

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S CHURCH PLANTING PHILOSOPHY

Paul established the church in the four provinces of Asia in 10 years! We believe that we can learn a lot from Paul's church planting philosophy. Let's look at some key factors that contributed to his success.

He trusted the Holy Spirit to keep the new converts (John 16:5-15). Before we can hand new churches over to new converts we must trust the Holy Spirit to look after them.

Apostolic teams are key! (Ephesians 4:11-16). God does not give every gift to one person and we need each other. Paul almost never went anywhere alone (Acts 14:22-28).

Paul never met physical needs by taking from one church to give to another. Except when the main church in Jerusalem was in trouble he took up a collection to take to them. This was a huge exception.

He never gave anything away when preaching the gospel! He must have seen many people with huge physical needs, but he pointed to God. Getting the people to rely on God and not on himself. This single fact must have caused his new disciples to rapidly develop their own faith by trusting God to meet their physical needs. We often make this mistake by allowing our disciples to rely on and trust us to meet their needs.

Paul did not have a master plan but **had a general plan.** It does not seem like Paul deliberately planned his trips. His general plan was to go back and visit the existing churches, etc.

Paul targeted Jewish centers because there were many Gentiles converting to Judaism. They were closer to Christianity because of their moral code and monotheism and therefore easier to convert. These new converts became the new leaders in the churches he established. The churches were founded in the centers of commerce where people possessed both intellectual and material wealth. Although **Paul seemed to focus on the upper class he drew many converts from slaves and lower class people.**

Paul used miracles, which attracted hearers and was an accepted proof of divine approval (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

In Paul's preaching he had a **balance between the judgment of God and the grace of God**. His communication was also full of faith; he expected converts and changed lives.

Paul **served the people he ministered to and became like them culturally** (1 Corinthians 9:20-23). God's model of cross-cultural communication is the incarnation. Jesus came as a Jew. He learnt Jewish ways, spoke Hebrew and took on the form of a man to such an extent that they struggled to believe He was God.

The secret to planting churches is in the beginnings. Paul's converts became missionaries! **How you train your first converts is vital**. We must teach converts to rely on God and not us. With regards to money Paul did not seek financial help from his converts although he accepted it if they offered. He also took no financial help to those he preached to and he did not administer local church funds. He wanted churches to be self-sufficient right from the start.

Paul **believed in emergence leadership**. At the start of the church he would appoint three or four elders and believed the right one would eventually emerge. The body of believers would help him to choose these leaders. He gave them authority to administer ordinances and to appoint others to do the same. These new leaders needed to have an elementary understanding of the gospel, baptism and the role of the elder. They also needed to understand the authority of the scriptures and be able to interpret them.

Paul was **sparing in his use of authority** and he taught people to take responsibility.