

Church Planting

*Establishing and Implementing a
Church Planting Vision*



APPENDIX 2 DISCIPLESHIP

When Jesus commanded the church to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28), what did he mean? Surely, he meant “do for the world, what I have done for the Twelve”.

Jesus did not disciple the Twelve by asking them to come to a couple of services each week. He disciplined incarnationally, not scholastically. A read through the Gospel accounts reveals the following traits of Jesus’ discipleship of the Twelve:

1. Jesus spent a lot of time with his disciples.
2. Jesus disciplined both by formal teaching and by informal teaching, when occasions invited teaching.
3. Jesus disciplined through example, as well as teaching. He demonstrated what humility was as well as taught it.
4. Jesus allowed many small faults to go by uncorrected, but he admonished big faults such as pride.
5. Jesus disciplined by drawing the Twelve into a community, where they would learn from/ through one another as well as from him. Small groups are an essential part of growing in grace and knowledge.
6. Jesus disciplined the Twelve by sending them out to serve two by two.
7. Jesus disciplined by praying for the Twelve.

We discover that in the same incarnational way, Paul urged converts to follow him as he followed Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:11, Philippians 4:9).

Introduction

Manor Park Church believes that Church Planting is a Biblical and primary growth strategy for the expansion of God’s kingdom.

In this document we attempt to sketch out how this vision can be worked out in practical ways.

Church planting may not be normal practice for all churches, but we hope that this document will explain why we believe it is both important and Scriptural.

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Why Plant New Churches?

Six Good Reasons

(1) This is the way the church grew in the book of Acts.

The basic reason for planting new churches is that this is the way the church grew in the book of Acts. One missionary journey after another resulted in new churches everywhere. The kingdom of Christ grew by the multiplication of churches.

In addition to this primary reason, we offer five other practical reasons:

(2) New churches carry less baggage.

Long-standing churches often carry *traditional baggage*. Their religious buildings may put people off and their forms of worship may have become inflexible, and they may simply be unaware of the great distance between them and the culture around them.

Alternatively, or sometimes in addition, churches can carry *institutional baggage* which may prevent them from adapting to the needs of the world. These institutional forces may be due to internal politics such as the influence of long-standing families or other pressure groups within the church. So although some folk within an existing church may want to reach the lost, they may find attempts resisted.

A new church is less likely to possess these kinds of baggage.

(3) New and smaller churches can express specific and local concerns.

Churches which pool from a large geographic area find it difficult to acquire or reflect local differences or concerns. It is hard for someone who lives many miles from a congregation's building to possess a passion for an area they do not live in. New churches made up mainly of people from the locality more readily express a natural concern for the people in their own community.

work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. THE CHURCH

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. THE FUTURE

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

We are also committed to the FIEC statements on gender, sexuality and complementarianism.

with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. THE HUMAN RACE

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. SALVATION

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his

(4) New churches are often born with an evangelistic purpose.

Some churches become inward looking over time, for one reason or another, and cease to care for the world. Some even justify their lack of Gospel zeal with notions such as "it's the day of small things", "the world is so hard to the Gospel today", "the great commission was only for the apostles", "it's because we are being faithful to the Word that no-one is being converted," all the while neglecting the Master's words, "go.... make disciples..." and "the fields are white unto harvest." (Matthew 28, John 4). New churches are often born specifically with an outreach agenda.

(5) New churches start off as more effective serving centres.

Small churches can be more effective places to serve because....

1. the *need for everyone* to serve rises in small churches
2. *ownership* of ministry rises as members, rather than leaders initiate works of service
3. *relational* organisation takes place instead of *organisational* administration

(6) New churches encourage the mother church and other local churches to re-examine their traditions in the light of Scripture.

New churches, properly founded, are not clones of their mother churches, but are given the freedom to implement Biblical principles in a new, fresh and relevant way to both the culture of the day and the people they are trying to reach.

Summary

We do not believe that church planting is the only way to grow the kingdom, but we do believe it is the most significant way. As an example, in *The Churching of America*, Fink and Stark point out that America was won for the Gospel by the rapid planting of many churches over it's brief history, resulting in a church attendance growth from 17% in 1800 to 62% in 1980.

A Church Planting Vision *Implemented*

How then can a church adopt and implement church-planting vision? Here are some practical guidelines.

Casting the Vision

Constant teaching will enable a church to see and catch the vision. This can be done through preaching, church meetings, pastoral letters and so on.

Implementing the Vision

Here are some possible steps to implement the vision, all of which must be done in a prayerful way over time.

(1) Research local areas and communities needing the Gospel

Where possible this to be done in conjunction with other evangelical churches, so that no duplication or 'stepping on toes' takes place.

(2) Establishment of a church plant

How may a church plant be established? There is no single blueprint, but here is one possible route:

(i) Identify lead church planters. Where possible, identify church planters. These people are pioneering and 'apostolic' (small 'a') people eventually sent out (an apostle is simply a 'sent one') from the mother church (see Acts 14:26-28). They must have a proven track record of faithful ministry. Leadership is the key to successful planting.

(ii) Identify the new church plant core. Here you establish the core members of the church, who will form the initial backbone of the

Four Core Theological and Practical Values

1. ***Doctrine.*** We are Evangelical in belief (see the FIEC statement of faith in Appendix 1)
2. ***Gender.*** We believe that the spiritual leadership of the church, according to the Scriptures, is male.
3. ***Government.*** We believe in the eldership form of church government with elders and deacons/esses as church officers
4. ***Secondary Issues.*** We do not want church plants to emphasise secondary doctrines.

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APPENDIX 1 - Statement of Faith (FIEC)

We believe that churches should have some established basis of faith, which enables us to line up with the Scriptures and historic orthodoxy.

1. GOD

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. THE BIBLE

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks

(7) Committed to Mission. By mission we mean the spreading of the Good News of Jesus by good deeds and by word, to our neighbours and the world. Our churches must be outward looking, not inward focussed.

(8) Committed to Church Planting. We are convinced that church planting is the Biblical way of growing the Kingdom, and so we want churches to be working through how they can engage in church planting from the start.

(9) Committed to Training. We do not believe that God's people should be expected to serve in any capacity without adequate training. We see this pattern in Scripture, and in particular in Jesus' training of the 12. It is a major responsibility of pastors to equip God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-12). So, for example, new elders would learn from experienced elders, and church planters in their first church plant would work under a more experienced church planter.

Because of the low emphasis on training in the wider church, we do not automatically assume that just because someone has been an elder or deacon in another church they bear the required characteristics or training. We assume that they will need training like anyone else.

(10) Committed to The Church (interdependence). We are not wanting to plant inward looking, small minded churches. We want the churches we plant to have fellowship with one another (and of course with other like-minded Bible-believing churches in the area) by the leaders meeting together (in a regular fraternal), the congregations also meeting regularly together, and by shared resources, for example, youth, training, preaching and so on. This interdependence will have a wide-ranging influence on each church, affecting, for example, the meeting times, to enable joint meetings and training to take place.

church. Ideally, team members should be:

- **mature believers** - church cores are going to be tested, so those who join must be prepared to count the cost.
- **flexibly-minded** - not all mature believers have the flexibility required for church planting.
- **Gospel-centred** - core members must not have a reputation for focussing on non-essential doctrines, such as a particular translation, certain eschatologies, and so on.
- **United** - the degree of unity required in a church plant far exceeds that of a large church.
- **prepared to serve** - church core people must be willing to serve Christ—and have the time to do so.
- **prepared to commit for a fixed period** - church core people must give a certain time commitment, so that the church plant knows it has initial viability.
- **been proven in ministry** - church planting is not for young believers, but for those who have proven their faithfulness over many years.

(iii) Bond and envision the church core together. Once the core has been identified the process of envisioning them and uniting them can begin. This may be facilitated through regular meetings 'incubating' the vision, getting to know one another and testing one's calling to the new work. Prayer must be a major part of their work.

(iv) Ensure sufficient resources. This is not easy to establish, but before the church 'launches', there must be sufficient resources of manpower and resources. We trust in a God who provides, but we also believe that prudence is required. The great advantage of a mother

church behind the plant is that additional resources can be provided if need be.

(v) Establish a time line. This may differ from plant to plant, but one scheme could be:

- Establish the bonding / envisioning period—3-6 months?
- Research during this period into the nature and needs of the area / people being reached?
- Set aside a Sending Sunday. This is the last Sunday the core group meet with the mother church and the Sunday before they begin meeting on their own. This is a vital morning for both daughter and mother.

(3) Transitioning issues for the mother

It is crucial that the mother church be prepared for the many changes that will result from the birth of the church. This transitional period of church life allows new gifts to come to the fore to replace those that will leave with the plant and even allows a re-envisioning of the mother church's own mission.

(4) Continuing support of the church plant

During the formative period, the church plant is directly accountable to the mother church. At the end of that period elders may be appointed by the mother church. But during and after this period additional support may be given by the mother church.

Ten Core Values of the churches we seek, under the Lord, to plant

Here are ten characteristics of the churches we want to see planted, four of which arise directly out of Acts 2:42.

(1) Utter dependence upon God's Spirit to lead, empower and equip the church. The church of Acts was led by God's Spirit, empowered by God's Spirit and equipped by God's Spirit (Acts 1:7, 6:3, 8:29). In a work like church planting where much human effort and planning is required, we need a reminder of the Spirit's work.

(2) Committed to the "Apostles' Doctrine". This means a whole-hearted commitment to God's Word, in doctrine and practise, and a commitment to the preached Word.

(3) Committed to "Fellowship". This means deep, encouraging and accountable relationships, which are fostered by weekly home groups.

(4) Committed to "Breaking of Bread". The cross of Jesus Christ is at the heart of evangelical church life, and regular communion is an expression of this centrality.

(5) Committed to "Prayer". The first Christians are often found praying with one another and for one another (Acts 6:4, 10:9, 12:5, 13:3).

(6) Committed to Discipleship. We take the command of Jesus in Matthew 28, seriously. We are not called to make converts but disciples—people who are 'trained' to follow Jesus. See Appendix 2 for what this might look like.