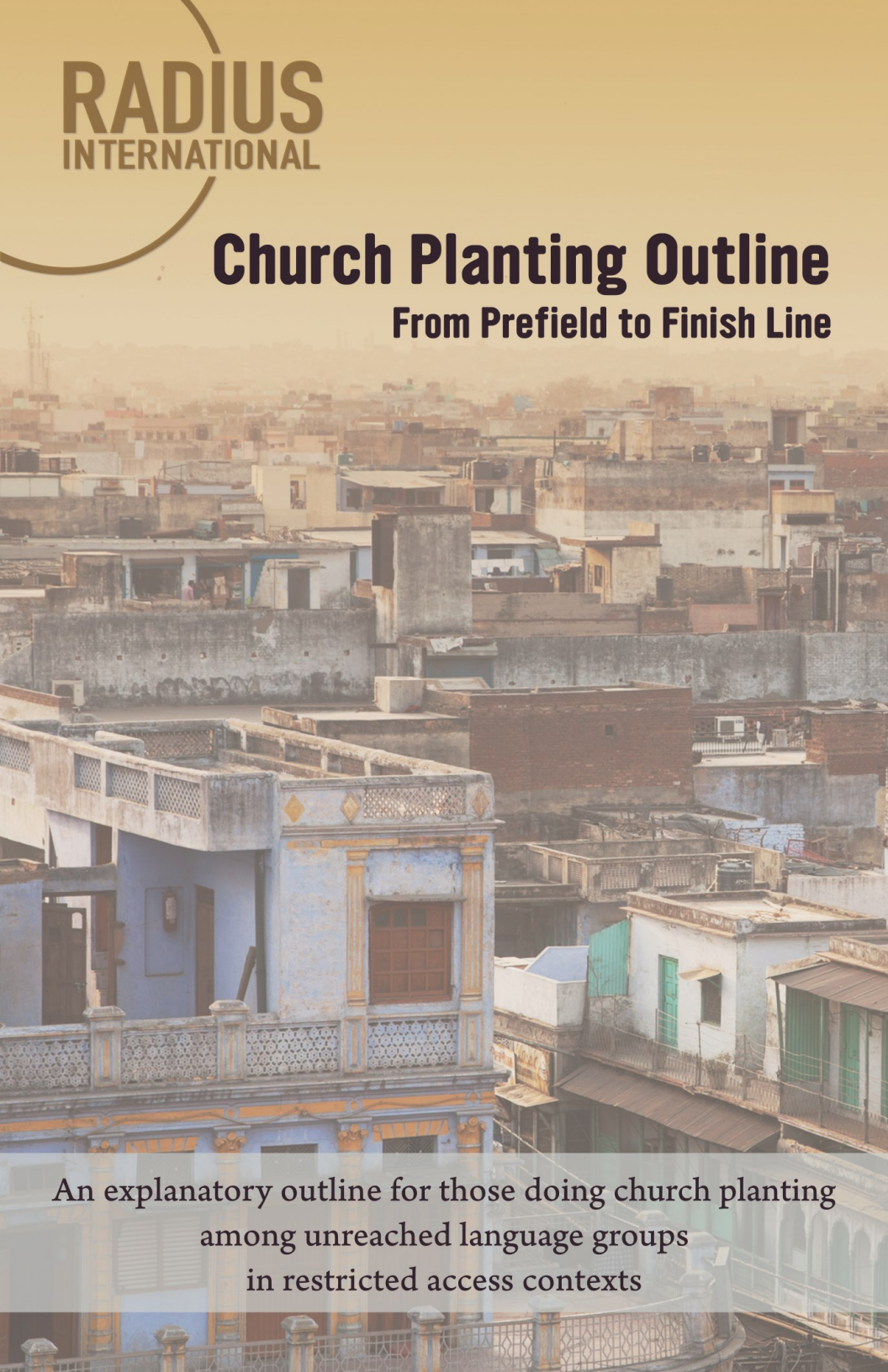


The logo for RADIUS INTERNATIONAL features the word "RADIUS" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "INTERNATIONAL" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font directly below it. The text is positioned within a circular graphic element that is partially visible at the top and left edges of the page.

RADIUS
INTERNATIONAL

Church Planting Outline

From Prefield to Finish Line

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a densely packed urban area, likely a slum or a developing city. The buildings are multi-story, with flat roofs and various colors like blue, white, and brick. The perspective is from an elevated position, looking down over the rooftops. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with a hazy, orange-tinted sky.

An explanatory outline for those doing church planting
among unreached language groups
in restricted access contexts

CHURCH PLANTING OUTLINE

From Pre-Field to Finish Line

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Radius International

www.radiusinternational.org

Radius Church Planting Outline

For Those Doing Church-Planting Work
Among Unreached Language Groups¹
in Restricted Access Contexts

A. Pre-Field Prep (2-8 years)

1. Affirmation of sending church (Often done during step 2)
2. Educational, technical and sending church preparation (1-6 years)
3. Preparing to transition, and commission to service (1-2 years)

B. On-Field Prep (5-10 years)

4. Orientation to field and acquisition of National language (2-4 years)
5. Identify and move into unreached language area, establish local long-term viability, and begin culture and language acquisition of that language group. (1-3 years)
6. Finish culture and language acquisition and begin identifying those who are interested at a deeper level in “The Story of God” among friends, neighborhood connections and business acquaintances. (1-3 years)

C. Evangelism & Early CP (3-6 years)

7. Teach those who desire to know more about the God of Scripture, man’s situation before Him and Christ’s unique answer to that dilemma. (2-12 months)
8. Gather those who profess Christ and begin discipling them in their new identity as “His people” and all that this truth implies. Live out the life of Christ with them, teaching them, showing a commitment to them as the one who has brought the Word of God to them. (2-5 years)

¹ We realize that terms such as “unreached people group”, “unengaged unreached people group”, “ethno-linguistic”, “socio-linguistic”, and other designations have become commonly used. By using the term “unreached language groups” we are deliberately focusing on people groups still divided by their unique languages, which have no church planting endeavors currently taking place among them.

D. Maturing Church (2-3 years)

9. As maturation is happening the gospel worker is less prominent with them. The church planter is tapering down his role, while the local leaders are growing into complete responsibility. Teaching of the church(es) is ongoing. (1-3 years)
10. The mature church² has taken ownership of all aspects of being the witness and presence of Christ in that community and is working to spread such believing communities in neighboring areas. The worker is now not physically present.

Total on-field expectation = 10 to 19 years

These 10 points are only a basic sketch of what Church Planting in an unreached language context should include (explanatory details are also available). We realize it does not answer many related questions. When we speak of “church” in this paper, we are speaking of groups of believers that can be left to function on their own with an excellent chance of continuing their Christian witness in their communities.² We do recognize there is a place for infant groups of believers who, with time and teaching, may develop into churches.

²See document, “Radius Definition of a Church”.

Affirmation of Sending Church

1. The local church acknowledges this person/couple has reasonable levels of spiritual desire, capacity to mature, life skills, social skills and intellectual ability to have success as a cross-cultural worker. The church affirms that this person's discipline and work ethic is excellent, and that he/she has a high capacity to handle stress as well as boredom.
2. The candidate demonstrates emotional maturity in relationships with others, and is not rebounding from the loss of a job, loved one or relationship. He/she is able to be a major contributor in a difficult work and life environment, bringing emotional resources to the task and not draining them from others.
3. The church has vetted the motivations of the candidate and found them to be grounded biblically in the mandate (Great Commission) of Jesus. They understand its implications on their lives and the lives of their children.
4. The church affirms that this person has begun to build an adequate biblical foundation. If not currently engaged in study, the candidate has shown a desire to be trained and grounded in the Word of God.
5. The candidate has shown he loves his local church as it is, flaws included. He/she has been engaged in the ministries of the local church and has demonstrated a desire to be a vibrant witness for Christ. There is genuine evidence of spiritual life and fruit. The candidate has a broad friendship base in the church, not known only by the college group, young marrieds, or seniors.
6. The candidate has shown a submissive and teachable spirit with his church, taking direction from them in life areas such as how to spend summer breaks (many candidates at this stage would still be in college), recommended Bible courses or further training the church feels is needed, mission agencies to consider and even the country of allocation. The candidate finds relief and safety in such counsel, not a loss of control.

Phase 2

Educational, Technical & Sending Church Preparation

1. A pioneer church planter in a restricted context will likely gain and keep access to such an area by way of business or professional employment. Finishing a degree and managing/resolving student debt while staying in close communication with the home church are critical steps in this process. In some cases a 4 year degree is the minimum needed for obtaining a visa. Often a business degree may provide the most opportunities in this context. Other specific certifications and experience may prove useful to acquire during these years of preparation.
2. The home/sending church should develop its own list of expectations for the candidate, including needed areas of character development, Bible training and ministry team formation.
3. The candidate should also be gathering a team of people (from inside his church, family, school and other circles he has been a part of) to pray for and stand with him in these years of preparation and his future church planting ministry.
4. In anticipation of admittance to a cross-cultural ministry training like Radius, ideally the candidate has (a) completed all formal education, (b) together with the home church investigated various mission agencies and created a “short list,” (c) begun to seek the Lord’s direction regarding country or people group, and (d) started the process of thinking through possible business/ministry plans.
5. The ideal would be for formal education and needed Bible training be done before specific cross-cultural training like Radius be undertaken. These ministry preparation steps, including possible ministry team formation, will likely be further refined while the candidate completes their cross-cultural training at Radius.
6. With much of the preparation work already underway, the ideal time between completion of the Radius training and launch to the field is less than one year.

Preparing to Transition & Commission to Service

1. Although this last pre-field stage is relatively short, some key areas are covered in this time. The home church is actively involved with the candidate so they can guide where possible and follow their cross-cultural worker intelligently once he/she arrives on the field.
2. This stage may include:
 - a. Sending agency candidate school and/or further required training
 - b. The gathering and development of prayer and financial partners
 - c. An initial country visit for purposes of orientation and planning
 - d. Ministry team formation, with care given to shared ministry goals and missiology/methodology
3. At this time the candidate is doing everything possible to transition the family, friends and church he is leaving behind in preparation for what lies ahead. They will need help adjusting to the fact that the worker will be very focused in his new context for his first years of culture and language acquisition (CLA).
4. All is done to minimize distractions and enticements to return home during early years of service. This includes:
 - a. Tying up financial and relational loose ends. For example, owning a rental property, if not managed properly, can become a distraction.
 - b. Helping families and churches become aware that trips, communication and news from their family member serving overseas will be limited due to the worker's focus on CLA. Visitors, phone calls, Skype sessions and social media participation must be kept to a minimum.
 - c. All involved should understand that a recommended first term for the cross-cultural worker is at least 3 years, and that trips out of the country are discouraged during this time.
5. The sending church officially lays hands on and commissions the candidate to the ministry of gospel propagation and church planting. This is a memorable service of commitment for the candidate and the church. All need to realize this is a serious long-term commitment.

Phase 4

Orientation to the Field, Acquisition of Trade Language¹

1. The worker and family arrive in country and begin, possibly with the help of the mission agency, to locate living accommodations and a language school where the new worker can become highly proficient in the trade language.
2. Factors to consider regarding living accommodations include possible connection with either a family or community of local speakers who can immerse the student in the new language and/or a neighborhood that will be conducive to social activities. Being able to build local relationships as naturally as possible is critical.
3. Ideally the language school uses proficiency assessment tools.² High proficiency in the first language is the finish line for this phase, not simply spending 12-24 months in the school.
4. In these first weeks, Internet habits and rhythms of communication with the home country and family are being established. It is important to be completely present in the new host country, making good use of the expected loneliness of those first weeks. This is a KEY time in terms of the future of the cross-cultural worker.
5. Sources of encouragement and human interaction need to be transitioned from home to the local context. If not done early, most foreign workers will have only “measured relationships” with nationals at best. Even social media, that can tie the worker to the home context, must be kept to an absolute minimum.
6. Habits of diligence must be established in learning the first language. Given the helpful, structured language school

¹“Trade Language, Language of Wider Communication, Primary Language” are all terms speaking of that first language which will be needed to formally communicate with officials and the general population of the country where the worker is living. “Insider Language” will be used in these outlines to speak of the language in which the cross-cultural worker is going to be doing the church plant.

²See Radius statement on “Language Proficiency”.

environment, the worker should average 8-10 hours per day in diligent study, knowing there will be occasional unavoidable interruptions. The focus the missionary develops in acquiring his first language will set the stage, or NOT, for acquiring the insider language (i.e. the language of the unreached language group).

7. Team dynamics should be maintained at a healthy level, but the trap of over-dependence must be avoided. Each worker and family must keep in mind the task they are there to accomplish. Keeping “short accounts,” thinking the best of each other, and habits of forgiveness and godliness must be in place so that interpersonal relationships do not take an excessive amount of time at this or future stages.
8. During this phase, two key activities are (a) investigative travel to potential target language groups and (b) development of a business plan suitable to the target context.

Phase 5

Identify & Move Into Unreached Language Group Area

1. Evaluating the actual need—gospel availability—will take deliberate investigation and some visits to key areas. Making the decision as to which language group to enter is done with much prayer and is the culmination of many factors coming together. For example, (a) current engagement and effectiveness of any gospel workers among the target language group and (b) existence of churches or communities of Christ followers. The difficulty of making this move adds to the importance of getting it right the first time. The worker will keep supporters engaged in specific prayer for this relocation.
2. Once the language group has been identified, the plan for the intended business or NGO must be configured toward what will be sustainable and considered beneficial to that specific context.³
3. Excellence in the trade language will be critical in working with government officials for gaining necessary permits. Furthermore, having excellent relational skills, honed while learning the trade language, will assist in opening doors, creating a market, and smoothing out bumps and offenses during the first months of the startup.
4. As with any venture, the initial time requirements of the business will be substantial. That said, two hours per day must be carved out at all times for CLA, with the intent of increasing that amount as soon as possible.
5. Creating and maintaining many healthy interpersonal relationships during this time is critical for community support as well as for future gospel receptivity. Demonstrating a winsome life amidst all the demands is mandatory. The worker must keep in mind that western standards of privacy and “me-time” create barriers and must be personally battled at all times.

³Many creative access workers should expect to face changing conditions during the years of their church plant which will require them to alter their business strategy.

6. The worker will be diligently seeking to understand the most relevant ways to demonstrate that he/she is a person with a “spiritual life” and a personal connection to God. Until language proficiency is acquired, and cultural understanding is gained, the worker is quite limited in communicating anything meaningful about this. But the need to be seen as “godly” and “spiritual” in this new context is an important aspect to begin wrestling with.
7. Business/NGO efforts and CLA must both be done with excellence regardless of the difficulties present in either one.

Phase 6

CLA Completion & Pre-Evangelism

1. When possible, hours that have been given to the business/NGO are increasingly shifted towards CLA and deepening friendships within that language group. Avenues for interpersonal relationships include social circles that the workers and/or their children have opened at schools, markets, and professional associations or sports clubs. The gospel worker must actively pursue a wide array of friends.
2. The worker is becoming increasingly natural in the local language and has moved through many of the stages of culture acquisition. In a low key way, he/she has begun asking questions about more abstract topics. In matters relating to the local value system, ideals vs reality, and areas of status and inner longings, the worker is increasingly able to predict how a local person would respond.⁴
3. As his friendship circle increases and he learns how to host his own social activities, it will not be a novel thing for locals to be in the cross-cultural worker's home or social environment. The worker is careful to be seen in all ways as a person who loves living in this area and enjoys the unique opportunity to raise a family in such a place as this.
4. As the worker moves into worldview-level discussions, he can expect questions and at times opposition. The uprightness of his life is hopefully gaining respect in the business realm as well as in the atmosphere of his home and family.
5. When the worker is three-quarters towards fluency he begins to gently move from only being a learner of local worldview to beginning to question some minor aspects. He does not need to provide answers to the dilemmas he is raising, but rather to begin to be seen as someone who is safe; thoughtfully putting into words some of the inconsistencies that have troubled people already.

⁴The worker has learned in his pre-field training not only a system for mastering the local language but also how to systematically acquire an insider's view of the culture and worldview of the language group he is living among.

6. The worker has become a regular part of the community, yet he is not reacting with the same desperation of “those who have no hope” to the hardships of life in that area. His response to those hardships, or blessings, may in fact be the source of many pre-evangelism discussions.
7. The worker is showing himself to be a serious learner and improved speaker of the local language. He is taken seriously and his ideas are also. He can fit in to local conversations without his presence being a limiting factor in the discussions. He is capable linguistically and culturally of introducing new ideas and predicting responses to those new topics. He is also able to pointedly inquire as to what the hearer has understood from what he has communicated.
8. When the cross-cultural worker is confident he is able to have deep level discussions (i.e. values, religious ideas and worldview), he must move diligently to being that gospel communicator he came there to be. The questions he is asking during this pre-evangelism time become more pointed. By intentionally bringing some tension into their worldview, he begins to plant a message—one that has been burning in his heart for years—in these peoples’ minds.

Phase 7

Evangelism, First Gospel Communication Efforts

1. After years of living, working, and learning in this area the worker knows that some individuals seem more prepared or interested than others. Now that the worker is a capable communicator he moves towards inviting people to study God's Word. The worker has been observing when and where other religious discussions take place. Can the Bible be looked at and studied openly or not? The location and setting for these first studies is critical.
2. Given the importance of consistent teaching, the worker knows that seasonal crops, sports, politics, and weather need to be taken into account as he plans out when to start the studies. These teaching times should not become the only way the worker interacts with his listeners. They are still friends, co-workers, neighbors, or parents of children in the same school.
3. Evangelism in this setting requires careful instruction providing necessary biblical context and truth in order to present the gospel with clarity:
 - The goodness of God in creation
 - His loving perfection and power over creation including mankind
 - Man's knowing rebellion and the ensuing consequences
 - God's promise and means of restoring relationshipFrom creation to the life of Christ, teaching the biblical narratives will provide the necessary truths for a full understanding of the gospel.
4. It takes time for an individual's lostness to really sink in. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring conviction into areas of an individual's life that the worker often times isn't even aware of. A careful balance of review and teaching new material will keep listeners interested while resulting in deep understanding of biblical truth.
5. The culminating effort of God reaching out to man is the coming of His Son. Throughout Christ's life, His mastery over hunger, sickness, Satan, the weather, and even death validates His coming from God. The unique death, burial, resurrection of Christ is clearly

presented while highlighting how these correspond with OT teaching. Understanding and personally accepting the forgiveness that Christ offers brings salvation and rightness before God!

6. The foundation for the church is being set here. Often this first group of believers will have within it key people who will become church leaders. The worker is keeping in mind that he is modeling for future evangelism efforts.
7. The worker must expect unusual opposition at this time. The enemy does not want this message to be heard or understood. Health, relational, political and other challenges may occur.
8. In the life of new believers, this season of hunger is often a fruitful time to bring people into a fuller understanding of what it is to be “in Christ.” As such, the cross-cultural worker should avoid absences during this time.

Phase 8

Gathering & Discipling the Church

1. Those who understand and appropriate for themselves what Christ accomplished on the cross, confessing His name even if fearful, are the beginning of the new church. It would be expected they will want to gather to thank God, sing, pray and even give offerings back to Him. Some of these responses will no doubt be affected by how they interacted with previous religious deities.
2. The worker is doing all he can to separate Christ followers from the merely curious in a Bible teaching setting. Government restrictions or cultural factors are just some of the reasons for desiring a context where only believers are present.
3. Becoming Christ followers does not free new believers from all historic religious behaviors. They will identify some areas of syncretism on their own. Other areas will come to light in the first few months; it may take years for the believers to identify and become free from all unbiblical religious practices. The cross-cultural worker must show patience while continuing to teach. There may be times to publicly challenge an issue, but primarily the pointed work of discipleship is done quietly. Patience, authentic friendships and biblical teaching are critical ministry components.
4. The worker must not hurry the process of identifying those he feels will be leaders, but rather allow this to develop naturally, observing those who are gaining spiritual respect for their response and growth. As the worker sees growth and hears validation from others, he is in a better position to discern with whom he will dedicate more time. Care is needed to avoid the trap of people seeing leadership and the attention of the worker as a means to gain status.
5. Much thought and prayer must be given to the progression of teaching being given to the new believers. One suggested teaching plan for a young church would be Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, I Timothy, II Timothy, I Peter. However, no teaching schedule or format should be allowed to take the believers away from the Gospels for too long given the importance of being refreshed by the life and example of Jesus.

6. How the worker handles being a business person as well as a Bible teacher/discipler will be critical to his longevity in that area. As the work progresses he may experience favor with government officials, or perhaps just the opposite. At this stage his presence with the new believers is vital and he does all he can do to stay in that location.
7. When faced with security issues, evacuation, the threat of hostage taking and persecution, the cross-cultural worker must consider the example he is setting for his fellow believers. The satisfaction but also the costliness of being a long-term church planter may become more real for the worker.

Phase 9

The Maturing Church

1. To develop leaders, the worker will be spending time coaching a few individuals. Having seen the ministry team share roles from the beginning will help the church in this transition, but it is still important to be careful when publicly endorsing individuals and giving them leadership responsibilities.
2. Local leaders who are capable communicators and demonstrate spiritual maturity can be given consistent, formal times for teaching the Word. The worker may now have planned absences so the local leaders can teach and lead the church on their own. While on-site, the worker's time is increasingly spent developing the church leaders, although it is important that he maintain normal friendships throughout the community.
3. The public endorsement of leaders ("laying on of hands") recognizes what these men have been doing for a while in shepherding the church. It is not a surprise to the believing or non-believing community. The witness of these men is consistent in spite of their flaws. It is important to guard against pride or other potential pitfalls that may affect the new leaders.
4. Worship, teaching, outreach, giving, observing the ordinances, care for the saints, love for their enemies and other attributes, individually and corporately, describe the church to varying degrees.
5. This local church has been deliberately reaching out to other communities to see groups of Christ followers started elsewhere. They are also beginning to network with other churches (through the trade language) outside of their language group. This helps them see the larger Body of Christ at work and find encouragement outside of their particular context.
6. Given his time and experience, the cross-cultural worker may now be receiving multiple requests to move into other leadership roles within the sending organization. Other factors calling for attention may be (a) the education needs of his children, (b) family needs back home, or (c) the accumulated pressure of living in a stressful environment. It is important to regularly recommit to finishing well. At this stage, the cross-cultural worker will begin limiting his availability to the maturing church to avoid hindering its development.

The Mature Church

1. For some time now the cross-cultural worker has limited his involvement with the local church while still meeting regularly with the leaders to hear how issues of discipline, doctrine, persecution, reprisals, etc. are being addressed. Giving input as truly needed is beneficial, but he is always careful not to take the role of the supreme authority. Maturation has happened. The worker must keep in mind that the church is handling many issues he does not know about.
2. Now is the time to continue gently encouraging the church in areas of weakness that they may be avoiding or beginning to see as normal. The worker will hopefully be seen as someone who is truly on their side, struggling together with them to see the life of Christ more fully developed in them personally and in the group. The cross-cultural worker may also need to help them in their outreach efforts, reminding them of the years, the setbacks and hardships the worker went through before seeing fruit.
3. It is important that there not be a “final cutoff” between the worker and the church. Death or age may preclude visits at some point, but a perspective of “I will see you again” is important for these, his spiritual children, to sense and hear from him. Church planting, like parenting, involves ongoing relationships. This mindset will help the church planter avoid appearing sterile or cold to those he has come to reach and now is ready to leave.
4. The cross-cultural worker will have done everything possible to firmly link this church with other Christ following communities in their area. Having the mutual encouragement from other churches that are enduring similar issues, and also having the benefit of especially gifted individuals in other churches, is important for the ongoing strength of any church.

The Church You Leave Behind

Definition of a “church” by Radius International

What do we mean by the goal of “planting a **church** among an unreached language group?” The answer to that question is a complex one, but a crucially important one. The church left behind will be the ongoing message-bearing people who will carry the responsibility for making disciples throughout their entire people group, and beyond!

The Flock

1. **Believers from a cross-section of the community.** A group that encompasses men, women, young, and old who have individually understood their sins have been forgiven based solely on what Christ accomplished on the cross. The church is made up of an understanding driven/Christ confessing group of people.
Believers... Acts 2:38-41, 11:25,26, I Cor. 12:12-13, Eph. 1:13, I Thess. 1:9, **Not just a family**... Acts 6:1, 9:31, 13:1, Rom. 2:1,17, I Cor. 1:10-12
2. **Tangible spiritual life.** There is genuine fruit of spiritual life. The various gifts that allow for fellowship, forgiveness, sharing of means, sharing of their faith and discipling of new believers all happen among them at a level that is unique to these Christ followers. These are not culturally driven habits but responses to being the people of God. Acts 2:42-44, Rom.12:1-2, I Cor. 12:7, II Cor. 8:1-4, Gal. 5:22-24 I Thess. 1:7,8 Titus 2:1-8 I Pet. 1:13-16, I Jn. 2:5,6
3. **New biblical identity.** The Christ-following community has a growing awareness and allegiance to their oneness in Christ. That awareness is allowing them to see their relationship to other Christ followers as eclipsing their previous religious, clan, political, or even family relationships. Lk. 8:19-21 14:25-26, Acts 2:42-45, I Cor. 3:1-9 12:25-26, Eph. 2:14-17, I Pet. 2:9,10

4. **Testimony to the community.** Those outside the community of faith (non-believers) have some sense of the difference between them and those who make up the church. The church has an identity. Those churches existing in hostile situations have a valid understanding of the costliness, and where needed, a preparedness to endure the cost of being known as Christ followers. Jn. 15:18-21, 16:1-4, Acts 5:12-14, I Thess. 1:6-8, II Tim. 3:12, I Pet 4:4

The Word

5. **Submission to God's Word.** The Word of God is seen as solely authoritative in matters of faith, life, marriage, culture and other areas that it speaks to. Gal. 1:6-9 Col 3:16, I Thess. 2:13, II Tim 3:16,17 Heb. 4:12, I Pet 1:23, Rev 22:18,19.
6. **Teaching of God's Word.** The teaching of Gods' Word is regular and central to their times of corporate life, prayer, worship, and an awareness and practice of Christian ordinances are observed corporately. Acts 8:12,36 16:33; Luke 22:14-22, I Cor. 14:29-33, Col. 1:28 II Tim. 4:1,2

The Shepherds

7. **Recognized leadership.** Recognized leaders who shepherd, teach, encourage, protect, rebuke, and when needed, take the lead in Church discipline. Acts 6:2-4 14:23 20:28, I Tim 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9 Heb. 13:7,17, I Peter 5:1-4.

Language Proficiency

The God who has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:16-21) is a communicating God! He is the One who takes the initiative to reveal Himself and to make Himself known to man in clarity and relevance (just consider the incarnation! Phil 2:5-11).

Radius follows the very fundamental truth that, as ambassadors, we are to take full responsibility for clear communication of the Gospel. We believe God is the One who designed communication and modelled clear communication throughout history. We equip our students with a PERSPECTIVE (that clarity of communication is their God-given responsibility) and with TOOLS (to achieve a proficiency level that makes clarity possible).

Determining “communicative proficiency” is crucial for the Gospel communicator who wishes to be used by God to bring the Truth into a new cultural and linguistic context. This “proficiency” is not measured by TIME (i.e. 1 year, 2 years, etc.) but is measured by objective assessment of the person’s ability to perform communicative tasks, anticipate and act according to appropriate and relevant cultural patterns, and to establish normal and deepening relationships.

Radius encourages the use of the ACTFL scale (see below), where the level of “Advanced-mid/high” is appropriate for a person desiring to communicate at a values and worldview level (and to be taken seriously as an adequate communicator). This proficiency level is only achieved through hard work, personal discipline and an understanding of culture and language acquisition processes.

Achieving “Advanced-mid” or “Advanced-high” does not usually happen intuitively and is rarely (if ever) achieved through just “spending lots of time hanging out with people.” At the same time, this recommended level is not a pie-in-the-sky dream of “speaking just like a native speaker.” In fact, a person at Advanced-mid or Advanced-high WILL have some accent issues, pronunciation issues and find themselves occasionally confused and needing to ask questions to clarify. But this level is way beyond what is so commonly found among mission workers who measure themselves against each other, or by a pre-determined length of time, or by an ability to “get around,” tell a few stories, and “be

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conversational.” Those descriptions are almost always inadequate and not indicators of a proficiency level that allows people to enter intelligently into discussions about deeper emotions, values, subtleties about worldview commitments, etc. Our goal in culture and language acquisition is to have the Gospel taken seriously! That is extremely unlikely when the messenger himself can’t be taken seriously due to confusing speech patterns that are not fit for this type of communication challenge.

With syncretism and misunderstanding being such powerful and consistent problems in cross-cultural Gospel work, we at Radius take the communication process very seriously and seek to equip our students to deal responsibly with such obstacles. Would-be Gospel ambassadors that treat syncretism lightly will almost assuredly end up contributing to a wrong understanding of the Gospel. In fact, those ambassadors are usually the last ones to notice that they’ve created syncretism.

Yes, this is serious business, and the stakes are high. We at Radius are not “into language”. We don’t “love language study”. We are, however committed to imitating God as the Communicator par Excellence, and we are very “into” clarity of Gospel communication as we seek to make Him known in truth!

ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Scale

ADVANCED:

Speakers at the Advanced level engage in conversation in a clearly participatory manner in order to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest. The topics are handled concretely by means of narration and description in the major times frames of past, present, and future. These speakers can also deal with an unexpected complication in a social situation. The language of Advanced-level speakers is abundant, the oral paragraph being the measure of Advanced-level length and discourse. Advanced-level speakers have sufficient control of basic structures and generic vocabulary to be understood by native speakers of the language, including those unaccustomed to non-native speech.

Advanced-mid Level:

Speakers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance.

Advanced Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future by providing a full account, with good control of aspect. Narration and description tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected, paragraph-length discourse.

Advanced Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as circumlocution or rephrasing are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Their discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language.

Advanced Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline.

Advanced-high Level:

Speakers at the Advanced High sublevel perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks

pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

Unreached Language Groups: Why not People Groups?

Radius believes that, as long as there are language groups that still have no witness (no Scriptures and/or no viable church), the Body of Christ should prioritize THOSE unreached language groups before adding more church planting teams to the languages that already have a witness.

The reason we make a distinction between “unreached language groups” and “unreached people groups” is because we’re trying to prioritize those socio-linguistic groups that truly have no access to the Gospel in their own language. There are still around 3,000 entire language groups that have no viable church planted in them yet (many of these do not have any Scripture translated into their language either). We believe that in order to move forward in the completion of the Great Commission – to make disciples from among every ethnē – we have to plant churches among THESE LANGUAGE GROUPS that have no church in them.

Currently, the popular view of “unreached people groups” in missions has two aspects that need sharpening: (a) a people group qualifies as ‘unreached’ as long as the evangelical population is less than 2%, and (b) a people group can qualify as “unreached” even when their native tongue is plentifully populated with churches, Bible translations and biblical training centers, but the alleged “people group” has some sort of cultural, political, educational or economic idiosyncrasy that warrant a specialized outreach effort. This unfortunate exaggeration of “cultural barrier” is what leads some to consider “Canadian NHL players residing in Anaheim, CA” as an “unreached people group”.

Our perspective at Radius, in regard to these two points, is that (a) if a language group has a population of true believers—established as a church or churches—even if they make up a miniscule percentage of the entire population of their people group, that group should not be considered “unreached” in the same way as those languages that have no viable church within them. And (b) that a social sub-grouping inside a reached language (eg. Canadian hockey players in Anaheim) should really be the normal and expected outreach target for the

existing church that speaks that language, even if it required the church to learn about that group's particular set of values and distinctives. We believe that by labeling these cultural sub-groups as "unreached peoples" we actually distract the Body of Christ from the true target of the Great Commission: making disciples from within every ethne (every socio-linguistic group).

Let us be clear: we do not wish the church to cease ANY of its outreach efforts! We do, however, believe that priority should be given to those language groups that have no viable church, and often no translation of the Scriptures in that language. We look forward to the reality described in Rev. 5:9, and believe that God is the one (not us; and not missiologists) who has always brought a focus to the very real barrier of language, and His full intention to have His Gospel taken **past** that barrier and to bring people into His family from every single tongue! (See Gen 11:1, 6-9, 12:1-3; Mt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8)

An illustration:

In North India, there are multiple church planting teams learning the Hindi language in order to plant additional churches in that language. Although there are two complete Bible translations and believers gathered together into maturing churches in numerous cities, as well as Bible Colleges and Seminaries in Hindi, there are still towns and cities all over North India where there is no church.

Many would say, "Then let's put together additional church planting teams, and get teams learning Hindi and locating in every one of those cities where there is no church. The total evangelical population is still less than one percent!"

Radius would say, "Yes; the need is compelling! The Gospel must be spread to those other cities! But since there is already a Bible and churches in that language, let's not add another church planting team to that language group until we've placed church planting teams into the language groups (living in towns just beyond the Hindi speakers) with NO witness, NO Scripture, NO church. It's not a question of right-and-wrong, it's a question of giving PRIORITY to those ethne from which we were commissioned to make disciples."

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