

LESSON 7 Practical Advice on Church Planting

After discussing the biblical mandate and theory of church planting, it is time to ask the question, “OK, now what do I do?” In this lesson we will discuss the practical matters of church planting. Under examination are various models for church planting as well as the practical considerations and steps necessary to start a new church.

lesson outline

Has God Called Me To Be A Church Planter?

What Should I Know Before I Begin?

How Have Others Done It?

Steps To Follow

The Role of Media

Other Helpful Materials

lesson objectives

When you complete this lesson, you should be able to:

1. Determine whether or not God is calling you to start a church.
2. Articulate what the new church will be like.
3. Discuss the various methodologies available to plant a new church.
4. Indicate the practical process of starting a new church.
5. Describe the use of media in modern ministry.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson and do the exercises in the lesson development. Check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson.
2. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers carefully with the answers given in the back of this textbook. Review any items you answer incorrectly.

lesson development

HAS GOD CALLED ME TO BE A CHURCH PLANTER?

Objective 1. *Determine whether or not God is calling you to start a church.*

Some people set out on the process of church planting without much planning or forethought, and often the result is failure. This is discouraging to the Christian worker and is a poor testimony to the community.

Before beginning any project of this nature it is necessary to ask ourselves some fundamental questions: Has God called me to do this? Do I have the giftings necessary to be a church planter? We as believers are expected to serve with excellence. The scriptures tell us that “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). This should especially apply to the concept of starting new churches.

The planting of a new church is a sophisticated process and not one for the faint of heart. It is commonly thought that a church is started by holding public services when in fact this is the end of a lengthy, well-thought-out process.

The scriptures offer practical wisdom by admonishing us to consider the cost before we begin building (Luke 14:28). Before beginning the process of starting a new church it is necessary to go through serious soul searching.

Application

1 In your notebook, write the following questions and prayerfully answer each one. If you are married include your spouse in this process.

Self-Evaluation Survey

- a)** Do I have definite call to pastoral ministry?
- b)** Is my call to this specific community?
- c)** Do I have the gift of evangelism?

- d)** What actual, verifiable spiritual gifts do I possess, which will enable me to reach this community?
- e)** Do I have a support system for starting a new church?
- f)** Can I build a church planting team, and if so, how?
- g)** Do wise and knowledgeable persons verify that I am gifted for church planting?
- h)** Does my spouse share the sense of call to plant this church, and have we discussed the financial pressures and spiritual strength necessary to endure difficulty in this task?
- i)** Will I ask others to help support me for a time or will I be self-supporting?
- j)** If others are to support me, why should they support me?
- k)** Will this new church relate strongly to a denomination or organization?
- l)** Do I understand the needs of the community?
- m)** Do I know what style of worship music is most acceptable to the target group?
- n)** Do I have a strategy for property, first facilities and staff?
- o)** How much will property cost to purchase or rent in the area?
- p)** How much will the first building cost?
- q)** Have I estimated salaries, benefits, rent, utilities, materials, special events, printing, advertising, and mission contributions for the first three years?
- r)** Do I have a backup strategy should my first strategy not succeed? (Cheyney 2005)

2 Having answered these questions, how do you feel about your decision to plant a church?

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Advice on Calling

Confirm your call. If you aren't sure that God's calling you to this, don't do it. Yes, it's hard

work, but spiritually it is work at the “pointy end” of God’s Kingdom and you will encounter difficulty, hardship, opposition. That stuff can either shape you and mold you in to someone more fruitful or it will kill you. I would definitely recommend getting your call to plant confirmed by more seasoned and wise men— via a network or denomination or the like— before you launch out. (Chant 2007)

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE I BEGIN?

Objective 2. *Articulate what the new church will be like.*

Philosophy of Ministry

A biblical philosophy of ministry is a set of non-negotiable, biblical principles that guides all the choices and decisions in your ministry. Your philosophy of ministry should be drawn from a careful investigation of both the explicit teaching of Scripture and any implicit methodologies which can be gleaned from seeing how ministry occurred in the early church. (Philosophy of Ministry)

It is a misguided perception of church planting to hold public meetings without first knowing where the church is supposed to be headed. Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. Each church is to be a unique expression of the bride of Christ. If you simply take off headlong into the future without forethought of what this new church’s role is to be in the Kingdom, you will never live up to the potential that the Lord has given you. As a result, the church will not fulfill its role.

God has a plan already laid out for the church you are going to start. He knows where they will meet, what segment of the population it is to reach, the types of ministries it is to offer, etc. You must first hear from God in prayer concerning the who, what, when, where, and how. Then you must do the hard work of thinking things through. He who goes off in all directions

ends up nowhere. Believers often erroneously think that being spiritual and being philosophical are opposing concepts. But God expects His children to do their best at everything.

Before the church is officially started, the church planting team should have a good picture of what the new congregation will be like. The church planter and or church planting team should have clearly defined their target group, the style of ministry and worship the church will use to minister to its people, and the purpose of this particular church. They should have a clearly defined statement of theological beliefs upon which the church will be built, and the values that the church will embrace from the pastor all the way to the newest believer.

You must know what you are all about. If not, those who come in will determine what the church believes and becomes, how it operates and who it reaches. Most of all, it is imperative that we are faithful to the scriptures. While it is true that methods do change with generations and cultures, some core principles will never change. We must build our ministries around those values.

Application

3 In your notebook, write a paragraph describing what group of people you wish to reach. Include what style of ministry and worship would be appropriate for this people group.

The Purpose of the Church

Each church has its own purpose. This may sound a bit odd but think about it for a moment. Of course, all churches are to win the lost and make disciples but God also has a unique role for each local assembly to fulfill as well.

Ask yourself: What is it that God is saying to my heart? What is to be the driving force of the church? What is that one thing that everyone should rally around? Why does God want this church started?

Too many churches wander from philosophy to philosophy without any clear sense of where they are going. This will take the church nowhere and cause the people to lose confidence in their leader. It is hard to build a fruitful church if the people do not have a singular sense of why they are there and what this particular local body’s God-given purpose is.

Before starting something and asking God to bless our efforts we need to take the time to find out what God desires to do and follow His lead. For the pastor, the leaders, and the congregation to have a good grasp on what this new church will be about, time should be spent putting on paper the vision, the values, and the beliefs that the new congregation will embrace. This is not a quick and easy process but one that requires much prayer, discussion, and writing to craft a clear, concise document. This effectively places a picture of the future church on paper. This will place the leadership and core group of believers on the same track and serve as a good foundation for the new church.

The writing of this document will save much time, money, and effort because it empowers the leadership to say no and to avoid distractions that are outside of the vision, core values, and doctrine of the church.

It may help you to see what other churches have written as their purpose statement. You can find many purpose statements by going online and typing in “church purpose statement” in a search engine window.

Application

4 Considering the church you wish to plant, describe what particular purpose or role this new church is to play in the body of Christ of your community.

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The Beliefs of the Church

If the core biblical beliefs of the church are not properly processed, written out, and agreed upon from the beginning, people who join your fellowship may seek to impose their own values and doctrines on others. This can bring confusion and disharmony. A written statement of doctrine read and signed by all members will allow for unity and biblical discipline if and when necessary.

Stetzer (2006) wrote, “Our beliefs are those primary issues of theology that define what we believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, the Bible, the role of the Church, and salvation.” To construct a belief statement you may observe the work of other churches by searching online under “church doctrinal statements.”

Application

5 Create a brief doctrinal statement that will guide the life of the newly-planted church.

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HOW HAVE OTHERS DONE IT?

Objective 3. *Discuss the various methodologies available to plant a new church.*

While in some parts of the world inviting people to a public crusade can easily launch a new church, this is not the norm in most places today. When planting a new church, gathering a core group of believers to serve as workers, musicians, teachers, prayer partners, and financial supporters is of utmost importance. To do this you must build relationships with the community at large. We will examine just a few ways in which this can be done.

1. **HIVING OFF:** If the new church plant is part of the mission strategy of an existing church, members with the blessing of the mother congregation can be sent with the church planter to serve as a nucleus of the new church. This can propel the church forward much more quickly. One drawback is that some old traditions also come with believers from an established church which could inhibit a creative new approach of ministry as well as the potential for the church to be inward focused from its inception.

2. **HOME BIBLE STUDIES:** Another good way to begin ministering in a new area is to invite neighbors and other interested persons to an individual's home for informal weekly Bible studies. In this way a nucleus can be formed with no financial outlay and no need for rented facilities. This informal setting allows for personal interaction, giving the seeker the opportunity to ask questions and be discipled.

3. **DOOR-TO-DOOR PRAYER:** The team goes from door to door in the target area meeting people and asking if there is anything they can pray with them about. This method of gathering a core group is simple and effective as people are eager to share their anxieties and troubles with someone who has a sympathetic heart. Sometimes people will share their life story with a team member. As time goes along and people's prayers are answered, opportunities to share Christ and bring them to the Lord will naturally arise. These people over time become part of the core of the newly forming church.

4. **CHILDREN'S EVENTS:** Vacation Bible Schools and Sidewalk Sunday Schools are great ways to win children to Jesus Christ. Touch a child and you touch a family. Parents are moved when someone loves and blesses their children. Special events geared toward ministering to children are a great way to build relationships and a sense of community. As people are exposed to your ministry to know the team and appreciate the newly forming church's love for the community they will begin to trust you.

5. SPECIAL EVENTS: Find out what the needs of your community are and create events to meet those needs in order to meet people and pray with them. This creates friendships and trust, which are valuable commodities for a newly forming church (Wagner 1990).

One church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma (USA) holds an annual “Day of Hope.” The people who come register by giving their name and contact information, and they receive free clothing and food. Also available to the public are health screenings and haircuts, all at no cost. As people are guided through the process, they are struck by the love and care shown to them. Attendees have the opportunity to have believers pray with them, and they are given a complimentary Bible as a parting gift. This event created a great sense of appreciation and trust from the local community.

When considering the process of church planting, one must keep in mind that there are many ways in which it can be approached. God is creative, so must His servants be. Because one method worked in a certain area does not mean that it will work in yours. Cultures differ from region to region and sometimes from town to town. The planter would also do well to remember that just because church planting has always been done one way in your area does not mean that a different approach will not work just as well or even better. Culture is living and as time passes cultures change and so must our methods in order to remain relevant and effective.

The following are church planting strategies suggested by www.newchurches.com:

1. Parachute: A planter and his or her family move into a new location to start a church from scratch. This is perhaps the most common method and one which most people think of when they think of church planting.

2. Sponsoring Church or Organization/Mother Church: “An existing church or church planting organization provides the initial leadership and resources (dollars and/or people) to get a new church started including the selection of the church

planter. Often the church planter is selected from within the organization and has already bought into the vision, values and beliefs of the sponsoring organization.”

This is an excellent method of church planting widely used around the world. This method allows the new church planter to have an experienced pastor mentoring him or her as well as the financial and prayer support of an established congregation. Often the church board of the mother church will function as the board of the new church until such time as deacons can be raised up from within the new congregation, providing seasoned leadership and accountability from the start.

3. Collaborative Network/Partnership: “This is a rapidly growing trend where an organization (or many organizations) committed to church planting work together to plant churches.” This is a great way for small churches to be involved in the process of church planting. Through sharing the load with other churches to mother new congregations several small churches working together can accomplish what they never could have working alone.

4. Satellite/Campus/Multi-site: “An existing church opens new locations. The idea is for one church to have many meeting locations.” Utilizing this method an existing church can start a new church without having to find, train, or pay new pastors or staff. One ministry team can minister in multiple locations over the course of a weekend (New Churches).

Think outside of tradition regarding the time and location of meetings. Sunday is the ideal for weekly services, but as one reaches out to a particular group of people the planter may discover that for unforeseen reasons such as work schedules or other obstacles, the target group can meet only at a time other than Sundays. Keep in mind as well that services do not necessarily have to happen in a “church” building to be effective. The church is not a building; it is the people.

In establishing a congregation among Filipino immigrants in Moscow, Russia, one group discovered that many of the Filipinos were unable to attend services on Sundays. The only

time during the week they could meet was late on Friday nights at their place of employment. Upon securing permission from the employer, a ministry to Filipinos was started at 9:00 on Friday nights at their place of employment. This group quickly grew because the church was designed to meet their needs.

It is imperative that the new church be built around the target culture instead of the culture having to adapt to religious tradition. As the planter strives to birth new churches one must keep in mind that the object of one's ministry efforts is unchurched people. We are striving to impart the Gospel not church tradition.

Advice on Flexibility

Things will not go the way you think they will go. That's ok. God is up to something. He'll let you in on it when He's ready. Pray every day for the strength to handle whatever situations might come up. (Payne)

The International Church Concept

Another effective church planting concept is that of a multi-congregational multilingual church. All around the world communities are becoming increasingly diverse due to ease of transportation, the globalization of economies, educational opportunities, and so forth.

In larger cities pockets of immigrants tend to find each other and form sub-communities within the larger context maintaining their distinct language and culture. This essentially isolates these people groups from the Gospel witness available to the community at large. It is vital that Christian workers have a clear understanding of this trend and address it with their church planting efforts.

In the multicultural or international church model an existing church intentionally seeks to connect with and minister to other ethnic and language groups located within their city. As these people come into the mother congregation, the church will

provide translation of services into their language and over time a new congregation is birthed to facilitate this growing language group. Leaders are then trained to pastor the new congregation who either moves to a new location of their own or continues to be a part of the mother church. With this concept it is possible on a weekend to have many services between Friday evening and Sunday evening. The pastor of the mother congregation serves as the Senior Pastor for the entire multi-congregational church and the pastors of the individual groups serve as associate pastors. The official Board of deacons is comprised of members from each of the congregations, and expenses and responsibilities are divided among the groups depending on their ability.

Application

6 Make a list of three church planting methods you think might work in your area. Describe how you would adapt one of these methods to make it work in your culture.

STEPS TO FOLLOW

Objective 4. *Indicate the practical process of starting a new church.*

Tom Cheyney, J. David Putman, and Van Sanders of the North American Mission Board outlined seven steps to follow in the church planting process.

1. Receive a Vision from God

Sometimes we ministers think of a vision for ministry as our own. However, as Christians we should seek to find and fulfill God's will, not our own. Starting a church is not our idea but God's. Have you ever thought that God wants to incorporate you in His project, not the other way around? Seek God in prayer, and allow Him to give you His vision. He is already at work. Your responsibility is to find out what He is up to and participate with that vision. If you do you will be a success.

ADVICE ON VISION

“Don’t compromise your vision. If you believe you have a vision for a church from God, hold on to it and don’t compromise it for short term gain. What I mean is this, in the early days you will have some Christian folk come across your path who will want in, but they will want in on their terms or with their agenda. The issues might not be huge, but I can’t tell you how important it is to ensure you are absolutely clear and upfront with everyone on where you stand. If it means a smaller core, or you wait longer before commencing a ministry or filling a position—WAIT. We all want things done yesterday, but unless they are fully on board with the vision it is a false economy.” (Chant 2007)

2. Define Church Planting Focus Group

Just as it is important to define the purpose and beliefs of the new church before beginning so it is also of great importance to discover just who God wants you to reach. Often our communities are segmented by race, religion, socio-economics, lifestyles, etc. It is wise for the church planter to realize that he or she cannot reach everyone with one style of ministry. So it is necessary to focus on a particular group of people, whether it is one particular neighborhood, people group, language group, or else.

ADVICE ON CONTEXTUALIZATION

“Know your Target. Buy the demographic data and live in the area. Determine who you will best reach and develop a basic plan to reach them. Don’t over-program! Spend significant time hanging around them. Join the groups they have joined. Love them, don’t treat them as a project. Pray for them every single day!” (Payne).

3. Develop a Church Planting Team

“In order for the project to be successful the church planter must recruit others to aid in the work. There are a myriad of jobs to be performed each week and one person simply cannot accomplish it all. It is imperative therefore to develop a church planting team in order to carry this out. The team can be made up of people from a mother church assisting in the church plant, new believers who have joined the core, family, friends, and ministry colleagues who have come along side to help.”

The size of a church planting team will vary greatly from situation to situation. Sometimes the team consists of as few as the new pastor and his family or as many as one or two hundred people who are sent from a mother church to serve as the core for a new church. In any case it is important that the church planter have as many people helping as possible.

Divide your workers into teams based on skills and interests. Everyone can do something. Divide the work, and invest time and knowledge into your workers.

If at all possible the church planter should bring on the team a music/worship leader and a spiritual development pastor. Music is a critical part of the life of the church. As you begin the process of planning, pray specifically for the Lord to send you people who can fill these critical roles.

ADVICE ON GOING IT ALONE

“Surround yourself with wise counselors. Take to heart the following two passages from Proverbs: “For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” (24:6) and “Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment” (18:1). You need to surround yourself with counselors. You need to seek out both “fathers” and “brothers.” A father is an older counselor that has been through the fire and can pastor you with his wisdom.

A brother is a person close to you in age and maturity who can relate to your struggle in the “now sense” and can challenge/encourage you in the battle. You should seek counselors from within your network/denomination and without.” (Foster 2007)

4. Identify Resources

In the early planning stages the church planting team should think through realistically what start up costs are going to be involved. Costs depend on what type of church model you use, how many tithe-paying believers you already have in your core, etc.

Set up a budget which includes everything you can think of. Search online to see what others have included in their church planting budgets. Some financial considerations for the first year are: salary for the church planter, rent of a suitable facility, cost of utilities for the facility, musical and sound equipment, promotional costs of literature, special events, etc.

5. Evangelize Unreached People

The purpose of a new church is to bring the lost to Christ, not to attract believers from other churches.

6. Launch Public Ministry

It is advisable not to begin public services until you have a core group that is committed to Christ and to the new church plant.

During the planning stages as you consider who you will be ministering to, what kinds of ministry you will be providing, etc. consider what kind of facilities the church is going to use. When we think about facilities for the church to meet in we tend to think of buying land and constructing a new church building on the site. If funds are available this method is, of course, preferable, but there are many other types of locations in which the church can meet. Schools, hotel conference rooms, shopping center store fronts, theaters,

community centers, hotels, etc. all make good meeting places. These alternate locations can offer unforeseen advantages that traditional church buildings lack because they force the church to be in the market place of society much more than a traditional “religious” building. Churches tend to become more internally focused and isolated from society the older they get. Remember, the reason the church is being planted is to infiltrate society with the gospel and illustrate biblical life to our culture. The fewer barriers we put between us and society at large the better for them to experience the gospel and for us to be pushed into sharing it.

When considering facilities your church will use, visualize how you want your church to interact with society. Since you are going to be a church planter, you need to see yourself as an innovator. You are going to create something that has never existed before. Why use your creativity and innovation to create a traditional church where the lost are forced to come to the church. Take the church to the lost.

7. Mobilize and Multiply Ministry

If the new church is to grow and be healthy, systems must be set in place for the church to focus continually on evangelism and discipleship. There must be a system of leadership training in place to move members into ministry and leadership. There is a tendency once the church is several years old for the members to sit back while the staff and a very small portion of the members are involved in ministry. Once this mentality begins the church is on a downhill slide from which it is difficult to recover (Seven Steps 2003).

Application

7 If you were to begin a church plant today, who would you have on your team? In your notebook, write the names of people who could be a part of your church planting team and what role each of them would play.



THE ROLE OF MEDIA

Objective 5. *Describe the use of media in modern ministry.*

Ipods, cell phones, television, movies, and the internet are major driving forces in the modern world. The learning style of most cultures of our day is less oral and much more visual.

One very effective way of getting the Gospel out is the internet. Even if people do not own a computer, internet cafes have made them accessible in most places. Creating a website, blogging, or using social networking sites such as FaceBook and MySpace are all great ways to get out information. There are a number of websites where you can set up a blog absolutely free.

These tools allow you to communicate and interact with the public. You can post pictures, mp3 sound files, and videos on the internet for free. Many people who might not come to a church will go to an internet site and read, watch and listen to the gospel presented by your team. With a simple email address on your site you can correspond with the viewers in a non-threatening way, witnessing to and discipling them.

Because media is such a huge part of modern culture we would be remiss if we did not include it as part of the modern worship service. Using PowerPoint presentations, videos, and object lessons will greatly increase the interest and learning of your people. Jesus was a master of illustrated lessons.

As with all material you study, the methods delineated in this lesson should be adapted to your local context. Some things will not work in your local situation because of certain restrictions or cultural barriers. However, many of these concepts can be contextualized and implemented. Ask the Lord how to proceed. He already has a plan. Your job is to discover that plan and follow His leading.

OTHER HELPFUL MATERIALS

Below are resources you may be interested in obtaining if you are serious about church planting. Read at least one book a month and continue to be a learner and innovator your whole ministerial life. Prayerfully seek the Lord about the ideas you discover in your readings. He may prompt you to implement some of them. Or God may want you to modify some of the ideas to better fit your context. Never be satisfied with yesterday's results. Believe God for great things!

Suggested Books

- Collins, James, and Jerry Porras. 1994. *Built to Last*. New York: Harper Business.
- Collins, Jim. 2001. *From Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*. New York: Harper Collins.
- George, Carl. 1991. *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co.
- George, Carl, and Warren Bird. 1994. *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell.
- Gerber, Michael. 1995. *The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*. New York: Harper Business.
- Hybels, Bill. 2002. *Courageous Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Jones, Tom, et al. *Church Planting From the Ground Up*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. 1992. *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Nebel, Tom, and Gary Rohrmayer. 2004. *Church Planting Landmines*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources.
- Rainer, Thom. 2003. *The Unchurched Next Door*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- . 2001. *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Russell, Bob and Rusty. 2000. *When God Builds a Church: 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church*. West Monroe,

- LA: Howard Publishing Co.
- Stetzer, Ed. 2006. *Planting Missional Churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Wagner, Peter. 1998. *The New Apostolic Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- . 1990. *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- Warren, Rick. 1995. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Suggested Websites

www.churchplantingvillage.com

www.newchurches.com

<http://churchplanting4me.com/churchplantingresources.htm>

self-test

- 1** A person needs a specific calling to plant a church.
 - a)** True
 - b)** False

- 2** Philosophy of Ministry is defined as
 - a)** a set of unchangeable principles that guide the life of the church.
 - b)** the way the church planters feel about church life.
 - c)** a blend of philosophy and theology.

- 3** Why do the biblical beliefs of the church need to be written out from the beginning?
 - a)** To keep accurate church records
 - b)** So you will not forget your doctrine.
 - c)** If the leadership team does not define what the church believes, someone else will.

- 4** When considering the process of church planting there are many ways in which it can be approached.
 - a)** True
 - b)** False

- 5** The methods we use must change depending on where we are planting a church.
 - a)** True
 - b)** False

- 6** In order to fulfill the vision for the new church
 - a)** we must plan and think of what our personal vision should be.
 - b)** we should get advice and ideas from several trusted people.
 - c)** we should seek God to find His will and participate in that.

- 7** It is important to know who you are going to minister to before you start a church.
 - a)** True
 - b)** False

8 As a general rule, an effective church planter should start public services

- a)** at the very beginning of the church planting process.
- b)** as soon as the planter has defined his or her ministry philosophy.
- c)** after the planter has formed a core group of believers.

9 Developing a system of leadership training to move members into ministry should be planned for several years later.

- a)** True
- b)** False

10 Using media in ministry

- a)** compromises the church by making us worldly.
- b)** is effective as more cultures today are visual and technological.
- c)** shifts focus away from the Word of God.