

---

# STRATEGIC DEFINITIONS AND DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT: National Church Development

*by Daniel A. Brown, PhD*

## **FOUR STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

FMI uses a simple model to describe the process of becoming a fully functioning *National Church*. Regardless of country, culture, geography, or history, the WHEEL (as it became to be known) has proven to be an accurate description of the phases in the growth from the initial church plant in a country, to when that country sends it own international missionaries.

The WHEEL identifies the most obvious landmarks that any *National Church* will pass on its way to maturity. The WHEEL is not a measuring device to *grade* nations or to determine the winners of a contest. We're not competing among ourselves, trying to beat some other country and reach "Stage 3" before they do. It is not a set of requirements or a list of accomplishments that must be satisfied.

All spiritual progress is an ongoing process, and not really a series of static levels or grades. That is why the WHEEL is like a set of directions: "*After you pass the big tree, you'll come to a dirt path that leads to...*" Like a compass, the WHEEL enables leaders to find their way and focuses their attention on normal progress from one stage to another.

## **A COMMON FOUNDATION**

For years there has been some uncertainty about roles/titles in Europe, especially over the difference between National Representative and National Leader. Part of the confusion came from the need for legal registration in countries. In order to register, it was necessary to have an identified leader. Consequently, the Foursquare Church in several European countries consists of a single congregation, legally recognized by the government as a national organization. The historical definition FMI uses (Stage 4), is not a legal definition, but a functional one.

We want to assure that all of Europe uses common language, goals, and practices, so that things do not develop differently in one country as opposed to the others. One of our first steps is to help each nation see itself in the midst of a development process—and, thereby, see where it ought to focus its energies to develop toward the next phase of national ministry.

Just as Nehemiah surveyed Jerusalem before beginning the work of rebuilding it, so we want to have a basis for examining the situation in our country. We want to build on a good foundation. The WHEEL gives us a common context for self-evaluation.

## A PRACTICAL DEFINITION

Construction projects are completed in phases, so too are National Churches. As unique as each country may be in terms of its culture or history, the development from an initial convert to an international missionary-sending church follows predictable and identifiable patterns common to all countries. Since each *stage* is a development process that might take several years to pass through, how will we know that we have moved on to the next *stage*?

We are not in a race; the goal is not to complete the stages of development as fast as possible so that we can win a prize. Rather, our goal is to develop healthy, reproductive National Churches that have focused on all the aspects of each phase. In other words, we want leaders who win the lost to be thinking ahead to planting a church among those newly converted disciples—and thinking ahead to using those disciples as church-planters—whose congregations will work together to reach the whole nation...and other countries as well.

The following pages identify the key spiritual/organizational elements associated with each *stage* of the WHEEL. By listing those components, we have created easy-to-aim-at-goals for National Churches in Europe.

## STRATEGIC DEFINITIONS

*Qualities that characterize our goals for Foursquare churches throughout the world are:*

### HEALTHY LEADERS WHO ARE...

- Exalting Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit, and Returning King.
- Licensed by Foursquare.
- Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit—especially *love*.

- Maturing in spiritual understanding and practice.
- Mobilizing others in leadership and volunteer ministry.
- Teaching and applying the word of God in all aspects of church.
- Fully engaged in Spirit-empowered ministry.
- Submitted to leaders within the local church and within their region.

**HEALTHY CHURCHES WHO ARE...**

- Exalting Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit, and Returning King.
- Well-led by healthy leaders.
- Broadly mobilized in leadership and volunteer ministry.
- Spiritually vibrant (prayerful, evangelistic, biblical).
- Gracious, loving and affectionate in atmosphere and reality.
- Fully engaged in Spirit-empowered ministry.
- Resembling their local community—and impacting it.
- Well connected with THE FOURSQUARE CHURCH.
- Financially sound and accountable.
- Balanced in outlook and activity (organic and spiritual).
- Missions-minded and world-conscious.

**REPRODUCING CHURCHES THAT ARE...**

- Converting and baptizing people—in water and in the Spirit.
- Delegating leadership roles and developing leaders that others follow.

- Multiplying cell groups and other lay-led ministries.
- Exporting resources beyond themselves.
- Starting new ministries.
- Planting churches.
- Impacting people who are changing others.

#### **CHURCHES—PEOPLE-GROUPS COMPRISED OF...**

- Worshipers and followers of Jesus Christ.
- A leader who accepts responsibility to care for the people, and people who are following the leader.
- An intentional and regular gathering time.
- Acknowledged validation by an external authority.
- An identifiable mark (name, logo, fixed meeting location).
- A missionary purpose—more than just friends hanging out.
- After a reasonable period of time—accomplished change in people/world.

#### **NATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

Writing a clear vision and making it plain enables everyone to run toward the same destination (Habakkuk 2:2-3). Where there is no clear vision, our energies dissipate and people scatter ineffectively with no restraint (Proverbs 29:18). A good vision narrows our focus and gives us goals to pursue single-mindedly. This planning exercise will help you aim your efforts in building a National Church in your nation.

*Directions: Check each of the landmarks that have been met or accomplished on your developmental journey.*

### *Stage 1*

- A healthy leader (*see definition*) who has won converts and made disciples.
- A healthy congregation (*see definition*) that is winning converts and making disciples.
- Both pastor and church are officially recognized by Foursquare.

### *Stage 2*

- Church leaders are being developed and mobilized for more ministry.
- A mentoring process within the church that is developing future leaders.
- At least one healthy church plant started by the existing church.

### *Stage 3*

- At least four healthy churches that are developing and mobilizing ministry leaders.
- At least one additional healthy church plant started by an existing church.
- A network among pastors/churches that are working together to reach the whole nation, *i.e., more than one city, region, language.*
- A national mentoring process that is developing future leaders.
- A legally recognized National Board comprised of the four (*or more*) networked churches.

### *Stage 4*

- Sent and supported missionaries who have started healthy churches in other countries.
- Unreached groups targeted within their own countries and other countries.
- Participation in global network of Foursquare Churches.

## LOCAL CHURCH ASSESSMENT

Local congregations are the primary means by which the Foursquare Church seeks to fulfill its mandate to preach the Gospel to—and make disciples of—all peoples. Consequently, the development of a National Foursquare Church is based on the health of established local churches in each country. This exercise will assist you in determining which areas of your church are functioning well, and which ones might be improved.

**Directions:** Check each quality that is being lived out in your church, and put a number from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong) to the left of each “bullet” (dot) you check. Put a zero (0) to the left of every “bullet” without a check.

### HEALTHY: THIS CHURCH IS...

- Exalting Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit, and Returning King.
- Well led by healthy leaders.
- Broadly mobilized in leadership and volunteer ministry.
- Spiritually vibrant (prayerful, evangelistic, biblical).
- Gracious, loving and affectionate in atmosphere and reality.
- Fully engaged in Spirit empowered ministry.
- Resembling their local community—and impacting it.
- Well connected with THE FOURSQUARE CHURCH.
- Financially sound and accountable.
- Balanced in outlook and activity (organic and spiritual).
- *Mission minded and world conscious.*

### REPRODUCING: THIS CHURCH IS...

- Converting and baptizing people—in water and in the Spirit.

- Delegating leadership roles and developing followed leaders.
- Multiplying *cell groups* and other *lay-led ministries*.
- Exporting resources beyond themselves.
- Starting new ministries.
- Planting churches.
- Impacting people who are changing others.