

CROSS-CULTURAL CHURCH PLANTING SERIES: BOOK 2



A SHORT GUIDE TO THE PREPARATION STAGE OF CHURCH PLANTING

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INTRODUCTION

This e-booklet is created by HIM's Ministries Department (ministries@byhim.org) with the aim of assisting individuals in the HIM family of churches who are considering cross cultural church planting as their next faith venture to fulfilling the Great Commission. This booklet focuses on the first stage – the Empty Field – of the four stages of church planting found in *A Leap to be His Ambassador – An E-booklet for Cross Cultural Church Planting*. This first stage is a preparatory stage before the church planting team lands on the church planting country.

We hope that through this booklet, greater knowledge and understanding into the preparations for cross-cultural church planting would be created and individuals who are considering or preparing for church planting would be better equipped to fulfil the Great Commission for our Lord Jesus Christ.



FORMATION OF TEAM



While it is not a must for church planters to do church planting in teams, it is highly recommended as there are many advantages of church planting as a team. When we look at how Apostle Paul planted churches, we see the value of teamwork and the success that comes with it. Some of the benefits of church planting as a team include support and accountability, security in times of crisis, protection against temptation, complementing one another in terms of giftings and abilities, greater boldness in evangelism, greater power through corporate prayer, greater creativity through team planning and greater productivity through team ministry etc. In fact, there are lots more advantages in planting as a team than there are as going alone or even as just a couple.

Of course, there are issues faced in team ministry. Even Apostle Paul faced that in his team ministry. However, he still held on very much to the concept of ministering in teams. As we weigh out the advantages with the issues faced, the value of a team working together would be worth pursuing.



TEAM QUALITIES

What are the desired qualities of a church planting team? The desired qualities of the church planting team are very much dependent on the nature and progress of the church planting work. They may be broadly categorized as follows¹:

1. Personal Qualities of Church Planters

Have spiritual maturity and a vibrant faith – Individuals who are prepared by God through the experiences of life and sacrificial service unto Him and these have become foundational building blocks of their lives, drawing them into an intimate relationship with God and shaping their character in the Lord. They are people who are

continually learning dependency and trust, surrender and obedience to the God's love, purpose and commands.

- Cultivated spiritual disciplines Individuals who have cultivated spiritual disciplines such as regular time with God to read His Word, for prayer and worship etc. that continually help them grow in their convictions and experience of God and be equipped for ministry.
- Emotionally resilient –
 Individuals who have cultivated the ability to sustain themselves emotionally and physically through difficulties, stress, setbacks, losses, disappointments, and failures and are adaptable and willing to accept changes without much difficulty.
- Have good self-management

 Individuals who have a realistic
 assessment of their strengths and
 limitations and are able to
 cultivate healthy habits and
 boundaries to keep focused and
 moving towards the priorities in
 life. They are continually learning
 to manage themselves well, be it
 in areas of their emotional and
 physical health or the use of their
 time and resources for the key
 priorities in life.

- Values relationship Individuals who see great value in building team cohesiveness and are willing to place the interests of the team and above their own. They take a genuine interest in others and are effective in nurturing relationships.
- Cross culturally savvy Individuals that enjoy cross-cultural experiences and are able to appreciate differences and accordingly, change their lifestyle to better minister or outreach (including befriending) to the locals of the host country.

2. Qualities of Pioneering Leader and Team

- Catalytic innovator (an "entrepreneurial leader") – Individuals who are tenacious, persevering, risk-takers, flexible, adaptable, self-starters and desire to pioneer.
- Visionary Individuals who have the ability to define the common direction of their team and decide on realistic courses for future action based on a good understanding of themselves, their team and the circumstances, without compromising godly values and the principle of faith in God.
- Evangelistic Individuals who are convicted and zealous about sharing the message of the gospel and are often able to win people to God.

3. Qualities of Replacement Leader and Team

• Disciple maker – Individuals who

are examples of Christ's disciples in their convictions, values and outcome of life and are able to inspire, teach and guide others to grow to be likewise.

- Teacher Individuals who has a burden and ability in grounding people in the truth and making it relevant to practical living.
- Leadership Individuals who are able to identify potential leaders & develop them
- Experienced in growing groups Individuals who have gained a certain level of experience and success in growing groups in the context of the local ministry.



TEAM PREPARATION

The team should work towards being a cohesive unit right from the beginning, before they even leave for the church planting mission. The following are the three steps they can take²:

1. Devote time to focused team building

It is wise and necessary to set aside time on a regular basis for teambuilding. This is when relationships, vision and strategy are adopted. Teams go through a cycle that includes tension and conflict after the honeymoon stage and these differences must be addressed as far as possible before the pressure of church planting emerges. A covenant should be made with each other and to the mission ahead of them. Where it is the case of an individual joining an existing church planting team, it is important for him/her to go through team building with the team as well, though certain dynamics may be different.

Some of the areas of focus for teambuilding include:

- To know each other, accept each other, build trust and develop esprit de corps

- To clarify the mission and vision of the church-planting effort

- To agree upon the key values, common commitments and early goals

- To make conflicts safe by agreeing on a conflict management and resolution plan

- To identify the major gifts and abilities of each member and work towards his or her initial roles

- To express dreams, fears and expectations openly and develop healthy patterns of communication

- To describe leader and follower responsibilities

- To covenant with one another to love, support and work together for the good of the team and the churchplanting work

Relationships within a team play a crucial role in the work of church planting. Team members on the field must not see themselves as part of a team, but as part of a family. Why? Simply because a church planting team lives together, eats together, ministers together and works together. In a pioneering situation, there is no church, no life group and possibly, even no friends (yet). Your church, life group, and friends would be your team, and this team lives together. Very probably, you will spend more time with your church planting team mates than you would have ever spent with your real family back home. So, like any real family, personal sacrifices need to be made for the good of the family. Furthermore, enough statistics have shown that a family that lives and relates together is one that will grow in every way, even at the individual level.

Gift and personality mix are necessary elements in bringing a team together. However, they cannot form the judging criteria of whether the team can successfully gel or not. Sometimes, God brings the most unlikely people together because finally, if a team or its leader puts relationship and vision first, and the team draws passion from one another, the most ungifted team will produce success. But having said that, it is still quite clear that we need to pay attention to gift and personality mix in team that is expected to work together and produce results. Once you get the relationship factor going, and have a good leader heading the team, gifting and personality can be the next factors to consider.

New teams need to learn from more experienced ones, and team leaders need to especially draw from the experiences of successful others. Critical issues such as expectations of ministry role, financial role, household role, etc need to be clarified. And we are just talking about internal team factors that will affect team performance. Circumstances, cultural shock etc. can also affect the team beyond what they are prepared for. In the end, it is all about the basics. Catalysts to good team formation would be a willingness to learn and put others first, willingness to be humble etc.

2. Devote time to focused team training

A part of team training could be focused on essential skills training and knowledge preparation for the church planters. A list of training areas and resources are listed in the section, *Essential Skills and Knowledge Preparation*. The team could go through or attend some of these courses together and sharpen one another through the sharing of insights and learning from the courses.

Another aspect of team training which will be most helpful would be the mentorship of ex-church planters. Ex-church planters who have gained experience and wisdom on ground would have a good understanding of the necessary acculturation, training, management of practical and difficult issues etc. in order to church plant successfully. This also provides a safe environment for the potential church planters to raise fears and issues, clear doubts and keep accountability etc. which could be vital for cross-cultural living in the near future. Having the potential church planters under them for a period of 6 months to 1 year (or even longer if possible) would put them in good stead for the church planting work.

3. Devote time to focused team planning and execution

The team should devote time to research on the country and the life of the locals in order to understand more about their thinking and perceptions that would be very useful in understanding the culture and interaction with them. *Demographic information helpful to church planters* may be used as reference for the research. The team could discuss their findings together and this could possibly spark off certain ideas and understanding which would be helpful for the church planting work.

The team could also work on shortterm projects together in the landing country. This has several benefits. Firstly, it allows the team to interact with and understand the local culture and people beyond the research. Secondly, it enables them to meet certain existing needs in the landing country, thereby growing the burden they have for the local people. Thirdly, it allows the team to bond and work with one another in the context of the landing country. More information on these projects could be found in the section Scouting the Land, Visits as a Tourist / Community Volunteers.

The visit as an expatriate and final visit as a missionary mentioned in the section *Scouting* should best be done as a team as those visits are crucial to the final landing. The onsite experience and information gained would be necessary for common understanding within the team, final planning before landing and the development of ideas for the church planting work.

Lastly, before landing, it is of utmost importance for the team to discuss on the entry vehicle and tent-making strategy and to agree on it as a team. This has great implications on the church planting work and should be given high priority. More information could be found in *Entry Strategy*.

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ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE PREPARATION

There is a need to invest time to learn and be equipped with the essential skills and knowledge for life and ministry in a foreign country. A list of the essential skills and knowledge preparation are provided. This list and its recommended courses are not meant to be exhaustive as the extent and scope of preparation from individual does vary to individual. However, this should give a good idea of what is necessary.



1. Life Skills

This focuses more on the personal preparation of the church planter. It includes the management of one's physical health, emotions, spiritual health, personal convictions and the development of personal abilities and skills etc. that are vital for the church planting work.



AREA

Interpersonal Relationships

Spiritual Foundations

Life Management

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Essential Skills for

Day-to-day Living

RECOMMENDED TRAINING COURSES³

- Word for Life Courses Healthy Relationships Essentials
- Global Conference Series A Covenant Church
- Global Conference Series A Word-centred Church, A Christ-centred Church, A Divine Authority Church, A Virtuous Speaking Church, A Sanctified Church etc.
- Christian Living I and II
- Word for Life Courses Knowing God's Will
- Word For Life Courses Life Management Essentials etc.
- Driving
- Cooking
- Simple home repairs and improvements (eg. changing of light bulbs, managing clogs in sinks, simple repairs in electrical equipment)
- Simple first-aid

³Many of these materials and courses are available in our HIM library of resources. Do request for them through your local leaders or write to ministries@byhim.org.

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2. Ministry Skills

This focuses more on the skill set that is necessary for ministry, including but not limited to evangelism, followup and shepherding, discipleship and mentoring, leadership development etc. AREA

Basic Ministry Skills

Leadership Skills

RECOMMENDED TRAINING COURSES³

- Global Conference Series An Evangelistic Church, A Teaching Church etc.
- Shepherding Series Spiritual Growth Through Shepherding (Acts 6)
- Word for Life Courses Follow up and Shepherding Essentials, Outreach Essentials, Everyday Evangelism 101 and 201, Mentoring 201, Basic Counselling
- Leadership Training (Pastoral Track Courses) Care Leader Course, Unit Leader Course,
- Leadership Training (Leading Life Group Courses) --Principle of leading fellowship groups,
- Leadership Training (DMM Lessons) On-the-job Training
- Global Conference Series A Leadership Training Church, An Effective Leadership Church, An Expository Preaching Church etc.
- Leadership Training (Pastoral Track Courses) –Sub-district Leader Course, District Leader Course









1. Biblical knowledge and understanding

This focuses more on basic knowledge of the bible, including Christian doctrines, overview of the various books in the bible, relevance of bible for daily living etc. as well as biblical understanding to principles of church growth, philosophy and management.

AREA **RECOMMENDED TRAINING COURSES** • Word for Life Courses – Bible Study Methodology Personal Bible Study Leadership Training (Leading Life Group Courses) -Principle of leading fellowship groups (Chapter 5 – personal bible study) • Word For Life Courses – Introduction to Bible Essentials, Survey of the Bible New Testament and Old Testament Foundations Basic Christian Doctrines • Word for Life Courses – Doctrine 101 and 201 Church Growth & Philosophy • Global Conference Series - A Growing Church, A Balanced Church, Vibrant Conference etc. • Word for Life Courses - Core Values & Philosophy of Ministry, Principles of Church Health Part 1 and 2 Spiritual Warfare, Prayer • Global Conference Series – A Spiritual Warfare Church, & Inner Healing A Signs and Wonders Church, A Powerful Praying Church, A Spirit-filled Church etc. Church Structure and Management • Global Conference Series – A Mobilised Church, An Organized Church, An Administrative Church etc.

³Many of these materials and courses are available in our HIM library of resources. Do request for them through your local leaders or write to ministries@byhim.org.

2. Cross-Cultural Living and Ministry

AREA

Cross-Cultural Communications

& Contextualisation

This focuses more on the knowledge and understanding needed to enter and be effective in a cross-cultural context.

	Cross Cultural Communications Course
Team Dynamics & Ministry	 Word For Life Courses – Healthy Relationships Essentials, SHAPE Essentials, Global Conference Series – A United Church etc.
Linguistics & Language Learning	• Available language courses at centres at your locality
Fieldwork	• Learning through short-term missions trips and exploratory trips (Refer to Understanding of Church Planting Country, Scouting)
Perspectives of Missions	Global Conference Series – A Missional Church, Missional Conference
Tentmaking & Church Planting	• Church Planting Resources – Tent-making and Church

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RECOMMENDED TRAINING COURSES[®]

• Global Conference Series – A Contextualized Church

Church Planting Resources - Concepts of Culture &

3. Theology, History & Current Issues in Missions

This focuses more on the knowledge and understanding into our theology, and the history and current trends and issues related to missions on a global basis that will equip church planters well for the church planting work.

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Perspectives of Missions	Global Conference Series – A Missional Church, Missional Conference
Fentmaking & Church Planting	Church Planting Resources – Tent-making and Church Planting Course
Cultural Anthropology & Apologetics	Any courses on Apologetics and Anthropology

UNDERSTANDING OF CHURCH PLANTING COUNTRY



READING ON THE LAND

People are a product of their past and cannot be understood apart from their collective experiences. As they live through crises and triumphs together, they develop a collective consciousness, collective memories and common values.

Understanding of history and culture transforms the messenger. "Culture is the soul of the ... nation" (Morin 1994, 579). It will move us, change us and bring us to a deep level of appreciation of the people, making us insightful and caring bridge-people for the gospel. Understanding is necessary effective for communication relationship and building. Understanding also helps in the contextualization of the gospel message and making biblical truth more meaningful and palatable.

Therefore, it is important that at least one serious work on the roots of the locals of the targeted church planting country should be read at this stage. Cultural information can also be found in government reports, letter, journals, oral and electronic questionnaires, newspapers and archives. Paul Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses's Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal Peasant, and Urban Societies (1995) is an especially valuable resource for understanding culture and social structure and their implications for church planting.



RESEARCHING THE LAND

In addition to reading, research into the demographic, social, religious, and cultural context of the landing country would be most helpful and necessary for church planting. While the research data collected may not be fully representative of the locals, it can reveal insights into people's thinking and perceptions that are very useful for ministry strategy. For instance, in one such study, it was discovered that a growing community had few activities for children and youth. The church planting team then proceeded to offer children's bible clubs which were well attended by mostly un-churched children and later started bible study with some of the parents. Where certain data may not be obtained easily, this research may be done together hand in hand with the scouting of the land.









It is important for church planters to explore the church planting country. In Luke 10:1-23, the Lord instructed his disciples to enter the land as vulnerable and peaceful agents for Christ, but to be aware of the hostile environment (lambs among wolves). It is beneficial for church planters to experience the environment for themselves and prepare a list of things to explore and to gather as much information as possible

conomic	Average household income
	Standard of living in the community
	• Commercial, industrial, agricultural activity in the community
	Primary forms of employment
	Unemployment rates
	• Public or other assistance for poor or unemployed
	• Transportation, commerce, tourism
iducation	• Educational levels of the population
	• Literacy rate (including functional illiteracy)
	Schools and postsecondary education institutions
	• Availability of libraries, tutoring, adult continuous
	education
ocial/political	Ethnic groups
	• Language groups
	Subcultures
	Refugees, immigrants, undocumented aliens
	Political parties and affiliations, power changes
	Available social services
	• Availability of medical care (eg. hospitals, clinics,
and the second	pharmacies)
teligious	Religious affiliation
	Active practice of religion
	• Beliefs
	• Religious institutions: churches, mosques, temples

to help planning and decision making for future landing. Three types of trips are recommended before the final landing in the church planting country.

1. Visit as a tourist/community volunteer

Tourists have the opportunity to be exposed to a different culture, taste different cuisine, learn about another's history, enjoy the natural attractions of the country and interact with the locals etc. Therefore, to visit a place as a tourist is almost always the first step to get to know a place and its culture in the most natural and comfortable way.

For some individuals, they may want to make the trip to a country slightly more purposeful. Hence, they may decide on a short-term mission trip with the purpose of community work. This is also a viable platform for the church planting team to experience the culture as well as learn to work together as a team.

In such trips which usually range from 1 week to 3 months, the church planters will team up with the locals to work on specific projects that will contribute to that particular locality. The objective is to expand the cultural worldview of the church planters and allow them to be aware, appreciate, understand and learn from another culture, especially from the context of doing community work as a means of outreach. Such trips would give them a brief understanding on what it means to land in a country to church plant from a cultural perspective.

Some of the contents of cultural learning trips include:

<u>Humanitarian</u>

Medical ministry; food distribution; construction work such as laying bricks, painting, cleaning, plumbing, carpentry or electrical work.

<u>Mercy/ Service/ Creative</u> <u>Ministries</u>

Perform drama, puppetry, music; sports ministry; visit hospitals, prisons, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and orphanages; conduct English, computer classes and children camps; and pray for physical and emotional healing and need.

In such trips, during the touring or project time where there's interaction with the locals, some questions could be asked to find out more about the culture and life of the locals.

Suggested questions include:

- A. Who are their heroes, past and present?
- **B.** What do popular myths, legends, stories, and metaphors communicate about the culture and worldview?
- **C.** How is the daily routine like for most locals? What are the activities that the locals enjoy generally?
- D. How is the larger society governed? Who are the key people of influence? What are the primary institutions?
- E. What are the means of transportation and communication? How is information passed on or disseminated? What or who is considered a credible source?
- F. What is the social structure of the society? What is the most important social unit: the nuclear family, the

extended family, the clan, the nation or the tribe?

g. What concept of time do they have? Is it linear or cyclical, more taskoriented or event-oriented? Are they most focused on events of the past, the present or the future?

2. Visit as an Expatriate

The next visit for individuals who have the intention to church plant could be a visit as an expatriate. Moving to another country is a big step that should not be taken lightly. There are many issues to consider. There are many unknown factors and questions about living abroad that cannot be answered by research alone, no matter how much time church planters spend gathering facts and information. The best way is to take a fact-finding trip to the possible landing and this, preferably to be done as a church planting team.

A fact-finding trip would allow church planters to get an idea of daily life in the landing country and explore first-hand all aspects of local life. For a successful trip, the itinerary and activities should be carefully planned such that it allows greatest benefit within a short trip.

Take time to research the following areas:

Ways to obtain the correct visa/ work permit

Church planters should find out about the appropriate visa or work permit for entry that could possibly be obtained for entry into the landing country. This should be one of the highest priorities. They may even visit to the embassy, the foreign affairs department etc. in the landing country, depending on the entry vehicle, to find out about the documentation needed and the conditions and restrictions of the visa/ work permit.

Entry vehicle

In confirming the entry vehicle, church planters may need more information with regards to finding employment, starting a business or others. The trip serves as a good platform to find out more information on the opportunities related to the possible entry vehicle. Visits to job agencies, business associations or even meeting up people whom they have networked with through correspondence etc. in the landing country may be helpful in gathering information and resources needed for the entry vehicle.

Primary necessities and facilities vital for living

Housing facilities

Housing is one of the primary concerns and finding a home that will meet needs will involve a great deal of research and careful consideration. Church planters may visit rental agencies to find out about the types apartments or homes available to rent and how much they cost. They may like to find out about issues such as how easy it is to have utilities connected and how to get a telephone and internet access, and even local facilities, transport connections and infrastructure available etc.

Banking facilities

Church planters would need to ensure that after they have landed, they have access to funds and can transfer money between their home and the church planting country. This involves gaining an understanding of the banking system in the church planting country and assessing whether or not it will meet their needs. This may even involve visits to potential banks to find out more about further information needed.

Healthcare facilities

Before anyone relocates, it is necessary to ensure that there is a good understanding of the cost of healthcare in the church planting country and the insurance that will be required and any limitations to that insurance. The type of insurance that expatriates or people living abroad will generally need are several types of insurance, health and medical insurance, travel insurance and life insurance. It would be good to find out the availability of suitable medical facilities and even the location of these in relation to where the church planters may be planning to live, if there are already some plans made.

Education facilities

Where the individuals considering church planting involve a family with children, selecting an appropriate school for the children will be extremely important. There are several decisions needed: whether to let the children come under the local education system, or opt for a private facility or home school the children, which curriculum to opt for and which school to send the children to. There may be a need to visit some schools which have been researched on previously and find out more information such as the quality and cost of education, the availability of school places and the requirements needed to secure a place.

Leisure facilities

It is important for church planters to picture themselves living in the places you visit. Pay attention to all the little details of daily life. Sometimes we miss the small things the most after moving abroad, since it is often minor activities and habits that give us pleasure in our day-today lives. Find out about the various entertainment venues, commercial areas, parks and public transportation in the church planting country. This would also provide church planters with a glimpse of the life of locals in the church planting country.

3. Visit as a Missionary

This is the final visit for the church planting team before actual landing. Obviously, at this stage, the team should have already started work in actual leaving within few months' time. Where the visit as an expatriate is to explore and gather facts about the various aspects mentioned, this is the trip where the team will attempt to establish any other final details needed and confirm all that is necessary, such as their entry vehicle, visas/work permits etc.

During this trip, the church planters could also involve themselves in some church-related ministries. This could be done with the existing Hope Church in the country (if the church planting team is a replacement team) or in partnership with other Christian organizations. Such projects would enable the church planters to network with others for support and learning, which would be especially helpful after they have landed in the church planting country in the near future. Such ministry experience would also expand their perspectives as they learn to minister in another culture. Through the response of the locals, the church planters could ponder, discuss and ask questions to understand further the mindset of the locals. Such trips will help participants prepare for ministry in a cross-cultural context and help them to sharpen their ministry skills to different people groups. It also gives them the chance to test their cross-cultural abilities.

Some of the contents of ministry learning trips include:

Evangelism

Sharing the gospel and personal testimonies in a local church settings, house-to-house visits, prayer walk, prayer for the sick, street ministry, and other settings as the Holy Spirit leads.

Discipleship

Conduct leadership trainings, seminars, workshops, camps and outreach events – to support local church ministry or pioneering work.

Prayer Walk

This is also the trip where the church planters will prepare themselves more in the spiritual aspect to enter the land. Church planters may consider doing a prayer walk during this final visit before landing. While it is necessary to gather information and interact with the locals, it is just as important to pray for the land. Prayer-walking is intercession on location. Intercessory prayer is a biblical priority. Paul instructed young Timothy as follows: "I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." (1 Tim.2:1) Why is there a need to pray on location? When we pray on location, it allows us to pray while seeing, feeling, touching, and hearing, and this often leads to us praying with more intensity. After the prayer journey is over, we will never pray the

same way again for the location of the walk and the people we met there.

An additional value of locationpraying has to do with presence. Since Jesus lives within us and the Holy Spirit works through us, there is a sense in which the prayer walk would provide light in dark places and salt in unsavoury places (Matthew 5:13-16). If our body really is a "temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16) then where we go, we represent His presence. (Refer to Appendix 1 Prayer Walk Guide for more details on prayer walk)

In this trip, where time permits, there could be further mingling with the locals to find out how well the church planters get along with them and how easy it is to make local contacts. Informal interviews may also be conducted with individuals or with certain focus groups to gather deep-level information about host country's understanding, motives, and perceptions.

Some questions which could be asked during such interviews with the locals include:

- A. What do the locals value most: objects, ideals, goals, principles, standards? What are some of their deepest longings and aspirations?
- **B.** How are decisions made? Is individual freedom valued over the wishes of the group, or are personal decisions subordinate to the wishes of the group?
- C. How attached is the younger generation to the traditional way? What segments of the society are more tradition oriented? Which are open to change?
- **D.** How are interpersonal and intergroup conflicts resolved?

- E. What are the most offensive sins of the society? What are the highest virtues? What are their holy days and festivities and their respective significance?
- **F.** What is their attitude towards social outsiders and people of other faiths?
- **G.** What are their convictions regarding the supernatural: God, spirits, demons, unseen powers? How do they talk about God? How do they feel about him?

Accuracy interpretation in of observations and interviews requires that one lays aside assumptions, prejudices, and preconceived categories or explanations. The church planters should avoid drawing hasty conclusions or making unsubstantiated judgment. On another note, if the church planters know of any expatriate clubs or organizations, it is a good idea to contact them so that they can meet other foreigners who already live there. They can share their experiences with the church planters and provide important insights into local life as a foreign resident as well.



ENTERING CHURCH PLANTING COUNTRY



TENT-MAKING STRATEGY

In Hope, we church plant through tent-making. Tentmakers are defined as,

Tent-makers are missions-motivated Christians who support themselves in secular work as they do cross-cultural church planting on the job and as their first and foremost priority.

be They may business entrepreneurs, salaried professionals, paid employees, in funded research jobs, and internship or study abroad programs but finally, they are there to church plant and will bring the church to a stage of maturity⁴ before actually leaving. They can serve at little or no cost to the church. They communicate the Gospel by word and deed through excellence in work, caring relationships and their lives. They seek to make disciples and build a local strong daughter church community that is able to establish and eventually, multiply itself.

1. Factors⁵ to consider in tentmaking

As we consider tent-making strategies, we should be aware that survival is not the only issue to be considered as we look for tentmaking strategies. There are other factors as well.

Acculturation and acclimatization

You would need to have time to be acclimatized, acculturated or learn a new language quickly. Typically, full time professional jobs are either expatriate in nature (which shields you from real situations) or full time professional jobs would likely not require you to master the culture and language (because you enter in a "superior" position)

Time to church plant and work with your team

You would need to have time to build up the church. Imagine having to work a full time job, get used to the different culture and language, and then, to spend the rest of your free time trying to set up a church from zero! Furthermore, your team would need to go through the typical stages of team building as you live and minister together.

<u>Time and space for self and</u> <u>family</u>

You would need to have time to be focused on what really needs to be done, and that does not just include the church planting work. If you go as a family, as a couple, or even as a single with a team, there are a lot of focuses that would cry for your time.

2. Ways of tent-making

<u>Teach top commercial languages</u> <u>in demand in the host country</u>

In nearly every nation, opportunities for teaching EFL (English as a Foreign Language) are abundant. The increasing worldwide demand for English language means that there are thousands of openings for teachers who speak, read and able to teach the language.

To be an effective teacher you must be prepared for the task. The type of preparation depends upon your teaching situation and the country you are going to. In some places, a TEFL short course and some practical teaching experiences are sufficient. For others, a number of courses or even a degree in the field may be required for the challenges ahead.

There is a current and growing demand for learning the top

⁴Here, we define stage of maturity as a point at the end of any of the four fields before handover to either a replacement church planting team, or local leaders raised and discipled by the church planters. ⁵These factors are especially crucial for pioneering church plants in cross-cultural contexts. Replacement teams to pioneering church planting teams would face less difficulties as some church planting work would have already been started by the pioneering team. languages of the world⁶, with certain languages having more demand in some countries. This is a viable entry vehicle to pursue.

Professional Skills Placements

Many countries are looking for skilled professionals in the area IT, education, of healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and business. There are many websites of different countries that list down the jobs available or the type of skills required. In restricted access countries, where such information is not easily available, there are missions organisations whom we can approach for assistance or even collaborates with to send church planters in.

Challenges of the global job market church planters should be aware of:

- Tendency to promote and transfer from within (governments protect their job markets for their own people)
- Few entry-level jobs for internationals (i.e. for fresh grads)
- Companies may make employees sign a statement not to witness regarding their faith
- There may be high demand on time, making it difficult to develop a ministry
- Job may be isolated, with little opportunity to develop relationships with nationals outside work

<u>Applying for Job Transfer</u> within a multi-national company (MNC)

Many careers are transferable globally. Consider the following areas:

- Computers: In greatest demand
- Education: All kinds, every level

- English teaching is especially in demand; and Mandarin too
- Health care: All kinds
- Business and Finance
- Agriculture: Includes all related rural, plant and animal careers (microenterprise)
- Science: includes engineering, technology, architecture, and urban planning
- Social Sciences: Although fewer openings than in other fields, there are jobs for sociologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, political scientists, social workers, psychologists, etc
- Fine Arts: Performing music, graphic arts, art history, photography, creative writing, radio, TV and filmmaking
- Construction (now in Middle Eastern countries)
- Athletics: All kinds

Challenges faced in Job Transfer within a multi-national company (MNC):

- Job expectations are usually pretty high. In addition to the basic requirements for the job, there are added expectations such as a good grasp of the foreign market and conditions, quick adjustment to the new work environment, management of communications across language and cultural barriers etc. This can create considerable stress for the church planter.
- There may be high demand on time, making it difficult to develop a ministry.
- If the church planter's job performance does not meet the expectations of the company, he/she

may be asked to return to his/ her home country prematurely. This would hinder the progress of the church planting work.

• Job may be isolated or the church planter may be viewed as "superior" by the locals, making it difficult to develop relationships with the locals outside work.

Setting up Businesses

In many countries, jobs are hard to come by (even for locals) because of economic stagnation and poor central governance. In such cases, one of the best means of entry is by setting up of businesses. This is not without risk but with thorough market research and frequent visit to relevant authorities, a viable low capital business venture can be started. The objective is to have sustainable businesses that provide jobs, visas, income and even outreach opportunities to the tentmakers.

Advantages if the business does well:

- There's no need to worry over visa issues. The church planters are able to stay in country for an extended period.
- The business provides the opportunity to influence a network of contacts e.g. suppliers, wholesalers, government, clients, and employees.
- Credibility is built as people can see your business ethic, which is different, and the company brings income and jobs into the country.
- There is flexible working hours planned around ministry demands.
- It is possible to bring in other tentmakers.

Possible disadvantages:

• It takes a lot to succeed in running a company cross-country (need in-

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depth research, start a base company in local country first, etc).

- You may end up draining all your energy and time just to keep the company afloat.
- The start-up stage of the business may take far more hours than a salaried position.
- May face pressure from government to train and hire local people.
- In some countries, there are problems of red tape, corruption, excessive taxation, and protection money demanded by the Mafia, etc.

Other possible strategies

Community Care Services

(e.g. through Non-Profit Organisations)

In two-thirds countries where unemployment is high, poverty is rampant, welfare and social system are under-developed, churches can go in and provide basic community care services such as medical assistance and basic education. The setting up of such services is mainly through Non Profit Organisations, and this is a viable entry vehicle. Charity and community care services are generally looked upon with respect. It will gain support from the local authorities because of the tangible services provided to the locals. This is also attractive to locals who join our community events as they also want to serve their country. It is an encouragement to them that foreigners would want to come and bless their people.

Study

Getting a student visa is one of the most straightforward ways to stay in a country. Studying overseas give us a good opportunity to integrate into the local culture and use the campus as an initial launch pad for church planting.

Some of the ways of overseas study include:

- Undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate studies etc.
- Scholarship and internships
- Student exchange programs
- Language courses

Some of the limitations include:

- Heavy on finance those with student visas are usually not allowed to work or if so, could only work limited hours
- Study demand studies too overwhelming and insufficient time for ministry



ENTRY STRATEGY

Very much related to the subject of a tent-making strategy is that of an entry strategy. Whereas a tent-making strategy focuses on survival and earning-as-you-plant issues, an entry vehicle focuses on issues of permanence or on how you can have the legal right to stay in the country. Essentially, an entry strategy is one that works to obtain a residence visa (temporary at the minimum) and hopefully a good reason for you to be in that country without causing you problems when you start the church planting work – problems as in time management, opportunities to acculturate and acclimatize, outreach etc.

Naturally, if we are able to connect and relate directly both an entry and tent-making strategy to be one and the same, we would then have created a way to enter a country, have a legal right to be there at the same time and yet, have the time and space to do what we left our home country to do in the first place – set up a church.

The following are some important considerations when determining an entry vehicle

1. Permanence in country

An entry vehicle must allow the applicant some element of permanence in the country. For example, a tourist visa affords a stay of not more than 30 days for most countries; such a visa would not be useful for church planting stints. We will never be able to build a permanent institution when we are only able to be around temporarily.

2. An asset to the church planting work

An entry vehicle, if possible, must aid in the planting of the church. Otherwise, the entry vehicle may become a liability and eventually become a source of frustration rather than a source of help. For example, if the reason you are allowed to be in a country is for a particular business, and that business requires you to travel throughout the country, your reason for being there directly reduces your possibility to plant a church; or if that

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visa you have obtained requires you to abide by some rules disallowing you to engage in religious activities, you will naturally not find space to church plant.

3. Consider the needs of the team

An entry vehicle, if possible, must allow for the team to work together and grow together. If not, then it may become a reason for the team to break up eventually. For example, if you are allowed to stay in a country because of a work visa that requires you to work long hours, while the other members of your team have visas that allow them time to plant a church, your team will obviously set itself up for some serious conflicts in terms of misunderstood priorities.

There are many other considerations, and these become more and more exigent if the countries we want to church plant in are CAN (Creative Access Nations) countries or countries that have very stringent immigration policies. The most important thing that we need to remember is that not every opportunity to enter a country is immediately an opening to church plant in that country. If we are not careful, we may actually end up in a situation where our enthusiasm to church plant is eroded by the very same means by which we entered the country!



CONCLUSION

Church planting leaders estimate that between 60 to 80 percent of the problems encountered in church planting result from insufficient preparation or lack of strategic preparation. As how Benjamin Franklin, an American statesman and scientist puts it, "*By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.*"

It pays for church planters preparing to land in the church planting country to place emphasis on the various aspects of preparation, so that they may be thoroughly equipped for every good work in the church planting country.

HIM's Ministries Department hopes to support church planters in such preparation for entry work.For more information, and guidance, do write to ministries@byhim.org.



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APPENDIX 1

Prayer Walk Guide

A. Preparation before prayer walk

1. Choose the location(s) for the prayer-walk. (refer to Suggested locations for prayer walk)

Choose a time for the prayer walk
 in general, it is best to allow about two hours.

3. Be spiritually prepared - the prayer-walker must be in right relationship with God before beginning the prayer walk. It is also important to remember the opposition of Satan in our spiritual work. We would therefore need to "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil..." (James 4:7) and to pray for truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17) to be in us and upon us.

4. Pray as a team before the walk and pray for the spirit of unity throughout the walk.

B. During the prayer walk

 Begin the prayer walk with a time of worship and thanksgiving unto God.

2. Thank God for His work in the country and His plans for the people to be prayed for.

3. During the walk, pray with eyes open so that there is awareness of the surroundings.

4. While prayer-walking, the people in the team should talk quietly in a conversational style. Rather than each person saying individual prayers one after another, act as though the time of prayer-walking is one continual prayer. This one prayer begins at the beginning of the prayer walk and concludes at the end of the prayer walk. The participants in the prayer team take turns praying out loud, according to the guidance of God's Spirit.

5. Pray for the blessing of God upon the people and the homes passed by.

6. Pray for the needs of the people that you are aware of.

7. These include physical, psychological and spiritual needs.

8. Pray about the evil in your city pornography, violence, suicide, crime, alcoholism, etc. Pray that the people would cease to be blinded by Satan so that they could come to a knowledge of the truth.

9. Pray for the spiritual harvest.

10. Proclaim Christ to be Lord of the neighbourhood and of the lives you see and people will believe in Him and mature in Him. 11. Pray for workers for the harvest. Pray that Christians of godly examples would develop in the area where you are prayer-walking and faithfully serve the Lord.

12. Conclude your prayer walk with another time of worship, giving glory to God.

13. Meet to evaluate your prayer walk. Keep a journal on the impressions from God during the prayer walk and areas which you are prompted to continue to intercede for etc.

C. Suggested location(s) of prayer walk:

1. The **neighbourhoods** where there are no evangelical work.

2. In or around **government buildings**, especially those that effect missionary presence and work. Pray that God will bless and lead government leaders.

3. In or around **commercial centres/office buildings**. Pray against the lure of power and money and pray for spiritual awakening.

4. In or near **hospitals** or **retirement homes**, praying for the healing and health of those inside, both physical and spiritual.

5. On top of a mountain or tall building where the whole city can

be seen. Pray for God's blessing, spiritual healing and harvest in the city.

6. **At a school** or **university.** Pray for the teachers, staff, students, and their families. Pray that the leaders of the school will guide it in accordance to Christian principles.

7. At a church building. Pray that God will bless and guide the church and use it for His glory.

8. At sites of other religions, false religions, sect groups or cults. Pray for the religious leaders and believers of other faiths to be freed from spiritual bondage.

D. Useful information

Some information that may prove helpful for informed praying includes:

1. Demographic information of racial and ethnic population as well as socio-economic needs

2. Religious presence, as well as needs, in the area

3. Names (if available) of those who minister in the area

4. Major physical and material needs of the people

5. Possibilities of future ministry

6. What spiritual activity is already underway as well as opposition to it

