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# Pioneering Churches

The background of the right page features a large, faint graphic of a ship's steering wheel. The wheel is positioned in the upper right quadrant, with several spokes radiating from its center. Below the wheel, the silhouette of a building under construction is visible, showing a complex network of steel beams and scaffolding. The overall image is in grayscale and serves as a backdrop for the title and author information.

**Leadership**  
**Recruiting the Pioneer Team & Evangelism**  
**Becoming Members**  
**Home Group Structure**

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# Pioneering Churches

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## Leadership

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# Leadership

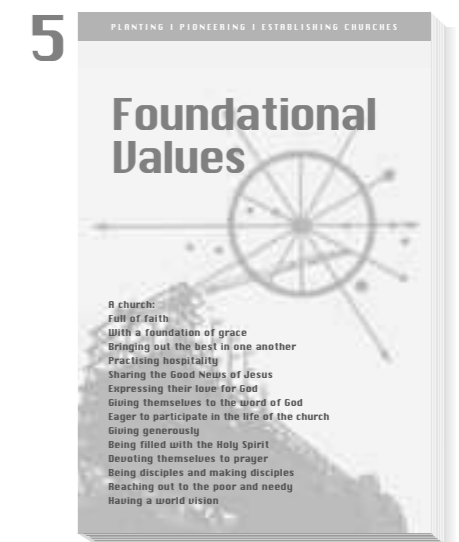
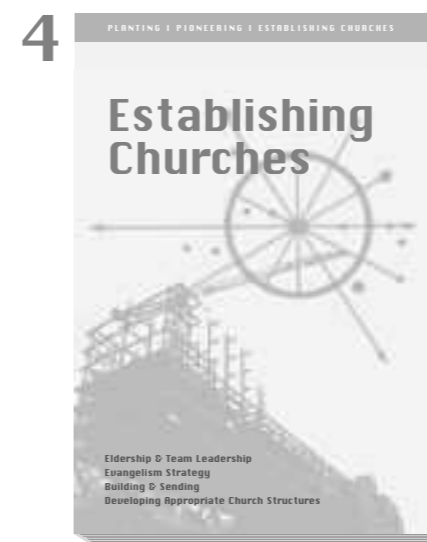
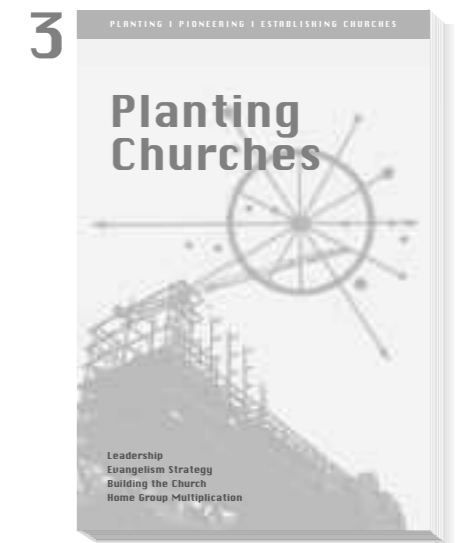
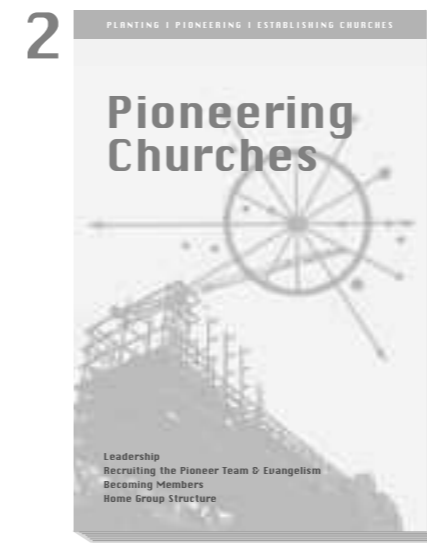
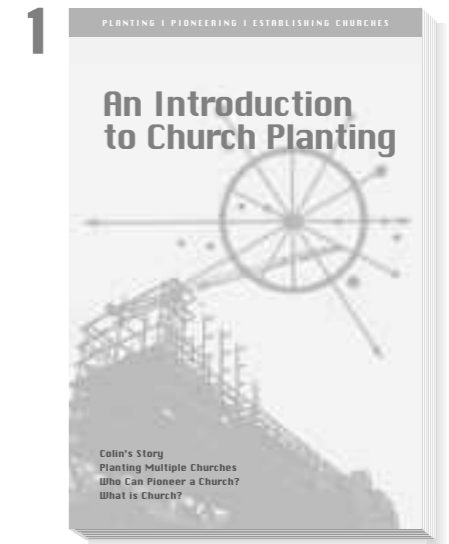
## 1:1 THE ROLE OF THE APOSTLE

Over the past few years there has been an explicit assumption that church planting is the best form of evangelism. Many conferences have been set up to motivate people to get involved which has often resulted in good people “having a go”, but unfortunately in many cases this has produced little fruit and much disappointment. So much that is called ‘church planting’ has often lacked focus and direction with many people who get involved not having a clear understanding or cohesive theology of church. They have failed to see the major contribution different ministries had in the planting and building of churches in the New Testament.

We see from Ephesians 4:11-16 that God gives people different gifts. Verse eleven tells us that “*he gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.*” Paul then goes on to explain that the role that these people play in the planting and building of the church is “*to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*” Each one of these gifts is important and we can see their unique contribution to the church planting initiatives recorded in the book of Acts.



The Church Planting Manual comprises the following five modules:



	Leadership	Recruiting a Team Evangelism	Becoming Members Vision & Values	Structure Sundays
Phase 1: Pioneering	<p>The role of the apostle</p> <p>Training pioneer leaders</p>	<p><b>Gather the first home group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prayer</li> <li>• hospitality</li> <li>• making friends</li> </ul>	<p><b>Establish membership</b></p> <p><b>Define vision &amp; values</b></p> <p>A church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full of faith</li> <li>• with a foundation of grace</li> <li>• bringing out the best in one another</li> <li>• practising hospitality</li> <li>• sharing the Good News of Jesus</li> <li>• expressing their love for God</li> <li>• giving themselves to the Word</li> <li>• being eager to be involved &amp; participate in the life of the church</li> <li>• giving generously</li> <li>• being filled with the Holy Spirit</li> <li>• devoting themselves to prayer</li> <li>• being disciples &amp; making disciples</li> <li>• reaching out to the poor &amp; needy</li> <li>• having a world vision</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 home group (1-12 people)</b></p> <p>home group leader intern</p> <p>Attend a larger gathering elsewhere or meet in a home</p>
Phase 2: Planting	<p>Apostolic government</p> <p>Local leader training interns/leaders</p>	<p><b>Have a strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prayer</li> <li>• meeting regularly with unbelievers</li> <li>• specific outreach events</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure all new people attend a vision &amp; values course and are welcomed into the life of the church</p> <p><b>Building</b></p> <p>A church where all members are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding areas in which to serve</li> <li>• being disciples &amp; making disciples by being involved on an equipping/training track</li> <li>• committed to the home group &amp; the larger gathering</li> <li>• practising hospitality - especially looking out for new people</li> <li>• communicating vision constantly</li> </ul>	<p><b>Multiplication to 4 home groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 home group leaders</li> <li>• 4 interns</li> </ul> <p>Start meeting in your town</p>
Phase 3: Establishing	<p>Eldership government</p> <p>Team leadership</p>	<p><b>Review strategy using geographic areas</b></p> <p>Each area to have a strategy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sowing &amp; reaping events</li> <li>• prayer</li> <li>• meeting regularly with unbelievers</li> <li>• specific outreach events</li> <li>• kingdom activity in the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building &amp; sending</b></p> <p>Where every part of the church is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-emphasising values</li> <li>• vision communicated constantly</li> <li>• motivating initial members to be full of faith (hope deferred makes the heart grow sick)</li> <li>• keeping the pioneering spirit of the church</li> <li>• training people to send to the nation and the nations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Developing an appropriate structure for your church</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small group leaders</li> <li>• specific ministries eg. youth</li> </ul> <p>Meeting in your town</p> <p>Supporting pioneer churches</p>

This section will look at the apostle, who seems to have had a key role in the planting and building of each local church. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 we read that “...in the church God has appointed first of all apostles...” As we look in the New Testament we can see how the apostles functioned as they fulfilled their ministry.

### called and sent

Acts 9:1-15 recounts how Paul was saved and received the mighty prophetic word from God through Ananias that was to shape his life “to carry Jesus’ name before the Gentiles and their kings, and before the people of Israel.” In Romans 1:5 Paul states that he was “to call people (out) from among all the gentiles to the obedience of faith.” His calling was confirmed in the presence of the teachers and prophets in Antioch during a time of prayer and fasting. They confidently laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and set them apart to do the work which God had called them to.

### others caught up in the apostle’s call and vision

Paul carried such an inspiring call and vision that he motivated others to join him on his church planting mission. Epaphras was an example of this (Col 1:7). He was so stirred by the calling on Paul’s life and so captured by all that Paul was doing that he pioneered a new church in his hometown, Colossi. This is how it should work today. The pioneer leader should be stirred by the calling and vision of an apostle to such an extent that the anointing, authority and promises given to that apostle by God have a direct effect on the church plant.

This principle has been very much at work in my own life. Had I not been caught up in the calling and vision of Terry Virgo to plant churches across the nation and the nations, I may never have been open to God giving me a vision to plant twenty churches in Manchester, or received the anointing to see them become a reality. In turn, many others have been inspired by my calling and vision and have been open to God stirring them to pioneer churches.

### fishers of men

Jesus called his twelve disciples with the promise that he would make them into fishers of men. In Acts 2 the apostle Peter’s bold gospel preaching resulted in three thousand being saved. In Acts 11:24 we see that through Barnabas “a great number of people were brought to the Lord.” Paul and

*“Had I not been caught up in the calling and vision of Terry Virgo to plant churches across the nation and the nations, I may never have been open to God giving me a vision to plant twenty churches in Manchester”*

Barnabas saw many people respond to the gospel as they travelled from town to town, planting churches wherever they went. When they returned to Antioch after their first church planting journey (Acts 14:27) "they reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Over the centuries God has raised up many apostles who were prolific fishers of men. John Wesley was such a man; he saw thousands respond to his preaching of the gospel in large open-air gatherings.

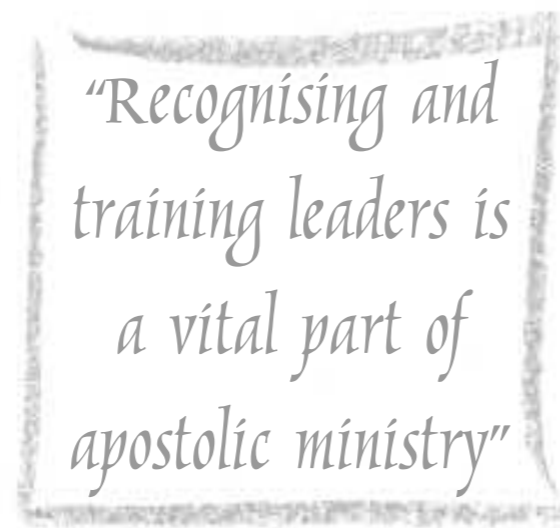
### master builder

In Acts 2 not only did the apostles see amazing fruit from Peter's preaching but they also had the gifting and ability to build a vibrant and committed church. Terry Virgo, in his book *A People Prepared* says, "One of the distinctive features of the apostle is that he is a master builder and foundation layer (1 Cor 3:10). Paul had a stewardship from God: he was to proclaim the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring people to an assured understanding of what it is to be in Christ and have Christ in them. This was the burden of the apostolic doctrine." Acts 5:42 and Acts 20:20 show how the apostles diligently worked this out. In the latter Paul tells the Ephesian elders "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would not be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." Not only did the apostles bring their gifts to bear on the church they were planting, but they also helped straighten out churches that had been planted, as in Titus 1:5. In Acts 8 Peter and John were sent to help Philip build a church in Samaria.

### recognise & train leaders

Recognising and training leaders is a vital part of apostolic ministry. In Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas went back to the churches they had planted and with prayer and fasting appointed elders in each church. Later on when Paul was unable to visit the churches in person, he sent Timothy and Titus giving them clear instructions on what qualities to look for as they appoint elders. Paul also chose and trained young men to join him on his church planting team, such as in Acts 16:1 when Paul arrived at Lystra where he met Timothy. He took Timothy with him and trained him on the way, saying about him, "Timothy my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord" (1 Cor 4:17).

Following Paul's example, the apostle should from the beginning be actively training the pioneer leader. In addition the next section shows some of the ways Jesus trained and prepared the twelve to go and pioneer into new towns and villages. As the church begins to grow the apostle should be looking out for potential leaders, first of all to



# Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\*circle the correct answer

Have you given your life to Jesus? Yes / No\*

How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you regularly attended another church? Yes / No\*

If yes, please give the name and address of your last church :

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptised by full emersion in water? Yes / No\*

If Yes, when and where?

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptised in the Holy Spirit? Yes / No\*

Do you speak in tongues? Yes / No\*

Previous Christian training completed :

- new believers course
- basic discipleship course
- Alpha course
- other – please state \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Church involvement :

- musician / singer / worship leader
- children's worker
- youth worker
- small group leader
- elder / deacon
- other – please state \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Welcome Form

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our church – thank you for coming. Now that we have had the opportunity to meet you, we would like to take a few details which will be maintained on our church computer. Periodically we will issue address lists to those attending home groups so that we can all stay in touch. But don't worry, **we do not disclose this information to anyone else**, and you can always check your own details.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

	First Name	Birthday
You	_____	_____
Spouse	_____	_____
Children (0-18)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

	You	Spouse
Occupation	_____	_____
Work Phone*	_____	_____
Mobile*	_____	_____
E-mail*	_____	_____

I understand that the information given above will be entered on the church computer for administrative purposes.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*optional



lead small groups and later a team of elders to take on the governmental role of leading the church.

## sober assessment of the pioneer leader

In a time when many people are finding themselves in pioneer situations, often without having had a significant leadership role in their previous churches, it is important that they have a sober assessment of their gifts. A lot of people have the grace and gifting to gather the first group of 10–20 people. To multiply the group and gather the next 30–40 may take a different sort of person who will require a number of different gifts and skills. It is necessary to prepare the pioneer leader for the distinct possibility that he will have to hand over the next phase of leadership to another person. There is a danger that the pioneer will feel a failure if this is not handled well. At the very beginning of the church plant everyone should be aware of the likelihood that this could happen. It is essential that the pioneers not only feel valued, but that they also carry on pioneering new churches and small groups, seeing this as a vital role in fulfilling the great commission.

*“It is important to prepare the pioneer leader for the distinct possibility that he will have to hand over the next phase of leadership to another person... At the very beginning of the church plant everyone should be aware of the likelihood that this could happen.”*

## ‘community on the move’ and keeping focussed

It was in community that Jesus lived out his ministry and it is in this context that we are to pioneer and plant churches. Jesus sent his disciples out in twos - ‘community on the move’ - an evangelistic team. Paul always planted churches with other people alongside him. His letter to the Romans lists a number of people whom he describes with great affection as “my fellow workers” or “my dear friend.” This enabled the church to have a more balanced input by bringing all the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4 to equip the church plant.

For many, pioneering can be anything but community with ‘lonely and isolated’ being how many would sum up their experience. It is important that the apostle models community and also encourages the pioneer to quickly build a community. This is a major challenge as we plant churches into unreached people groups or work with those people who find themselves isolated in a new city. The value of letters, phone calls and frequent visits are so important in the early days. Mobilising the sending church to be part of this can be very effective. At this stage pioneers do not need high powered strategy, they need friends to share a meal with, to be prayed for and to be encouraged. I firmly believe this is an important part of the apostles role.



Greg Livingstone states that there are three main foci for the church planter: proclaiming the gospel to the unsaved; discipling those who accept the gospel; and mentoring qualified men to serve as elders; I would probably add one more to this: to build the disciples into a community. The apostle needs to keep the pioneers focused, as there can be many distractions to hinder them from building a church.

## delegation

In the next section we shall examine more closely how Jesus the apostle trained and sent his disciples, but the first thing he did was to give them authority to do the task. Pioneers need to be those who are submitted to apostolic authority and in turn can receive authority and anointing to plant churches. Some people are scared of the principle of giving someone authority to speak into their lives. In his book *A People Prepared*, Terry Virgo says about spiritual authority, "The words can send a shiver down many a Christian's spine! Yet when correctly handled true spiritual authority creates security, peace and real joy in the Holy Spirit. Everything depends on how it is handled."

He goes on to say that when the apostle spoke to the churches, he was led by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor 10:1). Although he used strong language in very serious situations, he more often implored the believers to hear him and encouraged others to adopt this same loving attitude. 'If someone is caught in sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently,' (Gal 6:1) he wrote, and advocated the same spirit of gentleness towards those who opposed sound teaching (2 Tim 2:24-25)."

Philip was not fazed when Peter and John came down to Samaria and began asking questions about what was happening. Even though a mighty revival was taking place, Philip welcomed their insight and subsequent ministry. This submitting to apostolic authority was not imposed, but it was out of relationship fostered during their time together in Jerusalem. It was natural for Philip to embrace and enjoy the benefits of his friends coming down and getting involved in the church he was planting.

The exercise and application of apostolic authority will change over the development of a church plant. Just as in family life, a parent's counsel will be different when their child is 7 to when he is 27 and married. At the beginning of the church plant the apostle will probably be more involved, seeing his relationship more as a discipler and pro-actively involved in overseeing the new church. As the church grows and elders emerge from the congregation, they will take on the overseeing of the church, and the apostle will then carry on imputting to them as a father.

*"Some people are scared of the principle of giving someone authority to speak into their lives. In his book A People Prepared, Terry Virgo says about spiritual authority, 'The words can send a shiver down many a Christian's spine!'"*

# The Application

Use the following to help you apply the information in the last section to your own situation:

- 1 How many of the group would you describe as committed members?
- 2 What do you believe should be the main focus of the group at this time?
- 3 List down the different things that seem to be a factor in people being able to attend, or not attend, the midweek group.
- 4 Are there people in the group who need translation? How many are there and do you think that they need their own group?
- 5 What time availability do you have as the pioneer leader? How many evenings can you give to the church?
- 6 Is there another church near by that you could attend on Sunday mornings?
- 7 What is your major gift? Would it help if you had a public setting to exercise it and therefore gather new people in?
- 8 How long have you been pioneering? Is there pressure from the people to start on Sundays?

which occurs with meeting with another church on Sunday mornings very demotivating. This, in the end, can be a good reason to start on Sundays, accepting some of the difficulties and pressure they will face.

#### **We are miles from anyone**

Often pioneers find themselves in a new town and, increasingly, in another country and don't have the luxury of finding a church that they can relate to. This is a major challenge for the pioneers and also the apostolic teams that are seeking to support the endeavour. Again, the *Church in the Home* is one of the major ways forward. A Sunday meeting in the home based around the meal and the breaking of bread can be great fun, with the possibility, where appropriate, for the children to have some time in another room for their own teaching. This can also free up the midweek for evangelism. For some this has been a real blessing, while others have found the pressure of their home being used so much places a major strain on the family. Apostolic teams and churches that want to help these pioneers need to look at how they can send people to join with the pioneers in these meetings. It can be one of the most rewarding things a church member can do - to go and travel to the pioneer's town and spend a day with them, praying, taking them out for a meal and helping boost the numbers of their small gathering.

#### **Team**

Having the right team is also a factor when looking at the best decision about holding a Sunday meeting. Some pioneer churches may not have the 'big gifted ministry' that can gather, but when the team are together there is energy and life that is very attractive. This again could be a reason to start earlier rather than wait for the critical numbers. There are other factors that you will need to consider, but the main decision should be based on answering the question *"Will meeting on Sundays help or hinder the long-term growth of the pioneer church?"*

*"Will meeting on  
Sundays help or hinder  
the long-term growth of  
the pioneer church?"*

Over the past few years there has been an increased understanding across different denominations that apostles are as needed today in building healthy and strong churches as they were in the Acts of the Apostles. Even in a stream or denomination that believes in the role of the apostle we must make sure that the gift is effectual on the ground and with the people. Let us be like Paul who could say to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:8), *"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."*



# The Application

Use the following to help you apply the information in the last section to your own situation.

1 Who will be the source of apostolic input to you and the church you want to pioneer? Will it be mainly from the apostolic team leader or from one of his team?

2 What is the basis of your relationship with the apostle and his team? How much is task oriented and how much is genuine friendship?

3 In what ways are you seeking to build this friendship, and how will this be maintained over the next two years?

4 Write down your expectations of the type and frequency of help and support you expect to receive from the apostle and his team.

5 Talk your expectations through with the apostolic team to see if they match and if they can realistically meet them.

6 Having a sober assessment of your gift of leadership is vital. Have you talked through with the apostle what you both think your measure of gifting is?

7 What is your understanding of how spiritual authority will be exercised in the church plant? How do you see the relationship actually working with you on the ground and an apostle coming in occasionally?

## size

How many people you have is one of the major factors that should govern when you start your Sunday meeting. Twenty people meeting in a hall is often not very exciting and you will not be able to have the quality of children's meetings etc., that would make it attractive for new families to join. In fact, one major church planter said that starting with too few people puts the church on public display at the worst time in the church's development. The midweek meeting in a house, based around hospitality, has much to offer for this sort of group size. Where possible you should resist going into a more public venue until there are at least 30 to 40 people. Having said this, some pioneer churches start with less than this and do well, and others have found it wise to wait until they are much bigger. The following are some of the factors that should be borne in mind when making the decision:

### Larger church near by

How near you are to a related church is one of the key factors governing this decision. Where there is a related church that is within reasonable travelling distance, the small pioneer group should try to attend on a Sunday. This means that the people have access to a wider range of ministry and all the benefits of a larger church. This often leads to people asking "What are we joining?" It should be clear that they are joining the pioneer group, and the larger church is being used as a welcome resource. The leaders of the larger church will need to understand their role. It can be helpful to call the pioneer group meeting *Church in the Home*. This helps people, who tend to think that Sunday is church, to understand that their midweek group is actually the church that they are joining in their location.

### Ministry

What public ministry gift the pioneer leader has will be a factor. A very gifted bible teacher, who will gather around their teaching ministry, should consider starting on Sundays early. The church will often have a growth spurt at this stage due to their gift quickly attracting the extra numbers. A reaping evangelist with a public ministry may also start public meetings earlier. Another question that should be asked is whether a Sunday morning is the best time to begin with this type of ministry. Should the Sunday night or another evening be a better time to attract the unbeliever?

### How long do you wait?

For some groups it can take a few years to gather enough people to start with a good crowd on Sundays. They eventually find that the journey and fragmented church life

*"...one major church planter said that starting with too few people puts the church on public display at the worst time in the church's development."*

Colin Dye, who has built a very large multi-cultural church in London writes, *"In recent years church growth analysts have highlighted an important principle of growth. They call it the homogeneous principle. More than 70% of churches that are growing are mono-cultural, that is they have one main culture."*<sup>1</sup> This is a good principle of ministry as we are more able to reach people like ourselves. He goes on to say that homogeneity is not all there is to church life. Though we are different members, we are in fact united in one body. We need to have a church that expresses the many cultures present in a city, as this ensures no culture is excluded from the gospel. Colin Dye appears to use the homogeneous principle in reaching out to different people groups and for pastoral care, bringing every one together for large celebrations. Whatever we think of Colin's application, it is important that at the beginning of a church plant we try and work through the issues, making sure where possible the structure serves your long-term goal. Homogeneous groups are widely backed in small group literature.

It may be an advantage to have translation taking place during meetings. This could be to demonstrate the cross-cultural nature of the church. It could be for the very pragmatic reason that there are people for whom it is relevant. People hearing the vision and values in their own language, with people they are comfortable with, can help understanding and this can be a reason to have a group devoted to a particular people group.

### leader's time

With the above we can see there are a number of options. Again, there are a number of ways the pioneer leader can use his time. If he has time for more than one meeting a week, the possibility of multiplying the group into two with the pioneer leader leading both for a while can be helpful. If time is at a premium, then this may be the deciding factor on how the church is structured at this stage.

As you can see we often have to take a number of factors into consideration, and then choose the one that will best serve the particular needs of the church at the time.

### Sundays

The decision on what should happen on Sundays needs to be taken using some principles and then finding an application. There is often great pressure from people to start on Sundays as soon as possible. This often is founded on a misguided belief that it will speed up the growth of the church. For most groups, a Sunday meeting will expose the church to visitors at a time of weakness and consume time and energy that could and should be channelled into reaching out into the community

<sup>1</sup>Colin Dye *Building a City Church* p.72



*"There is often great pressure from people to start on Sundays as soon as possible."*

## NOTES



## Leadership

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# The Role of the Apostle

## 1:2 TRAINING PIONEER LEADERS

As we have seen in previous sections, people will find themselves pioneering churches with very many different skills and experiences. This is a great context for the apostle to disciple people - giving some clear instructions and guidance to the pioneers is vital at this stage. So many pioneers are left to get on with starting a new church with little input. Greg Livingstone says that *"missionaries are sent overseas to pioneer churches with little supervision, management and performance reviews."*<sup>1</sup> I have found the account of Jesus sending out the twelve in pioneer groups of twos very instructive, as he covers with his disciples many of the questions that pioneers often ask. Questions like, *"what authority do I have?" "Where should I start?" "How are we going to gather people?" "Who is going to pay?" "Tell us some of the dangers and pressure we might face."* Jesus himself shows us the value in covering these issues before the pioneers get started.

<sup>1</sup>Greg Livingstone *Planting Churches in the Muslim World* p.109



### exposure to the visionary leader

The visionary leader needs maximum exposure to the first people joining the church. This ensures that these people are totally immersed in the vision and values of the church. This can mean that the first group becomes larger than would be normal before it multiplies into two groups.

### how many of the group are committed members?

The first group can be made up of people with various commitment levels. Multiplying a group based on numbers can sometimes be frustrating, especially if some people drop out as they become more aware of the type of church they are part of. This can mean the two groups becoming too small and having to regroup.

### priorities

What the main focus of the church should be at this particular time will also have a major bearing on the structure of the church. If there are people on the fringe that would make an evangelistic group like an Alpha course feasible, it might be more appropriate to keep the group together. This gives new leaders time for running the outreach group.

### social factors

The make-up of the group will also have a bearing on the appropriate structure. Where there is a babysitting need, two groups meeting on different nights can help this. All-age midweek groups may be more appropriate for some people, however this increases the numbers and therefore the pressure on accommodation.

### transport

In a highly mobile community, drawing the small group together from different parts of the city may be feasible. Where there is limited private transport it may be easier to multiply into two smaller groups.

### multi-cultural

As we pioneer churches into large cities around the world, we will find people from different cultures who speak many different languages sometimes living in the same street. This also should have a bearing on how we structure the church.

*"More than 70% of churches that are growing are mono-cultural, that is they have one main culture."*



# Structure

## 1:7 HOME GROUPS & SUNDAYS

Two of the questions I often get asked by pioneers are: “Where do we meet on Sundays?” and, “How should we structure the midweek group?” This often leads on to another question, “What should be the main time priorities of the pioneer leader?” Due to the diverse circumstances people find themselves in, there can be many ways of answering these questions; it is more important that we try and understand some principles and then apply them to each unique set of circumstances. The following points are some of the main factors that should be taken into consideration when making these decisions.



In Matthew 10:1-33 we see five principles, which cover these questions and can be applied to the training and release of pioneer leaders by an apostle.

### 1 giving authority

In 9:35 Jesus is travelling around, teaching, preaching and healing every disease and sickness - he modelled to the twelve what he was going to ask them to do. When Jesus called them to him in 10:1 it was to impart to them the authority – the right to command and the power to bring about obedience – which would enable them to fulfil His instructions. Had Jesus not given them the authority, they would have been engaged in a futile task. The same is true when training leaders today – modelling, and even the giving of responsibility, are only part of the process and until authority is given, the trainee will not be able to minister successfully in place of the apostle. A good example of this happened when I said to one of the leaders in our church, “You seem to have grown in the last few months and taken on more responsibility and government in the way you have lead the church.” He replied, “It’s because you gave me authority to do it.” I realised that I had modelled this by giving real responsibility and by passing on the authority to do it.

### 2 giving instructions

With the giving of authority there needs to be clear instructions and guidance. In verses 5-14 of chapter 10, Jesus gives a very specific job description to the disciples:

#### Sphere of their ministry

Matthew 10:5: “Do not to go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.”

On the occasion of their first mission, Jesus restricted the ministry of the twelve to the people of Israel, even though their eventual commission was to be to the ends of the earth. It is important that as new leaders are trained to pioneer and plant churches, they are not given too much responsibility too soon - rather they should be given time to grow into a wider sphere, if indeed they do so at all. One of the things we are learning is that you can lock up a city by letting the pioneer call the new church by the name of the city; we called our first church plant in Manchester “Burnage Family church”, which is a small area in the south of the city. This gave ourselves and others the chance to plant in different parts of the city.

Apostles must be alert to the expectations of those they are pioneering with. One example of this is senior men moving on to pioneer, who, because of a Newfrontiers desire to

*“One of the things we are learning is that you can lock up a city by letting the pioneer call the new church by the name of the city; we called our first church plant in Manchester ‘Burnage Family Church’, which is a small area in the south of the city. This gave ourselves and others the chance to plant in different parts of the city.”*



open up new regions, see themselves as having a regional role before they have even planted a church. Another example is a home group group leader who has thrived in a larger church, but is untested in a pioneering situation. For such types of people, we need to be very specific about the sphere of ministry we are giving them.

**Scope of their ministry**

Matthew 10:7-8: *“Preach this message: ‘the Kingdom of Heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead...”*

When the disciples arrived in a town, they did not have to ask what to do next. Jesus had not only given them clear instructions regarding their task, but he had also imparted faith to them that following his instructions would actually work! Apostles should equip pioneer leaders with a tried and tested strategy for gathering which will enable them to know what to do, and to believe for and see growth by doing it. I am more convinced than ever that the impartation of faith for success in gathering is key to seeing a church established.

For those pioneers who have come from larger churches, especially leaders, this may be a major challenge as they may have been away from the ‘front line’ for years and have got used to the gathering being done only by those gifted in evangelism. In Manchester, I have faith to gather through hospitable people opening their homes. For the first two years here, I ran small groups in different people’s houses on Tuesday (Burnage), Wednesday (Fallowfield), and Thursday (Bolton) every week. These groups were pioneer churches, which grew over the following eight years to become churches in Stockport of 120, South Manchester of 200, and Bolton of 60 people. (Figures represent an average Sunday meeting in 2002, including children.)

**Supplying of their needs**

Matthew 10:9-10: *“Do not take any silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or staff; for the worker is worth his keep.”*

How a pioneer church is going to be financed is a very real question, and it’s important that the issue is addressed sooner rather than later. It is clear from Matthew’s account that Jesus expected them to trust God first, and this therefore, is the principle that apostles should instil in pioneer leaders. When I moved from Bourne End to Swanley (before I came to Manchester), Terry Virgo made it very difficult for me. He kept on emphasising that I was leaving a church that was looking after me well, and that there was no finance available at Swanley. He was so negative that I thought perhaps he did not want me to go. Once I had moved I talked to him again about it; he said that he wanted to make sure I had faith. This really helped me both then and since - to be very real about finances but have faith that God will provide and meet the needs of the new church.



*“I am more convinced more than ever that the impartation of faith for success in gathering is key to seeing a church established.”*

NOTES

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# The Application

Use the following to help you apply the information in the last section to your own situation:

- 1 Have you worked through the values course with the group?
- 2 Make a register of those who attended each session.
- 3 How are you going to cover the material with those people who missed different sessions?
- 4 List the values that you are confident the group have understood and are practising.
- 5 List the values that you think need extra teaching and time spent on them.
- 6 How are you going to address values that need emphasising in the group?
- 7 How much input has the apostolic team had in teaching these values into the group, and in assessing how they have been received and acted upon?

When Rob Coleman moved up to lead the Bolton church plant, there was no money for him to be employed in full-time ministry as he had been in his previous church, so he had to get a secular job for a year. It was a real faith challenge, but God provided both the job and later the finance for him to return to full-time ministry in Bolton.

Whenever I am putting together a church planting budget I have a column called 'faith goal.' Last year our Stockport church plant gave money to Bolton, Oldham and Warrington. Each one was asked what their short fall was, and then what their faith goal was, and we gave them a gift for the difference. By the end of the year they all met their goal, and for most they had nearly doubled it, which left them with money in the bank!

Jesus also wanted the disciples to instil into the new believers the good principle that they could contribute towards the ministry:

Matthew 10(b) *"For the worker is worthy of his keep."*

As we in Newfrontiers are looking for 1,000 churches in the UK, many of these being new church plants, we need to be aware that most will have to be self-financing. The implication of this on those called to pioneer, especially those already in full-time church work, is that they may need to take a secular job and become 'tentmakers' for a season in order to support themselves, as Paul was more than happy to do when necessary. Where money is provided as a start-up fund, it's important that the pioneer sees that he must have faith that God, not Newfrontiers, will supply his needs, especially as the start-up funds begin to run out.

### Success of their ministry

Matthew 10:11-14 *"Search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave."*

Jesus instructed the disciples that they should look initially for somewhere they would be made welcome, and apostles when training pioneers should encourage them to do the same. Sometimes in our early zeal to 'take the city for God', we may be tempted to start in the hardest place which others have failed or avoided, but it's important that we find success early on. Often we will need to start by finding like-minded people with whom we can easily make friends, even though we know that God will take us into the hard place when the church is stronger.

When we first arrived in Manchester we were advised by some other church leaders to go to the East of the city, as it was a hard place and no-one else was working there. My reply was that if they had struggled with a large Church to break into this area, we who were just starting out needed to be in an easier place!

*"Where money is provided as a start-up fund, it's important that the pioneer sees that he must have faith that God, not Newfrontiers, will supply his needs, especially as the start-up funds begin to run out."*

The apostle Paul started off in every town by going to the synagogue or place of prayer as in Philippi, where he knew there would be God-fearers who would welcome his message and join with him. Jesus knew however that in order to persevere and be successful, we also need to know how to deal with rejection and failure. "Shake the dust of your feet" - don't carry rejection but realise that those who reject you reject the Gospel and so, sadly, you will receive their judgement. Pioneering is hard work and there will be many disappointments, so we need to be able to get over them quickly and press on with the task.

### 3 giving warnings

Jesus was real about the dangers the twelve would face. He always wanted people to count the cost: I find that with any task, church planting or otherwise, we can help people if we are honest about the difficulties they might face. Jesus said to his disciples:

Matthew 10:17: "Be on your guard against men, they will hand you over to the local councils."

Matthew 10:21: "Brother will betray brother."

Matthew 10:34: "Do not suppose I have come to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword."

Pioneering churches puts us on the front line. When Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it", he knew that Satan would try to prevent the church from being built. It's important that we prepare people for this. As with any task there will be difficulties and potential conflicts and these can often come in subtle ways and not in outright opposition, although that can also happen. For so many pioneers, questions and doubts come to their minds, "Am I up to this?" "Am I good enough?" "Have I got enough time?" Those with families often find an additional pressure of the children not having any friends their own age in the small church plant. It's essential that the pioneer leader in these circumstances has faith for his family and does not neglect their needs in the pressure to evangelise and care for the new people. At the same time, we must know that such cautions are given not to scare, but to prepare. I have been in some situations where the potential pioneers were overwhelmed by people's lists of warnings, given to them out of fear, not faith. Jesus gave these warning to his disciples in the midst of faith and real encouragements.

### 4 giving encouragements

Jesus was confident that even in situations of conflict his heavenly Father would care for his disciples. He said to them in Matthew 10:29-31, "Are not two sparrows sold for

*"It's essential that the pioneer leader in these circumstances has faith for his family and does not neglect their needs in the pressure to evangelise and care for the new people."*



## foundational values

The foundations that we should be seeking to lay are a set of values that will be underlying everything we do. As I look back over the years we have been in Manchester, I have identified those values that have been important to us in getting this far, and which as we continue to pioneer, we seek to establish as foundations in any new church.

### Apostolic Involvement

It is the responsibility of the apostle to ensure that these values are not only taught, but that the pioneer church is seeking to live them out. This does not mean that the apostle himself will necessarily do all the work, although this may be the case especially if he is also the pioneer. However, as long as the apostle oversees the laying of the foundations, he may send someone else to do the actual training. I do not personally teach the values in every single church we pioneer around Manchester - sometimes we appoint one of the regional leadership team to take on that role on my behalf.

### Foundation Course

In the last volume of this manual, *Foundational Values*, (see back page) there is a study of fourteen key foundational values with discussion questions on each. They can be used to teach these values within the home group context, and home group meeting planners have also been included. The fourteen values are as follows:

- A Church
- Full of faith
- With a foundation of grace
- Bringing out the best in one another
- Practising hospitality
- Sharing the Good News of Jesus
- Expressing their love for God
- Giving themselves to the word of God
- Being eager to be involved and participate in the life of the church
- Giving generously
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit
- Devoting themselves to prayer
- Being disciples and making disciples
- Reaching out to the poor and needy
- Having a world vision



*"The foundations that we should be seeking to lay are a set of values that will be underlying everything we do."*

**Becoming Members**

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# Becoming Members

## 1:6 DEFINE VALUES

Jesus taught the importance of foundations in his parable of the wise and foolish builders. Anything that is built without foundations will soon come crashing down, but that which has good foundations will stand in the face of adversity. Although Jesus spoke in regard to our individual lives, it is a principle that can be applied to a far wider sphere.

It is very important therefore, to consider carefully the foundations we lay as we begin pioneering a church, because what we put in place now will shape what comes afterwards.

*a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*" What wonderful words of encouragement. It is so important that the pioneer firstly finds encouragement in their "Father who is in Heaven." The two aspects that are brought out in this short statement are crucial for the pioneer. Firstly, that God is our father. It is so easy to see our relationship with God through the task of church planting, and not out of this amazing relationship - understanding that we are children of God. The second is that our father is in heaven. He is above, and Lord over all our circumstances, even the problems.

One of the main difficulties of pioneering into new towns away from your friends and family is the isolation and loneliness often felt. I have found that many members of other churches can get involved and serve the apostle in the mission of church planting by praying, visiting, phoning and writing letters and e-mails to the pioneers. When Mary and I were in the process of trying to move to Manchester, Terry and Wendy Virgo invited us out for a meal and spent the evening talking to us about the move. We came away not just feeling their support and encouragement, but really feeling cared for as people and friends.

### 5 giving a challenge

With all the instructions, warnings and encouragements comes the challenge in Matthew 10:32, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge before my father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men I will disown before my father." Jesus wanted them to be wholehearted and to go for it because they will be acknowledged before God in heaven. In the end, pioneering a new church is a great challenge. William Carey said these famous words "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." We are looking for men and women who will take up the challenge of the great commission, making disciples of all the nations by starting churches in villages, towns and great cities all over the world.

*"It is so easy to see our relationship with God through the task of church planting, and not out of this amazing relationship - understanding that we are children of God."*



# The Application

Use the following to help you apply the information in the last section to your own situation:

- 1 Most people feel ill equipped to pioneer a new church. The disciples would have probably felt the same. You, like them, will probably have come to this time with some helpful experiences and training. What areas of church life have you been involved with and how do you think this will help you in this new venture?
- 2 What level of training and input do you think you need over the first two years of the church being planted?
- 3 Have you been prayed for and commissioned to pioneer a new church? Were there any specific prophetic words given that would help shape the way you work and the church you are pioneering?
- 4 What was the expectation given to you about the size and sphere of the church you are pioneering? At this time in your ministry are you a leader of 10, 50, 100, or 200 plus? Are you building a large city church or developing a church that can plant lots of new churches?
- 5 How will you provide for your family financially?
- 6 What do you think are the biggest dangers you will face as you pioneer a new church?

# NOTES

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*is wanted; when they see it coming to pass there will be a surge of confidence throughout the army.*

*I ask you to give me your confidence and to have faith that what I have said will come to pass.*

*There is much work to be done. The orders I have given about no further withdrawal will mean a complete change in the layout of our dispositions; also that we must begin to prepare for the great offensive.”*

Like Nehemiah, Montgomery faced the problem head on. He addressed the negative atmosphere that was the result of defeats and the constant change in leadership. He gave lots of encouragement. He told them how good they were, that tanks were not just promised but were actually being unloaded in Suez as he spoke. He then gave them the challenge: to destroy the Axis forces in North Africa. He finished by saying, *“We must begin to prepare for the great offensive.”*

When I first came to Manchester I kept meeting people who had been called to the city but because things had not gone as they had expected they were full of doubt and negative thoughts. During my first year in Manchester I spoke into this, preparing a culture and atmosphere where people were ready to have another go. *“Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick”*, and there are many sick hearts in the people of God. It is imperative that we don’t just give positive words but that we address the people with faith-filled encouragement which they can enlist again in the great adventure of seeing the Kingdom of God advance on earth as it is in heaven.

*“If anyone here thinks it can't be done, let him go at once; I don't want any doubters in this party. It can be done, and it will be done; beyond any possible doubt...”*

NOTES



Recruiting the Pioneer Team & Evangelism

1.3 Gather the First Home Group 17

# Recruiting the Pioneer Team & Evangelism

## 1:3 GATHER THE FIRST HOME GROUP prayer/hospitality/making friends

The question most frequently asked by pioneers is, how do we start! How do you get from one or two, to three, four, six, eight or twelve people and beyond? Here are some keys to help you gather the first home group.



to see the dream accomplished is the exciting life God would have us live.

In John Adair's book *Effective Strategic Leadership* he quotes Field Marshal Montgomery's speech, having arrived to take over the Eighth Army two months before the battle of Alamein. "The atmosphere was dismal and dreary", he wrote in his diary. That evening he addressed the entire staff of the Eighth Army Headquarters, between fifty and sixty officers. As he was their fourth army commander in a year he faced a sceptical audience. Montgomery knew he had to win their minds and hearts that evening if the morale of that broken army was to be restored. Here is what he said. 'I want first of all to introduce myself to you. You do not know me. I do not know you. But we have all got to work together; therefore we must understand each other and we must have confidence in one another. I have only been here for a few hours. But from what I have seen and heard since I arrived I am prepared to say, here and now, that I have confidence in you. We will work together as a team, and together we will gain the confidence of this great army and go forward to final victory in North Africa. I believe that one of the first duties of a commander is to create what I call "atmosphere"; and in that atmosphere, his staff, subordinate commanders and troops will live and work and fight.

*I do not like the general atmosphere I find here. It is an atmosphere of doubt, of looking back to select the next place to which to withdraw, of loss of confidence in our ability to defeat Rommel, of desperate defence measures by reserves in preparing positions in Cairo and Delta. All that must cease. Let us have a new atmosphere... We will stand and fight here. If we can't stay here alive, then let us stay here dead.*

*I want to impress on everyone that the bad times are over. Fresh divisions from the UK are now arriving in Egypt, together with ample reinforcements for our present divisions. We have 300-400 new Sherman Tanks coming and these are actually being unloaded at Suez now. Our mandate from the Prime Minister is to destroy the Axis forces in North Africa; I have seen it written on half a sheet of notepaper. And it will be done. If anyone here thinks it can't be done, let him go at once; I don't want any doubters in this party. It can be done, and it will be done; beyond any possible doubt...*

*What I have done is to get over to you the atmosphere in which we will work and fight; you must see that the atmosphere permeates right down through the Eighth Army to the most junior private soldier. All the soldiers must know what*

*"I believe that one of the first duties of a commander is to create what I call "atmosphere"; and in that atmosphere, his staff, subordinate commanders and troops will live and work and fight."*



great leaders to enable the whole project of a temple and city to be rebuilt. Morale and energy for the task was at a very low ebb. We can learn from the way Nehemiah handled the situation - how he sowed vision in such a way that he motivated and energised the people to set about a way of completing the task.

*"Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned by the fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.' I also told them about how the gracious hand of God was upon me and what the king said to me. They replied, 'let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work." (Nehemiah 2:17-18)*

We can see the different aspects that Nehemiah addressed in the statement and how he faced up to the problem, helping them deal with some of the hindrances to their faith. He put a challenge before the people and then delivered some fantastic words of encouragement.

**The Problem**

*"You see the trouble we are in, Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire."*

Many an inspiring word can get lost on people through cynicism gained from past failure and disappointment. Facing up to the problem and not being scared to talk about it helps people see that you are living in reality and begin to tackle some of the hindrances to the people's faith. They need to know that you understand the full extent of what you have taken on.

**The Challenge**

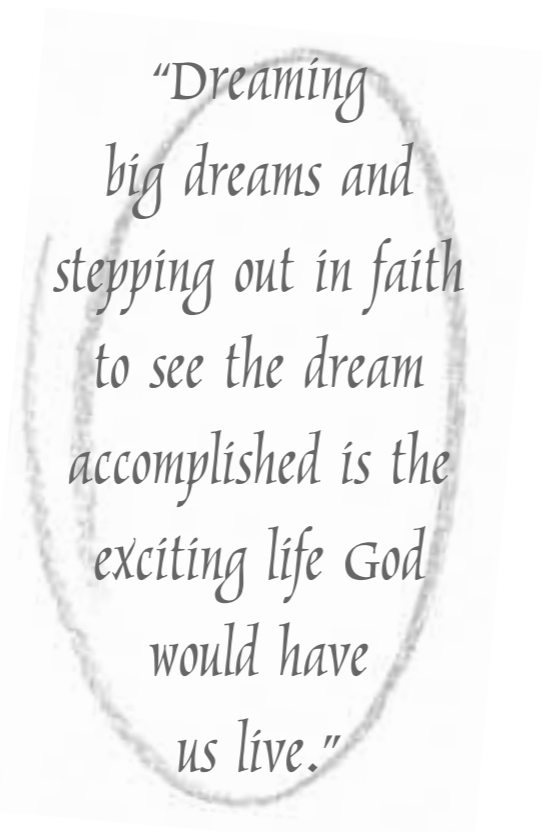
*"Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be a disgrace."*

Having faced the facts, Nehemiah was so confident that God had called him to complete the task that he gave a resounding and clear challenge: *"...and we will no longer be a disgrace."* Many a sporting coach has used a defeat and the misery it has caused to motivate a team to success.

**The Encouragement**

*"I told them about the gracious hand of God upon me and what the king had said to me."*

Nehemiah had proved God's faithfulness back in Babylon. He faced up to the king and found the favour of God. He was able to give a fantastic testimony of how God had intervened, motivating the king to give him safe travel and even to provide materials for the rebuilding of the walls. The account of their subsequent success, gained even when faced with serious opposition, is one of the great accounts of the Bible. Dreaming big dreams and stepping out in faith



**take a long-term view**

It is easy for pioneers to feel pressured to grow the church almost overnight, especially those who are being given financial support by the sending church or organisation. I would rather encourage those who have moved into a new area to initially spend most of their time sorting out their home and settling their family. For some this may be frustrating, but it will prove a worthwhile investment in time and effort as the work begins to demand more and more time and attention and extra pressures are put on their lives. This is even more important when planting into a new nation or a different culture. Learning a new language can take 2 years of intense tuition and then even longer to feel totally fluent. Adapting and feeling at home in a new culture will also take time.

**work within your resources**

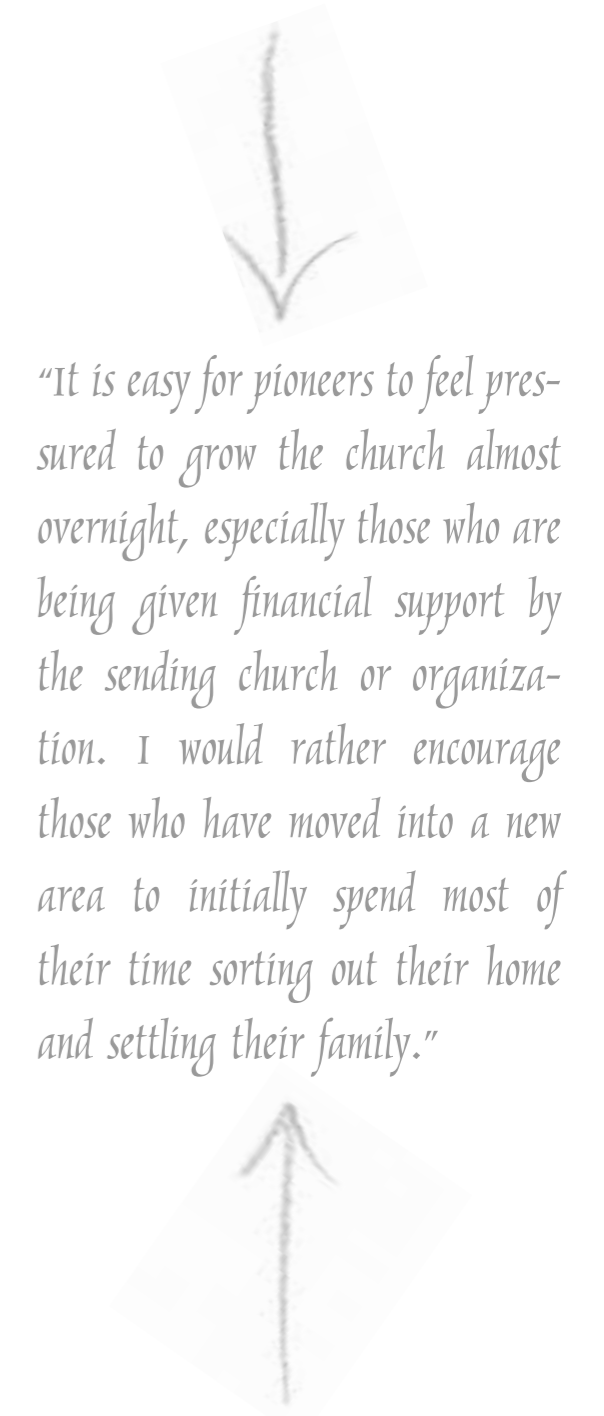
It is important that you don't attempt more than you can really manage - the time for full-scale mission is probably not when you have a group of only four people! The apostle Paul was aware of this principle, as we see in Acts 18:1-5 where he arrives in Corinth and begins to work alongside Aquilla and Priscilla making tents. Only on the Sabbath is he found reasoning in the synagogue, and it was not until Silas and Timothy arrived to support him that he *"devoted himself exclusively"* to preaching the gospel.

**identify who will join you**

There are basically three categories of people that you will draw from to build your first home group:

**Christians from outside the area to join your team**

Gathering a church planting team is vital to forming a community that can be strong enough to plant a church. Pioneering with the support and covering of a larger movement of churches can give you a broader resource from which to draw. Make it known as widely as possible your plans to plant a church, and request support in as many ways as you can get it. God may call people (or move them through circumstances) from around the UK and even other nations, to join you. The ideal would be to have a team of people with different giftings that would compliment your gifting. This of course seldom happens, and part of the joy of working with an apostolic team is that they can supplement some of the lack as they visit and help you plant the new church.



**Non-Christians from the new area**

As the church you are building is going to grow through people being saved and added, it is important that you begin to look for ways of making new friends as soon as possible. Asking for help from new neighbours and work colleagues is a great way of getting to know people. Many people feel more comfortable helping you, and this often gives easy opportunities for them to come into your new home, and for you to go to theirs. This is also true when moving cross-culturally. Greg Livingstone in his book *Planting Churches in the Muslim World* writes, "My wife Sally and I found it is easier to make friends with Muslims if we were dependant on them."<sup>1</sup> As you develop relationships with neighbours and work colleagues, there may be those who are interested in the Christian faith, or simply what you're up to, and they may want to spend time around you. It is important that an evangelist is part of the church planting team otherwise there can be a lot of relationships made, and very little fruit in terms of people becoming Christians. Making use of a travelling evangelist could help you reap where you are sowing.

**Christians from the new area**

Although in general you should be ready to discourage people who come from other 'born again' churches, especially if they have left with hurts, there may be those whom God has genuinely called to work with you. It is essential that you make your vision and values very clear to them, and to resist any attempt by them to impose things on you.

**Identify ways of gathering**

Where are you going to find the first few people to join with you? What sort of people will come with you?

**Prayer is key**

Prayer is a major key to answering these and other questions regarding building the first group and the ongoing development of the church. In the gospels and Acts we find some of the prayers Jesus and the apostles prayed - these are very helpful in directing our praying in pioneer situations:

**Pray for workers**

Jesus said, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field" (Mt 9:38). I believe this is a prayer given to the pioneer to pray in faith and confidence that God will send the right people to work with you.

**Pray for open doors**

Paul asked for prayer "that God may open a door for our message" (Col 4:3). As we build friendships with people, we want opportunities to demonstrate God's love and share our faith.

*"It is important that an evangelist is part of the church planting team otherwise there can be a lot of relationships made, and very little fruit in terms of people becoming Christians."*

<sup>1</sup>Greg Livingstone *Planting Churches in the Muslim World* p.128

**beginning to see dreams fulfilled**

Colin Dye says, "it is one thing to have a vision, but quite another matter to see it fulfilled. To bring vision into a reality takes time, effort and commitment; it means a single-minded dedication and unrelenting persistence, never giving up until everything is established. Someone has wisely said, 'happy are those who dream dreams and are willing to pay the price to make them come true!' Many Christian leaders have great dreams and wonderful God-given aspirations, but it seems that few really take hold of the things God has said and battle through until everything is accomplished."<sup>1</sup>

Getting started, keeping focused and persevering to the end: these are some of the main ingredients for fulfilling what God has given you. Nehemiah is a great example of this and a life story any pioneer should keep reading. I want to use one incident in the life of Nehemiah to illustrate how he communicated vision in such a way that motivated a dispirited and downcast group of people, to achieve an amazing building project.

**hindrances to communicating vision**

There are a number of hindrances to people confidently communicating their vision:

- Past disappointments
- Fear of Failure
- False humility
- Lack of Faith

These and other hindrances have to be faced and overcome, whether it is in the mind of the pioneer or of those he is gathering. Nehemiah faced some of these when he set about the task of leading the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city. I believe we can learn lessons from how Nehemiah went about this.

**learning from Nehemiah & Field Marshal Montgomery**

Nehemiah found himself in Jerusalem looking at a city whose walls were broken down and whose people were very vulnerable to an enemy. As he walked around the walls he realised that for nearly a century the people of God had attempted to complete the work. God raised up some

<sup>1</sup>Colin Dye *Building a City Church* p.93



*"Many Christian leaders have great dreams & wonderful God-given aspirations, but it seems that few really take hold of the things God has said and battle through until everything is accomplished."*

As he was riding in a cab one day on his way to the airport, the cab driver learned that he was a pastor. The cab driver spent the rest of the trip talking about how bad the church was – how it didn't help anybody, how it made people feel guilty, how it was always after people's money. Finally at the end of the cab ride, as they were pulling Wimber's luggage out of the trunk, Wimber looked at the cab driver and said, 'OK, tell me this. If Jesus were to have a church, what do you think it would look like?' The cab driver stopped for a moment, thought about it, and then looked at Wimber and said, 'if God really had a church it would feed the poor, heal the sick, and it would not charge you money for reading the book.' At that moment God gripped Wimber's heart with a vision for what the church ought to look like – and it seized the hearts of those Wimber told the story to as well, when he wanted to communicate his heart and vision for the church. The problem is many pastors get bored in telling their story, so they quit telling it, and then they wonder why their church quits growing. Telling your story is a major part of vision casting and leadership.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking out vision is creationary. Declaring at the very start of your first home group that you will be multiplying to two groups and will train leaders to take on the second group, will help that very thing to come about. As you declare it and pray it out, you impart faith to people.

As you begin the process of stepping out in faith to see the vision realised, it needs to be earthed with realistic faith goals communicated within the context of the vision as a whole. There is a saying in Africa - "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!" and in Manchester - "How do we see 10,000 saved and added? One at a time!"

## goal setting

Breaking the vision down into bite-sized chunks is the art of goal setting. Mike Southern writes, "goal setting is about having a vision of where an individual can get to, and about understanding the steps they have to take to get there. Well-set goals plot a path to success via a series of challenging but achievable goals."<sup>2</sup> Strategic goals are SMART: Specific; Measurable; Agreed; Realistic; Time phased.<sup>3</sup>

One of the biggest challenges I have found in communicating short-term goals is making sure that communication takes place in the context of overall vision. Short-term goals can easily become the end product. A goal to run an Alpha course to launch a new church plant can easily become a series of successful Alpha courses, and the dream of planting a new church can be forgotten.

*"There is a saying in Africa - 'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!' and in Manchester - 'How do we see 10,000 saved and added? One at a time!'"*

<sup>1</sup>John Wimber *Cutting Edge* Winter 1998

<sup>2</sup>Mike Southern & Chris West *The Beer Mat Entrepreneur* p.93

<sup>3</sup>One Minute Manager



## Pray for boldness

Paul asked the Ephesians to pray "that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19). In the early church this was a frequent prayer request, as it should still be today!

## "Pray for us"

Paul constantly asked churches to pray for him and his current situation, envisioning them with his onward march of church planting. Getting everyone praying for you is one of the ways an apostle will help you to pioneer a church, and who knows, maybe God will call some to come and join you! Terry Virgo once got me up in front of three hundred pastors, before I even moved to Manchester, and asked them to pray for me and for the city. Is it any wonder therefore that we have seen churches start right across the region!

## Hospitality

Hospitality is a major key to gathering, and in the early days of pioneering should be your primary focus. Open up your home - use opportunities such as a housewarming if you have just moved, Christmas parties or summer barbecues, which are also an excellent excuse to meet as many of your neighbours and colleagues as possible on a social level, or a creative way of keeping up contacts. Hospitality is universal in its appeal - Greg Livingstone writes, "If there is one common element among Muslims, from North Africa to the Philippines, it may be their hospitality. Therefore the pioneers must likewise be perceived as hospitable, generous persons. Some of the wives and mothers can major on hospitality since their home will be their major place of ministry. Asians from Istanbul to Jakarta will quickly perceive how welcome they are in a home."<sup>1</sup>

## Making Friends

You should be looking to build some real, genuine friendships amongst those with whom you have contact. At times it will mean going to things and taking part in activities that you don't always enjoy, but it will enable you to get into the life of those you are befriending. Often though, it is doing what you're good at and what you enjoy. Spend time getting to know people and letting them get to know you. Greg Livingstone also says that those who are pioneering into Muslim Countries "are strongly encouraged to make friends in high places. Friends can be called upon to rescue them when under the threat of expulsion or prison."<sup>2</sup> He says a large percentage of missionaries to Muslim countries who have been asked to leave would not have had to do so (at least not as soon) had they adequately enmeshed themselves in the society.

*"Where money is provided as a start-up fund, it's important that the pioneer sees that he must have faith that God, not Newfrontiers, will supply his needs, especially as the start-up funds begin to run out."*

<sup>1</sup>Greg Livingstone *Planting Churches in the Muslim World* p.103

<sup>2</sup>ibid



## where to start gathering first

There seems to have been two major ways New Testament pioneers gathered a group in the initial stages. The first was to go to the people with whom they had things in common, and with whom they had faith to see become Christians. For Paul this meant going first to a Synagogue, if there was one in the city. Acts 17 describes him arriving at Thessalonica "...where there was a Jewish Synagogue. As his custom was Paul went into the Synagogue and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the scriptures." In Acts 11 we see how those who were scattered due to persecution began pioneering among those they could relate to. This meant that those who were natives of Judea and Jerusalem went to the Jews, but those who were Greek speaking or who were born in Cyprus and Cyrene began to reach out to Greeks. We must reach out to those we have faith to see saved. There were other times when God opened up amazing divine appointments where the pioneers found themselves in situations that were not strategic. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26) and Paul and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:27), are two of many accounts where this happened.

## meet according to your gifts and faith

Another important question asked by pioneers is with regard to the content of their first meetings. This will vary according to the gifts and strengths of the pioneer. For some, prayer and worship will be the primary focus of the first home meeting; a hospitable person may concentrate their first group around meals; for others Alpha might be the most appropriate. In the section on bringing people into church membership I look at some of the challenges that you will face as you seek to transition this first group into a committed community. Knowing what you want to achieve and being 'up front' about it is important so that you do not find yourself disappointing people who have got used to coming round to your house for a particular type of evening. When they find the emphasis has changed they can feel hurt or left out.

"We must reach out to those we have faith to see saved."

Having faith for the vision that God gives you does not always come immediately, and speaking out a vision will not inspire people to follow you if you do not have faith for it yourself. Charles Price says, *"The thing above all else I want you to see is that you cannot generate it, you cannot work it up, you cannot manufacture it. It is imparted and infused by God himself."* So ask, and keep on asking God for faith. Even John Wesley's experience was that by preaching faith he found faith. Continue to speak out what God has said and expect faith from him to grow in you as you do so. Graham Webb, who teamed with me to pioneer the churches in Manchester, came with a vision to see 10,000 people saved and added. He clearly had faith that God would do this, but for myself, faith for that part of our vision has grown over the years we have been here and seen God at work.

Hebrews 11 lists many people in the Bible who believed what God had spoken to them and acted upon His word, despite there being no visible evidence to uphold their actions. This is how we should live out our vision. God has said we will plant twenty churches around Manchester, so when people laugh at us and say, *"Six people in a house and you call it a church!"* we can say, *"Yes, it is a church, because God has said so."* Along with Abraham we can say that what God has spoken will come to pass because we *"consider him faithful who made the promise"* (Heb 11:11).

*"...so when people laugh at us and say, "Six people in a house and you call it a church!" we can say, "Yes, it is a church, because God has said so."*

## communicating vision

Speak out your vision as clearly as you can define it, as often as possible. Those who you are gathering should have no doubt about what it is they are buying into, and they will see that everything you are doing is building towards that vision. Some will have faith for the whole thing and can see it complete. Others however will only be able to take hold of smaller parts of the whole, so wherever possible break it down into manageable chunks. For example, in Manchester, twenty hospitable families in different parts of the city are all we need to start twenty churches.

Steve Nicholson says that when the church planter is talking about vision he is describing where they want to end up. *"Vision is like a painting: it needs to have word pictures, metaphors and stories that illustrate the vision and which capture people's imagination."*<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to illustrate how John Wimber communicated vision. *"John Wimber did not just stand up in front of people and give a tick list of his vision; he would tell them this story, that was often told in the early days of Vineyard:*

Rob Parsons states that *“the most famous dream in the world was held in the mind of Dr Martin Luther King. ‘I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.’ His dream inspired millions to make a difference even when a whole world screamed at them, ‘yours is an impossible dream’. But dreams change things – companies, individuals and even societies. God has created us to have dreams.”*<sup>1</sup>

## creating a culture where people can dream

Bill Easum lists some helpful clues as to how we should create a church culture where imagination and innovation are encouraged:

1. Risk taking
2. Dreaming impossible dreams
3. Asking why
4. Being curious as to why things don't work or what it would take to make something work
5. Thinking outside the box
6. Doodling
7. Brainstorming
8. Play 'what if...'
9. Letting the inner child out to play with dangerous ideas
10. Doing away with too many rules that clutter the church culture<sup>2</sup>

Two important questions emerge at this point: what happens in your church culture when someone has a good idea, and what systems does your church have in place that encourage the development of new ideas?

## serve other people's vision

Before you can expect people to serve your vision, you will need to serve someone else's vision, and keep doing this always. If people see you serving others, they will be inspired to do so themselves, and you will find through all your life the joy of serving another person's vision at the same time as people are serving yours. This will enable you not to get locked up in small things, but having a large view of the world and benefiting from the breadth and faith of other anointed ministries.

## faith

In laying down the vision for a church, you are not making a list of the things you are hoping God *may* do, but rather you are making a statement about what God has promised and therefore what you have faith he *will* do.

*“The most famous dream in the world was held in the mind of Dr Martin Luther King... His dream inspired millions to make a difference even when a whole world screamed at them, ‘yours is an impossible dream’.”*

# The Application

Use the following to help you apply the information in the last section to your own situation:

- 1 What steps have you taken to recruit people to your church planting team?
- 2 How much has the apostolic team helped you in this process? If there is a need for more people to join the team, how can they help recruit new pioneers?
- 3 The pressure to gather and recruit can often get in the way of supporting your family. What steps have you taken to help your family settle into their new situation?
- 4 Where a new language has to be learnt, how are you making sure that you, and all your family are progressing in this?
- 5 What steps have you taken to make new friends? How are you doing?
- 6 Hospitality is important to pioneering. How much is your time taken up in this? How much is your home being used, and does this adversely affect your family?
- 7 What time commitment are you giving to prayer? Are the new people devoted and giving themselves in prayer to see the pioneer church plant succeed?
- 8 What should be the focus of your first group?

<sup>1</sup>Rob Parsons *The Heart of Success* p.98

<sup>2</sup>Bill Easum *Leadership on the Other Side* p.57-58



## Becoming Members

1.4 Establish Membership	25
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# Becoming Members

## 1:4 ESTABLISH MEMBERSHIP open to all?

Is your first group open to anyone? This is one of the first decisions you have to make as you church plant. When there are only two of you and you are desperate to grow, you will probably answer yes, but this response can leave you with some interesting problems. For example, as you begin to gather, some of the new people might not share your vision and values, yet they happily come along to the group week by week and you enjoy having them. However, you are increasingly aware that they seem to be pulling in a different direction to the rest of the group. It is important therefore to establish in your mind what you are trying to achieve during these first few months, as this will help determine what you do with those you first gather and the ground rules for allowing them to join you.



**W**hen people begin to pioneer a church, they usually fall into one of two categories with regard to vision. The first is those to whom God clearly gives a very specific vision right at the beginning. This was how it was with Manchester – I knew from the first time I visited the city that God had called me to plant twenty churches.

The second category into which many pioneers fall, is those who find themselves starting with nothing more than a vision simply to build a church. This can in itself seem overwhelming. When I moved to Swanley where there was already a group of eighteen people, my main thoughts were whether I could even lead those people, and perhaps multiply to a church of fifty. Long-term vision was not something I had considered. I could have told you something of the sort of church we were trying to build, but I never had any specific vision statement or any quantifiable goals such as in Manchester. This is how it will be for many, but as you begin to gather, it is important to keep asking God where you are going – the clearer you can be, the easier it will be for your first members to ‘buy into’ what you are doing.

### grace to dream

We need God’s grace to dream big dreams - to lift our eyes beyond what we now see and to start dreaming about what he will do in our town or city. If we only dream about what we might achieve, then our vision will be very small, therefore we must keep asking God to give us a vision which captures his heart and his purposes for his church in the place we live.

God gave Noah a massive vision to build an ark, but he also gave him very specific dimensions and instructions, so that in his mind Noah could see the finished ark before he had begun. This meant that he could stand against all the ridicule because he knew that one day his dream would become a reality.

Walt Disney had a huge dream but he died before it came to pass. Many thought that this was very sad and said, “if only Walt Disney could have seen Disney World”, but the reply of those who knew him was, “if he had not seen it, we would never have built it.”

Bill Easum says “leaders have strong imaginations. Imagination is the ability to see clearly what doesn’t yet exist and to be able to articulate it so that others see it.”<sup>1</sup> They “dream and daydream. In their minds and hearts they go places most of us have never thought of and they take us with them.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bill Easum *Leadership on the Other Side* p.57

<sup>2</sup>ibid p.61

*“We need God’s grace to dream big dreams - to lift our eyes beyond what we now see and to start dreaming about what he will do in our town or city.”*



**Becoming Members**

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# Becoming Members

## 1:5 DEFINE VISION

Proverbs 29:18 says, *“where there is no vision, the people perish”* (KJV). It is so important to have a vision of what God wants to build. Yonggi Cho, when addressing an audience of young pastors challenged them, *“Show me your vision, and I will show you your future.”*



**T**he main goal at this stage is to communicate your vision and values and this will give you the freedom to challenge people to be committed to the new church on your terms. By getting to know people on this basis you can then start your first home group knowing that everyone will be pulling in the same direction. Adding people in this way will also have established a model for the future.

### bringing people into membership

When people are thoroughly grounded in the vision and values and have been consistently joining with you, the pioneer leader and apostle need to spend some time with the group to find out where they are. With regard to the questions you ask, it is important to be open to God’s leading – take the example of Paul meeting a group for the first time in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). His line of questioning immediately gave him a clear picture of the situation, and enabled him to apply the appropriate teaching and ministry. The bottom line is, you need teachable, humble people, and sometimes human insight alone is not enough to find out what is really going on in people’s hearts. Some may struggle with some of the things they have heard, but if you sense they are teachable then you can go ahead and bring them into membership. Others will say a hearty *“amen”* to all you have taught and even say such things as, *“we have been waiting years for this”*, yet in your spirit you may feel that these people are not teachable.

When someone is coming into membership, you need to acknowledge publicly that these people have now committed themselves to the church (it should be noted however, that when you bring people in publicly, you must also give an explanation to the church if they move on).

### helpful process

For those recognising that the church is becoming their spiritual home and wanting to be a fully participating member, we recommend using the following checklist to ensure all necessary steps are taken.

#### 1. ‘Welcome’ form (see appendix 1)

Hopefully most people will fill in this form when they first begin to come amongst you - as it simply gives you their details to go on a contact list. This will probably seem unnecessary and too formal for the very first people you gather, but if you want to start a record on computer you need people’s signed permission to do so.

*“...Others will say a hearty “amen” to all you have taught and even say such things as, ‘we have been waiting for years for this’, yet in your spirit you may feel that these people are not teachable.”*



**2. Vision & Values**

Ensure the prospective member has thoroughly understood the vision and values of the church you are building.

**3. Membership form (see appendix 2)**

Ask the prospective member to fill out the Church Membership form, making sure that all the sections are filled in. Where another church has been attended, previous church leaders must be contacted to ensure that there are no unresolved issues.

**4. Meeting the pioneer leader and apostle**

For those wishing to become members this is an opportunity to discuss any issues they may have, and for the leaders to be sure that the prospective members are fully committed to the vision and values of the church.

**5. Welcome**

Announce to the whole group when new people come into membership so that they are publicly made welcome.

*“Where another church has been attended, previous church leaders must be contacted to ensure that there are no unresolved issues.”*

NOTES

A large rectangular area for taking notes, enclosed by a hand-drawn border. It contains three small ovals at the top, a horizontal line, and a large oval at the bottom.