

SECTION 1: UNITS

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INTRODUCTION

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this course is to determine the fundamental biblical principles for growing and strengthening (establishing) a church to maturity and developing a strategy for implementing the biblical forms and functions of a church necessary for making and keeping it strong. Specifically, this means that each person studying the course would:

- develop a biblical understanding of Paul's concept of establishing local churches, while discerning the difference between what Paul understood to be normative for all churches in every culture and generation and what he intended to be merely cultural for his time and situation.
- develop a biblical understanding of how the church fits into the overall plan and eternal purposes of God.
- develop a biblical understanding of the philosophy that is to drive the ministry of the church and the guidelines (i.e. "house order") by which each local church is to abide.
- bring all of this biblical understanding together into a contemporary model for establishing local churches in the twenty-first century, including general procedures consistent with Paul's establishing model and normative "house order" instructions.

ROLE OF EACH UNIT

Unit 1: Paul's Concept of Establishing Churches

In this first unit, we will look at Paul's process of establishing churches. One of Paul's highest priorities was establishing the young churches he had founded. He would even leave wide-open doors for the gospel if one of his churches was in serious trouble. He knew that unless the churches that he had founded were firmly established, there would be no way the gospel could progress to new horizons. Paul prayed for the churches, either visited them personally or sent one of the men from his leadership team, and wrote letters. In this unit, we will study his establishing process as well as the letters he used to establish the churches. All of his letters will be examined, in the order he wrote them, to find insights into this process and to determine what he emphasized at different stages in the development of the churches. We will then summarize those insights to use as a guide in establishing churches in the twenty-first century.

Unit 2: Form and Freedom: A New Testament Local Church Is . . .

In this unit, we will try to identify the core elements of a New Testament local church. Much confusion exists when attempting to define a church. Is any group of believers who gather for Bible study or ministry a local church? If not, why not? Are there universal norms that set apart a group of believers and cause them to be called a local church? Are para-church groups churches? We will attempt to describe what makes a group of believers a local church. It is impossible to establish churches in the twenty-first century if we cannot agree on what an established church looks like. Francis Schaeffer's brilliant article will set the pace for the discussion and study, in order to come up with a simple, pure, universal definition of a New Testament local church.

Unit 3: Setting in Order: The Concept of the Household Within the Household of God

In the West, we now live in a technological society rather than a traditional society, which often causes us to conceptualize and organize the church along organizational, utilitarian lines rather than according to the New Testament images of *family* and *community*. Does it matter? In his “household texts,” Paul describes the church as a family, or more accurately a family of families. He builds the entire social structure (house order) of the churches around this concept. Roles and responsibilities are assigned, which are consistent with this idea. The brilliance of this sort of social structure is readily understood and relevant to any culture at any point in history, which is a crucial element in the multiplication of churches and the progress of the gospel. In this unit, we will attempt to summarize the social structure and life of the church into two categories: the individual household and the household of God. They will form the inner structure of our establishing strategy. We will follow the natural order set out in the household texts themselves—in the household: husbands, wives, parents, children, slaves; and in the household of God: ministers of the gospel, elders, deacons, older men, older women, younger women, and younger men, as well as a few special groups.

Unit 4: Additional Guidelines for the Household of God

Building upon the study from Unit 3, in this unit we will comb the Pauline Epistles again, drawing together all the essential guidelines given by Paul to the churches, for them to function as mature households of God. We will examine the following key areas that are important to the household functioning in a harmonious and effective manner: leaders, men and women, handling conflict, assembly meetings, giving and financial matters, widows and special needs, community ministry and life, and relationship with the world.

Unit 5: Establishing Churches in the Twenty-First Century

In this final unit we will attempt to build, from previous studies, a contemporary model for establishing churches in the twenty-first century. The model will include a strategy with general procedures that are consistent with Paul’s establishing model and Paul’s normative instructions for structuring the life and relationships within the church, which is the pillar and support of the truth.

UNIT 1: PAUL'S CONCEPT OF ESTABLISHING CHURCHES

Issue 1: Paul's Concept of Establishing Churches

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 14:21--23
- Acts 15:36--16:5
- Acts 18:22--23
- Ephesians 3:8--10
- Romans 1:8--15; 16:25--27
- 1 Thessalonians 3:1--13; esp. v.2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:17
- Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:14--16

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed
- i. "Paul and His Letters," F.F. Bruce (Advanced)

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. At first glance Paul's missionary activity could appear haphazard and variable to the circumstances he was encountering. However, when closely observed, some patterns seem to appear. To what degree did Paul have a clear strategy as he pursued his missionary activity? Describe core elements of that strategy.
2. According to Paul, what qualities would a church possess if it were "established"? What was the nature of the qualities Paul used to evaluate the maturity and strength of a church? What does today's evangelical culture consider a strong church? How does Paul's understanding of a mature church differ from what people today consider a solid, mature church?
3. To what degree and in what sense are Paul's letters to the churches normative? Describe how Paul considered his own letters and the extent he believed they would serve as normative instructions to all the churches. (Consider specifically his instructions concerning the establishing process and the directives that accompanied them.)

PROJECTS

1. Write a one- to two-page annotated summary of Paul's concept of establishing churches. Include a study of Paul's concept of establishing built around the Greek word *sterizo* (and its cognates), which is found in several of the passages relevant to Issue 1. Also include a summary of Paul's establishing process.

Issue 2: The Purpose of Paul's Letters in the Establishing Process

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Early letters: Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans
- Middle letters written from prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
- Later letters to his key men: 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

Be sure to address each cluster of letters with these questions.

1. Each of Paul's letters is varied in content, in length, in severity, and in many other ways. What was the original purpose of each of Paul's letters? How did he use them in the establishing process?
2. If each of Paul's letters addresses different circumstances that were specific to the churches he was writing to, it would be good to ask if those circumstances were unique to just that particular church, or are they common experiences for all churches? With this question in mind, how do Paul's letters give insight into the process of establishing churches? How do Paul's letters give insight into the order in which churches ought to be established?
3. Philosophies and approaches for growing and maturing churches are abundant in today's church marketplace. Still, it is common to find pastors and church leaders who are at a loss as to how they can really mature their churches. How and to what extent does understanding Paul's establishing process provide a fresh approach for coming up with strategies for establishing a local church?

PROJECTS

1. Write a one- to two-page annotated summary of the contribution of each of Paul's three clusters of letters, to the process of establishing churches. (See "A Chronology of the Apostolic Age" in the Project Examples section on page 35 for the dates and placement of Paul's letters. See "Paul's Concept of Establishing Churches" on page 39 for an example of a completed project.)

Issue 3: Establishing a Church Today

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

None

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. If you were deciding to start a church, how would you begin? What questions would need to be answered? Describe the process that a missionary team would go through when starting a new church?
2. If you were a member of a team responsible for the re-establishing of an existing church, how would you go about the task? Describe the processes and dynamics that you believe would be necessary in order to bring an existing, unestablished church to maturity.

PROJECTS

1. Begin writing a provisional strategy for fully establishing a church by drawing upon the provisional work done in the previous projects. (Don't worry about completeness since this project will be adjusted throughout the course.)
2. (Advanced) Think through the life of the church of which you are a part. Do the leaders have a clear strategy for establishing the church? Is that strategy apparent to you? If you are a part of formal leadership, does your leadership team have a clear strategy for fully establishing the church? Regardless of which question applies to you, attempt to describe that strategy. List the strengths and weaknesses that you have observed.

UNIT 2: FORM AND FREEDOM: A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS . . .

Issue 1: Description of a New Testament Local Church

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 2:42–47; 13:1–16:5; 20:17–38
- 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus
- (Study also the various references in the article by Francis Schaeffer that is associated with this unit.)

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- b. "Form and Freedom in the Church," Francis Schaeffer
- *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, by Gene A. Getz, pp. 32–46, 56–68, 83–107 (Advanced—not included in Theological Reader)
- *The Community of the King*, by Howard A. Snyder, pp. 45–98, 137–168 (Advanced—not included in Theological Reader)

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. Some believe that a local church can be as simple as a group of Christians in one place. Others see it as more complex and involved than that. What makes a local church a local church? What normative realities must exist for a group of Christians to be called a local church, in any time and in any culture?

PROJECTS

1. Write a one-page annotated description of a New Testament local church. Begin with the phrase "A New Testament Local Church Is . . ." The norms that you write should be written from the perspective that they would be true for all churches, at any time, in any culture. (For an example of a completed project see "Form and Freedom: A New Testament Local Church Is . . ." in the Project Guides and Models section on page 41.)

Issue 2: When Does a Group of Believers Become a Church

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 2:42–47; 13:1–16:5; 20:17–38
- 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus
- (Also study the various references mentioned in the article by Francis Schaeffer that is associated with this unit.)

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

None

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. Would you consider a group of people who gather together for a Bible study or for a specific ministry to be a church? Why or why not?
2. Would you consider a group of believers joining other believers to accomplish a larger ministry project, a church? Why or why not?
3. Would you consider a group of new believers who gather for Bible study and prayer in an area or culture where the gospel has just penetrated to be a church? How about a group of new believers who gather for Bible study in an area where there are several established churches? Would they be considered a church?
4. For each of the above questions, explain the principles and understanding that guided your answers.

PROJECTS

1. Write an argument for when you believe a group of Christians becomes a church. Explain your reasoning and the principles used to support your argument.
2. (Advanced) Evaluate the local church of which you are a part. Does your description of a New Testament local church match that of your church? Write a brief description of where your church differs from your description. Begin praying for these to come in line with each other. Write a brief strategy, from the perspective of your role and responsibilities in the church, of how you can contribute positively to any needed changes.

UNIT 3: SETTING IN ORDER: THE CONCEPT OF THE HOUSEHOLD WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Issue 1: Paul's Job Description

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Ephesians 3:8-11
- Ephesians 5:22-6:9
- 1 and 2 Timothy
- Colossians 3:18-4:1
- Titus

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed
- c. "The Biblical Basis of the Church as a Family," Vern Poythress
- d. "The Family: Key Texts," Stephen Clark
- e. "The Community: Key Texts (1 Timothy 2:8-15)," Stephen Clark
- f. "Roles and Community Structure," Stephen Clark
- j. "Church Leadership: A Biblical and Pragmatic Perspective," Gene A. Getz (Advanced)
- k. "Men and Governmental Positions," Stephen B. Clark (Advanced)
- p. "The Haustafel Tradition in the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Advanced)
- q. "The Household and the Household of God in the Church of the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Advanced)
- s. "The Community as a Family," Robert Banks (Advanced)
- t. "The Community as a Body," Robert Banks (Advanced)

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. What were the core elements of Paul's job description? What role did Paul play in regards to the "administration of the mystery?" Explain why you believe that the concept of "the administration of the mystery" has been largely ignored and not understood in today's church.
2. Explain how and to what degree you believe Paul was fulfilling his job description in his letters to Timothy and Titus? See especially, 1 Tim. 3:14-16, and Titus 1:5.
3. Many of Paul's letters contain structural instructions regarding the family and the church that largely go ignored or are trivialized by today's church. To what extent do you believe Paul's household order instructions for the family and the church are to be normative? What implications do these instructions have for how we organize and manage the household of God today?

PROJECTS

1. Write a one- to two-page explanation of Paul's concept of managing the church that is built around the idea of household order, respecting the individual household and treating the church as a larger household. Be sure to comment and explain how Paul's job description is linked to that household order and its normative nature.

Issue 2: Order in the Household of God

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Ephesians 5:22–6:9
- 1 and 2 Timothy
- Colossians 3:18–4:1
- Titus

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed
- c. "The Biblical Basis of the Church as a Family," Vern Poythress
- d. "The Family: Key Texts," Stephen Clark
- e. "The Community: Key Texts (1 Timothy 2:8–15)," Stephen Clark
- f. "Roles and Community Structure," Stephen Clark
- j. "Church Leadership: A Biblical and Pragmatic Perspective," Gene A. Getz (Advanced)
- k. "Men and Governmental Positions," Stephen B. Clark (Advanced)
- p. "The Haustafel Tradition in the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Advanced)
- q. "The Household and the Household of God in the Church of the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Advanced)
- s. "The Community as a Family," Robert Banks (Advanced)
- t. "The Community as a Body," Robert Banks (Advanced)

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. What are the key social relationships within the home? What are the primary responsibilities of each?
2. What are the key social relationships within the church? What are the responsibilities of each?
3. What implications for managing the church arise from viewing the home as a household within a larger household? How might these concepts affect our understanding of church order and authority? Our ministry strategies? Our concept of counseling and discipline in the church? Our shepherding strategies in the church?

PROJECTS

1. Write an annotated summary of the relationships and responsibilities of each group listed in the household texts. Categorize them according to both individual households (a family) and the household of God (a local church). Follow Paul's categories within those groups: for families—husbands, wives, parents, children, slaves; for churches—ministers of the gospel, elders, deacons, older men, older women, younger women and younger men, and women who assist deacons and widows. (See "Setting in Order the Household of God" in the Project Guides and Models section on page 43, for an example of this completed project.)

2. (Advanced) Evaluate the management structure of your church. Attempt to diagram it. Is it structured as a household? Are individual household structures and authority systems vitally built into its management structure? Does it respect these structures and systems, as well? Are those managing the household of God qualified on the basis of doing a good job managing their own households? Write a brief description of where your church differs from your description of a church in the project above. Begin praying for these to come in line with each other. From the perspective of your role and responsibilities in the church, write a brief strategy of how you can contribute positively to any needed changes.

UNIT 4: ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Issue 1: Household Guidelines

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Leaders:
Acts 6:1-7; 14:23; 20:17-28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 5:17-25; 2 Timothy
- Men and Women:
1 Timothy 2:8-14; 3:4-5; 5:9-10,14-15; 1 Corinthians 11:1-12; 14:34-36; Titus 2:3-5; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-4:1
- Handling Conflict:
Galatians 2:1-14; 5:12-6:5; Acts 15:1-41; 1 Corinthians 5:1-6:11; 2 Corinthians 2:1-14; 7:5-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:5-16; 1 Timothy 5:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:14-26; Titus 1:9-16; 3:9-11; Romans 14:1-15:7; Philippians 4:2-5
- Assembly Meetings:
Acts 11:19-26; 19:8-10; 20:7-12; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 11:17-14:38; Ephesians 5:15-21; 1 Timothy 2:1-15; 4:6-16
- Giving and Financial Matters:
Acts 6:1-7; 11:27-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; Galatians 6:6-10; 1 Timothy 3:3,5; 5:1-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15
- Widows and Special Needs:
Romans 12:13; 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-5; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; Galatians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 5:1-16; Titus 3:12-14; James 1:27; 2:1-13
- Community Life and Ministry:
Romans 12:3-16; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-16
- Relationship with the World:
Titus 2:1-15; 3:1-8; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Peter 3:8-17; 1 Corinthians 9:9-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Romans 13:1-7

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- d. "The Family: Key Texts," Stephen Clark (Men and Women)
- e. "The Community: Key Texts (1 Timothy 2:8-15)," Stephen Clark (Men and Women)
- f. "Roles and Community Structure," Stephen Clark (Men and Women)
- g. "The Puzzling Epistles—Where Are the Exhortations to Witness?" Jim Peterson (Relationship with the World)

- j. "Church Leadership: A Biblical and Pragmatic Perspective," Gene A. Getz (Leaders) (Advanced)
- k. "Men and Governmental Positions," Stephen B. Clark (Men and Women) (Advanced)
- l. "Later Developments of Christian Worship," Ralph P. Martin (Assembly Meetings) (Advanced)
- m. "'Concerning the Collection'—Christian Stewardship," Ralph P. Martin (Giving and Financial Matters) (Advanced)
- n. "Growth and Care of the Community: Leadership and Worship," Dean S. Gilliland (Leaders, Assembly Meetings) (Advanced)
- o. "Growth and Care of the Community: Discipline and Finance," Dean S. Gilliland (Handling Conflict, Giving and Financial Matters) (Advanced)
- p. "The Haustafel Tradition in the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Advanced)
- q. "The Household and the Household of God in the Church of the Pastorals," David C. Verner (Assembly Meetings) (Advanced)
- r. "Conclusion: The Last Supper and the Lord's Supper," I. Howard Marshall (Assembly Meetings) (Advanced)
- s. "The Community as a Family," Robert Banks (Community Life and Ministry) (Advanced)
- t. "The Community as a Body," Robert Banks (Community Life and Ministry) (Advanced)

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

Ask the following questions for each of the areas identified in the Biblical Passages section above. When asking the questions, fill in the blank with each of the areas.

1. Can a set of core normative guidelines for _____ be clearly defined? (Try to create a common set of guidelines or discuss those listed in the Project Examples section.)
2. In what ways do these guidelines for _____ enhance the concept of the church being structured as a family?
3. In your culture, is the church generally following these guidelines for _____ or ignoring them? Are there common problems that arise from ignoring them?
4. What problems arise when the family guidelines for _____ are replaced with organizational guidelines?
5. What problems might arise in the "community of promise" (the church) if the family guidelines for _____ are replaced with the current trends or thoughts of society on that area of community life?

The following questions relate to the specific area identified before each question. Raise these questions, along with the questions above, when that area is being examined.

1. (Leaders) What does this basic social structure tell us about the relationship of heads of households to those entrusted with the care of the household of God—the elders (cf. 1 Tim. 3:4–5)? How might the shepherding structure of the church break down if elders are not in a decision-making position in relation to matters involving the whole church? What might happen in a church when leaders assume responsibilities that are meant for the husband as head of his household?
2. (Men and Women) Do these basic, social-structure guidelines shape our understanding of the relationship of men to women in the church? If so, how? How

- might the management system be affected if men are not in charge of their homes or of the household of God?
3. (Handling Conflict) Why is it crucial that conflict in the church be dealt with? What part do leaders play in handling conflict, and what part do other family members play? What might failing to deal with conflict do to the progress of the gospel?
 4. (Assembly Meetings) What were the gatherings of the early churches like? What were the key elements of their times together? How can the church experience order as it gathers while still building in a structure that allows for a variety of gifts, ministries, and effects?
 5. (Giving and Financial Matters) Is the tithe system carried over from the Law, or is a new system in operation? If the tithe is not our standard, what principle should guide believers in determining the percentage of their giving?
 6. (Widows and Special Needs) What is the church's responsibility for meeting pressing needs? Is it different towards believers than towards nonbelievers?
 7. (Community Life and Ministry) How can the church be freed to allow for a variety of gifts, ministries, and effects to take place in one-another ministry between gathering times, while still respecting the social structure and order established by Paul, especially in the pastorals?
 8. (Relationship with the World) Is there a relationship between following the "household" guidelines and the effectiveness of our witness? What might be some of the implications of not following the social structure guidelines of the household texts?

PROJECTS

1. Write an annotated summary of the core normative household guidelines and implications for the church of the twenty-first century. Include principles and accompanying implications for the church of the twenty-first century for each of the categories listed in the "Biblical Passages" section of this unit. (For an example of this completed project, see "Additional Guidelines for the Household of God" in the Project Guides and Models section on page 47.)
2. Evaluate your church's policy manual or constitution in light of your annotated summary of core guidelines from the above project. List any church policies or practices that are not in line with the household guidelines listed above, and continue to build upon your renewal strategy that you began in the last unit. (These only need to be brief notes, which you will use in the next unit for doing extensive evaluation and strategizing.)

UNIT 5: ESTABLISHING CHURCHES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Issue 1: Procedures in Establishing Churches

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 11:19–26; 16:1–5; 14:21–23; 20:17–38
- 1 Timothy 3:14–15
- Titus 1:5

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. “Paul’s Concept of Establishing,” Jeff Reed
- h. “Building a Renewal Strategy for the Local Church,” Howard Snyder

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. To what extent can we use first-century biblical texts and writings to develop strategies and models for today’s church?
2. Determining what qualifies Christians as mature is confusing for today’s evangelical church. Determining what qualifies as corporate maturity is even more challenging. When do you believe a church is fully established and mature? What qualities, states, characteristics, or achievements should be considered when determining the maturity and strength of a local church?

PROJECTS

1. Assume that you have just found yourself responsible for a large group of new believers, as was the case with Paul and Barnabas in Acts 11. Based on your work in this course, design a strategy for fully establishing the group as a “covenant community” (a local church) in its newfound faith. (For an example of this completed project, see “Establishing a Local Church” in the Project Guides and Models section on page 59.)

Issue 2: Implications of Operating by One Basic Plan

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author's/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 11:19–26; 16:1–5; 14:21–23; 20:17–38
- 1 Timothy 3:14–15
- Titus 1:5

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed
- h. "Building a Renewal Strategy for the Local Church," Howard Snyder

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. Is it possible to articulate Christ's plan (administration, house order, as revealed primarily through Paul) for building His church with enough clarity and confidence that one could challenge the entire community to become one-minded, under one hope, intent on one purpose? If so, discuss the process of achieving that unity, one-mindedness, and that focus on purpose.
2. In light of the diversity that is supposed to exist in the body of Christ, should unity and one-mindedness even be a goal? How does this reflect on the methods and criteria used when evaluating the maturity and strength of a church?

Issue 3: Renewal and Reform of the Twenty-First Century Church

BIBLICAL PASSAGES

When reading the passages, take note to do two very important tasks: (1) read the passage with the intent of determining the Author/author's intended meaning, and (2) study the passage as it relates to the issues and questions proposed.

- Acts 11:19–26; 16:1–5; 14:21–23; 20:17–38
- 1 Timothy 3:14–15
- Titus 1:5

THEOLOGICAL READINGS

- a. "Paul's Concept of Establishing," Jeff Reed
- h. "Building a Renewal Strategy for the Local Church," Howard Snyder

SOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS

1. Is there enough evidence that the church of the twenty-first century, in our culture, needs significant renewal? If so, what evidence points to this needed change?
2. Without exception, introducing change and renewal to existing traditions, forms, and ways of thinking will bring some level of frustration, anxiety, and even conflict. What are some of the cautions we must keep in mind before we set out to affect significant renewal in the life of a church? Discuss some skills and tactics that must be considered to "maintain a spirit of unity in the bond of peace." Discuss how Christ, Paul, and other biblical characters introduced new ideas to people and communities. How can their examples serve us today?
3. What are some of the costs we can expect to pay for seeking to bring a local church or churches back into conformity with Christ's basic plan? Were these costs foreseen in Paul's epistles? Are there community guidelines that provide methods and strategies for accomplishing such tasks and handling the conflict and opposition that may result?

PROJECTS

1. Summarize an essential set of qualities and skills that need to be understood and applied when attempting to establish an existing church. Be sure to address what it would take to accomplish the plan, but also address the type of characteristics and qualities that the team must possess to accomplish the task with care, patience, and effectiveness. Integrate this summary into your existing plan to establish a church.
2. (Advanced) According to Paul's concept of establishing, evaluate the condition of the church of which you are a part. Is it fully established? (Use the "Establishing a Local Church: Evaluation Guide from the Pauline Epistles" on page 61 in the "Project Guides and Models" section to help make this determination.) Design a strategy for the church to "set in order what remains," to see that it becomes fully established.

3. (Advanced) Write a mission and purpose statement to keep as a guide for evaluating whether a church is staying on course or not. The statement should be written as a series of lifelong goals or purposes. Then, based on the mission and purpose statement, write a set of two-year goals for a church that is nearly established at present, with the view of keeping it on course and maturing. (See “Ministry Management Guide for a Local Church: A Prototype” in the “Project Guides and Models” section on pages 65–66 for an example of this completed project.)