

MentorNet #35
15 STEPS FROM LUKE 10 TO PLANT HIGHLY
REPRODUCTIVE CHURCHES

Adapted from a forth-coming book by Victor Choudherie, MD

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We at MentorNet not only train, but we learn from others. In a recent training trip to northern India, we spent time with Dr. Victor Choudherie who, in his retirement, has spearheaded an indigenous movement of evangelism and church planting that has touched 1000s of homes in 100s of communities. Here is our take on his training from Luke chapter 10 by which novice Indian workers plant churches so well.

The goal for church planting movements is to reap an immense harvest. However, the number of labourers remains too few. Nevertheless, we have a clear job description that includes the following: (a) search out the strong man and destroy him; (b) find the “child of peace” whom God has prepared, (c) continually train more harvesters; and (d) reap the harvest. Our equipment is simple: power received through the Holy Spirit. The Lord of the harvest left us the following instructions.

- 1. GO TWO BY TWO:** Go empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). Take no excess baggage and do not depend on financial means. Go as lambs among wolves, evil spirits led by a “strong man”. Spy out the land, moving quietly and prayerfully. Focused prayer-walking will reveal entry points into the strong man’s house. Remember that you are on a search-and-destroy mission. Luke 10:1, 4; see Num. 13:1-5.
- 2. PRAY:** There are at least five kinds of prayers you are to employ:
 - (1) Ask for the nations (people groups or ethnic communities) of the locality, because God has asked you to do so (Psalm 2:8).
 - (2) Pray to the Lord of the harvest for labourers (Matt. 9:37-38).
 - (3) Bind the “strong men.”
 - (4) Pray that the Lord will lead you to a “child of peace” (Matthew 10:11).
 - (5) Bless all the families in that location (Genesis 12:3) by planting a house church.
- 3. BIND THE STRONGMAN:** Destroy all strongholds that hold folks in bondage, such as centers of occult, alcoholism, drugs, pornography, movie theatres, smuggling, atheism, idolatry, worship of money, and the “idiot box” (TV). God wants you to plunder the possessions of the strongman (the devil) which include families, property and wealth, and make them Christ’s possessions. (Matt. 12:29)
- 4. FIND A HOUSE OF PEACE:** Finding the “bayit shalom,” or “peaceful home” is central to the strategy of reproductive church planting. It will be your operational base from where you will launch out to establish the kingdom of God. Jesus was a Jewish rabbi who trained Jewish disciples in Jewish homes within the Jewish culture. The “house of peace” is the most contextual place for making disciples in their own culture. Persons are His tools, and the “house of peace” is the place where He will transform ordinary folks into extraordinary channels of His grace.
- 5. EAT, DON’ T JUST MEET:** Bless every family as you prayer walk their neighbourhoods. (Genesis 12:3). Keep on prayer walking, binding, loosing, and blessing until a “person of peace” welcomes you into his home. Eat and sleep there. You expect this family to join the household of God. Therefore, behave like a member of the household and not like a formal religious visitor (Eph. 2:19). Do not go from house to house amongst unbelievers (Matthew 10:5). When there are enough believers in the locality, then you can go from house to house (Luke 10:5-8; Acts 20:20). Like Cornelius and Lydia, the “children of peace” are often God-fearing and financially well off, such that they are able to feed you and take care of you and your companions. They may not yet

be Christians, so, once you find them, it is your task to bring them into the fold and to establish a church in their house.

6. **WAGE SPIRITUAL WARFARE:** The “children of peace” know the local people and will gather into their house their friends and relatives who can be redeemed from the evil one. As they come, first expel demons and pray for the sick (Matt. 10:8) as Jesus did everywhere he went, and heal folks’ diseases. Only then did Jesus teach. Likewise, when Philip the evangelist went to Samaria to preach, the demons came out with a loud voice and the sick were healed. In the New Testament churches were not planted without a “power encounter” that produced a healthy awe of the Lord. Folks will then ask, “What shall we do?” (Acts 8:5-6). Almost the first thing to teach them is spiritual warfare, lest their expelled demons return with seven more deadly spirits. If new believers cannot protect themselves, then their condition will become worse than before. An identifying mark of true believers is that they can expel demons (Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17).
7. **MAKE DISCIPLES:** Discipleship does not require going to Bible school and then finding a religious job. Jesus modelled a life-style of disciple-making by living with his disciples, eating the same food, wearing the same clothes and sharing the same facilities. Jesus taught his disciples by casting out demons, healing the sick, and identifying with the powerless. Discipleship for us, too, requires laying down our life for both the friendly and the unfriendly. Hebrew 6:1-2 furnishes a syllabus of six essential topics of foundational teaching. These include repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment. Disciple-making is a process and the end-product is a disciple who can faithfully pass on the teachings and skills that he has received to others. (2 Tim. 2:2)
8. **BRING FOLKS TO REPENTANCE:** John preached, “*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt. 3:2), as did Jesus at the start of His ministry (Matt. 4:17). His final words to His disciples were: “*Repentance and the remission of sins will be preached to all nations in His name*” (Luke 24:47). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter thundered, “*Repent and let everyone be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Repentance results in a change of mind, purpose and action.
9. **MAKE REPENTANCE A PROCESS:** The *Old Testament* process was this:
 - (1) Let each seeker confession their sins to two witnesses.
 - (2) Restore relationships with wronged persons by restitution. (It is not enough merely to say “I am sorry”.)
 - (3) Take a bath of purification in a nearby pool.
 - (4) Restore relationship with God by offering a ram as a sacrifice (Num. 5:6-8; Matt. 5:22-24), for “*without the shedding of blood there would be no atonement*” (Lev. 17:11).
 - (5) Enter the Temple precincts and pray (Psalm 96:8; 100:4).

In the New Testament, repentance requires the same steps, although the bath of purification is now called “baptism”, and instead of a ram, we offer ourselves as a spiritual offering (Rom. 15:16). Thus, making disciples starts with repentance, for “*the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart, which He will not despise*” (Ps. 51:17). New disciples must confess all their sins layer by layer, like peeling an onion. Hidden sins will render believers ineffective. Any curses that have been passed down from one generation to another must also be identified and broken in Jesus’ name. (Exodus 20:5)
10. **BAPTIZE WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY:** In Judaism, Jews who had committed a sin and Gentiles who intended to convert to Judaism would come to a sacred font for a bath (baptism) of purification in the presence of two or three witnesses, but without the presence of a priest. Baptism served as a sign of one’s repentance and of one’s covenant with God.

In New Testament times, folks can take their “bath of purification” anywhere, in ponds, rivers, bathtubs and private pools. Nowhere in the New Testament is the authority to baptize delegated to an elite class of people. Every believer, regardless of age or gender, stands commissioned to

baptize (Matthew 28:19). And baptisms described in the New Testament took place on the same day that one repented and confessed one's faith in the Jesus as Lord. Delaying baptism often results in a diminished harvest of souls. (Acts 19:5-6)

11. **TEACH OBEDIENCE:** To obey Jesus means to come under His authority. New believers must defect from the Devil, their previous master. As members of the household of God, they are to enjoy fellowship together, eating together just as a family does. Eating together helps to break down barriers in societies that are riddled with caste and status, with racism and denominationalism. Teaching must lead to an apostolic commissioning of Christians, by challenges them to go and make disciples of all nations. They also learn to intercede with God, just as our Lord Jesus has been doing for the last 2,000 years. (Acts 2:42; Heb. 7:25)
12. **SHARE MATERIAL BLESSINGS:** New believers must learn to share their material belongings from day one, like the poor widow who gave her last coins for the kingdom. Poverty is a curse (Mal. 3:8-12; Deut. 28:48) that can be broken more by giving than by receiving. Spiritual conversion leads to financial conversion. (Acts 5:2)
13. **START A HOUSE CHURCH:** Let believers participate openly and freely as 1 Corinthians 14:26-31 requires, rather than leading from up front. Sit in a circle and encourage believers to share their dreams, visions, prophecies, and revelations. Prophecy includes edification, exhortation, and comforting (14:3). Emphasize the "one-another" commands, which appear over 50 times in the New Testament. Make sure that everyone participates and that meetings are not "hogged" by a few compulsive talkers (Say, "Let's hear from others who have not yet spoken.") Encourage believers to multiply from the beginning by sharing their new-found faith with their extended family and co-workers, on the farm, at work, during leisure times, at school, in the kitchen, wherever two or three gather in His name. Church planting must become a movement of ordinary folks who participate actively. (Matt. 18: 20)
14. **EQUIP WORKERS:** The mandate of the Universal Church is worship, and the best way to glorify God is to make disciples (John 15:8). Invite in prophets, apostles, teachers, and others from the network of churches in your region. Doing so will soon reveal the giftedness in your churches while creating a bond of unity in the city. Without the work of apostles and prophets, there would be no church planting activity (Eph. 2: 20; 4:11-12). Equipping is done not merely by transferring knowledge and information. It includes imparting Biblically-sound church planting skills along with authority to baptize and to serve the Lord's Supper. Instead of lecturing, use the highly interactive, open format of the apostles who saturated the region from Jerusalem to Rome and beyond, in record time.
15. **SEND THEM OUT:** Fast, pray, and lay hands on willing workers, and, like Jesus, say, "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you*" (Acts 13:1-3; John 17:18). After you have fathered a healthy church, bless and send its members. It is time for the bride to go and reproduce.

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