. In all of this there must be a forum for them to talk. You want to create an atmosphere where everyone has sorted out their issues, so that if people leave they don't do so divisively but realise that it may simply be God moving them on as well and that it has been God's decision to bring this new guy on as the leader.

If these teams are not on board, the church will react negatively. Don't try and bulldoze this through, that's not the right attitude. Have a heart for the sheep. You don't need to rush!

The whole leadership team needs to understand:

- Comparison is bad
- Change is not a bad thing! It's what God does!
- Loyalty to the guy leaving is loyalty to the new guy.
- If they cannot work with the new guy that they should talk about it and work it out sooner rather than later. They should have the courage to explain why and work through the issues. The issues may be (a) generational, (b) cultural, (c) personality-driven, (d) theological, (e) stylistic, (f) a general uncomfortable feeling toward change, (g) a timing issue (the person isn't ready for the change – they need to be aware that it is just a timing thing, not that the change itself is bad.) None of these are worth being divisive. They can be worked out and understanding can be found – if you're willing to talk, be open, honest, teachable, and have a motivation for God's Kingdom. If you really can't work with the guy and can't work that out, then be honest about that and step aside. God may be calling you on.

The new guy needs to understand:

- That he must work with the team. Therefore, it's important, if he is from the outside, that he should come in for a while to see how the relationship develops while the old leader still leads. It's about transition, not dropping a bomb and leaving!
- That he should honour the "father", the one who is leaving – in every way (2 Chronicles 5:1). This is about trust. A son is given an inheritance and honoured through that, and the son honours the father. Let the NCMI team speak into this.
- Have fun with the team and build friendships
- Spend lots of time with the old guy and communicate openly and honestly.
- Talk about change. Ask why things are as they are before you change them. It's important to know why! That's why the relationship is father-son.
- That he must honour the team and the history of that church. Don't come in and 'stamp your authority', changing everything overnight and making it all 'your flavour' now. Even the church name – does that really need to be changed to the name you've always dreamed of having? Listen to what is important to God and what is good for the people you are leading. This isn't 'your thing'. Have the courage to face your ambitions and to sift out what is of God and what is just your ambition. Ask why you are in a rush to make change and examine your motives closely.
- This doesn't mean you should not make changes and everything should stay the same. It's just a matter of honouring all the people involved – the team, the eldership, the history, the battles fought and won by that church. You're not there to stamp your authority but to lead God's people!

The old guy needs to understand:

- When you have identified the new leader, how much profile do you give them? Do it once the process begins. God will show you as well. In your absence give him most of the preaching. It must be obvious to the church when it happens. You must be at a place where there is no turning back.
- Some teams battle with a new style. Encourage them to give it a season. Ask God to help them shift loyalties.
- You must respect the new guy's decisions. There must be mutual honour.

- Let the new guy have fun with the team and build friendships.
- Spend lots of time with the new guy and communicate openly and honestly.
- You have to walk away! Show your trust in the new guy by walking away!
- Don't go back and preach for some time – a year to six months or something like that! When you go back to the church and don't preach, you make a great statement of trust to the church.
- If it's your base, let the new guy choose to include you in what he wants, preferably in the background.
- If he leads the church out of partnering with NCMI it's his (and the team's) choice. And so it is with each choice he (and they) make.
- Stay connected as friends.
- Remember they are no longer *your* eldership and deacon team.
- Anything you want to happen, ask the new lead guy! They are no longer your people!

Other things to take note of:

- Some of our most influential people are not on the leadership team. Speak to them before-hand, tell them what God is saying, and get them on board – get their perspective.
- If you are transitioning soon, don't bring any new leaders on, even if the new guy wants them. Rather do it in his season, the they will be his leaders!
- Make the sheep the priority
- Relationship is the key issue
- Plan 'A' is raising a son from within, but not the only way! A new season might necessitate a someone from another church in NCMI. If you identify someone from another church who is not the leader, speak to the leader of that church first!

3. MUTUAL HONOUR IS THE KEY

In 2 Kings 20, King Hezekiah showed envoys from Babylon everything in his kingdom. *"All that is in my house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them,"* he says to Isaiah (verse 15). But Isaiah prophesies that it will all be carried away to Babylon (verse 17,18). What

was Hezekiah's reply? *"The word of the Lord you have spoken is good."* For he thought, *"Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?"* (verse 19).

We can either sit around and enjoy everything we have, or we can fight to take more ground for the generations to come. We need to be intentional with the next generation. These are the future carriers of what God has put in us. We have a responsibility with God to involve them. We build *with* the next generation, not *for* the next generation.

a) We teach them the value and the heart, we stay true to what God has said.

Often we don't build on the foundations but try and re-do the foundations. We must adjust certain things but not scrap everything entirely.

b) Mutual honour is the key to transition.

- **We are always in transition.** Today there is not enough mutual honour. Fathers too often demand and expect sons to only honour them without giving anything in return. Some fathers even expect sons, in the name of 'honouring', to be involved in building the father's inheritance! But children are supposed to get an inheritance from their fathers, not the other way around. This is especially important when handing the leading of a church over to someone else.
- **Let's not make it difficult for the next generation.** They do not owe the current generation. Fathers must make it easy for sons to honour them. This is about the success of the Kingdom.
- **Mutual honour means we honour our side and it's up to others, in God's sight, to honour their side.**
- **Mutual honour also means we have faith for things together.** We are on a mutual faith adventure. This is often difficult when it comes to finances, and it's there we are often tested.
- **Will God honour someone who cannot honour others?** Some sons are handed an inheritance and then take everything in a new direction, telling the fathers to find a salary elsewhere, etc. We are heart-led and covenantally committed and we must

TALK. There's no future if no one is talking and everyone is falling to the wayside.

4. TIMING

None of us know when the timing is right. But it is of vital importance. Some hang on for too long which is not fair on the next guy. Some are too short, which is not fair on the church. There are many opinions on timing! If we trust God, He will let us know when.

But we must have a date set. A cut-off so people can plan. Practically, not longer than three months before the hand-over.

The key issues of counsel:

- Don't hang on too long or too short.
- The eldership team's perspective and input is important in this process. Honour the team and honour their call as elders!
- Don't under-emphasise the importance of timing. You know its too late when the grace has lifted, and doesn't come back. Or when you have no more vision for the church. Or if the church is falling apart.
- If the time is right, when we make the announcement, it will seem obvious to all!

a. Training

- Get the church ready for this transition. The best way is to intentionally preach on change (moving forward). This needs to take place months before.

b. Transferring

- Little by little with transferring the leadership/authority/responsibility (See Numbers 27).
- This is the most vulnerable stage for both couples. More and more they run with things, even elders' meetings, where you are not part of the elders' meeting, because if you stay you aren't automatically an elder. That is a separate decision.
- It's hard to lead an elders' meeting with the old guy there. We want to set up the new guy

for success. Let him make all the good announcements, and don't steal the thunder.

c. Telling

- **The announcement!** Preach it rather than announce it. Perhaps in a series. "Changing hands and not changing hearts" for example.
- Preach about the 'why, how, what, who and when' because there are many questions people are asking. God is about transition. Moses to Joshua. Elijah to Elisha. Saul to David. David to Solomon. It's always there.
- Let people realise that God wants it to happen. God will always change hands showing He is not chained to any human instrument.
- Remind the sheep that the old leader can't do what the new leader can do for the sheep. This is for them and for the sake of the city, the nations, the bigger NCMI vision, and the sake of all involved.

TRANSITIONING DENOMINATIONAL MODELS

Frequently we are not only transitioning churches from one leader to the next, but are transitioning churches out of denominational models or other flows to our apostolic-prophetic model. This is a huge transition due to changes in the vision and values of that church. The key issues here involve:

- Understanding the theology of the apostolic-prophetic model;
- Understanding the value of a translocal team and partnership with such a team;
- Understanding why NCMI and not another such team;
- Understanding base church and how the apostolic-prophetic model (and NCMI in particular) will help create such a church;
- Relationships! Keep things open, honest;
- Patience and love!

This is a large topic, but all the material provided here is helpful for transitioning out of a different model. How you lead the eldership team, how you build into a base church, how you partner with NCMI – all these factors contribute into how you will transition such a church.

Outside of that, involve the team, particularly those who have done this before!

REPRODUCING

“Just as the true fruit of an apple tree is not an apple, but another tree so the true fruit of a leader is not a follower, but a new leader, the true fruit of a small group is not a new Christian, but another small group and the true fruit of a church is not a new group, but a new church. Whenever this principle is understood and applied, the results are dramatic.” - Ed Stetzer

As you develop your church as a lead elder, the question will arise: when is it time to plant churches from your church?

The answer is in the form of another more important question: when do we **not** plant churches? And the answer is: never.

1. We do not plant only when we have a church of a CERTAIN SIZE

- How often are we asked, “how big is your church?”
- How often do you find yourself justifying a smaller than normal attendance to visitors: “You know what happens when summer rolls around...” or “I just don’t know where everyone is today!”
- Do you spend a disproportionate amount of time thinking or worrying about church size? Church size and attendance is a LAZY measure of church SUCCESS.
- What is even the “magic number” of church size? We all do this because we haven’t taken the time to settle what the BIBLE says about success in God’s eyes.
- So if we define church success by size — even if subconsciously — who would ever wholeheartedly embrace church planting if it means us looking less successful?

Challenge: Take the time to settle biblical measures for Kingdom success!

2. We do not plant only when we have ENOUGH MONEY

- When is enough enough? Do you currently have enough money to fulfil all that God has put on your heart to do? Most would answer NO! But you go after those dreams because you believe God will provide since He's called you to them. (If you do have enough money then your dreams may be too small.)
- Vision that originates from us is limited to our potential and our (financial) resources. But a vision that is GOD-GIVEN — which church planting is and always needs to be — is limited to God's power and resources, both of which are ENDLESS because we serve the GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE.

Challenge: steward your finances in a manner that reflects your conviction that God is your Provider — one of the ways to do that is to CONTINUALLY SOW into church planting; God cannot be mocked, what a (church sows) they will reap.

3. We do not plant only when we have ENOUGH LEADERS TO REPLACE THOSE WHO ARE PLANTING

- Are you intentionally and consistently preparing and raising up leaders to serve within your church? Anticipating the need.
- The harder question to answer is, WHO are you preparing those leaders for? For you and your church and your church ministries, or for the King and His Kingdom?

Challenge: establish a regular and rigorous way to train leaders — not just for you and your church, but in order to be effective in whatever sphere the Lord has planted them. We need to help people discover how to serve and lead WITHIN the as well as BEYOND the church.

4. We do not plant only when we AS THE LEADER OF THE TEAM ARE READY

- You are never ready to church plant! You might think it gets easier? It doesn't.
- Every time you plant there is a:
 - i. RELATIONAL cost — losing some of your closest friends.
 - ii. FINANCIAL cost — establish a new church means losing the generosity of those

going.

iii. MINISTRY and GIFTING cost — the gifting resource of the team going with.

iv. A possible cost to UNITY — always the very real possibility of hurt through unmet expectations or poor communication.

- But there is a PRIZE that far outweighs them all:

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Challenge: keep your heart soft before the Lord and your hands open to His people.

FURTHER READING

This is by no means an extensive list, but represents some of the books referred to in this material.

Leading Ourselves, by Tyrone Daniel

Available freely at ncmi.net

In this short, easy-to-read book, Tyrone Daniel discusses the keys to leading ourselves that will set us up to finish the race for the long haul.

Christ-Centered Church, by Tyrone Daniel

Available freely at ncmi.net

If we claim to be Bible-based then we need to emphasize what the Bible emphasizes, and that is Jesus Christ. It's not enough to just have a feeling and heart for being Christ-Centered, but there needs to be fruit that proves we're following Christ.

Center Church, by Timothy Keller

Available at most book stores and online

In Center Church, Timothy Keller offers challenging insights and provocative questions based on over twenty years of ministry in New York City.

Church Planting Revolution, by Winfield Bevins

Available online or at seedbed.com

Regardless of whether you are in a city, in a rural community, or on an island, this book will outline general principles that will help you develop a unique church-planting process that fits your context.

Biblical Leadership, by Dudley Daniel

Available freely at ncmi.net

The intention of this book is to help with the releasing of more leaders and to raise the standard of excellence in leadership as it is expressed in the Church, specifically through the restoration of good government in the Church.