

Church Planting: The Model And The Mission

Introduction: In session one of our course on church planting, we addressed the question of “ Why Church Planting?” We looked at the spiritual condition of America that would be typical of many Western countries today, and we saw the need for life giving churches to reach these countries along with other unreached regions of the world. We discovered that God was a “ sending God”, that the Father sent the Son who sent the Spirit who sent The Church to fill the earth. The Church must go because it is sent, and its primary task is to make disciples. We then looked at the tension between “ Rabbit Churches” and “Elephant Churches” and how they both play a role in God’s purpose.

In this session, we will address why all church plants need to be missional and what that means. We will then look at models of church planting and define their strengths and weaknesses. It is important to remind ourselves in every session that one size of church planting does not fit all. Some church planters will plant large churches, some medium size, some small, and some in houses or small venues like that, but the measurement of whether it has health at all is discipleship and multiplication. If church plants just become magnets for “ transfer growth”, then we have failed in our mission because America or Canada or any other region of the world has not changed. For this to happen, we must become missional, and this, along with discovering models of church planting, is what session two is about.

I. What does it mean to be missional?

“ A church becomes missional when it remains faithful to the gospel and simultaneously seeks to contextualize the gospel (to the degree it can) so the gospel engages the hearers and transforms their worldview.”

Ed Stetzer, “ Planting Missional Churches”

“ I’ve said on a number of occasions that you’ll never do ministry that matters until you articulate what matters.”

Aubrey Maiphrus, “ The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting”

- A. A missional Church (which all church plants need to be) is seeing itself doing mission right where it lives.
- B. A missional Church means that every member of the church sees himself as a missionary on mission in their own community and making the needed sacrifices as a missionary would make to fulfill that mission.
- C. A missional Church makes any adjustments necessary for the local church and its methodology to communicate the gospel contextually.
- D. A missional church is contextual which means it attempts to be relevant and meaningful in presenting the gospel to the hearers it is trying to reach and being able to adapt the culture of the church to the culture it is reaching without violating the gospel or doctrine.
- E. A missional church lives in a tension between relevance and syncretism. We can attempt to be so relevant that we misrepresent the gospel or so insensitive to the culture that we end up preaching culture and tradition not the gospel, and as a result, lose our effectiveness in engaging and transforming the culture we are trying to reach.
- F. A Missional Church means that we incarnate our theology with the culture we are attempting to penetrate. In other words, how does our theology work with the people we are reaching ?
- G. A Missional Church evaluates continually, “ Are we preaching our traditions and past church culture or are we preaching the gospel to the culture we are reaching? “
- H. A Missional Church has a “ go and tell” mindset and strategy more than a “ come and see” mindset and strategy

I. A Missional Church places little emphasis on techniques and formulas that work in other environments and more on what is effective within the context of its ministry reach.

J. A Missional Church does not mean a “small church” or a “house church”. It can be large or small, a mega-church or a house church. It can have a big building or a small rented venue, but every church plant should be missional if we are going to see gospel impact. Aubrey Malphrus defines a local church as follows:

“The local church is an indispensable gathering of professing believers in Christ, who, under leadership, are organized.”

The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting

K. A Missional Church should ask the following questions about the culture it is trying to reach:

1. What is its general worldview?
2. What are its customs? Influencers= experts on social media/ sound bites/ sticky thoughts/ chat rooms/ branding/ zoom meetings/ home offices)
3. What are its cultural ethics?
4. What are the fashions that make up that culture?
5. What specific things can be offensive?
6. What is their general knowledge of Christianity or the Bible?
7. What are their learning methods?
8. What is the most effective way to communicate the gospel to them?
9. What specific aspects of this culture can be absorbed in the local church's cultures ?

K. All Missional Churches will hold to the conviction of the following truths:

1. Jesus is sending His Church everywhere throughout the earth.

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15

2. Jesus has commissioned His Church to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins.

“He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46-47

3. Jesus has commissioned us to baptize new believers.

“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 28:19-20 NIV

4. Jesus has commissioned us to teach all that He commanded.

“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

5. Jesus has commissioned us to make disciples.

“...go and make disciples...” Matthew 28:19

6. Jesus has commissioned His Church to equip every believer to do the work of the ministry.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his 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.” Ephesians 4:11-13

7. Jesus has commissioned His Church to serve one another in love and in community.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35

II. What models of church planting are there?

A. The Apostolic Itinerant Church Planter Model

Defined: Gathers, disciples, raises up leaders, and moves on to start new churches

B. The Founding Lead Pastor Model

Defined: A pastor moves to a city and starts a local church that eventually grows into a congregation that is self-sustained, self-governed, and self-propagating. The pastor stays there for a long period of time.

Note: This model has many varieties.

1. Sent out of a mother church with a team.
2. Sent out of a mother church with just his family.
3. Sponsored by a denomination to plant a church
4. Sponsored by a local church or denomination as a home mission

C. The Parachute Model

Defined: A pastor and his family just land in a community and begin to start a church in their home or a small venue. They are not sent out or sponsored by any organization or local church.

D. The House Church or Small Group Model

Defined: A small group starts that will multiply into a network of cells that eventually form a congregation.

E. The “ Hiving Model”

Defined: A local churches sections off a group of its members to start a church in another area of a community

F. The Church Split Model

Defined: A local church splits for various reasons and a new congregation is birthed.

G. The Shadow Pastoring Model

Defined: Often used in cross cultural mission work with the goal of raising up indogenous leaders, a church planter goes into an unreached part of the world and finds what is called “ the man of peace” based on Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 10:12-13. This new convert becomes the foundation of starting small house churches led by unprofessionals where the church planter plays the role of a coach behind the scenes as the new churches are led by indogenous not western leaders. This is a classic Rabbit Model.

H. A Multi-site Church

Defined: An established local church establishes new locations, sometimes due to strengthening struggling churches and bringing them under one local church government. All campuses move forward with the same vision, doctrine, and church culture.