

Planting Churches: Why Plant Churches

Introduction: Churches of various brands exist today in the West because someone ventured to proclaim the Kingdom of God through preaching the gospel and making disciples in a region of the world where there was no to little Christian influence. The result was that churches were planted. Some of those churches have experienced a multi- generational legacy that still exists today and others faded out only to give birth to new churches in that region that are carrying on the mission of God. Whatever the story of the church that exists today in regions around the world, it is the result of the faith and work of men and women who made a sacrificial commitment to extend the kingdom of God in the earth. That mission to establish churches around the world to extend the kingdom of God is as significant today as it was in the first century where followers of Jesus spread the gospel and planted churches from Judaea to throughout the Roman Empire, but do we have the same need for this type of sacrificial radicalism in modern Christendom to plant churches as in the First Century? Does America, that traditionally sees itself as a Christian nation, really need more churches?

Statistics from Ignite America claim that two-thirds of Americans, 18-35, doubt the existence of God. Thirty-five percent of Americans do not believe in the existence of Heaven. Thirty percent of U.S. adults believe in a cosmic force rather than God as described in the Bible. In America, Church attendance has dropped from 70% in 1960 to 20% presently. Seventy-one percent of Americans fear corruption in government and sixty-three percent fear that really bad things will happen to them or people they love. Anxiety has become America's number one health disorder. America is also one of the most unevangelized nations in the western world. There are hundreds of unreached people groups in America due to migration.

The cry of Jesus in Matthew 9:28 is still true today. “ The harvest is plenty but the workers are few.” We need workers who will preach the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches, not just a few but thousands. We definitely have a cause.

I. Why Church Planting?

A. God is a mission God. In the heart of God is a sending mandate.

The Father sends The Son
The Son sends The Spirit
The Spirit sends The Church
The Church fills the earth

“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,” Matthew 28:19

“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.”” Matthew 9:37-38

“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”” John 20:21

“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.”” Acts 13:2

B. Make disciples or plant churches?

Although it is true that the specific mandate of Jesus is to make disciples and the role of the Local Church is to do this, we plant churches to make disciples which is its primary mission, and we make disciples who form local churches that continue the work of making disciples.

C. The pattern of the Church in the Book of Acts

1. The first Local Church birthed on the first day of The Church (Acts 2)
2. Church planting spread by laity in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8)

3. Laity along with Apostolic help plant a local church in Antioch made up of Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 11:20-21)
4. Antioch becomes a mission sending Church (Acts 13)
5. Paul saturates the Eastern Roman Empire with the gospel, establishing local churches (Acts 14:21-23) and establishing mother churches in urban regions (Acts 19:10; I Thes 1:8)
6. Paul appointed elders to govern these churches and visited these churches as an apostle. (Acts 14:23; 19:10)
7. Paul also started house churches (Acts 20:20; Ro 16:3-5)

D. The lesson of the rabbit vs the elephant

“As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored.” 2 Thessalonians 3:1

1. The rabbit = 1000 babies in a lifetime
2. Elephants= 5 or 6 babies in a lifetime

E. The characteristics of a “ Rabbit Church”

1. They are led by non-professional leaders
2. They are basic in what constitutes the church (worship, prayer, gifts of the Spirit, teaching, sharing, baptism, communion, evangelism, and discipleship)
3. They have local or regional government to whom they are accountable
4. They are participatory where everyone can use their spiritual gifts
5. They are informal and flexible
6. They produce deep relationships
7. They are inexpensive
8. They are observed in a specific locale

9. They multiply

F. Characteristics of an Elephant Church

1. They produce high quality leaders (skills to recruit, equip, inspire, organize)
2. They can become a place of education, training, and resources (classes, Bible colleges, intensives, conferences,etc)
3. They can bring security to people who are drawn to excellence (especially in the U.S. “ this church will be around for awhile. It is safe”
4. They can be a sending launch pad (an Antioch Church)
5. They have programs to offer to equip, train, and heal
6. They are seen and known by more people in a region
7. They have a larger footprint with a facility or campuses(not just a neighborhood or section of a city)
8. They can serve the larger community and the globe
9. They can offer anonymity to seekers

II. Arguments Against Church Planting (do we really need to do this?)

- A. We should not weaken “ The House”
- B. We should not weaken full service congregations (we should be constantly raising up new leaders)
- C. We should increase “ attractational models” to reach more people
- D. We should only have one denominational church in a region
- E. We should have more educated versus less educated pastors
- F. We should rescue existing churches
- G. We should send to other nations but America has been evangelized and reached
- H. We should not create competition in a local region

