

PART FOUR: STRATEGY OF THE CHURCH // Acts 14:21-23

Message from the series, The Big Picture

PURPOSE	to glorify God (1 Peter 2:9)
MISSION	to make disciples (Matthew 28: 19-20)
VISION	a people redeemed (Revelation 7: 9-12)
STRATEGY	connecting mission and vision (Acts 14: 21-23)

How do we actualize the vision of the multitude in heaven? By pursuing multiplication on earth and growing the kingdom through planting churches. Church planting is the natural result of making disciples.

The task of the church is aligned with the [Missionary Task](#), specifically evangelism, disciple-making, healthy church formation, and leadership development. For each of these tasks, we must learn it, live it, and lead in it.

In Acts 14, we see Paul and Barnabas working through these steps:

1. Evangelism: “they preached the gospel to that city [Derbe]” (v. 21a)
2. Disciple-making: they “made many disciples” (v. 21b)
3. Healthy Church Formation: they “strengthen[ed] the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith” (v. 22)
4. Leadership Development: they “appointed elders for them in every church” (v. 23)

Ultimately, church planting is making disciples and raising up leaders. In order to put ourselves in a position to plant churches, we must do the tasks of the church, not because they are merely what we’ve always done, but with intentionality.

These strategic tasks are supported by specific subpoints to strategy. Although we may take them for granted, it is important to recognize that each of the following aspects of church life are strategic choices that must be leveraged to achieve the vision of the church.

1. **Staff**—hiring people for specific tasks within the church.
2. **Schedule**—determining when various activities and events in the church will occur.
3. **Systems**—membership processes, the election of deacons, policies and documents, and so on.
4. **Structures**—the organization of governance and polity: how many deacons and elders, how they are installed, how long they serve, etc.
5. **Spaces**—the facility is sometimes confused with the vision, but it is actually part of strategy.

Although these are subpoints, they cannot be neglected. To do so is to undermine the health of the church. Ultimately, ministry is the job of the church, the people in the pews—strategy gives us a framework for doing ministry.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does making disciples naturally lead to church planting? Think through the implications of multiplication.
2. What would it look like to learn, live, and lead in each of the tasks of the church (evangelism, disciple-making, healthy church formation, and leadership development)?
3. Why is it important to remember the subpoints of strategy (staff, schedule, systems, structures, and spaces)? How would neglecting any of them compromise the church’s effectiveness?