ABSTRACT

MINISTRY MULTIPLICATION IN FINISHING THE GREAT COMMISSION

IN SRI LANKA

By

Given Middle Sample Surname

The purpose of this dissertation is to document the launch and implementation of T-Net in Sri Lanka in 2013. There were initial uncertainty and doubts about the possibility of success in launching this training process. The main concern is the willingness of the pastors and Christian leaders in persevering through the long process of intense equipping, high accountability, and commitment. Nevertheless, by the end of the training, the initial group of thirty-five students, twenty-two completed and went to graduate with master's degree in ministry. This First Generation of Pastors have gone on to start Generation Two and Three training centers. The paper reflects on the journey of faith, trials and errors, spontaneous adaptation the unique challenges of the context and culture of Sri Lanka. The success and failures factors are identified in order to inform and enhance future implementation in other similar contexts.

Besides documenting the process of implementing T-Net in Sri Lanka, the paper will also examine the author's Reformed church tradition and how it influenced the conviction and practice of finishing the Great Commission.

APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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IN FINISHING THE GREAT COMMISSION

IN SRI LANKA

Presented by

Given Middle Sample Surname

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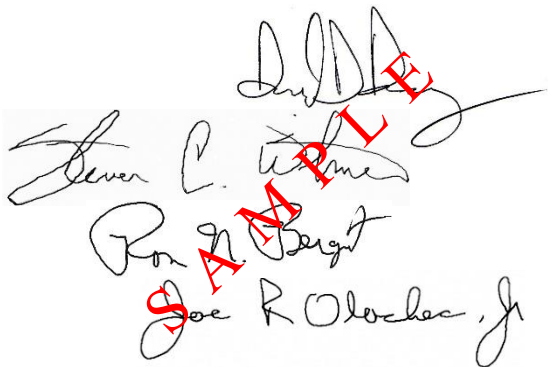

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A Ministry Project

Presented to the Faculty of

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By

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Journeying with the Sri Lankan Generation One pastors these last four years will

be remembered as one of the highlights in my ministry. Their dedication in applying the Biblical and T-Net principles of church planting has been an inspiration to many. Through the thick and thin of their ministry challenges and training, they have kept to the task without wavering. The bonding together as a band of faithful servants of God, regardless of denominational differences, is one of the many blessings that came out of the four years of training.

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PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE MINISTRY PROJECT

Is Singapore Antioch Yet?

In a sermon entitled, “Is Singapore Antioch Yet?”, Dr. Edward Keith Pousson, an American missionary in Singapore for many years, shared how he was inspired by Patrick Johnstone’s comment that Singapore is the Antioch of Asia. In a short span of 40 years, Singapore moved from third world to first world, prospering in economy and human resources. The church grew and became a key Christian base and missions sending country. It records a remarkable ratio of one missionary to each Protestant church as one of the best ratios in the world. Dr. Pousson, in his sermon highlighted many similarities between the Antioch in Acts and the “Antioch-likeness” in Singapore. He noted the parallels in social, cultural, and economic realms. The Singapore city state is a vital hub to the rest of Southeast Asia, providing an effective network of transportation and logistical support to the rest of the world. The local churches have been leveraging on this manifold blessings and has been ranked as one of the most missions-minded and missions-resourced churches in the world. The Singapore passport allows us entry into almost all countries of the world. The missions vibrancy and commitment of the church leadership have combined to make Singapore a conducive conduit for God's missions. In the 7th edition of the Operation World prayer guide, Mandryk made this observation, “Singapore is a strategic centre for regional and global Christian missions due to its infrastructure, stability, location and strong Christian population. Singapore's capacity as a mission-sending nation has grown in leaps and bounds.” The Singapore Centre for

Global Missions (formerly SCEM) played a catalytic role in unifying and mobilizing the Singaporean missions enterprise. The Fellowship of Missional Organizations of Singapore (FOMOS), an association of several agencies and para-church groups, and the triennial GoForth National Mission Conference also have a notable impact. Many churches have active missions programmes; one outstanding example is Victory Family Centre, which has sent over a thousand short-term missionaries and planted hundreds of churches in 80 nations (744-745).

While Singapore churches are strong in the push for world missions, there is very little mention of finishing the Great Commission. While the churches are busy and faithful in doing missions overseas, we do not know, if ever, or even dare to believe, that the task can be completed. A case in point is Singapore itself. With only five million people, there is no unified strategy to see the Great Commission finished in Singapore. The most vibrant and unifying indigenous movement, “Love Singapore,” has been sounding the trumpet call to evangelize Singapore. But nothing is mentioned about the feasibility of the task. There were aspirations that 80% of the population will come to Christ, but there is no concrete strategy or steps to see this happen. How will the 15% Muslim population be reached? What yardsticks are there to help us determine if the task is completed in Singapore? This is the primary problem facing us as a church in Singapore. There is still no definitive framework that will help us to know when the work of outreach and evangelism is accomplished in Singapore.

Christ’s Final and Parting Words

A person's parting words carry extra weight because priority and clarity dictate what is most needed to be said. In five different places, Christ's last words to the church

were distilled into the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (*English Standard Version*, Matt. 28:19). Implanted in these commands is the belief that the task was meant to be finished. The systematic spreadingout and expansion in Acts 1:8, points to the progressive completion of the gospel preached and its intended success, promised by the provision and empowering of the Holy Spirit. It is a task so humongous, that it is only by the accompanying presence of the Holy Spirit, with signs and wonders that the task can be finished. Jesus himself promised that it would be finished. Matthew 24:14 states, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end shall come” (*New American Standard Bible*).

In the beginning, the apostles may not have caught the intent of Christ’s command to spread the gospel far and wide. Their base of operation was still confined to Jerusalem. Thus, when Acts 1:8 did not happen, Acts 8:1 had to kick start the missionary movement. It was the persecutions that drove and scattered the believers throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. It was only later when the 12 disciples understood the Great Commission that they divided the entire world through drawing of lots, assigning where each would go. Jesus’ disciples carried out the task to the ends of the earth and all but one, Apostle John, died a martyr’s death as they proclaimed the gospel beyond Jerusalem. Paul could confidently claim he had finished this command from Jerusalem to the Adriatic Sea.

Definitions: What Does Finishing the Great Commission Look Like?

For a long time, the church has had only a fuzzy notion of the Great Commission. It is unclear as to what is meant by finishing the Great Commission. We are ambiguous when it comes to any tangible measurement of the completed task. The only yardstick often used is simple obedience to the call to go to the nations. As long as we keep sending missionaries and give towards to the need for Bible translation and support of missions venture, we think we have "fulfilled" the Great Commission. Our use of the word "fulfill" carries the idea of "justifying" or "satisfying" someone's wishes but not so much as finishing the project.

This is where T-Net's Project Zero has succeeded where others have failed. Project Zero aims for total completion of the Great Commission where there will be no nation left unreached. It is the conviction that a day will come when there will be "zero" nations needing to hear the gospel, because the gospel will be preached in all the nations of the world.

The Great Commission was meant to be finished, not just something to work at! The important question is, "When will the Great Commission be considered finished in any given country?"

For this to happen, there must be four realities in any given region. In the T-Net training manuals, these four realities are repeatedly and clearly spelled out. The first is a quantitative element. There must be a "critical mass" of effective disciplemaking churches of 100 (or two disciplemaking churches of fifty) for every 1,000 people. Second, the element of nearness and accessibility. This is the "proximity" factor of an effective disciplemaking church that is within easy travel distance of every person in an

area, say within five kilometers. This ease of access is necessary to reach every person. Third, the element of attraction and appeal. The "magnetism" of an effective disciplemaking church will draw every kind of person in a community and make them feel welcome and engender a sense of belonging. The community is made up of different kinds of people. This includes the wealthy and poor, urbanite and villager, various tribes and language groups, and even foreign-born citizens. Fourth, the element of sustainability over the long-term. The "steady growth" of effective disciplemaking churches in that region ought to produce conversion growth several times faster than population growth. This allows us to continually keep ahead of population growth, after first finishing the Great Commission (*Finishing* 9).

What these four realities should produce are three results. First, every neighborhood will be filled with disciplemaking churches. Second, every person in that neighborhood has been personally invited to receive Christ. Third, every willing convert is nurtured in an ongoing disciplemaking process (*Finishing* 9)

Five Marks of an Effective Disciplemaking Church

There is a tendency for churches to measure health and success too narrowly. The most commonly used index is a quantitative increase of membership. But the problem is that numerical growth alone cannot ascertain if a church is effectively making disciples. Another frequently used yardstick is the number of programs and activities that keep members busy. They can range from in-house teaching programs to community outreach ministries. But preoccupation with programs alone may not produce disciples that are growing holistically.

Amid multitudes, Christ gave a higher calling for those who are willing to follow Him wholeheartedly. It is a higher calling that demands a more holistic vision and commitment. What is a biblically holistic vision and measurement of an effective disciplemaking church? Five qualities should define an effective disciplemaking church (*Finishing* 9).

A Written Biblical Disciplemaking Plan

First, an effective disciplemaking church has a clear written plan for making individual disciples. This plan comes with a written and well-defined description of the process for making a disciple. This process is measured against a list of biblical transformation indicators. Knowing the exact picture of a disciple will ensure we are producing one that is according to Christ's specifications. While we do not want to be bogged by or driven by checklists, nevertheless they can still help us see the overall trajectory of a person's spiritual progress. It is also a way we learn to exercise loving accountability. As trainers, we will agree with this axiom that people seldom do what we expect, but they will do what we inspect (*Finishing* 10).

Effective Conversion Growth

Second, an effective disciplemaking church has an effective conversion growth rate, far above the population growth rate of their region (5% to 50%). The rate for your country should be 10% a year. These estimates are based on studies by church growth consultants over the years (*Finishing* 10).

Effective Disciplemaking Growth

Third, in an effective disciplemaking church, 60% to 75% of church members also attend an intentional disciplemaking small group or have a one-on-one meeting with

a disciplemaker each week. What is considered an intentional disciplemaking small group? There are at least three characteristics. First, the leader knows what a disciple is through the recipe or written plan and process. Second, the leader has been equipped to make that kind of disciple. Third, the leader is intentionally making disciples of his members, following the recipe (*Finishing* 10).

Measurable Maturity of Members

Fourth, in an effective disciplemaking church, 20% to 45% of their members progress to the next maturity level each year. The different levels of maturity are spelled out in the recipe and plan (*Finishing* 10).

Multiplication of Disciplemaking Churches

Fifth, an effective disciplemaking church consistently makes other disciplemaking churches, by planting them or revitalizing existing churches (*Finishing* 10).

T-Net has a clear vision statement that helps us finish the Great Commission in any given country by revitalizing or planting churches that have these five characteristics.

> "The vision of T-Net is to establish an indigenously led and funded multiplying disciplemaking, church planting, and revitalization movement in each country of the world and coach them until the Great Commission is finished" (*Final Project* 16).

Richard Niebuhr was right when he noted that, "The great Christian revolutions came not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when someone takes radically something that was always there" (Rice 87).

T-Net helps us rediscover what was always there in the model of Christ and the wisdom of Scriptures. It is for us now to take them and apply them radically, to bring about a gospel revolution.

The Overview and Thesis of this Project

This project is an attempt to apply T-Net vision in Sri Lanka. It began after my church completed the T-Net pathway to disciplemaking using the US curriculum in 2007. Soon, there was a possibility of bringing this to Sri Lanka with my Sri Lankan pastor, Pastor Sunil. He had been pastoring our Sri Lankan congregation since 1998. We shared the same vision of training Sri Lankan pastors who could go on to train others and plant churches. But his sudden death in 2009 left me devastated and wondering if the vision we shared would also die. On the contrary, his untimely death motivated me to pursue this dream with greater determination. The church was willing to support and finance this launch. With the help of Andrew Tay, the first course started in 2013.

This project is important in encouraging other churches in Singapore and Sri Lanka to take ownership of finishing the Great Commission. This thesis will show the biblical basis and practical process that will enable churches to finish the Great Commission. It will also show that despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the task can be accomplished. The plan to launch T-Net in Sri Lanka was deemed highly unlikely because it is hard to get Sri Lankan pastors to commit to such a long and challenging training. This was the view of an experienced Bible college teacher in Sri Lanka, as one who had seen students and pastors dropping out halfway through the training. But to everyone’s amazement, most of the pastors stayed on and completed Tier 1 training. We targeted Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka for the launch of Generation One. We had

a group of thirty-five pastors, some of whom came with their spouses, and some were associate pastors. Here is an overview of the project content:

In Part One, the ministry challenge of finishing the Great Commission in Sri Lanka will be described and analyzed. What are the unique historical, religious, cultural, and demographic contexts that must be taken into account to effectively apply the T-Net training? What is the training center(s) we are seeking to multiply?

Part Two will be a theological reflection reviewing literature relating to management for ministry multiplication. This is to develop a theology of multiplication, church revitalization, and saturation church planting for finishing the Great Commission. A better theological understanding of the church will also be developed.

In Part Three, the project strategy of defining goals and plans, the implementation process, and evaluation will be examined closely.

The uniqueness of the T-Net approach comes after many years of trial and error. Gleaning lessons from past mistakes of our own, as well as observing the malpractices and inherent errors of missions and seminaries training, has helped T-Net to keep recalibrating and re-writing curriculums that will produce better results. This is why this project is so important. This project will expose some erroneous assumptions that have kept the church from finishing the Great Commission. One of these assumptions is that training pastors and teaching biblical principles will be enough to finish the task. Another assumption is that the revitalization and transformation of the church will automatically lead to finishing the Great Commission.

The important ground breaking emphasis of T-Net is in the area of developing capacity. This is the only way we can stay on course in finishing the Great Commission.

> T-Net has failed in the past when its leaders saw it and used it simply as a means to train pastors or transform churches. T-Net has succeeded when its leaders clearly understood that the true goal is to finish the Great Commission and used approaches that can fully accomplish this. (*Finishing* 91)

The focus on capacity-building is an important component in the T-Net success. Over the years, T-Net has learned vital lessons and identified practices that did not work. They are counter-productive, and often caused failures. What are some of these practices? When we launch with students who lack credibility, network, motivation, or ability to multiply, train, and manage others, very often, the process will be hijacked or aborted. When pastors come with only pastoral training in mind, without practical skills of disciplemaking and simple strategies of multiplication, nothing much will be reproduced. This does not multiply. When we conduct training without accountability for implementing what is learned, it will end up only as notes on bookshelves. As Bob Gilliam in many of his training sessions often says, “People do not do what you expect. People do what you inspect.” Another crucial lesson learned is that when training starts without a plan for financial sustainability both for the first generation and for the future country organization, the work will grind to a halt.

Over the years, T-Net has developed effective principles that have enabled local T-Net ministries to thrive, built upon establishing self-led and self-funded organizations.

The development of a high-quality curriculum that is culturally sensitive and effective training processes are key ingredients for success. The pastors in training grow in confidence and are honored for their efforts and hard work. The graduates can receive an accredited degree from a university in the United States. Offering such degrees may solve several problems at once. One of these will be the maintenance of quality control because students who faithfully complete their assignments would have better quality and skills in critical analysis and assessment. The fees charged for these accredited degrees will also contribute to the long-term financial stability and ongoing impact of the organization.

Built into the curriculum assignment and requirement, is the recruiting and training of the next generation of training center participants. Working as a team, both in recruiting and training, the task is less daunting. Having to teach will serve to expand their capacity and the quality of their teaching, and also solidify their learning.
All these principles combined will ensure we stay on the right track, and keep the vision clear towards finishing the Great Commission.

My Interest in This Topic

In 1999, the church launched a ministry to reach out to the 20,000 Sri Lankan foreign workers in Singapore. By divine providence, one of our church members was studying at Trinity Theological College met and married a Sri Lankan theological student Sunil. The Lord gave Sunil a burden for evangelizing among these foreign workers. Ever since, we have seen many come to Christ and a few hundred have been baptized. After a few years, the plan was to explore with Pastor Sunil the possibility of equipping local Sri Lankan pastors in Sri Lanka to plant churches. At that time, the International T-Net course was not yet developed. So, it was with great delight when the new international

curriculum that was designed to raise up local church planters. We started Generation One center in 2013, in the capital city of Sri Lanka, Colombo, with thirty-five pastors and leaders.

Definition of Terms

Project Zero is the inspiring and catchy caption for T-Net's mandate to finish the Great Commission because the command to preach the gospel and make disciples of "all nations" or "all ethnicities" ends at zero.

There are two tiers of training in the T-Net Project Zero curriculum. Tier 1 is the launch of a new center and covers ten courses which equip students to be church planters. Tier 2 continues the equipping of students to be managers of multiple T-Net centers and church plants. The following are codes for the Tier 1 and Two courses:

1. Tier 1: C = Course and S = Session. Therefore, C1 S1 refers to Course 1, Session 1 of Tier 1.
2. Tier 2 : Courses are labelled CM = Core Module followed by the lesson number. Therefore, CM-1#4 refers to Core Module 1, Strategic Planning, Session 4.

CHAPTER 2

THE COUNTRY OR PEOPLE GROUP CONTEXT

"Sell Singapore, Buy Sri Lanka"

In his first visit to Colombo in 1956, Lee Kuan Yew, the first prime minister of Singapore, was envious of Sri Lanka's impressive infrastructure, educational system, strategic location, and vast potential for development. Most of these were established by the British colonial rule. He said Singapore should aspire to be like Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, two decades of civil war derailed what could have been a bright future. Sri Lanka's nickname is "Teardrop Isle." For many years, this was appropriate not just because of its shape, but also because of the tears shed during a brutal civil war that lasted from 1983 to 2009. However, over the past five years, a transformation has taken place in a country that promises so much. The end of the war has brought new hopes and aspirations (Harim).

Fraser Dinnis wrote a fascinating article "Sell Singapore, Buy Sri Lanka", where he shared his unbridled enthusiasm the evidence of Singapore's declining economy compared with Sri Lanka's resurgence and recovery from the war. Many positive signs are supporting this prediction. Dinnis concludes with this speculation,

> Singapore's reputation for its rule of law and fairness will not be matched by Sri Lanka for many years to come. Many will also be concerned by continuing investigations into the approach taken by the Sri Lankan government in ending the civil war and by allegations of corruption within the country. However, the question has to be posted. If the past fifty years belonged to Singapore, will the next fifty years belong to Sri Lanka? At least today, it seems likely that at least for

the next few years, the growth opportunities are more likely to lie in the Indian Ocean than in the South China Sea (Dinnis).

Eranda Ginige, Chairman of Social Enterprise Lanka, wrote an interesting article, “Why Sri Lanka Will Never Be Singapore”. His passionate cry is for Sri Lanka to discover her own strength, uniqueness, and prosperity. He echoes Fraser’s belief that Sri Lanka will be “The New Island of Growth” (Ginige).

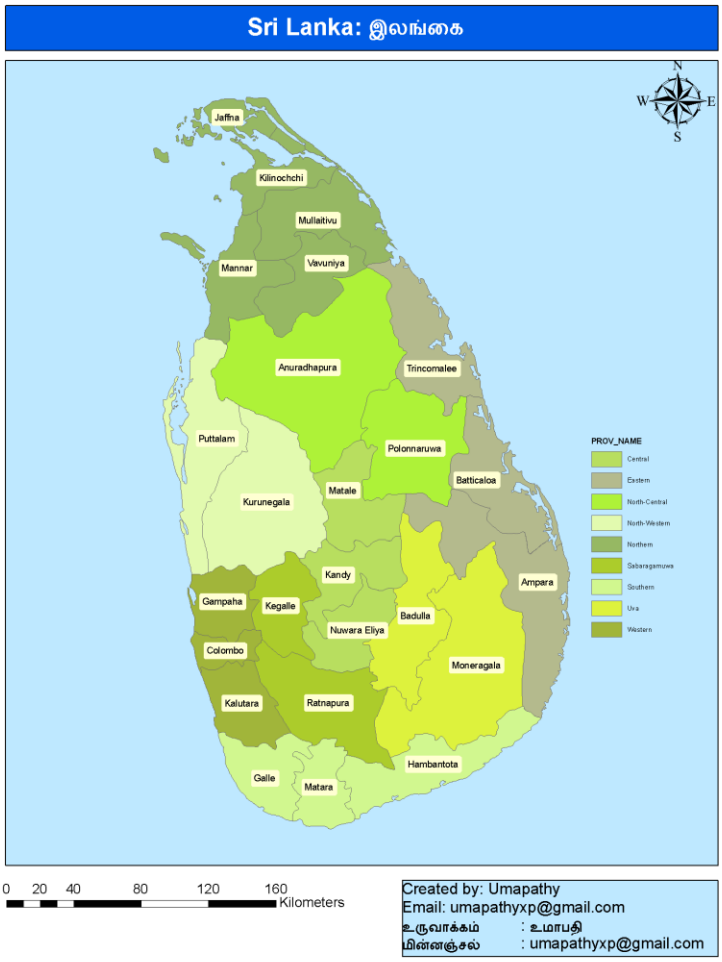


Figure 1. Map of Sri Lanka’s Districts and Provinces.

“We don't need to be like Singapore, or like the USA, or like China. We need to be like us. We need to build our version of Sri Lanka. Let us stop the meaningless

comparisons. Let us get out of the global rat race. Let us start loving our country, our history, our culture, and our people. Let us be brave enough to build our version of a developed Sri Lanka" (Dinnis). These are Sri Lankans who can see the unlimited potential for their country's growth and progress.

Figure 2. Sri Lanka National Flag.

The flag encapsulates the dominant religious influence of Buddhism, and the three main ethnic groups make-up the population.

> "The LION FLAG of Sri Lanka is full of the symbolism generated by South Asian religio-culture. The predominant colours are Yellow and Red, yellow symbolizing 'Sila' or virtue and red life-blood and strength of the people. The four yellow bo=leaves (ficus religiosa) represent the four noble qualities (sathara maha-brahmana) of Metta, Muditha, Karuna and Uppekha. The life-blood and strength of the people is enclosed within a frame of virtue. The Lion, symbol of the Nation denotes all the qualities associated with the King of Beasts: Courage, sagacity, rulership with virtue as the foremost quality. The head and the tail being on the same level symbolize the intrinsic equality of the ruler and the ruled. The sword stands for the guardianship exercised on behalf of the people. The tongue, separate from the mouth stands for truth independent of bias. The mane stands for

the noble qualities that should uphold the ruler. The original flag also had 24 tufts shown as arrowheads signifying the impartial qualities of government. There are more details about the claws on the three legs and the fingers holding the sword and the hilt of the sword itself. The entire flag is pregnant with meaning and is a practical sermon that puts the ruler and the ruled on par with each other within a cloak of Sila, fundamental to good governance, duties, responsibilities, and reciprocal obligations" (Bambil and Silva).

A Brief Historical Background

The beginning of the first Sinhalese Sri Lanka inhabitants arriving on the island was in the late sixth century BC, likely originating from India. Buddhism came around 250 BC. It was only in the 14th century that a Tamil kingdom was formed by a south Indian dynasty. By the 16th century, the coastal areas were largely dominated by the Portuguese, followed next by the Dutch in the 17th century. In 1796, the British took over and became a crown colony in 1802, that lasted till 1948 when it became independent. In 1972, the island was renamed Sri Lanka. In 1983, the deep underlying distrust and tensions between the majority Sinhalese and Tamil separatists came to a collision and sparked a war that lasted for almost 25 years. The intense violence and fighting between the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) finally came to an end in May 2009, The leadership of post war years under President Mahinday Rajapaksa sought to restore infrastructure and bring the country back to growth and normalcy. The government has been largely dependent on loans from China. In 2015, a new government was formed by a coalition led by President Maithripala Sirisena of

the Freedom Party. There were promising pledges to move the nation forward in the area of economy, governance, anti-corruption, reconciliation, reforms, and accountability. But in reality, there were not much progress or accomplishment. The persistent instability of the government contributes to the unsteady progress as seen in the recent attempt of the President to remove the prime minister in favor of the previous President Rajapaksa. This rocked the entire political system and government with a seven-week constitutional crisis. Normalcy was restored after the prime minister was reinstated in December (Srinivasan).

Socioeconomic Factors

Unlike India, where the social caste system is still very much alive and operating, Sri Lanka is supposedly a "caste-free" society. But beneath the surface of such social norms, there lies deep discrimination towards the minorities. Such mindset exists within religious and ethnic groupings. The hidden but real divide is clearly exhibited in the accessibility of education and healthcare for the minorities. Even though Buddhism is known for opposing such discrimination, in practice, they have used this as their trump card to divide and garner support for themselves at the expense of other religious groups.

First published on June 9, 2016, researchers Alyssa Banford Witting, Jessica Lambert, Thulitha Wickrama, Sivaguru Thanigaseelan, and Michael Merten wrote the paper "War and Disaster in Sri Lanka: Depression, Family Adjustment and Health among Women Heading Households," International Journal of Social Psychiatry, detailing the devasting aftermaths of years of civil war and tsunami.

The civil war, lasting from 1983 to 2009, and the tsunami that struck Southeastern Asia in 2004 were major stressors that changed the demographic landscape of the Northern

Province of Sri Lanka. The composition of families changed dramatically, with an increase in female-headed households, largely due to casualties. The conservation of resources model was applied in this study to examine the relationships between risk and resiliency factors among women heading households, including women widowed by war or disaster (Witting 1).

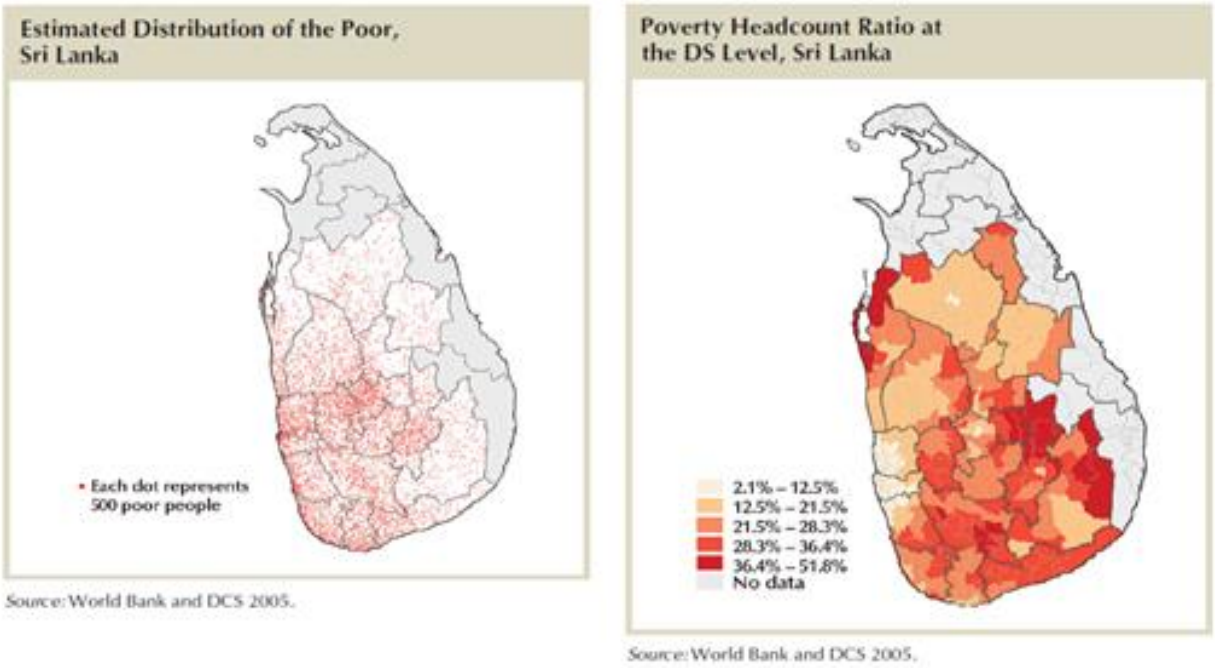


Figure 3. Sri Lankan Map of Poverty. https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Sri_Lanka

The outcome of this investigation shows the connection between "predictive risk and resiliency factors (i.e., war damage and loss, social support, economic status, religious participation, and discrimination) and outcomes representing well-being (depressive symptoms, family adjustment, and a rating of physical health)" (Witting 2).

The significance of this study is that it can help the church be better informed and equipped to reach out to these victims to meet their felt needs. The study "predicted better social support and more frequent participation in a religious community would be

associated with lower depression, better family adjustment, and higher-rated physical health" (Witting 6).

Cultural and Subcultural Influences (Religious and Ethnic Diversity)

The ongoing and important influences of social stratification according to class and caste, continues to be felt till today. Because of its deeply entrenched religious roots in Hinduism and Buddhism, this caste and ethnic diversity will permeate the social interactions of all society. When my church started the Sri Lankan ministry, we had our first theologically trained pastor who comes from the higher caste of Sri Lankan society. As he reached out to the Sri Lankan migrant workers in Singapore, where most of them come from the lower class and caste, he struggled with this "invisible" but unspoken "divide". For a while he struggled with relating with them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Majority of these migrant workers are domestic maids or health workers in the old folk's home. So even in the context of Christian and church, this pervasive cultural bias is at work and the prejudices come to the surface. How much more in the non-Christian social interactions of ordinary Sri Lankans.

While the 450 years of colonial rule has upset the traditional norms, that often favored members of certain, relatively low-status castes, and in the process effectively elevated their class status and that of their offspring, the class differentiation, on the other hand, is increasing both in day-to-day social interaction and manifestations of disparities (Bambil and Silva).

> "Today, where these hierarchical relations continue, there is a degree of uneasiness or even resentment toward them, particularly among the educated younger generations. Class status, in contrast, is increasingly manifested in

> speech, dress, employment, education, and housing. In general, elite classes can be identified by their command of English, education in exclusive schools, executive-level employment, possession of valued commodities, and access to international networks, whereas the lower classes are associated with manual labor, minimal comforts, and a lack of social contacts with the elite' (Bambil and Silva).

In a supposedly casteless society, Sri Lanka still has beneath the surface some caste barriers. The church's first Sri Lankan pastor came from the higher class of society, and he was superior both educationally and socially. When he began ministering to the Sri Lankan migrant workers in Singapore, he felt the distance and barrier immediately. He was unsure of how to relate to this lower class of people who come from poorer rural areas and are less educated. It took him a while to come down to their level. From my observation, the barriers could not be entirely eradicated because they run deep in a person's personality, as well as being deeply entrenched in the cultural framework.

At the ethnic level, there is still the unresolved tension and divide between the Sinhalese and Tamil groups. In his post, Harim Peiris, a political analyst, wrote on "The Challenge of the Second Decade of Post War Reconciliation". He highlighted the unfinished task after the end of the war in 2009, in the areas of reconciliation, healing and sustainable livelihoods of the vulnerable (Peiris).

After years of relentless fighting, the tangible signs of devastation have been long lasting especially in the Northern Province, but more so in the Eastern Province. The areas most badly hit are the districts of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu where the fiercest fighting occurred in the final stages of the war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE). In the initial years after the war, there have been quick restoration of the infrastructure of roads and government building offices by the former Rajapaksa administration. Following that the Sirisena and Wickramasinghe Administration continue the restoration with land release, rebuilding of smaller scale community infrastructure. The most significant step forward was the opening and sustaining of space for civil society and the non-governmental sector to meet the needs of the many people who were affected by the conflict. There are a few categories of people that needed most attention are the women and children, the war widows, the orphans and the injured, including many suffering from post-traumatic stress and other mental distress. Worthy of mention is the generous Indian housing project, that has provided housing units to many in the North and East. The most pressing need that requires more resources and attention is continuing need of the post war women who are the main provider for the family and the many rehabilitated ex-combatants, who need sustainable livelihood. Peiris laments the lack of drive for reconciliation from the government, "means that reconciliation would need to be advanced through other actors and stakeholders, including minority political leaders, provincial and local government institutions, community leaders and civil society" (Peiris). This opens the door for the church and Christian community to play an active role in bringing healing and reconciliation.

While there are many areas of need, one need that requires greater focus are the many victims of war, especially the widows, orphans, and the fatherless in the devastated regions of the North where fighting was at its worst. These are the ones that have suffered the most amid the armed conflicts for over two decades. These victims continue to live in poverty and deprivation, totally outside the radar of government concern. George

Barathan served with Operation Mobilization for more than three decades, has been reaching out to these war widows and orphans. He and his wife who are residing in Canada now, travel to Sri Lanka every year to help these "victims." Here is an account of his work.

> "It has been one year since my wife and I started to serve in the North of Sri Lanka. I understand there are 40,000 to 50,000 war widows in the North. We have met so far just one other local pastor, who comes from Colombo and meets a group of war widows in Mullaitivu. He provides packets of rice, lentils, sugar, and sometimes gives them a little money. We have provided so far, a cow, a sewing machine, finish constructing an outdoor toilet, fixed a panel sheet on the side of a shack, where a widow who lost 6 sons in the war lives. The last project we completed was the construction of a tube well in an area where there is a great need for clean and safe drinking water. I was very excited with this water project. Many widows must walk a long distance to fetch clean drinking water, and then have to carry the heavy buckets of water on their shoulders. This tube well we constructed will cut down the distance significantly. Each time when we go up there, we also provide bags of rice for each widow we see. We want to be involved in sustainable projects such as providing cows, chickens, goats, sewing machines etc., certainly, the tube wells are also a priority for us. We are still new but doing what we can to bring dignity, hope and encouragement for these widows, who lost their husbands about 10 years ago. Some widows do some labor work to get some income. Some others are involved in farming, some started a small convenience store, selling eggs, laundry powder, candy, soap, toothpaste,

> etc., and some other work in a roadside coffee shop serving the people. Some others have gone into prostitution to earn an income. But I haven't spoken or met such widows yet" (Barathan).

So, while humanitarian efforts on a large scale is woefully lacking, there are still encouraging signs of individuals from the Christian community meeting this gaping need. The T-Net team is in the process of connecting with George in order to explore ways to work hand-in-hand to provide the much needed humanitarian help as well as equipping the Tamil-speaking pastors in this region with the T-Net training. For a long time, the T-Net first generation pastors, who are Tamil-speaking have been planning a new S-curve for Tamil-speaking churches and pastors in the northern regions of Sri Lanka. One reason for the delay has been the slow process of translating the material into Tamil. But with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, this has further delayed the launch. Nevertheless, when this new S-curve takes off, it will be the ideal platform to reach out to many of these war widows and their families. As the churches are revitalized, they can be Christ's agent of healing and reconciliation.

CHAPTER 3

TRAINING CENTER CONTEXT

Challenging and Rewarding Beginnings

It was only after a few rounds of introductory meetings and interactions with various denominational heads, pastors, principals, and deans of Bible colleges before the training finally took the plunge and gathered thirty-five pastors and some of their spouses for Course One in 2013. The majority who came did not understand what kind of commitment and direction the training would take. The perseverance and effort paid off when we finally saw twenty-two of these pastors stay on, implement the process, and saw fruits by the end of 2016.

Name	Age (Years)	Education	Years as a Pastor
Ps Christopher Anthony	42	B.Th	24
Ps Mahendran	53	B.Th	34
Ps Lakpriya	46	B.Th	27
Ps Shantha Mahesh	35	B.Th	19
Ps Sukumal	52	B.Th	23
Ps Thushara D. Fernando	43	B.Th	18
Ps Prasad	43	B.Th	20
Ps Priyantha	48	B.Th	27
Ps Ravi De Silva	47	B.Th	29
Ps Saman Sahabandu	46	A/L	-
Ps Andrew	47	B.Th	23

Ps Nishan Cooray	47	B.Th	27
Ps Asoka Ratnapala	51	B.Th	-
Ps Dilan Nishantha	48	B.Th	33
Ps Susil Jayalath	50	B.Th	32
Ps Luxman Weerasinghe	53	B.Th	37
Ps Sandun Sri Kumara	52	B.TH	37
Ps Jayalath	52	B.Th	27
Ps Matthew Philip	57	B.Th	39
Ps Ruwanpriya Sampath	43	B.Th	23
Ps Ruwan Sanjaya	43	B.Th	20
Ps Raffei	44	Diploma	-

Table 1. Demographics of Generation One Students

What made a big difference is the status and stature of the senior pastors who came for the training and were committed to applying the process. One of the early applications of Course One was the preaching on stewardship which requires members to commit to giving for the work of evangelism and church planting. This early process and training produced an immediate increase in church giving. On top of the biblical teachings on giving, it comes with practical applications on how they can learn to give. One of the key emphases of T-Net training is the early and tangible ownership of the whole process of finishing the Great Commission by local pastors and leaders. The most challenging area of ownership is in financing the ministry. From the very beginning, we remind all the pastors that the task and responsibility of financially supporting the ongoing work of multiplying churches rest on them. So, T-Net has designed a “Business

Plan", which empower the pastors and country leader to raise the needed money through consistent and faithful collection of course fees. With the expansion of more centers and students, sufficient money should be flowing into the ministry, without having to depend on foreign contributions. (See Appendix C Maranatha)

Name	Status	Languages	Name of Church and Role in Church
Christopher Anthony	Fulltime	Tamil	Aroma Church, Pastor-in-charge
Mahendran	Fulltime	Tamil	Gospel Tabernacle, Pastor-in-charge
Lakpriya	Fulltime	Sinhala / Tamil	AOG, Pastor-in-charge
Shantha	Fulltime	Sinhala	United Christian Fellowship, Pastor-in-charge
Sukumal	Fulltime	Tamil	Independent, Pastor-in-charge
Thushara D. Fernando	Bi-vocation	Sinhala	Christian Center, Pastor-in-charge
Prasad	Fulltime	Tamil	Jeewana Diya Faith Church, Pastor-in-charge
Priyantha Fernando	Fulltime	Sinhala	Methodist Church, Evangelist-in-charge
Ravi De Silva	Fulltime	Sinhala	Margaya Fellowship, Pastor-in-charge and vice president of the denomination
Saman Sahabandu	Bi-vocation	Sinhala	Promise Land Church, Pastor-in-charge
Andrew	Fulltime	Sinhala	Christian Reformed Church, Pastor-in-charge
Nishan Cooray	Fulltime	Sinhala	Jeewana Diya Church, Pastor-in-charge
Asoka Ratnapala	Fulltime	Sinhala	Jeewana Diya Church, Pastor-in-charge
Dilan Nishantha	Fulltime	Sinhala	Calvary Church, Pastor-in-charge
Susil Jayalath	Fulltime	Sinhala	Maranatha Worship Church, Pastor-in-charge and head of the denomination
Luxman Weerasinghe	Fulltime	Sinhala	Christian Voice Church, Pastor-in-charge
Sandun Sri Kumara	Fulltime	Sinhala	Jeewana Diya Faith Church, Pastor-in-charge
Jayalath	Fulltime	Sinhala	Four Square Gospel Church, Pastor-in-charge and board member of the denomination
Matthew Philip	Fulltime	Sinhala	Margaya Fellowship, Pastor-in-charge

Ruwanpriya Sampath	Fulltime	Sinhala	Maranatha Worship Church, Associate Pastor
Ruwan Sanjaya	Bi-vocation	Sinhala	Maranatha Worship Church, Associate Pastor
Raffei	Bi-vocation	Tamil / Sinhala	Independent, Pastor-in-charge

Table 2. Role and Status of Generation One Students

Social/Economic Position of Students in Their Culture(s)

We had a good mix of well-established pastors who have their network of churches, and some holding high influential positions, while at the same time, there were several newer and bi-vocational pastors who struggled to make ends meet. Their churches are smaller, and members are poorer and therefore could not afford to pay their pastors. These bi-vocational pastors are very innovative and enterprising, finding different means of income. In the first year and a half, we avoided giving money to help these pastors, so as not to create a dependency mindset. It was only later that we started a Pastors' Need Fund to assist many of these pastors to start up their micro-enterprises. As their businesses began to turn a profit, they paid back some of the proceeds to the fund. This has enabled and empowered a few of these pastors to better manage their livelihoods and continue with their pastoral ministry. We are happy to see that out of the thirty-five pastors who started Course One, twenty-two of them completed and graduated with a Master of Ministry degree.

Positions of Students Within Their Church/Denomination

It was good that the majority (about 80%) of the Generation One students are senior pastors or pastors-in-charge in their church. A number of them are heads of their networks and denominational organizations. This has helped in the follow through and implementation of the course assignments and projects. They have also given T-Net a

credible standing with their proven results and positive outcomes. On the day of their graduation, it was heart-warming to see a big crowd of supporters from their family as well as key church and institutional leaders.

Unique Challenges of the Spiritual Climate

Inward looking

All the introductory meetings with the various denominational heads and pastors, principals, and deans of Bible colleges yielded very little fruit. There was little interest in finishing the Great Commission because they were occupied with their parishes and programs. The denominational churches, in particular, have acquired a rather bad and distasteful reputation among the other independent churches. They are viewed as liberals, compromising, and lacking in missional purpose, interest, and fervor. They seem interested only in maintaining their institutional properties and just surviving as a Christian ghetto. In some cases, they are in the survival and inward looking mode rather than outreach mode. So, the make-up of Generation One center comprised largely of pastors from independent charismatic churches.

Delayed buy-in, ownership.

There will always be some pastors who may be going through the training but are slow in implementing. There was one in particular who showed little interest in the course work and assignments. If the T-Net rules were to be followed strictly, he would have been asked to leave the training. Since this was our first run, we gave this pastor more time and runway to catch on. After a few courses, it was encouraging to see this pastor taking the course and material seriously and joined the other pastors to start Generation 2 training.

Paying the course fees.

It was hard to collect fees, especially from the poorer pastors. The other pastors helped, and the Singapore church provided some scholarship. T-Net provides a "Business Plan" training that comes with a practical process and framework to ensure long-term continuity and success of the ministry. When this is emphasized and applied, it ensures sustainable income through the collection of fees at each training.

Finding a good location and facility.

The choice of a residential, get-away program away from the city was important. A good location and excellent catering played an important part in making the training a little like a mini "sabbatical," giving these pastors some respite from their hectic and demanding work. Every three months, these pastors looked forward to this retreat and equipping time.

Language and Translation Issues.

It was both good and bad. The challenge of live translation is the extra time needed to finish each course. Because of this, we decided to spread out each course, rather than rush through the material. Therefore, we divided each course into two parts which are covered over two training periods. This has allowed more time for interaction. Though slower, but deeper application. Understandably there were errors in the first draft of the translation of Tier 1 course materials. As we went along, these were noted and corrected. The added advantage of teaching with translation, both in English and Sinhala, is that those who can understand both languages can grasp the material more deeply. It also provides an occasion to learn English.

Obstacles, Dangers, and Opportunities Associated With These Training Centers.

We had several meetings with key denominational leaders and Christian educators from different Bible colleges and institutions. We wanted to collaborate with existing ministries as well as partner with churches in providing T-Net as an equipping tool to raise up church planters. All these meetings bore little to no fruits. It is understandable because each church, ministry, and institution have their own programs and priorities. Anything new is viewed with some scepticism and suspicion. In the process, we developed good relationships and rapport with many of these leaders, which is an important foundation in order for the work to progress in the future.

One of the major concerns in starting this T-Net center was raised by a Sri Lankan Christian leader who had vast experiences and served in various roles as evangelist and teacher in one of the reputable Bible colleges. He was very cynical and doubtful if participants would complete the long-drawn and challenging process of assignments and church planting. From what he observed, even among his students, many of them dropped out after a promising start. He did not think many would persevere or survive the rigors of the T-Net courses. These were indeed valid concerns and he meant well to caution us before launching into such a daring venture. He wanted us to moderate our expectations so that we would not set unrealistic goals. Taking his views into consideration and making sure we covered the ground well, we decided to go ahead with our first center in Colombo in 2013. One major factor that helped us connect with a good group of Generation One students was Pastor Sudarman. He is a well respected and well-connected pastor of pastors. His role as Minister of Communication was instrumental in maintaining the high level of commitment among the pastors.

Near the end of Tier 1, there was a crisis with one of the churches when the senior pastor had serious disagreements and clashes with his two associate pastors. It was a very difficult time for the church, the pastors, and their families. It seemed almost inevitable that the church would split and splinter into two groups. The Chinese word for "crisis" is an interesting combination of two words, "danger" and "opportunity." Out of this crisis with this Generation One church and pastors came a surprising blessing and advancement for T-Net. What happened was that these two associates left and joined another church where the senior pastor was very keen to start T-Net in his church. These two associates immediately started implementing T-Net in this church, and they began to grow. Shortly after, they launched a few Generation 2 centers and planted more churches. We learned from this that God's sovereign wisdom can weave even our foolishness and follies into His grand plan of advancing His kingdom. Sometimes, our tragedies can serve God's strategies. With God there are mysteries, but no mistakes.

Bonding and Support.

The time spent together has created a close band of brothers looking out for one another, in concrete and practical ways, including financially

PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION & REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

What is the Heart of Reformed Theology?

The author came to Christ as a teenager through the present Presbyterian church where he continues serving as senior pastor since 1990. In those days, there was little concern about denominational distinction and uniqueness. There was no major emphasis on what the Presbyterian church stood for in terms of doctrine and practice. One of the young people who stepped in this Presbyterian church thought it was a "Pedestrian Church." It sounded good to her, and it was also very appealing because it is a church meant for all common people, the pedestrians. It was only later when the author did his post-graduate studies at Regent College, Vancouver, that he acquired a greater appreciation of the Reformed tradition. It was through the influence of mentors and professors like Eugene H. Peterson (the only Presbyterian professor then), J. I. Packer's classes on *The Westminster Confession*, and gleanings from Pentecostal Gordon Fee's teachings, that helped him "acquire the taste" of Reformed theology.

As C. H. Spurgeon once said, "Reformed theology is nothing other than biblical Christianity" (Sproul, Ligonier Ministries). Is this an arrogant declaration? Nevertheless, there is truth to this claim as we noticed how greatly influential Reformed theology has been in the West and in evangelicalism. But equally so, is the sad truth that few evangelical Christians today understand Reformed theology. They know it has something to do with predestination, and they may have heard of "the five points of Calvinism." But they cannot name these points, and they think no one believes in most of them anymore.

One of the best and brief introductions to “Calvinism” is J.I. Packer’s “A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life”. Packer provides helpful insights into the historical development of Calvinism, a wholistic overview and at the same time warn us against misunderstanding Calvinism by simply narrowing it to the “five points”. “Calvinism is something much broader than the “five points” indicate. Calvinism is a whole world view, stemming from a clear vision of God as the whole world’s Maker and King… a theocentric way of thinking all about life under the direction and control of God’s own words” (129).

R. C. Sproul is probably the most well known expounder and defender of Calvinist and Reformed theology. Writing on his Ligonier Ministries website, “The Fine Points of Calvinism”, Sproul referred to quoted the renowned Reformed theologian, Cornelius Van Til,

> “The late theologian Cornelius Van Til once observed that Calvinism is not to be identified with the so-called five points of Calvinism. Rather, Van Til concluded that the five points function as a pathway, or a bridge, to the entire structure of Reformed theology. Likewise, Charles Spurgeon argued that Calvinism is merely a nickname for biblical theology. These titans of the past understood that the essence of Reformed theology cannot be reduced to five particular points that arose as points of controversy centuries ago in Holland with the Remonstrants, who objected to five specific points of the system of doctrine found in historic Calvinism. Those five points have become associated with the acrostic TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace,

and Perseverance of the saints" (Table Talk Magazine).

A prolific writer, Sproul has written numerous books on Reformed theology. In "What is Reformed Theology, Understanding the Basics*"*, Sproul captures the main thrust of Reformed theology and reminds us that it would be a serious error to conclude the essence of Reformed theology simply in light of these five doctrines. At the same time, he sought to provide a better nuanced perspective of the "Five Points of Calvinism" by renaming the "Five Points" (137).

By way of introduction, it is important to first emphasize that the central core of Reformed theology is that it is not anthropocentric. In other words, Reformed theology does not begin with man nor is it centered on human beings. The central focal point of Reformed theology is God, and it is this high view and doctrine of God that infuses the whole of the substance of Reformed thinking. Therefore, Reformed theology, as a theological framework, is theocentric. It is a God-centeredness that pervades every aspect of its theology.

This theocentric commitment of the Reformed tradition has not always been well understood or appreciated. The language that was used hundreds of years ago at the Synod of Dort has not helped present-day readers comprehend the value of its doctrinal essence. However, in recent years, we have been greatly helped by Sproul's re-examination and retitling of the five points. He has done us a great service by re-looking carefully at the historic five points and re-labelling them so as to recapture and highlight God's initiative and commitment to save sinners. He explains and corrects the misconceptions that comes with the "old labels." Providing us with new labels, Sproul has skilfully encapsulated the enduring truth of God's saving grace, spelled out in the five

points. This renaming and "redefinition" of the five points will help debunk many of the myths that non-Reformed people have of Calvinism. But what has not changed is the God-centeredness of all five points, which was the original intention when refuting Arminianism's man-centered approach and perception of salvation. I propose to take a look at these new labels.

From Total Depravity to Radical Corruption.

The Scripture is very clear about man's inability to save himself because he is dead in sin. This biblical concept is better captured by using the phrase "radical corruption." Total depravity gives the misleading notion that every person is completely or utterly evil and lacking in any goodness, whereas radical corruption focuses more on the seriousness of the fall and the pervasive influence of sin, affecting our bodies, mind, spirit, and will. Sproul rightly insists that "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners" (*What is Reformed Theology* 137).

From Unconditional Election to Sovereign Election.

The absolute sovereignty of God affirmed in this phrase in freely electing a person, is not based on foreseeing an action or response on our part. The difference is in a "passive knowing" and an "active knowing". If all God can do is to observe what man can do to save himself, by choosing what he wants, then God is just a "rubber stamp". The truth, as we have seen from "radical corruption" is that man is incapable morally to choose what is good and right. In our spiritual deadness, we cannot choose nor save ourselves. If man can choose with his own will, it would be considered conditional election, as in conditioned by human choice. Rather, election rests on God's sovereign decision to save whomever He is pleased to save. His saving grace rest on His

unconditional choice. This does not mean that God will save people whether they come to faith or not. There are conditions that God decrees for salvation, not the least of which is putting one's trust in Christ. There is no violation of justice if God chooses sovereignly to bestow His grace on some sinners and withhold His grace from other sinners.

From Limited Atonement to Definite Redemption or Definite Atonement.

The common misunderstanding that people have is that limited atonement inhibits and constrains the power of Christ's atoning death on the cross. The efficacy of His death is called into question. But this is not the meaning behind the phrase. What is affirming is that when God planned to save sinners, He provided definite, sure, and final atonement. The certain and undeniable redemption of specific sinners was an eternal plan of God accomplished by the atoning work of Christ. God made sure sinners would be saved and it is guaranteed in the atoning death of Christ.

From Irresistible Grace to the Spirit's Effective Call.

The tendency of the phrase "irresistible" is to make man into a robot without any responsibility to accept God's offer of salvation. The idea is that God's grace is so effective and so powerful that it can overcome our natural resistance to it. Sproul reminds us that,

> In historic Reformation thought, the notion is this: regeneration precedes faith. It means that the work of regeneration in the human heart is something that God does by His power alone—not by 50 percent His power and 50 percent man's power, or even 99 percent His power and 1 percent man's power. It is 100 percent the work of God. He and He alone have the power to change the disposition of the soul and the human heart to bring us to faith (*What is Reformed Theology* 207)

Again, we celebrate the grace of God that works in our hearts to bring salvation. *From Perseverance of the Saints to Preservation of the Saints.* What keeps us in a state of grace is not our diligence or determination to hang on. Perseverance of the saints gives credit to human effort in finishing the race. He is going to bring us safely home. George Verwer likes to end his correspondence with this phrase, "IN HIS GRIP!" So, our confidence lies in the power of Christ to keep me with His grace and to know that His intercession sustains us, just as He prayed for Peter that after a season of sifting, he will return stronger.

J. I. Packer's *A Quest for Godliness* emphasizes this often forgotten and neglected truth of Reformed thinking about soteriology, that "God truly saves a sinner" (39). God does not just say He wants to save sinners, He guarantees it and makes sure it happens. From beginning to end, salvation is God's saving work from quickening the "dead sinners" and to preserving his journey home.

In an article, "Is Most of Reformed Deformed?", Collin Hansen, editorial director for The Gospel Coalition, responded to some fresh incriminations against Calvinists.

> Calvinists are angry bloggers living in our parents' basements who box up God and don't evangelize. Calvinists are intellectual snobs killing the church by building walls, preaching a social gospel, and preying upon young believers around the world by fostering skinny-jeans laziness because we do not care about people going to hell.

Does Reformed Theology Kill Missions?

The common criticism against Calvinist is the lack of concern for God's mission to reach the world. Is there truth to this charge?

Michael Horton's book, *For Calvinism*, devotes a whole chapter to deal with this question. He argues that it is a criticism that does not resonate with either the logic or history of Reformed churches. Reformed theology has always taught that God uses human instruments in accomplishing His saving works. Paul's teaching on divine election in Romans 8 and 9 does not preclude the necessity of preaching the gospel in chapter 10. Instead of killing missions' concerns, knowing God's election compels us to preach the good news. As historical records shown, Reformed Christians were at the forefront of the modern missionary movement and that evangelistic passion has not diminished over the years. Historically, the first Protestant missionaries to the New World were sent by Calvin to Brazil, and Geneva (as well as other Reformed centers) was a base for the first Protestant missionary schools. Calvinists pioneered missions to China, Korea, the Middle East, Africa, and South America. In these preaching points, communities were formed, Christian education and outreach were encouraged. (Horton). In Singapore, early missionaries from the London Mission Society were evangelizing local indigenous people, across different religious backgrounds. The Malay speaking Muslims were reached and a congregation was started at Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church in the 1800s (Lee). They also left behind a legacy of high-quality educational institutions that are still running today. They are highly sought-after schools, and they provide our churches with a wide-open harvest field.

The strength of the Reformed tradition lies in our theocentric focus on soteriology. Rather than reducing our zeal for outreach, it propels us to preach the gospel, assured of fruits that God has ordained. As in Acts 2:47, ". . . the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Evangelism is the church working in

tandem with God bringing in the harvest. It takes away our frantic anxiety to make things happen or be driven to bear fruits.

If there is one definitive and inspiring affirmation of how Reformed theology energizes world missions, it is the example of John Piper's Bethlehem Church in the United States. A church that grew from a one-campus of nearly 300 members to a church with three Twin Cities locations, a seminary and close to 5,000 attendees, is a fervent champion of world missions. Piper is well known for his leadership in a movement that emphasizes the strength and tenacity of Calvinistic Reformed theology, while at the same time regularly calls his church to go into all the world to make disciples. At the moment, his church sends and supports 300 missionaries all over the world. One of his famous taglines is, "Missions exists because worship doesn't." It is a healthy reminder for all of us to maintain a strong theocentric grounding and focus as we finish the Great Commission. The "pan-ultimate" goal is not just finishing the Great Commission but exalting the King of Glory (Missions).

The Glory of Christ in the Church

The Reformed church holds a very high view of the church. Peterson's paraphrase beautifully captures the centrality of the church in the heart and plan of the Trinity.

> All these energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is

Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence. (*The Message* Eph. 1:20–23).

The New Living Translation underscores the prominent place of the church by asserting that all the workings of the Trinity are for the benefit of the church.

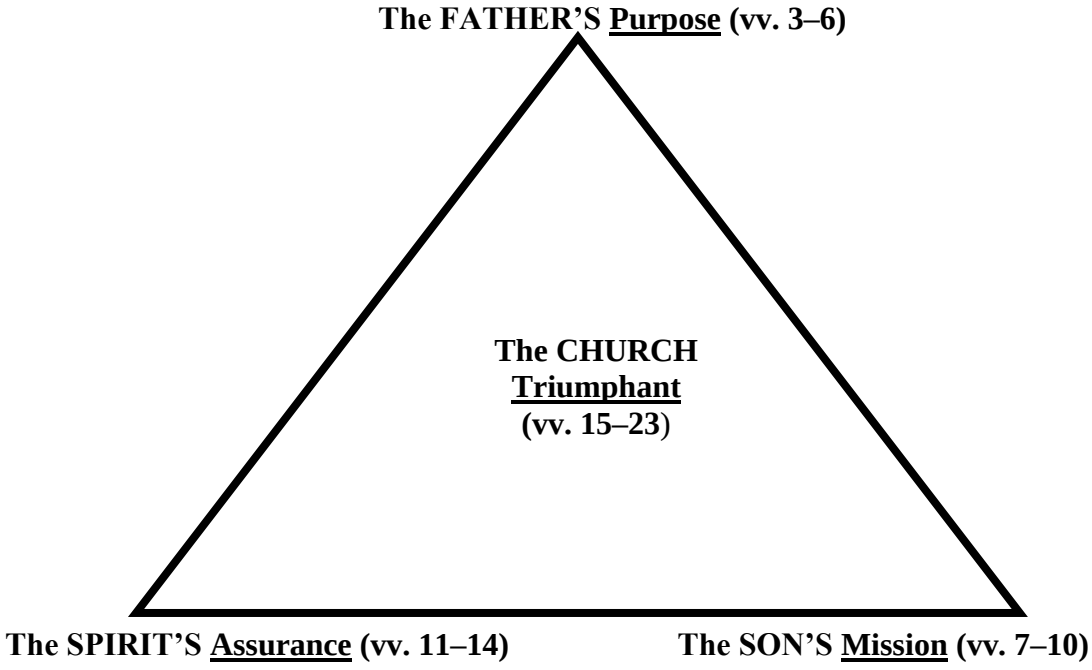


Figure 4. The Church in the Heart of the Trinity

What Influenced My Understanding of The Church?

The formative years that influenced the author's concepts of what it means to be a church, started right from his conversion in 1974. There was very little teachings or emphases on the Presbyterian denomination. There were no catechism classes that required us to know The Westminster Confession. Growing up primarily through the encouragement and Bible study in youth fellowship. Jubilee Church was a "melting pot"

of diverse influences where the teaching and pulpit ministry was anchored regularly by a Brethren elder, an Assembly of God evangelist, an English Presbyterian minister, and a variety of other guest speakers. High on the agenda and priority of church life was evangelism and missions.

Spending almost four years with Operation Mobilization, onboard the MV Logos, a gospel ship that travels around the world preaching the gospel brought to the author a greater balance in theological thinking. Onboard the ship is a community of like-minded believers from over forty countries, a true biblical ecumenism that embraces brothers and sisters from different traditions and denominations, without majoring on our differences, respecting one another's doctrinal preferences. The strong emphasis is on balance—avoiding theological extremes and practices. This immersion into the many facets of Christian traditions and community onboard the ship underscores the biblical image of the Body of Christ, embodying the diversity of culture, nationalities, Christian traditions, and yet unified in missions' objective of world evangelism. Often, visitors to the ship would highlight the beautiful picture of the United Nations on display onboard the ship. This has shaped my theological and practical understanding of the church in whatever setting we may find the church. Covenant Presbyterian Church has altogether seven different language groups of worshippers on Sundays. In August 2019, there was a "All Nations" worship service as part of the church 50th anniversary celebrations, where twenty-five national flags were flown.

CHAPTER 5

FINISHING THE GREAT COMMISSION

We are thankful that there has been renewed interest and concern among missions organizations to carry on the work of world evangelism. As Chris Lang, the Director of Mobilization for Frontiers USA said, "Part of what I think we bring to the indigenous church worldwide is vision—vision to finish the task; vision to engage all of the unreached people groups that remain" (Hearth).

Vision Without Solid Theological Foundations

While having vision is important, very little is said about the real possibility of finishing the task. While vision may not be lacking, there is not much said about the theological basis for completing the work and ushering in the return of Christ. One can grow up in a Reformed Presbyterian Church in Singapore and never hear any sermons that inspire you with confidence that the Great Commission can be accomplished in our lifetime. While the church has many zealous members and outreach programs, fueled by evangelistic passion and commitment, nothing is said about the ultimate goal of finishing the Great Commission. While outreach and missions can be a big part of the church's DNA and plays a big part in our church overall planning and program, there is ambivalence in the possibility about finishing the task. It is something we just keep doing till we die or Christ returns, with little prospect of seeing the reaching the final goal.

Calvinism is Largely Anti-missionary

The Reformed church has often been accused of neglecting or doing little in world missions. Does the widespread accusation against Calvinists as anti-missionary have any grounds and bases? Do the historical records of foreign missions give any credit

to Calvinist churches? Does the Calvinistic tradition hinder or help in inspiring world missions? What are the related theological foundations of Reformed theology and missions?

As the role of Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS) the author had the privilege of setting the vision and direction for the next two years. In one of the meetings with the key leaders, the vision of finishing the Great Commission in our lifetime was shared. Immediately one of the leaders challenged the whole idea that this is ever possible. His objection was, "Who are we to decide and declare when the Great Commission is finished? It is not for us to say when and how that can happen!" It was a surprising rebuttal and unexpected opposition. So, it seems that there will be such opinion when it comes to the Great Commission and the possibility that it can be finished. This highlights the need for and importance of laying a clear and strong biblical foundation, one that supports the belief and conviction that the Great Commission was intended by our Lord to be finished. How can we better understand Reformed theology and its support of finishing the Great Commission? Ebenezer in his article, "Reformed Theology and Missions: Reviving the Basics" gave these helpful insights,

> In a nutshell, the sovereignty of God is one doctrine that is usually understood as the paramount element of Reformed theology along with its natural corollaries of election and predestination. In the area of soteriology, the Reformed tradition finds a difference between monergism and synergism in which prominence is given to a God-centeredness and man-centeredness, respectively. When it comes to missions these are important issues. It will determine our understanding of the way God works in saving man; does it depend upon human effort; and the critical

> questions of whether man is elect from eternity on the basis of God's love, without any merit on man's part, or, whether man is chosen because of God's foreknowledge of his repentance and good works." (Ebenezar)

In every branch of Christ's church, there will always be radicals and extremists who tend to go off into tangents and end up elevating one doctrine or responsibility for others. All the while they may still claim to be orthodox and biblical. There will always be the "ultras or high-flyers" who have taken fundamental truths to extremes. Calvinists are not spared from its strain and share of extremist.

It is presumed that the doctrinal emphasis of the Calvinist Reformed tradition on the sovereignty of God on predestination, would lead to the logical conclusion that evangelism and missions will be de-emphasized, or worse, neglected altogether. The rationale runs along this reasoning, "After all," Calvinists are alleged to think, "God will see to it that the proper number of elect persons are saved—irrespective of whether we are active as His agents" (Stewart 125).

Such thinking and suspicion have been further propagated by some ill-informed academics. "In 1960, William Richey Hogg, a Methodist professor of Missions and Ecumenicism, gave credibility to this kind of suspicion. Having examined Protestant missions since 1517, he argued that from the era of the Synod of Dort (1619) onward, 'an extreme Calvinism . . . prevailed widely and worked effectively to throttle missionary endeavor.' The late William Estep, a reputable church historian of the Reformation period, called Calvinism 'logically anti-missionary'" (Stewart 125).

Setting the Record Straight

Responding to this kind of sentiments and suspicions, theologian J. I. Packer gave

his university talks in 1959 that were eventually published as *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Packer wrote in his preface,

> The aim of the discourse is to dispel the suspicion (current it seems in some quarters) that faith in the absolute sovereignty of God hinders a full recognition and acceptance of evangelistic responsibility and to show that, on the contrary, only this faith can give Christians the strength that they need to fulfill their evangelistic task (8).

Kenneth Stewart has written an excellent book to debunk the myth and dismiss the charge that the Reformed tradition has neglected world missions and evangelism. As a historical theologian, in his book, *Ten Myths about Calvinism*, Stewart sets the record straight by tracing the active and outstanding participation of Calvinists in missions overseas. In his opening remarks, Stewart highlighted the unbiased observation of Norman Carr Sargant, a British Methodist missionary to India, who saw the two expressions of Protestantism of Calvinist and Arminian persuasion goading each other toward foreign missionary fervor. “To praise Arminianism and to reproach, Calvinism is the conventional judgement. In respect of missions, however, rigid Calvinism and the warm Arminianism of the Wesley’s were in substance the same” (123).

In 2009 Matthew Ebenezer delivered his paper, *Reformed Theology and Missions: Reviving the Basics,* at the World Reformed Fellowship Conference on Global Theological Education in Jakarta, Indonesia. His paper affirming this truth:

> Election and predestination play an important role in Reformed theology. At times, these doctrines are stressed to an extreme limit that leaves out other important teachings of Calvin. It should be noted that Calvin himself was careful

> to present a balanced view of election and its relationship to evangelism. Calvin, in discussing election, refers to the continual preaching of God's free call (Ebenezer).

Kenneth Stewart's thorough and detailed research provides us with an amazing insight into the early ventures of Protestant missions beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century, even though it was a small beginning. Despite all the incredible odds and undeniable obstacles that stood against them, that did not stop the Protestant missionaries from pressing into regions beyond. Unlike the Catholic church that was backed by great monarchical, colonial powers, including naval support that gave them unhindered access to the New World, the Protestant had nothing in comparison. Stewart made this poignantly clear when he considered the challenges faced by the Protestant missions,

> A good number of mitigating factors can be put forward to explain why transoceanic missions were not a realistic option for protestants in the earliest decades of the Reformation era. The respected historian of missions Kenneth LaTourette provided six. None were so weighty as the fact that in the earliest decades of the Reformation no Protestant domain had access to the sea, was a maritime power, or had any immediate prospect of a seaborne empire. Catholic Spain and Portugal, the acknowledged leaders among missionary-sending regions at this time, had all these (Stewart 129).

What were some of these earliest Reformed missions?

As early as 1556, a door was opened for the Genevan Calvinists to launch a mission to Brazil. It was at the invitation of the French colonizers that made this possible.

And the opportunity was quickly seized by the Genevan church. Stewart provides this insight,

> The missionary possibilities were clear to the leaders of the Genevan church. Contemporary chronicler (and participant in the expedition) Jean de Léry recorded, "Upon . . . hearing this news, the church of Geneva at once gave thanks to God for the extension of the reign of Jesus Christ in a country so distant and likewise so foreign and among a nation entirely without the knowledge of the true God (Stewart 134).

Further strong evidence of Reformed commitment and passion for missions came in the form of the Dutch Reformed missionaries to Southeast Asia.

> Dutch Calvinism—far from being hostile to foreign missions, or second-guessing the need for it (in light of acceptance of divine election), was, in fact, congenial towards it. Research has demonstrated the presence in the Synod of Dort (1618–19)—a synod alleged to have restrained missionary labor because of its support for the doctrine of election—of advocates of foreign missionary work such as Gisbertus Voetius, and of language in the Canons of Dort that was supportive of the missionary task. The sizeable Protestant population of Indonesia today is witness to Dutch missionary activity that was carried on, almost without a break, until that nation withdrew from its former colony in 1947. Comparable missionary progress had been achieved under Dutch instrumentality in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka (Stewart 139).

William Carey, an English Calvinistic Baptist, is known to us as the father of modern missions. When he first promoted the need for a missionary society (only later

volunteering to go himself), he encountered opposition. On hearing Carey advocate a mission to the heathen, a Baptist minister named John Ryland Sr. is reported to have reminded Carey, "when God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without you." But Carey held a position antithetical to that of the avowedly-Calvinist Ryland. Carey's missionary zeal and labor left behind a huge legacy for world missions (Brown).

From this summary of the early years of Reformed missions, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Calvinists were equally convinced that God uses means in finishing the Great Commission. They believe they are God's messengers and have been willing to pioneer and risk everything for the propagation of the gospel of Christ.

The author's experience of coming to Christ in 1974 was the result of his classmates in school who were fervent followers of Christ, persuading him to attend an evangelistic meeting in their church. Coming from a Buddhist and Taoist religious background, he was won over by the dedication of these "Presbyterian" disciples of Christ. Since his conversion and growing up in the Presbyterian church, the passion and fervor for missions has not diminished but only grown stronger. In the church of about 400 members, it has planted three other new congregations in three different districts within Singapore. Over the years, the church has been sending missionaries and missions teams to Nepal, Ghana, Vietnam, China, Japan, Indonesia, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. A regular feature of the church's annual program is missions teams going out to preach the gospel, build houses, and dig wells. This is testimony of the missions and evangelistic commitment and vision of the church. Therefore, far from reneging the responsibility in preaching the gospel to all the world, the Reformed and Presbyterian churches in Singapore have taken up this responsibility with great fervor and

commitment. It is safe to say that majority of the Presbyterian churches in Singapore have some form of missions ventures, programs and have given substantial financial resources to missions work all over the world.

As a denomination, they offer regularly "The Kairos Course" which is a nine-session, interactive course designed to educate, inspire, and challenge Christians to active and meaningful participation in the World Christian Movement. (simplymobilizing.com/) The course looks at the four main areas of missions' concern which are the biblical, historical, strategic, and cultural dimensions of missions. It is a well-attended course that continues to raise missions awareness and involvement within the Presbyterian Church in Singapore.

While The Kairos Course provides a good introduction and overview of world missions, what seems to be lacking is the call, challenge, and missions strategy of finishing the Great Commission. While they draw attention to the task remaining and the methods that should be used to reach the unreached, there is no mention of how the task can be completed. While they seek to inspire every Christian to be part of the world Christian teamwork by looking at the variety of exciting ways the whole church can and must get involved in accomplishing strategic world missions, there are no concrete steps spelled out as to how this can be done.

Laying a Solid Theological Foundation

This is where we need to lay a strong scriptural foundation on the conviction that the Great Commission as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, was meant to be finished. For too long, the church has not been inspired and challenged with this possibility. All that we are committed to is to just keep working faithfully on this seemingly

"unfinishable task," all along hoping in our hearts that Christ's sudden appearance will get the job done miraculously. We do not believe that the task can be finished by us. All the negative and depressing news about younger generations turning away from religions and faith and the diminishing influence of the Christian churches go to show we are fighting a losing battle. The evidence around us reinforces our belief that the task can never be finished. What biblical foundation and scriptural promises do we have that assure us that the task can be finished?

The Apex of the Book of Ephesians

A focus on a passage in the Book of Ephesians that provide us with this foundation. The Book of Ephesians is the Reformed tradition's favorite book and it is not hard to know why. The grand display of God's glorious plan in salvation is beautifully painted for us in the very first chapter,

> How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son (*The Message* 1:3-6).

Many would consider Paul's emphasis on God's sovereignty and predestination to be his highpoint. Others would argue that the pinnacle of the book is that our salvation is by grace alone.

The highest point in Paul's letter is located in Ephesians 1:10. Here, Paul spells out and captures for us in a nutshell, the God of Glory and His eternal plans for all peoples.

> In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph. 1:7-10)

In a sense, this is Paul's vision and version of the Great Commission.

While Matthew 28:18-20 reminds us of Christ's authority in sending us out, and the content of our mandate in teaching and baptizing disciples, here in Ephesians, Paul gives us deeper insight and clarity into God's desire, and the scope and extent of His outreach, beyond just the nations. Paul assures us that, "All things in heaven and earth will be united in Him." We are reminded that there is a definite "end" in mind and the completion of the task is certain. The goal is within reach, and it will be done because God himself will see to its fulfillment. Paul further elaborates on his understanding of the Great Commission in Ephesians 1:20-23 (*The Message*):

> All these energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. *The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is*

Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence. (Italics mine)

The appointed regent and agency to complete this task is the church. The wonder of it all is that God would use us as His messengers to bring the good news to the world. The church is God's instrument through which the gospel is proclaimed and how all things come under His rule. "And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth" (*New Living Translation* Eph. 1:10). Therefore, the ultimate end and goal are bringing people to salvation, and the means God uses to accomplish His purpose is through preaching (Eph. 2:17; 3:1-6). Paul is the prime example as he faithfully preached the gospel and he asked for prayer for greater boldness in continuing this task (Eph. 6:19). But of greater importance is not just our part but the certainty of its completion.

The Certainty of Finishing the Great Commission

A deeper look at Ephesians 1:10, "a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" and the words Paul used will help us appreciate the full intention of God for the salvation of the nations. This God-centered perspective of the Great Commission is often lacking and we need to recover this because it will help us persevere in the face of obstacles, challenges, and setbacks.

Paul's use of the word πλήρωμα (*plērōma*) for "fullness" refers to what *fills*, the "content" which fills something up or the "completeness**,"** what is *filled*, as container, performance, period (Strong 58). It also has the idea of "full complement; supply, supplement," as used in Mark 2:21; Matthew 9:16 (Souter 206). What is interesting and

enlightening is that the same Greek word is used by Paul in Romans 11:25-26 to refer to the salvation of Jews and Gentiles.

> Lest you be wise in your sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way, all Israel will be saved.

The reference here is to a time when the total quantity and number of Gentiles will be brought into God's kingdom which will also result in the salvation of all Israel. Nothing can be clearer than this assertion that the Great Commission has a completion time and schedule. This is a strong encouragement to us that the Great Commission will be finished according to God's plan and timing. Paul's commission and commitment to preach to the Gentiles is part of God's plan and the means to fulfill God's purpose. Eugene Peterson captures the essence of God's desire in his paraphrase, "This hardness on the part of insider Israel toward God is temporary. Its effect is to open things up to all the outsiders *so that we end up with a full house*. Before it's all over, there will be a complete Israel" (*The Message* Rom. 11:25-26, italics mine).

Next, is Paul's use of the word καιρός (*kairos*) for "opportune time." His preference for this *kairos* over *chronos* highlights the urgency to make good use of every opportunity and to work diligently in proclaiming the gospel (Eph. 5:16; Col 4:5). This explains Paul's resolve and sense of earnestness in preaching the gospel.

> I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; and thus, I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand"

(Romans 15:19–21).

The way Paul strategically planned his missions included targeting and going to unreached regions where the gospel had not been preached. T-Net's strategy in phase three aligns with Paul's conviction. T-Net proposes three types of saturation, namely church, evangelism, and disciplemaking (*Disciple Making Church Saturation* 85-86). Paul's strategy offers everyone the opportunity to hear and understand the gospel. This is in line with one of the T-Net strategies and goals, to make sure "every person has been personally invited to receive Christ" (*Disciple Making Church Saturation* 71). It is a systematic and progressive saturation that will help us finish the Great Commission.

The long-range plan that Paul describes ἀνακεφαλαιόω (*anakephalaioō*), as God bringing together and formally gathering under one head, is the same ultimate vision of Revelation;

> Worthy are you to take the scroll
> and to open its seals,
> for you were slain, and by your blood, you ransomed people for God
> *from every tribe and language and people and nation,*
> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
> and they shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9–10, italics mine)

Present before the throne of God in heaven will be peoples from all nations. Again, this points to the completion of the Great Commission as a definite reality and God's desire and delight. It is a real possibility and not just a pipe dream. Paul could claim "from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19-20).

The “all things” (παντός, *pantos*) that Paul refers to with the definite article means “whole, with the focus on totality.” It includes the notion of “every kind” (Matt. 4:23; 1 Cor. 6:18, Swanson).

Here we have the irrefutable conclusion of the gospel's inclusiveness of all people, Jews & Gentiles (which would refer to the rest of the world, and all ethnic groups). All these point to the desire of God to see the gospel preached to all people, and it comes with the promise that one day this will become a reality.

To make sure we understand the heart of God for the salvation of all peoples, Paul uses the word, earth, which refers to regions of socio-political areas (Mt 4:15); or people as inhabitants of the earth, mankind (Matt 5:13). The “things in heaven and things on earth (ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ (*ho ouranos kai hē gē*),” is a figurative reference (use of hendiadys) to the universe in totality (Mark 13:31) (Swanson).

It is this theocentric understanding and appreciation of the Great Commission that fuels the Calvinists and sustains the Reformed tradition’s passion for world missions. It is faith in the absolute sovereignty of God that will give Christians the strength we need to fulfill our evangelistic task. While we work hard in our responsibilities in finishing the Great Commission, we must always remember it is God who is at work to guarantee the completion. When we serve out of this restful trust and deep mindfulness of God’s superintending role, we will be empowered to press on until the task is finished. The future of this completed task is guaranteed by the God who calls and co-labors with us in seeing the nations bow to Christ.

Multiplication as the Key to Finishing the Great Commission

Embedded in Matt. 28:18-20 is Christ's blueprint for finishing the Great Commission. The call to go is packaged inseparably with attention to a holistic and all-embracing concern for producing well-equipped laborers for the harvest field. From the very beginning, Jesus taught the disciples to pray for laborers, and here He gave them instructions to replicate and multiply a certain kind of laborers that would teach and do what Jesus taught and did. Here is the Lord's command to emulate what He did in the three years He spent with the twelve disciples. What they saw Christ do during the three years of apprenticeship was now their highest priority.

For us to understand Christ's call is a strategy to multiply rather than merely adding disciples, we must begin by understanding His core mission. We believe the core of Christ's mission is a multiplication movement of disciplemakers. By his own example, Christ devoted the bulk of his time in equipping and training the 12 disciples who were them sent out and commissioned later to do the same. In John 20:21, Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you". So, we are to imitate Christ's core devotion and mission to disciplemaking and carry this out into all the nations.

> "The words in Jesus' Great Commission give us our mission: biblical disciple making. Any other core mission will take us off track, failing to lead to healthy multiplication and movements of His witnesses (the commandment Jesus gives us in Acts 1:8). Simply put, *the core of any multiplication movement is disciple making* (Wilson).

In my church recent strategic planning for the next five years, we went through many rounds of consultation with all our leaders and small group members to understand

what our church core mission is. Eventually we arrived this statement which captures our church DNA: “We want to grow in Christlikeness through devotion and delight in God, nurturing relationships and intentional multiplying of disciplemakers”. In the past we have always believe becoming a disciple is a core value. All our training and teaching focus on this dimension. But it is not enough just having disciples, we need to have from the very start, everyone discipled is to continuing with the process of making other disciples. This core mission aligns with the words of Jesus’ Great Commission that calls for healthy multiplication of disciples that will go on making other disciples wherever we are.

> “Jesus started the church to be a movement of multiplication so that the church would grow exponentially. In order for the church to even keep up with the population growth of the planet, it would have to do more than add disciples. If the church is only a movement of addition, it will never keep up with the population of the world, and we will not be able to accomplish the mission of making disciples” (Adams).

In countries like China and North Korea where large gathering is prohibited, the church has to simplify in order to multiply and especially in the planting of organic outreach groups. It was timely that a group of our church leaders participated in a six months “Local Mission Training” where every person is trained to be a disciplemaker.

Most of our church infrastructure has mostly been designed for large gathering, less on small organic groups. This has to change now in light of the new normal. For multiplication to happen, it will be critical to ensure we are building the necessary

infrastructure and capacity to expand and support our disciplemaking context. The key question is, “What type of capacity are we building?”

We need to rethink if this is the kind of church infrastructure that will best support decentralized organic groups that can multiply disciplemakers. The shift is from the consumeristic, attractional, church-centric Christianity to the scattering of disciplemakers into the neighborhood and marketplaces.

> “By making biblical disciples, we become more effective at carrying the fullness of Jesus into every corner of our communities, ultimately sending disciples to go and multiply new churches that create even greater capacity for healthy kingdom growth. Disciples who make disciples the way Jesus did are the fuel of multiplication movements” (Wilson).

Paul has long been hailed as the principal exemplar of missions’ strategy. His paradigms and patterns of doing missions have been well studied to reproduce the same successes that we so desire. So, the important question is, “Did Paul have a strategy when accomplishing his missions?”

While Paul may have adopted a more fluid and flexible process, there seems to be some basic operating values, ideologies, and principles that we can glean from. In particular, what can we learn from Paul about the importance of multiplication in completing the Great Commission?

Probably the most outstanding feature of Paul’s model is his consistent application of 2 Tim. 2:1-2, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

This is Paul's perception and understanding of the Lord's Commission. This is how Paul intended to finish the Great Commission in his time. Billy Graham once said, "One of the first verses of Scripture that Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, encouraged me to memorize was 2 Tim. 2:2. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This is like a mathematical formula for spreading the gospel and enlarging the church. Paul taught Timothy; Timothy shared what he knew with faithful men; these faithful men would then teach others also. And so, the process goes on and on. If every believer followed this pattern, the church could reach the entire world in one generation! Mass crusades, in which I believe and to which I have committed my life will never finish the Great Commission; but a one-to-one ministry will." (Graham 147).

In Acts, we see Paul's intentional and deliberate process of training leaders, empowering them as elders and deacons to carry on the work. In his letters to Timothy and Titus, he gives concrete instructions on the selection and contents of equipping new leaders.

On a visit to Crete, Greece in October 2018, tracing Paul's third missionary trip, the author had the chance to see the remains of Titus' skull is still enshrined in a church, where he is alleged to be the pastor and later bishop. The information given by the well-trained Greek guide was that during Titus' time, it was a thriving church and his legacy continued for many years, until the invasion of the Turks.

Another noteworthy aspect of Paul's strategizing is the establishment of strong, indigenous churches; congregations that would be equipped to carry on the task (1 Cor 1:2, 7). He stayed as long as he could, setting up the church in spite of the difficulties.

When mature local leaders had been trained, he would move on, leaving the leaders to take charge. These church plants were self-governing (Acts 14:23; 20:17), self-supporting, and self-propagating (1 Thess. 1:8).

Paul's strategies are now replicated in T-Net's approach to finishing the Great Commission. Built on these biblical foundations and examples, are the four realities and three results that T-Net has spelled out as key indicators of completion of the Great Commission. The four realities of critical mass, proximity, magnetism, and steady growth should produce church, evangelism, and disciplemaking saturation are reasonable and biblical realities that will keep us on track. But there was a period, as a trainer, the author grappled with this fundamental question. It concerns the theological & biblical basis for deciding when the Great Commission in any region is considered finished. On what grounds are the four criteria and four realities built upon (*Disciple Making Church Saturation* 70–71)? It is obvious why this is important to us as T-Net trainers. Before deciding if it is doable, viable, practical, we have to know with certainty if this vision is man-made, or God-given and God-ordained. While many pastors and leaders are excited about the vision & possibility of finishing the Great Commission, we need to build this conviction on a strong biblical foundation.

There was an opportunity to bring this question to Bob Gilliam in 2015 when he was in Singapore for our T-Net bi-annual summit. We had trainers from a few Southeast Asian countries, like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Bob's reply was simple and uncomplicated. And he said it with confidence, as one of the top five church consultants in the US, with many years of experience. He simply said, “There is no one else who has come up with any clear understanding of what it means to finish

the Great Commission. This is the best we can offer, one that is biblically reasonable and sound." If there were any better explanation and proposals, he was open and prepared to discuss and interact.

After the shocking encounter with his Presbyterian colleague who challenged the whole notion of finishing the Great Commission, the author had a chance to dialogue with one of the New Testament professors at Trinity Theological College in Singapore who is also an ordained Presbyterian minister on the accuracy of our understanding of Matthew 24:14. This is what he said, "If finished means everyone and every people group gets an opportunity to hear the gospel, it can certainly be finished! There is a book called *700 Plans to Evangelize the World*, and it details plans to complete the task of evangelization by 2000 (that was in 1980s)! In Matthew 24 and Mark 13, Jesus says that the gospel will first be preached to the whole world and *then* the end will come. The context of Mark 13.10 requires us to understand this statement as a prelude to the end times."

And so contrary to popular belief that Reformed theology demotes world missions and evangelism, we have found that they promote it.

> "Reformed doctrine has been treasured by some of the greatest evangelists of all time, such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. The missionary expansion of the church came as God's answer to the prayers of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, taught by the Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God to intercede for "the propagation of the gospel and kingdom of Christ to all nations." Reformed theology is a worldview of missionary optimism because Christ shall surely save all whom the Father gave Him, all the sheep for

> whom He died, as they hear His voice calling to them in the gospel (John 6:37–39; 10:11, 16, 26–29). Such Reformed optimism prompted William Carey to say that we must “expect great things” and “attempt great things” in our missionary endeavors. Furthermore, the God-centered perspective of Reformed Christianity offers the highest motive that can sustain an evangelist or missionary: “for his name's sake they went forth” (3 John 7) (Beeke and Smalley).

So contrary to popular misunderstandings that Reformed and Calvinistic teachings do not encourage or promote missions, we have seen that they are some of the most zealous and passionate proclaimers of the gospel. There are many excellent examples of Reformed churches and pastors who are constantly challenging their churches to keep giving and going for missions. All of the Presbyterian churches in Singapore are involved in missions both locally through community services and overseas. In fact, we have sent missionaries to Western countries like Wales and Australia. These missionary endeavors are formed and shaped in us by a God who himself is a “sent one”, Someone who moved into our neighborhood, leaving home, comfort, and glory to reach us with the good news, Immanuel, God with us.

CHAPTER 6

CHURCH PLANTING

The Debate Over Church Planting

Church planting has been challenged recently as a biblically acceptable activity of the church. There is a call to rethink and reconsider if this should be the mandate and calling of God's people. We begin by looking at the New Testament model and example of "church planting." While it may be called as such, it is very much a coming together of Christ's followers, a people called out from diverse backgrounds and uniting together for common purposes and agenda.

A Brief Overview of "Church Planting" in the New Testament

Jerusalem, Acts 2:45; 4:32-37.

This can be safely called Church 1.0. This is version 1, the prototype of a freshly minted church. It is a largely homogenous, localized mega-congregation. This newly birthed church saw immediate numerical growth with little effort.

Antioch, Acts 15:30; 11:21, 26, 29-30; Romans 15:25-28.

This is a multi-ethnic missional congregation, where the dividing walls of ethnic differences are torn down. Here we see a progression beyond just the safe surroundings of Jerusalem, where mainly one ethnic group of Jewish people dominates the city. In Antioch, there is a gathering and coming together of different peoples from different regions and ethnic backgrounds.

Thessalonica, Acts 17:5-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4.

This is a further upgrade of the church to a multi-ethnic, missional regional network of churches. There is now a multiplication of churches that are connected in

koinonia and sharing of resources. This multiple groups of churches are united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Rome, Romans 16:1-16; 1:8.

Another model of the church is found in the urban network of organic churches in a major city, such as Rome. Paul's references to all the churches that met in different members' homes point to an elaborate network of churches that was growing in the city. Clowney gives this insightful perspective of the many levels of "churches" that are interconnected and bound together in the same geographical locality.

> In the New Testament, the question is further complicated by the fact that *local* churches are spoken of in more than one sense. At least, local churches come in surprisingly different sizes. The church in Laodicea is a city church, but apparently, there was also in Laodicea a house church, meeting in the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15). So, too, Paul can in one breath speak of the churches of Asia and the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor. 16:19). The Westminster Divines noted the house churches that existed along with city churches in the New Testament and argued from this evidence for a Presbyterian system of government. (Clowney 7)

Ephesus, Acts19:9-10; 20:20, 25, 32.

In Ephesus, another model of decentralized networks of missional, organic churches that flourished without the controlling or over-lording of a mother church is a further upgrade from Church 1.0. Some observers call these Church 3.0, while Church 2.0 is the institutionalized church that Emperor Constantine encouraged and perhaps even sponsored as patron, after he made Christianity the official religion of Rome.

What this new Reformation seeks to debunk are some common myths that have stopped the church from accomplishing her God-given missions. What are some of these damaging myths?

- Church is a static institution or building.
- Church is bound to a single location.
- Church is a one- to two-hour service held one day a week.
- Church must be centralized.

	Church 2.0	**Church 3.0**
Seating when gathered	Rows	Circles
Environment	Anonymous	Intimate
Leadership source	Institutions of higher learning	Harvest
Growth	Addition	Multiplication
Results	An audience is attracted	A spiritual army is mobilized
Ministry practitioners	The ordained	The ordinary
Resources	Imported to the harvest	Discovered in the harvest
Primary leadership role	Pastoral teacher	APEST team
Learning lab	Classroom-based education	Trench-based education
Cost	Expensive	Inexpensive
Ministry setting	The meeting places	The marketplace
Success	Full seating capacity	Full sending capacity
Church posture	Passive “You all come to church!”	Active: “We all go!”
Attraction	Felt need programming	Obvious life transformation
Model of church life	Academic	Family

Table 3. Differences Between Church 2.0 and Church 3.0.

Polar Paradigm Shifts In How to Do Church

To recover God's ideal of the church, we have to make radical changes in the way we understand church. We have to shift from:

- Building walls to building bridges.
- Attraction-based church programming to relational connection and community.
- Coming to going.
- One-size-fits-all to tailored groups for effective functions.
- Measuring attendance to measuring impact.
- Encouraging saints to attend service to equipping saints for works of service.
- "Serve us" to service, inward to outward.
- Minister of a congregation to minister of the community.
- Converts to catalyzing movements.

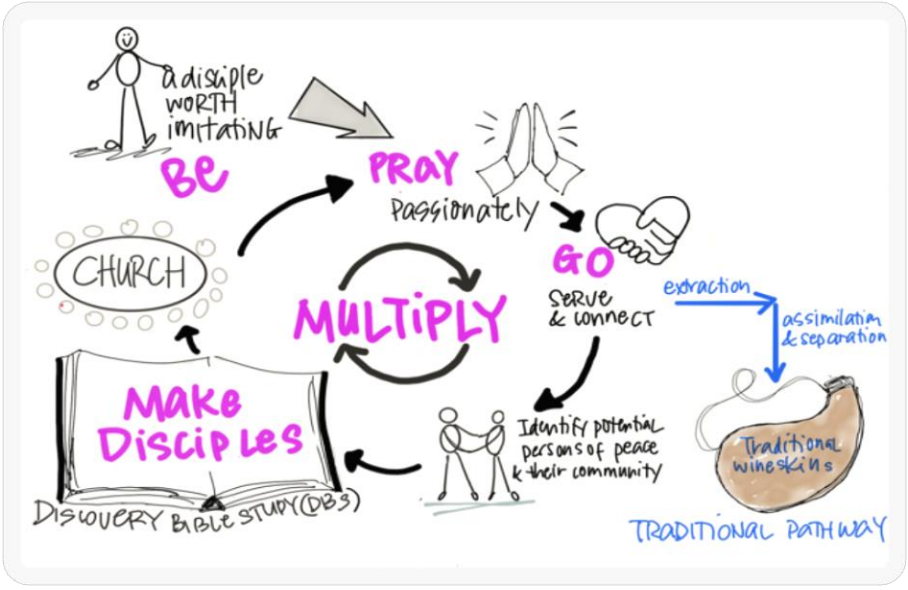


Figure 5. A Disciplemaking Movement Pathway to God's Vision (Crawley).

Our traditional way of understanding evangelism is bringing people to church after they believed in Christ. Without realizing it, we are doing them a disservice. We have effectively cut them off from their circle of friends. As a result, we have lost many opportunities to connect with many in their community of pre-believers. So instead of plucking them out of these networks, we should disciple and mentor them wherever they are, equipping them with simple tools of reaching out to their circle of influence. They are the ones that will grow fast because the new believers are told from the beginning their Discovery Bible Study is designed to be shared with their friends and family members. Instead of extracting them from their places and platforms of witness, we grow these disciples amid ministry and outreach within their communities. They are quickly trained to reach out to their circle of friends, and to share what they have learned from the Scriptures. They will pray for the person of peace, to identify those who have the desire and skills to be like them in reaching out to others.

Christ's Blueprint for a Church

Neil Cole who has successfully planted many organic churches in the United States firmly believes in the exponential power and multiplication of such churches. His refreshing definition of the church helps us recapture the essentials and irreducible minimums of such fruitful churches. It is one that encapsulates the DNA of a kingdom church that Christ intended, "The church is The Presence of Christ among His people called out as a spiritual family to pursue His mission on earth" (Cole 53).

Cole passionately modeled lowering the bar of how church is done so that anyone can do it, but at the same time, he raised the bar of what it means to be a disciple so that they will obey Christ. He sees Church 3.0 as a powerful weapon in the hand of God to

challenge Satan's territory. Cole asked a small group of teenagers who had just experienced Church 3.0, "Why is Satan more intimidated by this little church of 15 kids than any mega church?" (Cole 65) Would you prefer to start a mega church? Or one like this one

The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting

In Jerry Trousdale's book, *Miraculous Movements,* he proposes seven paradigms shifts if we want to see supernatural advances for the kingdom of Christ (179).

Making Intercessory Prayer the Highest Priority.

It is a consistent practice of such church planters to devote hours to prayer before they even consider doing any outreach.

Make Disciples Who Make Disciples.

This may sound clichéd, but we need to be reminded regularly that our goal is to not only see converts, and not even to just make disciples. Our long-term goal is always to make disciples who will go on to make disciples.

Invest Time in the Right Person.

Taking care and time to watch and see what God is doing and joining Him is the key to doing what God wants. Too often, we run far ahead of the Lord assuming that the "good stuff" we are doing is what He wants us to do. The "good is the enemy of the best" is a much needed corrective to our over-zealous activist tendencies. In God's economy, while nothing is wasted, and there may not be a "wrong person" to invest in, but at the same time, we are to be discerning in seizing the right moment of opportunity when God sends the right person. Riding the wave of God's move is a precious truth to cling on to.

Do Not Tell People What to Believe and Do.

Allowing God's unique work in each person and giving space for the new believer to catch God's revelation and vision will yield greater fruits than for us to "impose" our belief systems and traditions on them.

Never Settle for Revealing Just One Dimension of Jesus' Life.

Embedded in Christ's commission is the mandate to teach disciples "everything." Equipping our disciples "holistically" involves exposing them to the full dimension of Christ's life and church history traditions. There seem to be five streams of God's movements in the life of Christ and throughout church history. What are these "Five Streams of Living Water"?

Five Dimensions of Christ's Life	Five Movements in Church History
1. Devotion to God	1. Contemplative
2. Virtue in thoughts, words, and actions	2. Holiness
3. Spirit-empowered ministry	3. Charismatic
4. Compassion toward all people	4. Social justice
5. Evangelism toward the lost	5. Evangelical

Table 4. The Life and DNA of Christ and Church Movements. (Forster 27)

The challenge for us is integrating all these biblical dimensions of Christ's life in our church life. We tend to be "selective" in what we want to believe or practice. We need to begin an honest self-evaluation of where our church is at. In humility, we need to unlearn and re-learn to embrace all that Christ desires for his church.

Never Substitute Knowledge About God for an Obedience-based Relationship With God.

We often short change, soft pedal, soften the demands and cost of discipleship. Apostle Paul often talks about his ministry as one that is targeted at winning people's obedience to Christ, and not just a simple sinner's prayer.

Understand That Jesus Does Impossible Things Through the Most Ordinary People.

This inspires great hope, as no one should be considered "unusable" or beyond reach. I was reminded while reading, *If You Can Eat, You Can Make Disciples*, by Peter Roennfeldt, that in looking for a person of peace, we tend to gravitate towards those that have impeccable reputation, sterling standing, status, and achievements in life . But Christ showed how he is often attracted to those whose reputation is anything to be desired. Christ went after Matthew and Zacchaeus, people who were most hated by society, and probably considered the scum of the earth. Yet this did not deter Christ from making them His disciples. "Lord, open my eyes to see treasure in the most unlikely, unlovely and undesirable people" (10).

PART THREE: PROJECT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 7

GOALS AND PLANS

How The Great Commission Can Be Finished In Sri Lanka

It has been through God's ordering of events that has led my church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, to be involved in this venture and partnership of finishing the Great Commission in Sri Lanka. The birth of our migrant outreach to the 20,000 Sri Lankans working in Singapore began with a love affair between a Sri Lankan student and a church member who were both studying at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. Their coming together saw the birth of our Sri Lankan fellowship and has over the years saw hundreds of Buddhists Sri Lankans coming to Christ and getting baptized. The growth of this ministry led to the idea of running a "Returnees Camp," where we gathered all those who have returned to Sri Lanka to follow up with their life and spiritual journey. This annual camp has led to many more of the family members of returnees coming to Christ. This led further to the launch of the Generation One T-Net training center in Colombo in 2013. One of the keys to the success is the effective role of the Minister of Communication, Pastor Sudarman, who is considered a highly respected pastor of pastors. He is now the T-Net country leader for Sri Lanka, leading a board of directors who are comprised of Generation One trainers and respected Christian leaders.

From all the years of experience with Sri Lanka and other mission fields, together with my leaders, we are developing a flow chart to help the church strategize missions for long-term planning. This chart will answer the *why*, *how*, and *what* of missions for my church. This strategy helps discern and determine where we should allocate our resources

of personnel, finance, and time. To begin with, we often assume everyone knows what the ultimate goal of missions is. But it will surprise many to discover through interactions with different people who are involved passionately in missions, not much thought is given to this question. In many cases, there is the missing conviction and dimension of finishing the Great Commission. They may see missions as a mandate that calls for obedience, and that is good for us to be involved in, but little is made of finishing the mandate. So, the *why* of missions can never be overemphasized. We need constant reminders of the possibility of finishing the Great Commission.

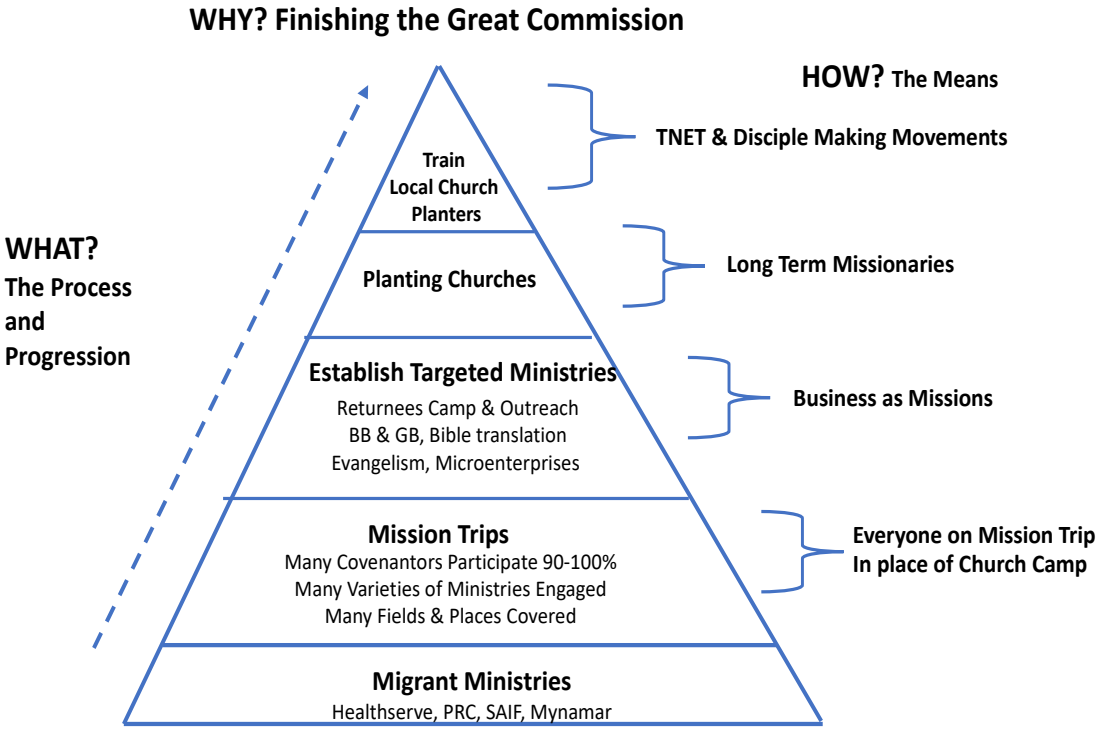


Figure 6. Covenant Presbyterian Church Strategic Plan and Process

Next, we answer "what" by looking at the various creative approaches and means that we have used over the years to establish a foothold in the mission field. By collaborating with the local leaders and missionaries, we discovered different unique enterprises that worked well in building bridges for their particular contexts.

In a very unique way, God has brought to Singapore around one million migrant workers in the field of construction, domestic helpers, and professionals. The largest groups come from South Asia. In my church, almost every Sunday, we have seven different nationalities and language groups (Mandarin, English, Myanmar, Telegu, Tamil, Hindi, and Sinhalese) using our facilities for their worship and outreach activities. We are ideally located in Little India in Singapore, which is where the Indian migrants in the 19th century first settled. On the weekends, thousands of these South Asian workers would flock to Little India to do their shopping, meet with friends, and seek leisure and entertainment. It is indeed an ideal catchment area. What started out as the Sri Lankan outreach in 1999, has since become a full worship congregation, where many hundreds have come to know Christ and have been baptized. From this first step in our outreach, we have gone on to launch T-Net in Sri Lanka in 2013. My hope is that this will become the modus operandi for us in moving forward our local outreach to finishing the Great Commission by launching T-Net in all these countries.

After determining the *what*, we explored the *how* in terms of all the available resources and means that have been employed. At the peak of the triangle is T-Net Project Zero, because this is where the ultimate goal of finishing the Great Commission is most tangibly fleshed out and effectively carried out. T-Net Project Zero has clearly defined goals, targets, and objectives, in saturating the country with disciplemaking churches and disciplemakers.

The Wisdom of T-Net Project ZERO—From Vision to Action

Having a compelling vision is a crucial step in finishing the Great Commission. The amazing life story and ministry of Jackie Pullinger illustrates how important it is to

have an alternative vision that defies the norm. Jackie Pullinger has spent her life working with the poor and destitute, triad gang members, heroin, and opium addicts. She has helped thousands to come off drugs through the power of the Holy Spirit. She has seen transformation in numerous lives and has made a huge impact on the city of Hong Kong. In a podcast with Nicky Gumble, her story was retold,

> "When Jackie arrived at the Walled City – gang-filled and drug addicted as it was – the Lord gave her a clear vision of what He wanted to accomplish. It was an awesome picture of children playing in the streets, drug addicts with arms without needle marks and old prostitutes with their heads lifted high. Jackie says, "I saw another city, I just didn't know how to make it happen." Knowing that her part was faithfulness and obedience, Jackie left the transformation up to the Holy Spirit. In the pockets of favour, Jackie rejoiced. And in the pockets of disappointment and opposition, Jackie persevered all the more, quoting Jesus' words "turn the other cheek." Over years of persistently following Jesus's voice and responding to the needs around her, Jackie saw hundreds of drug addicted gangsters and sex workers set free through prayer, radical hospitality, and life-on-life care (Gumble).

Jackie often says, "I don't have a ministry, I have a life." Jackie is full not of theoretical wisdom, but hard-fought wisdom earned through a bleeding heart and hard feet. While many Jesus followers are tempted to compartmentalize and segment their faith, the life of Jackie Pullinger challenges one to embrace a holistic discipleship to Jesus; a life where ministry is not delegated elsewhere, but where it is uncomfortably owned by the follower (Gumble).

What makes Project Zero unique and different is the coming together of vision and action after many years of trials and errors. Very often, we have one or the other. While most people have a vision of finishing the Great Commission, there is no clear roadmap of how this can be accomplished. After many years of consultation with thousands of churches, Bob Gilliam brought together the best and well tested knowledge and wisdom of church growth and multiplication to forge a way forward in seeing both vision and practical applications into reality. The brilliance of T-Net Project Zero is that the rationale and basis for finishing the Great Commission make sense, biblically, theologically, practically, and spiritually. In chapter four, the biblical foundation and rationale have already been elaborated. But one has to grapple with the theological basis for determining the criteria that T-Net has laid out, to decide when the Great Commission in a country is finished. The author's dialogue and interaction with Bob Gilliam in 2015 helped him to have a clearer and firm handle, and a solid foundation, in pursuing the completion of the Great Commission. Nevertheless, all these must be combined with faith in God's power in the Cross of Jesus Christ. It was not by human wisdom or ingenuity that Paul proclaimed the gospel and worked hard to finish the Great Commission.

The way Project Zero provides the biblical basis for deciding when a country is considered evangelized makes sense because it is thoroughly faithful to all of Scriptures, in what it means to preach the whole gospel to the whole world through the whole church. It is not just about seeing conversions and church planting, but it is in making disciplemakers who will go on to finish the Great Commission.

Whenever the introduction of Project Zero is shared, the real possibility and urgent mandate of finishing the Great Commission has captivated the imagination and

hearts of many pastors and Christian leaders. This resonance in the hearts of so many pastors and Christian leaders have to do with the wisdom and genius of Project Zero, in spelling out clearly and precisely what must happen if we want to complete the Great Commission. What are these criteria and ministry strategy that flows out of our theological analysis?

First of all, every neighborhood must be saturated with disciplemaking churches. Second, every person has been invited to receive Christ personally. Third, every willing convert is nurtured in an ongoing disciplemaking process.

T-Net has also spelled out the five marks of a healthy intentional disciplemaking church. To have such churches, pastors must be trained and coached to lead their congregations to become intentional disciplemaking churches. What are the steps to starting this process?

The first step was starting a first generation (1G) training center in the capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo. This is in line with Paul's strategy in targeting big cities. Fred Jonkman, from the Third Millennium Ministries website, wrote in *The Missionary Methods of the Apostle Paul*,

> The city was Paul's theatre of missions. Paul's theory was not that he had to preach in every place himself, but by establishing centers of Christian life in the important places, the gospel might then spread to the provinces. The cities where he did plant churches were centers of Roman administration, of Greek civilization, of Jewish influence or some commercial importance. (Allen 1991:13)
>
> It is important to note that, though today we see a rapid growth of urbanization, the city is not more important and the countryside less important. Rather, Paul

intended to have the congregation situated in the city to be a center of light (Acts 19:10). How else could Paul claim in Romans 15:19 that he had evangelized the whole province? Particularly, the church in Rome was to be of strategic importance when Paul planned to leave the East and begin work in the West (Rom. 15:23, 24).

Launching T-Net in Sri Lanka

In 2013, step one of the process was launched with the first generation of thirty-five pastors and leaders, together with Andrew Tay, President of Intentional Disciplemaking, Singapore. This gathering of the pastors and leaders came after a few rounds of introductory meetings with various pastors and leaders of different denominations and various churches. The plan was to target senior pastors. In our first course, we had thirty-five pastors and leaders. Not all are English-speaking pastors. We had a mix of Sinhalese, Tamil, and English-speaking pastors. After completing the ten courses of Tier 1, twenty-two pastors graduated with a master's degree.

There were four trainers when T-Net Generation One center was launched in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2013. At that time, we had no idea of the degree program that was offered. But the pastors were nonetheless committed to the task ahead. It was almost a year later that the degree offering was made known to them. They were all excited at the prospect of finishing Tier 1 with the reward of a master's degree. In the religious and social context of Sri Lankan, having credentials of an accredited degree from a university in the United States provided them with greater standing and legitimacy. As further encouragement and reward for their commitment and good progress, my church gave a scholarship to each pastor to help pay for the initial registration process for the degree

program. We followed the international curriculum and strategy as closely as possible. Initially, when we started courses one and two, it was based on the five-day week schedule for one course. But we later found that there was too much material to cover in one week. Thus, we divided each course into half, effectively doubling the length of the course. After which, the five-day training was reduced to a four-day training, given the busy schedule of the pastors. Some of these pastors are bi-vocational, and they needed to take up another job to support and bring income to their families. Their churches were small and were unable to pay their pastors.

The First Fruits

	Name of Center	Courses Completed	No. of Trainers	No. of Students	No. of Churches Represented	District
1	Colombo	Tier 1	8	25	18	National

Table 5. The First Fruits 1G (Generation One)

In the second step, this band of original students started 2G centers in different locations. Out of thirty-five pastors and leaders who started, twenty-five stayed on and completed the ten courses of Tier 1. These twenty-five pastors were clustered into three training teams to launch their 2G centers. Of the total of eighteen districts in Sri Lanka, nine districts were adopted and sixteen centers were started. The reasons these districts were chosen are varied. One of the trainers is the superintendent of the Four Square Church and he has influence and jurisdiction over the Kandy district. He leveraged on his overseer role and the strong relationships he has with these pastors under him. In the map on the following page, you will see the number of centers, and pastors involved in the 2G and 3G centers. All of these districts are primarily Buddhist saturated areas, and the

pastors occasionally face persecutions and discriminations from the monks and their followers.

	Name of Center	Courses Completed	No. of Trainers	No. of Students	No. of Churches Represented	District
1	Madampe	8	4	17	11	Puttalam
2	Negombo	6	4	15	9	Gampaha
3	Kadawatha	4	2	20	10	Gampaha
4	Kandy	7	2	18	1	Kandy
5	Pugoda	7	2	20	1	Gampaha
6	Kelaniya	7	2	20	1	Gampaha
7	Ingiriya	7	6	10	5	Kalutara
8	Wadduwa	3	3	10	5	Kalutara
9	Piliyanda	Project Zero (2)	3	10	4	Colombo
10	Avissawella	2	2	7	3	Colombo
11	Kuliyapitiya	7	2	14	2	Kurunegala
12	Mirihana	7	2	8	1	Colombo
13	Moratuwa	6	3	14	7	Colombo
14	Maharagama	5	5	10	1	Colombo
15	Puttalam	Project Zero	2	14	6	Puttalam
16	Jaela	3	2	10	8	Gampaha
Total	16 centers		22	217	66 (150)	7 districts

Table 6. The First Fruits 2G (Generation Two)

In the third step, the students in the 1G center (who are in four teams, teaching sixteen 2G centers) adopt one or more states/provinces of their country, so that every state is taken. They are each encouraged to commit to finishing the Great Commission in these entire provinces and districts of Sri Lanka. These 1G trainers lead their entire 2G training center to adopt this province and districts with them! This practice has a precedent in the New Testament, in the church at Antioch in AD 48, Acts 13:1-3 records:

> Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were

> ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Just like in China today, where Christianity is considered a threat and the church is persecuted, the church in Antioch although large in numbers, did not meet in one location. In most cases (except for the Three-self Church in China, that is controlled and monitored by the state), the church is made up of house churches connected through relationships.

For Paul and Barnabas to continue their ministry unhindered, these clusters of churches were challenged to give towards their missions' work. In the third step, the disciplemaking churches are encouraged to follow this model of missions-giving. The 2G church pastors lead by example to challenge their congregations to take ownership of the province and district that their cluster training teams have chosen to focus on, (together with other churches in the same center). This giving is sustained three to four times a year to support this ongoing missions work.

This model of missions-giving has brought numerous blessings and paybacks. As a start, these funds provide traveling expenses for the trainers. It also enlarges the training team who can then focus on, and continue training, without worrying about finances. The other benefit is involving the entire church in a missionary focus and goal that looks beyond the four walls of their church. The fruitfulness of this missions' work will further stimulate church members to participate more actively in the ministry of giving and service.

In the fourth step, these 2G/3G centers in each district go on to attract and equip more leaders and are encouraged to adopt every city in the district. For instance, in the district of Colombo, there is one large city and other smaller cities. The 2G centers launched another three 3G centers in the East and Kotte (please refer figure 7). Hopefully, after a year, these two centers might sponsor more 3G training centers in the Colombo district. In the Kurunegala district, the 1G center launched a 2G center in Kuliyapitiya with fourteen pastors. In another area, a 3G center with thirty-five pastors was launched.

Then, after another year, each of these three 3G centers would each sponsor five 4G centers in the remaining smaller cities.

	Name of Center	Courses Completed	No. of Trainers	No. of Students	No. of Churches Represented	District
1	Waikkala	3	3	15	7	Puttalam
2	Kimbulapitiya	2	3	11	5	Gampaha
3	Kurunegala	3	5	12	5	Kurunegal
4	Ratnapura	2	2	14	8	Ratnapura
5	Matara	1	2	12	8	Matara
6	Dodangoda	2	2	6	4	Kalutara
7	Meegoda	2	2	6	6	Colombo
8	Ingiriya	2	2	7	5	Kalutara
9	Dummalasyriya	2	3	10	6	Puttalam
10	Polgahawela	1	3	12	6	Kurunegal
11	Raddolugama	2	3	15	7	Gampaha
12	Anurahdapura	1	3	20	12	Anurahdapura
13	Kegalle	1	2	10	7	Kegalle
Total	13 centers		26	150	55	9 districts

Table 7. The First Fruits 3G (Generation Three)

The Present Status in Sri Lanka

In the following page, we have the map of Sri Lanka showing the locations of the 3 Generations of centers spread out in nine provinces.

In the fifth step, trainers in each city train and recruit students to take responsibility for each neighborhood within the city, as well as in the surrounding rural areas. For planning purposes, we may assume that every 500 to 1000 persons in the area equals one neighborhood. (Therefore, a town of 5000 would need five to ten pastors/churches to finish the Great Commission there.)

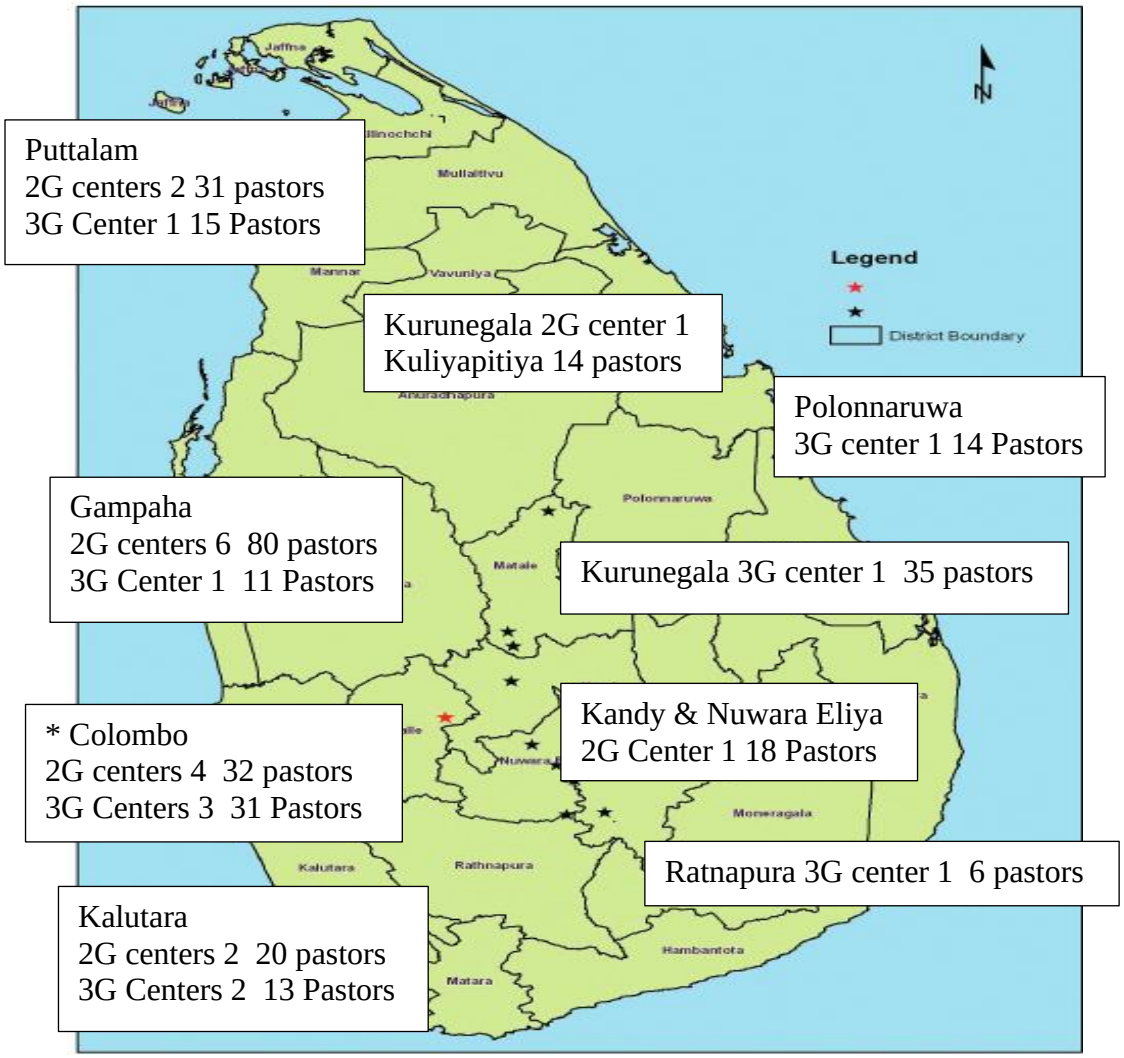


Figure 7. Locations of Generations Two and Three Locations

In step six, every pastor takes responsibility for one neighborhood for every 100 persons who attend their church. They plan to finish the Great Commission in their neighborhoods by planting home churches. To be able to do this, there are five healthy

targets to aim for in each of these churches. First, there must be an effective disciplemaking small group process that equips everyone to be a disciple and disciplemaker. In this healthy church, there will be a new covenant group every year for every 100 attendees in their church. Next, the church works with God to see a conversion growth rate of over 5% every year. Within a 5-year period, the church aims to have a door-to-door program in which every household in their neighborhood is invited to hear the gospel. (This would mean that, on the average, every person in their church must share the gospel with just two other persons a year, each year, for five years.) Lastly, every new convert is encouraged to join a disciplemaking small group for personal accountability and growth.

How Do We Get There?

In missiology, it has been recognized that there are three stages of a ministry strategy to finish the Great Commission. Throughout church history, there have been many mission organizations and attempts to finish the Great Commission. While passion and determination have never been lacking, these efforts have not always resulted in the desired breakthroughs and completion of the Great Commission. While some have failed, others have succeeded in fulfilling one or two of the three phases necessary to finish. There have been wonderful reports of completion of the Great Commission in a certain geographical areas and ethnic groups.

What are the three phases needed to finish? Let us take a look at them.

In phase one, an unreached country or language group is targeted by an expatriate Christian, who will translate the Bible, begin to see new converts, and plant the first church there. For Sri Lanka, phase one came in the person of Thomas the Apostle.

Christianity was introduced to Sri Lanka in the first century, probably in AD 72. *A Brief History of Christianity in Sri Lanka* recorded this early introduction of the first missionary venture,

> "Traditionally, after Thomas the Apostle's visit in Kerala in AD 52, Christianity is said to have been introduced via India because of its close geographical and commercial ties. According to Christian traditions, the Apostle Thomas preached the gospel in Sri Lanka. Records suggest that St. Thomas Christians and Nestorian Christians lived in Sri Lanka. Anuradhapura cross is one of the archaeological claims that suggest Christianity arrived in Sri Lanka before the Portuguese. Roman Catholicism was introduced by the Portuguese in 1505. The Anuradhapura cross plays a significant role for Christians in Sri Lanka." (wiki/Anuradhapura_cross).

Figure 8. The Anuradhapura Cross

It has been estimated that phase one has seen the completion of 97% of the world's 7,000 language groups, including Sri Lanka. Following in the footsteps of the Apostle Thomas, the Anglican and other Protestant missionaries arrived in Sri Lanka during the early 19th century when the British took control of Sri Lanka from the Dutch. The oldest Protestant church in Sri Lanka is the Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka, formerly the Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka, and has over thirty congregations and

more than 5,000 members. The Salvation Army is strong in Sri Lanka. The Lanka Lutheran Church has about 1,200 members. The annual growth of Protestants in Sri Lanka is about 3.9%. Violence for religious reasons against Christians occurs. 43% of the Protestants in the early 1980s were Sinhalese.

Phase two involves Christians from that first church, planting a disciplemaking church in every village in that country. This phase has also been completed in many countries and many isolated regions. While the successes are positive and encouraging, it is still missing phase three, before we can say the Great Commission is finished.

For phase three to happen, there must be three types of "saturation." First, there is a need for church saturation. It involves planting a disciplemaking church for every 1,000 persons (neighborhood) in every city, town, village, and rural area so all can be reached. Second, there must be evangelism saturation, where every person has heard the gospel and has been personally invited to receive Christ. Third, there must be disciplemaking saturation, where every willing convert is taken through an intentional disciplemaking process. Phase three contains over 90% of the work of finishing the Great Commission. It involves reaching tens of millions of persons in a country.

To complete the Great Commission, the mere addition of new trainers is never enough. There must be a multiplication process. To finish the process, phase three requires a huge number of pastors who continues to start new centers. For this to be sustainable, there must an indigenously funded organization that continues to generate funds locally. To generate enough funds, each generation must plan for a fivefold multiplication. Only then will there be sufficient volume of money and resources to support the local staff and ministry. This fivefold multiplication is to ensure enough

students, not just for the funding, but to cater to the eventual dropout. It has been shown that attrition is a normal part of the process. In Sri Lanka, so far, we have a dropout rate of about 30%.

What is Needed to Finish the Great Commission in Sri Lanka?

A T-Net Board was formed in 2017 and they were trained by Dr. David Durey in the rudiments of a T-Net Board. Pastor Sudarman De Silva who served as the Minister of Communication since 2013 for Generation One, is the newly appointed country leader for Sri Lanka. In 2018, with the endorsement and support of Dr. David Durey, Pastor Ron Berget and Generation One pastors, Pastor Sudarman was officially recognized as the country leader. Pastor Sudarman sent me this information on December 5, 2018, based on official data from the Sri Lankan census department.

Here is an overview of what it will take to finish the Great Commission in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has a total country population of 20,359,439. There are altogether 25 districts spread out in 9 provinces. At the moment there is a first generation training center launched in Colombo in February 2013. The number of districts needing a new S-curve first generation training center are 2 districts in the North and the East. The North and East districts have the most Tamil-speaking population, and this is where the Generation One Tamil-speaking pastors are setting their sights on. They plan to start two to three new S-curves in this region. The translation work into Tamil is still in progress, thanks to the financial support of US T-Net headquarters.

A missionary friend told me recently that there many Tamil-speaking “war widows” after the two decades of civil war. These women and children are totally neglected by the Sri Lankan government because of the previous and obvious animosity

between the Sinhalese and Tamil citizens. But through the efforts of the community and social enterprises, the churches are encouraged to reach out to this unreached group.

The number of disciplemaking churches needed will be two disciplemaking churches (not just any church) with 50 attendees or one disciplemaking church of 100 people for every 1,000 persons in your country. Based on the population of 20,359,439, we will need 20,359 churches of 100 people. Multiplying the 20,359 churches of 100 by 2, we will need 40,718 churches of 50 attendees.

What is the total number of neighborhoods we need to target? Our strategy states that for planning purposes, we may assume that every 500 to 1,000 people in the area is equal to one neighborhood. Based on a neighborhood of 1,000 people and a population of 20,359,439, there are 20,359 neighborhoods.

What is the total number of revitalized churches needed to plant new churches and grow disciples? We can usually assume that only one out of five existing Protestant churches will be willing to be trained by T-Net. The rest of the needed disciplemaking churches must be planted! The number of churches Sri Lanka can expect to revitalize through T-Net training. Based on the 7,500 Protestant evangelical churches, 7,500, we will have 1,500 churches willing to be revitalized.

What is the total number of church plants that will become disciplemaking churches needed to finish the Great Commission? To calculate this, we subtract the number of *revitalized* churches (1,500) we will likely gain through T-Net training centers and subtract the number of disciplemaking churches of 100 needed in the country (20,359) and we have 18,859. These church plants will likely be house churches, or a network of house churches, that will be much smaller than a church with an attendance of

100. It is recommended we plan on planting churches of 50 persons. Therefore, to gain a more realistic idea of the total number of churches, we will need to plant through outreach small groups, and double the number of church plants which will give the target of 37,718 (number of church plants of 50 persons needed).

Starting New S-curves: Vision for the Next Three Years

The secret to continued growth in church or an organization is to start a new S-curve (sigmoid curve) before the original S-curve reaches maturity and begins to make its way downward. There is momentum on the growth side of the S-curve that will help leaders create positive change and launching new S-curves. However, there is inertia on the decline side of the S-curve that will pull an organization down and make it extremely difficult to start a new S-curve. It is therefore important to start the new S-curve before an organization reaches the point of decline, because there will not be enough resources, time, energy, and enthusiasm to maintain the current organization, and launch the new initiative. As an organization is moving toward maturity and maximum efficiency, leaders must be developing the new S-curve and launching it.

It takes strategic planning to launch the new S-curve initiatives, while at the same time managing the current status. As in all life-cycles, growth is inevitably followed by decline. To avoid organizational decline requires starting new S-curves. However, these new initiatives and surge must be launched effectively and thoughtfully. As Aubrey Malphurs states, “It is imperative that strategic planning is at the heart of starting new S-curves” (Malphurs 15).

The Sri Lankan T-Net Generation One trainers and the board has in mind for 2020, to target new S-curves in North and East Sri Lanka. The North is primarily Tamil-

speaking, and they hope to raise a Tamil-speaking T-Net coordinator for this province. In the Year 2020, they aim to start 20 centers with 500 pastors. In the Year 2021, they hope to start another 30 centers with 750 pastors. In the Year 2022, the Generation One pastors plan to start two new S-curves in the North and East provinces for 50 pastors.

CHAPTER 8

IMPLEMENTATION DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

Genesis of T-Net in Covenant Presbyterian Church

Covenant Presbyterian Church launched the Sri Lankan outreach ministry in 1999, in partnership with Asia Evangelistic Fellowship, an indigenous ministry pioneered by a local evangelist Dr. G. D. James. It was a ground breaking outreach ministry that originally targeted Tamil-speaking rubber plantation workers in Malaya. Later it developed into a multi-pronged outreach to migrant workers from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. After a couple of years of reaching out to Sri Lankan migrant workers, and seeing fruit, there was a question of church membership after their baptism. Is there a church that can provide the pastoral aspect and ministry support in the area of finance and facilities? It was then decided that Covenant Presbyterian Church would take in this ministry and bring the Sri Lankan pastor under our supervision and administration. We adopted this ministry as ours and from then on, many more initiatives were launched.

Every year, missions teams were sent to different regions of Sri Lanka ministering to churches. After the Sri Lankans completed their work contracts in Singapore, there was a growing number of Sri Lankan returnees, who are now Christians, going back to their Buddhist families and homes. Some of them faced severe persecutions and were thrown out of their homes and houses, which they had built with money they had been sending back from their years of working in Singapore. With this new challenge, the church linked up with Pastor Sudarman, who became the pastor-at-large tasked to provide pastoral oversight for these new believers. He helped to connect them with local pastors in Sri Lanka, and also to find suitable churches in their locality. Some returnees

were helped financially to start small businesses, to enable them to resettle in their homeland. Over the years, some of them ended up serving God as pastors and ministry workers.

As the Sri Lankan ministry in Singapore continued to grow, Pastor Sunil (our first Sri Lankan pastor) shared this "dream" of training pastors in Sri Lanka to be effective in growing and multiplying their churches. This was before we heard of the T-Net Tier 1 training. Unfortunately, Pastor Sunil passed away in 2011 after struggling with a brain tumor. But the "dream" of training Sri Lankan pastors did not die. In fact, the burden increased when T-Net Tier 1 was introduced, with the excitement of bringing it to Sri Lanka. Therefore, in 2013, T-Net started in Colombo with a group of thirty-five pastors and leaders.

The Process of Launching Tier 1 and 2 Training

In 2013, together with Andrew, the first generation T-Net pastors were trained in Tier 1 courses one and two. Instead of following the standard week for one course, they had to split each course into half because of the time taken for translation. The courses involved lectures, breakout discussion groups, labs where we applied what we had been learning, and preparation to preach if called upon at the start of one of the five days of training. According to the original schedule of the standard week, Generation One was supposed to be formed into teams to launch their training centers after Course 5. This was delayed because of the slow application and buy-in of the pastors. But they were already told to start recruiting ten to fifteen pastors within their network to join their future training centers. It was near the end of Course 9 before the three teams began forming and strategizing their Generation Two centers.

Simultaneously, we launched the new Tier 2 Core Modules with MIN510 Reporting and Data Management for Ministry Multiplication. They were only required to pay for the printing of MIN510 and were given the core module workbook to study. They were also required to complete all assignments before meeting as a cohort. The idea and push behind Tier 2 modules and training was to equip them to be managers of new centers, which increased as they progressed to Generation Three. In Tier 1, they were only trained to be trainers of church planters. But now in Tier 2, they were taking care of many more centers. MIN511 helped them to write a personal life plan so that they could better balance their personal life, local pastoral ministry, and expanding T-Net training center ministry. At this stage, they would each have a peer coaching partner, with whom they would meet monthly for thirty-six months for support and accountability. At the same time, they would also be receiving full academic credit for MIN771 Teaching Practicum at full scholarship because it was akin to a teaching fellowship for their position as a Tier 2 trainer.

Three of the Tier 2 core modules on mentoring leaders, communication and conflict resolution, and leadership development were covered. A second teaching practicum and a ministry practicum would also be launched and be tuition-free and classroom-free as they support their students in launching their training centers. In year four, twenty-two pastors graduated from the Tier 1 Training Center with an MA. As a graduate of Tier 1, they can now officially apply for the Tier 2 degree program to pursue the Doctor of Ministry degree. We will be seeing the graduation of our second generation Tier 1 class and the launch of our fourth generation.

Pastor Sudarman who is the Minister of Communication is a major contributor and key driver to the success of the Sri Lankan center. He is a well-connected leader of pastors. He has worked with Cru (previously known as Campus Crusade) for many years, traveling throughout Sri Lanka from village to village showing the *Jesus* movie. Churches were planted out of this ministry. He has held weekly pastors' prayer meetings regularly in different locations. He also brings groups of pastors to South Korea each year to learn about prayer. This is sponsored by a Korean church. This has helped Pastor Sudarman build strong relationships with churches in Sri Lanka.

The Training Personnel

We have built a good team of trainers that is comprised of experienced pastors and theological educators. The majority of the trainers have been through the Pathway of Disciplemaking in our church in 2007. As such, they are familiar with key concepts of church revitalization. The main difference between this and the international curriculum is the church planting dimension. Andrew Tay, who is the President of Intentional Disciplemaking Network in Singapore, was in the first generation of T-Net churches in Singapore, trained by Bob Gilliam. Andrew was the trainer for Sri Lanka Generation One center, Course 1 and 2. Pastor Bandara, who was then the Sri Lankan pastor ministering to the migrant workers in Singapore, was also a trainer. He was taken through the T-Net material weeks before the training since he was not familiar with it. He had many years of ministry in Sri Lanka, both in evangelism and teaching. Rev Dr. Alan Pang was the first missionary to be sent from my church to Nepal in the 1970s. He retired after teaching in a missionary training center for many years. His wealth of knowledge and experience added value to the teaching of the Generation One center. Another trainer is

Rev Abel Lee, who is the Chinese ministry pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Two of my elders, Joan Chua and Edward Kong, have also joined the team regularly to teach and train.

Resources for Training

In terms of location and facilities, the first place was a Catholic retreat center that was quite spartan. Both the accommodation and food were unacceptable to the local pastors. On top of that it was too near the city and is less than ideal because the pastors found every opportunity to return home or to run errands, and this became very disruptive, with some turning up late and missing classes. There was little time for bonding and fellowship. It was then decided that we should find another place where it is necessary for the pastors to stay-in rather than commute daily. The second place, at Negombo, was further away from Colombo, and was an ideal beach resort, with better accommodation and excellent food cooked by a hotel chef. The host Maurice was a great manager and was able to meet the needs of the trainers and pastors. With this better venue, there was better time management, and the nights were used for mentoring, updating, and fellowship.

We had a good team of trainers from Singapore that help to share in the teaching and coaching schedules. They were both Pastors and Elders who have a heart for missions. But there is a consistent core team of trainers of 2-3 Pastors and Elders. This provides the much accountability, consistency and continuity in mentoring and building rapport. When it comes to translation, we had a couple of good translators among the Sri Lankan pastors who have worked overseas and have a good command of English. While T-Net encourages the first batch of students to be English-speaking, there is also benefits

in translation, as they learn to grasp new concepts in a different language. The time taken to slow down and explain more deeply helped in the understanding process.

The ongoing “evolution” of the training material was a challenge at times, as translation of the material would have already gone ahead a few months before the training. This resulted in wasted time and money.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Looking Back

It has been two years since the Sri Lankan Generation One pastors have completed their Tier 1 training, and they have gone on to start Generation Two and Three centers. Of the thirty-five pastors that started Course One in 2013, twenty-two graduated and are continuing with the Tier 2 core modules today (2019). This has given me time and distance to evaluate the successes and failures of the launch and the ongoing status of T-Net in Sri Lanka. There is much to thank God for, and much we can learn from the Generation One center.

Success Factors

There were a variety of factors that have contributed to the success of the Generation One center in Sri Lanka, and they can be categorized broadly in these areas: relationship, leadership, support, application, and commitment.

Relationship: A Growing Relationship With Sri Lanka.

One important foundational factor in the successful launch of Generation One T-Net in Sri Lanka, is the years of relationship building with Sri Lankans migrant workers and pastors in Sri Lanka. After years of outreach, prayer, and intercession for the Sri Lankan migrant workers in Singapore, we have a sizeable group of new believers. Many of these have since returned to their home country and assimilated into the local churches. Our rapport with many Sri Lankan pastors has been developed over the years, and especially with Pastor Sudarman who was taking care of these returnees. He was the

ideal person to be our Minister of Communication (MOC) for the Generation One center. It was also a unanimous decision to appoint Pastor Sudarman to be the country leader.

Leadership: Choice of Minister of Communication.

The choice of Pastor Sudarman as the Minister of Communication played a vital role in keeping the Generation One center on track due to his deep relationship with pastors throughout Sri Lanka. His national recognition and reputation as a Christian leader have been developed and tested through his twenty years with Campus Crusade as the *Jesus* film director. His extensive travels to many villages and cities have given him a wide network of pastors and leaders, with whom he works. He is well respected for his character of integrity and trustworthiness. He has never asked for financial compensation all these years. There was great support to appoint him as the country leader to carry the work forward in Sri Lanka.

The role of Senior Pastors in Effective Implementation.

Eighty percent of the pastors in Generation One center are senior pastors. This has made the implementation of the T-Net assignments more effective and productive. Rallying the whole church behind the launch of Basic Accountability Groups (BAG) models and small groups is easier when the senior pastor gives the call and challenge.

The Full Support, Ownership, and Sponsorship by Covenant Presbyterian Church.

When the proposal to launch T-Net in Sri Lanka was first presented to my leadership, there was no budget because we had no idea what the total cost would be. It was later decided that we would bear the full cost of translating course materials, lodging at the retreat center, love gifts for MOC and translators, and transport and airfares for the trainers. All of these would cost the church close to S$12,000 each year for the next three

to four years. There was an initial resistance from my missions' chairman, but somehow, the unanimous decision was to proceed with this commitment. With this total funding from the church, we were able to focus our time and energy on getting the training on track and not be distracted with the need to raise funds. The church subsidized their degree program by paying for their registration fees as a reward, motivation, and encouragement to the pastors to persevere in their work and assignments.

Prayer Covering and Support.

The ownership of the anchor church (Covenant Presbyterian Church), the regular updates on the progress of the training, and the ongoing visits of missions teams to these T-Net churches have helped to increase prayer covering for these churches. Prayer and fasting played a big part in the perseverance and breakthroughs of Generation One pastors. The pastors and their churches are fervent in their prayers for the success of the T-Net training. The practice of trainers setting aside a week of prayer and fasting before the training starts is a vital key in the whole process. One of the Tier 2 core modules included a session on "spiritual mapping," that served as a good reminder of the need to integrate discerning and warfare prayer for the country as we launch any training. It will enhance the training immensely if this session can be taught much earlier in Tier 1 Course One. We need to gather intercessors to join us in concerted prayer, to change the spiritual climate that opposes the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God. Paul says in no uncertain term of the need for spiritual warfare, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:10). What is unseen in the realm of spiritual warfare is more real than what is seen in the day-to-day training.

Tangible and Value-added Support for Pastors in Need.

The Pastors' Need Fund was set up through the generous gifts from the Singapore church to help those in dire situations needing financial aid. Some had no place of worship, no water and electricity, were unable to pay school fees for their children, required emergency medical treatment, or struggled with the loss of loved ones through sickness. The fund also provided sponsorship of course fees, and subsidies to register for the US degree program.

The Value of Mentoring.

Andrew Tay helped launch the Generation One center in Sri Lanka and he stayed in the center for two courses. He was an important mentor that started the center on the right footing. When Tier 2 was launched, Andrew was also there to make sure that we got it right. The vital role of a mentor in the launch of a new center is crucial to the success of the center. Years of pastoral ministry experience has reinforced this truth.

Amid a crisis in the church in 1995-6, there was a very difficult situation for the author who even contemplated "throwing in the towel." It was a long-drawn battle with church elders and some members over the "charismatic issue." At this critical point of his life, he wrote to his mentor in Regent College, Eugene Peterson (the only Presbyterian faculty member), to ask for advice and direction. He would be the best person to understand my dilemma of working within the Presbyterian church polity.

The author was looking for reasons, excuses, support, and affirmation to resign from his church. The battle was intense, and he wanted to bail out. He grappled over the question of rightness of signing. This is the only church he has known all his Christian life since 1974 and it was tough to know what to do. Peterson's reply was what he needed

to help him move forward. It was advice that helped him see the larger picture and appreciate the dynamics of his leadership situation. To cut a long story short, it helped him to persevere and soldier on in the same church rather than just quit. It helped him to continue working with his leaders through controversial issues. Looking back, it was a tough but right decision. It helped to have a mentor with a different perspective to "discern rightly" the crisis and choose to stay rather than bail out. The easier thing was to quit, but through the sound godly advice of the mentor, he persevered, and the Lord has seen him emerge stronger and more resilient.

Mentoring, in its various forms and approaches, has been a big part of growth as a Christian and servant for Christ. From the Gospels, we find three examples of this mentoring relationship. First, we see it in Christ's relationship with his Father. We see this also in the life of Christ as He nurtured the disciples in various settings, through different stages of their journey. Lastly, we see Paul exemplifying a similar approach as he traveled around planting churches.

One of the dimensions of Christ's life that is seldom mentioned, is the way he was mentored by his Father. In Luke's Gospel, we often see Christ withdrawing to quiet and solitary places to be in prayer. His times alone with God are sprinkled throughout the Gospel. We wonder what happened during such times. We are given a glimpse in Matthew 16 when Christ was up in the mountain, and he received the affirmation of the Father. This is a repeat of what Christ received at his baptism. In his priestly prayer in John 17, we gain further insights into the kind of mentoring relationship Christ had with his Father. It reveals a relationship of intimacy, reliance, and empowering. Christ

accomplished the task given to Him (Coach), he was accountable to the Father (Spiritual Guide), and He fulfilled His mission of imparting of knowledge (Teacher).

Christ's mentoring of the twelve disciples has been well documented throughout the Gospels. Again, in his priestly prayer in John 17, the mentoring relationship Christ had with the disciples are spelled out as the one who taught them and imparted knowledge to them (Teacher), who worked & prayed for their protection (Sponsor), who sent them into the world with a specific task (Coach) and corrected and advised them during those teachable moments (Counselor). Peter is a prime example of one who had an intense mentoring relationship with Christ. Peter was discouraged and disillusioned after the crisis of his infamous thrice denial of Christ. At the lowest point of his life, when Peter was about to give up and return to his old life, Christ appeared to reassure and restore his faith.

Paul had such a clear sense of the importance of mentoring that he devoted his time and resources to raise up teams of leaders to carry on his work before moving on. Paul stated his modus operandi very clearly in Titus 1:5, "This is why I left you in Crete so that you might put what remained into order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you." His way of mentoring Timothy, of passing on to faithful men what he has taught them, is replicated throughout his missions trips. In the end, Paul could confidently say he has finished preaching the gospel in all the regions he was entrusted with.
From this brief overview of Christ and his examples of personal mentoring from the Father, his nurturing of others, and the way Paul went about finishing the Great Commission through mentoring, we need to recover and recapture this same process to see the Great Commission finished. It is something that we all need in our growth and in

helping others grow. It is eminently doable, and multiplied no matter who we are, or in whatever situation or work environment we are in. The command that Christ gave to make disciples, comes with His empowering presence, “Lo I am with you till the end of the age.”

The Value of Reward.

The principle of the reward system has great benefits for the Generation One pastors because the Sri Lankan culture places a high premium on importance of credentials. When a pastor has a recognized academic degree, especially from overseas, it carries some weight. The T-Net degree program was announced and rolled out only after we launched Generation One and were already into Course 3 and 4. In fact we started the center with Tier 1 Version 5 and midway there was a transition to Version 6. This sudden and unexpected development was enthusiastically welcomed by the pastors. Given as a reward for all the hard work that these pastors were already pouring into multiplying centers and churches, it deeply appreciated. At the same it helped them to be more diligent in getting their reading and assignments done on time. While the degree program is a great enhancement, it comes with certain challenges as well. A big challenge for these pastors is the financial burden that comes with the cost of the degree program . in deciding on the cost, we had to keep it as low as possible. To further help and enable the Generation One pastors to benefit from this degree program, we offered scholarship in the form of financial support for their registration fees. This was covered by the Singapore sponsoring church. After the graduation in Sri Lanka, there was a request to have something similar in Singapore. It was mutually agreed that this visit will reap wonderful benefits for both the Sri Lankan pastors and the Singapore church leaders and

members. It's an excellent opportunity for us to reward the pastors and their families and for the church to connect with them. One interesting and rewarding outcome of the degree program is the case of our bi-vocational Pastor Sanjay who works in the bank. His Bank employers and board were so impressed with his 4 years of hard work to achieve his master's degree, that they promoted him to a higher managerial role in his bank. Indeed, our God is a great and wonderful Rewarder.

Calibrated Application.

While the T-Net processes and courses have strict regulations, it was also important for successful application in the local context of Sri Lanka to have flexibility, responsiveness, and openness to reasonable modifications.

Gracious Flexibility.

Grace in the flexible implementation and enforcing of rules have gone a long way in making T-Net succeed in Sri Lanka. In the beginning, there were many violations of T-Net rules. This includes attendance, assignments, and paying of fees. It seems like it is inherent in their culture to be hold rules lightly and not keep promises. The Minister of Communication exercised a great deal of patience and grace in enforcing the rules. At the same, he maintained an accurate record of their attendance, assignments, and commitments. There were certainly a few "late-bloomers", who came onboard fully only after many courses. The trainers just do not have the heart to dismiss them. In the end, even the late-comers and bloomers went on to start and train other centers. If not for the grace and flexibility of Bob Gilliam, the center would have been shut down after Course 3. Outstanding, unpaid fees were waived by Bob when he was told about it so that the

ongoing work of Generation Two canters could carry on. At same time, he worked out a reasonable business plan and held the key leaders to it.

Adjusting Curriculum to Denominational Distinctives of Participating Churches.

Each church comes with its unique history, denominational beliefs and practices and it is important to respect and accept these so-called "non-essentials" of Christian doctrines. For the more charismatic churches, signs and wonders are part and parcel of their church beliefs and practices. In fact, some of them see this as essential for effective evangelism where power encounters of healing and deliverance are common. In the history of missions, it has been shown that the Assembly of God and Pentecostal churches have seen remarkable breakthroughs and successes in missions and church planting (Pommerville). It will be helpful to revise the curriculum to make it more inclusive and tone down the exclusive emphasis of one particular denomination.

Committed to a Stay-in Residential Program.

The Generation One pastors have a lot of commitments as senior pastors, plus other distractions that can be a big challenge. Choosing a venue that is further away from the city and their homes was a good choice. Staying-in throughout the five days of training has brought immense benefits. It has given them time to slow down and put aside their concerns and busyness. It was like a little "sabbatical" that provided them with the space for much needed rest and reflection. It gave them time to catch up with their reading and assignments. The ample space, free time, and conducive ambience of the beach resort gave them solitude and silence. Staying together also deepened their bonds of fellowship and friendship. This band of brothers have grown closer over the last four years. They are there for one another through good times and hard times. They supported

the poorer brothers with financial aid and prayerful covering. The perseverance of the Generation One pastors, despite setbacks and delays, has reaped great blessings and fruits.

Committed to Apply the Training in Their Churches.

When asked what is one of the reasons for the success of the Generation One center, Pastor Sudarman, our newly appointed country leader knew the answer. He said, "Because the pastors took the training positively and very seriously. They were very serious about finishing the Great Commission. Our 1G and 2G pastors were able to take this training into their churches and started practicing the principles. This has brought about good results in their ministry. Many of them were able to plant new churches in places where there is no church. Seeing such growth is a new and exciting experience for them and their ministry."

Committed to a Sustainable and Workable Business Plan.

With the help of Bob Gilliam, we worked out a plan that will keep the ministry of multiplication in Sri Lanka moving forward. Based on realistic estimation and calculation, each participant will contribute Sri Lankan Rupees 1,000 for each course (see Appendix D).

Visionary Sri Lankan T-Net Board.

The setting up of the Country Board that comprises of some Generation One pastors and faithful church lay leaders has given greater credibility and accountability to the T-Net Country team. They have developed clear vision for the expansion and growth of the ministry for the next 3 years (see Appendix H), But due to the COVID-19

pandemic, the expansion has been delayed. Nevertheless, it shows the zeal and passion of the Country Board and leader is charting the future growth.

Challenges and Failures

Inability to Start With English-speaking Pastors for Generation One.

T-Net has a clear policy on starting a new center with English-speaking pastors and leaders. In terms of effective teaching, in a shorter amount of time, reproducing the higher quality of Generation One trainers, there is a good rationale for this requirement. Most of the English-speaking pastors and leaders will be found mainly in the city of Colombo. Most of the pastors from the rural and remote districts and villages do not speak English. On further reflection, the need for translation may, in fact, enhance the learning and deeper assimilation of the material. Rather than rushing through the materials in a shorter time, they have the advantage of an extended application period. Some of them have picked up more English along the way.

Lacking Diligent Enforcement of Business Plan and Collection of Fees.

This has been an ongoing struggle in the Sri Lankan center. For both legitimate as well not so legitimate reasons, there is a weak adherence to the demand to pay before they are allowed to receive the manual and participate in the training. Perhaps it is the leaning towards grace and magnanimity that has resulted in this state of affairs. Pampering has led to ineffective enforcement of the business plan.

Delay in Translating into the Tamil Language.

There were many delays in the translation of the material into Tamil. One reason was the inability to find a trustworthy and competent translator. There was also the

challenge of cost. Having to translate the material into two languages was and remains financially challenging for my church.

Religious Opposition and Persecutions.

There are organized "gangs" of radical Buddhist devotees that target Christian churches by using violent means of intimidation, assaults, and even burning of churches. A number of the Generation One pastors have experienced first-hand the fury and hatred of these violent gangs, beaten, and chased out of their properties or surrounded and trapped within the church compound. The churches are also targeted by Muslim extremists. The recent bombings in April 2019, affected many Christians and churches, causing the shutdown of worship services. It has also delayed the start of a new S-curve in the Northeast for predominantly Tamil-speaking Sri Lankans in August 2018. At the same time, this may help churches to be decentralized and gather in homes, which will facilitate the organic growth of disciplemaking movements. There are politicians still lobbying to legislate stricter laws against proselytization. So far, they have not been able to pass the law. But radical groups are taking things into their own hands to punish converts and persecute Christians. One of our Generation One pastors who has a ministry to drug addicts, was given a big plot of land to cultivate profitable crops so that the ministry can be self-sustaining. But just a few months ago, he and his family were viciously attacked and chased out of that land.

The Workability of the Business Plan in a South Asian Context.

After many rounds of hopeful trials in enforcing the business plan, we are still not seeing much good results. Has it got to do with the innate culture and mindset of the South Asians that has grown up with a "hand-out" mentality? Has the Singapore

sponsoring church “spoilt” them with too many donations and scholarships? We need to find a workable alternative that will sustain the work. We have seen effective implementation and outcome of the churches’ lesson on stewardship, as seen in Generation One Maranatha Church (see Appendix 3, page 98). Based on their increased collection, can we request these churches to set aside a small percentage towards T-Net ministry in Sri Lanka. We can ask them to consider giving for one year and if they like to continue long-term. This way of inviting churches’ active ownership could be a more sustainable way forward, while we continue implementing the business plan.

Keeping Up with the Latest Improvement of Tools and Processes.

When T-Net started in Sri Lanka, the material and curriculum were still going through updating and revision. It was an important step forward in improving the content, the processes of accountability and the tools that will assist in the effective implementation and monitoring the progress of each student and center. One example of these new tools is the “Final Project Evaluation Rubric”. This is a great way for the student to keep track of his progress as well as stay on track for each chapter's requirement. It serves well as an-going self-check and assessment as well as the supervisor's close monitoring of the student’s progress. It can also motivate the student to strive towards the higher score by following closely the target. Another great tool is the “Analysis of Church Planting Movements”. This is a good addition to the requirement because of the diverse ways in which multiplication of disciples and churches have taken place in different countries and context. A student can then choose one that is closest to his target country and community. Would it be better to have the Theology of Church Planting come after the analysis of Church planting movements? The theological critique

of each movement can be clearly highlighted when the student has understood how each movement operates. The whole section on the "Ministry Project Overview Explanation" is a vast improvement from the earlier version, spelling out clearly what is required for different chapters and pages needed. The suggestion and placement of appendices at this point is a good idea and helpful step. The "Ministry Project Template" is another excellent way to monitor the gradual developmental stages of each report and the review with their cohort will add value and enhance the overall outcome. The students will benefit from the wider contribution and broader perspectives of other students. At the same time, constructive criticism will sharpen the cutting-edge applications. This template saves a lot of time for the student in locating the references. When teaching the criteria for finishing the Great Commission in Course 1, there seems to be insufficient scriptural backing for each of the criteria. Are we asking students to find their own scriptural support?

Limitations to the Findings of this Ministry Project

The process of writing this dissertation is a great help in the ongoing launch of T-Net Generation One center in Pakistan. It has re-affirmed some of the general principles that would be a helpful guide in setting up another new center. But at the same time, there are obvious limitations due to the differences in the country's culture, religion, language, and social behaviors. In both countries, there is serious opposition to the proclamation of the gospel and there are severe consequences to any form of proselytization. Preaching the gospel of Christ to Muslims, compared to Buddhists, is vastly different, and requires a deeper understanding of their worldviews and perception of Christ and the gospel.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is the need to be audacious and courageous in pursuing open doors. The repeated challenge that I have faced is the need to persevere in the initial launch of any new center. The door has to be knocked persistently before we finally have the opening of a substantial size and number of interested students and pastors. This calls for many rounds of introductory meetings with many groups of leaders and pastors. Those who showed initial interest may not be the ones that continue in the training. The snail made it to the Ark through perseverance.

A careful and patient search for the Minister of Communication (MOC) is crucial. This key person plays a vital role in the success or failure of the center. Sometimes we need to courage to change the MOC when necessary, even if it raffles some feathers and stir up unhappiness.

The willingness to invest more time and resources so as to enable students to learn more comprehensively and apply deeply means spreading the training material and contents over a long period of time. The temptation is to rush and hurry through the teachings and squeeze in more lessons in order to speed up the process. Often this may turn out counter-productive. “He who hurries, delays the things of God.

Further Study

One recurring challenge and question that some trainers struggle with is the achievability of the saturation goals. How realistic is it for the church growth to be as high as the population growth? In a country that is predominantly Buddhist or Muslim, is it conceivable to expect whole communities to become Christian? There is a need to re-

examine the feasibility of these criteria that T-Net has set as benchmarks of having finished the Great Commission.

There is also a need for more strategic outreach tools and resources for different targeted groups of unreached peoples. The different religious and cultural roots of each country require thoughtful, well tested and well-tried evangelistic methodologies. Such tools are available and need to be harnessed and brought together in a manual that can easily be taught and transferred to new believers.

The phenomenon of the disciplemaking movements that encourages organic church growth need more research and understanding in how it can be applied in different settings and cultures. Does it work better in some situations where its rural compared to urban? Will it work in highly developed and hectic societies where the demands for higher quality and wide range of church "services" is greater compared to a slower paced, simpler culture and environment.

Another area that merits further in-depth study is the way the Sri Lankan government organizes their grassroots community and activities. Pastor Sudarman, the Sri Lankan T-Net country leader, highlighted that communities are grouped administratively around 2000 people for greater efficiency of management and planning. While they are not from the same village, they are gathered from most part of the country and they provide transport and food and even promise of employment to attend these political meetings primarily during elections seasons. The 2000 people have more one leader. There is a hierarchy from the ground level which includes a leader for a village. The participants from a single village are less than even 5%. Hence, gathering 2000 may be a labor of more than 100 ground level leaders and through personal networking and

persuasion. But besides political meetings and elections, they are gathered also for musical events through mass advertising via FM channels and TV channels.

What can we learn from this administrative organization that can be used T-Net church planting? For a start, the use of the social media has to be taken seriously. We need talented and creative people with such skills and expertise to leverage on this platform. Good and attractive music is a great tool that can be used more extensively. The genius of targeting 2000 people from different villages, can be examined carefully and apply to training church planters. How can we strategically select key people and leaders from different villages who will play a vital role in their sphere of influence.

APPENDIX A:

SRI LANKA GENERATION ONE PASTORS AND TRAINERS

Started Generation1 in May 2013 in Colombo, Sri Lanka
Participants: 35 from 18 churches

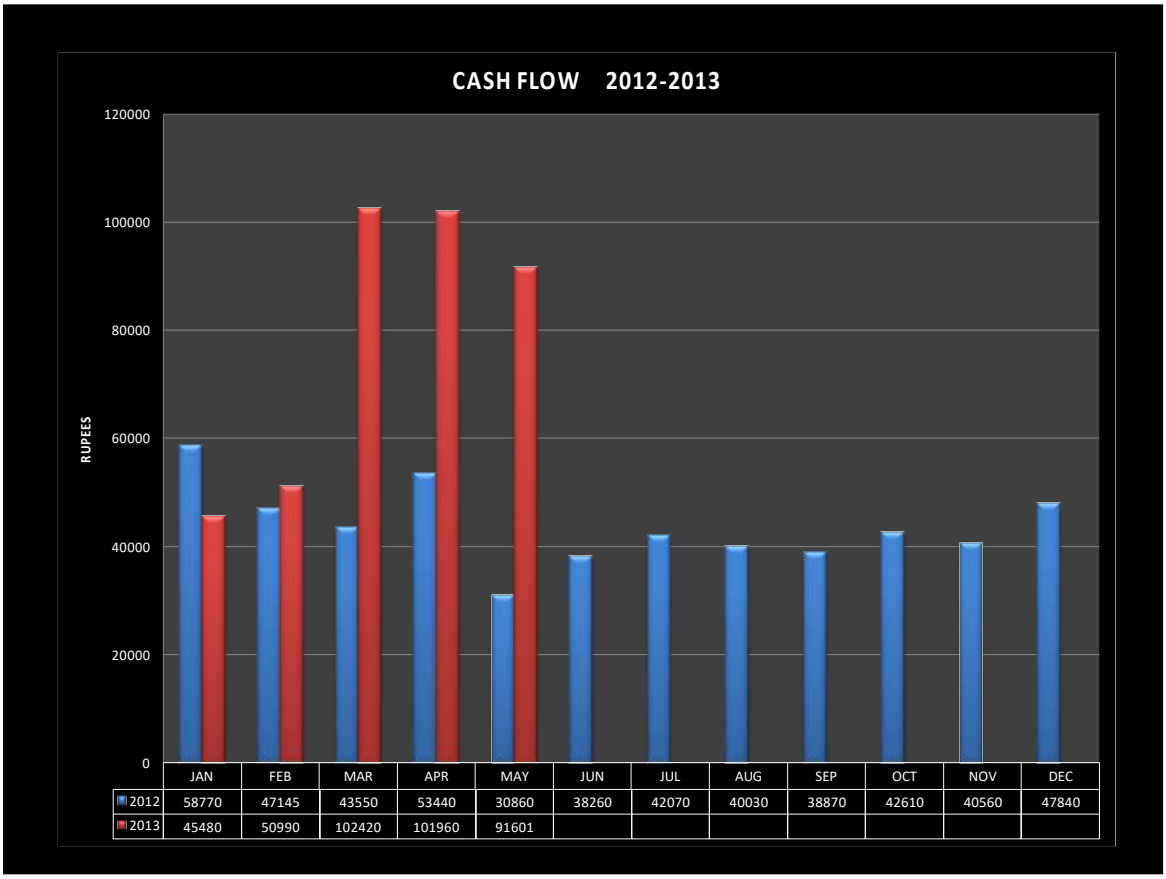
APPENDIX B:

TWENTY-ONE PASTORS GRADUATED

21 graduands. BA (1) and MA (20) in Ministry

APPENDIX C:

MARANATHA CASHFLOW AND INCREASED GIVING



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2012	58770	47145	43550	53440	30860	38260	42070	40030	38870	42610	40560	47840
2013	45480	50990	102420	101960	91601							

APPENDIX D:

SRI LANKA T-NET BUSINESS PLAN

					For Sri Lanka									
				Do not change any cell that is highlighted in gray!!!										
		Sri lanka Plan.17.7.17		Annual		Annual			Annual		Annual	Annual		
		effective 1.1.2018		LKR		USD			LKR		LKR	USD	All below is to be negotiated	
Annual Fixed Costs:				946,400		$7,280		Salary	561,600			$4,320		
Manual Costs:		(print/ship/$ transfer)		600		$5		Benefits	0			$0		
Student # by Type:		# Diploma students		100						Pension	0	$0	this is 10% of salary	
		# BA students		200						Soc Sec	0	$0	This is 5% of salary	
		# MA students		100						Housing	0	$0	this is 10% of salary	
		# Dmin students		0						Insur	0	$0	this is a quess-timate	
		# appl. Fees		132				Min exp.	384,800			$2,960		
		# of courses/year		3						eqpt	26,000	$200	This is 1/3 of first computer cost	
Course Fees:		fee for Tnet Diplimo stu.		1000		$8				Internet	62,400	$480	This is $40/mo	
		fee for BA degree stu		1500		$12				travel	234,000	$1,800	This is $150/mo	
		fee for MA degree stu		2000		$15				telephone	62,400	$480	This is $40/mo	
		Fee for D.Min stu (start at 600 Level)		2,500		$19								
		Fee for application		600		$5			One-time equipment expense of $1000					
***Income from Course Fees:**				1,879,200		$14,455			One-time business capital need of $500 1st year and additional $500 2nd yr.					
									MOC monthly expense approx $50 starting at meeting one					
									Part/time monthly salary is $150 + $100 per month starting at meeting 4					
									Full/time monthly salary is $360 + 250 per month starting at meeting 8					
Expenses:	(#stu*var cost/stu*#courses/yr)			720,000		$5,538								
Annual Fixed Costs:				946,400		$7,280								
Annual Profit/(Loss):				212,800		$1,637								
		Exchange rate = 1 USD/156 LKR						GDP per capita $6800 (2014)						
		Avg hh income/mo = $360 USD		Country comparison to world = 145 out of 229				Population in 2014 = 21,866,445					projected budget for July 2018	
		6800*.26 *12*1.3 =	$27,581	3,585,504		actual pay is	$4,320	plus Min expenses of	$2,960					
		***Income Explained:**												
		(#Diploma stu *#courses/yr * fee for cert courses)-+												
		(#BA stud *#courses/yr * fee for deg courses)+												
		(#MA stud *#courses/yr * fee for deg courses)+												
		(#Dmin stud *#courses/yr * fee for deg courses)+												
		(total # appl fees * application fee)												

APPENDIX E:

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF SRI LANKA

Data Topics	Data	Year/Source
Population	22 million	2012
Ethnic Groups and Percentages (list the top 5 by percent of the population)		2012
1 Sinhalese	Percent of population: 74.9%	
2 Sri Lankan Tamil	Percent of population: 11.2%	
3 Sri Lankan Moors	Percent of population: 9.2%	
4 Indian Tamil	Percent of population: 4.2%	
5 Others	Percent of population: 0.5%	
Languages and Percentages (list the top 5 by percent of the population)		2012
1 Sinhalese	Percent of population: 87%	
2 Tamil	Percent of population: 28.5%	
3 English	Percent of population: 23.8%	
Religions and Percentages (list the top 4 by percent of the population)		2012
1 Buddhist (official)	Percent of population: 70.2%	
2 Hindu	Percent of population: 12.6%	
3 Muslim	Percent of population: 9.7%	
4 Roman Catholic	Percent of population: 6.1%	
5 Christian	Percent of population: 1.3%	
Other Religions/Percentage: 0.05%		
Age of Population by Percentage of Total		2018
0-14 years	Percent of population: 23.75%	
15-24 years	Percent of population: 14.6%	
25-54 years	Percent of population: 41.46%	
55-64 years	Percent of population: 10.22%	
65 years and over	Percent of population: 9.98%	
Urbanization	Percent of total population: 18.5%	2018
Literacy	Percent of population age 15 and over who can read and write: 92.6%	2015
Literacy:	Percentage literate population: 91.90%	2017
Inflation rate in the last 1-3 years	6.5%	2019
GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita	GDP Growth 4.5% (2016); 3.4% (2017); 3.2% (2018); 2.7% (2019); $41,029	2018
Refugees and internally displaced persons: war widows 42,000 (civil war; more than half displaced before 2008; many of the more than 480,000 IDPs registered as returnees have not reached durable solutions)		2017

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Sri_Lanka)

APPENDIX F

FINISHING THE GREAT COMMISSION IN YOUR REGION

What it will take to finish the Great Commission in Sri Lanka:

1. Country Population—What is your total country population? 20,359,439.
2. Number of regions.
    a. Number of districts in my country: 25 districts (9 provinces)
    b. Number of districts with a 1G training center: 1; Colombo (National)
    c. Number of districts needing a 1G training center: 2 districts (North and East)
3. Total number of disciplemaking churches needed—We will need two disciplemaking churches (not just any church) with 50 attendees or one disciplemaking church of 100 people for every 1,000 persons in your country.
    a. Population 20,359,439 divided by 1,000 = 20,359 churches of 100.
    b. Multiply 20,359 churches of 100 by 2 = 40,718 churches of 50 attendees.
4. Total number of neighborhoods—Our strategy states that for planning purposes, we may assume that every 500 to 1,000 people in the area is equal to one neighborhood. Based on a neighborhood of 1,000 people and a population of 20,359,439 there are 20,359 neighborhoods.
5. Total number of revitalized churches—We can usually assume that only one out of five existing Protestant churches will be willing to be trained by T-Net. The rest of the needed disciplemaking churches must be planted! The number of churches Sri Lanka can expect to revitalize through T-Net training,

a. Take the total number of Protestant evangelical churches in your country and divide by five.

b. Total number of Protestant evangelical churches, 7,500 divided by 5 = 1,500.

6. Total number of church plants you will need—to calculate this, subtract the number of *revitalized* churches you will likely gain through T-Net training centers listed in number five above from the *total* number of disciplemaking churches of 100 listed in number 3(a).

   a. Total number of disciplemaking churches of 100 needed in the country (see 3i) is 20,359.

   b. Subtract the number of revitalized churches that will attend T-Net training (see 5b) is 1,500.

   c. Total number of church plants you will need (subtract b from a) is 18,859.

      - Total church plants of 100 needed (6c): 18,859.
      - Multiplied by 2 = 37,718 (number of church plants of 50 persons needed).

APPENDIX G: GOALS: THREE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Trainer/Team: Given Middle Sample Surname

Lai/Andrew Tay/Abel Lee/Joan Chua/ Edward Kong
Country / Adopted Area: Sri Lanka
Starting Date at CM-1: February 2013 Ending Date at CM-10: June 2017

Explanations	Present Level 2013	1-year Goals 2016	2-year Goals 2017	3-year Goals 2018
Strategic Objective 1: Great Commission Training Saturation: Equip and empower willing local pastors to create a multiplying, disciplemaking, church planting, and revitalization movement in your adopted area.				
Revitalize every willing church in your adopted area. Action Plan: Identify every local church in your area and recruit them to participate in a T-Net training center process. Mobilize T-Net students to recruit and train others also. 2013 February _____ current number of churches in adopted area.				
No. of churches in training centers	18	66	55	100
No. of training centers	1	16	8	20
No. of active trainers	4	22	21	130
No. of pastors in training centers	25	217	106	650
Strategic Objective 2 Church Saturation: Fill every neighborhood with disciplemaking churches.				
Plant new disciplemaking (DM) churches until each neighborhood of 1,000 has churches with at least 100 believers. Current number of identifiable neighborhoods or villages of 1,000 or fewer people in the adopted area: 20,359 neighborhoods.				
No. of new church plants (Outreach Discovery Bible Study)	-	46	260	1,300
Strategic Objective 3 Evangelism Saturation: Invite every person to receive Christ.				
Current population in adopted area: 2,304,833 (Gampaha district) Current number of believes in DM churches: around 3,000 in T-Net church				
No. of new converts added and attending DM churches	-	250	500	1,000
Strategic Objective 4 Disciplemaking Saturation: Nurture every willing believer (new convert and church member) in an ongoing disciplemaking process.				
No. of church leaders being apprenticed to lead DM small groups	-	80	160	320
No. of leading DM groups	-	40	80	160
No. of church members attending DM groups				
Strategic Objective 5 Great Commission Training Expansion: Take Project Zero to another region or country beyond your adopted area.				
No. of new S-curves beyond our adopted area where we have launched T-Net centers in cooperation with the country leader and board	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX H:

SRI LANKAN T-NET BOARD VISION

SL TNET Board Vision

Explanation of Goal	Present level	1 yr goal 2018	2 yr goal 2019	3 yr goal 2020
# of churches revitalized who are seeking to saturate locale	1000	600	1500	4000
# of DISCIPLE MAKING churches planted who are seeking to saturate locale	45	200	500	1500
# training centers and churches in training				
# Centers	15	50	150	300
# Churches	125	400	1200	3500
# and % of regions with T-Net centers	7	10	8	25
	36%	40%	24%	100%
# of graduate churches financially supporting T-Net	20	50	100	200
# of other countries where we have launched T-Net centers		Pakistan, Bangladesh Italy	Israel, Dubai, India	Kuwait, Qatar
# of Full-time T-Net staff in our country	1	1	2	4
# of languages translated	2	2		

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