

CHURCH PLANTING WHY IT MATTERS

SMTC

To think further:

Multiplying Churches, *ed. Timmis, Stephen* (Christian Focus)

http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Why_Plant_Churches-Keller.pdf

Planting Missional Churches, *Stetzer, Ed* (Broadman & Holman)

Have we missed something?

“Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven.”

Peter Wagner

“The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city, and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.”

Tim Keller, *Why Plant Churches*

What is church planting?

A basic definition:

The activity of establishing a new church.

But what is a church?

[Q] What is the irreducible minimum of things you need to have “a church”?
(i.e. if you took this thing away you would not have a Christian church)

An identifiable c_____ of believers, who meet in order to be

shaped by God’s w_____,

administer his s_____,

w_____ and s_____ Christ together,

and that is seen as d_____ from other churches.

Why does this matter?

“Anything less than this minimum fails to teach the new believers the doctrine of the church; and anything in addition to this minimum, though not necessarily wrong, possibly hinders the multiplication of indigenous churches.”¹

¹ J D Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the whats, whys and hows of global church planting* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), Kindle ed, Loc 510.

Types of church plant

Model of planting	Situation most likely to be used	Advantages	Disadvantages
Starting from scratch: A minister or small group seeking to grow through evangelism.			
Mother-daughter: A section of a larger congregation setting up as a new church.			
New congregation in the same church: Often sub-culture specific.			
Multi-site: Various congregations in differently locations under a shared leadership.			
Network collaboration: Various churches sending people to establish a new church family.			

Why plant churches?

1) The bible commends it

- 1) It is assumed in the great commission (Matt 28v18-20)
- 2) It is assumed in all the letters (1 Cor 3v5-11, Rom 16v5, Phil 1v2, Tit 1v5)
- 3) It is the strategy throughout the book of Acts
 - a) The pattern of meeting together: 2v1
 - b) The ideal of community life: 2v41, 46
 - c) The outworking of gospel growth: 8v1, 11v19

The early church was a miracle of “spontaneous expansion.” The world saw a rapid multiplication of churches across the Roman Empire and beyond. The clear strategy of the early church, starting with the commission from Jesus in Acts 1:8, is that followers of Jesus will not keep the Gospel for themselves, but will reproduce it over and over again in others. This led to churches that birthed other churches - and sent out leaders (whom we call missionaries) to start even more churches.”²

² Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 20.

d) A means of crossing cultural boundaries 11v19-30

*"Acts 11:19-26 records another great movement of the Gospel. In this passage, the scattered believers move throughout Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. As a result new chutes are established. The church in Antioch becomes the new "headquarters" for the church."*³

*"Each believer has specific boundary issues ingrained from family, society and other experiences. Such perceptions of how God may work need to be confronted by the teachings of the New Testament message concerning the universal scope of mission and the universal need of the message. Identifying and challenging such preconceived notions of how God works is a great challenge for the local context of convinced believers who struggle with their own prejudices surrounding the boundaries of God's grace."*⁴

[Q] To what extent do you think this is true in your church context? What are the boundaries people are unable to cross? How might a church plant help?

e) The norm of apostolic evangelism: 14v20b-28

*"For years, most Bible teachers have referred to Paul's travels as his "missionary journeys." We prefer to call them Paul's "church planting journeys."*⁵

*"The greatest missionary in history, St. Paul, had a rather simple, two-fold strategy. First, he went into the largest city of the region (cf. Acts 16:9,12), and second, he planted churches in each city (cf. Titus 1:5). Once Paul had done that, he could say that he had 'fully preached' the gospel in a region and that he had 'no more work' to do there (cf. Romans 15:19,23). This means Paul had two controlling assumptions: a) that the way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities, and b) the way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it. Once he had accomplished this in a city, he moved on. He knew that the rest that needed to happen would follow."*⁶

Conclusion:

*"Church planting should not be like building a building - one big traumatic event followed by a deep collective sigh of relief that it's done. Paul was continually engaged in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting... church planting should be as much an ongoing, natural part of your ministry as worship, evangelism, fellowship, education, and service."*⁷

³ Stetzer, *Viral*, 21.

⁴ Seemuth, *Mission in the early church*, 59.

⁵ Stetzer, *Viral*, 21.

⁶ Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches?" n.p., Accessed 2nd January 2014, Online: http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Why_Plant_Churches-Keller.pdf.

⁷ Keller, *Center Church*, p356-7.

2) Our culture needs it

Trends society displays⁸

1	Increasing diversity	
2	Increasing fragmentation	
3	Increasing amount of women working	
4	Increasing number of homes	
5	Increasing mobility	
6	Increasing secularization	
7	Increasing busyness	

Traits churches need

1	To differ according to context	
2	To display authentic community	
3	To be light on programs	
4	To be flexible	
5	To be evangelistically motivated	
6	To be creative with ideas	
7	To be established in new developments	

The population of the UK is set to rise by almost 10 million over the next 25 years⁹, according to official estimates and 126,000 new homes were built in the UK last year. We need an extensive church planting programme to meet the challenge of taking the gospel to this growing population.

Church attendance is said to be around 5% of the population. Just to maintain the same proportion we would need churches to serve an extra 500,000 in the next 25 years. That's 10,000 new churches serving 50 people each - 400 new churches to be planted every year. If we want to actually grow the percentage of Christians in the UK, we will need a great deal more.

3) All churches benefit from it

[Q] What are some of the objections people might have to a focus on church planting?

⁸ Many taken from Church House Publishing, *Mission-Shaped Church*

⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/29/uk-population-expected-to-rise-by-almost-10-million-in-25-years>

Response:

“It is a great mistake to think that we have to choose between church planting and church renewal. Strange as it may seem, the planting of new churches in a city is one of the very best ways to revitalize many older churches in the vicinity and renew the whole body of Christ.”¹⁰

- 1) New churches bring new ideas to the whole body
- 2) New churches are one of the best places to identify creative, strong leaders for the whole body.
- 3) New churches challenge other churches to self-examination and renewed focus and courage.
- 4) New church may be an “evangelistic feeder” for a whole community.
- 5) As some churches come to the end of their natural lives unless new churches are planted the total number of churches will decrease in an area.¹¹

“The normal response to discussions about church planting is something like this. A. “We already have plenty of churches that have lots and lots of room for all the new people who have come to the area. Let’s get them filled before we start building any new ones.” B. “Every church in this community used to be more full than it is now. The churchgoing public is a shrinking pie. A new church here will just take people from churches that are already hurting and will weaken everyone.” C. “Help the churches that are struggling first. A new church doesn’t help the existing ones that are just keeping their noses above water. We need better churches, not more churches.” These statements appear to be common sense to many people, but they rest on several wrong assumptions. The error of this thinking will become clear if we ask, “Why is church planting so crucially important?”¹²

¹⁰ Keller, *Why plant churches?*

¹¹ These first four are taken from

http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Why_Plant_Churches-Keller.pdf / the last is from a lecture by Neil Powell from Birmingham 2020

¹² Keller, *Why plant churches?*

What about revitalizing churches?

What is revitalization?

Model of revitalization	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Starting with the minister:</p> <p>Enters a small, struggling often nominal congregation, and begins there.</p>		
<p>Grafting into a congregation:</p> <p>The ministers takes a team from elsewhere with him.</p>		
<p>Revitalizing when almost dead:</p> <p>As above when very few, often elderly left in the church.</p>		
<p>Revitalizing what is viable but stagnant:</p> <p>30+ people who just coaxing, unsure of faith or nominal Christians.</p>		

Q: Advantages over a church plant - generally and for those involved?

Q: Disadvantages over a church plant – generally and for those involved?

Should I get involved in a plant or revitalization?

Four necessities for a church plant or revitalization:

- 1) Vision
- 2) Leadership
- 3) Core Team
- 4) Gospel heartedness
- 5) Circumstances

1) Do I share the overall vision?

Every church will have one, hopefully stated. It should be:¹³

1. Spiritual: reflecting a *commitment* to Christ and his gospel as the builder of any church
2. Theological: reflecting *convictions* about what the gospel is and wider Bible truth
3. Ecclesiological: outlining a *configuration* for the church's structure, forms and leadership
4. Incarnational: seeking a *contextualized* drawing alongside those to be reached
5. Missional: aiming to be a *community* shaped through and through for mission

“To reach this growing post-Christendom society in the west will obviously take more than what we ordinarily call an evangelistic church; it will take a missional church. This church’s worship is missional in that it makes sense to non-believers in that culture, even while it challenges and shapes Christians with the gospel. Its people are missional in that they are so outwardly focused, so involved in addressing the needs of the local community, that the church is well-known for its compassion. The members of a missional church also know how to contextualize the gospel, carefully challenging yet also appealing to the baseline cultural narratives of the society around them. Finally, because of the attractiveness of its people’s character and lives, a missional church will always have some outsiders who are drawn into its community to incubate and explore the Christian faith in its midst. So the idea that “to be missional is to be evangelistic” is too narrow. A missional church is not less than an evangelistic church, but it is much more.”¹⁴

2) Do I have confidence in the leadership?

1. Their theological convictions
2. Their ministry convictions
3. Their view of secondary matters
4. Their character and style

¹³ Stetzed, *Planting missional churches*, p1-4

¹⁴ Keller, *Centre-Church*

3) Could I/my family play a part of the core team?

1. My relationships with others?
2. My gifts?
3. My networks?
4. My neighbourhood?

4) Do I/my family have the Gospel heartedness?

1. To give money
2. To work hard
3. To move house
4. To reach “others”

5) Do my circumstances make being involved wise?

1. Responsibilities to family and others
2. Responsibilities within the church I am in

6) How else might I be involved?

1. Giving
2. Praying
3. Encouraging
4. Releasing