

Church Planting Movements

“Now it came about that while the multitude were passing around Him and listening to the Word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats that was Simon’s and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat. And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ And Simon answered and said, ‘Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding, I will let down the nets.’ And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break; and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus’ feet saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am sinful man, O Lord!’ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish they had taken; and so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.’ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

LUKE 5: 1-11

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

As I read the Word of God as found in Luke 5:1-11, I believe this passage describes a bit of what a church planting movement is like. I believe there is a 'kairos' time for every people group. That is the time, when the people are ready to respond to the call of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is the time when the Holy Spirit has already begun His work of conviction in the hearts of so many of the people. When that time comes, God calls forth His church and tells His people to let out their nets. A church planting movement begins when we, out of radical obedience to the command of our Lord, let out our nets when He reveals to us that proper time. Others may have labored among a people group for many years with no or very little fruit. We may be discouraged by what little fruit we see from our own labors. However, there will come a time when our Lord reveals to us that the nets need to be let out. When that time comes, we can let out the nets in obedience believing that a great catch is about to happen. We who are presently laboring among a specific people group may not be the ones whom God uses to bring in the full nets. We may be casting our nets and only seeing minimal results. However, God, in His infinite wisdom, is using all of our efforts and our faithfulness to prepare for the great catch among this people group. Regardless, all of us need to stand ready to be obedient. God may ask us to cast those nets one more time and we must be ready to do so.

I am no authority on church planting movements. I do not consider myself an expert theologian on church planting movements. However, I have had the privilege of being involved in a wondrous church planting movement in a restricted-access country. I have seen what God can do when His people are radically obedient to His command to go forth and make disciples. I have seen how God can use some of the simplest people and bring about a church planting movement. It is out of this experience that I would like to draw and give some personal reflections on what I have learned regarding church planting movements.

Some of what I will write will likely stimulate strong reaction. Some of what I write you may simply feel led to dismiss as not being applicable for your situation or ministry. There may even be some things with which you can agree. Whatever happens, know that this is not meant to be a definitive study on church planting movements, but rather is one man's view of some key components of a church planting movement drawn out of personal experience and study.

Giving a definition for a church planting movement that would satisfy all parties is not an easy task. There are many different components of a church planting movement that make it difficult to define in one, simple, straightforward definition. Here is my definition: 'When God's people are radically obedient to the command of our Lord as found in Matthew 28:18-20, a spontaneous eruption of new churches or cells will result that is out of human control, but clearly under the control of the Holy Spirit. It will not be driven primarily out of a comprehensive strategy or a particular methodology, but by a desire to be obedient to Christ.'

A first look at this definition may tempt you to offer a rebuttal by saying that Master Plans, long-term comprehensive strategies, and tried and proven methodologies are essential and how can I seemingly dismiss these as not important. Take a closer look at the definition. I am not dismissing any of these as being important or essential to a church planting movement. What I am saying is that once a church planting movement begins to take root, it will not be DRIVEN out of any comprehensive strategy or

Master Plan that you or someone else may have. It will not be held captive to a specific or particular methodology because, if it is a truly genuine church planting movement, it will be out of any human control. The uniqueness of a genuine church planting movement, in my opinion, is that it is definitely under the control of something (rather, I should say, 'someone') greater than any strategy which I or anyone else could develop because it is clearly under the control of the Holy Spirit.

I fully support the need for Master Plans. I believe that we need to replicate methodologies that have proven themselves successful around the world. God expects us to be wise and faithful stewards of our resources, our times, and our talents. I believe that many church planting movements have been initiated because of a plan or strategy to reach a city or people group with the Good News of Christ. However, a church planting movement, although perhaps initiated because of a Master Plan or some effective evangelistic or church planting strategy, is something that soon begins to take a life of its own. I, for one, rejoice when I can be a part of something that is driven by and under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit.

In Mark 4: 26-29, Jesus tells a wonderful parable. This is one of my favorites. It goes like this:

And He was saying, 'The kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows – how he does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain to the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.'

This is a good description of a church planting movement. The man in this parable simply goes forth and casts his seed upon the ground. He gets up in the morning and goes forth to cast his seed. He sows the seed all day long. He does this day in and day out, believing that his efforts will bear fruit. If he did not believe the effort would bear fruit, this man would not sow his seed.

Most all of us who are working in restricted-access situations or among unreached people groups know about seed sowing. For most of us that is where we have spent the majority of our time. We are involved in developing radio broadcasts in the language of a specific people group. We are involved in seeing that the Word of God is translated into the language of this people so they can read it in their 'heart' language. We are involved in mobilizing people who come to share their faith and experience with Jesus Christ on a one-to-one basis with this people group. We are involved in seeing the Jesus film translated into the language of this people group and then finding opportunities to show this film to as many of the people as we possibly can. Day in and day out, many others and we go about sowing the seed among the people group to whom God has called us.

But, Christ has promised us in this parable that there will be a harvest. All the seed sowing that take place via radio broadcasts, via scripture distribution, via Jesus film showings, via person-to-person interactions will result in a harvest. We believe it although we may not yet see it. We believe it, else we would not be about sowing the seed. There is, in my opinion, no such thing as a dichotomy between the so-called 'harvest' fields and the unreached people groups. Every field is a harvest field (see Appendix 1 "Towards a New Understanding of Missions: A Challenge to the Conventional Mission Thinking of Our Day").

The soil produces the crop. First, the blade. We see this in those initial believers that have come to trust in the Lord of the Harvest. These initial believers have the most difficult time surviving just like the initial blade of the crop. Without proper care, these initial believers will fall back into their old religion. This is something that has been seen around the world. I know that this is one of the major problems facing those working among Muslims in India. It is one of the major problems facing many of us working where the harvest is not yet so abundant and where new believers face severe hardships or persecution for their faith. When the seed that was sown begins to bring forth fruit, it is in this initial stage (the blade stage) that is so very crucial. Here is where intense discipleship that is modeled and taught must take place. We do not simply teach discipleship, we must model it. We who are the disciplers must see ourselves as mentors, those responsible for helping the new believers to mature in their faith. At this stage, we must begin to incorporate the truth of 2 Timothy 2:2 into our lives and into the life of the new believers.

Then the soil produces the head. This is like those first few congregations that are birthed. Not just a few believers, but actual congregations of believers that meet together regularly for worship, Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mutual encouragement. Still, the nurturing has to occur or the group (s) will quickly become fringe elements within their own culture and society, thus reducing their effectiveness to reach their own people. How often this has occurred, especially when the initial groups planted have a clearly Western-look to them. During my initial years in Cambodia, there were about 10 small house groups that gathered regularly throughout the capital city of Phnom Penh. These groups were like the head. They were clear evidence that God had planted His church among the Khmer people, but it was not yet a mature church that could easily reproduce itself. It took a lot of nurturing during those initial years before those small house churches were able to mature to the point that they could reproduce themselves. Interestingly, only about ½ of those initial house groups still exist today. The groups that did not survive were those groups where the nurturing process was abandoned or done half-heartedly.

Finally, the soil produces crop that is a mature head, full of grain. This is what I believe is the beginning of the church planting movement – where reproduction of churches is possible. Where will the sower get his seed for next year's crop? From the mature grain of this year's crop. From where will new churches come if we expect to see a church planting movement? They will come from those initial indigenous churches that are planted. A church planting movement, I believe, begins when an indigenous church within a specific culture or people group is able to and does begin to reproduce itself.

After the crop has matured, the sower gets his sickle and begins to reap the harvest. A church planting movement will begin, and it will quickly move beyond our control. While we are helping to nurture those initial believers and those first congregations, we need to be preparing for the harvest that is about to come. It will come and when it does, we need to be prepared. Once those first indigenous churches begin to reproduce themselves, the church planting movement is on its way. There will be an increasing need to harvest the crop, that is, to make sure that new believers are disciplined, that new leaders are equipped and trained, and that those new churches are nurtured until they can reproduce themselves as well.

It is important that the 'outsider' not try to exert power or control over these new congregations. The 'outsider' has a nurturing role, not a control role. The 'outsider' should encourage the local believers and churches to multiply themselves independent

of the ‘outsider’. Very few, if any, indigenous church planting movements have ever been born out of or sustained by the efforts of ‘outsiders’ who sought to control the planting of new groups.

The parable in Mark 4 that immediately follows this small parable is the Parable of the Mustard Seed:

And He said, ‘How shall we picture the Kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? It is like the mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is grown, grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that, the birds of the air can nest under its shade.

A church planting movement proves the truth of this parable. It starts out with humble beginnings. In fact, it has to start with one person who becomes a believer. Without that first believer the church planting movement will never occur. But out of that humble beginning will grow something that is amazingly large. The movement may start with a small group of believers in Karachi or Almaty who gather together for worship, Bible study, and fellowship, and who have a heart for reaching their own people with the message of reconciliation. It may start with a group of local believers in Cambodia that are trained, equipped, and mentored for church planting among their own people. It may start with a foreign expatriate who disciples a few new believers and together they begin to reach out into a city or a rural community. No matter how it starts one can be assured that the movement will likely start with humble beginnings.

I believe that if we are faithful in sowing the seed (and we do so abundantly – see II Corinthians 9:6), then God will honor that faithfulness. The seed will begin to produce fruit, first the blade, then the head, and then the mature grain on the head. It will grow like the mustard seed – from small, humble beginnings to something beyond our expectation.

I believe that we must be obedient to the command of Christ, to be faithful in going forth to make disciples. We must do so with radical obedience. We must sow the seed in any way that we can. If you will notice in all the parables that Jesus teaches about sowing seed, he never talks about methodology. Why? I believe methodology is not as important as the task itself. We must seek all kinds of methods and ways to see the gospel proclaimed among our people group. We must be faithful in sowing the seed. God will be faithful and one day the seed will produce fruit and that church planting movement will become reality.

Cambodia was a land where much seed sowing had occurred. For many years, folks had labored among the Cambodian people, proclaiming the gospel and seeing small congregations formed. Whenever it appeared that a major breakthrough would occur, Satan would come and attack the church heavily often through war and persecution. But, the church persevered. There is always a remnant, and so there was in Cambodia. Out of this remnant God began to rebuild His church in that land. More sowing of seed continued, until finally in the early 1990s the breakthrough came. The grain appeared with the head and now that grain has matured and is spreading out all over that land.

Baptist work alone has grown from one small church in 1992 to over 120 congregations in most every province of that country. There are estimated to be over 400 congregations throughout Cambodia today. A church planting movement? Yes,

no doubt about it. Seed was sown, the harvest came, and it grew into something unimaginable even 10 years before.

Did the church planting movement come suddenly? Did it happen overnight? No. It took a lot of sowing of seed through radio broadcasts, through scripture distribution, through Jesus film showings, through personal evangelism, through many other different methodologies. Yet, God did honor the faithfulness of His people. God responded to the radical obedience shown by His people. When the time came, God brought the harvest and the church planting movement was birthed.

What are some characteristics of a church planting movement? In a section of this compilation you will find an article written by a colleague on what he believes are some key ingredients to a church planting movement. This will be followed by some case studies on two unreached people groups as well as an article written about the church planting and leadership training done in Cambodia by Baptists. As you read all of these various articles, you will discover a variety of principles and truths that may help others or yourself in initiating a church planting movement among an unreached people group. Before moving on to those articles, I would like to present some characteristics of a church planting movement that I have seen out of my own experience and study.

First, prayer is what undergirds a church planting movement. One only has to look at the South Korean Church to know that prayer is essential to church reproduction and church growth. Perhaps the most significant impact which the Korean Church has had upon the rest of the evangelical Christian community is to open our eyes to the truth that prayer must be a part of all we do and all we are as a community of believers. Ed Silvano tells the story of the city of Resistencio, Argentina, and how this city was reached for Christ through the efforts of prayer. It was the Resistencio movement that gave birth to the Prayer Evangelism movement (see [That None Should Perish](#) by Ed Silvano). For years, thousands of believers around the world prayed for the people of Cambodia, especially through the dark years between 1975 and 1979. When the country began to open up to the outside world, many of those who prayed for the people of Cambodia came to work and minister among the people. Prayer undergirded the ministry in Cambodia, and prayer was the foundation upon which the church planting movement was built.

As a result of the prayer effort, one is likely to then witness signs and wonders as being part of the church planting movement. There has been a lot of debate in the Christian community today over signs and wonders. Some say that only through signs and wonders can we validate that God is at work. Others would deny the validity of any signs and wonders. Based on my experience and the testimony of others, I believe that signs and wonders will occur. They are not mandatory, but they appear to be a natural outgrowth of the intense prayer effort that undergirds the church planting movement. There have been stories upon stories of signs and wonders that have come from Cambodia within the last 8-10 years. Miraculous healings, deliverance from evil spirits, and other signs have all accompanied the spontaneous eruption of the church among the Khmer people. The signs and wonders have not occurred in every church planting situation within Cambodia, but they have been a part of the overall movement. Signs and wonders were a part of the first century church and they are a part of the twentieth century church. I, for one, believe that when there is such intense prayer as that which undergirds a church planting movement one is also likely to witness signs and wonders.

Second, a church planting movement is more likely to occur among a homogeneous group of people. History has shown that people like to become Christian without

crossing tribal, racial, class, or linguistic barriers. People like to become Christian with their own kind of people. Canjam Gamaliel, a Lutheran minister in the state of Kerala of India, has maintained that the Indian caste system should be seen as something God has used to help preserve Indian society. He believes that breaking this social structure, this order of preservation, is not a necessary part of becoming a Christian. He proposes that churches and missions should seek to plant churches among all castes with the understanding that these churches would remain one-caste denominations or part of the universal church (Gamaliel, "The Church in Kerala: A People Movement Study" – Master's Thesis).

Gamaliel is confident that accepting Christ and accepting the Bible as God's Word will destroy the religious sanctions that make the Hinduism caste system possible. When the religion sanctions that undergird the caste system are gone, then the sense of separateness and class distinction will also disappear. It is likely that indigenous churches much like those proposed by Gamaliel will begin to appear more and more within India. (Wagner and McGavaran, 1990, Understanding Church Growth). The India Missions Association and other groups are putting a clear focus on caste groups as people groups. Perhaps Gamaliel is correct.

Wagner and McGavaran say the following, "When several homogeneous units of a society turn responsive at the same time, the policy should be to disciple each out to its fringes. In these societies, 'loyalty to our people' becomes the chariot in which Christ rides to the hearts of unbelievers. If each homogeneous unit is completely discipled, nothing can prevent God from merging them into one fellowship; but if, before two percent of each unit has become Christian, churches and missions devote their energies to building up one Christian brotherhood, then most non-Christians (98 percent, to be exact) will be forced to leave their own folk and cross class and race barriers to become disciples of Christ. If this stumbling block is put in their way, the movement to Christian faith will usually falter and stop. Christian brotherhood is a *result* of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians – not a prerequisite for baptism" (Wagner and McGavaran, 1990, Understanding Church Growth, p. 177).

This principle of homogeneity seems to bear itself out when one looks at the various church planting movements and people group movements that have occurred throughout history. What has happened in Cambodia was a movement among Khmer people. The church is just now beginning to move beyond the Khmer racial barrier and reach out to smaller tribal groups and minorities within the country. The very fact that our own organization has opted to look at the world now through the lens of people groups indicates that we understand this principle of homogeneity to be true.

Another characteristic of a church planting movement that I have seen is that church planting movements tend to occur when leaders from the new believers are trained and equipped at the earliest possible moment so that the new congregations and churches can assemble under their own leadership. Nothing stifles a church planting movement any more than missionaries who refuse to relinquish the control and leadership of the new churches. We need to come to the place where we trust the new believers to rely upon the guidance of God's Spirit in their lives in the way which we say we do. Training-on-the-go is a stimulus to church planting movements. We need to move away from the formal theological educational system when we talk about church planting movements among the unreached and in restricted-access countries. We need to adapt our training, our discipling, and our leadership preparation programs to be

carried out on-the-go. We need to learn to train folks as they live and work in their communities and in their new congregations.

In Philippians 1:3-6, the Apostle Paul wrote, “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership (fellowship) in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

In his letter to the Philippian church, the Apostle Paul reflects an attitude that is important for us today. He says that the Philippian believers are ‘partners’ with him in the gospel. The Greek word here is ‘koinonia’, commonly translated as ‘fellowship’. Paul is not just talking about having fellowship with the Philippian church, as we tend to understand fellowship today. Paul is truly referring to the fact that the Philippian believers are tightly knit with him in the purpose of the gospel. Their hearts are joined with his heart. They have a unity of purpose, a unity of mind, a unity of spirit as they work together to expand God’s kingdom. Paul considered the Philippian believers to be true partners.

In our mission efforts today, the word ‘partnership’ often means that another is invited to join in what I am doing. Rarely do we find equal partnerships. More often than not, we seek out others to show them our plans, relate to them our vision, and then ask them to become a part of that. But, what Paul is relating here, in my opinion, something much different. I believe that Paul sees the Philippian believers as equal partners with him in the gospel effort.

When we work with our local brothers and sisters, we need to see them as true and equal partners in the gospel effort. Not too long ago, a Cambodian-American lady asked me about my ministry in Cambodia. She said, “Whenever I meet Cambodians believers, they tell me how you treated them as brothers and sisters. They tell me how you really cared about their spiritual growth, how you really encouraged them, how you trusted them to do the work. What did you do?”

I replied, “The only thing I tried to do was to see and treat my Cambodian brothers and sisters as partners in the effort. I trusted God that He who began the good work in them would complete that work. God had to convict me of my wrong thinking in this area. God had to show me that I needed to have confidence in Him and to have confidence in these new believers as well. I did nothing more than try to live my life among these brothers and sisters in this manner.”

Many times as missionaries, we have the attitude that because the new believers are not as mature in Christ as ourselves, we need to hold off allowing them to assume leadership until we can have confidence in them. It is not our lack of confidence in the local believers that are the problem. The problem is our lack of confidence in God. It is God who has begun the good work in them, and it is God who will complete that work. We need to walk alongside these new believers, not holding their hands as a parent would a child, but holding their hands as brothers and sisters, co-laborers in the task. If we truly want to see an indigenous church planting movement take root among a people group, we must reflect this attitude in our lives and our ministry.

In the two case studies that are included in this compilation of materials you will notice that training and equipping of leaders quickly was one of the keys to the rapid reproduction of churches among the respective people groups. During the first few months after becoming believers, people are highly teachable. Thus, it is crucial that we train leaders immediately and that we do so effectively.

In Cambodia, the primary principle we used for training was the principle found in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” We sought to teach people to be discipling teachers from the very beginning. This was indeed one of the keys for the rapid reproduction of churches among these people.

Another key characteristic of church planting movements is the emphasis and dependency upon God’s Word in the heart language of a people. In the church planting movements in Hawaii and among the Karen people of Burma during the 19th centuries, it was evident that having the Word of God accessible in the language of the people was critical to the growth of the church. In Cambodia, God’s Word was available in a variety of forms – Bible, Jesus film, Scripture portions, audiocassettes. Having ready access to God’s Word helped to facilitate the evangelism process and also was important for discipling believers and training leaders.

Many of those who work in World A, the neglected harvest fields of the world, know that such a tool as the Jesus film in the heart language of a people makes a significant impact. Sometimes the Word is not in a written form, but in an oral form such as Chronological Bible Storying. Hundreds of churches have been planted in the Philippines and other places around our world through the efforts of Bible Storying. Storying is simply an oral presentation of God’s Word in the heart language of a people.

All over our world as people have the opportunity to hear God’s Word in a way that is understandable to them, many are responding in obedience to that Word. God’s Word itself has the power to bring people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:12 reminds us clearly, “For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Therefore, it is crucial that the Word of God be presented to people in a way that is understandable to them. The best way is for that Word to be presented to them in their heart language.

Besides having the Word in the heart language for evangelistic purposes, the Word must also be taught to the new believers as they come into the Kingdom of God. New believers grounded securely in the Word will begin to evangelize their family and neighbors. They will begin to reproduce themselves, and churches will be birthed. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped in every good work.”

In Cambodia, training in God’s Word took center stage in all that was done. In the training program for church leaders, teaching God’s Word was key. We did not just teach books about God’s Word; we made certain that every training module had one or more of the books of God’s Word taught. I am confident that this grounding in the Word was critical to the spontaneous reproduction of churches that occurred and still occurring throughout that land.

If a church planting movement is going to take root among a people group, one thing that needs to be present is the mobilization of dedicated believers not just pastors, missionaries, and/or evangelists. When one looks at the growth of the New Testament Church it was the work of ordinary, dedicated believers preaching the gospel that was significant in the growth of the early church. Acts 8:4 tell us, “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Thessalonica saying, “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that

you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place you faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.” (I Thessalonians 1:6-8).

In Cambodia, although there was a core group of church planters who were instrumental in spearheading the church planting work, it was the dedicated efforts of the ordinary believers that stood out. Included in this compilation of materials are two short stories of ordinary believers. Their stories could be repeated over and over in the lives of many other ordinary Cambodians. In the first case study presented below you will see that ordinary believers were key in the rapid reproduction and multiplication of churches. A church planting movement will only occur when the evangelism and church planting becomes the task of the entire community of believers, not just a few.

During the last year or so in Cambodia, the trend is to see more new churches being planted by the existing churches as opposed to the trained church planters that are deployed. The church planting movement might have lost a lot of its momentum were it to rely solely upon the shoulders of trained church planters. However, because the local believers themselves have been mobilized and involved in the effort, the movement continues to grow. From the first days when the church planters were trained and sent out, they were instructed to always take church members with them. Almost every new start involved ordinary believers from existing churches. Thus, ordinary believers were given the opportunity to be involved in church planting. They were not only given the opportunity to be involved, they were expected to be involved.

David Hesselgrave writes, “History reveals that one of the most successful missionary movements of the modern era was that of the Moravians. Within twenty years (1723-52) they started more missions than all Protestants had started in the two preceding centuries. Why? Because they saw evangelization as essential and made it a ‘common affair’ of the Moravian community. How? By sending small groups of ordinary believers to establish themselves in new areas and raise up testimonies for Christ. In the case of the Moravians, they sent nuclei of believers to even the remote areas of the world! The proportion of missionaries to communicant members over a two-hundred year period was one in twelve!” (Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally – see also J. Herbert Kane, A Global View of Christian Missions).

Another characteristic of a church planting movement that I would like to mention is that of abundant sowing. The Apostle Paul wrote, “ Now I say this, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6). This truth is evident in church planting movements. In Cambodia, there was abundant sowing. Thousands of scriptures and scripture portions were distributed year after year. Teams were sent out to hundreds of villages each year to show the Jesus film or to carry out personal evangelism. Radio broadcasts were also an important tool in communicating the gospel. Further, new believers would go from village to village sharing their faith often following their web of extended family relationships. Television was another tool used for communicating the gospel message. Medical teams on boats went up and down the Mekong River into communities inaccessible by road to provide health care and preach the gospel. AIDS education teams went into rural villages to teach people about the rising problem of AIDS and HIV in Cambodia as well as to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Abundant sowing led to an abundant harvest and this continues among the Cambodian people to this day.

Finally, I believe that church planting movements are more often than not birthed out of a vision that results in a comprehensive strategy for reaching a specific people group or population segment. In my earlier definition, I mentioned that I believe a genuine church planting movement is not driven by a strategy or a specific methodology of evangelism and church planting. On the other hand, I do believe that a church planting movement is more often than not initiated out of a comprehensive strategy. Why? The key, I believe, is that this strategy helps to give a focus and keep those involved in evangelism and church planting from getting sidetracked from the ‘main thing’.

The church planting movement among Baptists in Cambodia grew out a vision to see a church planted in every district of the country by the year 2000. Initially, efforts were made to approach this systematically. The first obstacle was to start a church in each province believing that from this first plant the church would then spread to the various districts within that specific province. Once the first objective of a church in every province was reached, it soon became evident that the movement was beyond human control. The systematic approach to planting a church in every district was soon abandoned as the church began to spread spontaneously, most often following webs of extended family relationships.

In both of the case studies presented below, you will notice that the work initially began from a Master Plan. This Master Plan helped to give focus to the work. This Master Plan kept the Strategy Coordinator and others from getting sidetracked into areas that distracted from the main thing. The Master Plan was critical to birthing the church planting movement, but the church planting movement was not driven by the strategy or the plan.

As you read the following stories and case studies you will know doubt discover some other characteristics of church planting movements. To recap, the seven which I have mentioned are 1) church planting movements are grounded in prayer, and often signs and wonders occur as a result; 2) church planting movements will more likely occur among a homogeneous population segment; 3) church planting movements will more likely occur when local leaders are trained quickly and effectively; 4) church planting movements are facilitated by an emphasis and dependency upon the Word of God in the heart language of the people in either written or oral form; 5) church planting movements more often occur when the entire church is mobilized as opposed to just a few pastors, missionaries, and/or evangelists; 6) church planting movements are more likely to result when there is abundant sowing; and 7) church planting movements are often birthed out of a vision that results in a comprehensive strategy for evangelizing an unreached people group or population segment.

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8 Essentials of Indigenous Church-Planting

What will it take to reach the unreached with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? What all goes in to the process of planting Churches where there are none or only a few? Below are listed the essential elements of Church-planting among the unreached.

I. Prayer

Prayer must always be the starting place for any endeavor in which the church would even consider engaging. God desires us to show us His plans and ways, but to see where God would have us work, we must seek to hear from Him. As the assault on the Islamic strongholds begins, there can be no substitute for the fervent and effective prayer of God's people. Prayer is absolutely imperative to this entire work. It must and will permeate every aspect of the work.

Prayer mobilization requires getting the church to see beyond its local surroundings to intercede for people that they have never seen. It is a formidable proposition, but prayer mobilization is a must! Without it, we will surely fall short of the task.

Information, communication and a well thought out network are necessary to carry out an extensive international prayer mobilization effort. An effective means to provide the churches with what they need to carry out corporate prayer for the lost around the world has yet to be found. By dealing with the issue of prayer mobilization we will be encouraging the church to return to the front lines of missions. Simply, people in the church in North America don't pray for the Karakalpak, Mazandarani, and Hinkle people because they don't know they even exist. They don't know what God is doing among them or how they can become involved because they are not aware of what is happening. If we are able to bring the mission field to the churches through regular interaction between church and field, and through the use of various technologies, the church could be mobilized to pray much more effectively. There is an interesting revival of prayer permeating America today. I believe the Lord wants Christians in America to pray for the lost in World A. We can help them to pray by developing a strategy to bring them in line with what is happening in the fields.

The matter of mobilizing people to pray must remain among the top priorities for reaching the people of the Muslim world.

II. People

Even the best plans amount to nothing if no one carries them out. Our impact on the Muslim world will be meager if we don't recruit workers. We can no longer sit back and wait for individuals to respond to some indescribable feeling before they are willing to go and lay down their lives for the sake of the Kingdom. There is a tremendous need for willing and obedient children to follow Christ's leading to the mission field. Any strategy must include the mobilization of workers world wide.

The Great Commission is more than just a call to the church to go into all the world. It is a call to obedience for the whole church. God not only wants to save the lost through the church, but He wants to use the process of reaching them to sanctify the church. Through the commitment of the church to fulfill the Great Commission God will bring a great revival. Why? Because God's very purpose is to redeem the world to Himself.

I want to address this matter a bit further because for me it has come to be a pivotal issue in the dilemma as to how to reach the Muslim world for Christ. I am convinced that for so many years we have reserved the work of the Missionary to the socially and educationally elite so much so that we have refused admittance to the greatest asset of the church, namely the laity (I use this word with caution as it appears nowhere in scripture even in illusion. I use it to refer to those who are not an official part of the clergy or ordained leadership of the church).

The past hundred years has seen the emergence of the professional missionary. This professional missionary so completely dedicated to his task, full of self-sacrifice, blind commitment to his task and driven life of banishment has set for the church a frame of reference that few even imagine to attain.

Two problems seem to stem from this unfolding of events:

- 1) The church has been robbed of some of the blessings of the Great Commission because it has been effectively removed as the major player in it.
- 2) The 'Fields that are white for the harvest' haven't enough workers because the church has been convinced that it is unfit for the task.

I. The Great Robbery: It is imaginable that perhaps some of the greatest problems caused in the Southern Baptist Convention today are caused by the fact that we Southern Baptists who are called to be fishermen, have decided to become pugilists instead. I find it interesting that as I read about the standing Armies of the great empires of the world such as the Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, and others that their real problems began when their armies were at home in garrison. Soldiers who don't or aren't allowed to fight can become very cantankerous.

In Max Lucado's book "In the Eye of the Storm" Max relates a most fascinating story that I believe illustrates this point precisely. He tells of a fishing vacation that he, his father, and best friend took. They arrived to their weeks' fishing cabin just in time for a storm to break out. They were forced to stay inside the cabin all week, which led to some strained relationships. Max then goes on to say that he learned a hard lesson that week. Not about fishing, but about people: "When people who are called to fish, don't fish, they fight."

Not only could this be the cause of many of our problems it could be that which robs the church of many of the blessings commensurate with the Great Commission. I suspect that much of our failure to prosper could be at least loosely connected with this great robbery.

II. The Fields are White: Ponder these statements from Greg Livingstone in his recent book, Planting Churches in Muslim Cities "...a primary reason why more churches do not exist in Muslim cities today is a quantitative one, not a qualitative one. 'Where there is little sowing, there is little reaping.' (2 Cor 9:6)" and again, "Wherever the church of Jesus Christ exists today we normally find a history of sustained well-mannered effort for years. Thus, a major missiological problem related to church planting in Muslim cities is quantitative."

Many theories have been espoused as to why there aren't more churches planted among Muslims. Some say it is the fault of the Lord. God just isn't working among the Muslims. Maybe. Not likely. Others say, it is the missionary's fault. This doesn't seem too generous. Especially since some very godly people have labored years and have seen limited fruit. Maybe it is just the Muslims. They are just an obstinate bunch. That won't float. The Lord saved you and me. Maybe God has been waiting for us to adopt some good methodology. Naaaah!

Here goes! I think the problem has as much to do with the fact that quantitatively speaking the Muslim world has been ignored by the church worldwide. It hasn't been until the early 1980s that the church has even begun to wake up to the needs of the Muslim world.

Paul tells us in I Cor 9:6 that those who sow sparingly, will reap sparingly. It seems that perhaps the real reason that there are so few Muslim believers is because so little seed has been sown. Could it be axiomatic that where much seed is sown much reaping will take place? Lord of the harvest, send forth laborers in to the fields. The fields are white for the harvest.

III. Planning

The development of a comprehensive plan is essential to the accomplishment of any mission. Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out." We are admonished throughout the scriptures to exercise wisdom by planning and counting the cost. "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this." (Psalms 37:5). The key is to plan our trust, not trust our plans.

Thorough, informed and objective planning will enable us to maintain a balanced focus on the work to which the Lord has called us. This planning must be done systematically, with the best information at hand. Although plans will differ in each area of the Muslim world, there will be immense similarities between them. Regular interaction between the SCs will enable us to capitalize on one another's strengths, gifts, and experiences.

Planning to complete the task must become the hallmark of what we are doing. We must be more diligent and thorough in our planning. We must equally seek to be directed by the Spirit of God as we plan. Our plans are destined to fail if they are not from the Father, but, the Father's plan will always succeed. I know this is rather basic, but I have been reminded that it is easy to move forward with plans that are dreamed up in our minds devoid of God's compulsion. So I will say again; Spirit-led planning must be a priority if we are to complete what God has called us to do. We must never let our devotion be directed to a plan, it must always be focused on a person, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Platforms

Platforms for presence are becoming increasingly difficult to find in some areas of the Islamic world while at the same time, other places are blowing wide open. Increasingly, platforms in Islamic lands as well as others, tend to revolve around business and human development. Great Commission Christians need to be keenly aware of what the entry strategies are and how they can be used to effectively plant a church. This will require much study and wisdom.

Meeting the needs of a spiritually hungry and thirsty world are indeed getting more and more difficult as we approach the 21st century. Not only are the needs becoming even more immense, it is also getting more difficult to meet those needs.

Everywhere we turn it is becoming more difficult to give ourselves in the name of Christ to meet the needs of a hurting world. Has it become cost prohibitive to take the Gospel to the places where we are not wanted or are we called upon to carry the Gospel to all people who haven't yet heard? While being accountable to the laws of government, we must not allow the dictates of human government to keep us from our higher law that compels us to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

I would like to propose a model that is presently working in the midst of a society where missions is officially considered illegal and propose some principles that have been developed and tested in employing new ways to carry the Gospel to places where it is unwelcome using a humanitarian need platform.

I will use the term platform to describe the vehicle that we use to create presence and context, which affords the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Principles:

1. Human need is real and not to be taken lightly
2. Human Need platforms must insist on the highest level of integrity. They must do what they say they are going to do.
3. Human Need platforms must be inherently Christian in everything but name.
4. These platforms must provide for the maximum placement of people (Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God...how shall they hear without a preacher?)
5. The best platforms should provide for the maximum amount of flexibility in time schedule.
6. As much administration as possible should be done by local staff. Poor administration hinders effective service.

We can look to the Scriptures for several examples of how Paul used a platform to proclaim the Gospel to the people of Athens. Let your minds be creative when thinking of platforms. When Paul approached the men at the Areopagus he first did a careful study of the city in which they lived and was able to make a connection (build a context) through the idols that he saw while in the city. This connection was critical to his proclamation. It provide a context by which he was able to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. We must come to a place where we expand our thinking beyond just looking for visa generating opportunities.

V. Proclamation

Proclamation in many ways is the heart of the matter and the work in missions. Workers need to understand how to proclaim the Gospel in ways that are culturally sensitive. Workers must come and focus their lives on preaching the Word. Multi-faceted approaches will need to be used to proclaim the message of Christ.

The preaching of the Word of God must drive our strategies in reaching the unreached. It is not merely enough to develop relationships with local Muslims. It is a must that we develop strategies to engage them with the Word of God and confront them with the living Jesus. There are some basic ideas that we must consider in order to allow us to do this.

High priority must be given to language learning, WELL. We need to approach language in the contexts of relationships with people. As the Brewsters say, “language learning is communication – is ministry.” We need to really commit our hearts to learning the language as best as we can. We need to be able to handle with superb facility the great truths of our Lord and Savior. After that we need to take on the challenge of progressing in our language to the point of being able to enter deeply into the cultural/intellectual life of the people, through study of their history, culture and literature. This will find a great place in their hearts as we demonstrate that we are genuinely interested in them and not just on the prowl for another convert.

I want to cite some observations on language learning and give some hints that have been given to me on this matter (I can’t remember who gave them to me, sorry if they were yours).

- A. Perspective (attitude) is one of the most critical aspects of language learning. One of the major problems with language learning is not that the language is difficult, but that the learner is difficult. I know that sounds brash, but is just the truth. A positive ‘can do’ attitude will go a long way to setting the stage for healthy language acquisition.
- B. Scripture: learn to use the scripture as soon as possible. Read and memorize scripture in your new language.
- C. The Jesus Film: Use it as part of your language learning experience. This film is excellent for language learning. First, you already know the script and can understand the plot by merely watching the screen. Second, the film has a wide variety of voice pitches, moods, sentence construction, etc. It gives you an excellent range of ear range options. Make an audio cassette and use it to just listen to. Before long you will understand every word and construction.
- D. Proverbs: Learning local proverbs is an excellent way to be an insider with the language. You probably don’t know it but they use proverbs everyday in language. Memorize some of your new language’s proverbs. They will give you some interesting insight into the culture as well.
- E. Accountability: Most of us are lazy. Let’s face it. Only a few rare birds are able to do this without anybody checking up on them. There must be someone checking up on you weekly, asking you tough questions like “How much time did you spend in language?”
- F. Record Keeping: We must discipline ourselves to keep track of our progress and be constantly developing new strategies to learn in areas where we are weak.
- G. Evaluation: Consistent feedback is essential to our language study progression. If we aren’t getting feedback we are not getting the most out of our language learning experience.

VI. Planting

Church planting is the best way to see a people group movement for the Lord. Each people group has distinctly different CP needs that must be learned (uncovered). Some places are more hostile to the Gospel than others. Clearly the dynamics will be different with each people. Below is an example of the type of considerations that must be taken into account when developing a church planting strategy among a people group, in a nation, or in a city. The example is taken from the work being done among the people of the city of Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Evangelism and Church Planting in Tashkent:

With such a varied number of ethnic groups represented in Tashkent, the issue of what type of church to plant becomes a very important one. What will the church look like in Tashkent? While understanding that only the Lord knows the answer, I would like to offer some categories to help us think through the possible answers to that question as we develop the subject matter.

Many different issues will come into play as the Lord draws people to himself in Tashkent. What will be the ethnic make-up of the church? What type of corporate worship will drive the people into the arms of a loving Father? What will be the language of the fellowship? These may seem like rudimentary questions, but as we all know, there are no easy answers to these questions. AS the church in Tashkent unfolds it will become evident that it will have quite a few different faces and the lines of division won't be ethnic, but linguistic. While one will probably not see Russians worshipping in Uzbek language, there will most likely be seen Uzbeks worshipping in Russian language. It is just as likely that you will see Kazakhs, Tadjiks, and possibly even Koreans and Jews worshipping in the Uzbek language. I believe that these issues will be important because it will dictate from the very beginning what type of fellowship we intend to target. The type of church that will emerge will probably be rather predictable based on the region of the city you target and the population group that you hope to work among.

Below I have set out to loosely define the spectrum of Church options that one could now or in the future find in Tashkent.

C1 National Churches – normally Russian language. Baptist, Pentecostal. Isolated Uzbek believers who are members of a local National church. Possibly this category will include cross-cultural marriages as well as Uzbeks and other nationals that clearly don't have a firm grasp of the Uzbek language. These people will be heavily Russified in their culture and view.

C2 National Church made up of Russians, Koreans, and Uzbek believers. They use a more traditional worship form and use Russian language, but the church is not seen as a solely Russian church. It is seen as a multi-ethnic worshipping congregation.

C3 National Churches. Uzbeks who worship in Russian language. What distinguishes this church from a C2 church is the fact that it is almost exclusively an Uzbek congregation. This church will probably be the offspring of members from C1 or C2 churches.

C4 Indigenous Traditional Church – Uzbeks who worship in the Uzbek language. They use, however, many of the traditional forms of worship used in the C1-C3

churches. It is most likely that they were planted by a local Russian or Uzbek believer who was brought up in a C1-C3 church.

C5 Indigenous Non-Traditional Church – Uzbeks who worship in Uzbek language, but do not use traditional worship forms. They develop their own unique Uzbek forms of worship. They implement a lot of Uzbek forms of culture and semi-Muslim forms in their worship. These churches will most likely spring from the work of expatriate workers. These groups will probably come from among the ranks of heavily student oriented ministries.

C6 Indigenous Muslim Form Church – Uzbek in language, Muslim in form. They may even attend the mosque to worship. Would not refer to themselves as Christian but would identify themselves as Muslims who worship in the name of “Isa Masih.”

C7 Uzbek believers who worship in the name of Jesus, but do so in a clandestine manner, unattached to any formal fellowship. For fear of persecution they stay away from organized activities of all other ‘Christian’ activities and events.

Significant differences in strategy will emerge when one chooses which population segment to target. From the very start the type of fellowship he/she will seek to plant will be determined by the language they plan to study. For instance, if a person plans to study Russian, it is most likely that they will become involved in planting a C1-C3 church. A person learning Uzbek language will most likely be involved in planting a C4-C7 church. If one wanted to be involved in planting C1-C7 churches, he/she would have to learn both Russian and Uzbek languages.

It is important to understand all this because it will help clarify our sense of intentionality when actually planting the fellowship. There will be several ways to approach the church planting problem. Do I, for instance, feel more qualified to be involved in planting a specific type of church? If so, then I will want to begin my preparations which will lead me to that end. If I feel led to work among a particular segment of the population then I will want to prepare accordingly as well. The type of work we feel the Lord calling us to must determine how we go about preparing for that work. How we prepare will determine what type of ministry we will be involved in.

The next question to ask is what is the right type of church for Tashkent? The answer is: all of them. I believe that we will see a heterogeneity of churches in Tashkent as the Lord pours out His Holy Spirit on that city. There will certainly be plenty of C1 Traditional Churches. They are and will be one of the first places that we will see most of the activity. There is a tremendous openness to the Gospel among the Slavic and Korean people in Tashkent. I can’t help but believe that the Spirit of openness will spread out among the other ethnic groups as well.

VII. Preserving

Once the new-born church begins to grow there will be great need for care and nurture. It will be the workers responsibility to see that this new church thrives through discipleship and grows in their faith through Bible teaching, worship, and prayer.

Below are some areas that we need to insure the new indigenous church inculcates into their normal form of 'Christian living'. This list is not exhaustive, but just a starting point.

1. Salvation and Assurance of Salvation
2. Time alone with God
3. Prayer
4. Holy Spirit
5. Confession of Sin
6. Victory over Sin
7. Separation from the World
8. Fellowship
9. The Bible: hearing, memorizing, meditation and study
10. Claiming the promises of God
11. Applying the Word to life
12. Witnessing
13. Lordship of Christ
14. Personal relationships of believers, unsaved family, church, man-woman
15. World vision and missions
16. Goal-setting; discovering God's vision for your life
17. Money
18. Redeeming the time
19. Discipleship
20. One-to-one ministry
21. The Will of God
22. Self-control
23. Second Coming of Christ
24. Satan
25. Spiritual Warfare
26. Worship

Each of these areas will bear itself in a way that perhaps will be different from our own. That is normal and if it looks just like us, then perhaps we have over emphasized our own culture in the teaching process. Each of these areas will need to be born out from the heart of God. They will find their place within the cultural context of the people. This does not mean that whatever happens is ok. The culture can also be a hindrance to the nature of God in each man and woman. One responsibility is to teach the Word of god. That same Word that save, preserves for its own.

VIII. Parting

As we begin to see the new-born church firmly established it will become necessary to plan an exit strategy. Each situation will require a different set of requirements, but it will be important to begin addressing the matter of parting and leaving the work to the indigenous church. We see throughout scripture that Paul seldom stayed for long periods in any one place. Yes, others were sent to encourage and to exhort in the faith and to pick up where Paul left off. We must caution ourselves against gaining a settler mentality and moving in for the long haul when God may be desiring us to move on after laying a foundation through us.

“What Will It Take to Evangelize These People? A Paradigm Shift in the Ministry

From the starting of the church in Russey Keo in 1992 until the Spring of 1993, I had been involved in carrying out discipleship training and equipping leaders at this young, but growing congregation. During that time, there were about two to three new church starts out of the Russey Keo congregation. Some of my time was also spent visiting these groups and conducting some teaching and training. In a way, I was proud of myself for being able to do all of this work as well as still being able to oversee the humanitarian aid work of our organization. Pride cometh before the fall!

In early 1993, I had the opportunity to sit at the feet of a gentleman who, in a sense, would be like a mentor to me for the next few years. While in my home one day, this gentleman spoke the following words of wisdom to me, words that would reshape and refocus our entire approach to church planting in Cambodia.

He said, “Most people working cross-culturally usually ask themselves, ‘How can I reach these people with the gospel?’ This question narrows their vision and places the responsibility of the enormous task on their own shoulders, as if they were the ones who had to do it all. What we should really ask ourselves is, ‘What it is going to take to evangelize these people?’ This question broadens our vision and opens up new opportunities in that we no longer carry the burden by ourselves. We realize that there are more resources out there than just ourselves. One key is figuring out how to multiply yourself. If you have to do church planting, in a good year, you may be able to help plant three or four churches. However, if in that one year, you multiply yourself in the lives of three or four men, they may be able to start three or four times more churches in one year. A second key is realizing there are so many resources out in the world, there are so many people and groups that are being raised up to come and serve in Cambodia. You need to help them find their niche, their place of service among these people.”

One of the exercises which I was asked to do at that time was to write down 100 different ideas on how to reach the Khmer people. I remember making out my list. The closer and closer I got toward the magical number of 100, the more absurd and ridiculous my ideas became. At least, I thought some of those ideas were moving towards the absurd and ridiculous.

After completing that list, the next step was to go through each item, one by one, and identify any person or group that was involved in the specific ministry. As I did this exercise, God began to open my eyes to the truth that the body is indeed made up of many different (and sometimes unusual, of which I am one) parts, but that the parts

are brought together by God to comprise a beautiful, marvelous, and powerful body! How easy it is to accentuate the differences between each other rather than affirm the variety of gifts, talents, and resources.

A Cambodian-American said something to me one day that reinforced this idea for me. He said, “There was only one evangelical group able to work in Cambodia when I was a child. There was only one church. I never heard the gospel. We need all groups. One church, one methodology will never reach my people for Jesus.”

About six months after I did that initial exercise, I went back over my list of 100 ways to reach the Khmer with the gospel. What I discovered was that a large number of those absurd and ridiculous ideas of mine were actually being done by one Christian group or another. At first, I wanted to say, “Hey, that was my idea!” Of course, seeing other groups doing those different ministries made me realize my ideas may not have been as ridiculous as I had first imagined. I had to come back to my senses and affirm these other groups in what they were doing, giving thanks to God for sowing that idea into their hearts and then bringing it forth to bear fruit.

Another key thing that God taught me through this time of learning in 1993 was that the emphasis in our work should be on the sowing of the seed itself, not the methodology we employ to sow the seed. A tiny parable was how God brought this truth home to me: “The kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows – how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade; then the head; then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come” (Mark 4:26-29 NAS).

So often we become entangled in our methodologies employed for sowing the seed that we forget what is more important – the sowing of the seed itself. God calls us to be obedient and faithful, to sow the seed – day and night, day and night. This parable never speaks about how the farmer sowed his seed. Did he have a water buffalo to help him plow and sow the seed? Perhaps he had a machine that went up and down the rows of the field throwing out the seed. Maybe he had to get on his knees and plant each seed one by one in the dirt at just the right depth. For you see, methodology is not the overriding concern. Our faithfulness is the focus here, our faithfulness in sowing.

I made a commitment to our Lord saying, “I want to be a person and I want our organization to be a group of people that affirms the gifts, talents, and resources of different individuals, organizations, and denominations. I want to pledge that I will focus on the sowing of the seed. God, forgive me for thinking at times that my way was the best way and for not recognizing that it is really Your way that is the best. Your way is not always understood by my finite mind, but I do know that you call of us who have a variety of gifts, talents, and skills to be faithful seed sowers. I want to be one of the faithful.”

Once this truth had been shown to me, I realized that I had to ask some others to forgive me. At times, I had scorned some and mocked others for what I considered to be inadequate and ineffective efforts in preaching the gospel. I began to see the ministry in Cambodia from a new perspective, one that led me to be more affirming rather than critical. I wanted to become known as one who could encourage others rather than ridicule them. I committed myself to seeking a change of attitude and heart.

As I reflected on those whom God had called to serve in Cambodia, I stood amazed at the various nationalities and multiplicity of gifts of these people. I realized that

these other brothers and sisters in Christ had come wanting to be faithful to the call of God on their lives. Who was I to discourage them? I knew God desired that I should encourage and seek to find ways in which I could serve them in order that their ministry might prosper. After all, we were all about the business of sowing the seed. The harvest would come. The harvest indeed would come!

A second thing I learned from this gentleman is the need to multiply myself in the lives of others. II Timothy 2:1-2

(NAS) says, “You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others.” This is the simplest, yet one of the most profound statements found in God’s Word. It is simple arithmetic. I teach others who are faithful and who can then teach others whom can then teach others and so on. Simple, yet a truth which I had neglected to incorporate into my life and ministry.

I soon began to pray, “Lord, raise up some men and women in whom I can invest my life – those who have the desire to reach their own people with the gospel of hope and who have the burden to plant Cambodian churches.” I did not know what God was going to do. The only Khmer men and women whom I knew were those at the Russey Keo Baptist Church. I did not know from where God would call forth those whom I could mentor, but I tried to keep the faith that God, in His wisdom, would provide.

Another person who had heard of my plan to perhaps mobilize, train, and mentor local Cambodians for church planting said to me, “With all these different groups in Cambodia vying for laborers to work alongside of them, you should go out and buy up the best. You should go to the Bible school and other places and seek out the cream of the crop. If you don’t the other groups will, and you will only have what is left over.”

Although I knew the intent of his heart, I balked at such a suggestion. I realized there were Christian agencies and groups hiring as many of the Cambodian Christians as they could possibly afford in order to help build up their work; however, this idea of ‘buying the cream of the crop’ was not the answer I sought.

I am glad that I did not listen to this advice. I will never regret spurning this suggestion. I prayed again, saying, “Lord, I only want to work with men and women whom you have called out for this task. I want them to have a burden, not only for evangelism, but a deep desire to plant Your church. I will not actively seek out those for this task. Lord, send them to me.” Within several months, God raised up the very first man. His name was Rith who had been the gentleman God had allowed me to work with in planting the Russey Keo Baptist Church. Actually, he did the planting. I assisted with the watering, and as we all know, God gave the increase to that new church. Rith’s story deserves more attention later.

I look back on that time in early 1993 with joy, relief, and amazement. The joy was that God had revealed to me some key truths that would undergird our ministry for the next three years. I felt a sense of relief along with the joy because, for the first three years, I had placed the burden of reaching the Cambodian people with the gospel squarely on my own shoulders. How foolish I had been to think God had only called me out for such a task. Such a relief to know there many, many others whom He had already called and whom He was preparing to call out to join with us in the task.

I reflect back on those days with amazement because the simple truths God revealed to me during that time actually worked when put into practice. How often I had tried to make the ministry out to be an intricate and complicated thing. Yet, in God’s

Kingdom, it is so simple. We are not called out to stand alone. God calls out others to be faithful with us in sowing the seed. I stood in awe of those whom God called out from many different places around the world to come to Cambodia. God called out His people from places like Brazil, England, Scotland, India, Bangladesh, America, Ghana, Kenya, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Canada, and even places like Northern Ireland and Iceland to come and be a part of His mighty work here in Cambodia. God called all of us (and many others) to multiply ourselves, to pour out our lives into the lives of others so that the gospel will spread and churches will be planted.

In later months, I would often read the life of Jesus from the Gospels over and over. The more I read in the gospels about the life and ministry of our Lord, the more I realized that this was His way. Yes, He poured out His life for all people, but Jesus took twelve and poured all that He had into them. Not all of them succeeded, one actually betrayed Him. Others were of questionable character. But, somehow Jesus, in all of His wisdom, knew that the future of God's Kingdom would be entrusted to them. Thus, He poured His life into theirs.

Jesus never planted a church. In His earthly days, He never was able to witness the full fruits of His efforts. Jesus had to return to the Father and patiently wait to watch His eternal plan work out in the lives of that small group of men into whom He poured His life. Guess what? It worked. Somehow this gave me encouragement and hope. Perhaps it was because Jesus had made it work before, and He could make it work once again even through a broken, incomplete, and imperfect vessel like me.

BCa

“There was one, and then there were two, and then there were three...”
Rith's Story and the Birth of the Church Planting Ministry

As I mentioned earlier, the story of Rith deserves special attention, not only because he was the first Cambodian man that God gave to me to mentor in the area of church planting, but moreso because of the way in which God has manifested His marvelous grace and mighty power through the life of this simple man. What a thrill it has been to my heart to be a part of this man's spiritual journey! What a joy it has been to witness God at work in the life of this man whom God called out to plant churches among His own people! I have considered it a privilege that God allowed this man to be a part of my life. I have learned more from Rith than I could have ever taught him.

Rith was the Khmer gentleman who asked me to come and help him in the planting of the church in the Russey Keo area of Phnom Penh, a church that eventually became the first Baptist church planted in Cambodia. At that time, Rith had been working with a parachurch organization in Cambodia that focused on evangelism and short-term discipleship. It was not a church planting organization, thus Rith had no knowledge of how to begin planting the church. He was a strong evangelist and was capable of conducting beginning discipleship, but he lacked the knowledge (not the skill nor the gift as I later discovered) on how to mold a small group of believers into a church.

At the same time, I did not consider myself to be an expert in this area of church planting. In fact, I felt quite inadequate in this area. I had pastored in the United States and helped in the starting of a mission in Hong Kong, but I had never been a

part of actually planting a church from scratch. Yet, I knew that God called me to Cambodia for the purpose of seeing churches planted, and I had to trust that God would lead me.

It was during the time that I had been teaching at the Russey Keo group when I began to ask the Lord to raise up Khmer men and women into whom I could pour my life. I had little inclination that the first man would be Rith. After all, he was already employed with this parachurch organization, and I had no intention of asking him to come and work with me. In fact, I had already promised the Lord that I would not seek out these men and women, but would trust God to raise them up and send them to me.

Rith and I began to develop a close relationship with each other as a result of our working together in the Russey Keo community. I began to notice that Rith was troubled over a matter because he would often comment on how his organization was pressuring him to move into another area. In fact, Rith told me that his organization wanted to talk to me about taking over as the leader of the Russey Keo congregation. At that time the group of believers had not identified themselves with Baptists or any other group. Rith did not want to move to another area. He talked about how the group would break apart if there was no one to assume the mantle of leadership.

The leader of his organization did talk to me one day, and made an offer. He asked me to assume responsibility for the Russey Keo congregation. They would give me the church, he said. In fact, he offered to give me a number of small groups that his folks had started. I was somewhat taken back by the manner in which I was approached. My straightforward Baptist reply to this man was, "How can you give me or anyone else a church? It is not your church to give. This church has the right to decide themselves what they want to do under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Neither you nor I nor anyone else has the right to tell them what to do. You cannot give something away that is not yours to begin with." Needless to say, my reply did not set well with this gentleman.

A few days later, Rith shared with me that he was being pressured once again to move on to a new location, but he did not want to move. He said he knew that more needed to be done. "What good is it to do evangelism and some teaching only to leave the group? It will just fall apart. I want to stay longer. I want to learn how to plant the church," Rith told me. At that point, I still did not offer him anything other than my prayers and my continued support through teaching and training. The days passed, and Rith became more frustrated over this situation. About a week later, I jumped in my car and traveled over to see Rith at his home. When I got there, Rith was obviously excited at my arrival. I saw no reason for the excitement, but he was definitely happy to see me. He invited me into his home and began the story.

"I have been praying for a sign," he said, "a sign from God over what to do about my situation. I asked God to let me know if I should quit my work with my present organization and come to work with you. I told God that if He wanted me to work with you for Him to send you to my house. But, if He wanted me to continue my work with the other organization then send them to my house. I had just prayed that prayer this morning, and you came. Now I know what God wants me to do. He wants me to work alongside with you, with the Baptists.

Rith went on to tell me that he desired to learn how to plant churches. I explained to Rith that a church planter was different than a pastor as well as different than an evangelist. A church planter had to be able to function both as an evangelist and a

pastor, but with the intent of eventually leaving a work in order to start a new one in another place.

Although I believed Rith's story about his prayer and how he believed God had answered that prayer, I was still hesitant regarding his leaving of his present employment to engage in this new endeavor of church planting. Rith and I discussed the matter most of the morning. We prayed together about the matter. As we prayed, God began to give me a genuine peace in my heart about the matter. Rith continually assured me that this was what he believed God was calling him to do.

Thus, the journey began for the two of us. I walked out of his home that morning wondering how a blind person could lead another blind person. We were going to face some tough obstacles. "Will this really work," I asked myself. At that point, all I could do was trust the Lord to give us both the grace and wisdom we would need for the days ahead.

This was not the way I had envisioned the start of the church-planting ministry. However, I have come to understand through the years, and God once confirmed the truth, that His ways are not always our ways. Further, God had to remind me, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV). God had to know what He was doing, but I wish He would fill me in a little more often ahead of time instead of waiting until later! I also remembered the plea I had made to God asking Him to raise up the men and women and send them to me. I had forgotten to tell God how this was supposed to be done! God was faithful to my prayer, and He sent Rith into my life. This relationship would forever change my life, and Rith's life as well.

As I went back home, I asked myself, "Now what do I do? I have no material in the Khmer language to help Rith learn about planting churches. It is going to be an uphill walk all the way." However, I decided that I need to develop some type of material, not just for training Rith, but for those who would come after him as well. Of course, Rith and I would also have to learn the process together by doing it. You cannot learn all that you need to know from a book. But, we did need something to help begin to plan and organize the church-planting effort.

The next week I began teaching Rith about church planting. As I taught I was putting the materials into the Khmer language so that after we were finished we might be able to have some basic material with which we could train future church leaders. Each week, I would go to Rith's home, and we would focus on one step in the church planting process. Each week, I would instruct Rith that before he could start to learn the next step in the process he must teach the material he already learned to another person. Thus, from the very beginning I sought to instill the concept of II Timothy 2:2 into this man's life. After eight weeks, I had completed a church-planting primer in the Khmer language, Rith had been taught the basic principles involved in church planting, and now it was time to put those principles to work.

One early morning, I sat with Rith in his home, and we were sharing back and forth about our vision for Cambodia. At that time, we both agreed that if we were going to see Cambodia reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, it was going to take a joint effort of many groups and denominations, not just one. I showed Rith my vision statement for Cambodia I had written down earlier in the year. This vision statement was to see an indigenous, reproducing church in each district of the country by the year 2000. At that time, there were 187 districts in Cambodia, and it was going to take at least 187 new churches to fulfill that vision. Impossible some may say. Rith said it well, "No way that we could ever start that many churches." I replied, "You are

correct. We cannot start that many churches, but the Christian Missionary Alliance, Assemblies of God, Nazarenes, and all the other groups working together with us can!”

I also reminded him of a special promise of God, “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (I John 5:14-15 NAS). I went on to tell Rith, “Is it God’s will that all the people in Cambodia have an opportunity to hear the good news? You bet! Is it according to God’s will that His church be planted in this land so that there will be a light for the people? Sure. Then, is it wrong to ask God to fulfill this vision that we have? Not at all.”

From that day forward, Rith and I agreed that this was to be our common vision, the burden we would carry together. A colleague of mine visited Cambodia in the Spring of 1997. During that visit, he heard Rith speaking to representatives of many Khmer Baptist churches. Rith spoke of the vision to plant a church in every district of Cambodia by the year 2000. The vision still lives! Rith is moving forward with the vision and trying to instill that vision into the hearts and minds of all the Khmer Baptist believers.

The more I worked with Rith, the more I became impressed with how he allowed God to teach him and mold him. Our first several months together were difficult, we both had to learn a lot from and about each other, and we both had to learn a lot from God. However, there was one thing about which God began to prick my heart.

Coming from American to do cross-cultural work, one often has the tendency to think that he or she has the answers that the other people need. A lot of us involved in cross-cultural work talk about being filled with and led by the Holy Spirit, but seldom do we seem to recognize that the same Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of the people to whom we are called to serve. We say we do, but we do not live our lives nor build our ministry believing this to be true. I am not criticizing other cross-cultural workers, but I am reflecting on a truth that God revealed to me about my own life and ministry through my work with Rith. I have seen a lot of paternalistic patterns of relating to cross-cultural work, none of which were ever really successful. I had to abandon my paternalistic patterns of dealing with Cambodians. This involved daily checks on my words and actions as I worked alongside of the Cambodian people. This is a continuing process that does not end.

As a result, one day I shared with Rith another vision I had for the ministry in Cambodia. The vision was to see every church, every congregation birthed out of this church-planting ministry to be birthed by and led by Cambodians – no foreigners. The vision I had for foreigners was for us to serve as encouragers, to help in training and equipping of leaders, to mentor church planters and leaders, but the church should be Cambodian. It should not be an American or Western church model transplanted onto Cambodian soil or Cambodian culture. I asked Rith to join with me in trusting God to lead the Cambodian believers through to His Holy Spirit to fulfill this vision.

I knew this would be more demanding on us, but I believed in my heart that we were moving in the proper direction. I wanted desperately for the new churches to be rooted and dependent upon Christ, not dependent upon some foreigner or some foreign organization. I longed to see authentic Cambodian churches which God had planted within their own culture and which reflected who these people were because only such a church had a chance of reaching all the Cambodian people with the gospel message. To this day, every Khmer Baptist church started in Cambodia as a result of

this church-planting ministry or through the Khmer Baptist Convention has been started and led by Khmer men and women. God through His Holy Spirit is accomplishing what I believe He intended to accomplish all along, that is, planting a church in this culture that can reach out and minister within this culture.

Not long after Rith and I began working together, God sent us another gentleman. Sok was a quiet, gentle man who came from a southern district in Kompong Cham Province, the next province north of Phnom Penh. The first time I met Sok I questioned whether or not this man had the potential for such a ministry. However, Sok assured me that God had called him to this work. And so there were two. Soon God raised up another man named Meng from Battambang, and then there was another and another and another until the number reached nine men and one woman.

Not all of those who started out have finished the race. As in any battle, there are always casualties, and our work has not been an exception. However, today the group of church planters numbers eleven men working in places like Kratie, Koh Kong, Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Siem Reap, Kompong Speu, Battambang, Bateay Meanchey, Kandal, and Kompong Chhnang Provinces. The ministry continues to bear much fruit as these faithful men go forth to preach the gospel, gather the believers, and birth new congregations. Most of the churches in the Khmer Baptist Convention have been started as a result of the ministry of this group of church planters. Today, churches are being started by men and women whom these church planters have trained and mentored. A second generation of church planters has been born. This is evidence that the church planters are fleshing out the truth of II Timothy 2:2 in their lives and ministry.

I often tell people that I am not ashamed to admit that I have not started any of these churches. God had a different plan for my life. God raised up Khmer men and women into whom He would pour out His Spirit and through them He would perform marvelous works. God allowed me to be an encourager, a mentor to these men and women. I tried to pour my life into their lives, often falling way short. I made many, many mistakes. I became fatigued. I became discouraged. I did not give of myself to them as I should. Yet, in spite of my shortcomings and failures, God took these men and women and molded them into the people He wanted them to become.

Today, Rith oversees the work of this group of church planters. He is now serving as their mentor. He is now the principal teacher and model. Rith has become a devout man, a faithful follower of our Lord. Sure, he has his shortcomings as well. Yet, Rith is an avid student of the Word. Rith is filled with the Holy Spirit. Rith is committed to the task of seeing a church planted in every district. He hungers for God, he cries for his people, and he lives his life as a role model for others.

One day while I was back in the United States for furlough a gentleman said to me, "We appreciate your going to Cambodia to open up the Baptist work there. You are like the father of the Khmer Baptist churches in Cambodia." Initially, I felt a sense of pride and accomplishment, but in my heart I had to truthfully reply, "No, if there is a father of Khmer Baptist churches in Cambodia, it is Rith. However, both he and I would admit to you that neither of us is worthy of such a title. It has been God's work, and will forever be God's work."

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant

of the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, 'Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given I to you, just as I spoke with Moses...no man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail nor forsake you. Only be strong and very courageous...this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'"

Joshua 1:1-9 NAS

For Rith and the others whom God has called out to be church planters among their own people, this is my prayer for them. Cambodia belongs to the Lord, the Cambodian people are being called into God's Kingdom. Sure, it is often very difficult. It is frustrating. At times, they feel defeated. But the promise of God is sure and steadfast. He will be with them at all times and in all places. Wherever the sole of their foot treads, it is my prayer that God would give that place over to them for the purpose of planting His church there.

BCa

“Those things which you have received from me, you pass on to faithful men...”
The Rural Leaders' Training Program

I sometimes tell people that I am living proof that a person does not have to know what he or she is doing in order for it to be done. I do not consider myself an educator or a theologian. Those who have heard me preach would undoubtedly agree with the second! On the other hand, I am known for being one who will try most anything once, step out on the limb, take the risk, and see what happens. Trial and error, I think, is the sociological or psychological term used. That's me! I prefer to call it 'walking by faith' although not all the time is that true.

In the early months of 1993, the United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC) was in Cambodia preparing the people of Cambodia for free elections in which they would select a new government based on the agreements signed in Paris between the various fighting factions. However, the Khmer Rouge, although having signed the Paris Peace agreements, refused to participate in the political process. They continued to disrupt the nation with their guerilla warfare tactics. Furthermore, the former Communist regime –the State of Cambodia now campaigning under the name of the Cambodian People's Party – was not too pleased about having their power

challenged. They resorted to acts of intimidation, threats, and often acts of murder to keep other political parties from gaining a foothold, especially in rural areas. Thus, the security situation in early 1993 was tense throughout most of the country. Even after elections, when there arose no party winning a clear majority and the two major parties in the election sought to work out a compromise of power sharing, security through the countryside was questionable. No more so that in the northwest provinces of Battambang and Bateay Meanchey far away from Phnom Penh where the Khmer Rouge had their strongest forces.

One day a letter came to Cambodia from a Khmer-American pastor in the United States asking me if I could travel to Bateay Meanchey to visit a new congregation for the purpose of doing some discipleship and leadership training. I talked with Rith and another Khmer-American named Keth about this request. None of us were really interested in making the two day trip by road due to the danger of fighting and violence, especially along the major transportation routes. As an American, it was unadvisable for me to travel. Keth, being a Khmer-American was also a probably target, while Rith did not know the countryside in that area which made him vulnerable as well. The three of us thought of our options. Finally, the suggestion was made (I am not sure whose idea it was) for us to call the people from Bateay Meanchey to come down to Phnom Penh. Being people more familiar with the countryside and travel in that part of the country, those people could travel back and forth more easily than we could. Furthermore, there were a few other new groups being started that could benefit from the training as well. Thus, the seed was sown for what was to become the Rural Leaders' Training Program.

As I mentioned earlier, I do not consider myself to be an educator nor a theologian. How were we ever going to start a training program? Keth, Rith, and I sat down and discussed what we were going to do. We decided that we did not want to compete with the Phnom Penh Bible School nor did we want to duplicate the Theological Education by Extension Program presently being carried out by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. Could we find a special niche, fill a need that no one else was filling at that time?

We decided that we would focus on new church starts, that is, training the new leaders being raised up in these new groups whether they be elders, pastors, teachers, or some other leadership position. We would focus on the elementary principles of the faith because most of the people we wanted to target were new believers themselves. We decided that we needed to provide practical training as well as Biblical-Theological training.

What would we teach? What materials were available? We knew we did not have the resources to develop new materials nor did we feel we should do this given that there were likely to be some good materials already available. I went to the Christian and Missionary Alliance office to review the literature they had available. Keth, Rith, and I all reviewed the materials and jointly decided which ones were most appropriate for our situation.

We sat down one afternoon and made out a rough draft of a curriculum. We decided that we would later poll the students who came to our training as to what kinds of things they felt they needed to learn in order to be able to serve in their respective congregations. We actually wrote a curriculum. I could not believe it. I had not anything like this at all in my life. In talking with Keth and Rith, I suggested that we base our program on the principle of "learn a little, go and teach it, come back for more, then return to teach again, and so on". Furthermore, most of the folks whom

we wanted to reach were rural farmers as well as congregational leaders, and we knew that we could not start a residential program. We developed a one-year, four-module program. Each module was two weeks long. Each module was three months apart. Thus, the students would have two weeks of intensive learning, and then they would be sent back to their respective congregations with the encouragement to teach that which they had learned. Rith and I decided that he and I would travel around the various provinces to follow-up on the students to see if they were indeed teaching what they had learned.

Another one of the issues that we all agreed upon was that we want to have local Khmer teach as much as possible. It was my belief that we need to begin giving the local Khmer believers as much experience as possible learning how to teach and train others. We wanted to have at least one local Khmer believer or leader teaching in each session. Most of the time, we were able to fulfill that desire, but at other times, we had to rely solely on foreign or Khmer-American teachers and trainers.

Finally, we made it a standing principle that anyone could request to come and study in the program. This was not a Baptist program for Baptist leaders only. This was a training program for rural leaders. We decided that we would also make it a point to enlist teachers from other groups and denominations as well.

The first two-week session was held in August 1993. There were fifteen students, half of whom were from the Russey Keo Baptist Church where the training was being held. During that first sessions we taught a simple book on beginning doctrines for new believers that had been written by an overseas Khmer. We also taught the Gospel of John as well as practical ministry session on how to organize a small congregation.

About two weeks after we completed that first training module, I was approached by Rith who told me that some other leaders wanted to come and be a part of the training. Again, these were from new church starts, some Baptists and some from other groups. So, we held another session about five weeks later. There were seven students in attendance for that session.

Eventually we had so many requests for entrance into our program that we combined the first two groups of students into one in order to start up a third group. By the end of the first year, we were training 59 church leaders of over 40 congregations from about 13 provinces (there are 22 provinces in the country). God had truly blessed. I never imagined my being able to start a Bible training program such as this; however, I am so thankful that God allowed me to be a part of this effort, to be able to teach and train these men and women, to become a part of their lives and ministry, and, most of all, to learn from them.

Now, when we began our training program, we did meet with some rather stern opposition and slander. I believe that God allowed for this to happen in order to test us. I also believe that God allowed for this to happen in order to prepare others to become a part of this effort with us. Let me explain.

Shortly after we had started our training program, word came back to me that a certain lady named Betty was quite distraught over our opening up yet another 'Bible School' and a Baptist school at that! Now Betty had been working with Cambodians longer than any person I had known. She was a wonderful Christian woman who loved the Cambodian people and who was a gifted Bible teacher. When I heard the rumor that she was not happy with me, I just began to pray. I considered her to be a dear friend and one with whom I could seek advice on many issues. Thus, I was a bit confused when I heard she was not happy with our training program.

The only response I could make was to pray. First, I had no way to verify that she had actually said anything negative about us. Second, I understood that in Cambodian culture it is common for tales to be spread for the purpose of trying to ruin a person's name and this could well be what was happening in this instance.

The Lord gave me the answer. The Lord prompted me to go to Betty and ask her to teach in the next training session. This I did. She reluctantly agreed, but she did agree to do it. I said nothing to her about what I had heard. I told Rith what I had done, and we agreed to pray and wait.

Betty came, and she taught the book of Genesis. After the two-week session had come to a close, Betty showed up at my home one afternoon and made a request of me. She asked me if she could teach more often in the program. As it turned out, Betty had a real heart for rural people, she loved to teach the rural people, and teaching those rural leaders had brought a joy to her life that she said had not been there for many years. In the end, Betty became the program's resident Bible teacher whenever she was available. I will never know if Betty really did say the things she was accused of saying about our program, and I hope I never do know. All I know is that God gave us a wonderful Christian woman who loved His Word, who loved the Cambodian people, and who committed herself to teaching and training these folks.

At another time, a local Cambodian named Seang was asked to come and teach during one of our sessions. Initially, he refused. He blatantly refused, saying that our program was simply a cover to recruit people for the Baptist churches. Rith came to me upset about his encounter with Seang. I prayed with Rith and offered the advice to not concern ourselves with such petty incidents. God would provide the person we needed for the session. At the end of the first week of that training session, there was a wedding at the Russey Keo Baptist Church. Seang, who had refused to come and teach about music and worship in our training program, had brought his musical band to perform at the wedding. Of course, most of the students in the training session were in attendance that day as well.

I do not know what took place on that Sunday afternoon during the wedding activities. Somehow, God did a work in the life of Seang. The next morning Rith came to my home and sought my advice. He said, "Seang asked if we would allow him to teach in our program this week. What do I do?" My reply was simple, "Let him teach."

The Rural Leaders' Training Program eventually became an eight-module, two-year program. In August 1995, the first group of students graduated from the program. There were 23 students who had completed the eight modules. The second group of students graduated in June 1996. The program has grown in the past three years to more than 100 students. The growth has been so great that two additional training sites have been added. The Battambang training center serves the northwest part of the country, and the Svay Rieng training center serves the southeast part of the country. The Russey Keo training center in Phnom Penh continues to operate and will start with a whole new group of students later this year. More and more of the local leaders, especially those who have completed the program, are being utilized to teach in the Battambang and Svay Rieng training sessions.

All we have tried to do through this training program is to encourage the students to flesh out the words found in II Timothy 2:2 (NAS) which says "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." So simple, yet the foundation for growing

leaders and growing churches. God has honored our attempts to be faithful in this area because God is faithful!

One of the joys I have experienced through the church planting ministry and the Rural Leaders' Training Program is witnessing the involvement of Christian brothers and sisters from other countries, especially other countries from within Asia. No church has been more supportive and more involved than the Hong Kong Baptist Church. They have prayed diligently for these two ministries, they have prayed diligently for me, they have given generously and unselfishly of their finances, and they have sacrificed of their time to be personally involved in these two ministry areas.

As I think of the brothers and sisters of the Hong Kong Baptist Church, I am reminded of another church, the church of Thessalonica. The church of Thessalonica became an example throughout Macedonia and even into Achaia. In fact, Paul said, "For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything" (I Thessalonians 1:8 NAS). The faith and commitment of the Hong Kong Baptist Church indeed has gone forth into many places throughout Asia, and I am confident it has gone forth throughout other places in our world as well. I do know they have been the backbone of the church planting and training ministry here in Cambodia.

Not only has God raised up churches like the Hong Kong Baptist Church, but God also has begun to raise up churches in other places as well. For several years, I prayed and pleaded with folks in Singapore to become a part of this ministry. In late 1994, I had about given up all hope of ever being able to get Singapore Baptist churches involved, but then God began to stir their hearts. The first team of trainers arrived from Singapore in August 1995, and they have continued to send short-term teams to this day.

Of course, I do not want to overlook the contribution made by the Cambodian Southern Baptist Fellowship (CSBF) in the United States. These churches also have played a significant role in the church planting and training ministries in Cambodia. Further, in recent months God has called out several Southern Baptist churches in the United States to adopt Cambodia as one of their fields of service, and I know that God will continue to raise up and call out more and more individuals and churches.

Perhaps the greatest joy I have experienced as part of the Rural Leaders' Training Program is watching the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of these men and women. I often hear reports from their ministry as they come in to study each session. To hear of the growth, both numerically and in spiritual depth, is an affirmation that this Rural Leaders' Training Program is accomplishing what it was meant to accomplish.

I want to close with this story. I have often taught in the Rural Leaders' Training Program, but usually I have been called upon to translate for many that have come from Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States. During one particular session, I had been translating in the mornings and the afternoons for a full two weeks. I was exhausted. At the end of the two-week session, during the closing meal and program, one of the students stood up and made this statement. He said, "I thank God that he gave us Mr. Bruce to translate for us these past two weeks and not one of the Cambodians from overseas because Mr. Bruce does not know a whole lot of Khmer and his translation is simple. He does not use the big words that some of the Cambodians from America like to use because he does not know those big words. We could understand Mr. Bruce's translation when sometimes we cannot understand the others."

When I heard this gentleman say these words, I was a little bit offended. I was not sure whether he was giving me a compliment or was ridiculing me. I had to digest his words for a few minutes. I realized there was great truth in what this gentleman was saying. I recalled the words of the Apostle Paul as he wrote to the Corinthian believers, saying, “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God” (I Corinthians 2:1-5 NAS).

In the beginning when I translated or when I taught in the Khmer language, I did not have the attitude as reflected by the Apostle Paul. Actually, I sought to learn as many of those 'big words' as I possibly could in order that I might be able to use them in my translation. But upon hearing this man's testimony and his unique compliment of my translating skills, I resolved that this would be my attitude from that day forward.

I am confident that we have sought to be faithful, that we have sought to build the ministry not upon the wisdom of man, but on the power of God. We have not been perfect, but simply striving to be faithful. After all, that is all God requires.

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“For Consider Your Calling...” The Story of Vanny and Narin

Vanny's Story

In early 1994, my wife Gloria was approached by the women at the Russey Keo Baptist Church to help them conduct a humanitarian aid project, which would aid the poor women of that community. They wanted to learn how to make a special basket indigenous to the Siem Reap (northwest) area of Cambodia. They felt that if they could learn to make this kind of basket then they could sell the baskets in the market and thus earn additional income for their families. Both Gloria and I believed this was a worthwhile project to help underwrite and support.

Pastor Rith explained to us that there was an older lady from the Siem Reap area who had been making these baskets since she was a young child. They wanted her to come and teach the women at Russey Keo. However, Rith was concerned that we might not agree to have this lady teach because she was not a Christian. Yet, in keeping with our philosophy regarding humanitarian aid projects, we explained to him that all of our projects were designed to assist both Christian and non-Christian alike. We also wanted them to have the best instructor possible, and if that meant having a non-Christian teacher that would be okay. After all, we told him, in each of our projects conducted through the church, we invited students to participate in a Bible study once a week and that would include inviting the teacher.

Vanny was invited to come down from Siem Reap to begin the class. There were about 12 women who participated. Most of them were members of the church. The first thing I noticed was that these women brought Vanny with them to church every Sunday for worship. At sometime during the first two months she was teaching the class, Vanny became a believer.

One sunny afternoon, Rith and Vanny showed up at our home in Phnom Penh. As we sat on the porch talking with them, Vanny began to tell us of her need to return to her home village in Siem Reap. She had just received some devastating news. Her daughter who was eight months pregnant had been riding on the back of a motorbike taxi, and the motorbike had crashed, killing both Vanny's daughter and the unborn child. With tears in her eyes Vanny asked that we help her return home so that she could make arrangements for the cremation of her daughter and unborn grandchild. Vanny told us that she would return as soon as possible.

Gloria and I were both deeply concerned and sympathized with Vanny's plight. One of our concerns was the effect this tragedy would have on this woman who was new in the faith. Would her faith be shattered because of this unseemingly senseless death of her daughter and unborn grandchild? Was Vanny's faith strong enough to sustain her through this time? We could only pray and trust that the Lord would provide the grace she would need. After praying with Vanny and providing some money for her to return home, Gloria and I sent her on her way.

Several weeks passed by, and Gloria asked Rith a number of times if he had received any word from Vanny. Rith had not heard any news. One month passed, then six weeks and still no word. Finally, one evening Gloria asked Rith if there was anyone whom we could send to go and check on Vanny. Rith volunteered to go himself.

The next day, Rith departed for Siem Reap. We anxiously awaited his return for the news. Four days later, Rith shows up at our front gate once again with Vanny at his side. Once again we sat on our porch and listened to Vanny tell her story. After her return home to prepare for the funeral of her daughter and unborn grandchild, Vanny's husband had been killed in a motorbike accident as well. As Gloria and I listened to her story we were amazed at how calm Vanny appeared to be.

Vanny returned to finish the basket class at Russey Keo. In August of 1994, the class completed, Vanny returned back to her village in Siem Reap. Several months later, Gloria and I had the opportunity to travel to Siem Reap for a visit to Angkor Wat, the famous Khmer temple complex, as well as for a visit to Vanny's home. As we sat in Vanny's home, she told us about her being busy getting rice ready for harvest, she told us how she had begun teaching other women in her village how to make the baskets, and she told us how, after returning home from Phnom Penh, she had joined up with another young man and the two of them had started a church! We were stunned at the news.

As she told her story, I was quickly humbled. God reminded me of the words from the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian believers, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God" (I Corinthians 1:26-29 NAS).

Here I sat, a man with a college degree, a seminary degree, and another Master's degree as well. Here I sat, a man with several years of experience in pastoring a

church as well as working in a cross-cultural setting. Here I sat, listening to the story of a lady who only knew how to grow rice and make baskets talking about how God had used her to plant a church. She was young in the faith, tragedy had hit her life, not once but twice, and yet God had taken this woman and used her to plant his church in that area. I was greatly humbled.

I realized at that moment the most important thing about serving God. The most important thing was that we make ourselves available to be used of Him. We may have all the preparation schools and seminary can provide, we may have years of experience in serving the church, we may have immense knowledge of the Bible, and we may even have a charismatic style of preaching; however, if we are not fully available to be used of Him then all of this is for nothing. God can only use those who make themselves available to Him.

Perhaps this is why God most often chooses the simple, the weak, and despised people of the world because such as more apt to rely upon Him rather than their own wisdom and strength.

The small congregation that God used Vanny to start had some difficulties during those early months. However, God raised up another young Khmer man who had the burden to do youth ministry and plant churches in Siem Reap. This young man has assumed the leadership of the original congregation, and he has started three other new groups. Besides those four congregations there are at least six small cell groups which this young Khmer leader and the young people working alongside of him have started. I recently saw this young man's plan for the future that included the process of growing the six small cell groups into congregations as well as starting eight new cell groups in various villages. What began as humble beginnings, has now become a wonderful success story. Why? I believe it was because one simple lady made herself available to be used of God, and God did the rest.

Narin's Story

Many times I have read the parable of the widow's mite in Luke 21 thinking that this was a splendid teaching on tithing, and, indeed, it is. The parable goes like this, "And He (Jesus) looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And he said, 'Truly I say to you, this widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on'" (Luke 21:1-4 NAS).

My relationship with a man named Narin showed me that this teaching spoke of much more than just tithing. Narin was a simple man, but this simple man helped me to see that this teaching of Jesus about the poor widow went much deeper than just the giving of our money. God used Narin to teach me that we are to give all that we have, all that we are in service to Him.

Narin began working with our organization during 1992, overseeing the construction of a vocational training workshop that we were providing to a secondary school in the western part of Kandal Province about 50 kilometers from Phnom Penh. Narin was the construction crew supervisor. He helped us to construct two workshops as well as to dig two large fishponds on the school grounds. It was my thinking that we had hired Narin only for this construction work, but Narin had other ideas.

After the construction was completed at the secondary school, Narin would show up at my home each morning. He would sweep the drive, sweep the front walk, water the plants, cut the grass, and do other odd jobs. I had assumed that Gloria had asked him to help out around the house. Gloria had assumed that I had asked him to help out. One day, Gloria asked me, "Why does Narin show up every morning?" My reply to her was, "I have no idea. I never asked him to come." Neither of us had the heart to tell Narin he was not needed. After all, Narin was such a gentle man, and he had a good heart. He was a devout Christian man as well. And so, Narin became a fixture around our home.

Some would call Narin a handy man. However, this would be stretching the truth a little. More often than not, the jobs Narin would do on repairing broken items around the home ended up having to be done two or three times before finally being fixed.

One day we had asked Narin to build a little concrete shed adjoining our outside kitchen wall where we could place the propane gas tanks needed for our stove. After two days, the job was completed. Narin put the tanks in and closed the doors, proud of his handiwork. The next morning, one of the tanks was empty, thus I had to go out and change the hose to the full tank. When I opened the doors to the small shed, they fell off onto the ground. I was mystified. "What did I do wrong?" I asked myself. As I looked at the doors and the shed more closely, I discovered the problem. Narin had put the hinges on upside down! I called Narin over, explained the problem to him, and by the next day our doors were fixed. Such was life around our house with Narin. Nonetheless, this simple, gentle hearted man was a joy to have around.

In late 1994, funds were made available to help a congregation in the northwest province of Battambang construct a worship center. Also, we were ready to begin construction of the second Rural Leaders' Training facility in Battambang. I asked Narin if he was interested in overseeing the construction work at these two sites. I explained that first we would construct the worship center at Brokeap and then begin on the training facility. Narin was excited. He readily accepted the assignment.

Now Brokeap was in an area where there was often a lot of Khmer Rouge guerilla activity. However, Narin was undaunted by the prospects of encountering the Khmer Rouge. He seemed thrilled that we would ask him to oversee this work. I knew I could trust Narin. I was not exactly sure about the quality of the work, but I knew I could count on Narin to get the job done and get it done honestly.

Narin had been gone about 2-3 weeks when I took a trip to Battambang to check on the church building construction. On that day I arrived they had already laid the foundation and were preparing to put up the wooded frames. I helped them set up the frames, and then Narin and I sat down to talk. During that conversation, Narin reported to me how each day around 3:30 in the afternoon, they would have to stop their work, put all their tools away, eat supper, and before darkness hit take off into the fields to hide from the Khmer Rouge who had been coming into the village almost every night for the past two weeks. I asked Narin if he was frightened and did he want to return to Phnom Penh. He emphatically said he wanted to stay.

During that same conversation, Narin also told me how he met with the church members several times during the week, and they worshipped and prayed together. He really enjoyed those times together. Then Narin told me the following, "I do not know how to do very much. I am not a smart man. I cannot teach the Bible. I cannot be a pastor. About the only thing I am able to do is simple construction. But, I have told God that I want to serve Him by helping to build church buildings in Cambodia.

Whenever there is a church building to be constructed and they need someone to help, I want to do this for the Lord.”

I was somewhat startled by his statement, but I thought of how sincere Narin was in his commitment to serve the Lord. Narin was correct, he did not know how to do much. He was a simple, but gentle man. He realized, however, what he was able to do, he knew who he was, and he wanted to give all that he was to God to be used of God in a special way. So often we find talented and skilled Christians who use a little of their talent and skill in service to the Lord. How seldom we find someone willing to give all that he or she is and all that he or she is able to do in service for the glory of God.

I have reflected often on that day sitting with Narin in that quiet village of Brokeap. I have often thought how Narin has given more in service to God than I have because he has committed to give all where so often I am guilty of giving only a part of myself. May I find the heart to be like Narin, and may God raise up others like Narin in places like Cambodia. That is what it is going to take to reach our world with the gospel.

As I look back on the ministry God has given to me during the past six and one-half years in Cambodia, it has been a ministry whereby I have simply sought to pour my life into the lives of Cambodian men and women who would faithful to teach others. In the past four years, God has allowed me to be a mentor and teacher to about a dozen men and women who have given their lives to planting churches among their own people. This ministry has resulted in the establishment of over one hundred congregations of various sizes in most of the provinces throughout Cambodia. It has led to the establishment of three training centers for rural church pastors and leaders — one in Phnom Penh, one in Battambang, and finally one in Svay Rieng — where over 150 students have received basic Biblical teaching and practical training for ministry in their own villages and congregations.

None of these with whom God has allowed me to mentor and teach would be considered as wise, noble, or mighty men by the standards of this world or by the standards of Cambodian society. Most of them are simple rice farmers or tradespeople with limited education and experience. I have seen churches planted by people who knew nothing more than how to plant rice. Vanny was a basket weaver. Another gentleman was a motorbike taxi driver. Another gentleman was a barber. Another was a former cadre with the Khmer Rouge. And still another was a former sailor on a vessel that traveled the Mekong River back and forth from Saigon to Phnom Penh. Some were elderly. Others were young. Some were married. Others were single. Some could read and write while others were illiterate. It was a group of men and women much like the group of disciples that Jesus gathered around Him during His lifetime.

The one thing they shared in common was not capability, but rather availability. These Cambodians have give themselves to God to be used of Him. One of the greatest blessings I have received through the ministry God has given to me in Cambodia is to see how the same Holy Spirit who lives and works in my life is the same Holy Spirit that works in the lives of these simple Cambodian brothers and sisters. All of the churches that I have been a part of seeing planted through this ministry in Cambodia during the past years have been planted by and are being led by the Cambodian people themselves.

There were those who said it could not be done this way. They told me that the Cambodians were not ready to lead these congregations. They said the Cambodians were not spiritually mature enough to handle the responsibility. I refused to believe

them. Many of these naysayers were measuring the capability of the Cambodian brothers and sisters according to our Western ideas. I saw what God could do and was doing in the lives of so many simple Cambodian people. I learned that the Holy Spirit does not work according to our American or Western thinking. The Holy Spirit works as He always has done, calling out simple, committed people who make themselves available.

There are those in Cambodia today who still believe the Cambodians are not capable of leading their churches. These people have the tendency to work among the Cambodians not as partners, but as parents. But, it is my prayer for all of us whom God has called out to this place that we will remember our own calling. Just like so many Cambodians that God is calling out today to lead His church in Cambodia, not many of us were wise, noble, or mighty people in the land from whence we came. Let us not seek to be wise and noble now. Let us walk hand in hand with God and with our Cambodian brothers and sisters, not holding their hands as parents would a child, but holding their hands as equal travelers on the spiritual journey that God has set before us. May we always be confident just as the Apostle Paul and be able to say that we know and trust that He who has begun a great work in the lives of so many Cambodians will complete it until the day of Christ. May we take what God has given us, pour it out into the lives of our brothers and sisters in Cambodia or wherever we may serve, and then rejoice as we witness the Holy Spirit do His thing in their lives.

- BCa

Case Study of the Evangelization Strategy for the Exwyzeese

1. Describe your target group.

A. Describe the use of pseudonyms in this case study.

I have substituted the name Exwyze for the province and target group name of the people group. I have omitted any personal, agency, church, or city names as well, making only general references.

B. What is the time period under consideration?

December 1987 to April 1996.

C. What linguistic factors came into play in the evangelization of your target group?

The Exwyzeese people are ethnically Han Chinese. The factor that distinguishes them is their language. The Exwyzeese language does not fit the written Chinese language grammatically. The reading of the language is then quite awkward. A Exwyzeese script was developed but never widely used. There are five major sub-dialects of Exwyzeese which are geographically dispersed around the province. Exwyzeese is the heart language of over five million of the seven million inhabitants of the province.

Because Exwyze is part of China, the official language of government and education is Mandarin. It is commonly spoken in the capital city as well. The

people of the province are eighty percent rural and agrarian. This means they have only minimal formal education and do not speak Mandarin well. Therefore it is necessary in most rural areas to work in Exwyzeese. In the capital and among the more highly educated people in the smaller towns and villages it is possible to work in Mandarin. Such people are definitely a minority.

There are also a few minority nationalities present in the province. These have their own languages. One of these groups has just over a million members. These people are in a similar situation to the rural Exwyzeese in terms of needing a witness in their own language.

D. What were the primary barriers to the evangelization of your target group (cultural, governmental, geographic, historical, etc.)?

A historical factor that served as a barrier to the gospel among the Exwyzeese was the fact that Exwyze was viewed as a place to be avoided. It served as a place of exile for criminals and political outcasts. It was a place of cannibals, disease, wild animals, and oppressive weather. This meant that no one went there if they had any choice in the matter. It was also geographically isolated because of the fact that it was a remote island. It became an educational and cultural backwater in the country.

Exwyze received relatively little attention from missionaries as well. Although some missionaries came, a disproportionate amount of their work was done among the more responsive minority peoples. The number of converts and churches remained quite small despite the committed efforts of those early missionaries. The primary barrier to the gospel, however, is government opposition. Missionary or evangelistic work is illegal. Christianity as such is not illegal, but churches and Christian activity are heavily controlled by the government in an attempt to prevent growth in the churches or their impact on society. Evangelism and church services or other Christian meetings are only allowed if there are approved leaders in approved places at approved times. Minors cannot be evangelized. Preaching about the Second Coming or from apocalyptic passages and books is prohibited. The training of church leaders is tightly controlled and includes extensive political indoctrination. Baptisms and distribution of Bibles and Christian literature is also tracked and thus controlled. Violations of any of these laws, including attendance at an unregistered or unapproved church service will result in punishments ranging from heavy fines to imprisonment or stints at reform labor camps.

E. Were there any special opportunities for the evangelization of your target group (unusual circumstances, rapid changes, etc.)?

There are special opportunities for the evangelization of the Exwyzeese, however. The province has been undergoing extremely rapid change since 1988. The society is being suddenly exposed to the outside world and being forced to contend with new ideas and the influx of wealth. The capital in particular has experience rapid development and an increase in standard of living. These changes have opened the way for other changes, including those dealing with spiritual matters. The people are open to change at this time.

- F. Describe the demographic factors of your group which were relevant to the evangelization of your target group and what their relevance was (rural/urban, educational/literacy levels, population, etc.).

Eighty percent of the people of Exwyze are farmers and fishermen. This means their educational level and the literacy rate are low. This means the primary approach cannot be to rely upon ministry in the city to trickle down to the rural areas. There is little interchange between the rural people and the city. One recent exception to this trend is the pattern of men from the villages coming to the capital city as construction workers. This is a particularly difficult group to target, however. They literally work all the time they are not in their beds, and never leave the construction sites. Our approach then, demands geographic dispersal of the message, because people do not travel any farther than their local market town.

One political factor that has helped in regard to the geographic dispersal of the message is the system of government set up at the local level in order to take care of the distribution of crops. The government designated district towns, which now serve as the market towns for each region. There is one such town for every ten or so villages. This provides a natural target for ministry efforts.

The low literacy rate also means we cannot rely heavily on literature. We must make use of oral media instead, such as cassette tapes. It also means that emphasis must be upon the use of their heart language rather than the national language.

- G. Describe the status of Christianity among your target group when they were initially targeted.

When I first began to research this people group there were eighteen registered churches and meeting points with less than four thousand members. There were two house churches with less than a hundred members.

2. Describe your master plan or goals and how these were developed.

Our master plan included goals, which stated that we would have a church within walking distance of every person in Exwyze where worship was conducted in their heart language. This meant something over five thousand churches. This breaks down as a church for every town or village and additional churches for areas, which contained individuals from more than one people group. For the cities the number of required churches would be based upon population as well. The ultimate goal in the cities was for a church for every two thousand people.

The first level goal was to establish churches in each of the 342 district towns. This would make a church accessible to every individual to the same extent that government services and control were available. It also paralleled the accessibility of other goods, services, and distribution channels since these serve as the primary market towns.

The primary methods of doing this were to equip existing house churches to plant other churches in geographically contiguous areas and to recruit overseas Chinese churches and individuals to plant new house churches in pioneer areas. This plan was developed after trying to work through existing agencies to accomplish the same purposes. Existing agencies working in China, however, work almost exclusively in church support ministries or individual evangelism ministries rather than in church

planting per se. This did not change after the cooperative agreement. It soon became clear that new partners would be necessary to do this central task. This is why the overseas Chinese churches were brought into the equation.

We did this by writing a book on how to do pioneer church planting in Exwyze. It included step by step instructions beginning with how to survey an area. The book attempted to present church planting principles in terms of how they would apply to a team of overseas Chinese Christians working in Exwyze. It also provided a list of resources and recommended materials.

If a church was interested in participating, then they could request a district to be assigned to them. Their commitment would conclude with the planting of a church in that district if they desired for others to take care of ongoing leadership training. In that case then our agency partners and our residential coworkers would take care of the training and follow-up. This book was made available in both simplified and traditional Chinese characters. It was also made available in English for use by people who could speak Chinese, but could not read or write it. An English copy of this book will be included at the end of this study as an appendix. (See “Exwyze’s Adopt-A-District Movement: Reaching to the End of the Earth.”)

3. Provide a timetable of major events/ministries, indicating their duration. This should include both successful and unsuccessful attempts. Each event/ministry should indicate notable items under the following categories:
 - A. What was done (what tools or ministries such as radio, television, videotapes, audio cassettes, Bibles, Bible portions, tracts, other Christian literature, and prayer strategies were utilized)?
 - B. Who was involved (their length of service, linguistic abilities, ethnicity, age, means of support, platform/visa type, background/experience, nationality, how they were recruited and trained, etc.)?
 - C. How was it done (unique or significant emphases or approaches that were notable)?
 - D. What was the outcome (what went right, what went wrong, results in terms of the church planting level and/or conversion scale changes, lessons learned, etc.)?

Nov. 1990: I began to research the Exwyzeese people in search of a target for our planned strategy coordinator ministry.

Aug. 1991: We were appointed as strategy coordinators for the Exwyzeese. This was followed by orientation, training, language school in Taiwan for six months, and then a period of networking in Hong Kong which lasted until July 1992.

Oct. 1991: We began distributing our monthly prayer newsletters for our family and for the work among the Exwyzeese.

Jun. 1992: We participated in starting a Exwyzeese church in Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A. by phone. Our networking had uncovered the retired Exwyzeese pastor from the tiny Exwyzeese church in Hong Kong. He had dreamed of starting a church in America. We made arrangements for him to have free use of a church building near

the Exwyzeese community there and he was able to successfully plant a church among them.

Jul. 1992: We did language study and familiarized ourselves with the society and the people through April of 1993 when we were forced to leave due to serious medical problems which prevented our return. Formal language study was in Mandarin. I tried to pick up some Exwyzeese informally on my own.

Apr. 1993: We began the nonresidential portion of our ministry from Singapore. I took a position with a humanitarian aid and development agency for visa purposes. We remained there through June of 1996. At this time I also began to take every available opportunity to speak at churches, missions conferences, tentmaking conferences, and various Christian organizational meetings. I used these speaking opportunities as recruiting tools to find additional partners for our work. Related to this, I spent considerable amounts of time assisting people who had long term calls in taking short term trips which would help them know better how to prepare. There are a fairly large number of overseas Chinese who are just now completing their preparations for career service in Exwyze. I trust they will have a major impact. Another major time commitment which began at this time was assisting and servicing our various partner agencies, churches, and individuals. Helping them achieve their ministry objectives is an important part of what I do.

Jul. 1993: We invited the first of what became an annual project team of professional educators to teach an Oral English Workshop to English teachers for the province. This was in response to an urgent government need for more English teachers. The province had just been asked to begin teaching English from kindergarten as a pilot project. They did not have adequate English teachers and so were establishing a school dedicated exclusively for this purpose. The province had the lowest level of English teaching in the country so they seriously needed help. The summer team kicked off this project with an intensive four week course at the new school. They taught both the faculty of the new school and the first year students. It was a tremendous success so I was asked to locate some long term teachers for the school. I was able to place two career families from another Baptist agency. Both families proved to be quite fruitful. They led several faculty members and many students to the Lord, forming them into small groups for regular meetings. Before their arrival I developed a plan whereby they would keep track of all graduates, thus giving us contact people throughout the province who would be bilingual. This works quite well because this school is the only school in the province which prepares English teachers for kindergartens and primary schools in the entire province. This plan has proved effective for opening doors in remote areas. It has also given us key people around whom to start new churches as those who are believers move out into their new jobs. The seekers at the school are taken through the (bilingual) New Life in Christ book. This takes at least six months. Those who are converted then begin a one year course of chronological storying lessons using Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ (by Trevor McIlwain of New Tribes Mission). This is studied in groups of eight believers. New groups are started when there are eight more converts ready to begin the lessons. As a note of interest, both families I originally placed had large families. This created much opposition to my placing them. When the school discovered that their students learned more from being around the children constantly than they did in class, they changed their attitude completely. From that point on they required that every foreign teacher they hired have at least four children!

Aug. 1993: I recruited a Exwyzeese Singaporean who was willing to start an adult education center in the capital. She was willing to use it as a hiring base for tentmakers. She was self-funded and was an experienced businesswoman. Her school has struggled financially but succeeded otherwise. She has not had much evangelistic impact but many of her employees have. We have helped her locate appropriate teachers.

Sep. 1993: We began using foreigners to teach English in earnest. There had been three a year earlier but 1993 saw thirteen new families coming to do this sort of ministry. Their ranks continued to swell over the next three years until there were over forty families or singles participating in this type of ministry. They taught at every level from pre-school to university and adult education in both private and public schools. One unusual strategy we used in the 1995-96 school year was to send a single man who could speak Mandarin to remote parts of the province. He would spend one month volunteering his time to teach in middle schools that did not have the money or permission to hire foreign teachers. In most cases even the English teachers had never met a Westerner. He was received with great gratitude and in every case we received multiple job offers from those regions as they begged me to send them long term teachers. As a result I could now place almost unlimited Western English teachers anywhere I desire. Two limiting factors are the number of such personnel available and the fact that most of these areas are so remote from any other Westerners that the teachers would need to be able to speak Chinese or else they would have an exceedingly difficult time adjusting to the living situation.

Sept. 1993: Also during this month I began developing our strategy master plan. It was essentially a saturation church planting plan. The initial format included putting together a consortium of agencies and churches to cooperate in information sharing and coordinate their work within a geographic framework that I developed. I also developed orientation materials for those who came to work in Exwyze and put these into print. This was to minimize unpleasant surprises on the part of new workers and on my part.

Oct. 1993: A major frustration and disappointment was that the largest Exwyzeese church in the world (in Singapore) proved very unhelpful in the work. They were adamantly opposed to doing any illegal work in China. They had tremendous resources in terms of personnel and materials which they were unwilling to use beyond the boundaries of their own city.

Oct. 1993: A project that I began to try at this time failed completely. It was the Chinese Church Prayer Bridge. It sought to link Chinese Baptist Churches in North America with churches in Exwyze for the purpose of prayer. A one page check-box questionnaire accompanied the proposal. The questionnaire inquired about possible interest in ministry in China and attitudes toward house churches and toward registered churches. The response was pitiful. I sent it through appropriate channels in terms of the Chinese Baptist Association, the language department of the Foreign Mission Board, and other agencies. Out of several hundred questionnaires there were a handful of partial responses and one complete one that were all basically negative.

Nov. 1993: Another failed project was an attempt to place medical training personnel in the only medical college to teach nurses. These nurses serve the entire province. We also attempted to do similar work in the rural training centers for barefoot doctors. Both of these projects were scuttled every six months due to federal government failure to come up with promised funding for the medical training in the province. Attempts are still being made to this day. This created several frustrations

as we would get appropriate personnel to the field only to discover that funding was not available so the project was canceled. The intention was to have contacts throughout the province that could serve as touch points for church planting teams. Medical personnel who became believers could also serve as stack poles for new congregations. We have sent several short term medical teams on projects but still have not placed any residential personnel for this project.

Nov. 1993: During this month I also obtained agreements with four agencies in Hong Kong and Taiwan to help in training with a church in the southeast. All four have carried on continuing ministries since that time through one or two week courses several times a year. This has provided a boost in productivity among churches in that area. I also began working with a church in Hong Kong that had a key Exwyzeese member. They have helped with registered church leadership training (eight times each year for three weeks at a time) and actually attempted a high profile evangelistic effort (outdoor crusade!) in the man's hometown. This had significant fruit (sixty conversions!) but also resulted in a crackdown by the government in that area and surveillance of any people coming into Exwyze from that church in Hong Kong. This man also later established a hospital which serves as a base for Christian overseas Chinese medical personnel who wish to serve in the province.

Dec. 1993: We began to distribute promotional pieces such as brochures and bookmarks in order to increase awareness of our target people. This brought some immediate responses from several continents.

Dec. 1993: We began to test the effectiveness of the Jesus video at this time. We began showing it to individuals in the homes of tentmakers. When we discovered it was effective we obtained nearly four hundred copies and began using it more widely, including in house churches. House churches also used it as an evangelistic outreach tool. Some copies were left with video stores. It was a unique item since it is the only high quality movies in the Exwyzeese language. We even used some video projectors for outreach to new areas where teams did not know anyone to borrow a television from. We also used it on occasion as a pre-evangelism tool in our pioneer church planting program for overseas Chinese churches.

Feb. 1994: We began using cassette tape resources. We began with some sermons, church music, and Scripture reading. We later expanded to include training tapes and evangelistic and apologetic materials. As our network grew we brought in two high speed cassette duplication machines. This enabled us to bring in one copy of everything and then quickly make multiple copies for distribution.

Mar. 1994: About this time I began trying to set up sister institution relationships between Exwyze University and some Christian colleges. This effort continued for over a year and was blocked by one party or another every time.

Apr. 1994: We placed our first career residential overseas Chinese worker. He worked in the capital with house churches full time in church planting and development. He had a key role as a communication center between myself and much of the work.

May 1994: The two house churches in the capital began to rebound from near extinction brought on by government persecution during the previous year. They grew and multiplied to seven much larger groups over the course of the following two years.

May 1994: An unplanned project showed signs of arousing tremendous interest. I had used anecdotes about orphanages in some sermons. Those stories brought forward a number of people who wanted to get involved in orphanage ministries. This has resulted in several trips to Exwyze by various people and the

placing of a Chinese Singaporean nurse in the government orphanage for a long term commitment. She has had significant impact in discipling new believers. There has been continuing talk of establishing a private Christian orphanage as well.

May 1994: I began formal agency recruitment for our saturation church planting project. Ultimately, the inability to change the type of ministry performed by the agencies led me to expand the program to include and focus on overseas Chinese churches.

May 1994: I began investigating the possibilities of using Habitat for Humanity International as a tool for placing long term overseas Chinese personnel in a key area in order to do some church development work. They could be on salary with Habitat as project supervisors. This appeared to go very well. Habitat even paid me to travel to Exwyze as their consultant and they sent their regional director to visit with me on several occasions. Everything was going smoothly until the last possible minute when Habitat hired a new administrator who came in with no background and nixed the whole program, damaging several relationships in the process.

Jun. 1994: I made great progress in putting together the research booklet for our saturation church planting project. This included an extensive mapping and database section that pinpointed every village in the province and identified target towns. It also included demographic data and questionnaires as well as a description of the project and how it would be handled.

Aug. 1994: I began recruiting partners for the saturation church planting project in earnest. We had good success in doing so with the exception of one major agency.

Aug. 1994: One of our partner agencies set up a joint venture kindergarten with the customs department. It proved to be an effective outreach to the families of the students.

Aug. 1994: Another partner took over the coordination of Chinese Christian medical teams at this time. They began sending teams to the hospital started by the Exwyzeese Christian from Hong Kong.

Sep. 1994: A Singaporean church adopted the Exwyzeese people. They sent a short term mission team. They funded significant amounts of materials and equipment and all the expenses for the church adoption program.

Sep. 1994: The first residential long term workers came to work with the large minority nationality group in the interior of the province. This team has grown rapidly but has remained centralized in the only large town among that people group.

Sep. 1994: We developed a more detailed prayer booklet that we used as a promotional item for the work.

Sep. 1994: A radio broadcasting partner made a cash donation to our saturation church planting project, donated free Exwyzeese language broadcasts during the holidays (the first!) and gave me open access to their file letters.

Oct. 1994: Another major partner joined in our training scheme and began sending biannual six-week teams and frequent short term teams. They have additionally recruited other partners for the overall work and provided significant amounts of courier work.

Oct. 1994: The government achieved full control over all of the registered churches. They had been dealing with some uncooperative pastors.

Oct. 1994: The church planting project was expanded to include overseas Chinese churches and the focus was on these new partners. The database was also tied in with a computerized mapping program that made tracking progress more efficient.

Nov. 1994: We began to seriously pursue Chinese language versions of all promotional and training materials.

Dec. 1994: The Habitat for Humanity project crashed.

Mar. 1995: The book for the new version of the saturation church planting project was completed. Translations were begun. The whole plan was finalized and recruitment began in earnest.

Mar. 1995: Cassette ministry was expanded.

Mar. 1995: First full time (non-tentmaking) career overseas Chinese missionaries from another agency were on the field. They work in church planting and development. They had originally been planning to fill the Habitat for Humanity position and had been scrambling for plans B, C, and eventually D.

Jul. 1995: Took a trip to Taiwan that was dedicated to the recruitment of Chinese church partners for the saturation church planting project. The first actual adopters resulted and their August trip succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. They planted two churches six months ahead of schedule.

Sep. 1995: I carefully planned a cultural exchange through the Rotary Club in Houston and a port city in a totally unreached part of Exwyze. The American side (all evangelical believers on a mission trip) would provide translators and stay in the homes of local people. Part of the exchange was showing the Jesus video. Follow up among those who demonstrated interest would be done by itinerant evangelists from elsewhere in Exwyze. The Rotary Club would pay for a return visit by some government officials from the county. The project fell through at the last minute because of laziness and corruption of local officials. All provincial government hurdles had been cleared. The project looked good until December 1995, just four months before the project was to be carried out.

Nov. 1995: Another training partner became involved as our work expanded. This agency proved to be a valuable middle man in communications with remote house churches.

Dec. 1995: One of our radio broadcasting partners refused to adapt one of their church planting ventures to our needs. They were basically serving as the front for fund-raising for a Henan house church project and had no say in where the itinerant evangelists did their ministry. This was a plan that had great potential for fruitfulness but failed because of weak links with strong house church networks. If I were continuing my work among the Exwyzeese I would concentrate on providing information on the need and contacts among the Exwyzeese to the major Chinese house church networks. I had made some strides in doing so before changing assignments. These efforts had already produced results, but more could and should be done in this regard.

Dec. 1995: We attempted to work with another agency who wanted to partner with us for a door-to-door literature distribution throughout the province but they were unable to come up with adequate numbers of personnel and so postponed indefinitely.

Dec. 1995: All the simplified and traditional character versions of our updated saturation church planting project were completed and made available to our partners.

Dec. 1995: We finally arranged for a number of itinerant evangelists from the Henan house churches to begin to work actively in Exwyze.

Dec. 1995: The placement of seminary students in a church planting practicum did not work out because of my inability to locate a willing and appropriate field

supervisor. This was a shame since these students (four families) were all planning on career missionary service in the area they went to.

Jan. 1996: Singapore Baptists developed a new evangelistic video series in Mandarin. Among those in Exwyze who can understand Mandarin it received a good response and became fairly widely used.

Feb. 1996: We began receiving greater response from overseas Chinese churches that wanted to adopt a district in Exwyze for church planting.

Apr. 1996: This month was primarily dedicated to transitioning our work to someone from another organization with whom I had been working. I transferred to him all my books, notes, data, contact information, etc. I took a long trip through Exwyze with him in order to introduce him to key contacts throughout the province. I also spent significant time with him in Hong Kong answering questions. We arranged for him to move to Exwyze for two years to gain a more intimate knowledge of the province. I also spent time in bringing closure to my relationships within the province. When I was satisfied that the new strategy coordinator was in place and functioning well I turned my attention to looking for a new assignment.

4. Summarize the current status of Christianity among your target group.

The current status of the work in Exwyze as of April 1996 is that there are over twenty thousand evangelical Christians. Forty-one new churches were planted related to our work in the thirty months leading up to that date. There are currently over one hundred house churches, which represents fifty-fold growth since the beginning of 1988. The growth in the number of believers worshipping in house churches has increased at a similar rate. There has been no change in the number of registered meeting points and churches over that same period. The number of believers worshipping in registered churches has also remained stagnant at about four thousand. There are now at least two churches among each of the five major sub-dialects of Exwyzeese. There are at least two churches in every county. There are at least two churches among every national minority with fifty thousand members or more in the province.

What is perhaps more amazing is the rate at which newly planted house churches are reproducing. Six months is a typical length of time for a new house church in Exwyze to reproduce itself. Most new house churches being planted today are planted by another house church. Not only are the local believers doing a good job of evangelism, but they are doing it in places that are remote. They have a vision for taking the gospel to the most unreached areas and doing pioneer church planting.

After they plant churches, the national believers then train leadership in the churches they have planted. They are passing on their vision and the result is new churches that reproduce. They also have developed their own networks for continuing support. Two days per month leaders from each church gather on a provincial or regional basis for a day of training, prayer, and fasting. This is in the face of opposition not only from the government, but also from hard-hearted people. Local evangelistic teams have already experienced martyrdom at the hands of villagers in a particularly resistant area. They have persevered in carrying out their mandate, however, and actually planted churches among the very people who killed their coworkers.

5. Summarize your future plans for the evangelization of your target group.

Future plans are to continue in the same vein as currently. Local church initiatives are firmly in place and proceeding at a rapid pace. Supplementary training opportunities for church leadership are proving effective and are also in place for long term involvement through a number of agencies which have been recruited. This includes one agency from Taiwan which goes in twice a year, and three agencies from Hong Kong which go in a combined eight times annually to conduct training events. Finally, involvement from overseas Chinese churches is continuing in some of the neediest areas since that program has consistently produced fruit as well. The Lord is blessing the work beyond anyone's expectations.

One thing that will change is the leadership for the program. As the strategy coordinator I felt that my skills and knowledge were no longer as important. In April of 1996 I turned over the work to another experienced missionary who has more and better contacts among overseas Chinese than I do. He is familiar with my work and has agreed to take over my duties. He has moved into the area to become more intimately acquainted with the situation there. He plans to move out in two years. Initial indications are that he is doing a wonderful job. He will be able to recruit additional involvement in the area. He is also a skilled administrator who will be able to handle the increasing administrative load.

QUESTIONS FOR CASE STUDIES

1. Describe significant training methods, including the aspect of mentoring, which were utilized in the training of people ministering among your target group (nationals and others).

I utilized outside groups from existing mission agencies in Taiwan and Hong Kong (most of which focus on ministry in China) to train house church leaders once house churches were established. This was arranged through networking by providing contacts and demonstrating need. We concentrated our efforts in one part of the province that showed great promise. We ran short term intensive sessions. Most of these are one or two weeks in length. One emphasis is on vision for reaching the lost.

Large numbers of church members receive some level of ministry training. The churches are entirely lay-led and all leaders are bivocational. The majority of adult members are trained for outreach of some sort. This means that when churches grow too large for security and safety they can easily divide and form new churches because trained leaders are already in place. Notably church leaders are always raised up from within a congregation even if it consists entirely of new converts.

When outsiders are involved in leadership training, we consistently emphasize that they should use indirect teaching methods. Such methods encourage participation by the students and do not rely upon a highly educated teacher. The teacher's primary

role is to serve as a guide. Indirect methods also do not require extensive materials. They emphasize the Bible itself, which helps establish the authority of the Bible in the minds and lives of the students. These facets of indirect teaching increase the possibility and likelihood that the training will be successfully reproduced by local leaders.

As for my involvement, I tried to constantly cast the vision before everyone who became involved with our work. This helped to ensure that everyone was aiming for the same objective. This enabled them to shape their efforts in such a way as to focus on the same outcome.

I also tried to take people with me whenever possible so they could see how I worked. I also encouraged this and arranged it whenever possible for anyone involved in the ministry who was successful or knowledgeable. This resulted in much cross-fertilization of ideas and utilized fruitful individuals as models for others we were bringing in. Early on in the work I had to do this myself, but when the team grew I was able to use the same five or six people to mentor or model for large numbers of people I would send their way. (This was done serially, not in large groups.) This is, incidentally, how I replaced myself. Over the course of three years I worked with an individual toward the end of preparing him to take my place.

Similarly, whenever any personnel on our team discovered a particularly fruitful method of ministry, we made that information available to other team members as a model. We also arranged for such personnel to serve as consultants or provide direct assistance to others who could benefit from their expertise.

2. Describe “typical” churches that were being planted and how they were developing.

A typical new church plant will be the result of witness from a small evangelistic team of three or four people from an existing house church in another place. It will be planted among people who were previously completely unreached. It will be planted in a farming community. One member of the evangelistic team will remain behind for a time after the church is planted to help train and mentor leaders from within the fledgling congregation. Leadership will be shared among several individuals. These individuals will then be involved in the regional and provincial days of training, prayer, and fasting with leaders from other churches once each month. The new church will probably grow to about thirty members and plant a new church within about six months from that point.

3. What were your criteria for deciding whether or not a group was a church?

If there are baptized believers who are meeting together for worship and who are concerned for outreach then we consider it to be a church. The size of the group or form of leadership do not figure into our criteria.

4. What forms of support, if any, were being provided for churches that were being planted? What advantages and disadvantages did you see to this situation?

Other than occasional training for leadership in some of the more established churches there is no outside leadership provided. Materials are supplied at times. This includes Bibles, Christian literature, cassette tapes, and video tapes. These are items

that we can get for free in virtually unlimited supply, so we have elected to make them available to the local churches. They have no way to acquire such materials without our help because of the unavailability within the country. There is no financial support given.

This situation is a good one because other than the literature and materials the churches are completely independent and self-sufficient already. As the churches grow we are hopeful that they develop their own ability to acquire the materials now provided. We are trying to equip them to do so through making various introductions and letting them know of our sources and how to utilize them.

5. Describe typical church leadership. How were leaders trained?

Typical church leaders share responsibility with at least one other person in the congregation. They may be either male or female. They are usually somewhat literate. Often they can speak Mandarin as well as their heart language. They are typically farmers or fishermen.

Training depends on location. In the southeast and the capital and to a couple of other areas to a lesser extent, training is available from outsiders in Mandarin. All areas have training available which is led by Exwyzeese house church members. There are two outsiders who live in the province and assist in training and consultation full time. Others travel in on a periodic basis.

6. What methods proved most effective in terms of initial evangelistic approach?

Evangelism is most effective when done by local believers. Naturally, witness among friends and family members is the most fruitful. But even in pioneer areas local believers get the fastest and best results. Overseas Chinese have been the next best option. Westerners have proved fruitful in personal evangelism and even in church planting but the churches they have planted have not reproduced. Individual disciples have reproduced very successfully, but the churches have not. This is probably because the Westerners involved in church planting have been in the field of education. As a result, they have planted churches among students and young single professionals. In the absence of responsible family heads, these churches have been viewed as being for those who are young and highly educated rather than for “normal” Exwyzeese people.

7. What leadership styles or relational styles were used by outsiders and to what effect?

We have greatly encouraged and emphasized going in as friends and coworkers, rather than as one who is superior in some way and is graciously helping an inferior. This results in people who have no excuse for not passing on what they receive. No advanced training or fancy equipment or anything else is used which they do not have access to. They are expected to take leadership and to participate even in the training sessions. They are responsible for putting into practice what they learn. This results in reproduction even in the training of leaders.

8. How were baptisms usually handled?

Baptisms are usually handled in groups. This is not particularly because we wait for groups before we will baptize someone, but because groups often convert together and because of rapid response to the gospel. One church, in fact, built an outdoor baptistry right next to the pond where they normally baptize in order that they would not have to delay baptisms during the month when the pond was drained.

Most baptisms are done in the ocean, a river, or a pond. On some occasions bathtubs have been used. All baptisms are by immersion. Normally local leaders will baptize new converts. There is one overseas Chinese worker who has baptized several hundred individuals, however.

There are only minimal requirements for baptism. A profession of faith and sometimes a few basic lessons in the rudiments of Christianity are all that is required. The social cost is high enough that there is not a problem with casual professions of faith.

9. How were disagreements and church discipline handled?

In general, scriptural patterns of church discipline are followed. If there is a church member who is living in sin (either of omission or of commission) then the church member who notices it goes to the sinning member. If they do not repent then one or two witnesses are taken to confront the sinning member. If they still do not repent then the matter is taken before the entire church. If they still do not repent then they are treated as an outsider.

It is notable, however, that in the early stages of work in a key area several churches were formed as a result of splits or disagreements. Two of these splits were a result of a disagreement arising from the discipline of a church leader. That leader formed a church of his own. Another split occurred among people who thought the discipline was not appropriate or fair but who did not want to follow the disciplined leader. This shows that there have been problems in this area.

10. How did the level of cultural identification by foreign workers affect their effectiveness?

The level of cultural identification has not been a significant factor in the effectiveness of workers. Some team members have chosen to live at an economic level, which is significantly above the level of those with whom, they work. While some of the best workers have taken pains in this area, there are also many exceptions. Most of these exceptions have been among overseas Chinese workers. Among Westerners there has been a closer correlation between the level of cultural identification and the degree of fruitfulness. Surprisingly, Westerners have generally done a better job of cultural identification than have overseas Chinese. It seems that some of the overseas Chinese tend to equate the gospel with material prosperity and wish their converts to do the same.

11. What were the levels of trust and expectation of new believers in the churches?

The level of trust is very high when one considers the security risks involved. The level of expectation for new believers is also quite high. They are expected to demonstrate high levels of commitment, involvement, obedience, ministry participation, and so on immediately following their conversion. Trust and dependence are demonstrated toward them from the beginning as well.

12. How were finances handled in the churches?

Typically churches will take up offerings. My guess is that most members do not give a tithe. They use finances to help members who are in need. A few churches either rent or build a dedicated location. A few others will run electricity to an outdoor shelter that houses services. They purchase literature or equipment such as chairs as well. They also support the traveling evangelistic teams from one church to another.

They usually raise money on a case by case basis for a given project. They do not normally have formal budgets or salaried workers. Current needs determine spending patterns. Planned giving is not the norm.

13. Of the following list of tools, which did you not use and why: radio, television, videotapes, audio cassettes, Bibles, Bible portions, tracts, other Christian literature, prayer strategies, others?

We have not used television because all locally available stations are government owned and operated so that is not an option. Religious broadcasting is out of the question for those stations. We might not use it if it were possible because of the expense and the relatively small audience. Ironically, many of the personnel we have placed have received extensive television coverage, because of the excellent work they have done. This provided some good public relations, but was not an intentional part of our strategy.

14. Describe what security precautions you took and those that you should have taken.

We try not to use any religious terminology in mail, faxes, or phone conversations. All foreign language mail is read and all mail going to foreigners is read. Faxes can be picked up by the wrong people. Phones are not always secure. E-mail has not been available until very recently but will fall under even more stringent guidelines. Face-to-face communications have been very open. We have also been careful not to put into print anything that links personal names with either the target group or religious ministry terminology.

Our approach has been to push the limits in regard to security issues. You never know what you can get away with until you try. We have not been responsible for anyone who has had a serious security problem to date. Some of our partners have had problems, but those problems were a direct result of failing to follow the guidelines we recommended. One was kicked out of the province. Another has resulted in overt and close observation by government personnel.

I would not change our approach. I would be hesitant to do anything to hinder what we are doing. Increased security takes attention away from more central matters. So far we have not suffered because of security problems so there is little motivation to change.

15. Describe any significant impact which signs and wonders had upon your work.

Signs and wonders were involved in an area of rapid growth in the southern part of the province. In the north central region two churches were started as the direct result

of a dramatic and high profile exorcism. This has not been a pattern of the work, but has been a definite factor in some areas.

There have also been some dramatic power encounters with Qigong in our area. These power encounters have been in opposition to direct demon possession or countering signs and wonders done by Qigong practitioners. These have positively affected the work as well since Qigong is so highly revered by the Exwyzeese people.

16. Describe persecution which arose related to your ministry and what impact it had.

Believers related to our work have been heavily fined, imprisoned, and sent to reform labor camps. Others have had to undergo reeducation as well. Foreign workers have been expelled. These are all a result of government persecution against house churches.

Registered church Christians also experience government opposition if they do not submit to government direction. Pastors have been forcibly removed. Those wishing to pursue theological training are denied on political grounds.

From the standpoint of popular persecution there have even been a martyr. A Member of an evangelistic team has paid the ultimate price. In his case, the team returned and led his murderers to the Lord and planted a church in their village. That church has in turn planted another.

The persecution has not been a result of contact with outsiders but rather as a result of their evangelistic fervor. This means it is not technically related to our ministry. The threat of persecution is felt more keenly in the capital because of government sensitivity there. This has not hindered growth, however. Persecution in the capital has been real but so has rapid growth and the planting of new churches.

17. What were your priorities in seeking to recruit personnel for ministry positions and what methods did you find effective in doing so?

In general we have first tried to utilize local believers in primary ministry positions. Mainland Chinese house church members have been our second choice. Overseas Chinese who are Exwyzeese have been our third choice, followed by those who can speak Mandarin. Finally, we seek whoever we can get!

In terms of length of service, our priority has been to find people who can make as long of a commitment as possible. We also prefer residential ministry. Finally, we greatly prefer people who are willing to do full time (illegal) church planting or church development to those who go in on some sort of tentmaking platform which requires significant time commitment. Our most effective outside workers have been overseas Chinese who serve in this way.

As for recruiting methods, we have not found a fast way to recruit the higher priority types of workers. We have worked through our own denominational channels, other agencies, through denominational mission boards, through individual churches, and through interested lay persons. We seek to extend our recruiting network through currently involved individuals and through those who are likely to have a special interest in our target group because of ethnicity, skill set, or some other factor.

18. What was your approach to the ethical question of doing illegal ministry? How was this an issue in your ministry or for others with whom you worked?

Our approach to illegal ministry is that God has commanded it. He did not say to make disciples of all nations where it was legal to do so. We recognize the Lord's commands to obey government but see the Great Commission as the higher command. We do honor and seek for the welfare of the government but we cannot obey it where its laws contradict our Lord's commands. There is a clear contradiction in terms of religious laws in China. We must obey God rather than men.

19. What barriers did you experience in achieving unity of purpose and coordination of work among those with whom you worked? What did you do to overcome them?

We have not had much difficulty in attaining unity of purpose or coordination of work. The situation was relatively simple in this regard because we did not have to deal with any established workers or ministries. There is also a high degree of respect among workers from most groups we work with. Finally, the emphasis on the overall goals of the work has lent unity on many matters and helped people to overlook nonessential differences.

There have been occasional disagreements and a few broken relationships among various partners. These have not generally had much affect on the work. These partners have simply avoided dealing directly with one another. One of my functions has been to serve as a peacemaker among the various groups involved since I was instrumental in bringing most of them to Exwyze.

One situation that has affected the work is that churches started by charismatic groups in the south have not been compatible with churches started by anti-charismatic groups in the southeast. This is an example of when theological differences between outside workers have created differences between national believers. The workers in those areas had no overt problems with one another, however. The churches in these two regions simply choose not to participate in joint projects.

20. Describe major prayer initiatives or strategies you utilized. Note any striking results.

Before we began our ministry we established separate prayer newsletters for our family and for the ministry among the Exwyzeese by us and others. As a result of these newsletters we received much dedicated and fervent prayer which undergirded the entire strategy. We also had some smaller groups to whom we could go with urgent or sensitive (in regard to security) prayer requests. We were able to notify these groups of such requests through specified contact people who would notify the rest of these inner circle prayer supporters. We experienced many timely answers to prayers from these groups. These smaller groups also committed to greater quantities of prayer for us and the work on a regular basis. I also recruited prayer through articles in periodicals and journals, through promotional pamphlets and through prayer bookmarks.

I already mentioned some of the Qigong power encounters. These were examples of prayers answered in response to the newsletters and inner circle. The dramatic exorcism that resulted in two church plants was another example of a specific targeted prayer answer. The overall fruitfulness of the work is clearly the direct work of God as well. I believe this was largely in response to the prayers of His people.

21. What lessons did you learn (positive and negative)?

Expect a lot from new converts. Do not demand it of them prior to baptism, however. Baptism is the act that makes them a part of what the church is doing. Expect every member to be an active part of the ministry and outreach of the church from the very beginning. Part of what to expect of new converts is to be serious about reaching their friends and family if they made their commitment alone. Pursuit of these relations is an excellent way to ensure they follow through on their own commitment and frequently a door to rapid church growth. If you approach Christianity as something life-changing then people are not afraid to take the risk of public baptism and to share their faith.

It is much easier and more effective to start new work than to change the direction of existing work. This is true in establishing churches that will reproduce. It is also true in terms of agencies with which you may partner. In the latter case it is easier to get an additional partner which is new to ministry or which does the kind of ministry you need than to change an existing agency.

Culturally close people tend to be more effective. Those who commit to long term service are the ones God will usually build a ministry around. It is worth the time to seek out a few people who will be able to have a major impact rather than bringing large numbers of people who will have a minor or superficial impact.

Training is extremely important. Once a church is established the job is only begun. The process of planting the church must be a part of the training for it will serve as a model. All the effort expended in helping equip the new church to reproduce will be repaid many times over in future fruitfulness.

Goal setting and planning with the intended end result in view are extremely important. You will not achieve nearly as much if you fail to do so. Remember to do your goal setting not in terms of what seems reasonable or reachable but in terms of what would accomplish God's purposes for your target group.

Raise up leaders from within a congregation. Do not bring in church leaders from outside the community, especially in a rural situation. This is true even if it means putting a new convert into a leadership position. Also, encourage multiple leadership. This is healthy. It provides a safety net for persecution. If one leader is imprisoned the church will hardly miss a beat. It helps prevent personality cults or theological deviancy as well. It also ensures adequate leadership for new congregations if the church grows to the point of needing to divide. It increases the pace of church growth as well since it sets a pattern for broader ministry involvement among the members.

Never underestimate the value of music. Encourage the development of local indigenous music. This is a strong point of many of the Exwyzeese churches. They have developed their own local hymnody. Whatever they sing, they sing heartily. It is a dramatic experience to hear a Exwyzeese house church bellowing out songs of worship with no thought of the security risk, even in urban settings.

Audio (and to a lesser extent video) tapes are a valuable tool. They are easily reproduced, are inexpensive, and do not require a literate user. This can be especially helpful when dealing with illiterate church leaders. They can be used to distribute church music, sermons, evangelistic messages, training, Scriptures or Scripture portions, or any other important messages. This ensures an unchanging message over great distances and time.

Overseas Chinese often require more orientation, more training, and more support than Westerners. They sometimes are more reticent to accept advice as well. This was all a surprise to me. The extra trouble is generally more than worth it, however.

22. What other advice would you give (not covered above) to those planning to engage in restricted-access church-planting ministries?

Before you get too far into your planning process, get to know your target. Learn how society moves. Discover who people respect, views on religion, values, how families work, what authority structures are, and so on. These factors should have a tremendous effect on how you construct your plan. These are tools to help you. They are not barriers to overcome but opportunities to exploit.

Do not be too afraid of persecution either for yourself or others. Of course, you must bear persecution in mind both because of love for those who might be affected and out of concern for effectiveness. You do not want to cause persecution for anyone. That having been said, the way you minister will communicate either boldness or fear; either confidence or doubt; either action or hesitancy. Whatever you communicate will spread. Boldness, confidence, and action are soil in which faith prospers. Fear, doubt, and hesitancy destroy faith. And when people do suffer they will not blame you. They will recognize it as part and parcel of their new faith. Suffering will only serve to strengthen their resolve and call forth greater commitment. They will go on in the face of difficulty in joy. God will honor their suffering with increased fruitfulness. Suffering is not something to be avoided at all costs. It is something to be expected and rejoiced in.

STRATEGY COORDINATOR CASE STUDY SURVEY

1. Describe your target group.

A. Describe the use of pseudonyms in this case study

The people group in this study will be identified as the KAMBESI people. All names used for local believers will be pseudonyms. The KAMBESI people live in Southeast Asia.

B. What is the time period under consideration?

The time period that this case study covers is from early 1990 to mid-1997. The Strategy Coordinator for the KAMBESI people was involved directly with the KAMBESI people from early 1990 until June 1996.

- C. What linguistic factors came into play in the evangelization of your target group?

The KAMBESI people spoke the KAMBESE language. There were secondary languages spoken by a few smaller ethno-linguistic groups in the country where the KAMBESI lived; however, KAMBESI was the heart language as well as the trade language for these people.

- D. What were the primary barriers to the evangelization of your target group (cultural, governmental, geographic, historical, etc.)?

The KAMBESI are a Buddhist people. They have a saying that to be a KAMBESI is to be a BUDDHIST. Their cultural identity is indelibly linked to their Buddhist religious beliefs. Strong Evangelical Christian witness had been present among the KAMBESI people for almost seventy years; however, because of the strong cultural identity rooted in the Buddhist religion response had been sporadic. There had been spurts of response to the gospel, but these had not made a significant impact on the people. Despite years of fervent witness among these people, the church was very weak and immature.

Furthermore, the KAMBESI people had been subjected in recent years to war, genocide, and radical communist government oppression. In 1990, the KAMBESI people were still under the strong arm of a communist government that refused to recognize any religion. The government, although communist, did tolerate Buddhism because of the strong cultural identity associated with Buddhism. However, the government looked upon Christianity with suspicion as it was seen as a Western religion and an agent of Western cultural imperialism.

Establishing a Christian witness among the KAMBESI people in 1990 was difficult due to the fact that the rest of the world refused to recognize the KAMBESI government. Only the Soviet-block nations had diplomatic relations with the KAMBESI government. Thus, the country was, for the most part, a closed country. Resident or employment visas were very difficult to obtain. Furthermore, the KAMBESI people were cut off from the rest of the world. Communications in and out of the country were very difficult. The KAMBESI people did not have the freedom to travel in and out of their own country. Contact with the outside world was primarily limited to those peoples and countries of the Soviet-block.

During the early 1970s, response to the gospel had begun to grow. However, in 1975, the country was ruled by a ruthless communist government that systematically sought to eradicate all forms of religion and education. The small struggling church within the country was almost wiped out. Only a few believers remained. In 1990, there were only about 200 known believers inside this country of over 10 million people.

- E. Were there any special opportunities for the evangelization of your target group (unusual circumstances, rapid changes, etc.)?

From 1980 to 1990, most of the evangelical witness among the KAMBESI people occurred among KAMBESI people who had fled the fighting and communist oppression and were living overseas or in refugee camps situated in a neighboring

country. In fact, in 1990 there were more KAMBESI believers among expatriate KAMBESI than there were inside the country.

In 1990, there were signs of growing response to the gospel among the KAMBESI people. Much of this was attributed to several factors. First, the KAMBESI had suffered from nearly 20 years of conflict, persecution at the hands of their own leaders, famine and intense poverty, and civil war. Many KAMBESI people were searching for relief. Their Buddhist belief system had failed them in many ways. Second, the country was beginning to slowly open up to the outside world in 1990. More foreigners were allowed to come into the country, albeit at a small rate. Third, many of the overseas KAMBESI believers (and other Christians) had been fervently praying for the KAMBESI people in their homeland. Overseas KAMBESI believers were beginning to trickle back into their country for visits. Expatriate Christians were among the largest group of foreigners who were coming into the country as it slowly began to open up.

In 1992, peace accord was reached among the various factions involved in the civil war. Elections were scheduled for 1993. The United Nations sent a large contingent of troops and civilian workers into the country to help the KAMBESI people prepare for this momentous event. This country which had been virtually shut off from the outside world for over 15 years became an open country within a matter of months. People from all over the world were suddenly coming into the country. Government restrictions on religion, although still legally on the books, were unenforceable as the government was preoccupied with the political situation.

- F. Describe the demographic factors of your group which were relevant to the evangelization of your target group and what their relevance was (rural/urban, educational/literacy levels, population, etc.).

The KAMBESI people were predominantly an agrarian people. Over 88% of the population was rural, dependent upon some form of agriculture for their living. Due to years of fighting, civil war, and genocidal activities carried out by their own government, the family structure among the KAMBESI people had been devastated. Almost every family had suffered the loss of family members during the past 15-20 years. Many families were permanently separated as some had fled the country during the war and years of communist oppression leaving other family members behind. Also, due to the fighting and civil war, the KAMBESI women outnumber the KAMBESI men almost 2 to 1. 60% of the population were female, 40% were male. Furthermore, almost 50% of the population was under the age of 21 in 1990. During the height of the communist oppression, most of the educated people in the country had either systematically been killed or had fled the country. Thus, the education level of the KAMBESI people was extremely low, although great strides had been made since 1980. Literacy, especially among women, was extremely low.

Because of the break up of the primary unit of society within the KAMBESI culture – the family – the historical pressures of family to keep members from becoming followers of Christ were greatly lessened. In many instances, these pressures were non-existent, a far cry from previous generations. The entire society had become disjointed due to the years of fighting and turmoil, creating an environment where people were open to seriously listen to the gospel message. The KAMBESI people were growing tired of the war, devastation, and killing. They were searching for

something that would give them hope. This made fertile ground for the sowing of the gospel message.

Historically women respond in greater numbers to the gospel than do men. Among the KAMBESI people, women numbered nearly 60%. The KAMBESI women held very little political clout although the society was virtually dependent upon the labor of women for its economic survival. KAMBESI women were relegated to a secondary position within their own society. Thus, women were more open to the gospel message, and the KAMBESI church today consists of more women than men.

Furthermore, the KAMBESI population was a very young population and remains that way today. These young people have grown up in a society where ties to traditional religion and culture have been broken due to civil war, communist governments, and a systematic attempt to eradicate these traditions. Thus, historical barriers to the gospel were not as much of a factor in 1990 as they might have been, say, in 1970. The largest group of believers in the KAMBESI church today consists of people under the age of 30.

Another factor that must be noted in the evangelization of the KAMBESI people is the return of thousands of refugees from the camps in the run-up to the 1993 elections. Much outreach and evangelical work was done in these refugee camps. When these believers returned to their homeland from the refugee camps, many of these were instrumental in planting new churches as they carried their faith with them.

Finally, the presence of a large Christian KAMBESI expatriate population had a significant impact in the evangelization of the KAMBESI people and the growth of the KAMBESI church. Many of these expatriate KAMBESI believers came to know the Lord while in refugee camps or after they were resettled in new countries. The Christian Missionary and Alliance and Southern Baptists had the largest number of expatriate KAMBESI believers.

G. Describe the status of Christianity among your target group when they were initially targeted.

The KAMBESI church in 1990 within their homeland, numbered about 200 believers scattered in about 10-12 small house groups, primarily in the capital city. There were significant numbers of KAMBESI believers in countries like the US, Australia, and France due to the efforts of evangelical Christians as they worked among KAMBESI people in refugee camps and in resettlement in new countries.

In short, in 1990 there were more KAMBESI believers outside of their homeland than there were inside.

2. Describe your master plan or goals and how these were developed

The first Master Plan for the evangelization of the KAMBESI people was developed in 1993. It was a five-year master plan that had as its overall objective the planting of an indigenous, reproducing church in each of the 181 districts of the country where the majority of KAMBESI people resided. Prior to the development of this Master Plan, the Strategy Coordinator had spent over two years in language and cultural learning, developing relationships with a broad spectrum of KAMBESI people, and expatriate and local KAMBESI believers. The Strategy Coordinator for the KAMBESI people was also involved in one new church plant on the outskirts of the capital city during these initial years of language/cultural learning and relationship building.

The Master Plan grew out of two weeks of intensive training where the Strategy Coordinator, having gathered much insight into the culture and having developed a variety of key relationships, began to ask himself the question, 'What will it take to evangelize these people?' This helped the Strategy Coordinator begin to realize that the task of evangelization was more than one church or even one denomination could accomplish. The Master Plan was developed to include a wide spectrum of Great Commission Christian agencies and groups. The emphasis within the Master Plan was on church planting as it was believed that evangelization would only occur through an indigenous church planting movement.

3. Provide a timetable of major events/ministries, indicating their duration. This should include both successful and unsuccessful attempts. Each event/ministry will constitute a point under this sectional subpoints as follows.

The time period covered in this section is from February 1990 until July 1996 when the Strategy Coordinator left his role among the KAMBESI people. Things did not necessarily occur in a step-by-step process, thus making it difficult to give a month by month account of what God did among the KAMBESI people. However, the following description will seek to give a yearly summary of events.

- A. What was done (what tools or ministries such as radio, television, videotapes, audio cassettes, Bibles, Bible portions, tracts, other Christian literature, and prayer strategies were utilized)?

A variety of strategies were utilized during the time from the actual implementation of the Master Plan (early 1993) until the Strategy Coordinator left his role (mid-1996). However, it must be stressed that all of the strategies were built upon the premise that the end result should be a church planting movement. If a tool or a resource could not be utilized to help reach the destination then it was not given priority.

A worldwide prayer movement for the KAMBESI people had been active for many years already. The Strategy Coordinator, however, felt it imperative to build on this prayer movement and put into motion some things to keep the needs of the KAMBESI people in front of the Great Commission Christian community. One aspect of this was the development of several prayer newsletters that focused on the KAMBESI people and the specific ministries ongoing among them. Second, the Strategy Coordinator was involved in a weekly prayer ministry consisting of a number of expatriate Christians where the new struggling KAMBESI church was the primary focus. Press coverage by The Commission magazine in 1990 and again in 1994 was instrumental in providing information to many Southern Baptists churches in the US and around the world about the ministry ongoing among the KAMBESI. Mobilization trips to places like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand were instrumental in leading churches in these countries to adopt the KAMBESI people for prayer. The KAMBESI churches in America and other countries were actively involved in prayer for their own people. Prayer undergirded everything that was done among the KAMBESI people.

1990-1992

The Strategy Coordinator and his family entered into the country on a humanitarian aid platform. CSI was officially registered with the government and given permission

to engage in humanitarian aid and community development projects aimed at improving the life of the KAMBESI people.

During this initial two year period, the Strategy Coordinators (it needs to be said that the husband and wife worked in this role as a team with each assuming specific responsibilities as needed) was engaged in implementing several projects while learning language and culture. During this time period, the Strategy Coordinator asked for and received permission from the government authorities to attend on of the local house churches in the capital city. For a period of 3 months in late 1990, the Strategy Coordinator was granted official permission to teach in this house church. He was engaged in teaching English as well as Chronological Bible Storying. However, after three months the government suddenly withdrew their permission and the Strategy Coordinator had to cease teaching.

Although no longer able to teach in the house church, the Strategy Coordinator continued attending, building relationships with national believers, and building relationships with other expatriate Christian workers in the country.

In late 1991, the Strategy Coordinator and family returned to the States for a short furlough, returning in May 1992. During the furlough period, the Strategy Coordinator began to develop relationships with overseas KAMBESI believers in the US. Plans were made to seek to establish a partnership relationship with the group of KAMBESI Baptist churches in the US. A short trip in May 1992 was held to explore possibilities for partnership inside the country.

This initial attempt at a partnership with the KAMBESI Baptist churches from the US did not succeed on a formal basis. There was a wide divergence in methodology between the Strategy Coordinator and the several of the key KAMBESI Baptist leaders in the US. What did develop at a later date were some key partnering relationships with individual KAMBESI Baptist leaders and churches in the US.

There was not a need for scripture translation as CM&A missionaries had already translated the Bible into the KAMBESE language nearly 40 years earlier. However, in early 1991 there began an effort to start a new translation of the scriptures into more modern, more grammatically correct KAMBESE language with the hope that this would make the Bible more easily understood by a larger percentage of KAMBESI people. This new translation effort was spearheaded by several overseas KAMBESI believers. The translation team consisted of two foreign expatriate Christians, two overseas KAMBESI believers, and two local KAMBESI believers.

1993

As stated earlier, the overall strategy focused upon church planting. In 1993, the Strategy Coordinator asked God to begin to raise up local KAMBESI believers who had the desire and the calling to start churches among their own people. The first KAMBESI church planter trained by this Strategy Coordinator was brought onto the team in 1993. Within one year, a total of 6 local church planters had been raised up. The Strategy Coordinator developed and wrote a church planting manual in the KAMBESE language. Church planters were mentored in the church planting process by the Strategy Coordinator. Although the Strategy Coordinator was not able to physically accompany these KAMBESI church planters, he met with them on, at least, a weekly basis for encouragement, prayer, discipling, and evaluation purposes.

During the first year, 14 new churches were planted by this small group of KAMBESI church planters. These 14 new church starts were located in five of the twenty-one provinces.

Radio became a key element in the overall strategy. During the years that the KAMBESI people were shut off from the rest of the world, it was radio that was the primary method of sharing the gospel message with the people. Further, many KAMBESI people who lived in remote areas (which was a significant number) listened to radio as a means of contact with what was happening in their own country as well as the outside world. FEBC Radio was the key player in this strategy. The Strategy Coordinator worked with the staff of FEBC Radio in coordinating radio listener rallies, distribution of small short-wave radios, and development of appropriate radio programming for the KAMBESI people. The Strategy Coordinator served as a personal friend to the FEBC director (a KAMBESI expatriate from the Philippines) as well as the chairman of the Board of Directors until his departure in 1996.

In 1993, a leadership training program was started in Phnom Penh to begin to train the emerging new leaders from the churches started by the KAMBESI church planters. The first session had 12 participants, half from one church located in the capital city. This training program was set up on a modular system. Students were asked to come to a central location for a two-week intensive training period. After the two week training session, the students returned to their home church to teach what they had learned. The program was based around 4 modules, one every three months. Later a second year of 4 modules was added.

There were several important aspects to this leadership training program. First, it was decided that in every training session there would be some teaching conducted by a local KAMBESI leader. The idea was to train local KAMBESI leaders to be able to assume responsibility for training their own people. Second, each two-week module included some teaching of one or more books of the Bible, a subject that dealt with practical aspects of ministry, and one area in which simple books (i.e., Navigator material in KAMBESE language) were taught. Copies of these books were then given to each leader to take back to his own congregation so he could teach the local believers. For example, in the first module we taught the book of JOHN, a course on how to organize a house church for ministry in its village or community, and a simple fill-in-the-blank, question and answer book called 'Doctrine for New Believers'. Another module taught the book of ACTS, a book in the KAMBESE language on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and a simple course in church planting.

Also, in 1993 the country opened up significantly with the presence of the United Nations. At that time, a number of other Christian agencies and workers entered the country.

Many Christians from neighboring countries began to come on short-term exploratory, outreach, and training trips.

It was during late 1993 that the largest Baptist Church in Hong Kong began to become actively involved in the church planting ministry initiated by the Strategy Coordinator. This church was involved in providing financial support for this effort as well as short-term teams.

1994

1994 was the year of impressive growth for all churches among the KAMBESI people, including Baptists. The local KAMBESI church planters whom this Strategy Coordinator mentored were instrumental in bringing about a 300% increase in the

number of churches in 1994. At the end of 1993, the number of churches these men had planted numbered about 14. By the end of 1994, the number had grown to 42. These new churches were now in ½ of all the provinces within the country. Besides Baptist work, several other groups were also seeing impressive increases in the numbers of new church plants. These included CM&A and the independent Bible School located in the capital city. By the end of 1994, there were known churches in each of the provinces within the country, the first step toward fulfilling the vision of a church in every district. By the end of 1994, there were 8 local KAMBESI church planters being mentored by the Strategy Coordinator. These 8 church planters were moving about into various provinces of the country.

In 1994, enrolment in the leadership training program jumped to over 50. Two alternating sessions were held, six weeks apart to accommodate the demand. Most of the students were coming from churches started by the KAMBESI church planters; however, enrolment was open to church leaders from any denomination. 1994 saw the development of the second leadership training site located in the northwest area of the country. Because foreign expatriate teachers were difficult to secure for this second training center, the bulk of the responsibility for teaching fell onto the shoulders of the local KAMBESI church planters and other leaders who had completed the first leadership training course.

1994 also saw an increased involvement by overseas KAMBESI believers in the work. As many of these overseas KAMBESI believers returned to their country, they would share the good news with family and friends in their home villages. Efforts were made to have the local KAMBESI church planters follow up and start new units. However, it was discovered that, for the most part, this was not successful. It was difficult for the church planter to go into the area after the overseas KAMBESI believer had been there. Therefore, it was decided to have the local church planter involved from the very beginning. The local church planters, if not involved from the very beginning, were reluctant to try to follow up afterwards.

1995

The highlight of 1995 was the formation of the KAMBESI Baptist Convention in March of that year. This convention was formed entirely by the Baptist churches themselves and arose out of a felt need by these churches to cooperate together for the purpose of starting even more churches.

During 1995, there was a significant involvement initiated by Singaporean Baptist Churches among the KAMBESI people. Also, several Baptist churches in the United States adopted the KAMBESI people during 1995, among them were First Baptist Del City, OK and Bacon Heights Baptist Church of Lubbock, TX.

More and more Great Commission groups were working among the KAMBESI people by 1995. As more and more freedom came to the KAMBESI people, more and more Christian groups began to enter the country. By and large, this was a positive thing; however, there were a number of problems that arose due to the large influx of Christian groups. Local believers had to contend with a variety of doctrinal teachings, some which would be considered cultic such as Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses.

Groups like the Assemblies of God, CM&A, and Southern Baptists continued to show impressive growth. There was better cooperation emerging between groups while at the same time a pull towards denominationalism that had the tendency to separate congregations and believers. Various associations were formed among many

groups, much of it brought about by increasing government suspicions towards and regulations imposed upon the ever-growing Christian population.

The Strategy Coordinator for the KAMBESI people continued to train and mentor church planters while also continuing to develop the Rural Leaders' Training Program. The second site in the northwest was averaging about 35 in each session. A third site in the southeast was organized and plans made to acquire some land and building put into place. The third site in the southeast averaged nearly 40 per session during its first year. The second and third sites of the Rural Leaders' Training Program were primarily taught by some of the KAMBESI church planters and others who had graduated from the initial program in the capitol city. Short term teams from the United States and Hong Kong continued to be involved in training as well as individual expatriates working among the KAMBESI people.

By the end of 1995, the KAMBESI Church had grown to over 60 different congregations. It was also verified that an evangelical church had been planted in each of the provinces throughout the country, the first step toward reaching the goal of a church in every district by the year 2000.

1996-1997

By the time of the second annual KAMBESI Baptist Convention meeting in 1996, the KAMBESI Baptist Churches had grown to over 70 in number. They were the fastest growing group among the KAMBESI people. By 1997, the number had grown to over 100. By the end of 1997, the number had grown to over 120 churches. The most telling sign of growth among the KAMBESI Baptist Churches in 1997 was the planting of new churches by existing churches. In 1997, over 20 new congregations had been planted by existing churches. For the first time, the major growth among KAMBESI Baptist Churches was initiated by existing churches rather than by the church planters.

- B. Who was involved (their length of service, linguistic abilities, ethnicity, age, means of support, platform/visa type, background/experience, nationality, how they were recruited and trained, etc.)?

From 1990 until 1994, only the Strategy Coordinator and his family were working among the KAMBESI people (IMB personnel). However, there were a significant number of international expatriates and KAMBESI expatriates who were working with other groups or as individuals during this time. The majority of people working among the KAMBESI people were affiliated with non-governmental organizations or humanitarian aid organizations. By and large, the international expatriates came from either Britain, Australia, Canada, or the United States. The KAMBESI expatriates came primarily from the United States, Canada, France, or Australia.

Among the international expatriate community, most Christian workers were either fluent in the KAMBESE language or actively learning the language. It was very difficult for a non-KAMBESE speaker to function long-term in this country. One of the characteristics of the international expatriate community was that most folks served only two to three year terms. However, most of these folks had involvement with KAMBESI refugees either in refugee camps along the border during the 1980's or in their home country. It was interesting to see many that had worked with KAMBESI refugees return to this country to continue working with these people.

There were only about 20 international expatriates who worked inside the country longer than 2 years. These folks were the core group of expatriates who were seen by many as the most knowledgeable about the KAMBESI Church.

Among the expatriate KAMBESI who were working inside the country during these years, most were only for short-term work. Only a handful of KAMBESI expatriate Christians returned to work among their own people on a long-term basis. Some of these were KAMBESI businessmen or those who were fortunate enough to be able to land work with one of the many Christian non-government agencies working among the KAMBESI like World Vision, World Concern, World Relief, CAMA Services, Southeast Asian Outreach, or Asian Outreach. There were no long-term KAMBESI expatriates working with IMB personnel during this time due to the policy restrictions of the IMB in hiring people to return to their country of birth. IMB personnel had to rely upon volunteers from KAMBESI Baptist Churches in the United States to assist them in their efforts.

By 1994, additional IMB personnel arrived to work among the KAMBESI people. The first were ISC personnel followed by two career units. Today, the number of IMB personnel working inside the country among KAMBESI people has grown significantly.

C. How was it done (unique or significant emphases or approaches that were notable)?

The basic approach to church planting among the KAMBESI people was based on a formula called KISS (Keep it Simple and Short) and a belief that if the words of 2 Timothy 2:2 were taught and implemented it would result in a rapid movement of new church plants.

Everything taught by this Strategy Coordinator to the KAMBESI church planters was kept simple and short. That is, it was taught in bite-size chunks that could easily be learned and implemented by these new believers and apprentice church planters. 2 Timothy 2:2 was the underlying principle taught to these church planters as well as in the Rural Leaders' Training Program.

Another key to the success of the KAMBESI church planting movement was the belief that the churches needed to be birthed by and led by KAMBESI believers from the very beginning. Non-KAMBESI personnel took on a role as encouragers, mentors, and trainers. This principle avoided the problems that arise when expatriate workers assume leadership and then seek to turn their work over to the local believers. At the same time, it brought other difficulties with which we had to contend such as immature leaders. Thus, intensive efforts were made to train, equip, and mentor leaders quickly and effectively.

KAMBESI church planters were taught a simple church planting methodology. The Strategy Coordinator developed a simple church planting outline in the KAMBESE language based on the Pauline Ephesian cycle. The church planters were also taught how to use the Jesus film (primarily video format) in their work. The church planters' work was also augmented by the training done in the Rural Leaders' Training Program. Innovative methods and approaches were encouraged. Successes were studied and replicated. When efforts did not work as planned, church planters were not scolded or reprimanded. Rather, consultation and help were provided to help avoid mistakes again. The result was a church planting movement that grew rapidly and which is still growing today.

D. What was the outcome (what went right, what went wrong, results in terms of the church planting level and/or conversion scale changes, lessons learned, etc.)?

The primary obstacle faced in this church planting movement centered around finances. Many Christian groups began to arrive to work among the KAMBESI people. A lot of these groups brought with them large sums of money to assist in hiring local personnel. Thus, there were a lot of problems associated with finances. Not a few KAMBESI believers were tempted to get involved in evangelism and church planting because of the salaries they could draw from these groups. Some KAMBESI believers were tainted because of their mismanagement of funds given to them.

The problem of rice-Christians also emerged where humanitarian aid efforts and evangelism occurred side-by-side. This was a problem not easily solved. Several times this Strategy Coordinator witnessed new churches started as a result of community development projects fall by the wayside when persecution or hardships came. Eventually, this Strategy Coordinator would only do community development projects in areas where churches already existed as opposed to using such projects to open new areas.

It was also observed that large scale evangelistic efforts that were not followed up with church planting efforts tended to fail. For example, Jesus film teams were often sent into communities to show the Jesus film. Many conversions or decisions were recorded, but because no effort was made to follow-up with church planting these new believers fell by the wayside. A large evangelistic crusade was held in 1994 that proved disastrous. It was marred by riots on the third evening, the evangelist was run out of the country, and the government began to increase pressure upon the local church and Christian groups working in the country.

4. Summarize the current status of Christianity among your target group.

As of the end of 1997, the KAMBESI Baptist Churches have grown to over 120 congregations. Other groups such as CM&A have also seen significant growth. Best estimates are that there are over 400 congregations throughout the country with well over 20,000 believers. Accurate information is difficult to come by. What is certain is that the church continues to grow. The church planting movement is spearheaded by local KAMBESI believers, and the government is increasing its pressure upon the church and Christian groups working inside the country as it realizes the inroads that Christianity is making among the KAMBESI people.

5. Summarize your future plans for the evangelization of your target group.

There is an team of IMB personnel continuing to work among the KAMBESI people today. They continue to serve in a background role – discipling, training, mentoring, and encouraging the local KAMBESI Church. The KAMBESI Baptist Convention has adopted the vision of a church in every district by the year 2000 as its own.

QUESTIONS FOR CASE STUDIES

1. Describe significant training methods, including the aspect of mentoring, which were utilized in the training of people ministering among your target group (nationals and others).

The basic training philosophy was based on 2 Timothy 2:2. For example, when the Strategy Coordinator trained the first local KAMBESI church planter, this church planter was required to teach the material to others who were instructed to teach others. When the first session on church planting was taught, the church planter was required to teach someone else during the week before he could return the next week to sit for the second session, and so on. In the leadership training programs, this same principle was stressed, though, admittedly, it was more difficult to follow up on students after they returned to their home villages. However, it was usually evident after several months who was and who was not adhering to the principle by looking at both the qualitative and quantitative growth of the group. When church leaders were suspected of not fulfilling their responsibility in teaching their members, often a local KAMBESI church planter or the Strategy Coordinator would seek to privately confront the leader and encourage him or her to follow through. On a few occasions some leaders were not allowed to continue with the training program because they did not adhere to this principle.

In mentoring the church planters, the Strategy Coordinator would sometimes accompany (when able and when appropriate) the church planter and seek to model. However, the Strategy Coordinator made it a principle to never do for the church planter or church leader anything that he or she could do for himself/herself. The Strategy Coordinator never assumed any formal position within any church, choosing to work in the background. The local KAMBESI leaders were constantly encouraged to 'do it themselves'.

Other Great Commission Christian groups continued in implementing the model where the missionary assumed leadership until such time he/she believed a local was capable of assuming leadership. Typically, those employing this method had to depend on large numbers of foreign expatriate workers if they desired increased church starts. Those who employed the model whereby locals were empowered and encouraged from the beginning to assume the responsibility of leadership (training and mentoring provided as they did the task) typically outpaced other groups almost 4 to 1 in numbers of church starts.

2. Describe "typical" churches that were being planted and how they were developing.

The typical church was a house church. Only a few congregations were able to construct worship centers. In the Baptist work, typically groups were started from village to village. Training of leaders was implemented almost from the onset. Local KAMBESI church planters would assist with discipleship, Bible teaching, and church organization usually for a period of about 6 months before moving on. Some groups required more time.

3. What were your criteria for deciding whether or not a group was a church?

The sole criterion was that a group had the characteristics as described in Acts 2:41-47 (for Baptists). Normally a group was considered a church if it had these

characteristics, had an appointed or selected leader, and had about 10-12 adult believers.

4. What forms of support, if any, were being provided for churches that were being planted? What advantages and disadvantages did you see to this situation?

For Baptists, no formal program of support was ever instituted for churches. The local KAMBESI church planters (numbering usually between 8-10) were provided a monthly stipend, transportation, and funds for materials. Often overseas KAMBESI congregations would take it upon themselves to support a new church start or to assist with construction of a worship center.

Only the first generation of local KAMBESI church planters were given any formal financial support. As these men raised up additional believers who became involved in church planting, it was expected that the local churches would provide the support.

Money always will bring with it problems. A few of the local KAMBESI church planters did not work out because of their inability to handle the money issue appropriately. Some came to the task primarily because of the support they might receive. Looking back on the process, the overall method of support was sound and not detrimental to the church planting process.

The advantage of not providing formal financial support to churches or church leaders placed the responsibility of financial affairs on the church from the very beginning. The church was more of a genuine KAMBESI church as opposed to a Western church in a KAMBESI setting. Not providing support avoided issues of division over money. In those situations where an individual overseas congregation chose to support a congregation in the country, there were many problems of dishonesty with funds as well as jealousy between groups.

5. Describe typical church leadership. How were leaders trained?

For the Baptist work, leaders were trained in the modular leadership training programs or in TEE courses taught by another denomination. There was one independent Bible School established in the capital city that was a residential school. Another denomination started its own two-year residential Bible School in the capital city as well. However, for the most part, training was provided to leaders 'on the go' or as they did their ministry in their respective congregations.

6. What methods proved most effective in terms of initial evangelistic approach?

Local KAMBESI believers sharing their faith one-on-one was by and large the most effective method and remains so. The KAMBESI people did respond well to the Jesus film and other gospel video presentations (KAMBESI people love to watch movies or videos). The KAMBESI believers often sought to evangelize entire families, following the webs of relationships that existed within villages as well as between different villages.

7. What leadership styles or relational styles were used by outsiders and to what effect?

There were some groups from the outside that held to a more paternal or colonial view of missions when relating to the KAMBESI Churches (I use these two words not in a derogatory sense, but for lack of better words to describe the relationship). That is, these groups tended to rely upon the foreign expatriate worker to lead the local church because of the inherent belief that a more mature believer needed to be the leader. Thus, such patterns of church planting were slow and dependent upon the number of foreign expatriate workers within the organization and the number of new church plants that these workers could handle at any one given time. Today, one particular denominational group has over 50 foreign expatriate workers, and their church starts during the past 6 years have been about 40 in number.

Most groups in the country held to the principle that KAMBESI people needed to reach KAMBESI people and that KAMBESI people needed to start and lead KAMBESI Churches. This included groups like the CM&A, Southern Baptists, the Independent Bible School in the capital city, and others. The foreign expatriates in these groups tended to take on a mentoring, training, and encouraging role, preferring to work more in the areas of equipping KAMBESI believers as they started new churches and as they served in these churches. These groups have seen the fastest growth in numbers of new church starts. Training and equipping of believers and leaders is done on an “as you go” basis.

Strangely enough, the most paternal attitude towards the local KAMBESI Churches and believers has come from the expatriate KAMBESI believers from places like the United States, Canada, Australia, and France. Having only the experience of starting churches within their respective ‘host’ countries, these believers often came to the local KAMBESI Churches with the attitude that this was the only way to start new work. Most of these expatriate KAMBESI believers came from situations in the United States and other countries where there was a mother church that financially supported the KAMBESI congregations financially and in other areas for extended periods of time. For some, the dependency on their mother churches has yet to be broken. One of the greatest challenges was, and still is, to get these expatriate KAMBESI believers to not replicate their own experiences in church planting that they had in their ‘host’ country.

8. How were baptisms usually handled?

Baptisms were usually handled in groups. Very seldom were baptisms held for just one or two individuals. Normally, a church would expect new believers to show their commitment through becoming a viable member of the local congregation via attending Bible Study, prayer meetings, worship, and involvement in evangelism before being able to be baptized. Baptisms were usually held 2-3 times per year. They were not only a time of confirmation for the new believers, but often these baptismal services were used as an evangelistic outreach in and of themselves. Baptisms were held wherever there was access to water – such as a river, a lake, a pond, or even an irrigation canal.

9. How were disagreements and church discipline handled?

There was no set pattern of church discipline that was formally used in the KAMBESI Baptist Churches although congregations were taught Biblical principles of church discipline via the Rural Leaders' Training Program and other training programs. In KAMBESI society it would be rare for an individual to go to another individual when a problem arose. Often, slander of another was the rule when there were disagreements.

One way in which we sought to overcome this cultural habit was to have two or three people go together to talk with the other party or parties whenever there was a major disagreement. In this way, neither party involved in the dispute lost face. When this method was followed it was often the most effective way to resolve problems that arose.

10. How did the level of cultural identification by foreign workers affect their effectiveness?

There was no doubt that foreign expatriate workers who had language skills and cultural understanding were the most effective in working among the KAMBESI. Sometimes, foreign expatriate workers came to KAMBESI having worked with KAMBESI people in places the United States or Europe. They often did not understand that working with the local KAMBESI situation and the local KAMBESI people were different than working with KAMBESI people who were displaced. However, as a whole this category of expatriate workers tended to come with better language skills and a capacity to learn the local culture faster.

11. What were the levels of trust and expectation of new believers in the churches?

New believers were trusted to organize and structure their own groups as they felt was needed for their respective situation. It was expected that new leaders of new groups would attend some type of discipleship and training program, and every effort was made to see that this happened. TEE and the Rural Leaders' Training Program were two of the main ways in which new leaders were trained quickly. New believers were expected to handle their own affairs and were trusted to do so. The more mature leaders, such as the local group of church planters, were given the responsibility to ensure that new groups were adequately provided for.

12. How were finances handled in the churches?

From the onset of a new church start, one of the first committees that was formed was one that handled finances. Churches were taught and encouraged not to allow the pastor or one leader to handle the money as this often led to distrust and broken relationships quickly in the new church. Tithing was taught, but it was quickly discovered that in rural congregations the tithing of money was inadequate, thus, tithing of crops and goods-in-kind was taught. However, this concept did not take root as well as we would have liked to see.

13. Of the following list of tools, which did you not use and why: radio, television, videotapes, audio cassettes, Bibles, Bible portions, tracts, other Christian literature, prayer strategies, others?

All of the above tools were used, and depending upon the local situation had various degrees of success. However, all tools and methodologies were encouraged and used.

14. Describe what security precautions you took and those that you should have taken.

The main ministry security precaution we took was to maintain a state of separateness between the NGO work and the church planting work. As an NGO, we sought to be faithful to our commitment to the government and implement needed humanitarian aid and community development projects. Any work that we did in terms of church planting was done outside of the NGO. We never used the NGO name with anything related to the church work. In this way, we did not violate our agreement with the government to serve in the country as a registered NGO. Written communications (fax and e-mail) were not a major security concern during this time period.

The greatest security concern that we had was with physical security. KAMBESI was a land where there was much fighting going on all the time. Guns were as common as books.

We strictly enforced the out-of-bed policy for all of our foreign expatriate workers. In many rural areas, a system was set up between NGOs, the UN, and others working in that respective area to deal with threats to physical security.

One security issue that I would have implemented sooner (had I been able to do so) would be to not serve as the director of the NGO while at the same time serve as the Strategy Coordinator for the KAMBESI people. As much as we tried to keep the lines between the NGO and the church work from becoming blurred, it became increasingly more difficult as the church work grew and expanded.

15. Describe any significant impact which signs and wonders had upon your work.

Signs and wonders were often instrumental in the work. Reports of miraculous healings, casting out of evil spirits, and other signs did lead to new church starts and increased numbers of converts in various villages and areas from time to time. Eventually, some groups came into the country teaching that signs and wonders had to be a part of the normative Christian experience. This only caused minor problems as KAMBESI people did believe in signs and wonders. Very few bought into the teaching that it had to be normative to be genuine. They just accepted the signs and wonders when they occurred as being evidence of God's working in their midst.

On one occasion a faith healer from the US did come to KAMBESI to hold a crusade. It was a disaster that ended after three days with the evangelist having to leave the country for fear of his life. The promises that the lame would walk (in a land where 200 people a month were killed or made lame by landmines), the blind would see, and the dead would rise simply did not come about as proclaimed by those who were a part of this crusade. Yes, some miracles did occur during these three days, but, all in all, this crusade with its emphasis on signs and wonders moreso than the preaching of the gospel had a negative impact. This healing crusade could have set growth of the KAMBESI Church back, but fortunately the church recovered quickly and continued in its growth.

16. Describe persecution which arose related to your ministry and what impact it had.

As a whole, there was very little persecution that occurred. Most persecution had to deal with rejection by family members when one of the family accepted Christ. This was usually handled by encouraging the new believer to remain in the home and be respectful of parents, thus seeking to convert them through their Christian lifestyle and witness.

17. What were your priorities in seeking to recruit personnel for ministry positions and what methods did you find effective in doing so?

Large numbers of short-term personnel recruited from US churches and areas like Singapore and Hong Kong were mobilized primarily for training and teaching ministries.

Short-term expatriate KAMBESI believers were also recruited from churches overseas.

From 1990 to 1993, it was difficult to recruit personnel due to the instability of the country. As the country began to open up during the run-up to elections and afterwards, it became easier to recruit personnel, both short and long term. More and more groups and more and more people began to come to work among the KAMBESI people once the country began to open up.

In recruiting from US churches, the most effective way was to have groups or the pastor from these churches come on an exploratory trip to see the work first hand. In recruiting from places like Singapore and Hong Kong, it took a lot of personal visits by the Strategy Coordinator. Relationships were the key here. Usually, it was easier to get these Asian churches and groups to invest financially in the work before sending personnel.

18. What was your approach to the ethical question of doing illegal ministry? How was this an issue in your ministry or for others with whom you worked?

There was freedom of religion in the country. Thus, none of us working among the KAMBESI people were doing anything illegal. The only legal matter of concern to us was that we needed to be careful as an NGO to do what we had promised to do. This was more a problem of integrity as opposed to legality.

19. What barriers did you experience in achieving unity of purpose and coordination of work among those with whom you worked? What did you do to overcome them?

In 1989, a group called the KAMBESI Christian Services was formed by many international groups and expatriate KAMBESI believers for the purpose of coordination of work among the KAMBESI people. As a whole, this group was very effective. Almost all of the international (Christian) NGOs such as World Vision, World Concern, Asia Outreach, etc were a part of this effort as were denominational groups such as CM&A, Baptists, and Assemblies of God.

The major obstacle to achieving unity of purpose and coordination was the inability of the expatriate KAMBESI believers to work together. There were three KAMBESI believers from the US who returned to work among their people long term. None of these three men could cooperate together while in the US and they imported this spirit

of disunity into their work among the KAMBESI people. Thus, splinter groups were quickly formed.

In working with local KAMBESI Churches we taught that unity is not uniformity. We encouraged groups and workers to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry while, at the same time, encouraging them to affirm their differences and work together to continue to plant new churches. For the most part there was good cooperation among the local KAMBESI churches and international groups.

There was one group of international workers who preached fervently that the church should come under one banner. Rather than oppose these people, we took the attitude to show them the difference between unity and uniformity via example.

With the increase in the number of denominations arriving to work among the KAMBESI population, it was inevitable that fragmentation would begin to occur. However, for the most part, there remained good communication and good coordination between denominations and groups while each recognized and respected the work of each specific group.

20. Describe major prayer initiatives or strategies you utilized. Note any striking results.

The most effective prayer initiative was a gathering each week of expatriate workers inside the country who gathered to pray for the KAMBESI Church. This prayer initiative helped to build understanding between those that attended as well as undergird the young KAMBESI Church. A prayer network for the KAMBESI people worldwide had been ongoing for many years. I cannot report any specific striking results other than I believe that this prayer network was what broke the barriers and led to the beginning of the church planting movement among the KAMBESI people.

In local congregations started by the KAMBESI church planters that I mentored, early morning prayer gatherings were started in a number of these groups. The local congregations that put an emphasis on these prayer gatherings were often the groups that reported the fastest growth as well as new church starts.

21. What lessons did you learn (positive and negative)?

Primarily, I learned that church planting is both simple and difficult. The principles involved in church planting are very simple. Implementing those principles is often difficult as it takes a lot of patience, faith, and perseverance on the part of the church planter. I learned that the new believers can be trusted. I learned that the same Holy Spirit who guides and leads me in my work is the same Holy Spirit that leads and guides these new believers, and I just needed to trust the Holy Spirit to work out in the lives of these new believers His plan for His church. I learned that the principle taught in 2 Timothy 2:2 does work and is the simplest plan for initiating a church planting movement, in my opinion. I learned that it is okay to work in the background and be an encourager and mentor. There is no shame in that nor am I violating my role as a missionary. What is most important is not whether I physically plant the church myself, but that the church gets planted. I had to learn to be content with the role God had for me in this process.

On the negative side, I learned that money has been and will always be the main enemy of a church planting movement. It can be a friend to those of us working cross-culturally, but usually we allow money to become the enemy. I saw the misuse of

money destroy a lot of work. I saw the love of money turn humble believers into greedy, spiteful human beings.

22. What other advice would you give (not covered above) to those planning to engage in restricted-access church-planting ministries?

I would encourage those working in restricted-access countries to be open to new and creative ways to seeing churches planted. I would encourage them to learn the language and learn the culture of the people to whom they seek to plant churches among. I would encourage them to ask God to give them at least one person (perhaps about 5-6) to whom they could pour their life into, to whom they could model the truth of 2 Timothy 2:2. If they did this I believe that God would honor their faithfulness and use them to be the seed for a church planting movement among the respective people group. I would encourage them by telling them to be open to allowing God to use whomever He desires to accomplish the task among those people. He may not use them to actually plant a church among the people, but He may use them to be the one who trains, equips, and mentors that first church planter. Most of all, I would encourage them by saying that radical obedience to the Great Commission is the bottom line, nothing more and nothing less. God will honor such radical obedience. God has a role for each of us. May we allow God to reveal to each of us the role He wants us to have.

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