

## **MY VISION FOR THE CHURCH—ESTABLISH, EQUIP, EDIFY, EDUCATE, EVANGELIZE**

**By Bob Young**

Note: Because I am often asked about my current efforts in ministry and missions, I am constantly analyzing what I do and why. This focuses my thinking.

Five pillars sustain my vision for the church. Biblically, the goal of gospel preaching is to establish more churches where believers find hope, direction, fulfillment, power for living, support systems, and meaningful activity. Through the application of the gospel, God has given us the means, message, and ministry to equip servant-leaders, edify believers, and educate disciples resulting in spiritually healthy churches, leaders, and believers. Such Christians will evangelize (share the Good News) to establish more churches, equip more servant-leaders, edify more believers, and educate more disciples.

### **ESTABLISH CHURCHES**

We must learn how to plant churches efficiently and quickly. My vision for the church is that we will become a church planting movement. Church planting is one of the most effective evangelism tools. But it is not enough to plant churches—we must put in place the processes that will mature those churches. We must understand how to develop spiritually mature Christians, spiritual servant-leaders, and Christians capable of using their spiritual gifts to advance the kingdom.

The establishment of new churches, church planting, occurs through effective evangelism. Therefore, a major focus of my work is presenting evangelism workshops and providing materials and training.

### **EQUIP SERVANT-LEADERS**

Once a church is established, one of its greatest needs is for internal leadership. A missionary or mission team may function temporarily, but it is essential to begin immediately to build a team of indigenous leaders. Developing a team of servant-leaders will help escape the negative consequences that often come when one person is identified as “the minister.” Servant-leaders are interested in mentoring more leaders. The best coaching, training, and mentoring is done locally on a continuous basis.

Since an infant church does not automatically develop capable leaders, another focus of the work is to equip leaders for the churches. This is done through networking between churches, and is also done through seminars, consulting, and spending time with leaders in the local churches.

### **EDIFY ALL BELIEVERS**

The church must learn every member ministry. We will not fulfill God’s purpose until we escape the clerical mindset that characterizes much of Christendom. Paid staff will not get God’s work done. The church on the mission field has wonderful opportunities to change the model. Therefore, Christians must be built up in faith and action. Spiritual foundations must be laid. Disciples must be discipled (or they are not disciples).

The church that begins with a focus on servant-leadership and every-believer involvement in ministry is relational, requires a minimal initial investment, and rapidly becomes self-sustaining because maintenance costs are low. Where members are built up effectively, members are self-multiplying and the churches are self-multiplying. The least members and the smallest churches multiply and form new churches. The process is organic, and multiplication is in the DNA of the body.

### **EDUCATE DISCIPLES**

An important part of the vision is that every disciple comes to know Jesus and his word. This is a process of education—knowing and applying. Jesus in the Great Commission spoke of the need to “teach them to observe all that I have commanded.” Sometimes this is done by visiting local churches. The advantage is that I have contact with most of the members. The disadvantage is that it requires a lot more time to do the work congregation by congregation. More often this is done by educating leaders in regional seminars. They can then take the classes and messages to the local congregations.

### **EVANGELIZE**

The process continues when the leaders and church members are committed to outreach. This lets the church function as a body, each part doing its work. Every member activity allows the local church to penetrate the community. The result of evangelism is stronger churches and new churches established.