

Crucial Prelude to Multiplying New Testament type Churches
Guidelines to prepare to multiply churches, about 8 minutes

Participants

Larry

Conner

Lillian

Khichi

Prompter: Shout a brief line and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes: Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Larry My wife Lillian and I are frustrated.
We try to multiply churches as they did in the New Testament,
but we've failed. Can you advise us, Conner?

Conner I'll try, Larry.
Many efforts to start a movement flounder before they start.
Workers fail to apply a few simple New Testament guidelines.

Lillian We followed this church planting manual carefully, Conner.

Prompter & Echoes Every detail!

Conner That is the problem, Lillian. Too many details!
It lists many helpful tasks, but fails to discern the
three foundational guidelines that are utterly essential.

Larry Now wait a minute, Conner!
Lillian and I helped edit that manual!

Conner You did your best, Larry, with what you knew at the time,
but you included traditions that cause older churches to decline.

Prompter & Echoes Needless baggage!

Lillian You want to cut out details, Conner,
but our old church is very conventional.
If we require a lot of changes, few people, if any,
will cooperate with us.

Conner Don't ask all the members to change; there's an easier way.
Your congregation must have a few who want to serve Jesus
in a more vital way, but find vital ministry positions already filled.
Well, let them take the church to those who do not come to it.

Larry That makes sense! What are the essential guidelines, Conner?

Conner The first and most crucial is to obey.
Heed Jesus' general orders before all else.
He said, "If you love me, obey my commands."

Prompter & Echoes Obey the King of Kings!

Conner Seven general commands sum up all that Jesus ordered;
the first church obeyed them all from the start, in Acts 2, Larry.

Larry I remember them:
Repent, believe and receive the Holy Spirit,

Baptize,
Serve the Lord's Supper,
Love God, believers, neighbors, and enemies, which is to forgive,
Pray, which includes healing and spiritual warfare,
Give, and
make disciples nearby and afar.

Conner Very good! Another essential guideline is to simplify.
Require of new churches only what Jesus and his apostles required.

Prompter & Echoes Nothing more!

Lillian That goes against the modern current, Conner!

Conner It does; all movements of God do, ever since the apostles.

Larry This is helpful, Conner.

Conner The third and last guideline is to model.
Have others do what they have seen you do
in a way they can imitate at once.

Larry Obey, simplify and model! Yes!
Oh! I see why even new believers, uneducated and penniless,
are multiply churches in so many lands around the world.
We'll let new believers and leaders follow these guidelines.

Lillian Where did you get these guidelines, Conner?

Conner From Jesus and his apostles.

Prompter & Echoes No better source!

Larry Lillian, a few days have passed; look at what God has done.
Here we are at Khichi's home; he received Jesus yesterday.
Conner is coming; I want to see how he deals with Khichi.

Conner Hello, Brother Khichi, now that you know Jesus,
we will lay hands on you and ask God for power
for you to tell your family and friends about Jesus.

Prompter & Echoes Share your faith!

Conner Do it just as Larry and Lillian did with you;
pray for them and tell them what Jesus did.

Khichi Yes. I remember. Jesus died and rose from the dead
to forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

Larry I'll go with you at first if you want, Khichi,
but let them hear it from you first.

Lillian When should Khichi be baptized, Conner?

Conner Right away. The apostles did only one thing before baptizing.
Do you recall it?

Prompter & Echoes Go to the family!

Larry Another day passes, and we meet again.
Khichi, please tell Conner the news.

Khichi Larry baptized me in our bathtub, Connor;
only my family was present.

Lillian It was not public?

Larry Scripture does not require baptism to be public;
Paul baptized the jailer's family at midnight,
and Philip baptized the Ethiopian in private out in a desert.

Khichi Baptism left me really encouraged;
I am ready to go tell my friends about Jesus.
Larry also healed my sick aunt in Jesus' name.
Now we all trust in Jesus.
Larry had me baptize my own wife and kids, and my aunt.

Lillian Conner, did Larry do those things too rapidly?

Conner No. It is impossible to obey Jesus too quickly.

Khichi I am so glad you did not delay it! We are so happy!
While our hair was still wet, we sat in a circle
and received the Lord Supper. We felt Jesus with us.
We had no bread, so we used corn chips.

Larry We dipped them into one cup;
there is no need to heed the old protocols
that have no basis in Scripture. Simply obey Jesus.

Khichi Larry told us then that our own church had been born,
right there in our house!

Conner Khichi, God holds you responsible, as head of your family,
to be its shepherd. Will you lead your baby church
by your word and example?

Khichi Absolutely! However, I will need Larry's coaching.

Conner Yes, and you will need God's power;
we will lay hands on you now, and ask for it.

Larry Two weeks go by, and we meet again;
Khichi tells Conner about their first worship time.

Khichi Larry had us plan to whom we would go and tell about Jesus.
We then went in pairs, repeating exactly what Larry and Lillian
had done with us. On a later visit, I baptized two cousins
and three neighbors who repented.

Conner You must start other churches in your social network, Khichi.
A new church is a baby, unable to do all the vital tasks by itself,
so let several churches form a closely-knit body, as the apostles did.

Prompter & Echoes A regional church body!

Lillian But that will take tons of work, Conner!

Conner Yes, Lillian. That is why we let the new believers do it.
Let them shoulder the main responsibility for their movement;
you simply coach their leaders.

Lillian How do we motivate them to go witness to others, Conner?

Conner Lay hands on them, as you did for Khichi; let God empower them.
Go with them the first time or two, to watch;
give help if they need it.

Larry People received Jesus in one place; in another we wasted time.
I'm glad Jesus said to shake the dust from our feet,
to leave resistant people.

Conner Yes, but first make sure that the way you witness for Jesus
fits their background, and that the workers are united in prayer.
Serve in the power of the Holy Spirit;
do not merely work the principles mechanically.
Do everything in a way others can imitate.

Khichi Larry teaches us with Bible stories
that we recall and pass on at once.
We start by telling key stories about Jesus
that new believers can repeat easily.
Sometimes we get them and their friends
to act the stories out; they love that!

Lillian Now I see why we must cut out so many man-made customs
in order to multiply.

Conner We are eager to do all the valuable activities
that we've learned over the years, but we must be patient.
Once churches are multiplying in the normal way,
then we can introduce the more advanced activities.
This restraint requires self-discipline,
and is crucial during a movement's embryonic stage.

Larry Yes! We see that now!

Prompter & Echoes Thank you, Lord!