

Multiplying Church Network

Unit: *Calling out the Called*: empowering believers to impact their communities

MCN Facilitator Guide

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”

Philippians 3:14, NKJV

Unit synopsis

North America is a large and difficult mission field, and many population segments do not have churches that address their unique cultures. *Calling Out the Called* motivates church members to evangelize their communities and start new churches in order to reach these population segments. This unit explains the six primary components of *Calling Out the Called*, and how they empower churches to faithfully carry out the Great Commission.

Lesson

The presenter of this lesson should read through the *Calling Out the Called* guidebook prior to presenting this lesson. The guidebook will supply the presenter with details that will assist in explaining this information.

The role of the laity in church planting

The New Testament declares that the work of the church is done by the laos, or people of God. In fact, the terms layman and laity are derived from the Greek word laos. Today, laity often means the opposite of clergy. The terms laity and clergy are often used to distinguish the general church membership from professional or paid ministers.

However, the Greek word laos, as used in the New Testament, does not distinguish between professional and non-professional ministers. Instead all the people of God are ministers. Every believer has spiritual gifts such as pastoring, teaching, administrating, and serving. They are to use these gifts to glorify and serve God. Paul wrote, *“Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called”* (1 Cor. 7:24, NKJV).

Acts 8:4 (NKJV) reports, *“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”* The growth of the early church in the New Testament was the result of all Christians participating in evangelism and church planting. *“For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place”* (1 Thess. 1:8, NKJV).

The early church grew rapidly because all believers participated in sharing the gospel and starting new churches. These Christians were motivated by the love of Jesus to share the good news with their neighbors and friends. New churches met in homes, jails, by the riverside, and wherever believers could find to gather together. Churches in the New Testament had an affect on the world (see Acts 17:6).

The universal pattern of church planting described in the book of Acts, accentuates the importance of all Christians using their gifts to further the kingdom of God. Church planting consists of four primary functions—evangelizing the lost, discipling new believers, establishing the local church, and reproducing the pattern. All believers are called to each of these primary tasks.

Acts 14:21-23 (NKJV) describes the early church’s activity and how it exemplified these primary functions. *“When they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”*

All Christians have a primary call to a relationship with Jesus Christ. This call is received at the time of a person’s salvation (see Acts 2:39; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Pet. 5:10), and becomes a sanctifying relationship with Christ for the rest of the believer’s earthly life (see Rom. 1:7; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Thes. 2:13,14).

Some Christians have a secondary call to a specific ministry task (see Acts 13:2). This call is distinguished from the universal call to all Christians to become like Christ through witnessing, making disciples, and using their spiritual gifts.

All Christians—regardless of the secondary call—are to work together to evangelize, make disciples, and start new churches in their communities. In his book, *Called and Accountable*, Henry Blackaby writes, “Every Christian is called of God to salvation, and in that same call is the call to be on mission with God in our world. Those He saves, He involves as fellow workers with Himself in His eternal purpose to save a lost world.” The *Calling Out the Called* process empowers church members to reach the lost people of their communities.

Six components of the *Calling Out the Called* process:

Calling Out the Called is both a process and an event. Without the process, the results of the event are never fully realized.

Cultivation stage

Component 1—Strategic prayer

The prayer component is a permanent part of the *Calling Out the Called* process. This component consists of praying that all believers willingly obey God’s call on their lives, ask God to start new churches in the community, and trust God to call out the workers He will use to start them. It also includes praying for the spiritual needs of non-Christians, and using prayer resources.

Reflection:

- What strategic prayer efforts are in place for the Multiplying Church Network (MCN)?
- Identify three major obstacles that hinder Christians from hearing and obeying God’s call in their lives.
- List areas in the community, county, state, or in another country, where you are asking God to start new churches.

- List the population segments in your community that need new churches.
- Pray for these areas and population segments once a week, with at least one other person.

Component 2—Clustering churches

This component parallels the MCN concept of churches working together to plant new congregations. The benefits include spiritual synergy for church planting, increased ministry impact, renewed enthusiasm for God’s mission, and mutual accountability.

Reflection questions:

- List several churches that could conceivably work together to plant new churches.
- Is your church prepared to work with other churches to start new congregations?
- Why or why not?

Component 3—Forming a new churches team

The new churches team ensures that a church or MCN maintains an intentional, well-planned strategy for starting new churches. The new churches team has four primary functions—discovering church planting needs, prioritizing church planting opportunities, casting church planting vision, and networking church planting efforts.

A helpful guide for estimating the number of churches needed to disciple a community is presented below. To use this formula, a team will need current population figures, current attendance of all evangelical churches in the area, and the seating capacities of those evangelical churches.

1.	Establish the total number (X) of non-Christians in the area.	X =
2.	Subtract the combined seating capacity (Y) of all the evangelical churches in the area.	X-Y = Z
3.	This equals the number of non-Christians that cannot be accommodated in an evangelical church in the area.	Z =
4.	Divide the preceding number by the national median size of Southern Baptist churches, which is 230 members.	Z/230 =
5.	This equals the approximate number of churches needed (C) in the area.	C =

Obviously, this simple method is insufficient to define the specific church planting needs of a given area. This formula assumes that all of the evangelical groups would be willing to allow other groups to use their buildings for worship. The formula provides a very general estimation of the number of new churches needed in your area.

Event stage

Component 4 - The *Calling Out the Called* event

The purpose of the *Calling Out the Called* event is to give Christians the opportunity to respond to God’s call. The venue for such an event is unlimited. Missions celebrations, worship services, retreats, and annual association meetings are all good opportunities for a

Calling Out the Called event. The event itself consists of worship, testimonies, multimedia, drama, a compelling message, an invitation, and follow-up.

Harvest stage

Component 5—Mentoring the church planters

An intentional and thorough mentoring strategy assures that individuals receive appropriate and timely assistance as they participate in starting a new church. Functions emphasized during this time include helping individuals understand God’s call, maintaining healthy tracking and reporting systems, and identifying spiritual gifts and natural talents. It will also be necessary to encourage participation in formal training events and facilitate on-the-job training.

Component 6—Evaluating for reproduction

The *Calling Out the Called* process is reproducible in any setting under any circumstances. God is always calling Christians to follow Him. In obedience, Christians take the gospel to the lost in order to make disciples. The *Calling Out the Called* process includes two types of evaluation.

The qualitative evaluation includes questions such as:

- Did the implementation of *Calling Out the Called* reflect biblical, church, and associational values?
- Did the mentoring strategy foster Christ-likeness?
- Did the prayer strategy focus on God’s will or personal success?
- Did *Calling Out the Called* communicate the love of Christ to all participants?

The quantitative evaluation includes questions such as:

- a. How many Christians volunteered to starting new churches?
- b. How many new churches were started?
- c. How many individuals actually participated in starting new churches?
- d. Are there discrepancies between the number of believers who volunteered and the number who participated? Why?

***Calling Out the Called* and church health**

Evangelization of the non-Christian population in North America requires the rapid production of new churches for every population segment. That cannot happen without the involvement of the laity.

The growth of Christianity described in the New Testament resulted from believers participating in the spread of the gospel among the pagan population of the region. New Testament churches, in the midst of all the difficulties, exemplified how every believer, by using his or her spiritual gifts, had a significant role to play in evangelizing non-Christians and discipling them.

Every pastor or minister of missions should compare the effectiveness of the early church with that of the church they are serving. Here are four categories that help measure a church’s readiness for multiplication.

Complacent church:

Complacent churches are satisfied with the existing condition of the church and community. A complacent church sees no need for evangelizing non-Christians or for starting new churches.

Informed church:

The informed church understands the lostness that exists in its community, county, state, country, and world. This church also recognizes that church planting is an effective method of evangelizing non-Christian population segments. However, this church is not personally involved in starting new churches.

Engaged church:

The engaged church actively participates in starting new churches. It commits itself to reaching a variety of people groups and contexts—locally, nationally, and internationally. Engaged churches place high priority on involving all their members in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Champion church:

The champion church understands that church planting is a valuable vehicle in accomplishing the goal of discipling the nations. Therefore, the church planting vision influences every aspect of the church. This church recognizes that its one style, language, culture, and worship will not meet the needs of every population segment in their community. The champion church clearly understands its mission from a biblical perspective (see Acts 1:8).

The following survey is intended to help church leaders move their churches into obedience to the Great Commission. It is a beginning point for moving towards becoming a multiplying church of churches.

Participants Worksheet

MCN: *Calling Out the Called*: empowering believers to impact their communities

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Learning area Expectations

Knowledge and understanding:

List the six components of *Calling Out the Called*.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Explain why *Calling Out the Called* is both a process and an event.

Feeling and Appreciation:

Using the form below, indicate your church’s appreciation for and feelings about church planting.

Identifying church readiness for church planting

Mark each statement as true or false.

Complacent

- _____ The church has never been involved in a short-term mission project.
- _____ The congregation rarely prays for needs outside of those for the members of the church.
- _____ Most of the church’s ministries focuses on the needs of the congregation.
- _____ The church has a history of fighting and dissension.
- _____ The church does not have a strategy for reaching non-Christians.
- _____ The church actively demonstrates care and love for the pastor and staff.
- _____ The church has never analyzed the demographics of the community and how the church is impacting it.
- _____ The church does not give regularly to the Cooperative Program.

Informed

- _____ The church regularly prays for mission work and missionaries.
- _____ The church has a good reputation in the community.
- _____ The church has a weekly outreach visitation program.
- _____ The church gives regularly to the Cooperative Program.
- _____ The church actively trains members in evangelism.

- The pastor speaks of people he has seen come to faith in Christ as a result of his witness.
- The church has identified a group of people within the congregation willing to pray for a new church.
- Most of the missions education and awareness has to do with international missions.

Engaged — all of the items listed under Informed plus:

- The church has participated in starting new churches in the community.
- The church has partnered with its previous church plants in ministry projects.
- The church has an ongoing and active prayer ministry for the non-Christians of the community, county, state, country, and world.
- Community organizations come to the church for sponsorship.
- The church takes up special offerings for missions.
- The church regularly sends people on short-term mission trips.
- The church has been praying for the opportunity to plant a church.
- The church has adopted missionaries and their families.

Champion — all of the items listed under Informed and Engaged plus:

- Church members regularly participate in starting new churches locally, nationally, and internationally.
- The church has done demographic research into local population segments for the purpose of planting a church.
- The church has developed an Acts 1:8 mission perspective.
- The church has adopted a people group to pray for and support.
- The church has already established a line item in the budget for starting new churches.
- The church has a functioning missions committee.
- The church stays in contact with adopted missionaries.
- The church involves other churches in starting new churches.

Based on this questionnaire, the category that best describes the church's readiness is:

- Complacent
- Informed
- Engaged
- Champion

Share where your church is in terms of readiness

How does your readiness relate to the number of new churches needed in the community?

Communication:

How will you help the church understand the critical need for church planting?

Application:

Outline the next step for implementing *Calling Out the Called* in the community.
