Journal of the American Society for Church Growth

Volume 14 | Issue 1 Article 5

1-1-2003

Suggested Shifts in Preparation for the Spontaneous Expansion of the North American Church

J. D. Payne
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, jd.payne@samford.edu

Suggested Shifts In Preparation For The Spontaneous Expansion Of The North American Church

J.D. Payne

The purpose of this article is to address some of the necessary missiological shifts required for the North American Church to be in the position to experience spontaneous expansion.[1] The discussion also will include some of the hindrances to spontaneous expansion. From the outset, it must be noted that the spontaneous expansion of the Church is not something that can be manufactured by mankind. Not even the best missiological formulae or shifts alone will produce the church growth that many desire. The spiritual dynamic is a necessary component for church multiplication. The movement of the Spirit on the churches and the masses is required. Having stated this assumption, this article will examine the needed humanistic shifts in North American missiology.

Some Presuppositions

This article is grounded on several presuppositions that need to be mentioned. First, change is needed for the North American Church to experience spontaneous expansion. Though this chapter is not to be taken as a prescription for how to create church multiplication, nevertheless, it is written to advocate that paradigmatic shifts are necessary if the Church is going to be in the position to experience a church multiplication movement. These shifts, as related to church planting, are found in the areas of theology, strategy, and methodology.

The second presupposition is that by Her very nature, the Church is designed to grow and reproduce. Robert E. Logan

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Winter 2003

noted that the Church would grow and reproduce, "unless we do something that hinders that from happening."[2] Though at times the rate of the growth of the Church will vary, nevertheless, it is God's will for growth to occur.

The third presupposition is related to the receptivity of North America to the gospel. Donald A. McGavran observed:

> Peoples and societies also vary in responsiveness. Whole segments of mankind resist the Gospel for periods—often very long periods—and then ripen to the Good News. In resistant populations, single congregations only, and those small, can be created and kept alive, whereas in responsive ones many congregations which freely reproduce others can be established.[3]

It is assumed that North America is receptive to the gospel, but not to many of the traditional cultural expressions of the gospel and the church. The postmodern cultural shift has created an openness to the spiritual and supernatural in a manner that did not exist 20-30 years ago.[4] One problem, however, is that the Church has isolated Herself from the culture-at-large. Wilbert R. Shenk was correct when he observed that the Western Church "takes its culture for granted. The fact that the church has for so long been defined by the social classes in which it was embedded indicates that, far from having a critical knowledge of its culture, the church speaks largely with the accent and idiom of the class(es) with which it is identified."[5] This cultural ignorance has resulted in many individuals rejecting the gospel because of the manner in which the gospel has become packaged. Instead of rejecting the truth, many have rejected the evangelistic methodologies and have never even heard the truth.[6]

In light of this receptivity that the cultural shift has helped produce, a related assumption must be made. As noted in the opening paragraph, unless God in his sovereignty moves upon the Church and the masses, then the spontaneous expansion is an impossibility. The Church should be praying for continued and heightened receptivity, and in McGavran's words, be on the lookout for the changes and adjust accordingly.

> Unless churchmen are on the lookout for changes in receptivity of homogeneous units within the general population, and are prepared to seek and bring persons and groups *belonging to these units* into the fold, they will not

> even discern what needs to be done in mission. They will continue generalized "church and mission work" which, shrouded in fog as to the chief end of mission, cannot fit mission to increasing receptivity. An essential task is to discern receptivity and—when this is seen—to adjust methods, institutions, and personnel until the receptive are becoming Christians and reaching out to win their fellows to eternal life.[7]

A fourth presupposition is that the contemporary denomination should not be discarded. The Lord has used North American denominations in a powerful way to establish hundreds of thousands of churches on this continent. He will continue to use those Churches who remain faithful to His Word. Denominations will continue in their existence, and will reach many more for Christ. They are organized institutions that can guide and educate future church leaders concerning pitfalls to avoid and the correct paths to pursue. Though their resources are to be used with discernment and caution, denominations have much to offer North American church planting.

In relation to this presupposition, however, a disclaimer must be offered. Most denominations will not make the necessary paradigm shifts required for church multiplication in the twenty-first century. The three major shifts suggested in this chapter are in all likelihood too radical for many contemporary denominations. Too many unsettling changes in the current infrastructures will eventually occur if the necessary changes are made. Rather than make the necessary adaptations, out of fear and concern for control, many will continue to remain on their present course of action. Jonathan Stuart Campbell's observations describe the current situation and problem:

> The major reason church reproduction has not been envisioned for Western contexts is simply because the church is still captive to the Christendom paradigm. It still considers Western society as basically "churched." There is virtually no attempt to apply principles of group conversions, people movements and spontaneous church planting in Western cultures. The current emphasis continues to be on building bigger and bigger institutions instead. Since organic reproduction is not valued, there is no expectation for it. "Spontaneous" church reproduction in Western contexts is almost exclusively

limited to church splits.[8]

Though many denominations will continue to experience church planting by addition, church multiplication will remain only a dream. For those desiring church multiplication but also desire to continue in their established paradigms, great allowances must be made for *avant-garde* church planters.

A fifth presupposition, is that all church planting to some degree is cross-cultural; therefore, North American Church leaders have much to learn from missionaries and missiologists outside of North America. While discussing the importance of culture and church planting, Logan was correct when he stated that "it is important to realize that it is essential to be culturally relevant even if you are not going cross-culturally. Because the fact is that even when we are crossing over from light into darkness, *that is a cross cultural experience*" [emphasis mine].[9]

Though not only in a spiritual sense, North American church planting is a cross-cultural experience even if the church planter is of the same culture as the target group. Membership in the North American Church generally entails an unhealthy form of separation and isolation from the rest of the unchurched world. Though the Church is in the world, it is to keep from the world as much as possible to not be of the world. The Church, unlike Her biblical predecessor, has created a subculture in which most believers are expected to function in the areas of work, education, entertainment, ministry, and socialization as much as possible. In most cases, the Church is out of touch with the culture of the unchurched.

For the professional church planter who has been educated in Christian academia, the North American missiological experience is even more of a cross-cultural endeavor. Cultural readjustment is often necessary after being isolated for several years in classroom education.[10] Even readjustment is required for a minister to return to one's own people to minister effectively. Several years ago Roland Allen, who has been credited as coining the phrase "spontaneous expansion," was concerned with the Christian education of his day since it established an unhealthy chasm between the church leaders and the other church members.[11]

Many writers recently have observed that Western missiology now demands cross-cultural thinking and practice. Writing from a European perspective, Stuart Murray observed:

> As we conclude our discussion of the task of the church, the fundamental point is that, whatever diverse shapes the church assumes, church planters and church leaders in a post-Christian context are required to operate according to principles which have been common among cross-cultural missionaries for many years. The paradigm shift that underlies this requirement is the recognition that all church leadership in Europe should be missionary and cross-cultural, and that the shape of the church should reflect this. Church planting requires the same missionary encounter with surrounding culture and the same concern about developing appropriate forms and structures as is evident in areas of the world that have been regarded as the 'mission field'. Complex issues of indigenization, inculturation and contextualization need to be addressed. The local community is now the 'mission field' and missiological perspectives and skills are required.[12]

Eddie Gibbs made a similar observation on doing mission in Western civilizations in general, and North America in particular:

> The majority of church leaders throughout the Western world find themselves ministering in a rapidly changing cultural context that is both post-Christian and pluralistic. Consequently their outreach ministries are as crosscultural as those of their more traditional missionary counterparts seeking to make Christ known in other parts of the world. Consequently they are in as much need of missionary training to venture across the street as to venture overseas.[13]

Elsewhere, Gibbs noted, "Our post-Christian, neopagan, pluralistic North American context presents crosscultural missionary challenges every bit as daunting as those we would face on any other continent."[14]

Also, displaying similar lines of thinking, Shenk stated:

> Preparing for mission in the region of "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria" that comprises our Western culture will require that we approach this frontier in missional rather than pastoral terms. In this respect, the cross-cultural mission reserves for us a basic model of how the church

> is to relate to the world in all times and places. We assume that the cross-cultural missioner must treat the host culture with sensitivity and respect, starting with learning the language and the various symbol systems that comprise a culture. As modern societies have become increasingly pluralized, this "cross-cultural" perspective becomes ever more imperative for all Christian witness. Ministry always emanates from a particular vantage point, with the disciple serving as ambassador of the kingdom of God to a culture. The motif of the resident alien, found in both Old and New Testaments, is another way of expressing the fact that the church is to be "in but not of the world."
>
> We must come to grips with a culture that is in crisis and transition. At the same time we should become more self-aware of the assumptions that have controlled mission studies and missionary action up to the present. The cross-cultural experience of mission over the past two centuries represents an invaluable resource for the training of missiologists and missionaries to Western culture. Indeed, mission should be conceived of as an inherently cross-cultural action, a movement mandated by the Triune God into territory that does not acknowledge the reign of God. Geography and nationality are entirely secondary concerns.[15]

Though the Church has been established here for a few centuries, in some sense North America has recently become a pioneer territory. Though the continent is not like other areas of the world that have few or no churches, cultural shifts and maintenance-oriented congregations have contributed to this predominately unchurched region of the world. The presence of over 300,000 churches does not negate the need for the spontaneous expansion of the Church.

As will be discussed later, a sixth presupposition is that much contemporary church planting is founded on a shallow ecclesiology. Tradition, cultural relevance, and pragmatism, rather than biblical moorings primarily shapes this ecclesiology itself. It is a shallow ecclesiology that produces unhealthy churches and contributes to hindered spontaneous expansion.

A seventh presupposition is that church multiplication is the best approach to North American missions. Church planting by

addition is good, but not the best. An exponential increase in the number of disciples, and thus congregations, is needed for North America. In light of this presupposition, Church leaders must begin to strategize in terms of reproduction. Methodologies developed and applied must therefore reflect the value of reproduction.

A final presupposition is that the spontaneous expansion of the North American Church will take place through congregations that are yet to be planted. Most established congregations and many recently planted congregations are entrenched in theological and cultural paradigms that are counter-multiplication. A disclaimer needs to be made: it is possible that a catastrophic event could occur which would force the already established churches to make the needed paradigmatic shifts. In all likelihood, however, church planters will lead the way to spontaneous expansion. While addressing the post-modern cultural shift that has occurred, and continues to occur, Gibbs stated:

> Generally, those most aware of the cultural shift from modernity to post-modernity are people who are not locked into the power structures. Those who shoulder the responsibility for the functioning and survival of hierarchies and local churches tend to be too preoccupied in bailing out the boat to be setting a new course. Change agents are most likely to be pioneering church planters who have no congregational history to deal with and who are immersed in the cultures of the people they endeavor to reach.[16]

Three Paradigm Shifts

If the North American Church is going to experience spontaneous expansion, what are the needed changes that must occur? This section will attempt to address three necessary paradigm shifts in the areas of theology, strategy, and methodology. The theological shift is specifically related to the areas of ecclesiology and pneumatology. All church planters have some type of ecclesiology whether good or bad. Church planters must return to the Scriptures for the necessary ecclesiological irreducible minimum that needs to be translated to new believers. In light of this ecclesiological shift, North American church planters need to practice a missionary faith as advocated by Roland Allen.

Again, a return to the Scriptures will assist in developing a proper pneumatology to foster the missionary faith.

The strategic shift required will focus on developing a philosophy of reproduction. Instead of church planters focusing on planting a single congregation, the focus must be on church multiplication, or as Logan noted: planting churches which plant churches which plant churches. From the beginning, all that the church planter does is to be related to church multiplication through disciple-making and the corollary, leadership multiplication.

The methodological shift is closely related to the other two shifts. All church planting methodologies should be evaluated in light of three areas. First, the methodology must be effective in translating to the people group the gospel and the ecclesiological irreducible minimum. Second, the methodology should be effective in multiplying disciples and leaders. Third, and closely related to the second area, there should be a high reproducibility potential related to all that the church planters practice before the target people. The target people should be able to reproduce the pattern of church planting established by the church planters.

Theological Shifts

By far, the greatest need in contemporary North American church planting is a theological shift from a pragmatic ecclesiology or a paternalistic ecclesiology to a biblical ecclesiology that focuses on multiplication. Twenty years ago, Charles Brock noted the need for a healthy theology:

> A proper theological basis and practical principles of church growth are of major importance to the church planter. An education in various strategies and methodologies is of little value unless there is a corresponding and preceding theology. The greatest need today lies in this area of renewed theological thinking. A proper theology will produce a proper methodology. For the church planter the proper methodology will be natural and inevitable to the degree that it issues strictly from biblical theology.[17]

At the Baptist World Alliance International Conference on Establishing Churches held in 1992, Denton Lotz observed:

> One of the crises of the church today is ecclesiology. What is the church? Is the church a building? Is it where two or three are gathered together? Is it where there is a bishop and a diocese, or a pope and a Vatican with apostolic succession? Is it one man or woman in communion with God? Is it where signs of the kingdom, such as justice and peace and shalom, are initiated? Is it where a community of peasants form a cooperative? Is it when a group of youth walk for hunger? Where senior adults demonstrate for more pension? On and on the questions go, perhaps strange to some, but serious questions to others.[18]

Though much research is being conducted in the area of ecclesiology and North American missions, church planters have yet to heed Brock's words and answer Lotz's questions concerning the essence and nature of the church.[19] Murray was correct when he noted: "An inadequate theological basis will not necessarily hinder short-term growth, or result in widespread heresy among newly planted churches. But it will limit the long-term impact of church planting, and may result in dangerous distortions of the way in which the mission of the church is understood."[20]

As mentioned above, there are at least two ecclesiological dangers facing North American church planters. The first danger is a pragmatic ecclesiology. This ecclesiology sacrifices the big picture of seeing local church multiplication for the immediate satisfaction of seeing one church planted or only a few planted by addition.

In an unhealthy manner, a pragmatic ecclesiology focuses on the results. Those who adopt this understanding of the church begin with a church planting model usually because it produces quantitative results. Contentment is related to the large size of the churches planted. Since a particular model of church worked in one region of the country or world, therefore, the model should be applied to other church planting endeavors. The model becomes a panacea. The rationale is usually as follows: Because the model of church reached many for Christ among the middle-class, suburban population of one particular community, therefore it will work in other middle-class, suburban populations throughout the nation.[21] The model is selected in light of the culture, and then the understanding of the church develops

(see Figure 1).

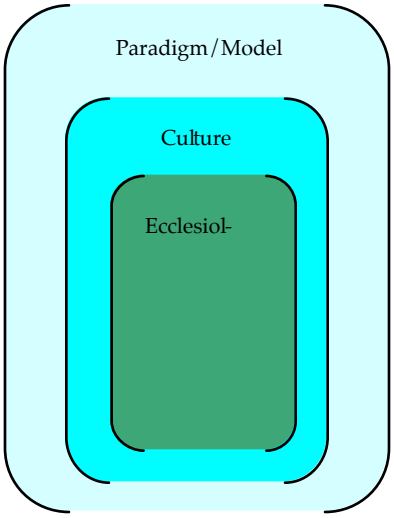

Figure 1. Pragmatic ecclesiological Paradigm

The rationale also assumes that since the model of church reached many people in a particular culture, then an ecclesiology must be designed to support the model. The next step in this phenomenological approach is to turn to the Scriptures to find support for why the particular church functions as it does. Though not referring to a pragmatic ecclesiology, Murray sounded an alarm of caution related to theologizing as he observed: "Designating an approach as 'a theology of' an issue may represent careful reflection on experience and an attempt to engage theologically with contemporary issues, but sometimes it is little more than an attempt to provide theological justification (or a few proof texts) for practices or structures that are already established on other foundations."[22] The end result is that the congregation has "biblical" evidence for seeker-sensitive, contemporary worship services, cell groups, nurseries, recovery classes, and marketing.[23] Campbell observed the danger of pragmatism when he noted:

> Pragmatism is preoccupied with effectiveness, success and measurable results. Practical and cultural perspectives are emphasized over biblical revelation. Meaning is determined through practical or experiential bearing in

contrast to theological bearings.[24]

Paul G. Hiebert observed, "We are often more interested in techniques than in consequences, in success than in outcome, in doing than in being."[25] Os Guinness stated, "Christians who know only trends, and not where they came from, will always remain uncritical. Heads may nod sagely, hands may scribble furiously, but minds will be only in neutral."[26] It is this uncritical mentality that is a hindrance to spontaneous expansion. The model becomes the focus, and the ecclesiology must be developed to support the model. Not only does the pragmatic ecclesiological paradigm look toward the culture to develop the nature and essence of the church, but also it teaches the membership of the congregation to do likewise.

A pragmatic ecclesiology is very similar to cultural syncretism as described by Bruce J. Nicholls:

> It may result from an enthusiastic attempt to translate the Christian faith by uncritically using the symbols and religious practices of the receptor culture resulting in a fusion of Christian and pagan beliefs and practices. . . . A contemporary example of cultural syncretism is the unconscious identification of biblical Christianity with "the American way of life." This form of syncretism is often found in both Western and Third World, middle-class, suburban, conservative, evangelical congregations who seem unaware that their lifestyle has more affinity to the consumer principles of capitalistic society than to the realities of the New Testament, and whose enthusiasm for evangelism and overseas missions is used to justify non-involvement in the problems of race, poverty and oppression in the church's neighborhood.[27]

As will be noted later, this quotation does not negate proper contextualization. The problem is that if any model used, as selected in light of the target culture, is antithetical to a proper biblical ecclesiology, even if numerous conversions are produced and churches are planted, that model must be discarded. Whenever the culture determines the church, not only is the ecclesiology based on a tenuous foundation, but also it hinders spontaneous multiplication.

Many church planters would agree that they should not cater to a culturally determined theology proper that advocates a

less than sovereign God; even if it is the only way to be seeker-sensitive. If church planters are unwilling to compromise on issues such as theology proper, christology, and soteriology, then why compromise ecclesiology for the sake of planting a church? As will be noted later, unless the people can reproduce the model, then in the church's mind, church multiplication is not a possibility.

The second theological danger facing North American church planters is a paternalistic ecclesiology. This ecclesiology advocates that the church background and church culture of the church planters must be projected onto the new believers. Because the church planter prefers having a large group worship experience with praise music, Sunday school classes, newcomers' classes, and a sermon offered by a single individual, then the new church must also have these elements for it to be a healthy congregation. This understanding of the church begins with the culture of the church planter. A model of church is then selected for the target group. This model usually will be one which the church planter is most familiar. Finally, the Scriptures are consulted to find support for why the model of church exists and functions (see Figure 2).[28]

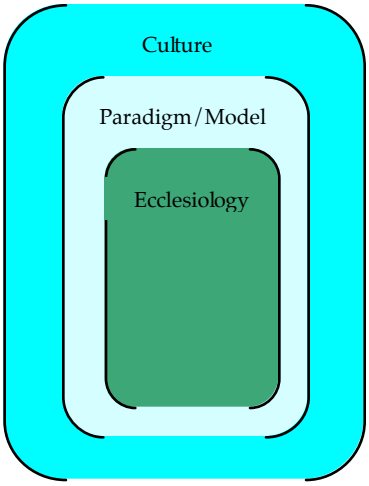

Figure 2. Paternalistic ecclesiological

A corollary of this paradigm is that the church planter tends to see the new believers as being incapable of existing as a church under the sole guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because the

neophytes are not more mature in the faith, the church planter cannot remove himself or herself from the congregation. A practice such as the apostle Paul utilized is seen as impossible in North America.

Not only is the new congregation viewed as spiritually immature, but also untrained, uneducated, and incapable of maintaining the institution that the church planter helped establish. A professional is required for the institution to exist and function as a church. The planting of an institution, rather than a church, is actually a sign of a much deeper-rooted problem plaguing many in the North American Church, institutionalism. Shenk observed this problem and noted:

> The integrity of the church in the West is under siege because of the extent to which institutionalism has overtaken the church. There are observable signs of this condition. One is the sheer proliferation of programs and activities. Driven by the advice of consultants who tell churches that they must cater to the needs of their publics, churches are operating a veritable supermarket of specialized services to meet the whims and demands of a consumer society. Not to do so is to lose out in the competition for a growing membership.[29]

Campbell made several observations regarding how the Church has been impacted by institutionalism:

> Beginning in Christendom, living images of the church (e.g., the Body of Christ and family of God) were displaced by non-living models as it came under increasing political-institutional controls. The shift was gradual and subtle because it followed the culture shift. Now the church defines itself predominately in institutional terms. Institutionalism assumes that the church is an inanimate, linear, cause-and-effect system that is constituted by its organizational structure. From a sociological perspective, an institution is a stable, constructed system of social roles and resources designed to perpetually accomplish some end beyond the lives of its members. Inescapably, it has a life of its own, which is often not easy to change. . . .
>
> This organizational paradigm was further influenced by the development of bureaucratic organizations and in-

> dustrialization of the modern era. Institutionalism is built on the basis of a humanly determined set of regulations, programs, policies, traditions and goals. Churches accommodated to this trend by developing their own privatized, institutional center (or compound) within the culture. . . .
>
> *For the most part, religious structures birthed in modernity have been organized to conserve and control for the sake of the institution rather than empower and release for mission* [emphasis mine].[30]

The concern with this ecclesiological paradigm is not the eventual institutionalization of the newly planted church. History has revealed that over time many religious groups become more and more organized and structured.[31] Institutionalization usually occurs. If the new church desires to develop technical and elaborate structures and organization, then that is her prerogative. The concern is that the paternalistic ecclesiology begins with institutionalization already in place. Even before the congregation comes into existence, the church planter already has the infrastructure and organization in mind.[32] From the beginning, the new church is taught how to function as an institution that exists to perpetuate the institution. Within the genetic code of the congregation, the church planter establishes the paradigm of how the congregation will exist and function as a church for the following generations, regardless of whether or not the new believers are capable of overseeing and maintaining the organization. Shenk stated that structures are not an evil in themselves, but rather cannot define the local church.

> Structures per se are timebound. Invariably structures undergo change in response to the environment, which itself is continually changing. Those that do not prove flexible and adaptable are soon regarded as obsolete and must be discarded. But the process is never easy. Enormous resources can be used up in defending and preserving archaic structures. The church, like all human enterprises, readily looks to its structures to ensure the continuity of the faith. But the New Testament emphasizes the fundamental identity and purpose of the church as the people of God. This peoplehood is what the Holy Spirit uses to give life and move the church

> forward. The church cannot exist without institutional arrangements, but it is the Spirit alone who gives the people of God life and renews them in their identity and purpose.[33]

To import the model of church onto the people is to place the proverbial cart before the horse. This paternalistic ecclesiology can be seen in North American church planting today when church planters enter into the field to plant a purpose-driven church, a cell church, a seeker-sensitive church, a Gen X church, a post-modern church, or a traditional church.[34] To determine the model beforehand, even in light of demographic and psycographic research, is presumptuous and detrimental to the multiplication of indigenous churches. Church planters should keep the models in mind and even create new models, but models should be held onto ever so lightly and only used in light of a proper biblical ecclesiology and proper contextualization.

Guder stated, "We must establish clearly the church's nature and ministry before we proceed to design organizational forms to concretize both in a specific cultural context. Unless we do so, we may fall subject to the illusion that managing the organization is equivalent to being the church."[35] According to Nicholls, this ecclesiological paradigm is also a form of cultural syncretism. He noted that "it is the spirit of the Pharisees and Judaizers who sought to force their cultural forms of religious conviction on their converts. Its modern form is often seen in mission or denominationally founded churches, as enforced ecclesiastical structures, or in social standards of right conduct and worldliness totally alien to the local culture."[36]

Even if the church does become capable of functioning on its own, it is not necessarily an indigenous church. While discussing the cultural implications of an indigenous church, William A. Smalley noted the misconceptions with the three-self formula. According to Smalley, the concept of self-government was subject to misinterpretation. He wrote:

> It may be very easy to have a self-governing church which is not indigenous. Many presently self-governing churches are not. All that is necessary to do is to indoctrinate a few leaders in Western patterns of church government, and let them take over. The result will be a church governed in a slavishly foreign manner (although probably modified at points in the direction of

> local government patterns), but by no stretch of imagination can it be called an indigenous government. This is going on in scores of mission fields today under the misguided assumption that an "indigenous" church is being founded.[37]

Smalley also noted a misunderstanding of the concept of self-propagation. He observed:

> Of the three "selfs," it seems to me that of self-propagating is the most nearly diagnostic of an indigenous church, but here again the correlation is by no means complete. In a few areas of the world it may be precisely the foreignness of the church which is the source of attraction to unbelievers. There are parts of the world where aspirations of people lead them toward wanting to identify themselves with the strong and powerful West, and where the church provides such an avenue of identification. Self-propagation in such a case may be nothing more than a road to a non-indigenous relationship.[38]

In relation to North American church planting, it could be noted that the "foreignness of the church which is the source of attraction to unbelievers," contemporary music, casual dress, use of technology, marketing, may mislead many Church leaders into believing the church is indigenous. In reality, however, the people are attending and joining because of the novelty.

International missionaries and missiologists for years have been refuting the notion of importing Western cultural constraints onto new congregations. Over a century ago, John L. Nevius questioned the practice of projecting missionary structures onto a new congregation and encouraged examining the Scriptures for the organizational principles.

> Is it not this, that practical experience seems to point to the conclusion that present forms of church organization in the West are not to be, at least without some modification, our guides in the founding of infant churches in a heathen land? If it be asked, What then is to be our guide? I answer, The teachings of the New Testament. If it be further asked, Are we to infer, then, that all the forms of church organization in the West are at variance with Scripture teaching? I answer, By no means. . . .

> The all-important question is, What do the Scriptures teach respecting church organization? Do they lay down a system with fixed and unvarying rules and usages, to be observed at all times and under all circumstances? or a system based on general principles, purposely flexible and readily adapting itself, under the guidance of God's Spirit and providence and common sense, to all the conditions in which the Church can be placed? I believe the latter is the true supposition.[39]

Allen also admonished missionaries to avoid projecting their own structures and organizations onto the new congregations.

> The missionary can observe the rule that no organization should be introduced which the people cannot understand and maintain. He need not begin by establishing buildings, he need not begin by importing foreign books and foreign ornaments of worship. The people can begin as they can with what they have. As they feel the need of organization and external conveniences they will begin to seek about for some way of providing them.[40]

Though believing that there is a place for various institutions in peasant churches, while discussing church planting in peasant societies, Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses admonished against cultural projection. They observed:

> On the social level, western [*sic*] leaders have a culturally shaped drive to create formal, highly organized institutions. We create roles such as teacher, doctor, nurse, and preacher, organize committees, set goals, pay leaders, and formulate rules.
>
> This tendency to high organization can have a negative effect on church planting. First, we are in danger of creating specialized institutions the people cannot maintain. . . .
>
> Second, the hidden message behind bureaucratic organizations is that life is divided into segments and specialists are needed in each. Medical care is entrusted to doctors, education to teachers, and church ministries to trained pastors. There is little room in this model for an empowered laity.[41]

While discussing church planting in band societies, elsewhere, Hiebert and Meneses noted that church planters must separate the gospel from their own culture. They noted that one important principle

> in ministering to bands is to distinguish between the gospel and our own culture. We naturally assume that Christianity is what we believe and practice; consequently, we expect converts in other cultures to do the same. We translate our songs into their language, expect them to listen to sermons based on logic, and teach them how to elect a pastor democratically. We are surprised and confused when they say that to become Christian, they must leave their own culture. . . .
> The church needs to adapt its modes of organization to the social practices of people as far as biblical teaching allows. In many ways the loose, egalitarian nature of band organization is more compatible with Christian teaching than the western Christian bureaucratic, pragmatic, and management-by-objective type of leadership that we have borrowed from the world.[42]

Murray attributed this projection of church organization onto a new congregation, to a variety of elements. He noted, however, that the end result tends to be a cloned congregation, rather than a newly planted community of believers.

> I suspect that the creativity needed to engage in such ecclesiological renewal is already present among contemporary church planters, but that this is frequently stifled by inadequate training in the process of theological reflection and contextualization, and such pressures as time-related goals and denominational expectations. The result is all too often that churches are *cloned* rather than being planted. Cloning, the exact duplication of an organism, is a technique once associated primarily with science fiction, and the scary notion of producing human beings through replication rather than reproduction. . . .
>
> In the context of church planting, then, cloning describes the process of replicating the structures, style, ethos, activities and focus of one congregation in another. The location of the church may change, but its shape remains the same.[43]

The alternative to the two harmful ecclesiological paradigms facing North American church planters and hindering spontaneous expansion is an ecclesiology which begins with the Scriptures, and in light of the target's culture, allows for the development of a reproducible church planting methodology. This alternative is a biblical ecclesiological paradigm (see Figure 3).

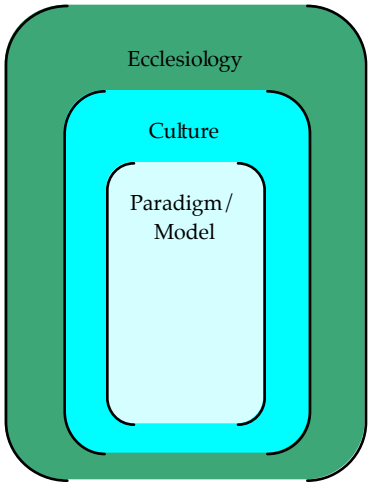

Figure 3. Biblical ecclesiological paradigm

As previously noted, Brock emphasized the need for the church planter to begin with a healthy theology. By beginning the church planting process at the proper starting point, with a biblical ecclesiology, the potential for church multiplication increases. He also observed:

> The resounding conclusion is that a fresh New Testament theology must pervade the life of an indigenous church planter. What one believes about the Bible, salvation, ministry, and the church, as well as other great biblical teachings, is very important. The strategy employed in planting and nurturing a church will depend greatly upon what a person believes. The planter's belief about planting a reproducing church will be reflected in his strategy.[44]

The church planter must develop a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, before attempting to plant a church. Until the questions, What is the Church? and What is

the Church about? can be answered satisfactory in light of New Testament teachings, then the possibility of adopting a pragmatic or a paternalistic ecclesiology exists.[45]

In relation to the above biblical exercise, the church planter must also come to understand what is the irreducible ecclesiological minimum that must be present for a church to be a church. By understanding the nature and purpose of the church, from a biblical perspective, the church planter will come to understand the least amount of components necessary for the church to exist.[46] It is this irreducible ecclesiological minimum that must be translated in church planting to the target group. Anything less than this minimum produces something other than a New Testament congregation. Anything more than this minimum, though not necessarily heretical, begins to run the risk of hindering the ability of the new believers to multiply themselves.

Since it is impossible to become completely objective while conducting research, the danger of developing a biblical ecclesiology intertwined with cultural values is always present. Despite this challenge, through proper hermeneutics, it is possible to make distinctions between the New Testament ecclesiological prescriptions and the Western Church's description. The result is that which can be contextualized into any given society. John E. Apheh noted, "It is imperative that a cross-cultural church planter be able to understand what it means to separate his culture from his message and communicate instead a contextualized message to his hearers."[47] Tom Steffen made a similar observation when he encouraged church planters to

> learn to think long term as well as short term. We must take time to reflect and rectify what we're doing, or plan to spend significant time later doing the same. We must learn to define the gospel, guard it, and strip it of cultural clothes. We need to ask ourselves what components of the message are nonnegotiable, and how we can eliminate cultural biases from the message.[48]

Nicholls offered a pattern towards healthy contextualization. He noted:

> There is always a dynamic tension between the supracultural universals of the church common to churches worldwide, and the cultural variables peculiar to each

> national church. In relation to the supra-cultural nature of the church as the body of Christ there must be a "formal correspondence" among all churches to the divinely appointed concept of the church as given in the Scriptures. In relation to the particular cultures in which the church is contextualized we expect the gospel to make a dynamic impact on their design for living equivalent to the impact that the biblical people of God made on their own societies. Unless the creative tension is maintained between the "formal correspondence" of the universals and the "dynamic equivalence" of cultural variables, there will be no true contextualization of the church.[49]

It is difficult to separate a biblical understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church from a biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit. Along with a biblical ecclesiology, the church planter must have a biblical pneumatology. For it is by a proper understanding of the Church and the Holy Spirit that the church planter can manifest a missionary faith required for the spontaneous expansion of the Church.[50]

Allen understood that most missionaries of his day feared the notion of spontaneous expansion. North American church planters face a similar fear. In an article entitled, "Spontaneous Expansion: The Terror of Missionaries," he wrote of the solution to overcoming the ungodly fear.

> For myself, then, I faced this terrible monster and I found here my answer to it: it is a compound of fear of the weakness of men which ignores the strength of Christ, and trust in the power of our own authority which ignores the grace of Christ; and I decided once for all that it was a monster which the Christian man ought to face and to defy in the name of Christ. Then I began to perceive its weakness. I saw that we did not escape from the evils with which it threatened us, moral and spiritual failure in our converts, by our exercise of authority. I saw that spontaneous expansion is not for a Church guarded and protected by a long training under foreign direction only, but for the most infant Church as a very condition of its well-being in Christ; I saw that spontaneous expansion was necessary for our faith and for the glory of Christ, that the power might be of God, not of us.

> I wish that all missionaries would face this question and decide once for all, whether they believe that the spontaneous expansion of the Church is a thing to be looked forward to only in ages to come, whilst now they must rely upon their training and discipline and government to prepare the Church for the future liberty; or whether they believe that we must go forth in the faith of Christ and expect spontaneous expansion now, to-day; and abandoning our control, give full authority to the native Churches, and be content to assist them and to encourage them.[51]

Until church planters develop a healthy biblical ecclesiology and pneumatology and learn to translate the irreducible ecclesiological minimum to the target group, spontaneous church multiplication will be hindered.

Shenk's words are appropriate to close this section.

> We can only pray that the church everywhere increasingly will develop an identity that consists of two things. First, the church exists for mission to the world, and its identity is authentic only when it is worked out in genuine missionary encounter. Second, the church always stands under the judgment and mandate of the gospel. It is the church's privilege to be the bearer of the life and love of Jesus in the world, to be the instrument of good news. But it is always incumbent on the church to allow the fullness of that life to be expressed rather than seeking to reduce it to fit a formula convenient to the times and context.[52]

Strategy Shifts

The second paradigm shift necessary to prepare the Church for spontaneous expansion is a shift from a strategy of church planting by addition to a strategy of church multiplication through reproduction. As Samuel D. Faircloth observed: "Church planting in any situation must make a high priority of the goal of *reproduction*—the multiplication of local churches throughout the land. Church planters must not be satisfied with the mere birth of an infant congregation."[53]

Strategies need to focus on the church planter modeling reproduction at all levels in the church planting process. Following

a discussion of the philosophy of modeling reproduction, this section will note three areas of the strategic shift that are needed: multiplication through disciple-making; multiplication through leadership development; and phase-out activities.

Reproduction Modeled at All Levels

The unifying theme that is found throughout the three areas of the needed strategic shift is that each area is founded upon the philosophy that the church planter must model reproduction before the target people. Brock noted:

> A church's view of reproduction will be learned early. Every action of the church planter becomes part of a lesson learned by the church, even during its birth. The planter's relationship to the church can be likened to a parent-child relationship. The child is learning from every action of the parent even though the parent isn't consciously teaching and the child isn't consciously learning. (Sometimes through his actions the parent teaches the child things he never intended to.) If the church planter is fully aware of the need for "thinking reproducible" in everything done, he will more likely plant a church capable of reproduction.[54]

What then are the areas in which the church planter should be "thinking reproducible?" Brock discusses at least three critical areas.

First, the planter must "'think reproducible'—*in the use of material things*."[55] All the material items that the church planter uses to plant a church convey to the people that those items are necessary for a church to be planted. If the church planter uses a guitar, then the use of a guitar will be seen as a necessary component in church planting. If the church planter uses a high-quality promotional mailing, then a promotional mailing will be seen as a necessary component in church planting. Brock noted:

> The planter should not use anything which the people cannot provide for themselves. . . . Long before the new church thinks of reproducing itself in another place, it must decide how to continue and how to attract and feed the people without the things used by the church planter. The church members will be tempted to give up because they can't do it like the planter did. The material

> "crutches" used by the missionary appeared to be a blessing, but stymied, stunted, irreproducible growth becomes a tragedy. . . . The planter should take himself, his gospel seed, and little else.[56]

Related to the use of material things is the notion of importing ecclesiological structures onto the new church. As previously noted, this importation also hinders reproduction. The reproducibility theory states that as the number and/or complexity of imported ecclesiological structures increase, the overall reproduction potential for the people to reproduce that model of church decreases (see Figure 4).

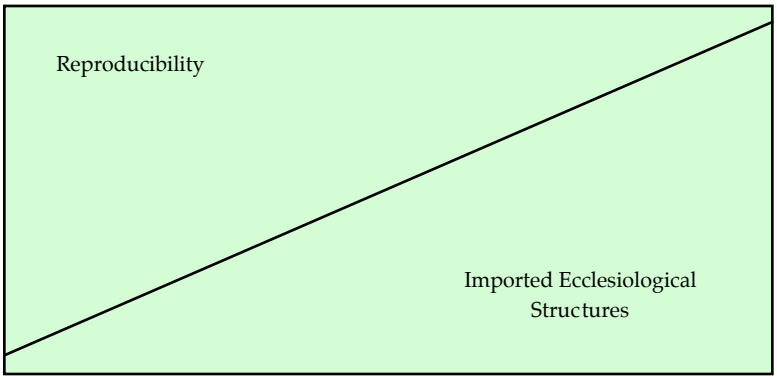

Figure. 4. Model Reproducibility Potential

The second area in which the church planter must "'think reproducible'" is "*in every detail of strategy used*."[57] The strategy must be contextualized to the target group, and capable of being used by the group to start other churches. David J. Hesselgrave noted that church planters should take advantage of the study of culture and missions history, but "If our dependence is on the overall strategy and the method of its implementation rather than on the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot claim to be true to New Testament precedent nor will our witness be as effective as was that of those first-century believers."[58] By using a non-reproducible strategy, the church planter "has made it very difficult for that church to plant another church."[59] The technicality of the strategy will affect the ability of the congregation to reproduce the strategy (see Figure 5). The reproducibility theory states that as technicality increases, the reproducibility potential decreases.

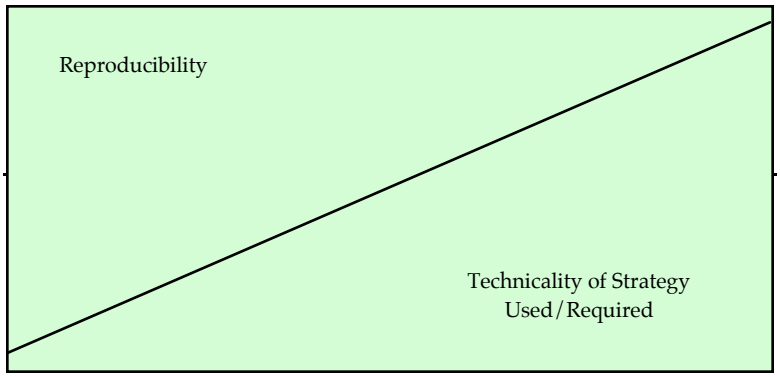

Figure 5. Strategy reproducibility potential

The third area in which the church planter should "think reproducible" is "*in the kind of leadership used*."[60] Though the concept of leadership will be addressed later in this article, here it is necessary to note that the model of leadership used by the planter will affect the actions of the leaders raised up from the new church. According to Brock,

"Everything the planter does in teaching, praying, and singing should be reproducible by the group shortly following salvation and baptism."[61]

If the church planter manifests a leadership style which can only be developed through years of theological education and ministerial experience, then few within the new church will desire or even be capable of taking over the leadership responsibility of the church. While advocating an indirect form of leadership, Brock offered the following statements to show how leadership style can limit church reproduction:

> Direct leadership is often leader-centered. Indirect leadership centers attention on the group. The spotlight is on the leader in direct leadership, while it is on the group in indirect leadership. Many churches have been planted by church planters using direct leadership methods. This often includes traditional evangelistic crusades. This kind of leadership may have its place in church planting, but because such a critical spotlight beams upon one person, the leader, the number of people capable of such successful leadership is very limited. . . . It is quickly apparent that many ordinary people would be disqualified. Most will not have the talent to plant churches if strong direct leadership is required.[62]

Again, the reproducibility theory states that as the technicality of leadership style increases, the leadership reproduction potential decreases (see Figure 6).

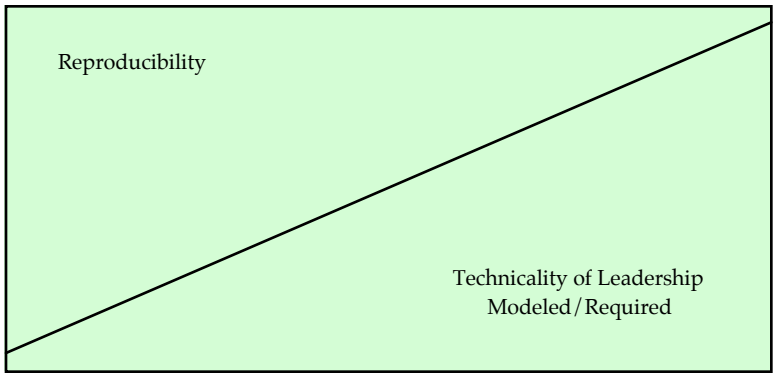

Figure 6. Leadership reproducibility potential

Three Areas of Strategy Shift

There are at least three areas which make-up the needed strategy shift.

First, strategies need to focus on church multiplication through disciple-making at the individual level.[63] As Charles L. Chaney experienced while working with the Illinois Baptist State Association, "We were convicted that churches always begin small. If you multiply churches in your fellowship, you must expect to have small churches around."[64] Though it has been argued that there are several advantages to planting large churches from the beginning, it is highly unlikely that those churches will ever experience church multiplication.[65]

Second, and closely related to the first area of the strategy shift, is the need to focus on church multiplication through leadership development. As Logan has noted, there is a great need to raise up leaders from the harvest and then send them back into the harvest.[66] As long as the professional clergy is needed for church planting to occur, spontaneous expansion always will remain a future possibility.

The third area of the strategy shift is related to the concept of phase-out activities. Church planters need to consider planting several churches and raising up indigenous leadership to oversee those churches. Phase-out passes the baton of leadership from that of the church planters to the new believers.[67]

Church multiplication through making disciples. Instead of first thinking about reproducing the macro structures which include, but are not limited to, the ever popular seeker-sensitive services,

church planters should begin by thinking about the "multiplication of the smallest units of Christianity" and "then congregationalizing what God is doing. Building it from the bottom up, not from the top down."[68] Contemporary church planters should place a priority on evangelism. Brock noted that even before the establishment of indigenous churches "*The first objective is to lead individuals to saving, transforming faith in Jesus Christ as the only hope of an abundant life*." Reginaldo Kruklis resounds a similar ideology:

> We do not preach church planting. We preach Jesus and Him crucified. We don't go around the world inviting people to church, as good as that may be. We are calling people to know Jesus, Savior and Lord. We call them to be part of His family. We preach the kingdom of God. He provides the answers to our problems and challenges regarding church planting and corrects our preconceived ideas. The emphasis must be on the fact that Jesus is God, and He is risen from the dead. We must make a fresh declaration of dependability on the power of Jesus. That is the beginning and the end of our mission.[69]

As with the New Testament example, the church planter should make disciples and then congregationalize those disciples, regardless of their numerical size, property owned, or lack of organization and education. When the church planter begins with evangelism at the individual level, an ideology is created within the newly converted that advocates personal evangelism as a healthy and reproducible strategy for planting churches. When the church planter begins with event evangelism, in all likelihood, he or she is modeling a non-reproducible disciple-making strategy.

Logan, while discussing the harvest model of church planting (also understood as planting at the grass-roots level or in a pioneer territory), urged church planters that as they design a culturally appropriate planting process, to refrain from a top-down approach:

> Most commonly, I think when missionaries think about planting a church they often are thinking congregational in their structure. And so we are talking and thinking finished product in the sense of very well educated pastors, with church buildings, all sorts of kinds of pro-

> grams, and a fairly sophisticated level of leadership in the midst of all of that. And if that's the starting point, [it] can lead you to some inappropriate designs when you are thinking about church planting.
>
> Rather than start at the top, I would suggest you start at the grassroots. And that you think through, "What really are the essential activities." And even translate it one step further, "What are the ordinary people going to be doing?" "What's the ordinary believer going to be doing in this new church?" You know, what are the essential activities that they are going to do individually. What are they going to be doing in their family? What are they going to be doing together in their small groups? How are they going to be ministering to each other? How are these groups going to be functioning in the communities in which they are found?
>
> And so, instead of thinking about a top-down model, think about a bottom-up model. Because in church planting, especially with the harvest model, you're building it unit-by-unit, piece-by-piece from the ground up. And so you're letting the church emerge, but you have to clarify what are the essential activities.[70]

Church multiplication through leadership development. The process of leadership development must not only be reproducible by the new church, but the new church must be taught how to multiply leaders. The goal is to see leaders multiply leaders. Without leaders, spontaneous expansion is an impossibility.

In the field of leadership development in new churches, Logan's research and philosophy surpasses many others. His passion is to see leaders raised up from the harvest to be sent back into the harvest for disciple making. It is this ongoing process of leadership multiplication which is crucial to church multiplication.

Logan noted the need for leadership multiplication when he stated:

> When you see thousands and tens of thousands of new people coming to know Christ, it quickly outstrips your capacity to be able to service those people and to serve those people with existing leaders. There must be a way to raise up leaders from the harvest. And so church mul-

> tiplication movements utilize leadership development strategies that are integrally woven into the evangelism process.[71]

When the spontaneous expansion of the church is occurring, potential leaders are being trained for multiplication as they are coming to Christ. A strategic shift in how leadership is understood and developed for North American church planting must occur. Logan's comments note the problem with the traditional understanding of teaching leadership development in the classroom.

> What is learned first, is learned best. And the second principle is what is learned first shapes all future learning. And I would also say, the way in which you've learned you'll have a tendency to reproduce that in the next place that you go. Thus, that's why the classroom model in particular, is one of the worst models for pre-service training of leadership. Here me say "pre-service training" because I'm all for higher education. But training people in a classroom to do evangelism and disciple-making is like trying to teach people how to swim in a classroom. You know the way to learn how to swim is to get into the water, try some stuff, then get some instruction, then go try some stuff, get some more instruction.[72]

If a church leader must be required to have a formal theological education, then church multiplication will be limited by educational requirements. If a church leader must leave his job and become a full-time paid pastor, then the number of congregations that can financially support a full-time pastor will limit church multiplication.

Leadership cannot be limited to a professional clergy. In fact, professional church leaders should be seen as the exception, rather than the norm. If the spontaneous expansion of the North American church is dependent upon the number of professional clergymen who can pastor new churches, then the expansion will be limited to the number of available clergymen. What about formal theological education? For Logan, formal training is more of an in-service experience, rather than a pre-service experience. He noted:

> Formal training is a good option for many people. But we find that it's more effective to use it as an in-service

> training after they're already out being a pastor, church planter, or a missionary and it simply enhances their development through theological reflection.
>
> I know from the teaching that I do in the seminary, that those that are involved actively in ministry ask far more perceptive and relevant questions than those that have not had ministry experience. And so I encourage people wherever possible to get formal training, but do it after God has already validated and proven your ministry. And after you've already been a proven leader, and after you already have the basic orientations down through the non-formal or informal ways of training, and then take one class a quarter and keep going after that new degree.[73]

As the reproducibility theory in Figure 6 notes, as the technicality of leadership required increases, the reproduction potential of leaders decreases.

A much better approach to leadership development is on-the-job training, beginning with the church planter's initial contact with the individual or group. Even prior to the group's conversion, by modeling a reproducible leadership style, the church planter begins the training. While looking to Jesus as a model, Logan stated that church planters should

> Start where they are. Help them to continue to be involved in the process, and raise them up as leaders as they do the evangelizing and discipling. And let them grow into the role. But let it be not more than what they themselves can do.[74]

By beginning with where the people are in their spiritual journey, the church planter's leadership style is to be influencing them to influence others. Logan stated:

> And as long as you are influencing somebody to move more toward Christ, and more toward the will of Christ in their life, it doesn't matter where you are on the maturity scale. It's possible for less mature people to do acts of leadership and to lead. Because witnessing in its very simplest form is a leadership function. Because the person who is a Christian already knows more and is [in] the Kingdom of light (the other one isn't); and they can

lead at least in that area.[75]

This process of beginning leadership training with people where they are in their spiritual journey is very beneficial for spontaneous expansion. As Logan noted, leadership develops through on-the-job training and faithfulness to Christ. This process allows for the development of valuable leaders, as the church is being planted and experiencing growth.[76]

Phase-out activities. Tom Steffen has significantly developed the concept of phase-out activities. While serving as a missionary in the Philippines, Steffen was discouraged when he noticed that after almost 25 years his mission agency had not "successfully phased out of their ministries so that nationals could control their own churches."[77] After conducting research and analyzing the data, Steffen noticed a number of factors that contributed to this problem. Upon further investigation, he came to realize that the church planters' strategies lacked an integrated approach which brought closure to the missionaries' involvement.[78] Steffen wrote:

> Individual team members, possibly because of the lack of an overall field strategy, tended to focus more on "phase-in" activities (e.g., evangelism and discipleship) than on "phase-out" activities (e.g., activities that would empower nationals to develop leadership among themselves with an eye toward ministry that reproduces). Team members, following the lead of field leaders, followed suit. They implemented the piecemeal activities individually instead of taking the stated objective of planting churches that reproduce and then integrate all the various activities, directing them toward that one goal. Team members tended to view ministry with "phase-in eyes" rather than "phase-out eyes."[79]

Though phase-out activities also entail raising up leaders from the harvest, these activities take leadership development to another level by completely turning over the congregation to the believers. The church planter begins the process with the end in mind. Steffen defines phase-out "as programmed absences by the church planters that encourage nationals to take up their rightful responsibilities as leaders and multipliers of the church planting movement."[80] Within this process the church planters are to *"work themselves out of a job, but not out of relationships."*[81]

Just as following his departure Paul maintained contact with the churches he started, contemporary church planters should do likewise. For church planters, phase-out activities must be determined prior to arriving on the field.[82]

The reason that the phase-out activities are to begin before the church planters enter into the ministry context is because

> Responsible phase-out begins with a *strategy of closure* for the overall people group, and for each subculture within that community. Well-honed phase-out strategies call for planting clusters of churches that have a contagious enthusiasm for reproducing themselves. Moreover, it encourages the national believers immediate freedom to execute this. . . . Responsible phase-out strategies create believers whose allegiance remains on the Holy Spirit, not team members.[83]

Do not phase-out activities preclude the assumption that an incarnational approach to church planting is necessary in postmodern societies? Because most postmoderns long for community, do not phase-out activities sacrifice the community that the church has with the church planters?[84] The answer to both of these questions is that phase-out activities do not sacrifice the relationships between the church planters and the new church, but rather strengthen the relationships.

First, phase-out activities keep the church planters from viewing the new church as spiritually inferior and incapable of standing on their own as a congregation. Church planters believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to oversee the believers, and look forward to the day when the group will take over the leadership. Though the new believers will always be the spiritual children of the church planters, they will not always be viewed as infants in need of adult supervision. Church planters hasten the day when the new church will work alongside them in multiplying other churches. Abandonment is never an option with the use of phase-out activities. As Steffen wrote:

> Church planters should inform the nationals about their departure plans in a judicious manner. Like Jesus, they must inform them at appropriate times, revealing only what is necessary for the moment. Church planters must also convince them that the departure will be to their advantage. To overextend the stay would be to steal the

> nationals' rightful power to grow and reproduce on their own.[85]

Continuing on, he noted:

> In the majority of cross-cultural church plants, an abrupt pull-out will not be the most appropriate response to reactions regarding the departure announcement. Following Jesus' post-resurrection example, church planters should return periodically to visit the nationals. They should bring encouragement, answer questions, review basic biblical truths, and have some meals together. This will rekindle the nationals' enthusiasm as they assist a second generation of disciples to mature in Christ and ministry, and reach out to the world. Programmed absences will help the disciples overcome the feeling of abandonment.[86]

The church and the church planters will always be a family.

Second, phase-out activities strengthen the community and fellowship of the new church. Since leaders are being raised up and the church planters are gradually doing less and less direct ministry, the church must rely on one another. A dependent mentality focused on the church planters is swiftly converted into a dependent mentality focused on the Holy Spirit and an interdependent mentality focused on one another. The community must grow together as they reach others for Christ.

Methodological Shifts

The field of church planting is action-oriented. As a methodology for evangelization, the world of church planting naturally contains numerous "how-to" books.[87] Methods in and of themselves are not an evil, but a necessity. The practioners are the experts and need to be heard by the Church. Though there is a place for the academic study of church planting and missions, the classroom cannot be an end in itself. A problem exists unless actual churches are being multiplied. Academic study is not enough. Church planting is a pragmatic field; the Church must know what is working and what is not working to multiply churches. Thom S. Rainer observed:

> We must not view pragmatism as an inherently evil approach. Christians make decisions daily based on "what best works" without violating scriptural truths. The

danger, rather, is replacing theology with pragmatism.[88]

As long as the Scriptures take precedence over the methodology and the target's culture, church planters are beginning in the correct place.

The purpose of this section is to address some of the needed methodological shifts to prepare the North American Church for spontaneous expansion. The first shift discussed is the erroneous assumption that because one methodology worked well to produce a certain model of church in one region, therefore it will work well in other similar regions.[89] North American culture is far from being homogenous. Though cultures may appear similar because of like socio-economic attributes, ethnicity, and language, word-views and lifestyle create much diversity.[90] Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser observed:

> We must approach our evangelism with the realistic awareness that we know very little about how to sow the seed, or water and harvest the crop. We will have to do far more than simply sensitize ourselves to the cultural dimensions so that we can know how best to plug in our standardized solutions. Completely novel approaches which have never been taught in seminary or college and which are not written up in any missiological journal may have to be devised. We need to be ready and flexible to do just that.[91]

Just because a methodology worked well to plant a church, does not mean that methodology will work well to plant a church which continually multiplies itself. As Brock noted:

> The indigenous church is a goal and not a method. The goal remains fixed and attainable by various methods. It should be strongly emphasized that certain indigenous methods lead more easily to the goal.[92]

Though a plethora of methodologies exists, prayerful discernment, flexibility, and experimentation are required to determine what will work best to result in church multiplication. A shift is required from the ideology that assumes that just because there is action, therefore, the best thing is being accomplished. Too much of the North American Church has substituted actions for faithfulness. Just because churches are being planted does not necessary mean that the Church is best accomplishing the Great

Commission. The Church needs to practice a critical discernment.

In light of the necessary discernment, the second methodological shift needed is a shift toward much more research in the area of North American church planting. Literature and seminars abound with various isolated church planting success stories and anecdotal evidence.[93] Though these illustrative elements are good for praise, morale, and encouragement, research needs to be conducted to determine what God is blessing with rapid growth, moderate growth, slow growth, and no growth.

History has shown that many will uncritically adopt the methodologies of the few isolated success stories that occur in the realm of church planting. Whenever this adoption occurs, the exceptional methodologies become a panacea, and those who do not follow the exceptions become the exceptions in and of themselves. What is exceptional methodology becomes the norm until many realize that the exception is just that, an exception.

In conjunction with the need for research is the need for Church leaders to encourage innovation in church planting. Church planters should be free to try new and different approaches to making disciples. There is much in church planting circles that discourage innovation. As Murray noted, "Time pressures, denominational expectations, the concern for numerical success, and the temptation to clone rather than plant all militate against such innovation. A further problem is the tendency to marginalize or patronize creative alternatives, to regard these new forms of church life as interesting but peripheral experiments, and to continue to endorse as "normal" forms of church life with which we are more familiar."[94]

The words of Dayton and Fraser need to be heeded:

> In the history of debates about methods one thing is certain: those who innovate a new and successful methodology invariably carry the day and the next generation of evangelists. It is difficult, in a pragmatic world, to argue against results, especially when one cannot show equal or better results from alternative methods. Logically, it is also difficult to try to argue that there is little or no connection between mean and ends, even if they are evangelistic means and ends. We may not know a great deal about how methods are causally connected to the conversion of unbelievers and the growth rates of

> churches, but we cannot conclude that methods are irrelevant to the communication of Christ or the conversion of the lost. We reap what we sow here as in the other departments of human endeavor. We *know* methods are relevant because of the experience and study of the church world-wide.
>
> Yet we cannot be so naïve or messianic about our methods as Finney and some of his descendents appear to be. There is far more to evangelization than simply the right use of the right means. We are not dealing with the operation of physical and organic laws, but with people who are far less uniform and predictable than plants. We have already alluded to the fact that human factors are involved (personality, competencies, gifts, rapport, etc.) in evangelism in a way that can have major impact on the effectiveness of a given methodology. However, we approach the question of methods, we must be humbly aware that they are only *one* of the components of a strategy. True, they are an important and critical part, but they are not sufficient in themselves to guarantee effectiveness or success. The right methods do not insure a large response to the gospel.[95]

The third methodological shift that is needed in the area of church planting is that methodologies need to be evaluated based on at least three areas: (1) the translation of the gospel and the irreducible ecclesiological minimum, (2) the multiplication of disciples and leadership, and (3) the reproducibility potential. As noted above, uncritical methodological evaluation is detrimental to church planting in general and spontaneous expansion in particular.

First, methodologies must be evaluated on how well they translate the gospel and the irreducible ecclesiological minimum. Do the methodologies add cultural requirements to the gospel and what the Scriptures say is necessary for a church to be a church? Church planters must practice excellent hermeneutics in determining the difference between Scriptural prescriptions and cultural additions.

Second, methodologies must be evaluated on how well they multiply disciples and leaders. Are disciples being made and leaders being raised up from the harvest? Do the church planters expect the new believers to be involved in personal evangelism

immediately following their conversions? Are the new believers required to assist in the ministry from the very beginning? Are the church planters giving the new believers more and more responsibilities? Are the church planters practicing phase-out activities? Are these expectations being communicated to the people in both verbal and nonverbal means?

Third, methodologies must be evaluated based on the reproducibility potential. This potential for church reproduction diminishes with an increase in the technicality of the approach the church planters use and an increase in the cultural expectations added to the gospel and the irreducible ecclesiological minimum. Are the church planters using a methodology that can be reproduced by the ordinary individuals of the target group? Are the church planters modeling a simple and reproducible leadership style? Does the methodology require resources that the target group cannot provide for themselves or would have a difficult time providing for themselves?

Conclusion

From a humanistic level, changes must occur within North American church planting circles before spontaneous expansion of the Church becomes a possibility. The most important and immediate shift required is theological in nature. Church planters must develop a healthy biblical ecclesiology rather than a list of proof-texts concerning the Church, a pragmatic ecclesiology, or a paternalistic ecclesiology. Within this biblical ecclesiology, the nature and purpose of the Church must be addressed. A corollary to this ecclesiological development is the need to develop a biblical pneumatology addressing the nature and purpose of the Holy Spirit. It is only by returning to the Scriptures that church planters will develop the missionary faith as advocated by Allen.

Strategy shifts are also needed for the possibility of spontaneous expansion to occur. Logan's philosophy of reproduction needs to permeate church planting circles. North American Church leaders would be wise to learn more from Logan's harvest paradigm. For the church planters, reproduction must be modeled at all levels. The reproduction of disciples and leaders is of the utmost importance. In conjunction with this philosophy, church planters need to incorporate phase-out activities into their strategies. The new churches must stand on their own to reproduce on their own.

The necessary methodological shifts reflect the values derived from a biblical ecclesiology and pneumatology and a reproducible philosophy and practice. Present and future methodologies must be subjected to critical analysis in light of the necessary theological and philosophical parameters. More research is needed in the area of church planting. Instead of relying on exceptions and anecdotal evidence, the Church needs to better understand what is effectively working and not working the area of the multiplication of churches.

Writer

Payne, J.D. Address: 5949 Bowie Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46254. E-mail: *jpayne@sbts.edu*. J. D. earned degrees at the University of Kentucky (B.A. Sociology), The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div. Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth), and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Ph.D. Evangelism and Church Growth). He has served in church planting and pastoral roles in Kentucky and Indiana. He is an Assistant Professor of Evangelism and Church Planting in the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted, I will always refer to the local church with a lowercase "c" and the universal, national, or denominational church with an uppercase "C".

2. Robert E. Logan and Steven L. Ogne, "Expand Vision for Church Multiplication," in *Churches Planting Churches* (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1995), cassette.

3. Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 216.

4. Numerous Christian publications have revealed the heightened receptivity that is found in postmodern cultures to spiritual needs and issues. For example, see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996); Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998);Thom S. Rainer, *The Bridger Generation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997); Todd Hahn and David Verhaagen, *Reckless Hope: Understanding and Reaching Baby Busters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996);Todd Hahn and David Verhaagen, *GenXers After*

God: Helping a Generation Pursue Jesus (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998); Dawson McAllister with Pat Springle, *Saving the Millennial Generation* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999); Jimmy Long, *Generation Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997); Kevin Graham Ford, *Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Xers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995); Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999).

5. Wilbert R. Shenk, *Write the Vision: The Church Renewed* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 63-64.

6. For example, much contemporary evangelism is event evangelism based on the unregenerate coming to a seeker service and usually listening to a monological sermon. Many people do not desire to participate in this type of experience. On another note, it is interesting to observe that much of what is currently being hailed as contemporary innovations in church planting and church growth circles closely parallel many of the contemporary innovations of the crusade evangelists of yesteryear (i.e., Charles Finney). Though the methodologies have worked since the nineteenth century, past success does not guarantee their continued effectiveness.

7. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 232.

8. Jonathan Stuart Campbell, "The Translatability of Christian Community: An Ecclesiology for Postmodern Cultures and Beyond" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999), 297-98.

9. Robert Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 27 January 1998), audiocassette.

10. Of course, a way to overcome this readjustment is for students to be involved in local church ministry while they find themselves in the classroom. Church planters especially must remain in the field while they are continuing with their classroom work.

11. Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, American ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), 106.

12. Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1998), 128.

13. Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 27.

14. Ibid., 36.

15. Shenk, *Write the Vision*, 90-91.

16. Gibbs, *Church Next*, 33.

17. Charles Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 9.

18. Denton Lotz, "The Holy Spirit and Establishing Churches," in *Five Till Midnight: Church Planting for A.D. 2000 and Beyond*, ed. Tony

Cupit (Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board, 1994), 2.

19. Research which already has been produced include the following: Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991); Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, United Kingdom: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998); George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, eds., *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, United Kingdom: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996); Craig Van Gelder, ed., *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, United Kingdom: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999); Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000); Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000); and Jonathan Stuart Campbell, "The Translatability of Christian Community: An Ecclesiology for Postmodern Cultures and Beyond" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999).

20. Murray, Church Planting, 30.

21. Aside from other problems, the fallacy committed in the above logic is that it reveals an assumption that middle-class suburban areas in North America are fairly homogeneous in nature.

22. Murray, Church Planting, 28.

23. A note of clarification is necessary. Churches should base all of their practices on biblical principles as much as possible. In light of culture, there are some areas in which Scripture is silent and therefore, the regenerate Body has the liberty to practice as the Spirit guides. The problem arises when church planters who project contemporary Christian practices onto first century believers teach congregations poor hermeneutics. It is much better for a church to practice something just because it is the way they desire to function and to offer no biblical support for lack of Scriptural evidence, rather than proof-texting unbiblical practices.

24. Campbell, "The Translatability of Christian Community," 38.

25. Paul G. Hiebert, "Planting Churches in North America Today," Direction 20, no.2 (Fall 1991): 8.

26. Os Guinness, Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 79.

27. Bruce J. Nicholls, Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Exeter, England: The Paternoster Press, 1979), 30-31.

28. For the purpose of discussion, I have listed scriptural consultation as the last step in this process. In all likelihood, prior to their arrival

on the field, church planters already have Scripture passages in mind that support their cultural views of the church. The point being made here is that the church planters' cultural understanding of the church takes precedence over the scriptural prescription.

29. Shenk, Write the Vision, 73.

30. Campbell, "The Translatability of Christian Community," 25-26, 29.

31. Even some groups which began with a counter-denominationalism philosophy in mind have become highly structured and even have become denominations (i.e., Association of Vineyard Churches).

32. A manifestation of this ideology can be seen in the premature development of a church's web page and name. I am amazed at the number of church planters who develop web sites, names, logos, and promotional pieces even before the churches come into existence. These subtle creations support the argument that a church can be in existence as an institution, but not as a regenerate body of baptized believers.

33. Shenk, *Write the Vision*, 84-85.

34. This statement is not to suggest that there is no place for models. Church planters should be familiar with what approaches are working and not working in North America. The problem is when the planter without regard to the Scriptures and the cultural context of the target people determines the model implemented. For a process of selecting an effective church planting model, see Tom A. Steffen, "Selecting a Church Planting Model that Works," *Missiology* 22 (1994): 361-76.

35. Guder, *Missional Church*, 72.

36. Nicholls, *Contextualization*, 31.

37. William A. Smalley, "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church," in *Readings in Dynamic Indigeneity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft and Tom N. Wisley (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 32.

38. Ibid., 35.

39. John L. Nevius *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (n.p.: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, n.d.), 56.

40. Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 161.

41. Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 244-45.

42. Ibid., 77-78.

43. Murray, *Church Planting*, 124-25.

44. Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting*, 15.

45. It is well beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt to answer these questions or attempt to develop some theological framework for church planting. Stuart Murray's *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 24-86 and Jonathan Stuart Campbell's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Translat-

ability of Christian Community: An Ecclesiology for Postmodern Cultures and Beyond," are two excellent works which attempt to address the nature and purpose of the Church in relation to church planting.

46. In some contemporary church planting circles numerical size is a determining factor as to whether or not a church is considered a legitimate and healthy congregation. Unless some arbitrary critical mass is achieved, then the "group" is viewed as a substandard congregation at best. In other circles, a church is only considered legitimate whenever it "goes public" and has a public worship service. It is commonplace to hear of the birth of the church referred to as the "launching" of the new congregation at this first service.

47. John E. Apeh, "Socio-anthropological Implications in Cross-cultural Church Planting," *Asian Journal of Theology* 11 (1997): 285.

48. Tom Steffen, "Flawed Evangelism and Church Planting," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (October 1998): 434.

49. Nicholls, *Contextualization,* 64.

50. This concept of "missionary faith" is from the thinking of Roland Allen. According to Allen, many missionaries lacked faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to protect, empower, and guide new churches to fulfill their God-given responsibilities. Because of this lack of faith, Allen noted that many missionaries were holding back the growth of the church by practicing a style of leadership that was heavy-handed and dominating. For more information regarding this notion of faith see my work "An Evaluation of the Systems Approach to North American Church Multiplication Movements of Robert E. Logan in Light of the Missiology of Roland Allen," Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001, 61-64.

51. Roland Allen, "Spontaneous Expansion: The Terror of Missionaries," *World Dominion* 4 (September 1926): 222-23.

52. Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 189.

53. Samuel D. Faircloth, *Church Planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 34.

54. Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting*, 55.

55. Ibid., 56.

56. Ibid., 56, 57.

57. Ibid., 58.

58. David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 54, 55.

59. Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting*, 58.

60. Ibid., 61.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., 73.

63. In reality, since making disciples is both an event and a process, all the strategic shifts could fall under the heading of making disciples. For ease in understanding the shifts, I have separated them into the three components as noted above.

64. Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*, revised and expanded (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991), 73.

65. David Putman, "Getting Off to a Big Start," in Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*, revised and expanded (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991), 179-210.

66. See Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1992-1995).

67. Phase-out as discussed in this article does not negate the legitimacy of someone planting a church and then pastoring that congregation. Since the topic of discussion is church multiplication through reproduction, phase-out must be addressed. Historical and contemporary missiology has show that generally whenever the missionary pastors the church, the likelihood of church multiplication occurring is rare. As noted earlier in this article, the professional clergyman who has been a believer for years, has to cross social and cultural barriers to plant a church in a non-Christian context. The notion that the church planter and the unchurched people are "the same type of people" because of socio-economic and language similarities, in reality, is a myth. The worldviews and lifestyles are radically different, hopefully.

68. Robert Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 6 February 1998), audiocassette. It should be noted that Logan was referring to the harvest model (church planting at a grassroots level, or pioneer territory) when making this quote.

69. Reginaldo Kruklis, "Christ, the Source and Goal of Church Planting," in *Five Till Midnight: Church Planting for A.D. 2000 and Beyond*, ed. Tony Cupit (Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board, 1994), 9.

70. Robert Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 5 February 1998), audiocassette.

71. Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, "Envisioning the Harvest," *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1992-95), tape 1, cassette.

72. Robert Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 3 February 1998), audiocassette.

73. Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, "Harvesting: Church Multiplication Movements," *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1992-95), tape 6, cassette.

74. Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 3 February 1998), audiocassette.

75. Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying*

Churches, 6 February 1998), audiocassette.

76. Logan, (classroom lecture, MC 525—*Starting and Multiplying Churches*, 5 February 1998), audiocassette.

77. Tom A. Steffen, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center
for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1993), 2.

78. Ibid., 2, 3.

79. Ibid., 3.

80. Ibid., 9.

81. Ibid., 19.

82. Tom A. Steffen, "Phasing Out Your Work: Make It a Plan, Not a Crisis," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 27 (July 1991): 284.

83. Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, 20.

84. As Stanley Grenz noted: "With its focus on community, the postmodern world encourages us to recognize the importance of the community of faith in our evangelistic efforts. Members of the next generation are often unimpressed by our verbal presentations of the gospel. What they want to see is a people who live out the gospel in wholesome, authentic, and healing relationships. Focusing on the example of Jesus and the apostles, a Christian gospel for the postmodern age will invite others to become participants in the community of those whose highest loyalty is to the God revealed in Christ. Participants in the inviting community will seek to draw others to Christ by embodying that gospel in the fellowship they share" (Stanely Grenz, *Primer on Postmodernism* [Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996], 169). Though I believe Grenz's quote tends to diminish the importance of a verbal presentation of the gospel which is necessary in any cultural context, nevertheless, his words need to be heeded by all contemporary North American church planters.

85. Steffen, Passing the Baton, 218.

86. Ibid. Steffen also commented that "Jesus' post-resurrection revisits to the disciples did not continue indefinitely. While Jesus left the disciples geographically, he did not leave them relationally (John 16:16). Today's church planters can keep their relationships intact through periodic letters, phone calls, video tapes, e-mail, prayer, and an occasional visit" (218). It is my assumption that North American church planters can contextualize phase-out activities so that they will not have to move from the geographic area. By starting numerous churches in a given location, church planters can remain in one location all their lives.

87. For example: Jack Redford, Planting New Churches: Nine Well-tested Steps for Starting New Churches (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978); David T. Bunch, Harvey J. Kneisel, and Barbara L. Oden, Multihousing Congregations: How to Start and Grow Christian Congregations in Multihousing Communities (Atlanta, GA: Smith Publishing, 1991); Floyd Tidsworth, Jr., Life Cycle of a New Congregation

(Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992); Melvin L. Hodges, A Guide to Church Planting: Practical "How to" Information on Establishing Mission Churches (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1973); Robert E. Logan, The Church Planter's Toolkit: A Self-study Resource Kit for Church Planters and Those Who Supervise Them, rev. ed. (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1991); Dick Scoggins, Planting House Churches in Networks: A Manual from the Perspective of a Church Planting Team, rev. ed. (Pawtucket, RI: The Fellowship of Church Planters, 1995); George Patterson and Dick Scoggins, Church Multiplication Guide: Helping Churches Reproduce Locally and Abroad (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1993); Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995); Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995); Thomas Wade Akins, Pioneer Evangelism: Growing Churches and Planting New Ones that are Self-supporting Using New Testament Methods (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: n.p., n.d.); Ray Register, Back to Jerusalem: Church Planting Movements in the Holy Land (Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2000); Charles Brock, Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey (Neosho, MO: Church Growth International, 1994); Greg Livingstone, Planting Churches in Muslim Cities: A Team Approach (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993); Samuel D. Faircloth, Church Planting for Reproduction (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991); Tom A. Steffen, Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997); David J. Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980); Aubrey Malphurs, Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998).

88. Thom S. Rainer, The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), 319.

89. A distinction needs to be made between a model and a methodology. A model of church is a form or pattern which gives the congregation its structural appearance, and generally affects the way the church views itself and conducts its ministry (i.e., cell church, house church). Models are needed, but must be derived from the target people. A methodology, on the other hand, is a way to achieve a desired result. It could also be a way to produce a particular model of church. What is being advocated in this section is that church planters should develop and select methodologies that will result in spontaneous multiplication, rather than the planting of a single church model. Just as it is harmful and unhealthy to import a model onto a target people, likewise,

it is problematic to use a methodology which is counterproductive to spontaneous expansion.

90. Research is needed in understanding and applying people group principles to North America.

91. Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 294.

92. Brock, The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting, 12.

93. The classic example of claims made without clearly delineated research findings is the internationally famous statement by C. Peter Wagner, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches" (C. Peter Wagner, Church Planting for a Greater Harvest [Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990], 11). To my knowledge many church planters and denominational leaders constantly cite Wagner and build philosophies and missiologies off of this statement, though Wagner never offered any well documented research to support his claim.

94. Murray, Church Planting, 164.

95. Dayton and Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization, 265-66.