

Pioneer Church Planting: Ten practices that facilitate Christ-ward movements



1. Work through 'persons of peace' whom God has prepared.

Start with anyone who (a) welcomes gospel workers and (b) brings others together. Expect God to draw others by his own love and power.

Let the original, apostolic gospel spread through family and community networks.

Discover: (a) Acts 11:11-18; (b) Acts 16:13-15, 40; (c) Acts 16:25-34; (d) Acts 17:1-7; (e) Acts 18:5-8.

Discuss: Where and how did Jesus' apostles find persons of peace? Describe these persons.

Demonstrate: Read **Luke 10:6, 10**. Have two volunteers find persons of peace amongst the participants.

Factoid: Persons of peace are as likely to seek you out, as you are to find them.



2. Plant clusters of growing cells and tiny congregations.

Start several new gatherings at the same time in a same community.

Promote inter-group fellowship early on. Hold periodic celebration events.

Coach several new leaders from the start.

Discover: (a) Acts 2:42-47; (b) Acts 10:24, 44-48; (c) Acts 14:21-24; (d) Romans 16:3-5, 10-11; (e) Col. 4:12-17

Discuss: In what ways did the apostles of Jesus start and maintain clusters of churches?

Demonstrate: Read **Acts 14:21-24**. Diagram several steps of the "Pauline Cycle."

Factoid: Rural movements usually start in *family* systems; urban movements through *friendships or workmates*.



3. Appoint and coach provisional elders on the job.

Develop indigenous leadership, from the start.

Meet with new leaders regularly for as long as they need your help.

Provide transferable lessons that shepherds can pass on to their flocks.

Discover: (a) Luke 10:1-7; (b) Acts 16:1-5; (c) Acts 20:17-21; (d) 2 Timothy 1:13-14, 2:1-2; (e) Titus 1:5-9

Discuss: What were some ways in which Jesus and the apostles trained new church leaders?

Demonstrate: Illustrate an imitable way in which new church planters can coach new leaders.

Factoid: Face-to-face coaching, punctuated with occasional seminars, remains a church-planter's main activity.



4. Teach group obedience to Jesus' commandments.

Foster bible discovery, ample discussion, group decisions, and group memory.

Sometimes delay baptism till household members can come to Christ together.

Seek to grow a 'critical mass' that can resist mild and severe ostracism.

Discover: (a) John 14:15-16, 15:12-14; (b) Acts 2:37-41; (c) Acts 2:42-43; (d) Acts 2:44-47; (e) Acts 4:32-37

Discuss: Which specific commandments of Jesus did new, little, apostolic churches obey from their start?

Demonstrate: Train for "Group Bible discovery," to foster Bible learning and obedience in new churches.

Factoid: God adds new believers to cells and churches that empower everyone for loving obedience to Jesus.



5. Work with each community separately for a time.

Allow new cells and churches to emerge in which folk 'feel at home.'

Raise up willing workers within existing social webs and family networks.

Adjust methods and forms to keep them imitable and culturally acceptable.

Discover: (a) Matt. 10:5-6; (b) Acts 1:6-8; (c) Acts 11:11-18; (d) Acts 15:17-20; (e) Revelation 7:9-12.

Discuss: In what ways did Jesus and his apostles respect ethnicity?

Demonstrate: Three levels of authority in choice of methods: Jesus' commands, apostles' practices, tradition.

Factoid: The gospel spreads most rapidly within existing family and social relationships.



6. Encourage believers to remain with their kin.

Avoid extraction evangelism and foreign-led events.

Seek to evangelize whole households and entire communities.

Teach family love and solidarity, helping to resolve relational problems.

Discover: (a) Luke 10:5-9; (b) Romans 12:16-21; (c) Colossians 3:18-23; (d) Titus 2:1-9; (e) 1 Peter 3:1-2, 7-9.

Discuss: In what ways did Jesus and his apostles win households and build families?

Demonstrate: Illustrate two ways in which to work with households (extraction and solidarity).

Factoid: The strongest churches consist of one or more extended families within their ethnic community.



7. Foster a constant stream of new disciples.

Let seekers discover the original, apostolic Good News.

Keep evangelistic methods biblical, affordable, acceptable, accessible and imitable.

Train all new believers to tell the Good News, and to make obedient disciples.

Discover: (a) Luke 24:44-48; (b) Acts 2:22-24, 38-39; (c) Acts 3:13-15; (d) Acts 10:38-43; (e) 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Discuss: What are the essential elements of the original, apostolic Good News?

Demonstrate: Find methods to share the Good News, such as telling Bible stories with pictures.

Factoid: More folk come to Christ where believers 'sow' the gospel abundantly.



8. Emphasize brotherhood amongst believers.

Develop a style of worship suitable to small gatherings.

Provide for both small-group life and big-group celebration.

Promote activities between cells and between congregations.

Discover: (a) Matthew 5:21-24; (b) Romans. 12:9-16; (c) 1 Cor. 14:26-31; (d) 1 Cor. 16:1-5; (e) Ephesians 4:1-6.

Discuss: In what practical ways can cells and congregations express their essential unity?

Demonstrate: Coach leaders for inter-group coordination (groups meet each other's needs).

Factoid: The most effective way in which to Christianize a population remains a continual planting of churches.



9. Let churches contextualize God's truth.

Distinguish between external forms (uniformity) and 'worldview' meanings.

Encourage believers to search the Scriptures themselves for answers.

Remain in cross-cultural Kingdom work as a way to avoid our own syncretism.

Discover: (a) Matthew 23:23-26; (b) Mark 7:6-9; (c) Acts 14:11-15; (d) Acts 15:1-5; (e) Colossians 2:6-12

Discuss: In what ways can believers distinguish their cultural values from biblical truth?

Demonstrate: Find a cultural way by which to baptize (wherever your denomination or mission allows variety).

Factoid: Biblical truth 'contextualized' in cultural forms and local languages avoids most 'syncretism.'



10. Let new churches surpass their society's ideals.

Combine genuine compassion with evangelistic zeal.

Build strong families, and respond to community needs and emergencies.

Defend the weak and rescue those at risk.

Discover: (a) Matthew 5:20-22; (b) Matt. 25:33-36, 40; (c) 1 Cor. 10:31-33; (d) Titus 3:1-3, 8; (e) 1 Peter 2:13-17

Discuss: In what ways can Christ's followers become models of their society's highest ideals?

Demonstrate: Analyze the 'Cultural Onion': behavior, authority, experience, core beliefs.

Factoid: Churches that evangelize with social outreach plant more churches than do those with solid theology.