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Master Builder Ministries

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[STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY AND MISSIONS]

This document is for the purpose of stating a strategy for ministry and missions, setting guidelines according to Scripture that can then be used to construct assessments and ministry goals for the further establishing of Master Builder Network of Ministries.

INTRODUCTION

This “*Strategy for Ministry and Missions*” document has been developed for the purpose of developing a strategic process and a standard in which present and future ministry can be evaluated. Guidelines have been articulated and assessments are constructed based on those guidelines.

The idea is that ministry leaders of churches should study, evaluate and affirm or further clarify the guidelines as to what conviction is held according to their best understanding of Scripture. In addition, implications should be spelled out as to what this means in light of being a Church ministering in the 21st Century.

From the strategy of ministry and missions, along with the guidelines stated, criteria for assessment must be created. These assessments can be used to measure or evaluate the church as to how it compares with this standard at this time. The assessments can also be used to evaluate individual leaders as they are being mentored through a process of discipleship and development as well.

From this point of evaluation, goals and objectives can be developed to see our churches strengthened, and further established. Ministry opportunities can also be evaluated as to how the Lord is leading us to impact and widen the kingdom of God through our ministry networking.

It is my hope that this document will facilitate discussion in our local church leadership and hopefully in the networking of churches that we are affiliated with. Place has been provided to insert notes or comments to further refine and or correct what has been articulated.

The value of this document will not be in sitting on a shelf, but in studying, discussing, evaluating, and developing a solid ministry and mission’s strategy with acceptable objectives and goals. This will give us a track to run on as we seek the Lord’s wisdom and guidance, to set in order what He has entrusted to us in our geographical spheres and beyond.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Bernier, Senior Pastor
Master Builder Ministries



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MASTER BUILDER MINISTRIES STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY AND MISSIONS

STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY AND MISSIONS

1. LABOR TO ESTABLISH THE LOCAL CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE KEY PRINCIPLES DISCOVERED IN ACTS, SUPPORTED BY THE EPISTLES.

- ***Become fully established as a church, setting in order what remains, so the church might stand firm with one spirit, with one mind striving together for the progress of the gospel*** (Phil. 1:1-7; 1:27-2:2; Titus 1:5).
 - i. **Establish each individual in his faith.** Encourage and admonish everyone to become complete in Christ. Firmly establish new believers and maturing children into the life of the community. Give special assistance to those who are unruly, fainthearted, or weak (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Thess. 2:1-12; 5:12-14).¹
 - ii. **Establish godly households.**
 1. **Husbands and Fathers:**
 - a. Encourage the men to assume responsibility for the management, provision, and care of their households, leading their households to function

¹ **Discipleship I** is our basic establishment path for all adults. It enters people into the process of becoming established in their faith through a combination of personal biblical study, Socratic discussion, and assessment (*Becoming Established Assessment*) done individually and by church leadership.

The goal of Discipleship I is to help each participant develop biblical convictions and begin living life based on principles about the gospel, individual and church family life, the mission of the church, and how to pursue wisdom for one's entire life.

The First Principles Series I is the biblical core of the **Discipleship I** program. These four six-session booklets cover the process of establishing believers in their faith in the context of the local church – a household of God. First Principles booklets include:

- *Becoming a Disciple*
- *Belonging to a Family of Families*
- *Participating in the Mission of the Church*
- *Cultivating Habits of the Heart*

effectively and harmoniously within the household of God (Eph. 5:15-6:10; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; 5:3-10).²

- b. Love their wives as Christ loves the church, honoring and cherishing them, that they might mature into the image of Christ, without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:19).
- c. Bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, being careful not to be too harsh or over corrective, causing them to become exasperated and lose heart (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:21).

2. Wives and Mothers:

- a. Assist their husbands by being devoted to them and the children, working hard to make their homes, under their husbands' leadership, a powerful witness to the beauty of the Word of God (Titus 2:3-5).
- b. Place themselves under the headship of their husbands, putting on gentle, non-challenging spirits, which is precious in the sight of God (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

² **Discipleship II** is part of our basic establishment path for all adults. It enters people into the process of becoming established in their faith through a combination of personal biblical study, Socratic discussion, and assessment (Becoming Established Assessment) done individually and by church leadership.

The goal of Discipleship II is to help each participant develop biblical convictions and begin living life based on principles about marriage, work, family/heritage, and how to handle the Word of God accurately.

The First Principles Series II & III are the biblical core of the **Discipleship II** program.

Series II turns participants' attention from the household of God – a local church – to individual households – the family. Series II booklets include:

- *Enjoying your Relationship*
- *Passing on Your Beliefs*
- *Envisioning Fruitful Life Work*
- *Building for Future Generations*

Series III moves from passages to entire New Testament books, helping develop a clear process for accurately interpreting these books. Series III booklets include:

- *Handling the Word with Confidence*
- *Unfolding the Great Commission*
- *Laying Solid Foundations in the Gospel*
- *Catching God's Vision for the Church*
- *Living in God's Household*

- c. Assist their husbands in bringing up the children, loving them, and caring for them (Eph. 6:1-4; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Thess. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; 1 Tim. 5:9-10, 14).

3. Children:

- a. Obey their parents, keeping their lives under the direction and control of their parents as they grow, as well as staying on the life course that their parents taught them from the Scriptures and set them on (Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).
 - b. Honor their parents, even to the extent of making some return to them as they are older, including completely providing for their widowed mothers if needed (Eph. 6:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:1-16).
- iii. **Establish a godly community of faith.** Encourage the leaders to assume responsibility for the management and care of the household, with each community member committed to do his or her part in building up the family – the local body of Christ, resulting in harmonious, loving relationships, living in community as an extended family, under the authority of the Word of God (1 Timothy, Titus, Eph. 2:11-4:16).³
- **Be an effective witness for Christ in our community.** Orient our households and the whole church toward effectively penetrating our community with the gospel. Use our households as a base for permeating the community (neighborhood, school, work, etc.) with the gospel. Faithfully pray for non-Christians in our community to come to Christ (Titus 2; Col. 4:2-6; 1 Tim. 5:9-10; Acts 9:36-10:44).
 - i. **Our home**-base witness must be genuine, over-flowing from lives that are deeply entwined in a loving, unified community, which provides a context for the people of the community to see an undistorted picture of Christ as they encounter His claims (Acts 2:42-47).

³ See Additional Church Guidelines:

- Ministers
- Men & Women
- Widows and Special Needs
- Handling Conflict
- Assembly Meetings and Worship
- Giving and Financial Matters
- Community Life and Ministry
- Relationship with the World

- **Become an “Antioch” church.** Becoming a base for penetrating communities and nations beyond with the gospel, responding to open doors of ministry, whether it is evangelizing new areas and planting churches or helping existing churches become further established (Acts 13:1-14:26; Phil. 1:2-8; 1 :27-2:2).
 - i. **We must cross traditional man-made boundaries** to reach the unbelieving world by shedding our own prejudices if we are going to be effective in building Christ’s church (Acts 10:1-11:18).

2. DEVELOP A PLAN TO TRAIN THOSE MEN WHO HAVE PROVEN TO BE FAITHFUL, PASSING ON THE DEPOSIT (SOUND LIFE AND SOUND DOCTRINE) THAT THEY MIGHT TEACH OTHERS ALSO.⁴

- **Paul entrusted the general oversight and shepherding of a local church to a group of men called elders.** These men are to manage the household of God with the same care that they manage their own households (Acts 20:17-28, cf. 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7).
 - i. They are to have mature character.
 - ii. They are to be able to teach and guard the believers as well as refute those who contradicted the Word.
 - iii. They need to desire to do the work, even to the extent of ordering their lives in such a way as to prepare for the responsibility.
 - iv. They are to be good managers of their own households.
 - v. They are to be mature in the faith, not new believers.

⁴ **Leadership I** is our basic leadership development program. Through **Leadership I**, participants enter into a process of developing biblical convictions on the New Testament model for the establishment and expansion of the church. Conducted in the context of the local church ministry, Leadership I includes assessment (*Life and Ministry Assessment*) done individually and by church leadership.

The goal of **Leadership I** is to train present and future leaders for ministry within the context of Master Builder Christian Church Network. Six Leadership Series I courses form the core of our **Leadership I** program. *The Leadership Series* is a collection of resources from BILD International designed to help local church leaders, missionaries, and pastors develop leaders to strengthen and expand the church worldwide.

Leadership I courses are:

- *Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the 1st Century Church*
- *Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches*
- *Understanding the Essentials of Sound Doctrine*
- *Leaders and the Early Church*
- *Habits of the Heart*
- *Interpreting the Word: Principles and Procedures*

- vi. In addition the elders are called to:
 - 1. Manage the church to which they have been entrusted, shepherding and caring for the believers, being careful not to lord it over them but rather seeking to be an example in family and community life and in character (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
 - 2. Be skillful handlers of the Word and use it to protect the church by refuting in sound doctrine as well as refuting those who contradict (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9).
 - 3. Be vitally involved in the development, recognizing, and commending of young “ministers of the gospel,” as their lives are tested and gifts evident, as well as appointing new elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:4-5; 4:14; 5:22; Titus 1:5; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-4; 20:28-32).
- ***A special group of men, called deacons, were designated by Paul to serve the church, evidently with the view of assisting the elders in carrying out their shepherding responsibilities*** (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1; Acts 6:1-7).
 - i. They are to have mature character.
 - ii. They are to have mature wives.
 - iii. They are to be good managers of their homes.
 - iv. They are to have tested experience.
 - v. In addition the deacons are to:
 - 1. Serve the church, being faithful to carry out responsibilities entrusted to them by the elders, recognizing that at times they will be given special tasks of meeting community-wide needs and finding solutions to problems, which demands faithfulness and not being double-tongues (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6).
 - 2. Be clear in their understanding of the faith, living consistently with the truths – especially in ordering their lives and families in accordance with God’s plan for this age (1 Tim. 2:9).
- ***Another type of leader, based on spiritual gift, was given to the churches as well. These men are to equip the whole church for the work of ministry*** (Eph. 4:10-11; 1 Tim. 4:6-16; 5:17-25; Titus 1:5; 2:1, 15).
 - i. Their ministry responsibilities are based on their spiritual gift(s) rather than a position of official authority, and they should carry out those responsibilities under the oversight of the local elders.
 - ii. Though they are under the authority of the local elders, they are to play a role in both the recognition and public correction of elders.

- iii. Their job description centers around three areas:
 - 1. Establishing the believers and the local church
 - 2. Doing the work of an evangelist
 - 3. Training the next generation of leaders, as Paul had trained them.
- iv. Those who are recognized as being truly gifted as equippers experience some sort of official recognition by the elders of the local church through the laying on of hands.
- **Women who assist Elders and Deacons:**
 - i. Serve the church, being faithful to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them, being careful to be accountable to the elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:11).
 - ii. Be careful to remain exemplary in character and avoid allowing difficult situations, in which they find themselves, to lead to gossip (1 Tim. 3:11).
- **Older Men:**
 - i. Set an example of faithfulness and perseverance within the church (Titus 2:2).
 - ii. Continue on in the faith and remain sound in it, growing in the Word, and modeling the living of a life that is ordered under its principles so the community might be strengthened as it relates as an extended family (1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:2).
- **Older Women:**
 - i. Set an example of respectful behavior in the life of the community, evidently both toward the leaders in the church as well as for younger women toward their husbands and family responsibilities (Titus 2:3-5).
 - ii. Continue to be devoted to good works, using their homes for meeting needs in the church and in the world (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 5:9-10).
 - iii. Anything they teach must have a soundness to it that is marked by good works and is built around assisting the younger women to properly orient themselves to godly living within their homes and within the household of God (Titus 2:3-5; 1 Tim. 2:9-10).
- **Younger Men:**
 - i. Seek to show themselves as examples of good deeds, watching their speech so as not to get caught in youthful lusts, which is so often tied together with speech (Titus 2:6-8; 2 Tim. 2:22-26).
 - ii. Labor to become established and sound in their faith (Titus 2:6-8).

- **Younger Women:**
 - i. Be devoted to their husbands and children and to laboring hard to make their homes a powerful witness to the beauty of the Word of God (Titus 2:3-5).
 - ii. Be known for good deeds by using their homes as a base for meeting needs in the believing community and in the community at large, as well as assisting those in distress (1 Tim. 5:9-10; 1 Tim. 2:9-10).
- **Implications for the Churches of the Twenty-First Century**
 - i. Each local church should be autonomous, as in a family, in the sense that it is governed by a team of men called elders. They should not be under the authority of one man nor should several churches be under the authority of some sort of hierarchy. Neither should the people be left to govern themselves.
 - ii. Whenever possible, deacons should be appointed to assist the elders in their work of managing the household of God.
 - iii. Although the way in which elders are appointed seems to be varied, the existing leadership must have the responsibility of making the final selection(s) of new elders.
 - iv. The authority of the elders should be restricted to the affairs of the local believing community and is not to be extended to the personal-life choices of a family and/or an individual member of the body.
 - v. The biblical terms (or titles) for leadership should be conformed to when possible, since specific qualifications are assigned to certain terms. If we change the terms, we must be very careful to explain which term and/or title conforms to which biblical term and/or title.
 - vi. We should avoid any titles that lend to the perception of a clergy and laity distinction, which in itself violates the priesthood of the believer. However, we need not necessarily avoid official recognition of leaders nor full-time financial support.
 - vii. Whatever organizational structure is created to assist the establishing ministry of the equippers (often called pastors or ministers today) it should be carried out under the oversight and authority of the elders and be viewed as a responsibility delegated by the elders.⁵

3. RESPOND TO MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AS GOD PROVIDES THEM, ONLY MOVING THROUGH THOSE OPEN “EXPANSION” DOORS WITH MATURE TEAMS COMMISSIONED BY THE ELDERS.

⁵ See “Master Builder Ministries Elders’ Governing Policies”

- Paul helped establish the church at Antioch, and from that base, with a team of men, set out to do a specific work (Acts 13:1-3).
- Those who are “prophet and teacher” types must be willing to be sent, and the local church must be willing to assist however needed (Acts 13:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-6; Titus 1:5; Phil. 1:3-8; 4:10-19).
- Paul commanded the leaders he had trained (especially the “Timothy” types) to train others in the same manner he had trained them (2 Tim. 2:2).
- Each missionary team must be commissioned by the leadership of the local church in which they are ministering. This infers that their lives and ministries have been tested and established (Acts 13:1-3).
- The core of the missional teams must have demonstrated gifts such as those listed in Ephesians 4:11. Paul had many men and women to whom and with whom he ministered, but, from the beginning, his teams were made up at their core of teachers, prophets, evangelists etc. (i.e. those whom Christ gave to the universal church to build up.) (Acts 13:1-4; 15:35-41; 16:1-10, and the Pastoral Epistles).
- When moving through these doors we will follow the basic model set forth on Paul’s first missionary journey, which he built upon in subsequent journeys by evangelizing strategic cities, instructing new believers, establishing them into local churches, and training and recognizing leaders (Acts 13:1-14:28).
- In regard to open doors, we expect to plan and use sound judgment when pursuing them, to have to turn our backs on some in order to maintain priorities, to experience great hindrance and opposition while pursuing, to have our plans shuffled by the Spirit at other times, and to aggressively pray for and pursue the opening of doors (Acts 14:27-28; 16:6-10; 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-7; Col. 4:2-6; 1 Thess. 2:17-18).

4. MAJOR ON WHAT ACTS RECORDS AS “MISSIONARY WORK” BY EVANGELIZING STRATEGIC CITIES (ROM. 15:14-19), INSTRUCTING NEW CHRISTIANS (ACTS 14:22), ESTABLISHING LOCAL CHURCHES, AND STRENGTHENING THOSE CHURCHES THAT WILL DUPLICATE THIS CYCLE AND MULTIPLY.

- Paul organized these communities of believers into local churches that were: (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
 - i. Self-governing (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28)
 - ii. Self-supporting (1 Tim. 5:17)
 - iii. Self-propagating (Acts 15:36-16:5)
- Paul’s indigenization policy rested on: apostolic instruction, pastoral oversight and divine faithfulness (Acts 13:43).

- i. **Apostolic Instruction:** Paul exhorted the church members to remain true to the faith, which they had received from him.
 1. A number of similar expressions are used in different parts of the New Testament to indicate that there was a recognizable body of doctrine, a cluster of central beliefs, which the apostles taught.
 2. Here it is called “the faith”, elsewhere “the tradition”, “the deposit”, “the teaching”, or “the truth.”
 3. Doubtless the two missionaries on their return journey will have reminded the Galatians of it.
 4. To some extent we can reconstruct it from the apostles’ letters.
 5. It will have included the doctrines of the living God, the Creator of all things, of Jesus Christ His Son, who died for our sins and was raised according to the Scriptures, now reigns and will return, of the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer and animates the church, of the salvation of God, of the new community of Jesus and the high standards of holiness and love He expects from His people, of the sufferings which are the path to glory, and of the strong hope laid up for us in heaven.
 6. These truths, perhaps already in some simple structure which later became the Apostles’ Creed, Paul left behind him, and then elaborated in his letters.
 7. Each church would begin to collect apostolic letters, alongside the Old Testament Scriptures they already had, and in their public worship on the Lord’s Day extracts from both would be read aloud.
- ii. **Pastoral Oversight:** Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders, for them in each church.
 1. This arrangement was made from the first missionary journey onwards, and became universal.
 2. Although no fixed ministerial order is laid down in the New Testament, some form of pastoral oversight (*episcope*), doubtless adapted to local needs, is regarded as indispensable to the welfare of the church.
 3. We notice that it was both local and plural – local in that the elders were chosen from within the congregation, not imposed from without, and plural in that the familiar modern pattern of “one pastor one church” was simply unknown.

4. Instead, there was a pastoral team, which is likely to have included (depending on the size of the church) full-time and part-time ministers, paid and voluntary workers, presbyters, deacons and deaconesses.
 5. Their qualifications Paul laid down in writing later.
 6. These were mostly of moral integrity, but loyal to the apostles' teaching and a gift for teaching it was also essential.
 7. Thus shepherds would tend Christ's sheep by feeding them, in other words care for them by teaching them.
 8. Such was Paul's double – and only – human provision for these young churches: on the one hand a standard of doctrinal and ethical instruction, safeguarded by the Old Testament and the apostles' letters, and on the other pastors to teach the people out of these written resources and to care for them in the name of the Lord.
 9. Just the Scriptures and the pastorate; that was all. Yet there was a third – and divine – provision.
- iii. **Divine Faithfulness:** Indigenous principles rest ultimately on the conviction that the church belongs to God and that He can be trusted to look after His own people.
1. So before leaving the Galatian churches, Paul and Barnabas *committed them* (members as well as elders) to the Lord, *in whom they had put their trust*, just as previously they had urged the Antiochene converts "to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43).
 2. Paul believed in his converts. He could trust them. He did not trust them because he believed in their natural virtue or intellectual sufficiency. But he believed in the Holy Spirit in them. He believed that Christ was able and willing to keep that which he had committed to him. He must therefore "retire from his converts to give place for Christ."
 3. These are the reasons why Paul believed that the churches could confidently be left to manage their own affairs. They had the apostles to teach them (through "the faith" and their letters), pastors to shepherd them, and the Holy Spirit to guide, protect and bless them.
 4. With this threefold provision (apostolic instruction, pastoral oversight and divine faithfulness) they would be safe.
- He "passed the baton" to the elders of these local churches to continue the process (Acts 20:17-28).

- We understand missionary work primarily as evangelism, establishing churches, and passing on the deposit to faithful men to guide and shepherd local churches. All other ministries will be subordinate to these activities (Acts 13:4-14:28; Acts 20:17-38; Acts 16:1-10, and the Pastoral Epistles)
- The major focus of our work will be that of “setting in order what remains” in the sense intended in Titus 1:5. Throughout the universal church today, especially in the Third World, there is great need for establishing the churches and building solid leaders (the Pastoral Epistles).
- Our strategy will center on building from open ministry doors, which participating local churches and their teams have presented. We will pursue these opportunities as God provides teams and resources (Acts 13:1-3; 14:27-28).

5. CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL WITH THE TEAMS THAT HAVE BEEN SENT BY STANDING WITH THEM AS THEY HAVE NEED.

- **The Process of Establishing the Early Churches in the Apostles’ Doctrine:**
 - Founding the Community:** In this stage, a group of believers responded to the gospel as it was proclaimed (the Kerygma). After they believed, their conversion was reinforced by careful instructions in the gospel. The conversion needed to be reinforced, not as a desire to reform, but as a dynamic conversion: a transfer, on the basis of God’s work, from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God (1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12).
 - Shaping the Community:** In this stage, the church was instructed in the traditions (the teaching, the *didache*) of the Apostles. This was a body of teaching delivered by the Apostles, which all churches not individual believers were to follow. Paul established the churches in this *didache* through three means:
 1. By teaching the church initially (1 Thess. 2:1-12)
 2. By returning to visit the church (1 Thess. 3:13-20)
 3. By sending a team member if he was not able to come (1 Thess. 3:1-10)
 - Stabilizing the Community:** Since many followed Paul around, or followed after him, trying to get the churches out from under his influence, he had to reinforce his teaching by clarification and exhortation. This stage seemed inevitable for every church to pass through – almost as if a necessary part of the maturing process. Again, Paul followed the same pattern to try to get the churches to

hold fast to the Apostles' teaching. He challenged them to hold to his teaching: (1 Thess. 3:1-5:28; 2 Thess.)

1. By sending letters that clarified his teaching and challenged them to hold firm
2. By sending men from his team with the letters and authorizing them to deal with those who would not conform.
3. By visiting them himself if possible.

6. NETWORK LOCAL CHURCHES WHEN MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES ARE LARGER THAN ONE LOCAL CHURCH CAN HANDLE. THIS MAY INVOLVE COMMON STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATION. SUCH STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATION, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH OR AUTHORITY OVER THE LOCAL CHURCH; IT SHOULD FUNCTION AS A TOOL OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- **Authority of Networking Organization**
 - i. **Networking Organizations do not have any authority over a local church.** Paul did not pass his authority on to a new apostle or to a particular organization, but rather to a team of men called elders, who were to oversee the people in their own local church. Therefore a networking organization should defer to the leadership of a local church concerning matters that involve a member of that local church that is involved with a networking ministry (Acts 20:17-38).
 - ii. **Networking Organizations have a delegated authority.** They are formed by leaders of a group of churches who are attempting a larger project together. When the local churches no longer desire to participate in this network as a tool to accomplish their work, then the organization should cease to exist.
 - iii. **A Networking Organization's authority to recognize and send individuals or teams into various ministries is secondary to that of the local church recognizing and sending them into ministries.** All men and women sent to do a specific mission work must be commissioned by their own local church, preferably after their own ministry and life have been established in their own local church (Acts 13:1-3).
 - iv. **In projects involving a Networking Organization's resources and personnel, local churches must abide by the general ministry guidelines governing the common ministry set forth by the board of directors of the Networking Organization in order to call themselves a participating local church in that mission project.** This guideline does not place the Networking Organization in authority over the

ministries of an individual local church, but rather places each local church in submission to one another while participating in a common ministry that is larger than their own local ministry.⁶

7. CONTINUE TO ESTABLISH AND EXPAND THE CHURCH LOCALLY, IMPACTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

The church is always to work through the cycle of these previous six strategies, reaching new people, establishing them in the faith, raising leaders, exploring new frontiers for the gospel, connecting in new networks, etc. We never reach a static position, but always remain in a dynamic and fluid advancing process.

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE STRATEGIES:

1. Be very cautious in using Christ's money to support men and women coming out of Bible colleges, seminaries, and universities before their ministries have been established in a local church and their gifts and character observed and recognized.
2. We should avoid the temptation of defining all work done overseas, whether by a "career missionary" or "short term missions," as missionary work. Relief and development work, medical work, social work etc., should never become our central focus and should be supplementary to missionary work as modeled by Paul on his missionary journeys.
3. Examine mission organizations to see if they are genuinely devoted to the centrality of the local church as the commissioning and sending agent. If their devotion to the church from the sending end is only in lip service, then they will tend to give only lip service to the centrality of the local churches on the receiving end as well. This would cause them to ignore or avoid the indigenous national churches, forcing a duplication or competition in efforts for the furtherance of the gospel.
4. Mission boards and societies and campus and community organizations as we know them today are a fairly recent phenomenon, many created because of the failure of local churches in building Christ's church. Their usefulness as tools can often be defended, but they should never be allowed to replace the centrality of the local church in the believer's life and ministry, nor should they ignore the centrality of the local church in all ministry/missionary activity, including evangelism and "discipleship."
5. We need to be prudent with our finances, making the local church our priority. The bulk of our time, talents, and money as a local church should be directed in a one-minded fashion toward missionary work as modeled by Paul: the establishing, growth, and multiplication of local churches.

⁶ Examples of Master Builder Ministries, working within networks include: BILD, Vision, MTEE, Barnabas Ministries, Kingdom Covenant Associate, IDLC (Ukraine and beyond), New Missions, Samaritan's Purse, Fall River Area Pastor Fellowship, etc.

6. The church should not abdicate its role in training leaders by simply turning the job over to Bible colleges and seminaries. These organizations should only be used as tools to aid the local church in doing its job of passing on the deposit to faithful men.

ADDITIONAL CHURCH GUIDELINES

MINISTERS

GUIDELINES:

1. Pay close attention to their own lives and teaching, disciplining themselves for the purpose of godliness, that their progress may be evident to all. Work hard as farmers, be disciplined as athletes, and be as unentangled in civilian life as soldiers (1 Tim. 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 2:3-6).
2. Preach the Word, in season and out; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with great patience and instruction, as well as guard against doctrines of demons and refute those who contradict (2 Tim. 4:1-4; 2:22-26; 1 Timothy 4:1-16).
3. Be devoted to establishing churches, setting in order what remains, as well as teaching and preaching the truths of how a church (a household of God) ought to conduct itself, with the view of keeping the church(es) on course (Titus 1:5; 2:15; 1 Tim. 3:14-16; ;2d; 1 Thess. 2:1-3:10).
4. Give priority time to training leaders – elders and faithful young “Timothys” to whom they can pass on the deposit. Be vitally involved in recognizing and appointing leaders as well as initiating necessary confrontation of elders who are sinning (Acts 20:17-38; esp. v. 31-32; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-25; Titus 1:2-9).
5. Be available to minister in other parts of the world as God opens doors and confirms direction through the leaders He has placed over them. This should primarily mean taking the gospel to new areas and establishing new churches or further establish existing churches (Acts 13:1-14:26; 15:36-16:5; Phil. 1:3-7; 2:19-24; 1 Thess. 1:1-3:13; 1 Tim. 3:14-16; Titus 1:5).

MEN & WOMEN:

GUIDELINES:

- i. Paul instructed the churches of the order in creation concerning men and women, which God wants honored in His church. Men are to assume the responsibility for the leadership of the believing community, not women (1 Cor. 11:3, 7-12; 1 Tim. 2:8-14).
- ii. This created order has an audience larger than men and women themselves; it involved the rulers and authorities in heavenly places. Evidently, submission to God’s order reveals to the universe the manifold wisdom of God (1 Cor. 11:10; Eph. 3:8-10).
- iii. Specifically, men are to assume the oversight of the community of believers and women are to avoid exercising authority over men and teaching men (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

- iv. The primary sphere of women’s ministry is to be their own household. Their reputation is to be based on how well they minister to their husband and children, along with how well they use their homes for ministry (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 5:9-10, 14-15; Titus 2:3-4; cf. Prov. 31:10-31).
- v. Older women are to encourage younger women to become skillful in loving their husbands and children and using their homes as a base for ministry. The command to instruct the younger women is not a general command for older women to assume a “preaching and teaching” role over other women (Titus 2:3-5).
- vi. When they assemble together, the women are to assume a non-challenging stance by receiving instruction submissively. If the women question what is being taught, they are to discuss it at home with their husbands. They should not challenge the teaching publicly. And, whenever they pray or prophesy publicly, they are to have their heads covered. All the churches followed this practice (1 Cor. 11:1-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tim. 2:8-12).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must be very careful not to allow our culture to redefine God’s design for men’s and women’s roles in the church. Instead, culture should drive us to better understand the universals behind the directives and communicate them with clarity.
- ii. Even though not always apparent to us, the directives God has laid down for the church are a reflection of His wisdom to all who observe. Therefore, we must be careful not to distort any of them from their original intent, including the set of guidelines on women that at first glance appear to be out of step with both our culture and reality.
- iii. Though the working out of these guidelines is difficult, we should not always assume that the most liberal or the most conservative interpretation is the best way to interpret.
- iv. We should assume that more is involved in the issue of the distinction between men and women than just an arbitrary command to obey “because God said so.” All His creation is set in order by wisdom (Prov. 8) so we should expect that further study of the directives will reveal their beauty.
- v. Contemporary “women’s ministries” need to be carefully examined in light of the above guidelines to make sure that such work does not distract from the priority of her own household, the health of which is vital to God’s household.
- vi. However we interpret the head-covering section, culturally or universally valid, and however we interpret the silence of women at the church in Corinth, it is clear that God intends the leadership by men in the assembly meeting to be evident to all attending.

WIDOWS AND SPECIAL NEEDS**GUIDELINES:**

- i. Paul understood the immediate family to be a family within a larger family (the church). The relationships within the church were to be patterned after the relationship within families (1 Tim. 5:1-2).
- ii. The church was to assist members who were in distress, using the strong base of their own households, with wives who were available servants to minister during special times (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:9-10; Titus 3:12-14).
- iii. Paul also encouraged churches in one area to assist churches and other men in other areas during times of special need. Yet, clear priority was to be given to the household of faith – other churches and the needs within those local households (Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-5; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 6:9-10).
- iv. God has a special place in His heart for distressed widows and orphans and poor men, as well, and so should we (James 1:27; 2:1-13).
- v. Special instructions were given concerning widows. They were to be cared for first by their own families (their sons and daughters and grandchildren) if they had any. Otherwise, the church was to care for them (1 Tim. 5:1-5).
- vi. A widow who had lived a model Christian life was to be honored by being supported by her family so she did not have to work in her old age. If she did not have family to support her, then the church should take on that responsibility. Yet, she should not be supported before she was 60 years old (1 Tim. 5:1-16). Key elements of a model life include:
 - Faithful to her husband
 - A reputation for good works
 - Faithfully brought up her children
 - Used her home to minister to unbelievers
 - Used her home to minister to believers
 - Assisted those in distress
 - Devoted herself to every good work

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. In a society that insures against all tragedies and sets up institutions for caring for those with special needs, it is vital that we think clearly about widows, orphans, and those in distress and with special needs. It is an area in which we have the opportunity for our light to brightly shine before the world.

- ii. To make an impact in caring for special needs, we must have strong homes and wives free to devote themselves to every good work. With so many frazzled working mothers, neglected children, broken homes, and institutionalized elderly, the ministry opportunities before a caring local household of God, anchored by strong ministering families, is almost limitless.
- iii. In the United States, we are unique among the believing communities of the world because we possess an unusual wealth. This should create within us a special burden for the less-fortunate churches of the Two-Thirds World and Eastern Europe.
- iv. One of our goals as a local household of God should be that we have a special place in our heart for widows, orphans, and poor men. And yet, is it not often the rich who gain our special attention and recognition in our success-oriented mind-set?
- v. We must be prepared to care for our own, especially widows. As believing sons and daughters, even as grandchildren, we should be preparing ahead of time to care for our parents, especially our mothers. As a church, we need to plan for caring for the widows in need, as well as completely supporting those over 60 who have lived a model life.

HANDLING CONFLICT

GUIDELINES:

- i. Paul understood conflict to be commonplace in the church. He did not avoid conflict when it was necessary. He was open about the personal toll conflict took on his own life and built a theology of triumph founded on a realistic perspective of conflict in the ministry (Galatians 2:1-14; 2 Cor. 1:3-11; 2:12-7:7; esp. 2:12-14 and 7:5-7).
- ii. Paul was particularly straightforward and confronting with leaders when they were not “walking straightly in the truth of the gospel” (Gal.2:11-14; Acts 15:1-6; Gal. 3:1)
- iii. Paul expected the churches to handle their own conflicts and to avoid letting problems between believers find their way into the world’s law courts. If, as believers, they were going to judge angels in the future, surely they must be able to judge their own conflicts now (1 Cor. 6:1-11).
- iv. The churches were to judge those in the body persisting in sin after confronted, by first rebuking in the presence of all and then by putting them out of the church if they didn’t repent. But it was not their job to judge those outside the church; rather, it was God’s job (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-22; cf. Matt. 18:15-18).
- v. Spiritual leaders were to avoid conflict if possible, staying out of “trivial theological arguments.” They were to be characterized by gentleness in correcting those trapped in unsound doctrine. However, those leading others astray from sound doctrine were to be dealt with firmly and directly (2 Tim. 2:14-26; Titus 1:9-16; 3:9-11).
- vi. Every individual in the household was responsible to do his or her part in preserving the unity of the Spirit. Several guidelines were set forth in order to preserve this unity:

- Let no root of bitterness develop over conflict, instead pursue peace with each other (Heb. 12:14-15).
- Admonish the unruly, but learn to tell the difference between the unruly and those in need of special help (1 Thess. 5:14).
- Each one was to be convinced in his or her own mind concerning living out freedoms in Christ and accept one another in the process (Rom. 14:1-15:7).
- Learn to set aside personality differences, making allowances for one another's imperfections (Phil. 4:2-5).
- Examine your own work, not someone else's. If someone is trapped in sin, gently help them out, but even then, be careful to look to yourself, lest you too be tempted (Gal. 5:12-6:5).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must avoid the success-oriented church-growth philosophy of the day. It will cause us to develop a distorted and unrealistic view of triumph and, at times, unbiblical expectations. We should expect problems, setbacks, and conflicts in building Christ's church. This is all part of growth. We are in a spiritual war, not a U.S. suburb.
- ii. We must not use the exhortation to live in harmony as an excuse to avoid necessary confrontation. When the gospel is being distorted, we must deal with the error, even at the risk of great dissension. It should be noted that guarding the truth is fundamentally a leadership responsibility.
- iii. At the same time, we must make allowances for each other's conscience as we learn to live under the freedom of the gospel. Those whose consciences are weaker should be accepted, as well as those who live with greater freedom.
- iv. A local church must establish procedures for dealing with conflicts needing mediation, so as to avoid the situation where believers are turning to nonbelievers to solve their problems. Procedures must be set forth, as well, for dealing with those who are unruly, including excommunication from the group, yet always with the ultimate hope of restoration. Decisions within these structures must be adhered to by the entire believing community (local church). Problems affecting the whole community must not be left ignored.
- v. As individual community members, we must do our part to build unity in the community, pursuing peace with each member, and at all costs avoiding a root of bitterness, which can defile many.

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS AND WORSHIP**GUIDELINES:**

- i. Paul encouraged each believer to come together with a correct focus. They were to avoid self-serving attitudes and come prepared to minister to others. One of the primary reasons for gathering together is to encourage each other to remain committed Christians (1 Cor. 11:17-22; 14:26; Heb. 10:23-25).
- ii. The gatherings were quite flexible and their meeting places varied. They met in homes (a sort of compound) as well as other available buildings (e.g. a school facility). They met for varying lengths of time as well. Very few guidelines are given concerning the meeting place and format (Acts 20:7-12; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Acts 19:8-10; 1 Cor. 14:26-33).
- iii. Opportunity was provided for each man, at least, to participate in the public ministry time, when the whole church gathered. This public ministry, though, had as its central purpose the edification of the whole body. It was not a casual sharing, nor was it focused on personal needs. Again, note the flexibility (1 Cor. 14:26-33; Acts 20:7-12).
- iv. It appears they assembled on the first day of the week, toward evening, to break bread. This was a sort of sacred time in which only the true believers participated. The center of their focus was on the reality of being a covenant community, set apart to serve Christ. They were to regularly remind themselves that they were Christ's community (1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7).
- v. Great pains were to be taken in the instruction of the Word. It was to play an important role in assembly meetings. Careful exposition of the Word was the key to the church being preserved from the philosophies of the world (Acts 11:19-26; 1 Tim. 4:6-16).
- vi. Men were to take the lead in the assembly meetings. They were to preside over the assembly meetings, as well as teach and pray. This was the norm for all the churches (1 Tim. 2:1-15; 1 Cor. 14:26-34).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must rid ourselves of society's attitude of "attending church" as we do a football game or a concert. Our primary concern should not be what we "got out of it" but rather, was I faithful in doing my part in building up the body?
- ii. The focus of our open public ministry time should not be on ourselves and our own needs but rather on inciting one another to love and good deeds. We must avoid letting this important ministry time be reduced to a mere "sharing experience." It is clear that each man ought to come prepared to participate in the open ministry time.
- iii. We are not given instruction on time, frequency, style, order of events, and on many other details of our meeting times together. Therefore we need to be very careful not

to let our forms become sacred. We need to vary them to best meet the needs of all involved, just as our own family gatherings change as our family changes.

- iv. A significant part of gathering together should be devoted to reinforcing the reality that we are a covenant people. Therefore, the Lord's Supper should be a vital part of our life as a church. The practice, however, of adding a token "cup and wafer" at the end of the "service" does not do justice to the directives of Paul.
- v. We must all take seriously the importance of the Word in our meeting times. It is to be taught carefully as well as discussed thoroughly. We need forms that will allow both to take place. Prayer should be a key element as well.
- vi. Despite the tensions created within our society, we need to respect God's household order. Each family is to be represented by the husband in the public meetings, especially in open discussion of what has been taught.

GIVING AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

GUIDELINES:

- i. Paul encouraged everyone in the churches to make giving a personal matter. Each was to decide in his or her own heart what to give. They were not to give grudgingly or under compulsion (2 Cor. 9:6-8).
- ii. At the same time, Paul put challenges before the churches, encouraged commitments to be made, and exhorted them to hold to their commitments (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9)
- iii. Paul encouraged these voluntary gifts to be collected at one time and given as one gift from the church. Evidently this was the pattern because he received a gift more than once from the Philippians in this manner. Individuals gave to a collective need administered by church leadership (Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-24).
- iv. Paul expected the churches to support those making their living by the gospel. Even though he himself did not exercise his right for support, he saw it as an important norm to support ministers of the gospel. His case was somewhat special in the sense that his ministry was always in question as an itinerant evangelist and church planter (1 Cor. 9:1-18).
- v. Even though virtually no guidelines were given to govern giving at the local church level, it is apparent that the finances were to be administered by the elders of the church. Several types of needs were to be met by the local church: support of ministers of the gospel as well as some elders, support of godly widows in need, special needs of other churches, as well as outsiders (Acts 11:29-30; 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:3, 5; 5:1-16, 17-18; Gal. 6:6-10).
- vi. At the same time, no one should be allowed to sponge off of the generosity of the church. Anyone not willing to work should not eat. If an individual continues to live a lazy, undisciplined life, the church is to break fellowship with the person (2 Thess. 3:6-15).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must establish giving procedures that avoid pressure tactics and guilt manipulation. Each believer must be encouraged to decide on his or her own what to give. It also appears that the tithe, a law in the Old Testament, has been replaced in the New Testament by a principle – give from the heart whatever you decide.
- ii. Yet at the same time, leaders must not be afraid to set needs before the church, call for commitment to meet those needs, as well as exhort the believers to fulfill their commitments. In fact, getting a response should not be like pulling teeth, but rather a church should be characterized by seeking needs to give towards.
- iii. However we collect gifts, it appears that needs should be responded to collectively, so that the image is that of the believing community meeting measurable needs.
- iv. Provided that their calling and gifts are confirmed by the elders, we need to take a hard look at those who feel that they are directed by the Lord to proclaim the gospel, and see that they are free for ministry. This is one of the keys to legitimate church growth. Provision also should be made for elders who rule well. Often this cannot be accomplished because a significant amount of a church's resources is being given to support individuals in para-church organizations that are not church based.
- v. The final authority on the use of funds should be in the hands of the elders. Many churches today, in our democratic country, claim to be under the leadership and authority of an elder board, and yet, all major financial decisions are in the hands of the congregation.
- vi. While we should go out on our way to care for legitimate needs as they occur in the life of the church, in other churches, and in society, the church must never be responsible for promoting laziness or undisciplined lifestyles. The church was not designed to be a free ride for those unwilling to work.

COMMUNITY LIFE AND MINISTRY**GUIDELINES – EPHESIANS 4:1-16**

- i. At the foundation of any description of the philosophy of ministry is unity of the Spirit, which every member must be committed to preserving (4:1-6). The "unity of the Spirit" is: one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all.
- ii. Preserving this unity will demand that each member of the body demonstrates a wealth of character (4:2). The character necessary to preserve the "unity of the Spirit" is: humility, patience, gentleness and forbearance.
- iii. Another aspect of unity calls for each of member of the body taking responsibility for the work of building the body of Christ, according to his or her measure of grace (4:7, 16).

- iv. Some gifts are given for equipping believers to carry out their ministry of building up the body of Christ (4:11-12). The equipping gifts mentioned are: apostles (laid foundation, Eph. 2:20), prophets (laid foundation, Eph. 2:20), evangelists, pastors and teachers.
- v. Since evangelists are given to equip the saints for the work of service, we can assume that part of the work of building the body of Christ, for which each is responsible, involves evangelism (4:11-12).
- vi. The result of the proper working of each individual part will be local churches unified and mature in their faith and ministry (established), to such a degree that they look and act like one mature man – Jesus Christ (4:13, 15).
- vii. In this fashion, each body of Christ is to mature in Christ, who is fitting the whole body (universal body Eph. 2:11-3:10) and building together as each individual part does its part (4:14-16).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. Unity is far more than “agreeing to get along” or “agreeing to disagree.” We are to be committed to one body of truth, one objective (building Christ’s church) and one God. This unity must be maintained in a context of love and humility. We should never be satisfied with anything less than a faith that is lived as consistently as possible with the body of truth given us by the apostles and prophets.
- ii. Whatever strategies are designed for “the work of service,” they must be soundly built upon the truth that the “work of service” is to be done by the saints, not by some select clergy or professional class. We must avoid the error of thinking that the “clergy” are the ones really qualified for ministry.
- iii. In an age when a professional class exists (clergy and laity distinctions are almost universally made in the Western church), we must be careful to avoid its trappings, bringing our expectations of pastors, evangelists, and teachers in line with their stated purpose, which is equipping the believer for the “work of service,” not as men paid to *do* the “work of service” for the church.
- iv. As local churches, we should be cognizant that we also are part of the building of one universal church. We should be prepared to do our part in building the universal church as we have opportunity, whether that is in our own local sphere or in some other parts of the world.

GUIDELINES - – CORINTHIANS 12:1-31

- i. Unity is at the foundation of the ministry. That is seen in the fact that we were all baptized into one body of which we are all members and have a part, with one Spirit, Lord, and God directing the gifts, services, and activities (12:4-6, 12-13).
- ii. The distribution of the Spirit can be summarized into a variety of gifts, services, and activities that utilize each individual member (12:4-6). The life of the body is: varieties

of gifts, varieties of ministries (acts of service or ways of service) and varieties of effects (forms of work, activities or way of working).

- iii. The Spirit is sovereign in regard to the distribution of gifts, services, and activities to members of the body, with no indication of such prerequisites as education, social status, occupation, etc. (12:11).
- iv. This kind of mutual interdependence is designed to bring about a certain balance in the body, because the whole body does not enter around one part, and the contribution of each member is deemed significant, with special attention being given to weaker members (12:14-25).
- v. At the same time, some manifestations of the Spirit at work in the church are to be desired before others, because they are more foundational to the building up and establishing of the whole body. This is set in opposition to the Corinthians' immature thinking that ecstatic experiences (miracles and other dynamic manifestations) were the most important and to be sought by all (12:1-3, 28-31; 14:1-4, 20-25).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must resist the temptation to encumber the ministry of the church with carefully orchestrated plans and deadlines and major instead on identifying ways in which the Spirit is seeking to manifest Himself in the lives of the members of Christ's body locally and throughout the world.
- ii. We should expect the gifts, services, and activities within the life of the body to be as varied as the number of members and welcome this diversity as a sign of divine activity rather than be threatened by change and different ideas and methods. Operating with this kind of philosophy will go a long way toward defusing conflict over differences, as well as competition between members.
- iii. We must train ourselves to look beyond first appearances in one another, and avoid categorizing each other's possible contributions to the building up of the body according to education, IQ, social status, and vocation. Instead, we must learn to identify and cultivate the various ways the Spirit is manifesting Himself in each member.
- iv. We should give special attention to cultivating the "manifestations of the Spirit" in the least-likely-to-contribute member, that they enjoy the mutual care of the body as well.
- v. We can expect to maintain better balance in a church through an encouragement of diversity in ministry, not conformity of activity. Leaders must develop a management style that cultivates the ministries of each member and preserves the freedom of the Spirit to work in varied ways.
- vi. Within the philosophy of diversity and mutuality described above, we must not forget the foundational importance of certain equipping gifts, and be zealous to see that these are developed and functioning in a primary role in the life of the body.

GUIDELINES – ROMANS 12:3-16

- i. At the foundation of proper functioning within the body is balanced, sound judgment concerning ourselves – knowing our God-given capabilities as well as limitations (12:3). Three key words are used here: to think (*phronein*), to think more highly (*uperphronein* = to think over, above, beyond), and to have sound judgment (*sophronein* = to be sensible, reasonable, to keep proper measure, not going beyond the set boundaries).
- ii. Key to developing this balance is understanding that God has given us a measure of grace (a special ability to carry out a vital function in the body) in certain proportions, and that our limits are made up by the rest of the body (12:3-5). Two key words are used here: “measure” (*meridzo* = deal out, assign, apportion) and “proportion” (*analogia* = right relationship, proportion, in agreement).
- iii. Once we possess “sound judgment” we are free to pursue our special “measure of grace” with our entire hearts, which explains the qualifiers Paul adds to each measure of grace in this passage (12:6-8). The following are representative “measures of grace,” from the Phillips translation.
 - Prophecy (preach to the limit of our vision)
 - Service (let us concentrate on our service)
 - Teaching (let us give all we have to our teaching)
 - Exhortation (let us set ourselves to it)
 - Giving (give freely)
 - Leading (work with enthusiasm)
 - Showing mercy (help others cheerfully)
- iv. This core insight, into the nature of ministry in Christ’s body, must be kept in balance with the reality that we are also to be “general practitioners.” We must demonstrate a daily commitment to each other, which measures up to the reality of being of the same body and the same family (12:9-16). The following are example “commitments” to one another:
 - Be devoted to each other as to family.
 - Give preference to each other with honor.
 - Be diligent in serving each other.
 - Stick with each other through difficulties.
 - Contribute to each other’s needs.
 - Show hospitality to each other.
 - Seek to enrich the lives of those who seem to make a career out of making your life miserable.
 - Share in each other’s joys.
 - Share in each other’s sorrows.
 - Take real interest in the ordinary members of the family.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. We must never allow the ministry to become a one-man show. When that happens, it violates all the fundamental principles that are to govern the life-balance of the body of Christ.
- ii. The intention of this passage is to encourage us to focus on what function(s) we do best in the body of Christ, not to give us an exhaustive fixed list of gifts. The list is an example of the types of God-given abilities we might find ourselves possessing, with the view of encouraging us to pursue them with all our hearts. Thus, as we seek to minister in the body, with the encouragement of others, we would expect to become aware of our function in the body. As this becomes clearer we should devote more and more effort to doing it well.
- iii. We must be sensible about the limitations of our own capacities as well as the extent of our God-given abilities. In doing so, we must learn to listen to those who minister closely with us, and let them help us interpret that balance in our lives, looking to them to supply what we lack, building a mutuality in ministry.
- iv. As we understand and learn to live by these perspectives, it will strip away petty comparisons and jealousies and empower us to serve each other in the spirit of the fellowship described in Romans 12:9-16.
- v. In the pursuit of doing our special God-given abilities well, we must keep in mind our general commitments to one another as well, avoiding at all cost the temptation to shrink our responsibilities to each other under the guise of “that’s not my job” or “that’s not my gift.”

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD**GUIDELINES:**

- i. Paul exhorted the churches to live lives of relational harmony and order, so that through their families and their community life, they might actually beautify the gospel to the unbelieving, judgmental world (Titus 2:1-15).
- ii. They were to be heavily engaged in good deeds toward believers and to do so with a certain attitude and outlook. They were to be considerate, gentle, and not contentious, remembering that unbelievers’ worldly pursuits are no different than ours once were (Titus 3:1-8).
- iii. Out of the context of a godly, harmonious, believing community and believers with lifestyles of good deeds, they were to make the most of every opportunity to give account for the hope that was in them, with humble attitudes (Col. 4:2-6; 1 Pet. 3:8-17).
- iv. Paul set himself up as a model of freedom. He encouraged each believer to be as free and flexible as possible around non-believers – becoming all things to all men that he might win some (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

- v. Paul exhorted the believing communities to pray for their government leaders and for all who were in authority, so that as churches they might lead tranquil and quiet lives rather than live under governmental harassment. When unjustly treated, they were to pray, rather than to respond with wrath and dissension (1 Tim. 2:1-8; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:11-25).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

- i. In a society in which both family life and community life are breaking down, we have an outstanding opportunity to model the beautiful effects of the gospel in our own households as well as in the household of God. It is imperative that we live according to sound doctrine and not the trends of society, in regards to both our family life and the life of our local church.
- ii. Being heavily involved in doing good deeds toward unbelievers is foundational to creating opportunities to give an account for the faith within us. We probably need more service-oriented involvement in the lives of unbelievers than we need more evangelistic programs to reach them.
- iii. In a culture in which true believers are known for judging nonbelievers and trying to legislate their morality (often with wrath and dissension), as well as confusing Christ's goals for the church with building a Christian nation, it is especially important that we get back to the habit of winning nonbelievers through our considerate, humble attitudes and through a lifestyle of doing good deeds for them.
- iv. In a culture in which true believers are often known for what they do and don't do rather than for their love, we need to rediscover what it means to "be all things to all men" that we may win some, risking judgment on our lifestyle by the legalistic, evangelical establishment. (Studies have shown that it takes about two years for the average new believer to lose all his non-believing friends!)
- v. At a time when many are disgruntled, with jaded expectations of our leaders in government, we need to watch our attitudes very closely, making sure that we possess attitudes of respect, praying for them, that we might lead our lives, as a believing community, without harassment.

BECOMING ESTABLISHED

ASSESSMENT

EARLY LETTERS OF PAUL:

- Are you sound in your understanding of the gospel, or is there evidence that you are drifting in any way toward a distorted or different gospel? Are you in danger, after “having begun by the Spirit” of now being “perfecting by the flesh?” (Galatians)
- Are you standing firm in the gospel, unshaken by those who might draw your attention away from your basic focus on the furtherance of the gospel with alarming teaching on future events accompanied by irresponsible living? (1 & 2 Thessalonians)
 - Is there evidence of your conversion being solid, with a clear and confident turning to God and the gospel? (1 Thess. 1-2)
 - Did you receive the Bible as the very words of God, grasping it firmly, without any hint of wanting to mix it with your old philosophy of life? (1 Thess. 1-2)
 - Are you living responsibly in your new life as a Christian, faithfully providing for yourself and your family? (1 Thess. 4:9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6-15)
- Are there divisions and conflicts in your life that are characteristic of an immature believer not fully established in the gospel? (1 Corinthians)
 - Divisions relating to comparing and elevating teachers? (1:10-4:21)
 - Divisions relating to conflicts, disputes, and open sin? (5:1-6:11)
 - Divisions relating to marriage, divorce, and remarriage? (7:1-40)
 - Divisions relating to debatable matters? (8:1-10:33)
 - Divisions related to assembly meetings and public use of spiritual gifts? (12:1-14:40)
- Are conflicts and problems, which are expected in the ministry of the gospel, being used by you to undermine the trustworthiness of those establishing you in the gospel? (2 Corinthians)
- Are you established in a full understanding of the whole gospel? (Romans)
 - Do you understand the work (grace) of God in your life, and on that basis, have you learned to walk in the Spirit, experiencing a growing victory over any life-controlling problems (chs. 6-8)
 - Have you made a firm decision, based on the mercies (the work of grace in your life) of God, to be completely devoted to Christ, orienting your whole being to being transformed into the image of Christ? (12:1-2)

- Do you think soundly in regard to yourself (not too highly or too lowly), and combined with a growing sense of how God has uniquely gifted you, are you fervently serving others? (12:3-21)
- Are you able to think broadly, in principles, using your freedom in Christ maturely, rather than in rules and regulations, while being patient with those who are less mature? (ch. 14)

MIDDLE LETTERS OF PAUL:

- Do you grasp the significance of your role in the unfolding plan of God and its accompanying riches, and are you walking worthy under this one purpose (Ephesians, Colossians)
 - Are you praying for both understanding the significance of your calling and unleashing the power of Christ in your life? (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21)
 - Are you walking in love within the church, living in honest, wholesome relationships; being careful not to grieve the Spirit through embittered relationships? (Eph. 4:25-5:2)
 - Are you walking in light within the church, living a careful and purposeful life, with the Word richly dwelling in your life? (Eph. 5:3-12)
 - Are you ordering your household around Christ's headship over the believing community, with each family member responding appropriately, as one under authority? (Eph. 3:33-6:9)
 - Are you growing strong in the strength of His might; putting on the full armor, within the church, as it builds Christ's Church; realizing that spiritual warfare is great; praying without ceasing for the building of Christ's Church? (Eph. 6:10-20)
- Are you striving with one mind together with the church for the progress of the gospel – united in spirit and intent on one purpose? (Philippians)
 - Are you willing to give up you own life interest for the sake of the progress of the gospel? (Ch. 2)
 - Are you able to forget what lies behind and focus fully on the goal of serving Christ? (Ch. 3)
 - Are you able to be content in any circumstance (abundance or want) that results from your total commitment to the progress of the gospel? (Ch. 4)
- Do you understand the relational implications required within the community and how they affect the one-mindedness of the church as it pursues one-minded commitment to the furtherance of the gospel? (Philemon)

LIFE AND MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

The qualities being assessed should be viewed as a cluster that have as their central focus the category listed in the bold type. When assessing each area in your own life, reflect on the passages listed with each quality.

MARKS OF MATURITY IN PASTORS:

A Careful Diligent, Prepared Student of the Word

- Are you devoted to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching, being diligent to these matters, devoted wholly to them? (1 Tim. 4:11-16)
- Do you watch your life and doctrine closely and keep Paul's sound teaching as a pattern, with faith and love? (1 Tim. 4:16; 6:1-3)

Guard the Deposit Entrusted

- Do you have a commitment to the same process of entrusting to others what is being entrusted to you, doing your best to present yourself to God as one approved as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, who handles accurately the Word of truth? (2 Tim. 2:2, 15)
- Do you have a commitment to preach the Word, being prepared in season and out to correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and instruction? (2 Tim. 4:1-4)

Disciplined, Exemplary Life

- Are you disciplined – training toward godliness, living an exemplary lifestyle in speech, life, love, faith, and purity? (1 Tim. 4:6-13)
- Are you watching your life and doctrine carefully, fleeing youthful lusts and being devoted in prayer? (2 Tim. 2:22)

Teachable

- Are you a good steward of the deposit that has been entrusted to you? (2 Tim. 1:12-14)
- Are you a follower of your leader's example – his teaching, his way of life, his purpose, his faith, his patience, his love, his endurance, his persecution, and his suffering – providing the leader is imitating Paul, who was imitating Christ? (2 Tim. 3:9-16)

Sincere and Genuine Faith

- Do you have the ability to love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith? (1 Tim. 1:5)
- Do you have a commitment to fight the good fight until the end? (2 Tim. 4:5-8)

Reliable, Responsible, and Hard Working

- Are you strong in the grace of Christ, enduring hardship as a soldier, being as disciplined as a competitive athlete, and as hard working as a farmer? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)
- Do you have a commitment to fulfill all of your responsibilities regardless of the effort and sacrifice needed? (2 Tim. 4:5)

Strong, Sound, and Patient in the Use of the Word

- Are you overcoming fear and timidity and ministering in power, love, and self-discipline? (2 Tim. 1:6-7)
- Are you maintaining perspective in all situations, boldly encouraging and rebuking, yet avoiding foolish controversies and arguments – in essence being a strong, even forceful leader, yet possessing great sensitivity and patience? (2 Tim. 2:14-26; 4:1-4)

MATURITY IN ELDERS: (1 TIM. 3:1-7; TITUS 1:5-9)*Personal Orderliness, Balance, Desire – Four Main Qualities*

- Is your lifestyle well-ordered and respectable? (life in balance)
- Are you prudent, sensible, and well-ordered in your mindset and attitudes? (mental balance)
- Are you temperate, demonstrating control of your emotions and spirit? (emotional balance)
- Are you self-controlled, demonstrating self-mastery in applying your life in a manner consistent with the convictions you hold? (personal discipline)

Additional Qualities of Character:

- Are you free from addiction to wine or drunkenness?
- Do you avoid pugnacious and contentious attitudes or dispositions, being peaceable, gentle, kind, sweet, and reasonable; making allowances for others' mistakes?
- Are you free from a self-willed orientation, from stubbornness, arrogance, and a quick temper?
- Are you above reproach, giving no grounds for accusation against you; being just, devout, not violating the sovereignty of God but keeping His laws?
- Are you managing your own household well, keeping your children under control with all dignity? (3:4-5)

Family Orderliness, Balance, Discipline

- Are you a one-woman type man, devoted to your wife? (looking at present character, not past failures)
- Are you managing your own household well as a leader, laborer, and lover?
 - Are your children under control, affirming your authority with all dignity and respectfulness?
 - Do you have children who are faithful believers who are not accused of dissipation (a life that has completely broken apart and is about to be abandoned) nor of rebellion (a life that cannot be controlled)?
 - Are you pursuing hospitality by loving strangers and being generous to guests without reproach or regret?

Ability to Handle the Word

- Are you able to teach skillfully, holding fast the faithful Word?
- Are you able to exhort in sound doctrine and reprove those in error?

Motivation

- Are you seeking to please God in your service, as one who is devout, and whose life is a spiritual sacrifice?
- Are your heart and affections focused on doing what is good and right?
- Are you free from the love of money, not fond of sordid and dishonest gain?

Relationship to Non-Believers

- Do you have a good reputation (well-spoken of) with those outside the church? (Luke 4:22)
- Are you well established in the gospel, not being newly converted?

MATURITY IN DEACONS: (1 TIM. 3:8-13)

Personal Life

- Are you a man of dignity; a person who is respected and looked up to?
- Are you avoiding being double-tongued (saying one thing to one person and something different to another person)?
- Are you free from addiction to wine or drunkenness?
- Are you free from desires for sordid, dishonest gain?

Family Life

- Are you a one-woman type man, devoted to your wife? (looking at present character, not past failures)
- Are you managing your own household well, keeping your children under control?
- Is your wife dignified, respected, looked up to, and worthy of respect?
- Is your wife free from participating in malicious gossip, slander, and false accusations?
- Is your wife temperate, with a well-ordered spirit (emotional balance), with sound balanced judgment, and not swayed by emotions?
- Is your wife faithful in all things, trustworthy, reliable, and dependable?

Tested and Committed to the Word

- Are you tested in ministry, serving without grounds for reproach or accusation?
- Are you holding to the mystery of the faith with deep, solid convictions?
- Do you have a clear conscience without anything undermining your convictions?

LATTER LETTERS OF PAUL:

- Are you conducting yourself properly in the local household of God, living a godly life in harmony with God's house order in the church, the pillar and support of the truth? (1 Timothy)
 - Are you living in line with God's created order for men and women in the church, in which men are to be taking the lead in the community? (2:8-15)
 - Are you managing your own household well, keeping your children under control with all dignity? (3:4-5)
 - Are you developing character consistent with you appropriate role in the church? (3:1-13. Also Titus 2)
 - Are you devoting yourself to careful study of the Word and teaching when appropriate? (4:1-16)
 - Do you have a commitment to care for you widowed parents, as well as helping honor those who have been exemplary wives, mothers, and servants of the community? (5:1-16)
 - Are you committed to helping amply support those who labor as leaders, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching, as well as seeing the need to deal strongly with problem leaders? (5:17-25).
- Are you committed to living an orderly life, assisting those entrusted with setting in order what remains in the full establishing of this local church? (Titus)

- Are you committed to doing good deeds in the community and to serving in the community through a good, useful occupation? (ch. 3)
- Are you committed to being faithful with the deposit given to you and boldly “fighting the good fight” and “finishing the course”? (2 Timothy)
 - Are you demonstrating a consistent teachability, viewing yourself as one being entrusted with the gospel? (1:13-14; 2:2)
 - Do you exhibit the intensity and focus of a devoted soldier, a disciplined athlete, and a hardworking farmer? (2:3-6)
 - Are you attracting similar type men/women around you, to assist you in the ministry (2:2)
 - Are you able to stay focused by avoiding unnecessary quarrels and challenges by those desiring to dispute nonessential matters, speculations, and arguments about words? (2:14-26)
 - Do you have the ability to handle the Word accurately, along with a growing ability to use it effectively in ministry? (2:15; 3:15-17)
 - Are you fleeing youthful lusts and keeping a clear conscience in your life and ministry? (2:14-26)
 - Are you a team player, willing to take instruction from those over you? (4:9-18)

GIFTEDNESS ASSESSMENT

The following assessment guide should be completed after reading and reflecting on the “Community Life and Ministry” summary found in “Master Builder Ministries: Strategy for Ministry and Missions” document under the section titled “Additional Guidelines”. It outlines the three main teaching passages on gifts in the New Testament: Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, and Romans 12:3-16. The Giftedness Assessment Guide is based on concepts presented in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The working of the Spirit, then, can be summarized into a variety of gifts, services, and activities:

- Varieties of gifts
- Varieties of ministries (acts of service, ways of serving)
- Varieties of effects (the outcome of one’s performance, effectiveness, what is produced)

Varieties of Gifts:

1. Which of the gifts listed in these passages are most attractive to you?
2. With which of these gifts do you think you are or might be most effective and capable?
3. Consider any input you have received from the people who know you best – family, friends, leaders, others in the church – concerning your gifts. In their observation, which of these gifts do you manifest? Which of these gifts are not manifested in you?
4. What do you consider to be your natural talents and abilities? Are any of the gifts you have identified closely aligned with your natural talents and abilities? Keep in mind that it is probable that God would take some of your natural abilities and energize them through your spiritual gifts (supernaturally broadening or deepening what He has already given you through His creative design from conception onward through your childrearing experiences.)
5. Your conclusions regarding the above questions are what comprise your “natural ability, spiritual gift cluster.” List or describe your natural abilities-spiritual gifts cluster in a profile that follows the pattern of what seems most logical and natural to you.

Varieties of Ministries:

1. What kinds of ministry have you gravitated toward up to this point in your Christian life?

2. What specific ministry experiences have you had? What involvement have you had with any organized or formal ministry responsibilities?
3. Are there any ministries you have always wanted to pursue, yet have not had the courage or the opportunity to do so? If so, what are they?
4. What kinds of roles in formal ministries have other people encouraged you to be involved in? Is there any pattern in the types of things you have been offered?
5. How does your natural abilities-spiritual gift cluster relate to the types of ministry in which you have found yourself involved? What insights do you gain from this comparison?
6. What is your present vocation? How do your roles and spheres of involvement within your vocation relate to your natural abilities-spiritual gifts cluster?
7. What kind of work (i.e. job, vocation) have you enjoyed the most and in it have experienced the most success? Consider how aligning your work or vocation with your natural abilities-spiritual gifts cluster might maximize your ministry for Christ in the everyday work world.

Varieties of Effects:

1. In what ways have you seen God use you in ministry?
2. In what types of ministry have you had the best effect? The most results? The most fruit?
3. What specific ministry involvement has been the most productive and has delivered the most powerful results?
4. List the times you felt God was really at work through you. What were you doing at that time? What kind of ministry?

5. Are you consistently involved in similar ministry on an ongoing basis? If not, why not?

Vision and Decisions:

1. What sorts of ministry visions have come to you during or as a result of this assessment process? Which ones do you find exhilarating and energizing?
2. What steps might you take at present to pursue them? How do they relate to ministry needs in the life of your local church? If these issues are unclear, talk them through with a church leader.
3. Review the ministry plan of your church, and list the ministries for which you feel most suited. Share these conclusions with the church leaders or with a specific leader who is most responsible for shepherding or training you. Make the decisions necessary regarding this ministry involvement!

CURRENT MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

DATE OF EVALUATION: _____

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Fruitfulness and faithfulness in ministry
2. Availability and teachability
3. Evidence of leadership ability
4. Areas of needed skill development
5. Ability to solve problems, think in principles
6. Effectiveness in ministries

List of current ministries:

MINISTRY TEAM PROFILE ASSESSMENT

DATE OF EVALUATION: _____

GUIDELINES:

1. Review the SIMA Motivated Abilities Pattern (MAP) if available.
2. Review Giftedness Assessment Guide.
3. Include comments on the following:
 - How you see him filling into a team
 - The kinds of ministries he is best suited for and least suited for
 - The kinds of people he will relate with best and relate with poorly
 - The size of groups he is best suited for and least suited to minister to

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR MASTER BUILDER NETWORK OF MINISTRIES:

5 YEAR GOALS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

1 YEAR GOALS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

