

The Steffen Five-Stage Strategy for Integral Ministry
Worldview Resource Group
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Presented by Robert Strauss

Dr. Tom Steffen planted a church among the Ifugao people on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. He earned his Doctorate of Missiology at Biola University's School of Intercultural Studies. Currently he is the Professor of Church Planting at SICS and oversees the D.Miss. Program. He has authored five books, including the popular and comprehensive *Passing the Baton* (1997) and his best selling *Great Commission Companies* (2003). Dr. Steffen is a member of the Worldview Resource Group Board of Directors.

The Steffen Five-Stage Strategy (SFSS) is presented as one broad strategy of holistic church planting with an understanding that other strategies and models exist and are useful. Any one model may not be appropriate for all settings. All strategies and models should be adapted to their context of application.

SFSS is based upon reflective observations made in real world church planting contexts. It was not developed as a hypothesis to be tested in fieldwork. It is grounded data observed directly in missionary church planting settings, originally among animistic people in Southeast Asia, but ultimately among a broader church planting context.

Worldview Resource Group (WRG) presents SFSS as a systematic approach to phase-out oriented church planting. The wise church planter is thinking "phase out" from the inception. It is the paradox of beginning at the end. "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds" 1 Cor. 3:10. We are to be expert builders. It matters how we build. It makes a difference who builds.

The Steffen Five-Stage Strategy of Holistic Church Planting

1. Pre-entry – Pre-entry is the stage before the church planter enters the host society. It is the stage of preparation. "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way" Pro. 19:2. Who should the church planters be? "Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or any passer-by" Pro. 26:10. What skills are needed? "If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success" Eccl. 10:10.
2. Pre-evangelism – This stage is the key! It begins on the day one enters the host society. Discipleship begins in pre-evangelism. Laying foundations here is "follow-up" in advance. What are the worldview assumptions of the host society? What relationships are being built? The foundations for discipleship are laid in this stage. This stage involves culture and language acquisition.
3. Evangelism – The methodology used in evangelism should be understandable and reproducible.
4. Post-evangelism – This stage empowers the church for multiplication.
5. Phase out – Though listed last, phase out is the strategy from the beginning. The exit strategy drives every stage of the church plant. To a great extent the beginning determines the outcome. "But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions..." Rom. 15:23. "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" Phil. 2:12-13.

A more detailed description...

1. *Pre-entry* is the foundation to personal and team development. It involves PREPARING. Preparing in what ways?
 - The Church Planter – What is the profile of the church planter?
 - Knowledge KNOW
 - Spiritual qualities BE
 - Ministry capabilities DO
 - Cross-cultural skills
 - Pre-entry may involve learning a trade language before entering the ministry context
 - Team competencies, organization (Bolman and Deal 1997), and development
 - Demographics – people, culture, language, history, geography, gender, generation, social organization, needs
 - Dynographics – religion and spirit world
2. *Pre-evangelism* is the foundation to relationships. It involves PERCEIVING. Perceiving in what ways?
 - Culture acquisition
 - Language acquisition
 - Worldview analysis – creating “tension” between rival symbols and stories
 - Understanding “grid and group”
 - Knowing how to bond and build relationships
 - Creating curiosity and interest in rival stories (biblical truth) – especially in times of crises, social upheavals, failure of current rituals and stories
 - Establishing the authority of God’s Word
3. *Evangelism* is the foundation to church lifestyle. It involves PRESENTING. Presenting in what ways?
 - Contextualized communication (in the vernacular and culturally understandable)
 - Laying foundations
 - Addressing worldview assumptions
 - In a narrative format (storying) vs. topical argumentation
 - Connected to real history
 - Developing curriculum
4. *Post-evangelism* is the foundation to maturity. It involves PERFECTING. Perfecting in what ways?
 - Symbols
 - Rituals
 - Stories
 - Immediate multiplication (CP1)
 - Discipleship
 - Leadership development – this began on day one
 - Role transition for the church planter
5. *Phase out* is the foundation to interdependence. It involves PARTING. Parting in what ways?
 - This is the strategy throughout each stage.
 - Local leaders
 - Fatherly advice vs. parental control
 - May leave geographically but not relationally