

Overview and Framework for Church Planting Activity

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World Impact School for Urban Cross-Cultural Church Planting
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Missionary activity always follows the same basic pattern but it can be described and understood at various levels of complexity. World Impact uses three different models to communicate the pattern of missionary church planting that is described in the Book of Acts.

The first and most basic way is to describe the process using three “E” words: Evangelize, Equip, and Empower. This is the basic framework of all missionary activity and is useful as an easily remembered statement of the essential parts of the church-planting process.

Secondly, we can speak about the PLANT model of missionary church planting. When we begin to plant churches a more complete statement of the principles outlined in “Evangelize, Equip, and Empower” becomes useful. World Impact uses the PLANT model as a way to more completely describe the process of church planting and yet preserve a model that is easily committed to memory and applied as a strategy.

Finally, the “Pauline Cycle” (as described by missiologist David J. Hesselgrave) is a fully developed analysis of the missionary activity described in the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Of the three models, it contains the most detail and separates out certain stages that are combined together in our PLANT model. It is harder to memorize and communicate but can be very useful for teams that are involved in detailed planning for upcoming stages of their church-planting activities.

As you can see, these three ways of talking about the biblical pattern for cross-cultural church planting do not differ in the content but only in their complexity: E-E-E (simplest), PLANT (more detailed), Pauline Cycle (most detailed). With that in mind, we could describe each model as follows:



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I. Evangelize, Equip, and Empower - *The Basic Framework of Missionary Activity.*

- A. EVANGELIZE - Prepare a missionary team to preach the Gospel and baptize converts into the Church.
- B. EQUIP - Teach the new converts to know God and his Word, to obey Jesus' commands, and to engage in Spirit-empowered evangelism and good works.
- C. EMPOWER - Nurture and release godly leaders who follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and equip the saints for the work of the ministry so that the new church becomes capable of reproducing itself without dependence on the missionaries.

II. PLANT - *World Impact's Core Model for Biblical Cross-Cultural Church Planting*

PREPARE

- Form and train a church-plant team.
- Pray.
- Do demographic and ethnographic studies.
- Select a target area and population.

LAUNCH

- Recruit and train volunteers.
- Make contact with the target population.
- Share the Gospel in word, in deed, and in power.

ASSEMBLE

- Form cell groups, Bible studies, etc. to follow up new believers, to continue evangelism, and to identify and train emerging leaders.
- Announce the birth of a new church to the neighborhood and meet regularly for public worship, instruction, and fellowship.

NURTURE

- Develop individual and group discipleship.
- Fill key roles in the church; identify and use spiritual gifts.

TRANSITION

- Transfer leadership to indigenous leaders so they become self-governing, self-supporting, and self-reproducing.
- Finalize decisions about denominational or other affiliations.
- Commission the church.
- Foster association with World Impact and other urban churches for fellowship, support, and shared mission.

III. The Pauline Cycle¹ - An Analysis of the Stages of Pauline Church Planting.



1. Missionaries Commissioned - Acts 13.1-4; 15.39-40; Gal. 1.15-16.

- Selecting and Sending
- Prayer
- Encouragement
- Training
- Support

¹ The "Pauline Cycle" terminology, diagram, and stages are taken from David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000).

2. **Audience Contacted** - Acts 13.14-16; 14.1; 16.13-15; 17.16-19.

- Courtesy Contact
- Community Contact
- Selective Evangelistic Contact
- Widespread Evangelistic Contact

3. **Gospel Communicated** - Acts 13.17-41; 16.31; Rom. 10.9-14; 2 Tim. 2.8.

- Method Contextualization
- Method Determination
- Media Selection
- Measurement Implementation

4. **Hearers Converted** - Acts 13.48; 16.14-15; 20.21; 26.20; 1 Thess. 1.9-10.

- Instruction
- Motivation
- Decision
- Confession

5. **Believers Congregated** - Acts 13.43; 19.9; Rom. 16.4-5; 1 Cor. 14.26.

- Belongingness
- Group Size
- Meeting Place
- Meeting Times

6. **Faith Confirmed** - Acts 14.21-22; 15.41; Rom. 16.17; Col. 1.28; 2 Thess. 2.15; 1 Tim. 1.3.

- Instruction
- Worship
- Service
- Witness
- Stewardship

7. **Leadership Consecrated** - Acts 14.23; 2 Tim. 2.2; Titus 1.5.

- Leadership Development
- Permanent Organization
- Scriptural Discipline

8. **Believers Commended** - Acts 14.23; 16.40; 21.32; (2 Tim. 4.9 and Titus 3.12 by implication).

- Withdrawal of Church Planter
- Transition of Leadership
- Continuation of Ministries

9. **Relationships Continued** - Acts 15.36; 18.23; 1 Cor. 16.5; Eph. 6.21-22; Col. 4.7-8.

- Missionary/Church Relationships
- Church/Church Relationships
- Church/Mission Relationships

10. Sending Churches Convened - Acts 14.26-27; 15.1-4.

- Understanding Mission
- Participation in Mission

At the Church Plant School we will look at these models in more detail and talk about ways in which they can be integrated and applied. In preparation for this time, it would be helpful for you to read the Scriptures associated with the Pauline Cycle and to jot down any questions you may have about the models and their application.