



THE  
BOOK  
OF  
ACTS:

THE HOLY  
SPIRIT'S  
HANDBOOK  
FOR CHURCH  
PLANTING  
MOVEMENTS

Frederick Osborn

Front Cover: Stained Glass Window by Frederick Osborn Installed in  
Jehovah Jireh Engineering College Chapel, Maheshwaram, Telangana, India

Description:

**Walled City** = after His Ascension, Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission to “go and make disciples” of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey the commands of Jesus Christ

**Fire coming from Jerusalem** = On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to the disciples of Jesus as tongues of fire. From that day forward the Church was empowered by the Holy Spirit

**Four-colored Ribbon** = the preaching of the Apostles. After being empowered by the Holy Spirit, the church went out and proclaimed the Gospel:

**Red** = the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus

**White** = Jesus rose from the dead as the promise and proof of Him giving eternal life to all who believe

**Purple** = Jesus is King and Messiah

**Gold** = Jesus is LORD and God

**Road out of Jerusalem and Boat** = by land and sea, apostles, disciples, and missionaries were led by the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel message to the ends of the earth.

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By: Frederick Osborn

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# THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HANDBOOK FOR CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

Study Guide

Frederick Osborn

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# Introduction: From Jerusalem to the World...Christ is Lord!

*"As long as there are millions destitute of the Word of God and knowledge of Jesus Christ, it will be impossible for me to devote time and energy to those who have both." – J. L. Ewen*

## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts is often studied and presented in sermons and in Sunday School lessons as interesting church history, but little more. Some spiritual principles may be drawn out of its stories, but the idea that the Holy Spirit gave Acts to the church to be our handbook or training manual for how to fulfill the Great Commission is often overlooked. "That was then" most will say, "but this is a different time and place. Surely, the Lord does not intend for the church to experience the same results today!" But the evidence from around the world is clear: the church planting paradigm of Acts produces rapid, exponential growth of the kingdom whenever or wherever it is properly applied. "From every corner of the globe the reports are coming in. Only a few at first, but now more and more frequently, reinforcing one another with their startling accounts of hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands coming to faith in Christ, forming into churches and spreading their newfound faith" (David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 1999). What David Garrison was describing could just as easily have been an introduction to the Book of Acts; for that was exactly what Luke was describing as he recorded the rapid expansion of the church that started in Jerusalem on that first Pentecost after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension.

The Book of Acts begins where the Gospels end; it records the initial fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20 and Luke 24:48, 49) as it traces the northern and western expansion of the church throughout the Roman Empire. It is important to note that Luke does not tell the whole story of the early church; missionaries were fanning out from Jerusalem in every

direction, preaching the Gospel, and planting churches to the ends of the known world at that time. The Book of Acts is Luke's personal account of his missionary experiences. Included in his account are stories of the Apostles working in the Roman territories that he would have had direct contact with (i.e. Peter, James, John, Paul, etc.). However, if we look closely at Luke's account, we will notice that it is more than just a few Apostles who are spreading the Gospel. In fact, the Apostles were often running to catch up with what the Holy Spirit was doing. They often found fertile soil already prepared for them and in many cases, believers already primed and waiting. What the Holy Spirit began in Acts continued around the world (and will continue until the end of the Church Age). "God desires to spark Church Planting Movements (CPMs) all over the world. CPMs are His work. But He waits for cooperating servants. We don't have to convince God that we want a harvest. He has to convince us" (Steve Smith, with Ying Kai, T4T: *A Discipleship Re-Revolution*).

However, the rapid expansion and dynamic growth of the New Testament church was not without cost. Jesus warned His disciples:

*"But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them."* Luke 21:12-13

The martyrdom of Steven is well documented (Acts 7), as is the death of James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John, who was beheaded in Judea 44 A.D. (Acts 12:1-2). However the martyrdoms of other disciples in faraway places are not included in Luke's account. It is difficult to say with certainty exactly where each Apostle went to spread the Gospel or what happened to each one because accurate records from that time are difficult to find, but from what sources are available, here is a short list of what is believed to have happened to some of them:

- Philip was born at Bethsaida in Galilee and was one of the first disciples called by Jesus (John 1:43). He was martyred (80 A.D.?) by crucifixion. He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified.

- Matthew, the tax collector called by Jesus (Matthew 9:9), wrote the gospel that bears his name. The places of his labors were Parthia and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with an axe in the city of Nadabah. (AD 60?)
- James (the Less), the brother of our Lord, was the head of the churches in Jerusalem. He was the author of the Epistle that bears his name. At the age of ninety-four he was beaten and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a club.
- Matthias, of whom less is known than of most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas (Acts 1:26). He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded (80 A.D.?).
- Andrew was the brother of the Apostle Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations and is believed to have preached the gospel as far away from his home as present day Scotland; on his arrival at the city of Edessa in Macedonia, he was taken and crucified on an X-cross (80 A.D.?).
- Peter, one of the disciples in Jesus' inner circle (along with James and John), became one of the most influential leaders of the early Church. He undertook a missionary journey to Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea, becoming instrumental in the decision to evangelize the Gentiles. Peter is believed to have been instrumental in establishing the church in Rome before was condemned to death by the Emperor Nero and crucified at Rome in 67 A.D.
- Paul was the apostle who before his conversion was the infamous Saul that helped persecute the Church. He became one of the early church's greatest missionaries. After experiencing many trials and tribulations from promoting the Gospel of Christ, Paul suffered martyrdom under Nero. After his second imprisonment, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he was beheaded in 67 A.D.

- Jude, the brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa (the same name, but not the same city of Andrew's death; this place is an ancient city of Mesopotamia on the site of present-day Urfa in southeast Turkey). (AD 72?)
- Nathaniel (a.k.a. Bartholomew) is believed to have preached in several countries. Tradition says he translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, and propagated the Gospel in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten, flayed alive (skinned), and then beheaded; some sources locate his death at Derbend on the Caspian Sea.
- Thomas, called Didymus (Gr. *twin*), preached the Gospel in Parthia (a region in what is now northeastern Iran) and India; he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear in Mylapore, Madras, India in AD 72.
- Luke, the evangelist, was the author of the Gospel that goes under his name. He traveled with Paul through various countries. Tradition states he was hanged on an olive tree in Greece by the idolatrous priests (84 A.D.?).
- Tradition states that Simon, surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania Africa, Armenia; Suanir, Persia; Edessa and even in Britain. The time and place of Simon's death is disputed.
- John, the "beloved disciple," was brother to James. John founded the churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira. He was arrested in Ephesus and sent to Rome, where it is believed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but miraculously escaped without injury. The Roman Emperor, Domitian, banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death; he died of old age in Ephesus (100 A.D.?)

Modern Church Planting Movements (CPMs) can best be understood in context of what was happening in the Roman Empire of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. As we look around the world at the dawn

of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see the church in many places catching up with God’s vision for the nations that was presented by Jesus in Matthew 24:14, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”* As the world is being prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ, it is not surprising to hear reports from every region of the world describing growing numbers of people responding to the Gospel message. No one can say for certain how many new believers there are in the closed countries and in places where simply announcing that you believe in Jesus Christ for salvation is cause for you to be killed. Americans are often stunned when they hear that there are probably more committed Christians in Communist China than in the United States. And the truth has not changed since Luke wrote Acts: it is often in those places where Christians are under the greatest persecution where the response is the greatest.

Christ’s last words before His Ascension, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”* (Acts 1:8), were so perfectly realized in the Book of Acts that they effectively and concisely outline its contents:

- **You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem [chaps. 1 – 7]**

Defining Events

Power of the Church 1:1 – 2:47

Progress of the Church 3:1 – 8:4

Main Missionary

Peter

Primary Audience

Jews

Jerusalem

Timeframe

33 – 35 A.D. (two years)

- **And in all Judea and Samaria [chaps. 8 – 12]**

Defining Event

Expansion of the Church 8:5 – 12:25

Main Missionary

Philip

Primary Audience

Witness to Judea & Samaria

Samaritans

Timeframe

35 – 48 A.D. (13 years)

- **And to the end of the earth [chaps. 13 – 28]**

Defining Events

Paul's Three Missionary Journeys (31:1 – 21:16)

Paul's Three Trials (21:17 – 28:31)

Main Missionary

Paul

Primary Audience

Witness to the outermost borders of the Roman World, and beyond

Jews, Greeks and Romans

Timeframe

48 – 62 A.D. (14 years)

Although Acts only traces the rapid westward expansion of the church – beginning in Jerusalem and spreading throughout the Roman Empire – the overall history of the church indicates that the Gospel was being spread around the world by a small but rapidly growing band of dedicated and determined disciples who had been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit (Act 1:8; 2:1-4) and were not about to let anything stop them from moving forward.

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor*

*things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)*

*“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” (2 Corinthians 11:24-28)*

These disciples were motivated by a single conviction that the message they carried was *gospel* (“good news”). Beginning in Jerusalem with Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), until Paul’s preaching of the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning Jesus Christ in Rome (Acts 28: 30-31), the crucial assertion of all those who proclaimed Jesus Christ as the Son of God, is that God saves those who believe.

Anywhere in the world where the church stops proclaiming without fear or compromise the message that Jesus is Lord and Christ, it starts to implode. In the Western nations today we see Christianity collapsing from the weight of postmodernism, secularism, materialism, liberal theologies, and scientific skepticism. The church is in retreat because they can no longer stand in the arena of ideas and proclaim Jesus Christ as the Way, Truth, and Life without compromise; far too many Christians in Western nations are looking for excuses and have become embarrassed or ashamed of anything that sounds like an absolute statement of their faith. Afraid to be called “fanatic” or “fundamentalist,” Christians in the West are being shamed into silence. Meanwhile, the church in many places outside of the West shows no signs of slowing down. The vitality of non-traditional, non-denominational Church Planting Movements described in various mission organizations’ reports means that far from being down-and-out and self-obsessed, the church in the rest of the world is energetic, passionate, and excited as the Gospel of the Kingdom spreads

rapidly from community to community by missionaries who often rely upon their feet or bicycles to carry the Gospel seed to fields prepared by the Holy Spirit and ready to receive it. The evidence of Church Planting Movements around the world indicates that it is only in those places in the world where the proclamation of the Gospel is given second place to social works or is subjected to denominational agendas that the Gospel is not advancing – or is at best only growing to keep up with the rate of population growth.

The book of Acts teaches us that a genuine CPM begins when the church – apostles, prophets, missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers, ministry leaders, etc. – catch the Vision for the Kingdom of God and conform their work to the Mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost, make disciples, and bring glory to God in all they do. As the Holy Spirit spreads this vision and mission to every member of the body, a dynamic CPM will be produced because they will be motivated to look beyond the four walls of their church on Sunday mornings and will obey the Lord’s command to go out onto the highways and byways to invite the lost to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, thus bearing much fruit and reproducing themselves without waiting for the “professional” clergy to do the job of church planting that they themselves are capable of doing.

In the following lessons we will examine up close the Church Planting Movements described in the book of Acts and compare them with modern CPMs that are taking place today. We will draw out of Luke’s account the universal elements, common factors, and practical lessons that will help the modern-day church to get on the right track and do what needs to be done to see the Great Commission fulfilled in this generation... so this world will at last see the Lord’s return.

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 1. JERUSALEM (Acts 1:1 – 8:4):

#### A Move of the Holy Spirit

*“When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.” Luke 24:50-53*

Acts makes it clear from the beginning that this is Luke’s effort to carry on with his story from the Gospel that bears his name. *“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen...”* (Acts 1:1-2) Written between A.D. 63 and 70, Luke, no doubt, followed the same careful investigative procedures that he used in writing his gospel (Luke 1:1-4), but unlike his gospel, Luke was a firsthand eyewitness to a large part of what he wrote in Acts because he was one of the close traveling companions with Paul on his missionary journeys (Acts 13 – 28). But to those events Luke was not a personal witness, he would have had the testimonies of Paul and the other Apostles he encountered on his travels to help him fill in key events. Although Acts is an historical document, it is important to keep in mind the fact that Luke is telling the story of the advance of the Gospel message from his perspective of

*Above all else, a church planting movement must be a work of the Holy Spirit.*

*“We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God.” – John Stott*

following in Paul's footsteps through Asia minor, to Greece and ultimately to the heart of Rome itself. Paul was in no way the only missionary traveling to far countries to fulfill the Great Commission to reach the outmost parts of the world. At the same time, other missionaries were rapidly spreading the gospel north, east, and south – as well as west – at this same time.

However, to study Acts merely as ancient church history while ignoring the spiritual lessons it teaches misses the primary purpose for which the Holy Spirit moved Luke to write this account. Acts is as much or more about what the Holy Spirit was doing in and through the church as it was about what the Apostles were doing that Luke wrote about. In this study of Acts, we will examine Acts as more than church history; we will study the book as the Holy Spirit's "training manual" for how to start and sustain a church planting movement. Simply stated, a church planting movement (CPM) is a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment. The description of a CPM is exactly what is being described by Luke in his book. By following this movement from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria and to the outermost parts of the Roman Empire, we can easily conclude that the same kinds of things were happening as the Gospel message was spreading north, east, south and west beyond the borders of the Empire by other dedicated missionaries. Our conclusions can be further confirmed by examining modern-day CPMs and examining the parallels between Luke's story and the stories of today's church planters.

Simply stated, a church planting movement is "a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment."

*"The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity." – Mike Stachura*

According to Luke, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-12), *“there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”* Of the three thousand souls who heard and believed the gospel that day, there were Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs. When the Feast was completed and these new believers returned home, they shared at home, what they witnessed in Jerusalem; in this way the Gospel was advancing swiftly to *“every nation under heaven.”*

Acts is an important historical document because it forms an important bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. Acts gives us the backdrop and context for all of the New Testament writings that follow the Gospel stories. Because of Acts we have important information about where, when, and to whom the Epistles were written. It helps us to understand some of the more difficult passages from the Epistles when we understand the specifics of the issues being addressed. Of equal importance to the historical significance of Acts, is the theological significance of the book. As more and more Gentiles poured into the church, Acts describes how faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior became distinct from Judaism, but at the same time, is the ultimate fulfillment of the Jewish faith.

However, we may miss the most essential purpose for which the Holy Spirit moved Luke to write the book of Acts when we fail to see the relationship between Jesus’

*“Luke, under the inspiration of the Bible’s editor, the Holy Spirit, is providing us with a model. The obvious intention is to stir up Christ’s followers to ‘go and do likewise’ among the people to whom the Lord of the harvest has sent you.” David Livingstone*

commandment to “go” and make disciples of all nations and the practical application of the lessons of that book. The lessons found in Acts are essential to fulfilling Jesus’ commandment; and the proper application of these lessons will insure the success of modern church planting movements.

**Read Acts 1:4-8; 1:12-14; and Acts 2:1-4. What instructions did Jesus give to His disciples? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why was it important for them to wait for the Holy Spirit to arrive? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What does this mean for those who want to start a Church Planting Movement today? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*The key to seeing CPMs emerge is to understand and cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s schedule.* We cannot generate or sustain a genuine movement of God by our own strength or force of will or by attempting copy or imitate other movements. Believing that all is needed is the right “formula” and it will automatically produce a CPM whenever it is tried, will only result in failure. Only the Spirit of God can create such a movement. Jesus fully understood this and ordered His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. If we run

“And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” Acts 1:4-5 (NKJV)

down the track of a CPM using our own strength we will run out of steam before too long; or worse yet, we will get run over by the Holy Spirit and be left lying on the tracks as the genuine movement passes us by. What we can (and must do) is wait.

**Read Acts 1:12-14 again; also 1:15 and 1:21-26. How many disciples were in Jerusalem at that time? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Were these the only disciples of Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What were the disciples doing as they waited? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Waiting on the Lord is NOT being inactive or passive.** Waiting on God allows us to prayerfully align ourselves in such a way that when the Holy Spirit does arrive and starts to move down the track we are ready to jump on board and move forward with the Holy Spirit's agenda and not our own. The Holy Spirit is always moving and preparing people for the Lord's arrival. In John 16:8 Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came, "He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." In Acts chapters 1 & 2 the disciples of Jesus were waiting in Jerusalem for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. When we study those chapters we see they were not just sitting around doing nothing. But what Acts 2 and following tell us is that a genuine CPM must be the work of the Holy Spirit and not the work of men.

*"Many of us go about evangelism assuming that we are the first to witness to someone. We aren't. The Spirit was there before us" Steve Smith, T4T.*

*"The Lord did not tell us to build beautiful churches, but to evangelize the world" – Oswald J. Smith*

It is impossible underestimate the importance of prayer in the lives of all those who desire to obey the Lord and go out to fulfill their part of the Great Commission. In every situation – good or bad – Acts confirms the disciples as men and women of prayer. Paul is an excellent example of this. Like his Lord and Savior, Paul’s life was bathed in prayer. Before he set out on his First Missionary Journey, Paul and his companions were sent out with prayer. Near the end of that first Journey, Paul and Silas appointed elders to lead in every new church that was founded: “*with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed*” (Acts 14:23 ESV).

Kingdom disciples must have the same mindset before they go to share their faith in Jesus. Before going out disciples fast and pray that God will lead them to those He is already preparing to receive Him (NOTE: Acts 13:2-3 “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”). We must realize that there are people all around us whose hearts are being prepared by the Holy Spirit and who are hungry for the truth – the truth of the Gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus – the truth we can bring them. Our goal should be to seek out those who are ready and invite them to join us and become disciples too.

On this point we clearly see who is truly a disciple of Jesus Christ. Those who are converts only – believers, but not committed to Jesus as the Lord of their life – never share their

*“So when they met together, they asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’” Acts 1:6-8*

faith with others; in fact they see no real reason to. Converts justify never sharing their faith in Jesus Christ with non-believers because they think evangelism is the responsibility of the pastors and “professional” clergy. Disciples on the other hand, are motivated by the Holy Spirit and have a burden for those who are perishing. Leaders should never hold back those whose hearts are overflowing with passion and a desire to share their faith with others.

**Read Acts 1:15 and 2:1-13. Was it only the twelve chosen Apostles who received the power of the Holy Spirit and who shared “the wonderful works of God” in other tongues? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Read Luke 10:2 and Matt. 9:36-38. Is the Great Commission supposed to be only for the few? Does the Lord say how many workers in the harvest is enough?**

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It was Peter who stepped forward on the Day of Pentecost and spoke to the crowd. But it is clear from the Scripture that all those who were waiting and praying in the Upper Room were equally empowered by the Holy Spirit. Remembering Jesus’ words to His disciples just a few days earlier, *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth...”* (Acts 1:8 NKJV), it is certain that the power of

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” Joel 2:28-29 (NKJV)

the Holy Spirit to make His disciples witnesses “to the ends of the earth” was not intended for just the few.

The first two chapters of Acts teach us that from the beginning, prayer in unity has been recognized as an essential and universal element before starting any CPM. Without the prayer and unity of those involved, the Holy Spirit will be inhibited from working. Therefore, from the beginning, all successful Church Planting Movements must:

- Make Prayer a key component – even before its inception. Often what happens is a personal belief in the efficacy of prayer becomes a part of the life of the new CPM as the new believers emulate the model of the missionary.
- Encourage Scripture and worship in the heart language of the people.

**Read all of John chapter 17. This is Jesus’ final prayer for His disciples and for all believers who will follow them before He will be arrested and crucified. What is the main thing Jesus is praying for them and for us? (Note verses 11 and 17).** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Why did Jesus say that the unity of all believers is so important? (Note verses 21 and 23).** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” John 17:20-21

*“I believe that in each generation God has called enough men and women to evangelize all the yet unreached tribes of the earth. It is not God who does not call. It is man who will not respond!” – Isobel Kuhn, missionary to China and Thailand*

Jesus had accomplished all that the Father sent Him into the world to accomplish:

- He had sought out the lost sheep of Israel and opened the way into the kingdom for them
- For three and one half years Jesus had been pouring His teachings into His disciples, revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to them in word and deed
- He finished the work of atonement for all mankind through His death burial and resurrection

Now the time had come for Him to return to the Father and launch the disciples He had trained out into a world waiting to hear the message of salvation and of the kingdom of heaven. One thing remained for them before they would be ready: the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit. But the disciples were still expecting Jesus to immediately establish His kingdom on earth, and did not understand all that was ahead of them and the generations to come before the Lord's return to establish His kingdom as promised in the Hebrew Scriptures. The church planting movements these disciples were about to start were only the beginning of many church planting movements that would need to happen before the ends of the earth would be saved. Acts would serve the purpose of preserving for future generations of the church the ways and means they needed to follow.

As the Lord disappeared into the heavens, the disciples stood still with their eyes fixed, watching for the Lord's immediate return. They stood watching the skies because they did not fully understand the work of

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’” Acts 1:9-11

evangelizing the world that was ahead of them. It took the divine intervention of angels to get the disciples to move up the road that led back to Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit that the Father promised them.

FROM PENTECOST TO A CPM

**Read Acts chapter 2; a church planting movement is defined as, “a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment.” Based upon that definition, how does that start to happen in Acts 2?**

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“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’

Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”

Acts 2:36-39

Pentecost is tied to the Passover celebration; it is a harvest celebration that takes place on the fiftieth day after Passover and was one of three major annual feasts commanded by God (Deuteronomy 16:16). Pentecost was significant to the Jews because it was on the fiftieth day after their deliverance, that they were given the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai. Jews of many nations gathered in Jerusalem for this festival. Therefore, Peter's speech (Acts 2:14ff) was given to an international audience, and resulted in a wide harvest of new believers – the first disciples of the first church planting movement in history.

*On the Day of Pentecost, many hearts were already prepared to receive what Peter was preaching. And convicted of their sins by the Holy Spirit; they cried out, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

The timing of this first CPM was no accident or random event. This was planned and timed by the Holy Spirit from the beginning. Those who were assembled that day were fully aware of the events that took place surrounding Jesus' death and burial. They were also aware of the rumors of His resurrection. The Holy Spirit was already at work in their hearts bringing conviction over their sin of rejecting God's chosen Savior and Deliverer. In one day the Holy Spirit would transform a small group of fearful men and women into a thriving, multicultural and multiracial church planting movement that was moving forward and fulfilling the Great Commission.

*"And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'" Acts 2:5-8*

The church was fully involved in the Great Commission as they baptized the new believers and turned them into disciples. It would only be a matter of days before the Feast would be completed and most of those who believed that day would be packing their things and returning to their places of origin. But when they returned, they would be disciples who carried the “good news” of Jesus’ resurrection to their homes and communities and shared with them what they had experienced. The spiritual significance of the Passover is made clear as Luke records three thousand believers from different tribes and tongues were added to the church on that day. In this way, God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel through the rapid growth of church planting movements among a multitude of people groups. As we continue in our study we will see how the way was often prepared for the Apostles and other disciples by the Holy Spirit and by people who had become believers at Pentecost.

From that day forward, we see the church growing rapidly, at first only within the walls of Jerusalem, but as Luke’s narrative continues we will see how the church was experiencing rapid growth beyond their leaders’ wildest dreams. While it was still in its infancy, the church remained centered on the Temple and its services. At first, believers in Jesus saw no need to separate themselves from Judaism. This became a hindrance to what the Holy Spirit was doing. But soon persecution against those who believed in Jesus started up and quickly intensified as the church grew and gained the attention of the Jewish authorities. Tensions in the city were on the rise and reached their height when Steven was accused of blasphemy, arrested and martyred. Steven’s martyrdom,

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20

and the general persecution of Christians that followed, forced the church out of Jerusalem. Leaders of church planting movements should be prepared to face opposition as the movement starts to take shape and people are being saved. Jesus warned us to be prepared for it, but not to fear because His promise is to be with us always, even unto the end of the age.

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 2. THE MESSAGE:

- The Kerygma
- Personal Testimony

THE MESSAGE IS CARRIED BY DISCIPLES ONLY.

**Read Acts 6:2, 7; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thes. 3:9; and 2 Tim. 3:10.**

**Is the life of a disciple intended only for a limited few?**

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**Who then should be called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?**

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Jesus said, *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master...”* (Matthew 10:24-25<sub>a</sub>). Every believer should be trained to be a disciple of Jesus Christ from the moment of their salvation. Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; and 2 Timothy 3:10 tell us that a disciple is like the one who discipled them. Jesus trained His disciples to be like Him and His disciples trained others in the same way. Therefore, each generation of disciples should be trained to be like the Master.

**Read 1 Cor. 5:11-12; 2 Cor. 2:15-17; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph.**

“And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26

**2:1-10; Phil. 1:27-29; Col. 1:9-15; 1 Thess. 1:2-9; 2 Thess. 3:11-15; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:15-19; and Titus 2:11-15. Everywhere that Paul planted a church what did he insist be done? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Why were these things so important to him? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Paul and the other Apostles knew that bad examples of Christians and poor role models in the leadership of the church would become obstacles to any CPM. Sadly, Christians have too often been poor examples of followers of Jesus. If they are truly disciples of Jesus Christ then there should be some evidence of the new life they received; a change in behavior should be the result of the faith they profess. If established churches in an area have non-regenerate, worldly members who engage in immoral behavior and set bad examples in their family and business affairs, it will be difficult for new leadership in the community to convince those outside the church that the Christian faith is genuine and will produce the new life of love, joy, peace, and righteousness in the Spirit. In this

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude 1:3-4

situation the need for repentance and revival in the existing churches may be necessary before a successful Church Planting Movement is possible. Hopefully, the local pastor would be open to leading a revival that brings correction, but if not, a Church Planting Movement is still possible, but may face opposition not only from outsiders, but also from those inside. Gene Getz in his book, *Building Up One Another* (p. 128) said, “No matter how gentle, kind, sensitive, and humble we are, there are some worldly Christians who will not respond to this approach. Paul saw this possibility when he wrote to the Corinthians. Consequently, he gave them a choice. ‘What do you prefer?’ he asked, ‘Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?’ (1 Cor. 4:21).”

The gospel Message carried by disciples will become muddied and confused in the hearts and minds of those who cannot distinguish between a genuine follower of Jesus Christ and those who are “Christian in name only” but not in deed. That is why it is so important for anyone who wants to start planting churches among the unreached to choose only those who are truly disciples of Jesus Christ. The spiritual principle involved here is “reproduction after kind” (Gen. 1:21-25). Although in the end it is the Holy Spirit who truly does the making, only disciples make disciples. Mature disciples provide the leadership and role models for those who are just coming into the church. If the church is filled with poor examples of Christians, the new believers will quickly follow after them. Therefore, Paul and the other Apostles insisted that the church be cleansed of worldly and faithless converts either

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

through repentance and faith or through strict discipline and separation from those who refuse to repent. Many Christians are the victims of poor leaders who neither know nor understand what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. They can only grow as far as the leader permits them to grow and so they never reach maturity in Christ.

#### THE KERYGMA

David Garrison noted in his book *Church Planting Movements* that “We have yet to see a Church Planting Movement emerge where evangelism is rare or absent.” (p. 33). This is confirmed by the book of Acts that tells the story of the evangelism of the Roman world. Social works are much needed in many places where there are unreached people groups. So missions’ schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. are established to address the physical needs of the people, but at the same time sowing the Gospel must never be allowed to take a secondary role to our overall mission. In countries where government opposition to Christian missions and religious hostility to the preaching of the gospel are common, promoting social works can be a legitimate means to the end of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who have ears to hear.

Whenever and wherever possible, Gospel meetings can allow hundreds or even thousands to hear the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. In addition to open meetings, our modern age allows us to sow abundantly through mass media evangelism and sowing the Gospel through music and video in the big cities and urban areas. Modern CPMs often employ

Kerygma - is a transliteration of the Greek word that means proclamation or preaching. Depending on the context, it may refer to either the content proclaimed or the act of proclaiming. The word is used once in Matthew (12:41), once in Luke (11:32), and six times in Paul's letters (Rom 16:25; 1 Col 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17; Titus 1:3). All of these New Testament occurrences appear to refer to what is being proclaimed.

the tool called "Precision Harvesting." Precision Harvesting is a method of evangelism that relies upon a tool called "response filtering." This tool is used to identify and locate people who have already made some kind of response to a Gospel message heard on a TV or radio broadcast, or some other form of mass evangelism. The idea is for the missionary or church planter to glean from these broad sowing ministries, by targeting these areas where seekers or new believers are likely to be found and start working in them. However, this strategy is not the best strategy for establishing Church Planting Movements throughout the villages where mass media forms of evangelism have not reached.

**Read Acts 10; 16:11-15; and 17:16-34; in what way is each passage an example of Precision Harvesting? Who or how were each of the different groups addressed prepared for harvesting? \_\_\_\_\_**

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"Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed." Acts 14:1

*"God is a God of missions. He wills missions. He commands missions. He demands missions. He made missions possible through His Son. He made missions actual in sending the Holy Spirit." — George W. Peters*

In a sense, Pentecost was the Holy Spirit showing us how Precision Harvesting works on a large scale. The crowd gathered that day was primed and ready to receive the message that Peter would deliver. But Precision Harvesting can work in different ways and on a smaller scale. In Acts 10 we see how the Holy Spirit prepared Cornelius and then brought Peter to him. When Peter arrived, Cornelius had already gathered a small group of family and friends who were already disposed to hear the Message. Paul was the master at using this method of Precision Harvesting. As he moved from city to city, Paul would first visit the Synagogue in each place where he found those who were ready to receive the Gospel. In the case of Philippi, Paul heard of a group of God-fearing Gentiles who met by a river outside the city, and sought them out. In Athens, Paul was invited to speak by the curious philosophers of that city. Because so many were open to discuss new ideas, Paul captured the imaginations of those who wanted to hear more about their “Unknown God” that Paul said he could explain and make known to them.

Those involved in modern CPMs recognize that in many regions of the world, village life has not changed as dramatically as in the modern metropolitan areas. Person-to-person contact is still highly valued in villages where people are not as isolated and where they still interact with one another on a daily basis. Family relationships are important and in most parts of world, village houses are grouped together rather than being spread out across the farm land. Precision Harvesting must be carefully crafted to reach a particular unreached people group.

It is important not to take a “one-size-fits-all” approach to Church Planting Movements. It is important to carefully study the particulars of the people group where the CPM is to be started. It is also important to remember that not every missionary is given the same skills – some are better organizers, some are better at personal evangelism, some are better teachers or preachers, etc. So it is essential that the skills of the person match the plan to be implemented.

For example, in India the ancient village organization that makes them almost entirely independent and self-sufficient communities is still very much in tact in the majority of villages across India. Each village has its own body of craftsmen and merchants, plus its own informal governing council, called the Panchayat that consists of the heads of important families. Every village stands apart, surrounded by its own fields, and in many cases the boundary that divides the houses from the fields has not changed for centuries. The characteristics of village life in India make personal evangelism more effective than mass media marketing. Gathering the people of the village together for a gospel meeting or to show a gospel film will be more effective than expensive television broadcasts or mass gospel meetings in big cities that few can manage to attend. This makes the personal evangelism of the indigenous lay leader involved the Church Planting Movement much more effective than any mass media marketing strategy.

In the underdeveloped rural areas of many nations – where most unreached people groups live – personal evangelism and testimonies of the life-changing power of the gospel, accompanied by signs and wonders, such as exorcisms, healings and other acts of spiritual warfare are the most effective means to spread the gospel. We will study this in detail in lesson four: “Paul’s Church Planting Movements.”

**Read Acts 9:19; 11:19-24; 14:21-23; and 2 Tim. 2:2. Did the only disciples being trained come from Jerusalem? Where were the other disciples coming from? Who was teaching them? \_\_\_\_\_**

*“...a common practice in the first few moments after a person comes to faith is to help him think through the implications of being a follower of Jesus and a fisher of men. Within minutes he receives encouragement to think about his lost family and friends and learn a way to witness to them (and eventually train them). From the moment of his salvation he is receiving a vision to be the mustard seed of a movement.” Steve Smith, T4T*

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Central to the life of the disciple is going and making other disciples. Evangelism is not for the seminary trained or full-time clergy only. These early disciples could not be contained because they were motivated by a single conviction that the message they carried was *gospel* (“good news”). David Garrison in his report on Church Planting Movements noted that “New believers were immediately baptized and taught that it was normal for them to win others to Christ and lead them to form new churches. This ‘high demand/high risk’ reliance on new converts as evangelists and church planters contributed greatly to the rapid expansion of the movement.”

Beginning in Jerusalem with Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), until Paul’s preaching of the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning Jesus Christ in Rome (Acts 28: 30-31), the crucial assertion of all those who proclaimed Jesus Christ as the Son of God, is that God saves those who believe and follow Him. Once a person believed and became a disciple of Jesus Christ, they immediately went out and started sharing the Good news and making other disciples. In that way the church was not confined to Jerusalem where the Apostles were staying, but

“Any discipleship program that creates a dependence on the human teacher rather than the ever-present Teacher of the Spirit is doomed to plodding human-dependent growth.” Steve Smith, *T4T*

*"The command has been to 'go,' but we have stayed – in body, gifts, prayer and influence. He has asked us to be witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth ... but 99% of Christians have kept pattering around in the homeland." – Robert Savage, Latin American Mission*

was experiencing the rapid, exponential growth that characterizes a genuine CPM.

Disciples immediately become a part of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. They believe that Jesus' commands are not just for a few, but are for all. Therefore, ALL disciples should do these three things:

1. "GO". Disciples must go and "seek and save the lost."
2. "TO EVERYBODY" (*not* to just a select few). Disciples share with everyone they can because they never know whom God will choose.
3. "MAKE DISCIPLES" (not just church members or "converts"). From the very beginning disciples teach every believer to be a disciple. A disciple is one who not only hears, but also obeys what he/she has learned and passes it on.

The Message disciples "go" to share is the fundamental proclamation of the Christian faith, called in Greek, the *kerygma* – the message that through His death, burial, resurrection, Jesus truly is Lord and Savior. In 1 Corinthians, Paul confirms that this message, (that is foolishness from the viewpoint of the world) is in fact "the power and wisdom of God" that the world is seeking (1:18-25). For Paul and all of those early disciples, *kerygma* – proclaiming or preaching the death and resurrection of Christ – was the only way to bring about the salvation of all those who believe and restore them into a right relationship with God (Romans 10:14-17).

The *kerygma* is the heart of the Christian message; it is

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." Romans 10:14-17

our declaration that through His life, death, and resurrection, “*Jesus is Lord and Christ*”. It is the content of the gospel of salvation that Peter, John, Paul, and the other missionaries in Acts so courageously proclaimed throughout the world. *Kerygma* is preaching without compromise the message of the King that all disciples have carried with them from the beginning as they went about fulfilling the Great Commission from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world – even to this day.

Too often today, evangelists preach what some call, “the gospel of me.” That means, instead of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord – and that salvation means believing and following Him as Lord and Christ – salvation becomes all about the person being saved. Jesus did it all for “you” and now all you have to do is pray a simple prayer asking Him to forgive you of your sins and you are guaranteed a lifetime of answered prayers for your wants and needs. All that is required of the new believer is that they attend church regularly, pay their tithes, and try to live a moral life as best they can (but knowing Jesus is there to forgive their every transgression anyway). **That is not the gospel Jesus preached and it is not the gospel the Apostles preached!** The gospel message that turned the world upside down was the *kerygma*. It is a message that requires a response of faith and obedience to Jesus Christ as LORD and KING. We follow Him not because of what He can do for “me” but because who He is demands nothing less than our total loyalty and commitment to Him.

The problem with those who accept a “gospel of me” is that it requires no real commitment or sacrifice on their

“Then He said to him, ‘A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, “Come, for all things are now ready.” But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, “I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.” And another said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.” Still another said, “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.”’ Luke 14:16-20

part. In other words, Jesus paid it all so they don't have too. They are unable and unwilling to make any real sacrifices of their time, treasure, or talents for Christ's sake. They came to Christ not counting the cost. So whenever any real cost for being a follower of Jesus presents itself, they shrink back (Luke 14:28-33). If they are unable to sacrifice the things of this world for the sake of the kingdom, how will they ever be willing or able to sacrifice their very self for Him (Luke 14:26-27)?

#### PERSONAL TESTIMONY

*"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city."* Acts 8:4-8

Once out of the confines of Jerusalem, the followers of Jesus began to interact with new communities that traditionally would have little or nothing to do with the Jews. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Philip travels to Samaria. There he becomes a bold witness for the Lord; and following in the footsteps of his Master (John 4:5-30), crashes through the ethnic and spiritual barriers established by Judaism. He takes the Gospel of Salvation directly to the Samaritans, a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles. From there, Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to travel south along the

*One thing is very important to remember: a testimony is designed to move someone's heart to listen to the gospel, but it is not the gospel itself! The goal of the testimony is simply to help us bridge to the gospel." Steve Smith T4T*

*"A God-centered theology has to be a missionary theology" — John Piper*

major coastal highway that leads through Gaza to Egypt and beyond. On the road, he kept a divine appointment when he met up with an Ethiopian eunuch and preached the Gospel to him. The Ethiopian believed and was baptized by Philip on the spot, making him the first full Gentile believer in Jesus Christ. The wall between Gentile and Jew has just come crashing down! Later the Apostle Paul would say in Colossians 3:11, *“Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”*

From the story about Philip, the scene changes and Luke takes his readers back to Jerusalem and introduces them to a young Pharisee named Saul who is preparing to pursue and capture the followers of Jesus that had fled from the persecution in Jerusalem and sought refuge in Damascus. The story of Saul’s conversion marks a dramatic turning point in the book of Acts and in the history of the church. No individual, apart from Jesus Christ himself, shaped the history of Christianity like the apostle Paul. When Paul is first introduced, he is standing with the Jews as they stoned Steven to death (Acts 7:58). After Steven’s death, Saul’s intense persecution of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:3) contributed in large part to the scattering of the church and Philip’s flight to Samaria.

**Read Acts 22:1-21; 26:1-23; Galatians 1:13-24; and Philippians 3:4-11. Note how Paul shared his personal testimony with others. Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). What do these passages of**

“For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.’  
Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’  
And Paul said, ‘I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.’”  
Acts 26:26-29

**Scripture tell us about Paul's attitude toward his personal testimony?** \_\_\_\_\_

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After Paul is born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, his personal testimony and preaching of the gospel from Jerusalem to the heart of Rome itself confounded both Jew and Gentile alike. His training under one of the greatest Jewish rabbis of the day made him a fierce advocate for the Lord as he used his command of the Jewish Scriptures to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. His personal testimony of how His encounter with Jesus Christ changed his life became his most effective method of introducing the gospel to those who had little or no understanding of the Scriptures and at the same time helped those who knew the Scriptures to understand the sincerity of Paul's message.

Disciples can learn a valuable lesson from Paul's preaching. The *kerygma* reinforced by personal testimony can be most effective with those who have been exposed to the gospel. On the other hand, personal testimony can form a natural bridge to the gospel message when sharing with those who have had little or no exposure to the Scriptures.

"It was Paul's contention that the gospel he preached was not simply something he had heard from others; it had come to him direct from God. That was a bold claim. To make, and it demanded some kind of proof. For that proof, Paul had the courage to point to himself and the radical change in his own life." William Barclay

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 3. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY:

#### The Holy Spirit Prepares the Way

*“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” Acts 13:1-3*

In the first lesson we learned that any CPM must begin with a move of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that Jesus instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. As the story of Acts unfolds, it describes how the transition of the church from a primarily Jewish church to a Gentile church begins to take place. The persecution of the church in Jerusalem and Judea continued. Herod had James, the brother of John, killed and Peter was thrown into prison again but was miraculously delivered. Herod's violent death brought a temporary halt to the persecution and Luke says, “The word of God grew and multiplied.” It is at this point that Acts describes a new phase in the growth and expansion of the church. The last verse of

“When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.” Acts 11:23-24

Acts chapter 12 is a foreshadowing of what is about to happen as Saul (Paul) and his companions shift from Jerusalem to Antioch – now a vital center of Christianity. Their ministry in Jerusalem behind them, Paul and the others are about to launch out on their first missionary journey that will take the gospel beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the ends of the earth.

**Read Acts 13:1-3; what do these verses tell you about the church in Antioch? Include in your answer how it is similar to the church in Jerusalem and how it is different.**

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Beginning in Acts 13, Luke records how the center of gravity in the church was shifting away from Jerusalem and a strictly Jewish sect of followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The first thing we recognize about the church in Antioch is the diversity of backgrounds. The only thing these men had in common was their faith in Christ. From this group, the Holy

*“What variety there is in the church! The common thread among these five men was their deep faith in Christ. We must never exclude anyone whom Christ has called to follow him. Like the early church, if believers today do their part to reach out to all who are lost, church congregations will eventually be comprised of people from different racial and cultural backgrounds... The more we understand the gospel and embrace God's version of the body of Christ, however, the more we will begin to transcend these differences. More than merely getting along, we will be able to honestly and authentically say from our hearts that we love each other.”*  
 Acts 13:1 Life Application Study Bible.

Spirit selects Paul and Barnabas “for the work to which I have called them.” So Paul and Barnabas, with John Mark to assist them, set off on the first of three missionary journeys recorded in Acts. This first mission set the pattern Paul would follow on each of his journeys:

1. The Holy Spirit would lead him on when and where to go.
2. He followed the communication routs of the Roman Empire – the system of Roman roads and sea routes made travel easier
3. He visited key population and cultural centers to reach as many people as possible.
4. He went to cities with synagogues, speaking first to the Jews in hopes that they would see Jesus as the Messiah and help spread the Good News to everyone.

#### PAUL’S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

**Read Acts 13:1-14:28 and pay close attention to verses 13:4; 13:9; 13:52; 14:27. In three of these four verses, the Holy Spirit is specifically mentioned (14:27 says “God”); what is the Holy Spirit doing to prepare the way for these missionaries?**

13:4 - \_\_\_\_\_  
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“From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.” Acts 14:26-28

13:9 - \_\_\_\_\_

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13:52 - \_\_\_\_\_

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14:27 - \_\_\_\_\_

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*"People who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives . . . and when the bubble has burst, they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted." – Nate Saint, missionary martyr*

In Lesson One we learned that any successful CPM must be a move of the Holy Spirit. Before even attempting to start a CPM those involved must first wait and pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. If a movement begins without the Holy Spirit it will quickly fail because human effort is not sufficient to sustain it. Acts 2 thru 12 tells story after story to demonstrate that what was born on Pentecost was nothing less than a move of God confirming Jesus' promise of power to fulfill the commission for His church.

Acts can be told as the story of how the Holy Spirit was crashing through walls and breaking down barriers ahead of the disciples who in far too many cases were running to

*God's vision always involves and blesses others. God blesses His people with vision in order that we become blessings to those who have not experienced the fullness of God's salvation.*

## How God Sovereignly Guided His People In Acts

MEANS	SCRIPTURE REFERENCES
Through direct revelation	1:4-5, 11; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 16:6-7; 20:23
Through Scripture	1:20
Through the casting of lots	1:23-26
Through unexpected, supernatural acts	2:1-41
Through the apostles' teaching	2:42
Through judgment	5:1-11
Through church "growing pains"	6:1-7
Through persecution and evil opposition	7:54-8:1; 14:5-7; 20:3
Through angelic messengers	8:26; 10:3-8; 27:22-26
Through miraculous relocation	8:39
Through direct, life-altering encounters with the risen Lord	9:3-9
Through visions	9:10; 10:3-8, 9-16; 11:5; 16:9-10; 18:9-11; 23:11
Through human instruments / messengers	9:17-19, 27-28
Through times of intense prayer	10:9; 13:2-3
Through bringing to their minds the words of the Lord	11:16
Through prophetic utterances	11:28; 21:4, 10-12
Through God-honoring, Spirit-led discussions among church leaders	15:1-31
Through promptings by the Spirit	15:28; 19:21; 20:22
Through closed doors	16:6-7
Through favorable circumstances	19:8-11
Through having them take advantage of civil / legal / political rights	25:10-12
Source: <i>Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps</i> , Neil S. Wilson and Linda K. Taylor Tyndale, © 2001 by Tyndale House Publishers. Database © 2007 WORDsearch Corp.	

“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

Acts 9:17-18

catch up with where the Holy Spirit was leading them. Still, half-way through Acts, a genuine CPM has yet to materialize. But all of that was about to change. Barnabas, no doubt led by the Holy Spirit went to find Paul and bring him to Antioch, a city far away from their powerful religious persecutors in Jerusalem and a flourishing city for disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Acts 13 we see the Holy Spirit working in every way to prepare the ground over which these missionaries were about to travel. First, it is the Holy Spirit who moves upon the leaders of the church in Antioch to fast and pray and select specific people who had been called by Him for this particular mission. Nothing quite like this had been done before in Antioch. Believers made at Pentecost had returned home and were no doubt sharing with their friends and family what had happened to them. But this is the first time we see believers outside of Jerusalem listening to and co-operating with the Holy Spirit to deliberately send out missionaries to “go” and preach the gospel far from their home (13:4).

The first great opposition to their mission came at Cyprus – the first stop on their mission. **Read Acts 13:4-12; how did the Holy Spirit help Paul to overcome this opposition?** \_\_\_\_\_

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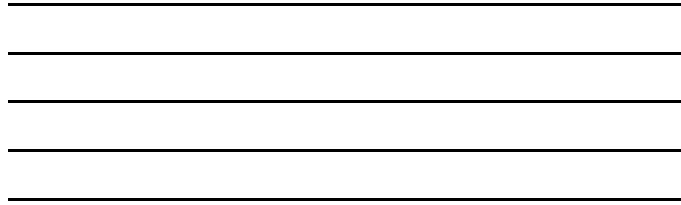
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**Note the similarities with the story of Paul’s salvation in Acts 3:9-18.** \_\_\_\_\_

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“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.” Hebrews 12:1-4



In the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* on these verses, I. Howard Marshall observed: “The character of the judgment suggests an analogy with what had earlier happened to Paul himself, and the phrase *for a time* suggest that it was meant to be merely temporary; hence the judgment was probably meant to be a warning and intended to act as a stimulus to conversion, although we do not know whether it achieved this result. The unfortunate magician was afflicted with a mistiness of the eyes and his consequent blindness was evident from his need of somebody to *lead him by the hand*. The superior power associated with the teaching of the Christian missionaries astounded the proconsul to such an extent that he was prepared to believe their message.”

Missionaries around the world have often testified to the fact that some kind of miracle – a divine physical healing or healing of a demon possessed individual – often resulted in the opening of a door to a church planting in a particular village or community. Once the news spread, people would come – if not for a miracle for themselves – to see if God would move again in their midst in a miraculous way. Miracles are often God’s way of getting people’s attention who would otherwise not pay close attention to a spoken message.

*"Any church that is not seriously involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist." – Oswald J. Smith*

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit...”<sup>1</sup>

Thessalonians 1:5-6

In verse 13:52 we see another way the Holy Spirit helped prepare the way for the missionaries. Preaching the gospel and planting churches among the unreached is not easy; in fact, it is often filled with hardships and both physical and spiritual opposition. Discouragement, loneliness, fear, and feelings of failure often accompany the missionary along the way. It is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple that gives them the ability to overcome everything and stay on mission with God and complete the hard work of establishing a Church Planting Movement.

This first mission was a great success. Paul and Barnabas reported that the gospel was being received “in large numbers” throughout Asia Minor (14:21), but not without trials, and great opposition. On their way back to Antioch, they strengthened and encouraged the new disciples to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (14:22).

*“Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” Acts 14:27*

Verse 14:27 may well be the most significant verse in all of Acts for it not only foreshadows all of what is to follow in the book, but also reveals that God had opened the way of salvation to the Gentiles. The church planting movements Paul will establish throughout the rest of his life will find their greatest success among the Gentiles. Was it because Paul was so great? No. It was because the Holy Spirit was blazing the

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:1-5

trail for Paul and the other missionaries to reach the unreached Gentile people groups God was sending them to.

**Read Isaiah 2:2-3; 11:10; 42:1-6; 49:6-7; 52:10; 55:5; 56:6-7; and 66:18-20. What do these prophecies tell us about God's intention for the Gentiles? How is this prophecy being fulfilled by the church? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Isaiah was not alone among the Old Testament prophets to proclaim God's intention for all the nations to come and worship Him in spirit and truth. Luke's description of Paul's missionary journeys is the first record the church has of the key role that cross-cultural missionaries play in fulfilling those prophecies. By laying the groundwork for Church Planting Movements, Paul and the other early church missionaries were on the way to fulfilling God's ultimate plan for the nations. When we understand the Book of Act as a series of reports written by Luke describing the successful activities of missionaries in the mission fields in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome then we can search them for clues on how we can use those reports as the Holy Spirit's handbook to guide us in the present context of cross-cultural missions.

Then as now, missionaries introduced the gospel to unreached people groups for the first time. In his book on

“Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’”  
Luke 24:46-49

Church Planting Movements, David Garrison recognized *Ten Universal Elements* of church planting: “While it may be possible to have a Church Planting Movement without them, we have yet to see this occur. Any missionary intent upon seeing a Church Planting Movement should consider these 10 Elements.” In Paul’s First Missionary Journey we see almost all of these elements taking shape.

### **1. Prayer**

The New Testament teaches throughout that prayer is fundamental to the life of every believer regardless of their calling. An important role for the missionary is to instill from the beginning in the local body of believers how important prayer is in the personal life of every disciple. And the history of missionary movements around the world has shown that prayer is always the first pillar of any successful plan for reaching a people group. Paul’s first missionary journey demonstrates that the source of the missionary’s power is prayer (13:3; and 14:23). But prayer is not for those involved church planting alone; prayer is critical to the life of the church. Prayer can mobilize new believers from the beginning and lead them to become fully involved in efforts to reach those who are not saved.

### **2. Abundant Gospel Sowing**

Church Planting Movements do not emerge spontaneously; not only must the Holy Spirit do the work of preparing the way and empowering those who go out, but those who go must go and share the gospel of salvation (13:16-41 gives us a good idea of Paul’s presentation of the

*“Without effective prayer, you cannot be effective in your evangelism-period! Do not even try it without prayer! Sharing your faith without praying for the person is like training a pig to fly; all you will do is waste your time and annoy the pig! All you will accomplish in trying to do evangelism without prayer is stay away from God, waste your time, and annoy the person!”*

*Dr. Richard J. Krejcir*

gospel). Evangelism must abound in the region and among the people group targeted. Although social works are much needed in many places around the world (and mission schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. are able to address the physical needs of the people) sowing the Gospel must never be allowed to take a secondary role to our overall mission. In countries where government opposition to Christian missions and religious hostility to the preaching of the gospel are common, promoting social works can be a legitimate means to the end of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, whenever possible, public meetings can allow hundreds or even thousands to hear the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Our modern age allows us to sow abundantly through mass media evangelism. Sowing the Gospel through music and video in the big cities and urban areas can get the word out, but what the Holy Spirit shows us in Acts is that in the end it is still personal evangelism and the testimonies of the life-changing power of the gospel – accompanied by signs and wonders, such as exorcisms, healings and other acts of spiritual warfare – that are the most effective means to win the lost.

### **3. Intentional Church Planting**

Paul, Barnabas and the other early missionaries in Acts started out with a specific strategy: whatever town they entered they would go to the Jewish Synagogue first. There Paul would be recognized as a Pharisee with authority to speak. Once Paul was given the opportunity, he would present the gospel to all in attendance. Those who responded (both

*"Never pity missionaries; envy them. They are where the real action is – where life and death, sin and grace. Heaven and Hell converge." – Robert C. Shannon*

*"In every Church Planting Movement, someone implemented a strategy of deliberate church planting before the movement got under way." David Garrison*

Jew and Gentile) would form the nucleus of a church. After a while, Paul had to adjust his methods because as he became known as a leader of the followers of Jesus. The Jews who opposed “the Way” would be waiting for Paul and would stir up trouble before he could make his points. So in time, he adjusted his strategy and went straight to the Gentiles who were receiving the gospel with gladness (Acts 13:46).

**Read Luke 9:1-6 and note Jesus’ method of leadership. For what purpose did Jesus send out His disciples? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Why were the disciples instructed to depend on those they visited while they went from town to town preaching the Good News and not from the church? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**What did shaking the dust of certain towns from their feet mean? \_\_\_\_\_**

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In this passage, notice that Jesus did not do everything for His disciples, and expect them to be “hearers only.” Jesus

*“It is important to dedicate our skills to God's Kingdom, but we must also be equipped with his power and have a clear vision of what he wants us to do.”*  
*Life Application Study Bible*

*“People who don't believe in missions have not read the New Testament. Right from the beginning Jesus said the field is the world. The early church took Him at His word and went East, West, North and South.” – J. Howard Edington*

empowered his disciples (9:1), and gave them specific instructions so they knew what to do (9:3, 4). Jesus expected them to obey. Jesus also knew that they would face opposition and instructed them how to deal with those who rejected them (9:5). Read a little further and you will see that Jesus held them accountable (9:10). As you study Paul's first missionary journey you will see that he followed the Master's instructions for starting church planting movements.

When we study the Gospels, we learn that Jesus' vision was for the Kingdom of God (or heaven). Jesus mentions the Kingdom of heaven no less than 32 times in Matthew's Gospel and the Kingdom of God is mentioned another 69 times in the other Gospels. To fulfill His mission, Jesus announced His Kingdom by both preaching and healing, and when He sent his disciples out, He gave them the power and authority to do the same. In Acts, Jesus' power and authority is passed onto His disciples by His Holy Spirit.

The purpose of church planting movements is to rapidly and greatly increase the Kingdom of God by proclaiming The Truth about Jesus: that Jesus Christ is the one, true, living God; and that salvation comes through Him alone. Because Paul knew that any teaching that fails to emphasize our responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ to obey His command to preach the Good News, make disciples, baptize, and teach them to obey everything Jesus taught us (Matt. 28:19-20) is in danger of distorting Gospel, he emphasized sound doctrine from the beginning (Gal. 1:6-10; Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 3:17-21).

*"Shaking the dust of certain towns from their feet had deep cultural implications (9:5). Pious Jews would do this after passing through Gentile cities to show their separation from Gentile practices. If the disciples were to shake the dust of a Jewish town from their feet, it would show their separation from Jews who rejected their Messiah. This action also would show that the disciples were not responsible for how the people responded to their message. Neither are we responsible if we have carefully and truthfully presented Christ but our message is rejected. Like the disciples, we must move on to others whom God desires to reach." Life Application Study Bible.*

**Read Luke 9:3, 4. Why do you think that Jesus instructed His disciples to depend on locals to supply their needs as they went from town to town preaching the Good News?**

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Paul and the other church planters who knew Jesus' teachings about evangelism recognized that:

- Their purpose was to take Jesus' message of the kingdom to the ends of the world; by traveling light they could move quickly.
- Their dependence on those they came to evangelize had other good effects as well:
  1. It clearly showed that the Messiah had not come to provide income for his followers.
  2. It forced the disciples to rely on God's power and not on their own provision.
  3. It involved the villagers and made them more eager to hear the message.

This was an excellent approach for the disciples' short-term mission, but it was not intended to be a permanent way of life for them.

“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Luke 10:17-20

**Compare Jesus' instructions with the way most pastors, evangelists, and missionaries operate today.**

Far too many modern-day missionaries will sit around at home and wait until all their needs are met and a steady stream of funds is coming in to them before they will move out into the harvest fields. They want to buy land, build church buildings, and establish a large missionary organization – often just to reach a small area or a single unreached people group. This tends to encumber the work of evangelism and restrict church planting to how much money comes in and how fast they can build buildings; it turns missionaries away from the field and makes them fund-raisers to sustain a “missionary organization.” Depending upon outside sources of money also sends the signal that the missionary is doing what they are doing not because they truly care about the people, but because they are being paid. When the missionary depends upon others to be their provision, it causes them to depend less upon God’s power and provision for their ministry. It also denies the opportunity for the locals who respond to the Gospel to become personally invested in spreading the message to their family, friends, and neighbors.

In Luke 9:4, Jesus was already establishing the pattern for a house church movement. Once a homeowner received the representatives of Jesus Christ and responded to the Gospel message, the disciple could spend the maximum amount of time with them to quickly train them to become a house church leader in their community and then quickly move on to the next town or village.

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” Luke 10:1

*"Love is the root of missions; sacrifice is the fruit of missions" –  
Roderick Davis*

#### 4. Scriptural Authority

*“Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.” Acts 13:48-49*

Even before the church began at Pentecost, Jesus made it clear that He had not come to destroy the Scriptural authority of the Torah (Law), but had come to “fulfill” it (Matthew 5:17-20). Therefore, the Bible is and will continue to be the primary source for sound doctrine for the church community and for the life of every believer.

**Jesus fulfills the Law by:**

1. **Confirming its validity**
2. **Bringing out its full, originally intended meaning**
3. **Expanding its demands beyond mere outward conformity to the inward attitudes of the heart**
4. **Jesus was the One who would reveal the true eschatological will of God recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures.**

It should not be forgotten that it took several centuries after the birth of the church for the New Testament Canon to be confirmed and closed. While the book of Acts was being written, the Jewish Scriptures – and in particular the Old Testament prophets – were all that the church had to prove Jesus was truly the Messiah or Christ (Acts 8:35; 17:2, 11; 18:28; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Tim. 3:16). As a Pharisee Paul proved himself to be uniquely qualified and trained in the Law of

*“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.” Acts 14:1-2*

*“We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first.” – Oswald J. Smith*

Moses to bridge the gap between Gentile and Jew using the Old Testament Scriptures. From his first missionary journey onward, Paul was able to walk into any Synagogue of the Jews and start preaching from their Scriptures. Before long Paul would bring his audience to discover Jesus. This would always be the turning point for them: would they believe the Word of God or not?

Whether it is orally transmitted, transmitted by the written word, or by some form of contemporary technology, Scripture must be the rudder and compass for the individual Christian's life. When the authority of the Scripture is undermined, the moral and spiritual authority of the church will be destroyed and the kingdom will not advance because the Holy Spirit cannot bless the efforts of those who seek to build a Church Planting Movement on a poor foundation of false doctrines based on human knowledge or traditions alone.

##### **5. Local Leadership**

*“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Acts 14:21-23*

Critical to the rapid, exponential growth of a church planting movement is the empowering of local leadership as quickly as possible. When the leader of a church planting movement tries to keep everything under their personal

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...”

Ephesians 4:11-13

control it will choke and constrain the movement. The Holy Spirit knows this and led Paul to quickly install local leadership and entrust them to the Holy Spirit for guidance and knowledge: *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”* (John 14:26).

Planting churches should be a co-operative effort between the Holy Spirit, the missionary, and the local leaders. The missionary can offer experience, guidance, mentoring, and training. But if the work is going to become a movement, the local leaders must be released from the direct supervision of the missionary as quickly as possible. There is a delicate relationship that must develop between the church planting missionary and the local leadership. If the missionary exercises too much control, the local leaders will become dependents and never grow and mature. If the missionary releases the local leader too quickly they may quickly stumble and fall away.

The role of the Missionaries involved in CPMs can best be described as that of a trainer. If the missionary sits in the pilot seat and lets the local leadership along for the ride, the Movement will never truly get off the ground. The church planter is the one who trains others to lead.

## **6. Lay Leadership**

*“From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.”* Acts 14:26

*“Somewhere along the way we have subtly and tragically taken the costly command of Christ to go, baptize, and teach all nations and mutated it into a comfortable call for Christians to come, be baptized, and listen in one location.” – David Platt*

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.”  
1 Corinthians 12:28

If Paul had used on his first missionary journey the traditional church planting methods used today, he never would have finished his first mission trip. Think about it. The way missions and evangelism is done today:

- First the evangelist, usually a seminary trained professional receiving financial support from his denomination or from a missionary society, comes to a particular village or rural community and starts to share the gospel.
- Over time they make a few converts who usually meet in a house church setting.
- The missionary slowly builds a group that starts to outgrow the house church. So the missionary searches for funds from his denomination or other supporters to buy land and eventually – if successful in raising funds – they will build a church.
- After the church is built the missionary – now pastoring the church – will reach out to a neighboring community and start the whole process again.
- If they are successful, and they can raise many thousands of dollars from outside sources, within a few decades they may have planted one or two churches in their area.

Traditional church planting that relies upon central or denominational control with seminary trained professional leadership differs greatly from the kind of Church Planting Movements being written about in Acts. Traditional methods may work in large urban areas where the gospel has already been saturated and where the population is familiar with

“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” 1 Timothy 4:13-16

Christianity, but the traditional method is not the best method for reaching populations of unreached people groups. Paul and the other early missionaries quickly realized that planting churches where they had successfully preached the gospel must rely upon lay leaders – otherwise these small, scattered groups of believers would quickly disappear while waiting for educated and skilled leaders to return to them and take care of them.

An unfortunate fact in many unreached regions of the world is that the more educated and highly trained pastoral leaders simply will not go to these places because the risks are too high and the financial rewards too low for them to leave the population centers and relatively safe or prosperous areas where Christianity is accepted. Paul’s missionary journeys teach us that for a CPM to be successful it must be the “tip of the spear” and always moving forward, opening new territory and reaching new people. Entrusting the movement to gifted and anointed lay leaders ensures the momentum from slowing down due to a lack of professionals who will not make the sacrifices and go to the ends of the earth. Lay leaders come from the largest possible pool of potential church planters and cell church leaders from within the targeted area.

## 7. Cell or House Churches

**Review Acts 13 and 14. How many church buildings did Paul build on his first missionary journey? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*"The average pastor views his church as a local church with a missions program; while he ought to realize that if he is in fact pastoring a church, it is to be a global church with a missions purpose." – Unknown*

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Acts 5:42

**Read Acts 12:12; 16:15, 32, 40; 18:7; 19:19; 20:20; and 28:30. What was the established arrangement for the believers to meet for fellowship and worship in the early church?** \_\_\_\_\_

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Once again, we learn another valuable lesson from Paul's missionary journeys: Church buildings do not appear in Church Planting Movements. Remember, the key to a successful CPM is rapid and exponential growth fueled by the Holy Spirit. If Paul had stopped to build church buildings and waited for theologically trained leaders to take over the leadership of each new church he planted, he never would have made it out of Pisidia and his First Missionary Journey would have been his last!

Nothing should be allowed to slow down the steady advance of the kingdom of God; as Jesus said in Luke 16:16 (ESV) "...the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it." The vast majority of churches planted in a genuine CPM must be small, easily reproducible churches of 10-30 members meeting in homes, rented rooms or small halls. This can be done either with cell churches (small churches linked to one another and to some type of structured network – often a larger single church or denomination) or with independent house churches. Either way, buying land and building structures should not be allowed to slow up the process.

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Matthew 11:12

“The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.” Luke 16:16

## 8. Churches Planting Churches

*“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” 2 Timothy 4:2*

**Read Acts 5:42; 8:40; 9:20-22; 11:19-21; 18:8; 20:20; and 28:30. Immediately after being saved, what were these new believers doing? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Once the initial churches are planted by the missionary or missionary-trained church leaders, the character of the movement should change over to an indigenous movement of churches planting churches. When this change occurs, a new phase of rapid and exponential reproduction should begin naturally.

The problem with most church planting today is it seems to be hopelessly locked into a traditional method that believes it is the responsibility of professional, seminary trained missionaries to plant churches, and that without outside assistance the local church cannot do anything. This creates a “needy mentality” that makes the average Christian feel they should always be on the receiving end of everything. This mentality has to be broken and the true biblical model demonstrated in the Book of Acts put in its place before a genuine CPM can be started. The indigenous church must

*“In Church Planting Movements, nothing deters the local believers from winning the lost and planting new cell churches themselves.” David Garrison*

*“If there is no passionate love for Christ at the center of everything, we will only jingle and jangle our way across the world, merely making a noise as we go” — William Wilberforce*

believe that reproduction is not only possible, but is natural. External aid is not only unnecessary for a CPM to take off, but it can be a hindrance or stumbling block because it requires sacrificial giving of money and manpower from the local church for a CPM to happen.

## 9. Rapid Reproduction

*"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."* Revelation 3:1b-3

Why is it that when reproduction rates slow down the CPM falters? A great American poet/philosopher once said that "He not busy being born, is busy dying." And when a church loses its vision for the harvest – when they stop looking outward and over the next horizon – they will invariably turn inward. Churches that have lost the Vision and Mission of Jesus will not be busy seeking and saving the lost and giving birth to new churches. And when a church is not looking outward, then it will naturally start looking inward. Soon the members will be looking at each other trying to find fault with each other, and then the pastor. Members of the inward-looking church will start to grow restless and will stop paying attention to the messages of their pastors. The inward-looking church will be like the seeds that fell among the thorns and will cease to grow spiritually as well as physically

*"Most church planters involved in the movement contend that rapid reproduction is vital to the movement itself."  
David Garrison*

*"'Go ye' is as much a part of Christ's Gospel as 'Come unto Me.' You are not even a Christian until you have honestly faced your responsibility in regard to the carrying of the Gospel to the ends of the earth." – J. Stuart Holden*

(Luke 8:14). If they are not reproducing, they will lose the sense of urgency to complete the harvest for the Lord's Second Coming. A church that is busy reproducing will be too busy to fight over nonessential elements. The individual members will be engaged, growing spiritually, and will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in one of the greatest harvest fields in the world today.

*"Every Christian should be both conservative and radical; conservative in preserving the faith and radical in applying it." — John Stott*

## 10. Healthy Churches

In his book, *Church Planting Movements*, David Garrison listed five elements that his missionaries reported were signs of a healthy church that was fully participating in planting new churches. These five things are all necessary attributes for those who are moving ahead with the Vision of advancing the kingdom of God and Mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost, make disciples, and glorify God. And these same five signs of a healthy church are found in the churches planted by Paul and the other missionaries in Acts.

1. Worship – is more than singing hymns on Sunday mornings; it is a lifestyle of giving God all praise, honor and glory in everything we do (Acts 2:47; 3:8; and Philippians 4:4).
2. Evangelistic and Missionary Outreach – is what the church is all about. A missionary church will be too busy going about the Father's business to be worrying about everybody else's business in the church. (Acts 5:42; 8:40; 9:20-22; 11:19-21; 18:8; 20:20; and 28:30).

*"Sometimes there is a precedent from history but we have forgotten it. CPMs are not simply a modern-day phenomenon. All throughout church history, there have been CPM-like movements – discipleship revolutions." Steve Smith, T4T*

3. Education and Discipleship – Jesus specifically commanded us to go and make disciples not converts. Converts do not reproduce, but disciples will. (Acts 5:42; 11:26; 15:35; 18:25; 20:20; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 John 2:27).
4. Ministry – is all about service; first to God, then to others. The gifts of ministry are given not for our own benefit, but to build up one another (Acts 26:16; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11-13; and Col. 1:3-8).
5. Fellowship – without unity there can be no fellowship; without love there can be no unity. Love (agape) is the key; without it nothing we do means anything at all. We can plant a million churches using all the latest church planting strategies and marketing skills, but if we have no love for one another, all will be in vain (John 17:20-23; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 4:13, 16; Phil. 2:1-2; 2 Thes. 1:3; and 1 John 3:11).

Samuel Matthew said it very well in his book, *Formation and Development of Missiology in India* (p. 164): “A ‘missional’ church is one where its members love and talk positively about the neighborhood, speak in language that is neither filled with pious phrases nor embattled. They apply their study of the Bible to the core concerns and stories of the people of the culture. They exhibit deep concern for the poor. They are generous with their money. They value their purity and respect the opposite sex. They show humility toward people of other races and cultures. They do not bash other Christians and churches.” The Holy Spirit moved Paul and

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

*“Here am I, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough, the savage lost of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort on earth; send me even to death itself, if it be but in your service, and to promote your kingdom” –David Brainerd*

the other church planting missionaries in Acts to make sure these elements were in place from the beginning. Today, church planters around the world know that when these elements are in place a church will be “on mission” with God and will be fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. And a church that is busy being born cannot help but reproduce and bring new life.

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 4. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: A Church Planting Movement Takes Shape

*"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." Acts 6:6-10*

**Read Acts 15:36 – 18:22 (Paul's Second Missionary Journey). Note the following people specifically mentioned in these chapters. Briefly describe each one and what were their contributions to the church planting movement of Acts?**

**Paul:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Barnabas:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark." Acts 12:25*

*"In the vast plain to the north I have sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been" – Robert Moffat*

**Mark:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Silas:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Timothy:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Lydia:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Jason:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Dionysius:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Damaris:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Aquila:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

"No reason is given why John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. Some suggestions are: (1) He was homesick; (2) he resented the change in leadership from Barnabas (his cousin) to Paul; (3) he became ill... (4) he was unable to withstand the rigors and dangers of the missionary journey; (5) he may have planned to go only that far but had not communicated this to Paul and Barnabas. Paul implicitly accused John Mark of lacking courage and commitment, refusing to take him along on another journey (see 15:37, 38). It is clear from Paul's later letters, however, that he grew to respect Mark (Col. 4:10) and that he needed Mark in his work (2 Tim. 4:11)."

Life Application  
Study Bible.

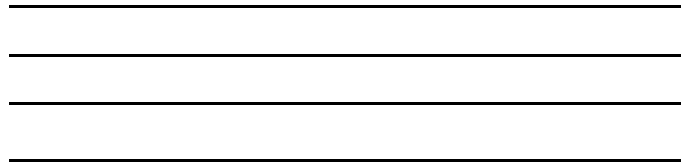
**Priscilla:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Apollos:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To be successful a church planting movement must involve more than just a few people. Luke mentions just a few of the people involved in the growing effort to win the lost. There were some other unnamed individuals (like the Philippian jailer) who played key roles in this emerging movement as well proving that God was wanting to invite Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor to join the increasing band of followers of Jesus Christ (disciples). Paul and the other missionaries had fought hard to keep the Gospel open and available to all (Acts 15:1-29). It was clear from the results of the Jerusalem Counsel the Holy Spirit intended for the Gospel of salvation to be preached and given to whosoever would believe. This Second Missionary Journey was intended to build upon the First, but the Holy Spirit was about to show Paul and the others that He wanted them to keep moving forward and plant churches in new regions to reach the unreached.

**Read Acts 16:6-10. The event described here is known as the “Macedonian Call.” What was it and why was it significant?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Acts 16:6-10



Paul and Silas began their second mission with the idea of going back over the territory covered on their first mission (15:36). However, it soon became apparent that the Holy Spirit had other plans for them and their mission changed when they reached Troas. It was at Troas that the most significant event of Paul's Second Missionary Journey happened. Known as his "Macedonian Call", Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man pleading with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (16:9). This passage demonstrates how the Holy Spirit was directing His missionaries to leave Asia Minor and take the Gospel to the Gentiles in Macedonia (modern day Greece).

There are two things anyone can do that will quickly stop a Church Planting Movement in its tracks: the first is to not keep moving forward and opening up new territories. It is always tempting to want to personally take care of and nurture every church that is planted, but the local leadership must be trusted to continue the work the church planter started. The second thing that will quickly kill a CPM is not listen to the Holy Spirit when He calls. Too often missionaries get caught up in their own agendas or create a "comfort zone" around them that they do not want to have disturbed. However, the Holy Spirit all too often calls us out of that comfort zone to minister to people in places that are strange and unfamiliar to us.

*"To know the will of  
God, we need an open  
Bible and an open map."*

*— William Carey*

"When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'"

Acts 18:5-6

Paul and his fellow missionaries Silas, Timothy, and Luke are now driven forward by the vision calling them to preach the Gospel to the Greeks. They quickly advance from Philippi to Thessalonica, Berea, and on to Athens – the very epicenter of the Hellenistic world. In Athens, Paul preaches the Gospel to the elite Greek scholars at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34). It is a tough mission field among the Greeks, but still the Gospel is advancing and the seeds are being sown for future missions.

**Read Acts 18:5-7. What is significant about these verses?**

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Another very significant event from Paul's Second Missionary Journey happened after he left Athens and while he was staying in Corinth. It is at this point in time that Paul shifts the focus of his work from "the Jew first" and goes directly to the Gentiles, bypassing the Jews.

**Read Romans 11:13; Galatians 1:15-16; Ephesians 3:1-2, 8-9; 1 Timothy 2:7; and 2 Timothy 1:10-11. Whose idea was it for Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_**

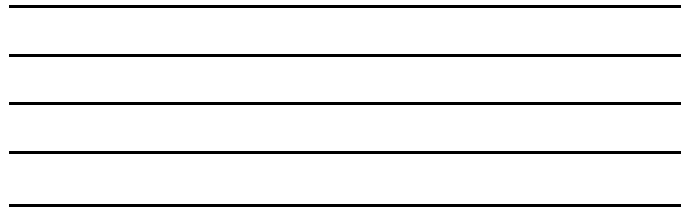
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**How did Paul's decision to go directly to the Gentiles fit into the overall plan of God to reach the nations?**

"Where *is* the wise?  
Where *is* the scribe?  
Where *is* the disputer  
of this age? Has not  
God made foolish the  
wisdom of this world?  
For since, in the  
wisdom of God, the  
world through wisdom  
did not know God, it  
pleased God through  
the foolishness of the  
message preached to  
save those who  
believe." 1 Cor. 1:20-  
21

*"He is no fool who gives  
up what he cannot keep  
to gain that which he  
cannot lose" – Jim  
Elliot, missionary  
martyr*



Wherever Paul preached the Gospel on his journeys, handfuls of Gentiles believed and received the Gospel. These became the firstfruits of God in the very heart of the Hellenistic World and produced the church planting movements that would eventually overtake the entire Roman Empire. So Paul's second missionary journey securely planted the Gospel amongst the Gentiles, and continued the trend away from Jerusalem as the center for Christianity.

#### A CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT TAKES SHAPE

David Garrison, like other experienced church planters around the world has identified Key Factors that all Church Planting Movements seem to share. Those same elements appear in Acts and are taking shape during Paul's second missionary journey. When Paul reached Thessalonica he found a synagogue of the Jews; he entered it on the Sabbath as was his strategy in every city he visited. Paul often used Sabbath days to reason from the Scriptures with his Jewish brethren and Thessalonica was no exception. As he explained and proved "*This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ*" some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul (and Silas), "*as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women*" (Acts 17:1-4). We know from Paul's two letters to this church that this group was

"For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."  
1 Cor. 1:22-25

quickly mentored Paul and Silas and formed the core group of future leaders in and around Thessalonica.

Reports from contemporary CPMs may well have been written from the verses describing Paul's fruitful second missionary journey where immediate incorporation into the body of Christ and rapid discipling of new believers were key elements in the initiation and speedy rise of the early church among the Gentiles. Paul and the other church planting missionaries of Acts were implementing the components of the Holy Spirit's church planting strategy. These essential components are found in CPMs today. They are described in different ways in different CPMs around the world, but in Garrison's book they were described by Chinese missionaries by the acronym, POUCH. In both Acts and in the modern context, the five characteristics of POUCH contribute to the swift reproducibility of churches in a manner that does not require them to rely upon the ongoing support of the church planting missionary.

P= *Participative Bible Study & Worship Groups*

**Read Acts 17:11-12; 18:7 & 13; and 1 Cor. 15:3-4. How did Paul's ministry fit this characteristic? \_\_\_\_\_**

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O= *Obedience To God's Word As Sole Measure Of Individual's Or Church's Success*

*"Going to church doesn't make you a christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger." — Keith Green*

POUCH

P= Participative

O= Obedience

U= Unpaid/bi-

vocational

church leaders

C= Cell churches

H= Home or

storefront

churches

**Read Acts 17:13; 18:11; 19:18-20; and 1 Thess. 3:13. How did Paul's ministry fit this characteristic? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*U= Unpaid/Bi-Vocational Church Leaders*

**Read Acts 16:14-15; 18:2-3; 1 Thess. 2:9; and 2 Thess. 3:8. How did Paul's ministry fit this characteristic? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*C= Cell Churches*

**Read Acts 15:41; 16:5; 18:22; Rom. 16:4; 2 Thess. 1:4. How did Paul's ministry fit this characteristic? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*H= Home or Storefront Churches*

**Read Acts 18:7-8; 19:9; Rom. 16:5; and Phm. 1:2. How did Paul's ministry fit this characteristic? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Acts 18:7 "And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue."

"Practicing Matt. 10:11, Paul looked for a respected man who would open his home to seekers. Can we see a little smile on Paul's face because his new house-church is being planted right next door to the synagogue? To have a gathering-place within walking distance is an excellent principle." Greg Livingstone

Throughout Paul's second missionary journey we see the Holy Spirit orchestrating the events and bringing key people across Paul's path who will not only respond to the preaching of the Gospel, but will become partners, co-laborers, and disciples with Paul. A Church Planting Movement is clearly taking shape as Paul first visits and encourages those churches that were the result of his first mission to West Asia. But we see that the Holy Spirit will not allow Paul to rest and build a reputation as the pastor and shepherd of these churches. Instead, Paul entrusts the leadership of these churches to local leaders and moves on and opens new territory among the unreached as the Holy Spirit led.

The key characteristics of Paul's second missionary journey have guided – with or without their conscious understanding – every successful church planter since then. To be successful, a Church Planting Movement must experience rapid, exponential growth. And to do that it must make *disciples*. Disciples are those who are:

- fully *participative in bible study and worship groups*
- completely *obedient to God's Word* in word and deed and use God's Word *as the sole measure of an individual's or church's success*
- led by *unpaid/bi-vocational church leaders* who are not dependent upon outsiders to provide a salary for them
- willing and able to lead independent *Cell Churches* free of denominational agendas or programs
- happy to meet in *home or storefront churches* and not tied down to buying land and raising lots of money to build church buildings

"So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:5

*"It is possible for the most obscure person in a church, with a heart right toward God, to exercise as much power for the evangelization of the world, as it is for those who stand in the most prominent positions." – John R. Mott*

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 5. PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY

#### JOURNEY:

#### A Church Planting Movement Is Established

**Read Acts 18:23 – 21:16 (Paul's Third Missionary Journey).**

As Paul and the other missionaries crossed cultural and linguistic barriers, they saw the need to immediately mobilize the new believers to be their co-laborers wherever they found them. These new disciples were the key to the rapid spread of the gospel, and for planting new churches. Although he was often asked to stay with the churches he planted (18:20), Paul was obedient to his calling and did not try to interfere with the day-to-day operations of those churches. Here Paul was demonstrating an important method that all successful church planters should follow: *Model, Assist, Watch, & Leave* (MAWL). Paul understood that the ultimate goal of planting churches is to create independent, self-sustaining, and self-replicating churches for the purpose of rapid, exponential growth of the kingdom of God. As long as Paul remained the leadership of the church would not grow and plant churches on their own because they would always be looking towards him and not to the Holy Spirit.

**18:23** marks the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey, which lasted from A.D. 53 to 57. After reporting all that took place on his second mission to his home church in

*"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God" – William Carey*

*"Only when the missionary has actually stepped away from the work is the cycle of MAWL completed. Only then is a passionate renewal of indigenous church planting assured." David Garrison, Church Planting Movements*

Antioch Paul headed toward Ephesus (the ultimate destination for this mission), but along the way he revisited the churches in Galatia and Phrygia to encourage them and strengthen them spiritually.

**Read Acts 18:24-28. Does the Scripture tell us when, where, or how Apollos became a believer or how he came to be on a missionary journey to Asia Minor? \_\_\_\_\_**

**How do Apollos' mission and his encounter with Aquila and Priscilla demonstrate a thriving CPM? \_\_\_\_\_**

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A good example of the value of MAWL process from Acts is when Paul was just beginning his Third Missionary Journey. Before Paul reached Ephesus, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria in North Africa, arrived in Ephesus on his own missionary journey. (Note that nothing is recorded about when, where, or how Apollos became a believer, or the circumstances of how he came to be on a missionary journey to Asia Minor.) There he encounters Priscilla and Aquila, the husband and wife leadership team discipled by Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and left there to continue the work with the local churches. Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and "explained to him the way of God more accurately." And when he was ready, the believers in Ephesus

"After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." Acts 18:23

The heart of this trip was a lengthy stay (two to three years) in Ephesus. Before returning to Jerusalem, he also visited believers in Macedonia and Greece.

Life Application Study Bible.

“encouraged him and wrote to the disciples” where he where he was going, and asked them to welcome him (Acts 18:23-28).

In the modern context, reports from CPMs in places like China, India, Africa, and the Middle East are all similar to what Luke recorded in Acts 18. Cross cultural missionaries are often aware of the enormous cultural and linguistic barriers that separate them from the unreached people groups they are trying to reach. The successful church planting missionary will usually begin by mobilizing Christian co-laborers from across that region and then partner these indigenous church planters with small teams of local believers.

Without Paul being directly involved, Priscilla and Aquila disciplined Apollos who had already become a disciple and church planting missionary from a church planted by a movement in North Africa. The church in Ephesus, without having to ask Paul, sent Apollos on his way with letters of introduction to the region of Achaia. Because Paul left the care of the churches he planted in the hands of local leadership, new churches were being planted throughout the region, and the gospel was firmly taking root everywhere the gospel was received on his first two missionary journeys. By the time Paul arrived in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, churches representing thousands of new believers were being planted in different regions by indigenous workers – most of whom Paul did not have any direct involvement in discipling or sending. The modern day church planting missionary will succeed in reaching the people groups they

*“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”*  
Ephesians 3:7-9  
NIV

are trying to reach by doing the same thing. They must immediately instill in their initial disciples a vision for reaching their entire region with the gospel. They must share with their indigenous workers the need for others to be saved, and encourage them to join the Great Commission, while assuring them that the Lord had equipped them with all they will need to reach their entire region with the gospel without outside help.

**Read Acts 19:1-7; 19:11-20; and 20:6-12. How important are the gifts of the Holy Spirit to establish a CPM?**

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**What role does the Holy Spirit play in establishing Paul's church planting movement on his third missionary journey?** \_\_\_\_\_

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“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10:19

*“I know many scoff at this, but that is why they remain powerless in their Christianity. The Holy Spirit was telling me, reassuring me, that Jesus had given power to me to triumph over darkness... The Lord was energizing me with holy boldness for this encounter. I was becoming keenly aware that I had been given... legal authority to act in Jesus' name!” Don Dickerman*

There are several important points to be drawn out of these verses concerning the Holy Spirit's activity during Paul's visit to Ephesus. In verses 1-7 Paul comes upon some believers who had never heard of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John's baptism – the baptism for forgiveness of sins – they knew and obeyed, but the baptism of Jesus, they did not know (Matthew 3:11). We do not know who led these men to believe and receive a part of the gospel, but whoever it was evidently did not know or understand Holy Spirit baptism because these men had not heard of it. Paul, recognizing that the power of the Holy Spirit is essential for all those who wanted to follow Jesus Christ, baptized them in the name of Jesus. Immediately upon receiving baptism in the name of Jesus they also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by their speaking with other tongues and prophesying.

In 19:11-20 we see some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested in Paul: extraordinary healings and exorcisms. Luke describes the disastrous result of some Jewish exorcists who attempted to mimic the Holy Spirit by casting out demons on their own power. The story of what happened to those men spread quickly throughout all of Ephesus. An intense fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly esteemed. The conviction of the Holy Spirit came upon many of the believers who had been practicing black magic. They confessed their deeds and brought their incantation books and charms worth thousands of dollars and burned them in public. All of this indicates how deeply the whole area was stirred by God's message delivered with Holy Spirit power by Paul and the other missionaries.

*"Did you receive the Holy Spirit? How many millions of nominal, powerless, ugly Christians discredit the Gospel to Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists because they know nothing of the cleansing, empowering dynamic of the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' who transforms people by true regeneration?" Greg Livingstone*

One final miracle is mentioned on this journey. After Paul leaves Ephesus and is on the way back to Jerusalem, he stops at Troas. Paul's visit there was going to be brief and so he wanted to make the most of every minute. It is hard for American Christians to imagine this scene: an upstairs room packed with people sitting on the floor, standing in every corner, and leaning against the windows of a dimly lit room – all listening intently to the man of God as he teaches them deep into the night. But for the modern-day missionary in many places in the world where the Gospel has never been preached, or where little or no intensive teaching of the Word from qualified preachers has taken place, this is a much more common occurrence.

Suddenly, the tranquility of the whole scene is disrupted as one tired young man who had fallen asleep sitting in a window falls to the ground and dies. If the Holy Spirit in Paul had not acted and raised young Eutychus to back to life, the meeting would have been remembered only for having been the death of a youth who came to listen to the man of God talk about Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life. Apart from the Holy Spirit, all that could have been done is cancel the rest of the meeting and for Paul to have been quietly escorted out of Troas. But instead, the Holy Spirit presented Paul with an unforgettable “teaching moment”! No doubt Paul had told them about Jesus healing the masses; about Jesus rising from the tomb; about Jesus promising the Holy Spirit and the power and authority given to all who believed and received Him as Lord and Christ. Suddenly, all of what Paul was teaching was put to the test. Was all that

“You need to model dialogue/teaching/mentoring/discussion for the elders you are training, lest they simply become ‘speakers’ barely relating to what’s going on in people’s minds and hearts.”  
Greg Livingstone

*Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... It's not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world. Radical obedience to Christ risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And he is more than enough for us.” — David Platt, Radical*

Paul was teaching just words or was their power and truth behind them? Go back to the first few verses of Acts 19 and the absolute importance of the present reality of the Holy Spirit in the life of every disciple becomes crystal-clear.

Above all, for any church planting movement to be successful it must be a move of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end. The Holy Spirit must prepare the way for the disciple/missionary even before they arrive on the scene. The Holy Spirit must bring conviction, and work in the consciences of those who are hungry and thirsty for the truth. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,”* Jesus said in the Beatitudes, *“for theirs is the kingdom of God.”* Of equal importance, to be successful, a church planting movement must be led by men and women of God whose hearts, minds, and souls are totally immersed in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. We must do more than teach and preach *about* Jesus as the way, truth and life; we must demonstrate by our own lives and actions that Jesus Christ truly *is* all we say He is.

Therefore, we must remember that the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 must also include what Jesus told His disciples in Mark: *“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”*  
Mark 16:17-18

**Read Acts 19:8-10; 19:23-41; Acts 8:1; 13:50; 14:22; Jn. 16:33; 1 Thess. 3:4; and 2 Tim. 3:10-11. What can**

*“The important thing is that we accept God’s truth and act on it. Paul did not spend his time speculating about divine sovereignty and human responsibility, the way some ivory-tower Christians do today. He got busy and tried to win souls to Christ! You and I do not know who God’s elect are, so we take the gospel to every creature and let God do the rest.”*  
Warren Wiersbe

**Christians expect when they move forward and boldly proclaim the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_**

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It is a difficult fact to face, but the truth is no great move of God will come apart from Christians suffering. Jesus warned us it would be so: *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also...”* (John 15:18-20).

It takes the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to stand in the face of persecution and not waver. It is only human nature to want to avoid pain and suffering. But it is a false doctrine that teaches Christians that they were saved so they can enjoy the best this world has to offer and never have to experience any cost for following Jesus as their Lord and Savior. On the other hand, we are not called to be senseless martyrs either. To deliberately throw ourselves into the fire or to throw ourselves from the pinnacle of some temple is putting God to the test (Matt. 4:5-7). The task of the church planting missionary is to keep their eyes fixed upon Jesus and follow the Holy Spirit wherever He leads – even if that means to prison or to death (Note Acts 21:1-16).

*“Nothing so clears the vision and lifts up the life, as a decision to move forward in what you know to be entirely the will of the Lord.” – John Paton*

*“You can help others in proportion to what you yourself have suffered. The greater the price, the more you can help others ... As you go through the fiery trials, the testing, the affliction, the persecution, the conflict ... life will flow out to others, even the life of Christ.” Watchman Nee*

As Paul prepared to depart Antioch, he sent Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia ahead of him (Acts 19:22). And when he finished his mission there he sent others on ahead of him to meet him in Troas (Acts 20:4-6). Here we see the mindset of the church planting missionary: Paul trains and sends others ahead of him to prepare the ground for him while he remains behind and completes his training of the leadership where he is staying. When Paul arrived back in Macedonia to visit the churches he planted on a previous mission to that area his disciples had already assessed the situation there. Before Paul leaves Macedonia the leadership is in place there and healthy churches are growing, making disciples, and planting new churches on their own.

It is during this third missionary journey that we see the seeds that were sown on Paul's first and second journey maturing and being established as a fully formed church planting movement. The strategy Paul developed on his missions represents the threefold ministry that all successful church planting missionaries incorporate to this day:

1. Making disciples
2. From these disciples appointing leadership to the newly-planted churches
3. Moving on to places where disciples have not yet been made

**Read Acts 20:13-37. This is Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders. Note the threefold ministry Paul is passing on to those leaders.** \_\_\_\_\_  
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*"Jesus will judge us not only for what we did, but also for what we could have done and didn't." — George Otis*

*"New believers were immediately baptized and taught that it was normal for them to win others to Christ and lead them to form new churches. This 'high demand/high risk' reliance on new converts as evangelists and church planters contributed greatly to the rapid expansion of the movement." David Garrison*

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*"Don't bother to give  
God instructions, just  
report for duty." –  
Corrie Ten Boom*

Paul had gathered his leaders together because he knew that his work in Asia and Greece was complete. He had made disciples, planted churches, trained disciples to lead those churches, and now disciples were making disciples and churches were planting churches all over those regions and beyond. The church planting movement was moving full speed ahead with the Holy Spirit in the lead. Now it was time for Paul to move on to new places where church planting movements needed to be started.

In verses 18-23 of chapter 20, Paul reminds the Ephesian elders how he was discipled by modeling and mentoring them while teaching them all he could about the gospel. He urges them not to feel sorrow for him for he is going on "to finish my race with joy..." and complete the ministry which he had received from the Holy Spirit. Paul was leaving them with a clear conscience because he said, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." In verses 28-38 Paul then turns his attention to give them final instructions on how to lead the flocks the Holy Spirit had given to them:

"And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship."

Acts 20:36-38

- He warns them to guard the flock against false teachers from without and within the church
- Paul entrusts them to God and His care. (Remember they belong to God and not to Paul.)
- Paul set an example for them with regard to money and how he refused to live off of others. And in fact they should support the weak.

#### TRIP TO ROME

##### **Read Acts 21:17 – 28:31**

After his important stop to encourage the Ephesian Elders and bid them farewell, Paul set his face towards Jerusalem. Both believing and non-believing Jews dominated the religious life in Jerusalem and the rumors that Paul was turning both Jews and Greeks against the Law had them fuming with anger and just hoping to get their hands on the one they believed to be a seditious blasphemer against Moses. His trip to Jerusalem turned out just as was prophesied (Acts 21:11-14); as soon as they saw Paul at the Temple, the Jews attacked him and the Roman authorities arrested him for causing a riot. The drama of Paul's arrest, trials, and shipwreck on the way to Rome close the book. Acts ends with Paul in the heart of Rome, a witness for the Gospel in chains and awaiting trial before Caesar's court.

#### LEARNING POINTS FOR CPMs FROM PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

There are a number of key points to be learned from Paul's successful church planting movements started on his

"Here is the quintessence of a great visionary mission leader. He is always looking to the 'regions beyond' (2 Cor. 10:16) where the church must yet start holding out 'the word of Life'." Greg Livingstone

*Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... It's not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world. Radical obedience to Christ risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And he is more than enough for us." — David Platt, Radical*

first missionary journey, continued in his second, and firmly established in his third. The most successful Church Planting Movements today are those that follow the prototype for all CPMs described in the Book of Acts. It can be argued that the Apostle Paul was the one of the most successful missionaries who ever lived. Therefore it only makes sense that our modern Church Planters should look to him to be their supreme role model.

1. Paul's shift away from institutionalized religion that depended upon the Synagogue to house churches run by appointed leaders coincided with an enormous increase in church growth. Freeing the modern Church Planting Movements from the physical limitations of establishing formal churches tied to institutional restraints will allow the enterprising evangelist/church planter to take the gospel witness and go directly to the community. Of course the ideal situation is for the local established Church to be a church planting church. When the established church is fully on board with a church planting movement they will train their members to be church planters (not church attendees) and will send them out (not dedicate their resources to find ways to bring them in and keep them in). However, Paul was able to plant churches everywhere he went without depending upon the resources of his home church in Antioch to support those churches. And if done right, the modern church planter should be able to do the same.

2. After he left the Synagogue and decided to take the Gospel directly to the Gentiles, Paul's leadership helped

*"CPMs are much messier than neat, orderly organizational charts, and much more exciting! Launch and repeat!" Steve Smith, T4T*

*"No one has the right to hear the gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once." — Oswald J. Smith*

to set a new direction and encouraged the house-church movement he started. In the modern context, even though it means a diminished measure of control for the foreign leadership, the indigenous workers who are best able to communicate and spread the Gospel witness in their communities should be the ones who take the lead while the foreign missionary should expect to take no more than a support role.

The support role of a foreign missionary should not be undervalued. Following Paul's example in Acts, the modern day missionary can begin a church planting movement by developing mentoring/discipling relationships with believers. As this small group of disciples starts to develop, it will form the nucleus around which the missionary can:

- Develop a church planting vision and training materials in the mother tongue of the unreached people group. Note that Paul's letters to particular churches instructing them on a variety of issues were quickly circulated among all the churches. His "Pastoral Epistles" (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) are particularly helpful for selecting and appointing new leadership in the churches.
- Teach the indigenous church planters sound doctrine, evangelism, and church planting skills. Acts 19:1-10 describes Paul's efforts to teach a core group of believers in Ephesus. He spent more than two years in Ephesus teaching and training them in doctrine, evangelism, and church planting skills before moving

"And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Acts 19:8-10

on to Macedonia and Achaia with the intention of going on to Jerusalem.

- Paul's Epistles were filled with inspiring words intended to instill in disciples a vision and passion for reaching those around them who had not yet believed the gospel. Ephesians is an excellent example of how Paul used his letters to inspire believers. In 3:7-11 Paul expressed how God had given him the great privilege of telling everyone about God's plan of salvation – a mysterious plan hidden through the ages, but now revealed to the church. Paul told how he was given power and a supernatural ability to accomplish his mission. Though Paul said he did nothing to deserve it – and was in fact the “least of all the saints” – still God chose him for the privilege and joy of telling the Gentile nations the good news of the kingdom. In Romans chapter 10 we find another fine example of Paul's inspiration of other disciples to preach the gospel to those who have yet to hear it. This passage is Paul's passionate appeal for the church to reach out to both Jew and Gentile with the good news; the words of that appeal have inspired many to carry forward Paul's work of planting churches among the unreached.
- Paul saw not only the necessity but also the Holy Spirit's wisdom of unity among believers and formed an association of like-minded churches for mutual support and encouragement. Paul's ability to form associations and cooperation between the churches he

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’” Romans 10:14-15

planted along his way was useful in keeping the work going while he was away. We see a very clear example of that when Paul was away from Ephesus and Apollos, a missionary from Alexandria came to Ephesus. Once he was ready to continue on his way, Paul's representatives in Ephesus encouraged him, and wrote letters urging the churches where he was going to welcome him (Acts 18:27).

3. Paul said it plainly in 2 Timothy 3:12 "*...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*" Persecution will always weed out those who are not serious followers of Christ. Paul suffered greatly for his part in spreading the Gospel, and every missionary will to some degree have to share in the same sufferings of Paul – and ultimately of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is important that from the beginning, *all* Christians are taught that there is a cost to following Jesus and if the Gospel is to reach the nations, Christians will have to give sacrificially of their time, treasures, and talents; they cannot count on others to bear the cost for them.
4. The Apostle Paul played a key role in advancing the kingdom by training others to introduce the Gospel to those who had not heard it. (Paul never felt that he had to do it all by himself). From the new disciples he was making, he quickly mobilized and trained lay leaders and placed them over the churches that were started – others he sent out as missionaries and then moved on. Paul did all of this without relying upon outside funding to maintain the churches or support the pastors. The

“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” Luke 14:27-30

churches Paul planted were self-sufficient and in some cases contributed to the welfare of Christians in other places (2 Cor. 9:1-5). Missionaries today can play a similar role by introducing the gospel; encouraging a CPM vision; introducing home or cell-church methodologies, and moving on. In the same way as Paul, they must immediately prevent the indigenous CPM from becoming dependent upon outside funds to survive and grow.

5. Paul did not remain inside the church in Antioch praying and waiting for the lost to come to him. At great risk to themselves (2 Cor. 11:22-33), Paul and his companions went out and evangelized where the lost were. Church leadership everywhere needs to encourage the same attitude among its members, and start sending them out from the church buildings to where the lost are. The church was never intended to be a sheep pen to house the sheep to be sheared, but was intended to be a training ground for disciples to *go* and make more disciples from every nation.
6. Paul did not receive pay for his work, and he never expected to be paid a salary from anyone. He graciously and joyfully with thanksgiving received whatever was given to help him along his way, but he lived as he began his ministry: trusting fully upon God's provision; never wanting to be a financial burden to anyone; and fully prepared to work with his own hands when necessary to make ends meet. Paul's ministry depended upon multiple, unpaid church leaders who accompanied him on the way

“Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.”

3 John 1:5-8

or were chosen and anointed by Paul to lead one of the churches he planted on his missionary journeys. The modern CPM in India can ensure the availability of the growing number of leaders needed to continually begin new works in unreached villages, by placing less emphasis on using “professional” pastors, evangelists, and ministry leaders and instead identify, encourage, and equip bi-vocational laymen and women who have a true missionary zeal and passion for the harvest. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders, “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:33-35

7. Paul often became the focal point of opposition to the Gospel. On a number of occasions, the persecution of Christians in a particular place started because of Paul’s presence. Today foreign missionaries in many countries should be sensitive to the local conditions where they travel. Short-term missionaries in particular should not allow their zeal to have an immediate, dramatic effect and then return home with exciting stories to tell, to mean leaving the local church having to deal with deeper hostility and increased scrutiny of their non-Christian neighbors who resented an invasion of foreigners upsetting the delicate balance of village life. Foreign missionaries in closed or semi-closed nations need to be

*When James Calvert went out as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, the ship captain tried to turn him back, saying, "You will lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages." To that, Calvert replied, "We died before we came here."*

“But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea...” Acts 17:13-14a

submitted to the local leadership and follow their instructions carefully. The local person understands the dynamics and complexities of their culture; they know the intimate details of what is going on in the area the missionary is visiting and therefore can avoid any danger for the missionary. Long or short-term, the missionary should be willing to leave the CPM they started in local hands before it grows large enough to attract the scrutiny of too many government and religious leaders. By maintaining a low profile, foreign missionaries can help a CPM avoid the appearance of foreignness in a post-colonial world where many countries are known for their nationalism and xenophobia.

8. Paul's missionary journeys could have been subtitled by David Garrison's words, "Failure can be a prelude to success, if we are willing to learn from it and not give up." The story of Paul's missionary journeys in the Book of Acts is not a story of one great success after another, but is the story of a man who endured great hardships for the sake of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:22-33). Ever since the first century A.D., efforts of evangelism and church planting among the unreached peoples of the world have often resulted in persecutions and martyrdoms; and it continues to this day. Disciples will never be able to have successful Church Planting Movements sweeping across their nation without those who are willing to pay the price and sacrifice their lives and fortunes for the sake of the Gospel. This is in part why the demands of being a true disciple of Jesus Christ are so high; one should seriously consider the words of Jesus in Luke 14:26-33 before committing themselves to be a follower of Jesus.

"Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'" Acts 14:19-22

9. Jesus commanded His disciples *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”* Notice Jesus said “disciples” and not “converts” because only disciples can go out and make disciples (Luke 6:40).

Before the end of his Second Missionary Journey Paul was spending a significant amount of his time teaching and making disciples (note his more than two years in Ephesus). In the end, a disciple will share the Vision of the Kingdom and the Mission to go and seek and save the lost, make disciples, and glorify God in all that he or she does. Too many of those who are filling comfortable, safe, churches on Sunday mornings are unwilling to take the risk and step out in faith. They want to remain in their safe and secure environment on Sundays and be filled with uplifting messages, and entertained with the best worship. For the converts, it is “all about me” and nothing about true sacrifice and obedience to the Lord’s commands to get up and “go” to the unsafe and uncomfortable places where the lost and hurting are. Paul understood this and heard his Master’s call. At the same time, Paul boldly set himself apart

10. By the time Paul left the mission fields he worked on his first three missionary journeys, he was able to go on to his next mission field to Rome (and beyond) in peace knowing that everywhere he had gone, he had left behind workers who were capable of carrying on the mission of

“Pray for what you need and take a risk.” - Ying Kai, T4T.

“The Holy Spirit has all the gifts and He can give you what you need. For instance, if you feel that you cannot speak very well, the Holy Spirit can help you. If you feel that you are very weak in faith, the Holy Spirit can give you faith.”  
Ying Kai, T4T

making disciples and planting new churches. Today's missionary should follow the example of Paul and bypass the step of 'passing the torch' to the local believers when he or she is ready to retire from the mission field. Instead they should initiate their mission with the intentional church-planting strategy of starting with the torch firmly in the hands of local disciples from the beginning and insist that every church planted be planted by indigenous church planters.

When the Paul finally completed his he had left behind a small team of missionaries with a network of healthy church planting churches scattered across much of West Asia and Greece. The work continued to grow and strengthen without him because of Paul's selfless devotion to those churches to fill them with mature disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit and able to stand on their own.

Paul was able to declare that he was "innocent of the blood of all" for he never failed to declare the whole gospel. Still Paul was deeply concerned and worried for the church because he knew that there were those lurking in the shadows that would twist the gospel for their own gain and strip them of their inheritance in the kingdom by preaching a false gospel to them – a gospel that would appeal to the flesh and deny the Spirit... but Paul said, *"...even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed... For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ"* (Galatians 1:8, 10).

*"Tell the students to give up their small ambitions and come eastward to preach the gospel of Christ." – Francis Xavier, missionary to India, the Philippines, and Japan*

The greatest legacy any missionary can leave behind is a growing network of vital indigenous churches that are preaching the Gospel without compromise, making disciples, and planting churches without being dependent upon outside help.

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 6. DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES

#### A Church Planting Movement Is Extended

**Read Acts 9:38; 19:19; 11:26; 16:1; and 18:24-25. Were the church planting movements started by Paul the only ones being started at this time? \_\_\_\_\_**

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The book of acts is by no means a comprehensive description of every church planting movement that was taking place at that time. Thousands were saved on the day of Pentecost and when they returned home they spread the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus with them. So while Luke was traveling with Paul and writing his personal account of what was happening around him, hundreds of other Church Planting Movements were springing up in places near and far. We have evidence of that fact in Paul's and the other Apostles' encounters with believers that already existed before he came to them. There is also the arrival of Apollos in Ephesus from Alexandria in North Africa to add to the evidence that church planting movements were spreading in other areas beyond those described in Acts.

David Garrison identified and listed Ten Common Factors found in CPMs around the world today. Each of these

“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’” Acts 2:9-12

factors can be traced back to Acts – where the prototypes for all CPMs can be discovered.

**1. Worship in the Heart Language:**

**Read Acts 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 14:9-11, 21; and Rev. 7:9-10.**

**Which language is the one God uses to communicate His gospel to the people? \_\_\_\_\_**

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There are a number of obstacles missionaries must overcome in order to reach unreached people groups: geography, culture, language, religion, tradition, caste, and class are the major ones. But of all the obstacles missionaries face, language is often the greatest. One reason why the gospel spread so quickly throughout the Roman Empire is that the missionaries were able to use Greek and/or Latin as bridge languages to communicate with people who spoke a different mother tongue.

In regions where literacy rates are low (often in the more remote villages and tribal areas) church planters have learned from experience that being able to explain and communicate the Gospel through songs, stories, worship and prayers in the mother tongue of the people involved is essential. Worship in the common heart language of the people makes it accessible and relevant to all members of the community. Worship is the foundational tool that allows everyone to participate in a new church's formation. So overcoming the language barrier makes it imperative that indigenous lay leaders that are intimate with the language and

There are approximately 6,000 languages and approximately 39,000 dialects in the world today.

“Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.” John 19:19-20

dialect of the natives be quickly trained as disciples who can quickly and effectively reach the village areas.

## 2. Evangelism Has Familial Implications

**Read Acts 2:46; 10:24, 44-45; 16:15, 32-34; Rom. 8:15; 16:15; 1 Cor. 16:19; Eph. 1:5; 3:14-15., 23; Gal. 4:4-7.**

**What was the role of the family in the CPMs described in Acts?** \_\_\_\_\_

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In the beginning, Paul and the other missionaries recognized the strong and cultural and social connections that bound families together. Both Jewish and Gentile families were tightly wrapped around solid parental leadership. Acts often describes how churches met in the homes of believers – especially when the head of that household was the first in the family to be saved.

Centuries after Acts was written, the methodology of missionaries changed and instead of going out and meeting in homes they often stayed within their compounds. The emphasis of their work was to bring nonbelievers from the surrounding homes into their churches to hear the gospel and hopefully believe, become baptized, and join the church “family”. When that happens, the institution of the church is attempting to take over as the center of family life, and that makes it impossible to initiate a church planting movement. Just like the book of Acts describes, modern Church Planting

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”  
Romans 8:14-17

Movements depend upon the natural structures of family relationships within the culture to draw new believers into a community of faith. In many cases these churches come to consist of family units that are led by the family's head.

### **3. Rapid Incorporation of New Christians Into The Life and Ministry of the Church**

**Read Acts 2:37-42; 8:35-38; 9:17-22; 10:44-48; 14:23; 16:14-15, 30-34; Eph. 4:11-16; and Titus 1:5. How long did the Apostles make believers wait until they were baptized? \_\_\_\_\_**

**How long did Paul wait until he began appointing elders and other leaders in the churches he planted? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Who is the one that calls and qualifies believers for ministry in the church? \_\_\_\_\_**

Beginning at Pentecost and carrying on through the Book of Acts, the rite of baptism was never delayed by lengthy discipleship requirements; once a person believed, they were almost always baptized at the same time. In some places in the world today, baptism is a much more complicated issue due to societal restraints, government interference, and religious intolerance that punishes Christians. In those places the decision to be baptized is not something that is taken lightly. Pastors, priests, and ordained ministers will take time with the new believers to make sure they fully understand their faith before agreeing to baptize.

*"The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner."  
— William Cameron Townsend*

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

Because of the rapid growth of Church Planting Movements, Bible teaching often precedes full conversion, but once a person is ready to be baptized and commit themselves to Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior nothing should prevent them from being fully incorporated into the life of the church.

God has given his church the enormous responsibility to carry on His vision and mission to make disciples of every nation. This must involve every member of the church if it is to be fulfilled. Paul and the other early missionaries were not hesitant to appoint leaders in the churches they planted. As the Holy Spirit directed them, they appointed preachers, teachers, administrators, and those with various spiritual gifts to help with the task of training those who could help build the momentum of the church. "... If we had to fulfill this command as individuals, we might as well give up without trying—it would be impossible. But God calls us as members of his body. Some of us can do one task; some can do another. Together we can obey God more fully than any of us could alone. It is a human tendency to overestimate what we can do by ourselves and to underestimate what we can do as a group. But as the body of Christ, we can accomplish more together than we would dream possible working by ourselves. Working together, the church can express the fullness of Christ." (Life Application Study Bible Note for Eph. 4:12-13).

In a CPM, discipling of new believers begins immediately upon baptism. New believers are the fruit of a Church Planting Movement and are expected to become

"Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." Acts 18:24-26

witnesses from the beginning. These new disciples immediately disciple others and are encouraged to join in planting other churches. In order to keep the Church Planting Movement focused on growing outward, CPM-oriented missionaries typically encourage new believers to help start new churches, instead of simply adding more numbers to existing congregations.

#### 4. Passion and fearlessness

**Read Acts 4:13-14, 29-31; 9:27-31; 14:1-3; 19:8; and Eph. 6:10, 18-20. What are the qualities required for the Lord's disciples that they might fulfill the commission given to them by Jesus in Mathew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-18?**

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Those who are content to be converts only fail to understand the true purpose for which they have been saved. For the convert, it is all about them: Jesus died for them and it is His desire for them to live happy, carefree lives – all they have to do is go to church on Sundays and pay their tithes, and God will do everything else. However, that is not at all what this Christian life is all about. Jesus died so that we might become His disciples; and being a disciple we must obey the Master's commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations..."

*"I have but one passion:  
It is He, it is He alone.  
The world is the field  
and the field is the  
world; and henceforth  
that country shall be my  
home where I can be most  
used in winning souls for  
Christ." – Count  
Nicolaus Ludwig von  
Zinzendorf*

"Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Luke 12:11-12

Disciples will truly share the passion of their Lord for the lost and will be motivated by the same sense of urgency that attests to the Lord's desire that all are saved. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life..." (John 3:16).*

New believers will exhibit the same boldness in the face of opposition as Paul who declared to his young disciple Timothy *"...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control"* (2 Timothy 1:7). The boldness necessary to fuel a CPM may invite persecution, but a spirit of timidity or fear will quench it. However, God will not abandon His church and will give grace to those who put their trust in him (Joshua 1:6 and Acts 18:9-11).

**5. A price to pay to become a Christian**

**Read Luke 21:12-15; Acts 5:40; 13:50-52; 16:22, 37; 18:17; 21:27-33; Rom. 8:35-39; Cor. 11:24-28; and 2 Thess. 1:3-5. Should Christians expect pay a price for following Jesus? Why? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**How should Christians respond when they are persecuted? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*

*John 15:18-19*

*Missions is not about "What can I spare?" The question is "What's it going to take?" Risk. Abandon. Sacrifice. Radical dependence on Christ. Everything. Are you passionately committed to God's glory among all peoples? — AsiaLink Worker*

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There is no doubt that Christians are a persecuted minority in many places around the world ([www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org)); for the most part, they are left alone as long as they stay to themselves, but once they act upon the Lord's command to preach the Gospel and make disciples, trouble will follow. As the day of the Lord's return draws near, the persecution will only increase. So-called, anti-conversion laws against Christians are on the increase in many countries where Christians are a minority; missionaries who openly preach the Gospel are threatened with prison or deportation.

From the beginning, preaching the gospel has led to severe persecution or even death for countless Christians, but the church has survived and grown for 2,000 years and will remain until the Lord's Second Coming. The saying, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" has been proven right around the world. In the face of daily opposition, believers can find strong encouragement from the examples of Paul and the other Apostles in Acts. The Apostles were the first Christian martyrs and after them came countless missionaries who with little or no recognition, gave their lives and fortunes for the sake of the Gospel. Church Planting Movements will have to proceed in the face of this kind of persecution; and believers will have to be taught that they will have to pay a personal price and sacrifice their time, talents,

*"Church Planting Movements often emerge in difficult settings where conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a popular or socially advantageous thing to do." David Garrison*

*"Some wish to live within the sound of a chapel bell; I wish to run a rescue mission within a yard of hell." — C. T. Studd*

and treasure if the kingdom of God is going to continue to advance and reach the unreached people groups around the world until the Lord's return. But the way of the cross tends to screen out the uncommitted (Matt. 13:21) and ensures that a highly dedicated group of disciples are following the Lord of the harvest into the mission fields around the world. So if they share the Lord's Vision and Mission, they will also joyfully share in His sufferings; but if they share in His sufferings, they will also share in His glory at the end of the Age.

#### 6. Perceived Leadership Crisis or Spiritual Vacuum in Society

Read Matt. 10:18; John 19:10-16; Acts 17:16-21; 22:25-29; and Titus 3:1-2. Who were the major political and religious powers at the time Acts was written? \_\_\_\_\_

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There is no time in a study like this one to go into detail about the historical background of Acts. It is sufficient enough to point out that there were three competing forces that controlled the region where Jesus was born and where the church began: the local religious leaders, the Greek philosophers, and the Roman civil authorities. The conflicts between these three kept the local populations in a constant state of uncertainty as to who was in control and who they needed most to fear. Our modern world has similar conflicts between religious, secular, and cultural interests that compete for peoples' loyalties and attentions.

*"God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for Himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of His name among the nations. Therefore, let us bring our affections into line with His, and, for the sake of His name, let us renounce the quest for worldly comforts and join His global purpose." — John Piper*

Globalization, materialism, and postmodern skepticism pose a threat not only to modern-day Christians but are creating societal disintegration and destabilization among the general populations in many nations around the world. Many developing nations are experiencing an increasing generational gap between the modern, upwardly mobile and educated classes and the previous generations who adhere to traditional values and ways of doing things. Young people who are fortunate enough to find work in Internet connected, highly technical, or global commercial hubs are able to earn incomes and live lifestyles that far outstrip their parents' mode of living. Modern youths are much more independent and less tied to traditions than their parents' generation. At the same time, in developing nations there is an increasing social and material gap between those who live in rural farming villages and those who are able to find jobs in one of world's major metropolises.

With the coming of the "Information Age", the educated classes are wired into the World Wide Web and are saturated with images of money, sex, and power from around the world – and many want to have it all for themselves as well. Advertisers beat their drums 24-7 in an effort to convince the youth market that if they drive this vehicle, or wear this perfume, that cologne, wear certain clothes, or use this or that product they will be seen as beautiful, powerful, and irresistible to the opposite sex. The world's major film industries are copying those in the West by pushing the limits of what is acceptable behavior for their young audiences – many of whom are turning away in droves from traditional religious values that shaped their parents' generation. Pop

"Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? *Do they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures." James 4:1-3

music videos are filled with images of young women gyrating and pumping their bodies in sexually provocative poses, while the male stars all project images of virility and potency. All of it is unrealistic, but as has been proven so true in the West, sex sells – and it sells very well everywhere.

While all of this is going on, to a greater or lesser degree, politicians and major businesses around the world are rife with corruption and inefficiency. Every week there is some kind of scandal being reported in one of the world's papers as the rich and powerful use any means necessary to gain more money and power for themselves. In developing nations people often suffer with poor infrastructures run by inefficient and corrupt officials; the cities are choked by traffic and uncollected waste; they cannot get a good supply pure drinking water or electricity anywhere. Access to good, affordable healthcare is limited in many of those same places where horrible sanitation and hygienic conditions leave numerous people sick and suffering from all kinds of preventable diseases. Every election the politicians promise improvements, and after every election conditions remain unchanged. The world's social safety nets are in tatters as millions of the very old and very young are left in the streets helpless and defenseless. Social reformers have tried for centuries to bring an end to this human suffering, but the divisions between rich and poor, the powerful and powerless, remain.

All of this adds up to a world where caste, class, religion, or cultural conflicts can break out at any time or any place – a world that is too much like the world when the

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:12-14

*"Unless there is the element of extreme risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith". –Hudson Taylor*

gospel was introduced to some 2,000 years ago. In the Roman Empire, the fragile peace between different and competing groups was often shattered by communal violence or war as populations fought for control of the wealthy trade routes that brought the food and goods necessary to maintain their Empires. Today, nations fight over the world's limited resources – resources that are stretched to the limit to meet the growing needs of an explosive global population. As in the days of Rome, it is into this mix that the purity of the Gospel message offers people the greatest hope for the future. Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, reminded His followers that, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).

#### **7. On-the-job Training for Church Leadership**

**Read Acts 1:21-26; 4:13; 14:23; 15:36-41; 16:1-3, 14-15, 40; 18:2, 18-19, 24-28; and 20:17-21. Is there any evidence that Paul or any of the other Apostle insisted that leaders should have some kind of special training before they were appointed to a position of leadership? What was the qualification the Apostles looked for? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Although the primary qualification for leadership looked for by the Apostles was the Holy Spirit's anointing

*“The nations are not gathered in automatically. If God has promised to bless ‘all the families of the earth,’ he has promised to do so ‘through Abraham's seed’ (Genesis 12:3, 22:18). Now we are Abraham's seed by faith, and the earth's families will be blessed only if we go to them with the gospel. That is God's plain purpose.” – John R.W. Stott*

“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.” 1 Timothy 5:17

and choice, it did not mean that training in the Word and in leadership skills were unnecessary. In fact, the rapid increase in the number of churches in a CPM makes effective leadership training – including Bible training – even more critical if the movement is going to be sustained over the long-term. Village pastors and lay leaders involved in church planting are already involved in full-time ministry. So even if they had the finances to go to a Seminary, they would have to leave their place of ministry and remain for extended periods of time in one of the urban centers where the Bible colleges and seminaries are located. Very few of these leaders are willing to leave their congregations behind without any pastoral care. In addition to that, if church leaders left their churches for theological training for extended periods of time, the momentum of the movement would dissipate.

Ongoing theological and leadership training is a vital component of church growth. The training of new pastors and lay leaders that are teaching and preaching in the villages must not be overlooked. The most effective way to provide training for these workers is to bring the training as close to them as possible. Short-term training modules in theology and leadership specifically designed to meet the needs of village pastors and translated into the mother tongue have proven to be a powerful tool to strengthen those who are on the frontlines of church planting. On-the-job training with an emphasis on practical learning interspersed with ongoing ministry has proven to be the best model for Church Planting Movements because they will not impede the most important tasks of evangelism, church planting and pastoral leadership

#### The Effects of a Leadership Vacuum on a CPM:

“THE VACUUM produced when a strong leader departs can devastate a movement, organization, or institution. Having been dependent on his or her skill, style, and personality, associates and subordinates flounder or vie for control. Soon efficiency and vitality are lost, and decline and demise follow. Often this pattern is repeated in churches. A great speaker or teacher gathers a following, and soon a church is flourishing. It is alive, vital, and effective. Lives are being changed and people led into the Kingdom. But when this person leaves or dies, with him or her goes the drive and the heart of the organization.”

From the Introduction to Titus, [Life Application Study Bible](#)

that are essential to the growth and rapid progress of a village Church Planting Movement.

### 8. Leadership Authority is Decentralized

Read Acts 14:23; 15:36-41; 16:1-3, 14-15, 40; 18:2, 18-19, 24-28; and 20:17-21 once more. Did Paul insist that the leaders of the church be personally under his authority? (Note also: 2 Corinthians 6:1 and 1 Thess. 1:5-8). If not, then how were they treated? \_\_\_\_\_

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David Garrison's report on church planting movements around the world concluded that denominations and organized church administrations that tend to impose top-down, hierarchical authority and bureaucratic decision-making are unable to cope with the independence and dynamism of a genuine CPM. The Holy Spirit teaches us in Acts that in order to succeed, every cell or house church leader engaged in a CPM must have the freedom and authority necessary to put into motion whatever needs to be done in terms of evangelism, ministry and new church planting without having to stop and wait for the approval from a church authority who is not intimately involved on the local level.

*"I wasn't God's first choice for what I've done for China. I don't know who it was. It must have been a man—a well-educated man. I don't know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn't willing. And God looked down... and saw Gladys Aylward. And God said, 'Well, she's willing.'"* — Gladys Aylward

We can see how the decision of the organized church structure of the early church in Acts 15 almost brought to an end the Church Planting Movements Paul and the other missionaries had started among the Gentiles on his First Missionary Journey (Acts 13 – 14). If the counsel at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29) had not listened to the Holy Spirit and imposed a process that demanded the Gentiles become circumcised Jews according to their religious laws, then the movement would have stopped in its tracks. But the Holy Spirit spoke and the counsel wisely obeyed, and the movement continued to spread rapidly throughout the world.

**9. Outsiders keep a low profile**

**Read Acts 17:1-15; 19:28-31; and 20:1. Did Paul seek after fame and want to be known everywhere he went? What was his response whenever his presence in a city became a threat to the local believers? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Many countries in the world today are particularly sensitive to the issue of foreign missionaries' involvement in any church activities in their country. In these countries it is especially important for missionaries involved in evangelism and Church Planting Movements to keep a low personal profile at all times. It is essential at this stage in history that the churches in hostile areas of the world minimize foreignness and allow indigenous leaders to take front-and-center in CPMs.

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” 1

Thessalonians 5:11-13

*"We are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure in which we have received it" – P. F. Bresee, founder of the Church of the Nazarene*

In those areas of the world that have a long history of foreign missionary involvement, but little progress towards completing the Great Commission it is past time for foreign missionaries to allow the local leadership to take the lead. The church in most of the developing nations of the world is more than capable at this time to send out indigenous missionaries from their flocks and draw in new believers – they may want, but they do not need the money that churches in wealthy Christian nations can provide. In fact, too often the money that foreign missionary organizations provide has a corrupting influence and can create jealousy and infighting between indigenous “have” and “have not” churches.

Foreign missionaries can still provide an essential support role by helping to “initiate and nurture” the movement; they can provide Bibles and help make the latest study materials available; and they work behind the scenes to help teach and mentor new pastors and lay leaders. Missionaries can also help by conducting leadership and discipleship training for the village pastors, evangelists and lay leaders. But once the missionary becomes a lightning rod for persecution or dissent, they must consider moving on quickly. It is important to always keep in mind the fact that for a CPM to be successful it must be self-supporting and self-sustaining or it will quickly fall apart.

#### **10. Missionaries suffer**

**Read 2 Cor. 11:24-33. Sometimes called “Paul’s Prosperity Doctrine” this passage of Scripture recounts much of what Paul personally suffered on his missionary**

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10

*“If missions languish, it is because the whole life of godliness is feeble. The command to go everywhere and preach to everybody is not obeyed until the will is lost by self-surrender in the will of God. Living, praying, giving and going will always be found together.” – Arthur T. Pierson*

**journeys. Add to this verse the verses from point #5 above. Can those who are fully engaged in a CPM not expect to pay a price for leading a movement that will lead many become a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Anyone who goes as a missionary to any of the unreached people groups in this world has to be prepared to suffer. Unless you intend to live in a secluded, wealthy area of one of world's major cities where Christians are at least tolerated, life on the mission field is far from easy by any Western standards. However, few missionaries have that kind of desire, and even if they did, if their heart is right and they are truly on mission with God, they will want to live much closer to way the people live that they have come to serve.

Very few missionaries are willing to talk much about the hardships of the life they have chosen; it is just part of what they have signed up for (Paul considered it "foolishness" to even talk about it). Only a fool would leave their life behind in America or some other Western country, and live a missionary's life in some remote, hostile place without seriously counting the cost of what that decision means. But the truth is – and this truth is rarely preached from American pulpits – there is a high, high cost for anyone who wants to follow Jesus, and especially for those who give their lives totally to the one of the mission fields where most of the unreached live.

Certainly there are risks for being a missionary; and those risks vary from country to country depending upon the

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation.” 2 Corinthians 1:5-7

political, economic, social and religious conditions of each country. But no matter who you are, or where you are from the same high cost is to be paid if you are going to live like a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Any gospel that does not mention the cost involved in following Jesus is an incomplete and inadequate Gospel. An inadequate Gospel message is one that contains absolutely no explanation of the radical nature of conversion and the whole life change that must follow; and has no understanding conveyed to those present that their decision to ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins means total submission to Him as the Lord of their lives (1 Corinthians 16:19-20).

Certainly our suffering should not be the result of our own self-destructive behavior, or foolish decisions. It is important to seek wise counsel and spiritual confirmation before jumping onto a plane and heading to a remote mission field for what they think will be an exciting “missionary adventure.” The decision should be weighed carefully for not only how it will affect them, but also how it will affect others who are close to them. The enemy will not allow them to enter his strongholds and set captives free without a fight; missionaries must engage in some serious spiritual warfare before, during, and after they enter the enemy’s spiritual territory. Paul knew this lesson well, and wrote to the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) because “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

“And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.’”

Romans 15:20-21

## Acts: A Church Planting Movement

### 7. CONCLUSION

#### Acts & Modern Church Planting Movements

“The Gospel is not an old, old story, freshly told. It is a fire in the Spirit, fed by the flame of Immortal Love; and woe unto us, if through our negligence to stir up the Gift of God which is within us, that fire burns low.” – Dr. R. Moffat Gautrey

Our study of the Book of Acts has revealed several KEYS TO CPMs:

- The rapid Growth and expansion of the church.  
This rapid growth is all the doing of the Holy Spirit, driving the church forward, and opening the doors of salvation to the Gentiles.
- The increasing hostility against church planting missionaries and the attempts by religious and political leaders to prevent the spread of the Gospel cannot stop or sidetrack the church. Once the Holy Spirit fell on the church at Pentecost, God quickly breached the walls that separated the Jews and Gentiles. The Council at Jerusalem confirmed what the Holy Spirit was doing amongst the Gentiles, and then Paul and the other missionaries were set free by the Holy Spirit to preach to the Gospel unfettered to the ends of the earth.

“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it! And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

Acts 28:28-31

- Acts ends abruptly. The story was not finished, and it is still being written to this very day. The Church throughout history was and still is a part of the story that Luke started to tell in Acts.

The story of Acts is the story of the beginning of Church Planting Movements that will eventually reach around the world. In every case, a genuine CPM begins when the missionary, evangelist, pastor, ministry leader, etc. catches the Vision of the Kingdom of God and conforms their work to the Mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost, make disciples, and bring glory to God in all they do. As this same vision and mission spreads to the other disciples in the churches, a CPM will be produced because they will be motivated to look beyond the four walls of their church on Sunday mornings and will obey the Lord's command to go out onto the highways and byways and invite the lost to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb – thus bearing much fruit and reproducing themselves without waiting for the “professional” church planters to do the job they themselves are capable of doing.

#### TEN PRACTICAL HANDLES

God gives His disciples the freedom and creativity to fulfill the mission He gave. When we model the same leadership style as our Lord Jesus, then we will give the same freedom to those we assign to go and preach the Word and plant churches. When we approach the Book of Acts as not as ancient church history, but as a handbook for contemporary church planters, then a number of practical helps for the

*"The best remedy for a sick church is to put it on a missionary diet." –  
Unknown*

*"Church Planting Movements are sovereign acts of God, but in His sovereign grace and mercy He has chosen to partner with us."  
David Garrison*

modern missionary will emerge from its pages and will help them initiate or nurture a CPM.

**1. Pursue a CPM Orientation From the Beginning**

**Read Acts 9:31, 15:41, 16:5, ; Romans 16:1-5, 23; 1 Cor. 1:2, 4:17, 7:17, 16:19; and Gal. 1:2, 22. Did all of these churches come into being on their own or were they deliberately planted by followers of Jesus Christ? (Note also Matt. 16:18) \_\_\_\_\_**

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A Church Planting Movement does not happen on its own. The pastor, evangelist, or lay leader must begin to move in that direction from the day their work begins. The vision and mission of being a church planting church should start with the core group of believers who are taught that their responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ is to model a Church planting church and reproduce itself. Rarely do Christians come to this conclusion themselves, but from the start, the leadership of the church must instill in them the heart for evangelism (seeking and saving the lost); the commitment to be disciples who then go and make other disciples, so that the CPM will grow and multiply. All of this is to the Lord's glory as those who are lost in sin and darkness come to the light of salvation in Jesus Christ.

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:15-18

What distinguishes the leadership training of a CPM from traditional methods taught in most seminary colleges is that the training of leaders does not follow a sequential, pattern; the training in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, etc. all take place simultaneously while the new leader is already in the field and moving forward. Again, the purpose of Church Planting Movements is rapid, exponential growth. One of the key deficits that slow or stop the forward movement of a CPM is a lack of trained leaders. On-the-job training of those who are called by and anointed by the Holy Spirit to lead is not a terrible thing; it is just different from the more traditional methods. Both methods have their strengths and weaknesses, but the traditional model cannot deliver new leaders fast enough once the CPM is up to speed.

*"Missionaries who address the scope of all that is required for initiating and nurturing a Church Planting Movement quickly realize that the job is far beyond their personal limitations of time, talent and resources." - David Garrison*

## **2. Develop and Implement Comprehensive Strategies**

**Read Acts 1:8; 13:2; 14:26-27; 15:36, 41; 16:5; 18:11, 23; 19:1, 10; 20:1-3, 17. In Acts 1:8 Jesus casts the vision for the Gospel of the kingdom to be preached to the world. What happened in Acts 13:2 that is different than the actions of the other Apostles, and disciples between Pentecost and 14:26-27? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**What is Paul's and the other missionaries' plan for their second journey and what is different in Acts 18:11 from Paul's first missionary journey? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*"I am ready to burn out for God. I am ready to endure any hardship, if by any means I might save some. The longing of my heart is to make known my glorious Redeemer to those who have never heard." - William Burns*

**In Acts 18:23 Paul starts his third journey; what is his beginning strategy?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**In Acts 19:10 Paul remains in Ephesus; what is the result?**

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**What strategy is Paul following in Acts 20:1-3?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acts 20:17 marks the closing verses of Paul's third mission; what is significant about the people Paul meets with?** \_\_\_\_\_

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We see Jesus casting the vision for His kingdom in the very first chapter of Acts (1:8). As is often true with any new thing God is doing, people are slow to catch up. In the first few chapters of Acts, the Holy Spirit is moving the action forward and the Apostles are running to catch up. It is not until Acts 13:2 that we see His disciples cooperating with and planning to work with the Holy Spirit as they move along. The missionaries return from that first journey and report on the completion of their work to their home church in Antioch (14:26-27).

**Mark 9:38-41.**

There is no place in the kingdom of God for competition or petty jealousies; there is too much work to be done and too little time before the Lord returns to allow ourselves to be sidetracked by conflicts over who, what, where, when, or how the kingdom work is to be done.

*"Desire that your life count for something great! Long for your life to have eternal significance. Want this! Don't coast through life without a passion." — John Piper*

When Paul and the others set out on their second journey they are ready to implement a more comprehensive plan that involved visiting the churches planted on the first mission; see how they are progressing, and strengthen them however needed (15:36, 41 and 16:5). This required an adjustment in strategy to take whatever time was necessary to complete the training of new disciples (18:11). By the time Paul started his third missionary journey, a fully formed Church Planting Movement was in place. Churches were rapidly expanding and the network of leaders had grown to a point beyond which Paul's direct involvement was not necessary. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Paul had implemented a comprehensive strategy that created a movement that had outgrown him. He remained two years in Ephesus and oversaw a movement that was rapidly spreading throughout Asia Minor (19:10). Paul then made one final visit to the maturing churches in Macedonia and Greece before leaving them to stand on their own. Before leaving behind the church planting movement he started and developed on his first three missionary journeys, at Miletus he calls from Ephesus the elders he put in place to lead the movement forward (2:17); there he gives them their final instructions and goes on his way to Rome.

In the modern context of Church Planting Movements, Paul's experiences provide the pattern to follow. Like Paul, before anyone is willing to enter the mission field, they must first catch the vision for the Great Commission. Jesus provides the inspiration and the Holy Spirit empowers and gives direction. (If the Holy Spirit is not involved, it is best for the believer to stay at home!).

*"Believers who have the gospel keep mumbling it over and over to themselves. Meanwhile, millions who have never heard it once fall into the flames of eternal hell without ever hearing the salvation story." —  
K. P. Yohannan,  
founder of Gospel for Asia Bible Society*

"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." 1 Corinthians 1:17

Immediately upon entering the mission field, the worker usually feels a sensation of being overwhelmed with the task ahead of them; and will no doubt feel inadequate for the job (Paul often expressed in his letters his own sense of inadequacy). Take India for example: according to the 2001 census in India, there are approximately 638,000 villages in India. The task of planting one church in each village is beyond the ability of a single missionary – or even a single church – to accomplish. It requires a deliberate and comprehensive strategy for the worker to stay “on mission” and complete the task God has given them to complete. Otherwise, they are likely to become overwhelmed, overworked, and get off track never completing what they had been called to do. Paul left the mission fields of Asia and Greece knowing his work was completed and he was clear to move on to the next place where God was calling him: Rome.

In his book on CPMs, David Garrison identified four strong pillars upon which any effective church planting strategy will stand; each of these pillars are found in Paul’s church planting strategy. The details of how these four pillars will be shaped depend upon the particulars of the people, place, and resources started with, but they should include: 1) prayer, 2) God’s word, 3) evangelism, and 4) deliberate church planting.

### 3. Evaluate Everything to Achieve the End-vision

Read Acts 20:17-38 again. Note verses 18-21, 27. What did Paul state was the End-vision for everything he did and said on his missions? How does this compare with Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:19-20? \_\_\_\_\_

“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” 1  
Corinthians 15:9-10

*"If the Great  
Commission is true, our  
plans are not too big;  
they are too small." –  
Pat Morley*

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**Verses 28-31 contain a warning to the leaders and an admonition. How do these words relate to the goal of achieving the End-vision of the Great Commission?**

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The role of the leader/coordinator of the Church Planting Movement is to keep everyone focused on the vision and mission of the Great Commission, evaluating everything in light of the goals of the mission, and keep everyone moving forward with that vision. The leader needs to give those under their direction encouragement, support, and help when needed, but NOT to micro-manage their ministries. The wrong kind of leader can be a hindrance to a successful Church Planting Movement. Paul provided the model for the right kind of leader in that he remained independent of them (verses 33-35). At the same time, Paul encouraged them to be independent and build up their own ministries among the people they were shepherding (verses 28 & 32). Paul understood that it would be a mistake to make everything he did among them depend upon him. What would be the end of everything Paul worked so hard to achieve if he made

*"The effective strategy coordinator is ruthless in evaluating all he or she does in light of the end-vision - a Church Planting Movement - discarding those things that do not or will not lead to it." David Garrison*

*"Let us daily strive to copy our Saviour's humility." — J. C. Ryle*

everything depend upon his personal involvement?

#### 4. Employ Precision Harvesting

**Read Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:1, 4, 19; and 19:8. What was Paul's usual strategy for evangelism upon entering into a city? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Why do you think Paul would employ this method? What were the results? \_\_\_\_\_**

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In modern terms, Paul's strategy of entering the synagogue in every new place he came to is a method of evangelism known as Precision Harvesting. This is a method of evangelism that relies upon a promotional tool called "response filtering." Response filtering is used identify and locate people who have already made some kind of response to a Gospel message heard on a TV or radio broadcast, or some other form of mass evangelism. The idea is for the missionary or church planter to glean from another's sowing ministry, where seekers or new believers are likely to be

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Romans 10:1-4

found and start working in that area. Turning back to Paul, we see what he was doing. By entering the Synagogue, Paul found a ready audience of Jews and “God fearing” Gentiles who at least had a basic understanding of the kingdom of God and who were looking for the coming of the Messiah.

Village pastors, evangelists, and ministry leaders often employ “response filtering” when they discover a person or persons from a village who are open to the gospel and make use of their influence in that village as an opening to share with others. The characteristics of village life in many areas of the world today where unreached people groups live make personal evangelism more effective than mass media marketing. Gathering the people of the village together for a gospel meeting or to show a gospel film will be more effective than television broadcasts or inviting them to mass gospel meetings in big cities that few can manage to attend. This makes the personal evangelism of the indigenous lay leader involved the Church Planting Movement much more effective than any mass media marketing strategy.

##### **5. Prepare New Believers for Persecution**

**Read Acts 5:27-33, 40; 7:54-60; 8:1-3; 9:29-30; 12:1-4; 13:49; 14:1-2, 5; 16:20-23; 17:5-9; and 23:12-15. Were the church planting movements of Acts started without persecution? Should those who start church planting movements today expect to do so without opposition? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*"A little while, we are in eternity; before we find ourselves there, let us do much for Christ." — Ann Judson*

“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” Luke 14:27-30

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Jesus was never deceptive about what it would cost to follow Him; in spite of what the TV evangelists might preach, the life of discipleship is not the way to wealth and comfort. “Whoever desires to come after Me,” Jesus said, “let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it” (Mark 8:34b, 35). The call of discipleship is a call to self-denial. Jesus would not allow anyone to follow Him on their own terms (Luke 9:57-62). Jesus is Lord, and that means HE alone sets the terms and conditions for His disciples. So often we have heard it said in evangelistic messages that “Christianity is not a religion, but is a relationship” – and it is true – but the relationship we enter into with Jesus Christ requires a personal allegiance to Him that transcends all other relationships. (Luke 14:25-27). It is not until the new believer has settled these things in their heart that they can begin to understand the radical nature of their calling to follow Jesus Christ and “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

As part of the final preparation of His disciples for His departure, Jesus warned them of the world’s hatred for them: “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the

*No sound system. No band. No guitar. No entertainment. No cushioned chairs. No heating or air-con. Nothing but the people of God and the word of God. And strangely, that's enough. God's Word is enough for millions of believers who gather in house churches... Jungles... Rainforests, and middle-eastern cities. But is his Word enough for us?' – David Platt. Radical*

*word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me"* (John 15:18-21).

A study of the history of the church cannot be separated from the stories of those who were martyred for the sake of the gospel. It has been lost in much of the church today, but it should be remembered that after the Bible itself, no book so profoundly influenced early Protestant movement as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. In the early days of the printing press, the common people had almost no other reading material except the Bible and Foxe's book; the deep impression that this book produced gave the Protestants the courage they needed to face the wrath of the Papacy and the divine rights of kings and declare themselves free men and women under God and with His Word as their only guide. For almost two centuries the *Book of Martyrs* served to mold the character of Protestantism. However, we see in the church today a far different attitude. Except in those places of the world where persecution is a way of life for most Christians, we hear from pulpits around the world a steady message that Jesus paid it all so that we can live happy, healthy, prosperous lives. All that is required of us is that we say a simple prayer (with every head bowed, and every eye closed so as not to embarrass anyone), attend church regularly, and pay our tithe. And for that Jesus will solve all of our problems, heal all of our sicknesses, and provide for all of our material comforts. Instead of being our "marching orders" the Bible becomes our business guide, our guide to count our Father's blessings, is

*"The concern for world evangelization is not something tacked on to a man's personal Christianity, which he may take or leave as he chooses. It is rooted in the character of the God who has come to us in Christ Jesus. Thus, it can never be the province of a few enthusiasts, a sideline or a specialty of those who happen to have a bent that way. It is the distinctive mark of being a Christian." — James S. Stewart*

and Jesus is reduced to some kind of pop psychologist to help us feel good about ourselves and others through a gospel of “I’m Ok, You’re Ok.”

In far too many places in the world, the main reason why the church is not advancing rapidly on all fronts is *not* because people are unresponsive to the gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ. (In fact all evidence is that the people are spiritually hungry and will respond in large numbers when they hear the gospel clearly preached.) The real reason is that far too many are unwilling to move forward without fear of persecution or death and proclaim the gospel “by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). The promise of rapid and exponential growth of church planting movements will never materialize apart from the great sacrifices of the church in time, finances, reputations, freedoms, and lives – in essence: ALL.

**6. Gather Them, Then Win Them**

**Read Acts 17:16-34. Who was Paul’s audience in Athens? How did Paul use his knowledge of their beliefs to present the gospel to them? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*“Church Planting Movements are acts of God, but it’s amazing how much mankind is capable of interfering with them.” David Garrison*

*“If the Church is ‘in Christ,’ she is involved in mission. Her whole existence then has a missionary character. Her conduct as well as her words will convince the unbelievers and put their ignorance and stupidity to silence.” – David Bosch*

In many ways inter-faith dialog can be considered a source of tension within the church. The idea of having meaningful interactions with neighbors of other faiths sounds wonderful on the surface, but we can see in many missionaries' wording, an idea that seems offensive to some when they speak of inviting "not-yet-Christians," "lost seekers," or the "unsaved" into the group in order to "win" them and bring them "into the family of faith." A totally different view is presented by Dr. C.V. Rao: "I was taught that all my neighbors are damned to hell since they do not belong to the Christian fold. Friendship with such neighbors of other faiths was interpreted as being unequally yoked. Interest in their sacred literature was discouraged as being only Satanic. It took a long time to unlearn such things and learn positive attitudes. I ask myself today: How come such things were part of the Christian mission? Is it not possible to preach Jesus without a reference to the others? Should Jesus be taught in comparison and contrast with others? Should the unique gospel of Jesus Christ be relativized? We who want others to hear from us should we also not be open to hearing from them and learning to appreciate the good that they possess? Tolerance breeds tolerance, openness breeds openness and respect breeds respect. Particularistic understanding of one's own religion leads to intolerance and disrespect for the other religions closing oneself to the wider work of God through the ages of human history all over the world amongst all other peoples." (C.V. Rao *Heads and Tales*, p. 102-103)

On this point we see must seek a balance between both

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'* Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'" Acts 4:8-12

sides of the spectrum and come to unity. But not without a note of caution for the Christian missionary/evangelist who seeks to push ahead with inter-faith dialog as a means of evangelism. In our zeal to pronounce the gospel to the world, we should be culturally and religiously sensitive to those around us and learn to understand more about their beliefs in order to find the good in them. All this can be done in such a way for us to have a more sympathetic approach to unreached people. Love (*agape*) is the key, and without the love of God in us and working through us, our message will fall flat. We must with all sincerity find those points of commonality and exhibit mutual respect for others' beliefs. However, in the process of understanding other faiths, we must never end up devaluing our own faith and eroding our confidence in the absoluteness of the truth we profess in Jesus' name in order not to risk offending someone else.

It is our love and compassion for the lost (those who are separated from our loving, heavenly Father) that compels us to preach the gospel and bring them to Jesus Christ who is the only way, truth, and life (John 3:16; 14:1-3). If we compromise the core truths upon which our faith is built then we have nothing to offer and our mission is in vain. Without *agape*, Christianity is just another religion, and Jesus is just another god among gods. But we believe, know, and confess that the blood of Jesus is the only acceptable payment (atonement) for the sins of mankind, and therefore it is the love of God that provided the only means through which sinful men can find their way back into the eternal presence of the living God of all mankind.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:16-18



As we have already studied in *Chapter Four: Paul's Second Missionary Journey*, the so-called POUCH method of church planting is the biblical model, and is therefore workable in almost every CPM setting. Each pastor, evangelist, or lay leader should be creative and implement each element POUCH in ways that are appropriate for their particular setting, but Acts demonstrates how, if every element is in place, the end results should produce good success:

**POUCH**

P= participative Bible study/worship groups (Acts 17:11, 12)

O= obedience to God's Word as sole measure of the individual's or church's success (Acts 19:18-20)

U= unpaid/bi-vocational church leaders (Acts 16:15; 18:2, 3)

C= cell churches (Acts 16:5; 18:22)

H= home or storefront churches (Acts 18:7, 8; 19:9)

**8. Develop Multiple Leaders Within Each Cell Church**

**Read Acts 14:23; 20:17; and Titus 1:5. Did Paul have a problem of not having enough leaders to take care of the CPMs he started? Why? \_\_\_\_\_**

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"Knowing that they didn't have long with each of these new churches, Paul and Barnabas took a risk to commend them to the Spirit of God rather than stay on and commend these leaders to themselves. They lived out the counter-intuitive ways of the kingdom. They took a risk to trust that the Spirit would remain on as Teacher, and He would do a much better job of controlling the movement than Paul and Barnabas." Steve Smith, T4T

From the very beginning, there have been many obstacles to the church's advancement. The last command Jesus gave His disciples "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), was delayed as the disciples remained in and around Jerusalem even after Pentecost. It was not until Steven's martyrdom and the persecution that followed that the disciples were forced to move away Jerusalem in large numbers. Even after that most of the church leadership remained in Jerusalem.

The Book of Acts can be understood as the Holy Spirit's prodding and pushing of the Apostles to break through the religious, social, and ethnic barriers that confronted them and go on with their mandate to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth and make disciples of all nations. Reading Acts it almost seems as if Paul was the only Apostle who really got the message (Gal. 2:11-14) because his story seems to be just the opposite of Peter, James, and the others mentioned in Acts in that they were saying, "not so fast, Paul" while Paul was blazing new frontiers, opening new horizons, and planting churches left and right among the Gentile nations. Paul was constantly pushing the limits of where, when, and to whom the gospel was for – and finding that there were none. The only time Paul felt restrained by the Holy Spirit was when he was going over ground already covered and not pushing on to the next fresh field (Acts 16:6-10).

The church today needs hundreds like Paul crisscrossing the nations and starting Church Planting

*At a meeting of Baptist leaders in the late 1700s, a newly ordained, untrained, minister who was a cobbler by trade, stood to argue for the value of overseas missions. He was abruptly interrupted by an older minister who said, "Young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me." That young man turned out to be one of the greatest missionaries to South Asia, William Carey.*

Movements everywhere they go. Nothing could stop Paul (2 Corinthians 11:23-29). And yet Church Planting Movements often fail to start or quickly stall for lack of leaders who are willing to take the risks or suffer any hardships to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. It is not that there are so few willing to answer the call, but often those who are most inspired and restless to move forward are restrained by the “professional” clergy that convince them they need years of training in a seminary to be able to be a missionary or evangelist. Only God knows how many missionaries never made to the field after receiving a “proper” seminary education and being offered less challenging and more lucrative assignments pastoring a church closer to home.

**9. Use On-the-job Training**

**Read Acts 18:1-4 and 24-28. Describe how Paul’s use of on-the-job training worked with Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos.** \_\_\_\_\_

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*“As a missionary living and working in India, it saddens me when I see so many Indian Christians living in safety, comfort, and ease in the US while tens of thousands are dying every day in India without ever having heard the gospel. Truly, Jesus could be standing on any high place in India today and looking in any direction could be saying these same words spoken in Luke 10:2 “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*

The present model of leadership training used by most denominations is to pull candidates for church leadership away from their places of ministry for years of training in one of their educational institutions. This model is a way for the administration to maintain control of its members and determines where, when, and how new churches are established. However this tends to obstruct rapid church growth as the unreached villages wait for someone to come and preach the gospel to them. New leaders trained in the traditional method tend to find placement in already established churches rather than go to remote areas where there is greater risk and less support.

The method of Church Planting demonstrated in Acts is the exact opposite of what is considered standard procedure today. CPMs require a decentralized theological education that does not depend upon established theological institutions. Basic biblical training alongside practical experience, added to ongoing discipleship training is all that is required for teaching and preaching the gospel in tribal and village areas where the vast majority of unreached people live today. An education in ancient Hebrew, biblical Greek, hermeneutics, and exegesis may benefit leaders who fill the pulpits in mainline established churches, but this kind of higher education can only hinder a Church Planting Movement. The best model is to give practical biblical training to church planting pastors as close as possible to the villages where they are working, keeping the modules short (measured weeks not years), and taking only one or two days per week in seminar settings with the most training on-the-job. This model will maintain an ongoing discipleship relationship between the

*"The motive is this,  
'Oh! that God could be glorified, that Jesus might see the reward of his sufferings! Oh! that sinners might be saved, so that God might have new tongues to praise him, new hearts to love him! Oh! that sin were put an end to, that the holiness, righteousness, mercy, and power of God might be magnified!'  
This is the way to pray: when thy prayers seek God's glory, it is God's glory to answer thy prayers." C. H. Spurgeon*

village pastors and lay leaders and the church planting leadership that provides the teaching, training and skill upgrades.

**10. Model, Assist, Watch, & Leave (MAWL)**

**Read Acts 20:17-37. Was it easy for Paul to bid farewell to these leaders and for them to bid farewell to Paul?**

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**What were some of the challenges these leaders would have to face and overcome?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Was Paul confident that it would be easy for these Elders to lead their churches?** \_\_\_\_\_

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It is normal for the parents to want be deeply involved in every aspect of their children’s lives. In some cultures parents routinely decide for their children what kind of education they will receive, what will be their career path, and when and whom to marry. Pastors who tend to see their church plants like their children will have the same tendency and do not know when, where and how to let go. Leaders by nature tend to be “take charge” kind of people and therefore

*"If God calls you to be a missionary, don't stoop to be a king" – Jordan Grooms*

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

1 Timothy 6:12

have the attitude that they can do it themselves or do it better than anyone else. The Apostle Paul's success demonstrates that from the beginning the best method for church planting pastors is for them to share the responsibility for the new church with those they are leading.

Remember the ultimate goal of the Church Planting Movement is different from traditional church plants. The CPM is designed to create independent, self-sustaining, and self-replicating churches for the purpose of rapid, exponential growth of the kingdom of God. The first church is established and shaped by the Vision and Mission of Jesus to be the model of a worshipful, missionary-minded church for the second and third generation of churches to follow in rapid succession. The first generation of church leadership is there to assist (disciple and train) the next generation, not to baby or control them (2 Timothy 2:2).

## END NOTE: OBSTACLES TO CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

*"Two distinguishing marks of the early church were: 1) Poverty 2) Power." – T. J. Bach*

Sometime after the book of Acts was written and included into the Christian Canon, it came to be considered a work of early church history. When that happened – and as the center of church power and leadership shifted from the East to the West – other methods of church planting and leadership development evolved. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century “traditional” methods of church planting and leadership development had become nothing at all like what we see in Acts. Adequate leadership needed to evangelize and plant new churches among the unreached had become a big problem. Missions were largely static because they were tied down to top-down leadership structures of Christian denominations that for the most part had left outsiders in control. Any promising indigenous convert would be required to endure years of Western-style training in Christian doctrines and church polity before would then be injected back into their place of origin (if they ever returned). It was not until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the focus of missions began to shift away from foreign domination and the “new” idea of raising and training indigenous leaders in the field, allowing them to work independently of any direct foreign control emerged.

Today, the Western dominance of the church is fading and is seen in many areas around the world as a hindrance to local Christians being accepted as a part of their birth nation’s life and contributing to its unique cultural identity. This problem was seen very early on and attempts were made early in the last century to create or encourage the formation of indigenous-led missionary societies in many areas of the world. But it was not until after WWII, in atmosphere of post-colonialism that the work of indigenous believers began to take front-and-center of world missions. By the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the idea of “A self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating church” had replaced traditional Western-led missions around the world. Today few Western churches send out full-time missionaries to the field; and the few who do go, will more often work along-side or under the indigenous church.

Today it is considered a good sign that foreign Mission efforts – though still present and still relied upon for major funding – have receded into the background and the foreground of the picture is dominated by the native Church. More than ever before, local clergy, teachers, businessmen, doctors, etc. are taking up positions of leadership and responsibility in the indigenous Christian communities.

Still, the evidence from most places around the world indicates that the home-grown leadership is not raising and sending anywhere near the numbers of missionaries needed to evangelize the unreached of their own nation. The Western legacy of missions has left a process of making the work of evangelism of the unreached people groups “church-centered” instead of “mission-centered.” This legacy has bogged-down the church leadership in many nations with constitutional and administrative matters concerned too much with perpetuating and maintaining their own power and control and less on the evangelism and rapid, exponential growth that Church Planting Movements promise.

*"The reason some folks don't believe in missions is that the brand of religion they have isn't worth propagating." – Unknown*

No one would argue that the emphasis of the present leadership of the indigenous church to “strengthen the communities of faithful men and women living by the Word and the Sacraments” is a bad thing. The church certainly needs to be the genuine, local manifestation of the Body of Christ, and the place where the building up of the people of God should be happening. However, if the church is truly functioning as the church, it must also be reproducing and expanding, and not just holding its own. (The truth is: a church that is just “holding its own” will sooner or later be a church in retreat – losing rather than gaining members.) That means Christians must be sacrificially sending and going to every part of their nation, proclaiming the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and making disciples. This can only be done when the present indigenous leadership of the church allows multiple lay leaders the opportunity to start Church

Planting Movements in the thousands of unreached villages and regions where there the gospel has yet to be preached.

It is true that there are many external obstacles facing the church that can hinder and obstruct them from reaching every tribe and tongue before the Lord's Second Coming. Globalization, Modernization, and Materialism are just three of the massive social changes that are affecting large populations of the unreached; and in many of those populations, Christianity is viewed as "Westernization" and is therefore thought of as something to be resisted. Militant religious movements, internal social prejudices, and ancient conflicts between groups often pose another great obstacle for effective church planting movements to take shape in a particular area.

*"Missionary zeal does not grow out of intellectual beliefs, nor out of theological arguments,  
but out of love" – Roland Allen*

Internal obstacles to Church Planting Movements often are the result of well-meaning, but wrong ideas about what is required to plant churches. Denominations often require long periods of training and seminary teaching before allowing anyone to go and plant a church. In addition to the restrictions on credentialing, there are those who insist that unless land is obtained and a church building is built and registered, and a paid member of the clergy attends them, they cannot be called a "church." When we read about Jesus' selection of His disciples (Matthew 4:18-22) and Paul's instructions to his young leaders Timothy and Titus – and in particular his criteria for bishops and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) – we find that a moral character and a willingness to follow Christ without hesitation are given much greater weight than academics or official credentials. Paul's word and the confirmation of the Holy Spirit was all they needed to be qualified. These internal, extra-biblical requirements quickly become roadblocks and detours that derail Church Planting Movements before they can even start.

By far, the greatest obstacles to CPMs are the Bad Examples and Poor Models that too often are tolerated in our churches. Sadly, Christians have too often been poor examples of the new life that should be the result of the faith they profess. If established churches in an area have non-regenerate, worldly members who engage in immoral behavior and set bad examples in their family and business affairs, it will be difficult for new leadership in the area to convince those

outside the church that the Christian faith is genuine and will produce the new life of love, joy, peace, and righteousness in the Spirit. In this situation a need for repentance and revival in the existing church may be necessary before a successful Church Planting Movement is possible. Hopefully, the local any pastor would be open to leading a revival that brings correction, but if not, a Church Planting Movement is still possible, but may face opposition not only from outsiders, but also from the local pastor (Note 2 Tim. 1:13-15; 3:8-9; and 4:16).

*There are two passages of Scripture every believer should know by heart from the moment of their salvation: John 3:16 and Matthew 28:19-20...*

*One is meaningless without the other.*

Church Planting Movements that depend upon outside funding and manpower to keep going are not sustainable; and as the movement grows, they will be overwhelmed with requests for more funds and trained leadership. Naturally, whenever the gospel is introduced to a new area or people group, some external financing is required. But the book of Acts shows us that the prototype church for the movement that is started should be easily reproduced by the indigenous pastors and lay leaders. Any element of the CPM that cannot be reproduced by the local believers should be discarded. From day-one new believers must be taught that they have two responsibilities that go along with their faith in Christ as their Savior:

1. To share their faith with everyone, every day
2. To give sacrificially of their time, treasure, and talents to advance the Great Commission in their area by “going” or “sending” missionaries from their church

*May God go with you — even to the ends of the earth.*

*AMEN*



Rev. Dr. Frederick Osborn travels the world teaching and preaching the Word of God. His first trip to South Asia was in 2001, and since 2005 he has been fully involved in ministry. Currently he volunteers his time on the mission fields of South Asia and around the world as a speaker and lecturer, distributing Bibles and biblical resources to pastors, evangelists and ministry leaders. His books and study guides have been used in classrooms by hundreds of students.

In 2013 he earned his M.Div. from Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad, India and in that same year was officially ordained into the ministry in a holy convocation administered by Indian pastors representing AG, CSA, and other independent ministries. In 2017 he completed his D.Min. from Covenant Bible College & Seminary, Florida, USA. He and his wife, Deena Benjamin Lakshmall, now live near Atlanta, GA where he continues to write, teach, and publish his books and study guides.

Several of his books and study guides have been translated into local Indian languages and hundreds of village pastors, ministry leaders, and lay leaders have completed one or more of his courses on "This Gospel of the Kingdom", "Exploring the New Testament", "Legacy of Women in the Bible", "Kingdom Discipleship", and "Disciple to Disciple".

In addition to the books and study guides, he has delivered countless seminar teachings and sermons relating to one or more of these subjects. These lessons have been shared and are being shared today with literally thousands of believers in India. He has done all of this free of cost to those who have benefited from these teaching materials. He has been able to distribute thousands of Bibles, Bible study books, and commentaries also free of cost to those in need throughout South Asia. He believes it is his calling to teach the unvarnished truth of the Word of God to those who have little or no opportunity to study God's Word on their own.

### Books Written By Frederick Osborn

1. *Building Wealth 2: Kingdom Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
2. *Church Planting Movements - India*
3. *Deceived! Overcoming the Age of Mass Deception*
4. *Disciple-to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus*
5. *Disciple- to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus, Study Guide*
6. *Exploring the New Testament*
7. *Exploring the Old Testament: Vol. One – The Pentateuch*
8. *Following Christ on the Indian Road: A Missionary's Story of Discipleship*
9. *From Genesis to Revelation: Interpreting the Book of Revelation Through the Old Testament Scriptures*
10. *Healing Miracles in the Bible*
11. *Jesus Over India: A 52 Week Spiritual Journey Through the Heart of India*
12. *Judges: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Prophetic Commentary*
13. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming Like Jesus*
14. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming a Disciple Like Jesus, Study Guide*
15. *One Holy Passion: A Daily Devotional Guide for 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for the 1040 Nations*
16. *Our Jehovah Rapha: A Christ Centered Holistic Approach to Wellness*
17. *Reviving A Nation*
18. *The Apocalyptic Vision: Understanding the Apocalyptic Writings of the Bible*
19. *The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements*
20. *The Church in Crisis: Four Essays on Contemporary Issues for Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
21. *The Gospel of Salvation*
22. *The Gospel of Salvation: Study Guide*
23. *The Healthy Heart*
24. *The Holy Spirit in You: Nourishing the Life of Holiness and power in You*
25. *The Legacy of Women in the Bible – Study Guide*
26. *The New Reformation: An Assessment of the New Apostolic Reformation from Toronto to Redding*
27. *The Physics of Heaven: The Theology of the New Apostolic Reformation*
28. *The Spirit of Religion*
29. *The Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Teachings and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah*
30. *This Gospel of the Kingdom*
31. *This Gospel of the Kingdom – Study Guide*





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