

## Road Map of SEND International Church Planting: Goals and Phases

The goal of Church planting (CP) in SEND International is to glorify God by establishing reproducing communities of faith among the unreached. This document is intended to serve as a roadmap to assist an area or team prayerfully discern the approach best suited to their local context.

### GETTING STARTED WITH THE CP ROADMAP AS A TEAM

- 1) Team members and leader(s) can use the Roadmap as a basis for planning, perspective and celebration.
- 2) Teams can use this roadmap as a starting point for team discussions and strategy formation.
- 3) Team members can use the Roadmap to know what phase the work is at, and what activities are most strategic at the present time.
- 4) Team members can share specific answers to prayer and contacts' progress in spiritual journey using scale for collaboration, mutual encouragement and prayer. Note: Connect and Pray is shortened to C&P, but the similar acronym, CP stands for Church planting.

(For more information on using the Roadmap in your team, see Appendix A on p. 9)

### THE GOAL

The goal of Church planting (CP) in SEND International is to establish reproducing churches among the unreached. The phases described in this document can serve as a guide map in this process.



First of all, what are we planting? While many definitions exist, let's start with this one: the local Church is a group of believers led by spiritually qualified shepherds, affirming their relationship to the Lord and each other by observance of the Lord's Supper, committed to prayer and the authority of the Word of God in doctrine and practice, gathering regularly for worship and the study of the Word, practicing mutual ministry, and turned outward to the world in witness. We seek the planting of churches that:

1. Prioritize prayer in principle and practice, gathering regularly in worship, prayer, teaching and communion.
2. Accept the Bible as their final authority, true to the teaching of Christ in obedience and his gospel of grace.
3. Have recognized servant leaders who lead by example, equip and empower believers for ministry and network with other like-minded fellowships.
4. Are developing loving relationships and authentic community, mutually encouraging and challenging one another to live the truth and building one another up in love.
5. Are living as fellowships that demonstrate God's redemptive power in the world, being reconciled to God and to one another. Multiplication is evidence in every aspect of community life.
6. Are engaging the lost by living compelling lives and giving compelling invitations, seeing people come to faith, living out the gospel and inviting them into fellowships.
7. Are burdened to see the glory of God spread to all peoples in accordance with Acts 1:8.

The phases outlined below are not so much intended to provide ready answers (church in a box), but help a group ask the right questions and prayerfully discern the specifics of establishing a church in their own context. Although each local situation is unique and multiple activities can happen at the same time and in

various orders, there is great merit in considering the following phases when establishing local fellowships. The phases reference the Connect and Pray tool which is summarized below.

**Connect and Pray (C&P)** is a tool designed to help you track the contacts God has given you as you strive to move them closer to Jesus. The following key summarizes the key elements and stages of that tool. See the C&P manual and Appendix B for a fuller description of this tool.

- “Presence” – The depth of your relationship with this contact (Familiar, Attender, Friend, Trust)
- “Proclamation” – The degree to which you have shared the Good News with this contact and whether they have decided to follow Jesus. (Dialog, Scripture/Story, Study, Follower)
- “Maturity” – Steps toward becoming a mature, reproducing follower of Jesus. (Growing, Serving, Sharing, Leading and Reproducing)

## THE 7 PHASES

Here is the basic structure. Each phase has these components:

- **Title.**
- **Definition.** A short description of what is to be accomplished in this phase.
- **“Threshold”.** This is the target point of the phase indicating when a team essentially moves from that phase onto the next phase. For example, a team in Phase 3 is discipling three or more believers. Once three or more believers begin meeting together in fellowship as the Body of Christ, the team is regarded as being in Phase 4. But that certainly does not mean individual discipling or mentoring stops. The threshold is a clear intermediate goal that should be out in front of the team in a given phase.
- **Suggested Activities** that the team might consider for that phase.

### Phase 1: SEED Initiating presence by mobilizing prayer and the church planting team

The Seed phase begins with prayer and is comprised of all vital activities aimed at forming and preparing a CP team for its effectiveness in the CP location. The vision bearers spend much time in prayer, developing their vision/strategy, recruiting a team, securing stakeholder support as well as initial settling in the new location and preparation of the ground prior to sowing. In the target area, the forming team builds relationships, develops circles of influence and prayerfully looks for the “man or woman of peace” in the target area.

This will typically involve the C&P “Presence” level, “Familiar” and probably some “Proclamation” levels as well.

**THRESHOLD:** Phase 1 ends and Phase 2 begins when most of the CP team is settled in the community, target groups and strategies are confirmed and the team is ready to focus on evangelistic ministry.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

1. Develop a strong home prayer team, an extensive network of prayer-partners in your home areas who can regularly intercede for your work.
2. Identify a Team leader / vision bearer.
3. Confirm stakeholder/mother church support.
4. Location is approved by appropriate leadership (stakeholders or mother church).
5. Conduct ethnographic research in the target location for the church plant to learn about the local history, culture, as well as gathering demographic data.
6. Research practical life issues (e.g. housing, schooling, banking).
7. Research existing church planting efforts currently underway in target area, if any.
8. Recruit the right team. Envision the kind of team members and team you want.
9. Identify initial training needs for the team and see that these are carried out.
10. Determine how each team member will respond to the question, “What kind of a job do you have?”
11. Get the team to own the vision and strategy for the church plant, adjusting it as appropriate. Build your team unity and identity together.

12. Team prayerfully considers and adapts the SEND Connect and Pray (C&P, see below or Appendix B) for their local context. The team can discuss their particular philosophy of ministry and approach to church planting and how the phases may help inform the process. For example, are you mostly pursuing groups or individuals? How does that affect evangelism? Do you foresee a house church model, a cell model or a larger, central church? How does that affect your discipling of individuals?
13. Develop a personal evangelism “toolkit” (personal testimony, gospel presentation and evangelistic activities and studies) and an action plan for personal evangelism.
14. Members “land” and secure suitable housing.
15. Members learn how to function and enjoy life in the new environment and adapt and renew your devotional life and enable their family to do the same.
16. Members make a plan for regular rest and a day off.
17. Continue to develop your role in society (i.e. job, business, humanitarian project, etc.).
18. Develop your team life regarding relationships, communications, accountability, and mutual support. Develop a spiritual team life that sustains members. Team meetings should include prayer, time in the Word, and strategic planning.
19. Clarify roles for team women and men. Work through differing expectations (e.g. regarding mothers of young children, business facilitators, etc.).
20. Develop relationships of varying depths with many local people. Enable family members to do the same.
21. Pray for God to open the door to a “man or woman of peace”.
22. Bring redemptive elements into your relationships by being identified as a “spiritual person” in that context. Look for those who already know the Lord or are spiritually sensitive.
23. Seek opportunities to demonstrate God’s love for the people practically and culturally, standing alongside those in need in appropriate ways.
24. Form links with any others in your area who are engaged in ministry to your intended people group.

## **Phase 2: Sowing - Advancing proclamation by engaging the lost with the gospel**

The gospel message is contextualized into the local context. The whole team spends most of their ministry time abundantly sowing the gospel in word and deed both with individuals and connected groups. The goal of this phase is living out compelling lives and offering compelling invitations for people to become followers of Christ. Men or women of peace are identified and the gospel is shared within their group of contacts or friends.

The primary emphasis will be on “Proclamation” through its four C&P levels and will also probably involve some “Maturity”. “Presence” will also expand to new contacts along with the Proclamation.

**THRESHOLD:** The team is recognized as having moved to Phase 3 when members of the team are discipling a believer from the intended people group. The team continues to sow and break into new social networks, and model evangelism to the believers with multiplication at every phase.

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. Every day tell God you are available and ask Him to direct you to those in whose hearts He is working.
2. Cultivate faith to believe God will lead friends to Himself.
3. Model Christ’s life before your friends and in your relationships, especially when difficulties arise.
4. Grow in your understanding about what are people’s felt needs, as well as their spiritual obstacles and opportunities.
5. Train together in effective ways to communicate the Good News through bible stories and/or vital apologetics.
6. Learn to share key Biblical truths and promises in the language. Memorize key Scripture verses.
7. Share Jesus with many, and watch for openness to the gospel develop in friendships.
8. Evaluate team members’ abilities and gifting. Regardless of team members’ gifts, all can use their gifts evangelistically and contribute to the team’s overall outreach. Where helpful, two or three team members can work together, combining complementary skills (e.g. relationship-building with hospitality). Discern who from the team should be involved in which social networks.
9. Develop a strategy for reaching receptive people’s social and work-related networks.

10. Develop outreach tools and materials, bearing in mind different audiences (socially, men/women, children).
11. Tell bible stories to “gossip the gospel” encouraging new believers to share with their network.
12. Start a Bible Study with a friend and see it grow into his or her social network.
13. Regularly pray in Jesus’ name for those who are sick or have urgent needs. Foster a reputation as a spiritual person (or Christ follower as appropriate).
14. Learn what are the marks of a “man or woman of peace” (M/WOP), or “respected person” in the culture. Be attentive to Persons of Peace God brings into your life.
15. Identify one or more potential respected persons.
16. Begin to discern what the good news for this social network and the respected persons in it.
17. Somehow introduce “Jesus” into the conversation within 30 minutes of every new person you meet.
18. Follow up any leads regarding existing believers.
19. Every team member should develop multiple ways of meeting new people (e.g. clubs, sports, etc.).
20. Implement a systematic way within the team to stay focused and motivated in the invaluable job of sowing many seeds.
21. As you lead people to Christ, or you form relationships with existing believers, have them share with their friends right away. Invite faithful ones to a deeper discipling relationship.
22. Multiply yourself through modeling, encouraging observation and release.

### **Phase 3: Seedling - Fostering maturity by discipling three or more believers from the target group**

The team works with young believers to establish them in Christ, in obedience to the word and in discipling others right from the start. Progress is made toward gathering the believers in appropriate ways. Progress toward gathering will likely involve a variety of preparatory activities (e.g one-off get-togethers, building bridges with believers, etc.).

All three aspects, “Presence”, “Proclamation” and “Maturity” will advance at this point with various contacts. The primary emphasis of the team will be on the “Maturity” of the key contacts from “Growing” through “Sharing”.

**THRESHOLD:** The team moves to Phase 4 once there is a fellowship group of three or more new believers of the people group regularly meeting together. However, discipling never stops.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. Use a plan of Bible study for the believers’ personal growth and development.
2. The believer(s) learn and share Bible stories to impact life practices.
3. They come to understand the place of suffering in the Christian life (such as we see in I Peter).
4. Respond to sin by repentance and developing new patterns of life.
5. Live out Christ’s life in the extended family (e.g. Matthew 5-7).
6. Develop godly patterns in husband-wife relations including: godly submission and loving leadership, resolving conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation.
7. Develop and model godly patterns of child raising.
8. Model regular habit of turning to Scripture and prayer.
9. The believer(s) shares the good news with family and friends and God’s plan for Kingdom communities.
10. Help new believers break any occult and/or sinful involvement.
11. Where appropriate introduce local believers to each other with the aim of fostering trust and fellowship. Host one-off events (e.g. birthday parties) as a “safe” venue for trust relationships to form over time.
12. The church planters decide which believers should be gathered together in fellowship and which should be developed as starting points for separate fellowships.
13. Continually teach believers the New Testament concepts of fellowship and community, so that they will own the conviction of being linked with other believers in *ekklesia*. Help them obey Christ’s teaching about relationships with other believers, conceptually and in practice. A fellowship group is formed.
14. Begin to identify believers’ gifts and calling in the Kingdom.

15. Implement godly patterns of conflict resolution with you, the church planter, and with others.
16. Become familiar with God's plan for the extension of the Kingdom from the book of Acts.
17. Men disciple men and women disciple women.
18. Help the believer(s) develop how to present their identity in Jesus to family and friends.

#### Phase 4: Young Plant - Gathering believers together into a local covenant community

Work continues with the new community of faith—and especially with emerging leaders—in order for them to grow numerically, in personal and corporate *koinonia* maturity. This crucial phase includes them developing a group identity and mutual commitment to one another as the Body of Christ, and also grasping a vision for leading others to Christ and forming new fellowships, locally or in neighboring places. Generally speaking, the team is either working with a single fellowship at this point that they hope will grow to medium or large size, or else they are aiming at a network of small house fellowships. In the case of house fellowships, the numbers below are evaluated collectively, in total. Often peacemaking becomes crucial here. Group decision dynamics are tested. Local leaders (influencers) emerge. The church planters begin taking a more background, empowering role, particularly in limited access contexts. This culminates with the believing community covenanting to be a church.

All three aspects, “Presence”, “Proclamation” and “Maturity” will advance with your contacts as well as with local emerging leaders and their next generation disciples. This phase culminates with the believing community covenanting to be a local fellowship.

**THRESHOLD:** Phase 4 ends and Phase 5 begins when the fellowship reaches critical mass in both breadth and depth. This looks different in different contexts but represents a sustainable number of core family units.

**GROUP COMMITMENT:** The local believers have committed to one another and see their assembling together as an expression of being a local church (using whatever word is most suitable for *ekklesia* reality).

**SIZE:** This is context dependent, but around 10 or more believers of the people group are regularly involved, including older believing children. This does not necessarily mean that meetings average 10 or more, just that there is regular involvement of the 10+.

**BREADTH:** 3 or more married heads of households, and 2 or more other mature adults, of local believers regularly involved (whether or not their spouses are believers, though that is clearly stronger).

**LEADERSHIP:** At least 2 key believers who seem to be “elders in the making”, assume more and more shepherding and overseeing, and are recognized as leaders by the others.

**STRENGTH:** Some believers are baptized and have persevered, maintaining their faith and their “confession of Christ before men” (Mt.10:32). Believers regularly share their faith; prayer and planning have begun for starting a sister fellowship.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

1. The community is meeting together regularly for worship, fellowship, instruction, and prayer. Passages such as Acts 2:42-47 are studied as an example to follow.
2. Except in the case of movement approaches, it is not uncommon for church planters to do substantial teaching and leading in the group early on, depending on the maturity of the believers and the group.
3. Older believers determine appropriate criteria for membership in the community.
4. Older believers understand and model Biblical “one anothers” which define community.
5. Believers learn to break previous or active occult involvement of new members. (See Acts 19:11-20)
6. The community celebrates the Lord's Supper.
7. The believers are doing the work of evangelism among their family and friends.
8. Older believers disciple new believers.
9. Older women believers disciple newer women in Titus 2 skills and other needs.
10. Believers learn to support each other when persecution and hard times occur.

11. Believers develop an attitude of sacrificial generosity toward the poor and needy, particularly to other believers in need. They begin to seek opportunities to demonstrate practical ways to share Christ's love for those in need.
12. Community meetings are organized by believers. Older believers trained to lead community meetings (various components). Certain mature or gifted believers given opportunities to teach the Word.
13. Appropriate male/female roles in public meetings determined and practiced.
14. Mature believers are emerging and begin functioning as shepherds.
15. Growth in godliness in the home of emerging leaders sets the pace for the community.
16. Multitude of gifts are encouraged and developed for the edification of the community.
17. Peacemaking skills exercised by the community. Believers forgive and forbear as normal hurts occur.
18. Past family hurts explored and forgiven.
19. Confronting, exhorting, reproofing of erring members.
20. Erring members are confronted, exhorted, reproofed and helped. Those persisting in sin receive church discipline according to the NT.
21. Church leaders teach stewardship, develop a budget and support their own ministries.

### **Phase 5: Fruit bearing - Developing servant leaders and potential elders**

This phase is a continuation in the growth of body life and Kingdom commitment in the new *ekklesia*. The church planters now focus primarily on discipling multiple leaders, especially potential elders. The group begins to own evangelism, shepherding and mutual care as expressed in the covenant. The church planters intentionally take a lower profile in the fellowship through the process of modeling, assisting, watching and leaving. They are also looking to recognize those believers with possible evangelistic gifts who are active in sharing the gospel and desire to initiate church planting ministry in other locations. Discipleship chains are set up in the fellowship.

While all three aspects, "Presence", "Proclamation" and "Maturity" continue, the first two, Presence and Proclamation, will likely wane in the life of the church planter, while the greatest emphasis and prayer is placed on the emerging leaders and the Maturity of their next generation contacts. The phase culminates with public installation of elders, who would likely be the ones God has used most in helping others along the maturity process.

**THRESHOLD:** Phase 6 begins with the public installation of 2 or more elders from the people group for the church (or network of house churches). The church has embraced a Great Commission vision. The church planting team takes on an increasingly background and support role.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. If not already in place, the church commits to times of corporate prayer, acknowledging their full dependency on Christ as His Body.
2. Church life and leadership concepts are taught and implemented. Believers determine ways to develop healthy biblical community life.
3. Intense teaching on reproducing communities. Community embraces goal of reproducing and networking.
4. Local believers and church planters look for new men and women of influence around whom to start new fellowships.
5. Older, more mature believers trained to take leadership of community gatherings. Believers take responsibility for Biblical instruction. Several given chance to "try out" leading meetings, teaching the Word, and leading the body in worship.
6. Respective avenues for men's and women's leadership identified and promoted.
7. Mature believers preside at the Lord's Table.
8. If there is one strong leader, he is taught and implored with the biblical necessity of plural leadership in the church and enlisted to make that a reality. Their broader ministry should be encouraged in multiple fellowships. This may also apply to non-elders, including female leaders.
9. The leaders' role in conflict and peacemaking in the community is taught and practiced.

10. The spiritual gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12 are recognized and appropriate forums are established for developing these gifts.
11. Church planters encourage believers with possible evangelistic gifts to share the gospel boldly and start ministries in other locations, with substantial prayer support from the body.
12. Church planters select elder candidates in consultation with the believers. Those who agree to undertake this process are introduced to the church as “elder candidates”, and the Body is urged to help.
13. Elder candidates begin the special process of character growth, examination of motives, and intensive learning about *ekklesia* and shepherding.
14. Meetings of leaders begin with church planters present. Team spirit develops amongst leadership. [Men and women leaders may meet separately or together, as appropriate.]
15. Conflicts about leadership appointment are dealt with. Those not selected may need special encouragement.
16. Church planter sometimes absent themselves from leadership meetings.
17. Elders formally and publically installed.

### Phase 6: Mature Seed – The church is under indigenous leadership

The church is now led by those who belong to the people group and are permanent residents in the area. The church planters (CP’ers) may still be involved in some of the outreach and training ministries of the church, but the pastoring and primary leadership roles in the church are filled by those who have been chosen by the new church. Discerning the will of the Lord by leaders and community taught and practiced. There are special activities, parties or retreats outside regular meetings for outreach and fellowship.

The “Presence” and “Proclamation” activities will continue to decrease by the CP’er, unless they are done to help train and equip local church members. The CP’er supports the new leaders as needed to help them succeed in their new roles as leaders and as these in turn develop other leaders. This would be done in a way that focuses the attention and authority on the new leaders, not the CP’ers. During this phase, the church planters move on to serve in another area (possibly another church plant).

**THRESHOLD:** Phase 7 begins when the church sends out some of their own people to plant another church, either in their local area or cross-culturally.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

1. Church planters continue to cast vision for reproduction.
2. Church planters train people for reproduction through context appropriate means (such as short term teams, Kairos program, etc.).
3. Leaders-in-training spend time with the church planters in all sorts of contexts—not just teaching or worship settings—so that church planters’ behavior can be modeled in every setting.
4. The local elders fully assume shepherding and feeding responsibilities in the church, including protecting the faith and doctrine of the community (Titus 1:9).
5. Members are encouraged to develop and exercise their gifts for edification of the body.
6. Deacons are appointed, as needed, to help the elders.
7. Leaders cast vision to the congregation.
8. Leaders confront, exhort, reprove and help erring members with the goal of restoration. Those persisting in sin receive church discipline according to the NT.
9. Married believers are specifically helped in their marriage relationship and character issues by older believers or church planters.
10. Leaders look for new leaders in training to develop and mentor.
11. Some or most of the church planters withdraw from believers’ meetings and focus on starting new fellowships.
12. One or more church planter(s) remain involved, but adopt a lower profile.
13. Leaders pursue fellowship with other, like minded churches and leaders, perhaps forming a network of emerging leaders.

14. New leaders lead while the church planters are often absent from fellowship meetings.

### **Phase 7: Reproducing - The established church moves toward Acts 1:8 reproduction**

While multiplication is key in every phase and aspect of the growing fellowship, focus is now fully on helping the church(es) become reproductive in planting daughter churches and working toward CP movement. The church looks to penetrate other cohesive social networks laboring for a wider spread of the gospel, with an emphasis on church reproduction to other locations. The church planters often move on to initiate the CP process in another location. The “Presence”, “Proclamation” and “Maturity” activities will be initiated in successive new location.

**THRESHOLD:** In a sense, this phase never ends, as the ministry has endeavored to ignite a spreading of the gospel and multiplication of churches that becomes a movement. Church planters exit during phase 7.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. Develop vision developed for planting new churches in the local area.
2. CP'er(s) redefines relationship to leaders as coach, attending leadership meetings only when invited.
3. Great Commission vision matures towards recognizing, training and sending local evangelists and church planters to other cities, and even to other countries.
4. Guide and support evangelists to go out to other cities, towns or villages.
5. Send out indigenous church planting teams.
6. Start new gatherings in new contexts.
7. Ephesians 4:11-13 gifted believers regularly visit other churches and emerging fellowships seeking to strengthen the community and develop new leaders.
8. Leaders begin to network with emerging leaders of new gatherings including taking some responsibility for their training.
9. Teach and model peacemaking skills among leaders.
10. Formally recognize newer emerging leaders (e.g. new elders or deacons).
11. Elders (with church planter(s)) ordain new elders in the newer community.
12. Establish ongoing relationship between different communities and leaders.
13. Teach and model peacemaking skills between communities and leaders.

**\* This work is primarily based on the work of Dick Scoggins and James Rockford. For more info see their website, <http://www.churchplantingphases.com/>**

**\*\*Any questions about the Roadmap or its use can be directed to Ted Szymczak at [TSzymczak@send.org](mailto:TSzymczak@send.org)**

## APPENDIX A

### HOW THE CHURCH PLANTING GOALS AND PHASES CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR TEAM

This CP roadmap is intended as a guide in helping an area or team prayerfully discern and share the best way to plant a church within their context. Such a unified local vision can help each one to know how they can best contribute to the mutual effort. The Phases are a broad description of the church planting process. Though they can be a guide in planting a specific fellowship, the emphasis is on planting multiple and reproducing churches. The phases outline the general stages of establishing new local fellowships by winning people to Christ, gathering them together as His Body in that locale, and discipling them into a functioning, biblical *ekklesia* or *church*, leaving them both with indigenous leaders and a vision for spreading the gospel and reproducing churches locally and cross-culturally. These phases identify key *milestones* along the way. They take a team all the way from essential preparatory work to the planting of reproducing churches. The Phases are a unique sketch of how something that is humanly impossible is possible in the Lord.

It really helps to break up the overwhelming task into smaller pieces. As Nido Qubein said, “One of the greatest reasons people cannot mobilize themselves is that they try to do great things. Most worthwhile achievements are a result of many little things done in a single direction.”

Oftentimes, Apostolic teams envision planting large churches, an expanding network of smaller house churches, or even a full-blown church planting movement. As mentioned, planting churches that reproduce is crucial. Some teams operate in regions where the gospel has not yet made any inroads at all, and perhaps appropriately have smaller visions. However, there remains a certain minimum objective for all teams, even in the most resistant and unresponsive environment. This minimum is to establish a group of believers, of a minimum “critical mass” of size and diversity, committed to being the Body of Christ, under the eldership of at least two or three local elders, where those elders are recognized and operating, giving indigenous shepherding to the church. The point is, whether a team has huge goals or more modest goals, the goal is always church planting. That is a narrow aim. And that narrowness is intentional in the CP Phases.

The Church Planting Phases are a combination of two tools in one:

1. A MEASURE or *yardstick*. There are 7 clear phases, with definitions that endeavor to make as clear as possible what phase a team is at, and precisely when they will pass into the next phase.
2. A GUIDEBOOK. This is mainly the specific, numbered activities under each phase. While this is certainly not meant to be “church in a box”, nor a list of mandatory steps that all teams must do, it does seek to comprehensively identify most of the activities you should be focused on in each phase, and it gets you thinking ahead into the next phase. Regardless of what phase you are in as a team, the priorities for you at that time ought to be clear, and the CP Phases try to make that possible. We have found having a large number of possible activities under each phase especially helpful for teams in resistant soils who tend to try a few activities over and over again, often losing hope and creativity.

The Titles, Definitions and Thresholds comprise the “measuring tool” of the Church Planting Phases. The aim is to be as unambiguous as possible with regard to what phase a team is in at any given time, just like the lines on a ruler are not fuzzy but sharp. Even though a team will be at one particular phase, it is very common for ministry activities to be going on at various phases at the same time.

It is very common for a work to sometimes go backwards in the CP Phases. For example, a team can bring believers together in fellowship, thereby advancing to Phase 4. That group might eventually attain the maturity criteria at the end of Phase 4, and go on to Phase 5. Then suddenly persecution hits, or serious division and strife occur, and the whole thing falls apart. The work would then revert to Phase 4 or possibly earlier. Again, this is not unusual and should not surprise us.

The ministry activities under each phase form the “guidebook” tool for church planting. These suggested activities are meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. No team is going to do all of them, nor should they. The team should look them over together and discuss which ones are applicable, which ones are not, and how to proceed. They are especially helpful when the team is stuck at a phase and not making any forward progress.

The alternative to having and using a tool like this is to have no tool at all: No measuring rod to mark progress, no guidebook to suggest key activities. One of the most debilitating aspects of CP ministry is when you can’t see any progress. If a team has only a vague sense of where they are, where they’re going, and of movement—relying just on anecdotes or feelings or just endless activity—that is pretty demotivating.

#### To Clarify The Goal

“You cannot manage what you cannot measure” the saying goes. Vision-casting, goal-setting, planning and accountability have no place if a team does not have a clear sense of where they are going and how they are going to get there. Of course, if you don’t have a goal, then there is no possibility of failure. Considering there are 2 billion souls in unreached people groups who desperately need Christ, we need to embrace Jesus’ exhortation in the parable of the ten minas<sup>3</sup> where He urges risk-taking and *going for it*, for His sake. It is likewise true that “you cannot motivate what you cannot manage”. In the absence of a tool like the CP Phases, it is very hard for leaders to encourage and motivate church-planters in the task. When you can see a step or two ahead, you gain confidence. Faith is enhanced. As C.T. Studd said about faith endeavors in the Kingdom of God, “Things first look impossible. Then difficult. Then done.”

#### To Motivate

Many teams repeat together—almost mantra-like—at the beginning of every team meeting: “Where are we? Where are we heading?” After a while team members roll their eyes as it sounds a bit like a broken record. But the very positive message is driven home each week: We’re here for a purpose. We are going in this direction. God is going to use us to accomplish something concrete and amazing for Christ’s glory. The CP Phases become the vehicle for bringing this hope out into the open.

#### To Keep Focus

This paper isn’t long enough to enumerate all the distractions on the field that workers can get into OTHER THAN evangelism, discipling and church planting. These are interesting things, satisfying things; they are sometimes good things, and occasionally even necessary things. But much of the time they have the effect of causing the team to go in circles, to run in place; they create a kind of centrifugal inertia to just keep doing what they’re doing. An apostolic team does not want to become like a spinning top: lots of motion, but no forward progress. Scoggins\* relates his friend’s observation, “There are millions of dollars being spent on good projects in our country but one wonders how many of them are really distractions from the real task which we use to make ourselves feel useful because the real task is so hard and sometimes goes so slowly.” It is easy to spend thousands of hours in tentmaking pursuits while on the field. Some of that can be necessary and very positive in helping the worker’s role in society make sense to friends; some of it may not. It is said that there are three ways to waste our years: Do nothing. Do the wrong thing. Or do so many things that none of them have sustained impact. We are all in desperate need of focus, to be on-task with regard to whatever is the most important thing at that stage in our ministry. The CP Phases can be like the person who comes alongside those in the valley, points up to the crest of the mountain and says, “Remember, that’s where we’re headed. And here’s the way forward!”

Scoggins warns about the “Curse of the So-Thats”. We’re going to do this, **so that** this happens, **so that** that comes about, **so that** it helps cause this, all of which will ultimately help people come to faith, **so that** the church gets established. Isn’t it interesting that in the New Testament, the apostles didn’t have so many **so-thats**?

### To Focus Efforts and Expectations

So, a team can frequently review its aim and progress together using the Church Planting Phases. When it's clear to the whole team where the work is at and where it needs to go, then it's also easier for people to see how they personally fit in and what their particular contribution is according to their gifts. Conflicts are reduced. Expectations are equalized. Individual team members are not left behind wondering if they fit in. And there is at least a starting point for healthy discussion and debate about the way forward.

### To Clearly Communicate

Finally, the phases provide a common language to communicate easily with others about the work. E.g. "We were at Phase 4, but that fell apart, so we're back to Phase 3, following up the believers..." People know exactly what you mean.

### **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES**

Titus 1:5 [Paul to Titus] "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you..." This is a good example of the team having multiple Phase 4 and 5 church plants, with all of them hopefully moving toward Phase 7.

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 "Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia." Paul thus describes a promising Phase 2 that was aborted.

Acts 16 & Philippians 1:1 (Luke's exciting narrative of how the church in Philippi got started, and then Paul's later letter to all the believers there) This is a delightful portrayal of Phases 1-7 as it includes preparations, evangelism, discipling, gathering, developing leaders and the eventual appointment of elders. Another example of Phases 1-7 would be Paul's First Journey in Acts 13-14.

Acts 19:1-20. The Lord had previously prevented Paul and Silas from going toward Ephesus. But now in this third journey God's timing was right. Paul learned valuable lessons about working with urbanized Greeks, especially during his year and a half in Corinth. God linked up Paul with Aquila and Priscilla, and together they laid valuable groundwork in Ephesus. At that time the church became well planted through Phase 7 (as we learn from Acts 20:13-38). We also learn from Acts 19 and other passages how Paul based here for three years, and trained a variety of other church planters "so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (19:10), i.e. an extended Phase 7. One example of mobilizing "nationals" was probably Epaphras' successful church planting venture to Colossae, a hundred miles down the valley.

### **SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

As versions of the CP Phases have been around for several years now, a variety of misunderstandings have cropped up. So let us try to clear the air on some of these.

1. "The phases are a cookbook, a guaranteed recipe for success. A magic bullet." ANSWER: Of course, it is not. CP is more like an art, rather a science.
2. "The CP Phases cause us to depend less on God and more on ourselves." ANSWER: The team's need for creativity and ingenuity from the Spirit to find the keys that will unlock the doors in their particular context are not diminished in the slightest.
3. "The Phases result in a kind of homogeneity, or *cookie-cutter* approach to pioneer church planting." ANSWER: Diversity and experimentation are still very much alive and well among teams using the CP Phases! They are simply broad categories. They are *descriptive* of where you are heading, rather than *prescriptive* of an exact method of getting there.

4. “They are rigidly sequential, and therefore prevent the laying of a groundwork for *movement*.” ANSWER: On the contrary, any thoughtful and flexible usage of the CP Phases can help facilitate church planting movements. See FAQ #6 below.

It should be noted that while experienced church planters can more easily work in a multi-phase, non-sequential approach, younger teams are likely to really benefit from the simplicity of the Church Planting Phases. This is perhaps analogous to a master chef doing many things all at once in the kitchen in preparing a fancy meal, whereas a less experienced cook will carefully follow a recipe’s steps.

5. “The tool is specifically bound to the *house church* approach to church planting.” ANSWER: New fellowships in unreached people group contexts are almost always *underground* fellowships, at least at first. This influences toward a house church approach. However, the CP Phases are intended to be model-neutral, i.e. not tied to any particular model. They are currently used by teams employing the cell model, as well as those developing larger, central churches.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - FAQ’S**

1. Is it possible to skip phases?

*Yes, as described above.*

2. If you’ve jumped quickly ahead, does that mean you can now just skip certain previous things, like language?

*No. While the phases are broadly sequential for the overall work, the specific activities for individuals are not necessarily so. Those whose church planting jumps ahead still need to learn the language and culture well, as well as develop good patterns of evangelism.*

3. Is evangelism just one phase: you do it for awhile, then leave it?

*This approach is not recommended. The new church needs to see how boldly spreading the Good News is a vital part of following Christ, whatever ‘phase’ one is in. New churches that don’t have this in their ‘DNA’ become stale and stagnant. This is an example of the fact this is a “phase list”, in that evangelism is something that ought to be continued, and not just confined to one particular period of time. We need to be evangelizing until we exit, serving as examples to the flock, even if it is a minor part of what we might be doing at Phase 5, 6, and 7. Also certain members of the team may be exceptional evangelists and highly effective in training national evangelists. We do not want to shackle them to Phase 4 and 5 activities that they may be very poor at. Others on the team will have gifts in the areas that can cause groups to blossom and deepen.*

4. How can the Church Planting Phases be compatible with going after a church planting movement?

*As mentioned, the Phases can be misunderstood to be at odds with ‘CPMs’, but it doesn’t have to be that way. There is a strong emphasis on working with the end in view, and the groundwork for leadership development and reproduction can be laid as early as possible, even in Phase 2. George Patterson says “begin with the end in view”. The Phase list keeps the overall process and thus the end in view.*

5. Does the phase mark where the *team* is at or where a particular church plant is at? *Both. It is the highest point at which the team’s work is at, and is also very useful in describing groups. Let’s say a team has three church plants: one at phase 5, one at phase 6 and one at phase 7. You would say the team is at Phase 7, the most advanced of the three.*

6. Are the CP Phases just a tool for expatriate CPers?

*No, national church-planters are also using them.*

7. Does this tool foster a fleshly sense of competition between teams?

*Mission leadership can use the CP Phases to describe to each other where the ministries are at. In general it just helps to build mutual understanding. The result is a supportive fraternity of church planters rather than a competition.*

Anytime a tracking device such as the Seven Phases is developed it can be misused. We do not want to see it used as an enslaving, sequential, discreet formula that guarantees the planting of a church. Only Jesus can truly plant a church (Mt. 16:18) through His Holy Spirit and by His grace. We church planters are but midwives. But it is helpful to understand the patterns that God uses so that we can be co-operative as midwives.

## APPENDIX B

### TRACKING EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP IN A CHURCH PLANT: SCALES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Multiplication and particularly the multiplication of growing disciples is key to the growth of any church plant. How do you encourage and celebrate this growth without some way to measure and track growth? The Connect and Pray (C&P) scale is SEND's primary tool to help accomplish that end. The two other example scales are included as a supplement to aid the CP team in developing their context appropriate processes for birthing new fellowships.

#### SEND's Connect and Pray Scale with tracking

SEND teams use the Connect and Pray levels to track the progress of individual contacts of their team. This tracking system enables team members to report progress to supporters even when there are very few conversions. The system also provides encouragement, focus and accountability for team members. This tracking method encourages collaboration among team members working with different contacts because the members communicate with one another about what has been communicated and when. As a result of this system, members are more intentional in bringing the Gospel into relationships. The scale identifies 4 different levels of friendship and 4 levels of proclamation, followed by 5 levels of discipleship or maturity and culminating in a disciple leading a small fellowship of their own. The model is reproducible and the new disciples can use the same process with their friends.

#### **Notes for levels below:**

- Presence and proclamation happen at same time (see below). In their team meetings, team members share about the progress made with specific disciples, thus enabling mutual prayer and support in achieving the team's common church planting goals.
- Discipleship begins early in the process
- Belonging begins early – create belonging before belief
- Evangelism is more than proclamation – evangelism starts in early phase of proclamation

The levels are as follows:

#### **PRESENCE**

1. **Familiar**  
Individual or visitor at group activities (sports, outings, socials), student in class, basic conversation.
2. **Attender**  
Person invited to attend some event sponsored by team (literacy/ tutoring/ new mothers' class/ language helper /computer class, etc). Begin to develop connection.
3. **Friend**  
Meals together, regular visitation in home/dorm, workplace, counseling, socializing. Beginning of reciprocation. Emotional connection.
4. **Trust**  
Overnight in homes, traveling together, deeper level of companionship. Growing shared experiences.

#### **PROCLAMATION**

1. **Dialog**  
Spiritual dialogs of faith, conversations about each other's beliefs. Listening well rooted in humility. Exchange filled with good questions.
2. **Stories**  
Intentional sharing Bible stories on the prophets, parables, stories of God - fairly regular
3. **Study**  
Committed to a study group of 3-4 people (family members or close friends).
4. **Follower**  
Follower of Jesus the Messiah

## MATURITY

1. **Growing** - Study and follow 7 commands of Jesus, Personal Biblical growth, Baptism, Focused Study in the Word.
2. **Reaching** - Involved in tangible outreach to own community, acts of service, serving others.
3. **Storying** - Sharing the message of Jesus with others through stories of God
4. **Leading** - Guiding a group in the study and doing of the Word
5. **Generating** - Shepherding three generations of groups

### Supplemental Reference 2: the Basic Engel's Scale

- +5 Stewardship
  - +4 Communion with God
  - +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth
  - +2 Incorporation into Body
  - +1 Post-decision evaluation
- New birth
- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
  - 2 Decision to act
  - 3 Personal problem recognition
  - 4 Positive attitude towards Gospel
  - 5 Grasp implications of Gospel
  - 6 Awareness of fundamentals of Gospel
  - 7 Initial awareness of Gospel
  - 8 Awareness of Supreme Being, no knowledge of Gospel

### Supplemental Reference 3: Contextualized Engel's Scale

This adapted version was written by a SEND missionary while working in Ukraine with Russians who consider themselves either "atheist" or "Orthodox". Like the Engel's scale, it moves from negative to zero and then to positive numbers as the person progresses from no relationship to new life to disciple-maker.

- (-10) In a state of total rebellion against God
- (-9) Without any effective knowledge of salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus
- (-8) Has a misguided understanding of the Gospel (what it means to be a Christian is understood through the grid of Russian Orthodox faith)
- (-7) Is genuinely interested in learning more about the truth of the Gospel
- (-6) Understands some of the truths of the Gospel
- (-5) Is beginning to grasp the truths of the Gospel and the implications of a personal relationship with Jesus
- (-4) Has an awareness of their personal sin against a holy God
- (-3) Has an understanding that salvation is only through faith in Jesus and is only by the grace of God (as opposed to works and earning their own salvation)
- (-2) Has an genuine awareness of their personal need of a Savior in order to be forgiven and declared righteous through Christ
- (-1) Genuine desire to turn to Christ by faith
- (0) New Believer by faith and repentance

- (+1) Testimony of new believer given in church context
- (+2) Actively pursuing church membership (i.e. new believer/baptism class)
- (+3) Actively growing in their faith (prayer, giving, evangelism, etc.)
- (+4) Baptized in a local church
- (+5) Active growth continues (Christian character and Christ-likeness) as they comprehend the glory of Christ, God's grace, and the power of the Gospel
- (+6) Discovering and using spiritual gifts to serve
- (+7) Growing desire to be used by God to help others in their walk with Christ
- (+8) Seeking deeper development to serve and lead others
- (+9) Impacted by a deeper understanding of the Gospel and great desire to spread the Gospel and disciple others in the truths of the Gospel
- (+10) Leading others to Christ and helping others become disciple-makers