



Seven Steps for Planting Churches

PLANTER EDITION
Church Planter Resource Library



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North American Mission Board, SBC

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This book is dedicated to
the many church planters
who are laying it on the
line daily.

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Foreword

One hundred thousand SBC churches by the year 2020 is no ordinary vision. It is a vision that forces us to think outside the box, while forcing us to our knees. Outside of a movement from God, this vision will never be realized. However, for one moment imagine God's Spirit moving across North America. Imagine thousands of pastors and laypeople being awakened to plant His church among all unreached people groups in North America. This is our vision . . . large churches, small churches, traditional churches, nontraditional churches, churches being planted by pastors and laypeople in schools, prisons, office buildings, storefronts, factories, on campuses, et cetera. It is our prayer that Seven Steps for Planting Churches can serve as a simple resource in the hands of scores of ordinary people committed to do an extraordinary work. With this in mind, we see a day when there will be 100,000 healthy churches dotting the landscape of North America. To this end we present this resource to you.

J. David Putman, Director
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Introduction: Getting Ready to Plant

Church planters by nature are fast-moving, catalytic people. Taking time to properly prepare can be challenging. Yet, this was key to Jesus' approach to preparing His disciples. He spent three years pouring Himself into them in order that the ministry He began could continue through them. In order for potential church planters to be effective they, too, must take time to prepare. There are a number of questions that need to be addressed before launching out on such a missional endeavor.

Do you understand the basic purpose of church planting? Above all else, church planting is about expanding the kingdom of God through evangelizing unreached or under-reached people. In North America, many people will go unreached unless a church presents the gospel in their language and culture. Since the gospel travels most effectively along cultural and relational lines, it is essential that church planting be the major evangelistic strategy for reaching an emerging postmodern continent with a growing multinational influence.

Therefore, church planters should focus on planting the gospel. When the gospel is planted, as Paul put it, it is God who "makes it grow" (see 1 Cor. 3:6-7). When one focuses on planting the gospel among unreached people he becomes open to God's process for building His church. On the other hand, when we focus on the planting of a church over the planting of the gospel, our focus can become organizational, programmatic, and institutional. Therefore, we must focus on the planting of the gospel that leads to intentional church planting.

Do you have the proper motivation for planting? As an organization contacted almost daily by individuals wanting to plant a church, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has discovered countless reasons why people are motivated to plant churches. Some reasons are noble; others are not. We have found that the most successful planters are those who usually say something like this: "God has given me a vision for going to a specific geographic area to plant a church or churches among a specific unreached people."

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There are three things that seem to continue to come up:

- A definite calling
- A specific place
- A specific people

It may be a calling to plant a church in Seattle among the homeless, or to plant in San Francisco among postmoderns, or to work in Flint with first-generation Arabs, but there seems to be a certainty to the task to which the individual feels called. Now this is not to say that everyone who wants to plant a church should know from day one where they are going and who they are called to reach. This often comes with time. However, there is a definite call that compels these planters to pursue a specific place and a specific people.

While in seminary a planter experienced an overwhelming conviction that God was calling him to plant churches. He had spent most of his Christian life actively involved in evangelism. He had a tremendous burden for the lost and a passion to share the gospel with them. He did not know in what kind of ministry he would end up, but he did know it would have something to do with evangelism.

Then his mission professor, gave an assignment for class members to work with an existing church and determine evangelistic strategies for reaching its particular community. For the first time the planter was forced to look at the church from an outsider's perspective. He became convinced that many of the churches studied simply weren't prepared to reach their community. It became obvious that to fulfill the Great Commission many new churches had to be planted.

At that point, he received the call from God. Evangelization of the world is intricately connected with the planting of healthy, reproducing churches. The Great Commission is a call to evangelize and congregationalize all people. Church planting can and should be the most effective means of evangelism in today's world.

Do you have church planting competencies? While everyone can be involved in church planting, everyone is not designed to be a church planter. Years ago at a conference hosted by Fuller Theological Seminary an individual talked about three different kinds of leaders: catalyzers, organizers, and operators. According to the presenter, catalyzers make up about 2 percent of our population and are the entrepreneurs of our time. He went on to suggest that organizers represent

approximately 15 percent of our population and are usually good at bringing some sense of order to a start-up organization. Both of these types of leaders tend to get bored once an organization is established. According to the presenter, operators make up the bulk of leaders.

There are a number of different types of church planters. Two of the most common are sequential planters and founding pastors. Sequential planters tend to be the true catalyzers, while founding pastors tend to be more about organizing. A sequential church planter does very well in gathering the initial group, but often struggles once the group begins to grow into an established church. A founding pastor may struggle with the start-up phase, but once he has enough people to initiate some structure he does very well. In determining your church planting type, ask yourself, “Is God calling me to be a sequential church planter or a founding pastor?”

In today’s missional context, we increasingly need sequential planters with a vision for raising up indigenous leaders to provide pastoral leadership for new congregations. We also need more and more founding pastors with the ability to grow large churches and see themselves as world mission centers. Such pastors are committed to sending devoted followers of Christ throughout the world, beginning in their own backyards.

We are indebted to Charles Ridley for his research in church planter effectiveness. His research suggests 13 church planting behaviors that are consistently found in successful church planters. Included below are his categories along with some adaptation made by the former Church Extension Section of the Home Mission Board. Through an extensive behavioral interview a potential church planter is assessed to see if he has specific church planting competencies. This interview process is built on two basic principles. First, past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior. Second, behaviors are transferable in that one doesn’t have to have church planting experiences in order to assess well, but has to have demonstrated similar behaviors in other settings. In addition to this, the first six competencies are considered knockout factors. They include: visioning capacity, intrinsic motivation, ownership of ministry, ability to relate to lost and unchurched people, and spousal cooperation. When one of these competencies does not exist then careful consideration should be given.

Visioning Capacity

- Builds projects, businesses, or ministries from scratch.
- Initiates efforts to build.

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- Communicates vision consistently in an inspiring, persuasive, and creative manner.
- Projects into the future consistently; has a future orientation.
- Mobilizes human and financial resources to accomplish significant tasks.
- Copes effectively with nonvisualizing elements.

Intrinsically Motivated

- Shows a high energy level and stamina.
- Handles large workloads and significant responsibility.
- Self-manages projects and completes them in a timely manner with little or no supervision.
- Puts forth one's best efforts and consistently strives for excellence.
- Maintains commitments, integrity, and character in tempting, challenging, or less-than-ideal circumstances.

Creates Ownership

- Recruits others consistently.
- Delegates to others to broaden their areas of responsibility.
- Coaches others to attain higher levels of performance.
- Reproduces leaders who reproduce others.
- Instills in others a sense of personal responsibility for the growth and success of ministry.

Relates to Lost and Unchurched People

- Builds relationships with non-Christians.
- Brings the unchurched to a decision for Christ.
- Assimilates new Christians into the church.
- Relates to the unchurched on a personal level while remaining non-compromising.

Spousal Cooperation

- Agrees upon respective roles and expectations in ministry.
- Sets healthy boundaries regarding workload and its impact upon family life.
- Models wholesome family life before church and community.
- Communicates openly and resolves conflicts in a healthy manner.
- Shares convictions regarding church planting.

Effectively Builds Relationships

- Initiates the starting and building of relationships.
- Demonstrates a sincere interest in people.
- Handles criticism and relational difficulties constructively.
- Develops a strong social network.
- Responds with urgency and compassion to individuals' physical and emotional needs.
- Relates to a diversity of people.

Committed to Church (Kingdom) Growth

- Seeks training in church growth principles.
- Implements church growth principles effectively.
- Establishes and maintains growth-oriented priorities.
- Evaluates church growth principles, concepts, and models of ministry.
- Appreciates growth taking its own course while not preoccupied with superficially fast growth.
- Understands the inherent nature and demands of growth.

Responsive to Community

- Finds the unique pulse and character of local communities.
- Develops programs that meet specific needs in a community.
- Utilizes community outreach to build the church.
- Adapts philosophy of ministry to fit the character of the community.
- Prioritizes ministry opportunities on the basis of resources and potential impact.

Utilizes Giftedness of Others

- Helps people to systematically identify their areas of spiritual giftedness.
- Helps people use their giftedness by matching them to a ministry where they can be most effective.
- Equips, develops, and trains others to maximize their giftedness.
- Releases people into ministry when they are ready.

Flexible and Adaptable

- Maintains open-mindedness.
- Refocuses and makes mid-course corrections during times of change or ambiguity.

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- Adapts to unexpected events and disruptions while staying on course.
- Manages multiple tasks and responsibilities simultaneously.
- Promotes and encourages vision-based innovation.

Builds Group Cohesiveness

- Harmonizes people despite their differences.
- Resolves group conflicts and divisive issues quickly and sensitively.
- Monitors and maintains the morale of people.
- Utilizes small groups effectively to accomplish ministry objectives.
- Promotes assimilation of others into the body-life of the church.

Resilience

- Remains optimistic and perseveres when convinced they are in God's will.
- Makes good use of one's support system during times of crisis, setback, and disappointment.
- Bounces back quickly from loss or discouragement.
- Evidences emotional stability through the joys and disappointments of life.
- Experiences unjust situations without lashing out or lingering bitterness.

Exercises Faith

- Maintains one's spiritual vitality through practice of spiritual disciplines.
- Takes significant faith risks and is not resistant to major change.
- Is convinced of church planting call.
- Impacts the faith of others positively.
- Sustains in prayer even when answers are delayed.¹

A careful self-assessment of these skill sets and competencies is a wise first step toward planting a healthy church. Therefore, when considering each of the 13 behaviors, a discerning church planter will ask himself: "Can I think of two-three examples where I have demonstrated this behavior in the past?"

A solid church planter selection process provides feedback that enables the planter to continue to develop his skill sets as well as build a team to compensate for weaknesses. It is important to note that some weaknesses cannot be compensated for and must be part of the planter's skill set.

Have you been adequately trained to plant a church? Once you have determined that God has called you to plant a church and you begin to understand some-

thing about that call, you need adequate training. The best training is always on-the-job training. In reality, we learn our way into the future. However, a basic church planting foundation and good healthy ministry experience goes a long way. Before launching a church, you should have a number of things in place:

1. A basic understanding of church planting. Effective planters tend to be well versed in church planting. They obtain this understanding through a number of venues that range from firsthand experience to some type of formal or informal internship or service. In addition, they are well read on the subject and are often avid students of church growth and missional literature.
2. A mentoring process. Once again, effective church planters are eager to learn from both formal and informal mentors. While most mentoring processes are set up to meet on a monthly bases, there is strong evidence that the most effective church planters meet as often as weekly with supervisors, mentors, and peers. While most supervisory or mentoring systems don't call for weekly meetings, the indication is that those who are most effective are relentless about getting good coaching and feedback.
3. Healthy peer relationships for shared learning. Effective leaders learn from other leaders. Church planters who get the job done tend to gather in natural peer learning environments. Those who work with church planters understand this and work to provide intentional processes for peer learning.
4. A teachable spirit. Our experience has demonstrated over and over again that effective church planters have a teachable spirit. They are constantly evaluating their effectiveness, learning from others, and seeking honest feedback. This is key in that church planters are often driven by their idealism and new ideas. If they are not careful they can become blinded by this idealism or intoxicated by blind vision.

Have you counted the cost of planting a church? Church planting is a ministry and a calling – not just a temporary fad. While all ministries are costly, there are probably few that carry the cost of church planting. Understanding this allows the planter and his family to prepare for a life of sacrifice. This sacrifice will involve time, energy, finances, and relationships. Many of the churches that need to be planted will be outside of our cultural and geographic comfort zone.

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Do you have the emotional maturity to plant a church? Effective church planting requires huge amounts of energy and commitment. Often, church planting is embraced by the young and inexperienced. Regardless of age and experience, it is important that the planter demonstrate both emotional and spiritual maturity. Additionally, it is important that the planter surround himself with a team that demonstrates this same kind of maturity.

Is your family committed and prepared to plant a church? Church planting is a team effort that requires the entire family. It is essential that the planter's spouse be on board. And if he has older children, they too should be on board. The first and most important team of any church plant is the church planter's family.

Continual attention must be given to the family throughout the church planting experience. The following questions should be answered prior to setting out to plant a church.

- What is the role of the spouse and children in the church plant?
- How will family time and space be protected if using a home office?
- What plans do you have in place to provide quality time for your spouse and children?
- Have you made plans to meet the financial needs, as well as other basic needs of your family?
- What practical steps are you prepared to take in order to protect and grow a healthy family?

Are you spiritually ready to plant a church? Church planting is as much about being as it is doing. Someone suggested that when your motives are wrong all else is wrong. It is essential that your spiritual motives be right, along with your heart, when starting a church. Nothing will try your spirituality like planting a church. It can come under fire from all directions. Good spiritual habits and a healthy devotional life become the bedrock from which church planting springs. Often, there are very few believers in a church plant, especially when you are in an unchurched area or your church planting focus group is highly unchurched. For many, the church planter may be the first Christian these people personally know or respect. It is important in this context that the planter model what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

In addition, the church planter and his family must be prepared for spiritual

warfare. The apostle Paul admonishes us, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm” (Eph. 6:10-12).

There are several common areas where church planters consistently struggle.

- *Discouragement*—It is not unusual for church planters to put unrealistic expectations on themselves and others around them. It is also not unusual for the church planting task to move slower than anticipated. When this happens it is easy for the planter to become discouraged. Discouragement can be a prime weapon of the enemy. It is important to deal with potential discouragement in a healthy way in order for one’s best energy to be focused on the planting of the church.
- *Discernment*—Every church planter makes literally hundreds of important decisions every day, including who to put in leadership, where to hold meetings, how to appropriate limited resources, how to spend one’s time, et cetera. The list goes on and on. Any of these decisions have the capacity for derailing or setting back the church planting effort. Careful attention needs to be paid to the decision making process.
- *Distractions*—Good opportunities abound in church planting. Sometimes those good opportunities happen at the expense of the best opportunities. It is important that the church planter stay focused in every area.
- *Discretions*—While there are many areas of discretion, there are two primary areas in which every church planter should pay careful attention. They include financial and sexual discretions.

Are you aware of—and working through—emotional baggage you might bring to a church plant? God chooses to use cracked pots to do His work. The apostle Paul put it this way: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Cor. 4:7).

However, we all have blind spots in our lives that, if undetected, will hinder us. When properly addressed they can become sources of strength as we minister to a hurting world. Being self-aware of these issues allows us to continue to grow and minister in Jesus’ name.

Have you developed a proven understanding of what it means to do evangelism in a non-Christian context? Church planting is about evangelism. There may be

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occasions when churches are planted because there are a large number of existing believers with no Christ-centered church in the area. However, most occasions will call for the planting of a church to reach unreached people. A church planter must have a burden and commitment to reach lost people. This burden and commitment should be demonstrated in past and present behavior.

Have you developed a clear covenant relationship and accountability with those you are partnered with? Every church planter needs a sending church, a mentor, and a church planting team. A clear understanding of these relationships up front is key to a long-term, healthy relationship. Clearly defined covenants are helpful to this process. Accountability grows out of such relationships and ensures a fruitful partnership.

Have you developed an intercessory prayer team? Since church planting is a spiritual endeavor, this is an important first step. An intercessory prayer team consists of individuals committed to praying for you and your ministry. The team usually consists of people who have gone through a specific ministry experience with you, are former church members, or are individuals with a special commitment and calling to prayer. They represent a small group of individuals who are willing to make a commitment to specific prayer centered around the church planting task. They are not necessarily part of the church plant and are often people you have met throughout the course of your life.

Once proper preparation has been made by the church planter he is ready to give himself to the lifelong task and calling of planting His church. Continual development is then essential in developing the new church into a healthy reproducing church. The task of preparation is never completed. The saw must continually be sharpened. Therefore, it is important that the church planter have a plan for his own leadership development. Developing the leader within you and developing the leaders around you is a full-time job.

Additional resources for “Getting Ready to Plant” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

Note

1. Descriptive qualities adopted by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from Charles Ridley, *Evaluating and Reporting* (ChurchSmart Resources, 2000), pp. 130-142. These exact descriptions were adopted by NAMB in 2001.

1 Step

Receive a Vision from God

“When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16: 7-10).

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint (Prov. 29:18).

It is clear in Acts 16 that the apostle Paul’s motivation for going to Macedonia was a clear and compelling vision or revelation that he received from God. In verse 9 we are told that, “During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’” Immediately, Paul redirected his actions in response to this vision. As a result, the gospel was preached and the church was established at Philippi.

In the same way, church planting must flow out of a clear vision from God. Any other motivation, no matter how noble, is not sufficient. Therefore, it is essential that before one begins the journey of church planting that he understand what it means to receive a vision from God.

For Paul, the vision he received was so specific and clear that it required a new direction. There was a new sense of authority in Paul’s life. He was compelled toward this new vision.

Since the early 1990s, there has been considerable emphasis placed on the visioning process. With that has come a lot of confusion. Ministry leaders

often misunderstand the issue of vision. A biblical understanding of vision is an appropriate step for bringing clarity to this issue. Henry and Richard Blackaby have provided ministry leaders a great service in their book, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*¹ by raising the question: “Where do leaders obtain their vision?”

- *Because It's There*—This is a reactionary approach to vision that acts on opportunity without counting the cost. An “open door” does not always equate to God's will.
- *Duplicating Success*—This approach relies on one's past success or borrowing vision from someone else's past success.
- *Vanity*—When a leader sets goals based on what will bring him the most success, he is leading out of vanity rather than vision.
- *Need*—It is not unusual for the church planter to study the target group and develop vision and strategies based on its needs. While this can be an important part of the process, it can't be the beginning point of vision.
- *Available Resources*—We live in a resource-driven world. The availability of resources should never be the driver behind direction.
- *Leader-Driven*—While God uses spiritual leaders to discover shared vision, it is important that the vision not be driven by the personality of the leader.
- *God's Revelation*—Henry and Richard Blackaby move us toward a better understanding of vision when they state: “The previous six sources of vision have one thing in common – they are all generated by worldly thinking.”² This is not surprising; the world functions by vision. But God does not ask His followers to operate by vision. God guides people's lives by revelation. They note that vision has a variety of sources and motivations, helping us to understand the difference between a worldly vision and a biblical revelation from God.

In *Chosen to Be God's Prophet*, Henry Blackaby continues to challenge our understanding of vision when he states:

“Many in our day do not operate by revelation but by vision. Because many have so adapted to the world, they have let the world's method of leadership control them. The world's thinking says that you cannot be a leader unless you have

vision. However, the people of God are not to be a people of vision; they are to be a people of revelation.”

Proverbs 29:18 has been interpreted by many as, “Where there is no vision, the people perish (KJV).” A descriptive translation describes the verse like this: “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint (NKJV).” A personal translation may be, “When they do not have a word from God, everyone does what is right in his own eyes.” When believers are not hearing from God, there will be spiritual anarchy in the lives of the people of God.³

With this perspective, it becomes the responsibility of the potential church planter to receive a revelation from God, which is the foundation for discovering a shared vision. This will result in a clear understanding of what God desires to accomplish through him in the planting of His church.

Jesus helps us understand what it means to receive a vision from God in His prayer, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:9-10). Therefore, an appropriate exercise for church planting might include answering the question: “If God had His will and His kingdom was to come as a result of His church being planted among a specific unreached people, what would it look like?”

What Is a Shared Vision?

A simple definition of shared vision in a church planting context is: God’s revelation of what He wants to accomplish in the reaching of a certain people group at a particular point in the future as a result of His church being faithfully planted. It is important to understand that this kind of vision is not created, for it already exists within the heart of God. Therefore, it is discovered as God reveals it to the listening church planter. This revealed vision must be shared by the church planter and the body of Christ.

Discovering a Shared Vision

If this is the case, how does one go about discovering a shared vision? A shared vision is discovered over time and results from a number of different processes. The following are some common processes that can assist church planters in discovering God’s vision.

1. Shared vision often begins with an **intense burden** owned by the church planter and affirmed by key individuals. It reflects real needs among an

unreached people. It is important that although the vision may begin with the church planter it is ultimately owned by a growing core of disciples. Any process utilized for discovering a shared vision must include those who join the planter in the mission of planting the church.

2. Shared vision is cultivated through a season of intense **prayer and fasting**. Since a fresh vision is the result of hearing from God, it is important that the planter spend time alone with God in order to hear Him clearly. For those who are initiators by nature, it is important for the visioning process to include time for prayer and fasting. A vision from God will become clearer and more intense over time.
3. Shared vision grows out of biblical convictions and is affirmed and cultivated through **Scripture**. Often that which moves an individual in a new direction is a fresh revelation from God's Word. A fresh understanding of a biblical passage or theme can result in a new burden or commitment to the urgency in which the Great Commission is carried out.
4. Shared vision clearly reflects what **God is doing** in a given context or among an unreached people. At the very center of any vision is the biblical truth that people matter to God. Any vision that has a motive other than glorifying God and reaching lost people should be called into question. We can rest assured that God is already at work in the lives of unreached people, and He invites us to join Him there. When the invitation gets specific and the evidence that God is at work becomes clear, it is time to respond. In the meantime, as we wait for a clearly shared vision, it is our responsibility to prepare to respond.

Building from the Foundation of Shared Vision

Strategic Preparedness. Once a shared vision has been received, one has a foundation from which to proceed. All planning should follow a preparedness paradigm. That is, instead of making plans and asking God to bless them, our plans should direct us toward activity that prepares us to respond to what God is doing.

Strategic preparedness focuses on aligning our lives in such a way that we can best respond to what God is doing around us. Strategic preparedness is not contrary to planning, but focuses on the type of planning we do. It forces us to direct our planning toward assuming a posture that can quickly respond to what God is doing around us and His invitation to join Him in the planting of

His church. In Genesis 12:1-4 God gave Abram a revelation of what He wanted to accomplish in and through him.

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’ So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.”

Notice Abram’s response to God’s revelation. Abram simply left and did what the Lord revealed to him. A good question to consider is, “If God revealed a new thing to us in relationship to what He wants to accomplish in and through us, how long would it take us to get in a position to respond?” Spiritual preparedness is about positioning ourselves or assuming a posture that frees us to respond to God’s activity around us.

When following a preparedness paradigm there are a number of components that make up a shared vision. They include:

- *Vision Statement*—A vision statement flows out of your overall vision and serves as a means to communicate “what” God has called you to become as a church.
- *Mission Statement*—A mission statement describes “How you are to accomplish the vision that is the “what.”
- *Core Values*—Core values are deep-seated convictions that drive behavior. While vision serves to ignite us, core values tend to unite us. They become the shared beliefs that are acted out in our daily behavior as a community committed to a common vision and mission.
- *System Design*—Describes the strategic process by which we accomplish our vision and mission. It also defines the relationships of the individual components to the whole.
- *Milepost*—A milepost is a significant point of development. It is made up of a series of events or activities that result in the accomplishment of a major development in the life of a church plant.

First, the planter receives a vision from God that clearly reveals what He wants to accomplish in and through the church plant. The planter then must deter-

mine the major mileposts needed in order to position himself to respond to God's continual activity in planting His church. Each of the chapters in this book can represent a major milepost that leads to a state of preparedness in church planting.

- *Getting Ready to Plant*—The “Introduction” of this book raised the question, “Am I ready to plant?” Without question, before beginning the planting process you must be spiritually prepared. Being spiritually prepared postures you to join God in His church planting activity.
- *Receive a Vision from God*—Receiving a vision from God is a significant milepost in the life of a church plant. Until you clearly receive a vision from God, you are unable to proceed. Once the vision is received, the church planter has been given God's marching orders.
- *Define Church Planting Focus Group*—In Matthew 28:19-20, God lays out His evangelistic strategy, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In this text, the word “nations” is the same word we get our word ethnic from and carries with it an understanding of people groups. It is here that God clearly calls us to take the gospel to all people groups. This milepost involves an understanding of the people group among whom God directs the church to be planted. After you understand who, you can begin to understand what it means to develop a contextual church planting approach among that unreached people.
- *Develop a Church Planting Team*—God has chosen to work through teams in the planting of His church. It is God who puts a team together. A team is the result of calling, chemistry, competency, and character coming together. In a church plant, there are a variety of teams that come together to accomplish this major milepost.
- *Identify Resources*—The type of church planted determines the resources needed. Some nontraditional forms of church require very little financial resourcing; others may need significant resources. All churches need people resources. When resources are identified and mobilized, another significant milepost has been achieved.
- *Evangelize Unreached People*—God births His church through the discipling of new believers. When the gospel penetrates an unreached people and begins to

manifest the fruit of new believers, the new church is ready to be established. Church planting, above all else, is a means to evangelize unreached people and see God's kingdom brought into a reality. Effective evangelistic penetration signals that another milestone has been achieved.

- *Launch Public Ministry*—Most church plants have a pre-public phase of ministry and a public phase of ministry. Traditional forms of church planting typically have a public launch that signifies another major milestone has been accomplished and that the church has begun its ministry. Nontraditional forms of church planting typically do not have a public launch. However, both forms of church planting launch their strategy as well as have a time when work is going on behind the scenes. Regardless of the form of church planting, the launching aspect of the ministry is another significant milestone.

- *Mobilize and Multiply Ministry*—Every disciple should have a ministry to the body and a mission to the world. When this is happening a new milestone is being accomplished. The ultimate goal of any church plant should be the multiplication of new churches. This signifies that the church has reached a new level of healthy maturity and a final milestone has been realized.

While milestones may vary from church plant to church plant, each milestone serves as a key organizing principle for accomplishing the church planting vision received from God. Mileposting allows us to ensure that healthy systems are in place prior to planting. When there is a conflict between calendar and the completion of a milestone, calendar should be adjusted.

Communicating Vision

Any visioning process should include the means for communicating the vision. Because church planting involves communicating with a host of other people, a church planting proposal can be a useful tool in introducing the church planter's vision to potential partners or core members. Most church planting proposals include the following components.

1. *Shared Vision*—A description of the vision organized around a vision statement, core values and definitions, and mission statements. It is helpful to present a list of milestones critical to the planting of the church.
2. *People Profile*—A description of the people and context within which the new church will be planted. This section should clearly describe the church planting focus group in a way that communicates the importance of planting a church among them.

3. *Church Planter Bio*—As a brief introduction of the planter, the planter’s family, and staff team, this section might include pictures and biographical and anecdotal information.
4. *Financial Plan*—If the church plant requires funding, information related to financial needs should be included. Funding needs can be organized around salary, start-up, and operational budget. Additionally, a list of major partners is helpful if a church planting proposal is being used to raise additional resources. Also, include information related to how one might participate.
5. *Prayer needs*—A list of prayer needs relating to the planting of the church. This list might include critical spiritual needs related to the ministry focus group, needs related to family, resource needs, and so forth.

It is important to realize that the task of casting vision is never completed. Therefore, an intentional plan for casting and recasting vision must be in place. There are many creative ways for keeping vision before partners, core members, attendees, and others. A holistic approach might include:

- Orientation class
- Annual vision casting services
- Printed communication
- Small groups
- Individual relationships
- Sermon series
- Testimonies

There are countless ways to communicate vision, but the communication of the vision must be intentional. Therefore, the role of vision caster is a primary one for the church planter. He will need to constantly cast the vision throughout the church planting process.

Additional resources for “Receive a Vision from God” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

Books for Further Reading

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Notes

1. Blackaby, Henry and Richard, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, 2001), pp. 57-72.

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Step 2

Define Church Planting Focus Group

“Now the Lord said to Abram: ‘I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’” (Gen. 12:1,3, NKJV).

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20, NKJV).

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth’” (Rev. 5:8-10, NJKV).

Throughout the Scriptures, God declares His love and eternal purposes with a focus on identifiable groupings of people worldwide. In Genesis, God makes a covenant with the family of Abraham in order to bless all the families or clans of the earth. In Matthew, God commands His disciples to make disciples of all groups of people in the world. In Revelation, God reveals that heaven will be populated with people from every tribe, tongue, and people group. God created many cultures containing many ways for people to group themselves. These social structures allow the gospel of Jesus Christ

to move rapidly from group to group through natural and familiar relationships.

Effective church planters will focus on a specific group or segment of people; and, thereby, take advantage of God's design to grow His kingdom through engaging every significant grouping of people in every society. This process of focusing on a specific group of people is called defining your church planting focus group.

Segmenting the North American Mission Field

Defining a church planting focus group is an essential task for church planters. North America is a complex mission field consisting of many cultures, languages, and worldviews. All of these are constantly changing and interacting with one another to create a variety of church planting contexts. Three primary types of church planting focus groups exist within this mosaic of contexts.

People Groups

One type of church planting focus group emphasizes **ethnolinguistic groupings of people** found throughout North America. These groups of people are distinguished primarily by their race and language. A people group is a significantly large grouping of people who recognize a common affinity because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, occupation, residence, class, situation, or a combination of these things. An ethnolinguistic people group focuses upon a people group's race and language in order to more easily identify them for church planting.

Many of the ethnolinguistic people groups in North America are first-generation immigrants and retain many of the beliefs and customs they followed while in their home countries. Some second- and third-generation immigrants maintain their ethnic distinctives to such an extent that they too can best be engaged for church planting by distinguishing them as a separate people group.

Population Segments

A second type of church planting focus group is referred to as a **population segment**. A population segment is a smaller grouping of people than an ethnolinguistic people group. Population segments are grouped according to a variety of factors. Larger categories such as language, worldview, and ethnicity, which are critical for identifying ethnolinguistic people groups, are also important elements in grouping population segments. However, population segments are further segmented from people groups with criteria relating to things such as

lifestyle preferences, generational identities, values, and socioeconomic factors. Peer and association groupings based on shared interests and activities can be significant enough to warrant separate church planting strategies. College students, lawyers, entertainers, postmoderns, cowboys, migrant workers, artists, and resort workers exemplify the wide range of categories possible for population segments. Cowboy churches, migrant churches, postmodern churches, coffeehouse churches, skydiver churches, and biker churches are designed to reach specific population segments.

Population segments usually overlap due to the variety of categories possible for grouping. Members of a biker church will also be part of other population segments that are defined by vocation, residence, or other categories. It is important not to allow all the possible ways of grouping people to cloud the primary reason for people segmentation in church planting. The purpose for identifying population segments is to discover how people best relate to one another in order to introduce the gospel to that group. This allows the gospel to move to others in the group with the least possible amount of resistance. Population segments then become strategic bridges for starting more churches among the larger people group within which the population segment is found.

Environments

The third type of church planting focus group highlights special types of **locales or environments where people groups and population segments live and interact**. Environments such as multihousing units, colleges and universities, entertainment venues, and various workplaces present church planters with unique locations for starting new churches.

These environments identify more than location. In some cases, the environment may be a critical influencing factor for determining a population segment. People living in places like prisons and nursing homes have so many commonalities that they form a population segment as a result of the place in which they live. Sometimes these environments function like an airport terminal, temporarily housing various people groups or population segments. Colleges and multihousing environments in particular can house a variety of peoples. In both cases, these distinct locations require church planters to use methodologies appropriate to the specific environment.

Obviously, all three types of church planting focus groups are to some extent interdependent in the North American mosaic. Such interdependence illustrates the importance of defining your focus group clearly in order to develop people-

focused church planting strategies. Lack of a clearly defined church planting focus group inevitably leads to shotgun evangelism and church planting approaches that are rarely effective.

Contextual Church Planters

North American church planters in the twenty-first century must be contextual to be effective. The number of non-Christians representing worldviews and lifestyles that are far removed from the Christian worldview continue to increase. It is therefore increasingly important for church planters to think in terms of planting churches across cultural barriers.

Two kinds of contextual church planters are apostolic and founding-pastor. Apostolic church planters follow the apostle Paul's example of starting many new churches and raising up local leaders for those churches. Founding-pastor church planters go to an area to start one church and become the pastor of that church. Both should be contextual church planters.

What does it mean to be a contextual church planter? Contextual church planters recognize missional contexts and adapt their church planting approaches to fit the language, culture, and worldview of their church planting focus group. They are not content to transfer their own church forms to the church planting focus group. Instead, they seek to do whatever it takes to clearly communicate the gospel in a manner that addresses the context and worldviews of the focus group.

The goal of contextual church planters is to further the kingdom of God by making disciples who transform their communities as they make other disciples. Church forms are not the issue. Making disciples is the focus. Therefore, whether the church planter intends to start one church and pastor it or start many churches and pastor none of them, the goal is the same—reproducing followers of Christ who transform their communities in the power of the Holy Spirit. When this happens, church multiplication will surely follow.

Indigenous Churches: Living or Dead?

Typically, indigenous churches are defined as self-governing, self-expressing, self-supporting, self-teaching, and self-propagating. Many Southern Baptist churches fit all five of these criteria and are indigenous to a culture, a language, and a worldview. Unfortunately, many of these churches are not reproducing themselves in terms of church planting. Nor are they reproducing themselves evangelistically among peoples different from the membership of their congre-

gations. Normally, the existing conversion growth occurs only among people of their own kind or within their own biological families.

Many churches in North America today can be classified as indigenous but not reproducing themselves. Seventy percent of evangelical churches either are plateaued or dying, and it is commonly agreed among researchers that U.S. churches have failed to gain an additional 2 percent of the American population in the past 50 years.

Indigenous, yes; reproducing, no! Indigenous churches can be dead churches. The level of a church's indigenousness does not ensure its reproductive health. Churches can become so indigenous that they also resemble their culture and lose the ability to function as salt and light in their communities.

However, some indigenous churches have the same five criteria and are reproducing themselves outside of their churches through evangelism and church planting. What accounts for this difference? Living indigenous churches maintain their focus on a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. They refuse to allow their human culture or an institutional church culture to take the place of engaging the lostness of their communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have a kingdom perspective and a transformational purpose rather than an institutional perspective and a maintenance purpose.

Churches and church planters today must think and act contextually with the lost people groups, population segments, and environments that surround them in order to impact them with the gospel. Contextual thinking and contextual church planting strategies, if submitted to and founded upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit, will lead to healthy, reproducing, indigenous churches, rather than unhealthy, dying, indigenous churches.

Identifying Your Church Planting Focus Group

1. *Has God already revealed to you a specific group?* Sometimes when God calls a church planter to start a new church He simultaneously reveals the group of people for whom to start the church. The call may focus you upon a general category of people like the most unreached ethnolinguistic people group in North America, or a population segment that closely resembles your cultural background and lifestyle. At other times, your call can focus you upon a place without a specific group of people in mind. For example, it might be a city, a college campus, or a cluster of multihousing units to which you believe God is leading. The issue here is to examine your calling

and vision and determine whether or not God has already shown you a church planting focus group. If He hasn't, then the following questions will give further assistance in determining your church planting focus group.

2. *What if God has not yet shown me a specific group?* Many times the call to plant a church comes before knowing exactly among whom you will plant. If this is the case, you need to first determine whether or not God wants you to plant a church where you live or in another area. After deciding the general area, you will need to gather basic demographic information to discover the unreached people in the area. This information will enable you to see the big picture of lostness in the area where God is leading you to plant a church. At this point, you are ready to begin narrowing your search to a few potential groups.
3. *Where is God working?* Often, God is working in areas that churches have not discovered. Spend time with non-Christians in your target area to see whether or not they demonstrate interest and openness to the things of God. Your goal is to determine who exactly the lost people are and their level of gospel receptivity. Also, find out which Christian groups are represented in the target area and what they are doing to evangelize and plant churches among the unreached. Maintain a kingdom mind-set and work together with other kingdom-minded churches to reach the unreached with the gospel.
4. *Is God leading me to an ethnolinguistic people group, population segment, or environment?* As discussed earlier, many different church planting contexts exist throughout North America. Clarifying your church planting focus group in terms of a people group, population segment, or environment enables you to zoom in on the details of your focus group. A clear understanding of your focus group lays the foundation for developing contextual church planting strategies later.
5. *Where does the focus group live?* By now you probably have a good general idea where the focus group lives. But you need to specifically identify where the people live in terms of census tracts, city blocks, neighborhood ZIP codes, landmarks, housing types, and their gathering places.
6. *What is the focus group's spiritual condition?* Many have noted that spirituality in North America today is on the increase. However, much of this spirituality is not focused on the revelation of the Bible. Rather, it is an eclectic

spirituality reflective of America's love of choice regarding even their religious beliefs. Certainly, this approach to spirituality opens many people up to demonic influences. The wise church planter realizes that the battle for nonbelievers' souls in church planting is a spiritual battle. Therefore, defining the spiritual condition of the focus group's previous religious involvements and members' current belief systems is fundamental to starting a new church among them.

7. *What barriers stand between the focus group and the gospel?* Common barriers between unreached focus groups and you, the church planter, include language, culture, and worldview. All non-Christians are not equally distant from the gospel. For example, a non-Christian adult raised in a devout, evangelical Christian home is much closer to understanding the gospel than an immigrant Somali Muslim who was raised in a devout Islamic home. The culture, worldview, and languages of the Somali are greater barriers to communicating the gospel than those of the person from a Christian background. The purpose for identifying the existing barriers is to help the church planter understand which issues of the focus group must be dealt with in order to present the gospel and start the church in a contextual manner.
8. *What bridges lie between the focus group and the gospel?* No matter how distant the focus group is culturally and linguistically from the church planter, and no matter how distant the focus group's worldview is from Christianity, significant bridges for gospel communication exist for the church planter. The key is for the church planter to study his focus group and discover the points of contact for communicating the gospel that lie in the focus group's worldview. The felt needs of a focus group can also provide the church planter significant bridges for gospel communication and church planting.
9. *What are your spiritual gifts and talents?* Every effective church planter has a call from God to church planting. But not every church planter has the same spiritual gifts, talents, and cultural background. When selecting your church planting focus group, it is important to understand your unique, God-given design, and how you fit or do not fit with the variety of groups needing a church planter. Determining which groups fit best with your gifts, cultural identity, and interests will help you reduce the number of possible church planting focus groups from which to choose. Several tools exist that can assist you in assessing your church planter gift mix. They are listed at the end of this chapter.

10. *Writing your initial church planting focus group profile.* A practical way to pull this information together is to write a church planting focus group profile. This profile is a summary of your answers to the nine questions listed above. Be sure to include in your profile the following information:
- a. What God has revealed to you about a church planting focus group.
 - b. A description of the geographic area to which God is leading you and the basic demographics of that area.
 - c. Where and with whom you see God working.
 - d. Your specific ethnolinguistic people group, population segment, or environment.
 - e. The specific location of the church planting focus group.
 - f. The spiritual condition of the church planting focus group.
 - g. The barriers to the gospel among the church planting focus group.
 - h. The bridges for the gospel to spread among the church planting focus group.
 - i. Your spiritual gifts and talents.

Additional resources for “Define Church Planting Focus Group” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

Books for Further Reading

Bennett, Shane, Kim Felder and Steve Hawthorne. *Exploring the Land*. Littleton, Colo.: Caleb Project, 1995.

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3 Step

Develop a Church Planting Team

“After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10).

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up” (Eccl. 4:9-10)!

The Bible implies that one of the first actions taken by the apostle Paul in his church planting ministry was to share with a team the vision God had given him. Notice the “we” and “us” of Acts 16: 10, “After Paul had seen the vision; we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10).

Without question, starting a biblically functioning congregation requires a team effort. But what is a team? A team is “a group of people bound together by a commitment to reach a shared goal.”¹ Thus, a team can be a group of professional football players who strive to win the Super Bowl. It can be a group of Sunday School teachers who pour their lives into middle school students. It can be a group of people who start a church for the purpose of carrying out Christ’s Great Commission in their community and around the world.

The church planting team should be formed months ahead of the actual church plant. The team consists of several key individuals. These individuals include the planter’s spouse (if married), a parent church representative, a mentor or mentors, and individual prayer intercessors. The planter is ready to move forward when all of these are in place.

The church planter's spouse is critical to the church planting process. If the spouse is not on board, the church planter does not qualify for the church planting task. The planter and his spouse must have a strong and growing relationship, because church planting is a stressful endeavor that can tax even the best marriage.

A New Testament pattern for church planting included a sending or parenting church. Paul went to Jerusalem prior to his first missionary journey. From day one of his church planting activity, Paul was sent out and supported by the Jerusalem church. The Antioch church later became an important sending church for Paul, but he was always connected to a sending or parenting church.

Paul not only had a sending church, but he also had a mentor, Barnabas. Every church planter will greatly benefit from a mentor or mentors who encourage and offer them healthy spiritual advice along the way. Successful church planters are great discerners and have a teachable spirit that is most often demonstrated in their practice of seeking out mentors. Ed Stetzer, of the Church Planting Group's Recruitment Team, notes that church planters who meet as often as weekly with their supervisor or mentor have a significantly larger worship attendance than those who meet monthly or less frequently.² This suggests that those who are teachable and seek out the wise instruction of others tend to translate their learnings into results.

Prior to starting a church, a planter also needs to identify individual prayer intercessors. One can't begin to communicate the importance of a committed group of intercessors. This team should consist of individuals committed to praying regularly and intentionally for the church planter, his spouse and children, and his ministry.

When this initial church planting team is in place, the church planter is ready to begin the process of discovering a church planting strategy. Most church planting strategies call for the formation of other ministry teams to work together with the church planting team. Several types of supplemental teams may be utilized in planting the church. Some of these teams are briefly described below.

Understanding the Role of Church Planting Teams

Understanding the basic role of the various church planting teams is necessary in developing a healthy missional church. Other teams may be needed beyond those listed here. However, the teams described here are commonly used by many church planters today.

A staff team's primary role is to equip the core group to provide the basic ministry of the church plant. This team may consist of two or more individuals committed to work together in the planting and leading of the new church. When a staff team is used to plant a church, it usually consists of a lead pastor, a worship leader, and/or a pastor of spiritual development. This team may or may not share the preaching and teaching, but all are responsible for equipping and growing a church plant in a given context. Paul put it this way: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

A core group's primary role is to become the expression of Christ in the ministry context through the sharing of a common vision, values, mission, and strategy. The core group exercises their gifts in carrying out the Great Commandment and Great Commission in the planting of a church. Again, it is the role of the church planter or staff team to equip this core group for the many responsibilities of planting the church. This core group may consist of people from a parenting church or the community. It will often consist of people at various spiritual levels. Sometimes those who are exploring Christianity for the first time can play a role in the core group.

A ministry team consists of core group members organized around a specific task. Ministry teams usually consist of a leader and several other team members who meet regularly to plan and carry out a particular ministry of the church. Most church plants will require several different ministry teams. Each of these teams will consist of individuals who have gathered to accomplish a specific ministry task. Such tasks may include set up and break down for the service, leading in worship, providing child care, running audio/visual equipment, leading small groups, greeting, visitor follow-up, et cetera.

A leadership team may consist of members of the staff team as well as the core group. Some structures take the leaders from the ministry teams and develop a leadership team out of that group. A key role of the leadership team is to provide spiritual direction and accountability for the church plant while overseeing that the vision, values, mission, and strategy are being carried out. This team can be invaluable when it comes to developing a leadership structure for the church. However, developing a team around trust, vision, values, and a common

mission takes time. In a new church, individuals tend to come and go. Therefore, it is important not to organize a permanent leadership structure too early.

Characteristics of a Team

Regardless of the type of team you are working with, there are some processes that are important to developing healthy teams. This process begins with creating a sense of togetherness. Most people long to be part of something that is far greater than themselves. This longing can forge a bond of unity among team members. This sense of togetherness takes place when every team member feels that they are making a unique contribution to the team. Different people with different spiritual gifts, experiences, relational styles, and ministry skills are needed for a church planting team to be complete.

Additionally, a sense of togetherness grows as people commit themselves to a team's shared goals. Jesus insisted that if a person wanted to follow Him, he or she must share His values and goals. He said, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matt. 12:30). Jesus made sure that anyone who wanted to be on His team was committed to His mission.

Second, an effective church planter builds a team by empowering others to lead. John Maxwell has observed a great irony of leadership: "If you want to do something really big that involves a lot of people, you need to narrow your focus to a few people."³ Leaders who lead leaders must share their power. The apostle Paul multiplied his ministry by multiplying leaders, not by gathering followers. He started with a few potential leaders, and he committed his life to helping them reach their leadership potential. Because he did, the first-century church experienced exponential growth like the world had never seen.

Third, a church planter builds a team through accountability. It is only after a team comes together and is fully empowered to accomplish its mission that accountability comes into play. The environment for good accountability is one that is forged over time through an open and honest trust relationship. Trust equals accountability; therefore, the higher the degree of trust, the higher the accountability. Accountability consists of team members' strong desire not to drop the ball or let down the team and a willingness for the team leader to see every team member succeed. Healthy teams are the context for accountability. When this happens the success of the team is ensured.

Fourth, church planting leaders are not a success until they have mentored suc-

cessors to carry on the mission of the team. Maxwell says, “There is no success without a successor.”⁴ In every successful church plant and team ministry, the leader mentors others who will continue the mission long after the leader is gone. Mentoring is how leaders prepare the next generation of leaders for service. Without future leaders, there is no future for the church or ministry.

Jesus, the ultimate mentor, mentored His followers in at least three ways. First, He mentored His disciples by teaching them. He taught them through stories, parables, and object lessons how to live in the kingdom of God. Second, Jesus mentored His followers by revealing the power of God in their lives (Mark 6:32-44). Jesus was building the faith of the disciples by His miracles. Third, Jesus mentored His disciples by modeling and teaching them a life of prayer (Luke 11:1-4).

The Importance of Teams in Church Planting

It is important to understand that teams are important when it comes to church planting. Paul Fife, a church planter in Philadelphia, made a simple, but astute summary of his church planting job description. He explained, “God has not called me here to plant a church. He has called me here to gather a group of people and equip them to plant a church.” Clearly, Paul believed that team ministry would prove more effective over the long run than his individual efforts. When a church planter utilizes his team he can:

- Multiply ministry.
- Mentor others.
- Maximize resources.
- Mobilize the body.

Enlisting Team Members

1. *Pray.* Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Matt. 9:37-38). It is amazing that 2,000 years ago Jesus knew the number one need would be for workers for the harvest field. With this in mind, He instructed us to pray for workers. Nothing will substitute for prayer when it come to building solid ministry teams. Pray for God to lead you to people of solid character who are committed to Christ, to God’s vision for you and the new church.

2. *List tasks and define roles needed to accomplish the vision God has given*

you for your community. Know what you need before you begin looking for someone. This will enable you to begin to pray specifically for future team members. John Maxwell has compiled a list of “Top 20 Personal Requirements” he looks for in potential staff members. Many of the requirements for leaders focus on their character. Traits such as integrity, responsible, flexible, creative, disciplined, and resilient are indispensable for church planting team members.⁵

3. *Look for ways that God may be answering your prayers.* Keep both eyes open for the people God is bringing into your life every day. Remember that God often works through the network of relationships you are building. As you pray over specific individuals, ask them to introduce you to key people in their network who might share a burden to help start a church.
4. *Personally invite individuals to join you in your church planting endeavor.* My experience as a church planter affirms two maxims about people. First, the people you need typically are the people who don't need you. They are busy people because they get things done. Thus, they are not looking to fill up their schedule. You must go looking for them. Second, sharp people rarely volunteer to do anything. However, they generally will do whatever you personally ask them to do.
5. *As you spend time with people, listen to them and observe them in different ministry situations.* Over time, you will learn what ministries they feel most passionate about and what ministries bring them the most fulfillment. The North American Mission Board's *Discovery Tools* booklet is a great self-assessment tool that clarifies an individual's sense of call, spiritual gifts, areas of passion, and ministry preference.
6. *Equip and release people for service.* Develop some kind of leadership structure and process that allows you to provide ongoing equipping. This equipping may take one of two forms: as-you-go equipping and intentional equipping. Early in a church plant you will need to spend regular time with your team preparing them for the task. However, over time, their equipping needs will change. Some church planters set aside a monthly time with ministry team leaders; others set aside time for a major equipping event two or three times a year.
7. *Monitor the team's progress monthly and mentor them as needed.* Keep in

touch with your teams. It is important that you spend time with key leaders. The ministry of presence goes a long way in keeping teams motivated and encouraged. A good friend offers a key shepherding idea. He suggests that a church planter or pastor always leave early when he is headed somewhere on or off campus in order to connect with people along the way.

8. *Encourage teams often and celebrate the victories, both great and small.*

Look for intentional ways to celebrate positive team behavior and victories. When setting goals look for opportunities to create small wins.

Affirm people publicly and privately.

Servant Leadership

For a church planter to be most effective, he or she must develop a “whatever-it-takes, no-matter-who-gets-the-credit” attitude. People are quick to follow those who love them and are willing to lay down their life for them. A church planter must resist the temptation to drive people and come to understand that the key to leadership is servanthood.

The apostle Paul, arguably the greatest church planter and ministry team leader in history, offered some tips on how to make ministry teams work over the long haul. In Colossians 3:12-14, he writes:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

This passage reminds us that unconditional surrender by the planter and his team produces undeniable transformation and an unstoppable church.

Perhaps it would serve any church planter well to understand that as a servant leader he is responsible for (1) setting direction, (2) creating a healthy environment, and (3) serving his team. It is not unusual for the most successful church planters to understand that it is their role to serve the team, not the team’s to serve them.

Additional resources for “Develop a Church Planting Team ” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

Books for Further Reading

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Notes

1. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1998), p. 215.
2. Stetzer, Ed, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, 2003), pp. 93-94.
3. John Maxwell, *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), p. 335.
4. John Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), p. 11.
5. John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993). See pages 186-88 for Maxwell's list.

4 Step

Identify Resources

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8).

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish’” (Luke 14:28-30).

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who has been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:1-3).

In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus very clearly communicates the importance of counting the cost prior to beginning a venture. This is certainly true for church planting. Church planting can be a costly venture that requires significant resourcing. There are two basic types of resources that exist in any church plant: people resources and financial resources.

People Resources

As one studies the New Testament pattern for church planting three relational resources are emphasized. The biblical pattern suggests that a church planter has a relationship with a sending church, he works in relationship to a team, and he has a significant relationship with a mentor or mentors.

- *Sending Church*—The church at Antioch serves as a prime example of a sending church. Key principles related to the importance of a send-

ing church are found in Acts 13:1-3. The church at Antioch was compelled by the Holy Spirit to send both Paul and Barnabas as an extension of their responsibility to fulfilling the Great Commission (v. 2). They intentionally set Paul and Barnabas aside for this work and sent them off to accomplish this task. This implies an ongoing relationship and responsibility between the church planter and the sending church (vv. 2-3).

- *Team*—The Antioch church set Paul and Barnabas apart and sent them off as part of a team. This pattern began with our Lord modeling team ship and continued throughout the New Testament. Mark 3:13-15 gives us insight into Jesus' commitment to building teams: "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons."
- *Mentor*—Although Barnabas was a team member, his relationship with Paul began as an encourager and sponsor, two primary functions of a mentor. Like Paul, church planters must be learners.

Financial Resources

In addition to the right people resources, financial resources must be considered. The type and amount of these resources required depends on the planter's approach and philosophy of church planting. It is not uncommon for a potential church planter to ask the question, "How much will it cost?" Although the remainder of this chapter discusses financial resources, remember that people resources are just as important, if not more important, than financial resources.

How much will it cost?

1. *It will cost more than you think.* Regardless of the type of church you are planting, chances are it will cost more than you think. Successful planters need to pay close attention to the identification of resources. No church will be planted without personal sacrifice. It has been the experience of many that one's vision always outpaces resources; therefore, cost must be considered, and ongoing efforts to raise resources are necessary.
2. *It depends on the type of church you plant.* For the sake of this discussion, even though there are many different approaches and models of church planting, we will look at two approaches: traditional church plants and nontraditional church plants.

- *Traditional church plants*—Those that typically require a meeting place and a paid church planter. Their style of ministry may or may not be traditional, but they take on a more institutional form with a very organized structure. They usually require a large amount of financial resourcing or a bivocational staff.
- *Nontraditional church plants*—Those that are typically more organic than organized. They may meet in houses, storefronts, office buildings, apartments, or clubhouses. They are often lay-led or led by a pastor who doesn't need a salary. They focus on multiplying and expanding through small networks. They often require very little funding; however, they do require a high level of commitment.

3. *It depends on the vision.* In the planting of any church, one must begin with the end in mind. If God is leading one to an unreached people who will require a more institutional form of church, it may require a large amount of resources from day one. However, it is important to understand that the more resources you put into a church does not guarantee a given outcome. One church planter had \$10,000 committed by a parenting church. The planter spent about \$6,000 in pre-launch types of activities that included marketing, a used sound system, signs, and nursery and preschool equipment. On opening day, 178 people attended. Today, the church has over 2,000 worship attendees on a given weekend. This church has also planted a number of churches. Another young church planter spent \$50,000 during the pre-launch stage and within a year of the launch this church ceased to exist.

Today, there seems to be an emerging vision for planting lay-led churches that require little financial resourcing. These churches usually meet in homes, coffee shops, boardrooms, and apartments. By design, they stay small, but focus on multiplying themselves through a growing network of missional lay leadership. This emerging vision seems to be embraced by a young, postmodern culture and may be the antitheses of the highly organized and institutionalized mega-church.

4. *It depends on the type of launch.* There are a variety of ways to plant a new congregation that impacts the amount of financial resources needed. A general rule is the more believers you have in the core group the less likely you will need to focus on a high-cost launch strategy. If believers are taught to share their faith and are actively building relationships in the unchurched community, growth can be fast and sure through networking. If the planter is in a

highly unchurched context and has a traditional church planting strategy with a small believer base, his start-up strategies will likely have to depend on ministry evangelism events and an effective marketing plan. Both of these approaches can be costly.

Another factor likely to impact the cost of start-up is the rental cost of the meeting facility. If the launch strategy is to attract a large group of people, it will require a meeting place that can handle the crowd. A space for 200 to 500 people in worship can require a large amount of financial resourcing. However, a home, coffee shop, or boardroom usually doesn't cost anything and opens up an entire relational network.

5. *It depends on the context of your ministry.* Socioeconomic factors have an impact on the individual's values. What one group may see as wasteful, another sees as the cost of doing business. When one's church planting focus group represents a higher socioeconomic group it will require more financial resourcing. Limited resourcing could spell doom from day one. There are a lot of factors that play into this aspect of resourcing. Careful consideration should be given to the issue of context.

6. *It depends on your shape as a planter.* Every planter is unique and will approach the task of planting based on his spiritual gifts, heart, ability, personality, and experiences. One planter may find that he is task-oriented with an administrative gift and a business background. He may tend to approach church planting from an organizational perspective. He is likely to create a start-up strategy similar to the launching of a new business. Also, a church planter may be highly relational and his start-up strategy may reflect a more organic approach to church planting.

What Do I Need?

Many ways exist to break down the basic financial needs a planter has when preparing to plant. There seem to be three basic needs: a start-up budget, an operational budget, and salary support. Breaking the financial needs down into these three categories is beneficial when it comes to raising support. For example, some people give financial support based on relationship. These individuals will most likely be drawn to give to support the planter's salary. Other individuals like to give a gift to meet a concrete need, like a video projector. The core group and growing number of attendees will likely want to give toward the ongoing operation of the new church. Dividing gifts—giving—into these three categories organizes the needs into manageable categories.

A start-up budget consists of those things required for launching a new church. These items include initial marketing strategy, worship equipment, nursery and preschool equipment, rental deposits, insurance, signs, letterhead, bulletin cover, and so forth. Some of these items will be included later in operational costs, but are also part of the initial start-up cost.

The operation budget consists of those things that recur and make up an annual budget. These items should fall into such categories as missions, personnel, facilities, administration, and ministry. It is important to build good financial systems from day one. When you are establishing your first operational budget, there are a number of things to consider:

- Establish an account in the church's name.
- Handle the finances as quickly as possible.
- Establish financial guidelines.
- Designate someone to handle the money. As planter/pastor never handle the money.
- Use two signatures for checks.
- Have an outside audit conducted annually.
- Budget with the end in mind.
- Maintain flexibility early.

Salary support will depend on the needs of the church planter and the context of ministry. A church planter living in a high-cost area will need additional income in order to live within his ministry context. A church planter with small children may need additional income in order for his spouse to remain at home with the children. Salary support may come from a variety of places.

- *Intentional bivocational*—Over half of Southern Baptist churches are lead by bivocational ministers. This will continue to be an important part of reaching the many unreached people of North America. There are many advantages to being bivocational. As it relates to reaching the unreached in North America being bivocational opens doors to many people we simply would not have access to.
- *Missions Organizations*—Organizations like a local association or state convention often contributes to a church planter's salary for a period of time.

Seven Steps for Planting Churches

- *Sponsoring and partnering churches*—These churches serve as key supporters for church planting. There are some churches that are able to underwrite an entire church planting project, while other times a network of partners can come together to provide funding.
- *Individuals*—In addition to churches, individuals often desire to be apart of a particular church plant in terms of financial support. This most often happens when a relationship is involved.
- *Businesses*—There are a number of growing businesses that desire to give a percentage of their resources directly to some type of missions project.

Regardless of where the resources come from, it is the responsibility of the planter to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with his partners. In addition, it is the responsibility of the planter to see that there are adequate resources in place before he sets out on a church planting project.

How will I pay for it?

The vision you write you must underwrite. Better yet, the vision God writes He must underwrite. It is important that a church planter does not delegate the full responsibility for raising resources to anyone else. It is ultimately his responsibility and he cannot put blame on anyone else for resources that do not materialize.

People give to people. When it comes to raising resources it is also important to understand that people give to people. Those who are most likely to support your ministry will be those with whom you have had significant relational experiences and your current relationships. Church planters have two primary sources for raising support: churches, and his personal relationships with individuals.

Vision attracts resources. Never underestimate the power of vision. People with big resources are usually attracted to people with a big vision.

Resources are in the harvest. It is important from day one that you look for resources in the harvest. Developing givers from within the new church is a primary task of the church planter and a basic function of discipleship. People you disciple most often want to turn around and support the work.

Jim was a new believer in a new church plant. One day Jim told his church planter pastor that God had given him a vision to make God the CEO of his company. The pastor asked Jim how he was going to do that. He had two things

in mind. One was to practice biblical principles in his business. Second, he wanted to make God the highest payee in his company. Over several years, with help from his pastor Jim achieved his vision. Jim illustrates the truth that many new believers have a huge vision for giving back to God, if we will only be faithful to challenge and disciple them.

You have not because you ask not. We have not because we ask not. First, we need to be constantly bringing our needs before God, expecting Him to provide for them. Secondly, we must develop good skills in providing people the opportunity to give and inviting them to do so. If you believe what you are doing is of God and is really making a difference, then asking is natural and easy.

People need a reason and opportunity to give. People with resources are often looking for a good reason and opportunity to give. They have lived their entire lives making good use of their resources and are looking to invest their resources in credible ways that will make a kingdom impact.

Resources are easier to raise prior to moving to the field. There is no time like raising resources before moving to the church planting field or starting the church planting project. Avoid presuming that if you go people will give. Many church planters fail due to limited resources or resources that never materialized once they get on the field. Whenever possible see that resources have been raised and partnerships are firm before moving to the new church plant location.

Additional resources to help “Identify Resources” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

Books for Further Reading

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5 Step

Evangelize Unreached People

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’” (Matt. 9: 35-38).

Jesus ended His ministry on earth by leaving the disciples with the commission to “go make disciples of all nations.” Two aspects of the Great Commission are evangelizing and congregationalizing unreached peoples. Evangelism is incomplete without congregationalizing, and congregationalizing is incomplete without evangelizing. Church planting allows one to be involved in both of these important aspects of His commission in any given context.

Church planting gathers a new group of believers out of an unreached people through contextual evangelism and ministry.

Furthermore, church planting is essential in contexts where many people do not have a Judeo-Christian worldview. For many years, the majority culture in North America embraced this worldview. In that context, the majority of

individuals began their journey toward faith with a positive predisposition toward the Christian message and had a positive predisposition toward the institutional church. This is called a church culture. However, this is no longer true. North America is now a smorgasbord of competing ideologies and worldviews. Additionally, there is the absence of a Christian memory among many existing and emerging generational groups.

In years gone by, we have approached North America from a pastoral perspective. Our ministry could be defined as pastoral in the sense that there was a positive predisposition toward the church from those within and without the church. The church served an important function in almost every community.

Today, we must define our ministry from a missional perspective because we live and minister in the context of opposing worldviews and hostility toward Christianity. In such settings, a church's evangelistic role is primarily apostolic in that it focuses upon sending out missional people. This is a radical shift from the "you come" strategies that were so effective in the latter part of the twentieth century. As Jesus stated, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matt.9:37, NKJV). Evangelistic work is to be done in the fields; therefore, the planting of a new church should be characterized by its activity in the mission field. Two primary types of fields exist:

- Harvest fields, which are characterized by a high degree of receptivity among unreached (or under-reached) people groups and population segments.
- Sowing fields, which are characterized by a lack of receptivity among unreached (or under-reached) people groups and population segments.

North America is characterized by a growing lack of receptivity to the gospel. In some cases, there is even open hostility toward the gospel. Nevertheless, certain people groups and population segments in North America exhibit a higher degree of receptivity. But it is important to note that much of our church planting efforts in North America will take place in sowing fields.

In a sense, the twenty-first century church in North America is in the same situation as the first-century church. First-century Christians followed Christ's incarnational model of disciple-making. The church is God's incarnational expression in the midst of a lost world. When unreached people exist without a contextual church, then a new church must be planted. Therefore, the church can no longer focus its resources on developing laborers for programmatic

activity. Instead, it must focus its equipping and resourcing activities on preparing incarnational disciples for evangelizing and congregationalizing unreached people.

Key Underpinnings for Effective Evangelism

Missional church planters understand that evangelism is the key to church planting. They recognize that we must begin where the people are. Christians can no longer assume that people understand the basic foundation of our Christian worldview. This has huge significance for church planting. If the church planter is to be missional in his approach, he must take the time to understand the culture in which he has been called to plant. Likewise, he must be committed to developing a contextual church planting approach.

God is at work in the lives of unreached people and invites us to join Him. The redemption of lost mankind is God's business, and He is actively at work in the lives of many. The church planter realizes that it is his responsibility to join God in what He is doing rather than God joining him in what he is doing. Key to joining God is the identification of receptive unreached people.

We live in a post-Christian culture where many people begin their journey toward Christ with their backs toward the gospel. Many people living in North America today have no Christian memory, and/or they have a completely different worldview. With this in mind, there is an understanding that church planting provides a context where the discipling of unreached people can begin and occur. Therefore, evangelism is not one of the many programs and purposes of the church, but it is the means of entry by which people enter the kingdom of God and move toward becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

The power is in the gospel and, therefore, the gospel must be proclaimed and experienced. Effective church planting is proclaiming the gospel. Paul put it this way, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16). Missional people go into the world and build relationships with unreached people to lay the foundation for sharing the gospel.

Unreached people need a safe place where they can relationally connect with believers and see the gospel lived out. Unreached people begin further away from the gospel than those exposed to the gospel, and often without a reference point. A new church plant gives unreached people a context where they can begin to explore and experience the claims of the gospel. It is important to note

that the entry point for the church is rapidly changing. While some still prefer the anonymity the seeker church affords them, others have the need for experience and community in their journey toward the gospel.

Relationships are foundational for reaching people. Effective church planters understand the significant role that relationships play in evangelizing unreached people. The gospel has always traveled relationally, and those who are reached in the context of relationships are most likely to become part of a biblically functioning community.

Prayer is essential in planting churches and seeing people effectively disciplined. Since church planting is spiritual in nature, its success depends upon prayer. Prayer plays a vital role in the life of those coming to faith. Prayer must be part of the planter's life as well as part of the unreached person's experience. As one experiences the power of God through prayer, he or she becomes receptive to the gospel.

Commitments to Evangelizing Unreached People

While it is important to have an understanding of one's context and a philosophy of ministry relevant to that context, evangelism is more than a philosophy. It is a missional activity that requires intentional effort. There are basic commitments that effective church planters demonstrate.

Commitment to personal evangelism. While it is necessary for a church planter to exercise many different roles and responsibilities, none is more important than evangelism. The very core of church planting is the evangelizing of unreached people, and the planter must have the capacity, character, and competence for evangelism. This should include:

- A God-given burden for lost people.
- A passion to see lost people disciplined.
- An ability to relate to lost people.
- A confidence in sharing your own redemptive story.
- A competence in sharing the gospel clearly with people.
- A burden to cultivate and build ongoing relationships with lost people.
- A willingness to do whatever it takes to reach lost people.

Commitment to multiplying their evangelism efforts. Beyond your own capaci-

ty, character, and competence for evangelism, you, as planter, must be committed to multiplying your effort through others. A common mistake made in many new churches is for the church planter to be seen as the staff evangelist. It is the role of the planter to evangelize a group of unreached people. But it is also your role to equip them to evangelize others. For this to happen, you must be intentional about your efforts. This involves modeling evangelism as a lifestyle in general and with specific individuals. It also involves mentoring those who share your commitment to evangelism and multiplying your efforts through them.

Commitment to creating an environment for evangelism. Another key to evangelism in a church planting context is the opportunity to create an environment for evangelism. Several critical areas for creating such an environment include:

Your Vision, Mission, and Values—If a church is to be evangelistic, evangelism must be at its very core. Churches begun for any other reason may have evangelism as a part of their ministry, but their motivation may be radically different. For example, churches that are begun to provide deeper teaching will likely reach believers who think their church is too shallow. The church plant may talk about the need to reach people, but it is unlikely that it will ever impact the community.

Your Structure and Programs—It is important that a new church develop a simple structure with very few programming needs. This means that if evangelism is to be a priority it must be integrated into the overall structure and program of the church.

Your Launch Strategies—When a launch strategy is utilized, it should be geared toward the reaching of unreached peoples. This will vary from one unreached people group to another.

Your Worship Expression—There are three basic approaches to worship today including worship that targets church people, worship that targets unchurched people, and worship that does church for the believer, but maintains a high sensitivity toward the unchurched. Many refer to these as believer-targeted churches, seeker-targeted churches, and seeker-sensitive churches. In a church planting context, careful attention should be placed on the unchurched or unreached people. This best happens when believers invite unchurched people into a community of believers that are effectively living out what it means to be a biblically functioning community.

Your Follow-up and Assimilation—Follow-up and assimilation of unchurched people differs from that of church people. Therefore, a process contextualized to the specific unreached people focused on must be followed carefully.

Jesus: A Model for Evangelizing Unreached People

The life and ministry of Jesus serves as a model for both personal and corporate evangelism. At the heart of church planting is the act of influencing unreached people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus. Jesus models what it means to be an influencer throughout the gospel. This is important in that we as leaders cannot make anyone do anything, but God has given us the primary responsibility of influencing people. Building and sustaining that influence throughout the planting and establishing of a new church is essential to fulfilling the Great Commission.

It is essential that you, as the church planter, live a lifestyle of evangelism and at the same time multiply it into the culture of a new church plant. While there are many key principles in how Jesus operated as an influencer, we will focus on five that every church planter needs to have and every church plant needs as part of its culture.

Acceptance

Jesus understood that acceptance paves the way for influence. He knew that if He accepted people they would be open to His influence, but on the other hand He knew if He wasn't open to them they would not be open to His influence. Jesus demonstrated His acceptance of others in very practical ways. He served, He listened, and He participated in their lives. His life was filled with shocking examples of acceptance. In Mark 2:13-14, we read the account of Levi a tax collector:

“Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.”

This is an amazing example of acceptance. Few were more alienated than a Jew collecting taxes for the Romans from the Jews. Because of this Levi was hated by his fellow Jews. Yet, Jesus called him to Himself and was later found eating a meal in his home along with many of his friends.

In church planting Jesus' example propels us to be incarnational. As one church planter put it, in order to love sinners you have got to hang out with them.

Hanging out with them means listening to them, serving them, and participating in their lives.

Competence

A second principle Jesus modeled is competence. There is an interesting verse of Scripture that is easy to skip over in the Sermon on the Mount. It is found in Matthew 7:28-29, “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” Jesus was an amazing teacher. He used this gift to serve God with all of His heart. This attracted people to Him. Throughout the gospel the crowds are amazed at His teaching.

The same principle applies to us. As the apostle Paul puts it in Colossians 3:23-24, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” In Colossians 4:5, he goes on to say, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” Part of what Paul is saying is that people who do not know Christ are watching the way we approach our work and ministry. They are watching our life. And part of the path of influence into their life is the way we approach our mission. Therefore, it is key that we throw ourselves at our work wholeheartedly. This is vital in a new church plant because our competence paves the way for influence.

Authenticity

Authenticity is huge in building influence. Assuming we begin building relationships with unreached people, it is important that our words and deeds match up. They are watching us to see if we are authentic.

There is a passage in Matthew 5:14-16 that summarizes this very well. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Do you know what this passage means? It means that you are to live your life in such a way that people see your deeds and conclude: There’s something up with him that’s more than just him. There’s something up with her that’s more than just her. There’s more to that person, there’s more to that family than meets the eye.

Inviting

Jesus was also inviting. He was inviting in the sense that there was something attractive about His life, but He was inviting in that He invited people into community. He did this by inviting people to experience community and to participate in community. In Mark 1:16-18, we see this, “As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ At once they left their nets and followed him.” Practically speaking we must provide opportunities for people to participate in the kingdom of God. This can happen a number of ways. A few to consider include:

- One on one relationships.
- Participation in prayer as they become open to spiritual things.
- Social activities that involve other believers.
- Small groups.
- Worship experiences.

It is important that we demonstrate an inviting spirit, but we determine practical ways to connect with them. Everywhere Jesus went He invited people to join Him.

Challenging

Jesus was constantly challenging people to take the next step. He began His ministry with a simple “come follow me,” but later in Matthew 16:13-15 He is seen asking disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is? . . . But what about you? Who do you say I am?” Challenging people to take the next step is an important part of influencing people to become devoted followers of Christ. Regardless of how one goes about challenging others, there must be careful consideration given to encouraging people to cross over the line of faith.

Challenging people to step over the line of faith often involves: (1) telling your story, (2) sharing the gospel clearly, and (3) inviting people to take the next step.

It is important to understand that this process most often takes time. Therefore, it is important that we challenge people to take the next step no matter what that step might be. The next step could involve:

- A commitment to continue dialogue.
- A commitment to be open to spiritual matters.

- A commitment to read a book or certain parts of the Bible.
- A commitment to attend a small group or worship service.
- A commitment to be prayed for.
- A commitment to enter into a relationship with Jesus.

Obviously, there is a host of commitments that you could make. The key is once you have become an influencer in their lives, challenge them to take positive steps.

Regardless of what type of church you plant, it is important to provide multiple opportunities to move toward the gospel.

Additional resources to help “Evangelize Unreached People” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

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Step

Launch Public Ministry

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

Church Planting Pattern

Jesus spent three years building a group of devoted followers prior to the launching of His church. Following His departure from earth in Acts 2, He poured out His Spirit on 120 believers. By the end of that day, 3,000 individuals were added to the church. From that point on, the church took on a very public dimension that focused on the carrying out of the Great Commission. Just as Christ’s baptism signified the beginning of His public ministry, this out-pouring of His Spirit signified the public launch of His church.

A brief description of this church gives insight into its structure. In Acts 2, two functional aspects of the first church are clearly demonstrated. First, they met in the temple courts where the preaching of the gospel was central. Second, they continued to meet from house to house where the ongoing needs of the believers were met.

Many new churches follow this same pattern today. They begin with a time of core group development, followed by some type of public launch and then followed by an ongoing small group structure that may or may not meet in homes. The type of new church beginning varies from context to context. In each situation, the church serves as a strategic means for carry-

ing out the Great Commission. In many of today's traditions, the public launch signifies an important step in the birth of a new church. Some would say that once the church has been launched, it has been birthed. To this end the new group must determine how to appropriately move toward becoming "church."

Definition of the Launching of a New Church

Important to the launching of a church is a healthy understanding of the biblical concept of church. Dennis Hampton, a town and country church planter suggests that: "A church is a group of people who meet regularly for Bible study, worship and witness, and see themselves as an ongoing fellowship of believers."¹

Just because you have a public launch doesn't necessarily mean you have a church. There is no such thing as an instant church, although a church can be made up of a few believers meeting in a home. Key to the birthing of a new church is the group carrying out the basic biblical functions of the church while seeing itself as a church. This separates a house church from a small group that meets in a home.

Church Planting Approaches

Because churches take various forms, there is no one way to launch a new church. However, there are two basic start-up strategies that will impact a majority of church models. The first basic start-up strategy involves moving from core to crowd. This approach emphasizes building the core of individuals until it reaches critical mass. When this happens the core usually desires to participate in some form of public worship that may or may not involve a public launch. Once the group begins worshipping together, it will either grow inward and lack a missional impact, or it will utilize existing relational networks for inviting unbelievers into a public worship celebration. While this approach may lack a definite launch event, the public nature of its ministry becomes more and more apparent.

A second approach moves from crowd to core and has a very clear public launch. This approach may begin with a core group, but in this context the core is mobilized to pull off a launch service where the public is invited to be a part of a new church. This approach often includes an aggressive marketing plan targeting unchurched/unsaved people. It is not uncommon for these churches to attract a large number of unchurched/unsaved people from day one. It is also important to understand that when attracting a large crowd one can anticipate a significant reduction in attendance within two to three weeks. Therefore, if a planter is creating a structure from day one to handle 200 people, then the first

service will need to attract approximately 300 to 400 people. In most cases, he can expect a 50 percent slide over a period of three to four weeks following the launch service.

Church Planting Models

There are a number of traditional and nontraditional church planting models that impact the nature of the public launch for the new church. Six models have been identified that represent a majority of churches being planted throughout North America. The traditional church planting models are the program-based model, the purpose-based model, the seeker-based model, and the ministry-based model. Nontraditional church planting models are the relation-based model and the affinity-based model.

The distinction between the traditional and the nontraditional church planting models relates primarily to the forms and structures of the new churches. Traditional models tend toward church forms and structures that require buildings, paid staff, et cetera. Nontraditional church planting models are more organic in nature and may meet anywhere. They often have lay pastors and are relationally driven. Below are brief descriptions of each model.

1. Program-based church planting is the planting of a church that will minister to people and grow through a variety of church programs. These programs will consist of some combination of evangelism; discipleship; youth, children's, men's, women's, and music ministries; missions; and social ministries.
2. Purpose-based church planting is the planting of a church that will focus on the five purposes of a church, which are outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service.
3. Seeker-based church planting is the planting of churches that intentionally target specific seeker populations and position themselves to respond to their needs. Everything done in the church service focuses on connecting with the spiritual seeker.
4. Ministry-based church planting is the planting of a church that will go into the community, impact people's lives, and draw them toward the gospel. Meeting specific social and spiritual needs of the audience is emphasized.
5. Relation-based church planting is relatively new and attempts to solve the riddle of reaching and congregationalizing people who reject institutional forms of church. Relation-based churches are networks of single-cell churches or

house churches. These churches are fluid and spread along relational lines through natural social networks.

6. Affinity-based church planting involves the starting of a church among a specific people group or population segment. These groups of people are distinguished by ethnicity, language, worldview, socioeconomic factors, and/or lifestyle preferences.

In each of these models, the environment in which the church is planted impacts the launch approach. Churches planted in a multihousing environment will likely be launched differently than a church in a fast-growing, suburban environment.

Pre-launch Services

Traditional church planting models usually take on some sort of launch where the new congregation invites the community to participate in regular, weekly worship services. The church planter, planting team, and the core group often will spend from three months to one year in preparation for the public launch. While some church plants utilize a one-time launch service, others choose to hold pre-launch services. This launch strategy usually includes a worship service or event on a monthly and/or quarterly schedule for three to six months leading up to weekly worship services. This pre-launch strategy is often referred to as a preview service. Preview services give the public an opportunity to preview the worship style prior to the launch. There are a number of advantages to this approach. Some of the advantages include:

- An opportunity for people to experience vision before making a commitment to join the core group.
- An opportunity to test equipment and general flow of the service.
- An opportunity to test the effectiveness of the church planting approach.
- An opportunity to make adjustments prior to weekly services.
- An opportunity to develop existing leaders, while attracting new ones to expand the core group.
- An opportunity to intensify evangelism and discipleship.
- An opportunity to solicit feedback.

A second type of pre-launch service involves conducting some type of outreach

or ministry event. This approach must be culturally relevant to the target setting and is an integral part of a church planting strategy that uses the pre-launch method.

Both preview and pre-launch services and/or events present opportunities for the core group to give the community a “feel” for the worship style, Christian fellowship, and the general leadership vision of the church planting team. The excitement that is generated during the pre-launch phase will either enhance enthusiasm for the public launch or create a negative attitude toward the new congregation.

Church Plants that Don't Launch

The “launch” of a house-based church, church of cell groups, and some rural groups may vary. In some cases, these groups may never “invite” the community to come. It is purely relational. Individual core group members cultivate, invite, and bring people. The cultivation is ongoing. There is no rehearsal or formal launch.

With cell-based and home-based churches, they are “launched” the first time they meet. This is a key issue with some “relation-based” church starts. Group members invite people with whom they have developed relationships. Their shared vision and the form of leadership that emerges will determine how they express being church. For some, that will be a decision to “be” and act now as a church, but it may not involve or require a public launch.

Church Planting Mileposts

Lyle Schaller suggested that a common mistake of traditional church planting models is to launch a church according to the calendar. He meant that we set a date like Easter or Palm Sunday, and if prepared or not the church is launched. If healthy systems aren't in place when this happens, a new church can experience a premature launch and experience the consequences of poor health for many years.

A solution to this problem is to develop the church planting strategy around mileposts. Several mileposts must be achieved before the church is ready to go public with a church launch.

The North American Mission Board's *Basic Training for Church Planters* uses a similar philosophy of mileposting. This process will help the church planter develop a strategic plan built on the accomplishment of major church planting events and not simply the meeting of a timeline. A key question that the church

Seven Steps for Planting Churches

planter must ask is: “What are the major mileposts that must be accomplished to plant a healthy missional church?” The following questions will allow the planter to evaluate the accomplishment of some of the major mileposts in a traditional church planting model.

- Has your core group reached critical mass?
- Do you have a shared vision for what the church is to be like?
- Do you have an appropriate meeting place?
- Is your worship team in place?
- Have you communicated to the community a clear understanding of who you are?
- Do you have adequate child care and children’s programming?
- Do you have small groups or Bible study groups in place?
- Have you appropriately publicized the launch?
- Are you prepared to carry out the ongoing ministry of the church?
- Do you have an appropriate evangelism strategy in place?

If your approach to planting includes a public launch here are some suggestions:

- Begin simple.
- Evaluate and get feedback.
- Visit a number of churches prior to launching.
- Conduct rehearsal services.
- Add elements only when you are ready.
- Major on your communication style.
- Be relevant.
- Be spiritual.
- Meet people where they are.
- Challenge people to make incremental commitments.
- Celebrate life change.

Regardless, if your church plant includes a public launch or not, it is important that you prepare for the public ministry of the church plant. Failure to do so may result in a new church turning inward and failing to have an impact on the very unreached people you feel called to reach.

Additional resources for “Launch Public Ministry” can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

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1. Nebraska-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptist Church Planting Team, “First Steps: A Blueprint for Planting New Work,” (Topeka: Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, 2001). Used with permission.

7 Step

Mobilize and Multiply Ministry

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (Acts 9:31, NKJV).

Regardless of your strategy or model for planting churches, at some point believers need to be mobilized so that ministry will be multiplied. The very heart of Jesus’ Great Commission is the call to “make disciples.” A believer’s experiences and understanding of what it means to be a disciple greatly impacts his or her method or approach for mobilizing and multiplying ministry.

Asking the question, “What does a disciple look and behave like?” can be a healthy exercise. One’s response to this question often depends on his understanding of church. Those who see discipleship through the eyes of a programmatic approach to church might describe a disciple as someone who attends certain worship services throughout the week, gives an offering on Sunday morning, serves on a committee, and participates in the programs of the church. On the other hand, one who sees discipleship from a relational approach (house church or small group church) might describe discipleship in terms of commitment and participation in community.

While there are many ways to describe what it means to be a disciple, Jesus extended three commands that get at the heart of what it means to be a disciple. At the same time, these commands address three basic processes that occur within the organized church following some type of public launch of ministry.

Come and See

In John 1:39 Jesus invited the first disciples to “come . . . and see.” Upon hearing this invitation, we are told that these disciples went and spent a day with Him. Planting a church builds an environment where people can come and see.

In today’s context, many of those with little or no Christian memory often begin the discipleship process prior to conversion. They make a decision to convert only after they join community and experience the church as a community. Within this context it becomes the church planter’s responsibility to create an environment where unreached people can “come and see.” There are a variety of environments that can be utilized for this type of evangelism: one’s home, a small group, a missions opportunity, a social gathering, and/or a worship service. In church planting, most leaders utilize small groups or a worship service as the consistent environment where relationships and experiences can come together.

There are three factors the church planter should be concerned with in establishing an environment that will move people toward relationship and experience. These factors are the attraction, pace, and grace factors.

- *Attraction Factor:* The attraction factor relates to creating environments that encourage ongoing participation. Regardless of what kind of environment one is creating, unreached people are most often looking for authenticity and relevance. If you can gain their trust and you meet a need, they are most likely to make the next step. A simple sermon series on real life issues dealt with in an honest way does much to creating this kind of environment.
- *Pace Factor:* Through the years, many of us who have been involved in planting churches have noticed that there is a direct correlation between the endurance of one’s commitment and the time taken to make that commitment. Creating an environment where people are not rushed or pushed to make the next step, but where they are allowed to come at their own pace, results in long-term discipleship. Jesus allowed the disciples to progress at their own pace, which for the most part appears to have taken about three years.
- *Grace Factor:* We shouldn’t expect unbelievers to act like believers before they are believers. It is human nature to long for acceptance. Creating an accepting, grace-filled environment will give many unreached people what they need to continue the journey. Jesus had no tolerance for the self-righteous. The example of how He dealt with the woman caught in the very act of adultery in John 8:1-11 is a perfect example of grace.

In this kind of environment, people tend to assimilate around a number of activities and relationships. The following examples represent natural opportunities where unreached people can “come and see.”

1. The table is an excellent place to engage people. A simple study of the life of Jesus demonstrates that the table played an important role in His relationships. Everywhere He went He sat down at a table with others and “broke bread.” On a practical level, many new churches do a good job of utilizing their hospitality ministries in moving people toward a deeper commitment. It can be something as simple as a cup of coffee and a donut before or after a worship service, a cookout for the entire church, or one-on-one meals at a local restaurant. Food has a way of breaking down barriers and is a proven means for creating intimacy in most cultures.
2. Small groups are another proven way of engaging people. Once someone decides to participate in some type of small group setting, the likelihood of them dropping out decreases significantly. Church planters must be wise in providing a variety of small group opportunities that are attractive to unreached people.
3. Ministry and task are key for moving people toward a healthy commitment. In a new church setting, there are many tasks that can be performed by non-believers. When this happens, individuals are validated and tend to move forward on their journey toward authentic discipleship.
4. Information can prove to be invaluable in the process of moving people toward discipleship. Helping unreached people understand what it means to be a disciple in simple and organic terms is essential. In addition, communicating the vision, mission, and values of the church as it relates to your commitment to making disciples is crucial. Many existing and new churches utilize some type of newcomer orientation and life development process for accomplishing this.

Follow Me

While “come and see” focuses on encouraging those who are searching, the command to “Follow Me” (found in Mark 1:17) encourages those who are deciding to become fully devoted followers of Christ. Once again, a major obstacle to following Jesus is a simple understanding of what it means to be a disciple. Most of us make it far too complicated. What does it mean to be a devoted follower of Jesus? Let me suggest four simple behaviors.

1. *Live like Jesus lived.*—While many people today are turned off to the church, few are turned off to Jesus. Teaching and preaching through the life of Jesus is a must in a new church. Texts like the “Sermon on the Mount” take on a new relevance as unreached people discern whether or not Christianity is for them. Just what does it mean to live like Jesus lived? Perhaps the best Scripture for understanding this statement is found in Philippians 2:5-8:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”

The single characteristic that describes Jesus is His willingness to decrease Himself even to the extent of death. His motivation was His commitment to the will of the Father. Living like Jesus lived is a daily surrender to the character and calling of Jesus. As John the Baptist suggested, “I must decrease in order that He might increase.”

2. *Love like Jesus loved.*—The life of Jesus is told through a collection of stories and pictures we call the gospels. These stories and pictures give us a vivid accounting of how Jesus loved. His death on the cross demonstrates the extent of His Love. To love like Jesus loved can be seen clearly in His relationship with His disciples, His commitment to Mary and Martha, His devotion to His own mother, His grace demonstrated to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, His tears for Jerusalem, His friendship with “sinners,” and His forgiveness to His executioners. Loving like Jesus loved is a lifelong quest of extending His love to those around us in practical ways.

3. *Lead like Jesus led.*—Jesus is the greatest leader of all time. He spent His life with a specific mission, but in the process of fulfilling that mission He poured Himself extensively into the lives of 12 individuals, while maintaining various levels of influence over many more. In return, those into whom He poured His life multiplied themselves into the lives of many others. If one follows carefully the leadership of Jesus throughout the gospels a pattern evolves. This pattern consists of the following process:

- *He mobilized*—He invited people to enter into community with Him.
- *He modeled*—He lived His life of love in the context of this community.

- *He mentored*—He sent those in community with Him out to “do likewise.” This was most often accompanied by a time of debriefing.
- *He multiplied*—He ultimately left them in charge of His mission as He returned to the Father.

4. *Leave what Jesus left behind.*—Ultimately, a disciple leaves what Jesus left behind, which is people who live like He lived, love like He loved, and lead like He led. The true mark of a disciple is that they leave a legacy of other disciples who are represented in future generations.

The life of Jesus demonstrates what it means to make disciples from a very organic perspective. A danger we face in program discipleship is that it becomes more about what you do than what you become. When Henry Blackaby was asked about the disciplines involved in discipleship, he suggested that the problem with talking about them is we begin to focus on the disciplines when Christianity is about a relationship. This is the danger in setting up organizational processes within the church. Priority should always be placed on the process and not the procedure. Once a clear understanding of this happens, the new church can create environments and processes for facilitating a maturing relationship. An example of an organizational process developed for encouraging a growing relationship among believers within the framework of a church is the baseball diamond that Rick Warren uses to mobilize disciples at Saddleback Church.

A key question to answer is how will you encourage the development of disciples within your context? What processes will you put in place to serve their needs for development?

Go and Make Disciples

Jesus’ final words to His disciples were related to multiplication. In Matthew 28:19-20, He said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Multiplying your influence as a disciple is the very essence of the Great Commission. God has chosen to use the planting of His church among every unreached people to spread this influence.

Multiplication is a mind-set, as well as a commitment. It begins with the under-

standing that we are called to be and make disciples. Therefore, multiplication must be part of the DNA that runs through the church planter and the new church. When it does, one can see multiplication at work at every level. When multiplication is part of the very fabric that drives the new church, you see the multiplication in every aspect of the church. It is reflected by believers, small groups, ministry, and churches being multiplied.

Inherent to multiplication is our understanding of church. If we see church only as a large organization with paid staff, large buildings, and extensive programming then multiplication is going to be very difficult. At best, we can expect addition. However, if we see church in a more organic form and are willing to plant it in its most transferable form then multiplication can be sure from day one.

When it comes to multiplication, it is essential that we have a biblical understanding of a number of areas:

- *Discipleship*—At the risk of sounding redundant, in order to multiply disciples we must understand the very nature of a healthy disciple. As mentioned earlier, this is one reason Henry Blackaby refused to define it in terms of disciplines. This is also the reason we choose to define discipleship in very simple organic terms such as living like Jesus lived, loving like Jesus loved, leading like Jesus led, and leaving behind what Jesus left behind.
- *Community*—When we come to Christ He invites us into community with other disciples. This community often takes the form of some type of small group ministry and structure. The challenge we face in facilitating community is setting it up in a way that encourages multiplication. This requires a high degree of trust and a willingness to relinquish control. In addition, there has to be a large amount of modeling and mentoring in order for effective multiplication to take place. Lastly, one also must be willing to let others fail in order to multiply community.
- *Leaders*—A church planter made the comment that it is our job to qualify the unqualified. The key to multiplying community and churches is multiplying leaders. From day one, this is the challenge in a church plant. Every church planter needs to be strategic in pouring his life into a handful of potential leaders. Once he has identified this group he can begin giving ministry away to them as they develop. His ultimate objective is to work himself out of a job through the multiplication of these leaders.

- *Churches*—In an environment where disciples, communities, and leaders are multiplied, church multiplication is possible. A good example of church multiplication can be found in the ministry of Ralph Moore, founding pastor of the Hope Chapel movement. Ralph has a vision for planting 500 churches and has recently planted over 150 new churches. He has structured his small group ministry around the concept of mini churches. Because his passion is developing leaders, when he sees a mini church grow under the influence of an aspiring leader, he releases it to become a church. This is a simple expression of organic church planting. It is obvious that the Hope Chapel movement has multiplication in its DNA. The multiplication of churches does not have to be complicated, but it needs to be intentional.

In conclusion, the three commands of Christ give us a biblical foundation for assimilating believers, mobilizing disciples, and multiplying the church. Jesus' command to "come and see" gives us key insight into the need for developing environments for providing a safe place for those searching to experience a dangerous gospel. His command to "follow Me" calls us to a lifestyle of discipleship that focuses on life change. And finally, His command to "go make disciples" calls us to multiply our influence at every level.

Additional resources to help "Mobilize and Multiply Ministry" can be found at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

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NAMB Downloadable Resources

The Church Planting Village - NAMB's Church Planter Web site -
www.thechurchplantingvillage.net

"20 Reasons Why You Should Plant a Church" (Knowledge Base)

"Developing an Intercessory Prayer Team" (Knowledge Base)

"Developing Covenant Relationships in Your New Church" (Knowledge Base)

"Visionizing," by H. Gerald Colbert

www.churchplantingvillage.net/equipping/cpn

"A Strategy Development Process," by Hugh Townsend www.churchplantingvillage.net/equipping/cpn

"Focusing," by H. Gerald Colbert

www.churchplantingvillage.net/equipping/cpn

"PREP Process for Church Planting" www.churchplantingvillage.net
(Knowledge Base)

"The Church Planting Process" (Knowledge Base)

“PREP Process,” particularly “People Study: Discovering Church Planting Receptivity” www.churchplantingvillage.net (Knowledge Base).

“Preparation for Church Planting: A Self-Study Guide for Church Planters,” www.churchplantingvillage.net/equipping/bt.

“Church Planting Sample Prospectus,” www.churchplantingvillage.net/churchplanting

A word about the authors . . .

Tom Cheyney has been a church planter, pastor, and director of associational missions in the North Eastern and North Central states. He has planted three churches and has assisted in the start of seven others. Tom has contributed to *Breaking Barriers of New Church Growth*, by Harry H. Fowler and *The Church Blueprint: Practical Helps for Building the Body* by George Thomasson. He is the author of the *Total Church Communication Planbook*.

George Garner has served in church planting roles since 1972 as a pastor, planter, and associational missionary strategist in North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Colorado. His church planting ministry in Colorado is an example of church multiplication in typical rural America. George has a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas.

David Putman has been the founding pastor of two churches, both highly committed to impacting unreached people, as well as a catalyst in the planting of a number of other churches. He was a contributing author to *Church Planting at the End of the 20th Century*. As a member of a new church, David enjoys seeing his unreached friends and neighbors find Christ.

Van Sanders planted churches internationally for 10 years in Kenya as a church planting missionary with the International Mission Board. He has also planted churches in Zambia and Mexico. Nationally, Van has planted churches in Ohio, Washington, Wyoming, and Kentucky. Van has a Doctor of Philosophy degree in missiology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas.

John Shepherd was a church planting missionary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and has successfully planted churches in Florida, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. In each of these church plants, John's use of church planting teams was foundational to the success of the new church. John has a Doctor of Ministry degree in Missions Leadership from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.



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