A missiological study of Paul's church planting strategy for application in Formosa/GO, Brazil and beyond

JE Graebin

Orcid.org 0000-0003-3566-8126

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Supervisor: Dr Muswubi Takalani Aaron

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Student number: 29753384

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to answer a question, while taking into account the Apostle Paul's strategy, that is, its flexible *modus operandi*, as developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control, while it is based, furthermore, on three pillars, namely his theological convictions that boosted his ministry; his philosophy of ministry, which shaped it; and his ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed. The question is: how should one plan the planting of a Reformed church in the city of Formosa/GO, Brazil? The purpose of this research is to prioritize the need for a relevant and appropriate church-planting strategy among other necessary supports for church planting. The city of Formosa, like other cities in Latin America it is part of a context marked by the numerical predominance and influence of Catholic doctrine, as well as the influence of spiritist and neo-Pentecostal teaching, combined with economic and social needs such as poverty and low socio-cultural development. In this regard, therefore, the Formosa Reformed Church will be used as a representative microcosm with a view to present and future church planting strategies within the Latin American context and elsewhere.

Keywords: Apostle Paul, church planting, urban missiology, strategic planning

RESUMO

Esta tese é uma tentativa de responder à pergunta: “Tendo em conta a estratégia do Apóstolo Paulo, ou seja, o seu *modus operandi* flexível, desenvolvido sob a orientação do Espírito Santo e sujeito à Sua orientação e controle, e que estava baseado em três elementos: as convicções teológicas de Paulo que impulsionaram seu ministério; a filosofia de ministério de Paulo, que moldou seu ministério; a prática ministerial de Paulo, por meio da qual seu ministério foi executado; como seria o planejamento para o plantio de uma Igreja Reformada na cidade de Formosa/GO, Brasil?” O objetivo desta pesquisa é priorizar a necessidade de uma estratégia de plantio de igrejas relevante e apropriada dentre outros suportes necessários para o plantio de igrejas. A cidade de Formosa, como outras cidades da América Latina, insere-se em um contexto marcado pela predominância numérica e influência da doutrina católica, bem como pela influência do ensino espírita e neopentecostal, aliado às carências econômicas e sociais (pobreza e baixo desenvolvimento sociocultural). A igreja será usada como um microcosmo representativo de outras estratégias presentes e futuras de implantação de igrejas dentro do contexto latino-americano e em outros lugares.

Palavras-chave: Apóstolo Paulo; plantio de igrejas; missiologia urbana; planejamento estratégico.

RESUMEN

Esta tesis es una tentativa de responder a la pregunta: “Llevando en consideración la estrategia del Apóstol Pablo, o sea, sus *modus operandi* flexible, llevado a cabo sobre la orientación del Espíritu Santo, sujeto a Su orientación y control, fundamentado en tres elementos: las convicciones teológicas de Paulo, que dio impulsión a su ministerio; la filosofía de ministerio de Paulo, que moldeó su ministerio; la práctica ministerial de Paulo, por medio del cual su ministerio fue realizado; ¿Cómo seria la planificación para el plantío de una Iglesia Reformada en la ciudad de Formosa/GO, Brasil?” El objetivo de esta pesquisa es priorizar la necesidad de una estrategia de plantío de iglesias relevantes y apropiadas dando soportes necesarios para el plantío de iglesias. La ciudad de Formosa, como otras ciudades de América Latina, está inserida en un contexto marcado por la presencia predominante de la doctrina de la iglesia católica, por la influencia de las enseñanzas espirita y neo pentecostal, aliado a carencias económicas y sociales (pobreza y bajo desenvolvimiento sociocultural). La iglesia será usada como un microcosmo representativo de otras estrategias presentes y futuras de implantación de iglesias dentro del contexto latino-americano y en otros lugares.

Palabras claves: Apóstol Pablo; implantación de iglesias; misiología urbana; planificación estratégica.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem statement

According to recent data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Brazil has 214 132 121 inhabitants. Among these, 84.72% live in urban areas (Diário Oficial da União, 2019) a very different percentage from the 1950s, when more than half of the Brazilian population lived in rural areas.

Among Brazilian cities we find Formosa, in the state of Goiás, in the Brazilian Centre-West part of the country. It is 178 years old, with 123 684 inhabitants (IBGE, 2010b). Formosa is located in the surrounding area of Brasília, the capital of Brazil. It is a particularly important pole for education and health treatment in that region. Besides this, the town holds the greatest area for armed forces training in Latin America, covering an area of ca 15 000 hectares. Such realities, which led to the duplication of the BR 020[1] road that connects the town to the federal district, brought about an exponential increase of inhabitants over the last years.[2] The enlargement however occurred in a chaotic way, which gave rise to pockets of poverty, particularly in the peripherical neighbourhood. This, in turn, caused serious social and economic problems.

From the religious point of view, the available data show the prevalence of the Roman Catholic church:

Table 1 – Religious profile in Formosa

Catholics	Evangelical	With no religion	Spiritists
71 558	20 211	4 385	2 355

[Available at: IBGE, 2010a).

[1] Name given to highways in Brazil.
[2] Over the last 10 years the population has risen from 100 085 (2010) to 123 684 (2020) (IBGE, 2010a).

According to the same data, evangelicals are distributed as follows:

Table 2 – Evangelicals profile in Formosa

Pentecos-tal	Adventist	Baptist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Not defined
13 442	1 358	1 511	242	88	3 570

[Available at: IBGE, 2010b]

According to these figures, there are more people without religion (4 385) in Formosa than spiritists (2 355) and historical protestants (1 841). The presence of the Reformed Church in the form of the Brazilian Presbyterian Church is almost non-existent (88 people).

Even though it is not possible to create a direct correspondence between the cities of the modern world and those of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul conducted the main part of his church planting ministry in an urban context. In Acts of the Apostles, several cities are cited by Paul on his journeys. Among the most important are Antioch (13:1-3), Cyprus (13:4-12), Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-52), Iconium (14:1-6), Troas (16:6-10) Philippi (16:11-40), Thessalonica (17:1-9), Berea (17:10-15), Athens (17:16-34), Corinth (18:1-27; 19:1-41), Jerusalem (21:17) and Rome (28:14-31). According to Rabens (2017:99), none of the biblical characters visited more cities than Paul.[3]

While scholars agree on the understanding that Paul exercised most of his church planting ministry in the urban context, there is no consensus among them as to whether Paul planted his churches with an established strategy or not. This discussion centres on three questions:

- Did Paul actually have a strategy?

[3] Roland Allen (1962:3) summarises the work of Paul in this urban ministry as follows: “In little more than ten years St. Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia. Before 47 A.D. there were no Churches in these provinces; in 57 A.D. St. Paul could speak as if his work there was done and could plan extensive tours into the far West without anxiety lest the Churches which he had founded might perish in his absence for want of his guidance and support. The work of the Apostle during these ten years can therefore be treated as a unity. “Whatever assistance he may have received from the preaching of others, it is unquestioned that the establishment of the Churches in these provinces was really his work. In the pages of the New Testament he, and he alone, stands forth as their founder. And the work which he did was really a completed work. So far as the foundation of the Churches is concerned, it is perfectly clear that the writer of the Acts intends to represent St. Paul’s work as complete.”

- If so, what were the elements that it was made up of?
- Would it be applicable/replicable for today's church-planting projects?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to define the word “strategy.” Etymologically, “strategy” is the combination of two Greek words: *στρατιά* (“an army”) and *ἄγειν* (“to lead”). Therefore, it means to lead an army, that is, it is a word taken from the military context (Kanagaraj, 2020:1). In turn, Schnabel (2004:500) maintains that “strategy” concerns the planning of a commitment and the question of how plans can and should be carried out in specific operations. He differentiates strategy from “tactics,” that deal with the phase immediately prior to the operation, as well as with actions and reactions on the battlefield. Van Rheenen (1996:140) says that strategy is “the practical realization of God’s will within a cultural context.” Therefore, thinking in terms Christian missional work, Kanagaraj (2020:1) defines strategy “as a well-organized plan of action or policy to be followed in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and consolidating the believers in their faith. It implies an order or discipline with which the missionaries are to be led in order to accomplish their mission.”

When it comes to the question as to whether or not Paul had a church-planting strategy, the opinions of scholars differ. For example, McGavran (1955:27) states that “while Paul was in Antioch he worked out a strategy to reach much of the Mediterranean world with the Gospel.” On his part, Green believes that the apostle Paul had little or no strategy. For this author, in the early history of the Church, “the Gospel spread in an apparently haphazard manner, as men obeyed the guidance of the Spirit, and passed through the doors that he opened” (Green, 1984:174). For Green, it was not just Paul who did not have a clear-cut church-planting strategy, but the Early Church as a whole. For him, the church of Acts “was a spontaneous movement of Christians who could not keep silent about their Lord Jesus” (Green 1984:140). He continues: “to say that the apostles sat down and worked out a plan [for the evangelization of the then world] would be a crass error” (Green, 1984:13). According to Allen (1962:10), it is not possible to maintain that Paul deliberately planned his travels in advance, selected certain strategic points in which to establish his churches and then actually carried out his projects. The only argument that seems to support this theory is the use of the phrase “the work” in connection with his first missionary journey in Acts 13:2; 14:26; 15:38. However, according to Allen (1962:10), Paul began to follow a more structured way of missional action at a later stage.

A less emphatic opinion on the question of Paul's strategy is found in Kane (1976:73), who states: “if we understand the word [strategy] to mean a flexible *modus operandi*, developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to His guidance and control, so Paul really had a strategy.” Kane (1976:73) differs slightly from the definition of strategy proposed above by Kanagaraj (2020:1). While the latter defines strategy as a “well thought out” plan, the former says that Paul had a “flexible plan.” Throughout this research, the concept of strategy used by Kane will be taken as a reference.

Building on this definition, what would be the elements that would make up Paul’s church-planting strategy? Although there are common elements among them, authors’ descriptions of this differ. Occasionally, they emphasize a step-by-step method (the cycle itself), and occasionally theological presuppositions give rise to isolated factors around their view of Paul's missional action. For Schnabel (2008a:34-37), the elements of Paul's strategy are the oral proclamation of the Gospel as a fundamental element of the missionary work of the early church; geographical movement from city to city, from region to region, and from province to province as a principal element of missionary work in the first century; moving to any locale in which people would be willing to listen to the message of Jesus Christ, since the goal was to reach as many as possible with the Gospel; while matters of ethnic identity, class, culture, or gender did not control his missionary focus, since Paul wanted to reach all the people in a given location; and the fact that people in antiquity were accustomed to encountering and listening to traveling orators, giving rise to the fact that the expectations and the procedures that were triggered by such encounters had to be considered.

In his turn, Bosch (2002:166-171) highlights three elements of the strategy: that Paul strategically focused his ministry on the main cities of the Empire; that he worked in a team; that he was an example to be emulated by his converts. Allen (1962) says that Paul's missionary method consisted of three moments: presentation of the Gospel; the teaching of converts; the organization of churches. It is observed, therefore, that Allen's focus is on the Pauline step-by-step strategy in carrying out his task of planting churches. Alawode (2020) underlines three further elements: planting churches in strategic cities; the communication of the Gospel in a contextual way; and the use of the house as a missionary centre. Greenway (2001) states that Paul employed key methods as part of a strategy: he confronted people with the lordship of Christ and appealed to them to submit their hearts and lives to him; he encouraged families and the people who lived

around them to evangelize and reach society; he emphasized the importance of planting and caring for churches as communities of faith, worship, fellowship, and service; he focused on developing local leaders in the churches, putting them in charge as soon as possible; he used the natural bridges of kinship, friendships, and other contacts for spreading the Gospel; and he started house churches. These churches became living cells of the Body of Christ.

Paul moreover used large numbers of fellow workers (known today as lay people) to spread the Gospel and minister in house churches; and he taught believers to promote justice, truth, and mercy in society and to care for the Lord's creation. Hesselgrave (1995) outlines the Pauline church-planting process in ten stages: Paul commissioned missionaries; contacted the auditorium; communicated the Gospel; converted listeners; congregated believers; confirmed faith; consecrated leaders; recommended believers; continued relationships; and summoned missionary churches. Moe (2017:106) says that Paul observed the following practices: he focused on limited regions and on particular people; appointed elders from among the converts to lead the churches that he had planted; developed a missionary team; focused on preaching that highlighted God's providence and care over all creation and God's salvation in Christ, and did so in a contextualized way. Graebin (2019), having analysed the description of Paul's missionary journeys (Acts 13.1-28.31) and the other Pauline letters, with special attention to Romans)[4], defined Paul's strategy for church planting in the following terms: a flexible *modus operandi*

[4] The theological convictions that drove Paul's ministry can be summarized in his letter to the Romans. Such a statement is easily verified by noting a basic hermeneutical rule for the interpretation of the biblical epistles: observe the occasional nature of the writing. This is because the letters "were occasioned, or summoned, by some special circumstance, either on the reader's side or on the author's side" (Fee & Stuart, 2008:32). What was the occasional nature of the letter to the Romans? Possibly, Paul was in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey, around A.D. 57 (Carson et al, 1997:270). He was preparing for a visit to the Church in Rome (Rom 1:10-13). Before going there, he would pass through Jerusalem, where he would deliver an offering that would be given to the poor (Rom 15:26). After his visit to the church in Rome, he would go to Spain, in a new missionary endeavor (Rom 15:23,24). He intended to have help from the Romans for this task and, since this church had neither been evangelized nor planted by him, it was necessary to (a) introduce himself – the content of the letter was therefore, in part, his "business card" (Barbaglio, 1991:123) – and (b) his missionary theology, that is, that which impelled him to go throughout the Roman Empire evangelizing and planting churches, as he wanted to do in Spain. In other words, "the general theological tenor of the letter stems from Paul's desire to prove that he is orthodox and worthy of support" (Carson et al, 1997:280). Thus, his missionary theology in Romans "is the theology that grew out of his own special task as an apostle to the Gentiles" (Fee & Stuart, 2008:32). As Stendahl asserts (cited by Carriker, 1998:5,6): "Romans is Paul's last statement on his theology of mission. (...) Romans is central to our understanding of Paul, not because of his doctrine of justification, but because the doctrine of justification is here in his original and authentic context: as an argument for the Gentile position based on the model of Abraham (Romans 4)."

developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and based on three elements that are subject to his guidance and control:

- Boosting the ministry by means of theological convictions[5];
- Shaping the ministry by means of a philosophy of ministry;
- Executing ministry by means of ministerial practice[6].

Considering that Paul had a strategy for church planting, and that it could be defined as proposed by Graebin (2019), would this be applicable/replicable for planting churches today?[7] The answer to that question is yes, for a few reasons. In the first place, although Paul does not arrogate his strategy as the only and absolutely normative one, it is easy to observe that his actions correspond to the strategic actions taken by Jesus and that which is expected of the whole missional enterprise (Mat 28:18- 20; Mar 16:15; Joh 20:21; Act 1:8). Furthermore, as Hesselgrave (1995:38) argues, where would one find a pattern for these activities that is less likely to lead into dead ends than in Paul's missionary work? In the same vein, Goheen (2014:151) points out that, "although it is not possible to simply equate Paul as a missionary today, the way of doing missions can be greatly enriched through the attentive study of his practice." Moe's work resonates with this premise and goes further stating that the Paul's strategy can be imitated in the contemporary world "not mainly because he traveled an estimated 10,000 miles for his mission [...] but because his missionary methodologies and thoughts are basic to mission in our contemporary world" (2017:109). According to McGinnis (2011:251), Luke's primary

[5] Throughout this research, the expressions "Paul's theological convictions," "Theology of Paul/Pauline," "Theology Missionary of Paul/Pauline," "Theological Elements," will be used interchangeably, always dealing with the set of biblical-theological doctrines on which Paul based your faith and convictions, and boosted their ministerial activities.

[6] It is clear that this conceptualization was taken, in part, in terms of a definition given by Kane (1976:73) quoted above, but was expanded by adding elements of Paul's missional practice. This is the definition that will be used throughout this research, as it broadly considers the elements of Paul's missional practice. It should also be noted that it will be described in detail in chapter 3 of this research.

[7] Kanagaraj (2021:2) brings an important reflection to the use of strategies in the Christian mission within which is found the task of planting churches: "Question is often raised as to whether we need to adopt a strategy at all in Christian mission. It is asked with reticence, 'Is it important to have an organized plan of action?' The reason for such scepticism is the misunderstanding that following a strategy means to perform a military exercise and that it will not fit into the church's mission that is entirely dependent upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If 'strategy' is essential in the army, games, and sports, and also in political or business circles, then it is hard to believe that it is not needed in Christian circles. Missiologists insist that it is wiser to do some strategic planning. H.R. Cook, for example, indicates that there is a need for having personal strategy and so also for having mission strategy. Van Rheenen argues that there is no missiology without theology, the study of the cultural context, and strategy. However, he cautions that strategy must be a servant and never the master to the mission of God".

purpose in writing Acts was even to make clear in the minds of his readers that Paul's ministerial service strategy is something to be imitated.

To say that Paul's strategy cannot be applicable/replicable today due to historical distance is a misconception. According to Blaiklock, Professor of Classical Languages at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, of "all the intervening centuries, the 20th century is most similar to the 1st" (cited by Stedman, 1972:129). There was considerable intercultural flow between people of different races and backgrounds in the Early Church, as is the case today. There was a generalized bankruptcy of ideas and ideals, with similarities to those imposed by the relativization of postmodernity. Furthermore, "there was a group of people scattered throughout the Roman Empire who, by virtue of their contact with monotheistic ideas and Jewish ethics, constituted a 'prepared audience' for the Gospel" (Hesselgrave, 1995:37). It was a globalized world with characteristics similar to those of today. Furthermore, people in the first century were just as lacking in the glory of God and the Gospel of Christ as people are today. They were also as idolatrous as people are today. The "Gospel of Paul" (Rom 2:16) was as normative and necessary then as it is today. The Gospel defined by Paul as "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes in him" (Rom. 1:16) is supratemporal and supracultural.

Finally, Paul's skills as a church planter make him a model missionary to be emulated "not only by his co-workers, but by all Christians" (Bosch 2002:170). Of course, Paul was not perfect. He saw himself as "the worst of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Still, he regarded himself as a zealous parent to those he had won for Christ and as providing an ethical standard for them to imitate (1 Cor 4:16,17; 1 Cor 11:1; Phi 4:9; 1 The 1 :6; 2 The 3:7,9).

Furthermore, history shows that "the Holy Spirit usually uses impactful life examples to inspire and motivate his people" (Crotts 2017:9). As Longenecker (1971:112) writes:

> It has often been devotionally said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man wholly devoted to Him." Paul was such a man, and the world has witnessed the effect. He had a firmness of dedication to his Lord, a effervescence of spirit, a compassionate heart, a broad vision, a keen perception, and he was constantly open to the Spirit. Similarly, an example of a Christian life and ministry stands out as a paradigm and inspiration for today.

The work of Gilliland (1996:276) resonates with this premise: “While today’s mission is much different from Paul’s in many ways, the principles that motivated and guided him are still urgently applicable.” Therefore, it can be said that Paul’s church-planting strategy is applicable today, as long as it is understood that its practice is not akin to wearing a straitjacket, but that it contains adaptable guiding principles for each case. In this way, the modern church planter can and should copy the example of Paul, which is to establish a balance between a life submitted to the Spirit “and a rational, reasonable strategy to engage modern culture with the power of the Gospel” (Alawode 2020:4).

Thus, if the modern church can and should copy the example of Paul, which is to establish a balance between a life submitted to the Spirit “and a rational, reasonable strategy to engage modern culture with the power of the Gospel” (Alawode 2020:4), in this research we aim to make use of Paul’s strategy of church planting as the foundation for the planning of planting a Reformed Church in the city of Formosa[8], the latter marked, as indicated, by the predominance of a Catholic tradition and the of Spiritism; it moreover houses theologically disoriented people coming from neo-Pentecostal churches who misunderstand the conversion experience and it is a city experiencing the challenges imposed by rapid and disorderly urban expansion. In Paul’s strategy for church planting, a missionary model resides for answering these challenges and outlining a project to plant a Reformed Church in this city.[9]

1.2 Literature review

Church planting constitutes a theme that has been studied and discussed for some time and under different viewpoints. It comprises approaches such those of Green (1979, 1984), Hesselgrave (1995), Silva (2000), Sanders (2005) McGinnis (2011), some of which has been touched upon above.

[8] In this regard, it is important to remember that the lack of planning ends up to be a serious problem for church planting. Logan and Ogne (1991), as well as Klippenes (2003:84), estimate that 60% to 80% of the problems faced in church planting projects are caused by the lack of suitable planning, mostly in the preparatory stage.

[9] In his master's thesis (Graebin, 2019), this researcher asked whether the Baptist Church of Montijo, in Portugal, had been planted by using the elements of the Pauline strategy. In the present research, an inverse path is proposed: that is, to present a church planting plan that intentionally applies the Pauline strategy. Furthermore, it was decided to present the planning for the planting of a Reformed Church in Formosa because the researcher was directly involved in this project as a pastor/planter of this church. However, nothing prevents the reader from adapting these concepts, strategies, and practices to their specific theological and missiological reality.

Allen (1962), Schnabel (2008a, 2008b), Glasser (2009), Stenschke (2010), Crotts (2017), Rabens (2017), Alawode (2020), and Kanagaraj (2020) illuminate both the person and the ministry of Paul, particularly regarding his church-planting cycle (or strategy). Overall, these works discuss the manner in which the Gospel spread initially from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) during a period that embraces a major part of Paul's ministry.

It is obvious that church planting as a theme needs to be analysed under the larger umbrella of church mission. In this sense, the works of Senior and Stuhlmuellller (1987), Carriker (1992), Lopes (1997), Johnstone (1998), Bosch (2002), Bruce (2003), Bosman (2009), Ferreira (2009), Duarte (2011), Button (2014), Goheen (2014), and Buys (2019), help reflect upon the biblical and theological foundations of missionary work as well as its implementation in the ministry of church planting.

A practical and up-to-date approach of the subject within the urban context is found in the work of Greenway and Monsma (1989), Logan and Ogne (1991), Wagner (1993), Neto (1996), Garrisons (1999), Pino (2000), Keller and Allen (2002), Barro (2003), Klipennes (2003), Lidório (2009, 2015), Payne (2009, 2013), Reimer (2011), Patrick (2013), and Graebin (2019).

Scholars discuss the Pauline strategy in a fragmented way, occasionally emphasizing one point, occasionally another. Given this, I suggest general lines for the applicability of this strategy in current days. In this research, I intend to take Paul's strategy for church planting as a whole – as proposed by Graebin (2019) – and apply it intentionally and systematically to plan the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa. With this proposal in mind, this research is divided into four chapters each with its particular focus as itemised below:

- The city of Formosa (Chapter 2);
- Paul's strategy for church planting (Chapter 3);
- The application and contextualization of Paul's strategy for relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed Church in the city of Formosa (Chapter 4);
- Conclusions and recommendations for the church planting plan in Formosa and other contexts (Chapter 5).

Throughout this research, the Bible to be used is the New International Version (1995). The Greek text used is the Greek New Testament (1983) edited by Aland, Black, and Martini.

1.3 Research question

This thesis is an attempt to answer a question, while taking into account the Apostle Paul's strategy, that is, its flexible *modus operandi*, as developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control, while it is based, furthermore, on three pillars, namely Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry; his philosophy of ministry, which shaped it; and his ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed. The question is: “How should one plan the planting of a Reformed church in the city of Formosa/GO, Brazil?”

This main question can be answered sensibly in terms of five sub-questions:

- What are the characteristics of Formosa?
- What was Paul’s strategy for church planting?
- What would be a useful application and contextualization of Paul's strategy for relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed Church in the city of Formosa?
- What are the necessary conclusions and recommendations that can be derived from this case for a church planting plan in general?

1.4 Aim and objectives

1.4.1 The research aim

The aim of this research is to biblically and missiologically discern Paul's strategy for church planting and schedule for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa.

1.4.2 The research objectives

The research objectives are:

- To describe the context of the city of Formosa, Brazil;
- To describe Paul’s strategy for church planting;

- To propose a relevant and appropriate plan for a Reformed Church planting in Formosa, Brazil, in the light of Paul's strategy;
- To provide conclusions and recommendations for this church planting plan in Formosa and other contexts.

1.5 Central theoretical argument

To answer the main research question as formulated above, this research will contend that planning is imperative for church-planting projects and that Paul's strategy, as defined by Graebin (2019), is an applicable/replicable model for today's church planting. Although Paul does not claim that his strategy is unique and normative, it is easy to see that his actions correspond to the strategic actions lived out by Jesus in his own ministry and ordained by him (Mat 28:18-20; Mar 16:15; Joh 20:21; Act 1:8).[10] Furthermore, since Paul is the leading church planter in the New Testament, nothing could be more appropriate than observing and imitating his example of missionary activity.

In fact, the planning of planting a Reformed church in Formosa can be taken as a representative microcosm for other present and future church planting strategies (especially in Latin America) since, on the one hand, it covers central elements for church planting and, on the other, outlines the challenges to be encountered around church planting in this city that will be relevant for other contexts.

Furthermore, the residents of Formosa are as lacking in the transforming Gospel of Christ (as announced by Paul) as were the people of the first century of the Christian era. Catholicism, Spiritism and even some branches of neo-Pentecostalism include teachings that are diametrically opposed to biblical doctrine as systematized by Reformed Theology. Among them are the false teaching of salvation by works or a mixture of salvation by Christ plus good works. In such a context, there is an urgent need to plant a church that emphasizes the main biblical theological themes as systematized by Reformed Theology such as, among others, total depravity, salvation by grace and faith in Christ, sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit, and the need for believers to live a life for the glory of God in all areas (see 1 Cor 10:31).

[10] "Paul gladly embraced the evangelistic method that Jesus had followed in His own earthly ministry. Where previously he had sought to destroy the followers of Jesus, he now sought to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jewish people and the Savior of the world" (Glasser, 2009:150).

1.6 Methodological approach

The present study is based on the Reformed theological tradition and will make use of key biblical texts as its primary source, particularly the part that ranges from Acts 13:1-28:31 and the other Pauline letters, with special attention to Romans – which summarizes his missionary theology – which will be analysed assuming that the text of the Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and needs to be interpreted in the light of its initial intent, while taking note of its contextual grammar.

In addition to the biblical narrative, secondary sources such as books, journal articles, conference papers, and so on, will be taken into account where they reflect the thinking of theologians, missiologists, and other experts on the characteristics of a church planting ministry. The opinions of authors about the historical development of the city of Formosa and its socio-cultural characteristics will moreover be incorporated into the argument.

Furthermore, the present project will make use of a deductive approach through which a twofold analysis will be carried out. The first is based on the larger context of biblical theology for church planting. The second considers the way in which Paul developed and applied a strategy for church planting. Based on these two analyses, the study expects to come up with a specific planning method to plant a Reformed church in Formosa.

1.7 Definition of concepts

Throughout this research, the expression “Paul’s strategy” is regarded to centre on a flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control, based on three elements: Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry; Paul's philosophy of ministry, which shaped his ministry; Paul's ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed (see Kane, 1976:73; Graebin, 2019).

The expression “church planting” is understood to entail “the ministry which, through evangelism and discipling, establishes reproductive communities of the kingdom of Jesus Christ and believers who are committed to accomplish the biblical purposes under the orientation of local spiritual leaders” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:23).

The word “planning” is related to the *act* of planning. That is, to organize an activity by using appropriate methods for the achievement of specific objectives. The definition coined by Drucker (1998:714) will be taken as a "planning" reference, namely,

> planning is the ongoing process of systematically and with the greatest possible knowledge of the future contained, making current decisions involving risks; systematically organize the activities necessary for the implementation of these decisions and, through an organized and systematic feedback, measure the outcome of these decisions in com-parison with the expectations fed.

“Reformed Theology” will be the biblical-theological system of understanding that has its roots in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century as systematized, above all, in the work of John Calvin[11], as well as in other documents produced in that period or fostered from it and systematized through the Westminster Confession of Faith (CFW).

1.8 Ethical considerations

No persons were put in danger of harm by this research, as it is of a literary and not an empirical nature. Nevertheless, it will be performed according to the ethical directives of both the South African government and the North-West University and will be analysed by the specific department of the Faculty of Theology at the university.

1.9 Schematic representation

Table 3 – Schematic representation

Research questions	Aims and objectives	Research methods
What does the city of Formosa, Brazil look like?	Describe the of the city of Formosa, Brazil.	A literary analysis of relevant scholarly material.

[11] Throughout this research, the name of John Calvin will be used both in the English language (Calvin) and in the Portuguese language (Calvino), depending on the research source used, as indicated in the Bibliography.

What is Paul’s strategy for church planting?	To describe Paul’s strategy for church planting.	A literary analysis of relevant scholarly material and key biblical texts.
What would be the application and contextualization of Paul's strategy for relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed Church in the city of Formosa?	To propose a relevant and appropriate plan for a Reformed Church planting in Formosa, Brazil, in light of Paul’s strategy.	Application and contextualization of Paul’s strategy for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa.
What are the conclusions and recommendations necessary for a church planting plan in Formosa and other contexts?	Provide conclusions and recommendations for this church planting plan in Formosa and other contexts.	The conclusions and recommendations are given.

CHAPTER 2 – THE CITY OF FORMOSA

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter established, among others, the theme, objectives, central theoretical argument, methodology and structure of this research. The objective of this chapter (Chapter 2) is to describe the city of Formosa, through a literary analysis of relevant academic material. The description intends to discern points that may constitute challenges for planting a Reformed Church in Formosa.

2.2 Geographical aspects

2.2.1 Brazil

Brazil borders every country in South America except Chile and Ecuador. To the east, it is bathed and bounded by the Atlantic Ocean. To the south, it borders Uruguay and to the north Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. To the northwest, it borders Colombia and to the west Bolivia and Peru. Finally, to the southeast, Brazil shares its border with Argentina and Paraguay as illustrated by the map below.



Figure 1 – Map of South America

[Available at: https://geoftp.ibge.gov.br/produtos_educacionais/mapas_tematicos/mapas_do_mundo/politico/america_sul_pol.pdf Access on Nov. 07, 2020]

According to the Constitution of 1988, Brazil is a Presidential-list Federative Republic composed of 26 states and the Federal District.[12] The population of 214 132 121 (IBGE, 2010a) is spread over 5 570 municipalities[13] divided into five regions: south, southeast, midwest, north, and northeast, as shown in the map below.



Figure 2 – Map of Brazil

[Available at: https://geoftp.ibge.gov.br/produtos_educacionais/mapas_tematicos/mapas_do_brasil/mapas_nacionais/politicobrasil_grandes_regioes.pdf Access on Nov. 07, 2020]

2.2.2 Goiás

The population of the Midwest (16 504 303), formed by the states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, and the Federal District, corresponds to 7.79% of the total Brazilian population. Formosa is located in the state of Goiás, as indicated by the arrow on the map below.

[12] A Federal District is an administrative division that responds directly to the Central Government in countries with a federal system. In Brazil this area is called Central-West. The present study uses expressions like “Federal District,” “Federal Capital” and “Brasília” interchangeably.

[13] The Brazilian government agency responsible for the statistical data of the population is the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). It considers that the country has this number of municipalities, including Brasilia (Federal Capital) and the island of Fernando de Noronha (a state district of Pernambuco).

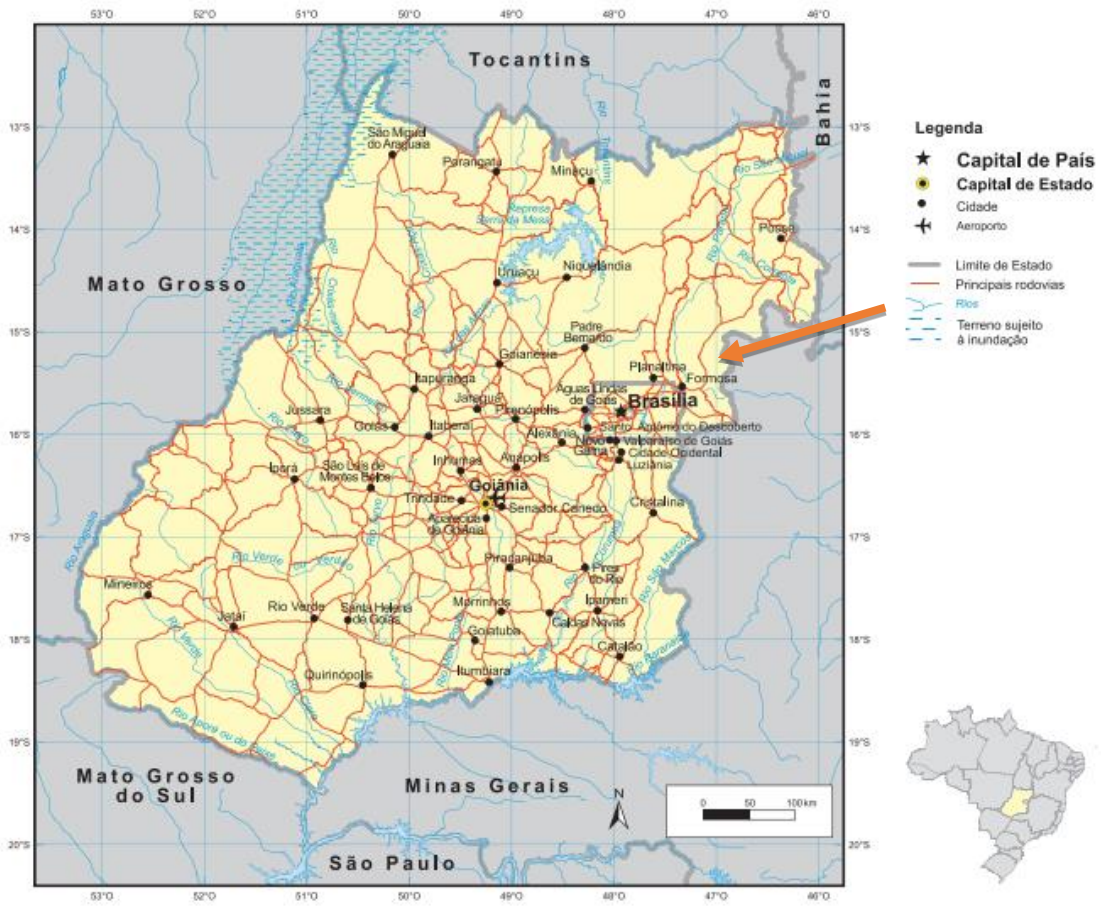


Figure 3 – Goiás Map

[Available at: https://7a12.ibge.gov.br/images/7a12/estados//goias.pdf Access on Nov. 07, 2020]

2.2.3 Formosa

In its turn, within the State of Goiás, Formosa is part of the East Goiás mesoregion, and a micro-region known as “Entorno de Brasília,” which, as its name implies, is a set of 19 Goiás cities that surround the Federal District. The following map indicates the location of these cities.



Figure 4 – Entorno de Brasília Map

[Available at: http://www.sgc.goias.gov.br/upload/arquivos/2014-09/municipios-do-entorno-do-df.pdf Access on Nov. 07, 2020]

Formosa makes is an important hydrographic locality in Brazil. It is the source of the waters that feed the three largest rivers in Brazil and South America: the Amazon, the São Francisco, and the Rio da Prata. In terms of natural beauty, the city is privileged for being home to Salto do Itiquira, a 168-meter-high waterfall; Lagoa Feia, a naturally formed lake 600 meters in diameter that forms the Rio Preto, which is a tributary of the Paracatu River that, in its turn, will flow into the São Francisco River; the Indaiá Waterfalls, a park with several waterfalls; and the Lago or Poção Azul, a lake of natural formation with crystalline waters, 30 km from the centre of the municipality.

Intriguingly, the exchange between Formosa and Brasília is greater than the exchange between Formosa and Goiânia, the capital of the state of Goiás. This is obviously due to the geographical distances involved. Formosa is 80 km from Brasília and 280 km from Goiânia. While a trip to Goiânia takes about five hours, it takes one hour to go from Formosa to Brasília. Thus, it is common for the people of Formosa to work in the Federal Capital and depend on the hospital as well as the educational and commercial services offered there. This strong relationship causes financial dependence in addition to causing

cultural influence of Brasília on Formosa. This influence is easily understood when we study the history of Formosa.

2.3 Historical aspects

The history of the city of Formosa needs to be understood in the light of the history of Brazil and its production cycles. The date of April 22 1500 A.C. is remembered in history as the day that the Portuguese Pedro Álvares Cabral discovered Brazil. As is known, Brazil had been inhabited by indigenous ethnic groups since the pre-Cabralian period.

At the time of the discovery of Brazil, the Indians of the Je group, that is, the Xavantes, Aimorés, Bororó, Botocudos, Cariris, Carijós, and Timbiras, lived on the Central Plateau. Unfortunately, “the confrontation with white men led to the near extinction of the Indians of Goiás” (Chauvet, 2005:87). In fact, several conflicts followed not only in this region, but in Brazil as a whole. This happened, because in 1533 A.C. the Portuguese Crown, in its eagerness to colonize the discovered territory, divided Brazil into fifteen extensions of land known as Hereditary Captaincies. These portions were given to entrepreneurs who would have to use their own resources to develop the received region. In exchange, they could donate portions of this land (*sesmarias*) to whomever they wished, “to collect taxes, found villages, enslave indigenous people or black people enslaved from Africa” (Chauvet, 2005:110). As can be seen on the map below, the place where the city of Formosa is currently located belonged to the Captaincy of Bahia.

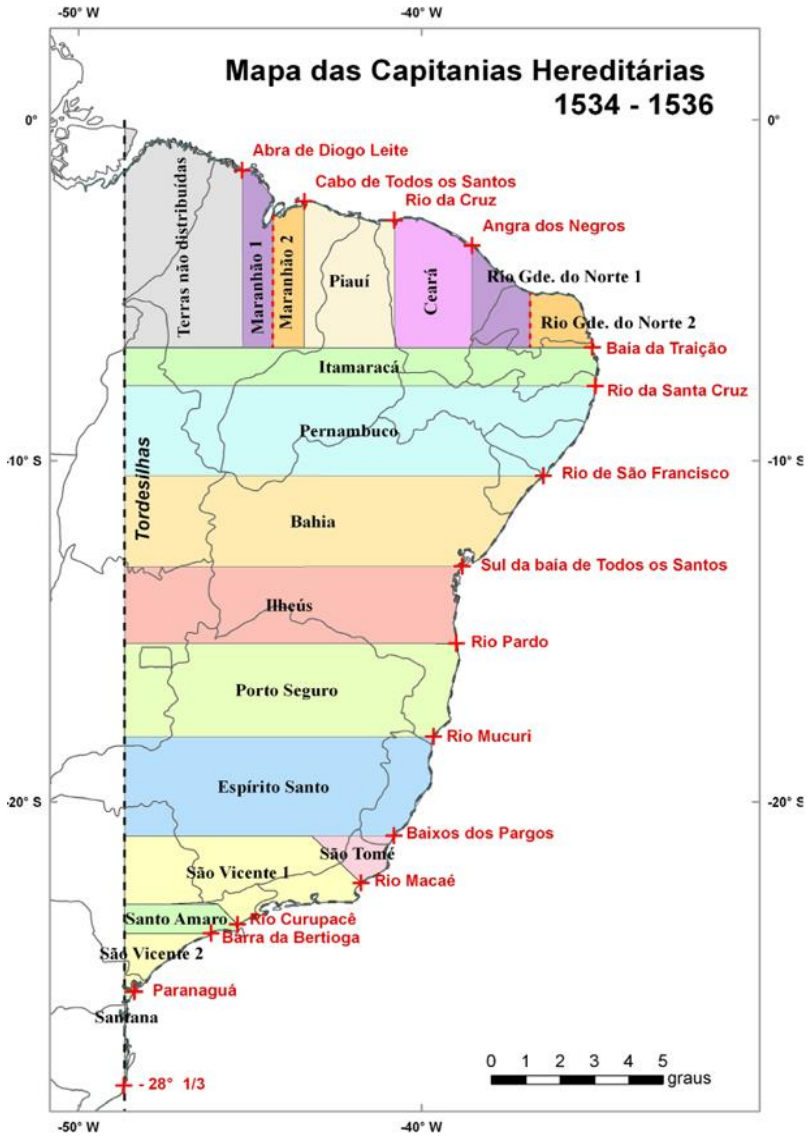


Figure 5 – Hereditary Captancy Map

[Available at: http://www.scielo.br/img/revistas/anaismp/v21n2/a02fig10.jpg Access on Dec. 15, 2020]

Of all the captaincies, only two were successful: Pernambuco and São Vicente. Soon after, in the mid-16th century, the economic sugar cycle began in Brazil. Especially in the states of Pernambuco and Bahia, large areas of sugarcane production were formed. In addition to sugarcane, this period was also marked by livestock as a source of income. “In the land dispute between livestock and agriculture linked to sugar, livestock moved slowly to the interior of Brazil” (Chauvet, 2005:113).

From 1590 onwards, with the objective of fighting indigenous groups, finding black slaves who had escaped from the sugar plantations and catechizing the Indians or in search of

gold and other precious minerals, several expeditions were undertaken to the interior of Brazil, among also in Goiás.

In one of these expeditions, in 1673, Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva (the Anhanguera Father) went to Goiás and came into contact with the Goya Indians. Living with them, he noticed that they wore gold ornaments. “To convince them to show them where the mines were, he put brandy in a gourd, set it on fire and told them he would set fire to the waters of the river. The Indians took him to the gold spot and started calling him Anhanguera (sorcerer or old devil)” (Chauvet, 2005:116,117).

Between 1722 and 1725, Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva (the son of Anhanguera) made another expedition into the interior of Goiás. This one was significant for the exploration of the state. Bartolomeu returned to São Paul in 1725, but a group linked to the expedition remained in Goiás. Through this group, according to Palacín et. al (2001:11,12), the population of the state increased.

As these expeditions found a substantial volume of gold and other precious metals, the Portuguese government developed a series of precautions to organize and supervise mining and the payment of taxes related to livestock production, as well as a registration procedure.

In 1736, the Registry of Lagoa Feia began to operate on the shores of a naturally formed lake located where we now can find the municipality of Formosa. There was a strategic reason for locating this registration office on the banks of the Lagoa Feia. Two roads converged there: the Picada de Minas Gerais and the Picada da Bahia. It was, therefore, a region of throughfare and connection between two important regions of Brazil.

A small village developed around this place. Between 1739 and 1804, more than 20 people received allotments in the Lagoa Feia region (Chauvet, 2005:125), and these were aimed at extensive cattle raising. Thus, with the arrival of the new residents, two villages emerged: Arraial do Santo Antônio do Itiquira and Arraial dos Couros.

In addition to the growth of the population caused by entries and allotments, Jacintho highlights another group that was added to the local population: a group of Creoles who migrated from the Arraial de Santo Antônio. According to him,

> the inhabitants of that village, seeing themselves decimated every year by intermittent fevers, moved, eight leagues away from there, to the locality where the city of Formosa was located, as it was healthier and because it was where travelling traders from farms came to, where they could find hardware, salt and coffee, which came mainly from Minas Gerais, and, afraid of the Paranã fever, they waited there for the inhabitants of Paranã to come and bring them cattle, hides, soles and saltpetre and to exchange their goods (Jacintho, 1979:19).

Although there is no way to prove it, it is possible that these blacks were runaway slaves who then formed a community. The existence of a significant number of blacks is confirmed by the only existing chapel in the region, dedicated to Nossa Senhora do Rosário," a saint who was directly linked to the black slaves.

Around 1819, Arraial dos Couros had 148 inhabitants, 50 houses, 39 cattle farms, 6 sugar mills and the churches of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Mercês, and Abadia (Chauvet, 2005:191). A little later, in 1830, several families began to move from Minas Gerais contributing to the increase of local commerce.

In 1833, Arraial dos Couros became a legal centre. On February 22 1843, the city council was installed, and on the 1 August the same year, Arraial dos Couros was declared a village, which gave rise to the Vila Formosa da Imperatriz. Later, the name would just become Formosa.

It was shortly after this period that the region of Formosa ceased to be merely a crossing point used by traders and travellers and became part of the discussions about moving the Federal Capital (which at the time was in Rio de Janeiro/RJ) to the Central Plateau region. The first vote to transfer the capital to this region came from Francisco Adolfo Vanhargen – the Viscount of Porto Seguro – who, in 1877, passed through the region.

In 1890, a year after Brazil proclaimed itself a Republic, Lauro Müller presented an amendment to the National Congress to demarcate an area for the future implementation of the Federal Capital. Two years later, because of this situation, and at the request of Marshal Floriano Peixoto, the Cruls Mission was created, made up of people from different areas of expertise. They went to the Central Plateau to verify the information left by the Viscount of Porto Seguro on the spot.

To establish marked borders, three municipalities in Goiás needed to cede parts of their territories: Formosa, Luziânia, and Planaltina, as shown in the map below:



Figure 6 – Demarcation of the Federal District Area

[Source: Chauvet (2005:15)]

From the first negotiations until the beginning of the construction of the new Federal Capital (Brasilia), Formosa experienced important historical events and underwent significant changes. In 1910, the São José college, a Catholic school, was inaugurated. In 1930, there were 257 cattle ranches, totalling more than 30 000 animals (Chauvet, 2005:236).

In 1931, the population of the urban area totalled 1 974 and the rural one was estimated at 16 000 (Chauvet, 2005:224). Magalhães (1999:28) describes the strong predominance of rural culture at the time:

> The residents of that time had the custom of raising animals that walked loosely around the city. They raised sheep and goats, animals that don't sleep in the bush but slept in the city. It was even a lot of fun, because we used to play with these animals at night, running from one side to the other. They grazed along the side of the Lagoa Feia and

> Brocotó. People had their own corral to have their milk. Milk was hardly bought. Almost everyone had their own cow [...]

From 1956 onwards, this rural cultural environment, typical of the interior of Brazil at the time, underwent a major transformation. From that date, under the government of President Juscelino Kubitschek, the construction of Brasília, the new Federal Capital, began. It was the catalyst for a strong growth in urbanization and population growth throughout the region. Different groups began to populate the quadrilateral, destined as the future Federal District: firstly, the engineers of the Companhia de Urbanização da Nova Capital Federal (NOVACAP) [the urbanisation company of the new Federal Capital]. Subsequently, the arrival of thousands of workers, merchants, and entrepreneurs “attracted by the opportunities brought by creating a city from scratch, in the middle of nowhere” (Rodrigues, 2019). Finally, especially after the inauguration of Brasília on April 21 1960, civil servants arrived, transferred from the former Capital in Rio de Janeiro.

Among the new residents of the region were the *candangos* who, contrary to NOVACAP's thinking and expectations, did not return to their cities when the Federal Capital was built. This intensified the migratory flow, extrapolating the quadrangle of the Federal District, which overflowed to the cities around Brasília. In Formosa, for example, several subdivisions were created or authorized during this period. The city had to undergo rapid transformations and adapt to the conditions of neighbouring Brasília/DF. The rapid population growth of this period can be easily observed when numbers are compared to preceding years, as shown in the table below.

Table 4 – Population growth of Formosa

Year	Number of Inhabitants
1920	15 860
1940	16 886
1950	23 273
1960	21 708[14]
1970	28 874
1980	43 297
1990	62 982
2000	78 651
2010	92 684
2020	123 684

[Available at: IBGE, 2010a]

Population growth has generated a change in the city's lifestyle. Formosa ceased to be essentially rural and started to show urban characteristics. Just at that time, several residents of the region chose to leave the rural context to live in the city. Chauvet (2005:428) notes that, in 1970, most of the population of Formosa resided in rural areas. In 1980, 29 618 of the 43 297 residents were already living in the urban area. In 2000, of the 78 651 inhabitants, 69 285 lived in there.

The influx of people from the countryside to the city increased from 1974 onwards. That year, 1 297 rural producers as well as their families, households, and tenants were forced to hand over their land (1 040 km^2) to the Brazilian Army for the creation of the National Security Area, with the objective of protecting the then new Federal Capital. It was a

[14] In 1960, São João d'Aliança and Cabeceiras were emancipated from Formosa.

truculent experience, which brought cultural and social uprooting in addition to a disorderly increase in the population and swelling of the outskirts of Formosa.

> Many families huddled together in tiny shacks, hastily erected. They lived in huddles, eating the provisions they brought from their gardens. Some former landowners did not even receive compensation and found themselves in absolute poverty and helplessness [...]. They had no services. They only knew how to work in the fields: planting, tending and harvesting. Poverty was spreading (Vieira, 2006:91).

Another remarkable fact of this period was that, from 1975 onwards, families of southerners began to arrive in the rural area of the Federal District, especially in the region of Planaltina/DF:

> There was intense propaganda in Rio Grande do Sul, and the "gaúchos"[15] who had already moved up, bought land for agriculture throughout the state of Paraná, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais and finally arrived in Goiás and the Federal District (Chauvet, 2005:395).

In 1979, three families from the south of Brazil came to Formosa. In this way, the new configuration that the city had assumed in previous years made it assume important roles in the region. Compared to other cities in the northeast of Goiás, Formosa assumed a prominent position. It became a point of reference sought after for medical and hospital care and for studies at all school levels. In addition, local commerce became an attraction for people, occasionally in search for jobs, occasionally because of the need for it is its products and services.

On the other hand, compared to Brasília, Formosa enjoyed a position of dependence. Today, still, it is occasionally called the "sleeping city." Thousands of people from Formosa travel daily to the Federal District, mainly for public service jobs but also for medical treatment, studies, shopping, or leisure.

It can therefore be concluded that the chronology of Formosa is divided into two major periods: before and after the construction of Brasília. In addition, history shows that the

[15] Residents of southern Brazil who came to the Midwest due to agricultural work fronts, at the time as encouraged by federal public policies.

population of Formosa was made up of a diverse racial and cultural reality. Indigenous peoples, blacks, whites, and browns who originated from various places including from Bahia, Minas Gerais and, more recently, the southern states of Brazil, forming a mosaic of colours, traditions, beliefs, customs, and different cultures, all encompassed on the same soil.

The way in which the city developed over the years directly impacted its religious profile. On the one hand, a diversity of religious currents was formed and, on the other, a marked religious syncretism. Despite this diversity, a Roman Catholic hegemony exists in it, of which the numerical predominance has remained from the beginning of the formation of Formosa to the present day.

In which sense do the geographical and historical aspects reflect obstacles and opportunities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? The proximity to Brasília has caused Formosa to experience a change from a predominantly rural to an urban culture. This is not just a phenomenon restricted to this region but a generalized reality in Brazil. IBGE (2010b) data demonstrate this reality:

> In 1920, the urban population made up a total of 16% of the population, while the rural population amounted to 84%. The change from a predominantly rural to an urban country gained velocity during the period of 1960-1970, when the relationship was reversed: of the 13 475 472 households registered in Brazil in 1960, just under half (49%) were located in urban areas; in 1970, when 18 086 336 households were counted, this percentage already reached 58%. Today, however, 85% of Brazilians live in cities and only 15% in the rural context.

Ribeiro (1995:198) recalls that no Brazilian city was able to accommodate these levels of migratory flow. Social issues that were already serious problems before the influx were intensified, causing increases in homelessness, slum settlement, unemployment, and a series of social maladjustments.

However, urbanization has not only brought with it social consequences. The migrant himself or herself suffered the consequences of this change. This includes psychological isolation. The individual may be physically integrated into the group while feeling alone having no one in whom to confide problems, doubts, joys, and sorrows.

The migrant who left the rural context with its rhythm of life, culture, and goods that enjoy symbolic meanings, different from the urban environment, has difficulty developing relationships. In fact, people are seen as adversaries. It is a competition – consciously or not – that starts when you get in line for a job and that intensifies individualism and the philosophy of "every man for himself."

He or she meets many, but the pace of the city does not allow relationships to be deepened. The feeling of being "just one more number in a crowd," oppresses the human spirit, causing people to prostrate themselves in loneliness and develop serious emotional illnesses.

Another matter engendered by urbanization is what Ribeiro (1995) calls deculturation, that is, a violent attitude against the culture of a people. "It is gravity is almost equivalent to the first deculturation that we suffered, in the first century, when de-Indianizing the Indians, de-Africanizing the African and de-Europeanizing the European" (Ribeiro, 1995:205). What happens is that the immigrant who left the countryside enters a totally different way of life to which he or she needs to adapt, giving up his or her culture, which uproots their cultural references and tradition.

In this context, in which people are emotionally fragile and in search of a "home," the church will, paradoxically, find them to be open to the message of the Gospel. Furthermore, a Reformed church in Formosa can be a place of refuge if aspects of koinonia are a hallmark of its culture.

2.4 Demographic aspects[16]

2.4.1 Area, population density and age characteristics

As indicated, the population of Formosa is made up of 123 684 people. It is spread over a territorial area of 5 813 637 km². In addition to the urban area (municipal headquarters), with 52 districts, Formosa is made up of three other rural districts: the District of Bezerra, District of JK, and District of Santa Rosa, which comprise population density of 17.22 inhabitants/km².Numerically, residents of the urban area correspond to 92.3% of the population (113 789), while those of the rural area account for 7.7% (9 895). Of the total number of residents, 50.9% (62 955) are female and 49.1% (60 729) male. In terms of

[16] The data below were taken from: IBGE (2010a).

colour or race, the population of Formosa is divided as follows: Asian (2 612); whites (33 448); indigenous (124); brown (54 738); black (9 163)[17].The most representative age group is between 30 and 39 years old (16 628), followed by people between 40 and 49 years old (12 305) and 10 to 14 years old (9 765). The age group with the lowest number of people is 70 years and over, with only 3 164 representatives. The characteristics of the population of Formosa point to a predominance of people living in the urban context who are relatively young (mostly between 30 and 49 years old) and a larger female population.

These factors must be observed, among others, when thinking about the formation of a team for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa, that is, there should be an intention to form a team that approximates these predominant characteristics of the population of Formosa. This is so because, it is a natural tendency for people to approach those who are like them. Warren (2002:163) reminds us that “people choose a church because of relationships, not because of location.”

2.4.2 Work, income and economy

Of the economically active population, 41 184 hold paid jobs. The sectoral distribution of these is as follows: 11 149 in commerce, 5 538 in general services, and 4 364 in civil construction. Still, in terms of occupation, 15.26% are students, 10.89% are pensioners, 7.89% are unemployed, 6.23% do housework, and 0.21% are retired. The average monthly salary of formal workers is 2.1 times the minimum wage.

Thus, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of the municipality is R$ 19.525,95. These values place Formosa in the 2 465th place (out of a total of 5 570) of the national GDP; in the 138th place (out of a total of 246) of the state GDP; third (out of seven) in the immediate region's GDP. Among the revenues that circulate in Formosa, 69.6% come to the municipality from external sources.

2.4.3 Education

The municipality has an enrolment rate of 96.6% in ages six to 14 years. Among people aged 25 and over, 26 327 have no education or have not completed the elementary

[17] It is important to note that the way of classifying races in Brazil is very different than the ones used in English-speaking countries. There is no rigid line between the races: rather, a line of gradual changes, that is, miscegenation is much greater in Brazil than in other Western countries.

school; 7 141 have completed elementary school but have not completed high school; 13 923 have completed high school but have not completed higher education; 6 511 have completed higher education; and 35 did not determine their level of education.

The demographic data shows that Formosa is essentially an urban city: 92.3% live in the urban area. These numbers are easily elucidated in the light of history since, after the construction and foundation of Brasília, Formosa experienced a marked population growth. From the 1980s onwards, following a phenomenon verified in most Brazilian cities at the time, there was a large displacement of its population from the rural to the urban sector. It is important to point out that, in Formosa, this urbanization process took place in a disorderly manner, producing major social problems.

The population of Formosa is composed mostly of persons of mixed race, whose largest age group is between 30-39 years. The number of elderly people over 70 years old is very small, making up only 2% of the population (rounded off number). Possibly, this lack of longevity is due to socio-economic and educational precariousness which, as observed in the numbers, situates Formosa far below more developed Brazilian cities.

One of the consequences of this social deficit is urban violence. The region around Brasília is currently one of the most violent in Brazil. In a recent report, *Correio Brasiliense*, a newspaper with wide circulation in the region, published a series of journalistic articles pejoratively calling this region the “Belt of Violence.” In one of these articles, data from Formosa is quoted: “Up to the seventh month of the year, 28 people were murdered. In the same period, criminals assaulted 272 pedestrians and the local police station recorded nine rapes” (Faria et al., 2017).

The areas of work, income, and economy point to the fact that a Reformed church in the city of Formosa will have to be intensely concerned with the need to be intensely concerned about social ministries. In other words, in Formosa, believers will have a unique opportunity to serve the Lord and the people. This because

> it is expected of God´s people to decide for change when faced with a way of living that does not reflect the divine ideal. Thus, if local churches are to break down barriers and move with deeds and words towards those that are non-believers, then a new reformation should have an impact our communities. Mobilizing the church means bringing it back to its position as a community-of-servants-with-a-towel, whose

> mission it is to be an instrument of God's love towards people in all of their dimensions, announcing the whole Gospel and extending their hands for every good work (Lyra, 2010).

2.5 Cultural aspects

In addition to geographic, historical, and demographic data, it is necessary to know the culture of the city of Formosa in order to enjoy a complete overview of this region. But first, it is necessary to define the concept of culture. There is no easily conceived definition of what culture means. According to Botelho (2016:22), “culture is everything that the human being elaborates and produces symbolically and materially.” For Hiebert (2016:30), culture is “the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, values and their associated patterns of behavior and products, shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel and do.” Stott (1983:9) brings a more expanded definition of culture:

> In the broadest sense, [culture] simply means the standards followed by a particular group. For there to be any kind of common life and a certain degree of collective action, there has to be consensus, whether oral or written, on a large number of issues. But the term 'culture' is not generally used unless it is a community larger than the family, be it restricted or broader. Culture implies a certain measure of homogeneity.

Thus, culture links several generations over a period. “It is received from the past, but not through a process of natural inheritance. Each generation has to learn it from itself. This learning generally takes place through a process of absorption from the social environment, especially at home” (Stott, 1983:8)

Occasionally, people act in accordance with culture without necessarily realizing what they are doing. This happens because such actions are carried out at the subconscious level, comprising all facets of human life. After all, culture “is an integrated system of beliefs (about God, reality and the meaning of life), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), customs (how to behave, how to relate to others, speak, pray, dress, work, play, trade, eat, work in the fields, etc.)” (Stott, 1983:9,10). “These beliefs, values and customs are expressed through institutions such as government, courts,

temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc. identity, dignity, security and continuity." (Stott, 1983:9,11).

In relation to culture, it is also important to note two issues. First, all human societies and, consequently, their cultures, are permeated by a double reality: the fact that men are the image of God, and the fact that they were affected by the Fall. These two realities unequivocally influence every cultural construction. As the Tenth Article of the Lausanne Covenant asserts: "Since man is a creature of God, part of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because man has fallen, his entire culture (usages and customs) is tainted with sin and part of it is demonic in inspiration" (Lausanne Covenant, 1974).

Secondly, culture is not a static reality and is always undergoing transformation, adaptation, and changes, which means that, a priori, a culture cannot be hermetically defined. However, its central elements can be observed: culture,

> is closely linked to language and is expressed in proverbs, myths, folktales and various forms of art, which constitute part of the mental equipment of all members of the group [...] This means that culture comprises all aspects of human life. At the centre is a worldview, that is, a general understanding of the character of the universe and one's place in that universe (Stott, 1983:8,9).

2.5.1 Proverbs and popular expressions

There are some popular sayings among the people of Formosa that express their culture, such as "it is bad, but it is good!"[18] Usually, this proverb is used in the context of a dialogue about how one's life is going. It expresses, on the one hand, that the person recognizes that there are positive and also negative elements in his life, that is, good things and bad things. In this sense, it expresses a culture that tries to see the positive side of life, a characteristic cultural trait of the Brazilian population in general. In fact, a variation of this expression reads: "It is bad, but it will get better!"[19]. On the other hand, "It is bad, but it is good!" expresses a passivity, a fatalism in the face of life. That is, it is better to settle for "a little good" than to strive for "very good". The discomfort that the "bad" brings is not enough for the person to want to leave their comfort zone.

[18] "Está ruim, mas está bom!"
[19] "Está ruim, mas vai melhorar!"

Another well-used expression reads: “Life is good in the countryside!”[20] There is, in the people of Formosa, a nostalgia for the rural environment. In general, the city is seen almost as a necessary evil, but the idyllic environment is the countryside. It is not uncommon to find residents talking about wanting to live on a farm in a field when they reach retirement. It is precisely in the countryside where many Formosa’s end up spending the weekend, since those who do not have a rural property, at least know someone who does. The historical fact narrated above about the removal of families to occupy the Army area in 1974, marked the history of these families and the city as a negative phenomenon. It is common to find people who regret this episode because they or their family members suffered emotionally and economically in its wake.

A third common expression among the people of Formosa reads: “Let's go at Coan's pace!”[21] Coan is a characteristic bird of the region, whose gait is quite slow. The expression is therefore similar to “slow and steady.” That is, there is no need to do things in a hurry. This demonstrates the rhythm of life of the Formosa. Interestingly, with the arrival of southerners in the late 1970s (as mentioned above), a distinct culture shock occurred. For southerners, Goiás was “very slow.” In turn, for the people of Goiás, the southerners were “very fast.”

The fourth expression that demonstrates cultural characteristics reads: “Senhora d’Abadia!”[22] It is usually used as an interjection for surprise, such as upon seeing an accident or hearing bad news. Even among some members of evangelical churches, it is common to use this expression. It shows the Catholic religious influence in the city, which even determines the way in which they speak.

2.5.2 The Legend of the Serpent

There is a popular tale well known in Formosa, whose narrative also expresses cultural characteristics. It is the Legend of the Serpent.

> When the friar Stephen came to visit Formosa, a square and a chapel had been built, a little above the “Rua dos Crioulos” (at that time, still far away from the village). But this chapel was built exactly on top of a

[20] “Boa é a vida na roça!”
[21] “Vamos no passo da coan!”
[22] “Nossa Senhora d’Abadia!” It is, at the same time, an expression used to show surprise and, on the other hand, it is the invocation of a Catholic saint.

very strong and devastating underground river, as it was the river that fed the Lake Feia, and everyone expected that this river one day would demolish all the houses and lands that existed in its extension. As if the river were not enough, a very large serpent grew up in this place, reaching almost a league in length. As the chapel was in danger, friar Stephen prayed a lot, and covered by the powers of the Divine Holy Spirit, he ascended to heaven and received three hairs from the hands of “Nossa Senhora da Conceição,” with which he – friar Stephen – should tie that serpent. Back on land, friar Stephen crossed himself and, taking with him the three hairs of the “Nossa Senhora da Conceição,” walked into the Lake Feia, finding inside it three coconut trees submerged in the water as well as the fearsome tail of the serpent, which at the moment was sleeping. Using two hairs from “Nossa Senhora da Conceição,” Friar Stephen tied the snake's tail to the two largest coconut trees and continued walking along the underground river until he reached the snake's head. As friar Stephen was invisible due to having been blessed, the serpent did not see him, so it did not advance on him. At the bottom of the river, another coconut tree sprouted, which can be seen exactly behind the Church of Saint Stephen (in the right hand corner), and it was there where friar Stephen used the other hair of “Nossa Senhora da Conceição” to tie the head of that terrible serpent. When friar Stephen arrived back at the Lake Feia, the snake woke up and, shaking, realized that it was tied up. It was so furious that, shaking its body, which was not trapped, it emptied a third part of the Lake, where the mark of a cross, that was placed on the shore a little earlier by the same Friar Stephen, can be seen. The chapel was demolished and a beautiful little church was built in its place, which, after the death of Frei Stephen, was named the Church of Saint Stephen. Putting his ear to the ground next to the vestry, he could clearly hear the sound of the waters and the sway of the serpent trying to get free. Even though the little church was demolished in 1910, the serpent is still alive and tied up, and if someone cuts the coconut tree where it is tied up, or even if the hair of “Nossa Senhora da Conceição” would break, it will raise up and demolish the city (Diocese of Formosa, 2021).

The legend evidences the religious syncretism that is present in Formosa. It mixes biblical truths. The serpent is a biblical representation of the figure of Satan (Gen 3:1; Rev 12:9) who came to “steal, kill and destroy” (Joh 10:10a) with this false teaching that the Virgin Mary whose name in the legend is “Nossa Senhora da Conceição” has the power to bind the destroying devil.[23] This power is shared with the Catholic Church, especially its clergy. In addition, the story is permeated by mystical and superstitious elements, common to Brazilian religious culture.

2.5.3 Cooking and art

Formosa's culture is also expressed in cuisine and art. In cooking, there are two elements that help to understand cultural traits. The first is the space occupied by the kitchen in homes. In the culture of Goiás, the kitchen is not just a space for meals. It is a place of socializing between family and friends. “The wider the area, the more comfortable everything else is. It is in the kitchen that the good housewife creates the most pleasant part of the home: the food. It is in the kitchen that the wife captivates her husband” (Signoreli, 2010:31). Ortêncio (1967:42,43) also highlights the role of the kitchen in the architecture and culture of Goiás and says that

> in the whole house the place where most of the work is done is in the kitchen. In the past, even politics took place there. The ancients solved all their problems at the big kitchen table [...] So we walk around, take the man to the kitchen, order a nice cup of coffee, and that's it [...] Taking someone to the kitchen signifies a trusting, secure friendship. When you want to show the intimate relationship, you have with someone, you say: “I'm from the guy's kitchen...” “I drink coffee sitting on the butt of Beltran's stove...” It is always in the kitchen that the boss shows her greatest aptitude.

[23] It is interesting to note that Jesus uses a similar figure of speech to speak of his action to obstruct the works of Satan: “Indeed, no one can enter the house of the strong man and take away his goods, without first binding him. Only then will you be able to rob his house” (Mar 3:27). About this passage, Myers (1992:211) comments: “Jesus (known as 'the strongest' announced by John, 1,8) intends to overthrow the kingdom of the strong man (equivalent to the scribe institution represented by the demon of 1.24). In this parable, the oracle of Second Isaiah comes to life: Yahweh fulfils his promise to deliver 'the prey of the strong (LXX, ischuounts) and has saved the captives of the tyrants' (Is 49,24f).”

In addition to this outstanding role of the kitchen, the cultural traits of Formosa can be understood in the light of its cuisine, if one looks at its typical dishes: *pamonha* (or *pamonhada*), rice with *pequi*, free-range chicken with *pequi, guariroba*, drover beans. Such dishes expose the mixture of three distinct cultures: the indigenous one centred on natives of the land, the African one centred on the history of slavery, and the European one centred on the arrival of Portuguese families in Goiás. In the words of Signoreli (2010:31):

> Although eating habits in Goiás follow a recipe more or less similar to the cuisine of Minas Gerais and São Paul, with which it shares several dishes, Goiás cuisine stands out for the mixture of: its indigenous origins, a hint of a European taste, a light African taste, everything in the same cauldron, with doses of good humour.

The artistic expressions of Formosa, once again, point to the attachment to the rural environment and the influence of Catholicism. In addition to the typical guitar music of the region, the *sertanejo* and the *sofrência*[24], as the *catira* are artistic expressions found in the city. It centres on a typical Brazilian dance, known since the times of Colonial Brazil. According to Maia (2005), Father José de Anchieta included the dance between 1563 and 1597 in the feast of Saint Gonçalo, Saint John and Our Lady of the Conception, of which he was a devotee. Anchieta would then have composed verses on its proper rhythm, and it was considered suitable for such festivities, since it was only danced by men. It is practiced throughout the interior of Brazil, especially in Goiás (Teixeira, 2010). It is widely celebrated on the “Folia de Reis” and on the “Festa do Divino” (Maia, 2005), which are typical Catholic festivals. It progresses through a Brazilian tap rhythm similar to a “foot tap” and to the sound of clapping and guitar music. It can be exercised by a group of men only or also by a group of women (Teixeira, 2010).

These artistic expressions are widely disseminated in at least three places. Firstly, by the programmes of the city's five FM radio stations.[25] The names given to these programmes are very suggestive and point to the affectionate connection with rural culture:

[24] Musical style linked to Sertanejo that usually emphasizes the suffering caused by broken or unrequited love relationships.
[25] It is common for Formosa radio stations to include in their daily programming the Prayer of the Hail Mary. It is usually broadcast at 6:00 p.m. At least for a few minutes, radio programming is devote to prayers.

“The time of the ranch,” “Good morning, backcountry!,” “Our ranch,” “Prose, coffee and viola,” “Straw hat,” “Cowboy city,” “Rough territory.”

Secondly, in August, as a celebration of the anniversary of the municipality, the Agricultural Exhibition Festival takes place. During the celebration, which lasts about fifteen days, rural programmes are hosted, such as animal and agricultural machinery exhibitions, as well as rodeos and musical performances. The festival attracts residents from all around, including Brasilia, for offering performances with nationally known country artists.

Thirdly, art is also expressed in the many little bars my means of live music. Not only on weekends, as is common in most Brazilian cities, but every night. These places are frequented, above all, by young people.

Fourthly, the predominant architecture also demonstrates rural and Catholic influence. In general, houses are simple buildings. Even in those that are owned by upper-class families, the rural tone prevails, reminiscent of the old farm houses.[26] In addition, it is quite common that these houses have a large backyard with fruit trees, vegetable gardens and, in some of them, chickens or pigs are raised. It is common to place images of saints painted on tiles on the facades of the houses. Usually, the house is consecrated to that saint. Another common symbol in the houses is the raising of the Flag of the Divine Holy Spirit so as to express devotion.

2.5.4 Religious profile

The religious profile of Formosa is another cultural indicator. The figures reveal that the population is markedly religious and divided as reflected in the table below.

Table 5 – Formosa religious profile

Religion	Number of members
No religion	4 385
Buddhist	54

[26] Some mansions in the city were listed by the Historical Heritage group.

Brazilian Apostolic Catholic	11
Roman Apostolic Catholic	71 558
Catholic Orthodox	21
Spiritism[27]	2 355
Spiritualist	195
Evangelical	20 211
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	67
Judaism	11
Undetermined and multiple belonging	103
New Eastern religions	38
Jehovah's Witnesses	709
Esoteric traditions	92
Indigenous traditions	51
Umbanda	49
Umbanda and Candomblé	49

[27] Despite the fact that the number of spiritists is much smaller than the number of evangelicals, there is an enormous influence of their doctrine and practice in Formosa. This is, in fact, a reality in Brazil, which has generally developed a syncretic religion, the result of a mixture of indigenous religions, European Catholicism, and religions of African origin. It is very common, for example, for people to identify themselves as Catholics, because it is still the predominant religion in Brazil, but they attend spiritist services on a daily basis. An example of this syncretism occurs in the Lavagem das Escadarias do Bomfim, which takes place in the state of Bahia on the second Sunday after the Feast of the Kings. The washing of the Church began in 1773, when members of the "Devoção do Senhor Bom Jesus do Bonfim" comprising lay devotees made the enslaved people wash and decorate the Church as part of the preparations for the feast of Senhor do Bonfim. This tradition extends to this day and, on the established day, women who are followers of Candomblé (a religious spiritist movement of African origin) wash the stairs of a Catholic Church.

Other Christian religiosities	98
Don’t know	78

[Available at: IBGE, 2010a]

The figures underscore the prevalence of Catholicism. If added together, the three branches of Catholicism present in the city, namely the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic, Roman Catholic Apostolic, and Orthodox Catholic churches, the number reaches 71 590, which corresponds to 57.88% of the population.

Though Catholic numerical superiority is unquestionable, the numbers would not necessarily be faithful if observed from the perspective induced by the IBGE Census survey. This is because the interviewer asks: “What religion do you belong to?” Occasionally, the answer has much more to do with a family tradition than a personal conviction or a real religious affiliation. In Brazil, it is common to hear the expressions: “What religion am I part of? I'm a Catholic. In Brazil everyone is Catholic!.” Or: “I am a non-practicing Catholic!.” Thus, it is common to find people who say they are Catholic while they join spiritist cults such as Umbanda, Candomblé, and others. That is, in numerical terms, the person is counted as Catholic, but in practical doctrinal terms, he or she adheres to Spiritism. It follows that, possibly, the number of 103 people for “non-belonging or multiple belonging” is far from a reality.

Consider further that respondents are not always aware of the definitions of their own religious affiliation. This is not only because of misinformation or ignorance among members, but also because there are religious movements that are synchronic in nature and therefore difficult to be classified. For example, the 98 people who identified themselves as belonging to “other Christian religiosities” can perfectly well belong to a Kardecist spiritistic centre and see themselves as Christians. Another example is those who participate in the Vale do Amanhecer[28] whose doctrine and cubic practices prevent a clear definition of the movement.

[28] “The Vale do Amanhecer was founded in Planaltina, a satellite city of Brasilia, in the late 1960s, by Neiva Chaves Zelaya, better known as 'Tia Neiva.' At the age of 33 he had visions of an entity called 'Pai Seta Branca,' who would have been in his last life a Tupinambá Indian whereas in previous lives he was St. Francis of Assis, a jaguar, and, even before then, lived on another planet from whence he came to the earth aboard a spaceship. In this brief biographical-mythological tour of the most important spiritual entity of the movement, we perceive strong religious sincretism. The observation is interesting because, unlike authors who prefer to use the sincrestism to refer

Additionally, the evangelical movement in Formosa is divided as follows:

Table 6 – Profile of the evangelicals of Formosa

Pentecostal	Adventist[29]	Baptist	Lutheran	Presbiteryan	Not determined
13 442	1 358	1 511	242	88	3 570

[Available at: IBGE, 2010a]

The table shows that this form 16.35% of the population with 20 221 members. Historical churches (including Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian ones) total 1 841 members, that is, 1.49% of the population. The only reformed denomination of the city, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, with 88 members, embody only 0.07% of the population.

The largest evangelical mass belongs to the Pentecostal churches. Here it is necessary to observe a characteristic that make it difficult to interpret the numbers: as described above, it may occur that some evangelicals cannot determine their own religious branch, which would explain the 3 570 Evangelicals who identified their religion as "undetermined."

2.5.5 Worldview

Last but not least, analysis of Formosa's culture must centre on the matter of the worldview. Several scholars seek to define what a worldview would be. Hesselgrave (1995:219-220) says it is "the way we see ourselves in relation to everything else. Conversely, it is the way we see all things about us." In turn, Kwast (1987:438-440) says that it is the core of culture, which is found in four layers: behaviours, values, beliefs, and the core (the worldview itself). Hiebert (2016:30-31) defines worldview "from the anthropological perspective, [which includes] the assumptions and fundamental cognitive,

to the Valley (Cavalcante 2005; 2004), Galinkin uses the te Romdiy more, being more faithful to its theoretical proposal. In fact, what is perceived here is a complex bricolage of the most diverse elements including ones from Catholicism, Spiritism, umbanda, and the New Age (see Oliveira, 2011:208).

[29] Despite theological differences, especially in eschatological issues and the use of the Decalogue, Adventism is considered by IBGE as an evangelical church.

affective and evaluative structures that a group adopts in relation to the nature of reality and that it uses to organize its life."[30]

The definition of worldview that will be used in this study is that of the Reformed theologian Sire (2012:179):

> Worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, which can be expressed as a story or in a set of assumptions (assumptions that may be true, partially true or totally false) that we sustain (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and which provides the foundation on which we live, move and exist.

The analysis of the worldview of a group of people is not, by far, a simple task. This is due, among others, to the interposition of the element of subjectivity between the analysed group and the one that will observe it. As Muller (2013:118) rightly states, every worldview model is influenced by the very worldview of those who elaborate it. Thus, person A can have an interpretation of the worldview of a very different group from person B. Moreover, interpreting the worldview of a society is to work with generalist elements. In that same society, therefore, there will be people with structures of thought and behaviour that will be absolutely different from the majority.[31]

Over the years, however, scholars have proposed models of analysis for a group's worldview. Among them, Sire's model (2012:197,98), is based on seven questions: (1) What is the primordial reality – the real one?; (2) What is the nature of external reality, that is, of the world around us?; (3) What is a human being?; (4) What happens to a person when he or she dies?; (5) Why is it possible to really know something?; (6) How do we know what is right and what is wrong?; (7) What is the meaning of human history?

Ronald Nash (2012:38) proposed an analysis model under the umbrella of the following question: "What kinds of beliefs make up a worldview? A balanced worldview includes

[30] According to Silva (2020), the term "worldview" comes from the German *Weltanschauung*. The first to make use of the term in the field of theology was Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). But James Orr (1844–1913) was the first to use it to describe the whole of Christianity as a system. Abraham Kuyper gave notoriety to the expression, referring to it as "a system of life" or "conception of life and world." (Silva, 2020)

[31] This is why, when the worldview of Formosa is analysed, expressions such as "generally," "often," "mostly," "tendially," And so on will be used.

beliefs in at least five main areas: (1) God; (2) Reality; (3) Knowledge; (4) Morality; (5) Humanity."

Pearcey (2017:28) presents a "simple grid" for identifying and analysing "unbiblical worldviews," assuming that "every philosophy or ideology has to answer the same fundamental questions:" (1) Creation: How did it all begin? Where did we come from?: (2) Fall: What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?; (3) Redemption: What to do about it? How to fix the world?

Still, Hiebert (2016:365) proposes the analysis of the worldview of a group observing four main axes called "themes and counterthemes:" (1) Cognitive themes and counterthemes; (2) Affective themes and counterthemes; (3) Evaluator themes and counterthemes; (4) Root metaphors.

There is also the model presented by Silva (2020), elected to be the guide of this research. Silva's proposal is based on the triad of Calvin (2008:41) and Kuyper (2014:28), who propose that the whole "system of thought" results from the understanding of the "three fundamental relationships of all human life: namely, the relationship with God, the relationship with man, and the relationship with the world."[32]

These three themes will be analysed in the light of ten axes by means of specific questions and measured on a scale of values, as shown below[33].

[32] This material was presented in December 2020 in the Phenomenology of Religion classes of the Missiological Training Center (CFM) of the Transcultural Missions Presbyterian Agency (APMT), an authority of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil responsible for training, sending, and sustaining missionaries in cross-cultural fields inside and outside the country. Silva's model will be taken for the analysis of the worldview because, on the one hand, it was made for analysis in the missionary context and, on the other, it is based on Reformed theology. These two themes (missionary context and Reformed theology) have direct bearing in the present study.

[33] Silva (2020:8) explains: "By way of example, for the question 'what is the personal orientation in relation to the group?', the answer may be 'more collectivist' or 'more individualistic'. This is because collectivism and individualism are values present in every society, but each society will have a greater inclination towards one or the other. Thus, in a 'more collectivist' society the group will be more important than the individual, and the opposite will happen in a 'more individualistic' society. This founding value will have a series of developments in relationships, behavior before norms and laws, in the way of communicating, in religiosity and in so many other areas of life. Of course, there is a scale between one and the other, which could be imagined as follows:

Collectivism Individualism

5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5"

Table 7 – Analysis of Silva's Cosmovision Model

Axes	Questions	Smattering
I. Relations with the world		
1. Space:	What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment?	+ affective or + utilitarian?
2. Time:	What is the orientation in relation to temporality?	+ historical or + presentist?
3. Cosmocentricity:	Who's at the centre of the universe?	+ divinecentric or + anthropocentric?
4. Reality:	What is the group conception of truth?	+ universalist or + relativistic?
II. Relations with the humans		
5. Group:	What is the personal orientation with respect to equals?	+ collectivist or + individualistic?
6. Authority:	What is the group's orientation towards leadership?	+ hierarchical or + egalitarian?
7. Wishes:	What is the group reference in personal fulfilment?	+ altruistic or + hedonistic?
8. Elenic:	What is the orientation of consciousness?	+ guilt or + shame?
III. Relations with the divine		
9. Religiousness:	What is the method of relationship with the divine?	+ worship or + manipulation?

10. Sacred:	What is the conception of fundamental reality?	+ personal or + impersonal?

[Available at: Silva (2020:13)]

2.5.5.1 Relations with the world

2.5.5.1.1 Space

The question that guides this analysis is: "What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment: + Affective or + Utilitarian? In other words, does society have a zeal for the environment, or does it relate to it in a utilitarian way?"

Groups that share social vision tend to be affective and preserve or use natural resources in a responsible, non-exploratory (predatory) way. On the other hand, utilitarian worldview groups exclude these resources, dealing with them pragmatically. "Such utilitarian pragmatism extends to relations with the social and even with the sacred" (Silva, 2014:180).

Formosa enjoys a relationship with a markedly utilitarian space. Places of natural beauty and sights are mostly deprecated and extremely dirty. This is the case, for example, at Lagoa Feia, where bars and restaurants built their facilities – with the authorization of the municipal government – literally within it. In addition to the constructions being questionable, since they are damaging to the environment directly, these establishments produce debris that, added to the sewage and garbage deposited in Lagoa Feia, have contributed to the silting of what is forming the Rio Preto, a tributary of the Rio Paracatu, tributary of the Rio São Francisco.[34]

That is not the only problem. Sewage treatment is quite deficient and dysfunctional. Not all sewage is collected for proper treatment. Part of the debris is deposited in septic pits dug into houses and another part is thrown directly into the rivers. Another issue is that there is no policy on the part of the municipal authorities for recycling waste. In this way, the 100 tons of garbage collected daily in the city will end up in inadequate landfills,

[34] The Brazilian Forest Code (Law no. 12,651/2012) establishes as a permanent preservation area all natural vegetation located 30 metres in watercourses less than 10 metres wide.

possibly polluting the water table. IBGE data (2010) clarify this picture. The municipality of Formosa represents[35]

> 42.9% of households with adequate sewage, 59.5% of urban households on public roads with afforestation and 9.2% of urban households on public roads with adequate urbanization (presence of manhole, sidewalk, paving and curb). When compared to the other municipalities of the state, it is in position 59 of 246, 200 of 246 and 61 of 246, respectively. When compared to other municipalities in Brazil, its position is 2527 of 5570, 3714 of 5570 and 2885 of 5570, respectively.

The neglect of the government seems to justify actions of vandalism, depredation, and carelessness on the part of Formosa residents. For instance, it is absolutely common to see people throwing garbage on public roads (perhaps because they have no public trash cans) or vandalizing public property. This is the case of the Ecological Park of Mata da Bica, which recently underwent a process of revitalization with the construction of new sidewalks, decks, lighting, and so on but, after a few months, is already depredated.[36]

Another frequent practice, especially at the peak of the dry season (July to October) is burning. It is a primitive practice of agriculture for the cleaning of the land. Often the fire goes beyond the predicted extent, getting out of control and causing fires in forests and large tracts of the vegetation.[37]

Perhaps a counterpoint to this reality of utilitarian use of the environment lies in the fact that, in Formosa, it is common for residences to have backyards with fruit trees and vegetable gardens, which end up as an ecologically more appropriate use of space.

[35] In July 2019, the Public Prosecutor's Office of Goiás filed a public civil action to compel the municipality of Formosa to adjust and regularize the city's landfill. This happened because, "according to the survey conducted by the 2nd Prosecutor's Office, it was found [that] the burning of garbage, erosive processes in the access route to the landfill, [involved] the possible contamination of the groundwater and the existence of other environmental damage in the region. The environmental licenses at the Brazilian Institute of the Environment (IBAMA) and the current SEMAD are expired, in addition to several infringement notices drawn up by environmental control agencies, which were not paid" (Ministério Público, 2019).

[36] It is an urban conservation park with an area of 25.68 hectares located in the city centre.

[37] In rain terms, it is common for Formosa to experience two divergent periods in the year: from October to March with a lot of rain, and from April to September almost no rain.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment could be classified as + Utilitarian (4).

+ Affective	+ Utilitarian
5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0	– 1 – 2 – 3 – **4** – 5

2.5.5.1.2 Time

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the orientation in relation to temporality: + Historical or + Presentist?” In other words, do the people of this society value (or “live”) more in the past or in the present?

The cultural groups that entertain the most historical worldview, which value their past, usually also value the future. They tend to be more patient, resilient, and persistent. By valuing abstract time, they develop a deeper and more consolidated emotional structure. On the other hand, the more presentist worldview cultures tend to be more immediate, less tolerant of suffering, and almost not concerned with the medium and long term future. “Valuing concrete time, it seems to develop a more superficial and unstable emotional structure,” as Silva (2020:2) points out about the latter attitude.

In Formosa, the devaluation of the past is clear. On the anniversary day of the municipality (August 1) there is no rememorating of history. There is also little talk of this history in the classrooms of children and young people. It is difficult to even find in-depth studies about the municipality. It falls far short of that which could be done in terms of valuing the past, especially when compared to Rio Grande do Sul, for example, where there is a specific time of year (Semana Farroupilha) in which the heroes of the past are remembered and celebrated. People wear typical clothes and celebrate the date, especially on September 20 (Gaucho Day or Farroupilha Revolution Day), when there is a state holiday and parades in the cities.

The lack of financial resources, as stated above, incapacitates most families from saving, which generates a continuous cycle of financial difficulties. In other words, as they cannot save for a possible financial change for the future, they remain in a state of financial difficulty.

Presentism can also be observed in the hedonism present in people's lives. The number of beauty salons and bars in the city is noteworthy. Most of them are extremely well-

frequented establishments. People get dressed and have fun today, without thinking about the consequences of a possible lack of money tomorrow. It can be said that such a lifestyle is close to that seen in the city of Corinth, according to the apostle Paul's comment: “If the dead do not rise, 'let us eat and drink [today!], for tomorrow we will die'“ (1 Cor 15:32).

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the orientation in relation to temporality could be classified as + Presentist (4).

+ History	+ Presentist
5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – **4** – 5	

2.5.5.1.3 Cosmocentricity

The question that guides this analysis is: “Who is at the centre of the universe: + Divine-centric or + Anthropocentric? That is, does the social universe of this group orbit around God or man?”

The interpretation of those who are at the centre of the universe directly influences the relationships, choices, and behaviours of the people who make up this society. “The perception of those at the center of the universe is one of the most founding beliefs of any worldview, with different developments in the most different areas of life” (Silva, 2020:3).

Reimer (2005:20) points out that “with the advancement of modernity, a turn from a theocentrism to an exacerbated anthropocentrism is operated over the centuries.” In other words, today, in general, a highly anthropocentric cultural context dominates, different from what was, for example, the European culture of the Middle Ages.

This tendency to exacerbated anthropocentrism is easily verified in the Cosmocentricity of Formosa's culture. Due to the strong presence of Catholicism, belief in God is normal among the people of Formosa. It is not a society absolutely dominated by extreme secularism and rationalism, such as those experienced in the current European context and in Latin American countries strongly influenced by rationalism or Marxist ideologies (such as Uruguay, Argentina, Chile). Quite the contrary: it is an essentially religious community. At the same time, although God is present in people's imaginations, it does not mean that this is the God revealed in Scripture, to whom all humankind owes worship. It is a

God (or god) who is at the service of people, who can magically manipulate it in his or her favour. It is not a God to whom people should subject their lives, but a God who is subject to people's projects. People do not have to question whether their actions correspond to what it wants or does not want (this rarely happens). After all, in their conception, they will never have to account for their actions.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the orientation in relation to Cosmocentricity could be classified as + Anthropocentric (3).

+ Divinecentric + Anthropocentric

5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 2 – **3** – 4 – 5

2.5.5.1.4 Reality

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the group conception of truth: + Universalist or Relativistic?” That is, in this society, is truth conceived as something universal or relativistic?

Silva (2020:4) points out that “the way a society is positioned in relation to the concept of 'truth' will be defining its moral values and with its relationship with the worlds of the below and beyond.” This is because “truth, by definition, is the correct description or interpretation of reality, so it is at the epicenter of worldview (4)”

More universalist social groups admit the existence of universal, timeless, and supracultural truths. On the other hand, their relativistic worldviews recognize that all truth is influenced and can change according to culture and time. A society influenced by this worldview believes that truth is something individualized and, as a consequence, that its application must be localized.

Because Formosa is a culturally typical rural society with a strong Catholic presence, it tends to be morally conservative and a defender of absolute truths. However, it is indisputable that relativism, common to postmodernism, has influenced Formosa. In general, relativization permeates Western society, leading people to question that which until then was known as “absolute truth,” as well as to break paradigms in the most varied facets of life.

In the context of the city, the Bible is considered to be sacred due to the influence of Catholicism. However, in the last ten years, there has been a tendency to consider biblical truths as obsolete and impractical, especially among adolescents and young people.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the group conception of truth could be classified as + Universalist (1).

+ Universalist	+ Relativist
5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – **1** – 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	

2.5.5.2 Relations with the human

2.5.5.2.1 Group

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the personal orientation in the relationship with your equals: + Collectivist or + Individualist?” That is, in this society, are interests focused on the collective or individuals?

Hiebert (2016:26) contrasts two social groups: those focused on the community and those focused on the individual. In the first group, children grow up learning to think like us. In the second, they develop thinking like “I.”

Thus it can be said that a collectivist worldview tends to afford greater value to the group than the individual. Consequently, there is a greater flow in the search for common interests and a greater probability of forming cohesive groups that, in the end, “will protect the individual in exchange for their loyalty” (Silva, 2020:5). In the group with individualistic worldviews, personal interests are valued above the interests of the collective. This attitude leads the individual to worry only about himself or herself or, at most, his or her family. “In collectivism there is a search for associative bonds, which generate a sense of belonging, while in individualism the search for autonomy and freedom prevails” (Silva 2020:5; Walsh & Middleton, 2010:102; Bosch, 2002:434).

In Formosa, a culture used to exist that entertained collectivism, common to rural societies. However, with the influence of urbanization that occurred with the construction of Brasilia, it became increasingly individualistic. For example, it is quite common for people to pass with their motorcycles without exhausts or their cars with extremely loud sounds, regardless of whether these occurred in front of a school or hospital, as well as

regardless of the time (it is common to happen in the early hours of the morning). Another attitude that illustrates the individualistic trait can be seen in people who set fire to garbage or lots, polluting the city and harming collective life. In other words, motorcycles without silencers, loud sound in places and inconvenient times and setting fire and polluting the environment show that individualistic personal orientations are held to be more important than collective ones.

One aspect, however, that diverges from the individualistic tendency is that the Formosa society values mutual assistance, especially when someone is experiencing financial need arising from health problems. It is common for people to come together to promote charity events. The products are collected in the local trade or even from neighbours or acquaintances of the sick person. Someone is responsible for organizing the event and, on a scheduled day, people pay to consume the food or other services offered. The amount raised is donated to meet needs. It is a clearly collectivist practice

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the group conception of truth could be classified as + Individualistic (1).

+ Collectivist						+ Individualist				
5	4	3	2	1	0	**1**	2	3	4	5

2.5.5.2.2 Authority

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the orientation of the group in relation to leadership: + Hierarchical or + Egalitarian?” In other words, how do individuals in this society view the question of leadership?

In all social groups one finds authority, and the relationship with leading figures varies from culture to culture. In the case of Indian castes, for instance, Dumont (1992:50,66,293) contrasts hierarchical and egalitarian societies. He notes that egalitarianism is a tendency of the West: however, every social grouping needs some degree of hierarchy (Silva, 2020:6).

Cultures with a more hierarchical worldview, will have more evident structures and leadership roles both in the family and in the other groups. On the other hand, more egalitarian worldviews tend to be refractory about a strong leadership figure and authority roles. “This will reflect the most different levels of interpersonal relationships, family structure

and sociopolitical organization, as well as religiosity. Strongly egalitarian worldviews will have a tendency for personal autonomy and moral autonomy" (Silva, 2020:6).

In Formosa, the group's orientation towards authority is tendentially + Egalitarian. This is evidenced by one or two examples. In families, especially among younger generations, men no longer occupy the leadership position that was common in older generations. Due to the markedly patriarchal rural culture, men were the leaders of and providers for the home. Women were usually housewives responsible for the organization of the home and the education of children. Today, however, most women are involved in the labour market and no longer "just" in the responsibilities of the home.

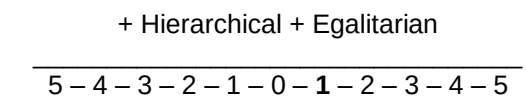
The spouses, in turn, besides being involved in the labour market as in the past, also help at home. It is quite common, even, to see homes where the wife is in the labour market (occasionally employed in the public sector in Brasilia), while the husband is exclusively responsible for the activities at home and taking care of the children.

Another custom that is present in societies in which the spouse performs a clear leadership function is that, when married, the wife uses the husband's surname. This is not the case in Formosa. Most women, when they marry, continue with their maiden name and, often, the spouse himself changes his surname to his wife's.

Moreover, as noted, the elderly Formosa population is quite small. If this age group is considered as the authority (due to their life experience), it is clearly not respected as such. It is no longer common to see young people giving way to seniors in the bank, supermarket, or bus queues.

Another example of the tendency to autonomy is found in the relationship with teachers in pre-schools and elementary and secondary schools. While, in Brazil, these professionals are usually called "teachers," in Formosa they are called "aunts." What might seem to be a loving way of addressing a figure of authority but it may equally well cover up a lack of respect for teachers among students.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the orientation in relation to the authority could be classified as + Egalitarian (1).



2.5.5.2.3 Wishes

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the group reference regarding personal achievement: + Altruistic or + Hedonistic?” That is, how do the individuals of this society behave in relation to their wishes?

While hedonism centres on pleasure and self-realization, altruism centres on necessity when it comes to seeking satisfaction. Clark (2013:162,163) traces the relationship between pleasure and desire by stressing that “pleasure is defined exactly as desire [...] the object is pleasurable to be desired: it is not desired because it is pleasurable.”

Thus, a society strongly marked by a more altruistic worldview will have as a moral value the restraint of its desires for the benefit of others or the environment. “In personal and environmental relationships, resignation will be present and at least partly will guide their actions” (Silva, 2020:7). A society entertaining a more hedonistic worldview, “will have as its primary value to satisfy one’s own wishes, to self-realize, despite the danger of possible social, economic or environmental damage” (Silva, 2020:7)

Hedonism is the group reference that tends to be present among the Formosa. Certain behaviours embody this trend. It is amazing to see the number of bars in the city. Almost every corner is a place where people go to drink and have fun every day of the week. It is common to find intoxicated people walking around the city, which causes accidents, destroys families, and manifests in domestic violence as well as a long list of personal, family, economic, and social problems. Addiction to other types of drugs – which can also be considered as a form of hedonism – is common. Marijuana users and users of other narcotics do not mind using these drugs in public places. Furthermore, especially in the surrounding neighbourhoods, it is extremely easy to find traffickers practicing their lucrative illicit drug trade.

The pleasure that Formosa seeks is not restricted to bars and “fiery mouths.” Once a year, during the Livestock Festival held in commemoration of Formosa's anniversary, the people from the near-by neighbourhoods crowd together with locals to drink and “have

a good time" accompanied by famous country singers who perform each night. During this period, the demand for motels[38] increases considerably.

The motel market is not only fed by the regulars of the Livestock Festival. It is quite common to see prostitutes and transvestites "presenting themselves" in the city. Being a city that connects two states (the Federal District and Bahia), the flow of truckers is constant, which further fosters the hedonistic market of prostitution.

This cult of pleasure causes beauty parlours and gymnasiums to be flooded with people frantically pursuing "beautiful bodies." Although some people attend these places in a balanced way (for the sake of body care or health), the great mass transforms these places into temples where they are worshipping their own bodies.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the orientation in relation to personal achievement could be classified as + Hedonistic (5).

$$\frac{\text{+ Altruistic + Hedonistic}}{5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - \mathbf{5}}$$

2.5.5.2.4 Elenic

The question that guides this analysis is: "What is the conscious orientation: + Guilt or Shame?" That is, in the face of a mistake, what is the element that triggers the weight of one's conscience: guilt or shame?

In a profound piece of research, missiologist Klaus Müller avoids the use of the term superego as derived from psychology and uses instead the term *elenic* (from the New Testament Greek) to indicate the orientation of the conscience (2013:87). He asserts:

> A guilt-driven conscience has the strongest reactions in the fields of guilt and law. The imaginary "axis" on which the conscience moves between the two "poles" is close to the lower rail [...] When the axis around which the center of the conscience rotates is closer to the prestige/shame rail, it reacts more intensely to these elements. In most

[38] Unlike other countries, motels in Brazil are used almost exclusively as places for illicit sexual intercourse (prostitution).

> cultures, people react more intensely to prestige and shame. We then speak of a shame-driven consciousne (Müller, 2013:109).

“The cultures of the worldview of guilt are guided by internal criteria, received from society but internalized. Faced with guilt, they seek innocence. On the other hand, the worldviews of shame tend to be guided by external criteria, seeking and reacting to people's approvals or disapprovals. In the face of shame, they seek honor or evidence” (Silva 2020:8).

As indicated, the Catholic influence on the culture of the city influences the thought of the Formosa in the sense of having a holy God who sees everything, including especially the wrong things that are done, which generates guilt, an inner feeling, regardless of whether other people see their mistakes. Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the orientation in relation to the orientation of consciousness could be classified as + Guilt (3).

+ Guilt + Shame

5 – 4 – **3** – 2 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

2.5.5.3 Relations with the divine

2.5.5.3.1 Religiousness

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the method of the relationship with the divine: + Worship or + Manipulation?” In other words, do the people of this culture relate to the sacred by worshipping or manipulating it?

The way in which a social group relates to the divine is the result of their worldview. Frazer (1978) points out that there are two great patterns of relationship with the divine: through religion and magic. “While religion is structured in worship and submission to spiritual beings, based on revelation, the principle of magic is seen in the 'laws of sympathy', deciphered from the observation of mystical forces and the connection of elements generated by them” (Silva, 2020:9).

Frazer (1978:34) describes these “laws of sympathy” in the following terms:

> In the first place, similarity produces similarity, or an effect resembles its cause; and secondly, the things that are in contact continue to act

> on each other, even at a distance, even after cutting off the physical contact. The first, we can call the law of similarity, and the second, the law of contact or contagion.

Thus, magic-based societies nourish personal relationships with beings from beyond. Actions and attitudes such as offering, reverence, invocation, and submission are present in this relationship. In turn, a society with a worldview leaning towards manipulation develops instrumental relationships with the forces of the beyond, usually in a utilitarian and pragmatic way (Silva, 2020:10).

Due to the strong influence of Catholicism and Spiritism, the general traits of the relationship with the divine in Formosa is a tendency towards manipulation. For example: there is a very common custom among the Formosa: before taking the first sip of "cachaça" (brandy), you "spill a sip to the saint." The person pours some of the "cachaça" on the floor in an offering to the saint. When one asks the reason for "spilling a sip to the saint," the person usually replies: "It is for my protection and that the cachaça does not hurt me." By this ritual the saint is therefore apparently manipulated (bought) to provide good health in return.

This kind of offering is not only present in this custom. Especially at intersections of blocks or in rivers and waterfalls in the city, it is not difficult to find "macumba works," which are objects and foods offered to *orixás*[39] in exchange for personal benefits like the intervention of spiritual forces to harm others.

It would be, however, a crass mistake to equate the rites of Catholicism and Spiritism. These rites cannot be reduced to elements of manipulation in the relationship with the divine. In both Catholic masses and in Spiritism there are elements of cultural worship (such as offering money, singing hymns, and so on).

It should be noted that, in these religions, as Silva points out (2020:9; italics mine): "worship is not structured based on *revelation*." Thus, worship is strongly marked by subjectivism. In this sense, Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism approach Catholic practices of Spiritism. Worship in these contexts is as subjective and relativistic as in those. In Formosa, one of the main means used in the Pentecostal or neo-Pentecostal environments to measure whether a meeting was "blessed and anointed" is by feeling

[39] Demonic spirits worshipped in Afro-descendant religions.

(emotionalism), that is, if the member “felt something” – a shiver, a joy, a willingness to cry – for the meeting to be a “blessing!”

There is another aspect of the manipulation of the divine among the Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals of Formosa that meet regularly: these are churches that launch various campaigns. According to common teaching, it is enough for the person to participate in the meetings that will take place during the campaign (the number of days may vary) and offer a certain amount of money so that “God will certainly act in your favour!” This evidences the fact that they have difficulty in understanding basic biblical-theological elements and teachings such as God's grace and mercy. The consequence is that they see God as a being to be manipulated and not worshipped.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the method of relationship with the divine could be classified as + Manipulation (4).

+ Worship + Manipulation
5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – **4** – 5

2.5.5.3.2 Sacred

The question that guides this analysis is: “What is the fundamental conception of reality: + Personal or + Impersonal?” That is, in this society, is God seen as a personal or impersonal being?

In all societies, including those strongly influenced by rationalism and its derivatives, the “sacred” element is present. Sire (2012:197) calls it “primordial reality” or “the real reality.” Schaeffer (2010:170) refers to “ultimate reality.” Willard (2002:100) points out that “the most important and singular thing in our minds is our image of God and his related images.”

Thus, the definition of that which would be sacred varies in each context, and can be polarized, “having on the one hand the figure of God as a personal and relational being, transcendent and at the same time immanent, essentially good and just, and on the other hand the idea of an impersonal, non-relational and amoral mystical force” (Silva, 2020:11).

In cultures that conceive the idea of God (or the sacred) as a personal being, the tendency is to develop an affective relationship with him. On the other hand, cultures that understand the sacred as an impersonal being tend to manipulate it instrumentally, “as the chemist manipulates physical forces in a technical and utilitarian way” (Silva, 2020:11).

As mentioned, Catholicism, evangelicalism and Spiritism are the greatest religious influences within Formosa. Except for Spiritism, which sees God as “a superior force,” Catholicism and Evangelicalism see God as a personal being.

There is a strong religious feeling among the Formosans. When they pass Catholic temples, people commonly make the “sign of the cross.” Moreover, some schools maintain the tradition of praying “the Lord's Prayer” and the “Hail Mary” to start the school day.

Although God is seen as a personal being, Catholic influence has permeated the minds in terms of the idea that God is nonetheless distant. To reach him, it is necessary to have the help of intercessors, such as the saints. Thus, at each mass the children baptized to the saint of the day are consecrated. In fact, these saints can also intercede with the Father, causing their friends and relatives to leave purgatory if they are there.

Thus, using the scale of values proposed by Silva (2020), the conception of fundamental reality is + Personal (2).

+ Personal	+ Impersonal
5 – 4 – 3 – **2** – 1 –	0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

The proverbs and popular expressions of Formosa, the tale of the Legend of the Serpent, the cuisine, the art and religious profile, all show that the city is characterized by two realities: first, it is a city of a strong rural culture, despite the fact that its 92.3% of its population lives in the city; second, it is a place historically influenced by Catholic predominance.

These two realities, in addition to, among others, elements of history, local geography, and economic and racial geography, caused the Formosans to develop a worldview strongly marked by utilitarianism in relation to the environment, anthropocentricism, presentism, relativism, individualism, while trending egalitarianism and hedonistism with a view of the divine as a being who, at the same time, can be personal and manipulated.

It is observed that Formosa is remarkably religious. The various religious manifestations that are present in the city point to this. It is therefore clear that it is not a society that is averse to the message of the Gospel (in contrast, again, with contemporary Europe). This constitutes a great opportunity for the preaching of the Gospel and the consequent planting of a church.

This fact is intensified by the fact that the Formosa's culture is notoriously marked by openness to relationships. By inviting yourself to come to the kitchen you will be going far beyond a meal. It is an invitation to share life around a stove. The house, therefore, is a place where the Gospel can easily be shared.

However, although religious, the central aspects of biblical teaching are not reflected in Formosa's worldview, which shows that it involves, at the very least, a dichotomized religiosity between the sacred and the profane, which is common to Catholic, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements, which comprise the majority of religious groupings in the city. In this respect, it is important to emphasize that Reformed Theology can bring crucial solutions to these questions, breaking with the dichotomy between "spiritual life" and "real life", since

> is rooted in a Reformed religion that was peculiarly proper [while], from this specific religious consciousness, developed first a peculiar theology, then a special ecclesiastical order, and then a certain reformed political and social life, for the interpretation of the moral order of the world, for the relationship between nature and grace, between Christianity and the world, between the Church and the State, and finally for Art and Science; and in the midst of all these expressions of life he always continued the same Calvinism, as, simultaneously and spontaneously, all these developments were born from his deepest principle of life (Kuyper, 2003:25.26).

2.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the city of Formosa. This was done by observing its geographical, historical, demographic, and cultural aspects, while concluding with an analysis of its worldview, that is, the core of its culture, based on the model proposed by Silva (2020). The analysis of these angles aimed to answer the following question: "In view of the characteristics of the context, thinking missiologically and

strategically, which challenges or barriers would need to be overcome for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul's strategy?" Seven items were listed in response to this:

- The challenge of Catholic numerical predominance;
- The challenge of religious syncretism;
- The challenge of cultural and racial pluralism;
- The challenge of a processed urbanization;
- The challenge of low socioeconomic and educational indices;
- The challenge of "competition" with other Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches;
- The challenge of a worldview that is markedly utilitarian, presentist, relativistic, individualistic, hedonistic, and that sees the sacred as something to be manipulated and God as a personal being.

Before proposing a plan for the implantation of a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul's strategy, it is necessary to describe the basic aspects that sustained Paul's ministry: its theological budgets, its philosophy of, ministry and its ministerial practice. These will be the subjects of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 – PAUL'S STRATEGY FOR CHURCH PLANTING

3.1 Introduction

The question that this research aims to answer is: “Taking into account the Apostle Paul's strategy, that is, its flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control -- as based, moreover, on three elements, namely Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry; his philosophy of ministry that shaped it; and the ministerial practice through which his ministry was executed--how should one plan the planting of a Reformed church in the city of Formosa/GO, Brazil?” In the preceding chapter, the city of Formosa was described with the aim of discerning points that may constitute challenges for planting a church in that location. The purpose of present chapter is to describe the Pauline strategy for church planting through analysis of relevant scholarly material and key biblical texts so as to discern the implications of Paul's strategy for planting a Reformed church in Formosa.

3.2 Paul’s strategy for church planting

As indicated, the Pauline strategy for church planting can be usefully defined in the following terms: its flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control based as on three elements:

- Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry;
- Paul's philosophy of ministry, which shaped his ministry;
- Paul's ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed.

The figure below illustrates the elements that made up Paul's strategy for church planting.

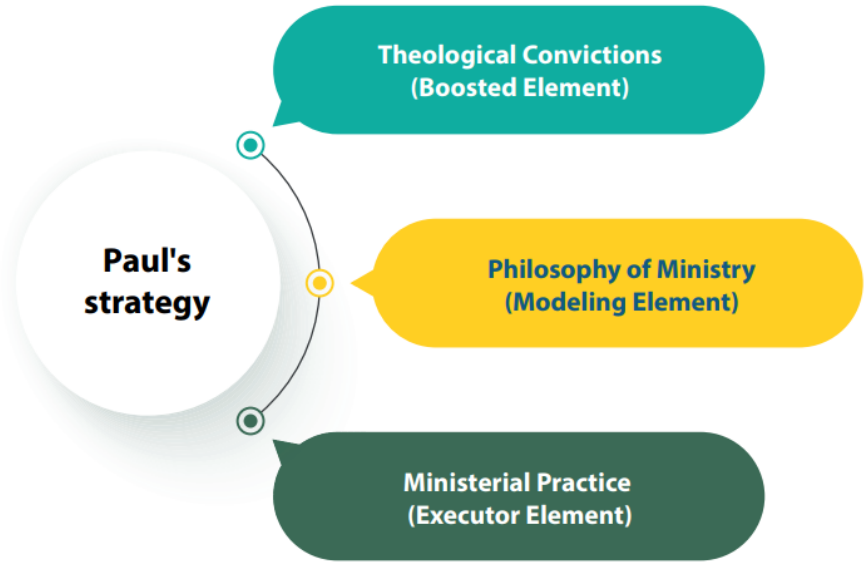


Figure 7 – Paul's Strategy for church planting

[Source: the author]

3.2.1 Theological convictions

Theological convictions are those that drove Paul's ministry as a church planter. Lopes (1997:2) says that the movement did not comprise explosions of piety, proselytism, love of profit, popularity, or any other similar motive. These motivations would not have endured the adverse environment of the mission field for long. “Paul was motivated by his theological convictions. His missional action was a result of these convictions. And they were of such a nature that they impelled the apostle to go into the world to proclaim the Gospel and plant new churches” (Lopes, 1997:2).

To systematize all of Paul's theological convictions would be an arduous task, possibly the undertaking of a lifetime, given the extent, complexity, and ramifications of his theology, including his theology of mission. Moreover, Paul was not a systematic theologian (Manson, 2009:9). He did not write a treatise on systematic theology, nor was the notion of systematic theology on his mind. He was, first and foremost, a Christian thinker and a missionary who developed his theology from the realities of his field (Manson 2009:9,10). Thus, it can be stated that his theology of mission, that is, his theological convictions that propelled him to the ministry of preaching the Gospel and planting churches, can be summarized in his letter to the Romans. One might question this idea, stating that the central theme of the letter would not be Paul's missionary theology, but the doctrine of justification by grace and faith in the Gospel of Christ. This is the thinking,

for example, of Carson et al. (1997:267), who hold that “Romans is the longest and theologically most significant of Paul's letters, 'the purest Gospel'” (Luther). The letter takes the form of a theological treatise framed by an epistolary introduction (Rom 1:1-17) and conclusion (Rom 15:14-16:27). While it is unquestionable that the Gospel is one of the central themes (or the central pillar itself) of the epistle, for a correct interpretation of its contents, as stated above, it is necessary to stick to a basic hermeneutic rule for the interpretation of biblical epistles: to observe the occasional nature of the writing. This is because the letters “were occasioned, or called upon, by some special circumstance, either on the reader's side or on the author's side” (Fee & Stuart, 2008:32).

Starting from this principle, Fee and Stuart (2008:32) question the observation of Carson et al (1997:267) that Romans is a theological treatise, since “the occasional nature of the epistles also means that they are not, in the first place, theological treatises; they are not compendia of the theology of Paul or Peter. There is implied theology, but it is always 'task theology', theology that is being written for the task at hand, or applied to it” (Fee & Stuart, 2008:32).

Starting from this premise, what was the occasional nature of the Letter to the Romans? Possibly, Paul was in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey, around A.D. 57 (Carson et al., 1997:270). He was preparing for a visit to the church in Rome (Rom 1:10-13). Before going there, he would pass through Jerusalem, where he would deliver an offering that would be given to the poor (Rom 15:26). After his visit to the church in Rome, he would go to Spain on a new missionary enterprise (Rom 15:23,24). He intended to receive help from the Romans for this task and, since this church[40] had not been either evangelized nor planted by him, it was necessary to (a) present himself – the content of the letter was therefore in part his “calling card” (Barbaglio, 1991:123) – and (b) present his missionary theology, that is, that which impelled him to go through the Roman Empire evangelizing and planting churches. In other words, “the general theological tenor of the letter is due to Paul's desire to prove that he is orthodox and deserving of support” (Carson et al., 1997:280). Thus, his missionary theology in Romans “is the theology that was born out of his own special task as an apostle to the Gentiles” (Fee & Stuart, 2008:32). As Stendahl (quoted by Carriker, 1998:5,6) asserts:

[40] “He recently suggested that Paul was requesting financial and possibly linguistic support for the Spanish mission” (Robert Jewett, quoted by Carriker, 1998:5)

> Romans is Paul's last statement about his theology of mission [...] Romans is central to our understanding of Paul, not because of his doctrine of justification, but because the doctrine of justification is here in its original and authentic context: as an argument for the Gentile position based on Abraham's model (Romans 4).[41]

What were the central themes of Mission Theology, namely the theological convictions that drove the Pauline ministry of church planting, as presented by him in Romans? They can be itemised in terms of five areas:

- his hamartiology (doctrine of sin);
- his soteriology (doctrine of salvation);
- his ecclesiology (doctrine of the Church);
- his eschatology (end-time doctrine);
- his missiology (doctrine of mission).

3.2.1.1 Hamartiology

After greeting the church in Rome (Rom 1:1-13), Paul states:

> For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.' (Rom 1:1; 6:17).

[41] "Paul saw Rome as a strategic location in the West, much as the church at Antioch served as a strategic home base in the East; and awe know that the church at Ephesus served in Asia Minor. If he was planning on reaching Spain, he needed a home church out of which to work. Therefore, Paul gives the church at Rome an expanded version of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, revealing how this message was for all men, both Jews and Gentiles. Paul opens and closes his epistle with the declaration that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be taken to all nations (1:5, 16:26), and he adds a call to the church at Rome to help fulfill this missionary assignment, saying, 'Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ' (Rom 1:6). Thus, Paul tells the church at Rome the overall assignment of the Church, which is to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. This assignment has been given to all who are called in Christ Jesus. Therefore, Paul hoped to challenge them to stand up and answer the call of spreading the Gospel to the West. In this way, he hoped to gain both the financial support as well as the prayer support of the church at Rome in order to reach as far as Spain" (Everett, 2023:84).

By quoting Habakkuk 2:4 (“The righteous shall live by faith”), Paul demonstrates on the basis of Scripture that the righteous are such because they believe, that is, “man's just relationship with God and his existential situation of freedom from the dominion of the world depend on trusting abandonment into the hands of saving grace” (Barbaglio, 1991:149). But why does humanity need to be justified before God? Towards answering this question, Paul develops his hamartiology which maintains that, after all, it is on account of sin that humanity has become unjust before God (Rom 3:10,11).

Paul locates the entrance of sin into the world in the Adamic Fall, which is described in Genesis 3: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Paul uses an idea common to the Old Testament, which emphasizes human solidarity: thus, “the whole race is one with Adam, and its sin and death is the sin and death of the whole race.”[42] (Ladd, 1997:377). As Brunner (1938:45) observes, “since Adam a doom of 'death' lies over mankind, over the whole of history; a hostile destructive power has penetrated it, a current the carries off every individual man, leading him towards ruin.”

Although the Adamic Fall brought about cosmic consequences (Rom 8:21), Paul focuses on the effects of sin on people, pointing out that, from Adam's sin, all mankind became slaves to sin (Rom 6:16). As Pearlman (2009:135) states: “The effect of the Fall took root so deeply in human nature that Adam, as the father of the human race, transmitted to his descendants the tendency or inclination to sin.” “A demonic power has taken hold of man” (Manson, 2009:36). In this sense, it is interesting to note the way in which Paul personifies sin, emphasizing his lordship and control over his slaves (the men). For the apostle, sin reigns in death (Rom 5:21), causing them to obey him (Rom 6:12), dominates them (Rom 6:14), enslaves them (Rom 6:17; 7:14,23-25), and deceives them (Rom 7: 11). In other words, Paul paints a terrifying picture stressing that sin is both a state and a force that dwells at the centre of all mankind, causing them to disobey God (Rom 7:20).

This sinful state not only brought about death (Rom 5:12), but also put mankind under the wrath of God (Rom 1:18), as Paul demonstrates in the book of Romans 1:18-3:20. This is not restricted to anger, a little irritation, or a little annoyance. It is a deep wrath of God arising from his holiness and righteousness against sin (Rienecker & Rogers,

[42] Kümmel (1982:205) notes that here (in Romans 5:12), “Paul simply follows a Jewish conception, according to which Adam is guilty of causing the connection between sin and punishment, but each person incurs the punishment for his own sin.”

1995:256), which manifests, paradoxically, in the present, leading God to surrender the human being to his own fate (Rom 1:24,26,28) (Sanday & Headlam, 1964:41). It is a cumulative, eschatological wrath, which God will pour out upon the unrepentant on "the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." (Rom 2:5). The target of God's wrath is against "all the godlessness and wickedness of people" (Rom 1.18), that is, anger is is caused by the fact that humanity sins in two directions: *ἀσέβειαν* ("ungodliness") represents impiety towards God, and *ἀδικίαν* ("injustice") are acts committed against men (Rienecker & Rogers, 1995:256), in other words, "ungodliness" is centred on violations of the first four commandments, and "injustice" on violation of the last six (Cranfield, 1992:40).

To explain the extent, effects, and consequences of sin (which entered mankind through Adam's sin and brought about death), Paul didactically divides mankind into groups. First, he speaks of the pagan, immoral, and idolatrous (Rom 1:18-32). The fundamental sin of this group is their refusal to worship God as God, that is, all evil is born from the perversion of worship (Ladd, 1997:378). Paul points out that, although this group received general revelation[43], which points out the invisible attributes of God (Rom1:20), they did not worship God as Creator. On the contrary, they idolized creation itself (Rom 1:21). Therefore, Paul does not define humanity's submission to sin as mere fatality, but rather as a conscious decision, for which he or she is responsible (Kümmel, 1982:206).

Because they had perverted the service, God gave them up to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another (Rom 1:24) and "shameful lusts" (Rom 1:26). Paul further states that, because of this kind of practice, people "received in themselves the due penalty for their error" (Rom 1:27). Impurity or sexual misrepresentation, therefore, carries a double meaning: on the one hand it is a sinful act in itself and, on the other, it is a sign of God's wrath manifested in the present.

In addition to giving them over to sexual impurity and shameful passions (Rom 1:24-16), God gave them "to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done" (Rom 1:28). The mind became reprehensible, that is, thoughts became futile (Rom 1:21): "they claimed to be wise, they became fools" (Rom 1:22) and they "exchanged the truth about

[43]"General Revelation is the expression of Christian theology used to designate the revelation of God to all mankind through, especially, the work of creation. It contrasts with special revelation, which is about Jesus Christ and, on the second level, the Bible" (Berkhof, 1996:128).

God for a lie" (Rom 1:25). All these verses point to the corruption and misrepresentation of *νους* ("mind"), the moral conscience, the determinant of will and action.

In other words, by not wanting to live in worship of God and opting for an autonomous life, the lost enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have always asked for, and therefore are enslaved by themselves (Ridderbos, 2004:70). The figure Calvin most likes to use to illustrate this alienation is that of the labyrinth, stating that, because of sin, humanity is lost in it. This resonates with Dagg (2003:121): "Although the image of God was still present in the human being, it was completely deteriorated/disfigured. Because of this disfigurement, man is not able to walk in the direction of divinity and therefore plunges into the constant error of making idols."

The second group that Paul analyses comprises the moralists (Rom 2:1-16)[44], that is, those who judge others by their so-called superior morality (Rom 2:1), who in other words find themselves "in the right to make moral judgments and condemn others" (Stott, 2007:89). Paul shows that the fundamental sin of this group is hypocrisy, since they judge others but do the same things that they condemn others for. Such moralists could read Paul's description in Romans 1:18-32 and, in light of the debauchery exposed, simply not identify themselves as people perverted by sin.[45] Paul analyses this group from the perspective of God's wrath "against all the godlessness and wickedness of people" (Rom 1:18), and concludes that God's judgment on those who judge others is inevitable (Rom 2:1-4), while his judgement is just (Rom 2:5-11) and impartial (Rom 2:12-16) (Stott, 2007:90).

The third group described by Paul are the Jews, a group very well known to him mainly because of his own days in Pharisaism (Brunner, 1938:22). Paul shows that the Law received by the Jews through Moses (Ex 20.; Deu 5) reveals the will of God, or, as stated in Romans 2:20, the Law expressed the truth. However, the Jews rejected this truth, and

[44] The moralists whom Paul describes in this pericope (Rom 2:1-16) may refer to the Jews, although he deals specifically with this group in Rom 2:17-3.8.

[45] Bruce (1979:82) comments: "We knew that there was another side to the pagan world of the first century, besides that portrayed by Paul in the preceding paragraphs. What about a man like Paul's illustrious contemporary, Seneca, the moralistic Stoic, Nero's tutor? Seneca might have said, upon hearing Paul's accusation, "Yes, this is perfectly true, if one speaks of the great masses of mankind, and I agree with your judgment of them—but of course there are others, like myself, who deplore these tendencies as much as you do." He [Seneca] not only extolled the great moral virtues. He denounced hypocrisy, preached the equality of all human beings, recognized the corrosive character of evil. He practiced and insisted on daily self-evaluation, ridiculed vulgar idolatry, assumed the role of moral guide."

such rejection is more serious in this case, for their knowledge of the truth was superior to that which had been given to the Gentiles (Manson, 2009:61). Receiving the Law was a source of pride to the Jew. After all, what other nation had been blessed with such a manifestation?

On the other hand, the revelation of the Law brought a responsibility imposed on Israel before the Gentile nations because, on the basis of the teachings of the Law, the Jews were to be a “guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children” (Rom 2:19.20). However, Paul’s life shows that there was a dissonance in the Jew's own lives: he was a teacher who did not know how to orient himself. Between what he professed and his way of acting there was an open contradiction (Barbaglio, 1991:166) (Rom 2:21-24). In other words, the Jew lived in total dissonance with the commandments of the tablets of the Law concerning idolatry, besides the fact that, though he confessed the moral duty not to steal and not to adulterate, he did steal and adulterate (Barbaglio, 1991:166). Therefore, in addition to the inconsistency between teaching and experiential practice, “the fundamental sin of the Jews, who had the Law, was 'ostentation,' which consists in perverting the Law, so that it becomes the basis of self-confidence that seeks glory before God and trusts in itself” (Ladd, 1997:378).

Paul uses a second argument to highlight the sinful attitude of the Jews: circumcision (Rom 2:25-29). The point that he makes in this respect is that “circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised” (Rom 2:25). In other words, circumcision was a visible, embodied sign that the Jews were the Old Testament covenant people (Gen 17), but it was not an end in itself. They, as covenant people, were to live in obedience to the Law, which did not happen. Thus, Paul relativizes the weight of this sign of divine election (Barbaglio, 1991:167), stating that “a person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God” (Rom 2:28,29), that is, “the true being of persons is determined not by circumcision and uncircumcision, but by the praxis of obedience or otherwise to God's requirements” (Barbaglio, 1991:167).

In this way, so to speak, Paul “breaks the pride” of the Jews, even showing that at certain times the uncircumcised Gentiles obey the precepts of the Law (Rom 2:26), whereas the

Jews, on account of their bad witness, turn the figure of God into a caricature (Brunner, 1938:23), thus not fulfilling the divine missionary purpose of being a witness to all nations. In other words, “the life of this people of God does not arouse desire in the world to know this God and belong to him. The result of their enterprises of conversion is an absolute negative” (Brunner, 1938:23).

Finally, to highlight the fact that condemnation is deserved (Rom 3.8b), Paul responds to a series of objections that could easily come to light on the part of some Jewish readers, who possibly reacted to him with a mixture of indignation and unbelief, “for this thesis would be to them an outrageous destruction of what constitutes the very foundations of Judaism, namely, the character of God and his covenant” (Stott, 2007:107). Four objections were raised (Stott, 2007:108-111): (a) Paul's teachings are a sabotage of God's covenant (vv.1,2); (b) Paul's teachings nullify God's faithfulness (v.3); (c) Paul's teachings contradict God's righteousness (vv.5,6); (d) Paul's teachings are a false promotion of God's glory (vv.7,8). Paul apologetically refutes each of these arguments, showing that, while there are advantages to being Jewish, such as the fact that they received the Law, the fact of circumcision, and that they are the Old Testament covenant people, they are also under the yoke of sin and, in that sense, relative to the Gentiles, not at an advantage.[46] As Paul argues, “What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin” (Rom 3.9).

Paul closes this thematic that focuses on humanity under the wrath of God on account of sin (Rom 1:18-3.9) with a rhetorical question: “What shall we conclude then?” (Rom 3:9). From there up to Romans 3:20, he presents a closure of his understanding of sin (hamartiology), showing that all men, without distinction, are sinners. It is interesting to note that, in these verses (Rom 3:10-18), Paul takes three literary resources to come to a generalization about the sin of mankind. First, it uses words that express generalization, totality: “none” (twice in v.10 and once in v.12); “nobody” (twice in v.11 and once in v.12); “all” (in v.12); “together” (in v.12).

[46] “Paul's interlocutor was no fictitious being. And it may even be that we would not be far from reality if we concluded that Paul's interlocutor was himself—Paul, the unconverted Pharisee, expressing opinions that the apostle remembered so well as his own” (Dunn, 1988:91).

Second, Paul uses a series of seven Old Testament quotations to show the absence of God in people's lives, the universality of sin, and its destructive nature.[47] It ends in Romans 3:18, which cites Psalm 36:1: “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”[48] Finally, a third literary resource is used by Paul in Romans 3:19, 20: the image of an inexcusable defendant before a judge. With this, Paul points out that God is the Right Judge, who will judge on the basis of the Law: through it, “we become conscious of our sin” (Rom 3.20). That is, “for both Gentiles and Jews, the root of sin is not found in sinful acts, but in a perverted, rebellious will” (Ladd, 1997:378,379), although sinful acts are a consequence of this rebellion.

In short: the first theological conviction presented by Paul to the Romans centred on sin. As he says, sin entered mankind through the disobedience of the first man, Adam, putting all mankind under a yoke of death (Rom 5:12). In light of Adam's disobedience, “one can define sin as man wanting to have control of himself, desiring to be like God” (Ridderbos, 2004:114). At its core, sin is a rebellion against God, a refusal to submit to him (Rom 8:7), enmity against God (Rom 5:10; 8:7), and disobedience (Rom 11:32). In this way, humanity is “under the power of sin” (Rom 3.9) as a slave (Rom 6:16,20) who has been sold to sin (Rom 7.14) and who remains in the service of sin (Rom 6:6). According to the law of sin (Rom 7:23,25; 8:5), it feeds its members to itself as instruments of wickedness (Rom 6:13). The sphere of influence of sin is the flesh, and in this way sin exercises its dominion (Rom 6:14; 5:21; 6:12). The business is consummated when sin takes its toll, which is death (Rom 5:21; 6:23; 7:11) (Manson 2009:36,37).

Sin has placed all mankind under the wrath of God (Rom 1:18), making them unjust (Rom 3:10), turning them into guilty defendants who are silent before the judge (Rom 3.19,20). The extent of sin is total, not only in the geographical sense, but also in the life of the individual. Sin affects the whole human being: the will, the mind, and the understanding, the affections and the emotions, as well as words and behaviours,[49] as stated succinctly by Milne (1995:107):

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[47] According to Morris (1988:166), this was “a common rabbinic practice that connects one passage to another, as in a pearl necklace.”

[48] Regarding this verse, Cranfield (1992:73) comments: “It is through the eyes that man directs his steps. Therefore, to say that there is no fear of God before your eyes is a figurative way of saying that the fear of God has no part in directing your life, that God is left out of your calculation, that he is a practical atheist, whether theoretical or not.”

[49] As Barth (2005:50) states: “The wrath of God is the judgment under which we are under as long as we do not love the judge.”

> This has traditionally been expressed as *total depravity*. The phrase does not imply that we are as evil as possible, which would equate us with demons, but no aspect of human nature has been left intact by sin. One cannot cite any area of personality to claim moral self-justification.

Therefore, regarding the hamartiology developed by Paul in Romans, he can state that:

- sin entered the world through the Adamic Fall (Rom 5:12);
- sin brought a state of death to all mankind (Rom 5:12; 6:23a), which must be understood in a multifaceted way, that is, sin broke the relationship between humanity and God, between a human being and his or her neighbour, between humanity and himself. This condition is usually known as total depravity, which implies that there is no area of human life that can claim moral self-justification;
- sin has struck all human beings, leaving them in a position of unrighteous (Rom 3:10) and guilty (Rom 3:19,20), and placed them under the holy and righteous wrath of God (Rom 1:18);
- sin is both an enslaving condition (Rom 6:20; 7:14) and a state of alienation from God (Rom 3:11b), and nothing man does can take him out of this picture: he is a guilty defendant who must remain silent before the Judge (Rom 3:19-20).

3.2.1.2 Soteriology

After having affirmed that all mankind is unjust before God on account of sin, that is, totally depraved (Rom 1:18-3:20), from Romans 3:21 onwards, Paul introduces a new thematic block: soteriology. In the first verses of Romans Paul shows why the righteousness of God is necessary, and from 3:21 shows how the righteousness of God is received, that is, how the human being can be justified before God. In addition, it describes how justification/salvation manifests itself in practical attitudes of obedience

(sanctification)[50] (Rom 6:1-8:39), and how it happens through a gracious and sovereign action of God (Rom 9:1-11.36).[51]

The change of theme from hamartiology to soteriology can be easily verified in the grammar of the text. Paul begins Rom 3:21 with the expression *nuvì dè*: "but now". This conjunction/adversative expression counters that which precedes it, marking a break in thought. It is an expression that can be viewed from three angles or dimensions: (a) a logical one (the argument); (b) a chronological one (the present); (c) and an eschatological one (regarding a new time) (Stott, 2007:122). In other words, the period that Paul refers to as "now" is that of the new Christian dispensation (Sanday & Headlam, 1964:82), which began with the advent of Christ (Ridderbos, 2004:184). What happened at that moment in history? "Apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify" (Rom 3.21). Paul is claiming that God intervened, giving unjust humanity a righteousness that only he could give. It is a righteousness that comes from God. Thus, "after the long, dark night, the sun rose, a new day dawned, and the world was flooded with light" (Stott, 2007:122). God fulfilled that which he had promised, as found in the Law and in the Prophets.

Where is the manifest righteousness of God promised in the Old Testament? "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Rom 3:22a). Paul here takes up what he had already said in an introductory way in Romans 1:16b, namely that the Gospel "is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." What is explicit in Romans 3:22a is the doctrine of justification by grace and faith. There is nothing in humanity that makes it worthy of justification/ salvation. As indicated, he or she is a silent defendant in the face of the charges of the Law (Rom 3:19). Therefore, gracious action on God's part is necessary. Thus, it is

[50] This research employs the concept of justification as coined by Ladd (1997:409): "[justification] is the declaration of God, the righteous judge, that the man who believes in Christ, although he may be a sinner, is righteous—he is seen as being righteous because, in Christ, he has come into a righteous relationship with God." Some scholars differ on the understanding of the terms "justification" and "forgiveness." Jeremiah (1966:66) states that "justification is forgiveness, nothing but forgiveness." In turn, C. H. Hodge (1835:82) argues that there is a difference between the terms. According to him, "to condemn is not merely to punish, but rather to declare the accused guilty or worthy of punishment; and justification is not merely to release from this punishment, but to declare that the punishment cannot be justly declared. Forgiveness and justification are therefore essentially distinct. The first is the acquittal of the punishment, the other is the declaration that there is no basis for the application of the punishment."

[51] This block (Rom 3:21-11:36) is so central to Romans that Cranfield (1983:199) calls it "the center and core of all that constitutes the main part of the letter." Still, Morris (1988:173) states that these verses would be "possibly the most important paragraph ever written."

indispensable that Christ come to the aid of humanity, for he is the only one who is inherently just and capable of making man righteous by transferring to him his own righteousness (Calvino, 2014:134). Therefore, when the human being is justified, it is noted that "the efficient cause is divine mercy; Christ is the substance [matter] of our justification; and the Word, together with faith, are the instruments" (Calvino, 2014:134).

However, justification can only be wrought because of Jesus' work on the cross. This is implicit to Rom 3:24-25a: "justified freely by his grace through the redemption [*ἀπολυτρώσεως*] that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement [*ἱλαστήριον*], through the shedding of his blood – to be received by faith" (my italics). In speaking of the cross as a place of redemption (*ἀπολυτρώσεως*), Paul is using the metaphor of slavery.[52] "This means that man was in power, in his clutches, under the dominion of sin, and from which only Jesus Christ can deliver him" (Barclay, 2009:68,69). The cross of Christ was the price paid for the human being to be rescued from this condition. Not only that: as Cranfield (1992:82) argues, the best translation for *ἱλαστήριον* would be "a propitiatory sacrifice" (v.25), so that this statement should be understood

> in the sense that God willed Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, in the sense that God, since in his mercy he resolved to forgive sinful men and, being truly merciful, wanted to forgive them justly, that is, without in any way tolerating their sin, proposed to direct against his own Self, and the person of His Son, all the weight of that righteous wrath they deserved (Cranfield 1992:82).

Thus, in Christ, God demonstrated "his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26). Because God is the author of salvation (Jon 2:9), any possibility of pride on the part of humanity is excluded (Rom 3:27,28). Salvation is not a matter of the religious self-made person: after all, "justification through faith alone is marked by gratuitousness. Trust in oneself, [...], and trust in God, a characteristic element of faith, are self-excluded" (Barbaglio, 1991:179). Another consequence of the fact that salvation is a gracious action of God, is that it excludes all discriminating particularism: "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is

[52] "'Redemption' was the process by which a slave obtained freedom. Thousands of Jews taken prisoner in the wars had been sold into slavery in the Roman dominions, and it was a popular work of benevolence for wealthy Jews to 'redeem' them for freedom. This is the source of the metaphor" (Dodd, 1978:53).

he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith" (Rom 3:29,30). Paul is interested in "emphasizing that faith, the only way to justification, equalizes and unites the circumcised and the uncircumcised in the same humanity that the Father of Jesus Christ reconciles to himself" (Barbaglio, 1991:179).

Paul illustrates in terms of Abraham's life how a human being is justified by faith before God, and not by works:

> What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about –but not before God. What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited [*ἐλογίσθη*] to him as righteousness' (Rom 4:1-4 – my italics).

Here Paul goes against the dominant rabbinical thought of his day, which pointed out that Abraham was justified by his obedience (works) rather than his trust (faith) (Harrison, 1976:47). By quoting Genesis 15:6, he shows that Abraham's justification was by his trust (faith) in God.[53] To show God's action before Abraham's faith, Paul uses the word *ἐλογίσθη* (passive aorist of *λογίζομαι*) which can be translated as "to be credited," "to be taken into account," or "to be imputed." This term, which is repeated 11 times in this chapter (in verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24), was used in the secular context in trade agreements and meant, among others, "reckoning." That is, by faith Abraham "settled his accounts with God," being justified by him. As stated by Brunner (1938:34):

> Abraham did not wish to be something himself but placed himself entirely in God's hand. Therefore, the imputing it to him as righteousness is no mere acknowledgment of a present fact. This man is a righteous

[53] Barth (2005:184) observes: "Abraham's proclaimed 'righteousness' (his religiosity, genius and importance), his conduct, the guidance he gave to his life and his conscience can justify his glory (and fame) before men, in the forum of universal history (and a misguided 'history' may stick to the fame and glory of such a personality and his peers) 'but not before God', for what serves him to glory before God' shall be: the sincere repentance of his penitent heart (2:4); his work as it is accepted and 'paid' (reciprocated) by God (2:6); 'the Jew who is in secret' and the circumcision that is in the heart' (2:29). This is (written) in a different book; this is impossible to man himself, and therefore it is hidden from human eyes, to men, this is only possible if it comes from God, and therefore can only be seen by God."

> person. Why should someone who believes be a righteous man? This imputation is grace.

In the subsequent verses, Paul uses the analogy of the payment of wages to show that God justifies the man who trusts in him: “Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness” (Rom 4:4,5). Paul's argument starts with opposites, namely that God does not communicate justice as a debt, but grants it as a gift (grace) (Calvino, 2007:155). This argument is reinforced by the words of Psalm 32, quoted shortly after by Paul: “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them” (Rom 4:7,8). Why does Paul use Psalm 32 to help interpret Genesis 15:6? The reason is that it has “internal and substantial validity, since the fact that God takes into account justice to a man 'independent of works' is effectively equivalent to forgiving him his sins” (Cranfield, 1992:91).

Finally, Paul concludes his argument in two ways: first, by underlining the fact that Abraham was justified by faith (Rom 4:17b-22); second, by applying this truth to his hearers, showing that this is the way God justifies all men. The justification was credited to him but were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (see Rom 4:23-25).

After this, the block of Romans 5:1-21 exposes the benefits produced by justification. From this point in the letter onwards, Paul shows “both the new situation of grace in which the justified by virtue of faith lives, and the ultimate and definitive salvation, desired and awaited” (Barbaglio, 1991:193). Newell (1970:162) goes so far as to state that, in the first 11 verses of Romans 5, one has not only the blessed results of justification by faith, but also the most comprehensive biblical statement of God's pure love and grace in giving Christ for sinners.

The first benefit of justification is peace with God (Rom 5:1). The expression “we have peace with God” evokes the figure of reconciliation. By being justified by faith, the sinner, who was previously in a situation of war and separation on account of sin (as described

in the early chapters of Romans), is reconciled to God.[54] It should be noted that "the term has no psychological connotations, that is, it does not express tranquillity and serenity of spirit. It indicates, instead, an objective situation of positive relationship with God, the source of salvation" (Barbaglio, 1991:193).

The second benefit of justification is access to God's presence: "Through whom we have gained access [*προσαγωγὴν*] by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2 – my italics). The Greek word translated "access" is *προσαγωγὴν*. Another possible translation is "entry," that is, through justification by faith, Christ enables the believer to enjoy an ongoing relationship with God. It is not just a periodic approach, or an occasional audience with the king. It is a privilege to live continuously in the temple and the palace. "[...] it is not sporadic, but continuous; it is not precarious, but a secure relationship" (Stott, 2007:162). In the final part of the verse Paul focuses on the moment of reconciliation that the justified can look forward to with joyful confidence, that is, the glory they will experience when they are in eternal presence with the Lord.

The third benefit of justification is joy in tribulations (Rom 5:3, 4). Despite living in the hope (certainty) of eternity with the Lord, as described in the preceding verse, the justified still live in a world characterized by tribulations, pressures, difficulties, and sufferings. Even so, the justified can and should face this scenario with triumphant joy and a firm trust in God, since these situations are used to develop perseverance, approve character, and create hope.[55] According to Cranfield (1992:106), the benefits of the tribulations to which these verses refer is not at all exultation in them as something meritorious on the part of the believer – which would of course be only a boasting in one's own works – but an exultation in them as that to which God subjects the justified as part of the discipline by which he teaches believers to wait patiently for their deliverance.

The fourth benefit of justification is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). While developing and deepening the workings of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life in Romans 8, here Paul mentions that the Spirit has already been poured out (*ἐκκέχυται*) into the lives of the justified. Calvino (2014:191) stresses that the participle is quite emphatic,

[54] Consider that "our peace with God is not as between two nations before at war; but as between a king and rebellious and guilty subjects" (Newell, 1970:165).
[55] Wiersbe (1989:527) observes that "our English word 'tribulation' comes from a Latin word *tribulum*. In Paul's day, a *tribulum* was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the grain. The tribulum was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff."

and entails that the revelation of divine love to believers is so copious that it fills their hearts. Being thus poured out, and permeating every part of the being, it not only mitigates suffering in adversity, but also acts as a pleasant condiment to transmit grace in the periods of tribulation experienced by believers.

The fifth benefit of justification is deliverance from future condemnation (Rom 5:9,10). In the first part of Romans, Paul makes it clear that, because of sin, all mankind is under the judgment and wrath of God (Rom 1:18; 3:19). This manifestation of God's wrath has present and eschatological aspects. The duality of the present and future time appears again here in Romans 5:9,10, but in a new light. Paul points out that those who justified them by faith in Christ have been reconciled to God (present) and "will be saved from wrath" (*σωθησόμεθα δι' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς*) (eschatological/future). The use of the verb *σωθησόμεθα* ("we shall be saved") here "signifies the consummation of that work whose justification is the beginning. It is a preservation against all causes of destruction" (Rienecker & Rogers, 1995:264). In other words, since God has accomplished the really difficult, that is, justified ungodly sinners, believers can be absolutely confident that he will do that which, by comparison, is much easier, namely to save from his wrath in the end those who are already righteous in his view (Cranfield, 1992:109). Thus, Wiersbe (1989:528) enthusiastically states: "Totally apart from Law, and purely by grace, we have a salvation that takes care of the past, the present, and the future. Christ died for us; Christ lives for us; Christ is coming for us! Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

Finally, in the last block of the chapter (Rom 5:12-20), Paul highlights the restorative effects of justification stating that justification by faith not only carries with it many benefits (Rom 5:1-11), but also outweighs the effects of the Fall Adamic. Thus, while in the preceding verses Paul emphasizes the individual aspects of justification, he now expands on this understanding by showing that, just as Adam's sin affected all mankind, Jesus Christ's obedience affected all believers. As Adam's one sin did not fail to bring about death, so Christ's only righteous act on behalf of sinners will not fail to be the opposite prize to those who are in it (Stifler, 1960:195).

The contrast between Adam and Christ is developed throughout the entire pericope, as can be seen in the table below:

Table 8 – Contrasts between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21

Contrasts between Adam and Christ		
Two men	Adam (v.14)	Christ (v.14)
Two acts	An act of transgression in the garden (vv.12, 15, 18, 19)	An act of righteousness on the cross (v.18)
Two results	Condemnation, guilt, and death (vv.15, 16, 18, 19)	Justification, life, and kingship (vv.17, 18, 19)
Two differences:		
In degree (v.15)	Sin abounds	Grace abounds
In operation (v.16)	One sin of Adam, resulting in condemnation and reign of death for all	Many sins in Christ resulting in justification and reign in life for believers
Two kingdoms	Sin reigning through death (v.17)	Grace reigning through righteousness (v.21)
Two plenty		Of grace (v.17)
		Of the gift of righteousness (v.17)
Two contrasting states	People condemned as slaves to sin by Adam	Justified people reigning in life through Christ

[Source: adapted from Newell (1970:176)]

Having expounded the necessity of justification (Rom 1:18-3.20) and the way in which it is obtained by faith in Christ (Rom 3:2 1-4:25), including its consequences (Rom 5:1-20), Paul shows that justification produces sanctification (Rom 6:1-8: 39). Indeed, after

greeting its readers the letter says that the reason for his apostolate is “to call all the nations[56] to the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom 1:5). Thus, as Stott (2007:197) points out, the God of grace not only forgives sins, but also frees believers from sinning. For grace, in addition to justifying, also sanctifies. It unites to Christ and places the justified in a new process of slavery: slaves of justice.

Constable (2023:36) says that, when a sinner experiences redemption – e “converted” is the subjective term – he simultaneously experiences justification, which is related to sanctification. Justification communicates God's righteousness to him and is same as “positional sanctification.”[57] This means that God sees the believer as completely holy in his position before God. Consequently, that person is no longer guilty because of his sins (Rom 8:1). At the same time, the justified person experiences “regeneration,” which is the transformation of his interior. When a sinner proves these realities, he begins a process of progressive practical sanctification. This process of becoming progressively more righteous (holy) in your daily experience is not automatic. It involves growth and requires the believer to cooperate with God to produce holiness in daily life. God leads the believer and provides the enabling for him or her to follow, but the believer must choose to follow and make use of the resources for sanctification that God provides. This progressive sanctification will end in death or rapture, whichever comes first. Then the believer will experience glorification. From this, your experiential condition will finally conform to your legal situation before God. You will then be completely righteous, in addition to having been declared righteous. That is, God will remove from the lives of believers their sinful nature and conform their lives totally to his will (Rom 8:29).

To speak of sanctification as a progressive practical experience, Paul uses three metaphors:

- death and resurrection (Rom 6:1-14);
- slavery (Rom 6:15-23);
- marriage (Rom 7:1-6).

[56] The word here translated “nations” is *ἔθνεσιν*, which can also be translated “Gentiles.” “Nations” was chosen, for though Paul saw himself as the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16; Rom 1:13), he also understood that the Gospel message of which he was the bearer was intended for all people (Rom 1:14;16).
[57] Constable, therefore, understands that sanctification is at the same time a punctual action (positional justification or sanctification) and a process (progressive sanctification or sanctification).

The first experience of sanctification is to be dead to sin: “We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Rom 6:2). To illustrate this death to sin, which happens to the believer at the time of his justification/conversion, Paul uses the figure and meaning of Christian baptism (Rom 6:3,4): “the plunge into the flowing waters was like a death; the moment the waters passed over his head was like a burial; and rising again to breathe in the sunlight was a kind of resurrection,” in the words of Stott (2007:207). Moreover, Paul shows that Jesus' death was not only substitutionary – as he had already said in Rom 5:12-21 – but also representative, that is, just as Christ died for sins and rose to new life, so believers should consider themselves “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6.11).

A second experience in the progression of sanctification is expressed in the metaphor of slavery (Rom 6:15-23). Paul compares the situation of believers to that of a free person on the one hand and that of a slave on the other, contrasting their lives before and after justification. Before justification, believers were slaves to sin (Rom 6:16). What did they reap as the fruit of this slavery? Death, wickedness, and impurity (Rom 6:1-6; 19; 21). In being justified, believers “have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Rom 6:18), or “slaves of God” (Rom 6:22). The results of this bondage are righteousness, holiness (Rom 6:16; 19) and, finally, eternal life (Rom 6:22). Thus, believers are called to offer themselves: “offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness” (Rom 6:19), that is, to live a life of practical obedience to their new Lord. A principle established here by Paul, by the Lord Jesus, and by Scripture in general is that those who know the truth and walk in it are free (Newell, 1970:238).

Paul solemnly concludes this section (Rom 6:15-23) by stating, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23-3). If sin is personified and represented here “either as a general who pays pay to his soldiers, or – and this is what best suits the pre-eminence of the idea of slavery in the preceding verses – as a slave owner who pays his slaves a pension or money for small expenses” (Cranfield, 1992:144) the Lord in contrast grants his slaves eternal life.[58]

[58] By “employing the Greek word represented here as 'free gift', [Paul] thought of the gift given to each soldier by an emperor or imperial heir on his accession to the throne, his presentation to public life or other extraordinary occasion, going back to Tertullian (second and third centuries)” (Cranfield, 1992:145).

The third reason for the sanctification of believers is exposed in the metaphor of marriage (Rom 7:1-3). Paul's application of these verses is clear: “So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God” (Rom 7:4). Here “Paul intended the illustration to document the changing status of the believer (the woman free by the death of her husband)” (Dunn (1988:368, 369)[59] The believer is therefore like a wife who was married to the Law (see “the force of sin” as found in 1 Cor 15:56), but who is now free (that is, a widower) and able “to belong to another” (Rom 7:4).

In conclusion, the three metaphors used by Paul that set forth the experiences of the progressive sanctification of believers can be summarized in the table below:

[59] “Once freed from submission to the law, the faithful do not find themselves in the emptiest and laziest indeterminacy. Liberation leads to a new belonging: now they belong to Christ, “to him who was raised from the realm of the dead.” In other words, it changes the essential point of reference of their lives: no longer the law, but Jesus, accepted as the only Lord. It can be said that, positively, Christian freedom is obedience of heart (cf. 6:1) to the Risen One. And it is a new dimension of life, fruitful and creative: ”so as to bear fruit for God'“ (Barbaglio, 1991:228).

Table 9 – Metaphors for progressive sanctification

Metaphors for progressive sanctification		
Metaphor of death and resurrection	Metaphor of slavery	Metaphor of marriage
Rom 6:1-14	Rom 6:15-23	Rom 7:1-6
The believer must live in progressive sanctification because, like Christ, he died to sin and rose to new life (this reality is represented by baptism).	The believer must live in progressive sanctification because he has been delivered from sin and now lives as a slave to righteousness/God.	The believer must live in progressive sanctification on account of his new status: dead to the force of sin (the Law) and united with Christ.
Death *versus* life	Slavery *versus* liberation	Married *versus* widowed

[Source: The Author]

Although the process of progressive sanctification is something necessary and a reality in the believer's life – given that he or she died to sin and rose again to a life of obedience (Rom 6:1-14), was delivered from sin and became a slave of God (Rom 6:15-23), and lives with a new status, united with Christ (Rom 7: 1-6) – progressive sanctification does not happen in a romanticized way. This is because of the sinful nature (flesh) of the one who was justified, which is the subject that Paul will develop in Romans 7:7-25.

Paul already mentioned that the Law is not the way to justification (Rom 3:20). The latter points out sin, showing people their sinfulness and the need to be justified by their faith in the Saviour, Jesus (Rom 3:21-26). Moreover, in the preceding verses (Rom 7:1-6), Paul stated that the believer enjoys a new status: “as a woman whose husband has died is free to marry another, so also are believers, since they have died to the law, free to belong to Christ” (Mounce, 1995:160).

So, what is the function of the Law in the life of the believer? First, Paul answers this question by taking up the argument used earlier, that the Law points to sin and humanity’s need for justification: “For I would not have known what coveting really was if the

law had not said, 'You shall not covet'" (Rom 7:7). Second, Paul argues that, in the Law one finds the ethical parameter of the Christian life: "So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (Rom 7:12). However, despite being aware of the benefits of obedience to the Law, in v.14 Paul describes himself as someone in constant tension between obeying and disobeying it. Why is this the case? It is due to his sinful nature, his flesh. In his words: "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Rom 7:18)[60]. Paul here is giving voice to his experience as a Christian convert, who did indeed die to sin and the Law in Christ, but who still lives in this world/age. As Dunn states (1988:396), Paul is experiencing "the eschatological tension of being surprised between the two epochs, that of Adam and that of Christ [...] thus he is suspended (indeed, very uncomfortably) between the death and resurrection of Christ." The consequence is a man in constant battle between obedience and disobedience to the Law. In fact, military language occurs in Romans 7:22, 23: "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war [*ἀντιστρατευόμενον*] against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me" (my italics).

The penultimate verse of the pericope reveals a man desperate for his state: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" (Rom 7:24). And the answer to that question is found in the next verse: "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). Thus, "though Paul laments his state and sighs for his departure, at the same time he confesses that he rests in the grace of God" (Calvino, 2013:266,267). Paul concludes the chapter by showing that he lacks God's grace to live in obedience to the Law. Grace, therefore, is not only a central element in the theology of justification (Rom 3:24), but also in the theology of progressive sanctification (Tit 2:11-13).

[60] Barclay (2009:112) states: "When Paul uses the term flesh in this way he really refers to human nature in all its weakness, its powerlessness, and its helplessness. It refers to human nature in its vulnerability to sin and temptation. It refers to that part of man that gives sin its opportunity and its bridgehead. It refers to sinful human nature without Christ and without God. It means all things that bind man to the world instead of to God. To live according to the flesh is to live a worldly life, to live a life dominated by the dictates and desires of sinful human nature rather than a life dominated by the dictates of God and his love. The flesh is the lowest side of man's nature."

In Chapter 8, Paul explains that the benefits of sanctification are made available through the presence and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit in every believer.[61] The chapter is naturally divided into three parts. The first (Rom. 8:1-17) describes the different facets of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who delivers, indwells, sanctifies, guides, adopts, testifies, and ultimately raises up the children of God. The believer, desperate from his or her sinfulness as described in Rom 7:7-25, can have hope: because he or she is justified in Christ, he or she is free from all condemnation (Rom 8:1), not by his or her own efforts, but by the merits of Christ (Rom 8:3,4). In addition to forgiveness, justification generates in the believer a new way of life. Before, he or she lived according to the flesh, but now he or she lives according to the Spirit, that is, a life empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in obedience. In other words, the Holy Spirit frees the believer from being controlled by sin (Cranfield, 1992:174). The transformation of the mind is the centre of this liberation/ transformation.[62] It is important to remember that, in the first chapters of Romans, Paul says that the mind was corrupted by sin (Rom 1:21,28). Now, however, it shows how the new life in Christ works a change of mentality in that mind (Rom 8:5-8). Later, in Romans 12:1, 2, Paul will appeal to believers not to let themselves be conformed to the pattern of the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of their minds (Rom 12:2). Such a change is possible because the believer is now the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9).

Another action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is adoption into the family of God (Rom 8:15-17). To understand the depth of Paul's words in these verses, it is necessary to know the workings of the adoption processes at the time of the Roman Empire. Barclay (2009:116) points out the following in this regard:

> (1) The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate child in the new family. In the most literal sense, and with the greatest legal obligation, he got a new father. (2) It follows that he became heir to all the assets of his new father. Although other children were later born, who had a true blood relationship, this did not affect their rights. He was co-heir with God inalienably. (3)

[61] Of the 34 references to the Holy Spirit in Romans, 17 are in Romans 8.

[62] "'To walk according to the flesh,' then, is to have one's life determined and directed by the values of 'this world,' of the world in rebellion against God. It is a lifestyle that is purely 'human' in its orientation. To 'walk according to the Spirit,' on the other hand, is to live under the control, and according to the values, of the 'new age,' created and dominated by God's Spirit as his eschatological gift" (Moo, 1996:485).

> Legally, the old life of the adoptee was totally cancelled. For example, all debts were legally cancelled; they were cancelled as if they had never existed. The adopted person was regarded as a new person entering a new life with which sin had nothing to do. (4) In the eyes of the Law the adopted person was literally and absolutely the daughter of his new father. Roman history provides a striking example of the literal and complete truth of this.

After talking about two central theological themes operated by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (sanctification and adoption), in the second part of the block (Rom 8:18-27) deals with the future glory of God's children, portrayed as a final deliverance in which all creation will participate. As heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ, believers will share in future glory (Rom 8:7,18). When Paul speaks of this apocalyptic glory (*δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι*) he is referring to the experience of the glorification of God's children, a divine action that will have not only individual consequences for believers, but also cosmically restored effects on all created nature (Rom 8:19). Meanwhile, believers live, paradoxically, groaning inwardly (Rom 8:23) in hope (Rom 8:24,25), for they already possess “the first fruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23), that is, God has already granted them the gift of a part, as a pledge of the fuller gift yet to come. What the believer has received is the foretaste and assurance of what he has yet to expect (see Cranfield, 1992:192).

In the third part (Rom 8:28-39), Paul emphasizes the unshakable love of God, who works in all things for the good of those who love him and promises never to allow anything to separate the believer from his love. In other words, believers can rest, because they are known to God, have been predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom 8:28-30) and, again, nothing will separate them from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39). There is, therefore, a clear contrast here with the closing verses of chapter 7, where Paul is struggling, warring with his sinful nature. Faced with this scenario, the Holy Spirit equips the believer to live in progressive sanctification and impresses on him the hope of eternity. In fact, in that sense, it is interesting to note that Paul here reveals a horizon that stretches from eternity to eternity. “It begins with 'no condemnation' (v.1) and ends with 'no separation' (v.39), in both cases referring to those who 'are in Christ Jesus'” (Stott, 2007:260).

All Pauline soteriology as expressed in Romans, beginning with justification (regeneration, positional sanctification), through progressive sanctification, to glorification, is reflected in the figure below:

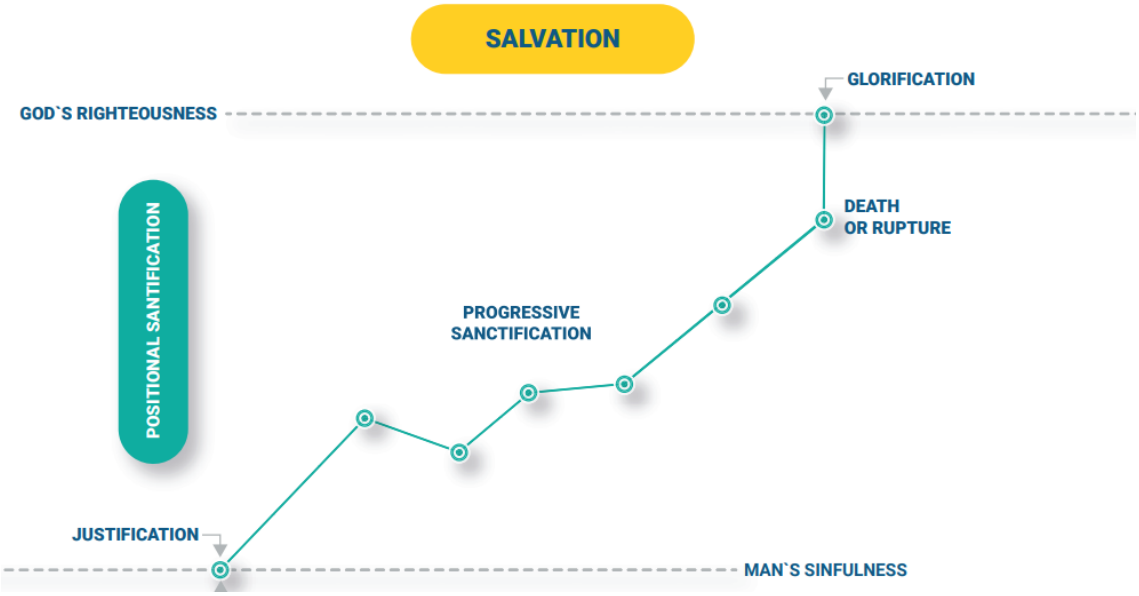


Figure 8 – Paul's soteriology

[Source: Constable (2023:124)]

Having addressed the necessity of justification, how it is given by faith, its benefits, and how justification produces progressive sanctification, Paul mentions two important and decisive aspects in his theology: first, justification is a sovereign action of God, and second, faith comes through the preaching of the Gospel.

As for the first subject, Paul already made it clear that repentance is not a human initiative, but an act of God's goodness, tolerance, and patience. Already in the greeting, the apostle states that they only belong to Jesus Christ and are holy because they were called (by the Lord) to do so (Rom 1:6,7). Later, in Romans 2:4, he asks rhetorically: “Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” A few verses after that, Paul points out that the sinner's justification is only possible because of the path that God has built toward humanity, that is, “the righteousness of God has been made known” (Rom 3:21). Moreover, in mentioning Abraham as a kind (example) of the justified, he does not exalt the virtues of the patriarch, as if on account of them he had been justified by God, but underlines the grace of the Lord, who acted sovereignly, choosing Abraham: in other words, “God credits righteousness apart from works” (Rom 4:6). As

Paul states in Ephesians 2:8, the faith that justifies humanity before the Lord is “a gift of God.” As Barth (2005:185) states: “Repentance does not come by human initiative or work; it is divine grace, and only God can see and judge.”

Paul continues with this argument in Romans 9-11, showing through the history of the People of Israel that the Lord has a people whom he has called, calls, and will call, a people whom he has elected for the purpose of justifying them (Rom 9:6-9), as described thus further:

> Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger. Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Rom 9:10-13).

Just as God sovereignly and graciously chose Jacob over Esau, in the same context, Paul speaks of how the Gentiles were called to repentance and consequently become the Lord's people. For this, Paul uses the figure of branches grafted into the olive tree. The lesson is clear: only the Lord, by an action of his sovereign grace, can call the Gentiles to repentance. Therefore, Paul appeals to this group: “If any of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root” (Rom 11:17,18).

The point is that God is not unjust, but sovereignly says instead: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy” (Rom 9:15,16). Paul goes on to state that “God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden” (Rom 9:18). And it is not up to human beings to question him for his sovereign choice: “But who are you,” Paul asks, “a human being, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?” (Rom 9:20). It is no accident that Paul ends this block (Rom 9-11) with a hymn of praise.

God, because of his holiness, should fulminate all humanity. His wrath is revealed “from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth by unrighteousness” (Rom 1:18). However, by an act of sovereignty, he mercifully and

graciously elected a people to give them faith to believe in the sacrifice of his Son and then be justified/saved. For this reason, Paul can only say: “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them? For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen“ (Rom 11. :5,36).

By following Paul's argument in these three chapters, one may well have provided enough to allow one to repeat the “Amen” of his doxology in pleasing confidence that the profound mystery that surrounds humanity “is not an inexpressible mystery of night-mares, nor the dark mystery of arbitrary omnipotence, but the mystery that will never turn out to be anything other than the mystery of the entirely good God, merciful and faithful!” (Cranfield, 1992:273).

But how does God awaken a justifying faith in those he has sovereignly and graciously elected? It is through the preaching of the Gospel. Already in the greeting of the letter, Paul says that his apostolic ministry (of preaching) had been given to him by Jesus Christ, with the aim “to call all the nations to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake“ (Rom 1:5). He reinforces this concept by stating that “the faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom 10:17). That is, Paul believes that the clear exposition of the Gospel is the means used by God to awaken faith, which would lead people to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Rom 10:13). However: “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom 10:14).

In response to this, Pohl (1999:173) comments: “Before faith comes, comes the message [...] faith is the acceptance of the message [...] Behind the mouth of the messenger is the mouth of the risen Christ.” Stott (2007:347) notes that Paul's arguments in these verses follow a logic according to which one can see the essence of them: “Christ *sends* his heralds; Heralds *preach*; people *hear*; hearers *believe*; believers *invoke*; and those who invoke *are saved.”*

Paul’s soteriology as developed in Romans can therefore be summarised in terms of the following items:

- Salvation is a necessity due to the state of total depravity brought about by sin (since the Fall) which has placed humanity in a state of death and under the wrath of God (Rom 1:18; 5:12);
- Salvation is given solely and exclusively by faith in Christ, independent of works (Rom 3:21-24). The term Paul uses for this is justification (Rom 5:5);
- Salvation (justification or positional sanctification) produces sanctification (procedural sanctification), since the believer has died to his or her old life, is a slave of Christ, and is now situated in a new relational position with God (Rom 6:1-7:6). Such sanctification is not something abstract, but is demonstrated through practical attitudes of obedience to the Lord (Rom 6:19);
- Justification and sanctification happen as a work of grace, wrought by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8);
- Salvation happens sovereignly, for it is God who grants grace to believe (Rom 2:24; 9-11);
- Faith (the means to salvation) is awakened through the preaching of the Gospel (Rom 10:17).

3.2.1.3 Ecclesiology

In addition to hamartiology and soteriology, another central element in Pauline theology for church planting (as summarized in Romans) is centred on ecclesiology. This theme is widely discussed throughout the Pauline *corpus*, which can be easily observed, for example, in the use of the word *ἐκκλησία*: of the 114 examples of *ἐκκλησία* in the New Testament, 62 are found in Paul, which amounts to more than 50%. This presupposes Paul's great interest in this institution (Rega, 2009:202).[63] Specifically in Romans, *ἐκκλησία* appears only in the final chapter, where five times Paul makes mention of groups of believers: the *ἐκκλησία* of Cenchrea (Rom 16:1); the *ἐκκλησία* of the Gentiles (Rom 16:4); the *ἐκκλησία* who gathered in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16:5); the *ἐκκλησίαι* of Christ (Rom 16:16); the *ἐκκλησία* who benefited from Gaius' hospitality (Rom 16.23).

[63] Paul thinks of *ἐκκλησία* in universal and local terms. “Paul teaches that the local church, though indissolubly united to all the power of God, is a complete church. All of God's promises apply to it, and Christ, the head and Lord of the Church, is as present there as in any larger entity” (Ladd, 1997:721).

It is curious to note, therefore, that Paul does not use the word *ἐκκλησία* to address believers in Rome, as he does in other letters (e.g., in 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:2; and so on). However, if the word that Paul normally uses to describe a group of local believers is not present in the greeting to the Romans, the concept of *ἐκκλησία* is present throughout the letter. As Ridderbos says, with this term is found "several others that are repeated frequently in Paul, which function as the usual designation for the church and, in which is expressed the same conscience proper to the Christian Church and the same apostolic judgment which is found in the name *'Εκκλησία"* (2004:374, 375).

The first of these words is *ἁγίοις* ("saints"), usually found in the opening words and the concluding words of various epistles. It appears in Romans 1:7. As indicated, the word designates the group of people who have been justified by faith in Christ (in terms of positional sanctification) and at the same time sets apart the notion of living in obedience to the Lord (in terms of procedural sanctification). As "slaves of God" (Romans 6:22) believers are empowered to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8) to the end, that is, personal death or rapture.

The other words Paul uses to designate the church are *ἀγαπητοὶ* ("beloved") and *κλητοὶ* ("called/elect"). The church, therefore, is the group of those to whom God has demonstrated his love by sending Christ to die in their place (Rom 5:8). They were sovereignly chosen by God to whom they were granted repentance and faith in Christ, that they might be justified (Rom 2:24; 9-11). They were doubly called "to belong to Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:6) as well as "to be his holy people" (Rom 1:7). It can therefore be "easily perceived that these various designations of the church as 'saints,' 'elect,' 'beloved,' and 'called,' as far as their meaning is concerned, are intimately connected with each other and complement each other" (Ridderbos, 2004:377). Furthermore, as you remember Goppelt (2002:383):

> Paul understands as the church of God the group of people affected by God's elective call in missionary preaching and Baptism, a group that is therefore *en Christo*, by which and through whom the word is preached and celebrated the Lord's Supper, which responds to the Gospel by confessing, believing and serving in faith, and that, therefore, he is walking the path through the cross to the Resurrection.

In other words, the church is the people that God has chosen and called to himself out of all peoples. “Just as Abraham was called your, the believers have been called to God by the Gospel of divine grace” (Ridderbos, 2004:377). Moreover, Paul makes it clear that this group is not only composed of the holy remnant of Israel, “but also those among the Gentiles, whom God has chosen, called to himself, and desires to consider his beloved” (Ridderbos, 2004:377).

Romans shows not only the identity of the church, but also its function. As indicated, the fact that a people are called to live in holiness will necessarily lead to a series of practical attitudes involving ethics, such as love of the neighbour (Rom 12:9); submission to the authorities (Rom 13:1-4.); or respect for brothers with differing opinions (Rom 14:1-15:13). In short, it is up to the church to serve the Lord and people with their gifts (Rom 12:4-10): the church is not a voluntary association of individuals who coincide in sharing a faith or a common ideal of life but, instead, is a continuation of the incarnation. The fact that Christ lives in the church (Rom 12:4-5) is the guarantee of the fulfilment of this life, here and now (see Manson, 2009:102).

In addition to being called to service, the church is also called to communion, characterized by relationships marked by brotherly love.[64] In this respect, Thielman (2007:84) says:

> The Spirit breaks down social barriers and brings unity to the church. The church, as a social group, takes the place of the temple of Israel as a symbol of the place of the indwelling of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). In this sense, the individual Christian who constitutes the church needs to work on “edifying” one another (3:14; Eph 2:18-22) and to use their spiritual gifts for this purpose (1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 12; 12:1-11). They need to fight division, as it threatens the integrity of

[64] As C.S. Lewis (1993:37) says: “No Christian, and even no historian, can accept the epigram that defines religion as 'that which man does with his solitude.' I believe it was one of the Wesley brothers who said that there was not the slightest hint of solitary religion in the New Testament. We are forbidden to neglect our meetings. Christianity has been institutional since the earliest of its documents. The church is the bride of Christ. We are members of each other.” Regarding Pauline ecclesiology, Dodd (1978:152) asserts: “It is a community of people who love, who bear one another's burdens, who seek to build each other up in love, who 'have in themselves feelings that were in Christ.' It is all this because it is the living incarnation of the very Spirit of Christ. It is a lofty and mystical doctrine, but devoid of meaning outside of affectionate and fraternal conviviality in real life. A gathering of people who celebrate the solemn sacrament of the body and blood of Christ and are constantly moved by selfish passions—rivalry, emulation, mutual contempt—is absolutely not, for Paul, a church or a divine community, however great their faith and how profound their mystical experience; for all things can 'inflate'; only love 'edifies.'”

> God's temple (3:14-16). Christians must make “every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3).

Another function of the church is to be a missionary instrument of God so as to perform and support evangelistic/missional work. As mentioned, “the faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom 10:17). And who are those whom God uses to fulfil this function? His servants, who make up the church. As Manson (2009:78) states, this task “has been entrusted to those who have already experienced […] reconciliation in order to invite others to participate in [the] experience.”

The church not only performs evangelistic work, but also supports the missionaries. Thus Paul, who had presented himself to the Romans as someone who had received a specific apostolic (missionary) ministry (Rom 1:5), asked for support for his missionary enterprise to Spain (Rom15:23,24). Although, as quoted above, the kind of help that he expected is not known (Cranfield, 1992:344), it is known with certainty that the church in Rome could assist him, otherwise Paul would not ask for it. As Ollrog et al *(*1979:234) say, theologically “Paul considers his mission a function of the church.” This is one of the reasons why he does not turn his missional endeavours into a solitary task. According to the description in Acts, very rarely is Paul somewhere planting churches alone. He is almost always accompanied by his co-workers.

Therefore, regarding the ecclesiology developed by Paul in Romans, one can state that

- the church is the sum of all the people who were sovereignly elected by God to inherit salvation (Rom 9-11) and who responded to his elective call (Rom 1:6) when the Lord gave them faith to believe in Christ through the exposition of the Gospel (Rom 10:17);
- the church was called to live in holiness (Rom 1:7), which should be reflected in practical attitudes of obedience to the Lord;
- the church is made up of Jews and Gentiles who form the Body of Christ, called to serve the Lord and love people (Rom 12:4-9; 15:25-26);
- the church is called to evangelize people (Rom 10:14), as well as support missionary work in contexts other than their locality (Rom 15:23-24).

3.2.1.4 Eschatology

Eschatology is another defining theological theme for Paul's church-planting ministry. In this respect, the apostle believed that the history of his days was not ordinary. It was a singular period

> in which all the ancient promises of God were being fulfilled through the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. He was persuaded that the eschatological age, promised by the prophets, had dawned shortly before his conversion, that the fullness of time had been consummated with the coming of the Son of God in the flesh (Gal 4:4), that the Kingdom of God had erupted in the person of Christ, that in Christ Jesus redemption was now announced to all men (Lopes, 1997:2).

This is evident in some of Paul's statements. In Romans 3:21-22: “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” Or, “in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God […], all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom 16:25,26). A humanity who had lived in the darkness of sin, under the wrath and judgment of God (Rom 1:18), could taste the rays of light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, this manifestation has not yet taken place in its fullness. Such an event will only happen on the occasion of the *parousia* (second coming of Christ).[65] For Paul this time was very near: in his words: “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here” (Rom 13:11b-12a). When this would happen, believers will experience redemption and eternal adoption as children of God (Rom 8:24); they will be glorified (Rom 8:30), nature will be redeemed (Rom 8:21-22); and “the God of peace [will] crush Satan under your [the believers’] feet.]” (Rom 16:20). Thus, in Paul's eschatology, the believer lives between two ages. To use Paul's metaphor in Romans 13:11,12, the believer has already been awakened from his or her

[65] “Exegetes agree on the following: the apostle desired to see the *parousia* during his life. He liked to express himself in the light of the coming of Christ; it reflected the enthusiasm of his hope” (Cerfeaux, 2012:178).

slumber with the first rays of the sun (first coming of Christ), but that sun has not yet shone in its fullness (second coming of Christ, *parousia*). As Kümmel (1983:166) states:

> According to Paul, then, God's action in Christ in the past has already made eschatological salvation active; with the sending of Christ the time of salvation broke out. Of course, this presence of salvation is provisional. Paul not only emphasizes that 'in hope we are saved' (Rom 8:24), but also states of himself, “I do not think I have attained it” (Phi 3:13) and speaks of the communities of Christians as being the ones “who have the first fruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23). So, there can be no doubt that Paul combines the sure hope that the time of final salvation will soon come through the appearance of the Christ, with the certainty that final salvation has already begun through God's action in Christ.

This tension between the present and the coming age is clearly represented in the figure below:

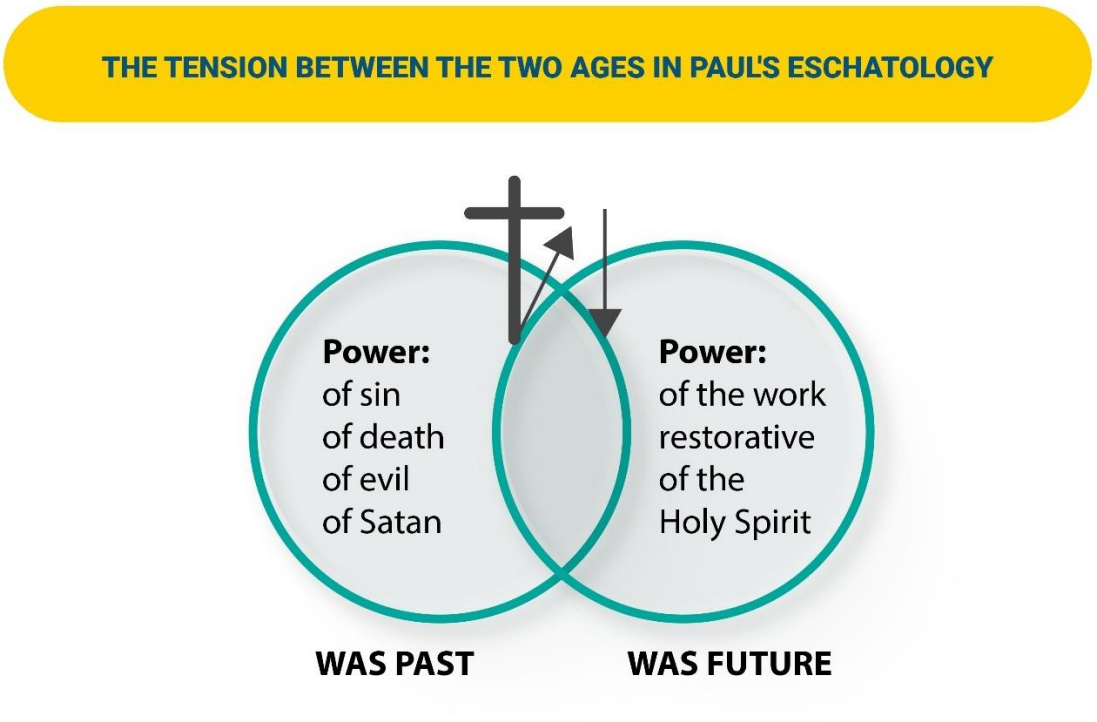


Figure 9 – The tension between the two ages in Paul's eschatology

[Source: Goheen, 2014:167]

Paul's eschatological conception directly influenced his missional actions. Green (1984:322, 323) states that anticipation of Christ's imminent return gave a powerful impetus to evangelism in the early days of the church. It is sufficient to turn to 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 to see how Paul's preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians "resonated the word of the Lord" in the surrounding regions, and was placed in the context of an eschatological hope soon, for they expected the Son of God to return from heaven. Or, in the words of Beker (1980:52):

> There is passion in Paul – but it is the passion of sobriety; and there is impatience in Paul – but it is patience softened by patience to prepare the world for its coming destiny, inaugurated by the Christ-event [...] apocalyptic fervor and missionary strategy go hand in hand [...] They do not contradict each other, as if one paralyzes the strength of another.[66]

Therefore, regarding the eschatology developed by Paul in Romans, one can state the following:

- God, in Christ, ushered in a new eschatological age, sending him as Saviour, thus fulfilling the promises made in the Old Testament by the prophets (Rom 3:21);
- In Christ, the powers of the ancient age, begun in the Adamic Fall and characterized by death (Rom 5:12), are dethroned;
- The church, the believers in Christ, have already experienced the benefits of the coming age, but will live it to the full at the second coming (*parousia*) of Christ (Rom 13:11b-12a). So, for the time being, they live in tension between the two ages;

[66] Cerfaux (2012:101,102) resonates with Beker's work, and says: Paul's first message "emphasized above all the return of Christ. However, he knew he had a work to do before that. From the beginning, these two things have been united: the idea of the *parousia* and the need to prepare it by announcing it. In the first instant, Christianity prepares the way for the coming of the Messiah and for judgment. Such was the role of John the Baptist and, partially, that of Jesus. The disciples continued the same mission. The missionary idea is included in the waiting for the *parousia.* It is by the announcement that it is prepared. Those who have received the kingdom of God in their hearts have at the same time the desire to spread it in order to save their brothers and sisters on the day of judgment. The kingdom of God, as Jesus preached it, was a living reality, a small seed destined to develop into the great tree of the eschatological kingdom."

- For Paul, Christ's *parousia* is an imminent event (Rom 13:11b-12a; 16:20), which directly influences his missional practice, giving him a sense of urgency.

3.2.1.5 Missiology

Paul makes important missiological assertions in the very first verses of Romans. He greets the brothers, identifying himself as a slave of Christ, "called to be an apostle [*ἀπόστολος*] and set apart for the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1 – my italics). Later, in this same context of the greeting, he says that "we[67] received grace and apostleship [*ἀποστολὴν*] to call all the nations to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake" (Rom 1:5 – my italics). Paul sees himself as a slave subject to Christ, from whom he has received grace and also a call to preach the Gospel to all nations, that is: first there was conversion, then vocation and first he was called, then he was sent apostolically[68] to the world in want of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) (MacArthur, 1984). Furthermore, Bruce (2003:139) recalls that Paul's calling was a free initiative act of God's sovereign grace:

> When Paul says that God had set him apart for the task of his life, to preach Christ among the nations "before I was born" (Gal 1:15) – he is echoing [...] the opening word that came to Jeremiah. And when his apostolic credentials were questioned, he might as well have said, like Jeremiah in a similar situation, "Verily, the Lord sent me to say these words" (Jeremiah 26:15)

Aside from the fact that the Pauline call was an act of the free initiative of God's sovereign grace, should be noted, although the conviction regarding Paul's apostolic calling is closely linked to his conversion to Christ (Acts 9:1-12), that it was not a "cold thesis" coming about only on the basis of theological reflection. They were theological convictions based on lived experience in Christ. The consequence of this fact, according to Green (1984:236-255) as well as Bosch (2002:171-178), is that Paul developed three senses that determined his missiology:

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[67] Although Paul changed his statements from "I" to "we," the context of the pericope suggests that he did so only for rhetorical reasons, namely to indicate that he was speaking of himself.

[68] The words *ἀπόστολος* ("apostle") and *ἀποστολὴν* ("apostolate") derive from *ἀποστολέω* ("to send"). It is in this sense that one must understand the fact that Barnabas is considered a *ἀπόστολος* ("apostle") (Acts 14:14). That is, although he cannot be counted as one of the Twelve (Acts 1:21-22), he was sent apostolically to the preaching of the Gospel, as were the others.

- concern;
- responsibility;
- gratitude.

Paul was concerned about humanity who were under the wrath of God because of sin (Rom 1:18). He was troubled by the fact that “all have sinned” and were “destitute of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). He knew of the impending judgment on those who “have stubborn and obstinate hearts” (Rom 2:8). So, he did not allow himself to relax. He had to proclaim to as many people as possible deliverance from “the wrath to come” (1 The 1:10). He was the ambassador of Christ; God made his appeal to the lost through Paul (Bosch, 2002:172).

Paul felt responsible both for these people and for their calling. He was imbued with a sense of obligation, which is clearly expressed in Rom 1:14-15: “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the Gospel also to you who are in Rome.” He was indebted to Christ, and this was transmuted into a debt to the people whom Christ wished to lead to salvation (Bosch 2002:173). And the reason for this sense of responsibility is expressed in Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.” Moreover, Paul saw himself as responsible for the building up of the church, for the Lord had called him to do so (1 Cor 3:11) (Lopes, 1997:3,4).[69]

As Dodd (1978:14) says: Paul is similar to the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son (Luk 15:11-32), who was constrained by the Father's love, leaving home and its sure delights in exchange for distant countries, in pursuit of those who “still vegetate among pigs and the leftovers thrown in the garbage” (Dodd, 1978:14).Paul felt like this, because he was grateful to the Lord who had loved him and given himself for him (Gal 2:20). God's love had already been poured into his heart through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), he

[69] It was with the certainty of this divine mission that Paul “launched his program and carried it out, step by step, in the center of Asia Minor, in the world of the Aegean Sea, in Illyricum and then in Rome and (at least in intention) in Spain. Many others devoted themselves to the evangelization of the Gentiles, but none to the overall strategic planning conceived in Paul's mind and executed so broadly by its dynamic energy. This energy was the result of his conviction that he was a personage of eschatological importance, a key agent in advancing salvation history, an instrument chosen in the hands of the Lord to bring the Gentiles into the obedience of faith, as a necessary preparation for the final salvation of all Israel and the consummation of God's redemptive purpose in the world” (Bruce, 2003:139,140).

who considered himself “the worst of sinners” (1 Tim 1:15) and therefore knew well that he had been saved, forgiven, justified, sanctified, and that he was on his way to live eternally with the Lord (Phi 1:23). The Holy Ghost testified with his spirit that he was a child of God (Rom 8:16). Therefore, for Paul

> the most elementary reason […] to proclaim the Gospel to all people was not only his concern for the lost, nor primarily a sense of obligation imposed on him, but rather a sense of privilege [...] Privilege, grace, and gratitude [...] these are the notions Paul employs in referring to his missionary task (Bosch, 2002:177).

As indicated, he also understood that his missionary enterprise could only be carried out with the support of other believers. In his missiology, the church was not “expendable,” but a vital instrument. There was a need to preach the Gospel, for Paul knew that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom 10:17). The was a further need to respond to his apostolic calling (Rom 1:1;5), and he wanted support from Roman believers for this (Rom 15:24). It was as if Paul said: “Roman brethren, there is a group of people in Spain who live under the wrath of God because of their sin. They are unjust before God. However, the Lord took an initiative: He sent Jesus as a propitiation for the sins of these people. That's the Gospel, the good news. Among these lost Spaniards is a group of people whom the Lord chose before he created the world to save them sovereignly and gracefully. That same God has chosen a way for them to make this happen: the preaching of the Gospel. He called me to preach this Gospel. If I go there and proclaim this message to you, I believe that in your goodness some will repent and put their trust in Christ. They will put their faith in the sacrifice, in Jesus, and they will be justified. Not only that. They will become saints and grow in the process. They will offer themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. And this will not just be an individual experience. They will be a group, the Body of Christ. They will live in a community of love, service, and they will lead others to Christ. Roman brothers, I am asking for support for this mission because I have within me a feeling of concern, responsibility, and gratitude. I am a debtor of the Gospel to them, this Gospel that has reached my life and yours. Also, you know that Jesus is coming soon. That which we see “by faith alone” will be seen face to face. In that hope we were saved. However, on the other hand, let us act fast, because our time is short. Let

us do all this together for the glory of the Lord. “To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

Regarding the missiology developed by Paul in Romans, the following can therefore be itemized:

- Paul was simultaneously converted and called by Christ to an apostolic ministry for the preaching of the Gospel to the nations (Rom 1:1;5);
- Paul, after his conversion, was seized with a sense of concern, responsibility, and gratitude, which threw him into missionary work;
- Paul did not see the church as expendable for the fulfilment of his apostolic calling. On the contrary, he counted on her for the execution of his ministry, for he saw her as a supporter of the mission (Rom 15:24).

The analysis of Paul's theological convictions (the element that drove his ministry) has a direct implication in planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa, especially in the life of the planter. This is because, among others, such theological convictions help the planter answer the following question: “What drives me/motivates me to plant this church?” One is mistaken in thinking that the church planter will always be driven by genuine, theologically well-founded motivations, the fruits of his own conversion to Christ. Viera (1998) points out one or two erroneous motivations for the exercise of the ministry that are commonly found in church planters:

- Self-promotion: the person seeks to create a new project because it is the chance he or she finds, supposedly, to achieve respectability with his or her convention, presbytery, or ministry, especially if church planting is something valued by the group and has public recognition;
- Conflict resolution: the worker is willing to plant churches because the experience of the pastorate was not a positive thing. He or she fought, he or she faced so many oppositions, he or she suffered at the hand of an unscrupulous and domineering leadership and, having entered into these situations of power struggle he or she now seeks, in a bitter way, to invest in the planting of a new church, but having in himself or herself a soul charged with suspicion against the church;
- Job search: given the shortage of fields these days and the crowded job market, more pastors and seminarians have expressed a desire to plant a new church, some without the slightest vocation for this type of project.

None of these motivations propelled Paul into the ministry of church planting. Believing that people without Christ were in a state of utter depravity and that only the Lord himself could bring them out of this circumstance through a gracious operation of the Gospel was that which motivated him to evangelize. After those who hear him become believers, they are to grow in sanctification, and this motivated him to disciple them.

The conviction that the church was a body composed of people empowered by spiritual gifts and that, among these people there were those who were called by God to exercise the Christian ministry, led Paul to empower them and establish them as servile leaders. He believed that his ministry was an ongoing responsibility of caring for those he had won to Christ, to the point of testifying as follows: “I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches” (2 Cor 11:28b). Even as he moved into a new domain of missiology, he continued to monitor pastorally the lives of believers.

These same convictions should drive the church planter including the case of a Reformed church in the city of Formosa. Moreover, as Murray (2001:17) states:

> An inadequate theological basis will not necessarily hinder short-term growth, or result in widespread heresy among newly planted churches. But limit the long-term impact of church planting [and] may result in dangerous distortions of the way in which the mission of the church is understood.[70]

Another aspect to be considered on the part of one who will plant a church by using Paul's strategy is his discernment of the calling. Paul saw himself as a slave to Christ called to preach the Gospel to all nations (Rom 1:1; 5). Not only had the Lord forgiven their sins, or, in his own words, the Lord had not only saved “the worst of sinners” (1 Tim 1:15), but he also appointed them to the ministry (1 Tim 1:12). In Christ, Paul found both forgiveness and vocation (MacArthur, 1984). In the same way, he who engages in the task of evangelizing people and bringing them together in a church must have a clear calling from the Lord, that is, “an inner conviction, given by the Holy Spirit and confirmed

[70] Lidório (2009:18) observes that, if missional practice is not grounded in the clear foundations of Scripture (theology), three risks arise: (a) the results will replace the character and profile of the worker; (b) false belief in the human capacity to replace the search for dependence on God may occur; (c) the right strategies replace commitment to the Word in the growth of the church and expansion of missionary work.

by the word and body of Christ" (Lutzer, 2000:14).[71] Although the call usually does not take place in a dramatic and spiky way. As in the case of Paul, the missionary/church planter who has no conviction of his or her commissioning sooner or later will lose the ability to value the wonder of the commission, "becoming a common salesman, in a common market, chattering on common goods" (Jowet, 2015:18). All in all, the central issues of Paul's missionary theology for church planting, expressed in Romans, can be summarized in the figure below.

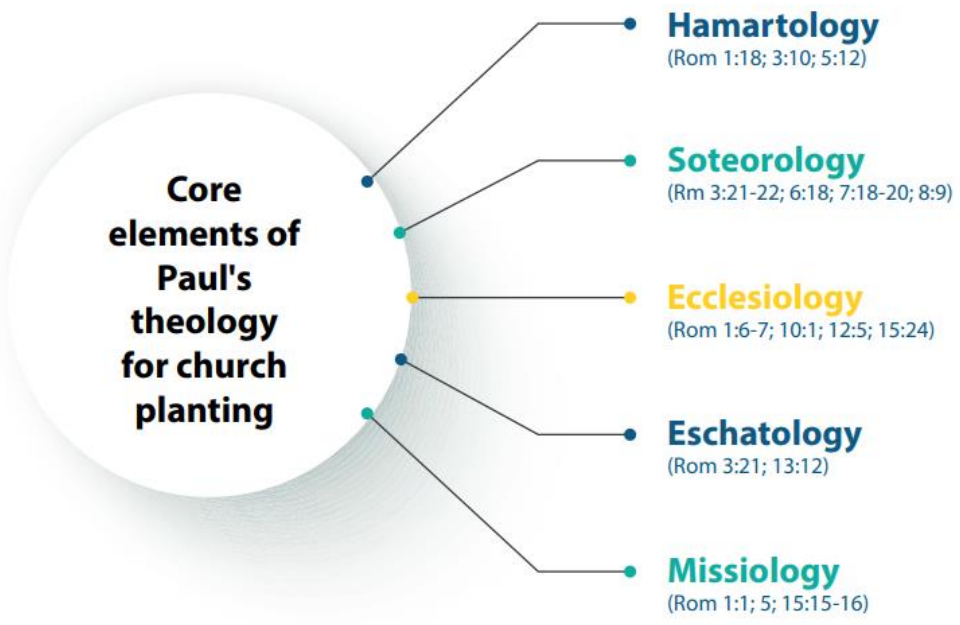


Figure 10 – Paul's theological convictions

[Source: The author]

3.2.2 Ministerial philosophy

Before observing how the elements of Paul's theology propelled him to a specific ministerial practice, it is necessary to reflect on his philosophy of ministry, the shaping element of his strategy. You could say that Paul's ministerial philosophy was based on four pillars:

- pioneering;

[71] Lidório (2014:12) says: "It is true that God directs us specifically to different places at different times in our life, but this is not a vocation. Vocation is what we will do and not where we will go. This confusion is the result of a missiological influence that does not distinguish the biblical criterion of function with geography. In the same way that a carpenter is called to woodworking, those who are called to 'do something.' Whether this is done near or far, in Brazil or overseas, is not defined by vocation, but rather by God's direction. And God's geographic direction can change."

- teamwork;
- church planting as self-managing, self-proclaiming, and self-financing;
- the scope of strategic locations.

3.2.2.1 Pioneering

The first pillar of Paul's ministerial philosophy is that of its pioneering nature. In Romans 15:19-21, he states:

> So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: 'Those who were not told about him will see and those who have not heard will understand'.

In light of Romans 15:19-21, Cranfield (1992:341) makes an important observation about Paul's ministry: “Paul's declaration of having completed the proclamation of the Gospel in the area mentioned should not be taken in an absolute sense, but rather in relation to what he understands to be his own particular function in the service of the Gospel, namely, the function of pioneer preacher.”[72] It is precisely for this reason that he states that there was no longer a place for him to work in that region (Rom 15:23); he was a pioneer. Furthermore, Paul biblically supports his emphasis on pioneering work by quoting (in v.21) Isaiah 52:15: “Those who were not told about him will see and those who have not heard will understand.”[73] Dunn (1988:869) observes:

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[72] In 2 Corinthians 10:16 Paul speaks of pioneering as characteristic of his ministry, expressing his desire to the Corinthians: “to preach the Gospel in the regions that are beyond you [of the Corinthians], without boasting of work already done in the territory of another.”

[73] Rabens (2017:106,107) observes: “There is also the hypothesis that Paul based his geographical direction and pioneering methodology on Isaiah 66:19: “I will set up a sign among them, and send some of the survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians, famous archers, to Tubal, to Greece, and to the distant islands, who have not heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.” This thesis has been developed in detail by Rainer Riesner. Building on Paul’s self-portrait as a missionary in the line of Israelite prophets, as outlined above, Riesner argues that Paul here presents his mission activity as a fulfilment of the proclamation of salvation in “Tarshish, Put, and Lud […] to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away,” as announced in Isaiah 66:19. Paul may have thought of these places as Tarsus, Cilicia, Lydia, Mysia, Bithynia, Macedonia, or the far west. Riesner does not maintain that Paul’s mission plans were oriented to Isaiah 66:19 from the beginning, or that this prophecy was the only or the most important among the different reasons for choosing the route travelled. However, the movement from Jerusalem in a north-western arc to the extreme west described in Isaiah 66:19

> As always, where Paul can find scripture to round off a line of argument, he does. Here he cites Isaiah. However, the passage cited (Isaiah 52:15) effectively ties together Paul's conviction of his call to serve the Servant's commission to the Gentiles (1:1,5; 52:17; 53:1). Thus, Paul manages to maintain the strong implication that his missionary strategy and plans dovetail with his theology of the Gospel in a way which shows the structure of the letter to be even more compact and integrated.

3.2.2.2 Teamwork

The second element of Paul's ministerial philosophy is teamwork.[74] In fact, "it is rare to find the first apostles engaged in the ministry alone" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:59). This practice is amply verified, both in Acts and in Paul's letters. From the beginning of the ministerial journey, Paul was accompanied by Barnabas and John Mark (Act 1:2, 5). In the period of preparation for the second missionary journey, when Paul fell out with Barnabas, he resolved to continue his ministry in the company of Silas (Acts 15:40). Later, Timothy was added to this team (Acts 16:1-3), as well as other collaborators. As Rabens (2017:115) notes:

> For Paul, mission was a community task for which he could count on an extend ended network of Jews and non-Jews, women and men, slaves, ex-slaves, and free… These colleagues worked with him, provided companionship for him, and acted as his representatives [...] or functioned as his host or patron.

Schnabel (2008a:248-255) points out that the biblical terminology used to describe Paul's co-workers indicates that they were not merely helpers, but were fully engaged in the same missional activities as the apostle himself and were in no way inferior to him. In this sense, it is interesting to note that the New Testament names more than 25 co-

corresponds to the idea behind Romans 15:19, and it may be a key reason why Paul planned to take his mission to Spain, rather than to Gaul or elsewhere"

[74] "A team is a group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose and work together in common agreement to achieve that purpose, holding each other accountable fully for the team's results" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:334). Shenk & Stutzman (1995:29-41) demonstrate the importance of teamwork for church planting.

workers of Paul who associated with him at different levels of partnership in his missional activity. Of these, it is estimated that 18% were women (Schnabel, 2008a:251).

In fact, Gilliland (1996:176) points out that, with his friends, Paul demonstrated the value of a missionary team. In addition, they demonstrated that the church is a community of care and witnessing. On that team was a training school, a miniature church, as well as a mutual support group committed to Paul's leadership and the church that sent them. However, consider that not all of Paul's companions could be classified in the same category with regard to the level of relationship. Ollrog (1979:92-106) distinguishes three such categories:

- First, the innermost circle, composed of such persons as Barnabas, Silvanus, and Timothy;
- Second, the independent collaborators, among whom are Priscilla and Aquila;
- Third, the representatives of local churches, such as Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Aristarchus, Gaius, and Jasom.

In fact, in the Early Church (or in Paul's ministry) the preaching of the Gospel was not only done by “professionals of religion.” Reading the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline letters, one gets the impression that many men and women who held no office other than that of believers played an intense role in the missional activity of the time. To the extent that these lay preachers were on their own, they ran the risk of becoming involved in all sorts of confusion, as indeed at times happened. However, Paul had great strength when, instead of suppressing this spontaneous spread of the Gospel, he organized and used it (Bavinck, 1960:40).

This was facilitated by the fact that Paul understood in practice the value of teamwork. Ollrog (1979:129) states that many of the churches that Paul and his co-workers planted had spiritually participated in the vision of preparing and sending workers for a greater mission. Thus, “the recruitment of workers from the harvest to the harvest was clearly key to the reproduction of churches and the expansion of the mission” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:61).

The table below reflects the churches planted by Paul and the co-workers they produced:

Table 10 – Churches planted by Paul and the co-workers they produced

Church (1)	Co-worker	Text
Lystra	Timothy	Act 16:1
Derbe	Gaius	Act 20:4
Thessalonica	Aristarchus, Secundus	Act 20:4, 27:2
Berea	Sopater	Act 20:4
Corinth	Priscilla, Aquila, Erastus, Stephanas, Fortunatus (2), Achaicus	Act 18:2; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 16:15-17
Ephesus	Apollos, Tychicus, Trophimus	Act 18:24; 20:4; 21:29
Colossae	Epaphras, Archippus (2)	Col 4:12,17
Philippi	Epaphroditus	Phi 2:25; 4:18
Cenchreae	Phoebe	Rom 16:1

(1) The city mentioned here refers either to the place where the co-worker became a Christian or where he or she joined Paul and his missionary group (for instance, Priscilla and Aquila were originally from Rome (Act 18:2) but joined Paul in Corinth.

(2) The association of this co-operator with the city is probable, but less certain.

[Source: Ott & Wilson, 2013:62]

Another practical reason to work as a team is that collaborators provide emotional support, as for Paul. As seen earlier, Paul's missionary work was carried out under opposition, which brought about enormous emotional exhaustion. In writing to the Corinthians, for example, Paul speaks of a gruelling experience: “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself” (2 Cor 1:8). Faced with such a picture, on the one hand, Paul knew that his

ministry could only happen if the Lord protected and strengthened him. On the other, he was grateful to the Lord for placing on his side companions who helped him share the burden of his ministerial responsibility. Thus, he testifies to the Corinthians:

> For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever" (2 Cor 7:5-7).

Likewise, in the face of his imminent death, he lamented that in his first judicial defence all had abandoned him (2 Tim 4:16), and appeals to his son in faith, Timothy, in a tone of urgency: "Do your best to come to me quickly" (2 Tim 4:9).

Another practical reason for Paul's preference of team work was that the apostle longed to exercise his ministry with integrity, in other words, to live a life that matched his teaching. This desire is expressed, for example, in his farewell words to the elders of Ephesus: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia" (Act 20:18). That way, his fellow ministers could confirm his integrity. This is exactly what would happen when Paul was to deliver an offering to the believers of Judea: he took Titus with him, for, according to Paul: "We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man" (2 Cor 8:20, 21).

There is still one last reason for Paul to work in a team. The apostle understood that his companions complemented his spiritual gifts, which facilitated the process of planting and consolidating the churches. The theological principle that the church is the Body of Christ composed of diverse members with specific functions (gifts) imprinted on Paul the awareness that he did not possess what might be called a "gift monopoly." To the Corinthians, he said: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work" (1 Cor 12:4-6). A little further on in that same passage, he asks rhetorically: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" (1 Cor 12:29,30). In other words, Paul understood that "God

uses a variety of gifts to plant his church, just as he uses many gifts to build it up" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:314). Thus, in describing his ministry among the Corinthians, he states: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Cor 3:6). Put another way, Paul had the gift of planting (possibly a reference to his apostolic gift), and Apollos had the gift of watering, that is, of assisting in the building up of already established churches.

3.2.2.3 Self-proclaiming, self-managing and self-financing church planting

The third pillar of Paul's ministerial philosophy was to plant churches that were self-managing, self-proclaiming, and self-financing[75]. The concepts of self-management and self-proclamation will be further developed later but, at the introductory level, as far as is known,

> Paul never became the pastor of a church he planted. Instead, after the initial evangelism, he focused on empowering local Christians, especially lay people, to continue and expand the work after his departure. His ministry was more itinerant, seeking to plant breeding churches with local leaders so that he could pursue his pioneering work among new unreached peoples (Ott & Wilson, 2013:104).

The fact is that, after planting the church, Paul left and hoped that it would become what Allen (1962:12) called a "center of light," that is, a church with a culture and practice of missionary evangelistic expansion where Christian communities would restart the process they had experienced with Paul himself. In other words, Paul wished to generate what Garrison (1999:7) called the church-planting movement, which is "the vertiginous increase and exponential multiplication of indigenous churches that plant new churches in an ethnic group or a segment of the population."

This is exactly what happened to the church of Thessalonica. Paul had evangelized them and, despite a short passage (only three weeks according to Acts 17:2), left an incipient

[75] Self-proclaiming churches are ones with the capacity to expand, that is, they are able to witness the Gospel for other people or places, so that those people may convert to Christ and form a new church. Self-managing, that is, they lead themselves, under local leaders, without the need for an external leader. Self-financing: the ability to meet all the financial needs that arise.

church there. However, some time later, as he wrote to these brothers, he was able to testify that the Lord's message

> rang out [*ἐξήχηται*][76] from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (1 The 1:8,9 – my italics).

In terms of self-management, it is observed that, although Paul had a sense of responsibility towards the churches he had planted[77] to the point of considering himself as "a nursing mother cares for her children" (1 The 2:7) or as "a father deals with his own children" (1 The 2:11), he did not see himself as the owner or proprietor of the churches. He did not want any missional advancement or enterprise to take place only under his endorsement. This provided freedom and encouraged each church to raise up its own leaders, provided that they met certain requirements such as, for example, those listed in 1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:6-9.[78] In fact, according to Paul himself, this was the reason he left Titus in Crete: "that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" (Tit 1:5). Thus, was established the principle of self-management, that is, churches run by local leaders.

As regards self-financing, it is necessary to talk about the financial policy that Paul used in his ministry. According to Allen (1962:49), it was governed by three principles: first, he never sought financial help; second, he did not give money to his converts; third, he did not manage the financial resources of the churches he had planted. On the one hand, his aim was not to be financially burdensome for any church (2 Cor 11:7-12), which he did by raising his own livelihood as a tent-maker.[79] On the other, Paul was not against

[76] "The word suggests the echo like that of thunder or the sounding of a trumpet. Although the metaphor is unclear, the word indicates that the sound is heard from a central location, in a large surrounding area" (Rienecker & Rogers, 1995:435).
[77] This theme will be deepened below.
[78] This theme will be deepened below.
[79] Although these principles were general rules, there were times of exception in relation to Paul's financial practice. On at least two occasions one finds a description of offerings sent by churches in support of their ministry. One of them, quoted in the previous chapter, speaks of the support requested from the Romans for their missionary enterprise to Spain (Romans 15:24). Another is described by Paul in Philippians 4:14-18: "As you know, Philippians, in your early days in the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me as far as giving and receiving is concerned, except you; for, when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help, not once, but twice, when I was in need. Not that I'm looking for deals, but what can be credited to your account."

the fact that Gospel workers were paid for their ministerial work. Therefore, raising his own livelihood (self-funding) was Paul's personal choice, not a rule imposed on all the churches he planted. Thus, in 1 Timothy 5:17,18 Paul says that “the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor [*τιμῆς*], especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain', and 'The worker deserves his wages'” (my italics).

Mounce (2000:306) notes that the term *τιμῆς* (“honor”)

> does not refer merely to an honorarium, but the failure to give proper pay would imply a lack of honor. The idea of ‘double’ may refer to the double portion the oldest in the family received (Deut 21:17). It probably consisted of the twin benefits of honor or respect and financial remuneration [cf. vv. 3, 17-18]. The fact that pay was at least included shows that those who gave leadership to spiritual affairs could expect financial support from the church (cf. 2 Cor 11:8-9; Gal 6:6).

3.2.2.4 Reach of strategic locations

The fourth pillar of Paul's ministerial philosophy was to reach strategic places. “It was concentrated in the capitals of districts or provinces, each of which represented an entire region” (Bosch, 2002:167). These places were usually important commercial centres and Paul established churches in two or three locations within the parameters of these (Allen, 1962:17).

It is unclear whether these principles were normative from the beginning of his missional enterprise. For example, for Allen (1962:11) “it is perfectly clear that in the second journey St. Paul was not following any predetermined route.” However, during the third missionary journey, the pattern of selecting centres of Roman penetration with Jewish communities (Antioch of Psydia, Corinth, Ephesus) seemed to emerge (Ott & Wilson, 2013:63).

One factor that made Paul focus on the cities, no doubt, was logistical. The fact is that

> the external conditions in the Roman Empire during the time of the Pauline mission were widely beneficial to the apostle’s travels. The rule of Augustus had inaugurated a time of peace and resulted in the

> flowering of economic and cultural enterprises. Trade could develop, the infrastructure was improved. Methods of travel were relatively safe so that traffic on the Mediterranean Sea and on the main trade roads increased (Rabens, 2017:111,112).[80]

Another aspect that he considered was the power of influence of the city.[81] As Foster (1962:29) says: “most of the changes occur in the city first among the upper classes and spread downwards, to the lower classes, to the countryside.” This is true also so the cities visited by Paul. Now, since Paul wanted each of his communities to be centres that propagate the Christian faith, there was nothing more assertive than prioritizing cities as his evangelistic task. As Allen (1962:17) says:

> St. Paul’s centres were centres indeed. He seized strategic points because he had a strategy. The foundation of Churches in them was part of a campaign. In his hands they became the sources of rivers, mints from which the new coin of the Gospel was spread in every direction. They were centres from which he could start new work with new power. But they were this not only because they were naturally fitted for this purpose, but because his method of work was so designed that centres of intellectual and commercial activity became centres of Christian activity.

Thus, Paul travelled the Roman roads, the main lines of communication, preaching the Gospel and planting churches in strategic centres. “From these centers, the message of salvation was spread; thus, Thessalonica served as the basis for the evangelization of Macedonia, Corinth of Achaia and Ephesus, of proconsular Asia” (Bruce, 2003:308).

The analyses made here of Paul's philosophy of ministry (the element that shaped his ministry) have a direct implication in the planning of the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa, especially as a guiding element of the project. In this way, it will help those involved in the elaboration of the project to answer the following question: “What are the

[80] Still, Meeks (1992:74) recalls that the cities that are known to have existed in Pauline communities in Asia, “all participated in the general prosperity; they were all centers of commerce.” It is known that there was intense traffic among the merchants, and it was not uncommon for any of these to send themselves converts and take the message of the Gospel to the places where they would conduct their business.

[81] Greenway and Monsma (1989), Hesselgrave (1995:70-75), Keller and Thompson (2002:47-51); and Barro (2003) have demonstrated the importance and centrality of the city in the mission.

important elements to be considered in the design of this project?" One is mistaken in thinking that the church planter will carry out his ministry only after a long period of prayer, analysis, and reflection and elaborate planning of his or her activities. It is not uncommon to find church planters with projects executed in a thoughtless, disorganized, and clumsy way, leading to stressful and traumatizing consequences for all the people involved in the process, including himself or herself, his or her family, the sending church, the people of the church in planting, and so on).

Paul's philosophy of ministry provided him with parameters for the mental elaboration of a strategy for church planting. Put another way, his philosophy of ministry shaped what he would accomplish motivated by his theological convictions: he could move from theoretical understandings to practical actions. It is noticed, for example, that pioneering ended stayed with him right up to the end of his agenda. He wanted to start pioneering work in Spain, for he made a point "to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation" (Rom 15:20). Thus, a philosophy of ministry is a great help to overcome also in the context of the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa the problems described by Logan and Ogne (1991), as cited above, as well as that of Klippenes (2003:84), that 60% to 80% of the difficulties faced in church-planting projects arise from lack of suitable planning, especially in the preparatory stage. As Johson (2020:27) says: "Paul's mission strategy […] lays the fundamental principle for today's mission. The strategies of Paul provide a new insight for 21st century missionary workers."

In short, the elements of Paul's ministerial philosophy can be reflected as in the figure below:

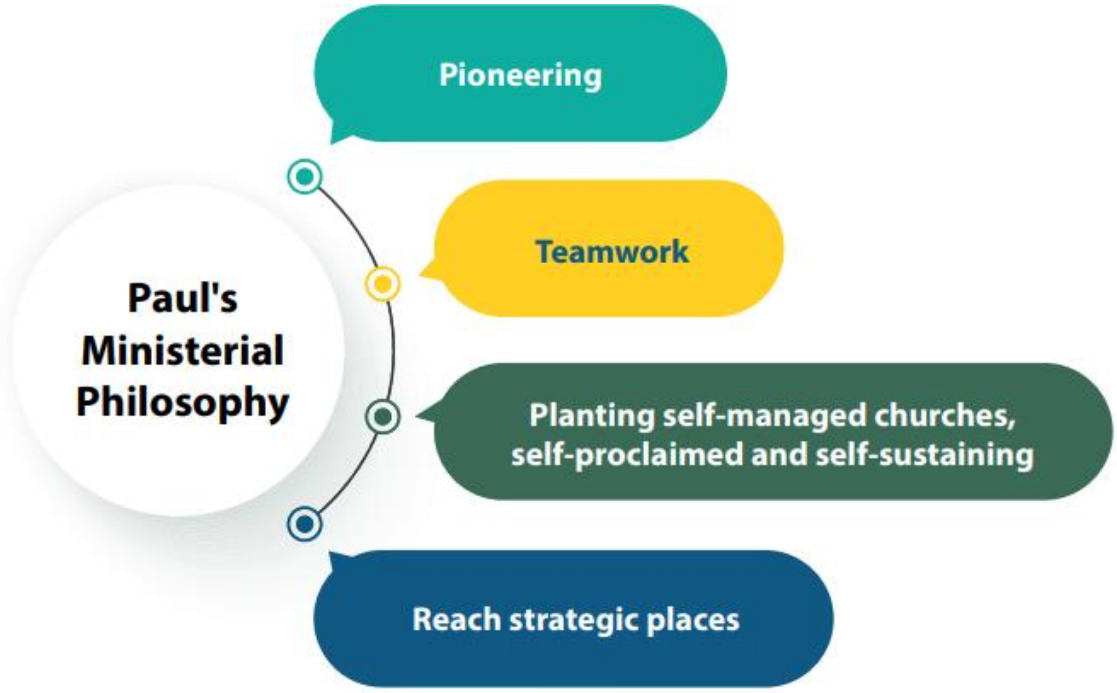


Figure 11 – Paul's ministerial philosophy

[Source: the author]

3.2.3 Ministerial practice

Having established his ministerial philosophy, Paul had to occupy himself with the practical stages of the process of church planting. However, before describing these, it is important to point out that, by observing the elements of Paul's ministerial practice, one runs the risk of thinking of a linear process. However, in Hesselgrave's opinion (1995:42), the elements of Paul's practice need to be observed both diachronically (in linear terms) and synchronously. That is, although one may think of progressing from the stage of evangelism to discipleship, and so on, one must also remember that, as one passes through time to the later stages of development, one must continue to carry out the activities of the initial stages (or supervise their realization). “Therefore, sharp lines should not be drawn between the main elements of the cycle. In one sense, they are distinct and sequential. In another sense, they collide with each other, and flow into each other” (Hesselgrave, 1995:42).

In these terms, five actions to be undertaken in church planting can be listed:

- to be sent by a church;

- to evangelize the lost;
- to discipline believers;
- to establish leaders;
- to leave and monitor the church;
- to pray continually.

3.2.3.1 To be sent by a church

In Acts, Luke points out that the first stage of Paul's church planting began in Antioch, the church that sent him.[82] This city was "almost a microcosm of first-century Roman antiquity, a city that enjoyed almost every advantage, had almost every problem, and pursued almost every human interest with the new faith that would come face to face" (Green, 1984:139).

The church had arisen there due to the flight of believers under persecution in Jerusalem, which spread to various regions (Acts 8:1). So that

> those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:19-21).

Bruce (1981:238, 239) comments on this as follows:

> In Antioch some daring spirits among the incoming Christians, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, took a momentous step forward. If the Gospel message was so good for Jews, might it not be good for Gentiles also? At any rate, they would make the experiment. So they began to make to the Greek population of Antioch the claim of Jesus as Lord and Saviour. To present Him as Messiah to people who knew nothing of the hope of Israel would have been a meaningless procedure, but the

[82] The expressions "sending church" or "mother church" (which in this research are used interchangeably), arise from this practice of Paul. They refer to the group of believers who sends the planter and, at the same time, supports the planting project of another church.

> Greek terms *Kyrios* (“Lord”) no *Soter* (“Saviour”) were widely current in the religious world of eastern Mediterranean.

As the Church of Antioch grew in number, the leaders of Jerusalem sent Barnabas to observe what was happening there (Act 11:22). Barnabas not only rejoiced in what he saw, but also exhorted the brethren to persevere in the Christian faith, but also, possibly, anticipated that, with growth, the Church of Antioch would need to be built up and deepened in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Barnabas “probably also realized that the church of this cosmopolitan city needed a trained theologian and efficient thinker” (Boor, 2003:173). Acts 11:25, 26a therefore state: Then “Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. Apparently, the process of quantitative and qualitative growth continued, so that “for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Act 11:26b).

Thus, the gracious character of Christ was being developed in the lives of the believers of Antioch. For example, when they were prophetically warned that “a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world” (Act 11:28), they decided to provide help to the brethren living in Judea through offerings and donations (Act 11:29,30).

In addition to being evangelistically expansive, doctrinally firm, and with a character that evidenced a genuine Christian life,[83] Acts 13:1-3 provides a more detailed description of this community of believers:

> Now in the church at Antioch[84] there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So, after they

[83] Acts 13:1,2 provides a central paradigm for missions in the New Testament: “a church like that of Antioch is a mission in its own locality, which grows through spontaneous expansion as its people incarnate and announce the good news. A missional church like that of Antioch also has in view the ends of the earth and therefore longs to participate in the task of taking the Gospel to places where it is not yet known” (Goheen, 2014:151).

[84] *ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ*” (“in Antioch”) is the expression used demonstrating that “*ἐκκλησία*” was here used in the sense of local church. It does not refer, therefore, to any gathering of churches as some think, but to a local community” (Lidório, 2009:10).

> had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Therefore, the Church of Antioch had many attributes. First, it was characterized by its multiplicity of spiritual gifts. Acts 131a says: “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers.”[85] Second, it comprised ethnic and cultural diversity (Stott, 1994:242), evidenced by the words of Acts 13:1b: “Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.” Finally, Third, it evidenced spirituality, evidenced by the words of Acts 13.2a: “While they were worshiping [*λειτουργούντων*] the Lord and fasting [...]” (my italics). The term *λειτουργούντων* was generally used in the LXX to designate the worship of priests and Levites in the temple (Williams, 1996:248): it refers to on

> who serves the Lord by being used by Him to bless, to edify, his brother. And this is precisely the root of the verb that expresses that Paul and Barnabas “*served*” the Lord thus affirming that they were, first of all, “*blessings*,” or “*builders*” of the Body of Christ in Antioch” (Lidório, 2009:11).

Boor (2002:187) explains that the service that Luke refers in Acts 13:1-3 is above all a prayer service.

These Antioch believers not only did serve God, or gather in a prayer service, they expressed their spirituality through fasting. Although fasting was no longer seen as meritorious achievement, it was understood to be an essential means to prepare for worship, speak to God, and let God speak to them (Boor, 2002:187). So, as Bruce (1981:261) states, while Christians fasted, they were especially sensitive to the communications of the Holy Spirit, who told them: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

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[85] “*προφῆται*” (‘prophets’) indicates one who ‘spoke in the name of God’ and is also used in Attic Greek for both ‘preacher’ and ‘expositor of the laws.’ *Διδάσκαλοι*’ (‘teachers’) is the term applied to one who has disciples, and it seems to me that, in this case these *διδάσκαλο* were more connected to the instruction of the new converts in Antioch” (Lidório, 2009:10) As Williams (1996:247) observes, these men seemed to “enjoy a certain 'status,' so that they might well be called 'elders of the church in Antioch,' whose official position was emphasized by their special gifts—elders like those of 1 Timothy 5:17, who worked hard 'in preaching and teaching.' Their function was perhaps analogous to that of the Twelve in the early days of the church. We can call them ‘the five.’”

There is no way to be sure about the way in which the Spirit spoke. Stott (1994:243) suggests that God probably spoke to the church through one of his prophets, "but their calling could also have been internal, not external, that is, through the witness of the Spirit in their hearts and minds" (Stott (1994:243). What was clear, however, was the command given by the Spirit: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul" (Act 13:2b)[86] (Stott 1994:243). That which the Holy Spirit revealed to the church is somewhat vague,[87] as Stott (1994:243) observes:

> The nature of the work to which he had called Barnabas and Saul was not specified. It was not much different from Abram's call. God said to him, "Go to the land that I will show you." To the church at Antioch, God said, "Separate me now from Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them. "In both cases the call to go was clear, but the country and the work were not. Thus, in both cases, the response to God's call required a bold step of faith.

However vague the instruction might have been, it is certain that the church of Antioch obeyed, as embodied in Acts 13:3: "So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands[88] on them and sent them off." The fact that they sent Paul and Barnabas

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[86] "To separate comes from the verb "*aphorizo*," which is an exclusivist verb, also used in Matthew 25:32, when the shepherd "*separates"* the sheep from the rams. *"Aphorizo*" differs from "*ekklio"* in that it is not a separation of relationship (they were excluded from the church of Antioch) but rather a separation to a function (remaining attached to the church are now assigned to a function beyond the local church). It is the same term used in the Carthage Papers when ordinary citizens were called upon to swell the ranks of the Roman army. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas would be separated because they had been called first, not the other way around" (Lidório, 2009:13).

[87] "It doesn't really say it would be a mission trip, but that's pretty implied. Nor is anything said about the sustenance of workers. We know, however, that both Barnabas and Paul later adhered to the principle of self-support (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:6; [Acts 18:3], and that may be the basis on which they began" (Williams, 1996:249).

[88] Fabris (1984:124) that the laying on of hands in Acts "almost always invokes the Holy Spirit or entrusts a certain mission." Lidório (2009:14,15) highlights that which the laying on of hands represented in the New Testament: "*A sign of authority*. This "*laying on* of hands" dates back to classical Greek when a father laid his hands on the son who would succeed him at the head of the family, that is, a transfer of authority. For Paul and Barnabas this would mean that they possessed the ecclesiastical authority to do all that the Church would do even where she was not present, as a community. It is therefore both a burden of authority and responsibility. As a church in Antioch they could preach the Word, pray for the sick, and challenge unbelievers, but at the same time they would also need to share in the same faithfulness and dedication that existed in that community of saints. *Sign of recognition*. It was also used at official times as in the city of Alexandria when twenty officers were specially chosen to guard the entrance of the city that suffered from frequent attacks by nomads, and on them "*hands were laid*" in recognition that they were endowed with the qualities for that function. For Paul and Barnabas it consisted in the fact that the leadership of the church recognized not only the calling (which was clear) but also the

shows not only the obedience of this church, but also that they had a responsible and liberal spirit[89], as Bruce (1981:261) says: “It is perhaps worth noticing that the two men, who were to be released for what we should nowadays call missionary service overseas, were the two most eminent and gifted leaders in the church.”

In light of the above data, it is observed, therefore, that the church of Antioch provided Paul with very important elements for his ministerial development:

- a pioneering missional practice, in which the Gospel was shared with the Gentiles hence breaking the Jerusalem paradigm, where the Gospel was preached only to the Jews (Act 8:1; 11:19,20);
- a space for a “previous stage” where, for a year, he could develop his ministry of teaching the Word (Act 11:25,26), presenting himself with a context within which his ministerial calling has been discerned and recognized (Act 11:25,26; 13:2);
- a community where spiritual gifts were lived and exercised responsibly (Act 13:1a);
- a group of believers with a deep spirituality expressed in prayer and fasting as well as the exercise of spiritual gifts, who lived and exercised responsibly (Act 13:1a);
- ministry companions (Barnabas and Mark) (Act 13:3,4);

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ability and gifts to fulfill the mission. *Sign of Complicity*. We also find in classical Greek the “*laying on* of hands” in the sense of complicity when generals were sent to distant lands to coordinate a province and the sending authorities imposed their hands demonstrating to the people that they would not be forgotten, that is: they remained as part of the body. For Paul and Barnabas it would mean to say that, however distant they were, they would remain attached to the church of Antioch. That this church would continue to be responsible for them, loving them, desiring them for the best, and certainly sustaining them. In my view, imposing hands as a sign of authority and recognition is not as difficult as imposing them as a sign of complicity, for the latter is a continuous act that demands dedication and deep love.” It is important to remember, however, that in addition to sending the missionaries, he gave them freedom to exercise their ministry. Stenschke (2010:77), recalls that “the freedom given to the missionaries apparently also included (in some cases): – longer periods of ministry (3; cf. Paul's longer stays in Corinth and Ephesus; 18:11; 19:10), – the liberty and possibility of earning their own support when and where needed or considered more appropriate for different reasons (4; 18:1-3), – the foundation of churches (5; did Paul view the churches founded by him as 'his' churches? How did the churches understand themselves? Does the later collection for the saints in Jerusalem imply that all the churches were linked to Jerusalem?) and – ties between the missionaries and the churches founded by them (6). In the course of time these new ties may have weakened the ties to Antioch.”

[89] Comblin (1989:20) recalls that with this solemn introduction (Acts 13:1-3), Luke “wants to stress the decisive importance of this moment in the march of God's people. This moment of sending was the starting point of the conquest of the world by the Gospel. Hitherto the spread of the Gospel had been accidental, on occasion of particular situations. Here begins a long walk – one that lasts to this day.”

- support for the ministry without excessive domination of absolutely all the actions of Paul and his companions;
- an environment of spiritual and emotional support, where Paul would not only return to give an account of his missionary journeys, but enjoy a comforting time of Christian fellowship (Act 14:26-28; 18:22).

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? First, the sending church provided Paul with an inspiring missional model and a deep spirituality, expressed in prayer, fasting, and obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit. It was, as mentioned, a mission in its own locality, which grew through spontaneous expansion as its people incarnated and announced the good news, while remaining eager to participate in the task of taking the Gospel to places where it was not yet known (Goheen, 2014:151). Their leaders were men of a unique relationship with the Lord expressed by a deep spirituality, so much so that "the first missionary journey was not the result of a planning meeting, but was an initiative of the Spirit as the leaders worshipped" (Bíblia de Estudo NVI, 2003:1878). Paul was inspired by this model and replicated these same characteristics in his own ministry (Rom 1:14-16; 15:17-20; 1 Cor 9:16). Likewise, the mother church needs to provide the planter and the entire team with an inspiring model of missional practice and a deep relationship with the Lord, especially on the part of its leaders, for the execution of the project of planting a Reformed church in Formosa.

However, despite the fact that it was an inspiring model for Paul and his fellow travellers, the Church of Antioch gave them various freedoms around the way in which they carried out the ministry (Stenschke, 2010:77). This shows that Antioch was a "sending church" and not a "domineering church" that determined or wanted to determine all the actions of the missionaries. Stenschke (2010:77) points out that this kind of freedom needs to be included in any evaluation of the relationship between missionaries and the sending churches. This is undoubtedly wise and applicable advice for the relationship between a mother church and a Reformed church in Formosa.

In addition, the Church of Antioch provided Paul with a place to develop his ministry before indulging in missionary journeys and consequent church plantings. This "early stage" caused Paul to grow as a teacher and become knowledgeable and experienced for more than a year (Act 11:25-26). By exercising his ministry among the Gentiles, Paul became known as a blessing. In light of these facts, Lidório (2016) recalls the Acts 13:1-

3 demonstrate that one who would begin missionary work as it is known today is not a person of intellectual competence, titles, or theological depth, but rather of faithfulness and consistency. In fact, a considerable number of problems would be avoided if the project of planting a church focused on a planter with proven ministerial experience and faithfulness to the Lord. Likewise, it is important that the planter of a Reformed church in Formosa be demonstrably known as an experienced and faithful person.

In addition to presenting itself as an inspiring role model and being a place where Paul was experienced, the Church of Antioch provided him with human resources. As seen above, Paul never made his ministry a solitary activity. From the beginning, he performed in the company of other collaborators. At least Barnabas, John Mark (Act 13:2; 5) and later Silas (Act 15:40) were Paul's companions who came out of Antioch. Similarly, thinking about teamwork (one of the elements of Paul's philosophy of ministry, exposed above), the mother church of a Reformed church in Formosa can provide the people who will make up the team, after all “church planting is undoubtedly a complex and challenging task that requires a variety of perspectives and skills in which 'real teams' can be expected to succeed” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:333).

In fact, the church of Antioch became a kind of “headquarters” to which Paul turned after his missionary endeavours to report and enjoy a refreshing period with the brethren (Ac t 14:26-28; 18:22). In the same way, the planter of a Reformed church in Formosa needs to have a group to account for his life and ministry and support him emotionally, pastorally, and spiritually.

3.2.3.2 Evangelizing the lost

After having been sent by a local church, in this case, Antioch, Paul took another step in the execution of church planting: the evangelization of the lost.[90] As demonstrated, Paul understood that all humanity was under sin and silent before God's righteous judgment (Rom 3:10-20). All, indistinctly, were backslidden (Rom 3:12) and dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). In a word, Paul understood that all humanity was lost (2 Cor 4:3). However, he also understood that the Gospel of Christ was the *sine qua non* for everyone to get out of this dilemma. He believed that the Gospel was “the power of God

[90] Bosch (2002:14) says that evangelizing is “proclaiming salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in Him, who are called to repentance and conversion, and to whom the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed and invited to be living members of Christ's Church, thus initiating a life of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). He believed that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). He was convinced that "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ" (2 Cor 5:19). Paul was overcome with the conviction that Jesus was the promised Messiah from the Old Testament (Act 17:3).

In order for people to have access to this good news, it needed to be disseminated. Paul understood that faith came by hearing the message, and the message was heard through the word of Christ (Rom 10:17). Moreover, Paul saw himself as a herald for the message (1 Cor 1:23; Col 1:28), and he knew that he had something to give to the people, that is, he was a debtor of the Gospel (Rom 1:14-17). Therefore, evangelizing the lost was on his list of ministry priorities. Fabris (1984:90) states that moment was the central moment of missionary preaching:

> the *κήρυγμα*, which can be translated as "announcement," "proclamation" or "pregão." The Greek term *κήρυγμα*, taken from the language of sport and military, was the announcement of feasting, when the city won the Isthmian or Olympian games, or when the army won a battle. The good news consisted in victory, which interested the whole community and changed its destiny. The early Christians had taken on this language to express their new awareness of the change and deliverance wrought by God in Jesus Christ. The great news, which today changes the destiny of humanity, is called Jesus Christ.

Paul's evangelistic preaching (*κήρυγμα*) is amply evidenced in Acts. Paul and Barnabas evangelized the proconsul Sergius Paul in Cyprus (Act 13:1-12), testified of Jesus in the synagogue of Antioch of Psidia (Act 13:13-51), testified in the synagogue of Iconium (Act 14:1-8), and testified also in the Gentile and idolatrous context of Lystra (Act 14:8-20). "They preached the Gospel" in Derbis (Act 14:21). "They preached the Word" in Pergis (Act 14:25). In Philippi, on that occasion in the company of Silas, Paul preached the Gospel to a saleswoman named Lydia, and she, as well as those in her household, were converted to Christ. It was in this city that Paul evangelized the jailer and his family with an emphatic message: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household" (Act 16:31). From Philippi they went to Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens (Act 17:1-34), "explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Act 17:3). In Corinth he went to the synagogue, where every Sabbath Paul debated with and convinced both Jews and Greeks. There he spent a year and a half "teaching them

the word of God" (Act 18 :11). In Ephesus "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God" (Act 19:8). Then, in that same city, he began to teach at the school of Tiranus, and "this went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Act 19:10). Subsequently, through his personal testimony, he evangelized his accusers in Jerusalem (Act 22:1-21), the governor Felix (Act 2:10-27), and King Agrippa and his wife Drusilla (Act 26:1-32). Finally, Luke ends the book of Acts by saying that Paul was under house arrest in Rome: "for two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – with all boldness and without hindrance!" (Act 28:30-31).

As indicated, Paul was imbued with a sense of gratitude for Jesus' work in his life and understood that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," among whom he—Paul – considered himself the worst (1 Tim 1:15). He was also concerned about lost humanity without Christ to the point of testifying that he had a "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" within him (Rom 9:2). Moreover, he saw himself as the one responsible for proclaiming Christ. In other words, preaching the Gospel was for Paul a matter of ultimate responsibility. Indeed, it was a task that overlapped with his own life to the point at which he testified: "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Act 20:24).

To understand Paul's evangelistic dynamics, there is a need to answer three questions:

- Who did Paul evangelize (public)?;
- Where did Paul evangelize (place)?;
- How did Paul evangelize (methodology)?

3.2.3.2.1 The people targeted

As shown above, once Paul understood that "*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23 – my italics), he also understood that everyone needed to be evangelized. Therefore, he summarized his ministry in the following terms: "Through him we received grace and apostleship to call *all the nations* to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake" (Rom 1:5 – my italics). He felt that he was indebted to the good

news “to *Greeks* and *non-Greeks*, both to the *wise* and the *foolish*” (Rom 1:14 – my italics). Precisely because of this, he did “all things *to all people* so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22b – my italics).

These verses display completeness, as can well be observed in words and expressions such as “all nations” (Rom 1:5), “both Greeks and barbarians” (Rom 1:14), and “all things to all” (1 Cor 9:22). All people needed to be evangelized. In this way, Paul said that he was not seeking his own good but the good of many, so that they might be saved (1 Cor 10:33). That is, he strove for the Gospel to reach more people and he challenged other believers to imitate him in this practice (1 Cor 11:2).

Not only did Paul understand that he was to evangelize all people, but he was also to evangelize everywhere, geographically speaking. This is clear from the statements of Paul at the end of his letter to the Romans:

> So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. [...] But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain [...] I will go to Spain (Rom 15:19b; 23; 28b).

3.2.3.2.2 The places

However, despite his desire to evangelize people of all races and nations in the most diverse places, Hesselgrave (1995:115) states that Paul had a strategy of contact that involved a certain degree of selectivity. No doubt this was determined by his ministerial philosophy. As observed, he focused his ministry efforts on urban centres. Hesselgrave (1995:70) states: “In the book of Acts, when Paul's extensive missionary endeavours are related to a specific area, the reference usually concerns a city. It considered an area already evangelized when a church had been planted in its main city.”

Cities were priorities in Paul's ministerial proposal. Once in them, he evangelized in synagogues, in homes, or in other places. The synagogue

> was the seed bed of evangelization among the Jews. Where there were Jews there were synagogues, and all the faithful Israelites were expected to attend them weekly. Moreover, they attracted a large number

> of “God-fearers” among the zealous Gentiles. This formed a ready congregation to which Christian missionaries could turn (Green, 1984:240,241).

Another important factor is that it was part of the liturgy of the synagogue meeting give the people present a chance to read a passage of Scripture and explain it, providing the opportunity for discussing a subject.

> Initially, Paul took the opportunity the synagogue offered to discuss the Scriptures with them. The root of the term used to discuss offers us the word “dialogue.” Probably, these discussions were not Sabbath sermons, but rather open discussions. These were not discussions separate from Scripture, but discussions that flowed from the source of Scripture. These discussions probably included taking a passage from the Greek version of the Old Testament and then exchanging ideas about its meaning, perhaps using the question-and-answer method. The Jews had a ready acceptance of the authority of Scripture, so Paul probably read specific passages from his own scrolls or books (Crotts, 2017:18,19).

Paul, being a Jew who was trained in Pharisaism, knew this opportunity all too well. Thus, for example, in Antioch of Pisidia, “after the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, ‘Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak’” (Act 13:15). Paul and Barnabas evangelized those present (Acts 13:16-41). And, according to Luke's commentary, the message aroused great interest in the people, so that “Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath [...]. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord” (Act 13:42,44).

Another place at which Paul sought for evangelism were homes. Occasionally, this turned out to be the alternative in the face of a situation of persecution. This is what is seen, for example, in Corinth (Act 18:1-28).[91] After having testified for three Sabbaths in

[91] Stambaugh and Balch (1996:129) recall that “Christian mission based on the family home can have significant antecedents in the homes of families and Jewish synagogues of the diaspora. At Easter, 'every dwelling house is adorned with the outward appearance and dignity of a temple'

a row in the synagogue that Jesus was the Christ (Act 18:4,5), the Jews opposed Paul (Act 18:6). “Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God” (Act 18:7). In addition to the house of Titius the Righteous in Corinth, Acts and the Pauline letters testify to other houses as centres for preaching the Gospel: the house of Lydia and the jailer at Philippi (Act 16:15, 32-34), the house of Jason in Thessalonica (Act 17:5), the house of Philip in Caesarea (Act 21:8), the house rented by Paul in Rome (Act 28:30,31), and the house of Stephanas in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15). As Green (1984:263) points out:

> When Paul, in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, stated that he had taught “publicly and also from house to house, testifying to both Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” [cf. Acts 21:5], he was not boasting with arrogance. He had discovered that evangelization in the homes is the one that gives the most results.

Why did Paul use the houses? There were practical reasons as itemised below:

- The houses of new church members were immediately available as meeting places. Remodelling to accommodate the Christian meetings was not necessary;
- For the central elements of Christian gatherings, the private house offered the best conditions: familial community and shared meals at which the Lord’s Supper could be celebrated;
- Private houses made possible relatively inconspicuous gatherings – a requirement that became necessary if there were conflicts with non-believers (Rabens, 2017:119,120).

In addition to houses, Paul made use of public spaces (Act 14:8-18; 17:17; 21:37) together with people who gathered to pray on the edge of a river in Philippi (Act 16:13), in prison in Philippi (Act 16:30), in the Areopagus in Athens (Act 17:19), and in the school of Tyrant in Ephesus (Act 19:9), as well as before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Act 22:30), in the palace of Herod (Act 23:35), and so on.

(*Filon, On Special Laws 2.148,* trans F.H. Colson in the Loeb Classical Library). Also in the case of pagan cults, worship was done in family homes, especially before building a public temple.”

Another central element of Pauline evangelistic practice was that it focused on preaching to people who were receptive to its message (Alawode, 2020:2).[92] When one reads Acts, it is clear that Paul did not "beg" for people's attention, nor did he even insist too much on it among audiences who rejected the Gospel. For example, when the Jews in Ephesus hardened and refused to believe and began to speak ill of Christ before the crowd, "Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus" (Act 19:9).

Morgan (2013) also claims that Paul focused on a group of receptive people and emphasizes that Paul always felt it would be better to move to an area that was more receptive to the Gospel message. So, when Paul and his team arrived in Philippi, they went to the riverbank and spoke to some women who would listen to them. Through this strategy, Lidia and his family were converted to the Lord (Act 16:12-15). According to Paul's experience, the devout Gentiles were receptive to the Gospel, just as the Bereans were more receptive than the Thessalonians (Act 17:1-14) (Alawode, 2020:3). Payne (2016) states that his attitude adopted by Paul resembles the command given to the disciples by Christ in Matthew 10.11-16 and Luke 10.5-16. Jesus emphasized to the disciples to go to people who were receptive to his message, that is, that they should focus on those ready to listen, although they should not ignore the non-receptives. A list of missionary approaches by Terry (2012:162) resonates with this. It advocates for

- a focus on major cities and, through them, spreading the Gospel in the region;
- a focus on potential places where he would have the opportunity to evangelize, such as synagogues, homes, or another specific place;
- a focus on specific people prepared to hear the Gospel.

These three foci can be seen in his missionary enterprise in Philippi as illustrated in the figure below:

[92] Hesselgrave (1995:126) calls this attitude the "principle of being prepared," that is, Paul understood that "a group of people, or a single person selected for evangelization, must demonstrate a degree of preparation to accept the Gospel." Thus, he finds some of these prepared people among John's disciples (Acts 19:1), or in the vision of the Macedonian who asks for help (Acts 16:9). "This is the petition of a man who was either a believer who was unable to effectively evangelize his area, and therefore was in need of help, or was an unbeliever who recognized his sad situation and cried out for help. Whatever the case, the call for help indicated that a preparatory work had been carried out" (Hesselgrave, 1995:127).

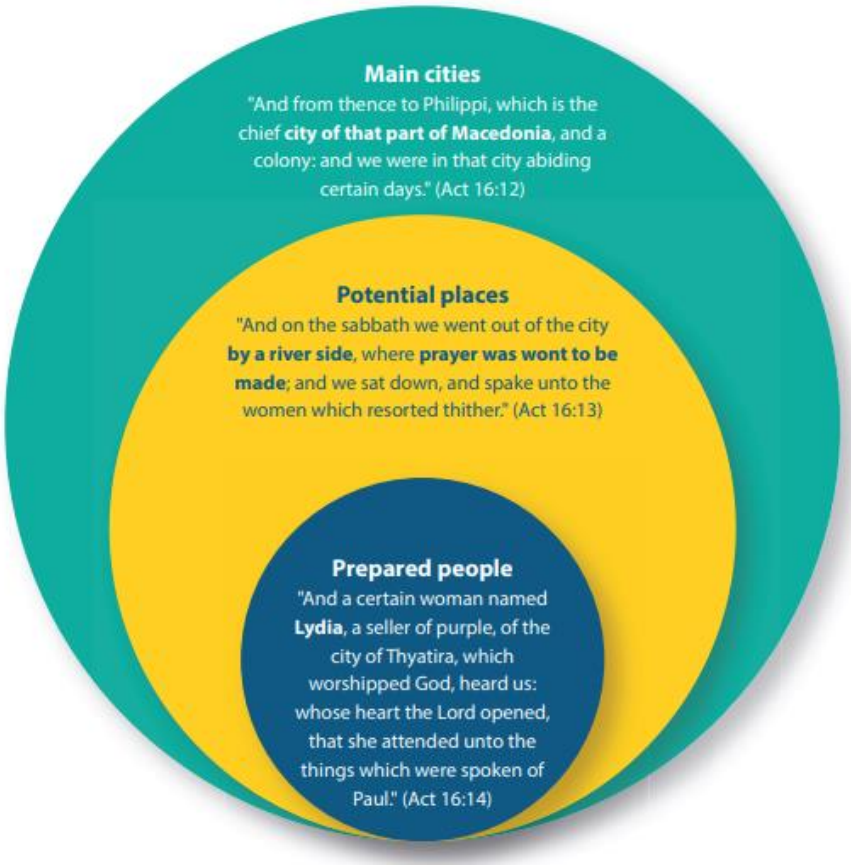


Figure 12 – Foci of Paul's evangelistic action

[Source: the author]

3.2.3.2.3 The methods used

It was not just the people Paul addressed and the places where he preached Jesus that were diverse. The way in which he evangelized was also heterogeneous. As Green (1984:140) states:

> It would be a mistake to conclude [...] that Christian proclamation in antiquity was poorly uniform. We may agree that there was a basic homogeneity in what was preached, but as to the manner in which this happened there was a very great variety [...] Much of the variety, however, has its cause in the needs and understanding of the listeners.

The work of Stuhlmueller (1987:257) resonates with Green's statement, while he also says: “It is probable that Paul had no method of initial preaching rigorously fixed. Like any good preacher, Paul's approach would depend on the particular circumstances of

his audience." In this way, Paul varied the evangelistic approach, depending on whether the audience was Jewish or Gentile. "The Jews were addressed through the Old Testament, [...] and the heathen were so in the light of natural revelation, which pointed to Christ" (Green, 1984:151).[93] Thus, to the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia he said that, among David's descent, "God has brought to Israel the Jesus, as he promised" (Act 13:23). He added: "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus" (Act 13:32,33a). However, to the pagans (Gentiles) of Athens, Paul introduced Jesus in terms of creation: "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth" (Act 17:24). Then he developed his discourse to the point of ending up with Jesus, the one who "will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed" (Act 17:31).

Diversity was reinforced with a view to his evangelistic methodology. Among them, one of Paul's evangelistic methods was the teaching of the Gospel. The difference between *κηρύσσω* ("proclamation of the Gospel") and *διδάσκω* ("teaching") is much more conceptual than practical. In Rabbinic Judaism, nor in early Christianity, there a clear distinction between the work of the evangelist and the teacher had been maintained (Green, 1984:248,249). The practice of Gospel teaching can be seen in the types of verbs Luke used to describe the way in which Paul evangelized in Thessalonica (Act 17:2-4):

> As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned [*διελέξατο*] with them from the Scriptures, explaining [*διανοίγων*] and proving [*παρατιθέμενος*] that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women (my italics)

Another example is found in the context of Ephesus (Act 19:8-9). After he had been "arguing persuasively [*διαλεγόμενος καὶ πείθων*] about the kingdom of God" (Act 19:8 – my italics) for the period of three months, some Jews opposed Paul (Act 19:8,9). Then

[93] "It seems that the early evangelists generally agreed on three factors which should always figure in the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, however varied the approach may have been in other respects to meet the particular needs of the hearers. These three were the attack on idolatry, the proclamation of the one true God, and the resulting moral implications" (Green, 1984:150).

“he took the disciples with him and had discussions [*διαλεγόμενος*] daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Act 19:9 – my italics).

Paul evangelized collectively and individually. Preaching to groups such as those present in synagogues or squares was not an evangelistic practice exclusive to him. Green (1984:270) points out that direct and personal evangelization

> was one of the characteristics of the early expansion of Christianity. The apostles were always practicing it [...]. Paul, as a castaway, speaks about his Lord to the governor of the island. It is interesting to note that in 1 Thessalonians Paul calls himself the father and mother of many members of that church. It was he who had brought them to faith, having conceived them in the new birth. With Onesimus he had the same relationship, and also with some converts from Corinth. This is reminiscent of the personal counsel Paul had given them, which caused them to become “sons” in Christ.

Another evangelistic method employed was that of personal witnessing. Acts mentions this method at least thrice: it was used in Jerusalem in response to the Jews who accused him (Act 21:37 – 22:21); to the governor Felix (Act 24:10-21); and to King Agrippa (Act 26:1-29). In all three cases, Paul follows the same structure in his discourse, that is, he talks about what his life was like before he was converted to Christ, his experience of conversion, and the effects of it. Although in all three cases Paul was presenting a verbal defence in the face of accusations, the evangelistic goal was also present. This can be verified, for example, from Acts 26:28, 29: “Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'Do you think that in such a short time can you persuade me to be a Christian? Paul replied, ‘short time or long – I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains’.”

In relation to the evangelistic methodology used by Paul, it is necessary to highlight the place of miracles in the evangelistic process. Allen devotes a long chapter of her book to highlighting the relationship between the miracles the Lord worked through Paul's life and evangelization. Introductorily, Allen (1962:41) says:

> Miracles hold an important place in the account of St. Paul’s preaching in the Four Provinces, and since this is one of the grounds on which is based the argument that his methods can have little or no bearing upon

> our work in the present day, it is necessary that we should examine carefully the nature and extent of these miracles, and the use which the Apostle himself made of them. We shall find, I think, that so far from invalidating any comparison between his work and ours, St. Paul's use of miracles may throw an interesting light upon some principles of constant value which should guide us in the practice of many forms of missionary enterprise common today.

Miracles are described around Paul in five cities in four provinces (Allen, 1962:41). In Iconium, "Paul and Barnabas spent a great deal of time [...] speaking boldly of the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by performing signs and wonders by their hands" (Act 14:3). In Lystra a paralytic "jumped up and began to walk" after Paul had said, "Be glad! Stand up!" (Act 14:10). In Philippi, Paul was used by the Lord to deliver a young woman possessed from a demon who gave her divination abilities (Act 16:18). In Ephesus, "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them" (Act 19.11,12). In Troas, Luke narrates the resurrection of a young man named Eutychus (Act 20:9,10). In Malta, Paul went to visit Publius' father, who was ill. "Paul went in to see him, and after praying, he laid his hands on them and healed him. When this had happened, the other sick people of the island came and were healed" (Act 28:8,9).

Although Paul did not draw people to Christianity by offering them healing (Allen, 1912:42), miracles aided in his evangelistic endeavour for four reasons:

- they attracted listeners (Allen, 1962:43);
- they were universally accepted as proof of divine approval of the work one does (Allen, 1962:44);
- they were a demonstration of Jesus' power over pagan idols and demons (Allen, 1962:45);
- they were illustrations of the character of the new religion (Allen, 1962:46).

If, as seen above, the diversity in Paul's evangelistic approaches was a reality (the teaching of the Gospel, collective and individual evangelism, the "use" of miracles), one can notice a common logical structure in his evangelistic sermons, as narrated in Acts: (a) contextualized initial approach; (b) elucidation of the sinful condition of the hearers; (c)

addressing justification by grace and faith in Christ; and (e) a request for a response from the listeners (that is, an appeal/invitation). Such a structure can be found in his preaching at the Areopagus in Athens (Act 17:22-31). First, Paul contextualized his message to an audience of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Act 17:18). It bridges the history and culture of the hearers, citing their religiosity (Act 17:22), the question of the altar to the "unknown God," and even their poets/philosophers (Act 17:28,29).[94] Second, Paul exposed the sinful condition of the hearers: in this case, the worship of God had been distorted by idolatry (Act 17:29). After all, "all idolatry is inexcusable, whether ancient or modern, primitive or sophisticated, whether its mental or metal images, palpable objects of worship, or despicable abstract concepts" (Stott, 1994:322). Third, Paul presented Jesus as the man appointed by God to judge the world: "He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead" (Act 17:31). Finally, Paul appealed to his audience to repent in the following terms: "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to suddenly" (Act 17:30).

As Green (1984:186) states: the apostles preached a person, proclaimed a gift, and waited for an answer. Or, as Gilliland (1996:274) says, Paul preached that the coming of Jesus brought a tremendous offering to the people: the promise of salvation, which included forgiveness and freedom. These precious gifts were found nowhere except through Christ. Thus, many who were evangelized responded positively to the message and were converted to Christ. In this way, the seed of the Gospel germinated and grew. God's ploughing became a visible reality (1 Cor 3:9). Converts to Christ became equally active in evangelizing lost others, so that the good news of salvation spread throughout the Roman Empire (1 The 1:6-10).

On this basis, one infers that the missionary practice induced by Paul comprises these items:

- The practice was driven by two central theological convictions: the state of perdition of humanity due to sin (Rom 1:18; 3:10; 23; 5:12), and the fact that only Jesus, by an act of his sovereign grace, could bring people out of this situation (Rom 3:21-24);

[94] Paul's quote in Acts 17:29 "comes from Aratus, the Stoic author of the third century B.C., who came from Paul's land of Cilicia, although he may be repeating an older poetry by Cleantes, the Stoic philosopher" (Stott, 1994:322).

- It was driven furthermore by evangelism, which was a central practice of his ministerial activity, as documented amply by Luke in Acts (13:13-51; 14:1-8; 21; 25; 16:31; 17:1-34; 18:11; 19:8; 10; 22:1-21; 26:1-32; 28:30-31);
- Although he saw himself as the “apostle to the Gentiles” (Gal 1:16), he evangelized all people (Rom 1:14) and strove to do “all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9.22b);
- The apostle had a concentrated rather than diffuse method (Terry, 2012:162), focusing on the major cities and, through them, spreading the Gospel in the region. It was done in potential places where he would have the opportunity to evangelize, such as synagogues, houses, or other places among people prepared to hear the Gospel;
- He communicated the Gospel in a contextualized way, observing the characteristics of his hearers and trying to make points of contact between the message of Christ and the cultural environment of the hearers (Act 17:16-31);
- Miracles were signs that enhanced his evangelistic approach, since they attracted listeners (Allen, 1962:43). They were universally accepted as proof of divine approval of the work one does (Allen, 1962:44); they were a demonstration of Jesus' power over pagan idols and demons (Allen, 1962:45), as indicated; and they were illustrations of the character of the new religion (Allen, 1962:46).

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? First and foremost, evangelism must be primordial, intentional, and copious in all phases, but especially in its beginning. Lidório (2018:116) says that, when planting a church, “the structure for subsistence such as transportation, communication, housing, and training will be of great importance in the process even more important, but it is the abundant evangelization.” As Payne (2015:17) says: “Biblical church planting is evangelism that results in new churches.” This claim was proven in a survey of 100 effective church planters. In it, Grady and Kendall conclude that more effective church leaders use broader-based evangelistic efforts. According to them,

> the most effective church planters had a greater tendency to use outreach methods that provide a large number of contacts in a given community. Those who enter a new cross-cultural situation, and devise a method for sharing the Gospel with a large number of people, may then identify from this large group those who appear to be spiritually hungry.

> They invest productive time in discipling those who are more interested (Grady & Kendall 1992:375).

In addition to stressing the centrality and abundance of evangelism in the task of planting churches, Grady and Kendall conclude that effective church planters are more flexible in their evangelistic approaches. The most effective church planters demonstrate a high degree of creativity in their outreaches. They identify and use culturally applicable ways to communicate their message. Each system has a target followership. Some styles hit one class, educational position, or indeed sex or age group better than others. Using a variety of styles extends the range of implicit successes. The broader pool makes it more likely that people in families, clans, and groups will respond collectively and contemporaneously to the philosophy. This increases the chances for a people's movement (Grady & Kendall, 1992:378).

In light of this information and Paul's evangelistic practice, the people responsible for planning and executing the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa need to work out in advance the best approaches, the best places, and the best ways for contextualizing evangelization. These strategies can be based on the information of the city of Formosa listed in Chapter 1 of this research.

3.2.3.3 Discipleship the believers

Paul did not consider his task finished once people had heard the Gospel and were converted to Christ. This was only the initial moment of the missional enterprise, and it was far from the end. According to Paul, those who had been justified in placing their faith in Christ had also been "called to be his holy people" (Rom 1:7) This would happen in the walk of discipleship.[95]

Although Paul was convinced that he who had begun a good work in believers would complete it to the point of Christ Jesus' return (Phi 1:6), he was also aware that Satan could deceive them, as he deceived Eve, by diverting them "astray from [a] sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3). He knew that he was living in the last days of history, in which many would forsake the faith and follow deceitful spirits and doctrines

[95] Araújo (1999:73) says that "discipleship is the ministry of, in the power of the Holy Spirit, leading people to a total commitment to Jesus Christ, accompanying them in the process of maturing in Christ and enabling them to make new disciples."

of demons (1 Tim 4:3). This reality was, for Paul, a cause of constant uneasiness (2 Cor 11:28).

3.2.3.3.1 The goal of discipleship

Paul's goal with discipling his converts was to bring about spiritual maturity in them. It was what might be called a long-term goal, since it aimed, as he told the Colossians, to "present everyone fully mature in Christ" (Col 1:28). In other words, making the disciples like Christ was their goal, or, literally, as he told the Ephesians, bringing them to maturity so as to attain "the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). The fact is that Paul saw himself as a father of those he had won to Christ. This is expressed, for example, in 1 Corinthians 4:15: "Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel." The figure of fatherhood used by Paul not only evokes the fact that the Corinthians had been brought (begotten) to Christ by him, but also the responsibility that he – Paul – had for caring for these children. This idea was best expressed in 2 Corinthians 11:2: "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." The figure evoked here, of a father jealous of his daughter, draws attention to the zeal that Paul had for caring for his spiritual children. As Harris (1978:385) says:

> Human jealousy is a vice, but to share divine jealousy is a virtue. It is the motive and object of the jealousy that is all-important. There is a place for a spiritual father's passionate concern for the exclusive and pure devotion to Christ of his spiritual children, and also a place for anger at potential violators of that purity." Thus, seeing that the spiritual maturity of the Corinthians was less than expected, Paul laments: "Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready (1 Cor 3:1,2a).

What also needs to be clear is that the spiritual development Paul desired for among his converts was not a subjective and abstract reality. Quite the opposite. He felt that spiritual maturity should be manifested in the lives of the disciples in an objective and concrete way, in the most diverse facets of life. Thus, for example, the spiritual growth of the

Corinthians was to manifest itself in peaceful relationships (1 Cor 3:1-9; 5:12-6:20); in the moral use of the body (1 Cor 5:1-11; 6:12-20); in terms of the way in which to behave in church meetings (1 Cor 11:2-4; 14:26-40); in the conscious practice of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12-14); and in financial generosity to those who needed help (1 Cor 16:1-9). To other churches, Paul mentioned different characteristics of spiritual growth. In fact, his goal was – as indicated – to act in such a way as that "we may present everyone fully mature in Christ" (Col 1:28), which implies a range of individual, collective, emotional, spiritual, relational, and behavioural realities.

There is no doubt that Luke observed this zeal for the spiritual health of believers in the lives of Paul and his co-workers so that Acts contains several passages that relate their attitude after the conversion of the people. Acts 14:21-22 says that "they preached the Gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. 'We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God', they said." In Acts 15:36, Paul says: "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." In Acts 16:40, after being flogged and imprisoned in Philippi, Paul and Silas "came out of the prison [and] went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them." Acts 18:23 states that, "after spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples." At Ephesus, after the tumult caused by Demetrius, "when the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people" (Act 20:1-2).

3.2.3.3.2 The methods for discipleship

Caring for those who had been converted prompted Paul to lead them on the path of discipleship. In which way was this done? The following items spring to mind:

- inserting them into the Christian community through baptism;
- nurturing in the community of believers an environment of care, love, exhortation and communion expressed, among others, by the Lord's Supper;

- teaching them to live a life of obedience to Christ (Mat 28 :18-20).[96]

These three attitudes can be observed, for example, in the city of Ephesus. After evangelizing a group of men, Paul baptized them, inserting them into the Christian community (Act 19:5). He consolidated this community of believers for three years, nurturing them in an environment of care, love, exhortation, and fellowship, as well as teaching them to live a life of obedience to the Lord (Act 19:9,10; 20:20). This pastoral zeal continued even after Paul had left the city. When he was in Miletus, "Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church" (Act 20:17) and conversed with them. The dialogue is rife with pastoral exhortations, among these that this group of leaders should take care of themselves and the flock, which would be attacked both internally and externally (Act 20:28-30). These exhortations would continue in the letter that Paul addressed to this same church years later, spelling out his pastoral zeal.

The beginning of the process of discipleship and the consequent pastoral care took place by means of the insertion of the believer into the Christian community through baptism. As indicated, in Pauline theology baptism is a representation of what happens at the time of conversion to Christ (Rom 6:1-4). The Christian dies to sin (Rom 6:2), is washed from his or her sins (Tit 3:5), and rises to new life (Eph 2:5). But not only that. When they are baptized, they are inserted into the family of faith, the church. For Paul, baptism represents this entrance (Eph 4:1-6) or, as Green says (1984:188): "baptism formalized entry into Christian society." Further: "The baptismal life implied, therefore, holy life and Christian love, and also worship and communion, witness and instruction [...] In other words, baptism sealed conversion in every way, whether individual, collective, ethical, cultural, or theological. Conversion, baptism, and new life were inseparable" (Green, 1984:191).

[96] Hesselgrave (1995:14) notes: "Making disciples is the only central imperative and activity indicated in the Great Commission. Making converts and believers is certainly involved in this imperative. But faith and discipleship can never be divorced from each other. Obedience is required, not only on the part of the one who carries the message, but also on the part of the one who hears, repents, and believes the Gospel. 'Converts' and 'believers' can live as they please. But 'disciples' must obviously do the will of their Master." It is also important to note that, in didactic terms, Paul discipled his converts both individually and collectively. An example of individual discipleship is Timothy, whom Paul calls a "true son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). An example of collective discipleship is found in Acts 19:9 regarding the city of Ephesus. There, Paul taught a group of disciples daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Bruce (2003:92) summarizes the understanding of the double meaning of baptism as a visible sign of what had happened in conversion and as a gateway to the Christian community in the following terms:

> Baptism, in Paul's teaching, initiates believers into their new condition of being “in Christ,” so much so that his historical death and resurrection become part of their spiritual experience; the baptism in the Spirit which the resurrected Lord effected, incorporates them into one body with him—or, as Paul tells Galatians, “as many as ye have been baptized into Christ, ye have put on Christ; [...] all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:27).

For spiritual maturity to occur, the community of believers have a fundamental role. This is clear, for example, in the list of virtues presented by Paul as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). None of these virtues can be cultivated in solitude (Manson, 2009:101). Therefore, if the church is the “society in which the Law of Christ is the law; where the conduct is not 'according to the flesh' kata *sarka*, but 'according to the Spirit' *kata pneuma*” (Manson, 2007:101,102), then it is in the context of believers that the relationships marked by the new way of life will be experienced and cultivated. In Paul's own words: “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph 4:15-16).

Another important aspect of the Pauline methodology for discipleship is the use of believers who are mature in the faith (2 Tim 2:2). In order to apply the teachings of Scripture quickly to the lives of converts, Paul sought out people with greater training and influence and focused his ministry on those people, while later they would teach others. Allen (1962:89) comments:

> Timothy was in Lystra for eighteen months after St. Paul’s first visit. St. Paul could teach Timothy, who knew the Old Testament, how to read it and explain it to Christians; and Timothy in eighteen months could teach others so that his removal was no serious loss. Gaius at Derbe, Luke at Philippi, Aristarchus and Secundus at Thessaloniki, Sopater at Berea, Erastus and many others at Corinth, were probably men of

> some education who could speedily grasp the essential principles of St. Paul's method of interpretation, and then apply them for the benefit of the less educated.

Just as Paul desired that the churches he had evangelized would become active in the process of evangelism of other people or localities, he also desired that believers who were discipled by him would actively disciple others. As Dever (2007:218) points out, "a healthy church is characterized by a serious interest in spiritual growth on the part of its members. In a healthy church, people want to get better at following Jesus." The help of other believers in the process of discipleship was evidenced, for example, by the fellowship among them. Relationships were, according to Paul, means used by the Lord for developing Christian character in the lives of the disciples (Rom 13:8-15:13). Relationships among believers in the most diverse areas of life were a pressing matter and cause for concern for Paul, as is reflected in Acts and the apostle's letters. Thus, in Acts, as he bids farewell to the elders of Ephesus, Paul foresees a future time of struggles and difficulties among them and says to them: "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30). In other words, Paul was exhorting this church about an onslaught of false teachings (by men who twist the truth), which would lead to serious relational problems when it comes to attracting disciples.

Paul's concern for these brothers was to ensure an environment characterized by friendly relationships, which also appears in the letter to Romans. Although he did not plant the church in Rome, he worries about the tensions experienced between "the weak and the strong" (Rom 14:1). It is notable that he says that the church of Rome could quickly split if Christian groups (Jews and Gentiles) insisted on exercising their Christian freedom independently of the opinions of others. Paul then lays out the criteria that everyone must follow to solve these practical problems in the church: love and tolerance. In Romans 14:13, he exhorts Christians not to judge one another and put the interests of others above one's own (Silva, 2000:16).

The relationships marked by division among the Corinthians are strongly rejected by Paul: "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you are perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor 1:10). Such a division was

regarded by Paul as a worldly and carnal act (1 Cor 3:3). In that same letter, he shows that the Corinthians' bad company corrupted their theology, leading some of them to disbelieve the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15). In a tone of indignation, he also writes to the Galatians, lamenting their doctrinal deviation as influenced by the corrosive relationship with the Judaizers (Gal 1:6). In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of the church as a place of unity (Eph 4:1) that "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph 4:16). This is possible, according to Paul, because Christ made Jew and Gentile a body for the purpose of creating "in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Eph 4:15a-16). In his letter to the Philippians, Paul appeals to Euodia and Syntyche "to be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phi 4:2).

All these verses underline the centrality of relationships within the Christian community. In Paul's own words: "For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone" (Rom 14:7).

Why did Paul attach so much importance to this theme? As a member of the church, the new believer has his or her own identity. He or she is a follower of Christ. In the new society, he or she receives spiritual nourishment through the activities of a group of believers (Eph 4:11-16). He or she is loved and taught to love (Heb 10:24,25). He or she receives all the security and stability that comes from being part of a group. This feeling of togetherness is so intimate that the group is called the body, and each person is part of it. If one party suffers, all parties suffer. If one member is honoured, all members are (1 Cor 12:26) (Hesselgrave, 1995:202).

In this sense, Holy Communion represents not only an individual identification and remembrance with Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11:24,25), but also an act of collective worship and fellowship. According to Bruce (2003:276), for Paul, this has a dual function: "when they broke the bread that was the symbol of the body of Christ, they remembered their self-sacrifice on the cross, but they also declared to participate all together in their collective body." This is clearly noted in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Here Paul is instructing the Corinthians about the way in which the Holy Communion should be administered in the context of the collectivity, while exhorting them to observe certain rites by pointing to relational issues. Thus, in relating a scene in which the Supper was taken collectively by the believers in Troas (Acts 20:7-12), he makes a point of emphasizing the atmosphere

of fellowship that exists there. It was held “on the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7), that is, on Sunday and the Supper was served “in the context of a communal meal, as in the upper room in Jerusalem” (Stott, 1995:360,361).

In addition to relatives, Paul understood that the community of believers was a fundamental piece for the development of the believers' maturity, as the church was a place of service. The Pauline letters are full of exhortations in this sense. By the way, such admonitions could be made with full authority from Paul, since he had a life of service to the Lord and to the brothers, in his words: “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). In that same spirit of service to believers, he calls on the brothers: “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Rom 12:10); “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Cor 13:11); “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’” (Gal 5:13,14); and “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 The 5.11).

Paul not only exhorts the brethren to mutual service, but commends Timothy's servant spirit, saying: “I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ” (Phi 2:20-21). In fact, it was to Timothy whom Paul commanded to guide his rich leaders, as follows:

> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share (1 Tim 6:17,18).

Among the ways in which service developed in practice was that of assistance to the poor. According to Paul, this was a mark of his own ministry. In the letter to the Galatians, he said that he was recommended by James, Peter, and John (church leaders in Jerusalem) to remember the poor, which, according to Paul, he “strove to do” (Gal 2:10). In

that same letter, he exhorts the brethren not to tire of doing good, “especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal 6:10).

Beyond these verses, the culture of caring for and supporting the poor that is present in the New Testament church as a whole is made clear in Acts. In Jerusalem, for example, the church was concerned about widows, to whom it distributed food daily (Act 6:1), not to mention the distribution and voluntary division of goods, so that “No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had” (Act 4:32). The result? “That there were no needy persons among them” (Act 4:34). Later, in Acts 11, after being prophetically informed by Agabus that a great famine would come upon the entire Roman world (Act 11:28), the church of Antioch took the following action: it “decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul” (Act 11:29,30).

Thus, in Romans 12:13 Paul exhorts the brethren to share “with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 9:11 it speak of offerings that the Corinthians were to give, according to Paul, for “assistance to the saints” (2 Cor 9:1). In Ephesians 4:28, Paul says: “Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.” In Philippians 2:3,4, he states: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Resonating words to the Thessalonians read as follows: “And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good” (2 The 3:13). In a letter to Timothy, who at the time pastored the church at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), Paul speaks of a diaconal arm of the church aimed at assisting widows (1 Tim 5:1-16). At the end of that same letter, Paul admonishes Timothy to challenge believers to be generous and ready to share (1 Tim 6:17-19).

One rightly infers that assistance ministries to the poor were the basic structure of the New Testament church, ensuring that everyone had access to what they needed without discrimination. The sharing of goods among believers occurred within churches as well as between them (Fabris, 1984:128).

If Paul discipled people from their insertion in the community (evidenced by baptism), in a place that aimed to be marked by relationships based on love and service, teaching

was also part of his method. In other words, Paul aimed to teach them to obey all that Jesus had commanded them to do (Matt 28:20) in order to develop a life lived for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

3.2.3.3.3 The content of discipleship

This engenders a question: “What were the subjects Paul addressed/content in discipling?” Stated in another way: “What did Paul want his converts to understand and obey?” Since Paul's goal was to generate spiritual maturity in the most diverse facets of his disciples' lives, as indicated, the content he taught was also diversified. However, three central areas characterised his teaching to the disciples:

- understanding the experience of conversion to Christ;
- a theological reorientation of thought;
- a construction of a new ethics.

Leading his disciples to understand what had happened to them when they were converted to Christ was one of the first matters of content presented in Paul's discipleship of his converts.[97] This is evidenced, for example, in the structure he usually developed in his letters to the churches he planted. In almost all of them, the first verses are set apart for this purpose:

- To the Corinthians, he says: “I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way – with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge” (1 Cor 1:4-5a;9);
- To the Galatians he says that Jesus “gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal 1:4);
- In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul takes the first three chapters to highlight the workmanship of divine grace among them (Calvino, 1998:15);
- For the Philippians, Paul exalts the Lord for having begun in them the good work of salvation, which he would complete until the second coming of Christ (Phi 1.6);
- To the Colossians, he says that the Lord “has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the

[97] Hesselgrave (1995:222) calls this the “elementary teachings of the Christian faith.”

dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:12-14);

- To the Thessalonians, Paul exalts the Lord for the fact that that church had become the fruit of God's gracious and sovereign choice (1 The 1:4), and because he "chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth" (2 The 2:13).

A second subject Paul addresses in the process of discipleship of his converts is the theological reorientation of thought. For Paul, the transformation of believers happens from the renewal of the mind, and renewing the mind requires changing patterns of behaviour and choice that are already present in a person's mental and emotional constitution. How is this possible? Paul explains to Timothy the role of Scripture in the renewal of the heart (2 Tim 3:16-17) The Bible teaches the truth, points out errors, shows how to correct them, and teaches the practice of righteousness (Rega, 2009:64).

It is important to remember that many Gentiles who were converted to Christ through the Pauline ministry came from a background heavily influenced by idolatry (1 The 1:9), as indicated. This was a practical reason why they needed a new mindset: in other words, Paul needed to destroy false conceptions of God (or idols), and build a vision consistent with the teaching of Scripture (1 Cor 10:19-20). If this did not happen, the whole of the Christian life of their communities would be compromised.

The third central element in Paul's teaching is the construction of a new ethics.[98] As noted, the Pauline assumption is that humanity is created to glorify God. However, with the Adamic Fall, this purpose was diverted. Instead of glorifying God, humanity wanted to be like God. In other words, "with the Fall, the human being began to lack a state of life exactly like that for which he was created" (Rega, 2009:54). For Paul, this restoration to God's original purpose occurs through faith in the Gospel of Christ. Justification by grace and faith in Christ brings about peace with God, that is, reconciliation (Rom 5:1). However, he or she who has been justified by Christ and reconciled to God is called to live a life that glorifies the Lord in everything. Or, to use Paul's words to the Romans: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship"

[98] The Hellenes did not consider ethics to be a part of religion, while Christianity did (Green, 1984:180).

(Rom 12:1).[99] In fact, what Paul says here is the following: “Accept Christ by denying your life and giving yourself to him in worship, that is, put your life on his altar, denying yourself” (Rega, 2009:57). This reflects Paul's own attitude (Gal 2:20).

It is observed, therefore, that there are two points evidenced by Pauline theology with regard to ethics: first, that the ethical life does not justify people before God. The moralist described in Romans 2:1-16 is as unjust before God as the idolater described in Romans 1:18-32. Second, the ethical life is a response of love and gratitude to Christ and evidences his relationship with God, that is, believers are not saved *by* works but *to* them (Eph 2:8-10), which leads to the clear conclusion that life in the grace of Christ is not at all a call to ethical/moral sloppiness. However, it is also important to point out here again that, for Paul, the whole process of ethical transformation was not just a matter of the believer's own effort. It was an operation of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:1-4) made possible by the grace of God, which teaches believers to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while waiting for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of their great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:12-13). In other words, Christ not only gave grace to believe (Rom 1:5), but also, by his Spirit, enables the believer graciously to obey.

Finally, the teaching of ethics in Paul involved several aspects that encompass individual and collective life--believers are called

- to individually flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18; 1 The 4:3-5);
- to forsake lying (Eph 4:25);
- to raise their children “according to the instruction and counsel of the Lord” (Eph 6:4);
- to watch over the quality of their thoughts (Phi 4:8);
- to maintain a schedule (Col 4:3,4);
- to work diligently (2 The 3:10);
- to care for one another (1 Cor 12:25);
- to serve one another through love (Gal 5:13);

[99] The word *οὖν* (“therefore”) can refer to the preceding sentence (from Rom 11:36), or to all the content developed by Paul in preceding chapters. This is illustrated as follows: “therefore, now that you know justification by faith in Christ and have been reconciled to God, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.” This organization of thought is found in Paul's other letters which, as demonstrated, develop a series of ethical norms (that are imperative) after having described the effects of the Gospel on the believer’s life (that is, the inidicative aspect).

- to bear the heavy burdens of others (Gal 6:2);
- to forgive one another (Eph 4:32);
- and to comfort one another (1 The 4:18).

In order for Paul to teach his disciples to obey, two elements are central: the Scriptures and his own life. Thus, it is not difficult to see that, among the central subjects of Scripture taught by Paul in discipleship is the Decalogue. It provides the basis for the ethical instruction of Paul's converts. Of course, he does not apply the commandments like a legalistic Pharisee, but observes them in their didactic use as a rule of practice for the lives of believers.[100]

In addition to Scripture, Paul uses his own example of life (Bosch 2002:170). As indicated, the apostle sees himself as a zealous father to those he had won to Christ. As a father, he could and should present his spiritual children with a standard of living to be imitated:

- 1 Corinthians 4:16 appeals to Christians: “Therefore I urge you to imitate me”;
- 1 Corinthians 4:17 says: “For this reason [*that is, because I want you to be my imitators*] I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church” (my italics);
- 1 Coríntios 11:1, after saying that he did everything for everyone, with the purpose of glorifying God and winning people for Christ, he appealed to the Corinthians: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”;
- in Philippians 3:17, Paul sets himself up as a standard of Christian living to be imitated, and says: “Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do”;
- in Philippians 4:9 says: “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice”;
- in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, after relating his sufferings as a result of the ministry, he says: “You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit”;

[100] As for this use of the decalogue, Calvino (1999 (1597)) states: “The law is the best instrument to enable believers to learn daily the will of God to be followed.”

- in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, he stands as a hard-working worker whose ethical standard is to be imitated: “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate.”

In conclusion, Paul desires that the churches planted by him be permeated by a culture of *koinonia*, that is, communities notably marked by deep relationships; *diaconia*, that is, churches whose purpose is to serve in love and practical attitudes; and *kerygma*, that is, communities that evangelize where they are inserted to act as, centres of propagation of the light of the Gospel. Thus, for example, Paul gave thanks to God for the Thessalonians on account of you’re their “work produced by faith […], labor prompted by love, and […] endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 The 1:3), as well as by the fact that they had become a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. Paul says to them:

> The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath (1 The 1:7-10).

In this spirit, Paul was evangelizing the lost and discipling believers. In turn, the churches planted had a strong power of attraction not due only to the proclamation of the Gospel, but also because of the quality of life of Christians, above all. Green (1984:223-232) says that the fellowship of believers, their transformed character, their joy, and their perseverance, are indisputable propaganda factors of the Christian faith.[101] Thus, in addition to a

[101] The work of Milne (1995:232) resonates with this idea, and he further says: “The harmonious community life of the early Christians constituted the greatest attraction of the Christian faith to the pagans of the time; It is also not difficult to establish the importance of this in an age like ours, where the discovery of the sense of communion and brotherhood, both local and international, is the price of our survival. The church certainly has few things of greater immediate relevance to offer the world than the secret of an authentic relationship.”

crop where the seeds of the Gospel germinated and grew (1 Cor 3:9), the churches planted by Paul became – by the grace of the Lord – spiritually mature. Now the church was a temple (1 Cor or 3:16) where the lives of believers were offered daily as a living sacrifice that was holy and pleasing to God (Rom 12:1-2).

To summarize Paul's discipleship practice:

- It was driven by the theological conviction that believers were doubly called to belong to Christ (justification), and also “called to be his holy people” (Rom 1:7). Since sanctification was an ongoing process, Paul took upon himself the responsibility for the long-term discipleship of these believers (1 Cor 4:15; 2 Corinthians 11:2);
- Its purpose was to bring converts to Christian maturity (Col 1:28), which would manifest itself in concrete and practical attitudes of obedience to the Lord, aiming for a situation where believers would live a life for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31);
- It was a central practice of his ministerial activity, amply documented by Luke in Acts (14:21-22; 15:36; 16:40; 18:23; 20:1-2);
- Viewed from a didactic perspective, it was done individually and collectively by inserting converts into the Christian community (through baptism); nurturing in the community of believers an environment of care, love, exhortation, and fellowship (expressed, among others, by the Lord's Supper); and teaching them to live a life of obedience to Christ;
- It used mature Christians to disciple new believers (2 Tim 2:2);
- It centred on three areas: the understanding of the experience of conversion to Christ; the theological reorientation of thought; and the construction of a new ethics. To this end, Paul based his teachings on Scripture and established his own life as an ethical standard to be imitated by believers (Phi 4:9).

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? First of all, planting this church cannot end in evangelism. Those who convert to Christ need to grow in maturity resulting from a deep discipleship process carried out in the context of the local church by the planter/pastor as well as other mature leaders. In Baxter's words (2008:27), “it is an unquestionable duty of ministers in general to be willing to instruct and guide individually all those who are given to their care.”

This may seem obvious, but it is not. Matos (2014:31), warns that, in numerous churches a great irony or a great incongruity is at work. These churches make a large and significant investment in the area of evangelization, the magnet for new people and families to turn to Christ. Once inside the church they are, so to speak, forgotten and fall into the routine of community life. Once they have formally entered the inside, it is understood that they no longer need attention. This is how numerous new members after some time end up being dissatisfied, losing their original enthusiasm and abandoning the church. This shows the absolute need for a reciprocal element to evangelism, which is followership or the integration of new converts. Although this may seem like a simplistic analysis, the lack of discipleship in Brazilian churches is one of the reasons that make it expand (numerically) more and more, while it does not necessarily cause significant social change.[102]

Second, both the planter and the team that will accompany him or her should discern the approaches that will be used as well as the most convenient contents for discipleship in Formosa. In this sense, some questions are fundamental: “To what extent can low educational levels (described in Chapter 2) be a barrier to the teaching of believers in Formosa?”; and “What elements of the worldview of the people of Formosa (described in Chapter 2) need to be confronted in the light of Scripture, aiming at renewal of thought and a new ethical standard?”.[103]

Finally, Paul did not disciple his converts “at a distance.” He lived among them and showed, through his own life, an ethical standard to be imitated (Phi 4:9). Incidentally, he also called on Timothy (who was also a pastor and disciple to set an example for the believers “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Tim 4:12). It seems that Paul “was of the conviction that the truths of the Christian Gospel must never be abstracted from action and put into high-toned words and phrases, but always expressed

[102] In Brazil (especially among the historical Protestant churches), there is a tendency to create “discipleship classes,” which are usually understood to be meetings of “interested people” aiming at baptism and integration into the church. After these two goals are achieved, the class ends. In Paul's practice, however, discipleship does not simply consist of a few encounters: it is seen as a lifelong (long-term) task.

[103] The goal of discipleship, in light of the Pauline strategy, is not only for its converts to assimilate the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. In fact, the goal is for all areas of life to be worked out, so that the disciples would live a life for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). Foster (2007:253,254) relates an interesting story which illustrates this goal well: “A Russian spiritual advisor was criticized for spending too much time sincerely advising an old peasant woman on how to care for turkeys.” To which he replied, “None of that! All this old woman's life is in those turkeys!” He adds: “spiritual guidance gives sacramental importance to concrete everyday experiences. We learn 'the sacrament of the present moment,' as Jean-Pierre de Caussade defines it” (Foster 2007:254).

in the life of the teacher" (Hawthorne, 1983:190). Likewise, those who engage in the discipleship of believers when they convert to a Reformed church in Formosa need to become examples of mature Christians in all areas of their lives, providing discipleships with an ethical standard to emulate.[104]

3.2.3.4 Establishing leaders

Once he has evangelized the lost and the converted, Paul took the next step in his church-planting process: the establishment of leaders. There is no doubt that this third stage was fostered, on the one hand, by his theological convictions and, on the other, by his ministerial philosophy.

One of these theological principles was that everyone that believed in the Lord was a servant of his (Rom 6:18). This life of servitude was to be exercised in the most diverse areas, among which the Christian ministry. Thus, serving Christ was an ideal of all church members, not just a group of leaders. As Barth (1960:116) says: "In the New Testament no one came to church simply to be saved and happy, but to have the privilege of serving the Lord."

Paul's other theological understanding is that, among those who formed the Body of Christ, with different gifts and functions (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:12-26; Eph 4:7-16), the Holy Spirit set apart some as ὁ *προϊστάμενος* ("to lead") (Rom 12:8). Among these leaders were the *πρεσβύτεροι* ("elders")[105], and the *διάκονοι* ("deacons").[106] The primary purpose of these leaders was to serve others by spiritually caring for and nurturing those under their leadership (Act 28:20).

In turn, three elements of the philosophy of ministry made the raising of leaders a priority target. First, his focus on pioneering work (Rom 15:20,21), that is, the more objective, practical, and rapid the process of consolidating a church, the greater the possibility of

[104] Rinne (2016:44) reminds us that church leaders, especially pastors and elders, must flee the temptation to place themselves only as "church administrators." Those who do so, "don't have to be in the midst of people. They can attend monthly meetings and internal discussions, return and then return home with a sense of accomplishment. When this model predominates, elders [and leaders in general] do not have to get their hands dirty in the struggle with what to say to the church member who is discouraged by being unemployed for fourteen months, to the brother who struggles with the temptation to fall back on heroin, or to the sister who is seriously dating an unbelieving man and sees no problem."

[105] The terms *ποιμὴν* ("pastor") and *ἐπίσκοπος* ("bishop") are synonymous, indicating the leaders who exercised pastoral functions (Calvino, 1998:83).

Paul crossing other borders. For this, nothing was better than to have leaders who could take care of this church in planting. Second, one is struck in this respect by his focus on teamwork (Act 13:2,5; 15:40, 16:1-3). Those with complementary gifts and different personalities could be better developed by the local ministry. The leaders formed a team that could help others tremendously. Third, one is struck by his focus on church planting is self-managing and self-proclaimed (1 The 1:7-10). If it is true that Paul considered himself to be a responsible father for those he had begotten in Christ, it is also true that he did not want to develop children that would be dependent on him for life. He wanted his spiritual children to have the maturity to beget and care for their own children in the faith (2 Tim 2:2). Mature leadership was a clear sign that this goal had been achieved.

One of the central elements in the Pauline process of church planting is therefore the establishment of leaders. In Acts, Luke summarizes the end of Paul's (and Barnabas') first missionary journey in the following terms: “strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. 'We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God', they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust” (Act 14:22-23). Later, in Acts 20:13-16, there is a long discourse of farewell to the elders of Ephesus, leaders established by him to shepherd the newly planted church (Act 20:28).

To understand the dynamics of Paul's establishment of leaders, four questions need to be answered:

- who were these leaders (definition)?;
- what did these leaders do (function)?;
- how were these leaders chosen (selection)?;
- How were these leaders trained (training)?

3.2.3.4.1 The leaders

As for the definition, it is important to note beforehand that Paul did not believe that these people constituted a superior group, hierarchically or spiritually speaking. As Ferreira (2009:217) observes:

> The various types of ministry do not presuppose that the Christian life has two levels: leaders and people. The distinction between

> specialized and lay ministry is essentially functional. Those who work full-time – whatever the title – are not above others, nor closer to God, nor are they more important than church members.

The *πρεσβύτεροι* (“elders”) were the main leaders of the church. They were also called bishops, elders, or pastors. “The terms 'elder/elders' are the most commonly used in the New Testament. 'Pastor' appears only in Ephesians 4:11” (Ferreira, 2009:213). It should be noted that the term *πρεσβύτερος* appears before Paul's missionary journeys in Acts 11:30 and points to the leaders of the Judean church. Therefore, when it came to choosing elders, it is not surprising that Paul copied a model of ecclesiastical organization applied by pre-existing Christian groups.[107] What is known, with certainty, is that Paul held the elders in high regard, to the point of telling Timothy that those who exercised their ministry effectively should receive “double honor” (1 Tim 5:17) (Ferreira, 2009:215).

Abundant and convincing evidence exists that there was a plurality of elders in the churches (Ferreira, 2009:215). For example, the term appears in the plural in most contexts: “Paul and Barnabas *appointed them elders* in every church” (Act 14:23a; 20:27; Tit 1:5 – my italics). No wonder Paul instituted a pastoral team rather than just a local leader.

His understanding of the church as the Body of Christ illuminates this preference. First, Paul understood that Christ was the head of the church and it was to live subject to him, must live in obedience to Christ (Eph 5:23-2 4). A pastoral team could avoid the temptation of an authoritarian and dictatorial leader who would not submit to Christ's directions. Aside from this, Paul understood that the Body of Christ was made up of people with different gifts (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4:7-16), so that a team could work with the complementariness of spiritual gifts, leading to greater ministerial effectiveness.

In addition to the elders, one finds the the *διάκονοι* (“deacons”). The word *διάκονος* means “one who serves.” It is from the same root as the verb used by Jesus in Mark

[107] In addition to this verse (Act 11:30), it is known from the description of Acts 15:2; 21:18 that there were also elders in Jerusalem who led the church along with the apostles. Hesselgrave (1995:255) states that Paul followed the synagogue's pattern of leadership to organize his churches: “In order to organize a synagogue or hold meetings it was necessary to have at least ten men. The elders of the congregation selected a president (or possibly several of them). The president was responsible for the synagogue's services and its assets. He often appointed others to direct expressions of praise, prayers, readings from the Law and the Prophets, and preaching with exhortations. Several assistants performed menial duties, meted out corporal punishment or disciplined members in other ways, and distributed the alms distributed from the members.”

10:45: “For neither did the Son of Man come to be served (*διακονηθῆναι*), but to serve (*διακονῆσαι*).” This term appears only in two contexts of Paul's writings: Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Because of this dearth of biblical material, it is difficult to develop a deep understanding of who exactly they were, what they did, and how they were chosen. However, it is observed that deacons were a different ecclesiastical office from elders. In 1 Timothy 3:8, after speaking of the qualifications of elders, Paul introduces the verse with the particle *ὡσαύτως* (“in the same way”), indicating that Paul was describing an office different from that of the elders.

3.2.3.4.2 The function

As for function, it can be said that it was the responsibility of the elders to care for God's flock (Act 20:28). “Taking care of the herd”[108] was a multi-tasking responsibility that involved the following items:

- shepherding, shepherding, counselling (1 Tim 5:1-25; Tit 2:1-15);
- leadership (1 Tim 5:17a);
- teaching (1 Tim 5:17b)[109];
- giving encouragement by means of healthy doctrine (Tit 1:9);
- refuting insubordinates (Tit 1:9);
- choosing and constituting new leaders (Tit 1:5).

It should also be noted that Paul expected the elders to restart and continue the process of church planting that he had begun in a given place. Thus, evangelizing the lost, discipling the converted, and establishing leaders are instructions he gives to Timothy, the young elder of the church at Ephesus, which was planted by Paul (1 Tim 1:3). Thus, Timothy is called to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5), to teach believers (1 Tim 4:6,11), and to establish leaders (2 Tim 2:2).

Polycarp (69 – 155 A.D.) (1867:72,73) says that the life of the elders was composed of a series of activities:

[108] Commenting on Acts 20:28, Comblin (1989:110) recalls that “the role of the elders in Ephesus would be constituted precisely in the mission of transmitting the Pauline heritage and defending it against the dangers of corruption.”
[109] “Both elders and deacons must have Christlike character, but only elders are required to exhibit the ability to explain and apply the Bible” (Rinne, 2016:54).

> And may the elders be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back the stragglers, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always “providing that which is proper in the sight of God and men”; abstaining from all wrath, from distinction between persons, and from unjust judgment; keeping away from all covetousness, not easily believing in against someone, not harsh in judgment, recognizing that we are all under the debt of sin. If, therefore, we beseech the Lord to forgive us, we must forgive ourselves; for we stand before the eyes of our Lord and God, and “it is important that we should all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and each one should be accountable for himself.” Let us serve Him, therefore, in all reverence and with all reverence, just as He Himself commanded us, and just as the apostles who preached the Gospel to us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [taught us in a similar way]. Let us be zealous in the search for that which is good, keeping ourselves free from causes of scandal, away from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and who lead men in vain into error.

Regarding the function of deacons, it was agreed over time that they would be responsible for ministries aimed at the social action of the church. So much so, that some versions of the Bible bear the title “the choice of deacons” in Acts 6:1-7. However, Ferreira (2009:216) states simply that “the deacons were assistants to the elders,” not making it exactly clear how the assistance was carried out in a practical way. In his turn, Hesselgrave (1995:255) states that deacons were responsible for serving the tables and distributing the church funds. He says one can “conclude, by inference, that they did all the servant work that was necessary in order to make it possible for those who ministered the word to devote all their attention to that ministry” (Hesselgrave, 1995:255).

Priests and deacons therefore undertook exclusive activities and ones that were common among them. This is clear in Stephen's diaconal ministry described in Acts 6-8. At first it is noted that his specific function was to care – with six other leaders – for the Greek-speaking Jewish widows who were being forgotten in the daily distribution of bread (Act 6:1). Although the term deacon does not appear in the passage, the function evokes the figure of this leadership. On the other hand, Stephen's diaconal ministry went

beyond this daily distribution of food. According to Lucas, “Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people” (Act 6:8). A little further on, it is said that his opponents “could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke” (Act 6:10). In the next chapter, Luke takes 53 verses to speak of a discourse of Stephen that was strongly grounded in the Word of the Old Testament. This is the activity of an elder, namely teaching. He was accused of blasphemy and stoned, while he had an impact on the life of Paul (Acts 22:20), who “approved of their killing him” (Act 8:1).

3.2.3.4.3 The choice

As for choice: since the function requires a high degree of responsibility, Paul understood that the elders should be chosen with the utmost observance.[110] Paul commands Timothy as follows: “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others” (1 Tim 5:22a). According to the context of the passage, the laying on of hands concerns public ordination to the ministry. Paul understood that a person who nominated a disabled candidate for office would share his guilt when his unacceptability came to light.

Becoming a leader, however, was not a matter of voluntariness and willingness. Paul devotes considerable space in his pastoral epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) to list the qualifications that elders and deacons needed. According to the apostle, the local elders had to be:

- above reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6,7);
- the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6);
- temperate and self-controlled (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8);
- wise, sensible, and righteous (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8);
- respectable (1 Tim 3:2);
- hospitable (1 Tim 3:2);
- able to teach (1 Tim 3:2);

[110] Commenting on the way in which the elders were chosen, Ferreira (2009:214) says: “The election [...] seems to have been done by raising hands, though not necessarily (Acts 14:23; 2 Corinthians 8:19). In fact, this custom was not strange in antiquity. Voting was usually done by the act of raising one's hands; in Athens, by acclamation or by voters' leaves or stones. In case of banishment, the vote was secret. The expression used by Paul in recommending to Titus that he should constitute elders in each city (Tit 1:5) does not indicate the mode of choice, but rather the need, following the practice of the Church, to 'constitute' men for every office.”

- restrained about the drinking of wine (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7);
- nonviolent (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7);
- non-contentious (1 Tim 3:3);
- gentle (1 Tim 3:3);
- free from the love of money (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1i7);
- able to govern their house well (1 Tim 3:4);
- converted for some time (1 Tim 3:6);
- carriers of a good reputation among unbelievers (1 Tim 3:7);
- humble, not arrogant (Tit 1:7);
- easy-going, not irascible (Tit 1:7);
- ones who loved the good (Tit 1:8);
- godly and righteous (Tit 1:8).

While some of these characteristics are generic and should be part of the ordinary Christian life (such as being godly and righteous – Tit 1:8), some are very specific to leadership (such as being able to teach – 1 Tim 3:2). And among all the points in the leader's profile, questions of character (who the person is) overlap with issues such as gifts and capabilities (what the person does). Towner (2006:240) says that the nature of the qualifications presented and the widespread concern for the reputation of leaders suggest that respectability of the kind that would sustain the credibility of the church in society was the priority.

Another central factor of the choice of elders is their personal conviction that they had been called by God to this office. Paul stated that whoever desired this function would be aiming for something noble (1 Tim 3:1). However, caution was needed. The life of the candidate for ministry should be evaluated. Calvino (1998:20) further reminds us that it is the calling that makes an office valid, and no one can hold it correctly or legally unless he or she has been chosen by God. In addition, pre-established voting procedures must be followed to ensure that no one tries to carry out their own wishes. “According to God's promise to govern his church, so he reserves for himself the exclusive right to prescribe the order and form of his administration” (Calvino, 1998:120).

The choice of deacons, like the selection of elders, could not be made in a banal way. As Calvin states (Calvino, 1998:94):

> In a word, the appointment of deacons must not consist in a hasty and fortuitous choice of one who is at hand, but that the choice must be

> based on men who recommend themselves for their former way of living, so that, after they have been subjected to an interrogation, they will be thoroughly investigated before they are declared fit.

It is also important to note that, as in the case of elders, deacons are subject to a list of qualifications described by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim 3:8-12). According to the apostle, elders should:

- possess dignity and earnestness (1 Tim 3:8);
- have no duplicity of word (1 Tim 3:8);
- not be inclined to too much wine (1 Tim 3:8);
- not to be full of greed and greed (1 Tim 3:8);
- keep the ministry of faith with a clear conscience (1 Tim 3:9);
- be experienced and not new converts (1 Tim 3:10);
- be the husband of one woman (1 Tim 3:12);
- possess strong personal faith (1 Tim 3:13);
- not to be wicked (1 Tim 3:11);
- be sober (1 Tim 3:11);
- be trustworthy in all things (1 Tim 3:11).

Like the list of qualifications of elders given above, Paul's desired profile of deacons is much more related to who they are (character) than to what they can do (charisma).

In addition to the points quoted above, it is necessary to point out that, “when Paul lists these qualities […] he lumps together requirements concerning character traits and intimate attitudes with requirements that cannot be fulfilled in a short space of time, except in a period of many years of faithful Christian life” (Grudem, 1999:768). This is precisely why Paul points out that the leader cannot be “a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil” (1 Tim 3:6).

The other element observed in the choice of leaders was the *χάρισμα* (spiritual gifts) required for the function. According to Paul, among the different gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows upon believers is the “gift of exercising leadership” (Rom 12:8). Whoever possessed this spiritual capacity had to exercise it with zeal (Rom 12:8). Stott (2007:397) comments: “The verb *προίστημι* means 'to care for' or 'to help'; And some commentators opt for this sense because, in the relationship, this gift comes between 'contributing' and

'showing mercy'. But the allusion found in the New Testament is to leadership in the home or in the church."

1 Timothy 5:17 directly connects the verb with the function of elder: "The elders who lead [*προεστῶτες*] well the church are worthy of double honor" (my italics), which indicates the nature of the relationship between the function of elder and the spiritual gift of leading. Perhaps, as speculative as this interpretation is, it could be the gift Paul told Timothy not to neglect (1 Tim 4:14).

In addition to leadership, another necessary gift to the elder was the ability to teach. In 1 Tim 5:17, Paul links leadership to the work of preaching in teaching. Moreover, an earlier the apostle had already said that the qualifications of the elders included an aptitude for teaching (*φιλόξενον διδακτικόν*) (1 Tim 3:2). Possibly, some elders gave more time to teaching than others (1 Tim 5:17), but all had to be knowledgeable of Scripture and able to "encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Tit 19). As Mounce (2000:185,186) says: "Paul sees the church led by its teachers, those who can preach the truth and refute error; its primary leadership does not lie in the hands of administrators."

Another key text for understanding the relationship between spiritual gifts and ministry is Ephesians 4:9-16. In this block, Paul teaches that the gifts were given to the church for the purpose of equipping his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12). In the words of Gordon (1994:73),

> the purpose of all these gifted leaders is to prepare the rest of the saints to minister and so build up the body of Christ, the church. "Equipping" (Gr. *Καταρτισμόν*) means preparing, mending, or restoring people to their proper use (Gal 6:1; cf. Mat. 4:21; 2 Cor 13:11; Heb. 13:21). The role of these leaders is to minister the Word to the saints in the church so the saints can minister the Word in the world (cf. 1 Tim 3:15). All the saints should participate in service, not just the leaders.

In addition to equipping believers, it is up to leadership to develop maturity, that is, facilitating spiritual growth in the believers subject to them. In Paul's words, "we may come to maturity, reaching the measure of the fullness of Christ. The purpose is that we are no longer like children [...]" (Eph 4:13b-14a). Calvin (Calvino, 1998:127) comments: "Children are those who have not yet taken a step in the way of the Lord, but who hesitate,

who have not yet determined which direction they should take, but who move sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another, always doubtful, always zigzagging."

3.2.3.4.4 The training

As for training, Paul had a special ability to form, develop, equip, and train church leaders. Cooper (2005:52) says that Paul had a transformational leadership style that raised morale and developed maturity in the lives of the people he served. A clear example of this is Timothy, who was transformed from a shy young man into a church leader who, as tradition claims, died for his faith. Paul provided in his own life the model of a leader to be formed. Three aspects are taken to be standard in this regard (Cooper, 2005:54):

- his relationship with Christ (2 Tim 1:9,12);
- his relationship with teaching of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16,17),
- his relationship with his co-workers (2 Tim 1:3-5).

Although Paul could train leaders by making use of formal (classroom) teaching, as happened in Ephesus (Acts 19:9b-10)[111], the training of these leaders took place in a practical way within the mission field itself. Paul took Timothy out of Derbe, for instance, and took him as his traveling companion (Act 16:1-3). During these trips, Timothy could observe Paul ministering, be mentored, and develop practical tasks. Then Paul established him, at least for a time, as the leader of the Ephesian church (1 Tim 1:3). However, after assuming this function, Paul continued to accompany and encourage him as is well observed in the letters addressed to him.

Paul's practice of establishing leaders therefore shows the following traits:

- It was driven by two central theological convictions: that all believers are servants of Christ (Rom 6:18) and that there was a group among believers that was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of leading (*ὁ προϊστάμενος*) (Rom 12:8);

[111] Regarding this passage, Bruce (1981:388,389) emphasises the following: "The Western text indicates that Paul had the use of the buiding from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. Turannus no doubt hel his classes in the early morning. Public activity ceased in the cities of Ionia for several hours at 11 A.M., and (as Lake and Cadbury point out) more people would be asleep at 1 P.M. than 1 A.M. But Paul after spend the early hours of the day at his tent-making (cf. Ch. 20:34), devoted the hours of burden and heat to his more important and more exhausting business, and must have infected his heares with his own energy and zeal, so that were willing to sacrifice their siesta for the sake of listening to Paul."

- It was shaped by three elements of his philosophy of ministry: pioneering, teamwork, and self-managing and self-proclaimed church planting. These three elements drove/made apparent the need for leaders;
- It was a central practice of his ministerial activity as documented by Luke in Acts (14:22-23; 20:13-16);
- Among the leaders Paul established were the *πρεσβύτεροι* ("elders"), who were responsible for leading the church, which involved a range of activities, the central of which was teaching (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1;9);
- The other group of leaders were the *διάκονοι* ("deacons"), who assisted the elders in their pastoral activities, and worked on the social (diaconal) issues of the churches;
- All leaders were chosen based on specific, character-focused qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9), as well as divine calling, and specific spiritual gifts (leadership and teaching) (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1;9). Such qualifications and characteristics were to be proven, which meant that leaders could not be newly converted believers (1 Tim 3:6);
- Although they could be taught by Paul in formal settings such as in a classroom (Acts 19:9b-10), these leaders were usually trained in the mission field itself, where Paul acted as a model of servant leadership.

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? First, it is important to point out that the empowerment of leaders will be a pressing need at various times, and that:

- The planter needs to be trained to perform the planting, remembering that, in addition to this function, in the first years he or she will be a shepherd that will also require specific training;
- The church planting team that will assist the planter needs to be briefly trained throughout the planting process, remembering that among them will be future elders, deacons, or department leaders;
- Future elders, deacons, and other department leaders need to be trained before they can hold their leadership positions;
- The successive pastor of the church will need to go through a training process before taking on the pastoral responsibility of the church.

Paradoxically, as church planting is structured people with leadership gifts begin to emerge while, and on the other hand, “when spiritual leadership emerges, organization will become practical and essential” (Hesselgrave, 1995:253). From a biblical point of view, the position of leadership is not aimed at status or recognition, but at service. The leader will occupy his function “not to be served, but to serve and to lay down his life” (Mark 10:45). It is therefore of the utmost importance that both the planter and other believers “be instructed in how to recognize and select men and women who have gifts, and who are spiritually qualified for leadership in the local church” (Hesselgrave, 1995:253). The parameters presented by Paul (especially those centred on character and ability to teach) are decisive for the choice of leaders of a Reformed Church in Formosa.

The ministerial requirement should furthermore match the profile of the potential leader. Occasionally, in their eagerness to fill a leadership position, people are placed in ministries that do not match their profile and, as Peter (1970:27) reminds us, “when an individual is elevated to a level above his ability, he becomes frustrated and unproductive.” Precisely for this reason, his ministerial trajectory should be noted. What ministry activities did he perform? What were the results of this work? What tensions or moments of conflict were experienced? And so on It is quite likely that, to a large extent, the picture of the previous ministry will be repeated, although “success in a certain position of responsibility does not ensure success in another position where the demands may be noticeably greater” (Hesselgrave, 1995:258).

Finally, the way in which Paul trained these leaders facilitates the way in which the leaders of a Reformed church in Formosa can be trained. Garrison (2000:44) warns: “Resist the temptation to uproot new local church leaders to spend years of training in an institution. Prefer a decentralized theological education that is punctuated by practical experience.” Such an approach reduces the exaggerated tendency of professionalization of the ministry, “keeping the student in the context of the ministry and makes the application of learning more immediate and relevant” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:358). Therefore, the planter/pastor needs to overcome the temptation to be a centralizer of the activities of the church and share the ministerial functions with other leaders, choosing them, training them, and establishing them in their functions.

3.2.3.5 Leave and monitor

Paul's next step was to leave for a new mission field where he would begin his church-planting process again. He did not stay long in one place. He had a remarkably itinerant ministry, no doubt shaped by his emphasis on pioneering work (Rom 15:20). Acts records only two places where Paul stayed for a slightly longer time: at Corinth for a year and a half (Act 18:11), and at Ephesus for about three years (Act 20:31). The rule was short periods of ministry.

However, Paul did not cut ties with the churches he planted. Instead, he kept monitoring them. He maintained with these communities a relationship of communion, a joint participation, a partnership (Hesselgrave, 1995:293). The Pauline letters show three main elements in the relationship of communion between Paul and the churches planted by him:

- Paul felt a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the churches and believers, whom he considered to be his children in the faith, as indicated (2 Cor 11:28);
- He expected from the churches he had planted to pay special attention to the words he spoke, since he had fathered them in the faith (1 Cor 4:15,16);
- The churches planted by Paul participated with him in his ministry through prayers, offerings, and the sending of helpers (Phi 2:25; 4:14-16; Col 4:3) (Hesselgrave, 1995:293,294).

The churches that Paul planted also enjoyed relationships among themselves. There was a relationship of authority and subjection to the Jerusalem church. This was due to the presence of the first apostles there. That is why this church sent Barnabas to see what was happening in Antioch (Acts 11:22-26). The respect for the authority of the Jerusalem church was moreover present in the life of Paul, who went there “to consult the apostles about the message he preached (Gal 1:18-19)” (Hesselgrave, 1995:296).[112]

A relationship of fellowship among the churches existed furthermore, as expressed in the New Testament. Hesselgrave (1995:296,297) notes that the churches founded by the apostles

[112] When there was doubt regarding the conversion of the Gentiles, the case was submitted to the consideration of the Jerusalem church (Act 15:1,2), which shows the position of authority that this church exercised over the others.

- recognized that in Christ they had a mutual bond with one another – and especially with the mother church in Jerusalem (Act 15:1,2; Rom 15:26,27);
- regularly sent Christian greetings to each other (Rom 16:1; 1 Cor 16:19; Phi 4:23);
- cooperated in a project to provide money for the poor saints in the church in Jerusalem (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 1:1-3);
- sent representatives to one another (Act 11:22; 23; 27; 15; 1-2; 1 Cor 16:3,4);
- sustained the toil of the apostles in other fields (Phi 4:15,16);
- shared among themselves the letters of the apostles (Col 4:16);
- encouraged each other by demonstrating faith in practice (2 Cor 1:24; 9:2; 1 The 1:7-10; 2:14);
- cooperated in the common cause of evangelization (1 The 1:8).

However, to understand the moment of departure and monitoring of the churches planted by Paul more deeply, consider two questions:

- When did Paul consider a church to have been planted?;
- How did Paul monitor the churches that had been planted?

3.2.3.5.1 When did Paul consider a church planted?

Regarding the first question, a divergence of opinion exists among scholars of the subject. For example, Allen (1962:3) suggests that Paul considered a church planted as soon as the first believers were assembled. And in fact, in many cases, Paul left the churches in a very short time. “In Asia Minor, he and Barnabas even installed elders in the churches on after the initial evangelization and then considered the work 'complete' (Act 14:23;26)” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:27). This implies that the established leadership factor was essential around considering a church to be planted. The fact that Paul regarded the work in Crete as unfinished because the leaders had not yet been established corroborates this view. Hence Paul's request that Titus establish such men (Tit 1:5). However, it is not certain how long the Cretan church existed before the text was written (Ott & Wilson, 2013:27).

Nonetheless, to hold Paul up as an example and conclude that the missionary should leave quickly, as soon as the believers have been assembled, is to ignore the larger biblical story. The fact is that, in addition to his longing to reach the greatest number of

places and people for Christ, “Paul's quick departures were often caused by persecution, not by planning” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:27). Thus, he left Thessalonica quickly, not necessarily because he considered the planting to be done, but because of the strong opposition to the testimony of the Gospel that caused him to go to Berea (Act 17:10).

Neither the matter of time nor that of the size was taken as a prerequisite for concluding whether a church was planted or not. Paul considered a church planted when four goals were achieved, albeit that, in many cases, these elements did not appear explicitly but in an embryonic form:

- people from that place were evangelized and converted to Christ;
- these believers were being discipled in the context of the church in order to mature spiritually;
- among these believers, leaders were established (self-managing);
- the church had an expansionist practice and was a supporter of missionary work (self-proclaiming).

The four determinants show that the church in Philippi could be regarded as effectively planted. After all, Lydia and her family (Act 16:13-15) and the jailer and his family (Act 16:31-34) were evangelized and converted to Jesus; they were baptized (Act 16:15,32); they were publicly witnessing their entry into the church and where they met (Act 16:40); there were established leaders, whom Paul greets in Philippians 1:1); and their practice of expanding and supporting missionary work, especially in Paul's ministry, was evident (Phi 1:4-5; 4:10-20).

3.2.3.5.2 How did Paul monitor the churches?

Paul was not irresponsible towards the churches he had planted. After he left for a new planting, he continued to monitor his congregations. Those whom he had won to Christ were his joy and his crown. And he wanted them to stand firm in the Lord (Phi 4:1).

> For this reason, despite his protest against doubling the missionary efforts of others and his eagerness to continue pressing into new territory (Rom 15:20), Paul still employed considerable efforts in “pastoral solicitude [...] He had felt personal responsibility for the communities he had instructed, and he did not hesitate at all to send them specific directions (Senior & Stuhlmuller, 1987:254).

This leads to a second question: How did Paul monitor the churches planted? It was done by means of letters, follow-up visits, and assistance from other co-workers (Ott & Wilson, 2013:27). As soon as Paul left his planted churches, there was a demand for questions among believers. In fact, he had already warned the leaders of Ephesus he had already warned: “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!” (Act 20:29-31a). Among these tasks were matters ranging from false teachings that could infiltrate the church to the point of diverting believers from the truth of the Gospel, to ethical issues related to the various facets of life, many of which had not yet been addressed when Paul was present in the church. This is not to mention the relationship problems that cropped up among the new Christians and a number of theological questions that were engendered as believers developed their Christian life.

These questions led Paul to an intense exchange of correspondence between himself and the planted churches in order to guide them (1 Cor 7:1). For example, he writes to the Corinthians, who were grappling with ethical issues related to marriage as to guide them (1 Cor 7:7-40). Paul calls on the Galatian church influenced by the Judaizing heresy to recall the gracious truth of Christ's Gospel (Gal 1:6-10). When Paul learned that Synty-che and Euodia were arguing, he intervened, asking them to be reconciled (Phi 4:2). He furthermore answered eschatological questions for the Thessalonians (1 The 4:13-5:11).

In addition to writing to the churches, Paul personally returned to the sites to monitor them. Thus, in preparation for his second missionary journey, he says: “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing” (Act 15:36). His co-workers also brought information of the spiritual state of the churches planted. This is how Paul learned of the divisions present among the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor 1:11).

This threefold monitoring action is evident, for example, in his letter to the Philippians:

- the letter is itself a monitoring action addressed to the believers of that city (Phi 1:1,2);
- he speaks of visiting them in person (Phi 1:27);
- he says he wants to help them through the co-workers of Timothy and Epaphro-ditus (Phi 4:19,25).

Paul in other words planted churches with evangelistic fervour for leading people to Christ and with pastoral zeal, edifying believers in the process of discipleship, while he nonetheless showed his organizational vision by monitoring planted churches and being actively concerned with the development of their faith.

In relation to Paul's departure and monitoring, the following items can be gleaned from the Scriptures:

- Paul had a remarkably itinerant ministry, which made it common for him to spend relatively short periods, plant a church, and then leave for another field of activity. This characteristic of Paul's missional strategy was shaped by his intense desire to begin pioneering work (Rom 15:20);
- Although there is divergence of understanding among scholars about this, Paul clearly considered a church planted when the believers of that place had been gathered (Allen, 1962:3) and had an established leadership (Ott & Wilson, 2013:27);
- Although Paul went to other mission fields, he did not sever his relationship with the planted churches. He assisted them pastorally and monitored them through sporadic visits, through the report of his collaborators, and through an intense exchange of correspondence (1 Cor 7:1);
- After leaving, Paul relied on the emotional, spiritual, and financial support of the church he had planted to restart other works (Phi 4:15-16).

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? First, if Paul's strategy is considered in full, it can be stated in advance that the person responsible for his planting (the planter) may not stay for many years as pastor of this church. Such an exercised ministry, with several changes in short periods of time, generates many stressors for the planter, his family, and members of the planted church. Therefore, departure will require from the people involved in the project great discernment. This is because the departure of a planter to new fields involves emotional and spiritual elements. One need only look, for example, at Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus to note that the departure of the planter from that church to new fields generated deep commotion in all (Act 20:36-38). In cultures with a strong emphasis on emotions, such as the Brazilian one, the departure of a pastor can generate discontent from people who, consequently, will end up moving away from the communion of the church.

According to Casimiro (2012:56), a mystical and affective connection exists between the planter and the first members of the church planted by him. He, like Paul, begot those people in Christ (1 Cor 4:15) and was therefore their spiritual father (1 The 2:11). Therefore, it is advisable that the church planter remain for at least two years after the church has been organized (Casimiro, 2012:56).

However, when the planter of a Reformed church in Formosa leaves for other fields, handing over to another pastor the care of those people, as Paul did with the elders of Ephesus – Acts 28:20, he should not cut ties with these brothers. In addition, this same planted church can become a source of support for the planter's new missionary endeavours.

3.2.3.6 Pray continually

Prayer was a transversal element in the Pauline practice of church planting, that is, prayer was present before, during, and after the process. This reality is amply documented in Acts and Paul's letters. In fact, Fabris (1991:222,223) points out that, in the book of Acts of the Apostles, prayer is present in every moment of the life of the church, especially when she was faced with important decisions. Shenk and Stutzman (1995:24) note that “the early church was born in a prayer meeting.”

Prayer was also a pressing activity in Paul's life and certainly one of the main (if not *the* main) factor of ministerial success. The Bible shows Paul praying and calling other believers to this practice. Sanders (2005:58) comments:

> To read Paul's letters is to discover the place of supreme importance that in his opinion prayer must occupy in the life of a Christian leader. Nowhere does he reveal the quality of his spiritual life with greater clarity than in the prayers that adorn his letters. It is obvious that Paul did not regard prayer as supplementary, but as fundamental; not something to be added to his work, but the very source from which his work originated. He was a man of action because he was a man of prayer. It was prayer, probably even more than preaching, that produced the kind of leader we find in his letters.

After his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was thrown to the ground and prayed: “Who are you, Lord?” (Act 9:5). And further: “What shall I do, Lord?” (Act

22:10). Days later, Paul went to Jerusalem and went through an ecstatic experience while praying in the temple. He heard the Lord, who said to him: "'Quick!' Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me'" (Act 22:18).

A few years later, a period of great missionary advancement would begin through the actions of Paul and his collaborators from the sending of the Church of Antioch. It was precisely in a prayer meeting of this church that the Holy Spirit said: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Act 13:2). The brothers not only heard the Holy Spirit, but also obeyed him. Thus, "after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Act 13:3).

Paul and Barnabas exercised their ministry and returned to the sending Church of Antioch, but not before returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch for the purpose of establishing "elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust" (Act 14:23). Later, on his second missionary journey in the company of Silas, Paul arrived in Philippi. After casting out a demon from a young woman he was flogged and thrown into prison along with Silas (Act 16:23). In that place, under those circumstances, "about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; the other inmates listened to them" (Act 16:25). Acts 19:6 states that, after having evangelized a group of John's disciples, Paul baptized and laid hands on them in prayer. Later, Paul left Ephesus: after having passed through some cities he came to Miletus, where he "sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus" (Act 20:17). After reminding them about the nature of his ministry among them, as well as challenging them to take care of their lives and the flock delivered to these leaders (Act 20:28), "he knelt down with all of them and prayed" (Act 20:36).

The last two chapters of Acts show Paul praying twice: once, when he was on the ship in the middle of a storm on the verge of being shipwrecked (Act 27:21-23), and then after the that shipwrecking in Malta. Publius was there, "the chief man of the island" (Act 28:7). His father was indifferent, sick, and bedridden. "Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured" (Act 28:8b,9).

The Pauline letters give a prominent place to prayer as a theme that is dealt with directly or indirectly:

- In Romans, Paul says he prays for the salvation of his fellow Jews (Rom 10:1). It urges Roman believers to persevere in prayer (Rom 12:12). At the end of that same letter, after having shared his plans for the missionary advance toward Spain (Rom 15:24), Paul requests: “join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there” (Rom 15:30-31);
- In 1 Corinthians states that God has delivered Paul and will continue to deliver him from the sufferings imposed by the ministry as long as this church is “helping with its prayers” (1 Cor 1:11). Many would give thanks to the Corinthians for the favours bestowed upon Paul and his co-workers “in answer to the prayers of many” (1 Cor 1:11);
- In Ephesians, Paul positions himself as an intercessor for these believers. They thank God in prayer for their lives (Eph 1:16). They pray that they will be strengthened and grow spiritually (Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21). At the end of the letter, after having spoken about the armour of God to win the battle against “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12), Paul warns the brethren to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should (Eph 6:18-20);
- In Philippians, Paul expresses his prayer of gratitude to God because of the “co-operation of co-operation which you [Philippians] have given to the Gospel from the first day until now” (Phi 1:5 – emphasis added);
- In Colossians, Paul says that he prays to thank the Lord for their lives (Col 1:3). He does not fail to pray for them “and to ask that they be filled with the full knowledge of the will of God, with all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col 1:9). He then exhorts the brethren: “Devote yourselves to prayer” (Col 4:2), and, as he had already asked the Ephesians, he asks the church of Colossae to pray for him, that God may open ministerial opportunities for him and give him courage to bear witness to the Gospel (Cl 4:3,4). Already among the last verses, he does not forget to mention Epaphras who, according to Paul, “is always fighting for you

[Colossians] in prayer, so that, as mature and fully convinced people, you may remain firm in all the will of God" (Col 4:12 – emphasis added);

- In 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Paul begins his writings by saying he is grateful for the lives of these brothers. This causes him to turn to God in prayers of gratitude (1T he 1:2-3; 2 The 1:3). At the end of both letters, he asks for the intercession of the Thessalonian church: "Brethren, pray for us" (1 The 1:25). In the second letter, he calls for the brethren to pray for the propagation of the Gospel, so as to keep him from the Lord before the persecutors, and for the strengthening before the Evil One (2 The 3:1-3);
- In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul commands the brethren and Timothy to pray for the authorities that they might have "a quiet and peaceful life, with all godliness and worthiness" (1 Tim 2:2). He continues: "I want men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and without quarrel" (1 Tim 2:8).;
- In the short letter addressed to Philemon, Paul reminds this co-worker that he always gives thanks to God for his life, "remembering you [in my prayers" (Phil 4). He adds: "I pray that the fellowship that proceeds from your faith will be effective in the full knowledge of all the good we have in Christ" (Phil 6). Finally, Paul adds: "Moreover, prepare a room for me, for thanks to your prayers I hope that it can be restored to you" (Phil 22).

Therefore, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, Paul makes prayer a transversal element. Paul is a man of action because he is a man of prayer. He prays and asks for prayers that he would be successful in evangelism (Rom 10:1; Eph 6:19-20). He prays that the believers he is discipling would be strengthened (Eph 3:16); he prays for established leaders as well those who are already exercising their ministries (Act 14:23; 20:32; 36). In addition, Paul prays and asks for prayers that more opportunities would arise for him to preach the Gospel (Col 4:2-6). His many prayers show a unique dependence on the Lord.

In terms of practising prayer as a transversal element of Paul's strategy, one should itemise the following observations:

- Prayer is a pressing activity in Paul's life and certainly one of the main (if not *the* main) factor of ministerial success;
- His prayer practice is amply documented by Luke in Acts as well as in the Pauline letters;

- All the practical elements of Paul's strategy for church planting – the sending of a church, evangelism, discipleship, the establishment of leaders, and the departure into new fields are permeated by prayer;
- From the beginning to the end of his Christian and ministerial walk, Paul is found in prayer, thus showing all his dependence on the Lord.

What are the implications of these realities for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa? Consider that planting a church is a spiritual activity and, as such, needs the spiritual resources to be successful. One is mistaken who thinks that “only” good theology, creative strategy, and proper planning are enough to plant a church. Prayer is fundamental, a transversal activity that needs to permeate the entire process of church planting. For example, in commenting on how the church of Antioch discerned the Lord's direction in a prayer meeting (Act 13:1-3), Foster (2007:244) gives valuable advice for planning missionary actions: “It would be of great benefit if we paid attention to this example of community orientation. It would serve as an excellent commendation to us to encourage groups of brothers to fast, pray, and worship together until they discern the mind of the Lord.”

Paul understood that his entire church-planting ministry was carried out in an environment of spiritual warfare. His struggle was “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12). He knew the devil had “blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4). He was aware that Satan could lead believers astray their “sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:3), doing it in a sneaky way, by masquerading as “an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Paul goes so far as to describe the fact that Satan prevented him from visiting the Thessalonians (1 The 2:18). How could Paul overcome all these struggles? It was overcome by the power of God (Eph 6:10) who was accessed by prayer (Eph 6:18-10). Precisely because of this, Paul exercised his ministry “with the care of a strategist, while he prayed and trusted with the faith of a mystic” (Soares, 2004:11).

Lidório (2007:83) presents a series of missiologists and church planters who agree that prayer is indispensable to the success of church planting:

> Johnstone, one of the greatest missiologists of our day, states that when man works, man works. When man prays, God works. Missiologists and researchers such as David Garrison, Patrick Johnstone, David Barrett, Bruce Carlton, J. Johnson, and David Watson have mentioned the clear link between prayer and church planting.

It is this same conclusion that Grady & Kendall (1992:370) came to when they researched one hundred effective church planters. According to the data from this study, prayer turned out to be the primary factor for success in church planting:

> The more time spent in prayer, the more effective the church planter. Regardless of field difficulties, those who prayed more tended to be more effective. The most effective church planters average four hours and 15 minutes more in prayer per week than their less effective colleagues.

Thus, all people involved in planting a Reformed church in Formosa are called to be “faithful in prayer” (Rom 12:12), praying individually, collectively, at vigils and prayer days, and in other creative ways. The words of Gordon (quoted by Casimiro, 2012:55) are inspiring and appealing:

> The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is to pray. It's not the only thing, but it's the main thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray, not those who talk about prayer, not those who say they believe in prayer, not those who can explain about prayer, but those who take time to pray.

In conclusion, Paul's ministerial practice with its core activities can now be depicted as in the figure below:

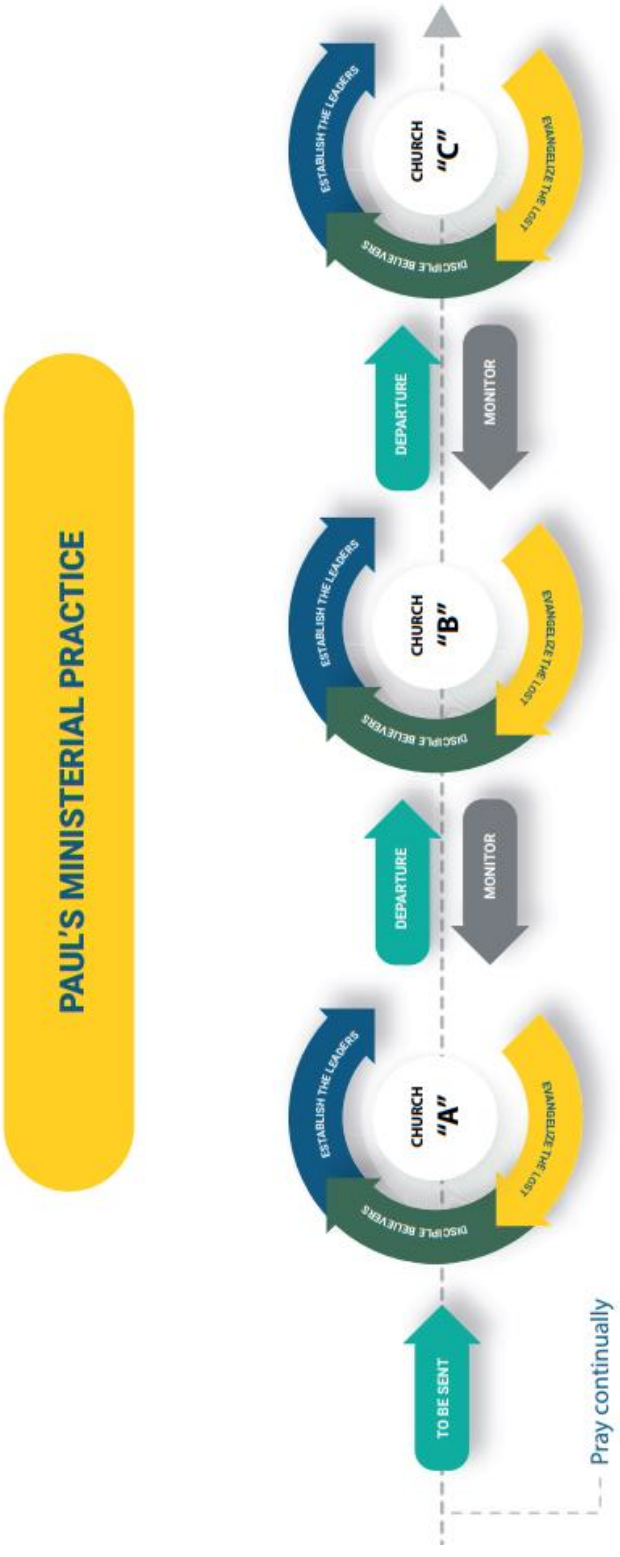


Figure 13 – Paul's ministerial practice

[Source: the author]

3.3 Conclusion

As indicated, the purpose of this chapter was to describe Paul's strategy for church planting. This was done by observing the three main columns of his strategy, that is, his theological convictions, his philosophy of ministry, and his ministerial practice, based on the model of analysis of Pauline strategy and practice proposed by Graebin (2019). The analysis of these angles aimed to provide information towards answering the following question: “What are the implications of Paul's strategy for planning to plant a Reformed church in Formosa?” This question was answered throughout the chapter, making connections between Paul's strategy and the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa.

Before proposing a plan for the implantation of a Reformed church in Formosa, aspects of the city were described (Chapter 2) and the Pauline strategy for planting churches also (the present chapter). Now, the strategy will be applied as a parameter for constructing a relevant and appropriate plan for planting a Reformed church in Formosa. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – THE PLANNING FOR THE PLANTING OF A REFORMED CHURCH IN FORMOSA

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed Paul's strategy for church planting with the aim of taking it as a basis for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa. The purpose of the present chapter is to propose relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of this church in the light of Paul's strategy. Is Paul's strategy for church planting the only one existing and accepted by all church planters? Certainly not, however, as stated in the introductory part of this research, although Paul does not claim that his strategy is unique and normative, it is easy to see that his actions correspond to the strategic actions lived out by Jesus in his own ministry and ordained by him (Mat 28:18-20; Mar 16:15; Joh 20:21; Act 1:8).[113] Hardly any planter could disagree that evangelism, discipleship, leadership establishment and prayer (as a transversal element) are not central elements of the church planting process. Furthermore, since Paul is the leading church planter in the New Testament, nothing could be more appropriate than observing and imitating his example of missionary activity, including to establish a parameter for the planning for the planting of a church.

4.2 Planning for the planting of churches

First of all, it is important to clearly define what planning is. The concept of planning varies according to the scholars. For example, For Drucker (1998:714),

> planning is the ongoing process of systematically and with the greatest possible knowledge of the future contained, making current decisions involving risks; systematically organize the activities necessary for the implementation of these decisions and, through an organized and systematic feedback, measure the outcome of these decisions in comparison with the expectations fed.

[113] "Paul gladly embraced the evangelistic method that Jesus had followed in His own earthly ministry. Where previously he had sought to destroy the followers of Jesus, he now sought to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jewish people and the Savior of the world" (Glasser, 2009:150).

In their turn, Chiavenato and Sapiro (2003:40) say that

> planning is a process of formulating organizational strategies in which the insertion of the organization and its mission is sought in the environment in which it is operating. It is related to the medium and long-term strategic objectives that affect the direction and viability of a company. Planning should maximize results and minimize deficiencies using principles of greater efficiency and, effective-ness. They are the main evaluation criteria of management.

Shapiro (2003:4) defines planning in the following terms: it is “the systematic process of establishing a need and then figuring out the best way to meet this need, within a strategic framework that allows it to identify priorities and determine its operational principles.”

When referring to planning in the ecclesiastical or missional context, White and Acheampong (2017:1) warn of a serious fact:

> A few years ago, it could be said that the church did not pay much attention to the role of effective planning and management as part of its core mandate of building the body of Christ. In situations where planning was done, ensuring the effective implementation and management of plans was always a challenge. Continuing this attitude into the 21st century might have several negative effects on the church.

Precisely because this practice is not observed, experienced leaders estimate that 60% to 80% of the problems faced in the process of planting and consolidating a church are caused by a “lack of strategic planning in the preparatory phase” (Logan & Ogne, 1991; Klippens, 2003:84).

As Portela Neto (1996:2) states, God is not averse to planning and systematization by his people. However, Portela Neto himself (1996:2) stresses one central convictions regarding the biblical-theological concept of the planning practice in the missionary context: that “any planning has to be exterminated under the awareness of the supreme sovereignty of God in all things.” To support his statement, the author recalls the words of James 4:13-16:

> Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

When thinking about these realities described by James, the intriguing narrative of Acts 16:6-10 springs to mind where Paul and his companions were “kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia” (Act 16:6). They continued their journey and “when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to” (Act 16:7). The question that arises from this narrative is: “How and why did the Holy Spirit of Jesus prevent Paul and his companions from evangelizing this region, if the Lord himself had already said that the Gospel should be preached throughout the world (Act 1:8; Mar 16:15)?” This was undoubtedly an action of supreme sovereignty of the Lord, to which this missionary team was subjected. As Longenecker (1964:456) says: “The missionary journeys of Paul reveal an extraordinary combination of strategic planning and sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in working out the details of the main goals. This is especially noticeable here.”

Furthermore, it is important to point out that, as Portela Neto (1996:3) reminds us: “correct planning is the planning of actions and not of results.” The Bible makes it clear that any positive result around converting unbelievers, spiritual growth of believers, planting and consolidating a church, or expanding missionary work, is an exclusive work of the Lord Jesus himself. It is his Spirit who convinces the man of sin, justice, and judgment (Jn 16:8-11). Luke narrates that this was an action of the Lord lived among the believers in Jerusalem (Act 2:47). In turn, in 1 Corinthians 3:6, as indicated, Paul says: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.” All these verses point to the fact that it is up to God's servants to strive for results in their ministerial tasks, but that that which will arise from these actions is up to the Lord alone.

It is pressing to observe the two parables of Jesus described in Mark 4: that of the sower (4:1-20) and that of the seed (4:26-29). In the first, Jesus speaks of various types of soils/hearts in which the seed/word of the sower/preacher fell and the consequences of having been planted in these places. These include the edge of the path, where they were eaten by birds (4:4,15); stony terrain, where they were burned because they had no root (4:5-

6;16-17); among thorns, where they were suffocated (4:7;18-19); and good land, where they germinated and gave good harvest (4:8;20). Given that the seed is the Word (4:14), and the types of soils the hearts of people (4:15), it is clear that it is up to the sower only to cast the seed, having no way to control the results, not even where it will fall and even whether or not it will produce growth.

The Lord Jesus further gave us the parable of the seed:

> He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come” (Mar 4:26-29).

Of course, in the light of the textual context and grammar, there is an immediate relationship between the two passages. In both, the result of sowing is described by Jesus as a sovereign action of the Lord that cannot be controlled by the sower. Precisely because he or she cannot control the result, it does not matter if the sower is awake or asleep (Mar 4:27). He or she can rest, even if they not know how “the seed germinates and grows” (Mar 4:27). MacArthur (2012:20,21) calls this “sleep theology” and comments:

> It is clear, of course, that the fact that the farmer sleeps is no excuse for lazine It is wrong to think that the evangelist's style determines who and how many will be saved. But there is also the serious mistake of using God's sovereignty as an excuse not to evangelize. This is called hyper Calvinism, and assumes that since evangelists are unable to regenerate people, evangelization becomes unnecessary. Nor does this perspective understand the point of Jesus' teaching. The farmer went to sleep, but only after he had diligently sowed the seed. The farmer who thinks, “I am unable to grow the seed, so what sowing for?” will not be a farmer for long. Jesus' description of the sower actually provides a model for evangelism. The Evangelist must sow the Gospel, without which no one will be saved (Rom 10:14-17). Then he has to entrust the results to God, for only the Spirit can give life (Jn 3:5-8).

Considering that only actions and not results can be planned, it is necessary to criticize movements that “seek to present supposedly scientific solutions to the mishaps found in the mission of evangelizing. There is, however, an intense concern in these studies that the methods are continuously evaluated by the results obtained” (Portela Neto, 1996:3).

The people who advocate this kind of pragmatic thinking where methods are evaluated by the results are strongly influenced by the Church Growth Movement initiated around 1960 by Donald McGravan and systematized in the writings of Peter Wagner. Among the central problems of this movement is that “the prescribed methodology and suggested planning inherently bring the concept that evangelization is like a cake *recipe*: if the ingredients are correctly added and mixed at the correct time, the results will come” (Portela Neto, 1996:4). Wagner (1991:19) goes so far as to state that “what God does is usually predictable, yet we also make room for Him to act sovereignly and unpredictably.”

Wagner's statement about God's predictability is as questionable as the need for humanity’s action of making room for him to act. Humanity cannot control the results of his missionary efforts in God's work or, as Newton (1999) says: “pragmatism can result in numerical growth, but it cannot regenerate an unbelieving man.”

Planning and organization find biblical support, although the results are under the sovereignty of God and are not necessarily predictable for human beings. Those who engage in church planting must, therefore, strive to plan for such outreach. In addition, planning church planting should be a pressing exercise among those who engage in this ministerial task, after all, as White and Acheampong (2017:1) remind us, although the Gospel itself does not change, the approach, techniques and Church planning, administration, and management strategies must change to meet the demands of our time.

Far from being a non-spiritual or merely human action, planning for church planting touches on the biblical premise of the good stewardship of time and talents. According to Baker's Dictionary of Practical Theology (Turnbul, 1967:342), “stewardship means keeping something in trust for someone else. For the Christian, it means that everything he possesses administers in trust to God, to whom he will one day have to account for our administration.” The fact that Christ's Church is aware that it will be charged for the way in which it administered that which God gave it should fill it with fear and zeal that will lead, among others, to a good plan for the execution of its missionary task.

As White and Acheampong (2017:3) point out, there are at least five benefits to a planning process. It

- helps focus attention and efforts on achieving the desired goals;
- leads to the adequate and rational allocation of limited resources to achieve defined goals;
- makes those involved proactive and non-reactive;
- minimizes the waste of time and other resources and promotes proper coordination of activities;
- minimizes delays and conflicts in decision-making as well as crisis management.

Organizations (among them churches and their planting projects) will be potentially and negatively affected if they are not zealous when planning their actions. As depicted in the list above, lack of objectivity, loss of time, and loss of financial resources are just a few examples of this potential, not to mention that people involved in church-planting projects organization and planning tend to hurt themselves and others because interpersonal conflicts will definitely arise. It is just a matter of time.

The planning process basically comprises five stages (Pinto, 2016:36)[114]:

- Establishment of the organizational guideline;
- Analysis of the environment;
- Formulation of the strategy;
- Implementation of the strategy;
- Strategic control.

However, “the planning process, although theoretically divided into stages, does not need to be carried out sequentially. It can be seen as a continuous process of reflection on where one wants to go (objectives) and how it will get there (strategy)” (Pinto, 2016:37).

In the first stage of the process, the establishment of the organizational guideline will be raised: these are “the objectives to be achieved” (Pinto, 2016:38). It is essential that the objectives are aligned with the mission of the organization, that is, the reason why it

[114] These steps vary according to the authors, both in the sequence and in the number of steps.

exists, as well as with its values. Thinking about planting churches, at this moment one should answer the question: “What will be done?”

The second stage of the process embodies an analysis of the external and internal environment, where “the organization will be able to identify the threats and opportunities of the competitive environment and, with this, evaluate the factors that can most directly affect the achievement of the objectives” (Pinto, 2016:37). In the case of planting a church, at this stage of the process the questions that must be answered are: “Where will the church be planted and what are the challenges and opportunities to plant a church in this place?” in terms of the external analysis. The internal one asks: “What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team that will plant the church?”

In the third stage, the strategy will be formulated and the actions that the organization must carry out to achieve its objectives will be established (Pinto, 2016:39). Of course, the strategy will take into account the information gathered with a view to the first two stages. In the case of planning for planting churches, at this point it is necessary to ask: “What strategy will be used to plant this church?”

In the fourth stage, the strategy is implemented. This is when the project emerges from paper into a practical, applied reality. “It is the most delicate stage of strategic planning” (Pinto, 2016:40). In a context of church planting, at this point the question should be answered: “What specific steps should be taken for this church-planting strategy to be executed?”

Finally, in the fifth stage, strategic control takes place. “It is a question of reviewing what has been implemented to decide new directions of the process, maintaining the strategies successfully implemented and reviewing the bad strategies” (Chiavenato & Sapiro, 2003:40). In the case of church planting, at this moment the fundamental question to be answered will read: “Is the goal of planting this church being achieved? If not, what can be done differently?”

The planning steps for church planting and the issues they raise are summarized in the figure below.



Figure 14 – The stages of planning for planting churches and the questions they raise

[Source: Adapted from Pinto (2016)]

Each of these elements was present in Paul's ministry of church planting. Of course, neither his letters nor Luke nor the narrative centred on him within Acts used the modern language of the corporate world of today. However, the concepts are present. For example, when Paul preached to the Jews on the basis of the Old Testament and proclaimed the Gospel to the Gentiles from the general revelation, he did so on the basis of analysis of the environment (Stage 2). When he arrived in a locality and preached from the synagogue, he was implementing his strategy (Stage 4) of evangelizing from a place where he would have the opportunity to speak and be heard. Certainly, when he returned to Antioch, his sending church, and to report on his missionary activities, he did so not only for the sake of respect, but also for the sake of evaluation and strategic control (Stage 5).

Since these stages are central to proper planning for church planting, it is important to remember that all steps must be passed through prayer. Planning for church planting is an activity that needs to be done "on your knees." It is not a question of analysing a niche market and establishing a company that will respond to these. It is, above all, a spiritual activity (Van Rheenen, 1996:242).[115]

4.3 Planning for planting a Reformed church in Formosa in light of Paul's strategy for church planting

As said, extant this researcher, after having analysed the description of Paul's missionary journeys as found in Acts 13:1-28.31 and the letters, defined Paul's strategy for church planting in the following terms: it involves a flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control on the basis of three elements:

- Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry;
- Paul's philosophy of ministry, which shaped his ministry;
- Paul's ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed.

Furthermore, it is assumed that planning is imperative for church-planting projects and that Paul's strategy is an applicable/replicable model for church planting today. Although Paul does not claim his strategy to be unique and normative, it is easy to see that his actions correspond to the strategic actions commanded by Jesus (Mt 28,18-20; Mar

[115] This subject will be taken up and expanded below.

16,15; At 1,8; and so on), and that he expects this from every sent company. Furthermore, given that he was the leading church planter in the New Testament, nothing could be more appropriate than observing and imitating his example of missionary activity. The Pauline strategy for church planting does not constitute a kind of “straitjacket” or a “package of fixed ministerial activities” that should be carried out in an unrestricted and inflexible manner. Quite the contrary: it is a flexible *modus operandi*, as I have demonstrated. Thus, even though today's church planters can adapt Paul's strategy to their own contexts (which the strategy allows, given its flexibility), it is fully applicable/replicable as a strategic model for church planting. As stated by Gilliland (1996:276): “While today’s mission is much different from Paul’s in many ways, the principles that motivated and guided him are still urgently applicable.” Furthermore, the modern church planter can and should copy the example of Paul, which is to establish a balance between a life submitted to the Spirit “and a rational, reasonable strategy to engage modern culture with the power of the Gospel” (Alawode 2020:4).

Having defended the applicability of Paul's strategy for church planting and the possibility of using it as a basic structure for planning for planting a church, the present project now comes to its head, since its central objective has been to propose relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa in light of Paul’s church-planting strategy.

Before the planning is developed, it is necessary to recall some subjects dealt with throughout this thesis that will serve as bases for this. First, about the city of Formosa. Chapter 2 analysed it by considering historical, geographical, and its demographic and cultural aspects.

The analysis of these aspects provided information that answered the following question: “in view of the characteristics of the context, thinking missiological and strategically, what challenges or barriers would be needed to overcome for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul’s methodology?” These challenges were listed in response:

- Catholic numerical predominance;
- religious syncretism;
- cultural and racial pluralism;
- a processed urbanization;

- low socioeconomic and educational indices;
- “competition” with other Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches;
- The challenge of a worldview that is markedly utilitarian, presentist, relativistic, individualistic, hedonistic, and that sees the sacred as something to be manipulated and God as a personal being.

Chapters 3 and 4 analysed Paul’s church-planting strategy in the light of Romans 1:1-7 and Acts 20:17-38. It was concluded that Paul’s strategy for planting churches was a result of each of the following items:

- his theological assumptions (which drove his ministry);
- his ministerial philosophy (which shaped his ministry);
- his strategy/attitudes of service (through which he performed his ministry).

Finally, the chapters focused on planning for planting churches. Among the analysed aspects, five stages of planning were found to be essential:

- Stage 1 – establishment of the organizational guideline – “What will be done?;
- Stage 2 – analysis of the environment – “Where will the new church be planted and what are the challenges and opportunities to plant a church in this place?”;
- Stage 3 – formulation of the strategy – “What strategy will be used to plant this church?”;
- Stage 4 – implementation – “What specific steps should be taken for this church-planting strategy to be executed?”;
- Stage 5 – strategic control – “Is the goal of planting this church being achieved? If not, what can be done differently?”

In terms of the combined concerns of the city of Formosa, Paul’s strategy for planting churches, and Reformed theology, while using the five steps proposed above, a relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa will be presented.

The steps to be undertaken will be formulated in terms of the following structure:

- What question needs to be answered at this stage?

- What are the critical elements at this stage?
- What are the relevant elements of Paul's theology and strategy at this stage?
- What are the relevant elements of Reformed theology at this stage?
- What are the elements of the city of Formosa that need to be observed for the stage?

4.3.1 Stage 1 – Establishment of an organizational guideline

The question that needs to be answered in this step is: "What will be done?" During this phase of the project, the planter forms a church planting team, transmits to this group his or her ministerial vision, and provides, together with a local church, a support system in prayer, funds, and other resources necessary for the execution of the task. The critical points of this stage, therefore, are the choice of the planter (who will lead the planting); the choice of the people who will compose the planting team (who will assist in planting); and obtaining support from a sending church (which will support the project). These are the central elements of this step. In the end, the organizational guideline should/can be summarized in just one phrase.

4.3.1.1 The planter

Of course, God uses people of different temperaments, age groups, cultures, and life experiences to plant churches. To say that there is a "perfect planter model" would be to go against the biblical narrative itself, which shows diverse and different missionaries used by the Lord to fulfil the mandate to go and make disciples of all nations (Mat 28:18-20).

However, the Lord Jesus himself is the ultimate executor of his mission. In his own words: "apart from me you can do nothing" (Joh 15:5). Just look at the Early Church, for example: if it was not for the Lord, Christianity could never have expanded in the way that it did. Even Paul, the greatest church planter in the New Testament, said that the success of his ministry was not due to his qualities, but because of the Lord's grace. In his words: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Cor 15:10).

If Paul asserts that the grace of the Lord was the sustaining element of the ministry, on the other hand, paradoxically, the same Paul who says this says to his young disciple Timothy:

> In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work (2 Tim 2:20-21).

In terms of the qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9), Paul stresses that being a leader in the Christian church – which includes the work of a planter – is not just a matter of willingness and disposition. There are certain characteristics that should be found or grown in these people. If these characteristics do not present themselves, the person is unfit for ministry.

Therefore, the lesson is clear: on the one hand, God's work advances in spite of its workers. On the other, God's work *advances* through workers qualified to do so. When it comes to the ministry of church planting, Thomas (2010) says that it is "difficult for the most qualified men and nearly impossible for those unqualified. If a man does not have the essential tools for the job, he will frustrate himself and everyone around him." Unfortunately, many books on church planting do not address these personal dimensions (Ott & Wilson, 2013:309). Pinney (2006:8) states: "Although the planter himself is an essential component of church planting, his personal and spiritual life still does not receive adequate attention in existing training." The same reality is true of Paul's ministry of church planting. Usually, the subject is addressed in the light of the theology or Paul's cycle of planting churches. However, when observing his ministerial performance, both in Acts and in his letters, there is little talk of Paul's skills as a planter[116]. The fact is that Paul had skills that led him to the ministerial success he had. He had a strategy and he was competent to execute it.

[116] Grady and Kendall (1996:172) are among the rare authors who talk about Paul's characteristics as a missionary, and among these they highlight four: Paul was called; Paul was trained; Paul had innovation and ingenuity; Paul was a teacher and preacher. In his turn, Stenschke (2020) reflects on the relationship between Paul's lifestyle and his performance as a leader in the light of Acts 20:17-35.

A considerable number of authors have worked on the concept of competencies, especially in the pedagogical environment and in the corporate/business environment. For Chiavenato (2000:166), “skills are those personal characteristics for the performance of activities that differentiate people's performance.” Furthermore, competence concerns “the quality that a person possesses and that is perceived by others” (Chiavenato, 2003:6). Spencer and Spencer (1993:9) say that “competence refers to characteristics intrinsic to the individual that influences and serves as a benchmark for their performance in the workplace.” For Perrenoud (1998:1), “the notion of competence refers to everyday practices that are mobilized through knowledge based on common sense and knowledge from experience.” McClelland and Spencer (1990:14) define competence as “an underlying characteristic of a person who is casually related to superior performance in performing a task or in a given situation.” Durand (1998:3) conceptualizes competency as “a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are interdependent and necessary to achieve a certain purpose.”

Therefore, competency boils down to a set of three elements: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These elements relate to each other and are fundamental to the execution of a task. Furthermore, the execution of a given activity involving a person with the necessary skills usually results in a higher-than-average performance. Napoli (2014:145) says that knowledge is that which one learns to learn; the skill is that which is demonstrated throughout the doing, that is, performing functions; and attitude is the desire to do. This occurs when one takes the initiative to do something that maybe no one else has done yet.

The elements that make up Paul's skills, such as church planter, are not always easily discernible. First, there is no list of Paul’s skills anywhere in the Bible. The word “competence” is not used in the New Testament. Still, the idea of competence is present in the pages of the New Testament, especially in Acts and Paul’s letters. This can be gleaned from the texts by inference.

For example, when Paul is stoned in Lystra and, the next day, returns to stand there again to announce the Gospel (Act 14:20,21), it can easily be concluded that Paul had an attitude of resilience. Secondly, skills are not static realities. They change, they expand, and they are excluded in people's lives over time. And that was no different in Paul's life. He saw himself as a changing person. Philippians 2:13,14 say: “Brethren, I do not think I have achieved it myself, but I do one thing: forgetting the things that have

been left behind and advancing to those that are ahead, I move on to the target, in order to win the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus."

For example, Paul testifies that his understanding of the Gospel of Jesus had a much broader clarity after a few years (Gal 1:11-24). In other words, the Paul of Acts 9 is not the same as the one of Acts 28. He had grown in his competencies. Paul's life and leadership are not perfect, "but they provide a tremendously stimulating and inspiring example of what it means to continue advancing to maturity" (Sanders, 2005:27).

The following items mark a cross-sectional set of competencies that were present in Paul's church planting ministry:

Table 11 – Paul's competencies for planting churches

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Main biblical doctrines (creation, fall, redemption)	Contextualized communication	Entrepreneurship
Culture and geography of the time	Spiritual gifts: apostleship, evangelism, leadership, faith, encouragement	Resilience
Judaism	Team work (participation and management)	Motivation
Certainty of the call	Management of the planting process	Humility
Clear targets and purposes	Leadership training	Dependence on God
	Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting)	Accountability
	Hearing God's voice	
	Writing	

[Available at: the author]

The three elements of knowledge, skill, and attitude operated in Paul's life in given fascinating ways, giving rise to a specific profile of competence, so that he could be successful in his church planting ministry. Consider the process of planting the church of Corinth. Paul was aware that he was an apostle, called to preach the Gospel of grace (1 Cor 1:1). Being knowledgeable about the geography and culture of his time, he knew that Corinth was an important city, especially because it was a port and had a great commercial flow; he knew also of moral and religious depravity there (1 Cor 6:9-11; 8.1-13; 12.2). Knowing Judaism and the functioning of the synagogue, he used this space as a place of evangelism (Act 18:4). In this environment, he had the ability to evangelize his listeners through contextualized communication (Act 18:4).

Paul was however not alone in his task. Priscilla, Aquila and, later, Silas and Timothy, made up a ministerial team (Act 18:2,5). Paul had the ability to participate in and join this team. After a period of resistance to the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews, he strategically moved from the synagogue to the house of Titus Justus and made this space his place of evangelism (Act 18:7). Paul's time among the Corinthians was therefore characterized by persecution and opposition, but he enjoyed a resilient attitude and one of dependence on the Lord. The result? “Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God” (Act 18:11). In other words, Paul became the planter of that church (1 Cor 3:6) and the spiritual father of children to whom he would still have to dispense much energy and care, as reflected in the letters addressed to this group (1 and 2 Corinthians).

Observing the characteristics that result in effective leadership for church planting, Thompson (1995; 2007) identifies twenty-one key ones and those that are most often mentioned as essences for the success of church planting. He divided these into three categories: dimensions of spiritual life; an ability to plant churches; and personal and interpersonal skills. In similar research, Ridley (1998) lists nine competencies of effective church planters: they are intrinsically motivated; the cooperation of the spouse; exercises faith; visionary capacity that creates mastery of the ministry; affecting those who do not belong to any church and the lost; effectively establishes relationships; effective use of the gifts of others; building the cohesion of the group; commitment to the growth of the church; and a flexible, adaptable attitude that demonstrates malleability. Based on a synthesis of these studies and personal observations, concluded that the most important qualities for church planters are (see Ott & Wilson, 2013:311):

- God's call;
- Holy character;
- Strong spiritual dynamics (prayer, listening to God's voice, and so on);
- Spousal support;
- A set of skills for the mission;
- Emotional intelligence and adaptability;
- Spiritual gifts suitable for the task.

“If these foundations are laid, God will continually mold the worker in service” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:311). The list of qualities of effective church planters contains elements that will only appear in the lives of leaders as they develop emotional and spiritual maturity. In this sense, it is important to note that the ministry of planting of Paul's churches in this sense begun from the sending of the church of Antioch (Act 13:1-4) and happened when he was already about 41 years old, ten years of conversion and a previous ministerial experience, both in the church of Antioch (more than one year, according to Acts 11:26), and in previous fields (Act 9:23-26; Gal 1:18).[117]

In light of this information, it is clear that Paul was a mature person with a view to his age. Moreover, later the apostle himself would say that one who was a neophyte should not be placed in the pastoral ministry (1 Tim 3:6). Although the passage does not properly address the matter of the church planter, but only of an elder, the principle remains the same. One should not put new ones in the faith within a leadership position “so that he does not become proud and falls into the same condemnation that the Devil fell” (1 Tim 3:6). Paul knew of the spiritual pressures and battles common to Christian ministry and knew that these could not be exercised by immature people. There are many factors that contribute to the missionary's overall stress (Taylor, 1997), most of which resort into one of these categories (Ott & Wilson, 2013:317):

- Multiple circumstances and new changes;
- Lack of resources and employees;
- Loss of support systems;
- Difficulties specific to the process of starting a church;

[117] Although these dates can be viewed with some flexibility, they were calculated from Kümmel's observations (1982:322-326).

- Opposition or lack of recognition.

Ott and Wilson (2013:317) say that, in some respects, planting a church "is like starting a new business with volunteers when market analysis indicates that most people are not interested in their product [...] Planters need to be designers, promoters, managers, leaders and instructors, without taking into account their natural inclination." For these reasons and many others, planting a church is a rewarding but complex ministry that requires considerable emotional intelligence, courage, and endurance. The attitude of the Church of Antioch which, upon hearing the clear direction of the Holy Spirit sent approved and experienced leaders to the missionary task that was ahead, is commendable. As Bruce (1981:261) comments: "It is perhaps worth noticing that the two men, who were to be released for what we should nowadays call missionary service overseas, were the two most eminent and gifted leaders in the church."

In addition to the aspects mentioned, at this point in the planning it is important that the planter foresees the kind of ministry he or she will have: whether he or she will be a pastoral, catalytic, or apostolic planter. This will inevitably influence his or her ministry in the medium and long term.

The goal of the pastoral church planter is simply to start a new church and shepherd it. The catalytic planter aims to plant a church that will become the catalyst for other churches (usually in the region) and launch a church planting movement. The apostolic church planter aims to multiply churches that neither are dependent on the planter of churches nor on external resources. While in these two cases the planter becomes the pastor, in this last approach, the apostolic one, he or she has no pastoral function but serves the people offering training and delegating the ministry. "The church planter leaves quickly leaving the ministry in the hands of local leaders" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:99).

Each approach has strengths and weaknesses. For example, in the apostolic approach weaknesses may include the following (Ott & Wilson, 2013:99):

- Initially, progress will be slower;
- Local Christians are not always motivated or empowered to lead;
- Lay leadership can be weak or poorly trained;
- Most church planters are not trained in this method;
- The church planter can change location several times.

Paul used elements from each of the approaches but, surely, he was an apostolic planter. He planted the church, brought that group of people under the leadership of other leaders, and set out on new missionary work. In addition to being faithful to Paul's strategy, apostolic church planting values an important element of Reformed theology: the general priesthood of all believers. Apostolic church planting puts the responsibilities of leadership in the church in the hands of lay leadership, valuing a shared leadership style.

However, it is important to think about the possible difficulty of the applicability of this approach in the present context. This is because the culture of the city of Formosa, characterized by Catholic predominance and influenced by Spiritism and Pentecostalism/ neo-Pentecostalism, usually sees with difficulty a shared leadership style. What stands out in these movements is the messianic leadership style. As Proença (2003:57) says: "The Brazilian religious imaginary is also strongly marked by messianic representations, that is, by the belief that it is possible to overcome contingencies and ills following the voice of command of visionary leaders with a strong charismatic representation."

In Catholicism, priests are charismatic leaders and mediators between the profane and the sacred. In turn, Afro-religions and other branches of Spiritism rely on the Father of Saint or the Medium to, as his name suggests, mediate the relationship between the physical and spiritual world. In Pentecostalism/neo-Pentecostalism this phenomenon is repeated. For example, in 1995, Rede Globo de Televisão[118] aired a video recorded by a dissenting pastor of the Universal Church and reported by the *Isto É*[119] magazine, in which Edir Macedo[120] gave training to his pastors on the messianic way by means of which they should behave before the public: "You should not appear before the public with that meek conversation, looking like a priest, like poor, humble [...], people want to see in you aggression, bravery, the people want to be provoked, called to a challenge in which they can overcome their own limits and instigated to face the devil to overcome it [...]" (Birth, 1995:20).

Similarly, when the offer security to people traumatized by need, hardship, and economic insecurity, neo-Pentecostal leaders fulfil social and psychological functions for them,

[118] Main Brazilian television station.
[119] Weekly magazine of important circulation in Brazil, based in São Paulo,
[120] The Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus is a neo-Pentecostal denomination with strong emphasis on Prosperity Theology. It was founded in the late 1970s by Edir Macedo, its main leader to this day.

providing them with emotional support and satisfying their desires for a magical spiritual worldview to overcome the crises they face (Proença, 2003:61). This involves a stark difference between the leadership style of these neo-Pentecostal pastors and Paul's. For example, in the passage of Acts 20:17-38, studied here already, when Paul bids farewell to the elders of Ephesus he presents himself as someone who exercised his ministry with all humility, weakness, and dependence on the Lord. In the light of these realities, the lesson is clear: the planter of a church in Formosa who will use Paul's strategy will need to reflect on a balanced position as leader.

At this stage of the project, the planter will need to reflect on the planting approach that he will make. Will it be a pioneering approach or regional reproduction? A pioneering planting of churches involves planting where there are "very few Christians, and, other than by the team of planters, there are few or no local Christians who can help start the church. Work will grow almost exclusively through evangelism" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:135).

This was Paul's approach, where pioneering was one of its pillars. In contrast, regional reproduction concerns planting churches based on the missionary work of a church in the region, which ends up becoming a sending church. If Paul indubitably was a pioneer planter, the churches he had planted reproduced, "forming numerous churches in homes in the same city" (Ott and Wilson, 2013:135), or expanding to other nearby regions. In the context of Formosa, a pioneering approach would not be fitting: not, at least, in the same terms as those of Paul, because there are already many Christians in the city. Therefore, the most convenient approach is regional reproduction, that is, planting a church under the tutelage of a sending church in the region.

The last element to be studied by the church planter at this stage, is this: "What will the theological orientation of the new church be?" Grady and Kendall (1992:372) state that

> more effective church planters are more committed to a doctrinal position**.** While creativity and flexibility are beneficial in evangelism, rigidity in doctrinal position, at least initially, produces better results. The most effective church planters appear to be very tight in their theology. The specific position itself is not as important as strict adherence to it.

In the case of the planting under examination here, the church will be planted under the guidance of Reformed theology.

4.3.1.2 The planting team

As indicated, one of the elements of Paul's ministerial philosophy was teamwork. Paul was not a “sniper” or a “lone ranger” in his missionary approach. Even when he was in the company of only one person, he formed his team (Act 16:1). In Solomon’s words, he knew that two are better than one, “because they have a good return for their labor” (Ecc 4:9). His co-workers helped him discern the Lord's will, supplemented his ministry with gifts, and acted as emotional aids in an environment marked frequently by loneliness (2 Tim 4:9-10).

Despite the fact that it was a practice in the ministry of Paul, “until recently, the literature on church planting did not devote much attention to the role of the teams [...] the popular belief arose that the church planter needed to be a vigorous and lonely visionary” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:333). However, in the last fifteen years of the 20th century, a change of thought began to take place in this direction. There was a growing interest in teams within missionary circles. At that time, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) conducted an important study on teams in the workplace by obtaining important results from their research. First, that a demanding and challenging job tends to form a team. Second, the most effective teams are not created in a vacuum but are born of necessity. Third, teams seem to work best when they have a clear task that requires a variety of perspectives and skills. Based on this information, conclude Ott and Wilson (2013:333): “Church planting is undoubtedly a complex and challenging task that requires a variety of perspectives and skills in which 'real teams' can be expected to succeed.”

Work teams can be divided into two categories: formal and long-term or formal and temporary teams such as work groups, committees. Church planting teams generally tend to be formal groups linked to the goal of planting the church for the time that is proposed.

The main elements of such teams are that they enjoy (Ott & Wilson, 2013:334)

- complementary profiles, not equal ones;
- a commitment to a common purpose;
- a decision on how they will work together to achieve this purpose;
- working in cooperation in the implementation of the purpose and plans;
- taking each other's responsibility for the results.

Macchia (2005:41) defines Christian ministerial equipment in the following terms:

> A Christian ministerial team is a manageable group of diversely gifted people who are joyfully responsible for serving together for the glory of God: sharing the same vision; living the loving message of Christ; performing a meaningful ministry; anticipating future results.

Finally, as to how these teams are formed, Lukasse (1986:2) says that a church planting team is generally made up of career missionaries or short-term missionaries who will be aiding a missionary once or twice. In some cases, the team is a blend of career and public missionary couples. Occasionally, the team lives in a community. In other cases, families are spread over a specific area of, for illustration, a megacity, and operates from the central place of a church.

Anyway, it is certain that the teams offer enormous advantages for the process of planting churches. In a study of the teams of Acts and five missionary organizations to identify the characteristics of the healthy and effective ones for planting urban churches, Sawatsky (1987) identified twelve items:

- Complementary gifts;
- Development of gifts;
- A stronger support system;
- Ability to open the doors of ministry to more people;
- Security in times of crisis;
- Protection against temptation;
- Provision of training during the execution of the work;
- Ensuring accountability;
- Decreasing loneliness;
- Allowing each to focus on strong areas;
- Intensification of the sense of vision;
- Ability to manage a larger project.

Although advantageous, working with a team brings in itself a huge challenge for the church planter. The leader should be able to inspire confidence because of his or her character and competence (Ott & Wilson, 2013:340). In addition to inspiration, he or she will need to determine the course to be taken. As Maxwell (2007:54) says: “Anyone can drive the ship, but it takes a leader to set course.”

Another challenging element is the fact that teams, as a rule, go through moments of difficulties regarding interpersonal relationships. The conflicting experience lived by Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark on the first missionary journey (Act 15:36-41) should be a sufficient warning of how these kinds of situations can occur in the missionary context. This will require the planter's ability to manage, mediate, and resolve conflicts. As though the elements inherent in the leadership of a team are not enough, add the issues of Formosa city culture that will potentially be difficult for the execution of the planting of a church through a team.

One of these characteristics, as noted, is the tendency to value a messianic leadership style to the detriment of shared leadership. Another cultural trend influenced by the religious configuration of Formosa is clericalism, that is, the Christian ministry being exercised through the “professionals of the faith,” duly paid for it. Clericalism is quite visible in Catholicism and, since, numerically speaking, this is the greatest religious influence of the city, such a conception can become a hindrance to teamwork. On the other hand, the biblical doctrine of the general priesthood of all believers rediscovered by Reformed theology will undoubtedly bring a biblical-theological response to the practice of a team church planting ministry in the city of Formosa.

It is important to reflect on three questions in this context. First, how many people should make up the team and what spiritual gifts do they need to have? There is no single answer to this. Of course, a team of three can be considered small, while a team of one hundred people can be an inlated number. Ott & Wilson (2013:346) suggest a team composed of the following individuals:

- A planter with an apostolate gift and one for evangelism;
- Two sprinklers with gifts of teaching, admonition, and administration;
- Three assistants with gifts of evangelism, faith, help, and mercy;
- Local disciples, sharing their faith, making disciples, and beginning to serve believers.

It could be said that the team should consist of about ten people. Based on the present author’s experience, there is a certain dynamism in the number of components, since the local disciples are inserted in the team. This assumes that they are placed after the beginning of church planting. The insertion of these individuals in the team is important,

because the project starts to be executed by the locals communicating that it is “our” project, not “theirs.”

A further question that springs to mind here reads: “What profile does this team need to have for Formosa?” To answer this is imperative because, a configuration is created for the team that will be “the face” of the future church. Hesselgrave (1995:136) says that these members “should not be chosen simply on the basis of their availability.” Other than that, there is a natural tendency for people to choose to attend a church “because of relationships and programs, not because of location” (Warren, 2002:163).

Thus, when someone goes to a church schedule (a cult, for example), consciously or unconsciously he or she wonders if there are people there with characteristics similar to himself or herself as regards gender, age group, sociocultural level, and so on, in the belief that he or she will related with them. If he or she finds people who look like himself, there is a tendency to stay there and even become a member of that church. Otherwise, he or she will possibly look elsewhere.

As indicated, urban residents of Formosa comprise 92.3% of the population (113 789) whereas rural ones total 7.7% (9 895). Of the total number of residents, 50.9% (62 955) are female and 49.1% (60 729) male. In terms of race, the Formosa’ population is divided as follows: yellow (2 612); white (33 448); indigenous (124); brown (54 738); black (9 163). The age group with the highest representativeness is the one between 30 and 39 years (16 628), followed by those between 40 and 49 years (12 305) and ten to 14 years (9 765). The age group with the lowest number of people is 70 years or older with only 3 164 representatives. Therefore, the characteristics of the population of Formosa point to a predominance of urban residents who are relatively new (between 30 and 49 years old), while the female audience has a larger number than that of males.

In light of this data, while adapting Ott and Wilson's team configuration proposal to the context of Formosa, it would be ideal to be composed of a team comprising the following individuals:

- A planter with an apostle and evangelist gift (and his family) of between 30 and 45 years old, with small children and/or adolescents;
- Two couples of watering cans aged between 30 and 45, preferably brown, with gifts of teaching, admonition, and administration;

- Two assistant couples, between 30 and 45 years old, preferably white or black, and three women in the same age group, one black, one brown, and one white;
- Two couples from Formosa between 30 and 45 years old, and two women in the same age group sharing their faith, making disciples, and beginning to serve believers.

The team would thus consist of approximately 22 people, excluding children. For the most part, the team would be made up of couples, which is very important for the context of Formosa, since it is highly marked by dysfunctional families, adultery, divorces, and so on. The families are mostly composed of young couples and small children. In this team, there will be a strong presence of women anticipating the tendency of the local culture that they are the first to start attending church, as well as the numerical superiority of women in the population. It will be a "multicoloured" team reflecting the configuration of the city. Finally, there will be an intentional choice of couples and women from Formosa. One of the goals with putting these people on the team is to form a quick connection between the church in planting and the residents of the city.

One has to then answer a further important question: "How and how long will this team be trained?" Once the group that will make up the team has been selected, it is up to the planter to train them for executing the project. This will require of the planter to have skills for training, such as those of "the guardian of health and team values" (Ott & Wilson, 2013:349).

Before this training and training period are determined, it is important that the leader develops a close relationship with team members. When it comes to a church planting team, we are talking about rallying a group of people who will work on a project spending hours, energy, money, and other resources, usually on a voluntary basis. Therefore, it is indispensable, as Maxwell (2007:134) states, that the leader observes the Law of Connection, that is, that the leader "touches the heart before asking for a helping hand." To this end, Maxwell (2007:139,140) suggests eight practical steps for leaders:

- Connect with yourself;
- Communicate openly and sincerely;
- Get to know your audience;
- Live your message;

- Go where they are;
- Focus on them, not you;
- Believe them;
- Offer guidance and hope.

The present author however contends that some leaders have a problem with the Law of Connection, because they believe that establishing the connection is the responsibility of the followers. This is true, especially in relation to positional leaders. They are used to thinking: I am the boss. I have the position. These team members are my workers. Let them come to me. But successful leaders who observe the Law of Connection always take the first action. They take the trouble of continuing to build connections. It is not always easy, but it is important for the success of the association. A leader has to do this without taking into account the number of obstacles involved (Maxwell, 2007:140).

A closer look at Paul's' church-planting strategy shows the way in which the apostle lived with what we now term the Law of Connection. It is evidenced by his process of disciple-ship, development, and Timothy's training. Before being useful to God's work, while be-ing an important "labourer" in Paul's hands, Timothy was a spiritual son of the apostle. In other words, before winning his hands, Paul won his heart.

After "winning the heart" of their leaders, the church planter needs to train them, infusing in the group the vision of the project to be done. Based on the Scriptures and, in the case of the project of planting a Reformed church, based on this theological tradition, they need to consider what they will do (they will plant a church), when they will do it (set dates for the execution of tasks), and what the motivation for this is (the glory of God).

Training can be done (Ott & Wilson, 2013:349,350) in:

- regular meetings (two to four times a month);
- special family meetings for communion and fun (several times a year);
- retreats designed specifically for training (at least annually);
- the abodes of families of the team (as needed).

It is important that a schedule is set for this training. After the team has been formed, the training period should not be longer than six months from its beginning until the first service or other activity that will publicly mark the beginning of the planting of the church.

Long training without a specific date for its completion tends to generate discouragement and loss of objectivity among participants.

4.3.2 Stage 2 – Environmental analysis

The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: “Where will the church be planted and what are the challenges and opportunities to plant a church there?”

If in the first phase of the project, the planter must recruit, train, and pass his or her vision to a team and provide support from a sending church. The planter undertakes to become a researcher of the context where the church will be planted, aiming to list the challenges around and opportunities for carrying out this missionary project in this locality. The critical point of this step, therefore, is the analysis of the site and the limits and possibilities that it imposes. At the end of this step, the planter should be able to summarize some characteristics of the site and incorporate them into a phrase, taking into account that it has already begun in the preceding step.

Choosing a city or locality to plant a church is an activity that involves both subjective and objective factors. When struggling with the question “where should I plant a new church?,” the planter knows that every place has the need to plant a church. After all, there are people who are “lacking in the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) who need to hear the Gospel. Planting a church with the goal of reaching them, therefore, is a necessity everywhere.

However, the planter also needs to think strategically. It is important that even in the Early Church there was room for strategic missionary thinking. For example, the apostles agreed that Peter, James, and John would focus on the Jews, while Paul and Barnabas would develop their ministry among the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-9). Thus, “because human and strategic resources are always limited, the church planting team can make better use of them by prioritizing a specific group” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:181).

There are at least seven topics to consider when choosing the specific place or group where the church should be planted (Ott & Wilson, 2013:181-184):

- Spiritual need. There are groups and places that have been reached to a lesser extent than others; therefore, there is a greater need to plant churches there. Holste and Haney (2006) state that, when in a certain

location has less than 2% of evangelical population and minimal or no church planting activity among them, the people can be considered “un-reached”;

- Greater receptivity. God, in his sovereignty, prepares groups and people to receive the Gospel. Although the Gospel should be testified to for all people, there are missiological and biblical reasons to give priority to receptive groups above non-receptive ones. In this situation, the planter and his or her team will need to have great discernment to classify a group as receptive or not;
- Pre-existing nuclei of Christians or Christians of the diaspora. For various reasons, among the people or in the potentially viable place for planting churches, there may be a group of believers. If one chooses to plant a church in this region, in addition to pastorally supporting these people, the planter can insert them into the planting team. This will provide a great advantage, since these believers already have a certain spiritual maturity and already relate to the locals, opening possibilities for evangelism;
- Exceptional opportunity. At certain times, God opens doors for missionary activities to take place in certain places. For example, Paul discerned a “broad and promising” ministerial door in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:9). Apart from this, Paul continually asked the brothers to pray for him so that ministerial doors would be opened and the Gospel to be witnessed (Col 4:3). Around this, the planter needs to have spiritual discernment of the situation. The counsel of other believers is also fundamental so that the planter does not follow doubtful inclinations;
- Supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the kind of experience faced by Paul and his co-workers in Acts 16:6-10. The Holy Spirit prevented them from preaching the Gospel in the provinces of Asia and Bithynia (Act 16:6,7). This blocking can be understood only in the light of the Lord's sovereignty. Would the Spirit himself prevent his missionaries from fulfilling what they had been led and empowered by the Lord (Act 1:8) for any other reason? In the subsequent verses, God gives Paul a vision, directing him to Macedonia (Act 16:9). The consequence is that the Gospel would reach Philippi (Act 16:11ss). As stated, this kind of guidance requires from the planter a life of deep intimacy with the Lord in prayer.

- Strategic effectiveness. Occasionally, there will be regions that contain Christian leaders of high credibility and good testimony, or other groups of believers living in a place where there are no churches. Although it is not the only strategic possibility to be observed, this constitutes a potential for planting a church in that location;
- Geographical factors. There are certain cities that influence others in the region. If a church is planted in this context, other churches may arise, starting a church-planting movement. Other than that, certain regions receive a greater influx of people, due for instance to urbanization. Usually, these people tend to be more open to new ideas, since they are looking for new benchmarks. In this context, planting a church tends to thrive.

Taking these factors described above into consideration, would Formosa be a “good place” to plant a church? Of course, not always subjective elements are difficult to consider. For example, was there any church planter who received a clear direction from the Holy Spirit to plant the church in Formosa? Or, to what extent are the city's residents receptive to the Gospel? Or, how to discern an exceptional opportunity for ministry?

However, objective elements can and should be evaluated. Thus, based on the data listed in Chapter 2 of the present project, from the point of view of spiritual need, Formosa cannot be considered an “unreached” city. Evangelicals account for 16.35% of the population with 20 221 members. What is to be noted, however, is the low number of members of the historical churches such as Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian ones: they add up to a mere 1 841 members, that is, 1.49% of the population. From a numerical point of view, the inexpressive reformed presence in the city should further be taken into account: it is restricted to the Presbyterian Church of Brazil with 88 members corresponding to only 0.07% of the population.

Groups of existing Christians or diaspora Christians live in Formosa, which enhances the importance of the planting and establishment of a new church. Census data shows that 103 people say they have no particular religion or multiple belonging; 98 claim to belong to other Christian religiosities; and 78 say they do not know which religious branch they belong to. Why can't some people in the city objectively answer the question about their religious affiliation? One of the reasons is that, in recent years, especially after the 1970s, Brazil has experienced a trend of religious transit. As for the direction of the flow of traffic, Almeida and Montero (2001) affirm that there are patterns of migration between religions

and that Catholicism is configured as a kind of universal donor, with Pentecostals and those without religion as the main recipients. To better illustrate the patterns of religious transit flow, the authors proposed a representative scheme as reflected in the figure below:

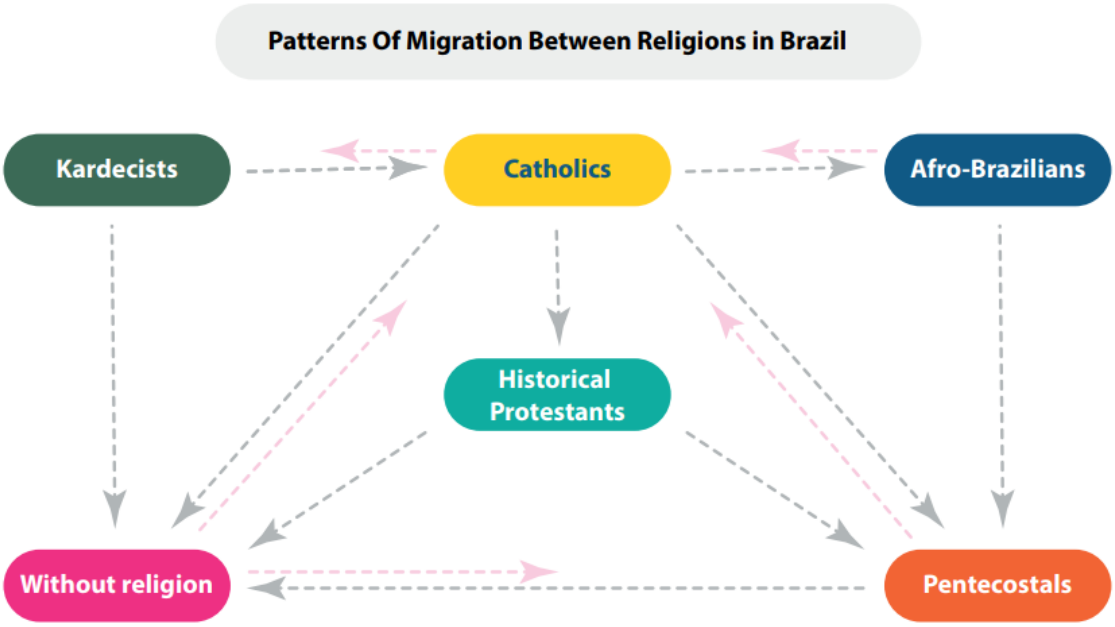


Figure 15 – Patterns of migration among religions in Brazil

[Source: Almeida & Monteiro (2001:98)]

It is quite common to find people who fail to define the group to which they belong, which confirms the census in one of the three ways mentioned above. In addition, a growing number of people are evangelical Christians but do not join any specific church or attend several churches, that is, the "church hoppers," constituting a group of believers who are in need of some form of pastoral care. Simultaneously in the future they could form part of a planting team.

Another group of evangelical Christians who temporarily live in the city but do not join any denomination are those who have been transferred to work in the armed forces or other professional activity, as well as students from other regions. Many of these cannot adapt to existing churches and end up without congregating, therefore also needing pastoral support and having the same potential to form part of a team planting a new church.

From the point of view of Reformed ecclesiology, there is no Christian life dissociated from affiliation to the local church. As CFW (chapter XXV, art. III) reminds us:

> To this visible Catholic Church Christ gave the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, to the congregation and improvement of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world, and by the very presence and spirit makes them effective for this purpose, according to his promise.

Therefore, a Reformed confessional church can make an important contribution to the spiritual life of countless unchurched or persecuted Christians living in Formosa. In terms of strategic effectiveness (especially from the point of view of Paul's church-planting strategy) and geographical location, Formosa is an opportune place for planting a church. There is no way to speak of strategic places without taking urban contexts into accout. As mentioned, they exert influence on smaller cities. Thinking about this trend, Paul developed a ministry of planting churches in urban contexts, evangelizing and establishing churches in major cities so that these, in turn, radiated the Gospel to geographically smaller contexts.

According to Bruce (2003:308), Ephesus served as the basis for the evangelization of the whole proconsular Asia, just as Thessalonica did for Macedonia and Corinth for Acaia. The influx of people to Ephesus was a reality, since "all roads converged to Ephesus, and all the inhabitants of Asia visited Ephesus from time to time, to buy or sell, visit a relative, attend the baths, watch the games in the stadium, watch a drama in the theater, or worship God" (Stott, 2000:352). In this effervescent context, Paul had constituted a centre of Christian activity. The consequence? All "Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Act 19:10).[121]

From an economic point of view, Formosa is not among the main cities of the state of Goiás[122], but it does exert influence on several municipalities and localities: Cabeceiras, Vila Boa, JK, Buritis, Formoso, Posse, Simolândia, Flores, São João d'Aliança, and so on. Formosa can be considered to be a strategic city in this sense.

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[121] Something similar happened in Thessalonica, another important city. After hearing the Gospel and converting to Christ, Paul testifies that they "became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath" (1 The 1:7-10).

[122] According to data from the Secretary of State for Management and Planning, the economic centres of the state of Goiás are Catalão, Itumbiara, Rio Verde, Jataí, Goiânia, Anápolis, and Brasília (Prado, 2011).

There is also another strategic element related to the city: the effects of urbanization on people. When an area is going through a rapid process of urbanization, transmuting from an essentially rural culture to an urban culture, there is a tendency to generate stressful processes. On the one hand, these engender enormous challenges. On the other, they provide great missionary opportunities. One of them is caused by the lack of social structure. Basic problems such as housing, for example, are not easily solved by social governmental policies. The urban mass moving from the countryside to the city needs to be resettled. Then, the slumns arise, which become the very expression of unequal economic development marked by the accelerated urbanization (Carmo, 1998:127).

Rapid and disordered growth of these peripheral regions occurs due to the process of spatial segregation, which increasingly pushes the working class to the outskirts of the city. The fringe has always been an extensively threatening place for its residents. Who would find it reasonable to live in a region that gathers nearly all the blights a megacity can have? The thoroughfares have no pavement and flood when it rains. Neighbourhoods do not have hospitals or dentists. In some homes, piped water and sewage are attained only with covert connection – so that, in numerous cases, the debris runs in the open. Square and green areas are luxuriant particulars. Since no scrap collection is done, residents use the gutters and live in a weakened and complaint-filled terrain (Secco & Squeff, 2001:88).

Formosa has undergone a process of urbanization and consequent "faveolization,"[123] due to the arrival of population masses attracted by the trade and services offered in the city, especially since the beginning of the construction of Brasilia. In recent history, the number of people who moved to Formosa from the Federal District has increased significantly because of the duplication of the highway connecting the two places, the BR 020. The vehicle safety that was promoted by this construction attracted several families to Formosa who had been stimulated by the cheaper cost of living compared to Brasília/DF.

However, it is worth remembering that Formosa received a significant contingent of people at the time of the expropriation for occupation by the Brazilian Army in 1974. Already at that time, people who left the rural context were placed on the outskirts of the city, creating the first pockets of poverty. Even today, it is common to meet people who have lived this tragic experience of expropriation and show the marks that came with it.

[123] From the word *favela* in Portuguese, equivalent to "slum" in English.

In the urbanizing context, unemployment invariably becomes a social demon. The dream of living in the city with all the benefits of this, including that a job, collapses in the face of the country's economic instability. It increasingly requires professional and academic qualification which the migrant, as a rule, does not have. The industry, in turn, is oriented to labour-saving production systems, in which each new job requires high investments. Consequentially, in homes where adults do not find employment, children become a source of income.

Unemployment causes the society to unravel socially in the desperate search for income resulting in prostitution, gambling (*bicheiro*)[124] or involvement with drug trafficking. The domino effect, makes the regions with the highest urban migratory flow to the ones with the highest rates of urban violence. It is clear that the social, educational, and economic levels described in Chapter 2 are not only due to the issue of urbanization. However, they are certainly enhanced and fostered by this.

Urbanization does not only bring with it social consequences in urban spaces that are not prepared to receive the migratory flow. The migrant himself or herself suffers the consequences of these changes. First, one can verify the problem of isolation. What happens is that the individual can be physically integrated into the group whereas he or she feels alone and has no one to trust with problems, doubts, joys, and sorrows (Pilletti, 1997:182).

The migrant who has left his or her rural context with its rhythm of life, culture, and symbolic goods cannot develop relationships. In fact, in general, people are seen as alike. It is a competition – conscious or not – that starts with being in line to get a job, and that intensifies the individualism and philosophy of "each one for himself." In the urban context, the network of contacts can be intense, but the rhythm of the city does not allow relationships to be deepened. The feeling of being "one more in the crowd," and oppress the human psyche, causing people to prostrate themselves in solitude.

Another effect is what Ribeiro calls deculturation. Its gravity is almost equivalent to the first great deculturation that the people suffered in the first century, by de-Indianizing the Indians, de-Africanizing blacks, and de-Europeanizing Europeans (Ribeiro, 1995:205).

[124] "The game of the animal is an illegal betting bag in numbers that represent animals. It was created in 1892 by Baron João Batista Viana Drummond, founder of the Rio de Janeiro Zoo, in Vila Isabel, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil" (Benatte, 2008:66).

The migrant finds a distinct way of life in the urban environment, to which he or she needs to adapt, giving up the old culture and adapting to a new one. Such uprooting causes the loss of references and traditions, and the emotional effects are devastating. Exorbitant rapid-fire changes, migration, profitable insecurity, violence, and misery are largely responsible for this situation. The loss of artistic identity and rejection by society induce instability and low-tone regard in recently arrived people, causing an emotional imbalance. Depression affects the system and makes humans vulnerable to usually harmless contagions and bacteria (Silva, 1996:236).

The lack of ethical and moral limits is another point that stands out in the life of the one who goes through the migratory process. The urban environment has a number of norms that differ from those of the rural context. The ethical, moral, and behavioural references differ, because “when people change places, the structure they have assembled over a lifetime is left behind. Ahead is just clay, mosquitos and the hope of a better life” (Secco & Squeff, 2001:91). As a consequence, invariably, “anomy settles in, prostrating crowds in discouragement and alcoholism. It often deteriorates, too, in anarchy, in fleeting gestures of uncontrollable revolt” (Ribeiro, 1995:206).

As Proença (2003:48) says, in the context of this kind of capitalist economy in the process of remodelling, causing disarticulation of the ways of life, a conglomerate of people living in limiting situations is formed who lack guidance that could provide support and meaning in life. This means that urbanization presents a huge challenge for the church. On the other hand, it is a huge missionary opportunity, also in the city of Formosa. The church attracts people “because they [are] harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mat 9:36). To them it can be of diaconal service, offer a home and a family (koinonia) and, of course, present the Gospel of Christ. Given these aspects, Formosa could again be considered a strategic city for planting a church.

In conclusion, the second stage of the church-planting project can be summed up in a sentence: Formosa, a geographically strategic city, which is going through a process of urbanization with low socioeconomic and educational indexes and Catholic predominance and a group of unchurched or poli-churched evangelical Christians, presents challenges and opportunities for the planting of a Reformed church.

4.3.3 Stage 3 – Formulation of the strategy

The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: “What strategy will this church be using?” In the first phase of the project the planter must recruit, train, and pass his vision to a team and provide support from a sending church; in the second, the planter undertakes to become a researcher of the context where the church will be planted, aiming to list the challenges and opportunities around this missionary project in this locality; in the third stage, the planter will establish the actions that will be taken to carry out the church-planting project. The two critical points of this step are the strategy itself (what will be done and how), and a schedule (when it will be done). Eventually, the formulation of the strategy should be summarized in just one sentence.

4.3.3.1 The strategy

In terms of the first two stages of the project strategic elements were discussed already. For example, such elements can be observed when one chooses to plant the church with a team and not with an individual planter; when the support of a sending church is sought; when one opts for an apostolic and non-pastoral or catalytic church planting, and so on. In the present stage, these will be reaffirmed and deepened.

It is worth remembering that Paul’s strategy has been taken as a basis for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa. As mentioned, Paul’s strategy for planting churches boils down to these aspects:

- His theological assumptions (which drove his ministry);
- His philosophy of ministry (which shaped his ministry);
- His practice, (through which his ministry was executed).

It was also demonstrated that, although it is applicable for the planting of churches today, Paul’s strategy is not a kind of “straitjacket” that limits the planter to apply all its elements. Not even Paul applied all the elements of his strategy on each church-planting occasion.

In terms of his ministerial philosophy, planting a Reformed church in Formosa can be modelled on the following points:

- Being sent by a church. As stated, this it is part of planning to have a sending church similar that of Antioch in Paul's ministry. This aims at spiritual, financial, and pastoral support, as indicated;
- Teamwork. This means opting for a planting team, as indicated, instead of an individual project restricted to the planter and his family. It involves reaching strategic places. As mentioned, given the geographical positioning and historical moment of urbanization, Formosa is a strategic city for planting a church;
- Pioneering and self-sustaining finance. Those two elements of Paul's ministry philosophy may or may not be applied in this planning. Formosa is not a city without a Christian presence. On the other hand, opting for a full-time planter who will be financially supported by a sent church eliminates the need for financial self-support.[125]

Finally, Paul carried out his ministerial practice in terms of stages to be developed for the planning for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa. This includes the following:

- Being sent by a church. Paul was sent (Acts 13:1-3) by the Church of Antioch, which became for him a base of missionary support;
- Evangelizing the lost. The target audience of this action were the lost, whom Paul evangelized, in the expectation that these people would respond in faith to the message and convert to Christ. Paul understood that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) in a position called total depravity in theology. It is important to emphasize that Reformed theology resonates with Pauline understanding. In Formosa, a population of more than 120 000 people exist who are totally depraved and lacking in the Gospel of Christ;
- Discipling the converted. The target audience for this action were those who responded positively to the Gospel message and became believers. Those who were converts were incorporated by the local church and baptism symbolized this entry. Believers in Christ need to grow spiritually in a sanctification process, and the medium the Lord uses for this is discipleship. Reformed theology dovetails with Pauline understanding: “this sanctification is in the whole man, but imperfect

[125] Financial dependence on the mother church is a very serious problem among churches planted in Brazil, so much so that some remain dependent for decades. At some point, the planted church has to become independent and self-sufficient. To this end, some practical attitudes can be taken: one of them is consistent teaching about stewardship of finances. The other possibility, as suggested above, is for the planter/ pastor to become bi-vocational (that is, a “tentmaker”).

in this life; there are still remnants of corruption in all parts of it, and from there is born a continuous and irreconcilable war – the flesh fighting against the Spirit and the Spirit fighting against the flesh" (CFW, chapter XIII, art. II).

- Establishing the leaders. The target audience of this stage were the potential leaders, that is, those Paul would leave to lead the church as soon as he went to another ministerial effort. They were the elders and deacons, established on the basis of specific criteria. In this regard, Reformed theology states that "the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, instituted a government in the hands of her officers" (CFW, chapter XXX, art. I).
- Leaving and monitoring. The target audience of this stage was the next church to be planted. As seen, it was an apostolic church planting, in which the apostle did not assume the position of the pastor of the church (or, in some cases, did very briefly), but acted only as the planter;
- Praying continually. Prayer was a transversal activity of all Paul's ministerial practice. The apostle knew that church planting was a spiritual activity engendered in a field of satanic opposition, and prayer was fundamental for the consolidation of missional work (Eph 6:10-20).

It is extremely important that the planter and the team understand that this process does not necessarily take place sequentially or linearly. Thus, evangelism, discipleship, and training of leaders can occur simultaneously. Before entering the execution schedule, it is important to ask how these activities can be better developed for Formosa.

4.3.3.2 The timeline

At this point in the project, the planter needs to make a schedule, considering the steps above. Below is a proposal for a medium-term schedule spanning 2023-2027 (five years). Of course, it does not deal with all the details and activities for planting the church of Formosa, but the main events of this period are stipulated.

Table 12 – Proposal for a schedule for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa

	Item	Run up to
Preparation	Establish the planter, church planting team, and sending Church	31/01/2023
	Moving the planter, his family, and other members of the planting team to Formosa	01/02/2023

Implementation Phase (Planning Steps 4,5)	Training and prayer meetings with the church planting team (weekly meetings, retreat)	01/02 – 31/07/2023
	Rent and adequacy of a commercial room for the realization of public services	01/05/2023
	Full out evangelism phase	01/05/ - 31/12/2023
	First public service	01/08/2023
	Beginning of discipleship aiming for baptism	15/08/2023
	Start of the training of leaders (considering that some will be from the planting team)	15/08/2023
	Strategic control meeting	01/10/2023
	Continuation of full out evangelism	01/01 – 31/12/2024
	Continuation of public services	01/01 – 31/12/2024
	Insertion of new disciples	01/01 – 31/12/2024
	Formation of support departments (children, ladies, men, couples, Sunday Bible School, and so on)	01/01 – 31/12/2024
	Insertion of the first leaders for the departments	01/01/2024
	Strategic control meeting	01/02/2024
	Strategic control meeting	01/07/2024
	Strategic control meeting	01/10/2024
	Continuation of full out evangelism	01/01 – 31/12/2025
	Continuation of public services	01/01 – 31/12/2025
	Insertion of new disciples	01/01 – 31/12/2025
	Formation of support departments (children, ladies, men, couples, Sunday Bible School, and so on)	01/01 – 31/12/2025
	Insertion of new leaders for departments	01/01/2025
	Beginning of the training of future elders and deacons	01/01/2025
	Strategic control meeting	01/02/2025
	Strategic control meeting	01/07/2025
	Strategic control meeting	01/10/2025
	Election of the first elders and deacons	31/12/2025
	Start of a project to plant a new church in another city in the region or in another neighbourhood	01/01/2026
	Continuation of full out evangelism	01/01 – 31/12/2026

Transition Phase	Continuation of public services	01/01 – 31/12/2026
	Insertion of new discipleship	01/01 – 31/12/2026
	Training of support departments (children, ladies, men, couples, and so on)	01/01 – 31/12/2026
	Insertion of new leaders for departments	01/01/2026
	Strategic control meeting	01/02/2026
	Strategic control meeting	01/07/2026
	Strategic control meeting	01/10/2026
	Church organization and financial untying and church leadership envoy	31/12/2026
	Beginning of the pastoral transition to a new pastor	01/01/2027
	Continuation of a project to plant a new church in another city in the region or in another neighbourhood	01/01/2027
	Continuation of full out evangelism	01/01 – 31/12/2027
	Continuation of public services	01/01 – 31/12/2027
	Insertion of new disciples	01/01 – 31/12/2027
	Training of support departments (children, ladies, men, couples, and so on)	01/01 – 31/12/2027
	Insertion of new leaders for departments	01/01/2027
	Strategic control meeting	01/02/2027
	Strategic control meeting	01/07/2027
	Strategic control meeting	01/10/2027
	Pastoral leadership of the church transitioned to a new pastor	31/12/2027
	Planter departs for a new missionary project	31/12/2027

[Available from the author]

The schedule was divided into three phases. The first is the Preparation Phase (6 months), which includes Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the project. At this stage, it answers the "what" (objective), where (local), and how (strategy) of the project to be executed. It is also at this time that a team of planters is selected and begins to be trained, in addition to gaining the support of a sending church.

The second is the Execution Phase (four and a half years), which includes Stages 4 and 5 of the project. At this stage, the project exits paper and becomes a practical reality involving the actual implementation of the strategy. Is it necessary for this implementation

to be constantly evaluated in terms of the following questions: “Is the goal of planting this church being achieved? If not, what can be done differently?” To this end, strategic control is constantly done.

The third is the Transition Phase (one year), which contemplates the moment of the change of pastoral leadership of the church. For the sake of preventing that this occurs abruptly, the future pastor will be invited to be in the church under the tutelage of the planting pastor, until such time when pastoral leadership is definitely transitioned to him or her.

Each phase has a key event that marks its beginning:

- Preparation Phase: Establish the planter, the church planting team and the sending church;
- Implementation Phase: First public service;
- Transition Phase: Beginning of the pastoral transition to a new pastor.

Likewise, each phase aims to reach a specific purpose:

- Preparation Phase: Prepare a group of people for planting the church;
- Execution Phase: Planting a church until the time of its organization (autonomy);
- Transition Phase: Transition the pastoral leadership of the church so that the planter can start another church-planting project.

Finally, Paul’s planting strategy was not performed in a diachronic way only but also synchronically. This implies that the activities emphasise the moment while it goes through a continuous repetition. For example, at the beginning of planting, there must be abundant evangelization (given the moment); however, the church must continue to evangelize (for it is her calling). Another constant element in this schedule is the strategic control that aims – as will be seen below – to assess whether the project is being properly executed and what can be done to better execute it.

In conclusion, the third stage of the church-planting project can be summed up in a phrase in response to the question that reads: “What strategy will be used to plant this church?” The phrase reads: by following Paul’s church-planting strategy.

4.3.4 Stage 4 – Implementation of the strategy

The question that needs to be answered in this step is: “What steps should be taken for this church-planting strategy to be executed?”

Finally, then, given the first three steps, the planter will execute the project making a practical reality of what was until then just a plan. The critical point of this step, therefore, is the execution itself and the challenges inherent in it. In the end, the formulation of the implementation of the strategy can be summarized in just one sentence, as will be done at the conclusion of this section.

As stated, although an application proposal may appear to be diachronic, the steps also need to be seen as synchronous. Lidório (2018:112) states that, in a more structured view, planting a church is a process composed of six main stages: relationship-building, evangelization, follow-up, meeting for worship, training leaders, and addition. One stage does not merely follow the other. The structure is instead also cyclical, where paths complete each other, intertwine, and are always repeated, as illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 16 – Six steps for planting a church
[Source: Lidório, 2018:112]

Although the proposal displayed by Lidório adds elements over and above those proposed in this research, their central items are similar.

4.3.4.1 Being sent by a church

Once the church planter has been identified, while the people who will compose the ministerial team responsible for this task, the theology that will guide the planting, and a project agenda has been established, spiritual, pastoral, and financial support will be obtained from a sending church.[126]

This moment dovetails with Paul's church-planting strategy since, as mentioned, it was part of Paul's ministerial philosophy to be sent by a church. At first, the Church of Antioch played this role. It is quite interesting that Lucas uses wordplay to describe this process. On the one hand, they "laid their hands on them [Barnabas and Paul] and sent them" (Act 13:3). On the other, they were "sent by the Spirit" (Act 13:4). That is, the Church of Antioch recognized the call of Barnabas and Saul and sent them to the ministry. But that was not a human action. On the contrary, it was a spiritual action: it was a sending by the Spirit. The lesson, therefore, is clear, namely that the Lord sends his workers through his church.

Reformed theology reflects the same conviction, emphasizing that the followers of Christ "have an obligation to sustain the religious ordinances that are already established and contribute, through their prayers and offerings and through their efforts, to the expansion of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world" (CFW, cap. XXXV, art. IV). When seeking the support of a sending church, the planter will aim to obtain support for himself or herself and the project in at least three areas: prayer support, financial support, and pastoral support.

As evidenced by his ministry, Paul saw a clear relationship between evangelism and spiritual battle. According to Luke's narrative (as found in Acts), shortly after Paul and Barnabas were sent on their mission, they were faced with satanic opposition in Cyprus

[126] Although the term "sending church" is in the singular, in some church planting projects a pool of churches gathers to support the new missionary endeavour. Although this may happen, it is very important that there is only one responsible church. This avoids any communication and relational problems that may occur between the planter, the staff, and the sending church.

(Act 13:4). It seems, at least on the basis of Acts, that this was the first time Paul faced a clear and deliberate diabolical opposition to his ministry, but it would not be the last.

Paul knew that “the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Cor 4:4) and that all humanity without Christ was under the influence and subjection of the “kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Eph 2.2). Because of this, he appealed to churches and individuals to hold him up in prayer (2 Cor 1:10-11; Eph 6:19-20; and so on).

Garrison (1999:28) lists the ten common characteristics of church-planting movements, and cites the suffering of planters as one of these. The list of missionaries who have shared in the church-planting projects looks like a list of disasters. Numerous suffered illnesses, derision, and shame. In some cases, the suffering was due to their own tone-destructive spirit. In other cases, it occurred at the hands of opponents. Scholars suggest that the depravity may be related to the paying of an advanced spiritual price needed to ward off the forces of darkness (Rev 12:12). Precisely for that reason, “the need to rely on God's power and intervention through corporative prayer is documented in the annals of church planting history” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:188). For example, the Moravians are among those who sent more transcultural missionaries per capita than all Protestant groups together (Tucker, 1983:71). What drove this advance? There were undoubtedly many factors, but the crucial point was the revival in Hernhutt, which generated a prayer movement that hosted daily meetings and a prayer vigil that lasted a hundred years (Tucker, 1983:70). Examples from both the biblical period and recent history testify to the need for church-planting projects to be maintained prayerfully. Evidently, first of all, the planter and his or her family should pray frequently, then the whole planting team, and also the supporters of the sending church.

Apart from spiritual support, the sending church will provide financial support to the planter and the project to be executed. As demonstrated, in Paul's ministerial philosophy self- financing was of importance. At first, Paul took his livelihood from the tents he made and chose not to be a financial burden for any church (1 Cor 9:12b). However, Paul later reported that he received offerings from the Philippians (Phil 4:10-20) and was asking for support from believers in Rome for his subsequent missionary work in Spain (Rom 15:24). In addition, writing to Timothy and giving guidance on how elders should be chosen and treated, he says that “the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For

Scripture says, ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain’, and ‘The worker deserves his wages’” (1 Tim 5:17.18)

The fact is that financial support issues can be one of the critical factors around planting a church. A survey posed this question: “Why do church plantings fail more often in Latin America?” Many church plantation leaders mentioned the lack of funds, financial support, or denominational support to be the main causes of this (Wilson, 2001:229).

Although there are no rules for the mechanics of financial sustenance, at this stage of preparation, planters must have a reasonable and viable plan for the financial support of their families (1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9; Phi 4:10) (Ott & Wilson, 2013:189). There are basically three main options regarding a planter-resource-raising policy. Each of them has advantages and disadvantages and are approved/ possible from the point of view of Christian ethics (Ott & Wilson, 2013:189):

- Full-time secular work;
- Full-time church planting through the prior survey of financial support;
- Planting of a bi-vocational church requiring previous partial support.

Of course, the planter himself or herself and the members of the planting team must be the first to offer support for the project to be consolidated. These people are expected to have the spiritual maturity to the point where they are practicing a proper stewardship of their own finances. Another expectation is that, as the church-planting project is being executed and people convert to Christ, they themselves will become involved members and begin to collaborate financially to consolidate the church planting.

In any case, when seeking financial support from a sending church, the planter needs to be provided with a budget that will clearly inform the amounts to be spent on the project. Assuming that the church planter in Formosa will work full-time and will have the financial expenses provided by the sending church, this budget could be presented as below.

Table 13 – Budget proposal for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa

FIXED MONTHLY EXPENSES (2023)[127]	
Values relative to the planter family	
Item	*Value*
Pastoral income (five minimum wages)	5.030,00
Social security	1.006,00
Fuel aid	500,00
Rent a pastoral home	1.400,00
Subtotal	**7.936,00**
Values relative to the ministerial expenditure	
Item	*Value*
Tithe	300,00
Rent commercial room (church building)	3.500,00
Water commercial room	350,00
Electricity commercial room	350,00
Internet shopping room	100,00
Commercial room cleaning	500,00
Stationery	250,00
Programme “So Simple “	800,00
Miscellaneous expenses (decoration, maintenance, equipment, Mail)	500,00
Subtotal	**6.650,00**
Total	**14.586,00**

[Available at: author]

In the first part, fixed expenditure is placed for the first year (2023). These expenses are divided into two groups: values referring to the planter's family and values related to ministerial expenses (project execution).

Table 14 – Deployment expenses

DEPLOYMENT EXPENSES	
Item	*Value*
Expenses for meetings of the planting team	6.000,00
Refurbishment/ adaptation commercial room	35.000,00

[127] Values expressed in Reais.

Visual identity	800,00
Website	2.500,00
150 chairs	15.000,00
Pulpit	2.000,00
Sound system	3.000,00
Projetor	2.800,00
Furniture for children's ministry	3.000,00
Teaching materials for children’s ministry	500,00
Printing pamphlets for distribution	1.000,00
Total	**72.600,00**

[Available at: author]

The second part of the budget contains the expenses for the implementation of the project. The necessary elements are foreseen for the starting of the planned meetings with the team up to the first service, considering that a room will be rented and that it will have to be renovated to serve as a place for meetings.

Table 15 – Expenditure and revenue forecast (2023-2027)

EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE FORECAST (2023-2027)			
Year	***Expenditure***	***Internal revenue***	***External revenue***
2023	276 731.00	42 000.00	234 731.00
2024	304 405.00	90 000.00	214 415.00
2025	334 845.50	150 000.00	184 845.50
2026	368 330.05	250 000.00	118 330.50
2027	405 163.05	405 163.05	-

[Available at: author]

The third part of the budget is the forecast for expenditure and revenue between the years 2023 and 2027. An increase of 10% per year is indexed. The values classified as “internal revenue” relate to the tithes and offerings of the people directly involved in the planting (that is, the planter and his family, the components of the planting team, and future church members). The amounts labelled as external revenue relate to the offerings coming from the sending church.

The sending church will provide pastoral/emotional support to the project, especially to the planter's person, his or her family, and the team. This was a practice present in Paul's life and ministry. So, when he and Barnabas returned from their first journey, “they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples” (Act 14:27,28). Of course, the missionaries’ intention was not just to provide an administrative report. It was a time of communion, of recharging emotionally and spiritually. At the same time, it was a time when the church of Antioch could learn from the missionaries, who had possibly been away for more than four years (González, 2011:205). There are, according to González (2011:205,206), two important lessons to be learned from the testimony of this sending church: first that, today still, there is a need for churches to bless everyone who takes the risk of going out for missions – as Luke would say, to “lay their hands on them” (Act 13:3). Second, they should listen to missionaries when they meet with the sending church and learn from them in their mission.

The fact is that, often, church planters go through difficult situations in terms of new and necessary adaptations, being under spiritual battle, and even that there are no other mature Christians with whom they can share their burden or even advise themselves. It is precisely in this context that the emotional and pastoral support of the sending church is so necessary. On the other hand, the sending church that listens to the church planter can learn from the missionary and grow in its missionary practice. It is, therefore, a two-way street, where one learns from the other and grows in maturity and consequent obedience to the Lord.

In conclusion, the first stage of the church-planting project can be summed up in a sentence in response to the question: “What will be done?” It reads: “for the glory of Jesus a Reformed Church will be planted through a planter, a church planting team, and supported by a sending church [...].”

4.3.4.2 Evangelize the lost

It has been observed here that one of Paul’s theological convictions was his apostolic call. Paul saw himself as a servant of Christ who had been sent apostolically to all nations to preach the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:1-7). He felt like a debtor before a creditor (Rom 1:14), obliged to witness to the good news which, according to his own definition, was “the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then

to the Gentile” (Rom 1:16). For Paul, the Gospel was necessary because of the sin that originated in Adam and Eve, and which also ended up affecting all humanity (Rom 5:12), placing all human beings in a position of slavery to sin (Rom 6:16) under the wrath of God (Rom 1:18), and in the condition of death (Rom 6:23). Sin, in Paul's conception, is therefore both an attitude and a condition. Such a definition can be summarized in only one verse: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

By systematizing the condition of the post-Fall human being, Reformed theology, as aligned with Pauline understanding, states that due to the first sin, Adam and Eve “fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and became dead in sin and entirely corrupted in all faculties and parts of the body and soul” (CFW, chapter VI, art. II). This state of corruption ~~did~~ not only drive Adam and Eve away from God, but also “all their posterity, which proceeds to them by ordinary generation” (CFW, chapter VI, art. III). Because of this original corruption, humans were “totally unwilling, incapable and adverse to all good and entirely inclined to all evil, is that all present transgressions proceed” (CFW, chapter II, art. IV). Because of sin, humanity is “subject to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and therefore subject to death with all spiritual, timeless, and eternal miseries” (CFW, chapter II, art. VI).

In this condition of total depravity, the human being is dead in his or her trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1), being unable to save himself or herself for his or her works, therefore desperately in need of Christ's saving grace. It is precisely at this point that the Gospel of Christ presents itself as good news. It is the clear demonstration of God's love in delivering Jesus to die for sinners (Rom 5:8). Jesus paid the price of the debt imposed by sin. Now the unjust can be justified “freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24).

Moved by these convictions, Paul preached the Gospel in the expectation that the Lord himself would convince the people of his sinful state and salvation in Christ. Paul believes that faith in Christ is “a gift of God” (Eph 2.9), or, as expressed in Reformed theology, “an evangelical grace” (CFW, chapter XV, Art. I) that the Lord grants to those whom he has predestined for salvation “before the creation of the world” (Eph 1:4). Therefore, the apostle testified “to both Jews and Greeks that they needed to be converted to God with repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 20:21). Among these people to whom Paul preached the Gospel were Lydia, and “the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message” (Act 16:14 b).

Taking into account the centrality of evangelism for the consolidation of a planting of churches, what would be the most effective way to evangelize people in Formosa? First of all, it is important to remember that the city is neither characterized as a secularized and indifferent place to Christianity (such as some European countries), nor even as an isolated place where people have never heard of biblical truths. It is extremely important that the planter is aware that such a picture presents good possibilities for communicating the Gospel, but also common barriers to this configuration. Crotts (2017:19) says that, today,

> in some places in the West, such as Brazil or the United States, they still have enough residue of Christian culture from bygone eras for people to retain a general knowledge of God, creation, sin, and even the basics of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It may seem natural to use a Bible in order to point out the truths of the Gospel, just as Paul did in the synagogue of Thessalonica. Unfortunately, the problem with talking to (or "so-called") nominal Christians is that they typically assume that a little knowledge of these basic Bible themes is all they need to be in a good relationship with God.

Thinking about the religious context of Formosa and its Catholic predominance and religious syncretism, it is important to remember that these movements, in general, preach salvation by works. In Catholicism, this doctrine is expressed in canons 9 and 10 of the Council of Trent, "written at the height of the Counter-Reformation, but never abrogated to this day" (Witt et al., 2001:62):

> Canon 9 – If one said, that by faith the wicked is justified; in such a way as to say, that nothing else is obliged to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed of by the movement of his own will; is anathema;
>
> Canon 10 – If one says that men are justified solely by the imputation of Christ's righteousness or solely by the remission of their sins, excluding grace and love that are poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and who remains in them; or if one says that the grace by which we are justified reflects only God's will — let it be anathema.

These statements go to the centre of the doctrine of justification by grace and faith that is central to Calvinist doctrine. “These statements are the unwavering defense of God's sovereignty in salvation, proclaimed by the 16th Century Reformation and remain part of the teachings of the Catholic Church” (Witt et al., 2001:62).

There is a similar understanding in Spiritism. Started by Allan Kardec in 1857, with the publication of *The spirits' book*, according to Pereira (2007:18,19),

> the Spiritist movement presents itself as the historical and prophetic continuation of Christianity. More than an alternative in the religious market, the spiritists’ purpose is the revitalization of the exemplary figure of Jesus of Nazareth, in a reinvigoration of the ethics of love and the heroic faith of the first Christian communities. Spiritism is a movement of reform of Christianity, continuing and deepening the reformist movement of the 15th and 16th centuries, aiming at returning to their origins, and purifying the errors and misunderstandings of the Christian message over the centuries.

Pereira's definition contains some crass errors. First, it historically relates Spiritism to Christianity. From the biblical-theological point of view, Spiritism is a movement with practices contrary to Christian Scripture, thus disassociated from it. To say Spiritism is Christian is, from a biblical point of view, impossible. Secondly, it is wrong to align Spiritism with the reformist movements of the 15th and 16th centuries. It is sufficient to quickly retort that the central doctrines defended by the two movements are antagonistic. One of them is the understanding of the person and the work of Christ (Christology). For Spiritism, Jesus Christ is an exemplary figure. For the Reformers, Jesus is much more than an example: he is the Lamb of God immolated for the sins of humanity (Jn 1:29). Thus, the motto of Spiritism that reads “out of charity there is no salvation,” is diametrically opposed to the Reformed doctrine of salvation by grace and faith in Christ.[128]

[128] For example, in his relationship with the Bible, Pires (2003:92) states that “Spiritism respects the scriptures, and relies on them, to confirm its own legitimacy, but does not enslave itself to them. On the contrary, Spiritism receives the scriptures as a cultural collection, from which it draws the creative energies, the vital forces condensed into their forms, to reelaborate them into new expressions of spirituality.” This definition shows the gulf between the understanding of the centrality of scripture in Spiritism and Reformation, which has always emphasized *the Sola Scripturae.*

While “Spiritism proposes the reform of man, and this goal is inseparable from the construction of a fraternal society, through the reform of institutions that stimulate and excite human selfishness” (Pereira, 2007:29), the biblical doctrine advocated by the Reformation points out that humanity cannot reform itself, for it is dead in its crimes and sins and, consequently, it cannot change the society in which it lives, composed of others who are equally totally depraved. In other words, Spiritism invites humanity to look at itself, improve itself and improve the society in which it lives. The Gospel invites humanity to look by faith to Jesus (Heb 12:2), be transformed by the power of God (2 Cor 3:18) and, consequently, change society, even though its citizenship as a Christian is not here, but in heaven, from where “we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phi 3:20).

Unfortunately, some branches of Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism also present a proposal for salvation that mixes the grace of Christ with good works. This doctrine is based on one of the main points of Arminianism, which argues that the security of eternal life is conditional, that is, believers are fully assured of salvation on the condition that they remain in Christ. Salvation is conditioned to faith, so perseverance is also conditioned (Piccalilli, 2002:203).

Thus, if Jesus is only the author and not the finisher of faith (Heb 12:2), and salvation depends solely on the believer, in practical terms his or her salvation will be “a certificate of good behaviour as a Christian.” What would that be but a sum of Christ's grace + the believer's good works? However, the biblical teaching stressed by Paul and elsewhere in the Scriptures shows that “abiding in Christ” is not based on works, but on the grace of God in salvation (that is, through the blood of Christ on the cross) that brought the believer into a relationship with Christ (John 15; Eph 2:4-10), as indicated.

In view of this situation, in Formosa the “witnessing to the Gospel of God's grace” (Act 20:24) must be pressing. It is necessary to present to people the biblical truth that they are dead in their sins, totally depraved, and that in Christ they find gracious salvation. The church affirms and proclaims the same words of Peter: “We are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus” (Act 15:11).

On the other hand, thinking about the challenges of the urbanization process that the city has experienced and the consequent situation of isolation common to this social phenomenon, evangelism through relationships is an important option to be implemented.

The fact is that there are a considerable number of people who feel isolated. Nurturing a friendship with these people in order to witness to them of the Gospel of Christ is a great tool.

As Warren says (2002:43), “a smart and friendly conversation opens doors to evangelize non-believers faster than any other strategy.” The attitude of going after isolated people with the intention of developing friendships and proclaiming the Gospel to them must come from the planter. As Van Rheenen (1996:244) says: “The church-missionary planting must map out the web relationships that connect people to people. The Gospel travels along these relational pathways.”

In the context of social isolation, not only is evangelism through personal relationships important, but also evangelism through small groups. With a small number of participants it is easier for believers to intentionally nurture relationships with non-believers in order to proclaim the Gospel to them.[129] Later, the very people who are reached with the Gospel will also be able to evangelize the people of their relationship group. Grady and Kendall (1992:378) rightly say that “more effective church planters have a greater ability to incorporate new converts into evangelistic outreach. Consistently, the more effective ones quickly involved new believers in ministry and evangelism, even though they had minimal training.”

The Gospel must also be witnessed by actions. The transformed life of believers and good deeds need to reflect the good news of Jesus. In this way, non-believers will see the works and “glorify the Father, who is in heaven” (Mt 5:16). Green (1984:223-232) points out that the communion of believers, their transformed character, their joy and their perseverance, are indisputable factors of the Christian faith's propagation. In Wright's words (2012:33), “if our mission is to share the good news, we need to be good news people. If we preach a Gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what this transformation is like.”

This transformation, of course, is multifaceted. Christians are called not to live a selfish life, but to take care “not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Phil 2:4). In practical terms, the transformed believer will be imbued with

[129] Jess Moody says: “We will win the world when we realize that fellowship, not evangelism, must be our primary emphasis. When we demonstrate the Big Miracle of Love, it won’t be necessary for us to go out – they will come in.” I would say, rather, that our emphasis should be evangelism through fellowship and especially through small koinonia groups (see Snyder, 2017:169).

compassion in the name of Christ, which will lead him or her to worry about practical issues such as poverty, disease, injustice, and every form of misery and human sin. This opens into a new point of discussion regarding evangelism in Formosa: the relationship between evangelism and diakonia or social action. Gondim (2009:113) says that, among evangelicals, three conceptions of the function of social action persist in the missionary action of the church:

> (1) social action as an instrument of proselytism, that is, social action serves to convince people to accept Jesus; (2) social action as a result or complement of evangelization, that is, true conversions generate people of solidarity, with a sense of justice and strive to promote good; (3) social action integrated to evangelization, without any difference between proclaiming the contents and the Church's solidarity commitment to the human being in all its social, cultural, political and economic reality.

Conceptions 1 and 3 seem foreign to Paul's practice. Neither in Acts nor in the letters does Paul encourage or practice a diaconal action with an intention to bring another person to Christ.

Paul does not integrate social action into evangelization. Although he practiced both, he understands that they were commandments to be obeyed, each in its sphere of action. Although there were many social demands in his time, in his missionary journeys he prioritized the evangelization of people. This holds an important lesson for the church today. Green (1984:149) says: "From the moment you pluck the fundamental root of Christ's conversion from the Christian message, it becomes a lifeless and broken plant, though it presents the beauty of the flowers of social involvement and concern."

On the other hand, as noted, "true conversions generate people of solidarity, with a sense of justice and strive to promote good" (Gondim, 2009:113). Thus, a church that does not care about issues concerning deacons, above all, disobeys the great commandment of the Lord, of loving others (Luk 10:27).

Apart from that, a Reformed church that understands that all life must be lived for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31), will not departmentalize it into spiritual and secular corners. Kuyper (2014:39) says that, in Calvinism, domestic life regained its independence, business and commerce refreshed their forces in freedom, art and science were freed from

all ecclesiastical ties and restored to their own inspiration, and humanity began to understand the subjection of all nature, with their hidden strengths and treasures, to itself as a sacred duty imposed by the original ordinance of Paradise: “Have dominion over them.”

Thus, evangelizing a person in order to lead him or her to conversion to Christ or to assist people “fallen by the wayside” (like the man attacked by bandits described by Jesus in Luke 10:30) is important. Pieter Buys (2017:77) pastor in South Africa during the apartheid period, testifies to the driving force of his ministry at the time*: “*I have become increasingly convinced that a holistic experiential Reformed Theology, focused on justification by faith as the central aspect of the Gospel, must lead to sanctification, and that the pursuit of social justice is seen and recognized as a mark of the true Christian.”

As indicated, Formosa has low socioeconomic and educational indices. Faced with such a picture, Christians must care for each other more faithfully, not only in spiritual matters, but also in temporal matters, so that none of them lack something truly good. The commandment of God calls on some to give and do good and others to receive and profit from the good works of others.

Moreover, the approach to evangelism in Formosa needs to be aware of the fact that low educational levels require evangelists to have a “simple” approach to the Gospel so as to avoid the danger of “passing over the heads” of listeners. Formosans undeniably also prefer audio-visual or representational culture above written or textual culture. This is even more noticeable in society's most popular layers. Barzotto (1995:65) points out that the majority of the Brazilian population listens to the radio and watches television, the minority being the portion that reads magazines, books, or newspapers.

This dislike of reading and illiteracy itself and/or functional illiteracy (in which people read but cannot correctly understand and interpret what has been read) can become complicating factors for evangelism and, later, the other stages of church planting. Barzotto (1999:83) indicates that this is a historical problem and one of the traits that mark the under-development of Brazilian education. The illiteracy imposed by Portuguese colonizers – and whose effects still persist – has long since condemned us to a typical cultural pattern: the taste for the spoken word, the refusal of reading. “We're a country where little is read. The phenomena reproduce situations created by school marginalization that reached large contingents of the working classes, generating a chronic illiteracy that includes those who have not learned to read” (Barzotto, 1999:83).

The next step to be taken for planting and consolidating a Reformed church in Formosa is the discipleship of believers.

4.3.4.3 Disciple the believers

In light of Paul's church-planting strategy, it was observed earlier that the apostle believed that the Gospel of Christ was transformative in its effects. Not only was it a Gospel that justified the sinner before God (Rom 3:21-24), but it also placed him or in a process of procedural sanctification, or, using his own words, those who were "called to belong to Christ" (that is, justification) (Rom 1:6) were also "called to be saints" (that is, sanctification) (Rom 1:7). If Paul's initial goal was to bring the lost to Christ, his second was to pay attention to those who had responded positively to his preaching and were converted to Christ. He led them to make disciples, teach them, and gather them in a local church. Among other places, this practice is reflected in his three-year ministry in Ephesus. According to Luke's narrative, after having evangelized a group of John's disciples (Act 19:1-7) and a group that was in the synagogue, Paul "took the disciples with him and began to teach daily at the school of Tyrant" (Act 19:9). In other words, Paul's goal was not just to have a group of converts, but a group of Christ's disciples gathered in a community. In this way Luke summarizes the ministry of Paul (and Barnabas) in Derbe: "They preached the good news in that city and made many disciples" (Act 14:21a).

By discoursing believers, Paul's goal was to develop in them spiritual maturity/growth, strengthened by the Holy Spirit (1 The 5:23), and catalysed by the teaching of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16); by the consequent transformation of the mind (Rom 12:1-3) in the context of a local church, so that believers should develop a life of service (Gal 5.13 b); and by glorifying the Lord in all (1 Cor 10:31) in an ongoing process until the day of Christ (Phil 1:6). Dovetailing with Paul's theology and strategy, Reformed theology believes that

> those who are effectively called and regenerated, having created in themselves a new heart and a new spirit, are also sanctified real and personally, by the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and by his Spirit, who dwells in them; the dominion of the body of sin is destroyed in them all, their various lusts in their hearts are more weakened and mortified, and they are more and more enlivened and strengthened in all saving graces, for the practice of true holiness, without which no one will see God (CFW, chapter XVIII, art. I).

The local church therefore plays a fundamental role in the process of discipleship/sanctification of believers, since “this church Christ has given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, to congregate and perfect the saints in this life, to the end of the world, and by his own presence and spirit, makes them effective for this purpose, according to their promise” (CFW, chapter XXV, art. III).

The church is the place where one lives what is commonly known among Reformed Christians of the public means of grace, that is, “the visible and common means by which Christ conveys to his church the benefits of his mediation. God gives strength, peace, comfort, instruction, discipline, guidance, joy, and many other things necessary for the Christian life” (Blackbourn, 1999:12). There are four public means of grace: meeting together for worship; the ordinances of the Gospel; communion with brothers and sisters in Christ; and collective prayer. The church is fundamental for the process of discipleship of believers, for it is in its context this public means of grace

Van Rheenen (1996:245) stipulates important guidelines for nurturing believers in a process of discipleship:

- First, discipleship is more effective when performed in a context of love and community care for believers;
- Second, discipleship leads new Christians to visualize that which God wants them to become;
- Third, discipleship involves developing Christian disciplines;
- Fourth, discipleship needs to be understood as a process, otherwise the church will stop growing and die.

Assuming that discipleship of believers is a central element in Paul’s strategy of church planting, which theological and ethical elements should be observed in the process of discipleship of believers of a Reformed church in Formosa?

Elementary biblical questions will focused on first in such a situation. Discipleship will centre on subjects such as creation, the fact of salvation, the Bible, Christian stewardship, and so on. The purpose of these fundamental teachings, which can be done either individually or collectively is to substantiate the new convert into the solid and central

truths of the Scriptures. These studies are usually prerequisites for people to be baptized and become members of the church.[130]

Secondly, issues related to evangelism should be tackled. As mentioned, since new converts still nourish a framework of relationships with many non-believers (which tends to decrease as they become a member of the church and begin to live with other believers), they constitute a fundamental group for evangelistic outreach. For their friends and relatives to be evangelized, however, believers must be discipled. At that moment, themes such as sin, conversion, work, and the person of Christ, witnessing, and how to share faith are fundamental elements.

Thirdly, issues related to Formosa's worldview must be focused on. Once Paul understood that the process of transformation took place "by the renewal of the mind" (Rom 12:2), for example, presentism could be confronted with biblical convictions that speak of eternity or hedonistic tendencies confronted with the servile spirit praised in Scripture. At that point, disciple people by using the Reformed faith symbols.

In a fourth moment, issues related to the involvement in missionary work, especially the planting of a new church in a neighbourhood of Formosa or in a city in the region, must come into focus. Although numerical growth and involvement in missionary work are organically available as a consequence of doctrinally well-nourished believers, there is also a need to intentionally create a culture of missions in the church that will go beyond theological reflection and will result in an expansionist missionary practice. According to Costas (1973:45), "a church that only reflects and does not act is similar to the army that spends time maneuvering inside the barracks." Goheen (2014:151) says that developing a missionary culture was one of Paul's frequent practices; in his words: "Perhaps we can imagine Paul then saying to each church by saying goodbye to them, 'You are now the mission in this place.' Paul's concern is also that each of these newly established congregations must incarnate the good news and carry out God's mission in their own cultural environments."

In a fifth moment, issues related to a life for the glory of God and all circumstances and environments are discussed. Both in Catholicism, Pentecostalism or neo-Pentecostalism one finds a tendency to divide life between sacred and profane, divine and secularized

[130] Three other criteria are usually: conscious conversion, minimal understanding of the Gospel, and change of life.

areas, and God is interested only in the ethics of the believer lived in the sacred means. It is the creation of a dualist system, “which found its most emphatic expression in the praxis of Carnival, giving religion full control of the soul during the weeks of Lent, but leaving an opportunity for the flesh to empty to the last drop of the glass full of pleasure, if not of euphoria and folly, before retreating to the valley of contrition” (Kuyper, 2003:61,62).

Paul did not see life in a sectorized way and he insisted that his disciples had to live for the glory of God in all circumstances and environments (1 Cor 10:31). Thus, a husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25) is as sacred an activity as praying (Eph 6:19). Or an employee/slave performing his service well (Eph 6:5-8) is as spiritual an activity as battling demonic forces (Eph 6:10-17). A life lived in all contexts and circumstances for the glory of God has made Calvinism a catalyst movement for great social transformations, not out of class envy, nor out of undue appreciation for the possessions of the rich, but out of a more serious interpretation of life.

> Through better work and a superior development of the character of the middle and working classes, he led to jealousy to the nobility and the wealthiest citizens. Looking first at God and then at the person of others was the impulse, thought, and spiritual custom to which Calvinism has entered (Kuyper, 2003:36).

There is no doubt that properly discipled Calvinist believers who understand that their whole lives are “before the face of God, not only in their church, but also in their personal, family, social, and political lives” (Kuyper, 2003:77), would have a great impact on the society of Formosa.

Finally, it is important to remember that preaching in worship can and should be a primary instrument for discipleship of believers. This will require the planter and his team to use the pulpit wisely, with preaching that will support the most varied subjects for the spiritual growth of believers. Using Paul's words, the pulpit needs to declare “all the will of God” (Act 20:27).

Moreover, discipleship is a lifelong activity. The believer will always have areas that will need to grow and sins that he or she will need to forsake. However, you can be fully certain that He who began the good work in him or her “will complete it until the day of

Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6) and that, on that day, the believer will be clothed in full holiness and become like the Lord (1 Jn 3:2).

4.3.4.4 Establish leaders

Another activity that Paul was engaged with, is the establishment of leaders, as indicated. This depended on his ministerial philosophy, which emphasized teamwork and his methodology, since Paul considered himself "only" the planter of his churches and not its pastor. There were two main leaders: a group of elders, responsible for ecclesiastical administration and the teaching of believers (1 Tim 5:17), and deacons, responsible, according to Calvin, for care for the poor.

Romans mentions two further types of functions. "He who distributes, do it with simplicity; he who exercises mercy with joy" (Rom 12:8). Since Paul is speaking of public offices of the church, there must have been two forms of diaconate. If I am not mistaken, in the first case he calls "deacons" to those who distributed alms; in the second, to those who cared for the poor and sick such as the widows mentioned in the Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim 5:10) (Calvino (2008), The institutions of the Christian religion, II, 4.3).

The choice of these leaders should be made while considering a list of qualifications expressed by Paul in his pastoral letters (1 Tm 3:1-13; Tt 1.5-9). In relation to this process of choice, Calvin notes: "Because they knew very well that it was a matter of paramount importance, they did not dare to bring it with great fear, considering in particular what they had at hand. And they fulfilled their duty above all by asking God to give them a spirit of counsel and discernment" (Calvino (2008), The institutions of the Christian religion, IV 3:12).

In line with Paul's practice, the Reformed practice has been, over the years, to institute elders and deacons to form the leadership of their churches. Calvinism understands that all believers are the priesthood responsible for proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to others (1 Pet 2:9). It also understands that, among believers, God called some (the deacons) to specifically assist the poor and others for the ministry of teaching (the elders). He therefore asks: "Who is allowed to preach the word of God?" and the Greater Catechism replies: "The word of God must be preached only by those who have sufficient gifts, are duly approved and called to ministry" (Catecismo Maior de Westminster (2013), question 158). Therefore, elders should be assigned to the ministry of word teaching after having been properly trained, trained, observed, and approved to exercise their ministry. In fact,

this a process echoes Paul's exhortative words to Timothy: “do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others” (1 Tim 5:22).

The planter should moreover not make the error of choosing a leader for a function only because of his or her qualities as a natural leader. Although God may use characteristics of natural leadership, it is God himself who leads the person's story, leading them to develop certain characteristics, and they can therefore not give the ultimate word for choosing a leader. In fact, in the context of Christian ministry, the characteristics of a spiritual leader should overlap with natural ones. Sanders (1987:21) compares the natural leader with the spiritual leader and, although the selected characteristics are especially typical of Western-type leadership, they are worthy of careful consideration, as expressed in the table below.

Table 16 – The natural leader *versus* the spiritual leader

The Natural Leader	The Spiritual Leader
(1) Self-confident	(1) Confident in God
(2) Knows humans well	(2) But also knows God
(3) Makes his or her own decisions	(3) Seeks to find God's will
(4) Is ambitious	(4) Retracts his or her own self
(5) Gives rise to his or her own methods	(5) Discovers and follows God's methods
(6) Likes to boss others around	(6) Serve in obeying God
(7) Is motivated by personal considerations	(7) Is motivated by love for God and human beings
(8) Is independent	(8) is dependent on God

[Available at: Sanders (1987:21)].

Precisely because the establishment of leadership is a central element for the planting and consolidation of a church, it needs to be permeated by prayer. In this respect, Jesus' attitude of praying for an entire night before choosing the Twelve (Luk 6:12) is at least thought-provoking. Commenting on Matthew 9.35-38, Ott and Wilson (2013:351) say that “the shortage of workers is the problem and the answer begins with prayer. Church planters will make prayer the starting point of their task of developing, empowering, and sending workers to the church.”

Either way, these leaders need to be trained. Among others, there are three main key methods of training workers in the context of the local church:

- Workshops. They are usually held on weekends or several nights. The main characteristic is that they are focused on action/work and not great theoretical deepening on a given subject. “Workshops are an excellent way to introduce new inexperienced workers to a ministry and can be followed by mentoring for the improvement of these specific skills” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:361);
- Ministerial teams. They are working groups formed with the aim of performing a specific ministerial task. For example, the potential leader may be part of a ministerial team of couples. There he or she will learn to coordinate the ministry, be encouraged by others, have support and support people in prayer, be evaluated by the most experienced leaders, inhibit individualism, train his or her skills, strengthen an accountability system, develop relationships, and create a team spirit (Ott & Wilson, 2013:361);
- Individual instruction. This is a personalized teaching and training process that involves modelling, training, and mentoring. The latter “is a learning partnership in which an experienced leader, as a mentor, develops an ongoing relationship with his pupil” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:362).

Each of these approaches has positive and negative aspects and can be used according to the target audience to be trained and the ministry of action. For example, if a new convert needs to be trained to share the Gospel with his or her relatives and friends, a workshop would be ideal. If the goal is to train a couple to take over a department/ ministry with new couples, their participation in a ministerial team already formed would be of great help. If a pastor is being trained to take over the pastorate of a church, individual accompaniment by a more experienced pastor coupled with formal theological training is critical.

4.3.4.5 Depart and monitor

Finally, after having evangelized the lost, discipling the believers, and establishing leaders, Paul set out for a new missionary endeavour.

In the case of planning for a Reformed church in Formosa, it has already been established that the planter would follow an apostolic planting proposal, in which he or she would be the planter and the pastor who would support the church only in its early years. According to this schedule, a new pastor would take over the church after five years, but

the transition process would take place a year earlier, with the new pastor moving to the city (if necessary) for a continuous process of delegation of activities and adaptation, until he or she becomes the main pastor, enabling the planter to leave for a new planting process.

Where will the new planter go? Among the many possibilities, the planter should consider, with the help of a new team, the planting of a church that had already begun (in a neighbourhood or a nearby town) in the first years of planting the first church. In the context of a Reformed church, the planter's monitoring role will be relativized. On the one hand, due to the question of pastoral ethics, if the ministry has been transitioned to another pastor, it is no longer up to him or her to shepherd the old congregation. Secondly, in the reformed environment, no church is independent, but is subject to higher councils. In this case, they also monitor the development of the church that was planted and, if necessary, can intervene by using the means due to do so.

Concluding Step 4 of the planning, the question has been: “Which specific steps must be taken for this church-planting strategy to be executed? This can now be answered in a sentence: “[...] evangelize, disciple, and establish leaders, until the time the church is organized[131] and the planter can go to a new church-planting project [...].”

4.3.4.6 Pray continually

Prayer was a transversal element of Paul's ministerial practice. As mentioned, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, he made prayer a non-negotiable practice. Once more, Paul was a man of action because he was first a man of prayer. He prayed and asked for prayers that he would be successful in evangelism (Rom 10:1; Eph 6.19-20). Paul prayed that the believers he was discipling would be strengthened (Eph 3:16). Paul prayed for establishing leaders as well as praying for those who were already exercising their ministries (Act 14:23; 20:32; 36). Furthermore, Paul prayed and asked for prayers that more opportunities would arise for him to preach the Gospel (Col 4:2-6). His many prayers showed a unique dependence on the Lord.

[131] In the Brazilian Presbyterian context, the expression “organized church” refers to the moment when the church in planting reaches “independence” (in financial, leadership and missional terms) in relation to the “mother church.” To define this moment, it is common to say that the community ceased to be a “congregation” and became a “church.”

> As indicated, church planters need to be aware that their work is a spiritual activity. They need to pray and fast for their cities or ethnic groups to which God sent them to evangelize. Thus, “the planter who does not build a prayer life and ministry will not get very far” (Ott & Wilson, 2013:313).

Prayer has always been an exalted practice both in Calvin's writings and practice and in Reformed theology as a whole. In this regard, Calvin's words are clear:

> First, so that our heart may be inflamed with a serious and ardent desire to always seek him, love him, serve him, while we get used to taking refuge in him in every need, as in a sacred anchor. Secondly, that no passion and no desire even rise in our hearts, ashamed to have him as a witness, while we learn to lay before his eyes all our desires, and even to pour out our whole heart; Thirdly, That we may be prepared to receive his benefits with true gratitude of soul, and even thanksgiving, which we are by our deprecation warned that they come to us from his hand (Calvino (2008), Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 3, Chapter 20, Section 3).

Behind these observations is one of the great themes of the Reformation, and that has great implications in the prayer life of the believer: the idea that all life is to be lived under the authority of God, for the glory of God, in the presence of God. Therefore, in the Reformed understanding, prayer is not simply a monologue, a mere therapeutic exercise in self-analysis, or a religious recitation. Prayer is a dialogue with the personal God himself. There, in the act and dynamics of prayer, the believer brings his or her whole life under the Lord's gaze. Yes, the Lord knows what is on his or her mind, but he or she enjoys the privilege of articulating for him what is on their mind.

4.3.5 Stage 5 – Strategic control

The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: “Is the goal of planting this church being achieved? If not, what can be done differently?”

Not infrequently, church-planting projects are carried with a certain zeal, later to be forgotten in a drawer and never taken up again. Exactly so that this does not happen, strategic control is critical. The proposed schedule for the planting of a Reformed church in

Formosa includes several meetings over five years aimed at continuous evaluation. Apart from these formal meetings for the sake of strategic control, it is very important that the planter and the planting team evaluate themselves regularly in order to question their collaboration for planting the church and, above all, their relationship with the Lord. One or two questions may guide this evaluation:

- What is my motivation to get involved in this project?;
- Have I valued this project above my relationship with God?;
- Who is first: this project or my family?;
- What have I done during the planting of this church that displeases the Lord?

Another important element to observe is the spiritual health of the church being planted. When Paul greeted the elders of Ephesus, he foresaw a time at which the herd would be attacked by wolves that would attack both from the outside in and from the inside out (Act 20:29.30). Therefore, he asked the leaders for total vigilance (Act 20:31).

In this spirit of vigilance, both the planter and the team need to observe the quantitative and qualitative growth of the church being planted. As Boor (2003:173) points out: “A church of Jesus is formed and grows outwardly only through 'evangelization', through the awakening proclamation of the message of salvation. Once formed, however, it needs consolidation and inner growth through 'doctrine'.”

Numerical growth is typically the easiest to evaluate. For example, one easily observes a numerical growth of a church that had ten members at the beginning of the year and 18 at the end. However, when one tries to evaluate qualitative elements, one is faced with subjective elements that will require from those who evaluate a deep spiritual discernment. Areas such as spirituality (spiritual disciplines), sanctification (sins), ministerial practice, Christian stewardship, participation in worship, and family life, among others, are basic elements for assessing the spiritual quality of life of the flock.

Finally, the scope (vision) of the planting project of a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul’s strategy could be summed up with the following passage: For the glory of Jesus' name a Reformed Church will be planted through a planter, a church planting team, and supported by a sending church; in Formosa, a geographically strategic city, which is undergoing a process of urbanization, with low socioeconomic and educational

indexes, with Catholic predominance and with a group of evangelical Christians un-churched or poli-churches; through Paul's church-planting strategy one may evangelize, and disciple establish leaders, until such time that the church is organized and the planter can go to a new church-planting project, while constantly evaluating the church-planting process.

4.4 Conclusion

As mentioned, the purpose of this chapter was to propose relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa in light of Paul's strategy. This was done by observing five stages for the execution of a project, as proposed by Pinto (2016):

- Establishment of the organizational guideline;
- Analysis of the environment;
- Formulation of the strategy;
- Implementation of the strategy;
- Strategic control.

The analysis of these angles were intended to answer the following question: "What would the planning for planting a Reformed church in Formosa look like in the light of Paul's strategy?" This question was answered and debated throughout the chapter, while making practical connections between Paul's strategy and the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa.

Having proposed a plan for the implantation of a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul's strategy for planting churches, the aim was to give recommendations for planning for church planting in contexts beyond this city since, as mentioned, planning for planting a Reformed church in Formosa can very well be taken as a representative microcosm for other present and future church planting strategies, especially in Latin America. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The research question

This thesis was an attempt to answer a question, while taking into account the Apostle Paul's strategy, that is, its flexible *modus operandi*, as developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control, while it was based, furthermore, on three pillars, namely Paul's theological convictions that boosted his ministry; his philosophy of ministry, which shaped it; and his ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed. The question was: “How should one plan the planting of a Reformed church in the city of Formosa/GO, Brazil?”

5.2 Search contents

To answer this question, five further questions were raised:

First: “What are the characteristics of Formosa?” This question was answered in Chapter 2, which sought to describe the place where the church would be planted by means of analysis of literature and relevant materials. From a missiological perspective, it sought to ascertain the challenges that would need to be overcome for planting a Reformed church in Formosa by using Paul’s strategy. In terms of this question, seven points were observed:

- The challenge of Catholic numerical predominance;
- The challenge of religious syncretism;
- The challenge of cultural and racial pluralism;
- The challenge of a processed urbanization;
- The challenge of low socioeconomic and educational indices;
- The challenge of “competition” with other Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches;
- The challenge of a worldview markedly utilitarian, presentist, relativistic, individualistic, hedonistic and that sees the sacred as something to be manipulated and God as a personal being.

Second: “What was Paul’s strategy for church planting?” The question was answered in Chapter 3, which sought to describe Paul's strategy for planting churches through

analysis of relevant literature and materials as well as key biblical texts. It was observed that Paul's strategy for church planting embraced a flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to his guidance and control, as indicated, and based on three elements:

- Paul's theological convictions, which boosted his ministry;
- Paul's philosophy of ministry, which shaped his ministry;
- Paul's ministerial practice, through which his ministry was executed.

Third: "What would be the application and contextualization of Paul's strategy for relevant and appropriate planning for the planting of a Reformed Church in the city of Formosa?" The question was answered in Chapter 4, which sought to apply Paul's strategy for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa. In light of Paul's strategy, a plan comprising four steps was proposed:

- Stage 1 – Establishment of the organizational guideline. The question that needs to be answered in this step is: "What will be done?";
- Stage 2 – Environmental analysis. The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: "Where will the church be planted and what are the challenges and opportunities to plant a church there?";
- Stage 3 – Formulation of the strategy. The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: "What strategy will this church be using?";
- Stage 4 – Implementation of the strategy. The question that needs to be answered in this step is: "What specific steps should be taken for this church-planting strategy to be executed?";
- Stage 5 – Strategic control. The question that needs to be answered at this stage is: "Is the goal of planting this church being achieved? If not, what can be done differently?"

5.3 Central theoretical argument: proven true?

This research intended to defend the fact that planning is imperative for church-planting projects and that Paul's strategy, as defined above by Graebin (2019), is an applicable/replicable model for today's church planting. Although Paul does not claim that his strategy is unique and normative, it is easy to see that his actions correspond to the

strategic actions lived out by Jesus in his own ministry (Mat 28:18-20; Mar 16:15; Joh 20:21; Act 1:8).

Formosa was taken as a representative microcosm for other environments while, above all, thinking about the planting of churches inserted in the Latin American context, especially those that, like Formosa, are marked by Catholicism, Spiritism, and neo-Pentecostal influences, in addition to dire economic and social needs.

This was the central theoretical argument of this research. Has it been proven true? The answer to that question is yes: in first place, in theoretical terms, it has been demonstrated that it was applicable as a framework for planning the planting of a Reformed church in Formosa (Chapter 4) and, of course, that it also serves as a template for planning the planting of churches in other places, with the necessary dues imposed by the peculiarities of the contexts.

However, some points need to be made clear:

- The theological convictions of the church planter are fundamental to the exercise of his or her ministry. As indicated, Paul was motivated by his theology. If the church planter cannot substantiate his or her ministerial practice in the light of Scripture, he or she will inevitably succumb to the challenges posed by the mission field or fall into a mechanistic and pragmatic ministerial practice;
- The philosophy of ministerial practice is an extremely relevant topic for the church planter. As demonstrated, Paul's strategy was shaped by his philosophy of ministry as executed in terms of his ministerial practice. If the church planter does not observe a specific ministerial philosophy, he or she can easily run out of clear parameters for ministerial action. On the other hand, if you don't carry out your ministry, it can become a good and “shelved” plan;
- Paul’s strategy is applicable as a methodology for planting a Reformed church. Both the theology that underpinned Paul’s strategy and the practice of it are not on a “collision course” with Reformed theology. Moreover, central elements of Pauline theology are also central to Reformed theology;
- Although planning for planting a church is fundamentally and biblically supported, it is not merely a human activity. Church planters are not managers of companies that sit with their employees to draw up specific action plans aimed at selling a product or service. Although there some elements overlap between planning a

company and missionary activity, planting a church is, above all, a spiritual activity. As such, it needs to be exercised in a spirit of dependence on the Lord. Prayer shows this dependence. Paul's journeys centred on planting churches began in a prayer meeting and were sustained by prayer. New ministerial doors were opened by prayer. The practical lesson is that the whole process of church planting, from planning to execution, must be bathed in prayer;

- Although all planning is done with zeal and the plan to plant a church is faithfully executed, the results will ultimately always be subject to the Lord's sovereign action. The wise Solomon said: “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the Lord gives victory” (Pro 21:31). God has his chosen ones, and they will be called according to his sovereignty, through the ministry and preaching of his missionaries. This implies that, ultimately, only the Lord can answer whether a church will be numerically large or not, and this should not be a subject of constant unease to the planter who, after all, is not the “owner of the work.”

In second place, discussion around the central theoretical argument of the present project proved it to be valid in practical terms because, as stated at the beginning of this research, the present researcher was directly involved in this project as a pastor/planter of this church. This research, therefore, was academic work done to obtain a PhD in Missiology while, simultaneously, it is reflective of practical exercise centred on planting a Reformed church in the city of Formosa. The method expounded here is being followed in this respect with the level of flexibility proposed by Paul's strategy. Today, three years after the project began, the congregation has:

- 37 members;
- 30 people discipleship to become church members;
- one pastor/planter (this researcher);
- five leaders that are being trained for the diaconate and the presbyterate;
- one seminarian coming from the Presbyterian Seminary of Brasília who helps in the activities and, at the same time, is being trained to be a pastor;
- ministries with children, adolescents, women, and men;
- weekly prayer meetings;
- an average attendance of 55 people in services on Sundays;
- services that take place monthly in the homes of church members, giving them the opportunity to invite their friends and neighbours to hear the Gospel;

- a situation where around 37% of the budget is provided by the congregation itself and 65% by the National Presbyterian Church of Brasília (Mother Church), which, in addition to financial support, gives pastoral, diaconal, and emotional support to the pastor/planter, his family, and other members;
- an organization forecast for December 2023 and, after that, new planting of churches will be seen through in the region.

Already a considerable number of people have been evangelized and, by grace, have known the “redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24). They are growing into their Christian maturity, being certain he by whom “the good work was started in you will make it complete till the day of Jesus Christ” (Phi 1:6). Some believers stand out in a position of servant leadership and are being equipped for the Christian ministry, “so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph 4:12). All of this is reminiscent of the straightforward and assertive words of Paul, the church planter: “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58).

5.4 Topics to be studied or deepened in light of the present project

The theme of church planting can be explored from several angles over and above the one proposed by this research. One of these angles would be to propose planning for planting a church in a theological tradition other than the Reformed one (for example, a Pentecostal-oriented church), or using a strategy other than Paul's. The question for such research could be: “What would be a planning proposal for planting a Pentecostal church in the city 'x', in light of the 'y' strategy?”

In addition, each element of the Pauline theology for church planting could be addressed by unique research. For example, a research question might be: “How did understanding Paul's apostolic call determine his church planting ministry?”

Not only Paul's theology for church planting, but also his philosophy and ministerial practice could be explored in terms of each of its elements. The questions could be asked: “What is the role of the sending church in planting churches?”; or “How to form church planting teams?”; or: “What is the role of discipleship for the consolidation of a church-planting project?”; or: “How to effectively train leaders for planting churches?.”

Another possibility of study would be to ask whether other Reformed churches that have already been planted in other geographic contexts in Brazil, such as those planted in the state of Paraná (south of Brazil) in the cities of Carambeí, Castro, and Arapoti, observed Paul's strategy for the execution of these projects or not.

Finally, it is important to mention that, although it is not necessary to write a doctoral thesis for the planning of the planting of a church, each missionary task should be performed with the utmost care in the planning of the item. How much loss of human and financial resources and disagreements in relationships could have been avoided if basic planning issues were observed. In this respect, this research can assist those who want to take it as a basic structure for planning for planting a church.

The sheer variety of these potential subjects just points to the fact that church planting is a fairly broad missiological theme. Certainly, the researcher who is involved in these studies will have, on the one hand, the privilege of growing in his or her knowledge on the subject and, on the other, cause more people to reflect on practicing the ministry of planting churches.

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