

JOURNAL

Jump School Core
Team Training


JUMP SCHOOL
CORE TEAM
TRAINING
JUMP SCHOOL
INTRODUCTION

WELCOME ABOARD!



Welcome to Jump School Core Team Training!

I want to congratulate you for the journey that you're about to go on. You're about to enlist yourself as a soldier in God's frontline kingdom advance.

In WW2, Dwight Eisenhower, along with our European allies were faced with the daunting task of taking Europe back from the Nazis. The largest problem that they faced was the challenge of transporting an entire army across a large body of water in order to form the tip of the spear thrust, and drive Hitler's forces back. Eisenhower organized the largest amphibious land assault that the world had ever seen.

But they didn't think they could really pull it off.

Not really.

It all seemed doomed to failure from the start.

But Eisenhower had a secret weapon…

The paratrooper.

The idea of dropping thousands of soldiers in overwhelming numbers from the sky had never been attempted before. It was the ace up their sleeve. In the end, the American paratrooper helped turn the tide of the most decisive battle of WW2.

In the same way, God has a secret commando, the church planter. Church Planting has been the only thing that has been able to reverse the trend of the decline of the church in the West, in the East, or anywhere else where ground has needed to be taken for the Kingdom.

You are enlisting as a part of that elite squad that God is throwing together in the shadow of the end of time. Souls are at stake. The Glory of God is with you. You are about to witness amazing things.

Semper Fi – Always faithful

Peyton Jones

WEEK 0 - LESSON 1 :



THE CURRICULUM SCHEDULE

Jump School Core Team Training is designed as a weekly curriculum over a six month period. We believe that core teams need 6-12 months to develop, so there is supplemental material as well at the end of these six months, depending upon how long your team decides to incubate prior to launching your church plant. The ideal core team finds a balance meeting for approximately 9 months prior to launching their church plant.

There is also supplemental material available up to three months after your launch, to help ensure that your team is keeping priorities, following up appropriately with the next steps, and ensuring Missional engagement, instead of merely “running a church service”.

Assuming that your core team will meet for 6-12 months as suggested, here is the breakdown.

- Jump School Core Team Training: 6 months – Your first 6 months of forming as a core team

- Supplemental Pre-launch Material – The last 3-6 months prior to launch

- Post-launch Material – The first 3 months post-launch

If you're interested in this content, email us at *info@newbreedtraining.com* to access the core team supplemental materials.

WEEK 0 - LESSON 2 :



Jump School Core Team Training is broken into 7 modules.

1. FOCUS
2. BATTLE READY
3. CORE TEAM
4. MISSION
5. FIRE
6. NO MAN'S LAND
7. RALLY POINTS

Each module is divided into lessons that last a few weeks. Here is the Jump School Core Team breakdown.

MODULE	WEEK	TITLE
FOCUS	1	Intro
FOCUS	2	Vision: What is church planting?
FOCUS	3	1st Century Style Planting

MODULE	WEEK	TITLE
BATTLE READY	4	Calling
BATTLE READY	5	Character
CORE TEAM	6	Team Leadership
CORE TEAM	7	Team Recruitment
CORE TEAM	8	Gift Driven Teams
CORE TEAM	9	Small Groups
MISSION	10	The Terrain
MISSION	11	Plan of Attack
MISSION	12	Models
MISSION	13	Jump Day: The Launch
FIRE	14	Prayer
FIRE	15	Spiritual Warfare
FIRE	16	Baptism of the Spirit
FIRE	17	Team Retreat
NO MAN'S LAND	18	Risk Taking
NO MAN'S LAND	19	Outreach Planning
NO MAN'S LAND	20	Outreach Engagement
NO MAN'S LAND	21	Outreach Debrief
RALLY POINTS	22	Kingdom Advancement
RALLY POINTS	23	Leadership Pipeline
RALLY POINTS	24	Multiplication

WEEK 0 - LESSON 3 :



The most common question that planters ask is how to recruit, train, and deploy their core teams. The Jump School curriculum was crafted as a tool to help train core teams reach 21stcentury communities utilizing the principles of 1stcentury church planting.

After years of training planters, Peyton Jones developed Jump School with the following training philosophy.

JUMP SCHOOL TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

1. We are not your guru – Most Church planter training focuses on the lead planter, leaving the core team in the dust. Jump School may be the only training that focuses on the entire core team. We don't want to be the guru to the team. We are not leading the team, and we are not in your particular context. Therefore, it's important that rather than teaching methods, we help you grasp New Testament principles that can be applied to any context. As you discover together the application, you learn to learn and work together as a team. We don't want you dependent on us. We are training wheels, but you're riding the bike.

2. You are not the guru either – We also don't want you to be the guru to your team if you're the team leader. When a church planter is trained directly, the tendency is that the leader goes to the team, and kicks down second-hand wisdom. Not only is it not based in the leaders experience, but it also postures the leader as the "expert" while all others are the novices. The reality is that many church planters are the novice in a church planting scenario, and the best way to point to the leading of the Holy Spirit, is to admit this, and not try to be the disingenuous expert. Besides, there are no experts in church planting, only veterans. Those who have been in the trenches and survived.

3. We use a team planting approach – Jump School speaks into the FIST leadership model (See Church Zero) or APEST (as unpacked in many of Alan Hirsch's works).* The FIST model acknowledges team leadership; the various elders on a church planting team consisting of apostle, prophet, evangelist, Shepard and teacher. In this respect, Jump School is unique. Team church planting is one of the reasons that the early church moved so rapidly across the map in the first century. We want to train church planters to deploy multiplying teams that go beyond their first church plant, and become a multiplication movement.

4. We train girls – Unfortunately, most church planter training is male-centric, meaning that if you're not the lead male, you don't get trained. Core teams are made up of male and female, therefore we value both sexes in the ministry of church planting and seek to honor the church planting couples like Priscilla and Aquila, and the single women such as Phoebe that Paul mentions in Romans 16. The fact that 1/3 of that chapter references women as gospel partners in the work, is enough to give pause and ask if we are following in the manner of the apostles, or not. Jump School core team training seeks to remedy this vast oversight.

5. Training should be interactive - Jump School is a 6 month intensive training program that allows your team to train together. Ben Franklin is credited as saying "Tell me and I forget, teach me something and I may remember, involve me and I will learn." For this reason, we incorporate the best practices from adult learning theory and utilize an understanding of how God created our brains in order to understand how people learn.

*APEST can be found in Ephesians 4:11-12, "Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service." FIST leadership, introduced in *Church Zero*, is the idea that each of these five gifts forms a finger of a fist, which is a powerful weapon if the arm behind it knows how to throw a punch.

WEEK 0 - LESSON 4 :



THE JUMP SCHOOL CORE TEAM TRAINING METHOD

At Jump School, we don't just value the transferring of information. It's important that your team forms a unit. In Jump School terminology, your core team begins to function like a platoon, on a mission, but like any band of soldiers, you'd be willing to lay down your lives for one another.

Therefore, every time your team gathers, there are certain practices that are always observed.

- Sharing a meal
- Devotional teaching
- Discussion
- Communion
- Prayer

Sharing a meal - Over the course of 6 months, it's important that your team bonds. In the New Testament, nothing facilitates this like sharing a meal together. Before you can work together, you need to know and like one another. Think of it as dating your

core team. Over the next few months, you'll laugh together, learn about each other, and begin to understand what makes each person tick. This will be invaluable as you begin to strategize the facilitation of gifts.

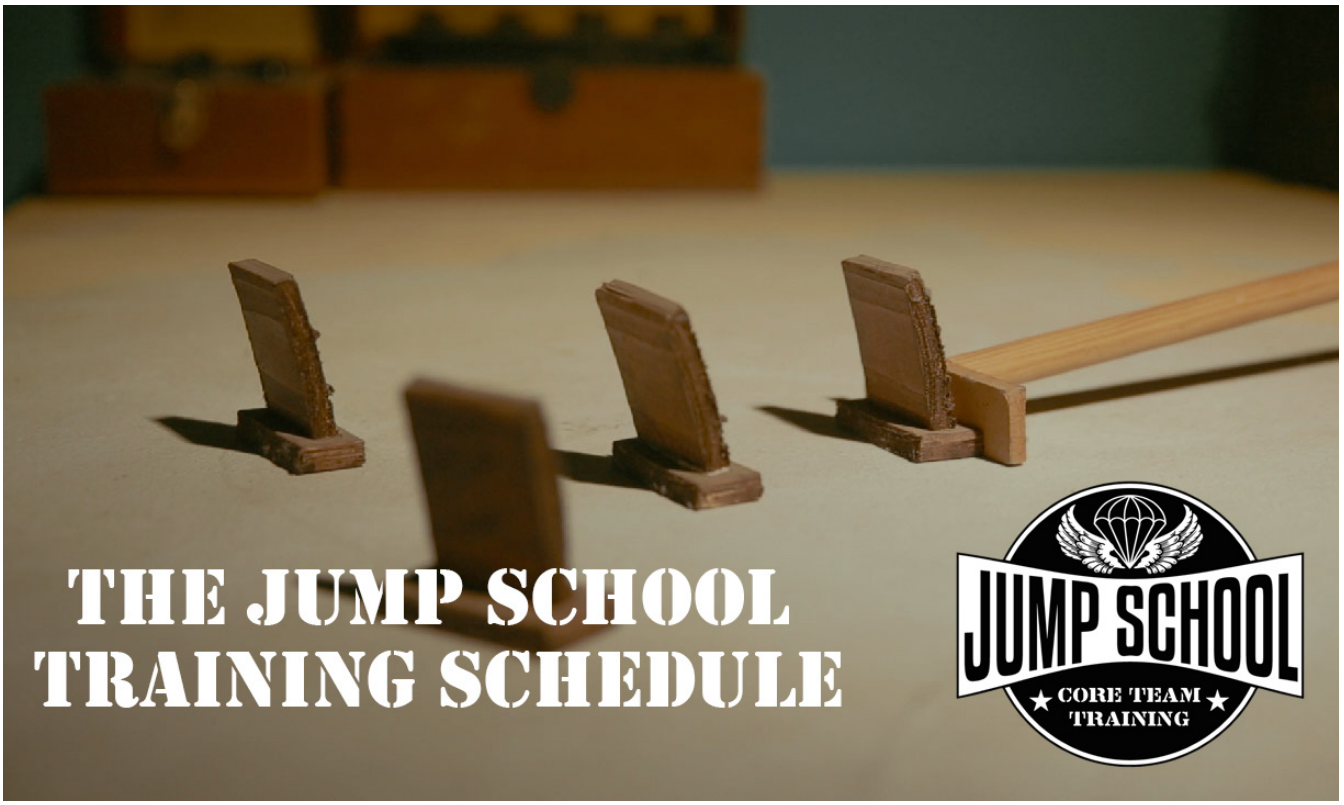
Devotional teaching – This allows your team to rotate in sharing with one another, and breaks the church plant from the tendency to have one leader speaking all the time. Team leadership means a sharing of the pulpit with others. It also allows for the development and discipleship of other leaders in order to facilitate faster multiplication. Lastly, it will help your leaders communicate any prophetic burdens that are particularly applicable to the group from that week's topic.

Discussion – This will become a key to reaching the lost around you. In today's society, people are not content merely to be preached at. They want to answer back, and be a part of the discussion. Interactive teaching, and evangelistic dialogue will help your church to reach the lost more effectively, and further train your people to be competent at having gospel conversations. For this reason, we ask that you read the dossier, and then come ready with your discussion questions answered.

Communion – Jesus said to do this whenever we come together, and nothing will align your team around Jesus more than observing the last supper together. This often feared or neglected practice is a powerful way to ensure that Christ is always at the center of everything that your core team, and church plant does.

Prayer – Without prayer, your church plant is doomed from the start. Learning to pray together, even in short bursts will make it as natural as breathing. When prayer becomes a reflex for your church plant, God begins to turn up in big ways.

WEEK 0 - LESSON 5 :



THE JUMP SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Although it may seem like there is a lot to accomplish when your core team meets, if you are disciplined, it can easily follow a two hour schedule. We suggest the following outline to help meet the realistic demands of people's schedules, and best facilitate all of the necessary components of the training.

7:00 – 7:25 – share a meal

7:25 – 7:30 – Open with greeting and prayer

7:30 – 7:45 – Devotional from Dossier

7:45 – 8:30 – Discussion

8:30 – 8:55 Communion & prayer

8:55 – Facilitator closes in prayer and gives summary, final thought, and dismisses.

PREPARATION

Devotional Leader Prep – Every week, there will be a devotional. The person leading the devotional that night should listen to the course audio in preparation. We don't want you to show a video every week, but get your hands dirty teaching one another, leading discussion, and practicing keeping things short. Developing leaders, teachers, and active group members is key to multiplication. Therefore, you get audio to use as training wheels. We've removed the temptation to throw another video of Peyton up on the screen. (You're welcome!)

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

Everyone should come prepared in order to make the night all that it should be.

Make sure you:

Prep in advance by doing the reading in advance of the meeting.
Bring something to share: food, drink, dessert, and appetizer to bless your host and team.

HOST PREPARATION

This is where you get to practice hospitality for the lost people. Your group is your guinea pig! Put the best spread on for them that you can manage. Make it a potluck, but remind people that it should be good. You should almost be more excited for the food than anything. Why? Because it holds a big draw. Trust me. When you get going, it's really going to matter. Light candles, set up low level lighting. Make sure the atmosphere is something special. This is a a special time after all.

SUPPORT

If you have any questions, or need any guidance, please contact us at info@newbreedtraining.com



MODULE 1 - INTRO TO 1ST CENTURY STYLE CHURCH PLANTING

WEEK 1 - LESSON 1 :



WEEK 1 MISSIVE - GOING COMMANDO

"I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ is already named..."

- Paul

"I wanna be an airborne Ranger"

- John Bender - the Breakfast Club

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand what church planting is and why we do it.
- To understand why most church plants "fail" and how to avoid it.

It's not easy to plant a church.

You need guts. You need God. You need some advice.

Paul went into prison almost solely so that the Holy Spirit could slow him down enough to have him write instruction to the troops on the ground. Titus, Timothy, and others who'd served along side him in the trenches, needed to complete their training.

I trust that these scribbled directives, improvised procedures, and reminders of Jump School will serve to reignite your lagging spirit so that you can scrape yourself together, climb out of the foxhole, leap over the barbed wire, charge ahead into the darkness and take back some territory for the rightful King of this land.

JUMPING OUT OF AN AIRPLANE

Church planting is like jumping out of an airplane. As you flex your calves to launch your boots from the rim of the airplane door 10,000 feet up, what matters to you most at that moment, is that the guy standing at the door and looking you in the eye, knows that you'll survive the jump if you've got the guts to fling yourself out. Those brave enough to jump belong to a bigger collective of daring souls, called by God to take a leap of faith as Kingdom expanding gospel commandos. If you've never jumped, then you can talk about it, dream about it, and read books about it, but until you've done it you'll never know the true thrill of what it feels like to free-fall into the hands of the living God!

The casualty rate is high...

For years, statistics told us that 70% of church plants failed.[1] However, North American Mission Board started assessing, training and coaching planters, and within a matter of years, we got to see the statistic reverse. Part of my work with them was to raise up a generation of church planting trainers throughout North America, and together we witnessed an 85% success rate as evidenced by sustainability into the 5th year.[2]

Yet, statistics also tell us that church plants are seventy percent more likely to see unchurched people converted.[3]

What if you could reduce the odds of failing? You would exponentially multiply the number of front-line converts, see less transfer growth, and be more likely to train tougher planters. The truth is that with the proper assessment, training, and coaching, the statistic reverses itself. 85% of church plants that receive assessment, training, and coaching succeed into their fifth year!

Think of Jump School as training. We provide assessment and coaching through the

New Breed Church Planting Network, but maybe your core team belongs to another network, or denomination. That's fine. Jump School was designed to fit all models, and tribes.

Besides, it's not all about the training, but about the Holy Spirit. Even the best training is no substitute for Him. What Jump School can and will do for you though is train you how to pull the rip cord so that the wind of the Holy Spirit can best catch your parachute.

Jump School will toughen you up, and train you to parachute into enemy occupied territory, endure the hardship like a good soldier, and do more than merely encourage you to stick to your post. This is a war, and it's about taking new ground.

Church planting begins with taking that first step of faith and putting yourself out there. In signing up for Jump School, you've already invested yourself in it. That means that you are either completely deluded, psycho, or a church planter called by God. Hopefully, you'll find out which of these two categories you fit into. Like most thrill-seekers, we're not happy until every other nut out there that is jump material knows the same thrill. Not only will you survive, you'll never be the same again after that leap of faith!

Well maggots, are you ready for the extreme sport of ministry? Are you ready for the call to God's special forces?

Are you ready to go commando for the gospel?

[1] http://www.namb.net/namb1cb2col.aspx?id=8590001127
[2] Stetzer, Ed and Warren Bird. The State of Church Planting in the United States. https://www.christianitytoday.com/assets/10228.pdf
[3] Green, Lisa Cannon. New Churches Draw Those Who Previously Didn't Attend. https://lifewayresearch.com/2015/12/08/new-churches-draw-those-who-previously-didnt-attend/

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- Why do you think that 70% of church plants fail?

- How will you avoid being the next statistic?

FALL IN MAGGOT!

Before you jump, I'm here for you every step of the way. Jump School was devised after training church planters for years. I've worked with the largest denomination in America, the largest domestic mission board in the States, Exponential, and various other denominations. I've planted in Western Europe, inner city America, and cut my teeth as the evangelistic wing of plants in Eastern Europe and New Zealand as a young pup in ministry. I don't know everything, but I've made a ton of mistakes, and lived to tell the tale.

Everybody who's good at something has a coach. Tiger Woods, Tito Ortiz, Michael Hyatt, even rock stars like Bono, Lenny Kravitz, and others have voice coaches. So what does this have to do with church planting? Everything.

You might as well ask what a soldier would do in boot camp without a drill sergeant.

I know what they'd do on the field; die.

Barnabas, a veteran who'd served with "the Twelve" in the Jerusalem campaign most likely coached the Apostle Paul during the early days of their front line ministry together. Paul himself became a guru to Timothy, Silas, Priscilla, Epaphroditus and Titus, to name just a few.

And as anyone who has ever gone through Boot Camp knows, the primary function of the training is to get you to act as a unit. A squad. A team. A platoon.

As you're reading this, you may be a lily-butt-white- soft-cheeked ministerial milk baby, but once you sign your name to that church planting recruitment form, your butt belongs to God and he's gotta shave your head, strip you down, and toughen you up a bit.

You need a drill instructor to whip you into shape. Remember that Paul was hard on John Mark, and wore him out. After all, Mark had quit the field at the foot of the dagger peaked Taurus mountain range during their first missionary journey at the first sign of danger. That's okay though, not everybody can be in what the Navy Seals call the "First Time Every Time" club. A good drill instructor cares if you make it. God certainly does.

For that reason, this manual enables my voice to haunt your mind on the field like your personal Jump School instructor. Hopefully what you read here will echo in your minds when planting, and what you do will echo in eternity.

Training core teams matter.

JUMP SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS

Jump School Instructors serve three functions:

First, they encourage you. Barnabas's name meant "son of encouragement". Either he'd been a by-product of somebody encouraging him, or encouragement followed him wherever he went. Ministry in general, but church planting especially, can be a discouraging past time. Like the farmer, you bust your behind, sowing, watering, and the hardest part...waiting. Sometimes harvest seems a long way off. When a veteran church planter whispers words of encouragement to you, when your hand is slipping off the plow, it can make the difference between looking back or plowing ahead. Paul's letters must have arrived in Timothy's mailbox just when he needed a ministerial shot in the arm.

Secondly, Jump school instructors see what's in your blind spot. They've gone further up the road than you have, and more than once. They can see what's around the corner, or what current climatic conditions are brewing the "perfect storm". They'll give sage advice that you'll ignore to your own peril. If you're bull-headed enough, you'll plow forward with a "I know better" mentality, and when it all crashes down, they'll be there to instruct you how to redeem it, and salvage a floatation device from the wreckage. You will be amazed how many times they'll be like a Jethro to your Moses, saving your sanity, marriage, and ministry with timely counsel.

Thirdly, they keep you humble. Guys who read books about planting and dream of the next Craig Groeschel are like the guys who think they're Rambo when they sign up for Basic Training. They come home in body bags. Saul had once been small in his own eyes, and God blessed that. With success we can believe our own legends, forgetting those early days when our knees were knocking together a tempo of fear and insecurity; the days we only stepped forward in faith because it was the only way we didn't cut and run. Seeing any mentor of mine over the years immediately transports me back to those times and I'm renewed with a fresh wave of who I really am...before I'd started believing my own press. I'm grateful for the men who took the time to invest in me when I couldn't see the potential in myself. Those men still humble me when speak with them, and remind me that much to learn this padawan still has.

DON'T JUMP TO SOON

A fourth, and unspoken benefit of having a Jump School instructor is that they talk you out of jumping before you're ready. There's a red light at the front of the plane that needs to turn green before you're good to go. Traditionally, a Jump School instructor teaches you to count before you pull a ripcord after flinging yourself out of the hatch of an airplane. There's also an ideal gestation period for a core team to develop. You need to be able to move as a unit, not be scattered around the countryside like matchsticks. In WW2, the ability to quickly form up and act like a squad was impressive, but only possible because of the training that was done in Boot Camp and Basic. Think of your core team development an essential period of training that will save you time later. Training a team after the jump is counterproductive, and counterintuitive.

When you fail to train your core team before the launch the yeast of unbiblical thinking and wrong expectations begins to work through the dough. I want to be a dense fruitcake by the time I launch, and most of those who've followed me on mission would say that I achieved that status in more ways than one. The reason that you've got to spend the time to train your core team is because of the baggage

that needs to be checked. The core team boarding process is like the entering Boot Camp. You need your head shaved, you need to be searched for contraband. People want to bring all kinds of unhelpful things from their last church with them, that they're convinced they need, but when you're jumping, traveling light is the name of the game. If you do this right, you're gonna have new Christians trying to get off of heroin; people with real problems who need your core team to be actively engaged. Think of the 6 to 12 months leading up to the launch as hands on discipleship training for your core team so that when your church launches, gospel commandos are unleashed. If it took 3 years to work that into the disciples, 6 to 12 months for you is pretty ambitious. Good thing Jesus left His Holy Spirit to help you out, right?

SURGE OR SPLINTER CELL?

Some people see a difference between a launch team and a core team? They see a launch team as an additional group of people who come to help you for a set period of time, such as 4 weeks to 6 months. After that period, they head back to the sending church. You can have people temporarily join your core team for the launch, and I appreciate the parallels to 1st century methods used by Paul in utilizing people like interchangeable moving parts. This may seem like the way to go, but frankly, I've only seen it as an attempt to build a fake crowd to manipulate crowd dynamics. It's your choice, but there's no other true measure of success in church planting except for the lost reached, and disciples made. If you do the latter one well, the former will follow.

STEPPING OFF THE TIME MACHINE

Before we travel much further together, let me tell you a little about myself and where I've been. I started in America at a megachurch and learned to preach. From there, I went to Martyn Lloyd-Jones's legendary church, Sandfields in Port Talbot, Wales. You can read about what I learned in *Church Zero: Raising 1st Century Churches Out of the Ashes of the 21st Century Church* (David C. Cook 2013), *and Reaching the Unreached: Becoming Raiders of the Lost Art* (Zondervan 2017). I accidentally planted a church in a Starbucks there, it grew and multiplied, then I returned home to Los Angeles, planting in urban Long Beach. That church threw down in the open air, grew, and multiplied. Finally, the North American Mission Board came knocking and recruited me to train their church planting trainers. I've worked with church planting legends, Bob Logan, Mac Lake, and partner with Exponential. I founded Church Planter Magazine, the Church Planter Podcast, and Hardcore Church Planting. I guess it seems I'm boasting, but it's not that. I'm trying to let you know that I've put my time in. I've planted. I'm not making stuff up. When you see a drill sergeant, the first thing you need to know is that he's seen combat. Otherwise, you have no faith

that he'll see you equipped and outfitted to fight the good fight.

Like I said, although I was originally from America, I embarked for the most unchurched part of the UK where I served as a Pastor/Evangelist/Church Planter for 12 years. It prepared me for just about anything.

A Polish photographer took photos in Wales's capital city, Cardiff on a Friday night a few years ago. I've tried to describe the level of binge drinking to American congregations, but knew that they thought I was exaggerating. In Swansea where I lived, the police often turned out in riot gear on weekends, and the streets were closed every Friday night for the 50,000 people that staggered drunk in the streets. Allowing cars to drive through them would have resulted in a blood bath. The photographer has traveled to over 20 countries on assignment but confesses that she'd never seen anything like what was witnessed in Wales. A few years ago, Swansea was voted the third most dangerous city at night in the UK

In addition, there is an incredible amount of fighting.

Take a Celt, put him in a test tube, mix in some beer, and the chemical reaction will give you a punch in the head. I bear on my body the marks of what I'm saying. Ten weeks into being on the streets of South Wales and one of em beat my head into the street until the world went black and I landed in the ER (maybe that explains a lot about me).

You might think *no way would this happen in the good old US of A,* but you'd be wrong. Wales has a richer spiritual heritage than America has ever known. Once known as the Land of Revivals less than 1% of the population attends church today.

Church planting there was front line. We found ourselves operating in first century apostolic methods. We only figured out we were doing it that way, because like the Apostle Paul in the pagan Roman empire, there was no other way to do it. Returning to America after twelve years in Wales was the equivalent of stepping off a time machine from the future. Because Europe is decades down the dark path of post-Christendom, ministering there was like ministering thirty years into America's future. Now that I've returned I feel like Biff Tannen returning to 1955 holding the 2015 Almanac, to prepare the American church for the coming Evangelical dark. I want to train you to be able to meet the world as it is, not as you'd like to remember it. This isn't the 80s anymore…or the 90s. Sorry. It's not even 10 years ago when people flocked to the theaters to see Mel Gibson's portrayal of Jesus on the Big Screen.

We live in desperate times. Churchill once faced the British people and told them

that if they could stand heroically, and take on the enemy, this would be called their "finest hour." It was.

Unless, like the book of Judges, some of the nobodies rise up to the frontiers of front line challenges of evangelism like the heroes of old, it's only a matter of time until we're reeling like Britain. The days of "Come to my massive church and dig my cool program" are done. Like the apostle Paul, Wesley and Whitefield, William Booth, we need a new breed of church planter willing to venture into the marketplaces, highways and byways, and interact with the lost. Many leaders have settled for an air-conditioned office, and Pastor's parking, but they know in their heart of hearts, that this isn't what they signed up for; nor was it what they were called to.

We want to train you to actually penetrate your community, and make a difference Monday through Saturday. Sunday just isn't enough.

BECOMING DANGEROUS

In church planting, God has the difficult task of taking the raw recruit of a seminarian, and made him into a dangerous spiritual weapon. Saul of Tarsus was no different. God molded from a book heavy, self-righteous Pharisee into a gospel killing machine. He made him heaven's "Tank Buster".

Why is it that when a guy graduates seminary the one thing that he's ill equipped to do is most of the stuff that Paul did in the book of Acts?

Think about it.

If there was one thing that you'd want to train people to do...If there was one thing that you'd want them to be able to do...wouldn't you want to be releasing dangerous delta force teams, or the spiritual equivalent of Navy Seal Team Six that; able to infiltrate, accomplish their mission, and then spread out to the next assignment?

Instead, we have generations of planters who can navigate church politics, write blogs, drink coffee, and discuss the finer points of theology.

Our problem is that for too long the church has been content to hold ground instead of take ground. We've been content being the army when we should have been rushing the No Man's Land as bullet stopping Marines. The churches command from Jesus was not to "hold till I return" but to "secure the beachhead" of every distant shore.

The fact is, every time that God has sent His Spirit in power, a wave of pioneering

daredevils has charged the gates of hell. The Lollards, Luther's missionary monks, Zinzendorf and the Moravians, Wesley and Whitefield, the Cambridge Seven, J. Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission, Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ?

By the time that Paul lost his head on the Appian Way, he'd set in place a posse of at least 32 pioneering missionaries who were ready to take his place as "sent out ones". The fact is, they had been trained to pick up where Paul had left off, and they were already doing it when he was sitting in a Roman prison.

God wants to form you into a dangerous gospel operative, but it's not going to happen in a classroom. That wasn't Paul's methodology anyways. Paul himself studied from world-reknown Rabbi Gamliel, and it did him good. Don't get me wrong. Attending a seminary can have great benefit. I went, I survived, I got the degree. I even learned. I'm grateful for what it taught me, but years later it dawned on me that it had failed to prepare me for my life's calling. It didn't prepare, or equip me to plant churches, perform an exorcism, or pray in faith that somebody might actually get healed in the name of Jesus. It didn't prepare me to help those writhing in the grip of heroin addiction or pornography. It didn't prepare me to enter a city and spearhead the gospel with covert or public strategy to crash the mainframe of the enemy's operations. Don't you think it strange that we're "preparing" guys for ministry, and when they're done, they're terrified to leave their offices and take risks for the Kingdom? The former Archbishop of Canterbury once remarked, "Where ever Paul went, they threw a riot. Where ever I go, they throw a tea party."

The equivalent would be to ship a handful of commandos to a weapons depot for a couple of years, assigning them with memorizing weapon specs and counting ammunition. Upon their release from "training" you wouldn't expect them to storm any terrorist bunkers with any degree of success. The fact is that our church planters aren't dangerous.

What would be the most dangerous thing to the enemy of souls?

Multiplication. Up front, I want to remind you that it's not about your church plant. Let me repeat that. It's not about YOUR CHURCH PLANT.

It's about multiplying yourself in the lives of others. You plant this church, it takes off, big whoop? If it starts and ends with itself, then it's just another church teaching people how to disobey the great commission. So, from day one, we will be training you to Multiply into multiple church plants for years to come. That's what people talk about when they say that rather than planting a church, you plant a church planting movement.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to be a multiplying church?

- What is your plan of attack for multiplying beyond your church plant?

ACTION STEPS

- This week, write a one page summary called "Why I want to plant a church" (be prepared to share with the group)

WEEK 2 - LESSON 2 :



"Nobody who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God"

- Jesus

"It was a tough assignment. That's why you got it."

- Lt. Col. Anderson - Saving Private Ryan

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the difference between Church Starting and Church Planting.
- To understand the difference between what Paul did versus what we do.

CHURCH PLANTING VERSUS STARTING A CHURCH

In Saving Private Ryan, Tom Hanks's character receives an apology that his squad

is getting deployed to another dangerous mission. In Saving Private Ryan, Lt. Col. Anderson tells Tom Hanks's character "It was a tough assignment. That's why you got it." God sends his best out…every time. Paul, Peter, John, Timothy…Only the toughest assignments were reserved for soldiers of their caliber.

Do you know what the difference is between starting a church and planting one?

Church starting is pretty much what you see people doing today in the name of church planting. Here are the six crucial steps to church starting:

1. Raise funds (usually hundreds of thousands of dollars).
2. Recruit enough people to ensure critical mass.
3. Brainstorm a catchy church name (branding is crucial).
4. Design a sexy logo (branding is everything).
5. Rent a building.
6. Advertise, blast on social media and hope it's enough to fill the building on launch day.

By contrast, here's what church planting looks like. It's a one step process.

7. Reach the lost with the gospel.

Paul didn't roll up with his sexy logo, rental agreement, and flashy website and call it church planting, nor could you even remotely conceive of him doing anything like that. You can stick a feather in it and call it macaroni, but the American way of church planting was completely foreign to Paul. Yet we advance our churches as an end to themselves as if Jesus commanded us to church plant to the ends of the earth. But he didn't. Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel to all creatures, discipling, and baptizing them. Churches are what happen after you've been doing those other things.

Church planting starts with the lost. The seed of the plant is the gospel itself. When those seeds are sown, and watered, the fruit of that will be a church plant. When you start with the lost, you start where God starts. That was Jesus's mission after all, to seek and save the lost. Therefore, it should also be ours.

Attracting a crowd of Christians is what guys do when they're too cowardly to hit the front lines and actually reach lost people. It comes from a lack of faith, and quite frankly, isn't biblical. There are many out there who will tell you how to become good at the art of moving Christians around, from one box to another. When you go through their training, you'll be like the Christian Martha Stewart, and be able to put them in their shiny new boxes, but unlike Martha's mantra, it's not a good thing.

You could say that in order to justify your church plant, you need to go after the marginalized in society. Those who fell through the cracks. Stop and think about the vast numbers of people who will never darken the doors of the churches that exist there already. Now ask yourself why. Once you've answered that question, you're halfway there to understanding what your church is called to be like, called to do, and where it's called. Everything from the location it meets in, to the time it meets, to the way the room is set up will all come into play. I'd say that for the most part, everybody plants a cookie cutter version of church with hipper music, sexier graphics, and skinnier jeans, thinking that will really reach people. The only people it seems to really turn on are Christians, while the vast majority of unchurched people stay turned off.

INVESTING IN THE WRONG AREAS IS COSTLY

For all of the millions spent on church starts annually, over 70% fail. Here's the catch, sharing the gospel with people is free. You could argue that planting churches is therefore free also.

I'm not against raising funds, or recruiting core teams…both can be helpful. They're just not necessary. Often our fundraising and attempt to reach critical mass is an attempt to strip all risk out of the endeavor, and ensure "success".

But success at doing what?

Filling a room?

I don't think Jesus or Paul ever aimed to do that.

Sometimes Jesus emptied them on purpose. He sent the crowds packing. He made extreme statements, and challenged them to follow him by taking up a cross. Jesus wasn't in the numbers game. He knew that the Spirit of God was the one thing needful.

We may have "success" in filling a room, or having a big launch, but at what cost?

What if church starting is at the cost of evangelism?

What if starting churches happened at the expense of saving souls?

How could that be? If we invest everything in a Sunday Service at the expense of evangelism, then everyone loses. Especially the lost.

The church is in its current rut because we've learned to "do church" in a way that nobody ever really has to engage anyone with the gospel at all.

ACTING LIKE THE BOOK OF ACTS

Scholars argue whether Paul advanced the gospel through planting churches, or church planting happened as a result of advancing the gospel. The two are inexorably linked together, intertwined like two lovers that "till death do us part". Therefore, you'll have to excuse me if I refuse to recognize the church starting that most do today by honoring them with the term "church planting".

Nonetheless, the number one thing that we ought to be equipping our ministers to do when they graduate seminary, is to reach the unreached with the gospel, but instead, we focus on honing their homilies to a room full of Christians. Therefore, when they graduate, they are unable to do most of what we read about in the pages of Acts.

Church planters, core team members, and ordinary everyday believers…you are the hope of your community.

Church planting itself will be your seminary.

For on this church planting journey, you will learn to live the book of Acts, and not just read it.

LEARNING FROM THE MASTER

How then did Paul train ministers to jump in the First Century?

He took them with him. Paul traveled throughout all of Asia Minor, training future planters like Timothy, Titus, Silvanus, leaving planters in his wake.

Paul's methodology was:

- I do, you watch
- You do, I watch
- You do, I go somewhere else and do

Rinse and repeat with every one of the 32 "fellow workers" that Paul mentions in his epistles, and you'll see that Paul's OTJT (On The Job Training) was the most effective

practice of preparing guys for ministry.

At least Jesus seemed to think so. He did it with 12 disciples for 3 years.

Reproducing himself was such a high priority to Jesus that most of his ministry was to the twelve, not to the crowds.

The stuff that you read about in the book of Acts can only be learnt on the front lines, not working from behind a desk in an air conditioned office as a pencil pusher for Jesus, hoping nobody will come in and interrupt you from your studies.

So, what'll it be?

Front lines or in a cubicle back at HQ?

In WW2, paratroopers were Ike's secret-weapon that turned the tide of the war, and ensured victory for the most ambitious amphibious land assault in history. Spiritually speaking, the times are ripe for heroes who are willing to be dropped behind the barbed wire to break the axis of evil. God wants to refashion you into an angel of death, equipped to parachute into a night sky lit up by anti-aircraft shells exploding and tracers whizzing.

It worked in the First Century so much, that Paul asserted that the Gospel had spread into every major city in the sphere of his ministry "so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; 20 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation" (Romans 15:25).

Recruits, this is what Paul did with one generation! What will this generation do?

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
Matthew 16:5

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- Paul said that he laid a foundation like a wise and master builder. What do you think that means? What did Paul do in laying a foundation in Corinth? Read Acts 18:1-11 noting what Paul did, what God did, and apply it to your church planting situation.

ACTION STEPS:

- On no more than two pages, spell out in detail what you'd like to see across your city, and what time scale, or process you'll use to accomplish that rate of multiplication. Dream big. Get a little crazy, and by all means, don't hold back from what God can do…(be prepared to read it to the group)

WEEK 3 - LESSON 3 :



WEEK 3 MISSIVE - 1ST CENTURY CHURCH PLANTING

"Sir, are you making this up?"

"It's in the field manual...you can check it out"

"Uh...sir, we're fresh out of field manuals here"

- Saving Private Ryan

1STCENTURY STYLE CHURCH PLANTING

So luckily, we're not out of field manuals for this whole church planting thing.

I wrote a book about it. Seriously. I really did. It's called Church Zero. Chaching! Rack up another sale! I'd like to give you a copy, but publishers have this funny thing about making you buy it, so I can't quite reproduce everything that I wrote in that book or I'd be infringing copy write laws. Plus, I worked pretty hard on it. So let me say that if you'll forgive a shameless plug, I'd appreciate you picking it up if you want the full

shotgun blast to the face.

That said, I want to introduce you to the 1stCentury style approach to multiplication. I'm about to rip you a whole new missiology.

Gather around with your graham crackers and marshmallows boys and girls, because Uncle Peyton is going to tell you a little story around the missional campfire. Alright campers, it was a dark and stormy night, 2000 years ago when the Apostle Paul hit the mission field at approximately 45 years old. That was 12 years after he'd seen the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus, and when God opened the door for him, Paul charged onto the field like a bull out of the gates. There was no stopping him on his first missionary journey. Tireless, seemingly fearless, and undeterred by hardship Paul and Barnabas had sailed from Antioch to Cyprus, whipped, beaten, and stricken with malaria, eventually passing over the Taurus mountain range and into Galatia. They traveled across the map, traversing the uplands of Asia Minor, and planting multiple churches across Galatia traveling Eastwards towards home. The journey took approximately a year, and they arrived back in Antioch and continued ministering there, business as usual. However, sorting through his mail one fine morning, Paul spat out his coffee when he read about the condition of the churches he had planted less than one year earlier. It would seem that the churches in the region of Galatia had adopted a "Jesus and…" theology. They now looked for salvation in both Christ and their own obedience to the ceremonial law. Paul fired off an emotional, pain-filled letter bitter with disappointment, tinged with grief, and filled with regrets and fears that he'd wasted his time with them. Paul wrote his harshest letter on record, and through Paul's large letters, hastily scrawled, we detect the shock of a missionary who is still finding it hard to come to grips with the imminent collapse of the house of cards he so painstakingly built.

Perhaps you know all of this, but what's important, what really matters, is what Paul did next. He changed. Yep, you heard me right. Paul, the master foundation layer (1 Corinthians 3:10) and expert church planter changed his tactics. You see, you don't become a master at anything without first mastering how to handle failure.

Paul mastered failure by examining what went wrong and then taking the next action steps to correct the mistake, and effect the necessary changes. You could argue that Paul did this on every single mission trip that he engaged in. Each of Paul's three missionary journeys recorded in Acts were an opportunity for course correction in his quest for greater kingdom impact. You're going to make plenty of mistakes, just like Paul did, but the good news is that God will mentor you, just as he did Paul to make you increasingly more and more fruitful. What if God isn't so much using your mission to change your community, as much as he is using it to change you? After all, Paul said, "The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a

share of the crops" (2 Tim 2:6).

At the start of every missionary journey, Paul changes his tactics and approach based on something he learned on his previous journey.

So what lessons did Paul learn from his first missionary journey, and what did he do to correct it?

The Lessons Learned On Paul's First Missionary Journey

It's fair to say that the first missionary journey was really Paul's fumbling forward into mission work. Metaphorically, he and Barnabas were creating a missional rope bridge into Asia Minor, and like all pioneers know, it's always hardest to be the first guy to leap across the chasm. Nobody has gone before you, or can show you the way. Nobody has gone across the void leaving a rope line for you to grab ahold of. When you're the first mountaineer with the first line of rope over your shoulder, you misstep, lose your grip, and learn the hard way as you vault across in a leap of faith.

Paul's pioneering mistakes are fairly evident in hindsight. On the first missionary journey, Paul only takes Barnabas, and Barnabas's nephew, John Mark. Months after the voyage from Antioch, they were scourged after preaching in Paphos on the isle of Cyprus, en-route to Antalya on Turkey's Southern shore. They had to cross through the lowlands of Turkey to get to the highlands of Galatia. The only problem was that the warmer months brought an infestation of malaria carrying mosquitos. When Paul speaks of his illness when he arrived in Galatia, he follows up with "you would have plucked out your own eyes" giving evidence was stricken with Malaria during his travels there, which often causes blindness. Arriving at the dagger peaked Taurus mountain range, Paul sick, tired, and in danger of being robbed on the dangerous path through the mountains, John Mark turns back. It's evident by his refusal at the start of his second missional journey, that this hurt. Perhaps Paul saw it less as an act of betrayal, as preachers portray and more that when the chips were down, and Paul was sickest, and needed him the most, John Mark was at his personal breaking point. Years later, Paul would change his mind about working with him, but probably because as he matured John Mark showed he was made of tougher stuff.

But here is where Paul changes on the second missionary journey. Learning from the first, he decides to take more than one. Simply put, Paul didn't have a big enough squad to cover the ground that they did. Things can, do, and will always go wrong with your team on mission. You can count on it. But Paul learned the hard way that when somebody on the team takes a bullet in the side and utters the cliché "Go on without me…" there are others who can carry the litter of wounded soldiers. In other words, Paul needed a bigger team.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Everybody likes to say that this "isn't my first rodeo" but the first rodeo counts. It's where you learn. Paul and his team got bucked, and landed hard, and it was the news that he got on the return nearly a year later that made him go back on his second journey. The Galatian churches had fallen into heretical beliefs. Turning to Barnabas, he said "Let's go back and visit each city we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing" (Acts 15:36).

He'd go back, but this time it would be different.

Multiplying Like A Master

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Paul's methodology was:

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At least Jesus seemed to think so. He did it with 12 disciples for 3 years.

Reproducing himself was such a high priority to Jesus that most of his ministry was to the twelve, not to the crowds.

Paul was a "ninja planter" always on the move like the Ronin of Feudal Japan. In Acts 19, Paul stopped walking the earth like Kane from "da Kung Fu" and began training up multiple ninjas from his church planting dojo headquarters in Ephesus. Acts 19:10 tells us that for over two years Paul taught his disciples in the school of Tyrannus daily, and that the gospel went out into the entire region of Asia. The result was that during that time, Paul sent them out to plant a chain of churches we now refer to as *the seven churches of Asia.* Paul was training them with hands on application to their seminary lessons.

The difference between a ninja planter and a shepherd is that a planter's focus is on raising up others who will duplicate what they've done in order to rapidly facilitate a vast number of church plants. This is in contrast to a shepherd who focuses on meeting the needs of those already in the pews.

Don't get me wrong. We need shepherds in the church, but we're cranking out lecturers from seminaries that resemble Saul of Tarsus more than Paul the apostle. I've been thinking that we need more ninja's in the Kingdom of God. At least that's what most little boys hoped they'd be when they grew up. I'm confident that if we focused on training ninjas instead of shepherds, things would start to look a whole lot more like what Paul did in the first century.

The stuff that you read about in the book of Acts can only be learnt on the front lines, not working from behind a desk in an air conditioned office as a pencil pusher for Jesus, hoping nobody will come in and interrupt you from your studies.

So, what'll it be?

Front lines or in a cubicle back at HQ?

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Recruits, this is what Paul did with one generation! What will this generation do?

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?" Romans 10:15-16

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- How have you personally modeled discipleship and multiplication in your own life?

- What questions does this raise about your discipleship process? What responsibilities might this put upon your core team?

ACTIONS STEPS:

- If you're not currently discipling anyone, that means you're not currently multiplying on a personal level. Multiplication on a corporate level requires it on a personal level. If everyone on your core team duplicated themselves, you'd have two core teams. This week, make a list of 5 people that you'd like to come alongside in the next two and a half years. Reach out to one of those people this week, and start a six month discipling relationship with them. Take them out to coffee, have them over for dinner, go through a book together, or simply have discussions about Jesus. This can be done as a couple with another couple, or individually on a one to one basis. Don't put it off! Get the ball rolling now!



MODULE 2- BATTLE READY

WEEK 4 - LESSON 1 :



WEEK 4 MISSIVE - CALLING

Are those dusty jump wings? How do you expect to slay the Huns with dust on your jump wings?

- George Luz - Band of Brothers

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To identify what your calling is, and be able to state it clearly
- To identify an area in which you'd like to grow in your calling.

JESUS COMMANDS US TO GO

The stage lights were hot. Sweat poured down his cheeks, and he could feel a solitary bead of sweat sliding slowly down the bridge of his nose, tickling as it went. He knew that he'd never be invited

back after the monologue he'd just challenged the crowd with. With a jet black Ronald McDonald 'fro' Keith Green arched his neck, sidled his mouth sideways up to the microphone that lurched out from his piano atop the stage in front of a crowd of thousands and sang the words:

Jesus commands us to go.

It should be the exception if we stay.

It's no wonder we're moving so slow,

when Gods children refuse to obey.

Feeling so called to stay

When the song was over the reaction was as mixed as the crowd at Mars Hill after Paul had spoken. Many were angry. Many were moved. Some wondered if he was theologically right. Keith Green was saved for a brief eight years before a fatal plane crash would rob the church of his clarion call, but his life and death both stimulated an entire generation to join the mission field. That was then. This is now. In our consumer church age today, you'd be lucky if you ever heard something as challenging from a Christian microphone.

TIME TO GET A BICYCLE

Every young Mormon man presses a black suit, dons a white shirt, a black tie, and takes to cycling for approximately two years of their young life in dedication to the mission of expanding the borders of a cult. Counter-cult apologist Walter Martin used to ask "Are you willing to do for the truth what the cults do for a lie?"

I think that every Christian ought to give themselves to at least one church plant for two years during their life. It will not only dramatically transform how you view, and operate in church, it will probably wreck you for anything else the front lines of mission. Once you've planted a church, there's no going back to the status quo.

The New Testament model of ministry is about expanding outwardswhereas most of our churches today are about building upwards…getting a bigger widescreen; a better website; a larger parking lot; more comfortable sanctuary seats…and don't forget multiple services! I recently saw a church planter post a picture of all of the chairs he'd bought for his new church plant and add the caption "That's what faith looks like"! I was tempted to troll the post and quote the passages about Paul's shipwreck and imprisonment, but alas, we live in strange days.

Our tendency today is to hunker in the bunker, but at some point, to taken new ground, the soldier has

to leap over the top, risk the bullets and shrapnel, and take enemy fire. There have been too many who have opted to plant thinking it was the path to glory. They mistakenly assumed it would get them shiny tights and a shot at possessing a key to the Justice League washroom. All too late they realize that instead it earns them busted ribs, broken jaws, and a mouthful of asphalt. They mistakenly assumed that the grass would be greener on the other side of church planting than it was at the church where they served as a youth pastor at their old church. Grass? Who ever told them there was grass on the other side? This is a war, and the other side of the trench is a wash of mud, blood, and crud. Nonetheless, the Master wants the Kingdom to expand into that territory, and that means getting out of your foxhole and leaping over the top.

CHURCH PLANTING IS HARD

Paul was a man on the move, like a gospel Navy Seal, he would infiltrate a culture, and with deadly efficiency, complete his objective, nail his target, and he was gone with a splash as he moved on to the next one. The glass slipper of a mega church would never have fit the travel worn soles of the apostle's blistered and calloused feet. Paul would rather plant churches "where Christ has not been named" than to stay in on spot and show off the prowess of his preaching from the pulpit. Paul was a front-liner. He was down-and-dirty in the trenches. If you're called to a church planting core team, then this is what you've been called to. There will be shrapnel embedded in your body, and mud under your fingernails. There will be blood.

Nobody knew that better than the apostle Paul. He'd had it literally beat into his head a number of times. Therefore, Paul constantly had to hearken back to his calling to keep himself going. I suppose when you're getting opposition at every turn, you need to remind yourself that it's all worth it. Paul knew that cosmic forces were trying to hinder the gospel, yet the greatest force in heaven or on earth worked in him mightily (Col 1:29). You may need that reminding a few times before this is done. Church planting was then, and still is a hard life. We once threw a New Breed Church Planting conference, and one of the sessions was titled "Why plant a church when you could hit yourself in the head repeatedly with a hammer?" The answer comes down to calling. Paul expressed it when he said "Woe unto me if I don't preach the gospel".

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."

2 Timothy 4:5

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- In a clear statement, what is your calling? How do you know?

- What do you think it would take for you to say with Paul, "Woe unto me if I don't preach the gospel"?

TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED

Paul constantly reminded himself that he was "an apostle called by God". At the beginning of most letters, Paul referred to himself as an apostle, or apostolos(literally "sent one"). Now before you protest too much, be assured that Paul recognized a special breed of missionaries called "The Twelve" apostles. They witnessed the risen Lord, hand-picked by Jesus himself. We know them as Peter, James, John, and the others. They wrote scripture and all died on the mission field, except for James who died as a sending pastor in Jerusalem. Although he mentions that he himself was an apostle

"born out of due time" (1 Cor 15:8), and numbered himself among "the twelve" like the thirteenth warrior who didn't quite fit in, he alsoused the term for everyone else on his ever changing core team as he moved across the 1stcentury map of the Mediterranean. When he used the same greek word *apostolosto* refer to them, he wasn't putting them into the same category as "the twelve". The twelve were unique, special, and limited to the 1stcentury. They were a thing of the past. But the same call to expand the kingdom is a present and future task ongoing "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We're still functioning as sent ones today, spreading the gospel to the outer reaches of humanity, around the four corners of the globe. That means that although you can't share the same status as Paul or the Twelve, you can still be a "sent one". If you're joining a church planter on a crazy hair-brained scheme to expand the kingdom of God into a neighborhood, you are a "sent one" too. The great commission is something that we're all called to, and church planting is the chief way that we can all help fulfill the call.

WE LOSE MEN TO SAVE MEN

I have to warn you about this God of ours. I'll let you in on a little secret about Him. He cares a lot about the people out there. So much so, that he'd sacrifice His own son to reach them...and he'd sacrifice you.

Let me say that again. He'd sacrifice your life to rescue theirs.

God knows that in order to win a war, you have to sacrifice soldiers.

If you don't believe me, flip through the pages of Foxes Book of Martyrs to find your proof. Within the covers of that book is a roster of fearless soldiers whom God has sacrificed to take captives from the other side of no man's land. Until you realize that about Him, you won't really understand what it is we're doing here. This God of the prophets sent them out with very unpopular messages until they were stoned, sawn in two, lived in caves like wild animals, and made the ultimate sacrifice. You need to know that. Like Warcraft ii, Tides of Darkness, God just keeps sending us wave after wave, over the top, past the barbed wire, even if it means that you'll be riddled with bullets.

Do you know why?

That's what it took for him to save you.

This God is a God of infiltration. It's what he does. It's what he's been doing since Genesis 3 when he killed the first living being on this planet. He was sacrificing to reach others. As His image bearers we are called to be continually infiltrating...and that will mean sacrifice. That's what soldiers do to purchase freedom for others. It's a risk I took daily to rescue others as a firefighter. God didn't send Gotham the hero it deserves, but the hero it needed when he sent Jesus. And right now, he's sending you.

Disembarking from the chariot in the desert, Philip the Evangelist was sent to a city called Hieropolis. Hieropolis was really a Necropolis; a city of the dead. If that word conjures up images of a zombie infested hovel, you've been playing all the right video games, but you've got the wrong idea. Besides, they didn't have shotguns back then, so the world would have been doomed. Hieropolis was a city of tombs that developed next door to the rejuvenating springs of Pamakule. How that happened is itself a fascinating tale. Pamakule's springs were rumored to possess mystical medicinal healing properties, so the disease afflicted rich Macedonian socialites traveled to reach the magical waters. The tourist trade was booming and there was money to be made in the name of medical malpractice. In the end however, the waters failed, the sick died, and their servants built them tombs with the money the rich left behind. Because it was a bad idea to transport fresh corpses hundreds of miles in the sweltering Mediterranean heat during the first century, the road to Pamakule stretched on for miles with elaborate tombs representing people who attempted one last shot at evading death.

It was to this corner of the world that God sent Philip the Evangelist. Imagine the impact of somebody who turned up in the midst of the medical reliquery booths claiming that Jesus would instantaneously heal their affliction? It'd shut down your business, create quite a stir, and probably get somebody killed. And it did. Namely Philip.

But Philip's martyrdom left a church in his wake.

Make no mistake, if you're not getting persecuted, then you're probably not hitting the culture where it hurts. Sad to say, most Christians today probably don't give much of a rip about the culture around them. We tell them they can go to hell (we don't care) with our apathy, and lack of action. A quick survey of the best-selling books for the last 20 years, *Your Best LifeandHeaven is for Real.* If I summarized those two books in one sentence, the Christian mindset of the past decade has been "Get as much crap as you can, and then get the hell out of here as fast as you can." Think I'm being harsh? Perusing the best-seller list a few years before that reveals that the best-sellers were, The *Prayer of Jabezand Left Behind*. Again, the mentality of the church has been, "bless me a bunch, God, but take me outta here before you lay the smack down on the cursed". The whole rapture thing may appeal to somebody who doesn't give a rip about the lost around them, but if a church planter wrote a book it'd be called "Please Leave Me Behind: I've still Got Work to Do Here". I agree with Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, that the measure of maturity in a Christian has always been a desire for lost souls.

SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

Reaching people is costly. It cost Jesus everything. It cost Paul. It cost Oscar Schindler. At the end of the film *Schindler's List*, Schindler weeps as his eyes search frantically around for something that could have been used to save just one more soul. He pulls on his coat sleeves, "These cuff links… one more!" This car…five, maybe ten more"! He collapses in sobs.

Oscar Schindler was a nobody, but he had something to invest in saving others. Schindler seized

the opportunity at the onset of WW2 to become a munitions manufacturer, and broke his precious alabaster jar of a cushy life and did what he could. Make no mistake; mission is going to cost you. Mission will suck your time, money, energy, privacy, preferences, and your gifts. And you may not be rich like Schindler, but you've got a life to invest. As David Platt points out that the kingdom needs more christians who aren't asking 'what can I afford?' but "what's it going to take?'

Are you ready?

Did you ever wonder why at the end of a hot, dry, dust-filled day the disciples cried and whined like school girls to send the crowds home, yet Jesus, exhausted, still continued to minister to them well into the night? The bible says his heart was moved with compassion! At that moment, looking out into the crowd that swayed like stalks of wheat on the hillside, Jesus challenged his disciples, "Open your eyes! The Fields are ripe unto harvest. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send workers out into his fields" That must have smarted a bit for the disciples who had left their nets to become Jesus's disciples. It was like Jesus looked right through them when he told the crowds that the workers were few. But they had wanted to send the crowds home. Jesus is the Lord of the Harvest, and he's looking for a few good men, and women; compassionate workers whose eyes are opened, and whose hearts are moved when they look out into the harvest field. Like Jesus, they see it ripe for harvest if only someone would simply demonstrate his love by beginning with the words, "He loves you" and end by showing it. And if nobody else will, they'll model it to a world that so desperately needs to see Jesus.

It all comes down to calling. Are you called to do this? Everybody who did something really hard in the scripture has a story about how they were called to do it. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Gideon, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the hits just keep on coming. God has a way of getting your attention. Before you've embarked on the flight path destined to drop you out over enemy occupied territory, you have to know that you're there because God wanted you there. Most of the 101st airborne signed up because it was an extra 50 bucks a month. You've got better reasons. Like Paul, necessity is laid upon you…woe unto me if I don't preach the gospel.

Are you called to do this?

Then no excuse will do.

No argument can keep you from it.

Eventually, you'll wrestle with them all, but in the end that call will defy logic, haunt you in bed at night, and keep you awake when the rest of the house is sleeping. You'll want to come out of your chest when you hear bad preaching. Your appetite for the word will grow ravenous, your awareness of your need for prayer will deepen, and your compassion for the lost will hurt sometimes. You've been called on a dangerous mission. It will take every bit of strength you have, and the Holy Spirit Himself will supply what you lack, but He needs you to know. Are you ready to do this? Are you

called to it? Will you buckle at the first drop of blood, or will you press on until you've taken the hill, planted the flag, and rallied the cry of victory?

Today is the day you discover that, before you take one step further.

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- How does it make you feel to think that God would make you a sacrifice you to reach others?

- What do you have to invest in expanding the kingdom of God? (Time, money, talents, gifts)

- What is one area that you'd like to grow in regards to your calling?

ACTION STEPS:

ROUTE 66: Looking back at the journey you've taken since coming to faith, outline on a piece of paper what stops you've made along the way by drawing a map of your ministry "road trip". Start with how you met your spouse if you're married, and outline any ministry related things you've done together, or separately if you're single. Note the patterns, the gifts required to perform those ministries, and your "sweet spot" (where you've been happiest and most fulfilled). If you're married, note where you've serve together best. Get creative. Pretend it's Route 66 and have fun putting it together. If you veered off course, maybe you were in "Sin City" for a while and lost your way. How might this help you to reach other backsliders. Remember, tracing the journey of where you've come from will help you to determine what your calling is for the future. He's been preparing you for this team and beyond. Seeing it mapped out on a piece of paper can open your eyes to your own calling in a new way. Use the giant post-it note presented to you at the end of week 3.

WEEK 5 - LESSON 2 :



WEEK 5 MISSIVE - CHARACTER: WIMPS NEED NOT APPLY

"I must decrease. He must increase."

- John the Baptist

"These men have been through the toughest training the Army has to offer, under the worst possible circumstances, and they volunteered for it."

- Richard D. Winters - Band of Brothers

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the important role that character plays in relation to gifting.
- To appreciate the hard work that being a part of a church planting team requires.

Okay, ready for some tough talk? Unfortunately, in this chapter, we've got to get a few things straight. Can you imagine Fred Rogers as a drill instructor? Yeah, me neither. Luckily, God didn't call him to that. He did what he did so well, but he was never meant to train soldiers and get them ready for combat. Ready for me to put a drill Seargent hat on and yell until flecks of spittle speckle your chin? Me neither. Let's skip that part.

Instead, let's talk though about character. I don't want to talk about the character laid out in the epistles that are for elders and deacons. You can talk about that when it comes time to choosing your leadership team. I want to talk about the character of a church planting core team, and what that entails. I want to talk less about moral fiber, and more about mental mindset. But first, a word about the over-rating of a leader's gifting. This is important for you to understand because in Western Christianity, we've so overinflated a leaders gifting (and ego) to the point where the average church member believes that they have nothing to offer.

In a church plant, there are no star players. This is a team sport, and your contribution will be more needed than you can possibly dare to dream.

JUMPING WITH STYLE : THE CHURCH PLANTER'S GIFTING

We need to talk about the church planter's gifting. We live in an age that substitutes gifting for character or the Holy Spirit's fire. Unfortunately however, what often passes as gifting is really just charisma or personality. Gifting is spiritual and is harder to explain and harder to nail down than a charismatic personality.

Now, I realize that you aren't all as gifted as I am, so it's almost unfair of me to write about this, but I also believe God has a sense of humor or he wouldn't have invented farts or talking donkeys. Therefore, I trust He who beat Shrek to the punch, will forgive my sick joke about being so gifted. God knows funny, and sometimes even your sense of humor is a gift.

But that's exactly what is important to know. Some will think my joke funny, and see it as a form of self-deprecation, while others will misunderstand and think me arrogant. The point is that we're not all wired the same. God will use men of different temperaments to accomplish the same objectives; namely, to glorify Himself. Spurgeon and Lloyd-Jones were two uniquely gifted men greatly used by God, yet they were nothing alike. Likewise, your gifting is going to be different from the leader next to you. He may be able to turn on the water works at sad events because he possesses the gift of compassion. You might be the unbreakable rock of machismo; but you can preach circles around him. Another guy may be an incredible administrator who can memorize people's names and details upon a first meeting, making them feel incredibly loved. Or you might be like the mascot in the chicken suit. You make people laugh.

Temperament and gifting differ from church planter to church planter, and although you're not a

snowflake, you are unique.

It's all part of God's sovereign calling of yourself into the ministry, having set you apart from birth, or as Paul sometimes said, "called to be an apostle before the foundation of the world". Paul was raised with the highest of learning, a mind like Einstein's, the writing ability of Shakespeare, and the spirituality of...well, Paul. He was unique, and he was uniquely called. And so are you.

Don't get your head all bigged-up over that, because all of the gifting in the world pales in contrast to your character and walk with God. God can get a donkey to talk for Him, but he needs a human being to be filled with the Spirit to live out the gospel of Jesus. Although I may appear to be side-stepping the issue of gifting, I want you to know that it faced with a choice between character and a preaching gift, I'd pick character. So would Paul. Over speaking with the tongues of angels, moving mountains by faith, raising the dead, and literally burning out for Jesus, Paul would pick love...

He'd pick love.

God, give me love, the greatest of all your gifts.

I may not be a great preacher, administrator, or counselor, but I hear that love never fails.

WHY GIFTING ISN'T ENOUGH

Church planting is the spiritual equivalent of Boot Camp. You know why they have Boot Camp right? It's to weed out the sissies. You've got to have grace, grit, and gumption to stay on and stick it out as a planter. You need stamina.

My biggest fear for the planters I coach is that they won't have the stamina to endure the weight of planting. They can preach well, and think that's all they need. A few months in, and reality hits like Mike Tyson. They realize it's going to be a long grind, and they peter out.

And here they thought that all they needed was to be gifted.

One of my favorite sayings is "Hard work is better than talent, if talent isn't working hard"

I've said it before but church planting is hard. Sometimes, it'll wipe the floor with the most gifted of preachers, and eat him for breakfast if he's not willing to roll up his sleeves and dig in.

For all of the glory stories about church planting, there's a lot of stuff that planters have to do behind-the-scenes that they don't want to. It's usually stuff that they aren't good at, never saw themselves doing, and quite frankly, don't have time for. In the end however, these things must be done...or the church goes belly up. You see, it's the behind-the-scenes stuff that determines the make-or-break.

For example, yesterday, I was setting up a bank account, getting signatures from a lawyer, picking up a check, and doing loads of admin in between discipling individuals, training a small core team and teaching a home study. Today, I'm calling people, looking at graphics, forward planning, examining and refining constitutions and bylaws, and dealing with the logistics of meeting at a school.

This is the stuff that nobody tells you about.

Nobody warns you that church planting is going to be about working. Not just working...but working hard. In church planting, you work hard or nothing hardly works. I don't flaunt what I do in front of my congregation when I'm planting. I don't tell them the hard stuff. But those that want to serve and plant churches of their own soon find out. I'm concerned about this generation of planters coming up. They've imbibed on iTunes sermons, Youtube vids, and testimonies of churches that exploded with thousands of people within a month or two of the launch. The fact is, that's the exception to most church plants, not the rule. It definitely wasn't the Apsotle Paul's experience, and he was the best in the biz.

Here's the reality, you're a team now. Many of you have come from backgrounds where everything was done for you. If you threw your national average of 2-3% of your income at the church, then everything would be magically taken care of. Not so with a church plant. When you join a core team, it's like going from being a renter, to a homeowner. You've got equity here, and it's going to require your investment. It's going to require an investment of your time, gifts, and service, because unlike the church you may have come from, it's not down to the leader, or a small group of professionals to do everything for you. You're gonna have to roll up your sleeves a bit.

The day that you take your watch off, roll up your sleeves, and take ownership, is the day that you start to become a leader.

I've met people who want a position before they'll ever do anything, but Jesus said that the greatest among us would be the greatest servant. He was, and he modeled it. He had position, but downplayed it, choosing to be called the Son of Man, rather than the Son of God. Jesus was modeling for us. It's time we pay attention.

STUPID STUFF I HATE:

There's been an email sitting in my inbox for over a year. It's a reply to an email with the same name as this article in the subject heading.

The body of the email contained stuff about setting up our 501c non-profit status, setting up a bank account, and writing the necessary constitution and by-laws that you need to have in order to do all of this.

Stupid. Stuff. I. Hate.

In life, we all choose to do the stuff we like. Eat food that tastes good, watch compelling films, check out how people responded to our post on Facebook depicting He-man singing "What's Going On" (Which, incidentally was an even better response of 'BoHe-manian Rhapsody').

But there are equally things that we hate doing, but must be done…paying our taxes, scrubbing the toilet, weeding the yard.

Church planting is like that. On the one hand, you have all the cool stuff you love. Preaching, adventure, open road, radical conversions, intimate groups, etc. But even more so, at every turn you also have things that are less gratifying. In fact, more than anywhere else in ministry, church planting is laced, lined, and stuffed with stupid stuff you hate.

Why?

Firstly, you have no money. You can't just pay somebody to do the "stupid things".

Secondly, you have few people. What people you have, you can't afford to burn out by giving them the sucky church chores.

Sure, there are indispensable people who make your life suck less by doing the church accounts, but at the end of the day, you will find yourself rolling up your sleeves, taking a deep breath, sucking it up, and jumping feet first into stupid stuff you hate.

This is the admin that is required to get a church plant off the ground. I was at lunch recently with somebody who somewhat critically said they often wonder what I do. I smiled inside. Much of it is stuff that nobody ever sees. It's also stuff that nobody will ever hear about, because quite frankly, you don't boast about this kind of stuff. Nonetheless, when it's not there people DO notice.

This is the reality that faces any church planter. Like a young teenager who longs for the bright lights in front of the bleachers, but quits the team because he found out there was practice, doing stupid stuff you hate separates the men from the boys. You can't lead worship unless you're willing to print song sheets, arrange power point slides, communicate with a worship team, and of course, practice.

You've been warned. Church planting isn't all swashbuckling for Jesus and raising gospel ruckus. Much of it will bore the heck out of you, but hey, I suppose Paul's stonings, shipwrecks, hunger, sleepless nights, and days of nakedness were the price tag for church planting in the 1stCentury.

What's a little pencil pushing after all?

You may be called upon to do some of the stupid stuff. If so, rejoice. That stupid stuff makes all the

cool stuff possible. If it's me, I try and make sure that everyone is doing a mixture of both. It's like doing chores after the steak dinner. It's like having the washboard after doing the crunches. It's like life. It's how things work. Church planting is no different.

Buck up soldier, you're in the army now, and everybody has got to peel potatoes, and everyone gets latrine duty every now and then!

EXPECTATIONS OF CHURCH PLANTING

One more thing when it comes to character. Endemic to all core teams is a sense of expectation of what the church is going to be. Some of you dream of the church's name in big lights. Some of you pray that never happens, but this church becomes your little piece of relationship heaven.

I have good news and bad news.

The bad news first? This church isn't going to be anything like your idealized version of church. The good news? It's going to be something better, but you've got to give it a chance.

I've noticed that unless a church plant becomes exactly what people think it should be, they leave. They leave because the church that was planted doesn't fit their expectations of what a church should be in that context. But what if the church that was planted perfectly fits the context? What if in God's plan, it's even better? I always like to ask people if they think they'd like one of Paul's church plants. They weren't flashy, big, or "exciting". They were often life and death, secret underground affairs that required people to be extremely careful for fear of being arrested. It's funny how we only want the biggest and best. If you're here, it should be because you've realized that going to the "biggest and best" is great when you're talking circuses, but maybe not so much for church.

I'd ask you to commit. To give God a chance to work. And as God told Zecharaiah, "Do not despise the day of small beginnings" (Zecharaiah 4:10).

If you're here, stay put. Commit to this start-up. Don't leave everyone else holding the bag because you didn't get to do something your way, or your pet hobby doesn't get indulged by the team. You're part of a team now, and together God has awesome plans for you…if you let him show you.

It'll be new. It'll be different. But it'll be worth it.

Nothing I've been a part of in church planting would have been possible if I'd bailed in the early days. Fishing, farming, and guarding are all illustrations that the bible uses about kingdom work, and they all require one exceptional virtue; patience.

So be patient. Endure. Perservere.

The fish will bite if you're fishing.

The crops will come if you're sowing and watering.

The morning will break with deliverance if you stay awake.

Church Planting is a grownups game; it's not for little boys or girls who want to play church. You're going to have to work, endure, and be patient according to Paul's advice to Timothy...and if you can't stomach doing stuff that is either hard, or not what you want to do...well...there's a sign hanging on the door that reads:

Church Planting - Wimps Need Not Apply.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
John 13:35

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- When you think about the work ahead, how hard do you think it's going to be? Explain your answer

- What specifically do you think you'll be shouldering when the church starts?

- How hard do you think the apostle Paul worked? Why might he have been hard to keep up with?

- On a scale of 1 to 5, how is your work ethic (1 being poor, and 5 being a Scandinavian lutheran)? What do you think it would take to get you to the next level in your work ethic?

- What falls in your “stupid stuff I hate” box?

ACTION STEPS:

- This week at the cohort, you’re going to do a white elephant gift exchange. You heard me! For everything that is in your “stupid stuff I hate” box, you’re going to bring a white elephant gift and label it with that stupid thing you hate. It could be teaching sunday school, but you always get roped into it. Don’t be ashamed, everybody has something they can’t stand doing at church. Go ahead and bring one gift for every “stupid thing” you have to the meeting and get ready to have some fun.



MODULE 3- THE CORE TEAM

WEEK 6 - LESSON 1 :



WEEK 6 MISSIVE - TEAM LEADERSHIP

I treasure my remark to a grandson who asked, "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?" "No", I answered, "But I served in a company of heroes"

- Richard D. Winters (Band of Brothers)

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the need for team leadership and justify it by scripture
- To assess your own needs for team leadership and understand what strengths and weaknesses you possess in regards to each role

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NEVER JUMP ALONE

The most frequent question I'm asked is "how do I start?". When you get ready to take the plunge, and dive into church planting, there are a few rules.

Number one, you need to build your team. Being hasty and dropping out the hatch without this in place is tantamount to dropping without performing your safety checks. Out of impatience and supposed "faith" in the power of God to do anything, you might be tempted to jump alone from the pinnacle of the temple and see if the angels will hold you up. The problem is that's not faith...it's stupid...and it's church planting suicide played to the tune of rock-and-roll bravado.

Last year I watched a documentary on illegal base jumping and found that the few guys brave enough to jump off of cliffs and skyscrapers with flying suits always feel compelled to have a jumping partner. Think about that. These guys have more guts than the pit at Chucky Cheese yet they still want a partner with them at all times.

They're not afraid to jump... just afraid to jump alone.

If nothing else, it might just be to have somebody to scrape them off the ground if the jump goes wrong. When I first founded the New Breed Network, I realized that there were other jumpers ready to strap on the parachute, but like me, they just didn't want to do it alone. Therefore New Breed began to form up networks of church planting, with the first two churches serving as sending agencies, so that the other planters coming up behind us would never have to jump alone.

When you're a year into your church plant, on the "No Man's Land" side of the front line, knee deep in mud, guts, and fear, you'll be eternally grateful that you've got a band of brothers and sisters who can stand next to you and shoulder the burden of leading the troops. That's right soldier, you need a team. The team you serve with is your platoon of like minded commandos who are willing to jump on the grenade in your foxhole. They're not just your team mates, they're your siblings in arms, and sometimes they pull you out of the soup, throw you on their back, and carry your bullet riddled body to the safety of an airlift. When New Breed co-founder Dai Hankey planted in a rough Welsh council estate, there were a number of Monday mornings that I peeled him off the ground with a phone call and when I was low he returned the favor. He helped me to stay in Wales as I fought my transition from Californian reptile (where there is 6 days of rain a year) to Welsh amphibian (where there is 6 days of sun a year). I can't even quantify to you how much it encouraged me to know that there was some other nut out there who considered me normal. I've come to the conclusion that there is something about tying two foxes together by the tail and having them carry a torch through the harvest fields that sets Philistine country ablaze! Nonetheless, be it Paul, or any of the church planters that succeed, they never go it alone. To do so is unwise, unsafe and discouraging.

Some planters go at church planting haphazardly...almost recklessly, resembling Daffy Duck drinking the potion in the devil costume on the Vaudeville stage in the famous Bugs Bunny cartoon. "I can only

do this trick once" they shout, and spontaneously combust into flames, leaving a black residue on the floor. Finding the right team is essential to preventing you from the church planters crash-and-burn.

Many planters get Jesus's command to "Go" yet struggle with the "tarry in Jerusalem" part. Slow down turbo! You'll get your shot, but first we've gotta build your squad.

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- How have you seen leaders become overwhelmed, burnt out, or over-committed?

- What do you think contributes to this epidemic in church leadership?

- What changes need to be made in church leadership to ensure against these things?

A WISE AND MASTER BUILDER

Compared to our padawan efforts at planting, Paul was a Jedi master at it. Reflecting on planting the Corinthian church, Paul said that he "laid a foundation like a wise and master builder" (1 Cor 3:10), it's important to note that he couldn't always say that. His first missionary journey was a train wreck disaster. Coming off the field, he realized he'd made a crucial mistake; he hadn't utilized a team approach. It was only on his second missionary journey that Paul began recruiting the 32 "fellow workers" that we see him reference throughout the epistles. Paul's 1st century Church planting network enabled multiple teams to strategically hit numerous targets throughout a broader area, operating in a bartering system of interchangeable men with interchangeable gifts who travel to an area when needed. Paul's network was Asia Minor, and he moved his carpenters, plumbers, and electricians all around this little piece of Turkish real estate as and when needed.

Paul used a team approach that wasn't too much unlike the building of modern houses. When building a house, you need a team of plumbers, electricians, foundation layers, carpenters, and otherwise. God left behind a five-fold aspect to ministry wherein a pastor supplies what an evangelist is lacking and an "apostle" (little 'a') does what a pastor can't do. There is a pattern in the New Testament of traveling in teams of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Planters who can complement your weaknesses. One leader leading isn't enough. Jesus sent them two by two.

Paul knew he should never walk alone because his Master's method was to send them in teams of two, propelling the disciples out into the towns of Judea in dynamic duos like double-barreled

shotgun blasts. Did you notice the breakdown of the teams in Luke 10? There were 36 teams of two. Similarly, check out Barnabas's Method of Operations. In Acts 11:25 when Barnabas is sent by the twelve to go and check out what's happening up in Antioch, the first thing he decided to do was apply leadership lessons from His Master, tagged his bags for Tarsus, and booked a passage to recruit a once legendary figure named Saul, who after 11 years had faded into obscurity. Finding partners for the work is therefore one of the reasons you're here. You've probably been a part of the recruitment wise and master builder process of your team leader… suckers!!!!

HE BLINDED ME WITH SCIENCE

When you combine these specialists together, you get a complete house. Separate them, and as the Babelites found, your building goes from Babel to rabble. When a team comes together under the leading of the Holy Spirit a chemical reaction results.

As a firefighter of 3.5 years, I learned about the combustion triangle. Combine fuel, heat, and oxygen and there's an explosive chemical reaction! In the spiritual realm, when the 5 roles of Ephesians 4 came together in the 1st century to build God's house, there was a spiritual housing boom and Paul was the contractor. If I didn't suck so bad at chemistry, I'd be able to scrawl a formula that demonstrated when these 5 elements were put together, something powerful happens.

In the world of therapeutic drugs, a synergistic effect is what happens when you mix two drugs together and they produce a greater outcome combined that far excels their individual capacity. In other words, if I take Motrin (+ 3 pain relief) and Tylenol (+2 pain relief) the combined effect of taking them together wouldn't equal +5 pain relief, but +8. Synergism. Big word. Big effect. Ponder this:

"A study of horses revealed that a single horse could pull an average of 2,500 pounds. The test was repeated with two horses. You'd expect the weight pulled to double – to about 5,000 pounds. Not so. Two horses working together pulled 12,500 pounds! That's five times the amount one could pull alone. Would the numbers hold if instead of horses researchers had use Vespas or Volkswagens? We doubt it. There's something inside a living being that rises to accomplish exponentially greater things when part of a team." (Harris bros – do hard things p.111)

This is exactly what happened in the 1st Century, when Christianity swept like wildfire throughout Rome's Pagan Empire as the chemical combination of A-teams were in full swing. It created spiritual detonations leaving the fallout of spiritual mushroom clouds that spread throughout Asia Minor. You will be serving as a spiritual contractor and every foreman needs to lay the foundation so that the other team members can build on it. When statistics demonstrate that 70% of church plants fail, I'm convinced that they fail at this level. They didn't have a strong shepherd, or evangelist, or visionary prophet, or radical apostolic church planter type. Simply put, it's because church planters ignore the way it was done by the wise Master craftsmen of the 1st century.

FIST LEADERSHIP

The wise and master builder created church planting strike teams, made up of highly competent individuals who could each take the church in their own right, but served together as a team for greater gospel impact. This is what Paul describes in Ephesians 4 when he talks about the five roles of leaders who work together despite their differences, so that others can see Jesus:

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and the teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 2:11-12).

I call this FIST Leadership.

Make a fist.

Now look at it.

You've just created a weapon.

A powerful one if the arm behind it knows how to throw a punch.

Fist leadership brings the five individual fingers together in a unity to pack a powerful punch for kingdom impact. Unfolding your fingers so that they're extended examine them individually. On their own, each finger isn't particularly intimidating. You wouldn't expect to see anybody fighting with just a finger unless you were watching a 1970s era Kung Fu B-movie.

Yet each finger has a unique function, like the five roles outlined in Ephesians 4:11, "And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers".

The pinky finger is God's toothpick. Nothing picks spinach from between the bicuspids like an extended pinky. The ring finger tells my spouse I'm committed to her for life. The middle finger tells people I'm angry with them. The index finger points. Lastly, the thumb gathers and touches the other four fingers, bringing them together into a fist.

In a future series of articles, we'll look at each of them individually, and unpack what their role and function is, but for now it's enough to know that each of them acts on their own in a unique way, yet when they come together they pack a hard hitting punch.

What if our churches were trying to fight the good fight with only one finger extended against the onslaught of the Kingdom of darkness? Would it explain why we keep getting our tail kicked and our butt handed to us in a doggy bag?

The New Testament presents 5 different types of leaders operating today that work together to form

a FIST that the Holy Spirit can use to deliver the knockout punch to the enemy time and again, throughout every age, and in every culture.

An apostolic-type leader is a church planting, front-line missionary committed to taking the people of God back out to the front lines to aggressively expand the kingdom of God. They are your spiritual entrepreneur and team leader. Their "A-Team" can do the impossible on the cheap, and "apostolic-types" are the team Hannibal. He's the thumb that gathers and touches the other four fingers, bringing them together into a fist.

The prophetic-type leader is concerned with hearing from God; be it collectively, or prophetically. They are concerned that people aren't just "playing church" but meeting with God. They tend to walk in the supernatural a bit more than the average bear, bringing God into the body as a reality, rather than an idea. Like the Old Testament prophets, they are the index finger, always pointing people back to Jesus.

The evangelistic-type leader does the opposite of the apostle. Rather than constantly motivating the church to go out, the evangelist compels the lost to come in. They are the middle finger because they bring the scandal of the cross and the offense of the gospel before people's eyes.

The shepherd leader is consumed with discipleship. They are inwardly focused and concerned with nurturing healthy sheep. For this reason, they tend to appear more conservative, but they are the ring finger, committed to the sheep, willing to lay down their life for them "till death do they part".

Teaching leaders are the pinky. They can pick the poppy seeds of bad theology out of the hard to reach places. They don't want you ingesting that stuff. They are exact, and delicate. They spend time on the finer points of theology to create right thinking. Like Lloyd-Jones used to say, "Right thinking leads to right living".

One finger is cool. One finger is different. One finger breaks easily. Put them together though and you can do some damage. A return to the team leadership of the New Testament is essential in these dark times. We're not in peace time anymore ladies and gents. We're in a war. These are fighting times, and if we're gonna stand a fighting chance, we'd better learn to make a FIST.

I hate to quote myself, but I wrote a book about this passage. It's a lot of work to write a book, so allow me to indulge here:

"When Jesus ascended with His work unfinished, He knew that no one person was going to be able to follow in His wake. The five kitbags each represent a specific skillset necessary for a church leadership team, like a sapper, sniper, commando, Navy SEAL, and heavy weapons expert. A church planter is never a splinter cell who acts alone, but the leader of a platoon of daredevil pathfinders. Church planting resembles a covert commando operation that travels covertly in small teams, creates an opening for other special teams, and gets the heck out of Dodge when the mission

is accomplished. Wimps need not apply. Typically, church-planting teams have not been very specialized. If somebody plants a church, it's assumed that he must be a pastor. What about the other four roles? Imagine Navy SEALs outfitted in full scuba gear getting ready to jump out of an airplane. They just don't have the kit. Don't get me wrong, a pastor may be called to plant, but he's going to need to jump with an apostle. If a pastor isn't particularly gifted on the evangelistic side of things, he's going to need somebody on hand with the evangelism kitbag. What good would it be if we were all Navy SEALs? I need a sapper. I'm gonna probably need a sniper as well. If you've seen Stallone's The Expendables, you'll know that the individuals in that team of elite mercenaries were recruited because of their special skills. So were you. When Jesus recruits leaders, He equips them like a Stallone, Statham, Li, Lundgren, Couture, Austin, Crews, Rourke, or Willis to assemble a super-team of highly specialized talents. We may be a Dirty Dozen crew of specialized ex-convicts, but we have skills. The Dirty Dozen impacted cinematic history because it concentrated on special teams. If it had been called The Dirty One, it would have conveyed an entirely different meaning, or it would have blown as a film. Nobody wants to watch one guy doing everything. Nobody buys it, and it doesn't work in real life. Because the church has assumed that all you need for simple shake-and-bake church planting is a pastor, the church has not learned to knit bands of special teams together, and rather than becoming the Expendables, they've often become the Disposables in terms of expanding the kingdom. The church desperately needs to see the return of the A-Team. The pastor-only club is killing the leadership of the church. Guys are burning out, losing their families, sabotaging their marriages, or simply going back to selling used cars. It's time those of you in ministry got your life back. There was only one guy who could shoulder all five jobs on His own, and He's not physically camping out here anymore. Jesus was the Master Chief of those five roles. Master Chief is a cybernetic super-soldier who can use any weapon of any make, alien or otherwise, simply by picking it up. He possesses integrative software hardwired into his cyber-suit that immediately breaks down the operational component of any weapons system. You and I, unfortunately, do not possess such a suit. We're grunts. Therefore, we specialize. A shepherd can't concentrate on evangelism; a teacher has to hit the books and resist being bogged down with too many namby-pamby counseling sessions. Jesus alone mastered all five roles:

- Apostle: "Consider Jesus, the apostle" (Heb. 3: 1). Let's face it, He is the ultimate pioneer, missionary, messenger, and sent one.

- Prophet: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers— it is to him you shall listen" (Deut. 18: 15). After Jesus gave the people bread in the wilderness like Moses did, John did the math for us: "When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" (John 6: 14). Good guess.

- Evangelist: When Jesus took the scroll in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read Isaiah 61: 1, which says that He was anointed to "bring good news [gospel] to the poor" as well as liberty and the Lord's favor. If John's gospel presents Jesus as anything in His conversations, it presents Him as an evangelist.

- Shepherd: "I am the good shepherd" (John 10: 11). Peter calls him our "chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5: 4).

- Teacher: "And he opened his mouth and taught them" (Matt. 5: 2). "Never man spake like this man" (John 7: 46 KJV).

'Nuff said. FIST leadership isn't something we've made up; it's what our Master Chief has distributed to the church so that He can "fill all things" (Eph. 4: 10). That means to spread out! Therefore, He calls some to be apostles, some evangelists … you get the picture. Facing a task unfinished, we seek to fill the hole that He's left behind. When Bugs Bunny ran through a wall, he left a Bugs-shaped hole, rabbit ears and all. What does a Jesus-shaped hole look like? You got it: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher. Each of these leaders plays a vital role in equipping believers with a specialty so that they become a balance of the five roles. That's why Paul said these leaders are given "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to … the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 12– 13). Last time I checked, the whole church hasn't attained that fullness yet. These roles have been given until we attain it. Therefore, I think we're gonna need these roles to stick around for a bit, until He comes back. If people see just the pastor-only model, they mistake Jesus's leg for the whole body. But when all five roles operate, the church's other three limbs will begin to be built up and attain Christ's stature in the world.

The church is a bit like Voltron: Defender of the Universe. Voltron featured a team of five young pilots who each controlled a giant lion vehicle that combined to form Voltron, a super robot as big as a skyscraper and nigh invulnerable. (Yeah, it's an eighties thing.) On their own, each of these lion robots, cool as they were, got their metallic butts kicked by aliens. For some reason that only the modern church could relate to, the five pilots repeatedly tried taking on said aliens individually before finally uniting to form Super Robot Voltron. Now, I was only eight when I watched this, but every day I knew their modus operandi was doomed. So I just waited till they got their cans kicked enough till they decided it was time to press the red button, uniting them into (step back) Voltron, Defender of the Universe. Once Voltron took shape, alien mutants got cut down, massive energy swords flashed, some alien chick screamed, and the universe got saved. Thus endeth the lesson. It's tough for an evangelist to strike out on his own when he doesn't know how to shepherd the community of people who get saved under his ministry. The pastor shepherds the people in the church while praying that he doesn't leak more out, but he struggles to get them to walk through the doors no matter how hard he tries. The pulpiteering teacher swashbuckles through the riggings of exegesis like Errol Flynn, but he has no clue how to care for his hearers when their lives fall apart. If we would take a lesson from an eighties Saturday-morning kids cartoon, we'd start to unite the five lions in order to create the image of Jesus, who would tower over our communities wielding the sword of the Spirit."[1]

Whew…I know that was a mouthful, but you needed a brainful. Church planting without a solid team leadership is like jumping without a parachute. As you stand at the hatch, prepping to launch out, it's important for you to realize that Jesus is the head of the church, and that he'll communicate with your team leaders. As a core team member, you may not serve as a leader, but understanding that

no one man or woman can fulfill all five of those roles will help establish the right expectations for your leaders. Your leadership is going to need a team approach if they're going to take this hill. It's a more biblical, sensible and sane approach to leadership than what is currently the status quo, and it's essential to kingdom expansion.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."
Ecclesiastes 4:12

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- What are your fears when it comes to any of these roles?

- People often say that team leadership won't work. How do you think that the first century church make it work?

- Discuss each of the roles that individuals on your team might fulfill; what do you think that would look like in practical terms?

- What responsibilities might each role have?

- How might this serve the church as a whole, and protect the lives of the individual leaders?

ACTION STEPS:

- List out the five roles and how they relate to you. List them off in order of your strength at # 1 to your weakest part at #5. Using a diagram, draw a picture of somebody being pulled in five different directions by five different horses. On your body, label each limb (and the head) according to one of the 5 roles. If that area is strong, draw the limb big or long. If it is weak, draw it puny, wimpy, and short. Next, draw the horses. Next to the weak limbs, draw a big horse for the one that you need pulling on you the most. (As usual, be prepared to share).

[1]Jones, Peyton. Church Zero: Raising 1st Century Churches out of the Ashes of the 21st Century Church (pp. 71-75). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

WEEK 7 - LESSON 2:



WEEK 7 MISSIVE - TEAM DYNAMICS

"Now I know!"

"And knowing is half the battle!"

- G.I. Joe cartoons - courtesy of the 80s.

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the dynamics between the roles of leadership.
2. To understand what it means to be a gift driven team.

The New Testament Leadership in Ephesians 4 has a 3:2 ratio of radicals to conservatives. That means that in the balance of team leadership, if you had one of each of these roles leading your church plant, you'd have one more radical guy on

your team than conservatives.

Radicals	Conservatives
· Apostle	· Shepherd
· Prophet	· Teacher
· Evangelist	

This is important when your leadership team begins to work together. It also means that the church is always meant to be forward leaning towards the lost if it's meant to play a role in kingdom expansion. This makes sense though doesn't it? The church may not be anti-establishment, but it was also never meant to be the establishment. It was an underground, multiplying, radical community of believers that shook the local authorities, and sparked mass persecution.

Each one of these roles is going to pull on you in some way. You'll be pulled on each of these different types of leader like a piece of taffy until you resemble Jesus, who was perfectly all five. Want to know what Jesus looks like? Put all five of these leaders in a blender. Jesus was more radical than conservative, and so is his church. So are you.

When it comes to working together, the individuals operating in these five respective roles have to ensure that they are able to work as a whole. The sum is greater than it's parts. Moses led with 70 elders. David had his mighty men. Jesus traveled with his twelve. Paul created a network of 32 missionary partners, and you still want to tell me that team leadership doesn't work?

WE ARE ONE BUT WE'RE NOT THE SAME

Each role has a specific function on the team, and when they work together, it's amazing. Like the human body, a leadership team, like the church, functions as a body though it's made up of different parts. Paul says " If the whole body were an eye where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as he pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body… Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually (1 Cor 12:17-18, 27).

Let's analyze each of the roles each briefly in order to see how they compare and contrast.

The apostle identifies the gifts of others, mobilizes the church towards the fringes of the frontier, and lays a foundation of grace through Christ and him crucified. The apostles sentness ensures that the lost and marginalized are considered.

The prophet stirs up the gifts of others, keeps the church focused on God, and keeps the atmosphere tinged with the supernatural. Just when the church wants to get established and comfortable, he rattles the cages.

The evangelist presents the gospel, is no stranger to confrontation, is task driven, and high energy. When things start to become to insular, he tips the scales to ensure that the church exists for those outside its walls.

The shepherd is the one consumed with discipleship, development, counseling, and relationship. When the church leaves families in the dust, the shepherd makes sure that everyone is being considered and can make the journey.

The teacher ensures that the word is rightly divided, God is rightly interpreted, and that the church is honoring God as he chose to reveal himself.

Once you understand the roles that each leader plays, you won't expect one person on your leadership team to do the work of five men! And by men, I mean people.

You'll also witness how the different roles balance each other out and prevent you from becoming lopsided, or having a limited perspective. As an apostolic leader, I need shepherds to temper my efforts at mobilization. For instance, there was the time in Europe when I was eager to start a church in a truck stop off a major motorway, meeting in the rest stop, and doing church in the coffee house. I'd talked to the manager and gotten approval. Everything was all lined up, and then one of the shepherds on our leadership team piped up. "Peyton, what about the children?" I'd already thought that one out, and my response was quick. "There is a ball pit in the Burger King. That should keep them busy." Needless to say, the team had to reign me in.

There was also the time that I wanted to buy a gas station on the corner in one of Long Beach's most deadly neighborhoods, and meet in the open air despite drive-by shootings. Yeah, that didn't happen, thanks to the balance of our team. Again, the kids were going to meet in the garage if I'd had my way…maybe in the mechanic's pit! Hey, they'd be safe from stray bullets there!

When Paul describes the gifts in Ephesians 4, he mentions that the body grows through their leadership, and that each of the 5 roles pulls and tugs on the body, pulling on it until it fills the Jesus-shaped hole left by the ascension. What's really

happening is that they are pulling on your gifts, and helping them to emerge, "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry".

As Christ was taken out of the world, he sent these gifts to re-fill the Jesus-shaped hole in the world with himself. As I pull on a local body with my apostolic gifting, I develop the apostolic part that lays dormant within each and every Christian. But my strength can also become a weakness.

If all you have pulling on a congregation is the apostolic, then your church becomes a mission station.

If all you have pulling on a congregation is the prophetic leader, the church becomes a circus.

If all you have pulling on a congregation is the evangelist, then the church becomes a stadium crusade (I see that hand brother!).

If all you have pulling on a congregation is the shepherd, then the church becomes a counseling session.

If all you have pulling on a congregation is the teacher, then your church becomes a classroom, and when we multiply them, we call them campuses.

On our own, we turn the church down the path to the dark side, yet together, we become those who bring balance to the force. No matter how great our gift, how strong our call, if we aren't balanced by those God has put with us, we distort the body of Christ until it no longer looks like Jesus, but becomes "twisted…more machine than man".[1]

PARTNERS IN CRIME

Conversely, some of the team members work really well together like the Apostle and Prophet, or the teacher and the shepherd. Despite the conservatives working well in tandem, and the radicals working well with their own kind, they don't balance each other.

We need both, as evidenced by my personal examples, but remember that God overbalanced Christianity with a ratio of 3:2 of by throwing the evangelist in there. He's the radical in the bunch that is balanced by all. Each pulls on him from either side. If I made diagrams, it would show the other four pulling on him. There may be no balancing an evangelist anyways. It often takes the four otheres to keep him

under raps.

The apostle and shepherd balance each other because the apostle always mobilizes the body to focus out, and the shepherd mobilizes them to take care of what's within. One is wired for health, the other for impact. As they each should be. The prophetic leader and teacher are perfect counterbalances. The prophet needs to make sure that things are constantly being tested against scripture, validated, and safe to believe in. Teachers need prophetic leaders to help them avoid simply becoming people who lecture about things that they never experience. Alan Redpath said that "A united church would be an unconquerable church." The same with a team leadership. Our distinctions should not become divisions. When a church learns that teams can more readily reflect Gods heart, not endulging the whim of one, but leading to a group quest to find the heart of God, things take an upward turn. If your leadership team is doing it right, they're not voting on issues, siding with the majority, but instead, they're talking from their unique perspectives as five distinct leadership types, uniting like Voltron's mighty lions to kick some uglybutt.

THE GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

As already stated, the roles in Ephesians 4 serve the end goal of pulling the gifts of others out. For this, we need to be face to face, mano a mano, up in each others business. In community. Again, *Church Zero* says "Paul established that spiritual gifts only operate when we're in the presence of one another: "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith" (Rom. 1:11–12). Nothing magical will happen as you sit there in church as part of an audience, but something supernatural willhappen as you get involved in another person's life and through the gifts function as Jesus's hands, feet, and mouth. Jesus Himself will begin to interact with somebody through you as you serve that person through your spiritual gifts. Now that's something worth dragging yourself out of bed for on a Sunday morning.

Getting ministered to, but more importantly, ministering to others is epic for the interactive mind-set of this generation.

As a youth pastor, when I took a kid and forced him to save all his money, get onto an airplane, and fly to some foreign country, he came back supercharged for Jesus. What made the difference? He was using his gifts. The mission field allows you to use your gifts. Sundays don't. If Sundays were turned into the mission, he'd be given the same opportunity to supercharge his soul, but if you want him to sit down and shut up, he'll tune out and walk away. Mission is where he experienced the power of God channeling through him. Like the disciples returning from their mission into the hill

towns of Judea (Matt. 10), he'll return revved up about what he saw and heard God do through him.

When the church becomes a theater, the attendees become an audience. They become spectators. The challenge of any pastor is when he tries to get an audience to start acting like missionaries. Somebody once said, "Christians are like manure. If you put them in a heap for too long, they begin to stink. But if you spread them out, they fertilize, and become fruitful." Why? Because they stop being an audience and become missionaries.

In the early church, prophecy, encouragement, and the other gifts were allowed to function as people ministered to one another, and those gifts revealed the presence of God to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:25). If I don't allow breaks in my service, then I don't allow God to break in. Nobody can share during the praise and worship time if they feel they're interrupting the performer's set. As E. Stanley Jones explained,

"The very setup of the ordinary church tends to produce the anonymous. The congregation is supposed to be silent and receptive, and the pastor is supposed to be outgoing and aggressive. That produces by its very makeup the spectator and the participant. By its very makeup it produces the recessive, the ingrown, the non-contributive, and the parasite. Men and women who during the week are molders of opinion, directors of large concerns, directors of destinies are expected to be putty on Sunday, and are supposed to like it. They have little responsibility, hence make little response, except, perhaps, "I enjoyed your sermon." They have little to do, hence they do little."1

The new breed of church creates opportunities for people to interact with each other. Small groups are hardwired into our service at Refuge Long Beach with the express intention of allowing people to minister to each other and interact with lost people. That's why coffee tables and horseshoes of chairs set around them are crucial. Nobody will get involved with the back of another person's head. Whoever thought that church should have people sit in rows was a moron. Greeting somebody next to you is just to allow the worship team to get the heck off the stage and allow the pastor to get his mic rigged up. You can't truly fellowship during this time. I want to take the time to hear about the woman whose heart is breaking for her son who is in prison yet again. Nobody notices her in a big church, but in a small group, that woman is guaranteed to come week in and week out and have people listen to her, pray for her, and maybe even follow up by writing to her son.

The beauty of it is that all believers at that table have been given opportunity to testify about the grace of God in their lives evangelistically. Not only have believers used their gifts during the service, but there's also room for interaction with the

newcomer to go beyond the four walls of the church by inviting them out.

"GRACE FINDS BEAUTY IN EVERYTHING"

Refuge Long Beach, where I'm planting, is an urban plant in the city's downtown area. We meet in a community center in Bixby Park. Every holiday weekend, the hall is unavailable because it's a government building. For this reason, every couple of months we have to meet outside with lawn chairs. Taking Matthew 10 as a text, we shocked our team one day by gathering them around like Jesus did the seventy-two and telling them that the teaching for the day was to go to the lost sheep of Long Beach and proclaim the good news of the kingdom. At first they looked stumped, but slowly they began to move out in pairs. Like the seventy-two, they came back rejoicing that incredible things had happened. Conversations lasted three hours, people broke down and wept, the hungry were fed, new friendships were kindled. Weeks and months later we are still witnessing the reaping of the fruit of that day.

Here is the letter I wrote to my planting team after that hard day's planting:

By now you've begun to realize that church planting is not a spectator sport. It's a full-contact sporting event. You're going to sweat. It's going to hurt. You're going to get muddy.

Yesterday, at Bixby Park, I saw you guys seeking and saving the lost.… I saw you leaving the ninety-nine to go after the one. I saw you sweeping the house for the lost coin. I saw you unloading some Jesus-style kung fu in the spiritual realm.

"For the Son of Man came eating and drinking." That was Jesus's description of His own ministry. He was up close and personal, across the table and available, in your face and ready to serve. Simply put, He was available.

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

I think that many of you are beginning to realize that you actually matter at Refuge Long Beach, and more importantly, to the kingdom. In a church plant, when you don't come, you leave a gaping hole. When you don't give, we're poor. When you don't reach out to others, the lost don't get reached.

Can you imagine what would happen if every once in a while, the average pastor pulled one of these on a congregation when they turned up?

"What? No teaching? No lesson? No worship?"

"Here is the lesson: teach what you've learned. Freely you've received, now freely give."

I imagine that we'd see a lot more people fired up for the gospel than we've ever seen before as the people of God step out in faith and actually begin to engage the community around them on a Sunday morning.

Now there's a thought.

If church has become a spectator sport, then we need to challenge people to get out onto the field. That's all great, but nobody would dare leave the bleachers and hop onto the field unless they were drafted onto the team. E. Stanley Jones spoke about leaders as coaches, equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry:

If the laity only listen they will produce only listeners, but no leaders. If the pastors are the coaches of a team they will produce players. Out of those players they will produce coaches. Out of our present setup is produced increasingly empty pews. If the church is pastor centered, then the output will be rhetoric; if it is lay-centered, then the output will be action. It will be the Word became flesh instead of the word became word.2

But people have to know their gifts.

FIND YOUR PASSION

I don't ask Christians what their gifts are. Over the years, I've learned that most believers who've sat in traditional churches aren't just unaware of their gifts—they didn't even know they had any. They've never been called upon to use them. Ironically, they weren't required for what we call church.

Here is the secret to finding people's spiritual gifts. You don't start by looking for their gifts. You root around for what they're passionate about; and people are passionate about things that burden them. If you can track what a person's burdened for, you'll discover their passion. When you discover their passion, their gifts will be trailing along behind.

What I've learned to do is grab some local papers and throw them down in front of the small groups. I ask them to circle the headlines that tug on their heartstrings, identifying needs in the community.

Next, I ask them to dream big. I'm actually looking for their gifts, but they don't know that yet. I ask them to circle with a red marker a couple of needs that stand out to them from the newspaper and come up with a strategy of how to meet those needs. The rules are simple: their plan can't be limited by lack of human or financial resources. When they begin to dream, their passion starts to bubble to the surface, and I start to see what gets them excited. Then I discern what God created them to do when we were "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

This is the single most effective way to motivate a church to use their gifts. Here's why.

Following a business model, a pastor drafts his five-year plan. Shine everybody else; the pastor is the visionary with the secret-service earpiece, communicating with the president. Here's the problem; if you're the only one who gets to listen on the Batphone to the Commissioner, everybody else will stop answering it. Nonetheless, the Pastor with the five-year plan draws a straight line out of a chalkboard that eventually breaks at various stages into multiple lines indicating growth in the programs, benchmarks, and goals he'd like to see. Now the people become a means to that end. So he cracks the whip over them, for more money to realize the vision. He pumps them for "more bricks, less straw." He begs, he weeps, he beats them until they become like the Pod People from Jim Henson's *The Dark Crystal*, mindlessly slaving with soulless eyes for the vision set before them. They've been steamrolled, and their passions have been buried under your five-year plan.

Rather than trying to get people motivated to meet needs that they don't give a rip about, I let their passions steer the direction of the church, knowing that the Holy Spirit has deposited a gift there. It's my job to ensure that they have a platform to use it. When God deposited our spiritual gifts to us during our salvation, a passion was kindled in our hearts about something we wanted to do for God; but somewhere, somebody down the line told us it was stupid, they weren't qualified, or it wasn't "the vision of this church." And something in them wilted as they tried to diffuse some of that energy by doing church chores. I've learned to sniff out people's gifts. Somebody animatedly telling me an elaborate strategy for meeting the needs of the homeless has the gift of helps. Somebody who wants to counsel and provide support for single mothers dealing with life's daily struggles in all shapes and forms has the gift of compassion.

And you can never predict who's going to be burdened for what.

Are you recovering huge amounts of addicts who need somebody to reach down into the gutter and pull them out? You're going to find somebody on your team has the

gift of compassion and giving. If not, then somebody will turn up. Perhaps it's more accurate to say that God, in His providence, will supply what is lacking as every part of the body does its share. Heard that somewhere before too.

A friend and former coworker turned up at our church with the gifts of giving and compassion. A successful entrepreneur, he sat in the emergency room with our addicts as they detoxed, turned up at their apartments, cooked them food, and wiped vomit off the floor. He supported our church plant from the start, and his kids came to the church and got saved when we launched, but he didn't turn up to the church until he was needed. At the time, none of us were aware of the need, yet God knew that it was right around the corner and moved somebody strategically into that slot to fit it.

There's an anonymous poem that is liberating:

I'm only one,

but I am one.

I can't do everything,

but I can do something.

And I will not allow the everything that I can't do

stop me from doing the something that I can do.

I'm only one,

but I am one.

Wheels Within Wheels

I've learned that above all, people are what Jesus is concerned about. He's more concerned about what He can do in a person who serves than what He can do through that person. Quite frankly, He doesn't need us.

Besides, the world out there has way more needs than I, you, or any number of Christians can possibly meet. Therefore, my strategy is to let the gifts of the people in front of me drive our mission. Because the strategy starts with people's gifts, it therefore ends with everybody's involvement.

For example, if I've started with ten planters on my team, I draw a circle representing

our church. Within that circle I place ten dots representing my team members. Next I draw a bigger outer circle representing our mission field. I then draw arrows from the team members' dots leading outside the circle of the church and into the mission field. Those arrows represent the direction their gifts will take us. Depending on the burdens, passions, and gifts represented by my team, those arrows could be anything from art exhibitions, to drug counseling, to a talking heads group in the local hipster coffee house. It may be that I've got an uncanny amount of artsy people. Then again, I might have a third of my church (which I do) made up of ex-cons and the recovery crowd. Those two tribes live on from different planets. I shudder to think of an artsy hipsters attempting to style themselves to reach convicts, or my recovery crew walking into an art gallery. Getting people engaged on the right mission is crucial. Like a compass, they'll find their true North if you give them room to wiggle on the dial.

When we let the gifts determine the direction of the arrows, we may get some converts. For example, if five people get saved as a result of us strategically using our gifts, I draw five dots representing the new converts in our "mission field. Next, I erase the small circle representing our church, and draw it bigger to encircle the five newbies.

Now the outer circle becomes our church.

Now we've got five new sets of gifts added to our original ten. The last step is to find out what gifts the new converts have and draw arrows pointing to an even bigger outer circle. Rinse and repeat as your church grows. If I have three gifted musicians with a heart to hit the city's stages, or three ex-cons with a desire to hit the barstools together and witness, or two film students who want to start a film club and critique movies, then I get behind them all, enabling them to weave the gospel into all of those activities as we engage our city on mission together. I just keep drawing arrows. The more I'm drawing dots, circles, and arrows, the happier I am as an apostle.

It's liberating when you don't have to do all the work but can sit in a corner doodling. When people ask what I do, I can either respond, "I do what Paul did" or I can say, "I draw pictures all day!"

My teachers were wrong…I...

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

If the whole body were an eye where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as he pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body… Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually"
1 Corinthians 12:17-18, 27

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- What are your gifts? How do you know?

- What gifts would you like to have?

- What gifts would be necessary for what you'd like to do?

ACTION STEPS:

- This week, pick up a local newspaper, a regional one (like the Los Angeles Times) or a city close to you, and a national newspaper. Read all three (at your favorite coffee shop) and bring them to the group.

[1]Shameless StarWars plug! I'll take em where I can get em!

WEEK 8 - LESSON 3:



WEEK 8 MISSIVE - THE CORE TEAM

"For he who today sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

– Carwood Lipton (Band of Brothers)

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To gain an understanding of the core team development timeline.
- To understand the core team commitment and to commit to the minimal behavior standards for healthy core teams to function well.

THREE DATES NO CHURCH PLANTER SHOULD FORGET

Apparently, guys forget their anniversary a lot, so I hate to tell you three other dates that you need to mark on your calendar. Remembering these dates will not save your marriage, but they may save your church plant. They involve the development of your team and provide time for you to bond and gel before your public launch.

Bonding is essential to core team building, and time is the secret sauce. The great thing about the missionary journeys of Paul was that 1st Century travel lent itself to team building. Weeks and months of traveling by ship, horse, or foot, gave Paul and Barnabus bags of time on their hands to forge a tight bond. You talked, prayed, laughed, ate together, farted, played tricks on each other, and practiced evangelism on people along the way. Not too much different from short-term trips today, except that short-term in meant long-term in those days. In today's world of modern transportation, you're not going to have the luxury of traveling months at sea or by land with your partners, so you'd better get your calendar up and mark some dates to spend some quality time together. While you may not be traveling on the Mediterranean together or snorting horse farts in a caravan, these dates will prove invaluable in making up for lost time when building your team.

The three dates are:

1. The initial core team vision meeting
2. The commitment cut off
3. The public launch

CORE TEAM VISION MEETING:

By now, you've already had the initial crazy night of gathering a bunch of peeps and selling them on this "crazy idea". You invite them to your house, a Denny's, or where ever. It doesn't matter on the first night. The point is that you've gathered with the people that are interested in church planting in your community. Something was said that night that resonated, and that's why you're back.

Do you remember what it was?

Was it the mission that captured your heart?
Was it the values that they said they'd operate by?

Was it that the strategy they laid out for reaching your community was something you knew would work?

Or was it just that you knew that here was a group of people where you'd be safe. They'd love those who came through the doors?

You'd heard the broad brush strokes. Now it's time for you to start filling in the details. That's right! Your gifts are going to be what makes this dog and pony show do some tricks.

During the next 9 - 12 months time, you'll eat together, laugh, talk, get into the word, pray, and discuss the people that you're trying to reach. Most of your bonding will happen

naturally through prayer and over a plate of indian curry, or sweet barbecued pigs flesh. We over formalize team building in the West, yet the Mediterranean people know that if you really want to bond with somebody, you eat with them.

Some of the best team building was done by my youth pastor who was more apostolic than he ever knew. Without realizing it, he mentored me by taking me into his house after our late night outreaches, and feeding me anything he had which usually wasn't much. Over the years, I've realized that I ate that poor guy out of house and home, but he will never know until eternity reveals all, how much he invested in me during those late night hours. We ate tacos, reviewed that night's ministry, and laughed until we cried poking fun at low budget rap videos, and infomercials. Shadowing this man of God as he unwound on the downside of intense, front line ministry, I learned what it meant to be a disciple. I'm convinced it was no different with the Twelve.

Over the next few months, your team is going to go through all of the normal ups and downs that life sets up. Birth. Death. Loss of jobs. Sickness. Promotions. You name it. God is going to take you, as well as the others, to new heights. He may also sink you into heart-wrenching depths. In his sovereignty, however, God will bond you together as you share these sorrows, weep with one another, and carry each other to God in prayer. Laughter and tears have the bonding properties of super glue, and I'm sure that Jesus had this strategy in mind, when he lived with and carried these poor misguided youths for three years. I'm sure that their laughter was epic. I've traveled with groups of guys before, and one thing they know how to do is laugh and cut up.

As Solomon said, enjoy these times, for dark times will come... soon enough..

But some of you will still decide that you're not going to make it to the launch. And that's okay. For now.

CORE TEAM COMMITMENT CUT OFF PHASE

In the film "Jerry Maguire", the lead character is a sports agent who has an epiphany about how things should be done and writes a memo called, "the things we think and do not say." His radical manifesto costs him everything, and in his passion for what he believes, he commits himself to a vision. As he prepares to leave the company, he makes a futile last stand to the standing ovation of all employees who respect his guts and bravery to put everything on the line for what he believes. He cries out, "who's coming with me?" but is stunned by the echoing sound of chirping crickets as everybody looks awkwardly at the floor. Finally, after an eternity of silence, a secretary says, "I'll come with you Jerry." Jerry grabs her by her hand and in the last moment before exiting, grabs the goldfish as an unwitting accomplice. As a church planter I relate to that movie more than most people will ever realize.

Church planters have been given enough faith to see something that doesn't exist yet, and that faith produces bravery to follow the vision. Jerry had an office girl and a goldfish after his stand at the office, but I had a room of people ready to trust God and see where it leads.

Jerry's challenges don't stop there. He struggles equally to get one professional athlete to give him a chance once he leaves the big sports management firm. Finally, Cuba Gooding Jr. signs on, but makes Jerry convince him of his passion by standing on his desk and shouting along with him at the top of his voice, "Show me the money!"

In the end, your core team will be looking to follow the leaders, like Cuba Gooding Jr. saying "Show me the Church Plant".

Cuba's reason for staying with Jerry is summed up in just five words. "I believe in you, Jerry". Your core team will have to be ready to leave good churches, stable programs, and follow the mission of the group out into the unknown. You will never forget the faces of the first brave souls ready to jump alongside you, and you'll be humbled by the faith of others

"Who's coming with me?"

Your leaders will be grateful that it's not just them and the goldfish...but they may still want to take the goldfish!

So How do you make sure that you're not falsely expecting people to follow you while you're raving and waving a bag containing a goldfish? Preferably, you're not meeting on a Sunday morning. Sundays mean that they'd have to ditch their own churches and it's too early for that. They're just getting a feel for what you're about to do. Don't worry if they don't fully understand where you're going overnight. Look to Jesus and his patience with the twelve during their three years traveling daily with Jesus, gathering up the fragments of his vision, readjusting when they understood it, and questioning it when they didn't.

Months into the game, however, your leaders will need to know who on your team is really on board. Are they really on your team, or just along for the ride until something better turns up? Your leaders will need to know if they're in or out. They're on a need to know basis, and now they need to know because there is work to do, people to reach, and enemy strongholds to demolish.

This is like the time Gideon crossed the stream to conquer Jericho. At this time, some of you will be drinking from their hands, while others will be lapping like a

dog. It's cut off time. Some decide not to come back; some don't make the grade. They vote with their feet, or you cut their feet out from under them Your leaders have finished nailing your colors to the mast, and they need to know who is ready to take to the high seas before you leave port. Losing people is tough at this stage but necessary.

For those of you who are crazy enough to throw their lot in with the team going forward, you'll need to tell their pastors immediately. I'm not suggesting that you have to go read Kissinger's tome on diplomacy, but you're going to have to pray for wisdom as you chat with your pastors in order to gain their support. This is a sticky wicket, and you'll need to approach them carefully. Remember that you're not rejecting them, and make sure that they know that. Make sure that you thank you Pastor and tell them that it's their ministry that made you want to go on mission. Give them a reason to share in the adventure with you, and own a little of it.

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK

This means that your leaders will give you another speech that basically says something like, "Hey, if you wanna go the distance with us, then we'll see you next week. If not, thanks for joining us up until now. You've been a great encouragement...we covet your prayers." You'll be surprised how many people are like Teflon at this point. They ain't gonna stick. In my last point, only 10 of the original oscillating crowd of 25 - 60 actually made it to the launch date... but when those faces turn up reporting for duty, the team falls in love all over again.

You'll look around the room at your team-mates and think to yourself, 'I couldn't imagine a more beautiful group of ugly people'. They'll be your stray pack now on, and you'll be as loyal to them as any Pastor ever was. This is your new family. You'd better love them.

You'll soon be bonding in like a high school football team on a road trip. (Just no jockstraps in the face!)

Oh yeah...and don't forget the goldfish!

START WITH THE LOST

Your public launch is the next date on the calendar, but that doesn't mean that you should put off going on mission until that date. In fact, that's the biggest mistake a

core team can make. You're here to reach people, not launch a church service. Paul always started with outreach. You can't just start with Christians, and expect the lost to magically turn up. To turn magical thinking into a reality, somewhere between stage 2 and 3 is a secret locomotive platform that you've got to locate if your going to get to a magical realm where all muggles can fly. Somewhere you will have needed to have started to reach out to the lost together as a team. You've got to begin community outreach before your public launch because at the end of the day, you're not looking to simply start a new church for Christians to go to. There should be other things that you're doing in order to get out into the community as a group. We'll talk more about that in a later chapter, but for now, simply understand that outreach along the way is an essential part of developing the bond within your team. It's part of your bonding experience!!! If anything, reaching the lost is the hidden platform between these two dates.

YOUR PUBLIC LAUNCH:

There is nothing as exhilarating as the backside of your public launch. Most of us want to climb back up thousands of feet and jump all over again before we've even repacked our parachute...ahem. A few words about planning your public launch…

Planning it is essential.

This date needs to be set in stone before you even put the others on the calendar. The reason why is that you're going to be tempted to keep moving it back, because we're all chickens.

You know it, and I know it.

So draw a line in the sand from the start. Like it or not, you're jumping out of that plane Mr. T, even if we have to drug you or knock you out. You need to start from this date and work backwards; determining how long your team needs to bond before you start inviting the lost to your church. Whether you plan to launch out of a coffee shop, community center, night club, or still meet in your house, it's Miller time in heaven, coz souls are about to get saved from this date forward. So I'm asking you to commit as a team and hold each other accountable to launching on the original date that you agreed upon.

PROPER BEHAVIOR ON DATES

That said, there's proper behavior whenever you go on a date. Like the proverbial

Dad cleaning his shotgun on the front porch when the teenager comes to pick up his daughter, let me give you a few conditional terms when it comes to going on a date with your core team.

- **Don't gossip –** There is nothing that the enemy will try and do to divide a team faster than causing bitterness to take root. It destroys our witness, and therefore the church plant. Don't be the weakest link in the chain. When you have something to say, go to the person that offended you in the spirit of Matthew 18. In Titus, Paul warned that Titus should warn a divisive person once, then twice, and after that have nothing to do with him. That's some tough guy talk, but you know how you make it work as a team? It needs to be modeled from the top. That's right! Your leaders need to make sure that they're not gossiping about anyone. This is so important that I warn people not to come to me unless they've gone to the other person first. I make it known that I'll be holding them to it. Then I promise them that they'll never EVER hear me gossiping about one of them, or heard that I said something behind their back. That's a show stopper right there, folks. It's so rare for a leader to promise that and then carry through on it. But it has to be modeled. We held that so strongly, that I invited everyone to our leadership meetings so that they could check that we weren't discussing other people's problems (OPP) there. We would discuss outreach, strategy, and the like in our meetings…we had nothing to hide. And people began to trust us. They also began to trust one another.

- **Commit –** Remember that cut-off commitment date we talked about earlier? That's when you put a ring on it. When you marry yourself to a church plant, there come responsibilities. That's right. You'll have the equivalent duties of taking out the trash, and paying for things. That's what commitment involves. It involves being there. It involves bearing with others, and adjusting your own rhythms to the lives of others. Your church will need you to show up, help pay for stuff, and serve. Those might seem like small things, but commitment is a rare thing in church these days. In a big church, you can attend twice a month, get lost in the crowd, and give your 2% a year to the Lord. Not in a church plant. Somebody needs to take ownership. Perhaps ownership is the right word. See, you're not renting, or leasing anymore. You're an owner of this house where your family will be created, nurtured, share and create memories, and reproduce. I'm getting all weepy just thinking about it.

- **Participate –** Besides the responsibilities, there's also priviledges. You get to do things you couldn't before. You get to use your gifts. In fact, a church plant is the one place on God's earth where your gifts aren't just needed. They're crucial. In a church plant if you don't use your gifts, it leaves a you-shaped hole. It may be that the church plant is where you'll actually begin to discover your

gifts. That's okay. Hopefully your church is going to pour into your development more than you'll pour into it. It's a symbiotic relationship, not a parasitic in either direction.

So…you ready to jump into the foxhole and stand side by side with this ragtag bunch of commandos? You may feel like the dirty dozen, but you're God's chosen twelve. He only needs a handful of wrecked, broken, screwed up knuckleheads to turn the world upside down. Think of what he could do in your community!

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"The Lord said to Gideon, 'You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me.'"
Judges 7:2

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- Commitment is not something that churches encourage nowadays due to the drivenness for numbers and desire to increase crowds. Why might a church planting team require a different mindset?

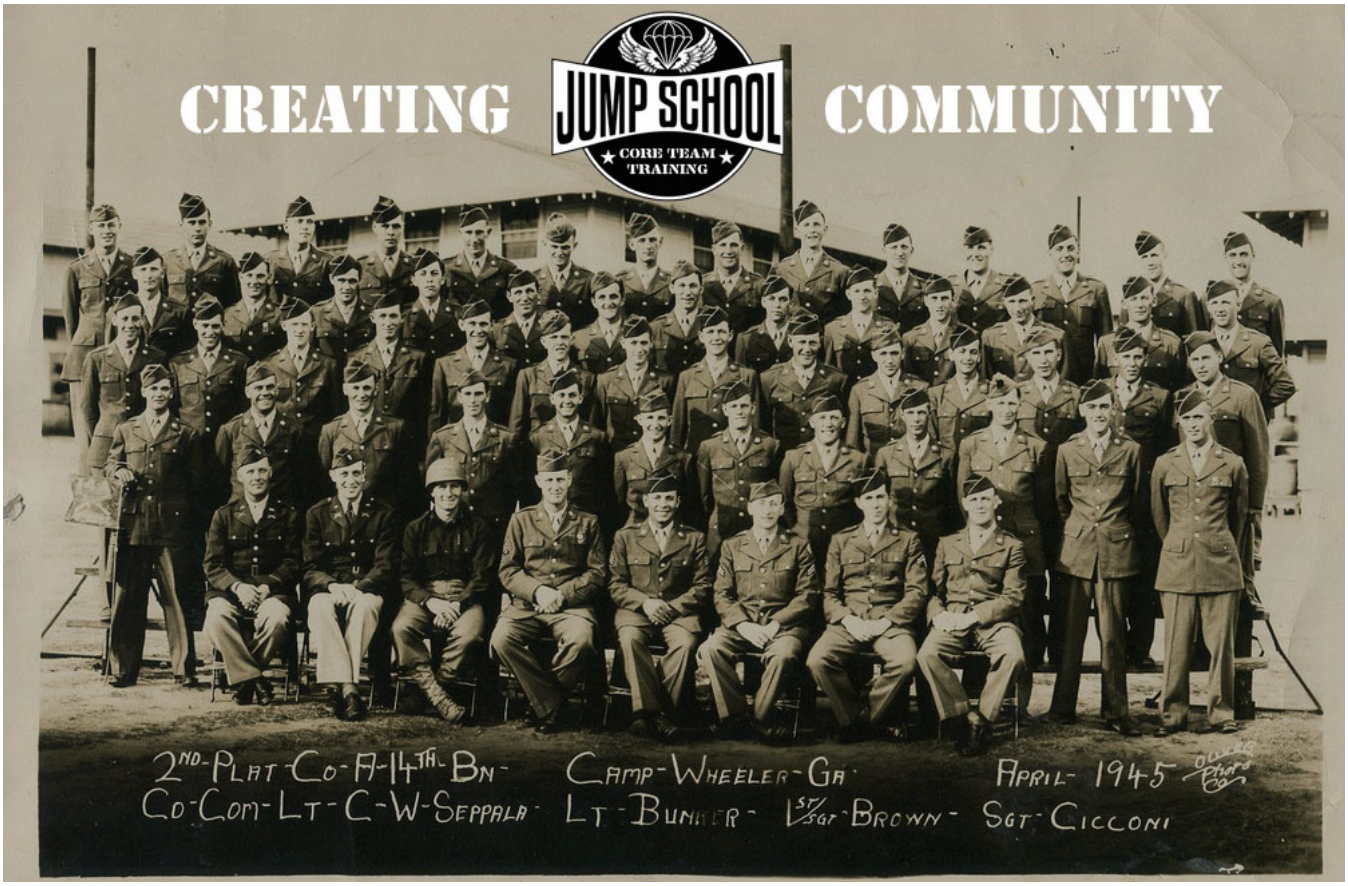
- Why is gossip so damaging to a core team?

ACTION STEPS:

- Write responses to the existing list of core team behaviors. Pretend that you're in a job interview being asked about the importance of each behavior. Write your answers and be prepared to share.

- Write any additional behaviors that you feel should be on the list of minimum requirements for any good, solid, and healthy core team. Perhaps it would be something like “Err on the side of grace”, or something similar. Again, give a paragraph summary of why you think it is important and should be on the list.

WEEK 9 - LESSON 4:



WEEK 9 MISSIVE - CREATING COMMUNITY

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the 3 T's of discipleship and how it will help you to multiply outward.
2. To create a community of grace to bring people in, and to send people out.
3. To discover your spiritual gifts.

"The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him."

- G.K. Chesterton

Small groups have been a part of the biblical plan of discipleship since the dawn of the church. Acts 5:42 says "And every day, in the temple and from house to house,

they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus." Houses and small groups were central to the growth, and spread of the church (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 11:20). It's no different today.

Even the military divides its divisions into small groups, called platoons. Despite gathering crowds of 5000, 500 and 120, Jesus operated with groups of 12, 3, and even spent special times in one on one discipleship.

That's the goal of small groups; discipleship. The small group is a vehicle or tool in which God himself is using the lives, thoughts, and sometimes, mistakes and sins of others as a means of honing the individual. An individual can disciple a group, as much as the group can disciple the individual.

Funnily enough, even though discipleship is mentioned in the great commission as one of three things we're supposed to be doing as we "go", very few actually know what discipleship looks like. If you asked the average Christian if they are discipling anyone, you'll be met with a blank stare. I would argue that people don't do it for the same reason they don't play guitar; they don't know how.

How can they unless they've been shown how to. Therefore, if we disciple at all, we tend to disciple the way someone disciple us. I was discipled by someone opening up the book of 1 John, reading small passages, and asking me what I thought it meant. Three decades later, it's how I still disciple others. There isn't a rule book, or even an instruction manual. So how do we know if we're discipling correctly?

JESUS AS A DRILL INSTRUCTOR

Jesus's rookie recruits were a bunch of wet behind the ears hippy weaklings when he found them. So how did he take the Bad News Bears, and whip them into the Dirty Dozen? When studying Jesus' method of discipleship, it becomes evident that there were three elements of discipling his team; Teaching, Time, and Training. A neglect of any of these three elements will result in a malformed disciple.

Teaching: Almost any small group I've heard of experiences teaching. We seem to be pretty good at teaching our people because it's an expected part of what we do. Spending time outside of our meetings is not.

Time: Missional churches employ time. They spend time together outside of the meetings, building relationship and practicing what some call "life on life." This takes a higher investment, but gives us time to develop practical application of what we've learned, within the church walls, particularly the 23 "one anothers" in the pages of

the New Testament (Love one another, forgive one another, prefer one another, etc.) Look it up sometime! It's a fascinating study.

Training: Teaching is the norm, and time is increasingly on the rise, but how many groups have you been part of that say, "Right. Get out there. Time to put into practice what you've been learning out there"? I already know the answer. We become experts at talking about things we never do. We talk about reaching the world, without ever venturing forth to do anything intentionally. If you're not careful, small groups can become a breeding ground for Christians who are experts on inactivity. Jesus recognized this in his disciples and therefore sent them out into the villages of Judea. He actually did this twice, but have you ever wondered why? There should be a rhythm to our discipleship, as natural as breathing. We take in knowledge, fellowship, and encouragement in one giant breath, and then exhale faith, risk, and mission with the same regularity.

The disciple who only spends time in teaching will become a know-it-all Christian who does nothing to lift a finger to reach or help those around him. The disciple who only goes out on mission eventually burns out as the gas in their tank runs out, and they crash and burn after running so long on fumes. The person who only spends time with believers becomes the "hostess with the mostest" but runs the best barbeque no unbeliever ever ate (or heard the gospel at).

COG

So where can all three of these take place in a church? Home groups, missional communities, life groups... call them whatever you want, but meeting in a small intimate setting like Jesus did allows for you to double down deeper into peoples lives. When that happens, you get to see the real person, up close and personal, warts and all. For that reason, we called ours "Communities Of Grace" (C.O.G.s). The idea was that the meeting on a Sunday was made up of a bunch of little cogs that turned the wheel. The cogs were the functioning engine of the church. Sunday was mission for us, but that didn't stop us form going on mission together in the week either.

First, in our COGs we wanted to build a stronger community than any other on the planet. We didn't want a gang, or book club, or crossfire gym to outdo us. We wanted our time together to be the one safe place you could come when you were struggling, beat up, or worn out. We saw ourselves as friends, coaches, and nurses to one another. Sometimes, we were firefighters metaphorically pulling each other out of the twisted wreck of a burning car. But above all, we were family.

Therefore, grace had to be the atmosphere; the air we breathe. As a person leading

one (and hopefully this group will break up into many where most of you in this room will be leading in time) you need to model grace by affirming everyone's answer. Even when they're off the walls. You don't need to agree with them to affirm them. You're affirming their participation and honesty. After all, if people are thinking, believing, and saying wrong things, you want them to do it here. This is where they can get help. The second that you allow groupthink to dominate any group is the moment that authenticity has died.

This is where you want people to get real. Confess. Heal. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says "In confession the breakthrough to community takes place. Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him. And the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation. Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of the unexpressed, it poisons the whole being of a person…. In confession, the light of the Gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. The sin must be brought into the light. " (*Life Together*). Churches that make people want to hide end up with more sin running rampant than a church that is open and honest with people's struggles.

This is where "accountability groups" didn't really work. Eventually, after you get to know everyone well enough, and the mask comes off, everybody is just as walking wounded as the next guy. When it comes to leading one, you need to know that this applies to you as well...so don't hide it. Everyone else will follow the leader. When the leader leads in honest transparency, he or she creates the atmosphere of grace, and lives change. Leading a cog means that you've got to be vulnerable, and lay down the expectations that phariseeism is the one sin that won't be tolerated. Even Jesus got mad at that one. The sick need a doctor, and you're going to be needing a lot of hospital beds if your church plant is going to be successful.

THE THREE GOALS OF YOUR COG

So, we spent time together, and we enjoyed teaching, but how were we to go on mission together? Rewind the tape for a second and apply what I said at the beginning of this lesson: the goal of every group is no different than that of every person; to make disciples (or to multiply). Therefore, in a multiplying movement, small groups disciple individuals to function together as a group to go on mission. The COGs (or whatever you call them) serve to awaken people's gifts, equip them to minister, and release them. Releasing them to minister in their gifts is a powerful game changer. When your group is ready, they should identify their collective gifting and passion as a group, and take it to the streets. When you see people awakened, equipped and released, the outward momentum of a church is unstoppable. This is

the power of community. It's where discipleship often happens, and for this reason, we're told not to stop meeting together. Community is good for the soul.

MISSIONAL COGS

COGs are the best places to use your gifts. The gifts were given to the church, but like an old tie or wool knit sweater from grandma, they stay in the bottom of the drawer. Have you ever wondered why the position of elder has gifts wired into it like "must be hospitable"? It's not to feed already-fat christians! It's not for fellowship. It's for evangelism! Your house is meant to be open. You're meant to have your life as a point of interaction. Your house is shared, your family life is shared, your meals around your table is shared. It's so that, like Jesus, you can get to know them, be relational, and reach out.

For this reason, we didn't limit it to reading groups. We've started film clubs during the week, where we can talk about various redemption themes in films. Take I am Legend. It's dated now, but at the time, that movie scared the bejeebies out of me. Yet, laced throughout were various redemption sign posts that few Christians caught. I watch movies now with a missional eye. The movie opens with a screen shot of an old poster on a brick wall reading "God has not abandoned us". Throughout the movie there is a theme of God being present through little things like butterflies, but the main character is too busy to notice. Finally, in the climactic scene, a flesh eating mutant cracks the bullet proof glass, making a butterfly pattern of cracked glass. His mind races back to his daughter's observation about God and butterflies, and he knows what he must do. He must sacrifice himself so that others can live. He realizes that he's been like God, trying to save mutants who are ready to rip him apart...and get this, he's yelling out, "I can save you" to them repeatedly, trying to tell them that their salvation is in the blood vial that he's holding out. I can ride that water slide all the way to Bombay! *Lost*, *the X-files,* before that...*Dallas* in the 80's? Wait, I've gone too far. But I hope you've seen by now that you could start a U2 fan club, or anything that would get people contributing, and you're in.

The end goal is to have discussions. Have you ever wondered why the most evangelistic book in the Bible, John's gospel is a book about discussions? It's because it's a book of conversations. John's gospel could be subtitled "Conversations with Jesus". That's right, the goal of using your gifts is to have discussions.

Have you ever heard the expression "Witness, witness, witness, and if necessary use words?" Yeah, it's rubbish. It completely neuters Paul's plea "Pray for me that I'd open my mouth to speak the gospel boldly as I should…" Maybe we should have quipped him with that phrase. Would have saved him a lot of anxiety…just wouldn't

have saved many souls. Search your feelings. You know it to be true. Conversations are what we're driving at, and using your gifts, hitting your missional sweet spot, opens up conversations like nothing else.

If you're operating in your gifts. You. Will. Evangelize. Period.

This cool guys says it best in his awesome book, Reaching The Unreached:

"When Jesus poured his Spirit out at Pentecost, it was an all or nothing investment of supernatural power mediated through natural humanity. The life of God, manifested as gifts of the Holy Spirit, coursed through every believer as they were empowered to carry out the mission of Jesus. When Peter spoke of the happenings of Pentecost to the crowd, he told them Joel has prophesied that they too were a part of this. They would see visions, have dreams, and experience prophesy. This wasn't a spectator sport, but a participatory one. The promise was that Jesus would pour his power out on all flesh, sons and daughters, wrinkly old men, and prune-skinned women would all receive gifts. Everyone was a participant. Pentecost was an all-inclusive, crowd-swelling revolution that changed the way people were reached. Nobody was excluded. Earthly revolutions chant to restore power to the people, but when the Holy Spirit is on the move, it's a restoration of power through the people. As the Holy Spirit is channeled through people, his outlet is their gifts. When I was a firefighter, we were taught that a person who'd been electrocuted had an exit wound because the energy needed to exit their body. The energy didn't just dissipate; it created an outlet. Your spiritual gifts are an expression of what Jesus's power looks like through you. It's Jesus with you-skin on. Through our gifts, the world sees Jesus in action. The gifts are what help fill the world with the presence of Christ (Eph. 4: 10– 13). Unfortunately, we've seen church become about one person's gifts, as the crowds watch and forget they have gifts themselves. As a jealous Monarchist, the Holy Spirit is consumed with the single aim of bringing worship and glory to Jesus, rather than calling attention to the individual being used."[1]

This is how we found all of the cool things to do. We started meeting every other week to go on mission together instead of meeting for bible study. We called that night Missional Cog because we were leaving the house to house and meeting in temple courts (i.e. - public spaces - see Acts 5:42). We founded film clubs, cooking classes, book clubs. It could be a running group, or biker club. Whatever you and your group like to do, utilizing their spiritual gifts, is how you go on mission together.

There's so much to say about spiritual gifts, but you can take a course that I've put together on it if you head over to NinjaTrainingCollective.com and check it out.

I'll just leave this categorization of spiritual gifts here for you.

Role: FELLOWSHIP CHAMPION(e.g. a host, or a liaison with the church community)

Spiritual gifts
Helps, Mercy, Service, Administration

Sample responsibilities
Host meetings; send reminder e-mails/calls; manage phone lists; organize meals (hospitality); plan celebrations for birthdays and anniversaries; coordinate social activities; set up the home/refreshment rotation.

Role: DISCIPLESHIP CHAMPION(e.g. a co-leader, worship leader, prayer coordinator)

Spiritual gifts
Shepherding, Teaching, Wisdom, Knowledge

Sample responsibilities
Perform research on topics for Bible study; function as a resource-provider to help people grow; regularly help facilitate Bible studies and discussion; encourage prayer, worship, and spiritual encouragement; highlight other growth opportunities within the church.

Role: MINISTRY CHAMPION (e.g. group ministry connector)

Spiritual gifts
Exhortation, Giving, Administration, Wisdom

Sample responsibilities
Uphold the application of learning to real life; encourage the discovery of each participant's spiritual gifts and involvement in fitting ministry teams; enlist participants for serving opportunities within the group.

Role: EVANGELISM CHAMPION(e.g. group outreach coordinator)

Spiritual gifts
Evangelist, Service, Apostle

Sample responsibilities
Encourage and equip participants to invite unsaved friends to the group; spearhead outreach events or gathering; integrate prayer for the nations and cultivate an external-focus within the group.

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SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"
Mark 2:16-17

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- How were you discipled? How have you discipled others?

- Which of the three Ts of discipleship excite you the most? Which is the most lacking in your life?

- What are your fears about getting vulnerable in a group? What has been your experience in the past?

- What are your spiritual gifts?

ACTION STEPS:

- Pick 3 people this week to interview. Using the list of gifts available, tell them what gifts you see in them. Then ask them to say what gifts they see in you. When done, compare all three responses and see if there is a pattern. Did it shock you, or where they gifts you already knew you had? Come prepared to discuss your findings.



MODULE 4 - MISSION

WEEK 10 - LESSON 1:



WEEK 10 MISSIVE - THE TERRAINY

"We're not lost Private... we're in Normandy"

- Richard D. Winters - Band of Brothers

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the terrain on the perimeter of your church plant.
2. To gain insight into your target drop zone.
3. To gain a clear vision of what the mission is.

TARGETING YOUR DROP ZONE

The first question you need to ask is where am I going to jump? How does one pick

a location? In the New Testament, Paul and Barnabas "went home". They targeted their own people. Paul targeted his fellow citizens of Turkey, and Barnabas the inhabitants of his native Cypress. On Paul's second missionary journey, Paul thought he had it all mapped out, but the Holy Spirit kept frustrating his attempts to go places, and instead it was the Macedonian call that brought him to Greece. Maybe you've seen the needs of a community and feel the pull to help them. It can be a call to a specific people group like J. Hudson Taylor who felt called exclusively to the Chinese. Paul claimed that he was called specifically as a "sent one" to the Gentiles in every epistle. Rick Warren claimed he was called to yuppies. Nothing wrong with that.

KNOWING YOUR TARGET JUMP ZONE

Before you can start to even think about pulling the rip-cord at your church launch you'll need to start doing some outreach in the community you're targeting.

When you start a church, knowing the territory you're going to jump into is extremely important. It will also determine your tactics. During D-Day, the strategic planners in Operation Overlord misread the aerial photographs of the hedgerow system of France. Assuming that the hedgerows were raised like the british equivalents, when the parachuters landed, they discovered that they were not raised, but depressed. Therefore the rules of engagement completely changed once they got on the ground altering how they'd take a road, or a storm a pillbox. The reality was that they hadn't been trained for this terrain. It can be as simple as going from Orange County, California into Los Angeles County. Once you cross that county line, people dress, think, and act different. And they have better taste in art and music. Seriously, Orange County people trying to reach LA county people have to make a drastic shift regarding how they approach people. Like Paul becoming all things to all men, the Republicanism has to be shelved, and a less materialistic, more liberal appreciation of the arts has to kick in if you're going to connect on common ground. There needs to be a shift from a suburban mindset to an urban one.

Although you and (insert name of personal church planting hero here) might think a lot, you are probably jumping into very different areas. Your toilet scrubber won't clean up his toilet, or visa versa because you're dealing with different crap. When reaching different demographical communities, your approach has to be adjusted strategically. The tactics I've employed in one jump zone won't work in my next, therefore you also have to be ready to strategically change up your tactics when jumping. If you jump into every target zone with the same tactics in mind, it's a recipe for home-baked disaster, just like mom used to make. For this reason, no mentor can give you a play-by-play "how to manual" that applies to every situation.

How could they? Even the scripture demonstrates that Paul's approach changed from city to city. Therefore, getting to know your city is going to be chief among your missional engagement strategy.

MAPPING

Google is your friend. Did you know that you can analyze how many Cambodians are living in Long Beach? You can profile census information? You can profile single mothers, foreign language speakers? Divorce Rate? Ethnic Makeup? Poverty level? Mission Insights is a valuable resource that many big denominations use.

This practice is known as "mapping". Mapping is the practice of identifying the people you are going to reach the city. You plot a digital map and strategize how you will reach specific neighborhoods. You can use google maps, doctor them up on photoshop or mark them with skitch. Every church planting map should have three sections: geographic, social, and spiritual.

Geographic- what neighborhoods are represented, what are they called, how have they formed as distinct communities, and where do they stop and start.

Social- is there a racial identity, social economic profile, or some other uniting factor?

Spiritual- what is the predominant make up of spiritual beliefs in these communities?

You want to map out the areas known as paths, such as commuter routes, bike paths, walking strips, and any main arteries that people use to traffic. These pathways can tell you a lot about what the people who traverse them daily are thinking. Observe the billboards along the route. What are the experts who pour research and advertising dollars into that community thinking about the people commuting along those routes? What do the billboards tell you are occupying the minds of the average person who passes by? Chances are, whatever those ads are selling, your community is buying.

You also want to identify the "nodes" or places where people congregate. You will also need to map out districts (we call them neighborhoods or sections of a city) which are mapped by borders. A border might be a street, or a hill, or a railroad track where one neighborhood ends and another begins. Nodes are often defined by their borders. People meet at the beach where the water serves as a natural barrier. Often the undeveloped edge of town is bordered by the booming newly developed real estate, complete with new shopping centers, movie theaters, and sports complexes.

Lastly, look for high places. These don't have to be religious, but are considered the sacred spaces of a culture. In Washington D. C. it would be the White House, the Smithsonian, or anywhere around that area. It might be a town's stadium. These are places associated with identity and yet, communicate concepts bigger than an individual. It could be a beauty salon, a financial district, or business center. It's often marked bythe tallest buildings, or architectural structures that take up the most real estate.

NEEDS

Put all of these components together and you will begin to understand where people are at. So how do you find the needs?

Once you know the outlay of the city, you'll begin to understand how people think, move, and congregate. The next step is to travel their paths, congregate in their areas, and learn from their scared spaces. The paths are how people move around. Where they congregate is a great way to reach them, and their values are learned from their "sacred spaces". The latter doesn't have to be churches, mosques, or buddhist temples, either. In Athens, it was Mars Hill, so Paul went there.

Waiting for his companions to arrive in Athens, Paul had time to kill. He walked around the city; felt its heartbeat. He breathed the air. He witnessed its wounds and felt its pain. Athens wasn't like any town he'd been to before, and neither was any other town alike. Paul had learned on his travels that everywhere he went there was a gospel "in". He just had to find it. And find it he did in the statue to the Unknown God. Paul's missionary strategy unfolded in front of his eyes as he simply took a walk through its streets. We didn't invent prayer walks. Nehemiah did it before launching his rebuilding campaign in Jerusalem just as Paul did in Athens before preaching on Mars Hill. When overwhelmed with the task in front of him, church planters put on their combat boots and pray that God will give them every place their feet trod as an inheritance for the Kingdom. Prayer can be both reconnaissance and rescue at once.

MEETING WITH THE MAYOR

One of the easiest ways to put your finger on the need of the city is to talk to the professionals. We met with the Mayor and asked her what the needs of the community were. Heck, pick up a newspaper. Have your team circle all of the needs in the city. Then, with a red marker have them circle the top two that they'd like to do something about. You've just pinpointed their passions. Once you've pinpointed somebody's passions, their gifts are close behind them. There are far too many needs

for you to reach, and you will have to select which ones you're going to meet. Luckily for you, the Holy Spirit has already identified and targeted the needs for you, and equipped your team…if you're listening.

HANG OUT

Once you identify the hang out spots, nodes, and gathering places, start going there. Start meeting there. Start making that community part of the rhythm of your day. As you do, you will form relationships. You will visit the same coffee house or pub and start to recognize the regulars. As you converse with them, ask them two questions: 1. what do you love about living here? 2. What's the biggest challenge about living here? 3. What do people who live here want out of life? 4. What do people around here fear? What keeps them up at night (besides the gunshots if it's Long Beach)? Talking about these things will not only give you insight, but actually lead to gospel conversations.

When I'm working locally with a team, I take my planters out to laundromats, bars, parks, plazas, and other places to study how to reach that particular place. Whoever comes up with the best analysis gets to lead a smaller fraction of the team there. It's an exercise to teach planters to strategize how to meet people in areas where they never thought church was possible. I call it ministry in public places, because it's what Paul excelled at, and what modern America sucks at. Like Francis Chan said, "If the church lost their buildings, would we still have a church?" Almost everything we've learned to do is confined within our own buildings. Take that away, and most ministers would be lost. Every bit of ministry in the New Testament, including Jesus's however, was done outside.

When you frequent nodes where people cluster, you will also begin to make out "tribes". Harley Davidson riders are a tribe, as are Apple product users. Cyclists in Portland, Oregon belong to an undefined community in which the bonds are strong. Gamers, Tech nerds, cosplay geeks, hip hop enthusiasts can all be identified by appearance because they adopt the tribal dress, language, humor, rituals, and customs of their particular subculture.

What would a church look like in Daytona Beach that wanted to reach bikers? After doing a funeral for a biker buried at a biker bar in the heart of the Angeles mountains, I realized that a biker church would be based around riding. If I planted a biker church, I would plant a church that you had to ride a few hours to get to. It would have to be outside of Daytona. In fact, it would probably need to move around and change venue to give the guys new opportunity to experience new rides. It's part of their identity and a way that they bond. When they arrived at the distant venue,

there would be lunch served, and we would have a service. Therefore, it wouldn't be in a city, and it would have to be in a bar. My pulpit would be the tank of a motorcycle standing upright with the handlebars coming out to hold the stand, headlight facing out. When it came time to play worship, I'd have a loud, hard band play where men could raise a beer to Jesus and shout the words. I would have plenty of testimonies and run it like A.A. I would preach, but I'd make an effort to make them laugh. Men like to do that with each other, and as the Spirit came upon me, I'd preach in the hopes that the Spirit would fall like a sledgehammer with the gentle word that would break the bone. By the end of our meeting, they'd be weeping, and laying hands on each other. The biker church inside my head is pretty cool, and I'd think I was a genius if I hadn't seen it unfold before my eyes at a biker tavern hours away in the mountains where I did the funeral. They listened to the gospel, laughed, wept, and came up to me afterwards, broken, and hungry for spiritual things. You can reach any tribe if you're willing to adopt that tribe's customs for the sake of the gospel.

What would an outreach church to Astronomy enthusiasts be like? We'd arrange night time star gazing events. We'd bring somebody way too smart for the likes of us to come and talk about the cosmos, quantum physics, speed of light, power of God stuff. We'd have him bless the Creator and blow our minds Louie Giglio style. He'd present something in the vein of Yancey, or C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity. It'd be intelligent anyways. We'd say something like, if God were real, what would you want to say to him? We'd all be laying on our backs, on sleeping bags by the way, looking up at the stars the whole time. We'd take some questions from skeptics. Then we'd play music (maybe something by Mozart, Wagner, or Vaughn Williams) and ask people to spend that time taking in the wonder, tripping on the fact that the God who made that universe also made our minds to compose and enjoy masterpieces like that. They'd have time to respond to what they'd heard, by looking out into that vast universe and sneaking in a prayer just in case for the God of the Universe to make himself to them. They wouldn't know it, but we'd be praying that something like David's night time worship session under the stars in Psalm 8 would take place.

How would I reach fishermen on the end of the pier? You get the picture. I could do this all day…

FINDING THE MARKETPLACE

Paul was bi-vocational. It was partly so that he could eat. It was partly so that he could support his team (Acts 20:4). I believe however, that Paul could have asked almost anything he wanted from his churches support-wise, but instead chose to go where the traffic was. In the same way, the apostles in Acts 3 are visiting the temple during the time of prayer (Acts 3:1). Church planters go where the people already are.

Alan Hirsch talks about proximity spaces rather than centralized gatherings in church buildings. If people are at a coffee shop, why start a christian one? The name of the game is infiltration, and if you want to infiltrate people, you go where they go. You don't ask them to come where you are. To meet them on their turf, you may need to go to an MMA gym and partner with them like Josh Boyd from Fight Church in Las Vegas. You set up church in a motel courtyard in Stanton. Park on Sunday mornings in an inner city neighborhood.

At a recent coaching session we did with a church planter, he'd mentioned that they'd moved into the old church building in the neighborhood that used the old church for weddings and funerals. The old church had gone bankrupt and they were seen as the new church with money who had pushed the old one out. Damage control was what was needed with the community more than anything. The message they sent to that community was crucial. We suggested that instead giving a modernizing overhaul rennovation to the old chapel to reach youth, they restore the old chapel with money from the weddings and funerals and make sure that the people know that that building "belongs" to the community because their most precious memories were there. They could also open up the new building to be a multi-use facility. In other words, since they had a building, they needed to use it in a strategic way. It sits there week after week unused except for twice a week. Meanwhile, opening it up to Karate classes, ballet classes, gardening groups, would serve as a white flag to the community. In the inner city, you could start D.J. Workshops, vegan gardening groups, or infiltrate model car racers.

INTERACTION

There is a lot of talk about being relevant. Like Vizzini in *The Princess Bride*, I suspect that many people use that word a lot not knowing it doesn't mean what they think it means. The word relevant comes from the word relate. Can we relate to people? When you read the gospels, you quickly realize that Jesus knew how to relate to people, and even more of a compliment to his witness, they could relate to him.

If we're going to relate to people that means that we're going to have to learn to talk to people. We often space ourselves out from people like they're dirty lepers. John's gospel is the most evangelistic book of the New Testament. Have you ever noticed that it's a collection of discussions between Jesus and people? The entire thing. What does that tell us about evangelism?

Sometimes I think that the church has always believed in aerial strikes. For most of the history of military campaigns, armies have had to set foot onto enemy territory to take it. Nonetheless, the church sets up a base of operations, calling in air strikes, and

never leaves it. They hope that the enemy will simply walk in and surrender to it like it was a walk-in-enter. I've got bad news for you, it's impossible to take territory without moving into enemy land on the ground.

When John Wesley and Whitefield rode the wave of the Holy Spirit during the Great Awakening, they established small groups throughout the country called "societies". They were convinced that life change happened in circles, not in rows. They found conversions in the field, and discipleship in the living room. There were churches. Lots of them. But the churches weren't reaching people, so Wesley and Whitefield went outside.

This took huge faith, and gumption. They had to exegete their culture. Whitefield went to the coal fields, because the miners worked seven days a week and couldn't hear the gospel at church. The methodist preachers were soon down the mineshafts, "in the pits" taking church to the people. A mine seems almost built for a house of worship, and the revival spread.

Wesley originally thought it "a sin to preach in the fields" when he heard of Whitefield, but within a few months, he was preaching to crowds of 20,000 people. Our models often hold us back and keep the kingdom from expanding like the old wineskin that's lost it's ability to be flexible and therefore expand. In the Great Awakening, and in most times of revival, what God was doing happened OUTSIDE of the confine of the church walls. So did Jesus's ministry. Did you realize that? He wasn't found where religious people were. He didn't have a church. The Son of God came and barely set foot inside the temple for three years. His ministry was OUTSIDE of the church. My first church plant was in a Starbucks. My second in a public park. My third is getting ready to plant in a gas station in the inner city.

John Calvin noted: "the Master did not will in outward discipline and ceremonies to prescribe in detail what we out to do because he foresaw that this depended on the state of the time, and he did not deem one form suitable for all ages…because he has tought nting specifically, and because these things are not necessary to salvation nad for the upbuilding of the church outgh to be variously cadmoodated to the customs of each nation and gea, it will be ffitting (as the advantage of the church will require) to change and abrogate traditional practices and to establish new ones." Calvins Institutes p1,208 IV.10.30

In planting your church, keep in mind that the early church was planted in Jerusalem, but met "house to house and in the temple courts." What most people consider "temple courts" is a big box with expensive speakers. I maintain that the temple was merely the city center, the place where the majority of people trafficked, and if it had

been the temple of Zeus, the apostles would have continued to meet there. Temple courts is synonymous with "public space", the watering holes, the proximity spaces, the market place, the cultural hub. The question is, are you willing to go there and set up shop? Or would you rather hunker down in the bunker?

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate yourself as a researcher of your own community?

- What do you think are the reasons for this?

- What are the pathways of your community?

- Where are the nodes?

- How do people congregate that you've noticed?

- What are the hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties of the people in your target community?

- How have you been hanging out where people hang out?

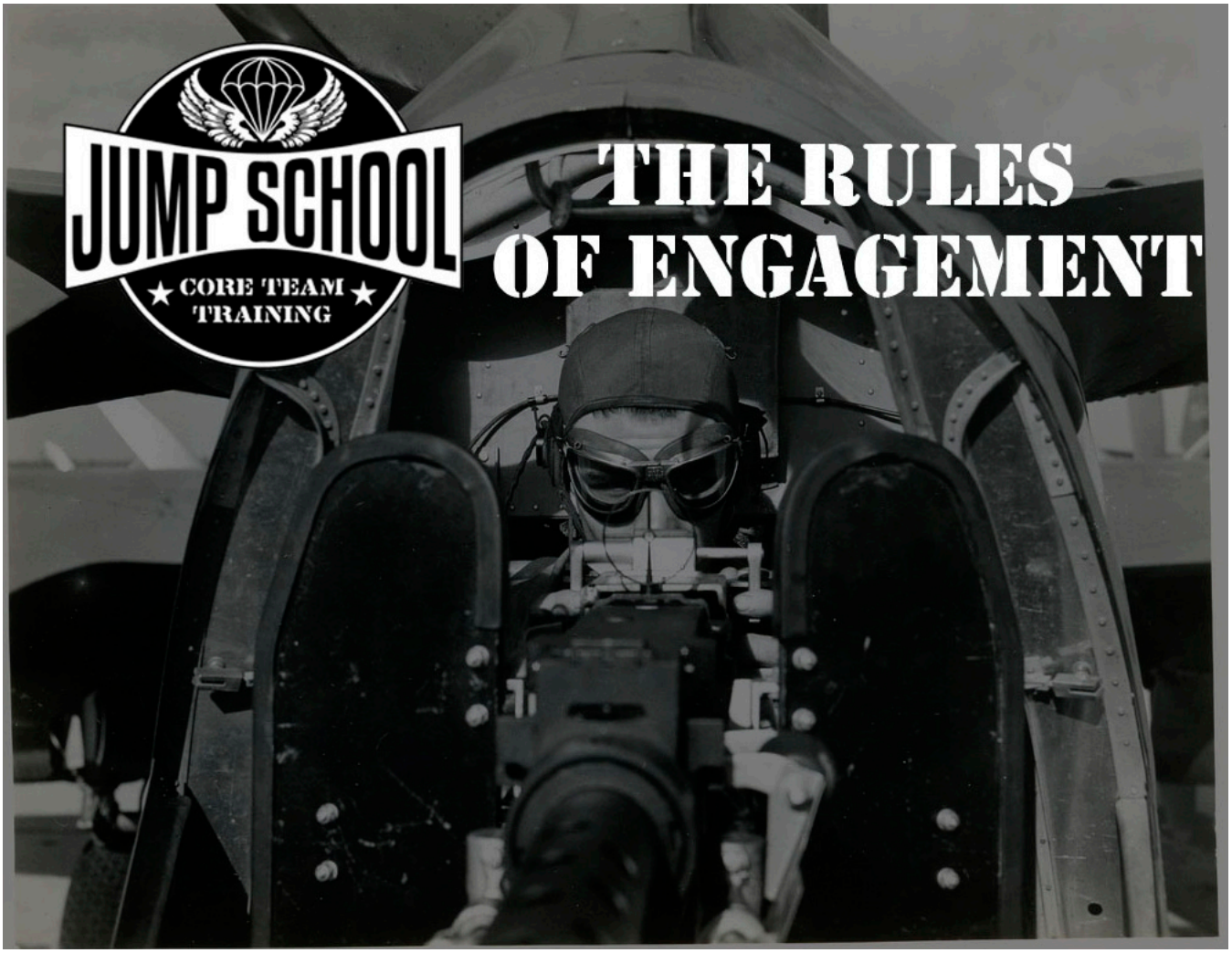
- What steps can you take in the next 30 days to become more of a part of the rhythms of your community?

ACTION STEPS:

- Draw a map of your city with the church in the middle. Allow it to stretch out for 5 miles. In it, draw the nodes, pathways, and boundaries. Draw any landmarks, or popular activities that take place there. Any places of note such as hospitals,

schools, or other places where people traffic should be included. Based on your map, what ways could you alter your personal rhythms in a strategic way?

WEEK 11 - LESSON 2:



WEEK 11 MISSIVE - THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

"Fire and Manuever, that's the name of the game"

- Band of Brothers

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

OUTREACH SHOULD BE GIFT-DRIVEN

Business models operate with the idea that you can draw lines across a whiteboard, predicting what you're going to be doing, and how you're going to branch out in

the next couple of years. Great when you're flipping widgets, but not so good when you're dealing in Holy Spirit filled believers. Therefore, I don't believe in sitting down and strategizing according to a five-year time table based upon the perspective of one finite senior leader. After all, the worlds needs are greater than the resources of one church plant. There's nothing like a five-year-plan to not only bypass significant needs, but more importantly, ignore the resources God provided your team with to strategically meet the pertinent needs around you. As one anonymous source wrote "I can't do everything, but I can do something, and I will not let the everything I cannot do, keep me from doing the something that I'm called to do. " So how do we identify what needs we should focus on, and how to posture our team to meet them?

I've talked about the gift driven model in *Church Zero*. When our core team plans, we don't use lines. We use concentric rings. Inside the ring, the individuals on our team are symbolized by a bunch of dots. Outside the ring are more dots that represent the people who are unreached surrounding our church. When I identify the gifts of my team, I'm looking for a pattern. I want to see who the Holy Spirit has sovereignly orchestrated together on my team so that I can cluster them together for mission. Therefore, the question that anyone who wants to be effective in outreach has to ask is "How has the Holy Spirit equipped the people in front of me to reach this town?

When I started my first church plant, I'd been in ministry for 14 years, and an overseas missionary for 5. I was burnt out. I told the team that I had a broad canvas, and a few brush strokes, but they needed to fill in the details. They didn't know what I meant. I told them that because I was now just a lowly barista, devoid of ministerial super powers, that I'd handed in my hot red bat phone to heaven that was ringing off the hook with calls from the commissioner. Plus, I didn't want to be Batman. (Did I just say that?) We looked around the group and asked, "What gifts do we have here?" We traded a business model or five year plan for an organic model. And we had no clue what we were doing. All we knew was that if the Holy Spirit was real, he'd lead us, move us, and reach the people through us that he was gunning for.

Remember those circles? We had a circle representing the church, with dots outside and inside the circle. The dots inside it were our core team. The dots outside it were the lost we wanted to reach. The game was to group the dots inside the circle into mission that made sense in order to reach the dots outside the circle. When we grouped people together by their gifting, it gave us the direction we needed.

If we had 3 creatives, 4 art students, an art teacher, and a professional artist (which we did in Refuge Long Beach) and want to reach the lost, we figured the Holy Spirit was up to something, and it was more than a coincidence. If we have a bunch of bikers, then maybe we do stuff tough guys like. If I have people who are film nuts, they start a film critics club at the movie theater. I had a couple of cooks, and the

mayor said that home health nurses reported unwed teenage mother's children were malnourished through most of their childhood. It would give Jamie Oliver a heart attack if he saw what these children were being fed. Could we help? So the cooks were released to start a group that taught young single mothers how to cook healthy foods on a cheap budget. We had college students who were addicted to Halo, so we started tournaments. People got saved, topped the leaderboards, and got discipled in a group of friends and peers. They also got their butts kicked at Halo…our guys were good!

All of these are relational and involve these people getting involved in their own communities with things they are already familiar with. Paul became all things to all men, and therefore, we allow people to stay themselves, and reach people in a way that's natural…and we haven't even gotten into gifting yet. I used to think that as a leader people followed me into battle, but in reality, I'm actually accompanying them. People may perceive me to be in charge if they're not listening closely, but my plan from day one is to release them to do things through the power of the Holy spirit that they never dreamed possible.

Besides lifestyle, interests, and natural grooves, there are the spiritual gifts themselves. The gifts in the diagram are represented by arrows extending out from the dots within the circle. The gifts are given to glorify Jesus. Therefore, if we have people who are operating in their gifts, they will naturally hit their missional sweet spot. People who serve will end up in gospel conversations as the incarnate Jesus through serving others. Similarly, people who have the gift of giving, or compassion are going to make a dent in the city. Those arrows we draw going out from the circle represent our spiritual gifts. The task of your core team is to group those gifts together. Chances are that there is much overlap within your team. Once you group your gifts together, you know what shape mission ought to take. In Refuge Long Beach, our artists were brimming with natural abilities and talents that I thought would overflow into the art district. But no, their gifting was compassion, giving, and helps. Refuge took shape as a refuge for those who had none. Whereas my strategic mind charted a course, it was a wrong one that didn't match their gifts and passions. So we moved out to reach the marginalized; the addict, homeless, and ex-cons. We hit the jackpot, because we operated in the strategy of the Holy Spirit based upon His Sovereign makeup from the combination of gifts from a core team He handpicked. We entered into the slipstream by approaching mission from this angle. Once we began to reach the marginalized, we came to know their gifts, causing us to re-evaluate our missional direction, and adjust. Sometimes we added new ventures, sometimes we replaced them. Every time we did, the circle grew, enveloping those dots on the outside of the circle, bringing them in; which meant we had more gifts.

More dots = more gifts. If you have ever played a MMORPG then you know what it means when someone cries out for "More DOTS!".

THE ART OF MOVING CHRISTIANS AROUND

A word of caution here. So far, you might be good at gathering Christians together, God doesn't really care if a hip church is in the town you're going to. He cares about the lost. As John Piper said, "Mission exists because worship does not".

Therefore, you don't go at mission thinking that you're going to reach people just like you. The patterns of church growth and kingdom advancement tends to follow a middle class trajectory in society. Jesus didn't. Nor should you.

Not only does God care about the lost, he's got a special heart for the poor and marginalized. Consider Galatians 2:20 when Paul was heading out for the mission field. Paul recalls the Twelve exhorting him, "Only do not forget the poor, the very thing I was eager to do!" Consider for a moment that the one instruction that they tagged onto Paul's mission was not to forge the poor. The poor are often marginalized. So are people from minority groups. Consider the heart that Jesus demonstrated for the marginalized from minorities when he healed the Phoenecian woman, or healed the Centurion's servant, or sat with the Samaritan woman at the well. The majority of Paul's battles in the New Testament were fought over Paul's insistence on including the ostracized gentiles into the plan of salvation by preaching the gospel to them! This was so radical, that it is what got Paul killed. A casual reading of the New Testament demonstrates clearly that God has a sweet spot for the marginalized, even if we don't. The marginalized in society range from those of the LGBT community, those with special needs, the deaf, blind, crippled, refugees, and the beat goes on.

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- How many people groups can you identify in your city?

- How is your church plant going to strategize to become *all* things to *all* men, rather than just reaching people like yourselves?

SEEK AND SAVE

Once your team has locked their sites onto the marginalized in society, how will you go after them? In Jesus' day they flocked to him. They weren't middle class, respectable people but down and outs, outcast from society, lost, helpless, and harassed…and Jesus' heart broke for them. He had to tell his hand-picked missionary team to open their eyes to take in the harvest set before them. The disciples had completely missed it. In annoyance, they'd strapped on their bossy boots and barked, "Lord, make them go home." Trust me, what Solomon wrote will become true of you, "with much knowledge comes much sorrow, and with much knowledge comes much grief". Jesus was a man of sorrows, according to Isaiah, for that very reason. He'd carried our sorrows, he bore our afflictions, and he was bruised for our iniquities. The Jesus crumpling in a heap at Lazarus's tomb was a Jesus who was wrecked by the consequences and pain that sin causes. The Jesus who sat on a donkey in the midst of a riotous crowd chanting his name and bellowing prophesies about him, was a Jesus unmoved by their desire to that day make him King. Weeping as his face flooded tears, He was emotionally moved and destroyed Jesus, as his heart saw the hard-bitten determination of unbelief, and their resulting destruction in A.D. 70.

Enough time on the front lines of mission and you'll come out feeling part firefighter scraping body parts off the road with a shovel, part combat veteran fighting for your own life and those around you, part RN administering CPR, and part cop being called to murder scenes where the blood is still fresh and the brown paper bag you brought isn't for your lunch. Being on the front lines of ministry will expose you to things that will twist up your mind, and send you reeling from the depths of depravity. You'll conduct funerals for addicts who knelt before Jesus, but lost the fight with addiction, or for a reformed gang member shot to death by police in the crossfire when the homie they're ministering to resists arrest. Nothing prepares you for the carnage of lives that have been stolen, killed, and destroyed. Although there is often more weeping in tears then there is rejoicing in the sheaves, nothing can extinguish the joy from baptizing a member of the Aryan Brotherhood next to a member of the Mexican Mafia.

I've gone to inner city neighborhoods and run church outside at the park benches serving breakfast at tables right before worship starts. I'm a missionary at heart, and I can't switch it off like a light switch. The last thing that Refuge Long Beach's neighborhood needed was a fancy logo, a big overhead projector, theater seating, and a service that says "we value expensive equipment and running a good show more than we value you". At the outset of going into that neighborhood I began to ask questions like "How do I reach Black, Hispanic, and Asian residents in this neighborhood?" The first thing that came to me was to stop running church like a white middle class cultural enclave; fake smiles, staring at the back of each other's heads, Starbucks cup in hand, funny white preacher speaking like a Hallmark card, white people playing white music vainly resembling a musakhybrid of U2 and Coldplay with no soul. No multiethnic leaders, no worship played on a mixing desk, and no talking about real life problems like Child Protective Services, late welfare checks, the police shooting your newly saved relatives in cold blood, addiction, overdose, homelessness, transgender issues, or child molestation. These are the problems an inner-city church deals with. We feed them breakfast. They feed us the real world.

For some of you, it will take some time before you even know what I'm talking about. But that will change with time and exposure as you plant out and boldly go where many fear to tread.

We set out to be a church that would become all things and changed our tune from the Sunshine Band's "Play That Funky Music White Boy" to Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On?" Some church planters haven't even thought about race issues, furthering the statistical trend in the West that the gospel tends to travel white middle class pathways. There's no money in the neighborhoods where the gospel is most needed, and therefore churches don't tend to go there.

Love is colorblind, and it never fails. People see your skin color, but hear love before an accent. Paul the Apostle was a Jewish Pharisee who braved people, cultures, and cities foreign to him. Despite it all, he committed himself to become all things to all men to win some.

From the ashes, God will begin to resurrect a fiery phoenix from divorcees, former racists, abortionists, ex-cons, and all of society's second-class citizens. People who live in No Man's Land are the kinds of people who mess your church up but make it the type of church that Jesus would actually go to. If we're going to see people the way that Jesus sees them, then we need to see them through his eyes. Have you ever noticed the way that Jesus dealt with people in gross sin? It was as if he saw the whole person. He didn't just see the woman at the well as a filthy man-eating whore. She says, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did" and implicit in that statement there is no trace of shame but relief. Instead of seeing a tart, Jesus saw the little girl with dreams and aspirations, who all her life dreamt of her future wedding day. Something happened to that little girl along the way. Here she was caught in adultery. Rather than telling her that "the fire that burns in ye loins shall reach full consummation in the fires of hell!" Jesus appears to trace the journey that led her to these harsh, cold stone pavements. Perhaps He knows about the uncle who molested her, or the neighbor who whispered unfulfilled promises as he took advantage of her body through her young and naive romantic vulnerabilities as she dreamed of someone to love her. On the other sides of fantasies of love strangled by lust, it isn't just her heart that has been broken; it is her dignity, sense of worth, and along with it, her life. Paul said, "For we no longer regard anyone from a fleshly point of view... as if Christ were pleading through us, be reconciled to God." Paul was saying that we've been given Christ's compassion, and desperation for people, as we see them through Christ's eyes.

Are you ready to open your eyes to the suffering in your own community?

Are you ready to have your eyes opened?

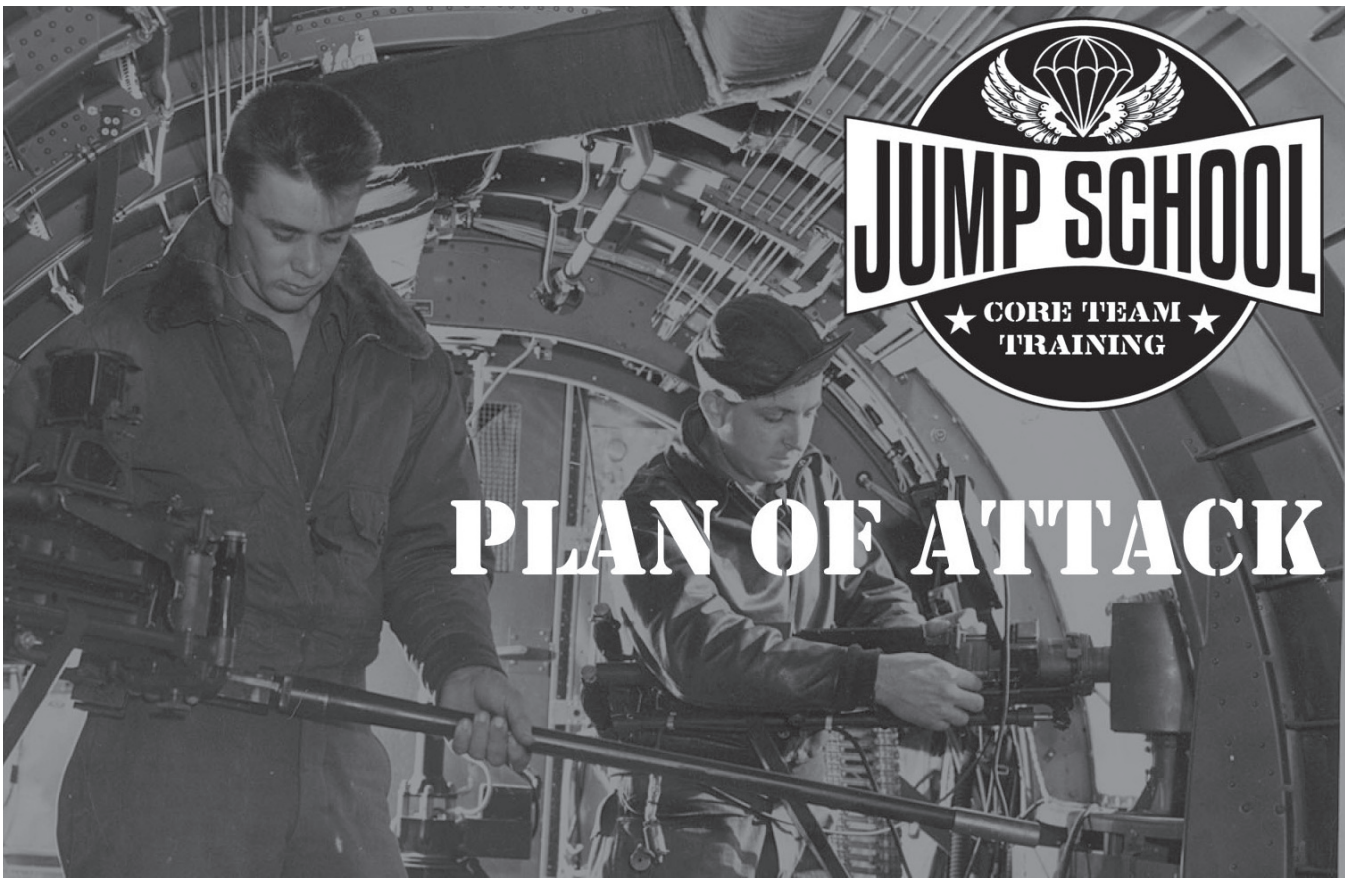
[1]Jones, Peyton. Reaching the Unreached: Becoming Raiders of the Lost Art (p. 52). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:9-10

WEEK 12 - LESSON 3:



WEEK 12 MISSIVE – PLAN OF ATTACK

"Before the battle is joined, plans are everything, but once the shooting begins, plans are worthless.

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

WHAT ARE YOU LAUNCHING?

What are you going to do? You should have answered the question early on. Why is it always the same jack-in-the-box church that pops up all the time?

Church history doesn't remember planters who just unpacked church like an Ikea prefab furniture piece in the middle of another neighborhood, like a one-size-fits-

all. It reminds me of the British colonialist observing tea time in the blistering Sahara desert complete with crumpets and cucumber sandwiches. Church history remembers the guys like Whitefield, Wesley, Moody, Lloyd-Jones, Seth Joshua, C.S. Lewis, and William Booth. It remembers the guys who saw that the gospel was failing to connect with those outside the church and did something different. They were mission focused and their zeal to connect the gospel to the lost unleashed some creative means of reaching them.

When I train church planters, I'm often shocked by the lack of creativity in order to reach the lost. Whitefield recovered open air preaching because he realized that the Kings Colliery coal miners would never darken the doors of a church. Bible in hand, and sermon in heart, Whitefield mounted a tree stump and preached the crucified Christ. When he told Wesley, the future Methodist leader was scandalized, and told George not to do it again. Seth Joshua pitched a boxing ring in the midst of a South Welsh town and advertised the fight of the century. When people turned up, Joshua announced that the devil was about to get a hiding. Souls were saved after the Spirit driven gospel preaching delivered the knockout punch.

Training core teams to plant, I've had to learn creative ways to reprogram people to do ministry in a way that doesn't completely ruin them for it. For this reason, I may take them to visit a laundromat with a notebook. We may sit and do laundry. We may listen, watch and pray. We may not do much else. We're scouting out the land in almost any interconnecting hub in the community where people from different walks of life congregate with time on their hands. We ask the question, what are people doing here? Why are they here? How are they occupying their time? What would they value? How could church be valuable to them? How would you reach this crowd if you did church here? This could apply to a coffee shop, a bar, an AA meeting, a public park, an outdoor mall. You see, I've started a church in a Starbucks, in a park in the open air, and run a mission in a gay coffee house, and have contemplated starting churches in a gas station in inner city long beach, or at a truck stop in Europe. I believe that God gives us permission to get as creative as Whitefield, Booth, and Keith Green.

AIMING FOR NOTHING

So, you think you know what you want to do. Whereas Paul laid the foundation like a wise and Master builder, most church plants make a fundamental mistake at the foundational level. They've never defined what it is they're going to do. They have more of an impression; a gut-feeling about what they're supposed to do; an itch that can't be scratched any other way. They want to church plant, but they've never been asked, who, why, when, or how.

Statistically 80 – 85% of American churches are in decline. Yet 85% of churches in America believe that evangelism should be a priority. Realistically, less than 15% of people in our churches have ever, or ever will lead somebody else to Christ. This is because most Christians aren't on mission. Your church plant therefore serves as a missional catalyst for the average Christian who comes through your doors.

If the church is on mission, then the mission needs to be hardwired into the DNA so that anybody who joins it immediately has mission spliced into their genes. According to statistics, fourteen out of fifteen churches that significantly increase do so by transfer growth. The risk of modern church planting is that your plant may "grow" and appear to have been successful without reaching a single lost person. Filling a room with crowds of Christians is not a successful church plant. Numbers doth not successful a church plant make. Defining your mission reminds you that like the Blues Brothers, you're getting the band together because you're on a mission from God. Your willing to make the mission the mandate will ensure a locked-on laser focus to your team. Whenever somebody asks, "what are we here to do?", the answer is simple: To glorify Jesus and reach the lost. Anything else gets in the way.

What are your mission directives from HQ?

What is it you and your church are here to accomplish?

Church planting is like navigating a ship through a storm. There are hurricane gale force winds that will try to blow you off course, and your mission serves as your true North. Without a solid mission mandate you'll default into the "any port in a storm is a good one" philosophy. In other words, if you don't know where you're headed, you're going to drift towards what comes naturally, or what's merely convenient. The military never sends men out without a mission objective. Neither does God. Jesus's mission mandates are repeated every time he said "For this reason I have come…" There was urgency. Jesus could have been sidetracked by so many things, as his temptation in the wilderness proves, but he "set his face like flint towards Jerusalem." Paul also had a mission mandate handed down to him at his conversion "to bring salvation to the gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind…" When Paul said, "woe unto me if I don't preach the gospel" he was exposing his missional mandate. Your church plant's mission mandate is the "must" that drives you incessantly. It is that thing that you must pursue at all costs, letting good opportunities go when they don't fulfill the purpose of your calling as a team.

A mission mandate is developed by asking what vision you've received. Every time that God calls somebody in the scripture, he gives them a vision. To the Twelve, he told them that they'd be Spirit empowered witnesses in ever increasing concentric circles spiraling outwards from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. That mission

statement comprises the who, where, how, and when. It's practical, tangible, and measurable. Moses was told he'd liberate the Israelites. Paul was told he'd open the eyes of the Gentiles. Ezekiel and Jeremiah were both told they would merely prophesy but nobody would listen. Nevertheless, their mission, should they choose to accept it, would result in the people knowing "a prophet had been among them".

Well flyboys and girls, what's God calling your team to do?

God didn't call your team in a vacuum. He called you to come together to do something practical, tangible, and measurable. There's a church plant shaped hole in your community that God Himself has called your outfit to fit. The Mission mandate will constantly serve as a rally point for you to reorganize yourself back into formation so that your troops can continue to infiltrate. It doesn't have to all be about evangelism, but if you're planting a church that isn't just going to play musical pews with believers, then you're going to need to start focusing on evangelism quite a bit. When I planted Refuge, our people knew that Sunday mornings weren't about me. Sundays weren't about them either. Some parrotted it half-heartedly, wishing it was still about them when they got worn out, but others caught a holy fever, and knew the joy that comes from lifting your eyes off of yourself, and fixing them on God and others. When the chips are down, you'll continue to come back to the church plant' s mission mandate and tenaciously cling to what God revealed to you, and at times you'll wrestle with the angel in the face of impending doom, shouting, "I won't let go until you bless me!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What's the church plant shaped hole look like in your city? (It may be easier to ask what's the God shaped hole look like and how will your church incarnate Jesus there? – Look up Ephesians 1:22 – 23)

- Your mission statement answers the question, "Why does our church plant even exist?" Why does it exist?

STARTING OFF RIGHT

Launching with the right focus is essential if your plant is going to avoid defaulting just another big, fat, gluttonous, self-indulgent church after you've grown. If you're using the New Testament apostolic model, then the solution is hard-wired into your church already. You're not wired to grow big, but to reproduce. As soon as the tender shoots begin to grow, you'll be splicing them to ready them for transplants. Outgrowing your building means that you've got to start assembling some new teams for planting outwards. Multiple services, outlying campuses, and other forms of ecclesiastical greed will make you want to vomit instead of causing you to salivate as you indulge your insatiable appetite for more. Getting your priorities right from the start involves setting a missional agenda that seeks to grow the church outward, rather than just upwards. It also details how to ensure that your team is starting by reaching the lost, rather than just attracting disillusioned Christians from other churches.

But starting out well isn't a guarantee that all will end well. It is possible to start out a champion like Gideon earning the moniker of "Baal-slayer", only to end up establishing your own form of idolatry in its place as people bow down to some sacred ephod of a sycophantic leader. If people worshipped Gideon's armor, rest assured that they will find ways to worship your success too... If you let them. The masses will flock to you and burst the fire capacity of your four walls, but at that juncture, you have a choice. Shedthe ephod like David, finding Saul's mega church ambition armor too big and cumbersome. In this outfit, there's only room for one hero (Jesus), and little squirts brave enough to opt for a sling-shot, greater mobility, guerilla tactics, the

Spirit's power, and enough confidence in the Almighty to keep running at giants.

The world has had enough of churches that are out for themselves. Young people have already made up their minds that churches are no longer about people, but about the institution. They cynically analyze the million dollar money making machine from a distance and conclude that the church is out for itself. Their number one question is "Are you for me, against me, or for yourself?" Your team's mission mandate will help your church plant safeguard that the church doesn't become about "itself" as an institution, merely adding more programs to keep the machine running and the people happy. After all, if you don't keep the people happy they'll leave, right? Any church plant worth it's salt always wants people to leave the church; either to plant more churches, or to stop distracting the rest of the congregation from the mission. You know what the difference between a church plant of 50 people and an established church of 1000 people? The answer is 950 people. How those people think is up to your team. There should be more difference between a church plant and an established church than numbers. It's an issue of DNA, not size.

CORE VALUES

Your core values are going to keep you from straying from your mission statement. Carefully examining and defining your core values is the concrete mixing stage. Before you pour a foundation of cement, you need to know what it is you're pouring. Everything subsequent to the foundation will be in relation to what you poured into the original mix. If your mega church has built for 20 years on a foundation that is cracked, then you stand to rip the whole thing down in order to build again on a solid foundation....and that's not easy. Like Mark Twain said, "Plan for your future, it's where you're going to spend the rest of your life".

This is your core team's one chance to get your priorities right and make sure that everybody is on the same page. If you don't establish the core values from the start, people will smuggle their own in. Core values are unchangeable. It means that if we're small or large, we operate the same.

Here's a couple of examples:

We value people themselves over anything they can do for us.

Only three things need to happen: 1.) We hear from God 2.) God hears from us 3.) We hear God through each other.

God gets the prime cuts, not our scraps.

Many people think that the new church plant is there to make the NEXT cool church with the boom-boom music. In our early days of Pillar, I typed up the 5 Pillars of Pillar. The pillars began with the letter C: Commitment to scripture, Community in the Spirit, Contemporary in worship, Compassionate with People, and Communion with God and others. I stressed these nonstop until they embodied the core group and their thinking, less concerned that they memorized them, if they lived them.

Most planters are eager for their church to grow to a certain size unaware that increased numbers change the dynamics. Because we met around coffee tables, our size quickly became an issue. We were constantly looking for new buildings. At each crossroad our core values gave us direction. A good friend and colleague of mine walked through the main meeting room that we used for Pillar's services. In an effort to help us maximize what we do, he scanned the perimeter and began asking questions about the placement of our worship team, angle of the room, arrangement of the chairs, and where the preacher stood. After thinking a moment he said, "I'd bet you could three times as many people in here if you eliminated these coffee table and chair set up, and set up rows. You could turn the whole room to that far corner and get even more people in."

After noticing my awkward silence, he smiled and said, "That is the goal, right? To get as many people in as you can?"

Without missing a beat, I said, "No. That's never been our goal, and it never will be as long as I'm here". From the beginning we'd determined that when we hit room capacity we'd break off another church planting team. Before I'd left, we broke off two church plants.

GETTING YOUR PRIORITIES RIGHT

Paul said that he laid the foundation like a wise and master builder. He knew what he was on about. He stepped back and said, I knew what I was doing. It started with the right priorities. The first thing that he did was lay down the foundation of Christ.

That's the most important thing. What foundation are you laying? It'd better be Christ. Everything that you do better point people somehow away from yourself and towards Jesus. When the addict is trying to get off drugs, you'd better point him to somebody who can set him free. When the guy's marriage is falling apart because he's been caught yet again on pornography, you'd better get him to Jesus. When a woman has been sexually abused, raped, and degraded as she's trying to escape the life of a crack whore, you'd better be pointing her to the one who can heal, forgive, and restore her.

The old hymn says "You can have all this world, just give me Jesus". It's funny how when you're planting a church everybody crawls out of the woodwork to try and make the church plant about something else.

YOU CAN'T TAKE YOUR PETS TO WAR

"Where there's light, there's bugs". After church planting I realize the importance of a good bug zapper. Everybody's got an angle. Everybody's got an agenda. People see a new church plant on the horizon and they think that it'll provide an ideal place to make the sun shine on their favorite pets. Even among our own core team, there was a temptation to pull the church one way or the other into our personal preferences. But because what we all wanted was for people to see Jesus, we sacrificed our personal pets. If scrambling up over the trenches and barbed wire, and running covert missions into enemy territory, then we were marked for war. As agents for the kingdom, it was serious business, and our pictures were going to end up on the "Most Wanted" pin up on the bulletin boards of hell. Therefore, we made a decision early on. We forbid people to bring their pets. I've never seen pets on the battlefield, have you? I mean, a pet terrapin on a leash would look pretty stupid while mortars shells are exploding all around me. Okay, you can't use the brits, because some of their soldiers wear skirts, and others wear tall furry hats. In the olden days, the Picts painted their bodies blue and fought naked. I can't take anyone seriously who dresses like a smurf to go into battle. Just don't get me started.

We all have our pets. Mine is preaching. When I founded Pillar, I was the first to lay down my 55-minute sermons. There were people from the more charismatic background who joined our team and were nothing but a blessing, and they had to lay down anything that would freak lost people out. We had a meeting in which we all honestly listed what we'd like to see in the church, and talked it through. In that meeting we talked about what would fly and what wouldn't in the establishment of Pillar. We all had to sacrifice some pets in that meeting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

* What should be the core values of your church plant?

* What are the pets that you need to let go?

MISSIONAL VERSUS ATTRACTIONAL

There is a debate raging in the church planting community; Attractional or Missional? Both sides are firmly entrenched in their positions, but not necessarily advancing. In mentoring church planters, I'm often asked which approach I favor. Before I answer that question, allow some brief summaries for those not familiar with the terminology.

ATTRACTIONAL:

The older generation who had their heyday in the 80s and 90s favored the attractional model. The plan was simple; rent an industrial building, renovate the sanctuary, plan a bunch of programs, hire a dynamic youth pastor, cater to families and watch the people pile in. Place the emphasis of church upon meeting needs, running programs, and excellent teaching, and the church becomes a "one stop shop" for everything people need to enhance their spiritual life. In short, the Field of

Dreams methodology applies, “If you build it, they will come”.

The emphasis in the attractional model is evangelism. Bringing crowds into a theater setting allows larger masses to hear the gospel all at once. The church is largely built upon the personality and preaching of a single individual, or a worship band with drawing power. Rick Warren’s book The Purpose Driven Church sought to deal with the weaknesses inherent in the system, integrating church consumers into serving participants.

MISSIONAL:

The younger, hipster generation wrinkles their noses at all things attractional, and many see the mega church as the embodiment of all that’s wrong with church. It’s not just hipsters either. After many years of ministry, middle aged Pastors are increasingly favoring small, tight knit groups and going on mission together. They meet in homes and “do life together”, i.e. – preparing and eating meals together, fellowship while shopping for groceries, and inhabit the community in third spaces together. There is often facilitated discussions, and all believers are able to use their gifts. In short, “quality not quantity” is the measure of success.

The emphasis in missional models is discipleship and mission. Allowing people to participate in a meeting allows them to share their struggles and use their gifts, consequently fostering deep spiritual growth through allowing them to minister. The weakness inherent in the system is that many have settled for “home groups” and called them missional communities. A missional church however is more about transforming every believer’s understanding that they are a missionary, rather than hosting house groups. For example, a missional community may target the local school, send their kids to that school, serve the school on the PTA, partner with it, and form relationships with teachers, staff, and families. Community infiltration is the name of the game, and he who builds relationships with outsiders, wins.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Each church planter is seemingly faced with a choice as to what path they will take, deeming one path as the way of the Jedi, and the other as the dark path that must never be ventured down, lest it forever dominate their destiny. However, those that watched the prequels know that only Sith deal in absolutes. The difficulty with glorifying one model at the expense of demonizing the other is that the Spirit may be working through both. The Spirit blows like the wind after all, as He does as he pleases. Like the hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, he’s tricksy that way.

From the 1st Century onwards, Church history is packed with examples both missional and attractional. Those that have gone before us seemingly utilized both approaches as they followed their call to proclaim the gospel and expand the borders of the Kingdom of God. For example, Charles Spurgeon, a favorite among many missional community leaders was so attractional that he had to ask his congregation to limit their attendance to the Metropolitan tabernacle to 3 out of 4 Sundays so that the massive crowds in London could be accommodated. There was even a special ferry crossing the Thames on Sundays whose conductor would yell, "Over the water to hear Charlie!".

If that's not attractional, nothing is.

Whitefield and Wesley used a combined approach of the missional and attractional models. In the fields, they attracted crowds of thousands, broadening the Methodist movement. Wesley recognized the need to gather the converts into house groups where discipleship would be fostered and the "Experience Meeting" was born. These groups, known as "Societies" became future church plants after Wesley and Whitefield rode away on their horses and into the sunset.

Even Paul the apostle strategically used the attractional model when he visited the synagogues. He repeatedly spoke in the synagogues, knowing that it'd create a riot, bringing crowds that he could preach to. In Jerusalem, they rode the middle line between the two extremes by meeting publicly in the temple courts, and from house to house in smaller groups. What about Jesus? Crowds of plus 5000 followed him, and at Passover he did many miracles in Jerusalem so that his fame spread. Nonetheless, these things didn't thrill him, and the gospels testify to his favoring the smaller, more intimate settings.

In fact, the first thing that the Holy Spirit did when He fell at Pentecost was attractional in nature. He stirred up tongues of fire over the heads of the apostles, gave them supernatural abilities to be walking talking Rosetta stones, and filled them with so much joy, they appeared drunk.

And this drew a crowd…

And a massive crowd was just what the Doctor ordered. Peter rocked the mic with the gospel and 3000 were saved that day like a primitive Billy Graham crusade. Although it'd be unpopular today to state that you kicked off at the tee line with a massive outreach, or crusade, that's how it happened back in the 1stCentury.

The attractional stroke of the Spirit falling at Pentecost was the master plan of Jesus getting down to business in Jerusalem. From that day on, the church went missional

as evidenced by Acts 2:42, but here's the kicker; they didn't cease being attractional. Acts 2:46 encapsulates the bilateral attractional and missional movement of the early church "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes". They continued to meet in the public spaces of the temple in massive crowds on a daily basis, and broke up to "do life together" in homes. You could say that the miracles that Peter did were attractional in that they drew massive crowds to the frustration of the Sanhedrin.

If balance to the force was good enough for Jesus, Paul, Whitefield, and Spurgeon, then the question is "Why choose?".

Should the attractional and missional models be locked in a head to head battle to the finish like two immortals from the Highlander series. Who said "There can be only one" anyways? Why not use a both/and approach as opposed to an either/or? Hugh Halter rightly points out in his book that the church is most effective when it is Gathered And Scattered. Like the current political battle, people are often mistakenly forced to choose between two bad options without realizing that there may be a third, and better alternative. When forced into a false antithesis, we often sacrifice the best properties of the model we don't like, and close our eyes to the weaknesses of the one we favor.

I can imagine that once upon a time there were two types of people. There were those who ate jam sandwiches, and those who dug on peanut butter sandwiches. Then, somebody had a disgusting idea. Somebody came along who wanted it all; somebody who'd had enough of being forced to choose between the two false choices. Some genius solved the dilemma by combining two differently slathered pieces of bread and created a masterpiece. I'm asking that you let the other side's peanut butter mix with your chocolate for a missional Reeses!

In 2008 I had the opportunity of listening to a European church planting leader. He was speaking to a small gathering of planters from the Acts29 and New Breed networks. What he said stunned us all. After nearly 30 years pioneering a missional community movement in England, he confessed that they had missed. At that time they were a network of house churches spread throughout Sheffield at roughly 1000 people strong. They would start new missional communities whenever the last one started reached 20 people, and the resulting growth was exponential. This leader confessed the realization that there were still swaths of people who'd never be reached simply because they'd never feel comfortable entering a stranger's home. As a missionary to his own culture, the leader had recognized a cultural barrier to the gospel and sought to leap the hurdle.

How?

You guessed it…

They started meeting in a larger gathering once a month. It was evangelistic in nature and intended to serve as a catchment for those untouched by the missional community model. For many the church had a great living room, but no front door. These larger gatherings served as the front porch to the church allowing many more to cross the threshold and step into the living room of the church. Like Paul, Timmis became all things to all men, in order to win some.

Whatever model the Spirit leads you in, it's important to remain humble, and open to what God might be doing elsewhere…it's something to do with losing babies when throwing out dirty bath water.

However you go at it, go hard, and go with the warcry of the 101stAirborne, "Let's make 'em holler!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- In what ways could your church plant be missional?

- In what ways could your church plant be attractional?

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

Matthew 7:24-25

WEEK 13 - LESSON 4:



WEEK 13 - JUMP DAY: THE LAUNCH

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

2nd Lt. George Rice: Looks like you guys are going to be surrounded.

Richard Winters: We're paratroopers, Lieutenant. We're supposed to be surrounded.

- Band of Brothers

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

When you pull the rip cord from a thousand fee up in the air, you need to know a couple of things, and you need to know them quick! Otherwise, your lunch is going

to be all over the jump zone, as well as your internal organs. Telling somebody to pull the ripcord is one thing; but if you've never jumped, you start asking some suddenly relevant question. Is right a right or wrong way to pull it? Do you pull it down, the right? Or do you just pull the stupid thing as hard as you can?

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

There is a very real sense in which I should not have to mention this, but to fail to mention it would be to fail to mention the most important part of this. This is the difference between what the pagans at Mount Carmel did versus what Elijah did. The pagans made a bunch of noise and frothed with fury, and sweated with their own abilities until they wore themselves out. Many churches start that way. Not so you.

Instead, take a cue from Elijah and make sure that after you've done all the prep you can, whether cleaning your home and making a meal in a house church, or lugging gear in a public space, you realize that it's only the water-soaked wood that needs the fire from heaven to fall upon it. Therefore, every time you gather, make prayer a priority as the first thing that you do when everybody starts to show up early. Slow yourselves down, and teach your people to lean into God. When your team begins to do this, it changes the culture and outcomes and how your team responds to everything else. It truly sets the tone for whatever happens in the adventure to come.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

–Philippians 4:6

Why all this emphasis on prayer leading up to the launch? It's simple. Many churches equate their church launch with what happened at Pentecost. I'm not good at math, but Acts chapter 2 comes after chapter 1, and chapter 1 is about prayer. The lesson? You can't become an Acts chapter 2 unless you first become a chapter 1 church. Forsake prayer and you'll end up running the greatest show on earth, where God isn't in the center ring, and wants nothing to do with the circus when it comes to town.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Along these lines, you'll read church planting books that will tell you to focus on the chairs. I'm not joking. They will tell you that you must work out percentages to give a Goldilocks perception of not too full (so invite your friends) to just full enough so people don't get depressed (this crowd is juuuust riiiight…). Remember it's about the numbers and the crowd right? Please.

Any bit of leadership for impossible endeavors involves morale, but you have to teach against the American "bigger is better" approach to ministry. Paul didn't have it, Jesus didn't have it, and apparently, the Father doesn't either. All heaven breaks out when just one sinner repents, and frankly, that's the kind of mindset you want your church to have. You want their mentality to be like God's so that they're focused
on the right things. If you haven't noticed, Jesus wasn't big on religious crowds. He broke a pretty big one up in the temple…with violence and whips. He also sent home 5000 men, not counting their families. Feeding them the day before, he opened a can of "eat my flesh and drink my blood" talk on them that sent them packing. These are things that flesh and blood don't reveal to the planter. Rather, most books on the subject tell him the opposite. It's the cold hard realities of church planting, and a knowledge of the ministry of Jesus and the apostles that tells a different story. Pentecost was never repeated on the same scale. Peter never preached again to a crowd of thousands. It was power of God stuff, not the power of leaflets and advertising.

This is part of the training that your core teams needs the day before the big launch.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

I've looked at some pretty weird places to hold church. I once took my leaders to a trucker stop and they thought I was crazy. When they asked me where the childcare would go, I pointed at the ball pit over at the Burger King. One of the shepherds took me aside and talked sense into me. In Long Beach, we walked into a nightclub that had the coolest round cushion benches for us to sit at and have small groups. One problem, each one had a stripper pole in the middle. It didn't bother me, but some of my team said it was a little too close to home from where they'd been, and it would be hard not to think about naked girls swinging on them during church. Fair enough. I've talked to art galleries, public swimming pools, hotels, bars, pubs, tequila bars, and considered a whole host of other places that don't do much business on a Sunday. In Southern California, you can meet on the beach with a permit. How cool is that? You can hold church almost anywhere, but the question always has to be, is this best for the people I'm trying to reach. If you only want to do it so that you can say "I'm going to be the church that meets on the beach" then the eight of you are going to have a great time.

In the end, try to get something with storage. And if you don't have storage, get a trailer. If you can't afford a trailer, then get a truck…but wait, we've been there before.

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE

Some of you will be surprised that I would advise having a practice run. Why? Because you don't want to show up your first day and try to figure things out. This goes for missional communities, and public space churches as well as for box churches. There will be lots of things to figure out if you're going to do something outside of the box. Even in a missional community setting, you've got to try running a potluck, figure out where people will sit, and get all of the choreography out of the way. Talk over the fears, do some role play, practice the conversational flow…

When we launched out of the Starbucks, it had been an accident. We didn't expect thirty people to turn up. It was the start of something and I didn't want to be in ministry anymore. What I'd wanted to see was if somebody could lead a group of

nonbelievers in a way that would combine the core elements of Starbucks, AA and a church together. We weren't prepared for what happened as the Holy spirit began to move through our midst. Then we asked the question, if we wanted to move this whole thing to a place where we could lead worship, could we keep it the way it was? We wanted to introduce the Starbucks crowd to worship, lengthen the teaching a little, and then keep the discussion that we'd grown so fond of in our reading group. We did. It worked. In fact, on a Sunday morning, I discovered that sitting around coffee tables allowed the use of spiritual gifts, provided opportunities to practice the "one anothers", and allowed people to get real. Getting real allowed them to get help. It was a thing of beauty. For the first time in my ministry, the tail wasn't wagging the dog. Mission was driving the shape of the church I'd planted. I wasn't doing mission outside of Sundays and trying to get people to come to a "service". Sunday was the mission. We chanted the mantra endlessly "Sundays aren't for you. They're for the lost". People got it. Home groups popped up one by one, and we told our people that these meetings were for them. We introduced weekly communion, prayer times, afterglows, and more discussion. Discipleship was happening organically and we'd kept our promise that if they went on mission with us on Sunday, we'd look after them in the week. It was all going well until the mission started invading our community groups too.

People started coming to faith there too.

Oh well. Worse things could happen, and nobody complained.

I've digressed from my main point, but the choreography of running a church service with discussion poses some problems. How will you organize the chairs? We went to Ikea, bought some coffee tables and made an 8 chair around the coffee table rule. We set up 6 clusters of 8 chairs and tables. Now we had to figure out how we were going to serve the coffee and cakes during the service without disrupting things. We determined that during the song of response, after the message, we'd have people bring out a big tray with coffee and tea and cakes on it. This required a bit of planning, and organization, not to mention baking. Setting up and tearing down the sound system was a challenge. Working out where the speaker would stand, and whether there was room for the worship leader to play were all considerations.

My crew were committed to authenticity and the moving of the Holy Spirit. They were focused on people, and gospel centric. They were averse to running a show, and suspicious of anything that seemed disingenuous, but they were especially glad that I didn't throw them in the deep end on our launch day and make them figure everything out on in front of a bunch of strangers.

That was also helpful in Long Beach where we planned on cooking breakfast for 100

people right before church.

THE BIG DAY

So you're ready for the big day? No you're not. Like rushing your wife to the hospital when you get the phone call from the adoption agency, or your wife's water breaks, you're never ready.

The first thing that I can tell you about the launch day is to put it on the calendar and NEVER CHANGE IT. Unless you commit to that principle, you're going to find yourself changing it the closer the date approaches. And you won't feel ready. To eliminate this temptation, you need to set the date in stone and make a commitment before the Lord that this is the day, and pray your guts out.

When the day comes, you pray. You pray before the service. You pray after the service. You pray afterwards. Following the tear down of the equipment and clean up of the mess, you gather everybody together and you praise God together. You take communion, you worship acapella for one song, and you pray. Then you debrief. You celebrate the small victories…always. These small victories will sustain the morale of your group and remind them of why they were there. They will share things that happened in the small groups…I'm assuming you want to use an interactive model of church because I made it sound so awesome…they will share conversations. They will share prophetic words, or things that God has revealed to them.

The reality is that 90% of the success is just showing up. Things will go wrong. Count on it. Something will trip up. Stay calm. Put it down to the ghost in the machine, the devil in the details, or the cheap in Chinese goods. Either way, follow the rule that I use in every wedding. Laugh. Learn to laugh at yourself and your feeble efforts and keep your mind on the one thing that matters, God's glory. In the end, God's glory isn't affected one bit if your sound system breaks or your slides don't work at worship. Ever seen that happen in a concert? A good musician grabs his accoustic, makes a joke, and gets on with what everybody came for. Trust me, the nonbeliever in your midst couldn't care less about how polished your service is. He or she just wants to know God and possibly even feel Him. If that can't happen in your church plant then you've got bigger problems than the sound system…

OVER AND OUT

One thing is for certain, it belongs to man to devise many schemes, but their outcome is up to the Lord. I'm glad for that. He knows better than I that many of my stupid

ideas don't bear any fruit. Others require me to keep sowing, much like Whitefield and preaching in the open air. I'm glad he didn't stop because it "didn't work" the first time. He was confident of what God had called him to do. So should you be, but only if you've found this out. Remember, the goal is not for you to have a new flashy church that you can boast about in pastoral circles, but rather to big up Jesus. He's the one who will be sung about for ages. When you pack a room with nonbelievers from a community who are desperately searching for something and stumble upon your gathering, and you witness them trying to mouth words of praise to God for the first time, or you witness a tough guy in the back who can't stop crying during church and he can't explain to you what's happening to him, or you see a single mom who has brought her parolee son to church because she can't think of what else to do with him because nothing else has worked and he asks to talk with you after church, you remember then. You remember why you did it. Why you ever wanted to jump in the first place.

And nothing in all the world can take that from you, nor would you trade it for anything.

Here's to you soldier as you get your wings and fling yourself into the winds of the Sovereign Spirit of God in hopes that He'll catch your fall and fill your parachute.

Geronimo!

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Philippians 4:6

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- What expectations do you have for launch day?

- Be honest, what would disappoint you on launch day?

- What do you think God would be pleased with on launch day?

ACTION STEPS:

- Write a description of the perfect launch day.

- When you're finished, list out all that you would be responsible for as a team versus what God needs to do to make it happen.



MODULE 5
FIRE

WEEK 14 - LESSON 1:



WEEK 14 - PRAYER

"I am an elite trooper - a sky trooper - a shock trooper - a spearhead trooper. I blaze the way to far-flung goals - behind, before, above the foe's front line."

- The Airborne Creed

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

When you pull the rip cord from a thousand feet up in the air, you need to know a couple of things, and you need to know them quick! Otherwise, your lunch is going to be all over the jump zone, as well as your internal organs. Telling somebody to pull the ripcord is one thing; but if you've never jumped, you start asking some suddenly relevant question. Is there a right or wrong way to pull it? Do you pull it down, the right? Or do you just pull the stupid thing as hard as you can?

In this series I'll talk about some of the important things to know and do as you prepare to make your jump into your church plant!

Want to take a guess at the first thing you should?

PRAY!

First, pray. Pray hard. Pray without ceasing.

Did I say to pray?

There's no atheists in a foxhole, and even the hardest soldier learns to pray.

"Trust God but keep your powder dry" is a helpful maxim. After doing everything on your end, it's time to trust God, and by trusting him, I mean praying.

During your preparation to plant a church you will have seasons in prayer that are like the Autumn season, when fruit seems to be dropping off of the trees faster than you can harvest it. You will have winters where the ground is hard and nothing seems to be growing. Spring will produce new life,fruit, and finally you will have a ripping hot summer complete with spiritual lemonade, fireworks, and watermelon. The important thing is that you keep moving forward through the seasons, even if the one you're in isn't your favorite.

Let's just say it. You pray best and most frequently when you're scared and desperate. If you aren't both of those leading up to your launch it's because you're stupid. You're like the guy who launches himself out of the foxhole with a red bandana tied around his forehead because he's seen too many Rambo films. Except you've just read too many church planting books with tales of glory. The "If you launch it, they will come" mentality is a myth. They won't. Not the lost ones anyways. Not without Jesus stepping in to intervene and bless your puny efforts for the gospel. You sow, another waters, one may harvest, but God alone gives the increase…oh, and that's not talking about numbers. That's talking about fruit. I'm afraid that in our age of church planting drawing a crowd is the way that people measure a successful launch. Just remember planter that by the end of your first Sunday, after all that effort, expense, and exhaustion you can bank on one thing…

…you're not going to see most of those people ever again.

You should be praying that God's presence overwhelms your meeting and begins doing some soul surgery on the people that were there. Otherwise your "church" becomes an idol, or the thing of importance instead of the Lord. Personally, I've never given a rip about any church I've planted as an entity or institution. I care about the people. Although I form strong bonds with my teams, I secretly pray that they would have gone a thousand miles in a million different directions, within a

year's time. The launch isn't endgame, even though many church plants treat it as such. Praying for the work of the Holy Spirit is the most important lead up to the launch. The day of Pentecost happened after 10 days of intense prayer. Your launch should be no different. Should it? If you're desperate enough, you'll fling yourself onto God in dependence and powerlessness before your launch, or afterwards wish you had.

Desperate men pray well. Theodorus wrote about Martin Luther, "I overheard him in prayer, but, good God, with what life and spirit did he pray! It was with so much reverence as if he were speaking to God, yet with so much confidence, as if he had been speaking to his friend." (Watson – taking heaven by violence). Charles Spurgeon learned to lean on God in desperation after being thrust into Pastoral ministry at the young age of 17, one year after his conversion and quickly becoming a popular preacher of the largest church in London. Dr. Wayland Hoyt recalls praying with'I was walking with him in the woods one day just outside London and as we strolled under the shadow of summer foliage, we came upon a log lying along the path. 'come,' he said as naturally as one would say it if he were hungry and bread was put before him, 'come let us pray.' Kneeling beside the log he lifted his soul to God in the most loving yet reverent prayer.Then rising from his knees he went strolling on, talking about this and that. The prayer was no parenthesis interjected. It was something that belonged as much to the habit of his mind as breathing did to the habit of his body." Bill Hybels goes to a lake every morning for his quiet time. There he writes his prayers in a journal to God. He writes about how God moved in his life the day before. So that he can do this, he goes to bed at 10:30 PM, rain or shine.

In the mission field, you seem to be praying more "on the go" and it's not about your devotional time, but about your devotion. Wesley once wrote, "Frequently, it seems, it was not so much the preaching as the praying of the men that arrested attention. The two men might join a burial party, and in the midst of those kneeling and wailing in the traditional manner at a a graveside, pour out fervent and sympathetic prayers. It was thus that many for the first time heard of eternal life and a loving heavenly father. The missionaries were ready to pray in every place. On one occasion a priest looked out of his church door for an overdue wedding party he was expecting. To his surprise he saw them kneeling on the road outside, with Ouseley also on his knees praying an tears flowing. Long before, Augustine had once said, the Christian teacher will succeed more by piety in prayer than by gifts of oratory." (Iain H. Murray on Ousely in 'Wesley and the men who followed' p152)

I'd suggest getting alone with God together, and praying before your services. Find people who love to pray and get them together on a night of the week. Ask them to go to the mat for you, the church and the community on a weekly basis.

YOU DON'T GET TO BE GOOD AT IT

Prayer is a funny thing. I once asked my mentor how he described his prayer life? He looked at me with a raised eye brow and a smirk. "How do you describe agony?" I knew he was a man of prayer, so his answer shocked me. Over the years however, as I've been growing in prayer, I don't feel like I've gotten better at it. In fact, quite the opposite. Sometimes, prayer is me sitting for an hour in God's presence unable to stitch two thoughts together into anything coherent. At first, this bothered me, until I cracked the code. If prayer is about dependence, then sitting unable to do anything except be at the mercy of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us when we can't with groans that cannot be uttered, teaches me that I'm even more in need of him than I thought. If I can't even pray without his help, then truly Jesus's words "Apart from me you can do nothing" ring even truer in my ears! It took me years to learn this truth: prayer like evangelism, is something you don't get to be good at. If God let you be "good" at either one, you'd try to do it without Him. Of all the things that we do, these two in particular require us to be dependent upon His power, and at His mercy. Perhaps this is why we avoid both activities so much. The psychology of human beings is very predictable. We avoid most things we don't feel adept at; and if it's something we feel we shoulddo, it brings condemnation. We feel there must be something wrong with us if we don't do either well. What a crock. What a bill of goods. What a lie. Therefore, we need to embrace the truth that you don't get to be good at prayer, and it doesn't say anything other than that you need God more than you thought. If we understood that, it would cause us to draw near to Him more in both departments. Class dismissed!

THE SECRET TO PRAYER

In summary, remember this simple fact. The secret to prayer…is to pray. Like my mentor's answer about his prayer life, there is no #lifehack; no secret sauce; no biblical shortcuts we can find in the word of God. There is only the encouragement to pray. To pray without ceasing. To pray and not give up.

The secret to prayer is to keep doing it.

Even if you feel you suck at it.

Surrendering to God is a painful process, but it is a sweet process, even if bittersweet at times. There has been a struggle as I've attempted to grow in the ability to pray if I'm honest. I can remember looking for the secret angle by reading the 6 volume life's work of E.M. Bounds on prayer. It didn't help. If anything, it merely clouded the issue. It made prayer more complicated than it was. I've read books on prayer hoping it

would give me more insight. Nope. In fact, the only thing that actually has helped me is to read the words of Jesus regarding prayer.

There are a few things that Jesus said that I find helpful.

Let me extract some principles from what he said.

1, Prayer requires endurance. Luke 18:1 tells us "that Jesus told many parables telling the people that they should always pray and not give up". So again, the secret to praying is to pray and not give up. Elisha, was a man just like us, and yet he prayed. That seems to have been enough. He prayed. He didn't give up. James mentions the episode of rain. When Elisha prayed for rain, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. He kept sending his servant out however to check and make sure that he could see something. Each time, the servant came back and reported no change. Elisha didn't give up. That was the lesson. Pray and don't lose heart.

2. Prayer takes faith. You have to pray believing that God will answer you. He always answers by the way. It may be a "yes" and God grants what you ask. It may be a "no" and although it's not the answer we want, it's an answer nonetheless. Some people simply can't accept no for an answer. Finally, there's a "wait" or a "not yet". This is the hardest type of answer. We can't understand why God doesn't act like a Genie in a bottle and grant our every wish immediately with the nod of his celestial head. But God's not a genie in a bottle, and prayer isn't cashing in on your free wishes. Prayer is a dependence upon an all-wise, all-powerful God who always answers, but in his own way, at his own time. I'm personally glad that God didn't answer all of my prayers as I wanted. After 12 years of unexpected infertility, my wife and I adopted two beautiful children who are more beautiful and precious than we could have imagined. Hindsight is 20/20, and "God's providences are like Hebrew letters, that can only be read backwards". At the end of the day, had God granted my requests, my life would have taken a different turn…a wrong one. Wrong because I would have never met the two beautiful little girls who call me Daddy, and I wouldn't trade them for a child that came from my own body. Genetics and biology aren't as strong as love, and God built my family out of pure love. Those years of wanting, waiting, hurting, begging, and weeping were God's way of saying, "Wait. I have two souls that I'm preparing for you… they're yours…but you have to wait."

3. Prayer is powerful. Jesus attaches a handful of promises to prayer. If we really believed them, we'd have a hard time staying off our knees for an hour, instead of finding an hour in prayer a great accomplishment. Moody said, "Prayer is

not preparation for the work. Prayer is the work!" He knew, like all evangelists do, that whatever the preacher does, or the twists and turns the conversation takes, the Spirit is the one in charge, and prayer is the greatest factor of winning souls to Christ. Here are some of the promises that the scripture gives us regarding prayer:

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Matt 7:7-11

"And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Matt 21:22

"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. Jn 14:13-14

"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. Jn 15:16

"In that day you will not question Me about anything Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. Jn 16:23-24

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 Jn 3:22

"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. Mark 11:24

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 1 Jn 5:14

Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. Matthew 18:19

TIME TO PRAY

Therefore, when it comes to your church planting core team, it's not enough to schedule meetings that only involve studying the bible, discussing it, or even applying

it by doing various forms of outreach. You should be spending equal times in prayer to all other activities, if not more.

Consider how much the apostles met together and prayed. They prayed for ten days prior to Pentecost. They set themselves aside for "prayer and the word of God". Acts is littered with accounts of what happened out of the prayer meetings of early church leaders in Jerusalem, and Antioch.

I'd suggest a few different types of meetings:

1. A weekly prayer meeting: Prayer meetings shouldn't be boring. Most are. So when you call the church together, mix it up. Take communion there first. Let people break in spontaneously with songs of praise and adoration. Allow people to share problems, lay hands on each other, and pray for one another specifically. Allow people to read scripture, share prophecies, and speak into one another's lives. A prayer meeting that makes prayer alone the focus for the sake of doing so, misses the point of the meeting.

2. Morning prayer meetings: I can directly link some pretty significant breakthroughs in the lives of the churches I planted to seasons of morning prayer meetings. I once told the church that we were going to pray every morning at my house for six months, and the only rule was that only one other person had to turn up for me to keep doing it. I was never alone. That was a remarkable season of some pretty supernatural stuff happening.

3. Retreats: Your core team should get away and pray together. In fact, guess what? That's built into this curriculum. Surprise! Immediate application is forthcoming.

4. Afterglows: Corny, cheesy word from the 1970s, I know, but they had a Jesus movement and you didn't, so don't judge! I love the idea of allowing the church to simply fall a the feet of the triune God for a few hours every month with no other agenda but to worship and adore him. I think God's pretty crazy about it to. A little known fact about the Jesus movement is that it kicked off the night that an afterglow was taking place in Chuck Smith's house, and somebody prophesied that because of the worship that was being given as a fragrant offering, God's spirit would move in power up and down the Western seaboard in a powerful youth movement. Those poor hippies didn't stand a chance.

As a further challenge, let me quote Charles Spurgeon here:

It is possible for us to mock Jesus today by the way we live. "You have mocked him

by a feigned worship, and thus you have put the purple robe upon him. For that purple robe meant that they made him a nominal king, a king who was not in truth a king, but a mere show. Your Sunday religion, which has been forgotten in the week, has been a scepter of reed, a powerless ensign, a mere sham. You have mocked and insulted him even in your hymns and prayers, for your religion is a pretense, with no heart in it; you brought him an adoration that was no adoration, a confession that was no confession, and a prayer that was no prayer. Is it not so?"

GET READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED

All I can say about times of prayer is to be prepared for the unexpected. You may not be a boy scout, or follow the boy scout motto, but you're going to need to "be prepared" anyways if you give serious attention to prayer. God acts in response to prayer so that we remember whose power it is that accomplishes the mission. Don't be surprised if you spend time praying like the early church, that you see some of the same results as the early church. I write a bunch about this in my book *Reaching The Unreached* if you want to get more down to the nitty gritty.

We were taught that God doesn't still speak to people in dreams, even though we hear stories from the middle east. A woman who came to my church in the UK was married to a Muslim man who worked at a factory that made the rubber for rescue boats. One night he had a dream that he was drowning and that Jesus was on one of those boats reaching out ot him to save him. He wouldn't grab Jesus's hand at first because Jesus was proclaiming himself to be God and thatn the only way he could be saved was to worship him alone, and not Allah. That's the god I'm talking about. But we've been sold a bill of goods. We don't expect that stuff to happen anymore.

Individuals like Luther, Whitefield, or J. Hudson Taylor, who had the guts to take Christ at His word, get radical, and step out in His power are probably a bit too "first century" for the church today… and that's the problem. They broke the status quo and rather than rattling cages, just got out there and did what they needed to do. But each one of them, without exception, taught others to do the same. Like Jesus, they didn't send the ordained, but the average believer. The institutionalization of Christianity has consistently paralyzed the church's missional advance and bottlenecked kingdom expansion. Along the streams of church history, we can trace the wake of those who ventured to bring the church closer to the 1st century, stirred movements in their time, and still awaken something in all of us.

Personally, I'm super sick of everybody in the church trying to be an expert on culture. It's fiddling while Rome burns. We don't need more people to try and look clever, hip, and edgy. The only people that are cool to me anymore are the people who

are doing stuff. Gary Vaynerchuk sums up what I feel about this. Stop listening to my podcasts, stop reading my books. Stop going to conferences. Start doing stuff. If you're scared, find a partner who's not scared.

It's time to put the books down and ask God when it's our time. Have you been treating life like a dress rehearsal? It's time to replace boredom with adventure, partner with God on mission, and step into the slipstream of the Holy Spirit's working in the world! It's time to turn the world upside down.

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- What holds you back in prayer?

- What do you think would help you to pray on a regular basis?

ACTION STEPS:

* Commit to praying for five minutes for the next week. Use that time to focus solely on being loved by God, and made acceptable because of the cross of Christ. At the end of the week, consider bumping it up to 10 minutes. The important thing is to start to initiate the habit of a prayerful life.

- Group text your core team this week, asking them how you can pray for them. As the text comes in, pause for a few seconds and immediately lift them up in prayer.

WEEK 15 - LESSON 2:



WEEK 15 MISSIVE - SPIRITUAL WARFARE

HQ - “What’s your position soldier?”

Platoon Leader - “We’ve got the enemy to the North, to the South, East and West of our position, and we’re pretty sure they’re not going to get away from us this time, sir.”

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To not be unaware of the enemy's devices
- To embrace your weakness, and find his strength
- To switch from defensive to offensive

ASPARAGUS, CHURCH PLANTING, AND YOU

Let's just file this away into the "things we don't ever talk about" folder. We say it's real, incessant, and painful, but we don't train our people for it. If you're getting ready to come into the enemy's territory, he's waiting to meet you.

In WW2, Hitler's German forces readied themselves by erecting telephone poles called "Rommel's Asparagus" to stop low flying planes. The enemy peppered the countryside with pillboxes equipped with mounted machine guns, and strewed the beachhead with tank-stoppers, mines, and barbed wire. What will the enemy use to stop you?

It's a question worth asking, and the answer is "whatever he can". He will press your defenses until he finds a weakness. That's why Paul tells the Ephesians to suit up and put their big boy armor on. If the Ephesians walk in love, walk in the light, and walk in everything else that Paul told them in his letter, so that they radiate the light of God's glory like the temple, then rest assured, the army of darkness will come to plunder it in response.

Therefore, he tells them to make their "stand". The term stand is repeated 7 times in that short passage. He's telling them to dig in. The enemy is coming in for a blow, and they don't have the required strength, prowess, or skill to stop him. Like Rocky Balboa, they just need to stand their and take the beating until the bell dings. Sometimes standing is all you need to make you a champion, so that you can shout speckles of spit through your swollen face, "Yo Jesus…I did it!!!" But you're not alone. In fact, Paul terms standing in that armor as standing in "the armor of God" and rephrases it as "the power of HIS might".

After all, that's what armor is…borrowed strength. A suit of armor, is a second skin, worn because yours isn't strong enough to last the attack. And neither are you. But are you willing to stand?

Falling back is a form of attack. Standing, enduring, and staying put means that you stay in the fight. And that's enough…for now. You'll be maneuvering on the offense and defense before this battle is won. That's how war works. It's how church planting starts, and continues until the war is won.

When people joined my core team over the years in the churches I've planted, my welcome included a backhanded apology. "Welcome" I'd say, and quickly add, "And I'm sorry…your life is about to fall apart." In my first church plant ever, everybody's lives fell apart rather quickly. The same happened in my second. It'll happen every time I plant. Guaranteed. I don't think many people really believe in spiritual warfare

until they go on mission. That's because they've not experienced it intensely until they put their toe to the line, and cross over into enemy territory.

The military knows that it can't have a bunch of individuals running around in a squad. It needs a functioning unit, and to accomplish this, each individual needs to stop thinking of themselves as an individual and reinvent themselves as a member of a body with a specific function that acts on behalf of the squad. The first step in this identity transformation is to buzz the head of every recruit, issue identical standard issue clothing, and teach them to march in formation as a single unit. The Army requires this to instill the principle that there are no individuals in a squad. Individuals get people killed. Therefore, they have to train them to think as a unit. In the same way you have to train a church planting core team about their corporate identity.

They need to know that they're no longer christian consumers who attend church services to meet their own needs. They are no longer merely autonomous individuals. They are soldiers. They are missionaries. When Paul spoke to Timothy, he told him to reframe how he saw himself, "Endure hardship as a good soldier." They need to know that they are picking a fight with the enemy, and the second they enlist, they are in the enemy's crosshairs. Just like my congratulatorywelcome and condolences in the same breath over a handshake, every drill sergeant is aware that he's training men for death. That's why he's hard on his soldiers. I'm not hard on my team, but I know that they're about to get made into soldiers. As they head out into mission, these thorns in their flesh are going to be paving the way to greater power. Their weakness becomes exposed through thorns in the flesh, opening up a channel for Christ's power to rest upon them. Their flesh dies daily as they reckon themselves dead. They become toughened up. In short, I'm asking them to develop a war mentality.

In times past, men and women embarked on pilgrimages to places of religious worship, but in order to truly make a pilgrim, a soldier for Christ, or a missionary, one makes a reverse pilgrimage, away from centers of religious worship. It's the outward propulsion of a soldier deployed on mission, or a missionary leaving Father, Mother, brothers, sisters, that resembles Jesus leaving heaven. If you want to be Christ-like, you must be on mission. The rest of the time, we learn in the trenches, on deployment. Boot camp doesn't make a soldier, it just trains him to start thinking like one. John Bunyan echoes this:

"Who would true valor see, Let him come hither;

One here will constant be, Come wind, come weather; There's no discouragement

Shall make him once relent His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.

GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

Entering into spiritual warfare is tantamount to dropping leaflets like America did in Vietnam saying, "there is about to be an attack here. Time to move if you don't want to get napalmed" (my paraphrase). The reality is that you're picking a fight with the enemy, and poking a spiritual finger in his chest. He laughs at all of our puny efforts, but he trembles when a team of believers hoofs the pavement with praise in their hearts, prayer on their lips, and a hunger in their eyes. He's not trembling because of us. Are you kidding? He's trembling because of who is going before us, inhabiting us, and coming along behind us. Jesus was the strong man who bound the enemy, plundering his house, saving souls, and stealing his trophies as he watched powerless, unable to stop him. Jesus rides forward in the book of Revelation, riding forth conquering and to conquer. He's the victor of that vision, and it covers what was, what is, and what is to come. God will win. He will be glorified. The battle is already won.

Soldiers, when you advance into a neighborhood or community, you are bringing the presence of God there, in the same way that the Israelites marched the ark of the covenant into battle with them. If God be for us, who can be against us? Therefore, marching forward is doing battle. We don't just dig in and stand, we advance.

There are ways of advancing. Prayer. Holiness. (I know that sounds weird to some of you, but if so, you need to read my chapter on it in Reaching The Unreached: Becoming Raiders Of The Lost Art). Evangelism. Discipleship. Worship. Communion. Preaching the cross and the grace of God. Living in such a way that adorns the gospel. I could go on.

Anyone who has been engaged in kingdom advancement begins to experience a shift in ministry. It starts to become about prayer in a big way. There is a direct correlation between prayer and advancement. Prayer brings in the air support, to clear the way for the troops on the ground. Apostolic evangelist, John Wesley said "When we pray, coincidences happen. When I don't. They don't." That weren't no coincidence. Pray. Stand. Advance. That should be your battlecry, your stance, your tactic.

Everytime you return from a skirmish, wounded, humbled, a bit broken, and bleeding. You heal up. Sometimes you win. Sometimes you lose. But when you come back, hurting from failure, smarting from a tail-whuppin, you receive the healing of Jesus. Your failures get consumed as fuel to stoke the fires of your heart for his grace and mercy. Enough of that, and you begin to realize what makes you conquerors… if God is for us, nothing can be against us. Nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Creation knows it…even our enemy knows it. It's often we who take all the convincing. Once convince however, we will die for Him…just like he died for us.

With those principles firmly in place, you're undefeatable…you're more than conquerors!

In the tribes of Israel, there were 12 tribes descended from the 12 sons of Jacob. All of them received a prophecy as Jacob lay dying. They were all loved. They all were sons. But one of them, Benjamin, received this prophecy:

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
in the morning he devours the prey,
in the evening he divides the plunder."

I've often thought that would be the coolest prophecy to get if you were one of Jacob's sons. This is the type of son I want to be. Ravenous. Devouring. Dividing the plunder taken from my enemy. I want to be an animal for the gospel, like a wolf that makes the enemy run when my church coming. I can imagine that's how he felt when he saw Paul setting up in the marketplace. Think it was any coincidence that Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin?

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."
2 Corinthians 4:16-17

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS

- If a warrior fights on their knees in the Kingdom of God, how hard have you been fighting?

- What does our failure do for us? How can failure be redeemed and made useful to us?

ACTION STEPS:

Write an assignment as if you were the enemy writing to a junior officer assigned to take you down (think C.S. Lewis's The Screwtape Letters). What are the top three things that he would use to take you down? Elaborate on these in the letter. What things would the enemy try to exploit in your life to make you ineffective? Would it be pride, lust, selfishness, doubt, or something else? What things would he for sure not want you to do? Come prepared to share your letter...or at least the parts that you can share.

After you're done doing that, go to Jesus with these things. Make it into a prayer list. Remember, Peter's struggle was believing that Jesus could love him with all of his weaknesses. In his first real supernatural encounter with Jesus, Peter told him to "Depart from me Lord, I'm a wicked and sinful man" and then, when he finally failed Jesus, he was given a second chance. Jesus knew everything about him, and on that walk down the beach, told Peter to care for his lambs... Hmmmph. Guess he still has love and a use for you...

WEEK 16 - LESSON 3:



WEEK 16 MISSIVE MODULE 5

"I would rather be a heathen and believe in an outworn, heathen creed, standing on the shore of the ocean and imagining that I could hear old Neptune or old Triton blow his horn than to be a civilized Christian within whom everything has died." (William Wordsworth)

"The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell." (William Booth)

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To gain a non-weird understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- To appreciate the power required and supplied by the Trinity for those who embark on mission.
- To begin to ask for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to accompany you by filling you from within and coming upon you.

In 1937 a major catastrophe occurred as the Hindenburg disaster unfolded before film crews and news reporters who couldn't continue their commentary because of the passenger Zeppelin bursting spontaneously into flame. Herbert Morrison's infamous commentary lives on in pop culture as he sobbed into his microphone as a live spectator "Oh the humanity!" Unable to continue, he quietly sobs in the background as 97 lives are lost in less than 37 seconds.

Fire travels fast. As a firefighter of almost 4 years, I can remember the speed of a forest fire rising over the crest of a hill, forcing us to grab onto the pump with the hose reels dragging behind. Fire spreads…quickly. Remember Acts 2 when the tongues of flame appeared above the heads of the apostles? Fire was a great symbol for what was about to happen as the apostles were empowered to take the gospel forward into the pagan world. But fire has another property that I believe God was trying to communicate. Fire first consumes. Fire spreads because it has consumed all of the fuel available to it. It hungers for more. Fire will consume everything in its path until there is nothing left to consume. It will take it ALL... or it isn't fire.

Fire is an accurate picture of the nature of God. In Hebrews we are told God's jealousy makes him "a consuming fire". Fire is just another type of energy, but fire needs fuel in order to burn. Therefore, every church planter should naturally want to be good fuel for it to consume. One of the stubbornest fires to put out is when the flames are invested in old tires that have been stockpiled. That stuff just keeps on burning. We usually had to use suffocating foam to put that stuff out. I don't want to be a fuel that doesn't spread out, but constantly burns slow because it takes so long for the fire to consume it. I want God to have all of me. This is exactly what happened in the early church. Those fire toupees on the heads of the apostles were symbolic of power that was igniting within the fuel of their lives. How long has it been since a fire burned so deep in you that nobody could quench the zeal that blazed in your soul or contain it's spread? You were a fiery torch, blazing the glory of Jesus Christ, so that your witness was one of power! People walked away from you not quite sure what exactly happened to them. They'd had an encounter with the burning bush, God engulfing you in flames, yet you weren't burnt up. Only, they knew that the ground they'd just stood upon was holy. If I've lost you, then you've got some cool experiences in front of you. Trust me, you've only touched the tip of the iceberg of Christianity.

In periods of revival, God sends his fire down upon his people, empowering them so that the gospel spreads like wildfire throughout the nations. Years ago, as a college student, I read all kinds of books on revival and was so moved in my own soul that I kept looking to the church to see it happen. After receiving countless puzzled looks after trying to share my burden, I realized it wasn't going to happen in my church. I was in advanced Microbiology at the time, and so I decided to start an experiment.

Just like a cultured agar dish, I sought to see what would happen if I really went for it with God, no strings attached. My agar dish caught fire. Now that would be bad in a science class, but gets top marks in your spiritual life. I sought the Lord every morning for a couple of hours and then prayed in the afternoons for revival as I drove from Huntington Beach to Hermosa beach and back. As I drove in my old VW up the 405 freeway, I begged God to send a consuming fire that would ignite our love and passion for Jesus. I started fasting on Sundays, and setting the whole day aside to read through Lloyd-Jones's 8 volume commentary on Ephesians. I was 18 years old. In front of the fireplace of my living room, with a cup of vanilla almond tea, and the word of God the other, I started to learn how to go on a "date" with God. Just me, the Doctor, the Republic of Tea, and God. The result was that a fire was lit in the hearth of my soul that burned hotter than the fireplace I was perched in front of. My experiment worked. I sought the Spirit of God with all my heart, and he was found by me. I was filled with the spirit. I like to call it personal revival. It might not have been raging around me, but my soul wouldn't be satisfied with that excuse. In the spirit of Moses who pitched his tent away from the camp, crying desperately to God, "Show me your glory!", I wanted to see his glory so badly that I didn't care who came with me. I had gone it alone...but I didn't stay alone for long. Because fire spreads... Soon, the college group that I was a part of started getting revived, a fire spread, and people got saved, discipled, and sent. It was epic. My favorite verse at that time was Romans 12:1-2. "Therefore in full view of God's mercy, I urge you to give yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. For this is your reasonable response of worship." The grace of God had so gripped our souls that we were anxious to be fully flung upon the fire of devotion and passion in giving our lives up to Him. I'd "given myself" as a living sacrifice, and like the Old Testament so graphically portrays, fire had come from heaven and ignited the wet waterlogged timber of my soul. It burned with a supernatural fire that was hard to extinguish. This is so vital to church planting, and yet so neglected. If the apostles of the early church were told to wait until this power came from on high, then how in the heck do we expect to do anything unless the Spirit of God is consuming us? So much of ministry is done in the flesh, rather than in the Spirit, and trust me, I know the difference. I've done it both ways.

It is absolute insanity to attempt to church plant without offering yourself completely to God as a living sacrifice upon the altar, in response to the gospel. Wholly separated for that task, wholly consecrated to God, and wholly consumed by Him. You are called to be the sacrifice in this passage, and there are a few things that are true of any sacrifice. Paul has in mind here then whole burnt offering.

BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

I always marvel that I have to move back to the elementary principles like the writer

of Hebrews, when we should be talking much deeper stuff. When you read Acts 1, they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and become empowered witnesses. That's part of what prayer is when a core team comes together. We're not just asking him to work externally, we're also asking him to work internally. The river of living water will overflow in your hearts and spill out to others. Paul said "Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit." Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones pointed out that this is a command. We are responsible for yielding ourselves to Him; to His influence. Prayer after all, is a form of surrender. It's a confession of helplessness. It's the white flag of the soul. Have you realized now that church planting is the commando branch of God's army? That's why I said Wimps need not apply. You're in Philistine country now men, and you're gonna need the supernatural strength of Samson. You're gonna need to call in air support.

In being filled with the Spirit, you've got a bit of a fight ahead of you before you get to settle down into eating the fat and drinking the sweet. You're going to have to fight for every inch of ground, because to be frank with you, because the enemy you're fighting is yourself on this battleground. Therefore, the surrender is a daily, sometimes hourly affair. Prayer is the way this is the way we are conquered little by little…on our knees.

ENTERING THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Continuing Paul's drinking analogy, he says "be filled" (he uses the same word for being filled with wine as he does with the Spirit) or literally, come under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Come under his control. Let him influence you more so than somebody who is drunk is influenced by wine. We literally speak of somebody being "under the influence" when they've had too much to drink. In this case, Paul wants us to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. If I fill myself up with wine, I'll be under its influence, likewise if I fill myself up with the Spirit, I'll come under His. The founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth was once summoned to appear before Queen Victoria and receive a commendation for the countless souls he'd rescued from alcohol and ruin. Victoria asked him why he'd had such widespread success whereas many others had failed. As tears began to well in his eyes and run down his cheeks, he looked up and said humbly, "I suppose your majesty, that it is because he has all of me". Whitefield said something very similar about his time spent in prayer, which is really a time of submitting yourself upon the altar. "Early in the morning, at noonday, evening and midnight, nay, all day long, did the blessed Jesus visit and refresh my heart. Could the trees of a certain wood near stone house speak, they would tell what sweet communion I and some others enjoyed with the ever blessed God there. Sometimes, as I was walking, my soul would make such sallies as though it would go out of my body. At other time I would be so overpowered with

a sense of Gods' infinite magesty that I would be constrained to throw myself on the ground and offer my soul as a blank in his hands, to write on it what he pleased." We usually do the opposite. We fill in the check of what we want and ask for God to sign is approval on the dotted line. But Whitefield handed God a blank check with his own signature at the bottom, inviting God to do whatever he wanted. When that happens, history usually changes.

Does he have all of you?

In The Enduement of Power, Oswald J. Smith writes about a horse dealer who agreed to break in a horse purchased by a city-slicker. "That'll be fifty dollars" he says to the dude. After a week or so, the city-slicker comes back to pick up his horse. "Okay, you can have him, but you can't ride him; not like this." "Why not" says the slicker. "He's only half-broken right now. I broke his left side, if you want his right side broken, that'll be another fifty bucks". Many of us, he concludes are like half-broken horses; broken only on one side. Until what Jesus has done for us breaks us completely, we won't offer our all upon that altar of consumation. Having bought us once with his blood, we still ask him for another fifty bucks to make it all worthwhile. "In full view of God's mercy, offer your bodies..." Isn't what Jesus did for you on Calvary enough? "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life my soul, my all." So says Charles Wesley in the throes of revival fire. So say all fire-starters.

A NIGHT OF FIRE

When Blaise Pascal, the famous mathematician died, they found a piece of paper sewn into his tunic. On it was written the following: On this day, November 23, in 1654 Blaise Pascal had a dramatic encounter with God. He wrote of his experience, and sewed it into the liner of his coat. It wasn't until after his death that people learned of this and realized everywhere he went Pascal carried this experience with him. This encounter has become known as "Pascal's Night of Fire."

Here is "The Memorial":

The year of grace 1654 Monday, 23 November, feast of Saint Clement, Pope and Martyr, and of others in the Martyrology. Eve of Saint Chrysogonus, Martyr and others. From about half past ten in the evening until half past midnight. Fire! 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,' not of philosophers and scholars. Certainty, certainty, heartfelt, joy, peace. God of Jesus Christ. God of Jesus Christ. My God and your God. 'Thy God shall be my God.' The world forgotten, and everything except God. He can only be found by the ways taught in the Gospels. Greatness of the human soul. 'O righteous Father, the world had not known thee, but I have known thee.' Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. I have cut myself off from him. They have forsaken me, the fountain

of living waters. 'My God wilt thou forsake me?' Let me not be cut off from him for ever! And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. I have cut myself off from him, shunned him, denied him, crucified him. Let me never be cut off from him! He can only be kept by the ways taught in the Gospel. Sweet and total renunciation. Total submission to Jesus Christ and my director. Everlasting joy in return for one day's effort on earth. I will not forget thy word. Amen."

It all changed for George Whitefield who flung himself on his bed in desperation and cried out, "I thirst!". The Spirit flooded in that day and Whitefield was surrendered, and consumed by a holy fire. At the moment that the Holy Spirit rushed in, he laughed that it had all been so simple and cried out, "joy, joy, unspeakable! So full and big with glory!" At that moment, Whitefield became a spiritual millionaire. When he spoke, it was out of an experience of a satisfied soul, nourished from a well that sprung up within him into everlasting life. Not only that, it spilled out over the rim of the well of his heart and created streams of living water that others used to quench their thirst. That well of the Holy Spirit is wants to well up within us so deeply that you never thirst again. Whereas Whitefield was a spiritual millionaire who made other rich, yet many of us are spiritual paupers. We live on PB and J, when God has prepared prime rib with garlic mash, piping hot and waiting at the table. It's not his fault if we refuse to pull up a chair and feast, or raise the overflowing cup and drink deeply from the wells of salvation. As one man said, "perhaps we say so little because we have so little to say".

Whitefields preaching was experiential. He knew the power and influence of the Holy Spirit in his life. He preached solid stuff. Deep theology. But it was theology on fire! And that fire spread. It consumed him straight out of heaven and continued to consume all that lay before him in an unstoppable wave of flame as the great awakening swept 18th Century America. Power! John Wesley once said "Never doubt either Gods' presence, God's word, God's pity, or God's power…but whatever else you do, deal much with God. People say, 'this man has talent', and 'that man has talent', depend upon it, the great secret of usefulness is close dealing with God…walk humbly with god. Acts of self-condemnation are, next to acts of faith in Christ, the most profitable of devotional exercises. I have grown best and done best when most frequent in them."

Paul was writing to third generation Christians (that's grandkids to the original believers in Ephesus). They'd grown a bit stale and their witness was somewhat lackluster. But Paul wants them to know that there was more to Christianity than what they were experiencing. Have you ever wondered if there was something more? Billy Graham's life forever changed the day he walked into a clearing in the woods and desperately prayed, "there must be something more!". Blam! Fire! And there is more...

THE FIRE IN THE TEMPLE

The only way that Paul can communicate that to the Ephesians is to use the temple as an illustration; and he was speaking their language. They knew temples. The temple of Diana of the Ephesians was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world (according to Doctor Luke, they thought it was “great”). Therefore, Paul communicates that they are the New Testament version of the gold clad temple of Jerusalem (easily a candidate for the 8th wonder of the ancient world). So much so, that Paul gets on his knees to pray that they “would be filled with all the fulness of God”! Whew! That’s a tall order, partner! But is Paul for real? You betcha! He even says, “Now to him who can do abundantly above and beyond all that we ask, think, or even imagine...to Him be all the glory in the church now and forever!”. That’s Paul’s way of saying, “Yeah, I was serious. Don’t limit what God can do by your own experience. He’ll blow your mind apart with the reality of what we’re talking about here”. Realize that when Paul was speaking of being filled with the Spirit, he meant business. This is what is commonly called unction, and not many people believe in it anymore. Many people in ministry take Han Solo’s preference for a trusty blaster at their side, rather than trusting in some ancient, hokey religion. Yet, it is such a powerful force...those who have rejected it, continue to bore the people who sit in front of them. Not only that, they fail to witness what God can do with somebody set on fire. Bring back the days where Spurgeon, testing the acoustics in the apparently empty Surrey Gardens Music Hall, clears his throat and bellows, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”, and an elderly repairman fixing one of the folding chairs on the balcony immediately falls under conviction of the Holy Spirit and places his faith in Christ. Ahem...I thought that this was a book on church planting? Yes, it is. But the bottom line is that you’re planting a city on a hill. A Jerusalem. A temple. And the temple is not made with human hands. Rather, the church that you’re going to plant needs to be radiating the glory of God so that they see Jesus. He said that a city on a hill cannot be hidden, therefore, don’t hide your light under a bushel.

Burn brightly!

Blaze!

Flame on!

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."
Deuteronomy 4:24

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'"
Hebrews 12:29

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think that people are afraid of the Holy Spirit?

- What do you think God desires in regards to His Spirit filling His people?

ACTION STEPS:

- Write a paragraph detailing what your most powerful experience was with the Holy Spirit. After that, answer the following questions: What made it so powerful? What were the conditions that were met when you experience it? How did it draw you closer to God? What aspects of your life felt changed forever? What do you think you'd need to do to experience more of God again?

WEEK 17 - LESSON 4:



TEAM RETREAT

WEEK 17 TEAM RETREAT MODULE 5



MODULE 6
TAKING NO MAN'S LAND

WEEK 18 - LESSON 1:



WEEK 18 MISSIVE - RISK TAKING

"We are all scared, but you hid in that ditch because you believe that there's still hope that we're going to make it."

– Band of Brothers

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To gain an understanding of the link between risk and power; fear and faith.
- To push yourself to do one thing every day that scares you.

Jumping from a stage into a crowd takes faith. Flinging yourself out into the unknown means you believe God will be there to catch you. We're not talking jumping off of any temples, and tempting God to act to the tune of rock and roll suicide bravado. We're talking about the early church willing to embarked on front-line mission in the confidence that His acts through their Acts led to the book of Acts. The British Airborne Commandos' slogan is "He Who Dares Wins". It's true in modern warfare,

and its truth echoes in the advancement of the kingdom.

Few from this generation will ever understand how cool Evel Knievel was to millions during the 1970s. If you like extreme sports, you have Evel and my generation to thank for it. After every kid owned the Evel Knievel stunt cycle growing up, when we got older, we carried on his legacy. Knievel was the infamous motorcycle legend who jumped buses, cars, through rings of fire, and attempted to jump Snake River canyon. Yes. That really happened. He became a household name for no other reason than he was willing to do what nobody else thought possible and risk multiple fractures. Over his career he made 75 ramp jumps, held the world's record for jumped cars, and broke 433 bones. He admitted that he wasn't the best motorcycle rider in the world. What he'd built his entire career on was risk. He once said, "Nobody wants to see me die. They just don't want to miss it when I do." Like missionaries through the ages, Knievel flung himself into the air, convinced that the glory of it was worth the broken bones. The difference is who's glory we're talking about.

JACKED UP

Returning from a twelve year long overseas mission bender, my head struggled to process America's brave new world of smorgasbord of Burger King Christianity; Jesus your way. Knowing it's their way or the highway, many pastors sell out to it. After all, bags of cash are needed to keep the religion-as-big-business-machine running. If the beast must be fed, then spiritual leaders feel forced to cater to the crowds and give them what they want, rather than what they need. Lest you feel too sorry for them, understand that it's a symbiotic relationship. Leaders use the people to keep paying the bills, and congregations use their leaders to put on a good show, make them feel better about doing nothing in Jesus's name. The zenith is reached when football stars, and celebrities are hired to "preach", elaborate stages are built like "sets", and props costing thousands are brought in as a draw. After all, when God isn't enough, the cost of giving people incentive to come back is costly; especially when competing with other leaders who've got the same idea. Thus, the responsibility to telling the greatest story ever told was replaced by attempts to throw the greatest show on earth.

After being on the mission field with a Bible in my hands, I was too jacked up for spectator Christianity. I'd just been on the greatest adventure of my life. There would be no going back to "normal" expectations. Cutting edge to me was no longer about being cool. It was about being front line. Therefore I struggled as I stumbled the booths, past the food trucks, Jesus junk booth vendors, and hipster carnival rides being catered to Christians who wanted to be entertained. The airwaves competed betwixt the comedian, the live band on the stage, and obnoxious music blaring from the coffee house giving the conference the unintentional vibe of a three ring circus.

To my right, people were riding a miniature ferris wheel, whooping and shouting "Weeeeee!" To my left people were shooting paint ball guns filled with opaque paint at a ginormous picture of Jesus. The worst thing of all was that the intentional sensory overload was cranked up to 11 to produce an illusion that everybody was having a good time. Except that they weren't.

A lingering glance at the attendees told me that they were bored with fun. What they really craved was adventure.

The conference was just another force-feed in an endless stream at the buffet table of entertainment. Except this time, it was stamped with religion. Because Sunday mornings rotated around attracting transfer growth, people have settled for entertainment based Christianity aimed at enticing people in, and keeping them there by pumping the volume up to harder, faster music, and by offering a plethora of cheap thrills. I walked away from that conference convinced of one thing. The church has substituted adventure for fun.

The result of this type of Christianity is rooms packed with Christians who are bored of sitting in rows and staring at the back of each other's heads. The church is tired of being treated like an audience even though they can't put a finger on it. They know they're bored, they just don't why.

CHRISTIANS ARE BORED.

In 1986, U2 front man, Bono visited African shanty towns where something in his soul was awakened as a result of the experience. He penned the song "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Perhaps no song in Bono's career has been so misunderstood. Bono wrote "I believe in the kingdom come, and all the colors bleed into one. You know I believe it"

Wait for it. The chorus comes back around.

"...but I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Christians shook their heads, calling Bono an apostate. Bono calls it a gospel song with a restless spirit. That restlessness was Bono's confession that in embracing God, it raised even more questions than he'd had before he'd fallen at the feet of the cross. For Bono, believing was just the beginning of they journey. Bono knew that there was something more.

How about you? If we're honest with ourselves, and we so rarely are, would we say that we'd experienced all that God has for us? My question isn't a veiled sort of Gnosticism, but a reinforcing of what the average Christian feels in their soul.

A strong desire to live the adventure of the mission that the Holy Spirit within us has saved us to carry out. Paul expressed it when he said, "There is one thing I do... to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." That's a question of purpose. Paul desired to know his purpose, to achieve it, and to leave a lasting impact.

What is your desire? I believe that when we are saved, our desires are at their strongest. Our sense of adventure is in tact. The Spirit of God comes to live inside of us, and we thrill with His presence believing that anything is possible. But soon, somebody tamps us down, douses the fires within us, or steps on our dreams, telling us that's not how it works. So we settle. Our problem isn't that our desires after fleshly things are too strong. It's that our spiritual desires aren't stronger. According to C.S. Lewis it's that our desires aren't strong enough. In the absence of our soul's truest desires, we settle for an illicit affair, a bottle, vengeful fantasies, even though none of these things ever leaves to fulfillment. There's a raging ocean of living water inside each of us that only Jesus can still, redirecting the powerful flow of our existance. Bruce Lee said, Water can drip, and water can crash." The soul can become a submissive entity that conforms to a container, or water can flow wildly out of control, spilling everywhere. Sometimes water is at peace, and at other times it is a tempest of destructive force. When a Christian isn't doing what he or she is made for, they become restless, just sitting in rows staring at the back of each other's heads. We grow weary of being treated like an audience, because Christianity is a participatory sport, not a spectator sport. Think about it from this angle. Every believing Christian has been invaded by the Holy Spirit who's chomping at the bit to lead them on the adventure of their lives. If they're not living the adventure, and chasing the Holy Spirit's dream for their life, they can still feel the inner conflict caused by the spiritual inertia.

I can tell you one thing. Nobody wakes up in the morning and thinks, "You know, I'd like to ruin my life and create a scandal that will break my wife's heart, rip my family to shreds, and destroy my name, haunting me to the grave". In fact, they don't think about it at all. But somewhere, lurking under the surface, there's a reason. David was bored. In the season where most kings went out to war, David decided to take it easy... and he got bored. He was designed as a war machine to whoop up on Philistines and kick Amalekite butt. But when he wasn't out doing what he was made for, he ended up doing people's wives. That wasn't the type of conquest that God had mapped out for him.

I'm firmly convinced that Christians were made for the conquest of mission.

They've got all of this pent up energy. They're meant to be fighting with the armies of the host of heaven, taking enemy territory, taking captives, and taking names. If we don't use that energy to impact, it will become a destructive force. The part of them

that's made for eternal glory kicks up, kicks off, and kicks out. Christians want to live the glory of the Kingdom and see it unleashed in the lives of others around them. They don't want to be catered to. They don't want to be entertained. They don't want to be pampered with programs.

HARDWIRED FOR HARD THINGS

Our souls were hardwired for adventure. In the absence of adventure, we crave spiritual stimulation, and go looking for it in other areas that get us into trouble; an extramarital affair, shady deals, and violent encounters like those pictured in Tyler Durden's Fight Club. Bored with a life of mundanity, we vainly attempt to satiate the restlessness by substituting our adventurous calling with entertainment. Gorging nightly on a multi-media frenzy we become voyeurs living vicariously through viewing the titillating lives of fictional characters like Jack Bauer and the exploits of real life sport superstars. Like the taste buds that crave sugar, while the body craves nutrients, the deeper cry of the soul is silenced by the deafening sound of society's soul numbing idolatry of entertainment. We are constantly bombarded by virtual images of others who are living the adventure instead of living it ourselves. As a result we find ourselves unable to sit in stillness and reflect on our festering disease of dis-ease. It all amounts to thesame thing; a substitution for living the ultimate adventure that Jesus set before us in Matthew 28 when He said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."

THE SECRET SAUCE

Because the church is out of its depth in today's cultural context, it needs to reawaken the awareness of God's power in our midst. It starts with our re-engaging on the radical mission assigned to us by Jesus. The secret sauce to greater empowerment by the Holy Spirit is found by "facing a task unfinished, that brings us to our knees". Being overwhelmed by Mission Impossible is the first step to getting back onto the front lines. That is where the church always belonged anyways. Sadly however, we've let the overwhelming nature of our mission cause us to bury our heads in the sand, hoping the world and it's need for salvation will simply go away. We've replaced front line gospel workers with behind the counter spiritual cubicle clerks. Our churches have hardwired themselves to take it's best leaders out of the world, suck them into an office, and make them religious clerical office workers, or pencil pushers for Jesus. The result is that the average believer comes into contact with more people who need Jesus by noon on Monday than their Pastor will in an entire week. What's wrong with this picture?

The front lines are where the Holy Spirit promised to be, on the other side of "No

Man's Land" kicking butt, and taking names. How have we missed the crucial truth that that the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is promised in direct connection with mission? Note the link in the following passages between Jesus sending us out, and the promise of the Holy Spirit's power to accompany us as we go:

"...and I will be with you to the ends of the age." (Matt 28)

"...you will be My witnesses when you receive power from on high." (Acts 1:8b)

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit was like the wind. As his first order of business after the ascension, he tore through the upper room and lit fires in his followers that turned the world upside down.

He's powerful

Untamable.

Unpredictable.

But what if I told you that I could predict where the Holy Spirit was guaranteed to turn up? What if I told you that I could spread out a map, and stab a pushpin on areas where I knew the Spirit was raging in a spiritual tempest? Not surprisingly, it would be in the same areas where Christians are on the front lines of missions. It would be wherever Christians were venturing out of their comfort zone. He would be found at work when they go to places, or do things where they need Him, in places where they were out of His depth. The Holy Spirit seems to turn up where He's really needed. After all, why would the comforter come to people who were already comfortable? The Comforter (or Helper) is needed when we actually need help, when we step out of our comfort zones. During a prayer meeting, one of our leaders addressed the church, "We pray for more power from the Holy Spirit, but why would He pour himself on us anymore when we don't do anything?"

Perhaps the complaint that we long to experience more of God's presence could be answered with the challenge that we may not be doing anything He would actually be needed for. If our goal is to cram a room full of people then we don't really need the Holy Spirit for that. I've been to seminars where church growth barriers are discussed without even a mention of the Holy Spirit at all. I usually got up and left the room halfway through convinced that the Apostle Paul would have done the same. Even Ringling Brothers can accomplish drawing a crowd. Trying to fill seats with butts, instead of engaging in the radical front line mission we read about in the Book of Acts, is like straddling a Harley Davidson, gripping the throttle, and making "Vroom! Vroom!" noises without turning the ignition. It's cute, but there's no power. Most of

what we call “mission” doesn’t actually require God’s power, but a building. If most of our churches lost their buildings over night, they’d be forced out onto the streets first century style.

Where we always belonged.

MISSION: THE MISSING INGREDIENT

Our Sunday gatherings have treated us like an audience for so long that our leaders often use their sermon time to tell the church to stop being one. Which is it? If the goal of our leaders is to build a bigger audience, they shouldn’t be shocked that they’ve accomplished their goals. Drawing large crowds is a recipe a spectator atmosphere. Christianity was never designed to be a pastime for spectator sport but a participatory one. Besides, bored spectators make lousy missionaries.

This all changed for me when I became a Youth Pastor. I tried in vain for years to develop bored pew sitting Christian kids into engaged Christian missionaries to their own culture. Like most Christians, they sucked at reading their bibles, praying, attending church, sharing their faith, or giving their money. The dramatic change came after our first short-term mission trip. I witnessed a spiritual combustion after I loaded them all on an airplane and turned them loose on mission in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Central America.I walked through successive cars on the length of a train whistling through Hungary to check on the high school students spread throughout its carriages. Passing through the compartments, I witnessed 16 year old girls weeping together with Hungarian families as they got on their knees and came to Christ. A young man in another carriage had his Bible open on his lap, talking to a business man through a Hungarian interpreter. That train became a moving Holy of Holies. God was in the house, a nd you could feel Him. From that trip forward God’s presence and the thrill of the adventure catapulted those youths from spectators into active disciples of Jesus. No leader ever had to tell them again to read their bibles, pray, serve, or give. Prior to this experience, nobody had ever told them why they should. Now they knew why, and it had to do with fulfilling bigger purposes in their lives than just themselves. It had to do with mission, and these things were tools necessary to accomplish it. But beyond that, they hungered to do these things now, because they understood how desperately they needed to walk in the presence of God, and because they were enjoying Him, they were no longer bored. The “Christian disciplines” of reading, praying, giving and serving were never meant to be the ends themselves, but the means to an end. They were what a drum kit, power amp, microphone or bass guitar were to a band. The goal was to play a song, not to play instruments. God being glorified was the song, and it’s a tune best played on mission. Without the tuning fork

of mission, the instrument of Christianity sounds out of tune. These kids who had multiple bibles, preachers who preached exemplary sermons, and devotional guides aplenty, needed the outlet of mission to tie it all together. And they couldn't find it in church as we'd been running it.

THE POWER VACUUM

Whenever a Christian becomes caught up in mission, they enter the slipstream of the Holy Spirit. There is a power in evangelism that any Christian, at anytime can experience. God just waits for us to enter into the slipstream of how He's already working in the world. In that slipstream the Spirit works powerfully as believers we experience a jolt participating in doing what we were made for. The ignition key to the Harley turns and as it does, we experience the rev of power from the Holy Spirit. He courses through us like fuel flooding into a carburetor. It becomes as addictive as hitting the open road, and the thrill of adventure eventually replaces every other cheap thrillLike grizzled old bikers, missionaries ride to live and live to ride. Although pitied by lethargic upwardly mobile, middle class Christians, the missionaries are privileged to live the adventure, and tell all the best stories.

Have you noticed the scandal? The missionaries tell the best stories that decent Christian folk only tell in hushed whispers at Starbucks like rumors from another strange land. Sure, most missionaries may dress like nerds, but they live like spiritual Jedi. As foreign missionaries unfold the tales of their adventures, such as smuggling Bibles into China, or into Russia before the fall of Communism, those in the pew wonder why they've never experienced these wonders, but deep down they already know. They've never left the garage and taken the hog out for a spin, placing them in a position to fully open up the carburetor. They've never embraced the Force like young Skywalker and run off half-cocked to save the world from the dark side. Their biggest thrill is still rushing into Toshi Station to pick up power converters; their biggest challenge in any given day - fighting traffic or making it through the line at Starbucks without a major altercation.

I have a theory. Missionaries witness God on the move because being on mission is like having a front row seat to what God is doing. The more frontline you go, the more of the of his activity you'll experience. And it's not like seen on T.V. where the guys with whites suits and big hairdos get all the money and chicks, as the y wave their hands dramatically like Harry Potter. It is not flashy and it's never on stage. It is out there in the front line trenches where the church rarely ventures out. It is for people at the end of the line just as they are in the gospels, dejected,destitute, and desperate. Christians who are dejected, destitute, and desperate enough to break out of their frustrated boredom and meet the same conditions in the lost surrounding

them, find themselves also meeting with God Himself. After all, that's where Jesus concentrated his ministry during his three years, not in the churches, but on the streets.

In the 1980's my mentor, Welsh Pastor Peter Jeffery came back from a reformed evangelical minister's conference convicted that he wasn't doing enough to reach the lost. Personally discipled by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, he'd been a minister in Rugby, England for years seeing little fruit. He returned from that conference determined to step out in faith and evangelize. Nobody can fully explain it, but the result was that the Holy Spirit started ripping through that town so powerfully, that somebody was converted every week for two years straight. The clincher was that nobody was saved by any of the outreaches that they put on, but something had changed...God turned up andstarted working in them, around them, and in spite of them.

Conversely when the church has lost its mission, you can guarantee that it has also lost the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. They may cry out, "God, why don't you go out with our armies anymore?" The answer is, we don't go out.

As soon as your foot hits enemy occupied soil to release P.O.W.s in obedience and faith, the Holy Spirit answers the call with an air strike. It takes faith to abandon security. When a believer jettisons their security, a temporary vacuum is created. That vacuum sucks in faith like a carburetor and give mission it's power. Somehow, like jumping off the stage, hands rise up to catch you and before you know it you're crowd surfing. Isn't that the story of every biography of a man or woman powerfully used of God? Their stepping out in faith was a direct invitation to the Holy Spirit to team up on a date with adventure. As men and women of faith, they finally went radical enough to rush the stage and dive. J. Hudson Taylor said "Unless there is the element of extreme risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith."1

Embarking on scary mission endeavors that take us out of our depth; out of our comfort zones are the activities that the Holy Spirit promised to help with. The things that most people run from are the very things He runs to. Keep that in mind if you ever want to have a crash collision with Him. In other words, run towards what the rest of the church is running from and you will experience a head on collision with God Himself. That is what every hero or heroine of the faith has done throughout church history. That one mindset has made the crucial difference and filled the books we write about them with stories worth reading. More importantly, it will make your church worth planting.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."
Philippians 2:13

DISCUSSION QUESTONS:

- What random or funny fears do you have? (Fear of dolls, clowns with knives, empty pools, etc...it's time to laugh a bit).

- What scares you about mission?

ACTION STEPS:

- First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, was attributed the statement "Do one thing every day that scares you." Truth is, she didn't say it. She said something close, but here is the actual statement originally published in an essay that went viral by Mary Schmich in 1997. Here are some similar quotes by other authors
  Always do what you are afraid to do. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

  To do what you are afraid to do is to guide your life by fear. How much better not to be afraid to do what you believe in doing! — Jane Addams

  You must do the thing you think you cannot do. — Eleanor Roosevelt

  I'm supposed to do one thing every day that I want to do but I'm afraid to do. —Mark Toby

  There are plenty of things you can push yourself to do on a daily basis that probably scare you. For example, you could ask somebody how you can pray for them. You could invite a neighbor to dinner, or take the bachelor neighbors a dish. You can start discipling someone...wait, you already did that, right? Right? Make a 30 day plan outlining one risky or scary thing that you'll commit to doing daily. Make or buy a calendar, and bring it to share with the group. If enough of you commit to stepping out in faith on mission on a regular basis, there will be no stopping you.

WEEK 19 - LESSON 2:



JUMP SCHOOL CHURCH PLANTER CORE TEAM TRAINING

MISSIVES

WEEK 19

MODULE 6 – TAKING NO MAN'S LAND

LESSON 2 - OUTREACH PLANNING

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

Okay team…

You've spent months together. You've been learning the controls, finding where the pedals are. You know where the break is. You know how to accelerate. It's time to take this baby out on the road.

This is where we hand you the keys.

This is where you get sent out like Jesus sent out the 72.

And nobody is ever ready.

For this week, I've prepared a special video for you. You can watch it HERE (Insert Hyperlink).

Some things are just better said than written.

See you on the video.

WEEK 20 - LESSON 3:



JUMP SCHOOL CHURCH PLANTER CORE TEAM TRAINING

MISSIVES

WEEK 20

MODULE 6 – NO MAN'S LAND

LESSON 3 - OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

Okay, so you planned everything out. It started with a field trip.

Problem is, mission field trips usually don't come with field manuals.

You need to get your feet wet, get out there and hear what God is saying.

Now that you think you've got a plan, it's time to execute.

Once you've done that, you're not done.

In fact, this is where the learning really begins.

Just for the record, I want to tell you something really, really important.

It's something I learned about mission when I was 16 years old.

Ready for it?

Mission never goes right the first time.

Never.

I'll talk about it more on the video.

If you want to meet me on the other side, I'll talk to you there

CLICK HEREto see what nonsense I'm spouting now.

(Talk about the fear and whitefield, how you never get it right first time)

Talk about gay coffee house…

WEEK 21 - LESSON 4 :



JUMP SCHOOL CHURCH PLANTER CORE TEAM TRAINING

MISSIVES

WEEK 21

MODULE 6 – NO MAN'S LAND

LESSON 4 - OUTREACH DEBRIEF

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

Whew!

Now that you're back, two things have happened.

You're either crazy excited with what happened like the disciples were coming back with the 72, or you've had the snot beat out of you.

That's okay. The disciples had that too (Acts 4).

It's all par for the course.

Don't worry about it.

In fact, just know that this is where you get to pray more, re-evaluate, and re-engage like we already talked about.

Now that you've been there, and moved beyond theory, you're beginning to feel what happens when you engage your target community. Now you know what you lacked. You know what you need.

Here are some questions to help you through it:

What went well?
What didn't go so hot?
What would we need to tweak to make it better?
What did we learn from the valuable interactions we had with others?

Got it?

Good. Now take some time to refine your strategy.

See you in the video again!

CLICK HERE

(On this video talk about gay coffee house strategy…or pillar maybe with starbucks learning).

Or maybe even Barnes and Noble. We weren't in a place where people associated books with coffee when launching Pillar's second reading group

RALLY POINTS



WEEK 22 - LESSON 1 :



WEEK 22 MISSIVE - KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

"I can remember the first time that I was in a military parade as a soldier. A commanding officer remarked to me "Your first parade? Enjoy it today, and let it get you through the hard times, because in this life there aren't many parades."

- A Marine Corps officer who wishes to remain anonymous

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- To think bigger than just this little church
- To identify your own biggest mistakes as a team that may be lurking around the corner

So, you've received your marching orders, formed up into a squad and launched your first all out attack into enemy territory? I wish I could pat you on the back and tell you "Good job soldier! The war's over." If only it were that easy.

In the same way that the D-Day Landing in Normandy didn't win WW2, you've still got a lot of the battle ahead of you. One battle can turn the tide of a war, but successive battles must still be fought. The biggest battle ahead of you after your launch and initial success is to not lose your momentum.

Does that surprise you? Your biggest temptation when you taste initial success is to rest on your haunches and sip in the sweet savor of…not success…but not failing. You were so afraid that it was all going to blow up in your face, that you can forget to keep throwing grenades after you've blown up the first foxhole.

OUTPOSTS

Although you'll make your own mistakes, and probably draw a better bead on your own mishaps, let me share with you one of the most common mistakes that teams make. Ready for it?

They only think of the church they're currently planting. They don't hardwire for multiplication.

Second, they don't develop, disciple, and train leaders fast enough to keep pace with their multiplication. That's why over the next few weeks, we'll close out by helping your team to think through this common mistake.

The third mistake teams make is letting fear hold them back – both from their own ministry and from multiplying. Whether that's fear of the unknown or of failure, it shouldn't stop you from pushing forward. You can learn by making mistakes as you go along. The Apostle Paul made some mistakes as he planted, having to write letters or return to old territory to correct wayward congregations. He learned from that and developed leaders capable of carrying on without him.

Thomas Edison is famous for speaking positively of failure. As he was trying to develop a viable design for the lightbulb, he is reported to have said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Eventually he succeeded.

MIGHTY MEN

Just like Paul had strike teams fanning out across the Mediterranean, David had his mighty men. We too have our mighty men and women. But here's where it's easy to go wrong: many don't think of the individuals in their church as having leadership potential. Therefore, they often get overlooked, or bypassed for people with a straighter tie, better makeup or a whiter collar. Yet Jesus picked a handful of people however who nobody ever saw potential in, and hotwired them for ministry, tricking out their ride, and getting them on the road to burn rubber on mission.

The interesting thing to note is that David's mighty men started off as "worthless men" when they were introduced in 1 Samuel. They were desperate, destitute, and despised. The best ones usually are. They can't always be like Andrew and John, with a headstart in following John the Baptist before they meet Jesus. Most of them are more like Peter and Matthew, with a questionable past.

I've found that church planting is less about me planting churches and more about raising up church planters. If you trace the trajectory of the Apostle Paul's ministry, you see that it was the same with him. In fact, by the end of his ministry, it's all about reproducing himself in others, to the point that he has more than 32 named "fellow workers" that he's moved all across the map of the Mediterranean.

And that's what you're going to have to learn to do if you're going to avoid the church planting dead end, and be a part of God expanding his kingdom through a movement. The key to that will be reproducing yourself in others. To send out, you have to raise up.

BACK TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Let's go back to Sunday School and cover something that the little old ladies probably didn't tell you with their flannelgraphs. Who needs flannelgraphs when you have maps? Swindoll said that children's bibles get pictures, but adult bibles get maps. As I've gotten older I've almost come to feel that the maps are more important than a commentary on the book of Acts. Just reading the book and tracing Paul's missionary journeys is worth a degree in church planting!

Come back to Sunday School with me for a second and I promise juice and cookies, and pipe cleaner crafts. Don't worry! They're coming in a few minutes! Let's briefly analyze Paul's mission to see the failures and lessons learned from them. Over Paul's missionary journeys, he learned to improve his method of multiplication and mission. Paul didn't just plant churches, eventually he planted networks of churches.

Paul's first missionary journey was all about him planting. It was his first time, and he made some mistakes. He didn't take many missionaries with him except Barnabas and John Mark, and the latter went AWOL. So did a whole network of churches, known as the Galatians (the churches of Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium). Something wasn't working right and it had to change.

Then, after having to write the letter to the Galatians less than a year after Paul planted his first churches in Turkey. On this second missionary journey, Paul began to think seriously about people he could leave behind. Therefore, he picked people up the next time he made his rounds to the first batch of churches planted, guys like Timothy and Silas. In fact, he recruits at least 32 people to train on the road. This is the journey that shows Paul's on-the-job-training.

On his third missionary journey, Paul tries something new. Instead of training a bunch of guys on the road, he decides to set up a headquarters in the gateway city of Ephesus and train guys on a daily basis. As he does, he begins to plant out in a circle around Asia. We get "the seven churches of Asia" from this time period, with Ephesus as the hub that the other churches were planted from.

Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey – Oh, you didn't know about that? Well, scholars think there were five, but we'll stay out of that territory for now. Paul was on his way to Spain but decided to stop by Rome on his way. When he arrives, he knows over 30 people there. His strategy this time was to send people ahead. He picked the first draft A-team players from his line up and sent them to the capital of the world. Priscilla and Aquila are there. They were important in establishing Ephesus and Corinth. This time, he's sent his trainees on ahead for mission impossible while he pushes the boundaries out to the foreign reaches of Hispania.

Here, have some juice. Grab a cookie. Now, why was all of that important? To show that Paul's training had paid off. He'd not realized the importance of thinking ahead on his first missionary journey. On his second, he takes them with him, as cumbersome as that was (have you ever led a small missions team and tried to maneuver a small group of people in and out of hotels, restaurants, or public transportation?). On the third, he decides to make life easy and develops the "hub" concept of planting. By the fourth journey, they have graduated beyond him. That's the goal of every church planter.

Next time, you'll be the veterans training the rookies. You don't believe me now, but that is how kingdom expansion works. It's how the King designed it.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."
2 Timothy 2:2

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- In what way do you feel that you've failed in church planting so far? What has been the value of that failure to you personally? What has God taught you through it?

- What things are you currently beginning to realize about how you're not seeing the big picture of what God is doing right now?

ACTION STEPS:

- When we planted Refuge Long Beach, we foresaw a church plant on every square city block. When we planted in Wales, we googled a map, and identified the black spots (Places where there were no churches). How might you strategize your kingdom advancement? Make a proposal that you can present to the group of what you'd like to see by way of kingdom advancement.

WEEK 23 - LESSON 2 :



WEEK 23 MISSIVE - MULTIPLICATION

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the concept of a multiplication hub as presented in the New Testament
- Determine what kind of hub your church plant will be

"You're a lieutenant? The army must be getting desperate"

- Band of Brothers

I'm not convinced that you can truly train church planters from a distance or from a textbook. Like the apostle Paul's, face-to-face, boots on the ground, get your hands dirty kind of training is what I've always done. Paul took planters-in-training with him, and believed in the incarnational impartation of certain gifts. Therefore, in 2 Corinthians Paul said, "I long to come to you that I may impart some spiritual gift to strengthen you." Some things just can't be learned from afar, but are more caught than taught.

It's this unconscious training, or as Paul calls it "my way of life" that is injected into an incarnational training model, that is missing in training today. Ancient craftsmen, and artists required years of apprenticeships, and church planting is much the same. When Paul trained Timothy, and the others, there was a rhythm. They trained with him, got sent out, then came back to him again like the 72 returned to Jesus. Training has to take place in stages, and in a real life church planting context. I'll be honest; it concerns that me that we send planters out on their own before they've ever accompanied a seasoned veteran of church planting.

When Paul's second missionary journey took him to Thessalonica, he'd already been traveling with students who planted with him as he took the lead. In Thessalonica, he was driven outside city limits after preaching on two Sabbaths in the synagogue. Paul left, but left his "peeps" behind. From the next town over he directed his students like a wise Master would train grasshopper. During that time, his pupil ninja planters in their pupa stage got to spread their wings as they helped the Thessalonica church struggle out of its cocoon. Paul must have beamed with pride when they graduated with a baby church plant under their belts. It might just have been their final exam, tantamount to Grasshopper snatching the pebble out of the hands of the Shaolin Master at the temple. Don't know what I'm talking about? You need to check out David Carradine in Kung Fu…

Often, when we're training on the field, we don't know what we're supposed to be learning. This is why hands on mentorship is so important. In the Karate Kid, Ralph Macchio's character, Daniel starts karate training with his newfound Sensei, Mr. Miyagi, played by Pat Marita. After painting the fence, waxing the floors, and washing the cars, Daniel calls Mr. Miyagi out for breaking their deal that Miyagi would train him in karate. He complains that he's not been learning anything, except how to be a slave. Miyagi tells him he's learned plenty. "Daniel-San, not everything as it seems." Daniel starts to walk out, when Miyagi calls him back. "Show me sand floor!" "Show me paint fence". After pushing him to go faster, he attempts to hit Daniel, and Daniel is able to block his attacks effortlessly. What he practiced in the dojo became an unconscious reflex.

This is the importance of hands on training. Part of the reason that we're not training planters well today is that we load them up with theory, but never let them practice. Every time the military trains, they progress the intensity until there is eventually an exercise with live ammunition being fired. We have to practically train in the field in order to produce planters who are able to do what they talk and read about. Their ministry training should be outside the church walls, engaging on frontline mission in a way until it becomes a reflex. What we train needs to become unconsciously absorbed as they wax the fence, sand the floor, and wash the cars with us. As Samurai, Philosopher, Ronin, Miyamoto Musashi said, "You can only fight the way you practice"

EVEN TRAINERS ARE STUDENTS

Let me shift for a minute away from the military metaphors and chase the chicken of kung-fu, martial arts, and ninjas. When it comes to describing Paul's activity, you can sum it up by saying that his ministry was multiplication. Ninja Planters travel to where the gospel is needed, plant churches, raise up leadership, get the heck out of Dodge City, onto their next assignment; rinse and repeat. On average, scholars calculate that in the eleven years that Paul planted 14-24 churches leading up to Acts 28 that he could only spend 3-4 months with them on average. Imagine that.

Speed wasn't everything for Paul. He also had learned to plant well...the hard way. The danger of ninjas when they are young is that they want to go fast, but as you get older, and you recount the faces of those who didn't make it, or committed seppuku falling on their own swords by folding up their church plants, you realize that speed isn't everything. Planting safely isn't either, but you learn to balance to desire to go fast with the need to be careful.

Paul had to revisit what went wrong with John Mark and change up a bit. It may surprise you to hear that Paul was not always the ninja Master we read about. He too started out like young grasshopper, yet developed into a master trainer.

After Paul's 2nd missionary journey, he was already feeling limited by how fast he could go. Many of them died as martyrs as they went further out than ever before.

Therefore, on his 3rdmissionary journey, Paul the master planter changed how he did things. During his second missionary journey, he was clocking up the miles on the odometer, scoring frequent planter miles, but also spending significant time in jail for *"bad behavior"*. Somewhere during Paul's second missionary journey, he realized that he's spent significant time behind bars. Realizing that he'd probably not be hanging up his harmonica anytime soon, he planned for more time off the road, and in the cell. Paul's incarceration meant that he'd better clone himself, and fast, because even if he was chained, the gospel wasn't. If he could train an army of planters, then even if he was in chains, a jail cell would become strategic command HQ for the mission. For the first time since his first two missionary journeys, Paul stayed put for more than 4 months in one spot. Spending in between 2 and 3 years in Ephesus, Paul started a training hub, or dojo, in Ephesus "so that the gospel went throughout all the region of Asia".

Paul began to think about how he could train up planters fast and furious. The answer was setting up a training dojo in Ephesus.The old African proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" was true for Paul. He wanted the gospel to go further, faster so he devoted his third missionary journey to the training

up and equipping of others. To do this he opened a dojo in the Hall of Tyranus and trained more ninja ronin for two years. After that, he flung them across the map

To train faster, Paul did something he'd never done before. He camped out, and put down tent stakes in Ephesus and set up a sort of Dojo; a training center for reproducing guys on mission. If you're going to train a sedentary pastor, you do it in a church on a big staff. But if you want to train an apostle, you take him out on the road with you. Jesus, like Paul, mentored on the move. He trained by demonstrating, empowering others, and then by leaving so that they could really learn. It's time to go back into the dojo with Paul.

EPHESUS THE DOJO HUB

Ephesus was THE hub of the New Testament. It was the place to be. By the time the NT closes, it's the center for operations. Timothy is there. Mary and John are there. It's a church planting hub. We have at least two letters, and one that had been written directly to the Ephesian church itself. Plus, Jesus had some words to say to that church in Revelation. Because it was the first church plant in the churches of Asia, it was the hub, or parent church, and therefore the one that Jesus addresses first. From Ephesus, the churches were planted outwards in a geographic ring around Ephesus, spiraling outward into a wider elipse with every church plant. Each outlying church plant was planted by a team of student ninjas who raised up leaders before moving on to the next plant.

The Ephesus network is an example of chain church plants, or what Steve Timmis calls "strawberry runners". When vine plants grow, the vine stretches out and buds into a fruit, but the vine continues outward from that fruit, until it finds another patch of ground suitable, and fruits again. This is what Paul's Ephesus practicum looked like.Of note is the fact that Ephesus is another hub planted out on the wild frontiers by another hub, making it a second generation hub (credit author). Each time a hub is formed, it can form a new one. Antioch was the hub of Asia Minor, while Ephesus formed the hub of Asia. In Asia, the 7 churches churches were planted outwards from Ephesus in a spiral or ring geographically, to the outlying centers. Ephesus planted a gathering and dispersing dock for planters. They gathered to train, and dispersed to practice.

But how did Ephesus become the hub of operations?

After preaching the gospel in the synagogue at Ephesus for three months, arguing persuasively, Paul left the unresponsive Jews and "took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so

that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." Make no mistake, Paul was training those disciples to reach their community. The training that went on in the lecture hall (vs. 9) resulted in the entire province of Asia hearing the gospel (vs. 10). What exactly was the province of Asia? Glad you asked. Remember the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation? Scholars have long argued about where those churches came from, and who planted them. Look no further, because Acts 19:10 just told you. In fact, there were 8 churches planted in all, starting with Ephesus, but by the tiem that Revelation was written, the volcano in Collossae has wiped out the church there. Jesus wrote to the churches of Asia in Revelation because they belonged to the same local network or family of churches. I strongly believe that Paul trained those men and women in both the trade of tent making and church planting. It was a bi-vocational church planter training dojo, and Paul was the sensei. He trained up church planting ninjas who traveled all over the province of Asia, sent out on short-term mission trips like the 72, that Jesus had sent out before them.

Paul's tactics resemble ours to a certain extent in that he rented the hall of Tyranus and lectured daily "so that the gospel spread throughout the region." But when was the last time you saw the gospel spread through a region simply because seminarians were listening to a professor? Paul was a practitioner, and as such, he was doing a lot more than dialoguing. He was training. If he only needed the hall in the morning, then what was he doing with the afternoon evenings? I would venture that in the afternoon, there were field exercises. I believe that Paul set up his tent making booth and trained his students bivocationally, as well as how to plant. I believe that he modelled everything that he wanted to reproduce in others, and gave three long years to being the example that others should follow. Here are the examples of Paul asking others to imitate him in the New Testament:

"For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. *I urge you, then, be imitators of me.* That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, *to remind you of my ways in Christ*, as I teach them everywhere in every church." 1 Cor. 4:15-17

"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Phil 4:9

"For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 2 Thess. 3:7-9

"You, however, have followed *my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings* that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. . . ." 2 Tim. 3:10-11

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." 1 Cor. 11:1

"Brothers, join in imitating me, and fix your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." Phil. 3:17

If you do the math, Paul reproduced himself so well in others that his students planted 8 churches in 3 years or less using the Ephesus hub model. Now, if you're doing the math, you know that this is slower than his average, where he would have seen 3 to 4 churches in a year. So, he's down by 1 or 4 depending on whether he planted 3 or 4 a year. But was it really slower? It's only slower if Paul was measuring success by the number of church plants produced. Perhaps Paul wasn't going after the church plants, but after church plantersproduced. Read Acts 20:1-4 where it says "After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.3 There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews[a] as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

Where did these eight come from? Since he's spent the past three years in Ephesus, and we've never heard of them before, it's most likely that he trained these eight during his three years lecturing daily in the halls of Tyranus. In fact, he even picked up Doctor Luke there, for in verse 5 the narrative shifts from third person to a 1stperson perspective, wherein Dr. Luke is now a part of this adventure. In addition, he divided them into teams of two based on their people groups (Berean, Thessalonians, Derbeites, and Asians). The indication is that he's going to fling them to four separate places in teams of two. Paul was creating an army, and like a general, he was bent on world conquest.

By the time that we get to Romans 16, he's got multiple teams of planters who've gone to Rome before Paul had ever set foot there! This amazing fact highlights what can be accomplished when we intentionally train up church planters.Setting up a training hub or church planting dojo happens often when apostolic leaders realize that they might more effectively serve the body if by releasing others, rather than trying to do it all themselves. The number of churches would exponentially increase as the number of planters trained increased, leading to a faster rate of multiplication.

Is this what we're seeing today?

YES, BUT WHAT TYPE OF DOJO?

Don't assume that every sending church is an Ephesus hub. The word dojo means "place of the way", but there are different ways. All dojos do not train the same way, or even the train the same skill. One dojo may train karate, another aikido, judo, or samurai. Similarly, there were different types of hubs in the early church; Jerusalem, Antioch, and Ephesus were nothing alike. Some hubs were accidental hubs, while others were intentionally strategic in what they trained.

Jerusalem

In Jerusalem, the twelve settled down together. Out of those twelve apostles, only two traveled abroad, namely Peter and John, two of the inner three that Jesus poured more into. The third apostle of Jesus's inner circle, was James. Each of them eventually ended up heading up local multiplication networks at various hubs. Perhaps that's what Paul meant when he reported that these three stood out during his visit to Jerusalem, "James, Cephas, and John seemed to be pillars" when he was there early in his conversion (Gal 2:9). In the end, Peter would travel as a missionary, ending in Rome; while John traveled into an exile on Patmos, until he was freed to return to Ephesus. James however put down roots in Jerusalem. There were twelve apostles chosen to reach the twelve tribes initially, and James and the other 9 disappear into relative obscurity in Acts from Chapter 10 onwards, when Luke shifts the focus of his narrative to the gospel's spread in the gentile world. Jerusalem becomes a reluctant, yet, accidental mothership of church planting under the persecution of Saul, sending exiles northwards, converting people throughout Judea, Samaria, and eventually up to Antioch.

I've met many pastors who lead their churches a lot like the Jerusalem leadership. Despite their insular focus (the Jerusalem church was focused exclusively on the Jewish population), they want to play their part in pushing the mission beyond their own borders.[1]With a bemused smile, courdoroy pants, tweed jackets complete with leather elbow patches, they sigh like the parent of a teenager, not only convinced they're no longer cool, but that there's no point in even keeping up the charade. They give towards mission, and send others out, and empower others, despite not having a clue how to do it themselves. Jerusalem did a huge amount of good as the accidental church planting hub. Without these types of churches, the kingdom of God would not be expanding.

If you attended their church on a Sunday, you'd draw the conclusion that they were

insular, and feel sorry for them, but if you analyzed their missions budget, you'd feel sorry for those not sent out by them. There are many Jerusalem churches today who may not directly plant churches, but from out of their midst come able and willing leaders. They lend help and credibility to a new work, and occasionally give guidelines.They support church planting by sending people to help with new works as Jerusalem sent Barnabas up to Antioch when word reached them that there was a burgeoning gospel work. Conservative churches who although they aren't necessarily good at missional work themselves, send out individuals who are suited for it. Consider Jerusalem's supporting role in Antioch:

"Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers…"

And when they arrived up North, "Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words."

Antioch

Luke hikes up the dress to reveal a little of Antioch's ankle in Acts 11 and 13. Antioch was a gateway city with an open door facing West to the Mediterranean. Antioch became the jumping off point for missionary endeavors to the rest of the Gentile world. Once Paul and Barnabas cut their teeth in ministry there for a year, they agreed to be sent out by the Antioch elders. The elders funded them, and laid hands on them, releasing them. Churches that are able to release a planter, and not control them, prove that it's not just churches that plant churches. In the case of Paul and Barnabas, when they released the planter, they planted multiple churches, most of which would never have any direct relationship with Antioch, or Jerusalem. I once sat in a room in Europe with the some denominational heads intent on launching a new wave of church plants after decades of inactivity. Almost two hours into the meeting, they were still debating over who actually planted churches; churches or individuals. Before I excused myself for the evening, I stood up and said, "Gentlemen, it's getting late, and I have to get home to my wife and baby. The answer to this debate is that you're both right. Churches plant churches, and individuals plant churches. Examples of both are in the scripture. The church at Antioch released Paul and Barnabas and that act of faith lit a spark that set Europe on fire." Okay, I embellished that last statement and stole some of the imagery from the Alarm and Rogue One, but I said something to that effect.

The fact is that Antioch shifts the model from an accidental planting church, to an intentional sending church that became home base for Paul and Barnabas. The two of them return there after the first missionary journey, stock up, give a report, and head

back out again. It is also a great example of a church sending its strongest leaders out to plant, rather than just the second stringers. Flinging your best to far away places is a New Testament thing.

That said, they seem to have released missionaries like Paul and Barnabas only once. True, they released John Mark, perhaps twice, but they released Paul and Barnabas after the Spirit had expressly said to them "Set apart Paul and Barnabas to me for the work that I have called them to". Not ones to argue with a clear prophetic word, they sent Paul out, but I'm sure that they felt the loss. Some churches only plant out once, transforming them from a level 3 (insular) to a level 4 (reproducing) church plant, but still aren't intentional about repeating the process. I've met many Pastors who don't quite know what hit them after launching out a team, sending out their best, or planting another church in the next town over. Obedient in sending, they're still trying to decide if their church is worse off, or better after the experience.

Ephesus however was Paul centralizing everything he'd previously seen and learned over his first years as a missionary planter. After traveling the highways and byways, Paul opened a "place of the ways". He had enough mileage behind him to prep others for the open road. As a Ninjas Master, Paul was ready to come out of the shadows, open up a dojo, and train an army of ninjas for the gospel. Training those planters for two years resulted in this:

"All the inhabitants of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the message about the Lord."

As a result of "all the inhabitants" hearing the gospel, Luke adds other fringe benefits to having your town invaded by ninjas:

"...the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor" Acts 19:17

"...the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" Acts 19:20

Further, setting up a Dojo resulted in a couple more fringe benefits:

1. It established a local network that provided hands on training

2. It also helped form strike teams (read more about this in my book, Divine Ninjanuity)

ESTABLISHING A LOCAL NETWORK

I'd say that this experiment of Paul's paid off. That last part speaks to training a posse of ninjas.

Consider the hands-on training that Epaphras received in Paul's dojo. Originally a part of the "eight churches of Asia", alas, it was destroyed in a volcano by the time that Revelation was written, providing an awesome last chance to those who would meet the same fate as the citizens of Pompeii. Nevertheless, when the training was done in the Dojo of Tyrannus, Sensei Paul sent them out to the surrounding towns, and Collosae was on the hit list. If you've read the book of Colossians, then you know that a church was planted there. Nowhere however, are we told that it was Paul who planted it. Instead, we are told that Epaphras ministered there (Colossians 1:7).Was he sent there to plant it because it was where he was from? Or was he saved there, and trained up in the dojo before he moved on to plant in Hierapolis and Laodicea? *"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends his greetings...I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis." Colossians 4:12-13*

Did you miss it?

Colossae was not a one-hit wonder. Ninjas descended into the entire region of Asia and received the gospel as Paul's ninja strike teams planted out 6 additional churches out of Ephesus. If you trace Jesus's letters to the seven churches in Asia, one notices that He addresses them in a geographic progression in a clockwise direction. It's possible that this was the order that these churches were planted.

Paul had four networks; Galatia, Asia, Macedonia (Romans 15, he says that it was fulfilled, the region that God had given him…that's rad!!!!). Galatia was written to a group of churches. To the churches that are in Galatia. Then we see the network in Rome itself (Romans 16). Paul's letters that were written to the three different networks/circuits (Galatia, Asia Minor, and Macedonia. [2]Okay, so you want to see what it looks like in Los Angeles where I plant churches one out of the other. Refuge network, HB, LB, SP, Impact (that one died). That happens. Paul had a saying in the Dojo at Tyranus: "Churches get buried in lava sometimes." I didn't say it was a good saying.

HOW THIS HAS LOOKED IN CHURCH HISTORY

We have probably established that being a church planting one hit wonder doesn't make you an apostle. Pastors, teachers, evangelists, and prophets, can all plant a church occasionally, but a ninja planter will always an apostle, and nothing else. At

this point however, you might be tempted to mistake moving around for being a ninja ronin. Ninja planters are apostolic by definition, but it's more than travel. Travel doth not a ninja make. There are other ronins out there that are not ninjas. True, the word apostolosmeans sent one, but history tells of men like Whitefield, who put more miles on his horse's odometer than most people with cars, yet he was not an apostle. He wasn't a pastor either. He was an itinerant evangelist. As cool as Whitefield's karate was, he was no ninja. Why does he not get to don the ninja hood? He never planted a church, but focused instead on preaching the gospel to the masses like the equivalent of an 18thcentury Billy Graham.

You can be a sending apostle as long as you foster forward movement, and spawn multiplying church plants. Similarly, you can be a networking apostle, like Paul and Barnabas were during their first and second missionary journeys. Networking apostles stay at one church and serve a network of churches, strengthening them, returning to evangelize (Paul and Apollos in Corinth). Or you can be a radical church planting ninja like Titus, who was asked to plant in every major city on the isle of Crete. He was a true ninja if ever there was one, and Paul designates him with the term apostle (2 Cor 8:23). He was still a ninja.

Whitefield was not a ninja planter, because he never trained circuit riders, didn't plant any churches, and nearing his death, he bemoaned that his followers were "a rope of sand" meaning that he hadn't left any substantial structures behind him to carry the work forward. Contrast that with ninja planter John Wesley, the Bruce Lee of ninja planters, who preached the gospel, but focused more upon raising up "societies" or house churches the length and breadth of both sides of the Atlantic seaboards. Those house churches were the seedlings that sprouted into the Methodist denomination. The difference between the apostle and the evangelist is whereas the evangelist brings the lost into the church, the apostle takes the church out. The apostolic leader doesn't go alone. The apostle is always concerned to train others up. Think about Paul's ministry and the shift from what he did to the focus on raising up the next generation and passing the baton. If the Sensei dies with all of that wisdom locked away inside of him, then that mastery dies until another generation has lived and lost another generation. Thus, mentorship is the surest way to ensure that each generation can achieve mastery in time to reach their own generation.

The reason that Wesley was able to accomplish what Whitefield did not, was that he trained young men, and women as preachers. Yes, he trained young women as well… just put that in your pipe and smoke it. Training the generation coming after him is just one of the many ways in which Wesley resembled Paul, and like his missional pioneering predecessor the apostle Paul, he also established a training center. Wesley's Ephesus hub equivalent was the church that Whitefield pastored prior to going to America. When Whitefield left to evangelize, Wesley took over, but when it

outgrew capacity, Wesley had a new building built called "The New Room". The New Room, which still stands at the center of Bristol, was a four story building. The lower level held stables for the circuit riders to saddle their horses on return visits, on their pony express-like gospel ventures. Two stories took up the high roofed chapel with a double decker pulpit. It was the fourth story that is of note. In the center was a central meeting area for socializing and training, but the entire floor was rimmed by rooms that served as living quarters for the circuit riders to stay in.

The New Room was the start…but it was far from the end. You see, in London, Wesley came across an old Foundry. Not too original in names, he called it "The Foundry". But do you know what the Foundry did? A foundry was a place to melt down metal into molten ore, and to recast it. Wesley did that with young men over the next few years, hammering them into circuit riders, and training them to take the gospel far and wide on horseback. The Foundry served as a second headquarters, and even a soup kitchen when hard times befell the city of London. Like Paul, Wesley didn't stay still for long, but even a ninja has to take time to train others in the dojo. During this time, ninja planters become ninja trainers; or sending apostles.

As demonstrated by Paul's time in Ephesus, a ninja might stay put for a time, but during this tenure the serve as sending senseis, or sending apostles. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is an example of this. Commencing his ministry in Port Talbot Wales, he revived a stagnating church in the rough necked blue collar dockside community of Port Talbot in South Wales, U.K. Within a few years the church was packed beyond capacity with nearly 700 people in attendance. One Sunday, he received a visit from G. Campbell Morgan, who invited him to come and preach at Westminster Chapel and eventually succeed him at one of the most influential churches in London. Lloyd-Jones was preacher, but biographer Ian H. Murray hints that he might have been something more apostolic. Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones took the reins there, but in doing so let loose ranks of wild horses during his ministry there. He was as much a catalyst of sending others out, as he was of bringing the lost in. It's this quality that makes a ninja planter more than an evangelist, or merely a pastor. In the second volume of his enormous biography, The Fight of Faith, Murray chronicles that more ministries started out of Lloyd-Jones's ministry than out of the whole country in the fifty years beforehand!

Church history is filled with ninjas. It's hard to see them because ninjas are invisible. But you can see the impact of unbridled kingdom conquering destruction to barbed wire barriers of darkness. Men and women crossed no-man's land to reach the lost, and mobilize movements of others. William and Catherine Booth hit the darkest streets of Victorian London and raised up a generation, "an army" of front-line ninjas who wielded the long blade katanas of preachers, nunchucks of counselors, and throwing stars of recovery counselors. Everywhere they went, the gates of hell

shuddered, and retreated, and the gospel pounded Mordor like a battering ram. The church was on the advance, rather than retreat, and the "word of God grew strong".

Count Zinzendorf strolled his mansion day after day wondering if there was something more that God had called him to. One day he mounted the stairway and stopped short on the landing before a portrait of Jesus suffering on Calvary. Jacob's ladder extended from heaven into the herat of Zinzendorf, and these words blazed in his mind "This much I have done for thee, what hast thou done for me?" Soon, Zinzendorf had opened his heart God and his estate to the poor. The Count housed, and fed countless poor, teaching them about the grace of God. Revival broke out and as always happens when the Spirit of God descends, people were scattered in power to spread the gospel further. Ironically, some of these missionaries traveled on the same ship as John Wesley years later, and became the means of his salvation. Ninjas after all make ninjas.

HOW THIS LOOKS TODAY

Imagine a modern day dojo, a bi-vocational training center; a shared public space occupied multiple businesses designed to to establish a leadership pipeline for bi-vocational church planters. This modern day "Foundry" utilizes business as mission. From Cross-fit trainers who start a church in their gym, to coffee roasters who open coffee shops across America, the Foundry trains planters in the spirit of the circuit riders, or the Baptist farmers of the 1800s. Paul's network hub, re-discovered by John Wesley, could take shape, and equip this new generation to take church to the people who won't come to the church.

All of these businesses could be run in various places in the city, or they could be all in one collective space. In America, we aren't talking about what's next. We're trying to catch up. We're trying to make our old wineskins hold more wine. Problem is that they're old, tired, and cracking, and the wine is leaking out. Many of our churches have gone bust. A building that transforms the marketplace into the training ground for future church planters doesn't just shift the paradigm for what America needs now, it preps for the future. This isn't what is next in America. In Europe, I first encountered this model of church in 2003 in Bedford England. They hadn't gotten the memo about the Ephesus hub, but they already knew that their old legacy church lovingly crafted from riverstone was failing to reach the people areound them. Therefore they sold their old building, bought land, appealed to European grant money from the EU and started a multi-use community center that they "rented" from the corporation they'd set up to better the community. Like Paul, it didn't take me long to realize that if I'd stayed put long enough, this would have been endgame for me. It would be for any apostolic ninja planter. Sometimes God slows us down, and

keeps us put to help others go further, faster.

[1]Some would actually argue that the Jerusalem church was doing exactly what was necessary to reach the Jewish community in Jerusalem. Paul's arrest there seems to indicate that any move towards reaching out to the gentiles in Jerusalem would have resulted in more barriers to the gospel.

[2]The diffalso the goal wasn't to give as many plants as possible on the ground. He started thinking about health later. Whereas Wesley seemed to start thinking about it from the start.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church."

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- How has this lesson changed or challenged what you previously thought about the role of the church as a multiplication hub?

- What type of multiplication hub to you envision your church plant to be?

ACTION STEPS:

Write an exit strategy for yourself from your current church plant in the form of a story. Write it in the form of an adventure story. Describe what a 1st century model might look like for you in the 21st century, what role you see yourself playing, and how you see yourself growing. How will multiplication continue to be a part of your story so that you can end the narrative with "and they lived happily ever after"?

WEEK 24 - LESSON 3 :



WEEK 24 MISSIVE – MULTIPLICATION PIPELINE

"No good decision was ever made in a swivel chair"

- George Patton

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- Practically plan out a pipeline of leadership development
- Prepare for scalable leadership through the realistic tactical plan of discipleship

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In order to see a movement of multiplication, you need to train a generation of multiplying leaders. The Book of Judges chronicles how quickly things devolve without a leadership pipeline in place. Generation after generation had no succession of leadership. Each time a leader rose up, and became the star, he quickly faded back into obscurity, and the people followed the downward circling of the drain. Talk of pipelines are all the rage among leaders these days. Everybody claims to have one, but having one isn't enough, because pipelines are neutral. You need to make sure that your pipe isn't leading into a sewer or a cesspool. Many pipes do. A conduit is a

neutral instrument that can either lead to a good place or a bad place.

What kind of leaders is your pipeline producing? Jesus remarked that the Pharisees leadership pipeline made their trainees twice the sons of hell that they were upon graduation. To quote Roland Allen, much of our training is a systematized lesson in inactivity, consisting of theory learned in the classroom with little outside application. Therefore, we train leaders to manage religious companies, run Sunday Morning Circuses. Students bury their noses in books and listen to lectures from men who long ago quit the field of battle. Generation after generation studies past exploits that they will never have the guts to try.

Too harsh? Imagine with me what it would look like if Paul trained in your city. How would he whip the next generation into shape? Could they even handle it? As a certified grumpy old man, complete with the Quaker Oats box, I'd venture that we'd be like the generation of recruits that goes through bootcamp complaining that the drill instructor wasn't nice. The apostle Paul trained church planters by taking them with him as he planted. That means that he took planters out to the front lines, training them under a hail of bullets from enemy fire. It's easy to talk big in the bunker, but Miyamoto Musashi statement rings true "You can only fight the way you practice".

For too long the church has been running like a business, and therefore, business has been running the church. The church's driver should be mission forged from a solid Christology. We are here to finish Christ's mission on earth, and serve as ambassadors of an ever extending kingdom. I have yet to see the agendas of businessmen employed by churches with an organizational approach lining up with kingdom priorities. Therefore, we see little leadership development resulting in spiritual leaders, but being more about running an organization. "Some men's sins go clearly before them, but some men's sin trail after", and the after effects of this approach has been wreaking devastating consequences to the church for decades. We're only beginning to see the effects of the ground when people have voted with their feet, feeling that the church as a corporation does nothing for the individual. I think they're not feeling God in it anymore. Men are great at making things, even religious organizations about God, even if he doesn't seem to be there. We make up for it with a display of pomp, power, and pageantry. In the age of Instagram, snapchat, and Youtube, grassroots authenticity and interaction are where people are looking for the answer to deeper questions.

Just before he did his final jump in his air Jordan's to heaven, he emphasized that discipleship was the core of what the church was called to do until the end of the age. The resurgence of a discipleship focus gives me hope that the church might suddenly start listening to the words of Jesus. When multiplication Rockstar Ralph

Moore is asked how nearly 2400 churches resulted from his ministry, he maintains that discipleship was the secret sauce. All he's done for fifty years is disciple three people at all times, and the growth has been exponential.

WE FAILED IN LONG BEACH

It's not often that you talk about failures. I used ot watch Kung-Fu a lot as a kid. It starred David Carradine who trained in the Shaolin monastery under his master. Each time he would face a challenging circumstance, he would go back in his mind to The failure is when we really learn. It's the problems that we hit that usually necessitate change in the way that we operate. It's where the real growth is at.

Imagine if we hit level five multiplication. Where would it lead? During times of revival, the church multiplied too fast for the church to catch up. Or too fast to meet the needs of the congregation. This is what happened right after Pentecost. They immediately faced a crisis in their leadership pipeline. First, before Pentecost they had to replace Judas. They wdidn't know how to replace him except by throwing some dice and asking God to make the decision for them. After Pentecost, Peter picked "men full of faith and the holy Spirit" (Acts 6:3)

I failed in Long Beach. We didn't go fast enough with our leadership pipeline. We were palnting faster than we could replace. In one case, I planted one guy too soon. Another was a number two. And yet a third came to the realization that he should have focused on discipleship and evangelism rather than planting a church, knowing tha thte latter would simply happen as a result of the doing the former.

So how do you choose leaders to go through your leadership pipeline. I confess that in the beginning of my ministry, I was much more traditional in how I picked leaders. I waited for somebody to come forward who expressed a call. In this scenario, I would wait for them to express a desire to be a minister and then pour into them.

This isn't what Jesus did at all.

Jesus picked very unlikely people who had no religious leanings, or desires. He picked them from their fishing jobs, tax collecting booths, and then poured into them. Peter…we would never have picked him. He wouldn't have passed any assessments. He would have failed. Instead, we would have focused on Andrew…the eager bringer. My story with Refuge Long Beach, is this. It changed how I trained people through a pipeline. There was no sense of a "call" to leadership. There was a come and follow me. The leadership simply emerged when they were discipled.

Once I got this, I poured into the people right in front of me, and discipleship emerged. I maintain that whomever you disciple well will end up becoming leadership material, either as a deacon or as an elder. In fact, whenever somebody comes to faith now in Refuge Long Beach, I see them as a potential planter on a church planting team. I pour into them, or try and discover how somebody else can pour into them. I now believe that rather than looking for a certain type of "leader" personality, I should be looking at everyone as a potential leader. Approaching everyone that way says "You're worth my time". Most people jump at the chance to be discipled. People who are discipled really well are leaders.

End goal of church planting is everyone released in their gifts. You can see this when Peter addresses the crowd of 5000. He's saying, this is for you. You will do this too. The same Spirit at work in me, is at work in you now. Peter links evangelism to gifts, acts 2:42 – it's what lay people did, not leaders, Antioch is what looks like when those people are released in their gifts – able to plant effortlessly, everyone a church planter, I tell teams I won't be here long. I'm leaving.

That said, Ralph Moore, my friend and leading practitioner on multiplication movements in North America, is now up to 2400 (and something) church plants that have come directly out of his ministry. How does this happen? His secret, he simply disciples three people at a time. And he's done it for 50 years. No flash. No secrets. Just three people, and Ralph.

You can do that.

So can I.

Obviously, you can't disciple everyone at the same time. That's why it's helpful to go back to Jesus and learn from the Master. Remember, Jesus had followers in different classifications. We're told there were crowds of thousands, 500, 120, 72, 12, and 3. What about you? What relationships can you forge and form around discipleship. You see, you have a system whether you think you do or not. It just may be a bad one. You have a leadership pipeline, even if the pipe is clogged, or something is broken. To ignore it, is to stop the flow of kingdom multiplication, and expansion.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are."

Matthew 23:15

CORE TEAM QUESTIONS:

- What would happen if everyone on your core team was actively discipling people to disciple others?

- What would happen when you run out of people to disciple within your own church?

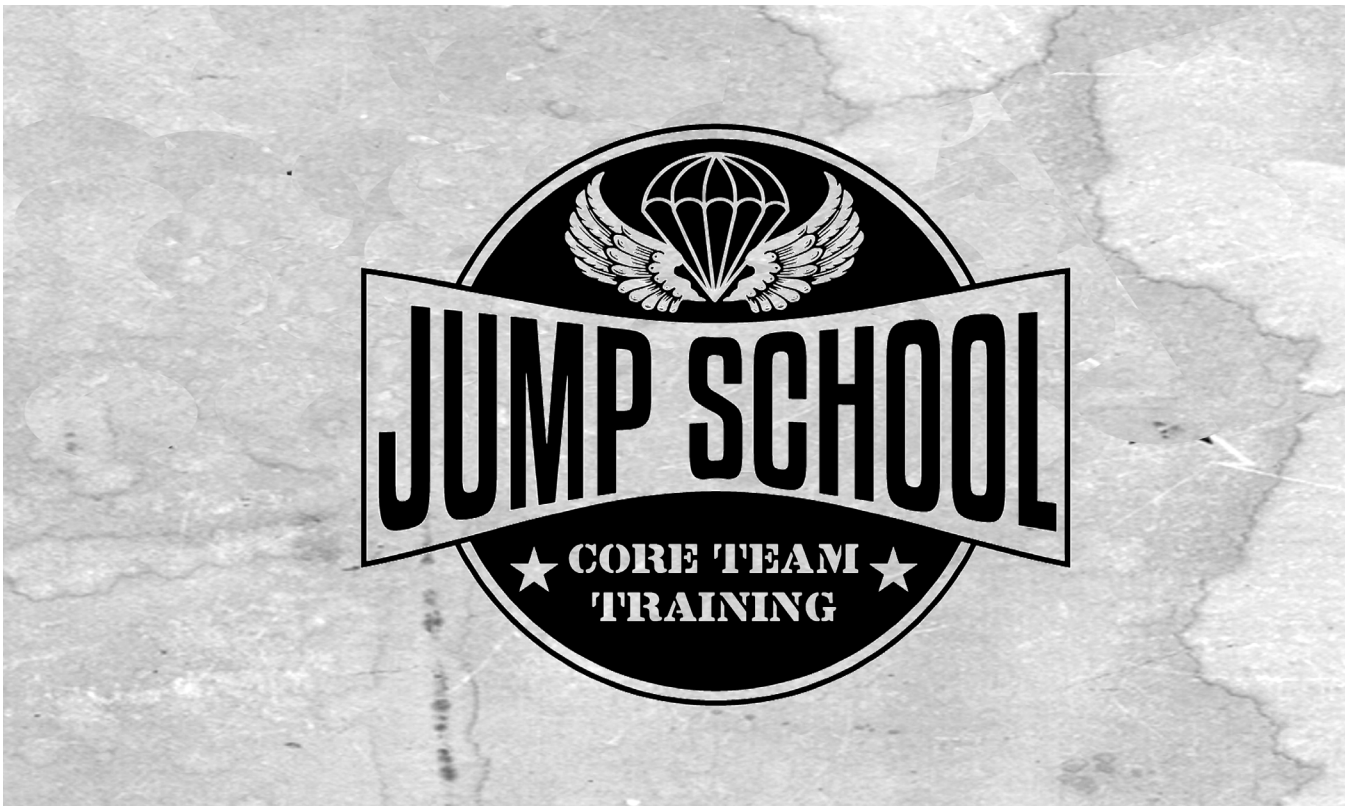
- How has this made you think about the under realized opportunities that may have been facing you for years?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Divide and conquer: Assign each person to the type of discipleship that they should be doing. For example, if someone is prophetic, develop them into a developer of people with the same gifting. What would this look like for an apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher? Be practical. Dream big. The future depends on it.


JUMP SCHOOL
CORE TEAM
TRAINING

LEADER GUIDE



Hey guys,

This is largely dependent upon people doing the assignments. It's okay if they don't do them, but you'll start to see a picture emerging with people as well. If they didn't do the assignments, they're not probably cut out for this.

Week 1

Answer the core team questions.

Have each person read their assignment "Why I want to plant a church".

Week 2

Answer the core team questions.

Have each person read their "What I want to see in my city".

Week 3

Answer the core team questions.

Ask them who they contacted for discipleship and why. Have fun with it, encourage them to share anything that was awkward about the encounter. Laugh at yourselves, and set the tone that you're all a bunch of knuckleheads like the disciples were.

At the end of the night, hand each person a large post-it note to bring back the following week.

Week 4

Answer the core team questions.

Have everyone share their Route 66 map and tell their story.

Week 5

Answer the core team questions.

Gift time! You know the rules right? Well, the reality is that they change every time, depending on who is running the game. So, here's the deal. Everyone will bring a gift. Draw numbers, which tells you the order in which people take turns picking gifts. Then, everyone gets a gift, and it's totally up to you if you want to have a gift stealing rule. I'm not touching that one!

Week 6

Answer the core team questions.

Go over their pictures, taking note of their answers. On a giant post-it, record how many of each answer you get. Record where people are weak, where they are strong, and who is excited to grow in what area.

Remind them before they leave that they'll need to buy a couple of newspapers that week. Make sure they are local papers. For example, if in southern california, buy the Los Angeles Times. Also have them buy local newspapers or as close to a local paper as you can get.

Week 7

Answer the core team questions.

TRANSITION/DIRECT TEACHING - 2 MIN

Okay, I'm guessing that some of you found that tough.

Many of you don't know how to assess the spiritual gifts of your people.

Let me demonstrate what I've done over the years to help us mobilize people in their gifts.

Many of us use people's abilities to do chores…but you need to harness the gifts to engage in effective outreach.

SELF ASSESSMENT (Part demonstration) - 20 MIN

(Take a local newspaper of a major city – 1 for ever student)

Give them 5 minutes to circle (IN BLACK INK) the needs that they see in every paper (local predicament).

Then, give them two more minutes to circle (IN RED INK) the two needs that they feel compelled to do something about.

You might say "You know, we're only a small group of people. There are hundreds if not thousands of needs in the city. One tiny band like us can't possibly meet them all. If you had to "pick a fight" with two things, two issues, or two states of brokenness in this city, what would they be?"

(Each person is given a chance to present their two and why).

Facilitator takes notes and uses the key to identify types of needs with spiritual gifts.

DIRECT TEACHING 3 MIN

Say "Now, I've listened to each of you share what you're burdened for. I've got a theory. People are burdened when they have a passion for something. And here's the secret to finding people's gifts. If you trace people's burdens, you'll find it leads to their passions. If you can trace people's passions, you'll find their gifts.

The gifts are given to meet needs. Therefore, if you want to truly meet needs, you need to harness the gifts. Paul says that the gifts glorify Jesus. Therefore in an inner city context, feeding people looks like Jesus. Jesus fed people after all.

In your context, the gifts allow the people in your community to see Jesus through the people in your church.

Week 8

Pretend that you're playing "The Dating Game"

They've answered the questions for an interview, but they've really been preparing to be the awesome candidate for the Dating Game for church planting core teams. Line up three candidates and turn your back. Let everyone get into character.

Ask the following questions:

Week 9

Answer the core team questions.

Afterwards, have them go around in a circle and focus on one person at a time. Have them debrief their exercise, and then the group will offer feedback, stating what gifts that they see in that person.

Land the plane by asking them to volunteer what would be a good choice of group mission that they could engage in?

Week 10:

Answer the core team questions.

Use a sample (Porterbrook style) map of a city, and use it to ask the following questions.

Week 11:

Answer the core team questions.

Introduce them to the personal "Sweet spot" tool.

After that, introduce them to Will Mancini's Kingdom Concept tool.

(Remind them that it's a moving target)

GROUP COACHING/PRACTICE – 20 MIN

Okay, I listened to each of you share your burdens and heard your passions, and I jotted down some notes about what I think your gifts are.

I want you to get together for 10 minutes and identify with one another what you think your gifts are as demonstrated by your answers. Then, for another 10 min pretend that you're in a small group that is trying to reach the city you just read about. How would your small group missionally engage?

Allow them to go to the post-it, with their church on the board, and identify their spiritual gifts one by one. Then, allow them to put them in the circle and come up with activities.

DEMONSTRATION – 5 MIN

Instructor goes to the board and draws the concentric circles outlined in Church Zero and shows them how strategically assessing the gifts of their people can help them to step out in the right direction on mission/outreach.

DESIGN ANALYSIS – 10 MIN

What did you like about that exercise?

What concerns would you have about conducting that with your church?

How might you improve upon this activity or make it better?

Week 12:

Answer the core team questions.

Go over peoples values, being mindful of the presence of God in their answers. Record all of them on a giant white post-it. Don't worry if you have 20, you can distill them down. There will be some that you won't use necessarily, but if you feel that

they are voicing some values that you've felt, but didn't know how to put into words, consider adding them to your list of values. Be careful that you don't have too many.

Week 13

Answer core team questions

Discuss the ideal launch assignment.

Concoct a detailed plan together of what will happen on the day.

Week 14

Answer core team questions

Discuss the effects that the group texting had on the group and your exhortation to pray continually (Philippians 4).

Spend some extra time tonight in prayer and meditation.

Use a guided prayer: walk through the Lord's prayer (Keep the prayers brief and shortened if possible to around 30 seconds or less)

Our Father - focus and meditate on his love.

Hallowed be your name - Worship him for all of his excellent qualities. Focus on who he is!

Your Kingdom Come - Your glory, your influence to spread - pray for this to happen

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven - Your agenda, your way - surrender

Give us this day our daily bread - thank him for his provision and ask for it to continue

Forgive us as we forgive - Confession time! Pay for God to strip you of your grudges and unforgiveness. This is powerful.

Deliver us from evil, and lead us not into temptation - Ask that the temptations be few, but the victories are many

For thine is the kingdom power and the glory - more surrender, more worship, more of his agenda.

Week 15

Answer the core team questions

Go over the letter with the group.

Ask the following questions. How was this exercise for you? Did you talk to Jesus about these things and if so, how did it feel talking to him about all of these things?

Time to pray again! Go to war...do the thing that he fears most...confessing your inadequacy and going to God in dependence upon him and his power.

Ask for strongholds to be broken. 2 Corinthians 10. Ephesians 6 (for your talk)