

# Next Step Follow-up Plan

Prepared by: Paul Bucknell & Hugo Cheng

January 7, 2008

This is the Next Step Follow-up Plan for the CMC'07 conference to assist the Next Step Follow-up Team (NSFT) to follow-up the NextSteppers. About 199 had NextStep interviews, but we should be aware that there are others among the 298 who committed themselves to go into missions. There are several parts to this follow-up plan. The first items are more urgent and placed first, but the later items regarding long-term follow-up and the organizational charts are important to keep in mind while doing the first. This is only a tentative plan of action and trust many improvements will be made to this plan that our goal of facilitating these precious and well-equipped servants might be sent out into God's ever-expanding kingdom.

## Contents:

- ▶ Update Resources (p. 1)
- ▶ Form a NextStep Team (NSFT) (p. 1)
- ▶ Immediate Follow-up for NextSteppers (p. 1-2)
- ▶ Long-term Care for NextSteppers (p. 3-4)
- ▶ Providing Mentors (p. 5)
- ▶ Forming NSFT Partners (p. 6)
- ▶ Developing a NextStep Biblical Theology (p. 7)

## ❖ Update Resources: Web NextStep

**Stage 1:** The Next Step website hosted on the AFC website needs to be functional with proper links. Removing bad links and making it presentable with the updated or new materials is critical. The Next Step Team (NST) have new or updated articles to submit. This would require about 30 minutes.

**Stage 2:** Add the mission organizations, seminaries and their brief introduction and contact information to the website (probably 2-3 hours). The exhibition list (excel sheet) can be used. Again, the NSFT can do that. Afterwards, we might email the same mission groups to see if they have even a more appropriate short introduction and email for that web page.

**Stage 3:** Put up more articles. Develop a better design. No deadline but the sooner the better.

## ❖ Form a Next Step Follow-up Team (NSFT)

The NSFT differs from the Next Step Team (NST), the latter focuses on providing materials and an interview time for those interested in or already committed to going into missions either full-time or as a tent maker at CMC. The NST can help serve as a bridge for the NSFT, but a whole new team needs to be designed for effective service. NST responsibilities are listed later along with other possible organizational charts.

The NSFT team leader needs to find individuals who can among other things phone NextSteppers, phone pastors, care for website, write emails, liaison with pastors and mission chairmen, establish regional coordinators, strengthen and encourage local coordinators. Other challenges are: to provide training, directly or indirectly, for local coordinators, mentors and NextSteppers. Many of these contacts will be in Chinese. A budget will need to be written and funds sought for. This NSFT can by God's grace develop into a greater pooling and shared mission development within the Chinese churches.

Many of the things suggested, such as a mentor following up a NextStepper, should be able to happen within a local church, but unfortunately, in many cases, this is not so. Like Nehemiah a strong support base needs to be built to accomplish His purposes.

## ❖ Immediate Follow-up

### 1. Develop databases

- ▶ Enter NextSteppers into database. Include map view.
- ▶ Offer NextStep materials and service to all those who made commitment at CMC'07 to pursue missions (the other 99) but were not able or did not attend NextStep interviews. Email all attendees (minus the NextSteppers) asking them to respond if they have made such a commitment and would like that support. Include these responders to the follow-up database. NSFT writes and sends this email.
- ▶ Enter NextStep counselors into database (not urgent). Hopefully, we have a better starting team of counselors at the next CMC.
- ▶ Develop (or reshape) database so it will include RC, LC and possibly mentors. This enables us to get a picture of the follow-up in a glance.

### 2. Find location and church situation of NextSteppers

- ▶ Use map and gained knowledge of churches and personal resources to observe each Next Stepper's situation and likelihood of being properly followed up. Much depends on their home churches (if they have one).

### Reminder:

Not all who sign up for NextStep should go into full-time service. God will use their God-given desires more locally. We are not pressing people into missions who were not meant to go but facilitating, encouraging and equipping those God is calling. It is okay to take these NextSteppers off our prime follow-up list after the initial call. We do not need to notify their pastor unless the situation warrants it.

### 3. NextSteppers (by January 20th)

- ▶ Call each NextStepper (couple as one).
- ▶ Ask their thoughts on the conference and NextStep interview. Since we might not know their level, we should ask them what next steps they are working on. Add to database. A list of what needs to be found out or offered, including prayer, should be developed to provide a consistent follow-up.
- ▶ Translate and email the **NextStepper's Plan of Action** sheet to them so they can focus on what they should be doing. NST can help form an initial email as necessary. The timeline (filled in at the conferences) and the Plan of Action will help the Local Coordinator and Mentors be consistent in their follow-up.
- ▶ Remember to ask permission to call their pastor/mission director and tell them about their participation in NextStep counseling.
- ▶ As you talk with them, keep in mind what category they might fit into (see #5).
- ▶ Encourage them to attend the NextStepper retreat (May 16-18). Provide registration forms.

### 4. NextSteppers' pastors/mission director (by Feb 15th)

- ▶ Speak with each pastor or mission director introducing the conference (in case he was not present), Nextstep and sharing with them the excitement of what God is doing in the lives of these NextSteppers. Mention the free materials. The NST can help supply what should be discussed in this conversation as necessary.
- ▶ Email them summarizing the conversation including the two pdf download links (eng/cht) of Training-Up-New-Leaders 培訓新領袖. Again, NST can help supply a draft email with what should be in this email as needed.
- ▶ Evaluate which category they might fit into (see #5) and relevant discussion. This ties in closely with the long-term care provided through the local coordinators.

### 5. Place in one of 3 different groupings (category)

- ▶ 3 groups:
  - (1) Churches capable and willing to care for the NextSteppers (probably can help other churches);
  - (2) Churches that lack the manpower and other resources to train (they want training and help from others); and
  - (3) NextSteppers who are in situations where there are no available church situations. See full-sized chart below.
- ▶ Update database (Nextstepper & Local Coordinator)
- ▶ Follow-up as the category and needs demand. This will be explained more in the following long-term care section that will closely tie in with envisioning and empowering (training) of local coordinators and mentors.

## Three Categories for NextSteppers

### PARTNER WITH

#### #1 Churches capable and willing to care for the NextSteppers (and probably can help other churches).

- ▶ Share the NextStep vision with the pastor/mission chairman.
- ▶ Recruit to be the LC and find (or be) mentor to NextStepper.
- ▶ Recruit to provide training for churches or be possible LC for other NextSteppers if needed.
- ▶ Encourage the NextStepper
- ▶ Keep in touch through periodic checkups.
- ▶ Provide retreat and other possible training seminars.

### INVEST HEAVILY

#### #2 Churches that lack the manpower and other resources to mentor (they want training and help from others).

- ▶ Share the NextStep vision with the pastor/mission chairman.
- ▶ Recruit to be the LC and find (or be) mentor to NextStepper.
- ▶ Connect to Church-2-Church resources.
- ▶ Encourage the NextStepper
- ▶ Keep in touch through periodic checkups.
- ▶ Provide retreat and other possible training seminars.

### MANAGE

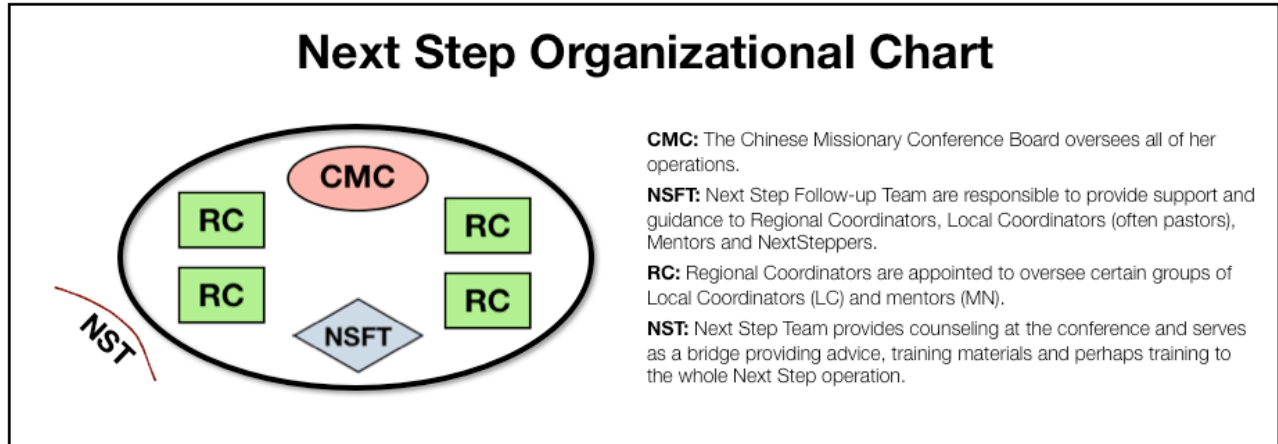
#### #3 NextSteppers who are in situations where there are no local church and mentor situations.

- ▶ Connect NextSteppers with local church.
- ▶ Connect NextSteppers with mentors (perhaps long-distance).
- ▶ Encourage the NextStepper
- ▶ Keep in touch through periodic checkups.
- ▶ Provide retreat and other possible training seminars.

## ❖ Long-term Care for NextSteppers

The greatest amount of work will need to be done in the near future. If care is to be consistent and thorough and help from churches, individuals, seminaries and mission organizations are to work together for the overall benefit of all, long-term help will be needed. This will require organization on several different levels. The chart below will help the different entities know how to interrelate. It is suggested to help provide a comprehensive look of what might be needed.

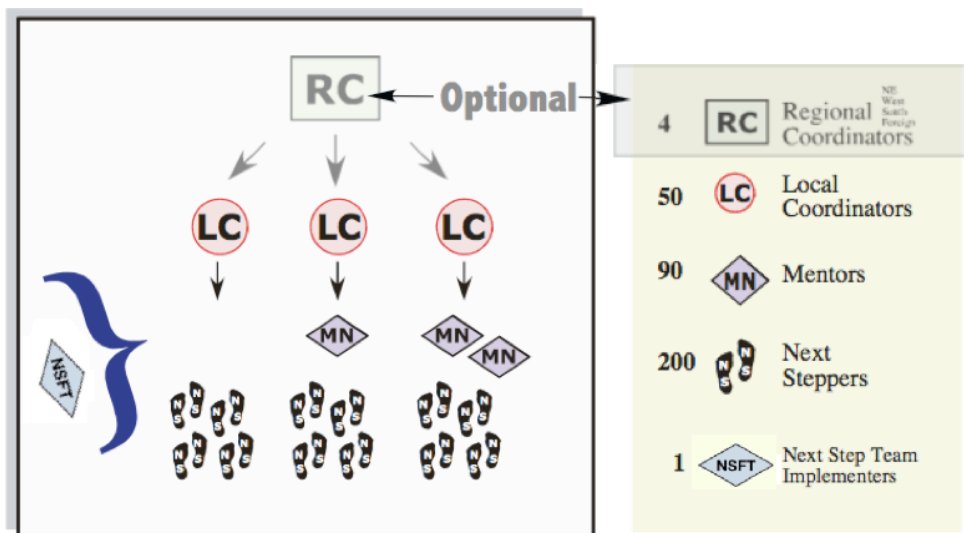
### 1. Clarification of Next Step's leadership organization



The Next Step Follow-up Team (**NSFT**) serves those in administrative and training roles as well as the NextSteppers themselves. The Next Step Team (**NST**) serves as an advisory team helping with materials, ideas and training. Regional Coordinators (**RC**) are not essential but can greatly help the NSFT carry out their duties. Typically, it would be better to appoint RC and have them responsible for finding Local Coordinators (**LC**) but this should have been done before the conference. Our suggestion is to first organize Local Coordinators which is done by calling pastors of the churches where NextSteppers are. When pastors, elders or others are found that understand and are excited about seeing the NextSteppers mentored, they can be used as Regional Coordinators.

Let us first look at the whole picture then discuss Local Coordinators, Mentors and Regional Coordinators in that order.

### 2. A Comprehensive NextStepper Follow-up Organizational Chart



We are only trying to implement what already should be operating in the local church. Some training will in some form will be necessary. Many churches have not understood the concept of training in the church as it speaks of in Ephesians 4:11-16.

Local coordinators in most cases could also serve as mentors. A regional coordinator might also be a local coordinator.

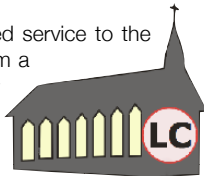
From an examination of the above diagram there are different ways the responsibilities of the Local Coordinators and possible Regional Coordinators might work out. Every church is different. One church might have 15 NextSteppers while another might only have one. One church might have a Local Coordinator, one who will make sure that the NextStepper is kept accountable, while another might not know how to provide assistance or not at all care about the NextStepper.

Many churches are not organized to provide care for those pursuing full-time service like the NextSteppers. They do not understand how discipleship fits into their churches. These mentorships are a form of high level discipleship. Our hope is that the NextSteppers will find a mentor who can help guide and pray for them but also to envision and empower churches to do what God wants through their churches. In these cases willing churches can be linked to other partners in the ministry (see page 6) from seminaries or other ministries.

In the above diagram a Local Coordinator himself might mentor a NextStepper, but his main responsibility will be to make sure the NextSteppers under his supervision are properly mentored. How to do this is discussed in the article *Training-Up-New-Leaders 培訓新領袖*.

### 3. Organize Local Coordinators

Help each NextStepper be guided into well-equipped service to the Lord by appointing volunteer Local Coordinators from a pool of local church leaders to oversee mentors for NextSteppers and help with any overall needs like training.



Find, appoint and provide support for 50 (guess) local coordinators in local churches who will provide oversight and sometimes mentor NextSteppers from their own churches. They will usually be a pastor, mission chairman or an elder, but it will always be church approved.

- ▶ Clarify vision and responsibilities for LC (see right)
- ▶ Phone/email & recruit local coordinators as needed. Explain what a LC is and ask if they would like to be one or who possible could fill that role. Or supply information and get back with them. Affirm it on the next phone call or email. Start this process on initial contact with NextStepper's pastor.
- ▶ Supply Next Step materials and possible training opportunities (brochure?). Perhaps done over the web (web conference).
  - *Training-Up-New-Leaders 培訓新領袖*
  - Audio of Training New Leaders workshop (at CMC'07)
  -
- ▶ Provide assistance to LC to start mentoring relationships and help in training resources.

### 4. Organize Mentorship Team

- ▶ In some cases the NextStepper's home church will have people that will oversee the development of their growth. When this is not the case, The Next Step Follow-up Team (NSFT) will find mentors and act as the Local Coordinator for these NextSteppers.
  - ▶ Our largest barrier to this is the lack of training in the development of personal character (including marriage), developing the proper skill set and rightly appropriating God's Word in their lives and ministry. All of which should be largely developed in the church and not depend on seminary which might not be accessible to all or even necessary.
  - ▶ A mentor's responsibilities are included on the next page.
  - ▶ A mentor's training materials are included on the following page.

### 5. General matters

- ▶ Bi-annually follow-up NextSteppers and encourage them, seeing how their mentoring relationship is going and if they could be of any help. Keep information updated.
- ▶ Translate e-manual and other material as necessary for NextStep Counselor Training.

## Local Coordinator's Responsibilities



The Next Step Local Coordinator will be accountable for the different people making commitments to go into full time missions from their own church and perhaps those in the local areas without firm church affiliation.

- ▶ Briefly go over the commitment and barriers that the individual faces to get to the mission field so that you better understand the NextStepper. (Have NextStepper share from the CMC timeline or actions sheet).
- ▶ Make sure each NextStepper has an appropriate mentor to keep them accountable.
- ▶ If the number allows, have those interested in missions meet for training or sharing.
- ▶ Every 3 - 6 months check and see if the mentoring relationship is going okay.
- ▶ Send quarterly reports to Regional Coordinator. Can be a brief email. Include the status of mentorships as well as any needs for training.

## ❖ Mentor's Responsibilities



Mentors can be any local resource person who has experience and insight into the special area in which he might guide the NextStepper. Sometimes a special mentor might be arranged for a short time to deal with a specific issue until it is resolved or he or she might mentor the NextStepper until he gets to the field.

- Meet the individual as soon after conference as possible. Share life stories.
- Establish mentor relationship: frequency and structure of meeting together.
- Familiarize yourself with the training manual for the Next Step counselors.
- Discuss the time line and its steps and obstacles.
- Review what the goal of service is and what level they are on.
- Establish areas of needed growth and development. Prioritize several areas and work out plan of action. Ideally have the NextStepper work on the Next Step Action Plan on his own and then go over it with him. Doing it together also has its benefits.
- Define and follow up ways to grow: (books, courses, individuals, etc.). Decide on one and start.
- Pray together.
- Notify LC (if none then RC) of how the meetings are progressing.
- If at level #3, then discuss their financial situation and help explain how the church might be able to help out with financial prayer support. Perhaps arrange a meeting with the Mission's Chairman. Make sure you wisely alert them to any red flags (potential problems in their person or training that might hinder a church from supporting them).

### The Mentor's Resources

Mentors that have gone through the NextStep interview will generally understand what needs to be done through the mentorship. Those that have not had the opportunity should become familiar with the interview process and the article the NextSteppers were assigned to read. The initial meeting should simply discuss the interview, the NextStepper's perspective, etc. Here is a list of those materials.

- **The training manual** for the NextStep counselor.  
The NextStepper does not know of this manual, but it is available to you. It clarifies the three different levels of NextSteppers and helps you know how to ask good questions depending on where they are at.
- **The NextStep timeline.**  
The NextStepper should have this. If so, have them explain it to you. If not, provide a blank one and have them tell you what was said.
- **The NextStep commitment card.**  
They probably do not have one as we collect them. You could, however, ask them what they did fill out or what they might if they filled it out now. Where are they at?
- **The NextStep Plan of Action sheet.**  
The NextStepper needs to be sent one. It is a sheet that helps them and you to know what to follow-up on. They can fill it out on their own or with you. Take your time. Identify priority areas. These are the ones you are to focus your mentoring.
- **Training Up New Leaders 培訓新領袖** article.  
This is designed to help the church leader and mentor understand how to mentor a NextStepper.

*We believe that the happiest and most effective missionaries receive good support and guidance both before and during their service as missionaries.*

# Forming NSFT Partners

## ❖ AFC

- AFC will form the NextStep Follow-up Team (NSFT) to coordinate and implement all the follow-up efforts.

## ❖ NST Advisory Team (Hugo and Paul) - serves as a bridge

- Provide an overall plan and steps of implementation.
- Provide initial draft phone information/emails when contacting the NextSteppers and Pastors as needed.
- Provide ready access to all the Next Step materials.
- Provide a one year curriculum *Developing NextStep Followup Groups* for your church if there are a number of people interested in missions.
- Keep in dialogue with AFC to refine and improve the plan.
- Assist in providing the knowledge of resources for both NextSteppers and local coordinators and mentors.
- Help in training as able.

## ❖ Local churches

### (1) Trainer Churches

- Mobilize their own NextSteppers towards their goal of service.
- Provide guidance, training and possibly mentors for other churches and NextSteppers.

### (2) Churches in Training

- Mobilize their own NextSteppers towards their goal of service along with the support of others.

## ❖ Mission organizations

- Supply mentors for NextSteppers.
- Provide counselors during the conferences for NextStep program.
- Provide extra guidance and training (i.e. Possible short and long term) for those about to go into the field.
- Provide training and speakers for NextStep training.

## ❖ Seminaries/training schools

- Pass on Next Step vision.
- Supply mentors for NextSteppers.
- Provide counselors during the conferences for NextStep program.
- Provide extra guidance and training (i.e. possible short and long term) for those about to go into the field.
- Provide training and speakers for NextStep training.

# Developing a Next Step Biblical Theology

## The Need for Next Step

The need for the Next Step program stems from three truths found in the Parable of the Sower.

1. **God purposely sows His seed (Word) for His specific purpose.**
  - God sows His Word with a strategic purpose.
2. **Spiritual truths grow like seeds.**
  - God's work will actively grow, prosper and bear fruit if not hindered.
3. **Satan tries to hinder the seed's growth.**
  - Satan through a number of devious means tries to hamper the work of God in His people's lives.

The challenge for the Next Step Follow-up team is to preserve that seed, the special work of God in His people's lives. The NextSteppers have His seed in their lives. The Lord is mobilizing His people. Of course, not everyone who comes forward is going to be a full-time worker. There are many misunderstandings of what full-time or tent-making ministry is or requires. Many find that their life situations do not allow for them to enter full-time ministry. But for many, God's Word is prodding them to move forward into some kind of dedicated service. Our particular responsibility is to keep their lives and heart focused on what God is doing in their lives.

The Next Step Follow-up program seeks, much like a farmer, to preserve this seed. We know the evil one will attempt to steal the seed just as in the parable. There are two stages of the Next Step Follow-up program to prevent that.

- In the first stage, usually at the mission conference, those more experienced seek to identify and clarify what God is saying to them and help them see and commit to next steps of activity to reach that long-term vision. These counselors seek to preserve the seed (what God is speaking to them) from being stolen.
- The second stage (Next Step Follow-up Program) helps these NextSteppers to place themselves in a situation where that seed is being protected through the help of mentors and encourages them in a number of situations to devote themselves to where God is leading them.

Our hope is that a well-equipped full-time worker gets to where God is leading him or her. We trust that as special needs of preparation are introduced early on that these servants of the Lord will be better prepared and thus more effective in God's harvest. Speed is of essence.



*"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Cor 3:6-9).*

## The Purpose of Next Step

The Next Step program strategically helps God's people get to where they ought to be as clearly stated in Ephesians 4:11-16. Christian training places its confidence in the way God revealed that He would empower His people—through equipping. Next Step largely focuses on developing those God has called into missionary service as it is often the most neglected and needs the most support.

1. The goal is simply to build up the saints so that they can serve. As the Christians are built up, the whole body of Christ is established and each serves the other.
2. The means of our work is to equip. This assumes we have what we need to empower God's people at any stage of development.
3. The need is for those who are specially gifted such as pastors, teachers and missionaries to help instruct these NextSteppers that they might grow.
4. The vision is to see these NextSteppers who in many cases are struggling alone with some issues in their lives step forward past these struggles and join the ranks of others who are equipping others for the strategic purpose of expanding God's kingdom.

