

Field #4 – Reproducible Church Formation

The Harvest Field

Objectives – The church planter will:

- Understand biblical church function and purpose
- Examine biblical guidelines for church health
- Do an honest evaluation of existing churches within their network
- Be introduced to tools for designing next steps in church formation

By church formation, we simply mean “bundling the harvest” and molding a collective identity as the body of Christ. This is not a task solely dependent on the church planter. It is God who establishes His church within His timing. For the church planter, joining God in this task means fulfilling certain tasks while delegating others. For the church planter the question is:

Key Question – *How do we form the church?*

Let us begin with the end in mind. For the church planter, it is necessary to think of church on these two levels.

- 1) **What is a church?**
- 2) **What does a church do?**

Taking time to pursue answers to these questions with the leaders of your network will solidify common vision and promote healthy evaluation of the steps needed to arrive at healthy church. Use the following studies to promote discussion. Take time to develop your own definition of healthy church based on the Word.¹

Self-Discovery Study – Healthy Church Identity

Read the following passages and discuss the descriptions of church identity.

- 1) 1 Peter 2:9-10 -
- 2) 1 Peter 2:5 –
- 3) 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 –
- 4) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 –
- 5) 1 Timothy 3:15 -

¹ For further help with scriptural references concerning church identity and function see the compiled list within: “*The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*”, Article VI: The Church. Available for download at: www.sbc.org.

Understanding biblical church function is essential. Biblical accounts provide precedents for church activities. Examining church function at the source will help us later evaluate existing church tradition that may or may not promote healthy advance.

Self-Discovery Study – Healthy Church Function

Read Acts 2:41-47 and Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3. What do healthy churches do? Record your answers below.

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1) | 5) |
| 2) | 6) |
| 3) | 7) |
| 4) | 8) |

Tools for Evaluation -- Facilitating Healthy Church

One of the challenges of teaching healthy church is organizing the vast amount of material available in the New Testament for quick dissemination in advancing fields. For this reason, consider these simple tools for organizing the biblical content as well as evaluating next steps in church formation designed to help oral learners.

Two “Handy Guides” will be introduced.

- 1) The Handy Guide for the Man of Peace²
- 2) The Handy Guide for the Maturing Church³

The first of these is intended as a starter. As the man of peace gathers his *oikos* around the gospel and begins discipleship, he is faced with a handful of simple questions that if not answered carry potential to stunt development of a new church. As a church begins, unexamined worldviews and previous religious practice, such as worship in temples, must be answered. In facing the issues of getting started, we have found the first of these two guides very helpful. It provides answers for the “Man of Peace.”

² This guide was created in the field as the need arose among new believers to answer several key questions in the initial formation of churches. Our partnership with Lipok Lemtur in pioneer fields showed us the need for this tool and served as the testing ground.

³ This guide was first introduced in the teaching of David Garrison. We have since made small adjustments to the format and content, but wish to credit Dr. Garrison in its creation.

The Second “Handy Guide” is valuable for those churches that are either maturing or perhaps returning to health. Organizing a church around simple reproducible vision is a key to multiplication. Of course, maturity is a process. It is not produced in a single training. Thus the church planter is served to consider again the T4T process or mentorship as these materials are introduced. Those churches that have arrived at “maturity” are sometimes served to go back to the beginning, as maturity is not a box to check off but a reality that must be maintained and revisited over time as traditions often cloud true biblical expectation. This second “handy guide” has proven very valuable among existing churches struggling with extra-biblical tradition which has limited their ability to reproduce.

Tools for the trainer – The Handy Guides to Healthy Churches.

The Left Hand – “Handy Guide” - for the Man of Peace

There are five questions that must be answered in the mind of the Man of Peace as he begins hosting a new church.

Who? When? Where? Why? What?

These are the 5 key questions of new church starts.



Question #1 – Who is the church?

This is a question that can be revisited with each contact with the Man of Peace, as the answer encompasses the many word pictures given in scripture, (Body of Christ [1 Cor.12:12-31], Bride [Eph. 5:22-33], People of God, God’s household, Royal priesthood [1 Pet. 2:4-10], etc.) To answer this question for the first time, however, we have chosen one verse. Acts 2:41 shows us the entry point for the formation of the first New Testament churches.

*“Those who accepted his message were baptized,
and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

Three initial teaching points exist in this verse. First, when the message was presented, those the Lord called, *accepted his message*. By faith these were added to the family of God through the sacrifice of Christ. It did not stop there however. They also chose to identify themselves with Christ’s body in his death, burial and resurrection through baptism.

This truth creates a second teaching point for us in this verse. Those who accepted the message were baptized. Baptism *immediately* follows *acceptance*. Here the point of emphasis is on both *the immediate inclusion* of some who in Acts 2:36-37 are said to have murdered Jesus, and the clear precedent of *baptism after acceptance*. This would seem to strike down any argument concerning the need to live up to any standard as prerequisite to baptism, as no more gross sin can be imagined than literally killing the author of salvation. It also answers potential false teaching concerning baptism prior to a personal confession of Christ.

Finally those who were baptized were *“added to their number.”* This means they had a *recognizable membership*. They knew who was in and who was not. The church is open to minister to all but exclusively formed around those who have followed the Lord in obedience, the first steps of which are acceptance and baptism.

Do you have the expectation of large harvest? Having 3,000 baptisms on the first day of the church most certainly meant multiple baptizers. No one man could keep up with the needs of this multiplying community.

Question #2 – When do we meet?

Here the answer is not written in stone; in fact, the precedent of the first church will point to daily meetings (see Acts 2:46). What can be stated, however, is the need for a regular plan for meeting.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Many cultures not known as “time oriented” have struggled with this question. The question for us as cross-cultural workers is: should such a schedule be imposed? The answer here should err on the side of freedom. Timing and length of service is not mandated in scripture. Consistency, however, is a must among new believers from belief systems that promote private worship. The goal is to establish the habit of meeting and seems to be the command of Hebrews 10.

Answer: Each new church start should set a time and day for regular meeting at least once per week. As a new family is created, our lives together should be set apart and considered as holy unto the Lord.

Key Question #3 – Where do churches meet?

The answer is the New Testament precedent. See the following study from the from Acts and Paul's letters.

Self-Discovery Bible Study

Read the following passages and answer the question.

Acts 2:46/5:42/16:40/17:5-7/18:7/19:9/20:20/Romans 16:1-5

1 Cor. 16:19/Col. 4:15/ Philemon 1:1-2

Question – Where did the churches meet?

Answer: In each case, the New Testament precedent is clear. In fact, no other venues exist in scripture.⁴ Following the example of scripture means churches meet in homes. Take time with your disciples or church planting team to discuss reasons for homes as the venue for church. This exercise can create valuable discussion, but may not be needed for the pioneer Man of Peace who is likely to simply follow scripture. Challenge the believers in your church. Would they be willing to offer their home for expanding the kingdom? Hosting a new Bible study, or the willingness to host a church fits the biblical precedent established in the study above.

Question #4 – Why do we gather as church?

The answer here is our primary motive.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.”*

This is a simple instruction for the church. Every activity the church participates in should pass the 1 Corinthians 10:31 test. Anything not committed to glorifying God is outside the realm of healthy church activity. This simple instruction is the charge of every believer. Mutual accountability to this command must be the “DNA” of our churches. This is the only pure motive. Anything less is an impure offering.

The scripture also offers mutual accountability and encouragement as a motive for the habit of meeting together.

⁴ Some may claim Acts 2 as an exception to meetings in homes. It can be defended, however, that the purpose of Temple meetings was ongoing evangelism as the believing community engaged their Jewish brothers. The second possible argument is the lecture Hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus where Paul is said to have continued in teaching for two years. It is of note, however, that Aquila and Priscilla who were in Ephesus and would have had access to the hall chose instead to use their home as the host of a church (see 1 Cor. 16:19, which is written from Ephesus).

Hebrews 10:24-25 say, *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Vision, accountability and encouragement are resources that must be regularly renewed. Like food for the body, or fuel for a machine, these benefits of body life keep us moving in the right direction. Do not forsake the assembly! Among converts of eastern religions, which view worship as an individual right, corporate worship and accountability may be new concepts. While the Holy Spirit will generate an intrinsic motive for fellowship, the habit of meeting corporately must be modeled. Doing so will expose new believers to the intended benefits of body life detailed in Hebrews 10:24-25.

Question #5 – What does a church do?

Here we need to make a simple list of activities of the first church recorded for us in Acts 2:38-47.

Self – Discovery Study – Acts 2:38-47

What did the first church do?

Present the gospel – call for decision – v. 38

Baptize the believers – v 41

Commit to leader’s instruction – v 42

Fellowship – love each other - v 42

Break Bread – Lord’s supper/meal - v 42

Prayer – v 42

Give to the needy – v 44-45

Meet regularly – v 46

Praise God – v 47

Do you consider these the functions of a healthy church?

What, if anything is missing in the list of healthy function you created from Acts 2:38-47?

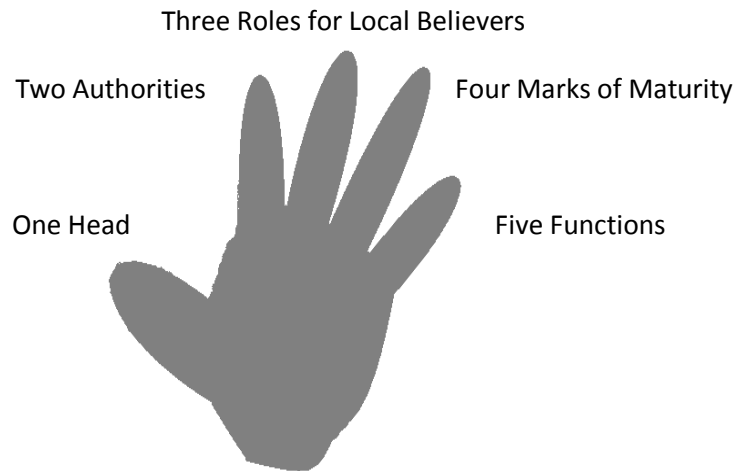
Remember, we are suggesting a starting point for the house or man of peace. New believers, or families of new believers expected to reproduce these functions are the starting point of a new church. Once this level of healthy church function exists, self-awareness, or a corporate commitment to identity as the body of Christ, remains as a necessary qualifier of church.

We have seen repeatedly in the field, church function proceeds maturity. This means, the activities of a church, in obedience to the Christ’s commands, are the starting point for church. This does not discount the need for formal church identity, leadership or church discipline as believers stray from healthy

function. Each of these elements of maturity will necessarily follow and help to bring order to a body's obedience to the Lord's commands.

For this reason, the church planter should evaluate the intended results of beginning discipleship. Introduction and expectation of obedience to the Lord's commands are a catalyst to healthy church function and can be expected from the beginning. Obedience corporately, adds the elements of body life demonstrated in the first church recorded in Acts 2:28-47.

The Right Hand -- The Handy Guide to a Mature Church



This guide presents the church planter with an easy way to organize elements of maturity and health vital to the longevity of a church.



The church has **One Head**.

Christ is the Head of the Church

Ephesians 1:22-23 says:

"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything in the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

Christ is the head of the church. There is no other. God has ordained only one "chief shepherd" (1 Peter 5:1-4). Within the body of Christ there is no hierarchy. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you.'" (1 Cor. 12:21). Rather, all parts work together for the good of the body. Each believer is a part of the body, and membership includes mutual accountability (1 Cor. 12:27). The church is the fullness of Christ displaying corporately the full extent of His ministry on earth. Ultimately each member is

responsible to Christ above all else in matters of function and polity. This means we each have access to the Head and carry responsibility among his body for promotion of right practice.



The church has **Two Authorities**.

The Word of God and the Spirit of God

The Word of God – To guide the church, God ensured the recording of His instruction and plan for mankind. It is without error and is the sufficient tool for discerning all matters of faith and practice. The scripture speaks to all matters concerning the church and must be central in the decision-making process of the body of Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 tell us, *“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God will be fully equipped for every good work.”*

The Spirit of God – God has provided each believer His Spirit as a counselor. The Spirit indwells us at conversion and guides us toward right thought and action. When we sin, the Spirit brings conviction leading us toward repentance and confession before God. His voice must be discerned as it guides the believer into God’s will.

In John 14:26 Jesus promised His disciples, *“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

Together the Spirit of God and the Word of God guide the church. God’s Spirit uses the Word as a tool to instruct and at times rebuke the believer. The Word is the Spirit’s tool for shaping and directing the church. Together these two provide all that is needed for the church to move forward in assurance of God’s will.

The Spirit and the Word will never contradict each other. They parallel each other similar to railway tracks. They will never cross nor part. Emphasis only on the Word will lead the church towards legalism. In the same way, emphasis only on the Spirit will likely result in emotionalism.

Any teaching or interpretation should be tested by these two authorities. When one claims to have a message from the Spirit, it must be tested with the Word. When an interpretation of the Word is shared, the Spirit confirms its truth in the heart of the believer. This process keeps the church from error.



The church has **Three roles for local believers** ⁵
Pastors, Deacons and Priesthood

Role #1 – Pastor⁶ – Three New Testament words are used to describe this leader in the church.

- 1) Shepherd – Ephesians 4:11 – “*poimenos*” – literally, “shepherd,” here translated as “pastor”
- 2) Elder – Titus 1:5 – “*presbuteros*”
- 3) Overseer – Titus 1:7 – “*episkopon*” - alternately translated as “bishop”

1 Peter 5:1-2 uses a form of all three of these terms to describe one office. The pastor is to be a shepherd, elder and overseer for the church.

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing...”

Here Peter establishes the role of leaders given the responsibility of oversight and at the same time helps the church avoid hierarchy by claiming equal status with others called to this office. There is but one Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:4).

As the name suggests, a *pastor* is simply one who leads his flock to *pasture*. Their charge over the sheep is that of protection and direction to nourishment. Every flock needs a shepherd. It is a worthy goal of the church planter to ensure their appointment. The church planter should note that no where in Scripture is Paul or any member of his church planting team referred to as a pastor. Church planters in the New Testament did not fill this role. Rather, as Paul instructs Titus, recognizing this role from within the church was a key for church formation (Titus 1:5).

Role – The job of the pastor is given to us in Ephesians 4:11-12.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for the works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up”.

What is the pastor’s role?

⁵ Baptists have historically proposed two of these roles as offices in the church – pastor and deacon. This Baptist expression is motivated as a safeguard against the division of the pastor, elder or overseer role. Such a division introduces hierarchy among these offices. It is suggested such a distinction be carefully avoided as each were descriptive terms for the same office.

⁶ The term “pastor” is a matter of preference as any of the three NT terms could be used to describe this servant. The point being made here is the division of these three terms for the creation of hierarchy among the body is a precedent beyond the scope of scripture and should be avoided.

Many believe the pastor must do the works of service. A more careful reading of this passage reveals the works of service are the job of every believer. According to verse 12, the pastor is an equipper of God's people.

It is often said, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. If this is true of the church, the failure belongs to the pastor. As an equipper, it is their job to mobilize the church with simple tools and accountability to perform ministry.

Qualifications – The qualifications of pastors can be found in Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Take time to go through these lists. Use the following chart to categorize each qualification.

Self-Discovery Bible Study		
Read the passage and assign each qualification to the appropriate category. List them below.		
<u>1 Timothy 3:1-7</u>		
Character	Gifts/Skills	Education
A similar study can be done for Titus 1:6-9. What differences exist between these passages? Why?		

A careful reading of these lists reveals Godly character as the essential qualifier for this role. Character cannot be replaced with any amount of biblical education or giftedness.

This means that the simplest of men in whom God is manifesting His character are qualified to serve!

Tool for the Trainer
Evaluating Emerging Leaders

Having examined the list of qualifications for Overseers provided in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, take time to consider the emerging leaders in your church plants.

Step one – list potential “emerging leaders” who you feel fulfill Paul’s expectations and demonstrate an aptitude for leadership.

Step two – evaluate their potential for leadership based on 1 Tim. 3:1-7. List any quality that may be lacking in the column on the right.

List of Emerging Leaders

Observations of Character

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

An application of church discipline

Read Matthew 18:15-20. If emerging leaders listed above lack expected elements of character required for leadership in the church, perhaps it is time to implement the Lord’s instruction for church discipline.

Based on your observations (above) how might you apply the instruction given in Matt. 18:15?

What Bible passages will you use to show him his fault? -- Make a list.

Take time with those you train to describe the step-by-step progression if a brother fails to repent as detailed in verse 16-20. Why does the church have the final say (v.17)?

Through prayer make specific plans to apply the Lord’s instruction. Remember, this may be the first time new believers have considered the Lord’s method for correction. This creates a sensitive, yet valuable teaching and training opportunity.

Role #2 - Deacons – Deacons are designated servants of the church. While not mandated in scripture, the role of Deacon was introduced to ensure equality among the Jerusalem congregation.

Role – Acts 6:3 gives us the role of the first deacons.

“It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them”.

As a servant, the deacon is an advocate of the poor. Fulfilling any need of the congregation falls within the realm of the deacon’s job description. This enables the church and its leaders to move forward in the ministry of the Word.

Qualifications – The qualifications of deacons can be found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The list is remarkably similar to that of the pastor. Again, it is primarily character that qualifies and disqualifies individuals for service.

Deacons as Treasurers – Nowhere in scripture is the treasurer described as an authoritative or mandated office. Utilizing a treasurer, however, follows the lead of our Lord as he traveled with His disciples. Jesus was accused of many things. He was accused of being a drunkard and associating with sinners (Luke 7:34), breaking the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6), being demon possessed (Mark 3:22) and even blasphemy (Matt. 26:65). Jesus was not, however, accused in scripture of mishandling money. What was the reason for this? Perhaps it was because He had a treasurer!

Acts 6:1-5, previously mentioned to introduce the office of Deacon, includes an oversight function in the distribution of support for widows within the early church. The original deacons were entrusted with the task of a fair distribution of food among widows regardless of ethnic background or language.

Role – The treasurer protects church leadership from accusation. The treasurer must be transparent in all dealings. Accountability either through witnesses or bookkeeping is the clear precedent within scripture and is a must among churches.

Role #3 – Priesthood – Priesthood is the corporate identity of every regenerate believer. Here we have intentionally chosen ‘priesthood’ over ‘priest’ as the Bible teaches this role as a corporate function of the Church. Just as the nation of Israel was chosen as a ‘*kingdom of priests*’ (Ex. 19:5-6), so too Peter applies this corporate identity to the elect. 1 Peter 1-4 are addressed all those purchased and redeemed by Christ out of the world (1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9-10). Where New Testament churches gather, members are to fulfill their role as a ‘*royal priesthood*’.

Role – 1 Peter 2:9-10 details the following purposes for the Priesthood.

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, now

you have received mercy that you may declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

The New Testament priesthood is a corporate expression. Priesthood includes citizenship as *'the people of God'*. As citizens of the light, the priesthood is to identify with the corporate Body of Christ (the Church) organized in various local churches (1 Pet. 2:4-5). This priesthood also has a specific purpose. Each member is to actively *'declare the praises of him who called {them} out of darkness.'* Each believer is a representative of Christ's Gospel (v. 9). Peter's instruction is echoed by the Apostle Paul who expected every believer in local churches to follow his example. Paul's expectation was that each believer in a local church would imitate his way of life, and his work in the Lord (1 Cor. 11:1, 15:58, 16:10, 15-16).⁷

Qualifications – The New Testament Priesthood is qualified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation. The Holy Spirit has sealed each true believer by faith for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:11-14, 2 Cor. 1:21-22, 5:5). The Spirit's indwelling is not a work of man. The Spirit cannot be manipulated or coerced by any effort of man. Rather the Spirit calls, seals and gives gifts among the corporate priesthood as He determines (1 Cor. 12:1-11). Where the Spirit has regenerated believers they are a part of the New Testament priesthood known corporately as the local church. This qualification serves as a denial of a formal 'office' of priest, and denies any form of hierarchy intended to set one 'priest' over another.



The church has **Four Marks of Maturity**

Self-Governing, Self-Supporting,
Self-Reproducing and Self-Correcting

For those who have studied missiology, these first three will be quickly recognized as a simple adaptation of the "Nevius Principle."⁸ The fourth "self" later offered to the church speaks to churches' need to address theological issues through their own cultural lens. Here we have replaced Self-Theologizing with Self-Correcting. The change in terminology reflects an emphasis on filtering or correcting one's own culture with scripture. The community of faith is not asked to re-invent theology.

Rather, following Paul's example they must seek to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). This is witnessed in the New Testament as Greek background believers dealt with

⁷ For a description of Paul's every member expectation in Gospel sowing see Peter Orr's article: "*Abounding in the Work of the Lord, (1 Cor. 15:58), Everything we Do as Christians or Specific Gospel Work?*", *Themelios* 38.2 (2013):205-214.

⁸ Nevius, building on the work of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, formalized 3-self's for indigenous mission in his classic book, *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958).

the issues surrounding Jewish customs and tradition. The culmination of this issue in Acts 15 reveals an inherent faith in the Holy Spirit to guide each new people in the biblical filtering and redemption of their own culture.

Self-Governing

By self-governing, we simply mean a mature church has the capability to make decisions for itself. Doing so means proper exercise of the two authorities granted the church. They must be able to discern guidance from the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Self-Discovery Study – Self-Governing

Read Acts 6:1-7 and answer the following question.

Who chose the first deacons?

Answer – The 12 gathered “all the disciples” and instructed them to choose the first deacons. When the decision was made, there was no debate. Rather, the 12 simply recognized the choice by the laying on of hands.

How did the 12 know the believers would choose the right men?

The 12 entrusted the task of guidance to the Holy Spirit! The church was about to be scattered by persecution. It is suggested, the selection of deacons in this manner, was on the job training for believers about to be scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1). Through this exercise the believers learned to discern God’s voice by exercising responsible selection of leaders under Holy Spirit guidance.⁹

Why is this important? – The understanding affirms the doctrine of “Priesthood of the Believer.” When churches’ decisions are made for them, they are robbed of their birthright. Access to God for all people through the washing by blood and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are key doctrines related to salvation. All believers have access to the throne (Heb. 4:16). All believers have access to the Lord’s guidance through his Word (Heb. 4:12). It is true that hearing and discerning God’s voice is a learned discipline, of

⁹ For description of four other New Testament accounts of this type of congregational rule see: John McRay, *Paul: His Teaching and Practice*. (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2003), p. 383-386. These accounts include: Acts 1:15-26 (the appointment of Mathias), and the use of the Greek term *cheirotoneo* and *kateseses* translated “appoint” in 2 Cor. 8:18-19, Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5. McRay demonstrates the original meaning of “stretching out one’s hand for the purpose of giving one’s vote in the assembly.”

course. Our point here is simply that the church planter must allow this learning to take place through corporate ownership of the decision-making process.¹⁰

Self-Supporting

The church must have ownership of its function. Self-supporting means the ministry and outreach it performs are fueled by stewardship of its own resources.

Self-Discovery Study – Self-Supporting

Read the following passages to discover New Testament examples of giving.

Acts 2:44-45/4:34-36/11:29/2 Cor. 9:10-15/Phil. 4:14-19/1 Thess. 2:8-9/others?

The book of Acts 11:27-30 and 2 Corinthians 9 record the giving of offerings between churches. Contrary to modern trends, it is the daughter churches that gave to the “mother church” in Jerusalem. Further, Paul’s example of self-support for the Thessalonian church and others was intended as a model for their own independence (1 Thess. 2:6-10, 5:12-14).

Why is this important? – Several reasons exist.

First, there is intrinsic motivation when one perceives his or her ownership of ministry. As the giving of members begins to fuel ministry, joy is the inevitable result. This creates an atmosphere of giving, thereby catalyzing healthy church function (2 Cor. 9:6-15).

This issue of local ownership of giving is also perceived by non-believers outside the church. As those transformed by the gospel begin to reach out in love, their neighbor’s jealousy and accusations are replaced with gratitude and openness to the source of transformation.

A third reason is simple mathematics. Outside funds will never replace a local, intrinsic motive for giving needed to change a nation. Dependence on outside funds will impose a ceiling limiting the spread of the gospel. Breaking through this ceiling requires local ownership of the task including finance.

Self-Reproducing

The healthy church will multiply. Maturity means a church will take ownership of the responsibility to evangelize its field. For the church planter, this means expecting every believer to accept the Great Commission. Paul demanded and praised such ownership among the churches to which he wrote.

¹⁰ Freedom, even to fail, in decision making is freedom to grow in the knowledge of God’s grace. See the writings of Charles Brock for strong argument concerning this freedom. Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting*. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2001).

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8, *“And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere.”*

It is important here to remember Paul spent as little as three weeks in the establishment of this church (Acts 17:2).

To the church in the home of Achippus he wrote, *“I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ”* (Philemon 1:6).

Here Paul asserted a Christian walk without the practice of sharing one’s faith lacks understanding of God’s provision.

Why is this important? – The farmer is made for farming. Mobilizing local new believers into the harvest is the only way to multiply. As new believers take ownership of the fields, generations of new believers will flood the church.

Self-Correcting

We have sought to simplify this “fourth self” by inserting the word correcting in place of “theologizing.” We are not asking new believers to start from scratch. There is much to gain by exposure to the theology of the universal Church. Rather, we expect new churches among previously unreached peoples to examine their own beliefs and practices for the purpose of taking every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Doing so means they have taken a firm grip on Scripture as their guide.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, *“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

The proper use of scripture is a mark of maturity. It must be the source of teaching and training and can be trusted for rebuking and correcting as well.

Why is this important? Host peoples must learn to filter their own culture. Consider this example.

Among the Hindus of India, idolatry is rampant. Church planters in this context are faced with the difficult task of guiding new believers through an examination of their worldview and redemption of certain aspects of their culture. To outsiders, certain surface level out-workings of the culture are obviously detrimental to the new believer’s relationship with Christ. Under the surface, however, there are countless other layers of culture the church planter does not perceive. This makes these few surface issues key for the church planter. They represent potential teaching points in the process of filtering culture through scripture.

When faced with the need for redemption of culture, the church planter has two options.

Option #1 - Forbid the practice of obvious sinful aspects of the host culture.

Giving quick instruction concerning the host culture may solve several immediate blatant trespasses. But it also has a more lasting unseen effect.

Firstly, Hinduism, like all other false religions is works based. The Hindu background believer has been programmed since birth with the thought he or she must *accomplish* salvation. Quickly adding a list of do's and don'ts perpetuates their dependence on self rather than God.

Secondly, solving these issues for the new believer quickly exhausts the surface level aspects of culture the church planter may perceive. This means the church planter has inadvertently lost the opportunity to walk along side new believers in the redemption of culture. No point remains for the church planter to offer guidance. This leaves the new believer alone in their effort to hear God's voice redeeming the more subtle, hidden points of their culture. Syncretism in the heart of the new believer is the likely result.¹¹

Option #2 - Model a careful searching of scripture with faith in the Holy Spirit to help the new believer or church body, discover and implement self-correction.¹²

Utilizing this option means from the beginning the Spirit and scripture are seen as the agents of change. Dependence is never formed on the church planter's instruction and lifetime filtering of the subtle, hidden points of culture is set in motion.

For example, suppose a host culture considers wife beating to be a socially acceptable practice. The church planter could produce a list of expected do's and don'ts for husbands. A second option available to the church planter would be to call the body of believers together for a participative and comparative study of Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19 and Titus 2:1-8. Choosing the latter option would lead to discussion on deeper issues such as motive for submission, the family's reflection of our relationship with Christ and the sanctifying value of responsibility within family. Dealing with scripture on this heart level is the path toward a self-correcting body.

The Four-Self's

Consider an infant. Each of us began life in this way. We were totally dependent upon our parents for food, direction, love and daily care. These things are natural. God has ordered life this way.

As the child grows, however, he or she must take ownership of each of these areas. It begins feeding itself, choosing and buying its own clothes, choosing its own friends, doing its own school work and so on. Eventually it even lives on its own caring for its own needs and beginning to reproduce.

¹¹ See Roland Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1949), chs 4-6 for a more thorough argument on this topic.

¹² Syncretism is not a danger, it is a reality. Every new believer who has understood and accepted Christ by grace perceives Christ in the midst of his or her un-examined world-view. It is the job of discipleship to create a venue for examining world-view issues. In this sense all disciples are being led away from syncretism. Rather than fear syncretism the church planter is served to expect it in order to deal with it directly.

Imagine an adult man who still depends on his mother to feed him. We would instruct the man to grow up. Maturity demands a certain level of autonomy. We suggest to you, however, the mother is as much to blame as the son. Unwillingness to release the responsibilities related to maturity have stunted the growth of the offspring.

The same is often true of the church. A church that depends upon outsiders to make decisions, support, and correct its mistakes is not mature. Learning to walk requires practice. Without it, dependence is a given.



The Church has **Five Functions**

Worship, Fellowship, Ministry,
Mission and Discipleship¹³

In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus gave us the greatest commandment.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all of your mind... and the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Obedience to this command drives the first three church functions.

Worship – Expressing love toward God.

Anything the church does as an expression of love toward God is worship. That could include singing, giving, praying and acts of obedience to His Word.

Fellowship – Loving the Body of Christ

Every believer has two kinds of neighbors, lost neighbors and saved neighbors. Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ is fellowship. Any act of love toward our spiritual family constitutes fellowship. Praying for one another, giving and carrying each other’s burdens are all acts of fellowship.

Ministry – Loving the Lost

The second type of neighbor is the lost. Showing the love of Christ through our actions and attitudes is ministry. The church should consider such acts of love as a strategic aspect of its function. Any activity of the church that expresses such love is ministry.

The Great Commission gives us the remaining functions of the church. Jesus said, *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew 28:19).

¹³ The five functions listed here are a loose adaptation of Rick Warren’s teaching on the Great Commandment and Great Commission within his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1995. p. 103-109.

Mission – Going!

Mission means carrying the message of Christ’s salvation to peoples who have not heard. According to Acts 1:8, this can be fulfilled locally and at great distances. For the church, practicing mission should be a part of everyday life.

Discipleship – Teaching others to obey everything Christ has commanded.

Our discipleship must be focused on moving believers forward in their relationship with Christ. Plan to provide tools and accountability.

Why are these important? - The health of any church is defined by its function. Any church, regardless of size, age or venue with healthy function is successful.

Self-Discovery Study – Church Functions

Examine the 1st church in Acts 2:41-47. Which of the five functions do you see at work in this congregation?

- | | |
|----|-----------|
| 1) | 4) |
| 2) | 5) |
| 3) | others? - |

Tool for the Trainer

To ensure the implementation of these functions take time to practice them. In small groups of 6-10 assign the facilitation of each function to different members of the group. Assign someone to lead in:

Worship – Loving God

Fellowship – Loving other believers

Ministry – Loving the Lost

Mission – Going!

Discipleship – Training others to obey

Allow multiple one-hour practice sessions with feedback opportunities to sharpen understanding of these functions. Brainstorm together different ways to fulfill each function in the small group setting.

The Goal - Multiplying healthy churches – and the mess we create.

The Apostle Paul wrote many letters to churches he had been a part of starting. It is of interest that Paul never wrote a single word to a fellowship, preaching point or even a cell group. Paul's open letters were addressed to churches.

Self-Discovery Study

How healthy must a church be to be a church?

Take a few minutes to look over the letter, 1 Corinthians. What challenges was the church facing? Make a list.

- 1) example – factions among followers/leaders – chapter 3:1-5
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)

As we examine Paul's church plants, we are many times surprised by the lack of maturity or Christ like morality they exhibit. Instructions concerning struggles with sin, order, false teaching, the errors of leadership and misuse of ordinances or gifting are common within Paul's letters. According to Paul, however, these struggles did not prevent him from respecting them as autonomous churches. Consider Paul's opening statement in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9:

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge – because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Considering the condition of the Corinthian church, which we just examined, these verses are remarkable. Paul was confident because he knew the faithfulness of God (v.9). Paul was confident, even where maturity was lacking, that God was committed and faithful to the Corinthian church. Though they were struggling to emerge from the baggage of their pre-Christian culture and worldview, they were church. Calling them church (1 Cor. 1:2), claimed Christ's promise in Matthew 16:18. Because Jesus was invested in them, the gates of hell would not stand in the way of fulfilling their purpose.

For church planting teams, it is valuable to discuss and come to consensus on vocabulary used in the church planting process. Even when the congregations were unhealthy, *Paul commissioned churches to all that Christ expected them to be*. Doing so raised the expectation for each body to the full measure of identity, responsibility and authority.

Introduction and acceptance of terms such as; fellowships, preaching points, "house" churches, cell groups, cottage meetings for new groups carry the potential to undermine the goal of new churches. If our goal is multiplication, these terms should be examined to determine motive as they often reflect an alternate definition of success with limited potential.

For this reason we have chosen to limit our terminology to the following.

- 1) A new "church start" – A "church start" is a new gathering we (the church planters) intend to become a church but that may be lacking some element of function or identity. These are new groups, often formed in or around houses or men of peace. Calling a new group a "church start" does not mean that everything we start *is* church. Rather, this choice of vocabulary reflects our intention. We have committed, we *intend* everything we start to become church. Often, even as church function is underway the necessary identity may be lacking and is often the last element in place for a group to become "church".
- 2) A "church" – A "church" is a body of baptized believers committed to a collective identity under the Lordship of Christ, for the purpose of fulfilling all of Christ's expectations for his body. That said, there has never been a church that fulfilled Christ's expectations throughout its lifecycle (for examples of churches lacking elements of health see the 1 Corinthians example listed above, or Galatians 1:2, 1:6-7 or Rev. chapters 2-3, 2:4-5, 2:14-16, 2:20, 3:2-3, 3:15-16). The biblical precedent for churches in such condition is rebuke and reproof after the example of Paul (1 Cor. 5:1-5, Gal. 1:6-9, Titus 1:5).
- 3) A "healthy church" - A "healthy church" is a church (see above), fulfilling the expectations of Christ as outlined within scripture. Remember, this is the goal; it is not a box that can be checked or forever completed. Churches will inevitably fall in and out of compliance with the fullness of Christ's expectation. Regular examination, evaluation and discipline will be needed.

Healthy churches are the plan. Anything less fails to fulfill Christ's eternal purposes (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 3:10). As witnesses to movements of multiplying churches over the years, we have grown in our understanding of Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 11:28,

Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”

After a long list of persecutions and sufferings (2 Cor. 11:23-27), Paul confesses his ongoing burden of concern for churches he and his disciples had planted. The nature of his calling (Rom. 15:18-23), and the violent responses of those who have opposed him demanded an itinerant ministry and the inevitable longing to be among those whom he could minister to only from a distance (Acts 14:5-6, 19-20, 17:10-15). As we pursue similar goals (the multiplication of healthy churches), how will we monitor and faithfully serve churches we are not able to shepherd in person?

In presenting church formation up to this point, we have suggested the ideal. We believe the “handy guide” introduces the elements necessary for promoting and maintaining the health of churches. Church health, however, is a dynamic goal that must be pursued as well as maintained. Often such evaluation of church health reveals elements of false teaching or sin. It also reveals elements of dependence or control preventing the release of autonomous church starts.

Below is a tool for evaluating and internationalizing elements of church health within body life. This tool is based on the activities and priorities of the first church in Acts chapter 2:38-47 as well as elements of maturity recorded in the Acts 13:1-5, Antioch church.

As you work through the Generational Mapping tool, consider the following questions for evaluation of your church plants and church planting disciples. Remember, for multiplication to occur, releasing healthy churches is as important as starting them!

An introduction to Generational Mapping

As churches begin to multiply in new generations, the church planter will quickly discover his or her own calendar does not multiply at the same rate. Success in generational growth quickly outstrips the pioneer church planters firsthand knowledge of the congregations and new fields that are bearing fruit. This is cause for celebration as each new point of light takes the Enemy's ground. At the same time the church planter's responsibility for healthy DNA across these generations becomes increasingly difficult to track.

One of the most effective tools in tracking health across a network is a simple generational chart. By tracking the common elements mentioned earlier as markers for movement toward health, the generational chart quickly takes on a diagnostic function that helps the church planter recognize areas of weakness or concern across entire streams of church planting.

Let us first suggest a few definitions.

First Generation Church – these are churches started by the original church planter or pre-existing churches approached by a church planting trainer for training in reproduction. Mapping these churches is the first step in the creation of a generational map. Begin by asking the trainee for locations, dates and the names of local leaders in churches they have begun. List them across the top of the page.

Second Generation Churches – these are churches that have been started by members of first generation churches independent of the original church planter. The individuals responsible for these church starts are typically the “Timothys” of the original church planter, thus providing spiritual “grandchildren” as the network begins to multiply for the first time. These may be easily discovered by asking if and when first generation churches have started their own works. Typically, these begin in connection to a specific disciple who can also be listed on the chart.

Third Generation and beyond – these generations follow the same pattern as each generation is encouraged to take up responsibility for targeting its own empty fields. Typically fourth generation (G4 movement) is a measure of church planting movements. By the time these generations emerge the need for such mapping becomes obvious.

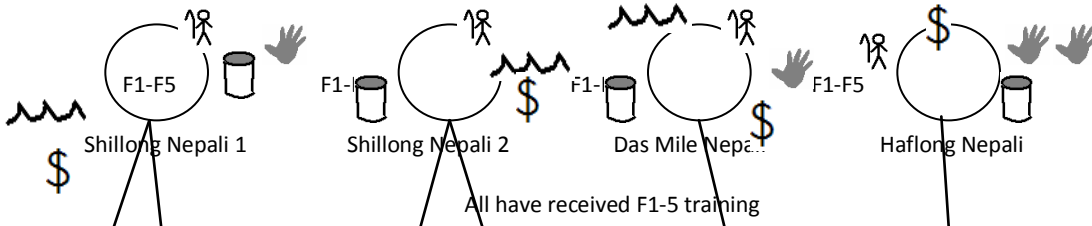
It will be appropriate for each network to define the minimum requirement for a group to be included on the chart. This can be facilitated through discussion of the definitions of church identity and function listed above.

Once all existing churches are mapped on the chart, the elements of church health discovered in Acts chapter 2 and 13 can be tracked across the generations on the chart. Take time to examine each element church by church on the chart. Looking for an “edge” of obedience for each element within the generations of church planting will help to determine next steps in the development of health across the generations.

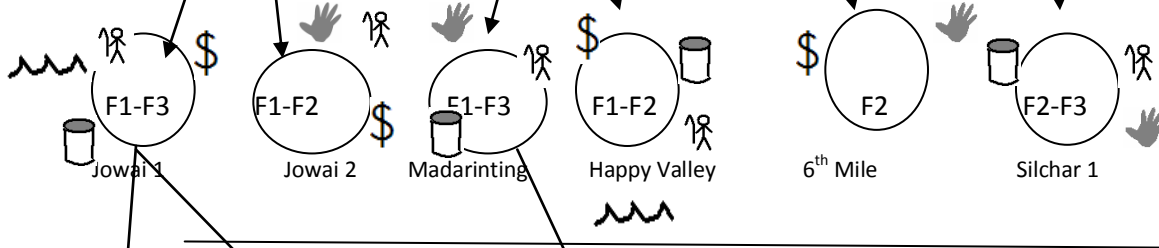
Consider the chart below as an example.

Generational Mapping - Intentional Church Formation

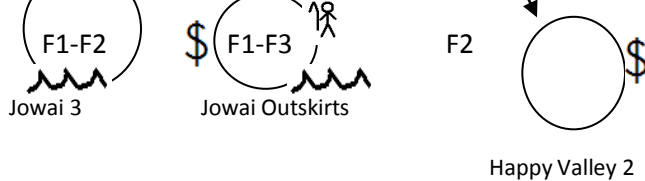
Generation 1 – Churches that were engaged for training or planted by the original church planter.



Generation 2 – Churches that have been started by the Generation 1 churches.
Only list churches in the habit of meeting regularly.



Generation 3 – These are churches started by Generation 2 churches.
Only list churches in the habit of meeting regularly.



Include names of all identified leaders, locations of the meetings and the date established.
When needed, transfer growing streams onto their own map.

Mapping Legend

- Shepherd/Elder/Pastor - 1 Tim. 3:1-7/1 Pet. 5:1-2
- Five Functions - Acts 2:38-47/Matt. 22:36-40
- Lord's Supper Authority within the church - 1 Cor. 11
- Baptism Authority within the Church - Mt. 28
- Regular Collection of Offering /Appointed Treasurer - 1 Cor. 9

Tracking Training

- F1 – Field 1 - 2x2 Teams – Luke 10/oikos
- F2 – Field 2 – Personal Testimony and Gospel Pres.
- List of Non-Believers
- F3 – Field 3 - Seven Commands/SWORD
- F4 – Five Functions Present –Biblical Leaders
- F5 – List of next generation “Timothys”

Uses of the Generational Map

We have found three major uses of this tool as churches multiply.

1) A vision for multiplication

By mapping generations, a paradigm capable of reaching an entire population comes into view. There are many effective church planters in the kingdom. Their efforts and abilities serve as models, but will not finish the task. First generation church starts (across the top of the page) represent addition, not multiplication. No matter the gifting or ability of the first generation church planter, his efforts add new believers and church starts. While this is commendable, we have never seen an example of this saturation approach keep up with population growth.

*Growth across the generational map is addition.
Growth in generations down the map represents multiplication.*

Spiritual grandchildren and great grandchildren within 3rd and 4th generation church starts represent multiplication. Capturing vision for such multiplication is an effective application of the generational chart.

2) Tracking elements of church health

As stated above, effective follow-up across multiplying generations cannot be maintained through the efforts of only 1st generation church planters. The nature of multiplication makes this impossible. Tracking elements of health across generations will always reveal “edges” or points where obedience and training break down. Finding these “edges” reveals the need for further training and encouragement among churches not yet implementing the element of church function. Remember, the elements themselves do not create health. Rather the disciplined practice of obedience creates the venue for renewal and obedience leading toward health.

3) The map provides a script for **T4T** discipleship chains

Where the map is used, next steps are not guesswork. By using the generational chart, first generation church planters, who are unable to visit 3rd and 4th generation churches do not have to guess next steps. By examining church function across the chart next steps are revealed by showing what is missing. In this way the chart is a tool for diagnostics as often entire streams can be seen lacking certain elements. To be sure, elements of health do not just appear in succeeding generations. What is lacking in the parent will not spontaneously occur in the offspring.

Content for practice, application and accountability can be scripted in this manner. In this way our **T4T** becomes more efficient.

Tool for the Trainer

Take time to consider the churches you are involved with using the Generational Mapping tool. Ask the following questions.

- 1) Are there areas in which your church starts are getting stuck?
- 2) What barriers exist in local tradition keeping them from moving forward?
- 3) What would it take to break out of these ruts?
- 4) How can you move existing networks past troublesome traditions?
- 5) Are there key leaders with the perceived authority to move these churches forward?
- 6) Are authorities recognized within the church making healthy function possible?

End- Visioning – Church Formation

“WIGTAKE” – What is It Going to Take?

Consider again the “X” people group with a population of 1 million souls. Keeping in mind God’s stated will (2 Pet. 3:9) that none should perish we must ask ourselves;

How many churches are needed?

As we gather the harvest among the “X”, we are faced with the challenges of multiple church starts. Determining the size of this task helps the church planter to set God-sized goals toward fulfilling God’s desires.

Worldwide, the average church size is about 50 people. Within our context we can use this average to estimate the number of churches necessary.

If one church = 50 people,
how many churches are needed to reach 100%
of the “X”?

With this in mind, we divide the “X” population by fifty to determine the number of churches needed.

“X” Population = 1,000,000
1 Church = 50 people.
1 Million Divided by 50 = 20,000
Reaching 1 Million “X” people would require the start of
20,000 churches.
*Reaching 10% of the “X” people would require
2,000 church starts!*

Forming and Releasing New Churches

Creation and adoption of goals for church formation should be tailored to each specific setting. For some, a goal of beginning 50 new churches in the next year is an appropriate goal. For others, moving existing churches towards healthy function may be a prerequisite.

Together with the leaders of your network, consider appropriate goals and anticipate a movement of God’s over the next year. What would you need to spend your time doing to respond to a movement? We suggest you record these activities in the form of goals below.

- 1)
- 2)

Specific Actions

Modeling healthy church function for your network and the projected leaders of new church starts is a must. One to three day trainings in which the “Handy Guide” is used to practice these functions, and the introduction of generational charts to track these functions can get you started.

Evaluate each church within your network to determine the next steps in their formation. Use the Generational Tracking tool to design specific actions intended to move past areas where churches may be stuck. Ensure there is a shepherd for every flock! Ensure there is authority for obedience vested in every church!

Evaluation – The Handy Guide to Church Formation

Take time in groups of 6-10, to evaluate the training tool, “The Handy Guide” for training new believers. Consider the following questions for discussion. Take steps to correct any perceived weaknesses within your efforts.

Questions to consider:

Is the tool obedience based? Is there an accountability process?

Does the tool grant responsibilities?

Does the tool plan for multiplication?

Is the tool facilitated by locals?

Does the tool depend on self-discovery?

Does the tool lead to healthy church formation?

Is the tool reproducible?

Explain each “yes” answer. Why are these important?