

UNIT II: PRINCIPLES OF MISSIONARY STRATEGY

LESSON 10

THE MEANING OF STRATEGY

Introduction

We may define strategy as “the science and art of military command employed with the object of meeting the enemy under conditions advantageous to one’s own force.” It also has a more general application: “a careful plan or method for achieving an end.”

Both of these definitions are relevant to our thinking in the realm of the strategy of missions. We are certainly engaged in a spiritual warfare as the Bible indicates to us in Ephesians 6:12–17. On the other hand, we desire to see Christ’s name glorified to the end of the earth. Indeed, we have His Commission “to disciple” the nations. To do this with limited resources, we must listen carefully to the Holy Spirit’s direction and then elaborate the very best plans we can for achieving this objective.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us a broad outline of the ends, purposes, and methods for achieving them, but He left to the Holy Spirit’s guidance the way we should go about this task. A number of factors call for the development of strategy or a plan of attack.

1. The scope of our objective calls for a strategy. In the present lessons, we will define an objective as “a specified end related to the purpose established for an indefinite length of time which may be translated into goals and actions.” Our purpose is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known throughout our world. Our objective will include the winning of men and women to Christ, baptizing them and incorporating them into New Testament churches. God’s love, as we have seen in the biblical and doctrinal foundation, was for the entire world; therefore, the world must be the scope of our activities.

2. Christians, in the beginning, were a minority group and remain so. This fact does not faze us, because God has often done great things through a minority group. It was true of Gideon and his selected, dedicated band of three hundred in Judges 7. It was true in the first three centuries of Christianity when, humanly speaking, a small despised sect—without financial resources, prestige, or political power—overcame the official paganism that had all of the power, backing, and support of the Roman Empire. Again and again we must return to that eternal principle: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

While we are not overwhelmed by the odds, we must seek God’s guidance in forming a strategic approach that will make best use of our resources. We must be good stewards of the resources and time God has placed in our hands to accomplish what He would through us. We must

Strategy is a careful p _____ or m _____
for a _____ an end.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

AS YOU READ, WRITE THE FACTORS WHICH CALL FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY OR A PLAN OF
ATTACK FOR MISSIONS.

1. _____

2. _____

deploy our forces, plan our attack, and train God's people to make the most of the human and divine resources available to the Church in our day.

3. We have limited physical and financial resources. What is the best employment of these resources to God's glory and the extension of His Kingdom? Although Gideon had only a band of three hundred, he strategically deployed them for the best attack. There are many good things that the Church might engage in, but it must give priority to that which is supremely important to its Lord. Its central purpose and task are "to disciple" the nations. To this central purpose, it must give priority.

4. God is at work in history. We must ask ourselves, "What can we read from His action that would indicate our approach?" We will develop our approach in light of God's eternal principles and in light of the existing conditions. We see God's moving in history as He prepared the world for an event.

By New Testament times, God had prepared the world for Christ's coming in many ways. The world rested under the *Pax Romana* or Roman Peace. Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy could travel throughout the empire, preaching without passports or visas. Conditions were not perfect, but the Roman roads—designed to unite the Roman Empire, develop trade, and give speedy mobilization to the Roman armies—became avenues of peace, over which the Gospel message travelled to the heart of Rome and to the ends of the earth.

In preparing the world for Christ's coming, God prepared a common language. *Koinē*, or common Greek, was the trade language of the day, even as Latin was the language of scholarship in the Middle Ages, and English is a trade language of our own day. Paul was fluent in Greek and could tell the good news of Jesus in many lands in the Roman Empire and beyond.

God had prepared an expectancy in the religious climate. The great Greek philosophers, like Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, had effectively undermined the Greek belief in its pagan gods. The Romans also were seeking a more personal faith through the mystery religions. In short, God prepared the world for Christ's coming and for the extension of the Gospel.

Paul effectively utilized a part of this social pattern. Moving throughout the empire, Paul began with the major cities and their synagogues and then moved to the Gentile community and surrounding countryside to evangelize and plant churches. Under God's direction, this wise strategy eventuated in clusters of churches that served as radiating points throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. Such a strategy allowed the churches to grow in an unbelievably rapid expansion during the first three centuries. If the student or the professor has available the

CONTINUE WRITING THE FACTORS THAT CALL FOR STRATEGY.

3. _____

4. _____

Two conditions which helped prepare for Christ's coming were--

1. Roman _____ and
2. Roman _____ which made travel with the Gospel easier.

(1. peace, 2. roads)

The use of a common _____, *Koinē* (common Greek) prepared the way for the message of Jesus.

(language)

Another way God prepared the world for Christ's coming was through an air of _____ in the religious climate.

(expectancy)

great work *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* by K. S. Latourette, he should see the first volume where the thrilling story of this expansion is told.

5. When we move into strategy planning, we must be open to the Spirit's voice as was Paul. Paul would have pushed into Asia, but the Spirit bade him enter Europe (Acts 16:6-9). Here God's direction led the missionaries into the European continent and placed Christianity in the mainstream of a dynamic civilization for the next nineteen centuries. If Paul and his colleagues had not heeded the Spirit's voice, they would have missed the opportunity that God was giving them.

6. Equally dedicated Christian men and women working in missions are finding vastly different results. This fact remains even where they are working in the same geographical areas. Wisdom dictates that God has made some strategies more effective for our day than others. We must weigh, evaluate, study and be willing to follow what God is obviously saying to us about a strategy. To continue a traditional plan simply because "we have always done it that way" is not only unwise but may be positively sinful.

7. Finally, we carry out our mission in a world that in many ways is hostile to the claims of Christ. In a current magazine, Gloria Steinam, stating her hopes for children in the year 2000, declared, "By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God." Her attitude is typical of the day in which we live. We must employ the very best strategy that God reveals to us to make advances in the face of this kind of opposition.

Ultimately we must know that God's plan for saving mankind is a Man. Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, became God's personalized expression of His redemptive plan. God's plan is still for men and women, redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, to share their testimonies in the power of the Holy Spirit with those who are receptive to God's message. No other plan or strategy can substitute for this basic one.

Biblical Examples of Strategy

Roland Allen, an Anglican missionary (first to North China and later to Kenya), opened modern thinking in the realm of missions in 1912 when he published a book called *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* In the book he took to task much of the missionary practice of the day, saying that it was totally contrary to the practice of Paul in the matter of training, finances, government, and approach. While he disclaimed that Paul had any particular strategy, he defined his approach and set it forward as a strategy for our own day.

Allen pointed out that, while we often tend to romanticize the past, especially the New Testament era, and

CONTINUE WRITING THE FACTORS THAT CALL FOR STRATEGY.

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Give the title of Roland Allen's book on missions. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

think that the propagation of the Gospel was easier then, Paul had no particular advantages in his world that we do not have in our own. St. Paul, Allen said, not only supported himself, but he taught churches to do likewise from the very beginning. This method, although very effective, is quite contrary to current practices.

He also noted that Paul depended on the Holy Spirit and led the converts to depend on Him at a very early stage. The converts, Allen noted, had little training before baptism but were pointed to the Holy Spirit and grew in Him. God quickly raised up local leaders. Paul helped in the process because he recognized their gifts and quickly gave them responsible places of leadership.

The believers themselves interpreted the New Testament teachings and letters and carried on the discipline in their churches. Allen pointed out that Paul worked out of the great centres of his day and moved from these strategic bases to the regions beyond. In conclusion, Allen summarized five principles of strategy that he felt are valid in any day:

(1) All teaching to be permanent must be intelligible and so capable of being grasped and understood that those who have once received it can retain it, use it, and hand it on.

(2) All organization in like manner must be of such a character that it can be understood and maintained.

(3) All financial arrangements made for the ordinary life and existence of the Church should be such that the people themselves can and will control and manage their own business independently of any foreign subsidies.

(4) A sense of mutual responsibility of all the Christians one for another should be carefully inculcated and practised.

(5) Authority to exercise spiritual gifts should be given freely and at once.¹

Allen's book rocked the missionary world and has remained a classic to our own day. Perhaps his major contribution has been to point us back to the New Testament as a source of principles for missionary strategy.

Later J. L. Nevius, who served in China and visited Korea, propounded a method for establishing indigenous churches. Indigenous churches adapt to the soil and become native to the culture. They lose their foreign qualities and represent the New Testament essentials clothed in local culture. Nevius pointed out that, to be sturdy and indigenous, a church must be self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting. These ideals, falling on fertile soil in Korea, produced a growth among Presbyterian churches that still stands as one of the marvels of modern missionary growth. That success captured the minds of many missionary strategists for over a half a century and is still very influential in missionary planning.

¹ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* 2nd American ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), pp. 194-195.

AS YOU READ THE TEXT ON THIS PAGE, NOTICE SOME EVIDENCES THAT PAUL HAD A STRATEGY.

1. Paul not only supported himself but taught the _____ to do likewise from the beginning.

(churches)

2. He depended on the _____ and led the converts to depend on Him also.

(Holy Spirit)

3. New converts had little training before _____, but they grew through the Holy Spirit.

(baptism)

4. Local leaders developed quickly, and Paul helped by recognizing their _____ gave them places of _____.

(gifts, leadership)

5. The believers interpreted the _____ for themselves and carried on the _____ in their churches.

(New Testament, discipline)

Paul worked out of the large _____, or strategic bases, to the regions _____.

(centres, beyond)

According to J. L. Nevius, the three key elements of the indigenous church are:

self-_____

self-_____

self-_____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Both of these methods sought to find New Testament principles that could be applied to our own day. There is a need to search the New Testament for principles that can form the strategy for our own day.

Current Schools of Thought

Traditional or broad spectrum

This approach is a broad spectrum approach, practised by many major mission boards. It combines proclamation with education, medical ministries, leadership training, and good-will centres to provide a wide basis of ministry and witness. It seeks not only to plant churches but to carry on a ministry to the physical, intellectual, and social needs that it finds in its field of work. These ministries are often carried on by the missionaries themselves with support from their sponsoring societies. The *parallel thrust* term derives from the fact that it gives equal emphasis to these various phases of the work. It measures its contribution not only in baptisms, church growth, and new churches but also in the number of students enrolled in schools and the number of patients treated in hospitals. In the current era, many churches are now taking ministry emphases and carrying them out locally in medical clinics, social work, and community action.

Indigenous church approach

As students of missions looked at the fruits of the indigenous approach in Korea, they reached the conclusion that the principles were valid everywhere and were indeed New Testament principles. In 1954 Stanley Soltau, also a Presbyterian missionary to Korea, wrote a book, called *Missions at the Crossroads*, in which he showed that the indigenous approach could give strength and expansion to churches all over the world.

As the Assembly of God denomination realized unprecedented expansion in El Salvador, Brazil, and other places, many students of missions became interested in what these Christians were doing. A book by Melvin Hodges (later the Assembly of God secretary for Latin America), therefore, caught the attention of many students of missions. The book, simply called *The Indigenous Church*, became a manual which many new missionaries used to guide their ministry. It gave emphasis to the proclamation of the Gospel, the organization of churches, and the self-government, self-propagation, and self-support that Nevius had propounded. Hodges related his own experiences in El Salvador and other places.

The Christian presence

This school of thought stated basically that the Christian witness, like the Incarnation, consists in being there and in manifesting the love of Christ among the people. It

AS YOU READ ABOUT THE CURRENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT, LIST EACH ONE AND WRITE A ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION OF IT.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Continue on the next page.)

McGavran further feels that we can measure church growth, find out why it does or does not occur, and take measures to bring about greater growth. He has not only established a graduate school of church growth but has inspired others, including missionaries and pastors, to make studies and to test this concept in the field. The result has been dozens of books in church growth relating to different geographical areas of the world.

In a later chapter, we will see how a pastor or a missionary can take these techniques and utilize them to measure growth in his church or association.

Guidelines for Strategy

Let us understand that strategists in missions are not planning some sort of strategy in opposition to the Spirit's guidance. They are trying to discern the way in which God is moving and would have us move in our day to reap maximum benefits in the world in which He is working. Peter Wagner, in an excellent book on missionary strategy, emphasizes the importance of this divine factor.

The Holy Spirit is the controlling factor in missionary work, and the glory for results goes to Him. But for reasons we have not been informed of, God has chosen to use human beings to accomplish His evangelistic purposes in the world.⁵

He further clarifies the point that "missionary strategy is never intended to be a substitute for the Holy Spirit. Proper strategy is Spirit-inspired and Spirit-governed."⁶ He goes on to define strategy as it relates to missions:

Strategy is a mutually-agreed means to achieve the ends which have been determined by a particular group. Good strategy will be concerned with broad principles as well as specific tactics, but it will not lose sight of the determined goal.⁷

Wagner feels that the three essential qualities of missionary strategy should be that it is Bible-centred, efficient, and relevant. The Bible presents us with the ultimate purpose of God and should serve as a polar star to guide our efforts.

Both the limitation of our resources in light of our commission to a whole world and Christian stewardship require that we get the maximum out of the resources that God has placed at our disposition. The eternal destiny of men and women depends upon our faithfulness and effectiveness.

Recently, in correspondence between a mission board administrator and a missionary, the missionary informed the administrator that he had been able to save \$1,000 on the shipping of his household effects to the

⁵ Peter Wagner, *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), p. 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Strategy is trying, with the guidance of the _____, to discern the way in which God is moving and would have us move in our day to reap maximum _____ in the world.

(Holy Spirit, benefits)

Proper strategy is Spirit-i_____ and Spirit-g_____.

(inspired, governed)

Three essential qualities of missionary strategy are: _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

field. The administrator not only congratulated him but observed, "This saving will mean that \$1,000 will be available for the Lord's work in another place."

Efficiency of operation includes the best use of personnel, financial resources, and time. To be relevant, a strategy must keep abreast of the changing times, while maintaining its compass fixed to its polar star of purpose. Strategy involves stating a purpose, setting objectives, and elaborating goals for reaching those objectives. Good strategy is courageous enough to measure its advance towards those goals. Wagner says, "Success or failure in the specific task are measured by other standards, according to the specified goals."⁸

Principles for Proper Strategy

In developing a proper strategy, we must first of all agree upon and set forth our purposes and our central objectives. Wagner once again gives an example: "Making disciples must be maintained as the central objective of missions, without allowing good-sounding phrases to detour efforts toward secondary goals."⁹

A good example of this sort of agreed-upon purpose appears in a document of the Guatemala Baptist Mission:

The purpose of the Guatemala Baptist Mission is to proclaim the Gospel and win people to Christ in this country, to work with national leadership in establishing and developing New Testament churches and to cooperate with the national constituency through the convention, association and institutions.

A local church, an association, a convention, or a union can develop its own statement or purpose. It can then relate its objectives and goals to this central purpose.

Difficulties in developing sound strategy

In analyzing the lack of sound strategy in many missionary activities, Wagner lists five hindrances to developing missionary strategy:

1. We have been too strongly tied to tradition and culture.
2. We have not been trained to diagnose the health of a church.
3. We have based strategy on need, instead of on the purposes of God.
4. We have used the Holy Spirit as a smokescreen, refusing to examine what we are doing.
5. We have substituted good activities for making disciples.¹⁰

He also feels that many times we have been content

The central objective in missions is to make

_____.

(disciples)

Review Wagner's list of five hindrances, or difficulties, to developing missionary strategy by writing the key words in each hindrance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27-28.

¹⁰ Wagner, pp. 29-35.

with sowing but have not heard the Bible injunction to reap.

Criticism of the strategy of the fifties

Donald McGavran contends that during the 1950's there was a moving away from disciple-making and a refusal to measure progress towards that goal. He points out that any strategy to be effective will set out its priorities. "No question is more important than this: What are the policies, patterns, goals and principles of highest urgency?"¹¹ He goes on to describe several of these:

1. For some, it is seed sowing to the ends of the earth.
2. For others, it involves organizational adjustments to enable them to survive.
3. For others, it involves the quiet Christian presence. To them it is neither discipling, nor witness, nor again the planting of churches, but expressing the love of Christ.
4. Another group is seeking a common mission to the world. They are most concerned with ecumenicity, of showing Christian unity.¹²

He moves to criticize these strategies which he calls the *strategy of the fifties*.

1. It attempts to take in everything that the Church and the Christian faith ought to do.
2. This strategy includes church-planting as one of its many emphases but steadfastly resists focusing on church-planting as partisan and narrow.
3. It has no answers to pressing problems.
4. This strategy is really a defense of the existing machine of mission, its departments, vested interests, bureaucracies, and massive service arms.
5. This strategy of the fifties is theologically and biblically wrong. It does not throb with Christ's passion for men's eternal redemption.¹³

As can be imagined, McGavran's criticisms aroused the ire of many Christian colleagues who responded to him from many parts of the world. He did us a service, however, in focusing on the centrality of discipling, of winning men and women to Christ.

McGavran's guidelines for right strategy emphasize the central themes of the church growth point of view.

1. Right strategy tailors mission to fit each of the thousands of separate communities. . . .
The hard fact is, however, that by far the largest number of *growing* churches are growing *in* some tribe or segment of society. Thus, the tremendous increase of Pentecostals in Latin America is in large measure due to the fact that they are frankly Christians of the masses.
2. Right strategy will also take church growth with life-and-death seriousness.
3. It will take into account anthropological and sociological factors in church growth and stubbornly asserts that the

Effective strategy sets out its p_____.

(priorities)

Good strategy must focus on d_____ --
winning people to Christ.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

¹¹ McGavran, ed., *Eye of the Storm*, p. 97.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

- Holy Spirit alone grants church growth.
4. Right strategy will devise hard, bold plans for planting churches, and will put them into execution.
 5. Right strategy will divide the world into cultural units—those where Christian mission is correctly seed-sowing and those where it is correctly harvesting.
 6. Right strategy will deal with both individuals and man-in-society.
 7. Right strategy recognizes that church growth is an exceedingly complex process and cannot be commanded.
 8. Right strategy will spend large sums of money and the lives of some of its best men and women in intensive research into the most effective ways and means of reconciling men to God and of multiplying churches.¹⁴

McGavran sets forth a basic conclusion that “right strategy can be discerned, learned, taught, and executed.”¹⁵ He underscores the emphasis on church growth here principally on an international level, from a mission board, sending-church frame of reference.

Elements of a proper strategy for missions

We will move to a slightly different perspective and set forth what seem to be elements for a proper missionary strategy. Let us examine it from the perspective of the local church, national union, convention, or assembly, as it relates to international organizations in which both the sending and receiving churches are involved in missions. A proper missionary strategy should:

1. Base itself firmly in biblical principles rather than in current philosophies, trends, or even needs.
2. Search missionary history for clues to effective witnessing, church planting, and harvesting. Many countries have known periods of remarkable ingathering. Some are reaping great harvests now. It is well to read, to visit, and to analyze what is happening, then to listen to what the Spirit would say to the churches today.
3. Give clear priority to proclaiming the good news, reconciling men and women to Christ, and practicing “body evangelism,” by which we mean converts being incorporated into the body of Christ—the Church. These new converts will be responsible for reproducing New Testament churches.
4. Operate under the dominion of the Holy Spirit, utilizing the best wisdom that He gives.
5. Plant churches that take root in the soil of the local community, employing local thought patterns, music, and forms of worship where these are not in direct conflict with biblical principles.
6. Be guided by the biblical concept of the people of God in which every member is a minister and a

Right strategy can be d _____,
l _____,
t _____,
e _____.

(discerned, learned, taught, executed)

Body evangelism is—

_____ the Gospel,
 _____ people to Christ, and
 _____ them into the body of
 Christ--the _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-107.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

- witness. It will develop God-called leaders quickly.
7. Develop churches in sturdy independence and interdependence in finances, government, and missionary outreach.
 8. Utilize scientific techniques in discerning growth and non-growth in churches and denominational bodies, and in discovering potentially responsive areas. The validity of this principle can be seen in a number of studies which show that people in new towns or new communities are more responsive to the Gospel during the first five to eight years.
 9. Utilize the insights of anthropology and sociology in carrying out its mission. It will study the impact of urbanization on its country and will seek to employ these insights in evangelism.
 10. Employ all legitimate means to proclaim the Gospel but will determine the effectiveness of the mass media (radio, television, and newspapers) in reaching people.
 11. Take into account the urgency of the era and work so as to realize a harvest in this lifetime.
 12. Measure and evaluate results against predetermined goals.

Practical aspects of developing a strategy

In developing its own strategy, a local church, or denominational body, needs to take these steps:

1. Develop a clear statement of purpose and determine if it can be met in light of biblical guidelines.
2. Set forth objectives and develop goals to meet these objectives. (A goal used in this sense is "a statement of dated intent to obtain a measurable quality and/or quantity of results in keeping with the objectives.")
3. Determine the physical, financial, and human resources necessary to accomplish the objectives and to attain the desired goals.
4. Ask for God's help in providing the necessary resources and then proceed.

Levels of Strategy Planning

The local church

The first and most basic level of strategy planning is that of the local church. Six veteran missionaries made a four-year study of the growth of Baptist churches in thirteen countries of Latin America and compiled the results of interviews of 1,200 people, including missionaries, pastors, women, and laymen. At the end of the study, the team developed the profile of a growing church. Generally speaking, the growing church has:

1. A dynamic, Spirit-filled leader.
2. An average of more church visits than other churches.
3. A larger than average participation of its membership in witnessing and ministering.
4. A long-range plan with prescribed goals for accomplishing the plan.

List briefly the steps in developing a strategy.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

List the qualities of a growing church.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

These are seemingly simple and self-evident characteristics, but an absence of them results in a stagnated church. Let us look at the last characteristic, that of long-range planning.

A local church, having defined its purpose and central doctrinal position, should have a prayer and planning session in which they fix their attention only on the theme, "What would God have us to do in missionary outreach in our community, county, state or province, and world?"

The church should review some of the doctrinal bases for missions described earlier in this book. The congregation should study the opportunities for witnessing, asking for help outside the congregation, if needed. They should survey the area of concern for witnessing opportunities, determine objectives, set goals, and ask for God's guidance as they move forward in their programme of outreach. It is possible that God may indicate the need for a home Bible study, a preaching station, a Bible study in a fire station, an orphanage, or a jail. The local church can and must take action outside of its four walls or it will stagnate.

The association

There are many denominational names for this level, such as synod or district. I have chosen the Baptist term, with which I am familiar, to refer to regional organization of churches for missionary outreach and cooperation.

An association in Central America was located in a large city. Among the hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, there were only ten churches of this denomination and only a few score churches of all evangelical denominations. The leaders of the churches met for prayer, asking for God's will concerning outreach to their fellow citizens for Christ. They studied maps and found large areas where there were no churches or missions. As they poured over the map, they realized that several of the churches had members living in these areas. They contacted these members and asked them to meet in a home in their area.

One of the churches took responsibility for organizing and guiding a mission church, but the other churches helped in visitation and finances. The convention saturated the area with radio programmes and invited the people to the new place of worship. In a short time a mission was established and shortly thereafter developed into a church. The association had used a specific strategy to reach an unchurched area of town. Now if the association develops a permanent plan for this kind of endeavour, it will have developed a fruitful strategy that will eventuate in the growth of many new churches.

In making long-range plans, a church should define its _____ and _____ position.

(purpose, doctrinal)

Then a church should--

1. study the doctrinal bases for _____;
2. survey witnessing _____;
3. set _____;
4. seek God's guidance in _____.

(1. missions, 2. opportunities, 3. goals, 4. outreach)

The convention

Here we refer to the denominational body or fellowship of churches on a national level. Sound principles of planning in which a convention sets forth its basic objectives, develops goals for reaching those objectives, and suggests ways of providing the resources to reach them can be wonderfully blessed of the Lord. Once objectives and goals are set, the convention plans and elaborates its calendar of principal activities for several years in advance.

Summary

Strategy is a careful plan for achieving an agreed-upon end. Christian churches need a missionary strategy because of (1) the scope of our objectives, (2) our minority status, (3) our limited resources in the world, (4) God's work in history, (5) our need to tie into God's plan and work, and (6) because the Spirit leads His followers in the missionary task. Equally dedicated men and women are realizing different results as fruit of their efforts. Part of the difference could consist in the strategy employed. Ultimately the centre of any strategy is the God-called man or woman who shares the redemption story.

St. Paul employed a strategy of reaching the cities and of developing Christians that were dependent on the Holy Spirit for resources and direction. Roland Allen, an Anglican, pointed out the need to study the Pauline methods of missionary work. I. L. Nevius, a missionary to China, developed indigenous church principles from New Testament studies. He taught with great effect in Korea that an indigenous church should be self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting.

There are a number of schools of missionary strategy today. Among them are the traditional or broad spectrum approach, the indigenous church approach, the Christian presence approach, and the church growth school of thought. Donald McGavran has been a key figure in the development of this latter approach.

Some guidelines for strategy can help in setting a proper strategy in a church, association, or convention. These principles can be applied to local situations.

LIST THE THREE LEVELS OF STRATEGY PLANNING WHICH YOU HAVE JUST READ ABOUT.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Why do churches need a missionary strategy?

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

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3)

After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

- 1. Give a definition of strategy. _____

2. List four of the seven factors that call for Christians to develop a missionary strategy. _____

3. How did God prepare the world for Christ's coming? _____

4. What evidences of missionary strategy do you find in the Bible? _____

5. What important book did Roland Allen write? _____
6. What are the three key elements of the indigenous church according to J. L. Nevius? _____

7. List three current schools of thought in missions. _____

8. How does strategy planning relate to the Holy Spirit's guidance? _____

9. What is the central objective in missions? _____

10. List three of the five difficulties in developing a sound strategy of missions. _____

11. What is the meaning of body evangelism? _____

12. What are the steps in developing a sound strategy? _____

13. Give three levels of strategy planning. _____

14. List four characteristics of a growing church. _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3)

Read pages 87-99, and 105 in *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy*, then answer the following questions.

1. What is the meaning of culture as used in this chapter? Of sub-culture?
2. Define cultural shock.
3. On page 105, number 8, how does the author err from the New Testament concept?

Advanced activity (Level 3)

Read pages 90-121 in *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* and answer the following questions.

1. Define cultural shock and show how it affects any missionary going far away from his home environment.
2. How can a Christian missionary overcome cultural shock?
3. Define cultural overhang and show how it can retard the advance of the Gospel.
4. Is planning in missions valid? How does it relate to the Holy Spirit's activity?
5. Where and why are great ingatherings taking place today?
6. Define and illustrate anticipatory strategy.

Seminar Discussion

1. Give some biblical examples when strategy was employed.
2. Review reasons why there must be strategic planning in Christian missions.
3. Discuss how God prepared His world for Christ's coming: language, government, spiritual need. What conditions today have prepared for the extension of the Kingdom?
4. Discuss the indigenous church concept and its application today.
5. What are the essential elements of the church growth school of thought?
6. Review McGavran's guidelines for a right strategy.
7. Review elements of a proper strategy in the study guide text.