

CO-MISSION: PLANTING

Recruitment

1 Timothy 3:1-12

- What strikes you as unexpected in this list of criteria? What might we not have put in?
- Huge emphasis on character. It can be argued that even ability to teach is more about character than skill.¹ Similarly, managing your family is in some sense a skill,² but it is hugely dependent on character and the fruit of the Spirit.³
- Notice that there are different levels of responsibility/service – overseers, deacons, women – but similar criteria. In the same way, there will be different levels of recruitment to do within our churches – someone to serve coffee, someone to serve as a small group leader or Sunday school, someone who is to be a fellow elder or right-hand man – and there will clearly be differences in the intensity of the examination/recruitment process in the different cases (as there is in 1 Tim. 3) but at the same time there will be common concerns and similar criteria and principles.

Where are they going to come from? Where are we going to find all the coffee servers and small group leaders and deacons and elders that we need?

- “If there is a dearth of leadership in our congregation, it may be that we are looking for the wrong things or that we haven’t done the work of developing the right things.”⁴ Stephen Kneale makes a very similar analysis.⁵
 - o We need to strip back the extra criteria we have added and have more confidence in the sufficiency of the biblical criteria so we do not overlook capable godly people who don’t fit our cultural templates. This means going back to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus. I have also found that the greetings sections of Paul’s letters are a good place to look – this is partly why they are there – to commend particular people as gospel workers recognised by the churches and to hold them up as examples – e.g. look at Romans 16 and Colossians 4 – we find there particularly the qualities of courageous risk taking,⁶ hard work⁷ and prayer held up as key aspects of an approved gospel worker – are they things that we are looking for?
 - o We need to have training in place which is producing the Christian maturity we want to see in those recruited for leadership and responsibilities in the church.⁸
- Apprenticeship / ministry trainee schemes can be very helpful in providing both a training ground but also a testing/proving ground. The pattern is biblical – Phil. 2:22. But not all apprenticeship schemes need to look the same.
- Consider coming to the [training masterclasses at the Maximise conference](#) on Friday 3 January – be sharpened by Johnny Prime and Orlando Saer and meet up with trainees and potential trainees over lunch.

¹ Teaching in the ancient world was not simply about imparting ‘a certain body of knowledge – what we would today associate with classroom or academic learning.’ It was about apprentice-disciples following ‘their teacher around. They not only listened to the teacher’s words, but saw his words in action in his life, and sought to learn that way of life by being with him constantly’ (Marshall & Payne, *The Vine Project*). See 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:10-14; Titus 2:7; Heb. 13:7.

² That’s what these sessions of CPT are largely about – seeking to sharpen our management skills.

³ E.g. “love your wife” (Eph. 5:25). See Paul Tripp, *Parenting* – where he makes the point that parenting is very largely about showing mercy and grace and that no one does that so well as the parent who realises they desperately need that mercy and grace themselves.

⁴ Mike McKinley, *Church Planting is for Wimps*, p. 102.

⁵ <https://stephenkneale.com/2019/07/22/en-article-why-only-a-few-good-men/>.

⁶ E.g. Rom. 16:4 cf. Phil. 2:30

⁷ E.g. Rom. 16:4, 12 cf. the emphasis in Proverbs on hard work.

⁸ For more on coming up with a training course see Mike McKinley, *Church Planting*, p. 97-99 and Appendix 2. Also, talk to Perks and Zim about what they are doing in terms of leadership training. I can also share I have used for apprenticeship scheme training in the past.

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The 6 Cs

- Character
 - We see in 1 Tim. 3 the huge importance of character but “when a highly competent person comes along, even those of us who know and are convinced that character is king can be” dazzled by the competency and “tempted to invite them to join the team and give them responsibility – even when we see that they have one or more serious character deficiencies.”
 - Character problems are hugely destructive to teams – producing toxic environments, driving away good people, bringing the gospel into disrepute.⁹
 - The danger of assuming and shortcutting – we can assume that because X comes from Y church or went to Z college his character must be good; we can just take it on trust from a friend’s recommendation; we can think that because his theology is sound so will his life; we can take references just as a box-ticking exercise.
 - Don’t trust written references. Get sit-down, off-the-record, verbal references.
 - Ideally, raise up your own leaders from within, where you’ve had time to see their lives.
 - Character involves a lot of things but particularly look for:
 - Humility
 - Have they been humbled?¹⁰
 - Other-person-centred service (Phil. 2:1-8) – not just British ‘humility’
 - Teachable
 - Sense of humour – takes gospel seriously but not themselves
 - Faithfulness
 - Do they do what they say they will do? Send an email, make a call, attend on time, do the work they’ve said they’ll do.
 - Give opportunities for people to prove themselves. Faithfulness in a little earns responsibility with more.
- Convictions
 - 1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:9 – hold firmly, with a clear conscience
 - Again, quite easy to assume – because he’s come through this particular training he must be sound. Need to actually ask the questions and talk it all through.
 - Level of detail will depend on level of responsibility – with someone who is going to be a fellow elder you clearly need to have a very high level of agreement while with someone starting off in service or entering an apprenticeship we will be looking for a grasp of the core gospel (they are a great sinner and Christ is a great saviour), for an acceptance of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture
- Commitment
 - Phil. 1:12, 25; 3:13-14
 - It’s possible to have good character and good convictions without much get up and go. We need a passionate concern for the advance of the gospel, a focussed ambition to see others delighting more in Christ, a forward-focused drive to do all we can that people may be saved (1 Cor. 9-10).
 - This will in part be measured by willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty, to make sacrifices that are uncomfortable, to spend social capital for the cause.

⁹ Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership*, chp. 5.

¹⁰ Listen to Tim Keller on this - <https://youtu.be/z6Kae36PR4o>. Cf. Rev. T. Charles of Bala: “I see now the wisdom of the caution which the Apostle gives to Timothy, not to admit “a novice,” (1 Tim. 3.6) one who has but little experience of the workings and deceit of sin... —not to admit such into the office of the Ministry, “lest he should be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil.” The Apostle himself was not without some danger from this quarter. (2 Cor. 12)” (quoted in Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*).

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- Chemistry
 - Does this person work well in this team? Do we complement each other?
 - Do we enjoy being around one another? “If you need to work closely with a person you might as well get on well with them on a personal level – otherwise every interaction will be much harder and require more energy than it needs to, and the tasks in ministry are hard enough as it is.”¹¹
 - But “chemistry doesn’t mean lack of diversity”.¹²
- Competency
 - We can easily weight this too highly but it is important. Many, if not all, competencies can be taught (so we need to look for teachableness and potential not just track record), but people do have different strengths and weaknesses (some are excellent at admin, some are excellent on the doorstep) so where possible it’s good to work with that and build on strengths.
 - In gospel ministry positions a key thing to look for is an instinct – a reflex to get the Bible open with people, to talk about Jesus, to pray.
- Capacity – “refers to how much work a person can get done at once, how many different tasks they can manage concurrently, or how much pressure they can withstand.”¹³ How much can they carry?

Be particularly careful in how you choose your ‘lieutenants’¹⁴ – that’s the inner circle you have given responsibilities, who you spend more time with, share more with, look to for advice – the inner circle exists but is it intentional? These guys are particularly significant because they:

- Communicate for you – either well (translating the message faithfully and convincingly to their sphere of influence) or badly (distorting or undermining)
- Represent you – people will look at the lives of those close to you and assume that their behaviour (e.g. sexual ethics) and manner (e.g. rudeness) is approved by you
- Counsel you – we need good counsel (Prov. 11:14) – these are the guys we will turn to for advice, to bounce ideas – you don’t want Yes Men or Boss Haters
- Focus you, free you up, multiply
- Support you (loyalty and love)

Involve others in recruitment and selection.

- It’s very tempting, particularly when someone comes on strong recommendation from a good friend or that the person you want on the team is already a good friend, to shortcut and just make a unilateral appointment but it’s always good to involve others.
- Others will be able to spot things that you can’t.

Making the ask

- Don’t make it a small thing – ‘Any idiot could do this’ – don’t be afraid to present something challenging, be open, realistic and show its importance to the gospel mission of the church
- Let people say no themselves – i.e. don’t assume they will say no, give them the chance to say no
- Ask busy people to replace not add (you’ll obviously have need to speak to the leaders of ministries that they might drop to do this)
- Have off ramps – give regular opportunities (e.g. once a year) for people to review what they are doing and whether they are best serving in that position or somewhere else

¹¹ Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom*, chp. 43.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom*, chp. 44.