

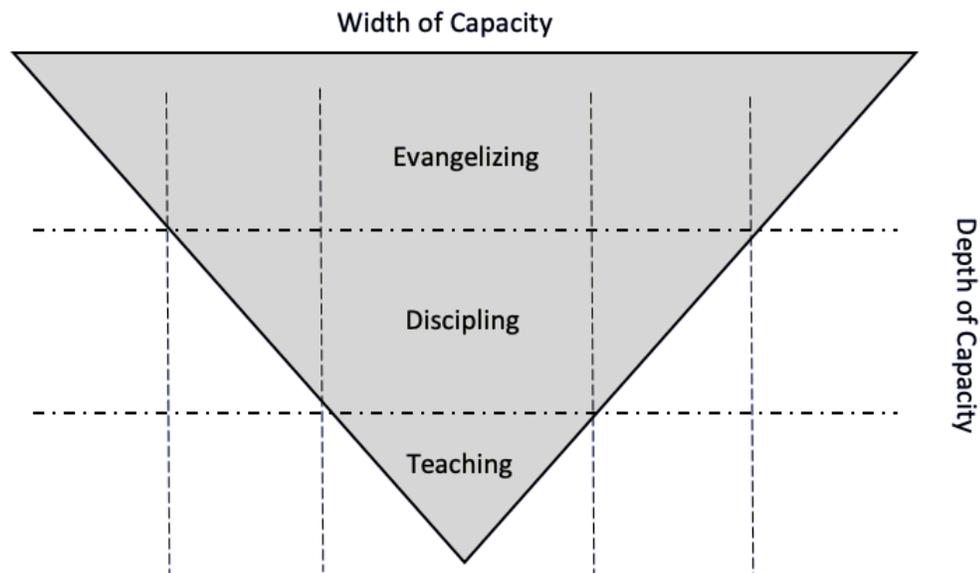
## Multiplying Pastoral Training: A Key Component of a Great Commission Approach

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- I. **KEY IDEA:** Multiplication and Proportionality are essential aspects of the Great Commission
- The concept of multiplication is apparent
    - The Great Commission was given to disciples to make disciples—thus, if a disciple makes a disciple, that disciple will make other disciples...
  - The concept of proportionality is implicit between evangelization, disciple-making and teaching.
    - The gospel spreads through evangelization (target- all nations).
    - Respondents to the gospel are to be disciplined (target- all who are regenerate).
    - Making disciples (planting churches) requires those who will teach “all things” (target – those who will pastor/lead/teach).
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- The proportions of the triangle may change but the three parts are all important.



- Our immediate task is to reach the unreached. The largest target group in the Great Commission is “all nations.” **Evangelizing** people with the gospel is the first step to make disciples. It requires the largest force because the message must be proclaimed to all nations before they can respond (Romans 10:14).
- Not everyone responds positively (Acts 17:32). Once someone responds to the call of the gospel, our task shifts from proclamation to **making disciples**—who themselves will also make disciples.

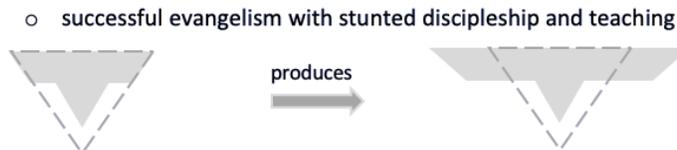
- **Teaching** is an essential component in spiritual development. While all disciples teach in some measure, not everyone is a teacher. As believers come to faith in Christ and are disciplined, churches are need. These churches require overseers, elders, pastors (one office, varying descriptions). A distinguishing qualification of this office requires the ability to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24).

Q: How much should a pastor be able to teach? “Teaching them to observe all...” indicates those who have exposure to *all*. In practical terms, pastors must have enough training to teach sound doctrine (theology) and to refute false doctrine (heresy)—see Titus 1:9. 2 Timothy 3:14-16.

### The Results of Disproportionality

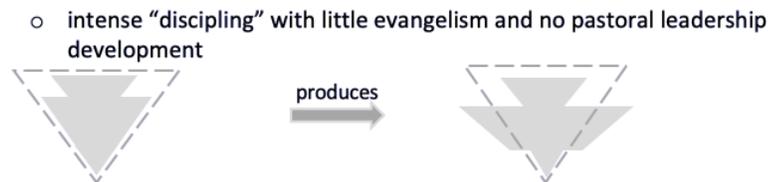
II. KEY IDEA: Disproportionate approaches to the Great Commission produce unhealthy results.

Example 1:



Problem: the approach of successful evangelism has immediate results (a good thing), but without discipleship and teaching, it will not multiply in a healthy way (a bad thing). As people come to faith in Christ, they are not disciplined, meaning they cannot make other disciples, and those that do come to Christ will be susceptible to the mutation of truth and syncretism with other beliefs as there is not sufficient capacity for them to be disciplined.

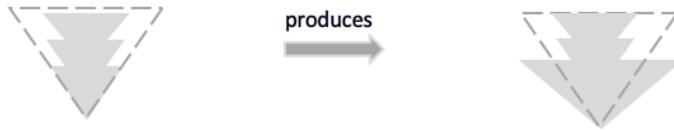
Example #2:



Problem: an intense focus on discipleship without evangelizing and teaching creates a group that becomes inwardly focused (spiritually self-centered). Furthermore, without pastoral leadership, there is no one to take them to task for not engaging the lost, multiplying through discipling new believers.

### Example #3

- A ministry built primarily on teaching or the teacher.



Problem: a singular focus on pastoral teaching builds a gathering or attractational model. Discipleship becomes limited to what the congregation learns from the pastor. If the focus is only on receiving from the pastor/teacher, the discipling process atrophies in the believer's life and, as a result, the expansion of the gospel diminishes.

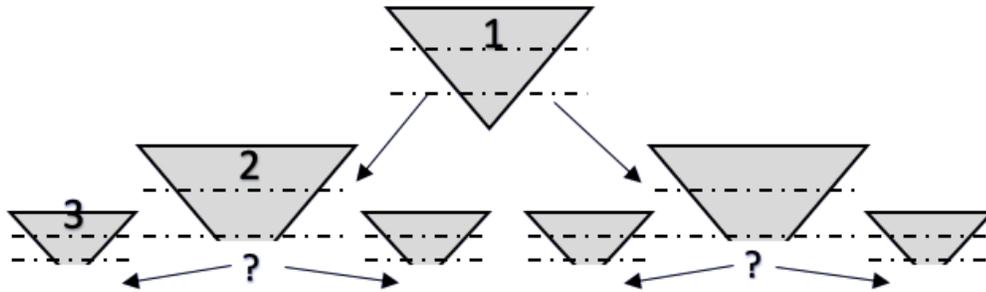
**THE POINT: If our strategic approach is disproportionate, our results will be as well. A healthy approach to the Great Commission values all of its elements (evangelizing, disciple-making, and teaching).**

III. KEY IDEA: Theological training is an essential component of the Great Commission. We most readily understand the need to evangelize. More recent missiological approaches have focused more on disciple-making and church planting. Unless, however, we also make theological training an equally important partner in our strategic approach, we will eventually have less-than-healthy expressions of the Great Commission. This is particularly important in Church Planting Movements.

#### THE PLACE OF TEACHING IN A HEALTHY EXPRESSION OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

- A sustained and healthy expression of the Great Commission must have multiplying disciples (multiplying churches).
- The multiplication of healthy disciples (and churches) will eventually require the multiplication of teachers (including biblically qualified pastors).

### Example 1: Church Planting without Sufficient Theological Training

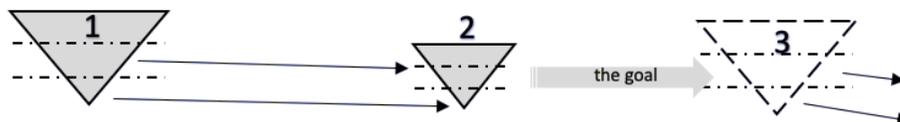


#### Observations:

- The pastor/teacher in the top triangle is responsible for shepherding an increasing number of disciples.
- Without pastor/teachers, the number of disciples will decrease with each iteration.
- The problem: leaders are not being developed or not rapidly enough to multiply.
- The theological knowledge needed to maintain health becomes diluted or absent.

### Example #2: Healthy Church Planting with Sufficient Training

- The goal should be to replicate healthy structure, including those who can teach.



- Successful evangelization means new disciples (multiplying) and, at some point, new teacher/pastors.
- Multiplying pastors and teachers keeps the discipling capacity from being curtailed or becoming highly susceptible to false doctrine (pseudo-Christian beliefs or syncretism), which would mean less capacity to reach those without Christ.

## CURRENT APPROACHES TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

#### A brief note:

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, theological education in the West moved from the study of “Divinity,” as a pursuit of the knowledge of God, toward pastoral education, a specialized field of study to prepare the pastor for a profession (this does not preclude the pursuit of the knowledge of God). This naturally indicated and included specialization. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century, many churches in the U.S. looked at seminaries as the means to provide a professional certification. This concept was also exported as part of many missiological approaches.<sup>1</sup>

Why does that matter?

Our concept of theological education is often shaped by our experience. The 20<sup>th</sup> century Western model in which many of us were educated did many things well. However, aiming for that particular concept of theological education as the only global norm for all or trying to realize it in a specific context can be discouraging.

Current Approaches: a broad summary

- Institutional (whether geared toward historical Divinity study or toward a professional certification)  
Strengths: best possibility for depth because it sets apart the most time, making possible the study of subjects not otherwise attainable (e.g., church history, biblical languages, etc.). Deeper study can promote doctrinal homogeneity (orthodoxy) and raise up more scholars that can also teach with a similar depth.  
Weakness: least possibility for multiplication. Why? Because an institution often requires a significant amount of time for the student and operating an institution requires maintaining a facility and holding faculty. This requires significant funding.
- Informal/Mentored  
Strengths: best possibility for applied theology because concepts of theology and ministry are formed in the laboratory of experience.  
Weakness: requires proximity of the teacher in the field of the student. This can make multiplication difficult, especially if you already have a Church Planting Movement underway.
- Modular  
Strengths: can be portable and can be delivered to a group at the point of need. The way time is allotted can be structured to the needs. This approach has the greatest potential for multiplication of theological knowledge.  
Weakness: may not teach contextually (like the mentor approach does). Often lacks the depth of traditional/institutional models.
- Ad hoc (“we will take whatever we can get”)  
Strengths: does not require an immediate strategy. Allows the facilitators to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.  
Weakness: Is not systematic and will omit essentials. Often, it reacts to theological problems (and their fallout) rather than preemptively preparing leaders for them.

## FACING THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING PASTORS/TEACHERS

Around 3-4 million pastors have never had theological training.

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<sup>1</sup> See Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Augsburg Fortress Press, 1994; reprint, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock, 2001), 8-9.

### Observation: The Four Most Common Barriers to Theological Education in the Field

- 1) Proximity: remote or “closed” fields are difficult places for pastors to find training. Many do not have freedom of movement or lack means to get to where training is located.
- 2) Time: if a pastor is working (the vast majority of pastors outside of the West do not earn a livable wage from their ministry), he is already “maxed.” He can’t leave his job or his field for months to get a theological education.
- 3) Qualification: many traditional models of theological education require some level of education for admittance. The absence of such qualification is the exception not the rule.
- 4) Money: even if a pastor has an opportunity close by, can allot the time, and has qualification, paying for education is rarely a possibility.

### THEOLOGICAL TRAINING FOR THE MASSES: WHAT WE KNOW

- As movements of the gospel expand, there must be those who are able to “teach all things.”
- A healthy, Great Commission strategy does not choose which component is more important.
- Both from the Scripture and from experience we know that there is proportionality between our reaching capacity, our discipling capacity, and our teaching capacity. Theological training is one of the essential components and it is needed in every field of ministry.
- How many need to be trained? That is dependent on the number that have responded to the gospel and are being discipled (this is the concept of proportionality).
- How much doctrinal training is needed? The example is the early church’s relationship to Apostles. Each locale needed to have someone who continued to challenge them with the truth, answer theological questions, and keep each local assembly true to the gospel. That knowledge was much more than being able to share about conversion. Today, our authority is the totality of Scripture. Every network/group needs access to someone with significant biblical/doctrinal understanding to provide the type of teaching that the Apostles provided.
- To be proportionally “Great Commission” means helping our national leaders face and successfully overcome the barriers that are keeping them from getting theological training.

Every approach to theological education comes with challenges, but each has a part to play.

Institutional: DEPTH

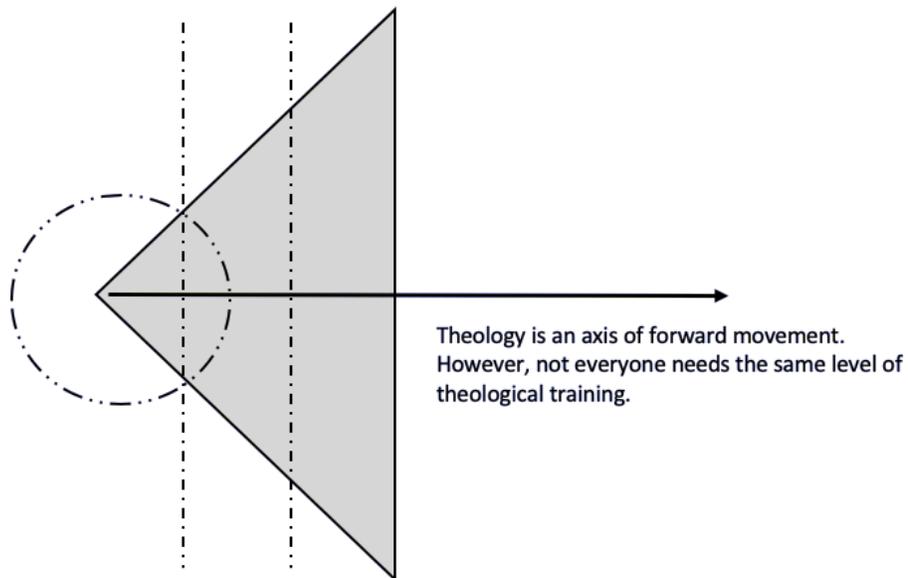
Mentored Training: APPLICATION

Modular: REPRODUCIBILITY

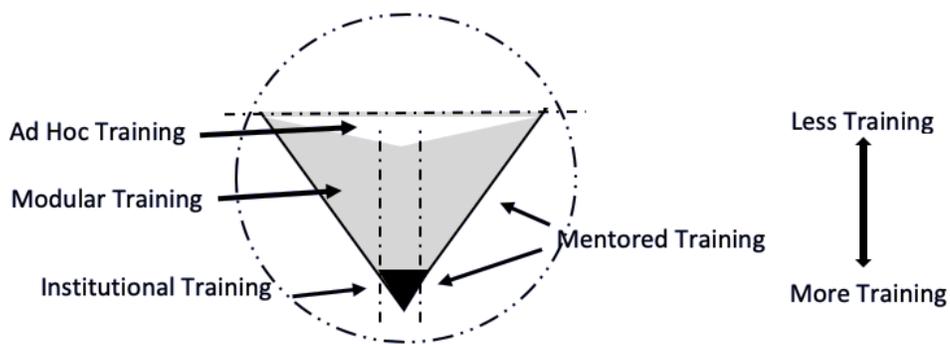
Ad hoc: EMERGENT NEEDS

Of the existing approaches, modular training presents the broadest possibility of multiplication in both new and already existing structures. Estimates place the number of untrained pastors in the world around 3-4 million.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION



Within the “triangle” of those who teach, not all need to have identical levels of training.



There are various types of training, but they do not all accomplish the same thing. Notice that as the training gets deeper, the potential reach decreases. This is the concept of proportionality applied to TE.

- The Role of Institutional Training among nationals:
  - Remember that **DEPTH** is its greatest strength. The number of pastors/national leaders with this type of training needs to be sufficient to push/guide others who are pastoring and leading.
- The Role of Modular Training among nationals:
  - Modular Training can deliver theological training to a large number in a short amount of time. Then, it can be multiplied among others. This leverages its **REPRODUCIBILITY**.

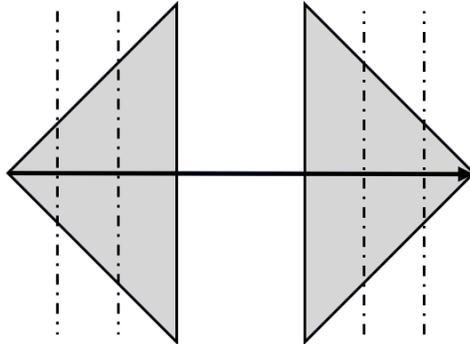
- The Role of Ad Hoc (conference-type training) among nationals:
  - Conference training can help address emergent needs, and tactical implementation. It can provide **CONTEXTUALIZATION**
- The Role of Mentored Training among nationals:
  - Every person needs to see and understand truth in the context of life. That is the core concept of **APPLICATION**. This makes mentoring essential in all cases.

#### IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- The principle of multiplying pastors is not just implied in Scripture. It was clearly part of Paul's approach in multiplying pastors. Paul tells Timothy,  
You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:1-2
- Every movement needs those who can act as stewards of orthodoxy. We have seen the global impact of evangelizing without discipling and discipling without teaching. In all cases, this harms the ability of those we have reached to become fully devoted followers of Christ (healthy disciples) and hinders their participation in subsequent Kingdom expansion.
- Modular Training can be an effective piece of the puzzle but it cannot do it all.
- There is still a need for in-depth, institutional training. Over time, leaders trained in this model must find others among nationals through whom they can reproduce themselves in the field. This can be accomplished through extensive mentoring or by helping them receive advanced training (seminary or Bible college).
- Mentored Training is essential for contextual ministry. Neither the traditional scholastic approach nor the on-sight delivery of modular training can replace the need for mentored application. Theology only really matters when it is applied to the context and lived out in the lives of people.
- No training in God's Kingdom comes with an EULA (End User License Agreement). Everything we learn is not only for us but also for those whom God has given to us.
- Ad hoc training can be used to fill gaps. It may include methodology and strategy, if it is contextualized. It can also address specific issues that believers in your field might be facing (an imbedded belief system, dealing with other faiths, etc.).
- A healthy expression of the Great Commission means that evangelizing, discipling, and teaching are all working together. If you have a strategy for one that does not keep pace with the other(s), you will not be able to sustain health.

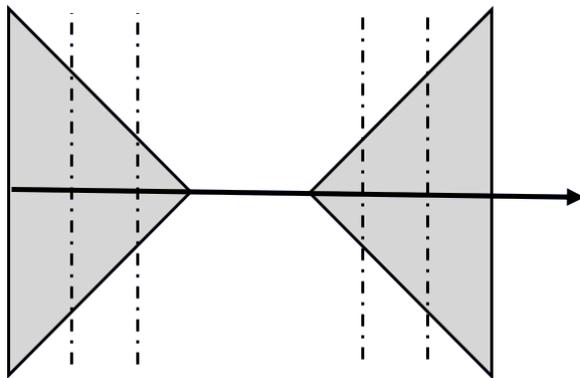
## FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THEOLOGY IN EXPANDING STRUCTURES

Example 1:



In this example, theology acts as the axis on which evangelism moves forward. The new structure begins with reaching but is not healthy until it pushes all the way through to build a new set of teachers including those with deep training (not shown).

Example 2:



In this example, theology pushes out new leaders and disciples to create new structure. Similarly, to the above, it is not healthy until it results in a push to reach the lost. In both examples, theology acts as the axis on which expansion moves.

### CONCLUSION

A complete and healthy representation of the Great Commission requires not only faithful evangelism and disciple-making, but it also requires an intentional approach to train pastors. Training can be provided in a variety of ways, each having both strengths and weaknesses. The global need, however, demands that a significant part of this training must be through a mentoring approach that becomes reproducible in the lives of others. Obeying the words of Jesus that we are to teach those being disciplined makes the role of pastors a vital component in our obedience to the commands of Christ. Theology is, indeed, a vital part of a complete Great Commission strategy. The use of a reproducible, multiplying approach to basic theological education makes the discipleship of all pastors around the world a real possibility and opens a door for some of them to access more advanced forms of training.