Course Syllabus

PRINCIPLES OF GREAT COMMISSION MINISTRY

Christian experts have done much research on the growth of Christianity around the world, to learn what accelerates and slows its expansion. These experts have written volumes on the principles and methods by which congregations and denominations can experience explosive growth. This course studies these principles and helps the Christian worker apply them to his or her own future ministry. Courses with an asterisk are excerpted with permission from S.D. Ponraj's book: "Stategies for Church Planting Movement." For further understanding the book can be purchased from Mission Educational Books, 11 Konnur High Road, Ayanavaram, Chennai – 600023.

	Unit	***Lesson***	***Assignment***
1.	Introduction	Syllabus and Assignments	A profile of a local church in the area; you should analyze strong and weak points of the congregation. Then, you should prescribe treatment so that the church regains its spiritual health. Your remedy should include a program of evangelism / discipleship.
2.	The Church's Mission	The Church's Mission: a Definition	
3.		The Church's Mission: Ecclesiology	
4.		The Church's Mission: A Process and an Attitude	
5.		The Church's Vision of the Great Commission - 1	
6.		The Church's Vision of the Great Commission - 2	
7.		God's Mission / Man's Omission	
8.	God's plan	God's Plan: The Incarnation	
9.		God's Plan: His People into the World	
10.		The Church Grows by the Power of the Holy Spirit	
11.		God's Plan: The Means of Grace	
12.	God's Church	Images of the Church: A Living Organism - 1	
13.		Images of the Church: A Living Organism - 2	
14.	God's Mission	God's Mission: A Description of Evangelism	
15.		God's Mission: Comprehensive Evangelism	There is an optional final exam for those who fail to do a church profile.
16.		God's Mission: A Great Commission Leader	
17.		Indigenous Leadership Training* - 1	
18.		Indigenous Leadership Training* - 2	
19.		God's Mission: Focusing God's Light	
20.		An Overview of the Remaining Mission	
21.	Sociological aspects	An Ethnic Approach to World Evangelization	
22.		Sociological aspects: Working Tools	
23.	Church planting	Church Planting - 1	
24.		Church Planting - 2	
25.		Church Planting - 3	
26.		Global Factors that impact Church Planting	
27.		Terms and Tools for Analyzing Church Planting	
28.		A Description of a Church Planting Movement*	
29.		Starting / Sustaining a Church Planting Movement*	
30.	Church Growth Factors	Factors in the Growth of the Church	
31.		Obstacles to the Growth of the Church	
32.		Social Classes and Socio-Economic Advance	
33.	Evaluation of Growth	Measuring and Evaluating Growth of the Church 1	
34.		Measuring and Evaluating Growth of the Church 2	
35.	Contextualization	Contextualization* - 1	
36.		Contextualization* - 2	
37.		Contextualization* - 3	

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The Church's Mission: A Definition

1. BASIC DEFINITION

The Church's mission is the sum total of everything necessary to lead people to Jesus Christ, disciple them to become soul-winners themselves, and integrate them into the life of the Church.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

In this course we will study the nature, planting, multiplication, function, health, and good operation of Christian Churches as they commit themselves to obeying the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). This science attempts to combine the eternal principles of the Word of God with the observations of the social sciences, using as a starting point the fundamental research of Dr. Donald McGavran. This course will include practical applications, not just theoretical information.

2.1. **We put into practice**: This will not just be a theoretical course.

2.1.1. Evangelism: is done in three phases.

2.1.1.1. Presence: Be present with non-Christians.

2.1.1.2. Proclamation: Announce the complete Gospel to non-Christians.

2.1.1.3. Persuasion: Seek to convince non-Christians to make a commitment.

2.1.2. Discipleship: There are many components to evangelism.

2.1.2.1. Enquire: Study the area you want to evangelize.

2.1.2.2. Evangelize: Proclaim the Good News (but remember, the task is not over when evangelism is finished).

2.1.2.3. Establish: Strengthen new believers.

2.1.2.4. Equip: Offer necessary personnel, training and material for the ministry.

2.1.2.5. Expand: Involve those you are discipling in soul-winning and discipleship ministry of their own.

2.1.2.6. Evaluate: Check up on the work of those sent out to see if it is well done.

2.2. **We do research**: We ask diagnostic questions about the health of the Church.

2.2.1. By researching the spiritual and other needs of those around us, we can better discern God's leading and direction into more fruitful ministry.

2.2.2. Following are some examples of questions to research:

2.2.2.1. Is there a village or neighborhood nearby where there is no church or Christian group?

2.2.2.2. If there is a church, is it growing? Are there new members?

2.2.2.3. If the church is growing, is their growth from transfers (people coming from other churches) or is it from new believers?

2.2.2.4. Has the church grown more this year than last?

2.2.2.5. How many members are participating in a weekly Bible study?

2.2.2.6. How many members are trained to do evangelism?

2.3. **We measure**: We take the "temperature" of the church when we have the facts.

2.3.1. If the ministry is important, we measure the results.

2.3.2. We do not hide the truth, even if the church's condition isn't healthy.

2.3.3. We measure results, not just activities.

2.4. **We evaluate**: we interpret the results.

2.4.1. The report exposes the health (or sickness) of the church and prescribes an appropriate course of action.

2.4.2. The report contains recommendations to improve the situation.

2.4.3. Some churches will die if they become too unhealthy.

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The Church's Mission: Ecclesiology, the Theology of the Church

1. SOME OF THE TERMS WE USE FOR "CHURCH" ARE NOT FOUND IN THE BIBLE.

1.1. **National Church**: all Christians in a nation
1.2. **Denominational Church**: all Christians bound by a common doctrine, a common label, and common statutes.
1.3. **Ecumenical Church**: institutional union of Churches
1.4. **Church building**: the building where Christians meet, the temple, or the parish

2. SOME OF THE TERMS WE USE FOR "CHURCH" ARE FOUND IN THE BIBLE.

2.1. Universal Church - "laos" and "kleros" - all Christians at any time (invisible)
2.2. Local Church: "ekklesia," and "koinonia" - assembly in a specific place (visible)
2.3. The Reformation expressed it this way: "The Church is the place where the Word is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered."

3. THE CHURCH IS MORE THAN AN INSTITUTION.

3.1.1. Many consider the Church as a denomination, but denominations do not exist in the Bible.
3.1.2. Others consider the Church as a simple building, but the Church is not material.

4. THE CHURCH IS A BIBLICAL NOTION.

4.1.1. The New Testament Church is defined in two ways:
4.1.1.1. Universal: the body of saints. ("Church" is spelled with a capital "C.")
4.1.1.2. Local: the local assembly ("Church" is spelled with a small "c.")
4.1.2. The Church emphasizes the fact that God calls people to be His possession. 1 Peter 2:9
4.1.3. Baptism is a demonstration – a public sign – of a person becoming God's possession.
4.1.3.1. His sins are forgiven, he is born again, and he enters into the family of God.
4.1.3.2. He takes the name Christian, and receives an inheritance that includes eternal life.
4.1.3.3. His old life with its sins is buried (figuratively) when he is baptized and he is "resurrected" into new life in Christ.

5. THE CHURCH IS A LIVING ORGANISM: THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE SHEEPFOLD.

5.1.1. The primary goal of the Church is to grow.
5.1.1.1. All living things grow; if it is not growing, it is not dying.
5.1.1.2. It is natural and supernatural that the Church grows.
5.1.1.3. The Church should experience constant revival.
5.1.1.4. Growth is thus the norm, not the exception.
5.1.1.5. Every church should offer an environment where people can grow. 2 Peter 3:18
5.1.2. The Church is to grow quantitatively (in numbers) and qualitatively (in quality, ie: in faith, spiritual maturity and in righteousness).
5.1.3. We sometimes give reasons why the Church is not growing.
5.1.3.1. Churches that are not growing have a problem and go against the will of God.
5.1.3.2. The problem always lies in the human element of the Church; it is never God's fault.
5.1.4. There are notable exceptions.
5.1.4.1. Churches may lose members because of persecution. Acts 8:1
5.1.4.2. Some members might leave the church to go as missionaries to evangelize a distant people. Acts 13:1-3
5.1.4.3.

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The Church's Mission: A Process and an Attitude

1. THE CHURCH'S MISSION IS A PROCESS: IT IS NOT A PROGRAM.

1.1. The Church's mission is defined by its underlying principles.

1.1.1. The Church's foundational beliefs are based on God's Word.

1.1.2. Principles will have an impact on all the members of the Church.

1.1.3. Principles tend to unite all the groups of an assembly because they describe the main goal of the Church.

1.1.4. Thanks to this dynamic, the Church with its diverse members works and plans with a unity of purpose.

1.1.5. This is not a temporary experience, something that passes with time: Principles can be applied at various times.

1.2. A program is limited because it does not impact all aspects of the Church.

2. THE CHURCH'S MISSION IS AN ATTITUDE: A COMMITMENT TO JESUS AND HIS GREAT COMMISSION.

2.1. It is more than an ideology, a theology, a philosophy, or a process; it is an attitude.

2.2. It is an attitude of optimism.

2.2.1. Jesus did not send people to carry out an impossible mission.

2.2.2. A little seed of faith can transport mountains. Matthew 17:20

2.2.3. Jesus promised to build His Church. Matthew 16:18

2.3. It is an attitude of pragmatism.

2.3.1. We must pragmatically evaluate each program: does it contribute to the growth and maturity of believers?

2.3.2. Being good stewards of the ministry God gives us requires careful analysis and evaluation of ministry programs and projects.

2.3.3. Too many churches maintain programs simply because of tradition; "We've always done it that way."

2.3.4. Good stewardship demands that we eliminate practices that don't bring qualitative or quantitative growth to the Body of Christ.

2.4. It is an attitude of responsibility.

2.4.1. God's people are responsible for the use of their time, talents, energy, and resources.

2.4.2. The Christian works for the approval of his Master. Matthew 25:21

2.4.3. Every effort should be measured and evaluated for its effectiveness. John 15:2

2.4.4. Jesus Christ is as interested in results as in the process.

2.4.4.1. He wants all the seats at the banquet to be filled. Luke 14:23

2.4.4.2. He wants us to harvest in the fields. Matthew 9:37

2.4.4.3. He wants us to catch fish. Luke 5:4

2.4.4.4. He wants His people to be fishers of men. Matthew 4:19

2.5. It is an attitude of perseverance: we redeem the time.

2.5.1. The time is short; we must do the work now. John 9:4

2.5.2. The Lord will return soon; we must act quickly. 1 Thessalonians 5:2

2.5.3. The world is full of people who die every day without Christ.

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The Church's Vision of the Great Commission – 1

1. A CHURCH'S BELIEF ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION WILL DETERMINE ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD.

1.1. If the group believes their highest purpose is to proclaim the Gospel to every person in the world, they will plan their activities and their budget accordingly. Mark 16:15

1.2. If it believes its highest purpose is to make disciples of all nations, it will plan its activities and its budget accordingly. Matthew 28:19-20

1.3. Whatever it believes to be its highest priorities will determine how it spends its time, energy and money.

2. A CHURCH'S BELIEF ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION WILL DETERMINE ITS IDENTITY.

2.1. People in the surrounding community observe what the people of the church work on the hardest and what they spend the most time, money and effort on. Their observations determine their impression of the particular church / group.

2.2. This public identity can be either positive or negative. Following are some possible positive identities:

2.2.1. The church is viewed as a center of evangelism and soul-winning that gives hope to the hopeless.

2.2.2. The church is viewed as a place where God is worshiped and where there is rich fellowship among the members.

2.2.3. The church is a center where orphans and widows and other suffering people are loved, received, and cared for.

2.2.4. The church is a place where anyone, regardless of position, is welcome to come learn about God.

2.3. Following are a couple of possible ways a negative identity could develop in the community:

2.3.1. The identity of a group can suffer if the leader of the group is seen spending more time and energy on personal advancement than on spiritual ministry.

2.3.2. There was a church in a particular city that annually held a big sale of donated items in order to raise funds. The sale became such a major priority in the church's calendar that it became the most important event of the year. Eventually, the people in the neighboring community came to view the church more as a financial business than a place of spiritual life and ministry.

3. WE CHRISTIANS SHOULD VALUE OUR DIVERSITY, WHICH HELPS SHAPE OUR DIFFERENT MINISTRIES.

3.1. The Christian Church is a mosaic of unity in diversity.

3.1.1. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Ephesians 4:5

3.1.2. All are one in Christ. Galatians 3:28

3.1.3. Yet every church is different, depending on its members' diversity.

3.2. We should value the variety of people that God has given to each church.

3.3. We should value the different ministries of different churches, and the various styles of worship among God's children because we all come to Him through Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.John 14:6

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The Church's Vision of the Great Commission – 2

4. WE CHRISTIANS SHOULD VALUE THE SHARED CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES WHICH WE HAVE IN COMMON.

4.1. Our vision of the Great Commission should be based on Christ and on prayer.
- 4.1.1. Our unity is based on the grace and forgiveness of God in Christ.
- 4.1.2. Salvation is a spiritual experience that demands repentance.
- 4.1.3. A renewed love and respect for the Word of God becomes the norm.
- 4.1.4. Believers are eager to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- 4.1.5. There are no "gimmicks" to help the church grow.

4.2. Our vision should revolve around the Great Commission.
- 4.2.1. The emphasis is no longer on acquiring more members for our church.
- 4.2.2. The training of disciples is emphasized.
- 4.2.3. We don't simply make converts; we make disciples.
- 4.2.4. The importance of evangelism does not diminish that of sanctification.
- 4.2.5. The church cares for its members, from the cradle to the grave.

4.3. Our vision should recognize that every believer is to have a ministry.
- 4.3.1. God placed a gifted and qualified team in the congregation; the role of that team is to equip the saints (each other) for ministry. Ephesians 4:12
- 4.3.2. Martin Luther spoke frequently of the "priesthood of the saints." 1 Peter 2:9
- 4.3.3. Each Christian must discover his gifts and be trained for the ministry that corresponds to his gifts.

4.4. Our vision should be sensitive to the felt needs of the people to be reached.
- 4.4.1. Jesus wanted people to be forgiven and in good relationship with the Father; that is why He died on the cross. Romans 6:5-11
- 4.4.2. Jesus never stopped having compassion for the whole person; he healed the sick and fed the hungry multitudes.
- 4.4.3. The Gospel must be given both by our words and through our acts of mercy, kindness and compassion.
- 4.4.4. People are receptive when the Church seeks to meet their needs. Luke 19:10

4.5. Our vision should be oriented toward the mission and the sending of missionaries.
- 4.5.1. The Church should pro-active in its witness. It should go into all the world to seek the lost.
- 4.5.2. It does not emphasize people coming to church; rather, it emphasizes the Church going out to the people. Luke 14:21
- 4.5.3. The accent is not put on looking inward, but on looking outward. John 20:21b
- 4.5.4. We meet on Sundays for the Word and the sacraments, in order to be salt and light to the world during the week.
- 4.5.5. The Church is God's people in society, ambassadors for Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:20

4.6. Our vision should stimulate concern for the world and its spiritual condition.
- 4.6.1. Its perspective is global, not just local. Matthew 24:14
- 4.6.2. The burden is shared: To seek those who are lost. Matthew 16:24
- 4.6.3. A vision for the world is supported through prayer and finances.
- 4.6.4. The people of God are challenged to proclaim God's salvation, not only at home, but also in other regions.

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God's Mission / Man's Omission

1. GOD CREATED THE WHOLE UNIVERSE, ESPECIALLY MAN. GENESIS 1-3

1.1. In the beginning there was no sin.
1.2. There was no separation between God and man.
1.3. Temptation was trying to be like God, independently from God.
1.4. Man and woman discovered sin because of their rebellion.

2. DEATH ENTERED THE UNIVERSE WHEN ADAM AND EVE SINNED. GENESIS 2-3

2.1. Sin polluted the whole human race and all of creation.
2.2. The spiritual sickness was inherited by all generations.
2.3. Decay, corruption and every other form of death entered every living organism in the universe.

3. GOD DECIDED TO GIVE MAN A SECOND CHANCE. GENESIS 3:9-24

3.1. God had the option to destroy man and woman.
3.2. But God is love, and His love compelled Him to give mankind an opportunity for redemption.

4. GOD LOVES MAN IN SPITE OF HIS REBELLION. GENESIS 3:7-24

4.1. Adam and Eve saw that they were naked.
4.2. God gave clothing to Adam and Eve in spite of their pitiful state. Genesis 3:21

5. GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE A PROMISE.

5.1. God told Abraham that He would bless all nations thru him. Genesis 22:18
5.2. He elaborated on the promise while speaking to David. 2 Samuel 7:16
5.3. He continued reminding Israel through His prophets of a Messiah. Isaiah 7:14b

6. GOD SET ASIDE A MISSIONARY PEOPLE. GENESIS 12

6.1. The covenant between God and His people had a missionary goal. Genesis 12:3
- 6.1.1. The covenant was conditional on the obedience of His people.
- 6.1.2. The conditional was that Israel had to share the covenant of God with other nations. Exodus 19:5-6

6.2. Israel was supposed to represent God to the other nations.
- 6.2.1. God made Israel an example of how He would respond with love and mercy toward any nation seeking Him. Isaiah 37:20; Joshua 7:9
- 6.2.2. The Israelites refused the divine plan to be a missionary nation. Example: Jonah
- 6.2.3. Confronted with the sin of pagan nations, Israel compromised her holiness: She committed adultery with the nations; she became like them. Example: Hosea

6.3. God sent prophets to call Israel to repentance.
- 6.3.1. The prophets proclaimed a new day for Israel. Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jeremiah 31:31
- 6.3.2. The messianic prophets were more and more prominent.
- 6.3.3. The Messiah is presented as the one who will save **the nations**. Isaiah 19:23-25
- 6.3.4. The prophets told Israel in detail of her missionary responsibility to call **all nations** to God. Isaiah 55:5; 56:6-8; 66:18-19
- 6.3.5. The Messiah would reign everywhere during the millennium. Isaiah 25:6-8; Habakkuk 2:14

6.4. God's mission is theocentric, but Israel's mission was ethnocentric. Ezekiel 36:22-23
- 6.4.1. **Theocentric:** God wanted His people, Israel, to take salvation to all nations, but they failed. Isaiah 49:6
- 6.4.2. **Ethnocentric:** Israel only understood they were to reach to their own, and they did not reach out to other nations. Matthew 5:16

CONCLUSION

- *Israel failed to fulfill God's mission.*
- *God is still calling and using the Church to take salvation to the ends of the Earth.* *Acts 1:8*

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God's Plan: The Incarnation

1. INCARNATION: GOD BECAME FLESH IN JESUS CHRIST. JOHN 1:1, 14

1.1. The incarnation was necessary to restore man to his former relationship with God.
1.2. If God had not come Himself, all our sins could not have been taken away.
1.3. If God had not come Himself, salvation would be neither infinite nor universal.

2. GOD'S PEACE WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE BIRTH OF JESUS. LUKE 2:14

2.1. God's peace is the result of a good relationship with Him.
2.2. It is a relationship that begins when God's forgiveness is received.
2.3. This forgiveness depends upon receiving the Son of God.

3. GOD'S GIFT OF PEACE AND FORGIVENESS IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION. 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

3.1. God sent His Son for unworthy people.
3.2. That is God's plan, not man's, because man would never do that.
3.3. God's plan of salvation succeeds if man does not prevent it.

4. JESUS CHRIST'S MINISTRY IS NOT A HUMAN ENDEAVOR.

4.1. Jesus began His ministry by His baptism. John 1:29
4.2. Jesus is more than a representative of God's mercy; He is God's mercy in the flesh. John 3:16
4.3. Jesus is the only means we have to reach God. John 10:9; 14:6; Acts 4:12
4.4. Jesus is not simply a part of the divine plan of salvation; He is the divine plan of salvation in the flesh. Romans 5:1-2; Hebrews 7:26-28

5. THE CROSS IS THE SUPREME DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S LOVE.

5.1. When Jesus took our sins upon Himself, His Father forsook him. Matthew 27:46
5.2. The Son bore the judgment of His Father, which we deserved. Romans 5:8
5.3. The result was His death and His separation from the Father.
5.4. Jesus said, "It is finished," just before He died on the cross. John 19:30
5.4.1. The original word in Greek is "Tetelestaï", which also means, "the debt is paid."
5.4.2. This means the plan of forgiveness is complete; the matter is concluded.

6. JESUS AROSE FROM THE DEAD. 1 CORINTHIANS 15

6.1. Jesus defeated death and Satan.
6.2. He offers us life after death.
6.3. He offers us the possibility to defeat death and Satan.
6.4. For those who believe, Jesus will come and indwell them.
6.5. The "Me" dies; henceforth, Jesus lives in me. Galatians 2:20

7. JESUS IS PRESENT AMONGST HIS PEOPLE.

7.1. Jesus promised to be with His disciples. John 28:20
7.2. He is present in His Word.
7.3. He is present in His Church.
7.4. He is present in the body of each believer. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19

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God's Plan: His People into the World

1. THE CHURCH IS THE IMAGE OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

1.1. God's desire that all humanity know Him continues through the Church.
1.2. Jesus is the head of the body. Colossians 1:18
1.3. God's people are spokesmen for the King. Ephesians 4:15; Romans 12:5; 2 Corinthians 5:20
1.4. The living and resurrected Christ continues incarnate through His Church.

2. JESUS CHRIST'S VICTORY REDEEMED GOD'S PEOPLE FROM THE LAW AND GIVES THEM THE GOSPEL.

2.1. Until Christ came, the Law was the teacher of God's people. Galatians 3:19
- 2.1.1. The works of the Law did not justify man. Galatians 2:16
- 2.1.2. The Law brought death, not life. Galatians 2:19-20

2.2. The Gospel fulfills the Law. Romans 10:4
- 2.2.1. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:13
- 2.2.2. The Gospel reveals God's pardon.
- 2.2.3. It restores those who are condemned by the law.
- 2.2.4. It motivates delivered people to proclaim the Gospel to others. 1 Corinthians 9:16
- 2.2.5. It gives us victory over sin and death. 1 John 5:4

3. JESUS' MISSION IS CENTERED IN THE CHURCH, HIS DIVINE AGENT.

3.1. The nature of the Church should be understood by the terms in the Bible
- 3.1.1. "Laos" means "people of God," laity, all the saints. 1 Peter 2:9-10
- 3.1.2. "Kleros" means "God's inheritors, the clergy, all the saints." 1 Peter 1:3-4
- 3.1.3. "Koinonia" means "brotherly and spiritual communion" among God's people. Acts 2:42-46; 1 John 1:3
- 3.1.4. "Ekklesia" means "the assembly, those who are called out." Matthew 16:18

3.2. God's people are to be His agents and to take His Gospel to all nations.
- 3.2.1. We are ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20
- 3.2.2. We are God's fellow workers in the fields. 1 Corinthians 3:8-9
- 3.2.3. We are a sweet fragrance of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:15
- 3.2.4. We are sent by God. John 20:21
- 3.2.5. We are His witnesses. Isaiah 43:10; Acts 1:8

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The Church Grows by the Power of the Holy Spirit

1. THE CHURCH WAS BORN AT PENTECOST. ACTS 2

1.1. The disciples had a new power, a new vision, a new understanding, and a new commitment to carry out God's plan of salvation.

1.2. The first century Church was alive and did not yet know the burden of non-productive traditions, lazy habits, and fearful faith. Acts 8:14

2. THE CHURCH HAD WEAK POINTS.

2.1. The Corinthians put too much emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12-14

2.2. Before the end of the 1st century many churches became non-productive. Revelation 2:5

2.3. As early as the 2nd century, many churches already needed revival and reform.

2.4. Since then, we have needed the Holy Spirit to call us back to God, to convict of sins, to lead us into Spirit-filled holiness and witness.

3. THE CHURCH GROWS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

3.1. It is God who takes the initiative to lead people to repentance and faith.

3.2. The following are some signs that occur when the Church is not living by the Holy Spirit:

3.2.1. The preaching of the Word is no longer the priority and Christ is not worshipped in spirit and in truth.

3.2.2. The Church organism becomes the Church organization.

3.2.3. The preaching of the Word no longer responds to the people's needs.

3.2.4. Holy Communion and baptism have become mere rituals.

3.2.5. Christians are becoming spectators, not involved worshipers and witnesses.

3.2.6. Evangelism is becoming the work of the pastor only.

3.2.7. Bible study is considered only for children in Sunday school.

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God's Plan: The Means of Grace

1. THE "MEANS OF GRACE" ARE THE WAYS GOD OFFERS LOVE TO HIS PEOPLE.

1.1. God's grace is His kindness, favor and forgiveness, for every person.
1.2. We see God's means of grace through the Bible, baptism, and Holy Communion.
1.3. His means of grace give us the proper motive for growth.
1.4. The Church will grow with spiritually renewed people. Matthew 9:17

2. THE BIBLE IS A MEANS OF GRACE.

2.1. The Word is the primary source for evangelistic outreach of the Church.
- 2.1.1. The Church grows where the Word of God is preached.
- 2.1.2. Non-believers need a witness of Jesus from the Bible, and not that of the denomination, building, program, or activity.
- 2.1.3. The outreach of the Church is sincere and effective when it is based on the Bible.

2.2. The Word is the primary source of discipleship within the Church.
- 2.2.1. When people study the Bible, they grow in faith and maturity.
- 2.2.2. Backsliders need to hear more about God's concern for them, not about human reasoning or the necessity to go to Church.
- 2.2.3. When a person is rooted in the Word, he resists the temptations of the world. Phil. 2:16
- 2.2.4. Growing churches are characterized by their appreciation for the Word. Matthew 28:20

3. BAPTISM IS A MEANS OF GRACE.

3.1. External Church growth depends of the miracle of baptism.
- 3.1.1. Baptism is an essential element in making new disciples. Matthew 28:19
- 3.1.2. The Bible says, "Repent and be baptized." Acts 2:38

3.2. Internal Church growth depends on the miracle of baptism.
- 3.2.1. Each time a new convert is baptized, the saints remember their baptism.
- 3.2.2. The saints are strengthened when they remember their repentance and their commitment.
- 3.2.3. The saints better resist Satan when they remember the work of the Holy Spirit at their baptism.
- 3.2.4. Baptism contributes to unity and fellowship in the Church. Rom. 12:4-5, Eph. 4:5

4. THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A MEANS OF GRACE.

4.1. Each time the believer participates in the Lord's Supper, he confirms his faith commitment to Christ and His Great Commission.
4.2. The Lord's Supper demonstrates forgiveness and renewing of God's people.
4.3. The Lord's Supper puts missions and the ministry in God's perspective. 1 Cor. 11:26
4.4. The Lord's Supper is a demonstration of the sinner's participation in God's mission.
4.5. The Father welcomes imperfect, but forgiven people to do His work.
4.6. Participation in the Lord's Supper is collective as well as personal and individual.

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Images of the Church: A Living Organism – 1

1. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S TEMPLE.

1.1. God's temple is the place where God resides.
- 1.1.1. The Holy Spirit indwells those who make up His Church. — 1Co. 3:16; 2Co. 6:16
- 1.1.2. The Holy Spirit indwells the living stones of His temple. — Ephesians 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5
- 1.1.3. The living stones (our souls) cannot be destroyed. — John 3:16, Matthew 25:46

1.2. The foundation of the Church is alive: it is Jesus Christ. — Ephesians 2:20; 2 Peter 2:7
- 1.2.1. The apostles and the prophets are part of the foundation. — Ephesians 2:20
- 1.2.2. Christians make up part of the building. — Ephesians 2:21

1.3. God is the Lord (the owner) of the Church. — 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
- 1.3.1. God makes His Church grow. — 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
- 1.3.2. Christians work at the construction of the Church. — 1 Corinthians 6:8
- 1.3.3. Christian workers represent the work site. — 1 Corinthians 3:9

2. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FAMILY (GOD'S HOUSE).

2.1. This image is related to that of the temple. — Ephesians 2:18-20
2.2. The family is united. — Ephesians 2:18
2.3. Christians are no longer strangers to God. — Ephesians 2:19
2.4. God is the Father of His children. — Matthew 23:9; John 1:12; Galatians 4:4-7
2.5. The children have free access to the Father. — Ephesians 2:18; 3:12
2.6. The house is the Church of the living God. — 1 Timothy 3:15
2.7. The other saints are our brothers. — 1 Peter 2:17; 5:9
2.8. Our membership in God's family depends on Jesus only. — Hebrews 2:10-18

3. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FLOCK.

3.1. Jesus declared that He came for the lost sheep of Israel. — Matthew 10:6
3.2. Jesus is our Shepherd because of His redemptive death for His sheep. — Titus 2:14
3.3. Sheep are the people of God, the new Israel of God. — Galatians 6:16
3.4. Jesus said that those who follow Him are His sheep. — John 10:4
- 3.4.1. Good sheep follow the Shepherd and will receive eternal life. — John 10:10, 28
- 3.4.2. His disciples must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him. — Mark 8:34-35
- 3.4.3. Those who follow Him must have a burden for the lost. — 1 Cor. 9:16
- 3.4.4. He asked His disciples to follow Him and become fishers of men. — Matthew 4:19

3.5. Shepherds must feed and protect the flock. — Ac. 20:28; 1 Peter 5:3-4
3.6. Jesus will equip His own so that they carry out His will. — Hebrews 13:20-21
3.7. Those whom God chooses as His possession are His people. — 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 21:3
3.8. God's people have the Great Commission to reach those of all ethnic groups with the good news of Jesus Christ. — Revelation 5:9-10

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Images of the Church: A Living Organism – 2

4. THE CHURCH IS THE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD. 1 PETER 2:9-10

4.1. All the saints make up part of the royal priesthood.
- 4.1.1. God places His children in positions for ministering to others.
- 4.1.2. All are saints because they have all been set apart for His service.
- 4.1.3. All are royal because they belong to the King of kings.
- 4.1.4. The priesthood serves God, declares His wonders, does His will, glorifies Him....

4.2. Forgiveness allows God's people to be a royal priesthood. Revelation 5:10

4.3. The priests come from all tribes and nations. Revelation 5:10

5. THE CHURCH IS THE VINEYARD. JOHN 15:1-8

5.1. The key to discipleship is to remain attached to Jesus. John 15:4

5.2. Jesus declares that He is the Vine and believers are the branches. John 15:5

5.3. The Lord is interested in the fruit which the branches produce. John 15:5

5.4. All the stewards in the vineyard will have to give an account. Jn. 15:6

5.5. Those who bear fruit glorify the Father. John 15:8

5.6. The fruit which Jesus desires is that which remains eternally. John 15:16

5.7. The resources belong to God, but they are loaned to his stewards so that they use them for His honor and glory. John 15:8

6. THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BRIDE. MATTHEW 25:6-13

6.1. Jesus Christ is the promised Bridegroom for God's people. 2 Corinthians 11:2

6.2. Those not waiting for His return at the marriage feast will be cast out. Matthew 25:12

6.3. The Church must anticipate, prepare, and plan for Christ's return. Matt. 25:1-13

6.4. We must not forget our first love. Revelation 2:4-5

7. THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BODY.

7.1. Jesus is the head that controls everything. Ephesians 1:22; 5:15; Colossians 1:18

7.2. The Church is Christ's body in the world.

7.3. Every saint is a member of the body.

7.4. There is a great diversity in the body's unity. Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:11

7.5. The Church edifies itself in love when each member works in a coordinated way with the strength granted him. Ephesians 4:16

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God's Mission: A Description of Evangelism

1. THREE COMPONENTS OF EVANGELISM

1.1. Presence – "We evangelize by being with non-believers."

1.1.1. There are churches which emphasize good works and the necessity to be associated with non-believers, to help them in their everyday problems, and to respond to their physical, intellectual, and emotional needs.

1.1.2. "We evangelize by our good works," they say. Ephesians 2:10

1.1.3. This is one component of evangelism, but by itself it is not enough.

1.2. Proclamation – Some churches proclaim the Word and they think that is enough.

1.2.1. There are Churches which support the importance of our presence among non-believers, but they emphasize the proclamation of the good news, regardless of the results.

1.2.2. "We evangelize by proclaiming, even if people are not interested," they say. Phil.1:18

1.2.3. This is another component of evangelism but it is not evangelism. The definition is still incomplete.

1.3. Persuasion – Other churches define evangelism as being present, proclaiming and persuading the non-believer.

1.3.1. There are Churches which support the importance of our presence and our proclamation, but they emphasize the necessity of seeking to persuade the non-believer to receive Christ after having explained the Gospel.

1.3.2. "We evangelize by going to non-believers, by proclaiming the Good News with the goal of convincing them to change sides, to leave the world and follow God.

1.3.3. There are churches that not only support the importance of presence and proclamation, but they add the third component, persuasion, which is much closer to the biblical understanding of the word evangelism.

2. A WORKING DEFINITION OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism is presenting the Gospel in such a way that the non-believer has a valid opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

3. THE "TRADITIONAL POSITION" OF THE CHURCH MATTHEW 28:19-20; ROMANS 10:9

3.1. "Traditional" means historical, so the Traditional Position of the Church has been the historical one through the ages.

3.2. This position can be stated as follows: "Proclaim to the entire world the Good News of Jesus Christ, so that men will believe in Him and be saved."

3.3. The mission is thus understood in the terms, "Proclaim ... the Good News."

3.4. The emphasis is on conversion of the soul and its development in the Church.

3.5. This position is called the evangelistic mandate.

4. THE "ECUMENICAL POSITION" OF THE CHURCH MATTHEW 22: 37-39

4.1. "Ecumenical" means "united world-wide," so the Ecumenical Position emphasizes the united structure of the church institution, a position which began in the 20th century.

4.2. This position can be stated as follows: "We must establish peace in the sense of social harmony."

4.3. This peace (shalom) is synonymous with the Kingdom of God.

4.4. The mission is therefore a historical process for the renewing of society.

4.4.1. The resolution of conflicts within industry

4.4.2. Different attempts in rural development

4.4.3. The elimination of all racial and social discrimination, etc.

4.5. The emphasis is on social action and the development of this present life.

4.6. This position is called the cultural mandate (or social mandate or Social Gospel).

5. BIBLICAL SYNTHESIS JOHN 20:21

5.1. Social action (loving your neighbor) and the proclamation of the Gospel (making disciples) are coequal partners in God's mission.

5.2. The mission encompasses both: works and verbal confession

5.3. There is no biblical justification for isolating one mandate from the other; the two are complementary and cannot be separated.

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God's Mission: Comprehensive Evangelism

1. GOD'S PLAN INCLUDES REPRODUCTIVE MULTIPLICATION. **GENESIS 1:28**

1.1. It is the key to the continuity of all life.
1.2. It is the key to the survival of the Church.

2. EVANGELISM IS GOD'S REPRODUCTIVE PROCESS.

2.1. It is the method ordained by God for the expansion of Christianity.
2.2. Biblical evangelism is comprehensive, inclusive, and total.
2.2.1. It is not simply the responsibility of a committee or the task of the pastor.
2.2.2. It is not simply a special event or a monthly project.
2.2.3. It is the very life of the Church, the process by which others come to life and begin a relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. EVANGELISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CHURCH GROWTH.

3.1. The two types of growth go together and cannot be separated.
3.2. Quantitative growth is growth from the outside to the inside (also called External Growth.)
3.2.1. With evangelism, people on the outside enter into God's kingdom family.
3.2.2. The Holy Spirit uses Christians to evangelize non-Christians.
3.2.3. The Holy Spirit urges listeners to respond to the proclamation of the Good News and to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
3.2.4. New believers seek baptism and are incorporated into the Church.
3.2.5. The new believers grow in the teachings of the Church.
3.2.6. Consequently, the assembly grows; this is external growth.
3.3. Qualitative growth is growth from the inside to the outside (also called Internal Growth)
3.3.1. If the saints are committed to obeying the commandment of external Church growth, internal Church growth will occur naturally.
3.3.2. Many saints do not understand the Gospel before sharing it.
3.3.3. The discipline of proclaiming the Good News allows the saint to apply it in other areas of his personal life.
3.3.4. Those who share their faith are more and more attracted to the Word.
3.3.5. Those who evangelize experience the power of the Holy Spirit when He makes them ambassadors of Jesus Christ. Matthew 10:19-20; 28:18-20
3.3.6. The work of harvesters edifies the whole Church. John 4:3-5
3.3.6.1. The more a worker labors in the field, the stronger he becomes and the more fruit he will see for his efforts.
3.3.6.2. God gives the field, the soil, the seeds, the sun, the rain, and even life, but the worker must cultivate or there will not be a harvest.

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God's Mission: A Great Commission Leader

1. DUTIES OF A GREAT COMMISSION LEADER

1.1. The person must recognize that only God gives spiritual life.
1.2. The leader must help his people, families, and assembly to grow in their faith, witness and numbers.
1.3. The leader must continually seek to remove obstacles which prevent the Holy Spirit from fulfilling the Lord's Great Commission: that of making disciples of all nations.

2. ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREAT COMMISSION LEADER

2.1. He wants to participate in Great Commission ministry. John 4:34-35; Acts 4:19-20
2.2. He is ready to pay the price for the kingdom. 2 Corinthians 11:24-28
  2.2.1. His time
  2.2.2. His money
  2.2.3. His energy and effort
2.3. He is a servant-leader
  2.3.1. Servant leadership is rooted in the life of Jesus, who washed the feet of his disciples. John 13:2-5
  2.3.2. Jesus said "Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves." Luke 22:26
  2.3.3. Servant leaders put "service above self." They seek transformational ministries, they create authentic relationships, invest in helping people find God, and live for His favor, not men's.
2.4. He has great respect for the Word of God. Psalm 119:140
2.5. He trusts in the Spirit for His guidance and His strength. He often prays.
2.6. He plans ahead and establishes long-rang goals; he is an agent of change.
2.7. He is a visionary: he dreams about new possibilities for the Church. Proverbs 29:18
2.8. He knows how to delegate, motivated by the desire to see the task accomplished and the saints mobilized for the mobilization of the Church.
2.9. When he delegates, he does not stifle those to whom he gives responsibilities: he follows his disciples, but not too closely. (Example: Jesus sent out the 70.) Matthew 10; Luke 10
2.10. He cultivates his dependence on the Holy Spirit and on others.
2.11. He knows that gifts count as much as experience in the ministry.
2.12. He is a "player/coach:" he participates (plays) in various ministries; sometimes he leads others (coaches) in ministry and other times he observes his disciples, in order to teach and encourage them. Ephesians 4:11-12
2.13. He knows that his main role is to equip others for the ministry.
2.14. He replaces himself; he trains a person, and he leaves to train another.
2.15. He is constantly discovering and using his spiritual gifts. Romans 12:1-3
2.16. He learns from other leaders how to best reach the lost.
2.17. He leads the saints out for on-the-job training; he wants people to discover, develop, and use their gifts.
2.18. He constantly reminds the Church that the priority of evangelism is the goal to make disciples.
2.19. He encourages people to help in various meetings which will contribute to their spiritual development.
2.20. He constantly reads and learns all that he can about God and about how to reach the lost with God's love.

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Indigenous Leadership Training* - 1

Introduction: Jesus instructed his followers (us) to make disciples. Making disciples is all about training, and training is all about building up Christian men and women to be leaders who will disciple yet others.

1. THERE ARE THREE REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP FOR CHURCH PLANTING AND CHURCH GROWTH (ACCORDING TO DR. LOIS MCKINNEY):

1.1. There has been an over reliance on professional clergy
1.2. There has been an over reliance on residence seminaries
1.3. There has been an over reliance on the exported (Western) norms (methods of training).
1.4. The existing training programs offered by theological colleges and seminaries must be examined in the light of local requirements, with a view to radical change, when necessary.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

2.1. Train the right people
2.2. Help them to do the job, not just pass tests
2.3. Be as simple and inexpensive as possible

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

3.1. A church planter is tempted to bring outside leadership to newly-formed congregations. This temptation should be resisted. He should concentrate on developing local leadership.
3.2. The missionary should be constantly on the alert to discover the leadership strengths of new believers, to select the future leaders carefully, and to give them sustained systematic training.
3.3. Continuous and constant training must be given from the beginning of the formation of the new congregation. Also from time to time advanced training should be arranged for senior leaders. Although the preliminary training should be given to all interested people in the congregation, advanced and special training should be given for specific ministries, e.g. children's work, youth work, women's work, pastoral work and evangelism.
3.4. Lay leaders play a very important role in evangelism and church planting, and they must be continually trained and cultivated.
3.5. The Importance of training ordained people: All churches practice some form of ordination or recognition of leaders for fulfilling certain leadership responsibilities in the local church. Recognized or "commended" leaders are needed for proper function of the local church.

4. THREE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES

4.1. **Level one: church elders and deacons:** They must be men and women of maturity both in age and in experience. They should be accepted and recognized by the members of the local congregation, and, if possible, by the community.
4.1.1. The local church elders should be used for conducting worship services, prayer meetings, visiting sick people, dealing with the discipline of the members, counseling the backslidden.
4.1.2. Christian workers should not hesitate in using the elders for such work.
4.2. **Level two: evangelists and church planters:** They are selected from the local church membership but are trained mainly for evangelism and church planting.
4.2.1. The evangelists / church planters are full-time supported workers.
4.2.2. They are not and should not be ordained. (If they are ordained they might be tempted to limit their ministry to the churches.)
4.3. **Level three: pastors and over-seers**: These are men of spiritual maturity, Christian experience, good in Bible knowledge and local church administration.
4.3.1. They must undergo the prescribed training and receive a certificate.
4.3.2. They must be qualified according to the Biblical standard found in First Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

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Indigenous Leadership Training* – 2

1. FIVE TYPES OF LEADERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

(According to David W. Bennett, adapted from a chapter by Dr. Edgar Elliston in *Missiological Education for the 21st Century* [Orbis, 1996].)

1.1. **Type 1 Leaders (Small Group Leaders)** are leaders of small groups.

1.1.1. These would include house church and cell group leaders, heads of families, Sunday school teachers, and others who have direct, face-to-face influence in guiding and encouraging a limited number of people.

1.1.2. They would normally be unpaid, volunteer lay workers.

1.2. **Type 2 Leaders (Self-supporting local supervisors)** are volunteer workers who supervise other volunteer workers in their own local area.

1.2.1. Their influence is multiplied because they are encouraging and equipping others who are also leading, but their sphere of influence is still limited because of their other regular employment, and because of their focus on their own locality.

1.2.2. This category could include self-supporting or "tent-making" pastors and missionaries, as well as volunteer supervisors of a number of house churches.

1.3. **Type 3 Leaders (Full-time local leaders)** are leaders who devote most if not all of their time to the work of Christian leadership.

1.3.1. These would include local church pastors, church-planters and missionaries, whether they devote all their time to one congregation, or to a circuit of several congregations in the same general locality.

1.3.2. These are often bi-vocational, meaning that they receive some income for their Christian service but must supplement it with some other means of income, for example, by raising crops.

1.4. **Type 4 Leaders (Regional leaders)** are leaders whose influence is felt within a region.

1.4.1. They may be the leader of several mission teams, or the district supervisor of a number of full-time church workers, or the principal of a small Bible college that serves a particular state.

1.4.2. They may also have influence through their writing, but it is limited to their own region or local language.

1.5. **Type 5 Leaders (National leaders)** are leaders who have influence throughout the entire country, or internationally.

1.5.1. They may be leaders of denominations, or national missions or Christian organizations, or training institutions that draw their students from the entire country.

1.5.2. They may influence through policy-making, or writing, or mass media, or speaking at national conferences, in addition to their personal influence on co-workers who have broad responsibilities themselves.

1.6. Many ministries do not fall neatly into a single classification. But we can see this typology as a continuum from very narrow and focused influence to very broad influence. And the training and development needs are quite different for the different levels.

2. SEVERAL METHODS OF TEACHING (DISCIPLESHIP):

2.1. **Teaching by Example:** Jesus taught by example. In Luke 11:1 we read: "Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to him; 'Lord, teach us to pray…" Then Jesus taught them how to pray. He also taught them how to evangelize, how to use the Scriptures and to exercise faith by His own example.

2.2. **Teaching in Life Situations:** There is a good example of teaching on the fasting prayer as recorded in Mark 9:28, 29. This is an example of an informal teaching in a life situation; they came to Jesus who was always prepared to teach.

2.3. **Teaching in Close Association:** On many occasions Jesus was involved with the disciples as they faced different situations. He always associated Himself with them, both on happy occasions and in times of trail and opposition.

2.4. **Training by Theological Education by Extension:** This is a method widely used in the Third World countries. It is suitable to Indian context. This is a nonresidential training program which can be worked out wherever and whenever students and teacher can meet.

2.5. **Teaching Training Vocational Evangelists:** This approach is to train young people for evangelism in a self-supporting manner. This method is also known as "tent making" based on the example of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:1-3.

2.6. **Short Term Rural Bible School Training:** For training evangelists and church planters rural vernacular Bible schools are needed in the mission fields. School of Evangelism (SOE) and Portable Bible Schools (PBS*),* are two good models.

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God's Mission: Focusing God's Light

1. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

1.1. An ancient prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Isaiah 42:6
1.2. The Word brought light to humanity. John 1:4-5
1.3. Jesus said Himself that He is the Light of the word. John 8:12

2. JESUS GIVES HIS PEOPLE THE MISSION TO BE HIS LIGHT.

2.1. Jesus met Paul as a Light on the road to Damascus. Acts 26:12-18
2.2. Thereafter, Paul presented Jesus' light to the pagans. 2 Corinthians 4:4-5
2.3. Jesus said that we are the light of the world and we must shine before men. Matt. 5:14-16

3. EVERY LOCAL CHURCH MUST FOCUS THE LIGHT.

3.1. Focused light has more impact than dispersed light.
3.2. Churches should concentrate on activities which they can do very well in order to better shine the Light in their communities.
3.3. God's plan is not generalized; it is focused multiplication.
- 3.3.1. Multiplication becomes possible when the Holy Spirit works within each believer.
- 3.3.2. Each believer is to participate in the ministry of focusing God's light in this world. This is the Great Commission.
- 3.3.3. Jesus had but one physical body but now Jesus is working through the Holy Spirit and many believers can multiply His Light.

3.4. Multiplication is superior to addition.
- 3.4.1. The leader equips the saints, as Jesus equipped His disciples.
- 3.4.2. The Church ministries multiply as disciples multiply.

3.5. We must focus on the Great Commission as the Church's fundamental priority.
- 3.5.1. We must understand that the Church is unique.
- 3.5.2. We must understand what the Church can do.
- 3.5.3. We must understand what the Church should do.
- 3.5.4. We must understand what the Church must do.
- 3.5.5. We must understand that if the Church is not focused, the mission of the Church loses its power, and the Church will not have much of an impact.
- 3.5.6. We must understand that the local church is God's chosen agency for the evangelization of the world.
  - *3.5.6.1. It is not the missionary society.*
  - *3.5.6.2. It is not the denomination.*
  - *3.5.6.3. It is not the seminary.*
  - *3.5.6.4. It is not the Bible Institute.*

3.6. The Great Commission loses its impact if we separate it from the local church.
3.7. Satan uses two strategies to reduce the effectiveness of the Great Commission.
- 3.7.1. He removes from the local church the sense of mission by giving the task of evangelism to others, such as para-church agencies, the denomination or the missionary society.
- 3.7.2. He blurs the vision of the local church, and it does not understand its role.

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An Overview of the Remaining Mission

1. WE CAN BE OPTIMISTIC IN OUR VISION, OUR PLANNING AND OUR EXPECTATIONS.

1.1. There are more Christians per capita in the world now than ever before and the proportion continues to increase.

1.2. Christianity is the most widespread of all religions.

1.2.1. *Operation World* (2010 Edition) tells us (page 2) that Christians are predominant in 159 nations of the world.

1.2.2. By contrast, Islam is predominant in only 52 nations.

1.2.3. Buddhism is predominant in only 14 nations.

1.2.4. Hinduism is predominant only in India and in Nepal.

1.3. The statistics in the chart below show that the worldwide Church is growing. (The chart uses the following working definitions: **Non-Christians** are those who do not consider themselves Christians. This category does not include those who say they are Christians but do not walk with God or believe the Bible [nominal Christians, for example]. **Christians** are those who call themselves Christian, including Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, etc.)

Date	Non-Christians	Christians	Proportion
100 AD	18,00,00,000	5,00,000	360:1
1000 AD	22,00,00,000	10,00,000	220:1
1500 AD	34,40,00,000	50,00,000	69:1
1900 AD	1,06,60,00,000	4,00,00,000	27:1
1950 AD	1,65,00,00,000	8,00,00,000	21:1
1980 AD	3,02,50,00,000	27,50,00,000	11:1
1992 AD	3,64,70,00,000	54,00,00,000	7:1
2010 AD	6,80,00,00,000	2,10,00,00,000	3:1

1.4. We can realistically state the rate of growth of the Church.

1.4.1. Christians experience a high rate of growth, notably in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

1.4.2. The Church's growth rate surpasses that of non-Christians.

1.4.2.1. From 1980 to 1992 the non-Christian population grew by 622 million, a growth of 20.5%. In that same period, the Christian population grew by 265 million, a growth of 96.3%.

1.4.2.2. From 1992 to 2010, the Christian population grew by 1,560,000,000. This is a 289% increase (the Church almost tripled) while the world's population grew also, but only by 86.5%.

2. WE FACE DIFFICULTIES AND DIFFICULT PLACES.

2.1. Christianity is losing members in Europe. The Church there is not prospering.

2.2. Christianity is stagnant in North America.

2.3. Christianity is penetrating the 10/40 Window, but only slowly.

3. WE MUST PRESS ON IN THE TASK OF REACHING THE LAST OF THE UNREACHED.

3.1. There are approximately 1,200 unreached people groups.

3.2. There are approximately 1,00,00,00,000 committed Christians in 1,40,00,000 local churches.

3.3. There are approximately 11,666 churches for each of the 1,200 unreached people groups.

4. WE MUST REACH INDIA WITH GOD'S SALVATION.

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Sociological Aspects: An Ethnic Approach to World Evangelization

1. WE MUST REACH EVERY ETHNIC GROUP WITHIN EVERY NATION.

1.1. Jesus was sacrificed to redeem every ethnic group. Revelation 5:9
1.2. We must make disciples of every ethnic group. Matthew 28:19-20
1.3. We must proclaim the same Gospel, according to the incarnation principle.
1.4. We must be bridges so that Jesus can be presented in cultural terms.
1.5. We must communicate Jesus to each one in his mother tongue, his heart language.

2. WE MUST CROSS THE CULTURAL BARRIERS.

2.1. Each different people group has its own preferences about how they eat, dress, live, speak and view the world.
2.2. Dr. George McGavran said, "People prefer to become Christians without having to cross over barriers of race, language, and social level."
2.3. A "homogeneous unit" is a group which possesses common characteristics.

3. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE GOSPEL IS ABOVE CULTURAL BARRIERS.

3.1. God uses friendship networks.
3.2. We share the Gospel in our personal relationships.

4. WE MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN CULTURE, TRADITION, AND PURE CHRISTIANITY.

4.1. An example of culture: the type of Christian music a particular group likes to sing.
4.2. An example of tradition: the instruments the grand-parents used to sing to Jesus.
4.3. Pure Christianity: the eternal truths sung to Jesus (regardless of what style and instruments are used).

5. WE MUST PLANT MORE CHURCHES SO EACH ETHNIC GROUP CAN WORSHIP GOD IN ITS OWN ETHNIC LANGUAGE AND CUSTOMS.

5.1. Each people group deserves to hear the gospel message in its own heart language.
5.2. Each people group should be able to worship in its own heart language.
5.3. Christians of every people group should be able to approach others of their ethnic group with expressions of their faith that are not foreign to the group.

6. COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATIONS - "MULTI-INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION."

6.1. These are mass movements to Christianity, sometimes called "Church Planting Movements," in which whole extended families become believers.
6.2. Transformations are mutually interdependent.
6.3. More will be learned about this in Lesson 26.

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Sociological Aspects: Working Tools

INTRODUCTION

- *The following chart helps us assess the degree of opposition or receptivity of a particular people group we hope to reach with the Good News.*
- *Once we've identified which group is most receptive to the gospel, we'll be able to initiate our efforts of evangelizing them.*

1. RESISTANCE-RECEPTIVITY AXIS

Axis	Resistance-receptivity	Percentage of the population	What is their behavior and attitude toward the Gospel?
-5	Hostile		
-4	Very opposed		
-3	Opposed		
-2	A little opposed		
-1	Almost indifferent		
0	Indifferent		
+1	Almost favorable		
+2	A little favorable		
+3	Favorable		
+4	Very favorable		
+5	Seeking		

2. SPIRITUAL CONDITION

II. People's Situation	Percentage of the Christian Population	Who needs to be evangelized? What is their spiritual situation?
Hidden:	0%	
Contacted:	0-1%	
Lightly reached:	1-10%	
Seriously reached:	10-20%	
Reached:	20% or more	

A. The Engle Scale is a tool to help us measure the spiritual state of a people or individual.
B. It is a tool to indicate at what point the people group is in the process of accepting Christ.

3. THE ENGEL SCALE

III. Engle Scale	Diagnosis	Percentage of the ethnic population
-7	No recognition of Christianity	
-6	Recognition of Christianity	
-5	Knowledge of the Gospel	
-4	Understanding of the Gospel	
-3	Understanding of the personal implications	
-2	Recognition of a personal need	
-1	Challenge to receive Christ	
0	Decision to receive Christ	
+1	Evaluation of the decision	
+2	Incorporation into a local Church	
+3	Active propagation of the Gospel	

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Church Planting - 1

1. SEVEN ATTITUDES TO BE EXEMPLIFIED BY CHURCH PLANTERS

1.1. They assume personal responsibility for the evangelism of a particular group.
1.2. They see beyond their own local church and strategize to reach their neighborhood or village, their city, region, or even their entire nation.
1.3. They ask God to give them a deep conviction and passion for lost souls, so as to lead and incorporate them into the Church.
1.4. They take time to create an atmosphere of acceptance for church planting within their local assembly. (This takes time; they can't be in too much of a hurry.)
1.5. They do not maintain ineffective methods, even if they are part of their traditions.
1.6. They train others in the principles of discipleship, evangelism and church growth.
1.7. They commit to serve for a long time. (Just as it takes human parents almost 20 years to raise a child, it may take many years to see a healthy church planted and thriving.)

2. MODELS OF CHURCH PLANTING

2.1. Geographical: an identified community in a targeted area or region.
- 2.1.1. Chapel: the mother-Church develops a new assembly based in this area.
- 2.1.2. Satellite: the Church develops "branches" for those living far from the building.
- 2.1.3. Groupings: a number of small Churches share the same staff.
- 2.1.4. Mission: the mission developed by the denomination goes where no local Church has gone, beginning Bible studies which eventually become a worship service.
- 2.1.5. House churches: Some house churches have an overseer to supervise the group, but many have no direct supervision from an ordained leader.

2.2. Cells: Small groups that remain connected to the mother church but meet separately during the week
- 2.2.1. Chapel: the new group reflects the doctrine of the mother church, but they share some common characteristics which draw them together.
- 2.2.2. Satellite: the church recognizes a group not coming to the worship service; it plans a special place and service to meet the needs of the targeted people.
- 2.2.3. Mission: small, homogeneous groups are formed within the church; they study the Bible in homes, responding thus to personal needs.
- 2.2.4. Home: churches meet together in homes; it's economical!

2.3. Buildings: Various ways of using the church building for church planting
- 2.3.1. Single use: a building reserved only for worship.
- 2.3.2. Multiple uses: the congregation uses the building on Sundays and at some other times in the week; others (such as a school) use it at other times in the week.
- 2.3.3. Shared use: many church groups use the same building. (They may be from different nations, tribes or languages, or even of different denominations.)
- 2.3.4. Self-financed: the church rents part of its building to others to subsidize its own costs.

2.4. Sponsors: Different ways to support a new church plant
- 2.4.1. Mother Church: A church supports the birth of a daughter church elsewhere.
- 2.4.2. Parent group: A group leaves the church to support a daughter church elsewhere.
- 2.4.3. Planned split: The church divides into two according to a determined plan.
- 2.4.4. Partnership: Many churches group to support a daughter church.
- 2.4.5. Denomination: The denomination plans the multiplication of local churches.

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Church Planting – 2

3. THE SELECTION AND CHOOSING OF A CHURCH PLANTING TEAM

3.1. The team (the mission force) must make a long-range commitment to:
- 3.1.1. continually put the planting vision before the saints.
- 3.1.2. seek and analyze various possibilities
- 3.1.3. look for opportunities so that saints become parents
- 3.1.4. mobilize the maximum amount of people in the planting strategy
- 3.1.5. continually inform the church of research and progress
- 3.1.6. guide the church toward wise planting decisions which please God.

3.2. The team members should have certain characteristics.
- 3.2.1. They should have a missionary spirit.
- 3.2.2. They should be spiritually motivated.
- 3.2.3. They should have compassion for lost souls and be concerned for people.
- 3.2.4. They should be capable to do research and analyze data.
- 3.2.5. They should know how to work with a team.
- 3.2.6. They should be open to working a lot and hard.
- 3.2.7. They should be capable of leading.
- 3.2.8. They should be optimistic in the Spirit.

4. HOW TO CHOOSE WHERE TO PLANT A NEW CHURCH

4.1. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us to a place.
- 4.1.1. We must ask God's guidance in prayer.
- 4.1.2. Seeking God's leading through Bible study is a central element in the process.

4.2. Reflection, study, and dialogue are important. Do research and seek answers to questions such as the following:
- 4.2.1. What is the population of the targeted community (tribe, people group, etc.)?
- 4.2.2. Does the community have any churches among them? If so, what is the proportion of non-faithful1 to faithful?
- 4.2.3. How has the community responded to other attempts to evangelize them?
- 4.2.4. What could be the impact of that community for God's kingdom?
- 4.2.5. Is the community strategic for the growth of your denomination?
- 4.2.6. Could the community have an impact for Christ?
- 4.2.7. Could a group of new believers in the community support itself in a relatively short period of time?
- 4.2.8. Are there any established local churches near the targeted community that might partner with you in an effort to plant a new church?
- 4.2.9. Are there two or three prayer cells or Bible study groups that could be combined to make a church?
- 4.2.10. Is there a core group of people gathering who want to start a church?
- 4.2.11. Are there available workers to go into the targeted regions?

4.3. What questions might you think of that would help a church-planting team to determine God's leading for where to plant a new church?

1 The non-faithful are those who do not go to Church.

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Church Planting - 3

5. THE RIGHT STRATEGY

5.1. Planting a new church is easier than we usually think.

5.2. Forming the best church planting strategy is much more difficult than we usually think.

5.3. Here are some important questions to ask about the planting strategy.

- 5.3.1. What type of church do you want to plant (denomination, language/cultural group, socio-economic group, etc.)?
- 5.3.2. What will be the vision for the ministry of the new church?
- 5.3.3. What kind of church will you plant? One like the others in the denomination? Or one different from the others in the denomination? How unique will the new church be?
- 5.3.4. What other churches are already in the targeted region? What is their vision for ministry?
- 5.3.5. What type of people will be targeted by the daughter church?
- 5.3.6. What are the felt needs of the targeted group?
- 5.3.7. Are there other churches responding to their needs?
- 5.3.8. What is the health of the mother church?

6. TEN STEPS TO PLANT CHURCHES

6.1. Pray and plan.

6.2. Develop and train a church planting team, those who will join with you in leading the new church plant.

6.3. Look for a people group or a particular geographical area that has no church.

6.4. Prepare the members of the mother (sponsoring) church.

6.5. Cultivate the field.

- 6.5.1. Strive to involve whole families, not just individuals.
- 6.5.2. Don't rush to inaugurate regular worship services too soon.
- 6.5.3. Bible study groups are a good way to begin "cultivating the ground" for future planting and eventual harvest.
- 6.5.4. Evangelistic visits are important.

6.6. Arrange for a place where the new group will be able to meet regularly.

- 6.6.1. A home is adequate in the beginning.
- 6.6.2. Rent if you need a bigger place.

6.7. Begin official meetings.

- 6.7.1. It might help to give the new church a name that will help establish an identity for the group, such as "The Rock," or "The Jesus Flock."
- 6.7.2. Publicity at this point is important, but person-to-person conversations are the best advertising.

6.8. Set long-range goals for a meeting place, etc., that anticipates continued numeric growth. (A committee could be assigned to find a facility to purchase.)

6.9. Cultivate a spirit of multiplication.

- 6.9.1. Constantly remind the group that one day they will be a mother church.
- 6.9.2. Look for leaders who will remain a long time.

6.10. Install the church officially.

- 6.10.1. Develop a constitution.
- 6.10.2. Have a service of dedication where the founders sign the constitution, and where some who helped sponsor the new congregation pray God's benediction upon it.
- 6.10.3. Form a church planting team for subsequent daughter churches that will later be planted by this congregation.

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Global Factors that Impact Church Planting

1. GLOBALIZATION OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

1.1. Huge multi-national companies control more money than do many nations.
1.2. The nations of the world and its economies are becoming more and more interconnected. For example, a tsunami in Asia has immediate repercussions in the West.
1.3. There is a shift in political power from the West and North to the East and South.
1.4. Most members of the U.N. are now from the "Majority World."

2. THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

2.1. Over 700 crores people in the world today
2.2. Third World: 5O% of the population is under 18 years of age.
2.3. India and China – each with 120 crores inhabitants
2.4. The draining of our earth's resources: water, food, space, dwellings

3. URBANIZATION

3.1. People, especially youth, are streaming from rural areas into the cities, looking for jobs and education.
3.2. Cities are places of spiraling unemployment, disorientation, famine, lack of medical care, the loss of identity, looting, and other social and economic crises.

4. CAPITALISM AND INDUSTRIALISM

4.1. The U.S.A. and the West are being challenged economically by China, India, Brazil, Russia and others.
4.2. Capitalism is coming to the developing world, promising quick wealth but leaving many disillusioned and even destroyed.
4.3. Socialism promises success by governmental planning and industrialization, but only disappoints.

5. THE ARAB BLOCK, AND ISLAMIZATION

5.1. Muslims are becoming much more aggressive in their "jihad" to Islamize the world.
5.2. Many Muslim countries have become very rich through petroleum exports. They are using their wealth to finance aggression in many countries, particularly in Africa, India and other Asian countries.
5.3. Militant forms of Islam are using violence to purge Christians from geographical areas (Ex.: northern Nigeria, Southern Sudan, and Syria).

6. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

6.1. Computers – particularly "desktop computers" – have changed the way we live.
6.2. Communications advances have linked us as never before via mobile phones and the Internet (and resultant "social media;" Facebook had 90 crores members in 2012).
6.3. Christians face ethical questions regarding infanticide, abortion, artificial fertilization possibilities, etc. because of medical advances

7. CRIME

7.1. Human trafficking has become a multi-crores rupees international industry. Many lakhs people live in what amounts to slavery.
7.2. International drug cartels and crime syndicates include the US mafia, the Colombian drug cartels, the Chinese Triads, Japanese yakuza and others.

8. EDUCATION

8.1. The desire to have good training can be seen everywhere in the world, especially in developing countries.
8.2. Illiteracy remains a challenge despite efforts to educate people. The vast majority of the world is still functionally illiterate.
8.3. We often discover that where there is a need for leaders, the education offered is not adapted to the changing demands of the economy and society.
8.4. Education must be pragmatically flexible to meet changing and growing demands.

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Terms and Tools for Analyzing Church Planting

1. THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF CHURCH GROWTH.

1.1. Biological growth (internal – church parents having children)

1.1.1. "Multiply and fill the earth." Genesis 1:28

1.1.2. Many children belonging to Christian parents become Christians. Proverbs 22:6

1.2. Transfer growth (internal – members of one church transfer to another church)

1.2.1. With transfer growth one church grows at the expense of another congregation.

1.2.2. Some churches can be accused of sheep stealing (attracting Christians to their churches from other churches).

1.3. Transformation growth (external – a church grows by seeing souls won from sin into God's heavenly family)

1.3.1. Non-believers accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

1.3.2. This is a redeeming of territory which Satan had occupied.

1.4. Understanding these three terms and recognizing what kind of growth we are having can help us plan our evangelism and discipleship ministries appropriately.

2. COUNTING BELIEVERS

2.1. Why do we count? Is it so we can feel gratified (even important) about growth in our church? Or is it for the sake of diagnosis and evaluation?

2.2. Who do we count? Luke 15:3-7

2.2.1. Should we count only those who attend the worship service? (No)

2.2.2. Should we count only adults? (No)

2.2.3. Should we count only baptized Christians and church members? (No)

2.3. We should count as many adults, children, youth, men, women, members, non-members, etc., as possible, in order to have sufficient data to present a clear, accurate picture of growth (or lack thereof) from one year to the next.

3. GRAPHS

3.1. Graphs can provide a visual image of church growth or decline.

3.2. By graphing the data on church membership and attendance, etc., we can see a picture of whether the church is growing or not.

3.3. To make a graph (if you don't have access to a computer program), on graph paper first draw a horizontal line. Then from the point of the beginning of that line draw a vertical line.

3.3.1. The horizontal line (axis) will note the passage of time, in months, in years, etc.

3.3.2. The vertical line will be for noting the number of members, attendees, etc.

3.4. Next, place a dot above each year denoting how many members, etc. there were.

3.5. When the dots are completed, connect each dot from one year to the next. The resulting line will show you the growth or decline from one year to the next and over a period of time, depending on the data you have entered. (See the graph below.)

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A Description of a Church Planting Movement*

INTRODUCTION

Occasionally, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit moves in such power that whole families, villages and people groups turn in vast numbers to Christianity. When this happens and results in rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches in the population segment, it is called a "Church Planting Movement."

1. A CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT (CPM) SEES RAPID CHURCH PLANTING.

1.1. How rapid? Churches are planted more rapidly than could be imagined apart from the Spirit of God.

1.2. It is common in CPMs to see still-young churches plant new churches.

1.3. A Church Planting Movement should be distinguished from a "mass people movement." There have been mass movements into other religions. For example, it is reported that from 1921 to 1931 over ten lacks were received into Hinduism from Animism in Assam, Bengal and Bihar alone.

2. A SECOND CHARACTERISTIC ABOUT CPMS: CHURCHES MULTIPLY THEMSELVES.

2.1. Churches not only plant new churches; they plant numerous churches at the same time.

2.2. When God blesses and sends a CPM, churches spring up in the most unexpected places, and are often started by people who've been believers only a short time.

2.3. One Baptist group in India reports that for 200 years they planted an average of one church per year, until in the late 1990s, when a CPM swept through their region and churches began springing up, on average approximately one every day!

3. A THIRD CHARACTERISTIC ABOUT CPMS: THEY ARE INDIGENOUS.

3.1. CPMs are grass-roots movements of God's Spirit that grow and spread along indigenous lines and are led by indigenous leadership.

3.2. In CPMs, new worship songs and expressions are developed in the music and other indigenous cultural expressions of the particular people group.

3.3. For example, when the Chin of northwest Myanmar began accepting Christ in large numbers, they sang some Western hymns taught by the early missionaries, but they developed many praise and worship songs of their own, written and sung in their own cultural style of music.

4. CPMS MOVE ALONG PEOPLE GROUPS OR INTERRELATED POPULATION SEGMENTS.

4.1. The Nadars of Tamil Nadu in the 1820s are an example of this. Tens of thousands of Nadars accepted Christianity, but relatively few from other groups did so until the 1890s, when the Madigas began turning to Christ.

4.2. There are reports of thousands of Berbers (up to 50,000) turning from Islam to Christianity in Algeria, North Africa. This movement is spilling across national borders among Berbers living in the neighboring countries of Libya and Morocco, but not to other people groups.

5. WHERE HAVE CPMS HAPPENED?

5.1. In India, there have been numerous CPMs in the past in Tamil Nadu and in North East India (especially in Mizoram and Manipur). There have also been CPMs in the Punjab, in a region spilling over into Pakistan.

5.2. Presently in India, there are CPMs reported in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and elsewhere. (Christian leaders often remain secretive about CPMs, in order to avoid attracting opposition from fundamentalists of other religious groups.)

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Starting / Sustaining a Church Planting Movement*

INTRODUCTION: THERE ARE TEN PRACTICAL STEPS THAT, IF FOLLOWED, WILL BE FRUITFUL FOR STARTING AND SUSTAINING A CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT.

1. GIVE PRIORITY TO PRAYER AND INTERCESSION.

1.1. All CPMs, just as with all spiritual movements of any kind, begin with prayer and must be saturated with prayer.

1.2. CPMs are God's work and involve spiritual battles with the forces of darkness.

2. FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS ON A SPECIFIC PEOPLE IN A SPECIFIC PLACE.

2.1. Field research should be done to determine where to focus your ministry.

2.2. Data should be gathered on where a CPM is needed (where there is no existing churches among a people group) and where there is an indication of possible receptivity to the Gospel.

2.3. Once the research has been gathered, analyzed and prayed over, a wise decision can be made about what people group to reach out to, and in what specific geographical location.

3. GIVE FIELD-BASED SHORT-TERM TRAINING FOR CHURCH PLANTERS.

3.1. Training and developing indigenous leadership at different levels is one of the most important requirements for starting and sustaining a CPM.

3.2. Training should be offered for small group leaders, for local church elders, for full-time church planters and eventually for supervising pastors.

4. DEVELOP LOCAL GRASSROOTS CHURCH PLANTERS (GRCPS)

4.1. Develop a team of local grassroots church planters by meeting with them each week and training them how to share their story, introduce others to Jesus and start little worship groups.

4.2. Encourage them to begin by sharing their faith story with their own families.

5. BE OPEN TO NEW RESPONSIVE PEOPLE GROUPS.

5.1. It is possible that God will draw someone unexpectedly to His salvation through your witness. Always be on the watch for God's unexpected leading and fruit.

5.2. For example, a church planter was on his way in a rickshaw to a prayer group meeting. In his brief conversation with the rickshaw driver, the driver indicated a spiritual interest. So the church planter arranged to meet the driver at a later time and was able to lead the driver and his family to Christ.

6. GO FOR HOUSE CHURCHES AND SMALL CHURCHES.

6.1. As small Bible study (discipleship) groups mature and grow the time will hopefully come when it will be appropriate to authorize them to meet as a worshiping group. This can often most easily be done by having the group continue to meet in homes.

6.2. Avoid church buildings in the early years.

7. WORK OUT AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AS THE MOVEMENT DEVELOPS.

7.1. It is important to connect each small cell group with a larger organizational structure.

7.2. There should be occasional opportunities for the members of the different cell groups to meet together with other cell groups. Small cell group members are encouraged when they see that there are many others who share their faith and values.

8. GIVE IMPORTANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL LEADERS.

8.1. There should be continuous training of the small group (cell) leaders.

8.2. Some cell group leaders will have extra leadership abilities; these should be encouraged by being given extra opportunities to use their leadership gifts for the strengthening of the community.

9. RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT NEW MISSION INITIATIVES.

9.1. In a Church Planting Movement it is not at all unusual for new believers to bring others to Christ – and for those to bring still others, and so on.

9.2. Always be looking for opportunities to organize new cell groups with these new believers.

9.3. Sometimes these new cell groups will begin even before you know about it; when you learn of them, encourage and support them with training and other encouragement.

10. ADDRESS THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE NEW BELIEVERS.

10.1. Christians cannot meet all the social needs of those around us but we must be ready to do what we can to help others in need.

10.2. Just as the early Church fed the widows (Acts 6:1-6), Christians today must be willing to share generously with others who are in need.

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Factors in the Growth of the Church

INTRODUCTION:

- *Because of the spiritual nature of the Church, we cannot guarantee that churches will grow.*
- *In the final analysis, Church growth is given by God and is His matter.* *I Corinthians 3:3-9*

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH IN GOOD HEALTH (WAGNER 1976:159)

1.1. The pastor - He is a dynamic and optimistic leader who guides his flock with enthusiasm so that the members commit themselves to projects which lead to continued spiritual growth.

1.2. The members - All are mobilized for growth. “The expansion of any movement is in direct relationship to its ability to mobilize all its members in the constant propagation of its beliefs.” (Strachan 1964:27, 28).

1.3. The number of members (size) - It is big enough to meet the spiritual needs felt by those who attend the church.

1.4. A balanced ministry

1.4.1. The Congregation – comes for celebration/worship. "the crowd"

1.4.2. Cells - the members know each other (with usually fewer than 20 members)

1.4.2.1. Limited groups where a person feels free to reveal himself

1.4.2.2. A person feels free to share even personal prayer requests.

1.5. There is usually a homogeneous membership - they feel an affinity for each other; they feel interconnected, like a family.

1.6. There is usually a methodology - the church has a plan to make disciples: evangelism and follow-up of new believers.

1.7. Priorities - They are determined by the Word of God.

1.7.1. There’s a commitment to Christ. Matt. 6:33

1.7.2. There’s a commitment to Christ’s body. Jn. 13:35; Galatians 6:10

1.7.3. There’s a commitment to Christ’s work.

1.7.3.1. Evangelistic mandate *Matt. 28:18-20*

1.7.3.2. Cultural mandate *Genesis 1:28-30*

2. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHURCH GROWTH: A CHURCH WILL GROW WHEN:

2.1. There’s a person totally committed to church planting.

2.2. There’s a strategy laid out which responds to the felt needs of the group.

2.3. The internal and external factors coincide to favor growth.

2.4. Growth becomes an ideal belonging to all the members of the group.

2.5. The leaders trained are members of the group.

2.6. Spiritual revival creates a favorable atmosphere for growth.

2.7. The church emphasizes discipleship of new believers.

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Obstacles to the Growth of the Church

INTRODUCTION

- *It will be difficult (impossible?) for a church to grow under the following conditions:*

1. THERE IS SIN AND DIVISION WITHIN THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

1.1. Sometimes a pastor or the members of a church live in sin and try to keep it a secret, but inevitably non-believers in the community learn of the sin. Num. 32:23

1.2. There is materialism, racism, caste-prejudice, or other sinful attitudes in the church.

2. A CONSERVATIVE OR FEARFUL SPIRIT AMONG THE MEMBERS RESISTS ANY ATTEMPT TO CHANGE.

2.1. Sometimes the area will change as different people move into the area, and the church doesn't change its ministries to care for these new neighbors.

2.2. Sometimes a pastor will try to institute new ministries, or perhaps some new dynamic elements of worship, and the people of the church resist such changes.

2.3. Sometimes young people, or perhaps poor people from a different socio-economic level will begin attending the church, but the people of the church refuse to alter their ministries to accommodate these new people.

3. A CHURCH HAS A METHODOLOGY FOR SLIGHT GROWTH INSTEAD OF SIGNIFICANT GROWTH.

4. THE CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP ARE TOO STRICT.

5. A CHURCH CONTINUES TO EVANGELIZE AMONGST A RESISTANT PEOPLE INSTEAD OF EMPHASIZING MINISTRY TO A RECEPTIVE PEOPLE.

6. THE ACADEMIC LEVEL OF THE PASTOR IS TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW COMPARED WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP.

6.1. It will be difficult for rural, less educated people to understand and appreciate the teaching of a scholarly, academic pastor.

6.2. It is equally difficult for urban, well-educated members to value the preaching of a less-educated pastor or teacher.

7. THE PASTOR MONOPOLIZES THE MINISTRY AND DOES NOT SHARE IT WITH OTHERS.

7.1. Strong lay believers want to be used of God for fruitful service. If the pastor doesn't give opportunities for such service they will become discouraged and will be tempted to attend another church.

7.2. It takes a lot of work to care for a growing flock. If the pastor tries to handle the load by himself, some important ministries will be left uncompleted.

8. THE CHURCH HAS THE CONVICTION IT MUST MEET SOCIAL NEEDS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL NEEDS.

8.1. Churches should do all they can to meet the social needs of their neighbors.

8.2. However, they should not neglect the complimentary focus of meeting spiritual needs as well.

9. THERE IS A LACK OF SPIRITUAL FOOD.

10. THERE IS PASSIVITY ON THE PASTOR'S PART.

11. THERE IS PASSIVITY ON THE MEMBERS' PART.

12. THERE IS A LACK OF FINANCIAL MEANS.

13. THERE IS A LACK OF NEEDED TRAINING.

14. THERE ARE POLITICAL CONFLICTS (WAR).

15. THERE ARE CULTURAL DIFFICULTIES (LANGUAGE, CUSTOMS).

16. THERE IS OPPOSITION BY SYNCRETISTS AND FALSE CULTS.

17. THERE IS RATIONALISM (INTELLECTUALISM).

18. THERE IS PERSECUTION.

18.1. Sometimes a church will struggle when members are forced to leave the area—or perhaps are even killed—due to anti-Christian persecution.

18.2. But persecution can also bring great blessing, as the body of Christ is purified.

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Social Classes and Socio-Economic Advance

1. SOCIAL CLASSES AND CHURCH GROWTH

1.1. In earlier lessons we've learned that each church is generally made up of people who have something in common. We use the term "homogeneous" to refer to this common-trait identification.

1.1.1. This "homogeneous" factor might be a common language, tribe, caste, or educational level, etc.

1.1.2. One factor which often determines the homogeneous group is the social standing of its members. (Upper-class people generally feel more comfortable with other upper-class people; lower-class people generally feel more comfortable with other like them.)

1.2. Evangelism is historically more effective among the poor (lower classes) than among the rich (upper or middle classes).

1.2.1. The poor, in their times of great need, are more likely to be open to the saving grace of Jesus and to the ministries of the Church. The wealthier have fewer material needs, and are more likely to rely on their financial means to meet their needs than to turn to God.

1.2.2. The poor generally live in neighborhoods where people spend more time with others. They are more approachable and are more likely to have contact with the witness of Christians. The wealthier live in bigger homes and try to isolate themselves from the poor; they are therefore harder to reach with the gospel.

2. REDEMPTION AND "SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFT"

2.1. Socio-Economic Lift is a term which means that when families, villages and tribes become Christian, they begin to gradually experience a raise in their social standing.

2.1.1. This is partially due to God's supernatural blessing upon His children.

2.1.2. When people give their hearts to God and begin living according to His principles, they are freed from the sinful habits that had formerly enslaved and impoverished them (drunkenness, gambling, debauchery, etc.).

2.1.3. As God's children are freed from sin's crippling vices, they become generally healthier and their lives become more stable.

2.1.4. Christians become better workers because they are honest and trustworthy.

2.1.5. Because they are no longer wasting their money on alcohol and tobacco, etc., they have more money available for better housing and education, etc.

2.1.6. As God blesses them, they are often able to afford better education for their children, which enables their children to get better jobs with better incomes. This explains why it's common for the children of first-generation Christians to enjoy a significantly higher socio-economic standing than did their parents.

2.1.7. Christian families and tribes generally become more prosperous with each decade and generation.

2.2. This general "socio-economic lift," especially from one generation of Christians to the next, explains why Christianity has a tendency of growing from the lower classes to the upper classes, instead of the reverse.

2.3. A challenge faced by the Church is this: as Christian families (and as congregations) experience socio-economic lift (as they become more prosperous), how can they maintain their ministry to the lower classes?

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Measuring and Evaluating Growth of the Church - 1

1. WHY DO WE GATHER AND STUDY CHURCH DATA / STATISTICS?

1.1. We gather and evaluate church data because God can reveal important truths to us about the health (or lack of health) of the Body of Christ through these statistics.

1.2. Just as a medical doctor examines our bodies by checking our temperature, heartbeat and blood pressure, in the same way we can analyze our church's health by observing certain vital signs.

1.3. By correctly analyzing our church's vital signs, we can initiate (with God's help) appropriate ministries and measures accordingly.

2. THE CHURCH PROFILE: WHAT KIND OF DATA SHOULD WE GATHER?

2.1. For a local church we should keep track of:

- 2.1.1. The number of baptized members.
- 2.1.2. The average attendance at the main weekly worship service.
- 2.1.3. The average attendance at Sunday school.
- 2.1.4. The number of prayer and Bible study cells.
- 2.1.5. The number of leaders of cell groups.
- 2.1.6. The total amount of offerings given.
- 2.1.7. The number of new believers who accepted Christ.

2.2. For a group of churches (a district, community, area, region, or country) we should report:

- 2.2.1. The same information as the above list, but with combined figures from all the churches / preaching points in the region.
- 2.2.2. The number of churches and preaching points.
- 2.2.3. The number of pastors, evangelists, lay pastors, elders, and deacons.

3. THE DIAGNOSIS: WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE DATA WHEN IT IS COLLECTED?

3.1. We can evaluate growth (or decline) from year to year or over a decade.

- 3.1.1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) calculates the growth rate over one year.
- 3.1.2. Formula: First, note the number of members from one year and subtract from that number the number of members from the previous year. Divide the sum by the number of members from the previous year, then multiply that sum by 100. This final sum equals the Annual Growth Rate (AGR) percentage.
- 3.1.3. Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) calculates the growth rate over a decade.
- 3.1.4. Formula: First, note the number of members from one year and subtract from that number the number of members from 10 years earlier. Divide the sum by the number of members from 10 years earlier, then multiply that sum by 100. This final sum equals the Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) percentage.
  - *3.1.4.1. Example: 2012 - 300 members 2002 - 140 members*
  - *3.1.4.2. DGR: 300 minus 140 = 160, divided by 140 x 100 = 114.3% growth.*

3.2. The "Law of 72" is a mathematical formula to calculate how many years it will take to double a number or amount at a given percentage rate. The percentage rate multiplied by the number of years will equal 72. Example: If your church has 80 members and is growing at a rate of 15% per year, divide the percentage rate (15%) into 72. The answer (4.8) is about how many years it will take before the number of members doubles (from 80 to 160), assuming that rate of annual growth is maintained.

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Measuring and Evaluating Growth of the Church - 2

4. ANALYSIS: WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM THE DIAGNOSIS?

4.1. We can compare our church's (or district's) growth to the biological growth in the community, to see if we are actually gaining or losing ground compared to the surrounding population growth.

4.2. By analyzing the growth/decline of different churches, we can see where there are strengths and/or weaknesses, and respond accordingly.

4.3. By analyzing the growth of your church (or district), we can seek explanations for the following questions:

4.3.1. Why did your church grow?

4.3.2. Why did your church decline or not grow?

4.3.3. What errors might have been made that need to be corrected?

4.3.4. What external factors impacted the growth of the church?

4.3.4.1. Were there political factors? (For example, did the nation experience political events which destabilized the people or caused some to stay away from church?)

4.3.4.2. Were there local or economic factors? (Example: A factory might have been opened in your town, boosting employment in the area which brings new people into the community, and some into the church.)

4.3.4.3. Were there economic factors? (Example: A drought might cause farmers to leave the area, which could negatively affect church attendance.).

4.3.5. What internal factors impacted the growth of the church?

4.3.5.1. Was there a Church Planting Movement in an area which brought strong growth?

4.3.5.2. Did the Spirit of God bring extraordinary blessing on your church? And if so, why might the Spirit have blessed the church? Can these measures be repeated elsewhere, so that the Spirit might bless in those places as well?

5. SETTING GODLY GOALS **PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14**

5.1. A good diagnosis and analysis of church statistics can enable us to set godly goals for our lives and ministries and for the Christians under our spiritual leadership.

5.2. Where do we start in setting godly goals?

5.2.1. Setting godly goals starts with prayer, as we ask God for His leading, wisdom and direction.

5.2.2. Setting godly goals requires faith, and on the recognition that reaching those goals will depend entirely on God's enabling, provision and blessing.

5.3. Steps to follow

5.3.1. Set realistic goals for the next five years.

5.3.2. Evaluate your progress at the end of each year.

5.3.3. Adjust your goals appropriately at the end of each year for the next year.

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Contextualization* – 1

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CONTEXTUALIZATION? CONTEXTUALIZATION MEANS COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL IN SUCH A WAY THAT PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND IT. CONTEXTUALIZATION IS MAKING CONCEPTS OR IDEALS RELEVANT IN A GIVEN SITUATION. IN REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN PRACTICES, IT IS AN EFFORT TO EXPRESS THE NEVER CHANGING WORD OF GOD IN EVER CHANGING MODES OF RELEVANCE.

1. THE NEED FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION

1.1. Contextualization involves a meaningful and relevant communicating of the Gospel to meet the needs of the whole man and his society. In other words, the gospel has to be made relevant to the people's context in which they live.

1.2. Contextualization is not another word for indigenization, but it includes the concept.

1.3. A meaningful contextualization of the gospel should cover at least three areas of Christian mission:

1.3.1. The interpretation of the theology of the Gospel.

1.3.2. The expression of the content of the Gospel.

1.3.3. The realization of the response to the Gospel.

2. MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF INDIA

2.1. India is a land of many cultures, languages and ethnic groups.

2.2. It is therefore, rightly considered a multi-national state, a federation of cultures. We are many nations in one country!

2.3. According to 1971 Census, India represents a baffling variety with 1,652 languages (mother tongues) actively spoken. Fifteen of these are official languages and there are another 370 major languages plus many other minor languages.

2.4. India is a land of many religions: Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and several indigenous religions, sects and cults.

3. TAKING THE RISK OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

3.1. Any effort made toward contextualization the gospel involves risk, as there is always a danger of syncretism, which can lead to universalism.

3.2. The danger of syncretism is particularly great whenever the gospel is contextualized into the Hindu culture. "Hinduism has the dynamic capacity of absorbing and accommodating concepts and practices that are contrary to its ideology and practices."

4. GOD COMMUNICATES IN THE HUMAN CONTEXT: BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

4.1. **Old Testament example of communication in context:** We read in the Old Testament times that God communicated Himself to human beings in human cultural context and in human cultural terms. For example, the offerings and the sacrifices of Leviticus were very much related to the local culture. Some of the miracles performed by God were not only understood by the people of Israel but also by the Gentiles.

4.2. **New Testament example of communication in context:**

4.2.1. We read in the New Testament, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). It means God became man and lived among us and His name was Jesus of Nazareth.

4.2.2. In the incarnation. God the Creator chose to limit Himself by taking a human form and was born as a baby at Bethlehem in the cultural context of human beings. In this process of communication God chose a particular historical and socio-cultural context, that of the Hebrews.

4.3. **God's Word communicated in human context:**

4.3.1. God's Word was given in human language written by human beings so that human beings may understand it.

4.3.2. The Holy Spirit inspired the biblical authors (different human beings) and used their knowledge, skills, experience and cultural backgrounds. For example, in the Old Testament the shepherd boy David understood God as a Shepherd when he wrote the psalm: "The Lord is my Shepherd." And the wise man Solomon could write, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom".

4.3.3. Thus the Holy Spirit used the cultural background of the biblical authors to communicate God's Word in the human context.

4.4. More is taught in the course "Biblical Foundations of the Great Commission" about how Jesus and Paul contextualized their message of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

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Contextualization* - 2

1. THE GOSPEL JUDGES ALL CULTURES

1.1. One of the change factors of the Gospel is that it brings all aspects of any culture under its scrutiny and standards.

1.2. The following processes occur as part of the 'appraisal' of a culture by the Gospel:

1.2.1. **Rejection** – Abandonment of contra–biblical practices. For example: Idol worship, witchcraft and an immoral life.

1.2.2. **Adaptation** – Introducing functional substitutes. For example: Harvest ritual can be substituted by harvest festival; the witchdoctor can be substituted by the missionary; magic and sorcery can be substituted by prayer.

1.2.3. **Transformation** – Transforming the good elements. For example: Group solidarity; respect to elders.

2. CULTURAL CHANGE: ESSENTIAL AND NON-ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

2.1. While bringing cultural changes the missionary must know the differences between the essential and non-essential elements as well as the negotiable or the neutral elements in that culture.

2.1.1. **Essential Elements:** These elements are commandments or practices which are essential to our Christian faith or to the church in every culture. For example: The Ten Commandments.

2.1.2. **Non-Essential Elements:** These elements are practices which are not essential to our Christian faith or to the church in every culture. For example, serving wine at Lord's Supper.

2.2. More is taught about this in the Biblical Foundations course.

3. JUDGING A CULTURAL HABIT

3.1. The following five questions should be asked in judging a cultural habit before rejecting it or accepting it into the church:

3.1.1. Is it essential to our faith and practice?

3.1.2. Does it edify the church?

3.1.3. What will the effect be on our Christian character?

3.1.4. Will the conduct have an effect (impact) on others?

3.1.5. By doing this will it give true witness to the gospel?

3.2. Paul Hiebert offers the following guidelines for contextualizing of theology or self-theologizing:

3.2.1. Missionaries must translate and teach the Scriptures into the language of the target culture. These two things must be the beginning of all future work.

3.2.2. Missionaries must affirm the biblical teaching of "the priesthood of all believers" and allow the people to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves.

3.2.3. Missionaries must trust that the same Holy Spirit is at work in the people when they read the Scripture.

3.2.4. Missionaries must allow people the greatest privilege to make mistakes.

3.2.5. The missionary must affirm the community of the church and share with fellow Christians the understanding of Scripture, listen to their own understandings. Missionaries also need to know and understand the way the Church has understood and interpreted Scripture throughout history.

3.3. The communicator of the Gospel in a cross-cultural context must commit himself to Christian values and demands. He must constantly live within these commitments, so that he can communicate the Gospel in its true meaning, and at the same time communicate it in a relevant way to its hearers.

3.3.1. **Commitment to a life of discipleship:** This involves a personal relationship to God through Christ, knowing him as Father through his Son. Commitment is demonstrated by a consistent Christian life fully dedicated to the lordship of Jesus Christ and to the empowering and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3.3.2. **Commitment to the Scriptures:** A cross-cultural missionary must commit himself to the absolute authority of the Bible for his beliefs and practices. This point of commitment is where most Indian theologians fail. Acceptance of the authority of the Word of God is an essential qualification of a gospel interpreter in a cultural context.

3.3.3. **Commitment to the study of culture and Identification with culture:** Relevant contextualization is possible only when the communicator knows the culture of the people with whom he tries to communicate.

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Contextualization* - 3

1. **THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANTING CONTEXTUALIZED CHURCHES:**
   1.1. **It will help them become independent of outside support:** A native and independent church must be the goal towards which all missionary efforts aim. Mission subsidy, mission-controlled administration and missionary personnel must not be perpetual, but temporary.
   1.2. **Contextualization will help the church experience rapid growth:** Failure to produce indigenous churches may hinder church planting in an entire region or among an entire tribe; whereas indigenous churches facilitate the rapid growth and multiplication of churches.
   1.3. **Contextualization will help the church express its identity:** The missionary must aim to plant an indigenous church that can express its identity in its own cultural context, not in the culture of a distant region or church.
2. **TRUE INDIGENIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH INCLUDES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:**
   2.1. **Contextualization of witness:** The local church is the entity chosen by God and found in Scripture to be the ideal medium for witness and evangelism. As new believers relate to their non-Christian relatives and friends they have the capacity to be effective witnesses for Christ. In this way evangelism can occur and churches be planted.
   2.2. **Contextualization of evangelistic methods:** In each culture the methods best suited for relevant evangelism must be found. With many tribal groups, for example, singing and story telling are suitable methods. The missionary should permit local Christians to use native methods (e.g. bhajan singing and the use of native musical instruments) for gospel communication and avoid introducing methods which are not culturally relevant.
   2.3. **Contextualization of leadership and church government:** The form of church government should be suitable to the local patterns and forms of leadership and administration. The missionary should not impose foreign forms of leadership into the new church, even if these forms are from India and they work elsewhere in India. From the beginning the missionary must work with local leaders. The best way of recognizing leadership gifts is to identify the abilities and spiritual gifts of the people through working with them and observing them. Known leaders with proven ability and integrity can be asked to assume roles for which they are best suited. Leadership development can then occur as these **natural leaders** are trained by the missionary and assume leadership roles in the newly established church.
   2.4. **Contextualization of finance:** Self-support is an important aspect of an indigenous church. Mission financing usually means mission domination. Self-support, on the other hand, produces independent and strong churches. The **self-support principle** ought to be applied from the very beginning. The new believers should be given the responsibility of church finance and decision-making in small ways at first. Then, when they prove their integrity and ability, they should be given increasingly larger responsibilities. Church members must see finances as their own and coming from their own labor. In this way their giving will be personal, sacrificial and spiritual. The missionary should also train believers to provide a regular accounting of their giving and spending, subject to the scrutiny and approval of a disinterested third party.
   2.5. **Contextualization of worship:** Forms of worship should be indigenous, except in cases where a particular form of worship contradicts the teaching of Scripture or the character of godliness. The use of prayer books, liturgies, hymnals and musical instruments need to be contextualized without sacrificing or compromising their biblical integrity or content. Instead of introducing music with which the missionary is familiar, he should instead adapt the existing forms of music and worship to Christian meanings.
   2.6. **Contextualization of church buildings:** A prayer shed, or church building, in the village of the target culture helps new believers feel like the church is their own. Houses in villages are generally small, so there is little space in them for meetings. Not all new believers feel free to worship in a private home. So having a public place of worship is important, not just for new believers but also for their friends and relatives. A public place of worship provides a setting where people feel free to come and worship. This enhances church growth.
   2.7. **Contextualization of lifestyle:** "Actions speak louder than words." How true this is in the life and work of a missionary and an evangelist. The contextualization of lifestyle includes the missionaries' dress, food habits and behaviors. Apart from these outward appearances and actions, his **attitude** is very important. He must have a high regard for the recipient culture and should try to appreciate its good points. Both his attitude his actions are important.

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