

THE IDEAL VILLAGE OR LOCAL CHURCH. E.G. PHILLIPI (PHI.1:1).

This term describes the usual Local Church with a membership of between 100-400 approximately. It's main qualities will be:-

- 1) It should either be a segment of a City Church and live within the spiritual City walls or, if this is not possible because of it's geographical location, it should at least be plugged into a City Church in a definite relationship and be drawing life from that source.
- 2) It is ruled over by a plurality of Elders with a clear Head among them who is usually called "The Pastor" or "Senior Pastor".
- 3) Deacons have charge of specific tasks and serve the Elders in a variety of practical ways but do not have church government. They should not be formed into a "Deacons Board" but should individually relate directly to the Elder who has governmental responsibility for the task allotted to them.
- 4) A mature strong Local Church should have the following characteristics.
 - i) Properly developed family life through real relationships and the development of home groups.
 - ii) Proper pastoral care through the effective working of the pastoral elders.
 - iii) A powerful and effective local prayer life through local meetings and the development of prayer cells of two or three.
 - iv) A local evangelism program to supplement the centrally organized program even when part of a City Church.
 - v) If the church is not able to participate in the youth and children's program of a City church then it needs to develop it's own program.
 - vi) A working body in which every member, male and female, has found a fulfilling function.
 - vii) A strong financial base with the people released into joyful generous giving.

viii) The other elements which are found in a City church, such as a mission program, a sophisticated teaching program, conferences and seminars are not appropriate or really practical for a single local church. For this reason every local church should be drawing from the resources of the City church to get these needs met in their congregation.

ix) The Local Church may meet separately on a Sunday or it may meet with the other Local Churches if it is part of the one City church. In which case it will need the necessary facilities to hold meetings that draw and feed the people and in which the power of God is present.

The Interaction between Regional Center and Local Church.

Covering:- Strictly speaking, churches do not cover churches as this is a matter of individual relationships between men. However, one of the responsibilities of a Regional or City Church, is to use its greater spiritual fire-power to attack the regional strong man, disarm him and rob him of his goods (Luke 11:21-23).

In this way, it produces a shade or protective covering over the region so that all the churches benefit. In God's plan, large churches are to enrich, protect and bless the smaller churches causing them to grow. They should not decimate them or gobble them up. The ruthless commercial methodology of the world should not be found in the church.

Fathering:- One church cannot father another church, but Apostles are called to father churches and to father men who are leaders of churches on a wider basis. City churches have the responsibility to provide a home and a financial base for such men to serve the Church at large. Such men should be joyfully released to their wider ministry with a sense of privilege.

Servanthood:- The attitude is to be one of servanthood not control. No church has the right of control over another. The rich deposit of gift and ministry that gathers at a City Church should be released to serve, first the committed churches and then the whole body of Christ.

THINGS A LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT.

- i) It usually does not have the gift or power to have regional or national impact.
- ii) It is not up to city level of gift expertise or excellence, so that things done at village level will have an amateur quality about them.
- iii) Not all gifts are present at village level.
- iv) A village does not have the financial of gift resources to do certain things which can only be effectively done at city level. e.g.:-
 - Run a Bible School.
 - Leadership Training Program.
 - Crusade Evangelism.
 - Senior Day School.
 - National Outreach.
 - International Outreach.

(c) Alan Vincent and Outpouring Ministries