

Calling **Out** the Called



Empowering Believers To Impact Their Community



CALLING OUT THE CALLED:

**EMPOWERING BELIEVERS
TO IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY**

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INTRODUCTION

Many church members today are mature in their faith. They recognize and exercise their spiritual gifts in the local church. Many have seen God use them outside the church in various mission opportunities both locally and abroad. They wonder if the Lord has something more in store for them in their local church.

These believers need some assistance in praying through, defining, and living out their local missions call.



Calling Out the Called (COTC): Empowering Believers to Impact Their Community helps these believers identify and clarify their calling to missions—to share the gospel with non-Christians in their neighborhoods and communities.

This guide addresses the tremendous opportunity Southern Baptists have to impact North America with the gospel of Jesus Christ by starting new churches. It introduces the need for lay church planting in North America, the history and purpose of COTC, six components for implementing COTC, and four types of churches that can benefit from COTC. It is written for church leaders who are looking for a way to empower local church believers for the purpose of evangelizing neighborhoods, communities, and cities throughout North America. Pastors, associational leaders, ministers of missions, state convention leaders, strategic focus city coordinators, and church planting missionaries will all find this guide beneficial for their attempts to empower believers for church planting missions.

Concepts and principles are presented in this guide from the perspective of a church leader who wants to empower church members to start new churches. The process outlined for implementing COTC assumes the reader is mobilizing several churches for church planting rather than just one local church. Therefore, some aspects of the process must be slightly adjusted for the reader who implements COTC in only one church. Such need for adjustment will be noted accordingly.

NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS AND THE NEED FOR LAY CHURCH PLANTING

The North American Mission Field

Today, North America is one of the largest and most difficult mission fields in the world. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) estimates the lost population of



the United States at approximately 200 million, which is 70 percent of the total population. Canada's population is approximately 31 million with an estimated lost population of 28 million. Cultural and ethnic diversity continues to increase in North America while mainstream society departs further from the Christian worldview.

Many segments of the non-Christian population do not have churches designed for their unique life contexts. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will hear the gospel in terms meaningful to them. The biblical imperative to reconcile and disciple all people is a mandate for Southern Baptists to design intentional evangelism efforts among all of these population segments.

Lay Church Planting in the New Testament

God calls every local church to the mission of reconciling non-Christians to Himself. Paul wrote that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Jesus told His disciples to make disciples of all the *ethne* or nations of the world (Matt. 28:19). The book of Acts describes how God worked through the New Testament church to reconcile and disciple many diverse population segments of the Mediterranean world.

The New Testament depicts the whole church as the people of God, or *laos*. Our terms lay, layman, and laity derive from the Greek word *laos*. Today laity often means the opposite of clergy. These terms are often used to distinguish non-professional and non-paid ministers from professional or paid ministers. Professional ministers are paid because their only vocation is the ministry. The New Testament clearly supports this system of "full-time" ministers earning a living through the ministry. (1 Cor. 9:1-14) Such "full-time" ministers are essential for the well-being and expansion of Christianity.

Laos, as used in the New Testament, does not distinguish between professional and non-professional ministers. Instead all the *laos* or people of God are ministers. All *laos* have spiritual gifts (pastoring, teaching, administrating, serving, etc.), and they are to use these gifts in whatever vocation or situation of life God placed them.

Paul wrote, “Brethren, let each one remain with God in that calling in which he was called” (1 Cor. 7:24, NKJV). Thus, a Roman soldier, sent to a barbarian outpost far from Rome, could start a church as a missionary if God so gifted him. A jailor could pastor a church in his house if God had given him the spiritual gift of pastor. The focus was on whether or not the person was gifted for a particular ministry, instead of on whether or not the person was paid for a particular ministry.

Such a focus fostered a rapid multiplication of churches throughout the Roman Empire. Michael Green argues that “Christianity was from its inception a lay movement” consisting of ordinary Christians “gossiping the gospel” as informal missionaries and evangelists.¹

Lay Church Planting Among Southern Baptists

Historically, Southern Baptists have emphasized that all believers are spiritually gifted at the time of their salvation. They understood that these gifts equipped every believer for ministry. They believed that ministry, inside as well as outside the church, was the responsibility of every church member.

Today, Southern Baptists still maintain that all believers have spiritual gifts that equip them for ministry inside and outside the church. The recent growth of Southern Baptist mission volunteers testifies to the fact that God is still calling out the laity to evangelize the lost and dying world around them.

During the past 25 years, a quarter of a million Southern Baptists obeyed God’s call to volunteer their time and gifts to serve throughout North America for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. During this same period over 30,000 Southern Baptists went overseas in obedience to God’s call to minister as volunteers.

Recently, Richard Harris, vice president of the Church Planting Group of NAMB, asked Don Kammerdiener of the International Mission Board for his perspective on the current trend of volunteerism among Southern Baptists. Kammerdiener notes that volunteerism has become more intentional in the past 25 years. He responded:

Today the process has been further refined. Routine and repetition has given way to intentionality. Volunteer projects are increasingly being designed with a clear focus on church planting among the lost unbelieving populations of the world. Rather than being an add-on to ministry, the volunteers are more and more finding their place at the very heart of the missions task.

Participatory Learning

Two reasons help explain why many Southern Baptists are hearing God’s call to share the gospel with non-Christians. The first reason relates to a shift in learning patterns. Due to major changes in American culture and life, participatory learning styles are emphasized more. According to Kammerdiener, “In the earlier days a typical learning pattern had three steps. It moved from cognitive learning (reading and study) to commitment and finally to action (participation).” Today, however, the learning process begins with participation, which leads to commitment and ultimately provides a more complete understanding of the issues related to missions. It is this second learning path that has opened the door to increasingly more

effective volunteer activity that contributes to the objectives on the mission field.

Biblical Pattern of Ministry

A renewed experience of the biblical pattern of Christian missions is another reason why so many Southern Baptists are eager to take the gospel witness beyond the walls of their churches. The New Testament teaches that all believers are to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and use their spiritual gifts to accomplish God's mission of reconciling and discipling non-Christians. Mission volunteers exemplify this teaching when they participate in starting new churches by serving with their witness and spiritual gifts.

The Old and New Testaments demonstrate the necessity of believers working together to accomplish God's will. Some examples include: Moses delegating leadership during the wilderness journey (Ex. 18:13-23), Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 4:16-17, 6:15-16), Jesus modeling and involving the disciples in kingdom ministry (Matt. 4:18-20, John 17:20-22), the early church sharing all things in common (Acts 2:44-47), the first deacons working together with the apostles to spread the Word of God (Acts 6:1-7), and Paul's metaphors of the church as a building and body (1 Cor. 3:9, 12-31).

In Southern Baptist vernacular, these examples demonstrate believers on mission with God. Today there is a growing hunger among Southern Baptist laity to recapture the experience of the early Christians who turned their world upside down. They want to partner together with all the *laos* of God to fulfill the Great Commission in their generation.

Calling Out the Called and Lay Church Planting

The Church Planting Group of NAMB believes that starting new churches is the most effective way to evangelize the multitudes of non-Christians living in North America.² We are greatly encouraged by the increasing number of mission volunteers who are responding to God's call in their life. We believe this indicates that God continues to call Southern Baptists to use their gifts and witness to start new churches in their home communities and counties, their states, neighboring states, as well as other countries of the world. COTC builds upon the momentum of the mission volunteer movement among Southern Baptists and grounds that volunteerism in the New Testament context of lay church planting.

The culturally diverse, ever-increasing number of non-Christians in North America compels us to start many new and different types of churches. Acts 1:8 declares that a healthy church simultaneously bears witness to Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and in the utter most parts of the world. These four locations of mission activity highlight both geographical and cultural barriers to the gospel. It is difficult to move from one's Jerusalem to the utter most parts of the world because of the great geographical distance involved. Also, as one moves from Jerusalem to the utter most parts, the missions task increases in difficulty because of language, culture, and worldview differences.

Both the geographical and cultural barriers remain today as obstacles to fulfilling the Great Commission. However, God is removing the geographical barrier to the gospel by bringing many of the world's 13,000 *ethne* to North America. God has given local churches in the United States and Canada an incredible open door to evangelize many peoples of the world without ever leaving home. The geographical barriers have been removed or diminished, but the cultural barriers still remain. Many Southern Baptist churches in North America are uniquely situated to start churches among some of the most unreached people groups of the world. An Acts 1:8 perspective is essential for churches, associations, and state conventions seeking to make disciples of all the *ethne* now residing in our continent.³

The missions task in North America is immense. COTC provides one way to empower believers to accomplish this missions task. COTC reflects New Testament teaching on lay church planting. COTC assumes that laypersons—men, women, and children—are essential for accomplishing the Great Commission in North America.

As a church planting resource, COTC empowers local church members to fulfill the Great Commission through starting new churches. COTC's flexibility allows the reader to adapt it to a variety of church-planting strategies. Though possible to apply COTC to other ministry needs, throughout this guide, the application of COTC focuses upon accomplishing the missions task in North America by starting new churches.⁴

Notes

¹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 173.

² United States Southern Baptist Convention data from 1972-1993 demonstrates that the older the church the less evangelistic it tends to be: 10.7 baptisms per 100 members during the first year; 6.3 baptisms per 100 members per 100 members during the fifth year; 4.8 baptisms per 100 during the tenth year; 3.8 baptisms per 100 members during the fifteenth year; 2.3 baptism per 100 members is Southern Baptist Convention average.

³ See Sam Turner, *Networking for Kingdom Growth* (Alpharetta, Ga.: North American Mission Board, 2001). Contact George Thomasson at gthomasson@namb.net for the resource *Acts 1:8 Church Implementation Guide*.

⁴ Contact Van Kicklighter at vkicklighter@namb.net for the *Church Planter Starter Kit Resource*. This resource is designed to assist churches in starting new churches.

WHAT IS CALLING OUT THE CALLED?
A RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

WHAT IS CALLING OUT THE CALLED?

A Response to God's Call

In 1995, Randy Blan, a former bivocational pastor, heard God calling him to mobilize Southern Baptist men, women, and children to reach Illinois with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now pastor of First Baptist Church, Channahon, Ill., Blan says, "The vision God gave me was simply to remind our churches where we had come from and to once again call out the called."

As a result of God's leading, Blan and his wife, Karen, began to drive from one end of the state to the other sharing their vision for evangelizing their communities with the gospel. According to Blan, "It seemed as though every door would close behind us with little to no interest in what we were sure was from God. How could anyone not see this as an opportunity to join God on an incredible journey of mobilizing believers for His service?"

In the middle of 1996 Blan sensed God leading him to call out the called. So he moved his family from central Illinois to Chicago. It was the most challenging step of faith he had ever taken.



After God showed him where to live, Blan discovered that within a 20-mile radius of his home, there were more than 1 million unchurched people.

In 1997, Blan talked with Jim Queen, director of missions in the Chicago Metro Baptist Association, about the need for new churches in that area.

Blan realized at that moment that this

was his opportunity to share the vision God had given him. "Finally," said Blan, "I had someone who was interested." At this point a committed team of lay and professional missionaries began the work of starting new churches all across the Chicago area.

Over the next several months Blan and the Chicago Metro Baptist Association New Work Development Team began to develop a strategy to mobilize believers for ministry. Blan presented his first COTC message at St. Mark's Missionary Baptist Church. Eleven people surrendered their lives to the service of God. Three of those 11 became church planters.

Soon after this experience, Blan was called to restart Curtis Avenue Baptist Church, and moved his family to the southwest side of Chicago. While pastoring this church, Chicago became a Strategic Focus City. NAMB's Strategic Focus City emphasis mobilize Southern Baptists to impact all population segments of a specific city with the gospel through contextualized evangelism and church planting methodologies. Blan began to work alongside Ray Fuller and the Three Rivers Baptist Association for the Strategic Focus City emphasis in Chicago. They developed a strategy

to evangelize the more than 1 million unchurched people in their association. They quickly discovered, however, that their resources for church planting were woefully inadequate.

Blan then explained to Fuller the vision God had given him to call out the called. Looking back on that conversation Blan felt as though he was instantly given someone who would join him in implementing a COTC strategy.

Over the next several months they saw God do a great work within their association. Three Rivers Baptist Association was made up of 35 churches in 1998. The association was divided into seven clusters with five churches in each cluster. These clusters were originally formed for fellowship. Blan led the clusters to focus upon starting new churches together. Each cluster developed their own resources for starting new churches.

The association developed a New Work Development Team as it became more involved in the Strategic Focus City effort. This team focused primarily upon starting new churches, but also included developing other ministries as needed. The team consisted of representatives from each cluster as well as Blan and Fuller. During this time Blan became a New Work Strategist for the Illinois State Baptist Convention.

Each cluster embraced the opportunities for new churches as God revealed to them the depth of need for the gospel in their communities. One by one the clusters committed themselves to evangelizing their communities through church planting. Soon, the seven clusters had committed to starting 35 new churches. They identified 54 locations that needed new churches. They eventually concluded that as God showed them new locations needing new churches, they could not limit their response due to a lack of resources. They believed it was their responsibility to evangelize the entire area encompassed by their association.

Learning of the COTC concept, the New Work Team enthusiastically embraced the concept and developed an implementation strategy for each cluster. COTC training events were held. Churches within each cluster invited members of the New Work Team to come to their churches and lead COTC events. Twenty-eight people responded during the invitation of the first COTC event. Soon more than 300 believers said yes to God's call to ministry in their lives over the next several months.

The results of the COTC strategy were remarkable. In just 18 months, 22 new churches were started in Three Rivers Association. Local church attendance in the association increased to an all-time high. The number of baptisms also significantly increased, as did giving.

Today, more than 1,000 people in Illinois have said yes to God's call in their lives to use their witness and spiritual gifts in church planting. COTC has been used in other areas of the United States with significant response in identifying willing workers and involving them in starting new churches.

A Historical Distinctive

Historically, during the invitation time, Southern Baptist pastors have invited their members to answer the call to a focused ministry of the church. Church members were encouraged to respond publicly to God's call. It was common practice

prior to the 1960s for local church members to regularly respond to God's call in their lives.

Though not nearly as common today, invitations are extended to church members to consider and respond to God's call in their lives for mission ministries. Often, such an invitation focuses upon the call to full-time ministry (i.e., the clergy or professional ministry). As noted earlier, such a focus limits the New Testament emphasis that all of God's people are to be involved in fulfilling God's mission for the church in the world.

The terms clergy and laity, as commonly used today, can obscure the biblical emphasis of lay church planting through the local church. If the call to ministry is limited to the professional minister category, many church members will not understand God's call in their lives to use their gifts and witness inside and outside the church. These members will incorrectly conclude that ministry is only for the professionally trained person. They will never be vitally involved in ministry. Their gifts and witness will be undeveloped and wasted.

The COTC concept emphasizes that every member is gifted for ministry and missions. It recognizes God's call to certain individuals to become professional ministers. But it does not limit God's call to the professional minister category. The COTC concept focuses on God's call to all believers for ministry, especially starting new churches, without distinguishing between professional and non-professional.

An Effective Church Planting Resource

God has called all Christians to engage the lost world around them and thus obey the mission mandate of Christ to make disciples of all nations. COTC invites Christians to say yes to God's call for believers to enter the lost world with the good news of Jesus Christ. It is an effective way of empowering believers for evangelizing local communities through starting new churches. COTC is an event and process that identifies and involves those whom God is calling to participate in starting new churches.

The COTC event is reproducible in any setting where God's people have made themselves available to Him. Such settings include a local church worship service, an annual meeting at the association or state level, a chapel service of a college or seminary, a bible study in a home, or an outdoor retreat. During a COTC event, believers are presented a biblical call to use their gifts to start new churches in their communities. At the end of the message the audience is given the opportunity to say yes to God's call.

It is important to have a process of planning and preparation in place prior to the COTC event, as well as a plan of follow-up for those responding to the call of God. This process is outlined next.

**CALLING OUT THE CALLED
IN YOUR CONTEXT**

SIX ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

CALLING OUT THE CALLED IN YOUR CONTEXT

Six Essential Components

Six essential components emerge from the story of COTC in Chicago. This chapter overviews each of these components in order to introduce the functions and principles related to applying the COTC concept in your context. Detailed examples are intentionally limited. We believe that *your* contextualization of the COTC concept to *your ministry context* enhances receptivity among those with whom you minister.

The six components are introduced through the framework of a three-stage COTC process: 1) cultivation, 2) the COTC event, and 3) the harvest. The cultivation stage has three components and the harvest stage has two components. The COTC event is discussed as one component. The reason for discussing COTC as a three-stage process with six components is to provide an overview of the entire COTC process.

However, presenting COTC as a three-stage process may falsely imply assured success if each stage occurs sequentially. In an ideal situation, all the components listed below are interrelated and build upon each other. However, such ideal situations seldom exist. A more likely scenario has various components of each stage developing at varying rates. For example, the COTC event itself may take place before some aspects of the pre-event components are completed. God's activity during your COTC emphasis is not dependent upon completing each stage in order. Your context and God's sovereign leadership will determine how and when each component finds expression as you employ the COTC concept. Keep this in mind as you read the following description of the essential components of the COTC process.

The Cultivation Stage



Component 1 - Strategic Prayer

COTC is built upon the foundation of a solid and extensive prayer strategy. Christian history testifies to the relationship between purposeful prayer and God working in extraordinary ways. From Pentecost in the book of Acts to the great awakenings, the common element is that they were

preceded by and saturated with fervent prayer. Church planting movements found among various international people groups today, as well as throughout history, are characterized by fervent, purposeful, and ongoing prayer.¹

Prayer is the most important element throughout the entire COTC process.

Empowering believers for church planting missions in your community depends upon God's blessings. We know from Scripture that God desires we first come to Him, asking Him to call out the called to be sent into the mission fields of our communities. Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37, NKJV). COTC asks God to answer the prayer He instructed us to pray.

Three Goals

The prayer strategy includes numerous goals, but only three are highlighted here. The first goal relates to the *Christians with whom you minister*. Pray that all believers will evaluate God's call in their life and willingly obey Him in that call.

Another goal concerns *starting new, reproducing churches* so that every population segment in your community encounters the gospel message. Ask God to start new churches in your area and trust Him to call out those He will use to start them.

The third goal focuses upon *the spiritual needs of non-Christians in North America and around the world*. Your community may become the center of a church planting movement. Such a movement has the potential to spread the gospel from population segment to population segment in North America, and possibly to other countries.

Prayer must empower any strategy for mobilizing believers for starting new churches!

Begin Now!

- * List how you are praying for God to call out the called in your areas of ministry.

- * Identify three major obstacles that hinder Christians in your sphere of ministry from hearing and obeying God's call in their life.

- * Pray that the Lord would remove these obstacles.

- * List the areas of your community, county, state, or another country where you are asking God to start new churches.

- * List the population segments in your community that need new churches.

- * Commit to pray once a week for these areas and population segments with at least one other person.

Many methods exist to make prayer an effective component of COTC. Some of these include:

Lighthouse of Prayer - Lighthouses of Prayer have tremendous potential for believers to impact their communities with the gospel as they pray for people in their own neighborhoods. New churches can result as believers discern and follow God's activity in their neighborhoods.²

Prayerwalking - Prayerwalking enables Christians to see the spiritual needs of a community up close and personal. As they walk and pray through their own communities they gain God's perspective on the lostness around them and a higher level of personal responsibility.³

Intercessory Prayer Teams - Intercession always creates ownership. A person cannot sincerely intercede for someone and not want to know the results of their prayers. Believers can join together and intercede for communities or population segments needing new churches.⁴

Component 2 - Clustered Churches



Clustering churches refers to several churches joining together for the purpose of starting new churches. The Multiplying Church Network (MCN) strategy of NAMB incorporates the clustering churches concept.⁵ The MCN strategy can provide you valuable insights for implementing your church planting goals. It assumes several churches are partnering

together to start new churches. This component does not apply to your situation if you are a pastor and your church decides to start churches apart from joining together with other churches.

Clustered churches jointly prepare COTC events to identify church members whom God is calling to participate in a new church start. Once identified, these members form new church planting teams or join existing church planting teams. Each person's role in the team depends upon his or her gifts, call, and experience. The exact nature and length of involvement vary according to context and leadership.

At least three factors influence which churches cluster together. First, churches cluster together because of their geographical proximity to one another. Second, they cluster together because of their social and/or cultural similarities. Third, churches may cluster together simply because they each have the vision and compassion to evangelize their communities through church planting. This third factor can often overcome the absence of the first two factors.

Churches that cluster together in order to start new churches experience several positive benefits. Sharing the common purpose of starting new churches results in renewed motivation and enthusiasm for the things of God. Clustered churches,

through mutual accountability, exponentially increase desired ministry outcomes. Fellowship between the members of these churches grows deeper due to their shared ministry experiences. Clustering churches empowers individual churches to do together what they are unable to do easily alone—start new churches!

Clustering churches strengthens churches, associations, and state conventions that are focused on evangelizing population segments in their communities through church planting. The component of clustering churches in the COTC process to start new churches accentuates the cooperative distinctive of Southern Baptists.

The spiritual synergy that results from Christian cooperation is attractive to Christians and non-Christians alike. Jesus prayed that all His disciples “May be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe You sent Me” (John 17:21, NKJV). Clustering churches in order to start new churches demonstrates the unity of Christ and His love.

Begin Now!

Is your church prepared to cluster with other churches in order to start new churches?

Why? _____

Why not? _____

List three to five churches in your area that can cluster together to start new churches.

Component 3 - The New Churches Team

The New Churches Team brokers church planting within a variety of church settings. The team could be located in one church as part of that church’s On Mission Team, or as a part of the mission committee.⁶ If neither of these exists, the church can develop a New Churches Team devoted expressly to starting new churches. The name of the team is not as important as is the function—starting new churches. A church with such a team is prepared to start new churches by itself or with other churches.

The New Churches Team might be located in an association seeking to mobilize numerous churches for starting new churches. This team could be a part of an already existing Associational On Mission Team, mission committee, or new work team. As with the individual church, the function of the team is the focus. In an associational setting, the New Churches Team networks with clustered churches within that association or neighboring associations in order to start new churches.

Contexts, configurations, and team participants will vary. In each situation, though, the New Churches Team has four primary functions: 1) discovering church planting needs, 2) prioritizing church planting opportunities, 3) casting church planting vision, and 4) networking church planting efforts.

Discovering Church Planting Needs

The New Churches Team leads the way in discovering church planting needs by thoroughly researching their community. The goal of this research is to determine the levels and locations of lostness throughout the team's entire ministry area. Demographic and psychographic information should be included in the research. Research tools such as ACORN, VALS, SCAN US, PRISM, and others, provide useful statistical data for many areas of North America.

Another element of the research focuses on identifying various population segments within the team's community that have the least amount of gospel contact. Such research requires local surveying. NAMB's "The Church Planting Probe" and "The Prep Process for Church Planting" are helpful tools for community surveying.⁷

The team's research may identify population segments consisting of unreached people groups who have immigrated to their area. If so, they will need to determine the language to use for evangelism and church planting, the communication media most appropriate to their style of learning, specific worldview barriers to the gospel, and specific worldview points of contact that serve as bridges for the gospel.⁸

The New Churches Team correlates the above research with current church data to statistically describe the need for new churches in a given area. A helpful guide for quickly estimating the number of churches needed to disciple the team's community or communities is presented below. To use this formula you will need current population figures, current attendance of all evangelical churches in your area, and the seating capacities of all evangelical churches in your area.

- _____ Add together the total number of non-Christians and unchurched in your area.
- _____ Subtract the combined seating capacity of all evangelical churches in your area.
- = _____ Equals the number of non-Christian or unchurched people in your area unable to attend any evangelical church.
- /230 _____ Divide by the national median size of Southern Baptist churches.
- = _____ Equals approximate number of churches needed to disciple your area.

This simple method is not sufficient to precisely define the church planting needs of your area. It counts the largest attended service of the week and assumes that no other groups use the building for worship. The formula provides only an estimation of the number of new churches needed in your area.

It may be helpful to indicate on a map of the team's area each population segment needing a new church. Such a map highlights geographical proximity with existing local churches. Later the team may find that social, cultural, or language differences

cancel out the geographic proximity advantage. Nevertheless, a mapping system of the entire ministry area, that depicts geographically your church planting needs, is a valuable vision-casting tool.

Prioritizing Church Planting Opportunities

Another important task of the New Churches Team relates to prioritizing the hard data gained during the research of the team's area. More than likely, their research will reveal many more areas needing new churches than the team's church or churches are able to address at one time. They must determine which population segments and/or geographical locations are priorities for their first church planting efforts.

Prayer and discernment are required for prioritizing church planting opportunities. Key ingredients for discerning God's priorities include: prayer, the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the study of God's Word, and observing where God is already at work in the target areas.

One indicator of a priority population segment or place for starting a church is the identification of a person of influence in that location or among that people group.



God often prepares an area and people to receive the gospel well ahead of the gospel's arrival. The person of influence opens the way for the gospel to enter a neighborhood or community. When this person accepts Christ, he or she will lead others to Christ via existing relationships with one another.

Another priority indicator is an existing church with an affinity for the area or population segment in need of a new church. Often God will put on the heart of a pastor or church member the desire to share the gospel with a specific people or area. When this occurs, the New Churches Team should pursue connecting that church and/or individual with any existing church planting efforts in that area or with that people. If no such plans exist, the team should consider developing them.

The criteria used to prioritize the church planting opportunities should not emphasize either the abundance or the lack of financial resources. Instead, the team must focus on knowing the needs of the community, the will of God for the area, and the believers and churches that God is calling out to start new churches.

Casting Church Planting Vision

The New Churches Team casts church planting vision by providing church members and church leadership compelling biblical and statistical reasons for starting new churches in their communities. Casting vision for church planting also includes providing practical, hands-on opportunities for starting new churches.

Casting church planting vision includes: catching the vision, growing the vision, and living the vision. Catching the vision of church planting occurs when a person

or church understands what it means to be a part of evangelizing a community through church planting. The vision grows as churches and individuals experience the dynamics of starting a new church. Living the vision takes place when the person or church demonstrates that starting new churches is a normal expression of obedience to Christ's command to make disciples. It is helpful to develop short-term goals and long-term objectives in the visioning process. Some examples of each are listed below.

Short-Term Goals

- To provide accurate and up-to-date information about church planting.
- To involve 100 percent of all churches in an association in starting a new church.
- To involve 100 percent of all church members in starting a new church.
- To educate in the biblical basis of church planting.
- To initiate prayerwalking events for 50 percent of the community's neighborhoods.

Long-Term Objectives

- To stimulate ongoing prayer for new church starts.
- To raise financial support for church planting efforts.
- To recruit, train, and send out potential church planters.
- To assist church planters in their ministries.
- To encourage all churches or church members to be involved in starting new churches.

Networking Church Planting Efforts

The New Churches Team function of networking church planting efforts takes place before, during, and after the COTC event. The networking function of the New Churches Team resembles the function of a blueprint for a construction crew building a house. The blueprint details each room of the house and every necessary item to complete them.

In a similar way, the New Churches Team has a blueprint of their community or area of communities. Every population segment or geographical location in need of a new church resides on this blueprint. The New Churches Team, like the construction crew, knows what item is needed to complete the new church start in any given population segment or area. Their resources are the called out individuals of all the local churches in the area. Their task is to connect the called out to the people and places needing new churches.

Networking church planting opportunities is an ongoing function of the New Churches Team. Areas and people needing new churches always change, as do those called out to start churches. The team also facilitates mentoring for those whom God calls out during a COTC event. The mentoring component is discussed after the COTC event is explained.

The Calling Out the Called Event Stage

Component 4 - Calling Out the Called

The first three components—strategic prayer, clustered churches, and the New Churches Team—set the stage for the COTC event. Ideally, the audience of a COTC

event will have encountered aspects of components one through three prior to the event. Thus, the message they hear connects with previous information related to starting new churches in their community. The COTC event provides a tremendous opportunity for believers to hear from the Lord about His will for them in regards to their involvement in starting new churches.

However, it is important to note that speakers have presented a COTC message to unprepared audiences. Many people have come forward in these meetings to declare that God was calling them to participate in starting a new church. God's activity is not dependent upon our preparation.

Preparation for the event itself includes securing a location, setting the order of the service, developing media such as videos, special songs for the service, writing the message, securing participation of other churches, publicizing the event, and equipping counselors for the invitation time. This list is only representative of the preparation needed prior to the COTC event.

The focus of the event is the COTC message. Everything done prior to the message should support the emphasis of the message. The COTC concept derives from many biblical passages. Since there is not a perfect sanctioned COTC message, whoever presents the COTC message should follow the Lord's leadership concerning the details of the message.

The invitation time of the service offers God's people the opportunity to respond to His call. The invitation should not be rushed, but allowed to progress as the Holy Spirit leads. Those responding need assistance from prepared counselors. This is the best time to begin immediate follow-up by solidifying their commitment and by praying with them. A method for recording all decisions is extremely important. Such records are vital for post-event mentoring and connecting the called out to church planting opportunities. A response card with spaces for the person's name, address, phone number(s), e-mail address, and reason for coming forward should be included.

The Harvest Stage



Component 5 - Mentoring the Called Out

An intentional and thorough mentoring strategy assures that the called out individuals receive appropriate and timely assistance as they participate in starting a new church. Mentoring in the COTC context means that a mature believer initiates a relationship with the called out individual for the purpose of aiding him or her in

spiritual formation and skill development related to starting new churches.

Such mentoring may consist of several stages with different mentors in each stage. First, the called out individual needs immediate mentoring, focusing on initial processing of God's call in his or her life. The mentor for this stage most likely will be someone in the called out individual's church or association. However, as the called out individual gets involved in starting a church, someone on the Church Starting Team or one of the lead church planters may become his or her mentor. In the third stage, the called out individual becomes the mentor of a recently called out individual and reproduces himself or herself in that person's life.

Mentoring consists of formal and informal training.⁹ Thus mentoring takes place in an endless variety of settings such as class rooms, church services, personal study, group interaction, video instruction, short-term church planting experiences, lunch with a friend, etc. The ultimate goal of COTC mentors is that called out individuals increasingly participate in reconciling a lost world to Jesus Christ.

To effectively connect called out individuals to a new church-starting situation keep in mind the following issues. (These are not listed in order of priority.) First, be careful that no one falls through the cracks. It is easy to inadvertently lose contact with people if large numbers have responded to the call to church planting. Be careful not to judge too quickly who can or cannot be involved in starting a new church.

Second, develop a good tracking and reporting system. Such a system assists in maintaining oversight of called out individuals. This will enable you to plan and execute your mentoring strategy effectively. Also, you may discover new opportunities for starting new churches as you identify those God is calling out and where they live.

Third, help called out individuals determine their spiritual gifts and natural talents. This kind of self-understanding provides clear insight into what role the individual may serve in starting a new church. Role clarification will greatly assist in matching each person to a specific task and to a planter or church planting team. During this process of self-assessment, individuals whom God is calling to be vocational church planters also will be identified.¹⁰

Fourth, emphasize that the best training for starting new churches is starting new churches. A good mentoring strategy provides mentors who walk alongside the called out individual and provide on-the-job training. Today it is easy to over-train people or neglect to assist them in ways that will benefit the person for the assignment that God has given them. On-the-job training, sometimes called just-in-time training, follows Christ's model of discipleship.

The mentoring strategy you employ will reflect the unique circumstances of your context. This will determine which of the many available resources you use for mentoring the called out individuals in your area.¹¹

Component 6 - Evaluating for Reproduction

The COTC process is reproducible in any setting under any circumstances. God is always calling Christians to follow Him into a lost world in order to reconcile non-Christians to Himself through faith in Jesus Christ. Be sure that the new churches started through the COTC emphasis receive the opportunity for reproducing the process in their church.

God's call upon individual Christians to serve Him in a lost world never changes, but the context into which believers are sent always changes. Therefore the last component of the COTC process addresses the need for evaluation.

Your evaluation should include qualitative investigation. Did your implementation of COTC reflect your biblical values, your church values, and/or your association's values? Did your mentoring strategy foster Christ-likeness? Was your prayer strategy truly seeking God's will or your success? Did your COTC emphasis communicate the love of Christ to all participants?

Your evaluation should also include quantitative questions. How many Christians were mobilized for starting new churches? How many new churches were started? How many called out individuals actually participated in starting new churches? What are the explanations for the differences between the number called out and the number who participated?

The above questions are only illustrative. The ultimate goal of the evaluation process is to improve the COTC process in order that it becomes a more effective tool for empowering and mobilizing believers for starting new churches. As you develop your evaluation process, remember you are seeking to understand God's will for your community or communities. Accurate observation and synthesis of God's activities during COTC provide the best indicators of His next step for you in reconciling non-Christians to Christ in your area by starting new churches.

Notes

¹ A church planting movement is defined as a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, (Richmond, Va.: International Mission Board, n.d.), 8.

² See "On Mission as a Lighthouse of Prayer," NAMB, Chris Schofield, cschofield@namb.net

³ See *Taking Prayer to the Streets: Prayer Journeys Resource Kit*, NAMB, Thomas Wright, twright@namb.net

⁴ Gary Odom "Prayer Powered Planting," unpublished document.

⁵ Contact Bob Sena for more information on the "Multiplying Church Network Strategy," NAMB, bsena@namb.net

⁶ A church's *On Mission Team* is committed to mobilizing church members for the Great Commission. The goal of the *On Mission Team* is to guide the congregation to be on mission with God. See *The On Mission Church Complete Planning Kit*, NAMB, 2000, and Danny Sinquefield, *The On Mission Team Manual: Mobilizing Your Church for the Great Commission*, NAMB, 2000.

⁷ Contact David Terry, dterry@namb.net, for more information on these research tools.

⁸ Points of contact are manifestations of general revelation found in all worldviews that facilitate communication of the gospel.

⁹ Contact Steve Reid, sreid@namb.net, for information on ESCaPaDES, a mentoring resource for individuals in the early stages of church planting.

¹⁰ A helpful resource is *Discovery Tools: Does God Want Me to be Involved in Church Planting?* NAMB, 2001. Contact John Shepherd, jshepherd@namb.net

¹¹ Contact your local association or your state convention offices for mentoring resources available in your area.

FOUR TYPES OF CHURCHES

IDENTIFY YOUR CHURCH TYPE

FOUR TYPES OF CHURCHES

Identify Your Church Type



North America stands in need of many new churches. Evangelization of the non-Christian population in North America requires a rapid multiplication of new churches for every population segment and cannot emerge without the involvement of the laity. The growth of Christianity described in the New Testament

resulted from all believers participating in the spread of the gospel among the non-Christian population of their day. New Testament churches, in the midst of all their difficulties, exemplify how every believer, by using his or her spiritual gifts, has a significant role to play in reconciling non-Christians to Christ and discipling them.

Many churches in North America have drifted from this New Testament example. Common questions among church leaders today reflect the growing inability of many churches to impact the lost world around them. Some of these questions are:

- How can we get the average Christian involved in evangelism?
- How can we develop the spiritual gifts of every member?
- How can every Christian be on mission with God?
- How can real discipleship work within the church?
- How can we spread the love of Christ to every neighborhood, apartment complex, cultural sub-group, school, office building, and every other niche in society that needs to hear?¹

Many programs and materials that address these questions already exist. COTC is not a program or how-to manual. It is a process that can be adapted and applied to any context and it is up to you to contextualize this process and its components to your specific situations. COTC is a way for pastors, denominational leaders, missionaries, and church staff to empower believers in their respective churches to impact a lost and dying world with the gospel of Jesus Christ by starting new churches.

If you are a pastor or minister of missions, a good place to begin is by taking a general inventory of your church. If you are a director of missions, a church planting missionary, a state convention leader, or a strategic focus cities coordinator, take an inventory of those churches with whom you are involved. Questions for such an inventory are listed below. These questions identify some common characteristics of churches that often determine a church's readiness for starting new churches. Four types of churches are identified.

The first type of church is the *complacent church*. Complacent churches are satisfied and content with the existing condition of their church and community. A complacent church sees no need for evangelizing non-Christians in its community or for starting new churches.

The second type of church is an *informed church*. The informed church understands to some degree the lostness that exists in its community, county, state, country, and world. This church also recognizes that church planting is an effective method of evangelizing non-Christian population segments. But due to a variety of reasons, this church is not personally involved in starting new churches.

A church that actively participates in starting new churches is an *engaged church*. An engaged church commits itself to church planting among a variety of peoples and contexts—locally, nationally, and internationally. Engaged churches place high priority on involving all their members in fulfilling the Great Commission through starting new churches.

The fourth type of church is the *champion church*. A champion church understands that church planting is the ultimate goal of all attempts to disciple the nations. Therefore, church-planting vision influences every aspect of the church. This church recognizes that its one style or language or culture of worship will not meet the needs of every population segment in their community. The champion church clearly understands its missions role from an Acts 1:8 perspective.

Take a few minutes now and check the statements that apply to your church or churches.

COMPLACENT

- We have never been involved in a short-term mission project.
- We rarely pray for needs outside the members of our church.
- Most of our ministries focus on the needs of our congregation.
- Our church has a history of fighting and dissension.
- We do not have a strategy for reaching non-Christians.
- Our church actively demonstrates care and love for the pastor and staff.
- We have never looked at the demographics of our community and the impact of our church.
- We do not give regularly to the Cooperative Program.

INFORMED

- Our church regularly prays for mission work and missionaries.
- We have a good reputation in the community.
- Our church has a weekly outreach visitation program.

- We give regularly to the Cooperative Program.
- Our church actively trains members in evangelism.
- The pastor personally speaks of people he has seen come to faith in Christ as a result of his witness.
- Our church has identified a group of people willing to pray for a new church.
- Most of our missions education and awareness has to do with international missions.

ENGAGED

All of the items listed under “informed” plus:

- We have participated in starting new churches in our community.
- We have partnered with our previous church plants in ministry projects.
- Our church has an on-going and active prayer ministry for the non-Christians of our community, county, state, country, and world.
- Community organizations come to us for sponsorship.
- We take up special offerings for missions.
- Our church regularly sends people on short-term mission trips.
- Our church has been praying for the opportunity to plant a church.
- Our church has adopted missionaries and their families.

CHAMPION

All of the above items listed under “informed” and “engaged” plus:

- Our church members regularly participate in starting new churches locally, nationally, and internationally.
- We have done demographic research in the population segments where we want to start a church.
- Our church has developed an Acts 1:8 mission perspective.
- Our church has adopted a people group to pray for and support.
- We have already established a budgeted line item for starting new churches.
- We have a functioning missions committee (team).
- We stay in contact proactively with people whom this church has adopted as missionaries.
- Our church involves other churches in starting new churches.

Based on this questionnaire I think that the category that best describes the readiness of our church or churches is:

- COMPLACENT** **ENGAGED**
 INFORMED **CHAMPION**

Note

¹ John Butts, “The Transformational Church,” unpublished document, 4.

CONCLUSION



TAKING THE NEXT STEP

What type of churches did you discover? Are they ready to start new churches? Are they ready to implement COTC? What type of churches did you discover? Are they ready to start new churches? Are they ready to implement COTC?

The Recruitment Team of the Church

Planting Group of NAMB offers a Calling Out the Called Forum for churches and associations considering starting new churches. This one-day seminar addresses various factors that determine a church's readiness for starting new churches and discusses ways of using COTC in your context. If you are interested in having a COTC Forum in your area, please check the COTC Forum box on the response card located on the back cover.

Or it may be that God is calling you to be a church planter. If so we want to send you a *Discovery Tools* booklet that is designed to assist you in the early part of your journey as a church planter. There is a box on the response card for this guide.

No matter what type of church or churches you are involved with, COTC can help you mobilize the believers in these churches and empower them to actively participate in fulfilling the Great Commission by starting new churches. The Church Planting Group of NAMB exists to assist you in reaching your church planting objectives in your specific ministry context.

Today, God continues to work through local churches to reconcile and disciple non-Christians in a variety of population segments in North America. Many different methods are being used and blessed of God. An increasing number of local churches are starting new churches to evangelize communities throughout North America.

Churches that start new churches focus on the non-Christians of their communities. The biblical mandate to reconcile and disciple non-Christians to Jesus Christ motivates their efforts. They have an outward focus on the world around them. They ask, "What will it take to make a difference in our community for the sake of the gospel?" Often they conclude that starting new churches is the only way to impact the unsaved and unchurched population segments located in their communities. What is God saying to you?

EPILOGUE

The following experience of George Garner, NAMB national missionary for town and country church planting, illustrates the importance of the call of God in church planting.

HEARING FROM GOD

“Who will bring me to the strong city? . . . Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies” (Ps. 60:9, 12, NKJV).

Successful church planting must have an authentic spiritual foundation. No matter how proficient a person may be in the skills of ministry, an intimate encounter and personal walk with our Lord is essential. One part of this foundation is a clear and definite calling from our Lord. There is always danger of being defeated in church planting, whether in a rural or urban setting. When you are in the pit of despair and reverses are on every hand, the calling will keep you from quitting. Regardless of the circumstances, you will be strengthened to endure if you have a definite sense of calling. Not only is this true in the general sense of the calling to church planting, but also regarding the specific sense of geographic location and ministry assignment.

Claudine Duncan, a good friend and member of the rural church I pastored, Bethel Baptist Church, Okla., encouraged me with a statement she had read which I would never forget. “Never doubt in the dark what God has revealed in the light.” There have been many crisis times when I have had to encourage myself, my wife, and my children with the question, “What was the last thing God told us to do? That is what we must continue to rely on, regardless of how good or bad things appear.”

A calling will be very definite and will come from the Lord through His Word. Scripture has one interpretation, but may have many applications determined by the Holy Spirit. When considering the beginning of a ministry, or facing life-changing decisions, anticipate God speaking His will from His Word in your quiet hour with Him. I mark well when I understood my calling as a church planter. As background, I will recount some of my journey.

Having been involved in new work areas in the 1970s as a pastor in Langdon, N.D., and North Kingstown, R.I., I led our churches to do multiple new starts. At that time, I did not think of myself as having a specific calling as a church planter. I was attempting to lead our church to be obedient in what I thought God commanded all churches to do. Following this time I

I did not see myself as a church planter, but was simply trying to be obedient to the Great Commission.

served as a bivocational minister in north Texas for six years. In the fall 1983, my wife and I mutually began to sense that the Lord was leading again into new work areas. We waited, watched, and continued faithfully in the work at hand. Through a series of events, I was asked by the

Colorado Baptist General Convention to move to eastern Colorado to plant a new church in Limon. This church, Hi-Plains Baptist Church, became a multiplying church—planting new work in towns along Interstate 70 from Byers to Burlington. Again, I did not see myself as a church planter, but was simply trying to be obedient to the Great Commission.

God's hand was upon us in miraculous ways. In 1986 God interrupted me through His word at a church starter strategist conference. Lyndon Collings, of the former Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board), Southern Baptist Convention, was speaking from Acts 8. He read and reflected on the occasion when Phillip was involved in the great awakening in Samaria. The Spirit of God called Phillip to leave that successful ministry. He was told to go down to the lonely stretches of Gaza to introduce the gospel to a singular man in a chariot.

During this Bible study, the Spirit of God spoke to my spirit. His application was, “Are you willing to leave the movement in Limon and go to the lonely forgotten pockets of small population throughout the plains of rural eastern Colorado? Are you willing to take them the gospel by planting churches?” It was that time of calling—hearing from God—that kept me serving 17 years in eastern Colorado.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide began as an attempt to understand and describe the COTC emphasis used for starting new churches in the Three Rivers Association of Chicago, Ill., 1998-2000. A group of individuals met together to hear the Chicago story. It became apparent that principles contained in the COTC experience could be used in other contexts to facilitate starting new churches. Aspects of the COTC concept and process have been used in several states with encouraging results. The purpose of this guide is to outline the COTC concept and process in such a way as to make it available to all. May the Lord use this guide to His glory!

Special thanks go to Randy Blan for his untiring efforts to be used of God through COTC. His vision and obedience to God's leadership lead to this guide.

Jim Brunk, David Jackson, Gary Irby, Jim Kirk, and Jim Toole have also contributed to the completion of this guide. Their insights and faithful ministry to see many Christians empowered in order to evangelize non-Christians and start new churches are invaluable.

Van Sanders

Recruitment Church Enlistment Associate

Church Planting Group

North American Mission Board

HOW CAN I BEGIN CALLING OUT THE CALLED?

Please detach and mail this card.

Check your interest:

- I want to participant in a Calling Out the Called Forum to learn further how to implement Calling Out the Called in my area.
- I am interested in being a church planter, send me the *Discovery Tools* booklet.
- I am interested in the Multiplying Church Network Strategy.
- Other. _____

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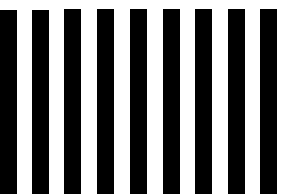
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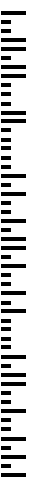


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