

## LESSON 11

### ESTABLISHING NEW WORK

#### Introduction

##### Aim

To recognize areas where new churches are needed and to explore methods by which they may be established.

##### Thought questions

1. If only a thousand people live in a community, is one church sufficient?
2. Who should determine whether more than one church is needed in an area?
3. What is the difference between a mission and a church?
4. How does a mission become a church?
5. Why do some churches have articles of faith rather than church dogmas?
6. What articles should be included in a church constitution?

##### God's will regarding new churches

Missions may be defined as what God wills and commissions man to accomplish in His name. According to the Scripture, God wills and desires to "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). God's plan is for His servants to carry the gospel into communities where there are no churches and to establish churches when persons respond in faith to Christ.

##### Determining the Need for a New Church

New churches should be established in communities or population centres wherever the spiritual needs of people are not being met with the gospel of Christ. Almost all leaders of every denomination would agree with this statement. The problem arises in defining when the spiritual needs of the people are not being met. Some church leaders might argue that one church in a population centre of ten thousand to one hundred thousand people is sufficient to meet their spiritual needs. Other leaders argue that five churches for a population of five hundred might be insufficient. Two considerations are primary in determining the need for new churches: the number of lost people not being reached by the established churches

Missions is what God \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ man to  
accomplish in His \_\_\_\_\_.

(wills, commissions, name)

Two factors to consider in determining whether a new church is needed are:

1. How many \_\_\_\_\_ are not being reached by established churches.
2. How many \_\_\_\_\_ are already in the area.

(1. lost people, 2. churches)

and the number of churches already established within an area.

Paramount consideration should be given to the number of people without Christ as Saviour. If one soul is worth more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26), how can the pastor of a church object to the establishment of another Christian church nearby? Different Christian personalities with different methods of ministering are able to reach different people.

Human pride, ambition, and fear frequently cause leaders of established churches to react negatively towards new church groups. The beginning of a new church is often interpreted to imply that established churches have failed to minister effectively. Competition may result and lead to unwholesome rivalry; however, competition often stirs a dormant group into action and results in a greater work for Christ.

The mind of Christ should be considered in determining whether a new church should be established or not. Too often man, controlled by pride and selfishness, makes the decision in the name of Christ. Frequently a new church is started when a person, who is ambitious to lead, disagrees with his fellow members. He influences the faction which supports him to withdraw and to begin a work under his supervision. Since the controlling motive is not to honour Christ but to satisfy the whims of an individual, this approach should be avoided. Christ is honoured when His people establish new churches in order to reach more people for His Kingdom.

The reasons for establishing a new church should be evaluated carefully, especially if churches already exist in the vicinity. The sponsoring groups must consider as objectively as possible whether its ministry will meet the needs of men and honour God. Sometimes new denominations, which claim a monopoly on divine truth, move into the midst of established churches but make little additional contribution to the spiritual life of the community. On the other hand, established churches in many population centres are spiritually dead and ineffective in bringing people into the Kingdom of God. The existence of an ineffective church in a community can claim no biblical authority for preventing other groups from establishing churches. Spirit-filled leaders will welcome the coming of Christian brothers who will contribute to the work of Christ.

The following questions should give guidance in deciding where to establish new churches.

1. Are there numerous families which have not been reached and likely will not be reached with the gospel through the ministries of established churches?

*Another factor to consider in determining the need for a new church is the \_\_\_\_\_ or will of Christ.*

*(mind)*

*The group considering establishing a new church must be sure its ministry will meet the needs of \_\_\_\_\_ and honour \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(men, God)*

2. Are there nearby population centres where no Christian group has yet extended a missionary outreach?
3. Can the existing churches be revived and led to meet the needs of the area?
4. Has a religious survey been taken within the area to determine the extent of spiritual needs?

Christian groups which plan the establishment of new churches should:

1. Avoid rivalry with other denominations. The Kingdom of God is composed of people from various denominations who by faith have committed themselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour. Christian brothers are to work together in love.
2. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in overcoming any motives of pride and ambition. Christ's love should control the Christian's activities.
3. Attempt to locate the new church in the area of greatest need. Remember that two-thirds of the world's population is without Christ; therefore, there are many unchurched areas. A concentration of churches in one community is unjustified as long as so many communities are without a Christian witness.
4. Seek to honour Jesus Christ in every decision.

Leaders of established churches in communities where a new fellowship is being developed should:

1. Recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others. Do not conclude that the Spirit of God is absent from other groups. No Christian group has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit.
2. Remember that God's ways are not always man's ways. Be willing to rejoice when others are blessed of God in their service of Him.

### Methods for Starting New Work

After the decision has been made to begin a Christian witness in an area, there are several ways of getting started.

#### Begin with a Sunday school class

Begin a Sunday school in a home or in a rented building in the area. Usually a Christian family which would be glad to make their home available for boys and girls to meet in Bible study can be located in the area. Parents become interested and barriers are removed when their children learn about Christ. Workers need to be alert for opportunities to witness to parents of the children

*List briefly in your own words four principles of attitude to follow in establishing new work.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*As you read, list each possible method for starting new work.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

enrolled in Sunday school. Too often, Christian workers do not look beyond the children's class which they teach.

### Begin with a home Bible study

If a Christian family is living in the community, the family may invite neighbours to their home for a period of fellowship and Bible study. There are people in every community who are interested in Bible study and can eventually be reached for Christ. While visiting in a community, a minister found overnight lodging in a home. That evening the home owner and her sister were invited to join the visitor in a time of Bible study. They responded enthusiastically. The suggestion was made that they invite their friends and neighbours to join them. In less than an hour, fifteen people had come together to study the Bible and pray. Before the session ended, five adults and young people had professed Christ as Saviour and expressed an interest in the continuation of Bible study in the area. A church could have been established immediately if a person with some knowledge of the Bible had been available to lead it.

### Begin with a home worship service

Interested Christians living in an unchurched area may form the nucleus of a new work. They can meet together in a home for worship. As the number increases, larger facilities can be rented or constructed.

### Begin Sunday services in a rented building

Churches which sponsor missions usually provide a place for the people to meet, either in rented or purchased facilities. Sponsoring church members help survey the community and distribute information about the beginning of services. They enlist Christians who live in the area and encourage them to invite their friends to attend the scheduled services. A special feature may be advertised, such as the showing of a Billy Graham film. An invitation is given at the conclusion of the services, and those interested in the continuation of spiritual services may be invited to stay and discuss plans for future worship.

### Finances and Personnel Resources for New Work

The beginning of new work is not necessarily expensive. Two or three concerned Christian families who are committed to tithing and witnessing can find a place to begin Bible study classes. They may decide to open their homes or rent an inexpensive building. Many people are hungry for the gospel and will respond when faithful Christians share Christ with them.

The purpose of a church is to make disciples and to instruct them in the teachings of Christ. These purposes can be accomplished without elaborate facilities. Some

*Continue listing possible methods for starting new work.*

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

*One source of finances and personnel for beginning new work is some concerned Christian families covenanting to t \_\_\_\_\_, w \_\_\_\_\_, and l \_\_\_\_\_ Bible classes.*

*(tithe, witness, lead)*

printed materials are needed for use in Bible study. Music is natural in worship, but people can express their joy in the Lord without an elaborate musical instrument. The leader and members can bring people to Christ and teach them without expensive buildings. The only indispensable element is available persons.

Churches could be established in many areas if Christians would take the initiative to begin them. A young man heard the gospel through a radio message. He desired to be a Christian and inquired of a relative how to be saved. He invited his young friends to meet with him once a week for prayer. Their Bible study consisted of reading from a children's Bible story book. Their initial efforts at worship included the singing of one hymn (which they had been taught by an elderly Christian lady), prayer, and scripture reading. God was in their midst and blessed their efforts. The leader had an opportunity to study in an extension seminary. Within a few years, other young men had surrendered to the ministry and new churches had been started. The membership multiplied as many persons in the community came to know Christ.

The key to starting a new church is to have a capable leader. Initiative, dedication, faithfulness, patience, a zeal for lost persons, and a confidence in prayer are essential qualities of the leader who develops new work. The person does not have to be an ordained minister. His theological training can be provided through extension or decentralized guided study. If he enrolls in a guided study programme when the church is first established, his development in biblical knowledge and pastoral leadership parallels the development of the church—both grow together.

Frequently pastors of established churches send young and inexperienced men to lead in the beginning and development of a new work. This procedure was not followed in Antioch according to Acts 13. Paul and Barnabas, who appear to have been the more mature leaders, volunteered to go into new areas to proclaim the gospel. This plan was revealed by the Holy Spirit. The result was the establishing of many new churches in many countries over a period of fifteen years.

Normally a new church begins under the supervision of an established church. The sponsoring church provides initial funds for a building and property. Leaders from the sponsoring church may be given the responsibility of conducting Bible study and worship. The established church continues to provide personnel and financial support until leadership within the new work has matured and the giving of the persons in the mission is adequate to meet the expenses of the work.

*The key to starting a new church is a capable leader.*

*List some qualities the leader must have.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*The church at Antioch sent out two of its most mature leaders, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, to start new work.*

*Is this statement true or false?*

*The Antioch way is not usually followed today.*

*(Paul, Barnabas, true)*

*Another source of finances and personnel for beginning a new church is an established \_\_\_\_\_ which provides initial \_\_\_\_\_ for a building and property and \_\_\_\_\_ for conducting Bible study and worship.*

*(church, funds, leaders)*

## Strategy for Developing New Work

### New Testament emphasis

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Philip explained to the Ethiopian that the Scripture spoke of Jesus (see Acts 8:26ff.). After believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Ethiopian requested and was granted baptism. The authority for Philip's actions was the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts emphasizes that the expansion of the early Church was the result of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were sensitive to His leadership.

According to Acts 13, the church at Antioch was led by the Holy Spirit to set aside Paul and Barnabas to go forth to the Gentile cities and proclaim Christ. There is no indication that their work was further supervised by the church; however, they were supported with prayer and may have received some economic support. They reported their activities to the church upon their return. The mission churches were largely under Paul's supervision. It should be noted that Paul's interest was not to boss them nor to gain economic support from them. His work was motivated by the desire to hasten the return of Christ by sharing the gospel with every person. Sharing the gospel in the power of the Spirit is the means of building the Kingdom and preparing for Christ's return.

### Traditional patterns

In modern times, churches have followed the tradition of supervising new work as missions. This tradition developed as more emphasis was placed upon buildings to house churches. The advantages of this procedure are: (1) trained leadership from the sponsoring church is available for work in the mission; (2) finances are available from the budget of the mother church for the expenses of the mission; (3) a responsible Christian group is available to share in visitation and witnessing in the mission area; (4) supervision and guidance can be provided for a group of spiritually immature and inadequately organized new Christians who meet together as a mission; and (5) encouragement and fellowship are offered by the established body to the new group.

Care should be taken to avoid several pitfalls if the traditional approach is used:

1. The sponsoring church should select leaders who will not lose interest in the work and cease to give real support.
2. The sponsoring church should not design a building and develop an organization which is so expensive to maintain that the mission must remain dependent on the sponsoring church for a lengthy period.
3. The leaders on loan from the sponsoring church

*Some advantages of a church supervising a new work or mission are:*

1. Trained l \_\_\_\_\_ are available.
2. The sponsoring church can provide f \_\_\_\_\_ for expenses.
3. There are Christians available to help with v \_\_\_\_\_ and w \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Mature or experienced s \_\_\_\_\_ and g \_\_\_\_\_ can be provided.
5. The established body can offer e \_\_\_\_\_ and f \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Read the pitfalls to be avoided by a church establishing a new work and be prepared to list them in your own words.*

should not hinder the development of community leaders for the new church.

4. The sponsoring church should not over-organize the new and developing group. It will not need as many committees or programmes as larger churches.
5. The sponsoring church should not keep control of the new mission too long.
6. The mission should not be permitted to become accustomed to trained personnel supplied by the sponsoring church to the extent that it will be unhappy with the leadership which it is able to support when its budget is no longer subsidized.

### Developing maturity through responsibility

When a church invests money and effort in a new mission, it is concerned that its investments are not lost to heretical groups. One reason for not constituting a mission into a church too soon is to prevent the immature and developing group from being led astray or destroyed by dissension or divisive leaders. The sponsoring church should remember, however, that maturity comes by assuming responsibility. Many missions have been prevented from maturing and developing because of excessive protection by the sponsoring church.

### Preparation of natural leaders

When new work is established, a primary task should be to teach the natural leaders of the community the Scripture and instruct them in the meaning of democratic church government. The early emphases of a new church programme should be the winning of people to Christ and the training of natural leaders who are brought into the membership. The leaders should be encouraged to take responsibility as soon as they are ready. Their readiness depends on their spiritual stability and their growth in the knowledge of Scripture. They are not expected to be theologians before being involved in leadership responsibilities.

Those who assume responsibility in beginning new work should pray that God will provide leaders for it. A representative of one mission group inquired of another how sufficient leaders were discovered for all of the new work which was being started. The reply was, "We prayed for God to provide leaders, and He has." There should be a plan from the beginning for training leaders of a new work.

### When to Constitute a Mission into a Church

The question of when a mission should be constituted into a church frequently arises. No definite rule or standard can be suggested which will apply to all situations,

*List the pitfalls to be avoided by a church establishing a new work.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your list with the text.)*

*A principle to remember in sponsoring missions is maturity comes by assuming r \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(responsibility)*

*Two concerns in a new work are:*

1. *winning people to Christ*
2. *training those with 1 \_\_\_\_\_ ability.*

*(leadership)*

but three suggestions may be helpful. (1) The mission is ready to be constituted into a church when it has stable leadership to guide it in positive growth. Trained leaders for a fully organized church should not be expected. The responsibility of the pastor is to develop leaders. There should be, however, enough mature adults in the membership to give stability to the new group. (2) The mission is ready to become a church when the members are united in serving Christ. If groups within the mission are divided, the sponsoring church should strive to bring about harmony and spiritual agreement. The future progress of the mission will be dependent on the degree of fellowship and spirituality it possesses. (3) A mission should be permitted to become a church when the Holy Spirit leads in this direction. No church is perfect; therefore, the sponsoring church should not expect the mission to be functioning perfectly before it is given its freedom and responsibility. Faith in the ability of God to work His will through guidance by His Spirit must be exercised.

If the sponsoring church provides a large part of the finances and leaders in establishing a new work, the chances are that the time will be prolonged before the mission is ready to become a church, especially if the mission is located in an economically deprived area. The length of time involved is dependent on the potential leadership qualities of those reached within the community and the effectiveness of leadership training.

### Steps in Constituting a Mission into a Church

#### Adopting a church covenant

Many churches have doctrinal creeds which the members are obligated to affirm. If they embrace doctrines (interpretations of Scripture) contrary to those set forth in the creed, they are judged as heretics and excommunicated. Other churches have covenants and articles of faith which summarize teachings of the Bible. These summaries serve as a unifying point for those who hold similar beliefs and join together in the fellowship of the church. These beliefs are not considered to be dogmas which are used to judge a person's doctrine.

A covenant and articles of faith are intended to respect the doctrines of the priesthood of believers and the sufficiency of the Scripture. The priesthood of believers means that each person is capable of being guided by the Holy Spirit to interpret the Scripture according to the will of God. No dogma which demands a person to believe a certain doctrinal interpretation is needed since the unity of the church is based on the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God and the confidence that the Spirit will guide each believer to interpret the Scripture according to

*A mission is usually ready to become a church when--*

1. *It has stable \_\_\_\_\_.*
2. *The members are united in serving \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *The \_\_\_\_\_ leads it to become a church.*

*(1. Leadership, 2. Christ, 3. Holy Spirit)*

*Match:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>creed</i></li> <li>2. <i>covenant</i></li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>summarizes teachings of the Bible and serves as unifying point for those of similar belief</i></li> <li>b. <i>doctrines one is obligated to affirm to be a member of a certain church</i></li> </ol> |
|---|---|

*(1--b, 2--a)*

the mind of Christ. Those who hold this view do not conclude that all believers will be in absolute agreement.

Since a church covenant sets forth concisely the teachings of the Bible regarding the Christian life, new churches need to adopt a covenant as a guide for their members. Each member should be invited to accept the stipulations of the covenant. The following covenant gives the basis on which persons relate in a church fellowship. It sets forth a Christian's responsibilities for the advancement of the church, stewardship, family life, conduct in the world, love of others, and church membership.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Approving articles of faith

While the covenant focuses on conduct, the articles of faith focus on doctrine. The following essential doctrines should be included and agreed upon by the members of a new church:

1. The Bible is the divinely-inspired, written Word of God; it is God's revelation of Himself to man and is the authoritative guide for man in spiritual matters.
2. The one, eternal, and supreme God is known in the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father who reigns with providential care over His universe; God the Son who died for man's sins and arose for his justification; and God the Holy Spirit who is the abiding power and presence of God.

A church covenant sets forth the teachings of the \_\_\_\_\_ regarding the \_\_\_\_\_

A church needs a covenant as a \_\_\_\_\_ for its \_\_\_\_\_.

(Bible, Christian life, guide, members)

Match by drawing lines.

- |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| 1. covenant          | a. doctrine |
| 2. articles of faith | b. conduct  |

(1--b, 2--a)

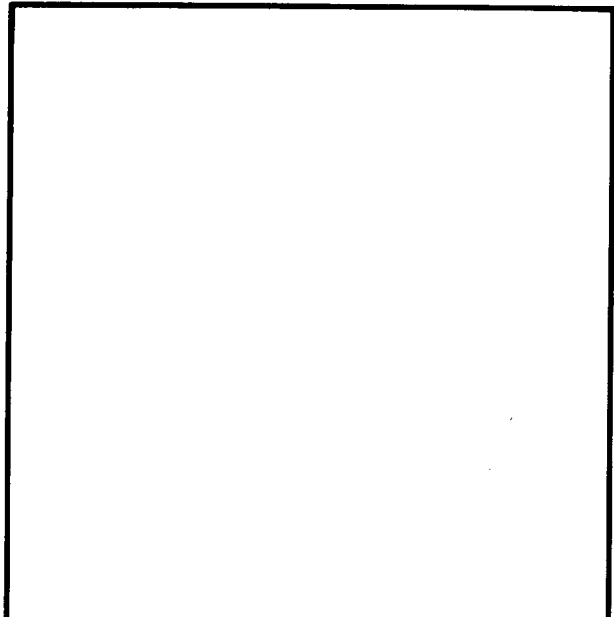
Be prepared to list the ten doctrines which should be defined in the articles of faith when you have finished reading about them.

3. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and the Saviour and Lord of man; He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for man's sin, arose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will return visibly.
4. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and third person of the Trinity. He is equal with the Father and the Son. He convicts of sin, regenerates, and endows the Christian with power to live righteously and to serve effectively.
5. Man is the creation of God and responsible to his Creator. By free choice he sinned against God and brought condemnation upon himself.
6. Salvation is the work of God through Christ and is graciously offered to man who receives it when he repents of sin and commits himself in trust and surrender to Jesus as Saviour and Christ.
7. Baptism is by immersion. Only those who have received Christ as Saviour and Lord through faith can scripturally be baptized. It is the outward expression of faith in Christ and the means of identification as a disciple of Christ.
8. The Lord's Supper is the second ordinance which pictures Christ's death by using the symbolic elements of bread and wine to represent His flesh and blood.
9. The church is a fellowship of those who have experienced salvation, who have followed Christ in baptism, and who have been guided by God's Spirit to unite with others in the corporate worship and service of Christ. Each church is autonomous under the leadership of God's Spirit but is guided to cooperate voluntarily with other churches in the work of Christ.
10. Every Christian is chosen by Christ to minister in some capacity and has been equipped by God's Spirit for carrying out his responsibilities in doing God's will.

Additional doctrines such as election, regeneration, justification, perseverance, and the priesthood of believers could be included in the articles of faith. The previous ten have been presented as the basic and fundamental beliefs of a Christian fellowship. Without some doctrinal agreement, a fellowship of believers is not possible.

**Preparing a constitution and by-laws**

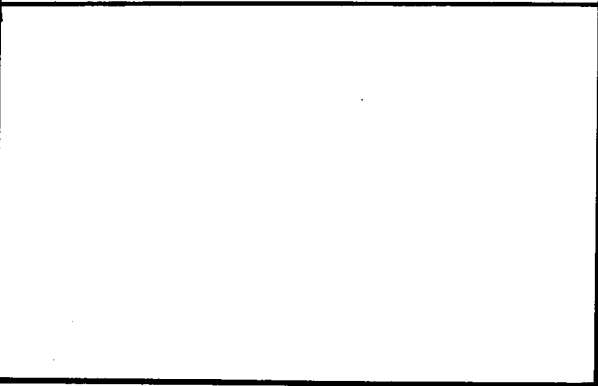
Each church should have a simple constitution and by-laws to give guidance and to maintain order in its business meeting. Before a mission is constituted into a



*When you have finished reading the ten doctrines which should be defined in the articles of faith, list them as you remember them.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

*(Refer to the text for any you may have omitted.)*



church, the sponsoring church should lead in the approval and adoption of a constitution and by-laws. The church constitution may include the following items:

1. Preamble: a statement of the purpose of the church.
2. Name.
3. Church covenant.
4. Articles of faith.
5. Church government. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches of like faith.

The by-laws should include the following articles:

1. Membership

(1) *Qualifications*: The membership of this church shall consist of persons whose profession of faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour has been recognized as genuine by other members of the church and whose baptism as a symbol of death to sin and resurrection to the new life in Christ is by immersion.

(2) *Duties*: Members are ministers of Christ who are responsible for carrying out the commission of Christ through the church.

(3) *Membership termination*: When members move to another area, they may apply for membership in another church of like faith on promise of a letter of recommendation from their former church. Members may be dismissed from the church by vote of the majority of active members for moral actions which bring reproach upon the church and the cause of Christ.

2. Church officers

(1) *Pastor*

- a. The procedure for his selection
- b. His qualifications
- c. His duties
- d. His authority
- e. The manner of his termination of office

(2) *Deacons*

- a. The procedure for their selection
- b. Their qualifications
- c. Their duties
- d. The time of their service and the manner of termination

Why should a church have a constitution and by-laws? \_\_\_\_\_

(to guide and maintain order in business meetings)

The by-laws should have an article dealing with membership \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and how membership is \_\_\_\_\_.

(qualifications, duties, terminated)

Another article in the by-laws should set forth the officers, their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, how they are to be \_\_\_\_\_ and their term of office or how their services are to be \_\_\_\_\_.

(qualifications, duties, selected, terminated)

(3) *Other officers and their duties*

- a. Moderator
- b. Clerk
- c. Treasurer
- d. Financial secretary
- e. Music director
- f. Chairman of ushers
- g. Bible study director
- h. Training director
- i. Women's missionary leader
- j. Men's missionary leader

(4) *Employees and staff members*

- 3. Committees (membership, chairman, and duties of each)
- 4. Church finances
  - (1) Procedure for approving the church budget
  - (2) Regulations for spending church funds
  - (3) Requirements for reporting financial transactions to the church
- 5. Regular meetings
  - (1) Worship
  - (2) Business
- 6. Amendments

Only a skeleton outline of a church constitution has been given. The different articles suggest the items which should be included in a constitution. Some churches will desire to have a rather extensive constitution, while others will keep it to a minimum outline. The constitution should be elaborate enough to make clear the procedure for carrying on church activities and assigning responsibilities. On the other hand, a constitution should not be expected to contain specific rules for every situation.

**Planning the formal organization service**

The need for organizing a new church arises when (1) a mission which has been sponsored by another church has matured and desires to become an independent and functioning church or (2) a group of Christians who are not connected to any particular church desires to be organized into a church. If there is a sponsoring church, its congregation should formally approve the organization of the new church and pledge its support to it. The time and place for the service are then set and invitations are sent to persons interested in becoming members of the new church. Members of the sponsoring church are invited also to participate in the service of organization.

Since the order of service is an act of worship in which the church is committed to the will of God, a call to worship, appropriate Scriptures, a hymn of adoration, and an invocation should be included. A formal statement of

An article should be included listing \_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_.

(committees, duties)

There should be an article dealing with finances and how they are to be r \_\_\_\_\_ and r \_\_\_\_\_.

There should be an article setting forth the regular \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.

An article should set forth how the constitution may be a \_\_\_\_\_.

(regulated, reported, meetings, amended)

When it has been determined that a mission should be organized into a church, the sponsoring church should--

- 1. formally \_\_\_\_\_ the organization
- 2. set the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for the organization service
- 3. send invitations to those who will be involved--the \_\_\_\_\_ of the new church.

(1. approve; 2. time, place; 3. members)

the purpose of the meeting, the sponsoring church's approval, and a resolution by those forming the new church should be made. Those forming the membership may read together the following resolution or one similar to it:

Resolved, that we who are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, believing that it is God's will for us to establish a church, do solemnly enter into covenant to become an organized fellowship for the purpose of worshipping God, witnessing to His saving grace, living as Christians in the world, and ministering to the needs of people wherever we observe such needs, to the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Appropriate Scriptures to read include: Matthew 16:13-28; 28:18-20; John 15:1-17; Acts 1:1-8; 2:37-47; Romans 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 12; 13; Ephesians 4:1-12; Colossians 3:1-17. A brief sermon on the church and the responsibility of the members to one another and to lost persons may be given. The names of those who have indicated a desire to become a part of the new fellowship may be read, and they may be invited to stand for the reading of the covenant. A special prayer of dedication and commitment for the new church is then given. Those who have covenanted together to form the membership may then adopt a constitution, which includes the covenant, articles of faith, and by-laws. If no constitution and by-laws have been prepared, a committee should be appointed to work on them. The new church should elect a leader or pastor. The service may conclude with a hymn of dedication and benediction.

*Give an order of service which could be used for the organization of a new church.*

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## Home Study Exercise

**Basic assignment** (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide content, answer the following questions.

1. Define missions. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. List three factors to consider in determining the need for a new church. \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin M. Segler, *The Broadman Minister's Manual* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1968), p. 83.

3. List four guiding principles in establishing new churches. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name four ways to begin a new mission or church. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name two possible financial and personnel sources for starting new work. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did the strategy of the church at Antioch differ from contemporary strategy in starting mission work?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What should be emphasized in a new work from the beginning? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. List four advantages of beginning a new work under the supervision of a sponsoring church. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. List five pitfalls to avoid in the establishment of a new work. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. List three suggestions for determining when a mission should be constituted into a church. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What is a church covenant and why have one? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Name ten doctrines that should be defined in the articles of faith. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. List six articles which should be included in the by-laws. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. What action should be taken by the sponsoring church before the organizational service? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Supplementary assignment (Levels 2 and 3).** Read pages 1-27 in *The Churchbook* by Dobbins and answer the following questions.

1. Name three characteristics of a good location for a new church.
2. What should be the relation of a church to other churches?

**Advanced assignment (Level 3).**

Outline a constitution and by-laws which would be appropriate for the church where you are a member.

### Seminar Discussion

1. The word *comity* is used to describe the agreement of ecumenical churches to assign each population area to only one denomination and to encourage members of other denominations in that area to attend the one ecumenical church. Should evangelical churches respect and abide by such an agreement? If so, under what conditions?
2. Are more churches needed in your area? What can be done to establish new churches even though your finances are limited?
3. What are the advantages of a church's adopting a constitution and by-laws?
4. What are the differences between a creed and articles of faith, and why should a church adopt articles of faith instead of a creed?
5. What is a covenant and why should a church have one?
6. Who should determine whether or not a new church should be established?