Identifying the Common Characteristics of a Successful Church Plant

REVISED EDITION

A summary of a dissertation identifying the common characteristics which contribute to the success of a church plant as identified by church planters and organizations around the world. More than 500 church planters and church planting organizations were surveyed during the course of this study and the resulting list of common characteristics evidenced in growing church plants were tested against actual case studies. While this study provides insight into the contextual challenges facing the Church in South Africa, the principles hold true for the Universal Church.

By Leston Blackburn, 2001
Revised 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE: INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGY

CHAPTER 1: CHURCH PLANTING AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER 2: SOUTH AFRICA - A BRIEF CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING ON CHURCH GROWTH

CHAPTER 4: THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CHURCH PLANTING

CHAPTER 5: ADVANTAGES OF AND OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH PLANTING

CHAPTER 6: CHURCH PLANTING MODES, MODELS, METHODS AND STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 7: IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL PLANT

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARIZING THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AS IDENTIFIED BY THE SURVEY GROUP

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROWTH PATTERNS OF THE CHURCH PLANTS AND THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY

CHAPTER 10: BIBLICAL AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

CHAPTER 1: CHURCH PLANTING AND THE CHURCH

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Before we endeavor to ascertain whether or not South Africa needs more churches, what impact the church is having on society at large, the future role of the church in South Africa and the common characteristics which lend to the success of new church plants, we must lay a platform - we need to be clear on what we mean when we speak about the 'church' and 'church planting'. It is thus expedient to begin with a few brief definitions.

1.1 DEFINING THE CHURCH

When we use the term 'church' today, many different ideas spring to mind, some of which are shaped by personal preferences or experiences. Some people think of buildings, denominations and organizations. Still others conjure up images of special meetings or

ministries. But when we speak about 'church' today, do we understand the word to mean what the authors of Scripture meant by it? What constitutes a biblical church?

The Ekklesia of God

The Greek word for 'church' or 'assembly' is "ekklesia". The word has two derivatives, 'ek' and 'klesia'. W.E. Vine defines these derivatives as follows:

'Ek' meaning "out of" and 'klesia', meaning "a calling."[1]

In the Septuagint the word '*ekklesia'* is used to translate the Hebrew word '*quhal'*, which referred to an assembly of people who had been called together for a specific purpose at the sounding of a trumpet, as evidenced in Numbers 10:2,7. In Exodus, it is used to refer to the whole assembly of God's people who have been called under His authority (Exodus 12:3). The word also occurs 114 times in the New Testament. Twice it is translated '*congregation,*' and in both instances, refers to an assembly of the Children of Israel (Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12). Three times it is translated '*assembly,*' referring to groups of people other than Christians who had been assembled together (Acts 19:32,39,41). But the remaining 109 times that it is used in the New Testament, the word '*ekklesia*' is translated '*church'* or '*churches'.*[2]

The Church is thus not a building, a denomination or an organization, although each of these aspects form part of the life of the Church. It is an assembly of people called out by God for His purposes, and acting under His authority.

---

[1] W.E. Vine: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985) p 42
[2] Nate Krupp: *God's Simple Plan For His Church – And Your Place In It* (Solid Rock Books, Inc. 1993) p 19

It is in this context that the apostle Peter views the Church:

> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. [3]

Furthermore, we understand the Church to be the people of God who have been called out of the world and into a relationship with the Father through the atoning work of the Son, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.[4] Paul refers to the groups of believers both local and universal who make up the Church as the '*Body'* of Jesus Christ – Jesus being the Head (Ro 12:4; 1 Co 12:12; Eph 5:23).

In his book entitled, *The Nature of Churches*, Justice C. Anderson defines the Church as being divine in origin, corporate in constitution, a fellowship in its community, universal in scope, an organism in its function and expendable in its purpose, in that it has a clear goal – to glorify God through the establishment of His Kingdom.[5]

The Local Expression of the Church Universal

The local church is simply the many local expressions of the Church universal, and is made up of professing believers who assemble together in the bond of mutual understanding on the basis of their shared faith in the Lord and their conviction about the Scriptures, to conduct worship services, to observe the Lord's ordinances, and to perform the functions ascribed to them by the Scriptures. [6]

---

[3] 1 Peter 2:9 - *The Holy Bible*: *New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

[4] Nate Krupp: *God's Simple Plan For His Church – And Your Place in It* (Solid Rock Books, Inc. 1993) p 19
[5] Opal L. Reddin*: Planting Churches that Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers, Missouri 1990) p 3
[6] George C. Peters: *A Theology of Church Growth* (Chicago Moody Press 1972) p 56

Suwandoko Roslim and David Duncan, co-authors of *The Bible and the Church* define the

Church as:

> An assembly called together by a responsible person for a special purpose. Again, since it is Jesus who is building His Church (Mt 16:18), we gather that 'ekklesia', as Jesus envisioned it, referred to a company of people He would call together out of the world, commission for service, and empower to carry out His purpose on earth. Since His purpose is universal… the implication is that His body will be extensive, reaching out to the ends of the earth.[7]

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, author of the Ryrie Study Bible, supports this definition. In his

synopsis of Bible doctrine, Ryrie defines the Church as:

> That Spiritual organism of which Christ is the Head and is composed of all regenerated people from Pentecost to rapture.[8]

He goes on to define the local church as:

> A group of professing believers in Christ who have been baptized and who have organized themselves for the purpose of doing God's will.[9]

The Church is thus a living organism consisting of all believers in various places throughout

the world who find expression in the local context by assembling together in obedience to

Christ under His Headship and in His name in order to fulfill His purposes.

1.2 <u>DEFINING THE CHURCH'S COMMISSION</u>

The Purpose of the Church

The "ekklesia" of God, His Church, is therefore called out by Him to fulfill His purpose.

But what do we mean when we speak about the Lord's purpose for His Church? While it

---

[7] Suwandoko Roslim & David Duncan: *The Bible and the Church, an Independent-Study Textbook* (International Correspondence Institute 1987) p165
[8] Charles Caldwell Ryrie: *Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition* (The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago 1986, 1994) p2008
[9] Ibid. p 2008

can be described as manifold in nature, it would be fair to say that Jesus gave His Church one great mission - we call it the Great Commission because of the importance attached to it. It is in fulfilling this Great Commission that the purpose of the Church in all its various expressions is realized:

> 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." [10]

Discipleship in the Book of Acts

It is interesting to note that the only imperative verb in this portion of Scripture is "make disciples" (*matheteuo* in the Greek).[11] All other verb forms are participles, describing different aspects of the discipling process.[12] We will therefore take a moment to consider how the early church understood the process of discipleship.

In the book of Acts, discipleship involved organizing new converts into local churches (Acts 2:46, 47; 14:21-23). Elders would be appointed to oversee the local church, and ministries were raised up to ensure that the saints would be prepared for works of service, reaching unity and maturity in the faith (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The local church still plays an integral part in the discipleship process today. As new communities are reached and new converts are won to the faith, church planting automatically becomes part of the whole process. A community without a church is, as Ezra Jones puts it, like:

---

[10] Matthew 28:18-20 - *The Holy Bible*: *New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

[11] W.E. Vine: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985) p172

[12] Opal L. Reddin: *Planting Churches that Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers (Springfield, Missouri 1990) p5

…a body without a soul or an explorer without a compass. [13]

S.D. Ponraj lends his support to the relationship between discipleship and church planting in reaching new communities when he describes church planting as:

> Proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians, leading them to true repentance, and the experience of personal salvation, guiding them to the point of baptism and forming them as a visible local worshipping community which will be actively involved in prayer, Bible study, witness and social concern in its community and in the world.[14]

Church planting is thus one of the natural and obvious expressions of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The Church and the Great Commission

Although the will of God is multi-faceted, the Great Commission given to the Church by none other than Jesus Christ cannot be overstated. While it would be incorrect to go so far as to say that any local church which does not have a heart to go into all the world to preach the gospel is not a true 'church' in the biblical sense of the word, it would be accurate to say that it is, at the very least, a disobedient one!

Kevin W. Mannoia, author of *Church Planting - The Next Generation* concurs:

> It is my firm conviction that the church has a clear mission from God: To make Him known. Although it is often muddled and obscured, the mission remains the same. It awaits discovery or rediscovery by those who are charged with leadership and influenced on a regional level…God is calling His body, the church, to come off the mountain of our own comfort zone and enter the valley where the battle is hot. You see, He wants us to declare His kingdom to the world. What is the kingdom of God? My undergraduate religion professor, Harry Anderson, was taught: 'The kingdom of God is the rule of Christ in the hearts of people.' If that's the Kingdom and if expanding His kingdom is our mission, then our task is clear – to declare Christ to the broken people in the valley. Sure, it means leaving the security of our comfort zones. Sure, it means taking

---

[13] Ezra Earl Jones: *Strategies For New Churches* (New York: Harper & Row 1976) p xx
[14] S.D. Ponraj: *Church Planting and the Great Commission* (http://www.abcog.org/plant.html)

risks. Sure, it means getting hurt and even, at times, failing. But our mission is in the valley of hurting people where the enemy is in heated battle. It's not on the mountain-top where we retreat into the security of our own institutional, protective sub-culture.[15]

Aubrey Malphurs, a noted author on the subject of church planting, believes that church planting is key to the successful fulfillment of the Great Commission, describing it as:

> …an exhausting but exciting venture of faith that involves the planned process of beginning and growing new local churches as based on Jesus' promise and in obedience to His Great Commission.[16]

James H. Feeney, author of *The Team Method of Church Planting* also believes that church planting is vital to the successful fulfillment of the Great Commission:

> In brief, the church's commission is to win the lost and train the saved. And even within this short statement of purpose, we can see that the starting point is evangelism. Mendel Taylor has rightly noted that theologically evangelism is the church's primary task, as is a fulfillment of the Great Commission. It presupposes the lostness of men, their universal salvation in Christ, and the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit in working through witnessing and preaching to bring about awakening and conversion. It is the awareness of the 'lostness' of people without Christ that compels the church to press forward in evangelism and church planting. And indeed neither can be neglected without damage to the other. New churches will not be planted without aggressive evangelism. And conversely, the converts won through such evangelism must be placed in Christ-centered, biblically based local churches. [17]

1.3 <u>DEFINING CHURCH PLANTING</u>

Now that we have established the importance of church planting, let us briefly define what we mean by it. Activities are often carried out in the name of evangelism and church planting, which in reality, do not culminate in the establishing of a new congregation or in church growth. It is thus imperative that we understand what we mean when we speak about planting a church.

---

[15] Kevin W. Mannoia: *Church Planting – The Next Generation* (Light and Life Press 1994) p15, 17,18
[16] Aubrey Malphurs: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Baker Book House Co) p45
[17] James H. Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) pp 4,5

Church Planting is not the Construction of a Church Building

More often than not, church planting will result in the construction of a building. However, church planting in the truest sense does not refer to the physical structure in which the local church meets.

Church Planting is Not Forming a New Congregation by Splitting Another

While some churches may be led to divide in order to plant a new work, splitting a congregation by unscriptural or unbiblical means should not be defined as a church plant. Church planting, then, refers to the process of establishing, nurturing, equipping and releasing a group of professing believers in Christ who acknowledge and submit to His Headship, and who have organized themselves for the purpose of fulfilling His will.

With these definitions in mind, let us take a moment to consider the context in which the Church in South Africa finds itself.

CHAPTER 2: SOUTH AFRICA - A BRIEF CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

J.J. Kritzinger, author of *South Africa - The Context for Mission*, believes that context has a significant bearing on the unfinished task of the Church.[18] The way the Church is able to respond and adapt to any given culture is crucial to its success within that culture. It will only be able to respond to the extent to which it understands its contextual perspective and its biblical role within that perspective.

In this chapter, we will attempt to present a brief, but holistic picture of the nation and people of South Africa. In so-doing, we will determine what impact, if any, socio-cultural and socio-political changes have had and are having upon the effectiveness and relevance of the Church in South Africa, and how these influences may affect future church plants.

2.2 A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

The Topography

The Republic of South Africa occupies the southernmost part of the African continent, stretching latitudinally from 22° to 35° South and longitudinally from 17° to 33° East.

The surface area of South Africa is 1,219,090 km² (1,961,516 square miles). It shares common boundaries with the Republics of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the west and north. The Republic of Mozambique and the Kingdom of Swaziland lie to the east. The mountain kingdom of Lesotho falls within the southeast territory of South Africa.

---

[18] J.J. Kritzinger: *South Africa - The Context for Mission* (Missionalia 1988) p157

A MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The interior plateau is lined with a series of mountain ranges called the Drakensberg. The escarpment (the raised area to the north of the mountain ranges) is more pronounced in the east and south. These factors, together with the sub-tropical location of South Africa, make it a relatively dry climate with an abundance of sunshine. Indigenous vegetation is diverse and can be divided into five categories; desert, bushveld, temperate grasslands, forest and mediterranean.

---

[19] Map of the Republic of South Africa (http://www.gov.za/yearbook/rainbow.htm)

Natural Resources and Industry

South Africa is one of the most prolific mineral suppliers in the world. There are large reserves of gold (the city of Johannesburg being the gold-producing capital of the world), platinum, vanadium and chrome as well as other valuable minerals like coal, uranium, diamonds, iron-ore, nickel and phosphates.

The main exports include mineral ores, metals, chemicals, agricultural products and machinery. Imports and exports account for about 60% of the Gross Domestic Product. Tourism also plays an important role in the economy. But two important resources are lacking - natural oil and water. South Africa is also a major exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods and technology.

Provinces

South Africa is divided into nine provinces, each with its own Legislature, Premier, and Provincial Members of the Executive Councils. Each province has a distinctive landscape, vegetation and climate. The provinces are the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, North-West Province, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province.

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The South African Government conducted a national Census in 1996. It gave the most comprehensive demographic view of the people and socio-cultural trends to date. We will take a moment to describe these findings before we consider their impact on the Church.

The People

According to figures released in the Census, on the night of 9 October 1996, there were 40.6 million people in South Africa. Of these, 76.7% classified themselves as 'African', 10.9% as 'white', 8.9% as 'colored', 2.6% as 'Indian/Asian', and 0.9% as 'other'.[20]

Population Group by Percentage -1996
Government Census Results

2.6%
0.9%
8.9%
10.9%
76.7%

AFRICAN 76.7%
WHITE   10.9%
COLORED 8.9%
ASIAN   2.6%
OTHER   0.9%

Religion

The Census included a section focusing on the religious convictions and preferences of the people of South Africa. The following question was asked:

> What is your religious affiliation, denominational affiliation or faith? Please state the full name or official abbreviation, e.g. Apostolic Faith Mission; Catholic Church; Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church); Hindu; Muslim; Zion Christian Church, (ZCC). If you have no religion, write "none".[21]

---

[20] 1996 South African Government Census Results
[21] Religion in South Africa: *Census '96 compiled by Prof. J H Hendriks in the South African Christian Handbook*, 1999-2000 (Christian Info Publishers 2000), p47

A list of nearly 500 names of churches, denominations and religions was provided. These were indexed into 66 groups, 62 religious groups and five other categories, namely; 'no religion', 'no church', 'refused to answer', 'other', and 'not stated'.[22] Once all the data had been collated, the following picture emerged:

TABLE 1: RELIGION IN SOUTH AFRICA: CENSUS 1996

RELIGION	TOTAL	%
Jewish Faith/Hebrew	68,060	0.17
Hindu Faith	537,428	1.32
Muslim Faith	553,583	1.36
Eastern Faiths	10,069	0.02
Other Faiths	1,937,337	4.77
No Religion/Refused/Not Stated	7,418,420	18.28
Christian	27,020,325	74.08 [23]

[22] 1996 South African Government Census Results
[23] J. H. Hendriks: *Religion in South Africa - Census '96* (Christian Info 2000) p54
[24] The South Africa Yearbook (http://www.gov.za/yearbook/rainbow.htm)

**TABLE 2: THE ESTIMATED RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN POPULATION BASED ON THE 1996 CENSUS**

Religious denomination	Members in 1000's	%
Zion Christian Church	4 181	9.71
NG Church family	3 810	8.85
Catholic Church	3 703	8.60
Methodist Church	3 035	7.05
Pentecostal/Charismatic Church	2 381	5.53
Anglican Church	1 731	4.02
Apostolic Faith Mission	1 214	2.82
Lutheran Church	1 137	2.64
Presbyterian Church	788	1.83
Ibandla Lama Nazaretha	491	1.14
Baptist Church	474	1.10
Congregational Church	465	1.08
Orthodox Church	34	0.08
Other Apostolic churches	3 802	8.83
Other Zionists	2 334	5.42
Ethiopian-type churches	865	2.01
Other Reformed churches	418	0.97
Other African Independent churches	250	0.58
Other Christian churches	1 365	3.17

24

According to the Census results, the largest reported grouping of Christian churches in South Africa is said to be the African Independent Churches (AIC's), although many Christians consider some of these churches to be sects, because they incorporate unbiblical cultural practices into their faith, like ancestral worship.

Although these churches originally resulted from a number of breakaways from various mission churches (the so-called Ethiopian churches), the AIC's have developed their own

dynamics and momentum, and continue to flourish. The majority can therefore no longer be regarded as Ethiopian churches, but are 'Zionist' or 'apostolic' churches.

The Zion Christian Church forms the largest single denomination within the AIC's. More than one million members gather twice a year at Zion City in Moria, near Pietersburg in the Northern Province – at Easter and for the September festival. Traditionally, Easter is the religious highlight of the year. Church members, estimated to number four million, are not obliged to make the pilgrimage, but have loyally observed the tradition for more than 80 years.

Population Growth Statistics

Some population projections in the late 1980's put the population growth figure at 2.9% per annum. If these figures were to continue unabated, the population of South Africa would double by the year 2020.[25] However, the onset of AIDS has impacted negatively on the population growth statistics. The latest estimated annual population growth has been recalculated to 0.5%.[26]

2.4 <u>SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS</u>

South Africa is a land of extremes. This is further reflected in the socio-economic conditions of the country. As in many other countries, South Africa has a minority of affluent people, with a majority living on or below the poverty line. The *World Factbook 2000* describes South Africa as:

> A middle-income, developing country with an abundant supply of resources, well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors, a stock exchange that ranks among the 10 largest in the world, and a modern infrastructure supporting an efficient distribution of goods to major urban centers throughout the region. However, growth has not been strong enough to cut into…unemployment, and daunting

---

[25] W.P. Mostert: *Demographic Trends in South Africa – Perspectives on the Future* (Owen Burgess Publishers 1988) pp. 59-86
[26] The World Fact Book 2000 (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/sf.html#Econ) p 3

economic problems remain from the apartheid era, especially the problems of poverty and lack of economic empowerment among the disadvantaged groups.[27]

Rising Unemployment

One of the greatest challenges facing the new government is the rising level of unemployment and poverty. The Census defined the term, '*employed*' as referring to people working for pay, profit or family gain. '*Unemployed*' referred to an economically active person who had no work at the time of the Census and would accept work at any given opportunity, being able to start work immediately. '*Not Economically Active*' referred to those who were outside of the labor field, e.g. housewives, students, scholars, pensioners, and the disabled, or simply those not wanting to work. The statistics make for interesting reading:

TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT VERSUS UNEMPLOYMENT

1996 CENSUS RESULTS

NOT ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE	42.6%
EMPLOYED	37.9%
UNEMPLOYED	19.5% [28]

Employment vs. Unemployment

---

[27] Ibid. p5

[28] Employment and Unemployment Demographic Data from the 1996 Census – SA Christian Handbook 1999,2000 (Christian Info 2000) p13

The Census figures reported that 19.5% of the economically active population of 57.4% were unemployed. This relates to an effective unemployment rate of 33.9%.[29]

A recent report presented on national television by the SABC (The South African Broadcast Corporation) showed that unemployment figures have risen since the census was conducted. Unemployment now stands at a staggering 35%, with many of the employed population earning a salary of less than R500 per month (approximately $74 at the current exchange rate).[30]

Urbanization

Rapid urbanization has become an entrenched problem in South Africa. On January 20, 1980, *The Star*, a national newspaper, correctly projected a 70% increase in the total urban population by the year 2000. Urbanization has resulted in an increased shortage of housing, food, water and sanitation. As a result, the plight of the urban poor has escalated. Of the total urban population, 75% can be traced to four major metropolitan areas; the Durban–Pinetown region in KwaZulu-Natal, the Port-Elizabeth-Uitenhage region in the Eastern Cape, the Cape Peninsula in the south-west, and Gauteng (the most economically active and the most urbanized province in South Africa with an urbanization level of 97%).

---

[29] Employment and Unemployment Demographic Data from the 1996 Census – SA Christian Handbook 1999,2000 (Christian Info 2000)p13
[30] *Morning Live* – A Television Production of the South African Broadcast Corporation, November 6, 2000.

TABLE 3: URBAN AND NON-URBAN POPULATION BY PROVINCE

PROVINCE	URBAN	%	NON-URBAN	%	TOTAL
Eastern Cape	2,304,378	36.6	399,8148	63.4	6,302,525
Free State	1,806,651	68.6	826,853	31.4	2,633,504
Gauteng	7,130,277	97	218,146	3	7,348,423
KwaZulu-Natal	3,628,268	43.1	4,788,753	56.9	8,417,021
Mpumalanga	1,094,287	39.1	1,706,425	60.9	2,800,711
Northern Cape	588,906	70.1	251,415	29.9	840,321
Northern Province	541,301	11	4,388,067	89	4,929,368
North West	1,171,734	34.9	2,183,091	65.1	3,354,825
Western Cape	3,516,007	88.9	440,867	11.1	3,956,875
Total	**21,781,807**	**53.7**	**18,801,765**	**46.3**	**40,583,573**

[31]

Informal Settlements and Townships

The majority of the population lives in informal settlements or townships, which are mostly concentrated in or around the periphery of the larger towns and cities. These settlements consist primarily of dwellings or 'shacks' as they are commonly referred to, which are made out of zinc, wood and other materials. These dwellings are usually small, and concentrated. As a result, a large number of people live in a relatively small area. Many of these informal settlements do not have access to electricity, running water or sanitation.

2.5 SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITIONS

Age Groups

63.2% of the population is younger than 30 years of age. 54.6% are younger than 25.

6.9% of the population is older than 60, and 4.7 % over 65.[32]

---

[31] Marjorie Froise: *The South African Christian Handbook* (Christian Info 2000) p 7
[32] Age Distribution of South Africans in Five Year Intervals – *Demographic Data from the 1996 Census in the SA Christian Handbook*, (Christian Info 2000) p9

The Impact of AIDS

South Africa is a country caught between a rock and a hard place. It has been plagued by political difficulties in the past, which have greatly divided an already multi-cultural society. While these divisions are slowly being redressed, another crisis looms: South Africa faces the full onslaught of the devastating impact of AIDS in the very near future.

In an article entitled, *AIDS: We Must Go to War*, Dr Robert Shell reports that AIDS will have claimed more lives globally by the year 2010 than all major pandemics combined. At the time that he wrote the article, 20,800,000 of the reported HIV-positive cases were found in Sub-Saharan Africa.[33] He goes on to say:

> The peak ages of HIV infection are between 18 and 25; the peak ages of AIDS deaths are ten years later... The concentration of HIV/AIDS in these age groups has important consequences… Before the pandemic, South Africa had been enjoying a drop in mortality with a consequent increase in life expectancy. AIDS is reversing that progress. On current trends, the average life expectancy will fall to 40 years by the year 2010. … If present trends continue, I believe that by 2025 we will have a life expectancy of a mere 30 years – close to that of a Roman slave![34]

Even though the full impact of AIDS is yet to be realized, it is already the number one cause of death in Africa. Already AIDS accounts for 25% of all infant mortalities. According to the World Health Organization, South Africa now has the fastest rate of escalation of HIV infections in the world.[35]

In 1991 Dr Darryl Hackland, Secretary of Health in the KwaZulu-Natal Province stated that:

> People are using the tip of the iceberg to describe AIDS. I feel a crocodile would be more appropriate! [36]

---

[33] Dr Robert Shell: *AIDS, We Must Go to War* (Reader's Digest, July 2000 edition) p 51
[34] Ibid. pp 52,53
[35] Business Report: *Aids Planning is Crucial* (Business Report Newspaper, Sunday 9/5/99)
[36] Religious Leader's Workshop held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal 17/5/1991

In 1990, the number of reported cases of AIDS was 613. Since then, the AIDS epidemic has increased 30-fold:

- Recent statistics show an increase of 33.8% in the past year alone! An estimated 3,600,000 South Africans are now HIV positive, making up 7.6% of the total population.

- 16% of the adult population is HIV positive.

- An estimated 405,000 people have already died from AIDS-related illnesses.

- In five years time, this figure is expected to escalate to 2.1 million!

- The rate of new infections has increased to 1,600 per day.

- 46,000 children currently have full-blown AIDS.

- 20% of babies currently born at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, the largest hospital in South Africa, are HIV positive.[37]

The Impact of Crime

South Africa is a nation plagued by crime. Former President Nelson Mandela stated that South Africa needs, '*A campaign of moral regeneration.*' A society in flux has become a society in decay! Much of this has to do with the rising levels of unemployment experienced in the nation at present.

Recent statistics reveal that crime has escalated sharply since 1993/4. Although the rate of crime is still increasing, police statistics show that the rate of escalation is lower than it was. South Africa remains the murder capital of the world. The incidence of murders per 100,000 people is 58.5 compared to 46 reported in the 1996/7 Christian Handbook. This figure compares with a ratio of 8.2 per 100,000 people in the United States. Robbery and hijacking have increased dramatically over the past year and the Gauteng Province (making up almost

---

[37] South African Department of Health Figures; February, 1999 – compiled by Marjorie Froise

two thirds of the population of South Africa concentrated in urban areas) has been hit the hardest. With a large number of illegal weapons in circulation, criminals are displaying an increased brutality when carrying out crimes.[38] *The Star* conducted a survey on the streets of Johannesburg in 1997. In the article, it was reported that nearly 80% of sexual abuse cases, 70% of muggings/robbery, 76% of assaults, and 55% of assaults with weapons went unreported.[39] Furthermore, South Africa has the highest incidence of rape in the world. Rape and attempted rape has increased since 1994 by some 20% to a total of 1.7 million rapes annually.[40]

The Impact of Apartheid

We will deal with the impact of apartheid on the Church in more detail in chapter 6 when we look at the history of the Church in South Africa. However, since we are trying to understand the context in which the Church exists, we will take a moment to deal with the impact of Apartheid on the perceptions of the people of South Africa.

The word '*apartheid*' is an Afrikaans word meaning '*separation*' or '*separateness*'. Within the context of South Africa, apartheid has come to mean the separate development of different cultural groups. History records that the whites in South Africa felt an inalienable right to self-determination and preservation of culture and ethnicity. However, the intense desire to protect this identity has been at the expense of other cultural groups. Although racial segregation was traditionally accepted in South Africa prior to 1948, the general election of that year saw the National Party rise to power, and in the process, the new government adopted an official policy of separate development.

---

[38] Marjorie Froise: *The Church in Context – The South African Christian Handbook*, *1999-2000* (Christian Info 1999) p31

[39] The Saturday Star Newspaper: *Street Survey Wises up on Crime Stats* (Saturday Star Newspaper 4/10/1999)

[40] Marjorie Froise: *The Church in Context – The South African Christian Handbook*, *1999-2000*(Christian Info 1999) p31

Initial emphasis was given to the separation of whites and other cultural groups in urban areas. This led to the forced removal of the Colored and Asian populations and the formation of townships.

A Policy of Separate Development

Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, introduced a policy of separate development under the National Party-dominated government. The idea was to form nine recognized African (Bantu) groups, each becoming a separate nation with its own homeland, or '*Bantustan'*. A total area of approximately 14% of the country's land was set apart for this purpose. Movement to and from these homelands became strictly regulated, and blacks were not allowed to vote or to own land outside of these areas. Labor permits were necessary for any other cultural group to reside in so-called 'white areas'. Often permits did not include a spouse or other family members, and so the estrangement and break-up of many families was inevitable.[41]

The Church and Apartheid

While many Christians resisted and openly opposed apartheid (and were either jailed, exiled, persecuted or killed as a result) some denominations in South Africa, like the Dutch Reformed Church, openly embraced it. As a result, corporate worship was not only discouraged, but also considered an anathema. However, there were churches that resisted and continued to encourage the inter-fellowship of Christians from all colors and cultures. Because of the differing views, a growing sense of mistrust and alienation was cultivated between different denominations. Barriers began to emerge, and many people began to look at the Church with a deep sense of mistrust.

---

[41] R. Sutter & R. Ormond: *The Freedom Charter* (The Apartheid Handbook 1986) pp. 6-9

The Impact of Political Transformation

The first democratically elected government came to power in 1994. As a result, the many draconian and oppressive laws of Apartheid began to be systematically outlawed, and steps were taken to re-unite the people of South Africa. However, even though the apartheid system has been abolished, it has left a painful legacy in its wake. Analysts believe that many South Africans will not easily forget the injustices and atrocities committed – the homes that were razed, the families that were divided, the children who were killed, and the many other injustices of apartheid. Massive social and economic inequalities still exist along racial lines.

2.6 <u>THE IMPACT OF CONTEXT ON THE CHURCH</u>

Now that we have an idea of the context in which the Church in South Africa exists, let us determine what impact this context is likely to have on the effectiveness of the Church. Can the Church in its current state still be considered relevant? How do most South Africans perceive the Church today, given its record of complicity? We will take a moment to consider the impact of the socio-cultural, socio-historical and socio-economic transformations on the Church.

Population Statistics and the Church: Christianity in Decline?

How has Christianity grown in comparison to the population growth over the last century? What are the current trends? Based on the information of past national Census's conducted in South Africa, the following pattern has emerged:

% Christians in South Africa 1911-1996

100							

(chart)

◆— % Christians in South Africa 1911-1996

1911   1936   1951   1970   1991

YEAR	% Christians Per Capita
1911	45.7
1921	51.3
1936	60.8
1946	63.2
1951	68.0
1960	73.4
1970	75.4
1980	77.0
1991	74.5
1996	74.1

It is clear from the above data that the number of people professing Christianity in South Africa has declined steadily since 1980. Rev Paul Siaki, an Anglican Missionary stationed in Soweto has made the following observation:

> There is no doubt that Christianity is in decline in this country (South Africa). The current statistical figure (for the year 2000) cannot be accurately known until the next census, but by all indications, the decline of Christianity is not being arrested.[43]

---

[42] Demographic Data From the 1996 Census, appearing in the SA Christian Handbook 1999/2000 (Christian Info 2000)

[43] Paul Siaki: *What is the State of Christianity in South Africa?* (CPA Publishers, 2000) p1

H.J. Hendricks, professor of religious studies from Stellenbosch University agrees:

> The percentage of Christians in South Africa from 1911 to 1996 disclosed how the typical Western pattern of a declining Christianity, which struck Europe after the Second World War and the USA after the sixties, became visible statistically in South Africa as from 1980. The growing percentage of people who indicated 'No religion, Refused, Not stated' thus is typical. In the light of the global mega trends above, churches should recognize that their members are facing a new situation and new realities. The Church needs to discover in a new and contemporary way, the old or basic truths of faith in Jesus Christ. The Church will not grow and become a prophetic, missionary, serving-the-poor church by concentrating on dogma and words alone.[44]

Declining Church Attendance

If the decline in the number of professing Christians is not cause for concern, then the decline in annual attendance figures are. Rev Siaki continues:

> Although there is no national study completed that shows the actual number of people in church on any given Sunday, smaller regional studies have been done which indicate that only 20% of persons in their respective communities attend church on a regular basis. If applied nationally, then it can be estimated that over 20 million people who give affiliation to Christianity do not regularly attend church and can be classified as 'nominal Christians'. Given the new South African context, unless radical steps are taken, this number will only increase.[45]

While estimates in 1996 put the number of Christians attending church at 20%, recent statistics record a much lower figure of 14.1%. While it is difficult, if not impossible to verify these figures until the next Census, one should take note of the groundswell of Christians who agree that church attendance in some circles has shown clear patterns of decline.

---

[44] H.J. Hendricks: *The South African Christian Handbook, 1999-2000* (Christian Info, 2000) p87
[45] Paul Siaki: *What is the State of Christianity in South Africa?* (CPA Publishers, 2000) p17

Population Growth & The Growth of the Church

While there has been a marked decline in the annual population growth rate, which may well impact on future statistics, figures for the last decade reveal that the Church has still lost ground. Rev Terry Rae of the Baptist Union (one of the fastest growing denominations in South Africa, growing from 280 churches to 423 churches in just 10 years) agrees. Commenting on the growth of the population as opposed to the growth of the Baptist Union, Rev Ray says:

> We have doubled in 10 years, but against population growth, we are still going backwards![46]

South Africa is not the only country in which the Church is growing at a slower rate than the population. Everett Stenhouse noted that church growth in the USA has not kept up with population growth. In 1900, 27 churches existed per 10,000 people, which equated to one church for every 370 people. In 1985, the figure had dropped to 12 churches per 10,000 people - or 1 church for every 8,333 people. When confronted with these figures, Opal L. Reddin, author of *Planting Churches That Grow*, concludes that the only way millions of Americans can and will be reached for Christ will be by planting churches.[47]

Age Distribution and the Church

With more than 60% of the population now younger than 30, no significant steps have been taken to reach this group. As a result, many young people see the Church as being out of touch.

---

[46] Rev Terry Rae – CPA conference on Church Planting 2000 – 24 October, 2000
[47] Opal L. Reddin: *Planting Churches That Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers, 1990) p14

Unemployment and the Church

Increasing levels of poverty and unemployment have impacted the perceptions of many South Africans. A growing pessimism has led to a growing mistrust. More and more people are looking for action, not words.

Knowing what is happening on the economic front can be of great benefit to the Church's effectiveness in evangelizing the lost. The Great Commission remains one of the Church's greatest responsibilities. If South Africans are saying, '***Show*** us you mean what you say!', then the Church must respond accordingly if it is to have any significant impact! The focus needs to shift from 'word-oriented' evangelism to 'need-oriented' evangelism (evangelizing by meeting a need within the community). I am not for one moment advocating that we should renege on our responsibility to preach the gospel. Nor should we ever fall into the trap of meeting needs at the expense of preaching the gospel - communicating the whole truth of the Scriptures remains our first priority. If we meet the needs within our community without presenting Jesus Christ, the hope of glory, we have failed! But simply ignoring growing needs will not endear people to the message we need to share with them.

In short, the Church needs to trust the Lord for innovative ways to impact the community in which it serves. And innovative ways of reaching the lost are being found. The Timothy Training Institute (a local Christian College) has compiled a literacy program, which can be run twice weekly. Using this course, any local church can train people to read and write within nine months. This opens up a whole new scope of opportunities for an unemployed person, because it makes them far more 'marketable' in the working sector. The beauty is that the study manual uses Scripture as the training material! Not only does the Church become relevant in meeting the needs within its local community, but the gospel is communicated in an innovative and practical way.

Patterns of Growth and Decline in the Church

The decline of mainline denominations (one of the most notable being the Methodist Church of South Africa) and the growth of the Africa Independent Churches has a sociological explanation according to Buchanan and Hendriks, co-authors of *Meeting the Future:*

> The mainline churches are declining in stark contrast to African Independent Churches and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. A combination of secularization, individualism, economic prosperity and self-sufficiency continues to impact Christian decline. Ironically, it also affects the growth of the more independent churches. Many Africans are finding it more difficult to fit into a church that is not geared to meeting their most basic of needs.[48]

H.J. Hendriks adds:

> The process of secularization has played an important role. The combination of the influence of individualism, economic prosperity and power has taken its toll. An analysis of the figures among the church-going population of South Africa reveals that those who have money and power are not in need of church, and those without it do not easily find a home in mainline denominations with their hierarchical structures and top-down style of worship. As demonstrated in the case of the AIC's (African Independent Churches), they move to a church that is small group oriented where their basic needs can be met. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that Christianity prospers when functioning well at grassroots level.
>
> A church leadership that lives with its people at grassroots level, addresses their needs, helps them to face and deal with realities confronting them, and, despite tough measures and difficult decisions, thrives. That implies that mainline churches as a rule, are failing at the very level of primary socialization: in their ministry and in the homes of the families that constitute the church. A church must have a balance between preaching values (orthodoxy) and living virtues (orthopraxy). Membership in declining denominations lacks the theory and practice of a ministry that empowers people to socialize their faith in daily life.[49]

---

[48] Buchanan & Hendriks: *Meeting the Future* (Randburg Knowledge Resources 1995) p28
[49] H.J. Hendriks: *The South African Christian Handbook 1999-2000* (Christian Info, 2000) p87

Urbanization and the Church

The growing problem of urbanization must be seen both as a challenge and as an opportunity. Migration to the cities presents the Church with the possibility of reaching more people at once. The rise of new informal settlements makes the planting of new local churches essential. The Church needs to look to the Lord for a clear mandate. Presenting the gospel meets man's greatest need. Helping congregants to face and deal with the realities confronting them makes for a successful, thriving Church.

AIDS and the Church

The onset of AIDS will impact the Church whether we like it or not. The latest estimates show that 14-million South Africans will possibly have died from AIDS within the next decade. If these estimates are correct, most ministers will have to conduct an average of four funerals every week. Many children will be orphaned. The number of orphans in South Africa is growing rapidly. Many of these orphans are HIV positive. There is an increase in the number of babies being abandoned. Children's homes and welfare organizations are already operating at full capacity. What will happen to these children? Who will care for them?

What about teenagers and adults who live with the disease? What about the eternal consequences of dying without the forgiveness of our Savior? Who will reach out to them with the gospel of Jesus Christ? The Church may have been guilty in the apartheid era of standing by and doing nothing, but such action must not be repeated where AIDS is concerned. We dare not wash our hands of the many people who are plagued by AIDS. It is a South African problem – it is our problem!

We must trust the Lord for ways to help. Many local churches have responded to the plight of AIDS. Counseling, AIDS awareness training, foster-parent programs and 'mercy' ministries are making it possible to share the love of Christ and the message of truth. If 14 million people are going to die, then the Church must accept the challenge of ensuring that these people are given the opportunity to respond to the grace of God!

Crime and the Presence of the Church

Crime has plagued South Africa in the last decade. However, a very interesting pattern has emerged which bears testimony to the impact that the presence of the evangelical Church can and must have. At the *2000 Conference on Church Planting* organized by the Church Planting Alliance of South Africa, Superintendent Hall (the district superintendent of the Soweto division of the South African Police Services) made the following observation:

> Although there has been a steady increase in reported crimes throughout the country, including Soweto, ***I have noted a steady decrease in crime levels in areas where the Church is most active***. It brings me to the conclusion that South Africa needs more churches![50] (Italics mine)

Changing Values and the Church

Marjorie Froise continues to point out that the common values that have served to hold society together and provided common loyalty and shared goals and ideals have been lost:

> In African society, the youth have been catapulted into adulthood. Whereas adults used to establish values and norms, they have now lost their power and authority. These changes are not solely the result of upheavals in South Africa, but form part of the new post-modern value system that all South African population groups have bought into. It's 'what's right for me' that establishes values.[51]

There are few arguments to refute the fact that the way many people in South Africa think about truth is changing rapidly. For much of the older generation, truth lies in tradition, and

---

[50] Superintendent Hall – quote – 2000 CPA conference on Church Planting
[51] Marjorie Froise: *The Church in Context South African Christian Handbook, 1999-2000* (Christian Info 2000) p 16

security is found in doing things as they were done in the past. Younger people, however, tend to be more rational in their approach. South Africa is evolving into a society that is fast becoming more consumer-driven - a 'rational-choice' society where cold logic settles the issue. The younger generation is part of a worldwide, post-modern reaction against the life and culture of the normal Western lifestyle. Just as this train of thought surfaced in the 1960's among the 'Hippie' generation in the USA, and in the student revolts in Europe, the youth of South Africa are also becoming increasingly more focused on experience and feeling. This is reflected in the arts and contemporary music.

Professor Hendriks continues:

> Modernistic Western churches are being challenged to reframe themselves in nothing less than a new theological paradigm. In this regard, it is advantageous to be in Africa where realities are sobering, as well as challenging. The rational-intellectual-dogmatic premise of western individualistic theology and reasoning need to be tempered. In Africa, words have very little truth-value. Deeds count. The context of the world in which we live has changed. Our theology, theory and practice of ministry have to be drastically adjusted, or rather, born again! This will happen only from faith communities where reading the Bible and reinterpreting the Christian message under the guidance of the Holy Spirit takes place.[52]

Changing Morals and the Church

Loren Mead notes:

> In the old dispensation, the state, provinces, municipalities and schools were responsible, in partnership with the Church, for a moral code of conduct that was enforced from the top down. Christians did not have to make a choice on certain issues, the unspoken 'rules' dictated. In the new 'human rights' dispensation, people can decide what and how they want to do things. To illustrate the point, issues such as observing the Sabbath, pornography, abortion, gambling, sex and gender issues can be raised. Now Christians need to be morally and ethically fit in order to make their own decisions about many new choices. In this regard, we are not doing very well. The new dispensation forces Christians to adapt or die. The old

---

[52] H.J. Hendriks: The *South African Christian Handbook* (Christian Info, 2000) p90

clerical paradigm where ministers were held in high esteem and where Christianity became a cultural phenomenon is on its way out. [53]

The past decade has seen tremendous change that has eroded the very network upon which society is based. This is particularly true of the African population. Valerie Moller, author of *Finding the Lost Generation*, writes:

> Social cohesion has disappeared. Great waves of social, political and economic upheaval have changed the moral landscape and often destroyed the network of ethical values and norms that have provided social cohesion and control.[54]

What can the church do about it? We can be the salt and light that Jesus calls us to be in our communities! We can become the salt and light in communities that have no local representation of the Church! In years gone by, Sunday schools have played an important role in society. It was (and is) the place where moral values are taught. Marjorie Froise believes the Church has a vital role to play in this regard.

She says:

> Can Sunday School, Children's Church and Holiday Clubs be changed to become something that children in the community love to attend? Can the Church accept the challenge of restoring moral values in the community in which the church is situated?[55]

If the moral state of a nation is a reflection of the strength of the church in that nation, then it needs to be said that the Church in South Africa is, in some regards, very weak! However, an active Church will and must have an impact on society.

---

[53] Loren Mead: *The Once and Future Church* (Alban Press 1997)
[54] Valerie Moller: *Finding the Lost Generation* (The Bulleting, June 1997)
[55] Marjorie Froise: *The Church in Context - South African Christian Handbook, 1999-2000*(Christian Info 1999) p32

Closing Remarks

Even though there is a marked decline in the way many people are perceiving and responding to Christianity in South Africa, it does not signal the death knell! In 1965, Harvey Cox wrote *The Secular City,*[56] followed by a second book entitled *Fire from Heaven.*[57] In his first book, the Anglican Clergyman described how secularism was contributing to the death of the Church in the cities. Thirty years later, however, he was writing about the wonderful revival being experienced from east to west, and north to south! Changing sociological patterns in South Africa will not be the end of the Church! The moral decline and the rise in crime are not insurmountable problems. Generation gaps and changing values will not lead to the Church's demise. Why? Because Jesus said that He would build His Church, and that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it! (Mt. 16:18). But if the Church is going to be a factor in South Africa's changing society, it is going to need to learn to adapt to the demands and needs of what are clearly rapidly changing morays and norms. The Church has to adapt and learn how to communicate from the bottom up, in the style of a servant, with the power of love and an authentic witness. If the Church can accept the challenge of our changing society and share the unchanging biblical truths of Scripture in a relevant and practical way, we too may be writing in years to come about the great waves of revival being experienced all across our land!

The Church in its current state is not perceived as relevant. It would be short-sighted to suggest we are being as relevant as we could be. With Christianity in decline and attendance rates estimated to be as low as 14%, paradigm shifts and sweeping changes is the order of the day. Simply changing existing churches, as vital as this is, will not suffice. Other factors like migration and urbanization make church planting essential. Does South Africa need more churches? Yes, I believe it does!

---

[56] Harvey Cox: *The Secular City* (Macmillan, 1965)
[57] Harvey Cox: *Fire From Heaven: the rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Addison-Wesley, 1995)

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING

ON CHURCH GROWTH

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

While Christianity in South Africa is declining steadily, several denominations are showing clear patterns of growth. Each of these growing denominations have a clear church planting vision and program in place. Evidence from abroad supports the positive impact that church planting has on the growth of a denomination. In this chapter, we will consider how church planting is impacting church growth in South Africa and abroad.

3.1   PATTERNS OF GROWTH AND DECLINE AMONG SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The following table appeared in *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting.* It measures the percentage growth in several denominations represented in South Africa:

DENOMINATIONAL MARKET SHARE TRENDS (%) VS. TOTAL POPULATION

	Cong, Presb. Bapt, Luth	Methodist	Reformed	Catholic	Pentecostal/Chari smatic	Anglican	African Ind. Churches
1911	20.5	21	33	3	0	19.5	0
1921	18	23	31.5	4	0	20	0
1936	14	17	25	6	1	16	18.8
1946	14.5	17.5	25.5	7.5	4	15.5	10.5
1951	20.5	16	24.5	8	2.5	14	18.5
1960	12	14.5	22	9	5	12	19.5
1970	13	14	20.5	11.5	7	10.5	16.5
1980	10.5	11	19	12	7	8	28.5
1991	9	9	15	11.5	5.5	5.5	37
1996	8	10	13	11	9	5.5	36

The Decline Among Mainline Churches

48.5% of South Africans claiming affiliation to a church are members of the mainline churches. However, these numbers are declining rapidly. The most obvious drop is noted in the Methodist Church of South Africa, which has seen a steady decline in congregants and in the number of churches. In 1993/1994, 6,450 Methodist churches existed in South Africa. By 1997, this figure had dropped to 3,399. Currently there are approximately 2,500 Methodist churches. [59]

Commenting on the steady decline among the denominations represented by the South African Council of Churches, Paul Siaki says:

> If we predict the (current) average annual decline rate… (among churches affiliated to the South African Council of Churches)… out to 2005, we will see the figure fall to 8395... (current number of churches is 9100) …on a declining percentage of 7-8% per annum. Of course, the figures could drop rapidly as many other factors influence Christianity in South Africa. In practical terms, if this trend is not turned around soon, then the mainline base of power, influence and money will disappear. As in other patterns around the world, a plateau will be reached where the percentage decline will be less, but by then it will be too late. The South African

[58] *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishers, 2000) p35

[59] South African Council of Churches Statistics 1986-2000 – *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000) p20

Council of Churches (SACC) has played a long and crucial role in South Africa, and their ongoing work is important. But that alone will not change their inevitable end. They will very soon find themselves marginalized amongst the total population and within the Christian market share. Something drastic must be done to stop this trend. ***The mainline churches must evangelize and plant new churches.*** This is the only measure that will work and has been found to work. There are countless examples here in Africa and from around the world. The facts are there for those who wish to see. [60] (Italics mine)

African Independent Churches

The most notable increase among denominations in the last few decades may be attributed to the African Independent Churches. Two reasons for this increase exist:

i)   Churches have been planted in easily accessible areas.

ii)   These churches have adapted to their cultural context.

Jay Gerhart of the Baptist union agrees:

I think God is saying, "Look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest." The missionary task is far from finished in this country. The task of winning the lost is far from over. The presence of evangelical churches is too limited. There's no other name by which we are saved. There is no other message or hope or mission. The time has come for the Church to be the Church. Jesus is still the answer." [61]

Growth in the Baptist Union of South Africa

The Baptist Union of South Africa is another denomination that has shown a very steady pattern of growth in the last decade. Speaking at the *2000 Church Planting Alliance Conference*, Rev Terry Rae shared how embracing a church planting vision had literally changed the face of the Baptist Union. With an existing church membership of 280 in 1991, the Baptist Union adopted a vision to plant 95 more churches in 5 years. They got a church planting movement going and began to plant new churches. By 1996, they had surpassed

---

[60] Paul Siaki: *What is the State of Christianity in South Africa?* (CPA Publishing 2000) p27
[61] Jay Gerhart: *The Baptist Union – Interview with Angelo Scheepers of the Western Province Baptist Association* (CPA Publishing 2000) p86

their goals, with 117 new churches having been started. The latest statistics reveal that there are 423 new churches just ten years later.[62]

Despite this very impressive growth pattern, Rev Rae made a startling remark:

> We have doubled in ten years, but against population growth, we are still going backwards! [63]

The Positive Growth Effects of Church Planting in Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches

Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have also shown clear patterns of growth against the common trend. These increases have been attributed, to a large extent, to the positive growth effects of church planting. The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) is one of the fastest growing denominations in South Africa, with 1,142 new churches having been planted since 1989.[64]

Church Growth in the Apostolic Faith Mission

Dr Isak Burger, president of the AFM believes that church planting has been key. Speaking at the CPA Church Planting Conference, 2000, Dr Burger said:

> The logical conclusion is that there can't be growth without planting, even though God brings the growth.[65]

Dr Burger remarked about a policy the AFM held until the 1980's, that if a church reached 350 members, it would have to divide and plant out into the neighboring community. He noted that in almost every case, within one to two years, both the "mother" church and the new church plant had reached the same size as the original congregation before they divided. In other words, the number of members touched by the 'mother' congregation had

---

literally doubled within one to two years! He did however bring a balance, stating that the new church planted must be planted in the right attitude and spirit, and with the correct purpose and motives in mind.[66]

Growth and Decline in the IFCC Churches

Pastor 'E' must certainly be recognized as an expert in the field of church planting. Leader of *Dawn Africa Ministries*, co-founder of *The Church Planting Alliance of South Africa*, and a man personally responsible for 38 different church plants in South Africa, Pastor Vermeulen recognizes a common trend regarding church planting in the African context. He states:

> Show me a denomination in decline and I will show you a denomination without a church planting vision. Show me a country where the Christian population is stagnant or in decline and I will show you the denominations within it, with no church planting vision.[67]

This is no idle statement. The impacts of Pastor Vermeulen's remarks are clearly illustrated within the very denomination he used to relate to - the International Fellowship of Christian Churches (IFCC), a Charismatic/Pentecostal denominational affiliation. The IFCC had an aggressive and deliberate church planting vision in the 1980's, which saw the denomination nearly double in size between 1985 and 1989. This was reflected in their mission statement: *A Presence in Every Place*.

Before the 1980's, no formal Charismatic networks existed in South Africa. This had an adverse effect in more ways than one. Traditionally, non-denominational churches did not attract the attention of the government unless they did something 'wrong'. Recognizing a need to speak into the life of the nation at a time when the system of Apartheid was having

---

[66] Dr Isak Burger: Ministering at the CPA Church Planting Conference 2000, October 24, 2000
[67] Danie Vermeulen: *The Strategic Value of Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000) p8

a tremendous impact on society at large, Pastor Ed Roebert and other like-minded Charismatic ministers felt the need to form a fellowship that would unite the Charismatic front. Meeting with ministers like Ray Mc Cauley, the Pastor of Rhema Bible Church, in Randburg, South Africa (the largest Charismatic congregation in South Africa, with a membership in excess of 20 000), Tim Salmon, Nicky Van Der Westhuizen and Reinhardt Bonnke, Pastor Roebert presented his vision, and as a result of these meetings, 22 churches came together in 1984, committed to the vision of seeing a united Charismatic denomination in South Africa. The International Fellowship of Christian Churches (IFCC) was born.[68]

The philosophy of the IFCC was three-fold:

      i)   To plant a presence of Christ in every place

      ii)   To work together as a team

      iii)   To build strong relationships with a strong mission emphasis.[69]

This philosophy had a very positive effect on the growth of the IFCC. By the end of 1985, a new church was being added every 14.2 days. Between January and September 1986, this figure had grown to a new church every 4.8 days. Then between August 1986 & November 1986, the figure peaked at a new church every 2.9 days.[70]

By December 1986, the IFCC comprised 216 new churches, with 110,000 adherents.[71] By the end of 1988, IFCC had grown to represent 495 congregations, with over 300,000

[68] Johannes Combrink: *Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa: A Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Church Case Study* (Thesis presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, March, 1990) p134
[69] Johannes Combrink: *Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa A Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Church Case Study* (Thesis presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, March, 1990) p140
[70] Ibid p134
[71] Allen Anderson: *The Prosperity Message in the Eschatology of Some New Charismatic Churches* (Missionalia Vol. 15, No. 2 – 1987) pp.72-86

adherents. Member churches exceeded 600 by 1989. Johannes Combrink gives the explanation for this growth:

> A percentage of this expansion involved existing churches that applied for membership with IFCC. But the large majority of churches added were actually planted as a result of the evangelistic efforts of especially Hatfield and Rhema.[72]

But in 1989, a distinct change in philosophy occurred. Pastor Vermeulen noted how the vision of the IFCC changed from deliberate, aggressive church planting to a strong emphasis on fellowship and relationships – with detrimental effects! As is depicted in the following graph, the rate of increase within this particular denomination began to level out, and by mid 1992, the IFCC was in steady decline. Had current levels of growth continued, IFCC would have reached 1,000 churches sometime in 1994. Instead, 1993 saw the first signs of decline, and 1994 was the first year of steady decline. Pastor Vermeulen believes this is a clear indication both of what church planting does to a denomination, and what a lack of a church planting vision can do. While other factors cannot be excluded, church planting has a definite and deliberate impact on the growth or decline of a denomination.

IFCC: Growth Chart
The fruit of a Vision

Number of churches in the IFCC fold

1989: The year the vision changed from deliberate, aggressive church planting to strong emphasis on fellowship and relationships.

——— Number of member churches

– – – – Number of affiliated senior pastors, leaders

[73]

---

[72] Johannes Combrink: *Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa A Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Church Case Study* (Thesis presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, March, 1990) pp 136-137

[73] Graphic compiled Danie Vermeulen, given to me at an interview with him on November 13, 2000.

There definitely seems to be a clear link in South Africa between denominational growth and the adoption of a church planting vision. But are these results being evidenced in other parts of the world?

3.2 THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The Positive Effects of Church Planting in the Nazarene Church of Canada

The following chart illustrates the effect that church planting has had on the Nazarene Church in Canada:

Effect Of Church Planting on Membership in the Nazarene Church in Canada 1980-1995

- Membership Without Church Plants
- Membership Including New Church Plants

[74]

Observations Relating to Church Planting

Rev Siaki has made the following observation about church planting:

> From research on church growth and decline around the world, the only way to dramatically turn around declining numbers in any denomination is to produce more churches by church planting.[75]

---

[74] Dr Murray Moerman: *Transforming our Nation* as presented in *Transforming South Africa through saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing, 2000) p31
[75] Paul Siaki: *What is the State of Christianity in South Africa* (CPA Publishing, 2000) p32

C. Peter Wagner, a noted author on church planting agrees:

> The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.[76]

Roger Foster reports a startling discovery from a study he completed in which he compared rapidly growing denominations with those in decline. He noted that congregations that have not produced new churches, or are themselves not new churches, are declining at exactly the same rate as the fastest declining denomination. He states:

> The only reason the fastest growing denomination is growing is because it has churches that are producing churches, producing churches, producing churches. That is where the… numerical growth is taking place. Where a denomination has stopped planting churches, it will decline, and it will decline at almost a common regular rate.[77]

The Impact of Church Planting in Peru

Berna Salcedo, a prominent minister from Cali, Colombia, is actively involved in coordinating and mobilizing church planting efforts in South America. He participated as the guest speaker in the October 2000 Church Planting Alliance Conference in Muldersdrift, South Africa. He shared the following statistics about the impact of an active church planting program on the growth of Christianity in Peru between 1989 and 1995. The following table depicts the results:

YEAR	CHURCHES	TOTAL CHRISTIANS
1989	5,574	750,000
1993	9,900	1,879,000
1995	12,915	2, 189,000

---

[76] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p11
[77] Roger T. Foster: *Models of Church Planting* (Ichtus Media Services) p6

NUMBER OF CHURCHES IN PERU 1989-1995

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS IN PERU 1989-1995

[78]

As the number of churches has grown, so the number of Christians has grown exponentially. In 1989, there were an average of 134.55 evangelical Christians per church in Peru. In 1995, that figure had grown to an average of 169.49 Christians per church. Not only had the number of churches increased, but the average attendance of each existing congregation had increased as well!

The Impact of the Presence and Absence of Church Planting in the USA

In *The Pastor's Manual for Effective Ministry*, Win Arn notes the patterns of decline among several denominations in the United States:

> In the years following World War II, thousands of new churches were established. Today, of the approximately 350,000 churches in America, four out of the five are either plateaued or declining.[79]

He continues with a staggering statistic:

> 80-85% of churches in America are on the downside of this growth cycle.[80]

Figures among mainline churches in America seem to support the fact that denominations that do not have a clear church planting vision or program will inevitably experience

---

[78] Berna Salcedo: *Insights into Peru* (CPA Conference South Africa, 23-25 October, 2000)
[79] Win Arn: *The Pastor's Manual for Effective Ministry* (Church Growth, 1988) p41
[80] Ibid. p43

decline. According to the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, in 1965, the United Methodist Church reported approximately 11 million members; in 1996 they reported 8.5 million. In 1965, the Presbyterian Church reported 4 million members, but in 1996, they had dropped to 3 million members. Similarly, the Disciples of Christ reported 2 million members in 1965, dropping to 1 million in 1996. The Episcopal Church reported 3.4 million members in 1965 and only 2.5 million in 1996.[81]

GROWTH PATTERNS OF FOUR DENOMINATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1965-1995

1: United Methodist Church

2. Presbyterian Church

3: Disciples of Christ

4. The Episcopal Church

Here we see the same trend as is being evidenced by some denominations in South Africa. But there are also positive reports of denominations experiencing growth. The common denominator is that they are involved in church planting. C. Peter Wagner agrees:

---

[81] Constant H. Jacquet Jr: *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1988* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) p.261 compared with Kenneth B. Bedell: *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1996*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) pp. 251-52, 255-56.

Without exception, the growing denominations have been those that stress church planting. My own studies indicate that at the present, theologically conservative churches still tend to grow more numerically than theologically liberal churches. For example, the Assemblies of God, the Church of God (Cleveland), and the Christian Missionary and Alliance are experiencing growth. The reason for their growth is the fact that they're planting churches.[82]

Wagner repeats this assertion in his book, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest:*

While some denominations have been declining in the United States, other denominations in the same country through the same period of time have been growing vigorously. Without exception, the growing denominations have been those that stress church planting. The leaders of these denominations know that church planting is a central key to their growth, so not only do they believe it themselves, but they see to it that their pastors and lay leaders also believe it. They go to great pains to communicate the challenge of church planting throughout their constituency. They are successful in keeping church planting high on the agendas of their people across the board.[83]

Lyle Schaller notes that church planting:

...continues to be the most useful and productive component of any denominational church growth strategy. [84]

Kevin W. Mannoia, author of *Church Planting – The Next Generation* notes,

The Dead Sea is dead because it's not flowing into anything. Species die because they don't reproduce. Seeds rot if they are not planted. Churches and districts stagnate if there is no new life. Inherent within a district are the seeds of its own reproduction – its churches.[85]

The Positive Growth of Denominations that Have Embraced the Priority of Church Planting

Has church planting had a positive effect? Yes indeed! Various denominations have placed church planting among their top priorities. Aubrey Malphurs, author of *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* states:

---

[82] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, California: Regal, 1990) p12
[83] Ibid. pp. 12,13
[84] Lyle E. Schaller: *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991) p20
[85] Kevin W. Mannoia: *Church Planting - The Next Generation* (Light and Life Press 1994) p18

The Assemblies of God, which is one of the fastest growing denominations in the United States, has a vision which is to 'plant 5,000 new churches, recruit 20,000 new members, win 5 million people to Christ, and enlist 1 million people to pray regularly for revival – all by the year 2000.' In 1990, they planted 340 new churches – 20 percent more than in 1989 – and recorded just under 320,000 conversions.[86]

The latest figure provided by the Assemblies of God (AOG) website reveals that church plants are still taking place after 35 years, and those planting churches within the AOG are still enjoying success. In an internet article entitled *35 Years of Church Planting 1965-1999*, Paul Drost, Director of the Church Planting department of the AOG (USA), includes recent statistics for church planting efforts. In 1999, 315 new AOG churches had been planted in the United States.[87] After thirty-five years of successful church planting, the AOG still believes that church planting is vital. The following reasons are given on their web site:

- It is biblical.
- It is the best evangelistic method under heaven.
- America needs God and needs churches filled with the power, presence and people of God.
- People reproduce people, Christians reproduce Christians, and churches should reproduce churches.
- It is easier to have babies than to raise the dead.[88]

The Explosive Growth of the Church in the Philippines

The Philippine church has seen tremendous growth because of the positive effects of church planting. Jim Montgomery, founder of DAWN ministries, an acronym for *Discipling a Whole Nation*, played a major role in developing a strategy in the Philippines in the early 1970's that changed the nation forever. In 1974, about 75 mission leaders committed

---

[86] Aubrey Malphurs: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Baker Book House Co) p41
[87] Paul Drost: *35 Years of Church Planting: 1965-1999* (AOG Online USA – http://ag.org/dhmchurchplanting/director_messages.cfm)
[88] Paul Drost: *Assemblies of God Church planting Welcome* (http://ag.org/dhm/churchplanting/cp_index.cfm)

themselves to seeing a church in each baroo (neighborhood) by the year 2000. For the Philippines, it would mean growing from 5,000 to 50,000 churches in 26 years. This seemed like an almost insurmountable task. But in February 2001, they will celebrate the birth of the 50 000th church![89]

In an article written by DAWN in 1995, it was reported that churches in England are beginning to favor church planting as a model. Chris Foster, director of Challenge 2000, the English-based DAWN project, reports that the official position of many English denominations and churches regarding church planting has changed dramatically in the last few years. In 1992, it was mainly the Salvation Army and the Assemblies of God that showed a deliberate interest in church planting. But now, according to Fortser, every large protestant denomination has incorporated church planting into its strategy, and in some cases, has set a specific target.[90]

Church Growth Patterns in Australia

The AOG in Australia can attribute much of its growth to the fact that a new church is being planted every 6 days.[91]

3.3 ESTABLISHED CHURCHES VS. NEW CHURCH PLANTS

Wouldn't it be Easier to Make Established Churches Relevant Rather than Plant New Ones?

This is an interesting question. If part of the problem is the fact that existing churches are seen as outdated or out of touch, why not simply work on making established churches more relevant? Wouldn't this be a lot easier than planting new ones? Lyle Schaller believes

---

[89] Danie Vermeulen: *The Strategic Value of Saturation Church Planting* (CPA publishing 2000) p8
[90] DAWN Fridayfax 1995 No.35 (Http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/1995/dawn9535.html)
[91] Dr. David Carteledge: *A.O.G. in Australia: Report to the National Conference 1993*

that the key to reaching the next generation lies not in reforming existing churches, but in church planting. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist New York Fellowship in Atlanta, Schaller stated:

> If you are interested in reaching new people, by far the most effective way to do this is through church planting…. Some think we need to make all our existing congregations vital before starting new churches. What's wrong with that is nobody knows how to do it… and nobody's young enough to live long enough to do it.[92]

Paul Drost observes:

> Inevitably, when church planting is discussed, the subject of declining and plateaued churches surfaces. Coming into this position, several of my colleagues in the church planting and consulting fields informed me this would happen. They also told me that a costly and major mistake of many church organizations has been to put their resources into the revitalization of churches to the neglect of church planting. This has had disastrous results.[93]

3.4 FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF CHURCH PLANTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Historically, the Church in South Africa has been most successful in its evangelistic task when it was actively planting new churches. A study conducted by Johann Combrink entitled *The Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa among the Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Churches*, reveals that congregations aggressively planting new churches have shown the fastest growth in South Africa. Those training an abundance of new leaders also experienced growth.[94] This is no new phenomenon: It is mirrored not only in the church planting activities of the past couple of decades, but in the church planting efforts of the last four centuries. We will touch on this point in greater detail when we look at the history of church planting in South Africa.

---

[92] "Schaller says SBC Must Decide About New Church Starts," (The Biblical recorder, June 15, 1991) p8
[93] Paul Drost: *35 Years of Church Planting: 1965-1999* (AOG Online USA – http://ag.org/dhmchurchplanting/director_messages.cfm)
[94] Johannes Combrink: *Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa: A Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Church Case Study* (Thesis presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, March, 1990) pii

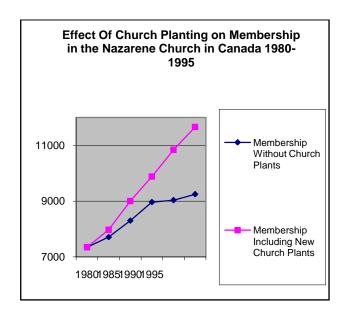**Closing Remarks**

From evidence both in South Africa and in the countries we have considered in this section, it is clear that church planting is a vital contributing factor to the success and growth of Christianity in a nation. It is logical that if our predecessors in the faith did not believe in church planting, there would be no Church in South Africa today! The time for church planting has come again! It needs to be said that a lack, or better still, a *loss* of church planting vision has clearly been to the detriment of society at large.

For South Africa these are, to coin a phrase, *the best of times and the worst of times*. South Africa needs a future. South Africa needs the gospel! South Africa needs more churches! But quantity alone is not the answer. We are a culturally diverse people. We need evangelical churches that are Christ-centered, commission-oriented, culturally relevant, compassionate expressions of our Savior's heart, hope and love.

CHAPTER 4:   THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CHURCH PLANTING

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Although the positive results of church planting are clearly evident, is there any legitimate biblical basis for church planting? What evidence do we have from Scripture that church planting is an important and biblical model? Aubrey Malphurs believes that birthing new churches is biblical. He believes the church's mission and vision is expressed in the Great Commission. It consists of three elements: the pursuit of, the evangelization of and the

discipling of lost people. Thus the Great Commission encompasses all that the Church is about.[95]

4.1 BIBLICAL EXAMPLES AND THE SUBSEQUENT POST-MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF CHURCH PLANTING

One of the key motivating factors for church planting lies in a clear understanding of its biblical role. And indeed, almost all texts and commentaries on Acts underscore the missionary flavor of the book. Malphurs points out that a careful study of the book of Acts indicates that the early Church implemented the Great Commission through the planting of new churches.[96]

Church Planting and Paul's Missionary Journeys

The first missionary trip is recorded in Acts 13:1-14:28. During this missionary journey, local churches were established in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. The second missionary journey, recorded in Acts 15:36-18:22, reveals that church plants took place in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth. By now, the Church had grown beyond Asia Minor into modern-day Greece. Acts 19:21-28:31 further describes the events that led to the planting of churches in Rome and beyond. In Romans 15:40, Paul makes reference to the geographical extent of his life's ministry, ranging from Jerusalem to Illyricum. His passion to preach the gospel where Christ was not known is further evidenced in Romans 15:20:

> It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.[97]

---

[95] Aubrey Malphurs: *Vision America* (Baker Books 1994) p125
[96] Ibid p126
[97] Romans 15:20 - *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

Church planting was unmistakably part of the early Church ethos. Malphurs further alludes to Paul as a pioneer planter in the truest sense by showing his desire to push through what was virgin territory in terms of preaching the gospel in order to plant new churches and reach new people for Christ:

> Paul's point is that his passion is for starting churches rather than building up that which another started… His missionary goal was entrepreneurial – to plant new churches and then turn them over to another who would build them up.[98]

The New Testament Practice of Church Planting

In an article entitled, *Church Planting and the Great Commission*, S.D. Ponraj expresses a view shared by many Christian scholars regarding the centrality of church planting to the Great Commission:

> The principles of church planting are based on the Lord's Great Commission as we read in Matt. 28:19, 20… What did Jesus mean when He commissioned the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations?
>
> There are four important words found in the Great Commission. They are "go," "make disciples," "baptize" and "teach". It is generally assumed that the word "go" is an imperative verb and constitutes the last command of Christ. This is not correct. In the original Greek language, "to make disciples" is the central imperative or action verb and not the word "go". All the other words are helping verbs. The word "go" is a participle which should be translated as "having gone" or "as you go"' and, therefore, rather than a command, it is the method by which disciples are to be made.
>
> In the Greek, only one word is used for "make disciples" and it should be translated "disciple" with reference to the nations. The act of making disciples was not confined to Israel or to Jerusalem, but was to extend to "all nations - i.e. - all people groups."
>
> The Great Commission commands believers to bring men and women to Christ and to make them responsible and reproducing members of the local church. This is how to "make disciples of all nations." The evangelistic task is incomplete unless it relates new believers to the local worship group. The church-planting ministry reflects the believers' faithfulness and obedience to the Great Commission of their Lord.[99]

---

[98] Aubrey Malphurs: *Vision America* (Baker Books 1994) p127
[99] http://www.abcog.org/plant.html

Murray continues:

> So, whereas the New Testament basis for church planting is less extensive
> than is often supposed, every strand of New Testament teaching, it seems,
> can be mined for perspectives on church planting. … Church planting may
> be peripheral theologically by comparison with a theme like the Kingdom
> of God, but it is the primary context within which the New Testament was
> written, and by reference to which, it should be understood. Church
> planters can draw on the resources of the entire New Testament.[100]

The early Church was a church planting Church! Almost 30 years after Pentecost, Paul

wrote to the believers in Rome about the tremendous growth the Church had experienced:

> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is
> proclaimed throughout the whole world.[101]

He gave the same report to the Church at Colossae:

> All over the world the gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has
> been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's
> grace in all its truth.[102]

The Role of Church Planting in the Life of the Church

Pastor 'E', founder and leader of DAWN Africa Ministries believes that church planting is a

non-negotiable part of the biblical pattern of the life of the Church. He says:

> Once we have somewhat of an understanding of Father's heart for a lost
> world, we will start to appreciate His strategy… Father's vision is to see
> all men saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth… It is true then
> that church planting should be a natural result of church life, just as
> reproduction is a natural result of the marriage relationship.[103]

Apart from his contributions as an author, C. Peter Wagner has also served as a lecturer at

Fuller Theological Seminary in the United States, where he taught on church growth for

several years. During this time, he came to the conclusion that planting churches is the most

---

[100] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p79
[101] Romans 1:8 - The Holy Bible: *New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)
[102] Colossians 1:6 - The Holy Bible*: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)
[103] Danie Vermeulen: *A Biblical Basis for Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000) p6

effective method of evangelism.[104] He is convinced that church planting is the biblical pattern that the modern-day church should emulate:

> Church planting is the New Testament way of extending the gospel. Trace the expansion of the Church through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth, and you will see that church planters led the way. This is a Kingdom activity, strongly endorsed by God our King. Collectively, as a community of the Kingdom, we can scarcely feel that we are obeying God if we fail to plant churches and plant them aggressively.[105]

The Expansion of Christianity and the Planting of New Churches in the Book of Acts

It needs to be said that the book of Acts is more than a mere history of early church planting activities - it addresses the early life of the Church by presenting some of the theological debates and doctrinal questions which confronted the early church, like the incorporation of the Gentiles into what had been up to then, a 'Jewish' community. But Luke clearly portrays the link between the expansion of Christianity and the planting of new churches. Through the church planting efforts of men like Barnabas, and more specifically, like Paul, many churches were reproduced.

After the Holy Spirit gave instruction to the prophets and teachers gathered at Antioch (Acts 13:1,2), Paul and Barnabas were sent out on what became known as the First Missionary Journey. They sailed from Seleucia to Cyprus, journeyed to Paphos, sailed to Perga, where they continued their journey to Iconium, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia and Attalia before returning again to Antioch. During this time, Paul and Barnabas preached mainly in the synagogues, winning a large number of disciples to the Lord. But their strategy was not simply to preach the gospel and win converts. The gospel was never considered by them to be a rational message that changed a person's worldview, or an experience that resulted in a decision to affirm Christ. It is clear that the Apostle Paul never considered his work complete simply when new converts were won to the Lord. Paul's method was not only to

---

[104] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, California: Regal, 1990) p16
[105]Ibid. p 19

preach the gospel, but also to establish churches. He made it his business to appoint elders in the places where he had seen a harvest (Acts 14:23). The elders needed spiritual and practical advice (hence the epistles to Timothy and Titus). Church life had to be addressed as well. Doctrinal foundations had to be laid for new believers. Liturgy had to be introduced. Troublemakers and false teachers had to be confronted and corrected. This all took place in the context of the local church.

Church Planting Practices as Evidenced in Paul's Epistles

Many of Paul's epistles bare testimony to the existence of organized local churches. Murray believes that the New Testament should be read from this premise. He believes the New Testament should be read as a mission document, written primarily to leaders and members of first-generation churches, and addressing issues arising within the church planting context. Theological, ethical and pastoral teaching is provided in relation to these pressing concerns, not in order to provide a systematic textbook of theology or ethics. [106]

David Bosch echoes Murray's sentiments. He concludes that the New Testament was written in the context of an 'emergency situation' at a time when the Church, because of its missionary encounter with the world, was forced to theologize.[107]

Paul's Labors Resulted in New Churches

It would also be fair to say that the ultimate outcome of Paul's labors were new churches. Indeed, it could be said that the essence of Paul's ministry was the Church! Almost everywhere he went, Paul left a church behind. He never said it, but it is clear that he assumed it to be the biblical pattern. He writes to Timothy:

> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.[108]

---

[106] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p79
[107] David Bosch: *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991)
[108] 2 Timothy 2:2 – *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

This is precisely what happened. Epaphras started the church in Colossae (Colossians 1:7). Someone else was responsible for planting the church in Laodicea (Colossians 2:1). Church planting was undeniably and unmistakably part of the ethos of the early Church.

Herbert Kane identifies nine principles that Paul employed in his apostolic ministry:

1. Paul maintained close contact with his home church. The church at Antioch commissioned and sent him out, and after their journey, they returned to Antioch to report on their work (Acts 14:26-28).

2. Paul confined his work primarily to four Roman provinces (Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia). He concentrated on an area small enough for him to provide some supervision and support for the new churches.

3. Paul concentrated on the large cities. He established "seedbed" or "mother churches" from which the gospel could be spread to the surrounding provinces.

4. Paul usually began his work in the local synagogue if one existed. Here he could share the gospel with Jews, proselytes and God fearers who were already looking for Messiah (Acts 13:14-15).

5. He preferred to preach to responsive people. He was determined to be both fruitful and faithful. Therefore he went where he could achieve good results. He did not waste his time and efforts on unresponsive areas (Acts 18:6).

6. Paul baptized converts when they made their profession of faith (Acts 8:12, 36-38, 9:18, 16:33).

7. Paul remained in one place long enough to establish a church. He did not plant or sow seeds and leave it unattended.

8. He made good use of his fellow workers by employing a team ministry. Barnabas, Mark, Silas, Timothy and Luke accompanied Paul on different missionary journeys. This not only made the work more fruitful, but it enabled Paul to train younger workers.

9. Paul became all things to all people. He would not compromise or change his message or doctrine, but he was flexible. He tried in every way to adapt to the culture in which he was working (1 Cor 9:19-23).[109]

The Apostolic Foundation for Church Planting

Preston Graham Jr. wrote an article describing church planting as an essential element of the Christian mission. In the chapter entitled *The Church Question,* Graham makes it clear that if the church is the biblical pattern birthed by God, and if this view is supported by the works of the apostles, then by implication, church planting is the means and the end of the Great Commission just as church multiplication is the result.[110]

He points out that many people today identify the role of the evangelist primarily with that of itinerant preaching, or to a lesser extent, with one-on-one evangelism. As such, the evangelist is identified either as a traveling orator of the gospel, or a good friend who happens to be a Christian. In these instances, the Great Commission is not essentially about church planting, but rather about personal evangelism and the publication of a message. Graham views this as a theology without a church.[111]

---

[109] J H Kane: *Christian Missions in a Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids 1976) p73-85
[110] Preston Graham Jr.: *Church Planting as an Essential Element of Christian Mission* (http://www.yale.edu/cpc/studycenter/pamphlets/planting.html) p1
[111] Ibid, p1, 2

It is clear from Scripture that the process of evangelism involved more than merely preaching a gospel message. Believers were to be organized into established local churches or groups. The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ led to the planting of a local church!

Graham continues:

> What these observations indicate is a biblical vision for church planting, established for the post-apostolic age by the apostles and written into the apostolic foundation itself…Perhaps, to the modern reader, the distinction is subtle. But a study of the historical narratives in Acts as noted in the above scenario indicates that just as we see the preaching ministry of pastors-teachers anticipated by the apostle's preaching, so too we see the church planting role of the evangelist anticipated by the apostle's church planting. There was an apostolic succession of church planting![112]

Pastor 'E' believes a conclusion can be drawn that both Jerusalem and Antioch were "mother" churches (churches giving birth to churches). He also believes that one of Jesus' first sermons was to announce the new Kingdom (Mt 3:2). He said He would build His church, and the gates of Hades would not stand against it. We can therefore conclude that this new Kingdom is made up of churches, that He will subdue the Kingdom of darkness, penetrate it and rescue those in bondage through His Church (Col 1:18; Eph 3:10-11; Rom 5:17).

Jon Haley says that, for Paul, faithfulness to the Great Commission meant more than preaching evangelistic messages here and there. It meant completing a sequence of activities that would result in mature churches. Paul understood that the Lord's command to 'make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19) required planting churches.[113]

---

[112] Preston Graham Jr.: *Church Planting as an Essential Element of Christian Mission* (http://www.yale.edu/cpc/studycenter/pamphlets/planting.html) p2,3
[113] As quoted by Danie Vermeulen: *A Biblical Basis for Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000) p7

Church Planting and the Great Commission

James H. Feeney, author of *The Team Method of Church Planting*, also believes that church planting is vital to the effective fulfillment of the Great Commission:

> Church planting is inseparable from the Great Commission and from Christ's mandate in Acts 1:8 to go forth with the gospel to our home town, to our nation and ultimately to all the world. This is the record of the book of Acts: believers go forth with the word of reconciliation; souls are saved; new churches are planted; and the multiplication of both converts and churches goes forward.[114]

4.2 EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCES OF CHURCH PLANTING DURING THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES A.D.

Historical Accounts of Church Planting in the First and Second Centuries A.D.

Early historians recorded the many church planting activates of the early church, and indicated that these activates continued well into the second century. Reddin recounts the observations of Justyn Martyr (A.D. 100-165) and Tertullian (A.D. 160-230):

> There is not a single race of human beings, barbarians, Greeks or whatever name you please to call them, nomads or vagrants or herdsmen living in tents, where prayers in the name of Jesus the crucified are not offered up.[115]

> We (Christians) are but of yesterday. Yet we have filled all the places you frequent: cities, lodging houses, villages, townships, markets, the camp itself, the tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate, and the forum. All we have left you is your temples. Behold, every corner of the universe has experienced the gospel, and the whole ends and bounds of the world are occupied with it.[116]

---

[114] James H. Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p18
[115] Opal Reddin: *Planting Churches that Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers 1990) p31
[116] Ibid, p32

4.3 OTHER EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCES SUPPORTING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING

In 422 A.D. a man called Patrick had a vision for Ireland. In less than three decades, he had baptized more than 100,000 converts and had planted scores of churches. He became known as the man who found Ireland all heathen and left it all Christian.[117]

History remembers John Wesley and George Whitfield as great men of God. Although Whitfield was reputed to have been the greater orator, drawing larger crowds to his meetings, Wesley is by far the most remembered simply because he used a strategy for church planting that gave birth to the Methodist movement.

William Booth and the Salvation Army became a powerful force because of church planting. In fact, most major evangelical denominations we have today can trace their beginnings to a revival that manifested itself through church planting.[118]

In 1910, a man called John G. Lake arrived in South Africa. Five years later, he had helped to plant more than 625 churches.[119] The Apostolic Faith Mission movement was birthed as a result.

Closing Remarks

The Biblical basis for church planting is clearly portrayed not only through the Great Commission, but also through the practices of the early Church. Believers understood the role of church planting to be an essential ingredient in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The extra-biblical accounts of the emphasis given to church planting during the first and second centuries A.D. serve to further substantiate this belief.

---

[117] *The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church s.v. "Patrick"* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982 - published by Online Bible Foundation 1999)
[118] John Juliano: *Church Planting Manual* (http//www. Christian-faith.com)
[119] John G. Lake: *The Adventures of God* (Harrison House Inc. 1981) p130

The practice of church planting is a clear biblical pattern that must be passed from generation to generation as surely and as faithfully as the message we preach. Until every people-group has been reached; until every sinner has heard the wonderful message of Christ's redeeming work, then the significance and centrality of the Great Commission and (by emphasis) church planting in the life of the Church is no less important today than it was in the days of the Early Church.

CHAPTER 5: ADVANTAGES OF AND OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH PLANTING

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Although we have already established a clear need for church planting, it is essential that we consider the advantages of and objections to church planting before drawing a conclusion. We will do so now.

5.1 THE ADVANTAGES OF CHURCH PLANTING

Kevin Mannoia believes that church planting is not only a fulfillment of the Great Commission, but fundamental to the well being of the church:

> Without them (church plants) we become self-serving, self-perpetuating, self-centered flat liners. If there is to be life, there must be reproduction – of disciples and of churches. It keeps us growing, it keeps us effective, and it keeps us on mission.[120]

Apart from arguing that church planting is a biblical mandate, and therefore not optional, there are several reasons why church planting is advantageous:

New Churches Grow Faster Than Older Ones

Why do new churches grow faster than more established ones? Pastor 'E' believes it is because evangelism is often the main activity:

> They break into new households of relatives and friends and if there is a building, something new is more noticeable. Then keep in mind that it is easier to give birth than to raise the dead.[121]

Lyle Schaller also believes that new churches grow faster than older, more established ones.

He says:

> Perhaps the simplest explanation of this pattern is that new congregations are organized around evangelism and reaching people not actively involved in the life of any worshipping community. By contrast, powerful

---

[120] Kevin W. Mannoia: *Church Planting – The Next Generation* (Light and Life Press 1994) p18
[121] Danie Vermeulen: *The Strategic Value of Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000) p8

internal institutional pressures tend to encourage long-established churches to allocate most of their resources to the care of members.[122]

C. Peter Wagner agrees:

> Built into new churches is the potential for growth that older churches no longer have. This does not mean that older churches cannot grow. They often do. Nor does it mean that all new churches grow. Frequently, they do not. But across the board, growth is more likely with less effort in newer churches.[123]

According to Wagner, Phil Jones, a researcher for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, reports that:

> If baptism rates per 100 members are used as a measure of efficiency for a church, then young churches are more efficient than old(er) churches. The older a church gets, the less efficient it is in baptizing new converts.[124]

After conducting a similar study, Win Arn arrived at the same conclusion. He compared churches started between 1972 and 1981 with those started prior to 1971. He looked at membership sizes, and tried to determine the percentage growth of all of these churches from 1981 to 1986. Aubrey Malphurs notes:

> The result was that churches of all sizes that were started between 1972 and 1981 grew at a rate of 60 percent to 80 percent. Those started prior to 1971 grew at a rate of 20 percent to 60 percent, with the older and larger churches coming closer to the 20 percent figure. Certainly older churches shouldn't become discouraged by these figures. Instead, they should find in them a challenge to renewal and the planting of daughter churches.[125]

---

[122] Lyle Schaller: *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Abington Press, 1991) p22
[123] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p32
[124] Phil Jones: *An Examination of the Statistical Growth of Southern Baptist Convention "Understanding Growth and Decline 1950-1978* (The Pilgrim Press, 1979), p170
[125] Aubrey Malphurs: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Baker Book House Co. 1998) p44

In an article entitled, *Church Planting and Evangelism*, John Bowen writes:

> What has church planting to do with evangelism? In the Episcopal Church in the USA, statistics suggest that 80% of new Christians in the denomination are in church plants, compared with only 20% in established congregations – all the more remarkable since there are far more established churches in the USA than there are church plants![126]

A study conducted by Fuller Theological Seminary found that newly established churches tend to be more effective in evangelism than established ones. In a church that is between 1 and 3 years old, it takes **3 people on average** to evangelize one person. In a church that is between 4 and 7 years old, the average figure rises to **7 people** to lead one person to the Lord. But in a church that is ten years and older, this figure rises to a staggering **85 to 1 -** one person is won to the Lord for every eighty-five people in membership! This is depicted in the following graph:

[127]

---

[126] John Bowen: *Church Planting and Evangelism* (Good Idea! A Resource for Evangelism and Congregational development Vol. 7, no. 3, Autumn 2000)
[127] Division of Home Missions: Fuller Theological study in *American Horizon* (Vol. 8, No.4) p13

Dr Ebbie Smith presents some convincing proof to support the belief that newer, smaller churches evangelize more effectively than older, larger churches:

> Larger churches have some advantages. Smaller churches also have advantages, not the least of these being evangelistic effectiveness. Philip Baron Jones points out that the Southern Baptist congregations less than twelve years old and less than fifty members reported 11.4 baptisms per hundred resident members. Churches with over three thousand members and forty-one or more years of existence reported 3.5 baptisms per hundred resident members.[128]

THE EFFECTS OF AGE AND SIZE OF CHURCH ON EVANGELISM

Number of Baptisms per 100 Members

1 = Churches 12 years or younger with less than fifty members. 2 = Churches 41 years or younger with 3000+ members.

David A. White has planted churches and trained church planters and planting coaches. He has lived in the Philippines since 1985, serving with Philippine Challenge, and has experienced first hand the tremendous effect church planting has had on the spread of Christianity in the Philippines.

In his book entitled *Your Church Can Multiply*, David shares about the relationship between church planting and effective evangelism. He firmly believes that one of the reasons church planting is so effective as an evangelistic tool is the fact that new churches lead far more

---

[128] Philip Barron Jones: *An Examination of the Statistical Growth of the Southern Baptist Convention – as quoted by Ebbie Smith, Balanced Church Growth* (Nashville, 1984) p34

people to Christ than older ones because evangelism is the main activity. Quoting statistics released by CAMACOP (Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of the Philippines), David clearly illustrates that new churches grow faster than older ones. CAMACOP began to emphasize church planting between 1975-1980. The number of churches grew from 513 to 931. During the same period, the total membership skyrocketed from 26,000 to 58,000! This represented a 123% increase in membership over a 5-year period!

But then CAMACOP changed their emphasis. From 1980 to 1985 local evangelism was emphasized rather than church planting. Members were carefully trained to use the best evangelistic tools available. The strategy was to incorporate those who responded to the gospel into existing churches, in order to help these churches to grow. It was still very effective. Many people received Christ and were incorporated into local churches. During this 5-year period, membership increased by 41% from 58,000 to 82,000. However, even though this growth rate was still very high, it fell far short of the figures reported for the previous period. Church planting had resulted in three times the growth in total membership![129]

GROWTH IN CAMACOP, 1975-1985

Ministry Emphasis	1975 – 1980 Church Planting	1980 - 1985 Expansion Growth
Total Increase %	81% increase	42% increase
Number of Members	26 000 to 58 000	58 000 to 82 000
Total Growth	32 000	24 000
Growth %	**123% increase**	**41% increase**

---

[129] David A. White: *Your Church Can Multiply* (Philippine Challenge, Inc. 2000) pp 5,8,9

Church Planting Growth

Expansion Growth

Feeney reports on another case study conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana, which further substantiates both the practicality and effectiveness of new church planting as a method for church growth. Mc Gavran and Arn summarize the findings:

> At the turn of the century Indianapolis had four big well-to-do Christian churches. They appointed a city missionary who planted daughter churches – small, struggling, somewhat disreputable congregations – all over Indianapolis. They met in schools, barns, homes and storefronts. For a number of years, these churches remained rather poor illustrations of what a church can be; yet today (1977) Indianapolis has fifty-seven large Christian churches. All of them own fine properties. All are reputable congregations.[130]

---

[130] James H Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) pp 14,15

Feeney continues:

> New churches have a number of advantages evangelistically over older
> congregations. They still have a freshness, a vitality, a sense of
> excitement, purpose and vision that can be lacking in more established
> churches. The people tend to be more enthusiastic and committed in a
> newer, smaller church. They feel more needed, more involved. They
> cannot hide as easily. Relationships among the saints tend to be personal
> and active. The environment is conducive to personal growth and is
> likewise a stimulus to bring out one's ministry gifts. The very fact of the
> assembly's smallness and newness serves continually to accentuate the
> need for aggressive evangelism by the members.[131]

William Tinsley, author of *Upon This Rock: Dimensions of Church Planting*, agrees:

> New churches… are much more likely to reach non-Christians and
> assimilate them into the life of the church. While they have fewer
> programs to offer, these new churches reach people with the
> gospel, challenging men and women to seek a vision for the future
> and offering them an opportunity for sacrifice… New churches
> offer open networks that can rapidly assimilate new members into
> the life of the church, to offer opportunities for service, leadership,
> and friendship. A new congregation retains a higher percentage of
> new members than does the more established congregation.[132]

In his book *Ten New Churches*, Roger Forster provides an informative documentary on the
founding and growth of 10 new local churches in England. Writing in 1986 about a 'rising
tide of spirituality' in England, he noted that many of the country's older churches did not
provide the teaching so vital to these new converts. As a result, he strongly encourages
church growth in Great Britain through the planting of new churches, and observes that the
spawning of new churches is one of the fastest ways of evangelization. He shares that there
is a growing perception that church planting is essential to the re-evangelization of
Britain.[133]

---

[131] James H Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p15
[132] William C. Tinsley: *Upon This Rock - Dimensions of Church Planting* (Home Mission Board of the
Southern Baptist Convention, 1985) pp 45,47
[133] Roger Forster: *Ten New Churches* (The Chaucer Press, 1986) pp 9-11

New Churches Bring New Vision

Just as a new baby creates great excitement in a household, so new churches bring a new excitement and vision to a community. In 1997, I was called to pastor at a small congregation in Springs, South Africa, called *New Life in Christ Fellowship*. Although the congregation consisted of only 50 people, and although it wasn't a new church plant, it was the first time a full-time minister had been appointed to the fellowship, and the oversight was happy to proceed with the vision the Lord had laid on my heart.

By the end of 1999, just two and a half years later, the congregation had grown to 300 members. A new auditorium capable of seating 600 people had been constructed, and several new and vibrant ministries had been established, including a Bible College, a home for children with HIV/AIDS, a music ministry that reaches over 1900 missionaries in 30 different countries, an outreach ministry to a small community in a local neighboring town (that sees close to forty people attending regularly), and many other ministry opportunities for people to become involved in a lay capacity, including hospital ministry, cell groups and youth ministry. As a result, two new ministers have been called to the church. **<u>I can take no credit for this growth!</u>** I must emphasize that it has been the Lord's doing! But it is a wonderful example of what new vision can do to a community. New churches bring new vision. New vision brings growth!

Church Planting Develops New Leadership

C. Peter Wagner says:

> Many studies have confirmed the fact that the most important institutional variable for the growth and expansion of the church is local leadership… For the most part existing churches have placed a ceiling on both clergy and lay leadership, and as a result, upward mobility of new people into a position of ministry is difficult. But new churches open wide the doors of

leadership and ministry challenges and the entire body of Christ subsequently benefits.[134]

James Allen believes that planting new churches creates new opportunities for ministry:

> Many established congregations have a lack of room for more leaders. Although most pastors struggle with finding adequate leadership to minister to their local congregations, there are often many people who feel their ministry gifts are not needed in their church. Planting new churches spurs opportunities of ministry to people who want to be better used of the Lord in ministering. How often do we witness churches with several people called to preach sitting quietly on the pews of established churches, because they have not been given opportunity to use their gift?[135]

Leaders Gain Credibility Faster in New Churches

C. Wayne Zunkel, author of *Growing the Small Church,* believes that most pastors taking up a position in an established church proceed according to a pattern. They begin as chaplains, progress to pastors and end up as leaders.[136] For the first three years, many pastors proceed as chaplains, preaching and performing pastoral care without being allowed to exercise any significant leadership. As they begin to build credibility and to win trust, people become more likely to let them lead. However, planting-pastors have an advantage in that they often become leaders without having to go through the first two stages. They gain credibility upfront, which means that a new plant is more likely to accomplish its vision, and to accomplish it far more quickly than an established congregation.

Church Planting Stimulates Existing Churches

Although some ministers may be reluctant to have a new church start in the community where they are serving, it has been found that in most communities, a new church tends to raise the religious climate of the community in general, and also provides opportunity for joint ministry between churches. Furthermore, it spurs existing congregations on to a deeper

---

[134] C. Peter Wagner*: Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p20
[135] James P. Allen: *Church Planting Manual* (Church Planting Ministries, 1998) p4
[136] C. Wayne Zunkel: *Growing the Small Church* (Elgin 1982) p48

involvement themselves. James P. Allen, director of *Church Planting Ministries* in Lafayette, Louisiana, notes that:

> One fallacy that Satan would instill in the minds of established churches is that a new church starting in their area will hurt their attendance and income. Fear is one of the first tactics the enemy will use against Christians to keep us from doing what God wants us to do. Losing church members to new congregations is a common fear expressed, but one that should quickly be dispelled.
>
> No church is going to be effective in reaching the entire community. Just as a radio station will not reach all people and must target a particular group to gain an audience, churches will always be more effective reaching one target group. The exciting thing about starting new churches is that they are often able to reach people that have been unreached by all other existing efforts of established churches.[137]

Allen dispelled this fear at a retreat held in Monroe, Louisiana where he shared about Dan Betzer, a pastor in Fort Myers, Florida. With a burden to see an Assemblies of God church planted across the river from Fort Myers, Dan began to ask the Lord to send a pastor with a vision for church planting who would be able to pastor the new church plant. After praying for a few months, a young man walked into his office, stating that the Lord had called him to plant a church across the river. Pastor Betzer placed him on staff, allowing the people of the church an opportunity to get to know and trust him. Allen relates what happened:

> On his last day with them, Dan allowed him to preach the morning service. The planned altar call was for everyone who was being led of the Lord to become a part of the new church to rise from their seat and walk out the door with the new pastor. Dan had thought that maybe 35 people would become a part of the new church, but to his amazement, 135 people followed the new pastor out of the building. Half of the choir left, one deacon left and many other tithers. As they were walking out, Dan said he was calculating the tithes that were leaving and realized that $5,000 a week was walking out the door. He was devastated and walked around the rest of the day in shock.
>
> All fear left him by the next Sunday. He looked around the church and it seemed just as full as the week before, the choir was full again and within a couple of months the income was back to where they were before the

---

[137] James P. Allen: *Church Planting Manual* (Church Planting Ministries 1998) p4

new church started. Dan went on to explain how God will bless those churches that will follow His leading.[138]

Church Planting is Cost-effective

Africa is noted for the many large evangelistic crusades headed by evangelists like Reinhardt Bonke (Christ for all Nations) and Peter Pretorius *(*Jesus Alive Ministries). These crusades are effective in reaching the lost for Christ. But one of the most cost-effective ways of evangelizing any given community is to plant a church. Church planters are often bi-vocational, holding a full time job while establishing the church.

New Churches Provide More Options For the Un-churched

Any given community or culture will be made up of a number of smaller communities or sub-cultures. These sub-cultures, by sheer virtue of their cultural differences, will be prone to different styles of liturgy. South Africa, as has already been mentioned, is a very diverse nation. One of the greatest hindrances to the advancement of Christianity in the 1900's was the unwillingness of missionaries to move away from a western-style liturgy to a more African approach. Although their efforts were very sincere, many Africans misinterpreted their message, and understood that to be a Christian, one had to become 'westernized'. Now the Bible is clear that when a cultural practice or belief contradicts the Scriptures, the culture of the convert needs to be adapted. But God, in His infinite, creative wisdom, has allowed for diverse expressions of His Church. Robert E. Logan agrees:

> The harvest is also diverse. A motto for many urban centers across North America could be: Walk our streets and tour the world. In the United States, daily newspapers are printed in more than 45 languages. Over 200 groups of foreign origin live here. One church cannot reach everyone. Rick Warren says, "It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people." This is true when people speak a different language. But even when the same language is spoken, there are incredible differences… New churches can be started to reach every segment of society. The diversity of

---

[138] Ibid, p4

harvest requires a diversity of churches to make disciples of all people groups.[139]

New Churches Replenish and Revitalize Denominations

This has been particularly noticeable in South Africa. Dr Isak Burger, moderator of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa, firmly believes that church planting is of vital importance to the health of any given denomination. The Baptist Union shares this view. The Cell Church Movement in South Africa, led by Pastor Harold Weitsz, is now writing church planting into their materials, and has asked DAWN Africa for assistance in this regard. Both these denominations are experiencing growth, against common trends! Peter Wagner observes:

> Without exception, the growing denominations have been those that stress church planting.[140]

People Are More Open to Change in New Churches

As a church becomes more established, so it is more likely to build up traditions that later become set in stone. Often these traditions have proved valuable in the past. But as times change, so must some of those traditions. Unfortunately, the change that does occur in more established churches, is often gradual and over an extended period of time.

New People Assimilate into a New Church Far More Readily

David White, author of *Your Church Can Multiply,* has found that new converts are far more likely to fit into a new church than they are to fit into a more established one:

> It's so easy to lead people to Christ in the Philippines. At the same time, it's so hard to bring them to church. There are many reasons. One reason is that most new believers feel very out of place in an older church. In

---

[139] Robert E. Logan: *Church Planting – The Most Successful Form of Church Growth* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/0004/012_most_successful.cfm)
[140] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books, 1990) p20

many older churches, the members have been there for years. They know exactly what will happen in every Sunday service. They know the songs. They know when to stand, when to sit, when to shake hands, who is always late, who sings off key, who doesn't sing, who shouts, who cries… new believers… are all at similar levels in the beginnings of their spiritual development. They can learn together. A key to rapid growth is to disciple new believers in a context in which they are comfortable, rather than bringing them into a context where we are comfortable.[141]

Church Planting is One of the Best Ways to Reach Unreached or Least Reached People Groups

Let us take a moment to define what we mean by the term *people group.* Some have translated the Greek word *"ethnae"* (or "nations" as used in the Great Commission) as "people groups." This is probably the most accurate translation of the word, since great cultures of people transcend every national and political boundary. People groups make up nations, and people groups should be reached in a manner consistent with their culture and heritage without in any way compromising the message of the gospel. People groups are thus the smaller groups within a culture or nation that make up that culture or nation. Lewis adds:

> In the Great Commission, Jesus reminds us that our world is filled with "people swarms" – clusters of people with their own history, heritage, traditions, culture, language, values, philosophies and belief systems. If we are to be effective in evangelizing and 'congregationalizing' these clusters, we must penetrate the swarm.[142]

A people group is considered *unreached* if there is no viable indigenous evangelical church within that group. A *least-reached* people group is one with a very small concentration of indigenous churches. One of the most effective strategies in reaching unreached or least reached people groups is church planting. This allows churches to be planted right within the culture of the people group, encouraging the use of practices prevalent to that culture.

---

[141] David A. White: *Your Church Can Multiply* (Philippine Challenge, Inc. 2000) pp 6,7
[142] Larry L. Lewis: *The Church Planter's Handbook* (Broadman Press 1992) p 21

By doing this, unreached or least reached people can become disciples without first having to adopt a new culture or move to a new region.

5.2 <u>COMMON OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH PLANTING</u>

While many advantages to church planting can be identified, it is also imperative that we take a moment to consider some of the objections that have been raised:

It Will Hurt the Mother Church

Can a church involved in planting a daughter church into a neighboring community be hurt by such a plant? Wagner believes that, with proper planning, the opposite is more likely to happen. He believes it will serve to help the mother/parent church. Underlying his belief is the application of the biblical promise, 'Give, and it will be given to you.' (Luke 6:38). He supports his sentiments with a testimony:

> I watched God do this some years ago when my church, Lake Avenue Congregational Church, sent off 60 members one Sunday morning to start the Sunrise Community Church in a nearby city. We had mixed feelings because as of the following Sunday we knew we would no longer see our brothers and sisters whom we loved very much. But that evening purely by coincidence we also had scheduled a reception of new members. God gave us 65 of them! We felt that He had kept His promise on the same day![143]

He reports how Brian Larson's doctoral studies at Talbot Theological Seminary show that, ordinarily, the parent church finds that the number of members who have left as a result of a new church plant are usually replaced within 6 months. The same, he says, holds true for finances. But he also discovered that much depends on the attitude of the pastor. If he has a negative attitude toward the church planting process, it might negatively affect the parent church's subsequent growth.[144]

---

[143] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p38
[144] Brian L. Larson: *Church Planting Mother-Daughter style - A Study of Procedures and Results, D. Min. Dissertation. Talbot Theological Seminary*, 1984

Pastor Huffaker, the Senior Pastor of Grove City Church , a Church of the Nazarene congregation situated in Columbus Ohio, has been involved in planting two new churches from his local congregation. Over the past decade, membership has grown by 151.4%, with over 1,000 people joining their church family during this time. When asked what keeps the church healthy so it can grow well, he responds:

> Discipling people, vision, outward focus, risk taking, relevant ministries and prayer. [145]

Referring to the church's involvement in two new plants, Huffaker believes it is a "God-thing."

Crossroads Community Church of the Nazarene was the first church plant sponsored by Grove City Church. The grand opening service took place on the 9th of November 1997. Worship attendance had already reached an average of 140 just two years later. Concerning the positive ties between Grove City Church and the newly developing Crossroads church, Mc Corkle, the new church plant pastor observes:

> Pastor Bob Huffaker has become our greatest cheerleader. There is love, excellent support, mentoring and encouragement provided us by the mother church. [146]

The second church, known as Hilliard Community Church of the Nazarene, opened with its first service on March 26, 2000. A core group of thirty adults was sent out from Grove City, and are also enjoying a time of growth and blessing. When asked what impact planting two new churches has had on the sponsoring church, Huffaker responds enthusiastically:

> The year we began our first new Start (church plant), we had our best year ever numerically, financially and spiritually. [147]

---

[145] Interview with Pastor Huffaker: *Grow Magazine: A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship*, (Spring edition, 2000) p9
[146] Ibid. p9

When asked if he thought other churches could sponsor new works, Huffaker replied:

> As a mother church, we have found this effort to be a positive and exciting venture. We love the continual, happy relationship with the pastors and people of the new starts. We love having them back from time to time for a shared service. Our people love meeting the new people these churches are winning for Christ. We enjoy seeing the baby churches growing and becoming like the mother church. Most of all, we find great joy in seeing the kingdom of God increase.[148]

But it is not only in younger churches that such a positive effect has been noted. Pomona First Nazarene Church, a 90 year-old congregation situated in the USA, witnessed a dramatic transformation after answering what they believed to be a clear call from the Lord to become involved in church planting. Finding themselves in probably the most difficult situation financially in their 90-year existence, and witnessing a steady numerical decline since the 1970's, the church averaged 118 in worship by 1998. Although the idea was met with resistance initially, the Lord began to speak to Pomona church about planting into the La Verne Community directly north of Pomona. Pastor Jim Scharn shares some of the initial reservations of the church board:

> With our discussions at the next board meeting came legitimate questions like, 'How would we pay for it?' 'Why not focus that energy on spiritual and numerical growth in Pomona?' Strong and sincere feelings were expressed by myself and by board members reflecting various viewpoints concerning the new start. Major questions could not be adequately answered. This was not an easy time to be on the board… Between our February and March meetings, the Board sent out a general letter to many churches in our nation with computer-generated research and demographic maps suggesting areas with strong potential for new start churches. The demographic map they sent to Pomona contained the exact section of La Verne we had targeted. Our church board voted to go for it, and the start date was set. As the idea was introduced to the entire congregation, it was clear this was not the easy path to take – but it was becoming clear it was a path God wanted us on. Eight months later, in November 1998, the core group of ten people from Pomona began meeting on Sunday mornings at nine in a home in La Verne. On Easter Sunday, April 4 1999, in a multi-purpose room at Oak Mesa Elementary School, the La Verne Community Church celebrated its grand opening.

---

[147] Ibid p11
[148] Interview with Pastor Huffaker: *Grow Magazine: A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship*, (Spring edition, 2000) p11

> Forty-nine people attended… We have been averaging 44 people with a current high attendance of 60 on December 1999.[149]

Not only has the new plant been successful, but it has had a very positive effect on the Pomona church as well. God started blessing the church at Pomona in several ways. Apart from the obvious growth which accompanied their planting efforts, Pomona was also able to go to the district Assembly with all budgets paid, and in a position to give 10 percent of their income to missions. A new church plant has also since been started in their building, reaching the Korean community in Pomona. An average of 65 people attend this second service!

Church Planting Will Weaken Existing Resources

Although many congregations who have been involved in church planting have shared the direct opposite point of view, like the Pomona First Nazarene Church, there are those who feel that church planting will only serve to weaken the existing church by dividing its resources and minimizing its impact. While this could prove to be true, especially in churches that lose their evangelistic dimension, this is an issue that could easily be overcome through effective planning and leadership. As Stuart Murray points out, groups involved in church planting who may begin with the best of intentions might find themselves enmeshed in organizing a new congregation and losing their vision for mission. This leads to duplication in many aspects of church life, including public ministry, administration, finance and leadership - two guitarists are needed instead of one; two overhead projectors are needed, as well as two sets of hymnbooks. Twice as many meetings with elders and deacons are required. [150]

---

[149] Grow: *A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship* (The Church of the Nazarenes, Spring 2000) p61, 62

[150] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press, 1998) p18

While advocates of church planting acknowledge that this can become a problem, Murray points out that this is offset by the tendency of church planting to motivate and mobilize church members to do more than they were doing in the existing church. The duplication of needs thus becomes a duplication of opportunities, enabling people to discover (or rediscover) gifts, and make contributions that were not previously required.[151] People who were under-utilized before are often encouraged to find a role either in the new church plant or in the planting church, which has a two-fold effect: Firstly, the people involved in establishing the new church are given responsibilities they would not have had in a more settled situation and exercise faith in new ways. Secondly, people remaining in the planting church are encouraged to take up responsibilities laid down by those who have left, thus releasing them to tasks they would not have considered themselves competent to do while others who seemed more capable were around. Murray points out that this is a frequent experience in church planting, and one that many would broadly welcome as a move towards the ministry of the whole people of God.[152]

It Will Cost Too Much

Although some denominations in South Africa do recognize the need for, and share a desire to begin planting churches, one objection is the cost involved in starting new churches. Is this a valid objection? While I do believe we need to count the cost before we undertake any form of ministry (as our Lord directs us to do), we should never base our decisions solely on the availability, or the lack of finances. We are not governed by finances, but by God! Church planting experts agree. Often the problem is not the cost involved in planting a church, but how resources are used.

---

[151] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press, 1998) p18
[152] Ibid, p 19

Samuel Mathete, a pastor from Zimbabwe in Africa, is responsible for planting over 400 churches in that country. This in itself is a wonderful feat, but when we consider that this was done without any formal funding, it boggles the mind! Funding need not be a problem as far as church planting is concerned.

Wagner believes that church planting is one of the most cost-effective ways of evangelization.[153] Schaller agrees. When told by some Methodist leaders that it would cost approximately $100 million to start 500 new churches, Schaller replied:

> That is the wrong question based on questionable assumptions… A better beginning point is the Great Commission.[154]

In 1980, C. Peter Wagner was invited to minister at a pastor's seminar in Texas. They were quite pleased to report that they had planted two new churches in the past decade, and were planning another church plant for the 1980's. Wagner asked them why they were only considering one new plant, and they responded by saying it was all they could afford at the time. When asked how much each church plant had cost them, he was told it had been approximately $500 000 per church.

A month later, Wagner ministered at a similar seminar in North Carolina. The district was about the same size as the presbytery. Wagner recalls:

> As I was having lunch with the district superintendent, Charles Cookman, I asked him how many new churches they had started in the 1970's. "Oh", he said, "I'm glad you asked. We set a goal of seventy new churches for the seventies, but we actually planted 85." Again, on impulse, I asked him how much they cost. He did some calculations on his place mat and said, "Each one cost about $2500."[155]

---

[153] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p38
[154] Lyle E. Schaller: *Why Start New Churches?* (The Circuit Rider, May, 1979) p80.
[155] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, California: Regal, 1990) p39

The problem is more one of assumptions made by the denomination or organization planting the church, rather than actual costs involved - assumptions, for example, that the pastor needs to be paid a full salary on par with pastors of established churches, and that land and buildings are necessary up front. A team-ministry approach or a bi-vocational approach can change costs dramatically. In short, cost need not be a reason why we don't plant new churches!

Some churches in Africa are planted with no budget to speak of! People meet in groups under trees on a Sunday! Samuel Mathete's strategy offers another example of a very cost-effective and ingenious way of supporting a church plant. When a church is planted, Samuel gives the pastor five cows. The pastor then sells the milk produced by these five cows, which helps to sustain him. Certainly in the African context, finances need never become the reason why new churches are not planted.

But five cows aside, God owns the cattle on a thousand hills! He is more than able to undertake financially for a church plant! In the whole of Scripture, a perceived lack of money or other resources has never been an obstacle to God! It won't be an obstacle now! The Apostle Paul never allowed finances to keep him from what he believed to be a clear clarion call from God. In fact, Paul was willing to forego his right to remuneration for the sake of the gospel:

> For it is written in the Law of Moses: Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.' Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely He says this for us, doesn't He? Yes, this was written for us, because when the ploughman ploughs and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we do not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.[156]

---

[156] 1 Co 9:9-12: *The Holy Bible - New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

While some church plants have faced financial difficulties, it needs to be said that there are many examples of how church planting can have a very positive effect on the finances of a church. The Nazarene Church in Canada is a case in point. Dr Murray Moerman studied the effects of church planting on the finances of the Nazarene Church in Canada, and made the following startling discovery; although finances grew in churches without a clear church planting vision, the effect of new church plants on the finances was very evident. Rather than prove to be a financial drain, the presence of church plants greatly stimulated the finances. Below is a list of figures (in Dollars) of the effects on the finances as evidenced by Dr Moerman, recorded in *Transforming Our Nation Through Saturation Church Planting*:

YEAR	Churches Without New Church Plants ($)	Churches with New Church Plants ($)
1970	1608139	
1975	2690649	*Church Planting Vision Adopted*
1980	5118211	5806539
1985	7280919	8160095
1990	8635154	10299031
1995	9031842	11658107

THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF CHURCH PLANTING ON FINANCES FROM THE NAZARENE CHURCH OF CANADA

We Might Fail

Some ministers are reluctant to plant new churches because they have heard of a church planting effort that has gone awry. Is this a valid objection? No. Although there are many church plants that do fail, there are many that succeed! I believe the reason church plants fail has to do more with preparation than with principle. As James P. Allen notes:

> One of the sad truths about church planting is that a large majority of church plants fail. It has been estimated by church planters around the United States that as many as 70% of new churches close their doors in the first few years. In a recent survey that Church Planting Ministries conducted concerning church plants in the U.S., we determined that over 50% of the new churches are failing within the first 5 years. This same survey revealed that 70% of the churches that failed could have possibly been saved had they had support from experienced church planters and other churches.[158]

But this argument addresses the process of church planting rather than the principle of it. It is our intention to discover, during the course of this study, the reasons why some church plants are succeeding where others have failed.

[157] Dr Murray Moerman: *Transforming our Nation* as presented in *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing, 2000) p32
[158] James P. Allen: *Church Planting Manual* (Church Planting Ministries 1998) p5

This argument does not annul the fact that more churches reach more people. Statistics also reveal that over one million people start a business in The United States every year. 40% of these businesses close within the first year. Within five years, more than 80% will fail. Of the 20% that make it past the first 5 years, 80% will not make it past the second five-year period.[159] But this is no reason to stop opening new businesses, so why should it be a reason to stop planting new churches?

Paul Drost, director of church planting in the Assemblies of God, USA, says that churches within the Assemblies of God that were planted using a proven and intentional system, have a 90% survival rate after five years, while churches that do not, have only a 50% survival rate [160].

Just as new businesses are prone to failure, so new church plants are also susceptible. Reasons for failure vary from a lack of ministry gifts to a lack of money, from a failure to become contextual, to the fact that it is simply a very demanding ministry! But this is not an argument against the need for church planting. If anything, it is a call to count the cost and to be as prepared as possible.

It Will Have an Adverse Affect on Unity

A possible objection to planting into an area where other churches of the same or different denominations exists, is one of unity. Some may feel that having another church of a different denomination, or worse still, another church of the same denomination in the same area, will have an adverse affect on the effectiveness of the existing church – people will tend to transfer, and there is a grave danger that 'sheep-stealing' will take place. While I

---

[159] James Emery White: *Why New Churches Fail* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org)
[160] Paul Drost : *AOG Church Planting Division 1999* (http://ag.org/dhmchurchplanting/director_messages.cfm)

cannot speak on behalf of other communities, my observations have shown the opposite to be true.

There are over 50 local churches in Springs, representing many different denominations. Some of these churches have been in existence for more than 50 years. The Dutch Reformed church is a case in point. The first Dutch Reformed church was birthed in a suburb called Geduld. But the transformation of Springs from town to city has seen many more Dutch Reformed churches planted throughout the area – some even in the same suburb! To date, no Dutch Reformed church has closed its doors as a result of another church of the same denomination being planted in the same city, or even the same suburb. Many churches from other denominational backgrounds have also since been planted in Springs. Instead of being to the detriment of existing congregations, it has often had a very positive effect. Churches have often grown as a result

Wagner has observed the same phenomenon:

> Some are reluctant to start new churches for fear of harming those churches that are currently located in the target community. They feel that doing so could create undesirable competition between brothers and sisters in Christ. … suffice it to mention here that in more cases than not, a new church in the community tends to raise the religious interest of the people in general and if handled properly can be a benefit to existing churches. That which blesses the kingdom of God as a whole also blesses the churches that truly are a part of the Kingdom.[161]

We should not allow personal fears or insecurities to keep us from the Lord's plan and purpose. If we truly believe that Jesus is the One who builds His Church - if we truly believe His promise that the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against it - then we should be willing to respond to His call. If God has called someone to our community in

---

[161] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal, 1990) p20

order to plant a church, and if they are men and women who are yielded to Him, nothing will stand in the way of His will being done! Perhaps we would do well to heed the words of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrin at the arrest of the apostles:

> Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do with these men. … Therefore in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.[162]

Church Planting is Not Our Responsibility

Some local congregations feel church planting is not their responsibility – it rests with the denomination or district. If we consider that God created every organism to reproduce after its own kind, we are perhaps being short-sighted or narrow-minded to assume He does not expect His church to reproduce itself.

We Need to Grow Large Enough Before We Plant a New Church

Church planting helps to eradicate self-centered attitudes like this one, forcing the church to become more outward looking. This usually leads to a greater evangelistic thrust within the denomination, which in turn leads to growth. Small churches have started many successful new churches. Pastor 'E' related a story of a church that was only 6-strong when it planted a church. Not only did the new church plant prove successful, but also the 'mother church' grew to 95 members in the process! What is more, two churches can co-operate in a church plant. Each church should be prepared to do what it can!

Feeney points out that the objection is sometimes posed that the resources of a well-established church would give it an edge over the newer church with its more limited

---

[162] Acts 5:35,38-39: *The Holy Bible - New International Version* (International Bible Society 1973, 197,1984)

resources. But again, research shows just the opposite to be true. The Nazarene Church conducted a survey of their growth from 1906 to 1971. They discovered that in the early years, when resources were limited, they experienced rapid growth. In later years, when many large, wealthy churches existed, little growth took place. In analyzing the data, they found a close correlation between the number of churches planted and the denomination's pattern of growth.[163]

We Don't Have the People to Start a New Church

Only when the priests stepped into the Jordan river did it begin to recede. Often the Lord responds to a step of faith. Sometimes we need to be prepared to take one!

We Don't Need More Small Churches

This is a self-centered viewpoint. The interpretation is usually that we want to grow big, and planting another church will hinder our efforts. But church planting does not involve 'losing' people. It is a case of 'investing people' in the interests of the Kingdom of God! While it is true that larger churches reach more people within a community in some cases, it is foolish to think that one large church will reach the whole of a community!

Christian Schwartz, author of *Natural Church Development*, surveyed one thousand churches from 32 different countries and 6 different continents. He discovered that small churches, averaging only 51 people in attendance, were 16 times more effective in winning new converts to Christ than mega-churches.[164]

---

[163] James H. Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p 14
[164] Christian Schwarz: *Natural Church Development - A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Church Smart Resources, 1996) p46-48

Valley Foursquare Church in Southern California is a case in point. Averaging only 43 in attendance, Valley Foursquare Church has been responsible for establishing more than 20 multi-ethnic churches in 6 years. The total attendance of fifteen of these churches is more than 2000![165]

Church Planting Doesn't Increase Soul-winning, But Simply Recycles Christians

Objections coming out of New Zealand, as reported by Brian Hathaway, indicate that extensive church planting efforts of recent years in New Zealand hasn't brought many people to Christ. Mainline denominations are still in decline, and most Pentecostal groups have plateaued.

> The leaders of our most prolific church planting denomination recognize that church planting has not achieved the results hoped for and acknowledge that although they've covered the land with churches, they've had comparatively few converts. Their national facilitator stated that much church planting throughout the denominations is just gathering Christians from other congregations. Christians are being regurgitated from church to church. In many cases, churches weakened further the few struggling churches already there, and didn't come to much themselves. So that denomination's executive is now shifting its main church-growth emphasis to increasing the size of existing congregations through 'soul winning'.[166]

He goes on to say that in many of New Zealand's smaller communities, planting one more small church, like those already there, won't really make a difference when trying to evangelize a community. He believes there is a great need for churches that are large enough and healthy enough to evangelize more purposefully. He also believes that many of the churches in New Zealand are just not robust enough, or large enough, to make an impact on the community.

---

[165] Robert E. Logan: *Church Planting – The Most Successful Form of Church Growth* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/0004/012_most_successful.cfm)
[166] Brian Hathaway: *Church planting in New Zealand* (http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/wemag/9712hath.html) p1

He then adds:

> However, considerable church planting is needed in larger, rapidly growing areas like Auckland because strategic church planting is the only way to evangelize many people moving into new areas.[167]

While he raises some good points, we need to bear in mind that Hathaway is relating to the objections he has observed from the church planting efforts of one denomination, which he does not name. I don't believe it is accurate to draw a conclusion based on the efforts of one denomination alone. In presenting his argument against the need for more churches in a smaller community, Hathaway also makes it clear that the denomination he is talking about has no clear evangelistic program, and that through church planting, those congregations already in the area have begun to realize the need to be more evangelistic in their approach. This, more than the process of church planting, would explain why there is no clear increase through soul winning, and why there has been such a significant movement of Christians from one assembly to the next. It is my belief, and I hope to prove it during the course of this thesis, that church planting without a clear evangelistic vision based on the needs and the vernacular of the community, is church planting that is doomed to struggle or even fail! It also needs to be said that Hathaway is not arguing directly against church planting. He is questioning whether the way church planting is being done is effective. While I do not know which denomination he is referring to, two questions come to mind:

i)   If there is no clear evangelistic vision in this denomination, is this perhaps the reason why the churches being planted aren't successful?

ii)   If extensive church planting has been done by this denomination, why have these church plants been concentrated in smaller areas where churches already exist, with no clear church planting

---

[167] Ibid, p1

activities in areas which have no churches, and which are growing rapidly?

It suggests to me that the problem is not an argument against church planting as much as an argument in favor of a more prayerful, purposeful, planned and primed approach. If anything it supports the need for a Spirit-led, prayerful, strategic approach to church planting rather than the cessation of it.

Church Planting Has Become an End in Itself, Rather Than a Means to an End

In his foreword to the book, *Local Church Planting* by Peter Nodding, Nigel Wright noted somewhat facetiously that the world is divided between those who think that church planting is a good idea, and those who are actually planting churches.[168] But has church planting distorted the biblical understanding of the mission of the church? Has church planting acquired a status that has marginalized other aspects of mission? This is a valid danger that needs to be avoided - a congregation may decide to plant a new church, and in the process, so much energy and time is invested into the new work that the planting church is threatened.

But Murray suggests this problem can be overcome quite easily if one simply looks at church planting not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. He suggests that establishing a new congregation is not the ultimate goal, but the penultimate one:

> Whenever church planting becomes an end in itself, not only does the focus on mission become unclear, but other features can appear that have blighted church planting initiatives in the past. Competition, denominationalism, sheep-stealing and empire-building have been some of the less welcome accompaniments of church planting.[169]

---

[168] Peter Nodding: *Local Church Planting* (Marshal Pickering, 1994) p.ix
[169] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p22

Again, his caution does not detract from the need (or the biblical pattern) of church planting – it is an argument in favor of such planting being done in a God-inspired, God-centered manner. He continues:

> Church planting operates best when the focus is not on planting new churches per se, but on fulfilling the mission of the church, or better still, participating in the mission of God.[170]

Murray also refers to David Bosch, author of *Transforming Mission*, who identifies church planting as a legitimate missionary motive, but cautions against it becoming a predominant aim. In relation to 19th century development, Bosch writes:

> There was something incongruous about the heavy emphasis of church planting as the goal of missions… the church had, in a sense, ceased to point to God or to the future; instead it was pointing to itself. Mission was the road from the institutional church to the church that still had to be instituted… The relationship of these churches to society and to the wider ecumenical and eschatological horizons was largely ignored.[171]

A concern that church planting will become an end in itself is a legitimate one, and it is a concern that has given rise to some problems in the past. But again, it is not so much an argument against church planting than an argument in favor of the need for an asserted examination of motive and circumspection of method. Church planting that is set, as Murray puts it, within *a biblical and theological framework*[172] is vital.

Church planting is part of the God-given mission. As such, it is not the invention of human beings, but the very will and intent of God. It should thus be regarded not as an end in itself, but as one aspect of the mission God has given His church, and an aspect we are truly privileged to be involved in!

---

[170] Ibid p 23
[171] David Bosch: *Transforming Mission* (Orbis, 1991) p332
[172] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p25

CHAPTER 6: CHURCH PLANTING MODES, MODELS, METHODS AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

There can be no doubt that South Africa has a very successful church-planting heritage from which we can learn many vital lessons. Indeed, in order to fulfill the second objective of this study effectively, namely identifying the common characteristics of a successful church plant, we must take a moment to understand the various modes, models, methods and strategies of church planting that have proved successful both in historical and contemporary church plants.

Stuart Murray correctly points out that there are significant lessons to be learnt from the ways in which early Christians planted churches, but there are not many blueprints. Attempts to establish biblical precedents frequently do no more than justify preferred models, which sometimes hinder creative engagement with the contemporary context. Different social contexts require different approaches. Sociological analysis, prayerful planning and theological reflection will be far more effective than operating within a 'biblical' straightjacket.[173] Consequently, there are many ways to plant a church.

6.1 CHURCH PLANTING MODES

I have identified the following four modes of church planting. I refer to them as "modes" not models, because they describe the different starting points of a church plant.

Pioneer Planting

Murray defines pioneer planting as the practice of establishing churches in areas previously unreached by the gospel, but now being evangelized and discipled.[174] Much of the previous church planting efforts in South Africa fall into this category. The New Testament is full of examples of pioneer planting which saw the Church extend from Jerusalem to Rome. For

---

[173] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting - Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) pp 259,260
[174] Ibid. p88, 89

300 years, even at the time of the disintegration of the Roman Empire, pioneer planting enjoyed great success. And until such time as every nation, tongue and tribe has been reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, pioneer planting will remain an effective and essential mode of church planting.

Pioneer planting saw the gospel proclaimed throughout Europe. As European Christianity slipped into a maintenance mode that persisted almost unabated throughout the medieval era, the battle for the heart of Asia was raging between Buddhism, Islam and the Nestorian churches.[175] Later, the Americas became the next missionary focal point.

While church planting also enjoyed success in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, missionaries were more dedicated to seeing people converted than to ensuring that new churches were established. As a result, many of the churches that were planted, as Murray points out, were debilitated by cultural imperialism and inadequate indigenization. Although the discipling of new converts was seen as necessary, little ecclesiological thought was given to how such churches should differ from the sending churches of the missionaries who had founded them.[176]

The 1900's saw a great change in strategy. Roland Allen, an influential writer of the early 20th century, began to put questions to missionaries which would usher in much needed change. He challenged mission organizations to ask themselves whether they were planting new churches, or merely perpetuating a mission.[177] A more ecclesiocentric approach to mission was also advocated by strategists like Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson and Karl Graul, who required missionaries to become more aware of ecclesiological issues and to

---

[175] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting - Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p90
[176] Ibid p91
[177] Roland Allen: *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) p v. – originally published in 1912

treat church planting as an essential part of mission.[178] As a result, more effort was given to planting churches that would be self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting. This significantly advanced the cause of indigenization, and had a positive effect in countries like South Africa.[179]

Replacement Planting

Replacement planting, as Murray points out, refers to the practice of re-establishing churches in areas where churches had been planted previously, but had ceased to exist.[180] While Replacement planting has not been a significant mode of church planting in South Africa, it is sure to become one if the current patterns of decline among several denominations continues.

Indeed, the Apostolic Faith Mission has seen this model work very effectively in South Africa. Dr Isak Burger, speaking at a conference organized by the Church Planting Alliance of South Africa, gave examples of struggling churches within the AFM that were forced to close or relocate. They experienced tremendous success as a result. He felt that it is sometimes necessary to close a struggling work down and to begin again rather than to try and keep it going.[181] This is an example of how replacement planting can work in the South African context.

Because replacement planting is not planting on unclaimed territory, the legacy that the previous church has left behind could have a strong bearing on the new church plant. Murray is quick to point out that this legacy could have both negative and positive effects

---

[178] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p91
[179] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p91
[180] Ibid. p89
[181] Dr Isak Burger: *Speaking at the CPA Church Planting Conference, 2000*

on the new plant.[182] Familiarity with biblical teaching and a residual Christian faith could prove positive. However, previous mistakes should be carefully studied and avoided.

Historically, replacement planting has been very successful in countries like England. In the 5th and 6th centuries BC, the collapse of the Roman Empire saw pagan tribes overrunning a supposedly Christian Empire. Murray notes:

> All over England, the demise of the Roman churches gave way to the replacement planting achieved by (a new Celtic missionary movement)… The mission work seems to have involved a self-replicating model, whereby teams of men and women established new churches and new monasteries, missionary communities and training centers from which further teams were sent out to continue the work. Team members became team leaders.
>
> Why did they flourish? Certainly a primary factor was the spiritual vitality of the Celtic missionaries and the churches they planted. Evangelism and social action were rooted in a deep spirituality, and often accompanied by signs and wonders… but a significant further factor was the extent to which these churches were contextualized. By comparison with the Roman churches that had been established in previous generations, … they seemed vulnerable, but proved to be more enduring because of their rooted-ness in culture. Undoubtedly they tapped into the residual Christian faith still to be found in many communities, but it was their ability to rekindle this and to establish appropriate forms of church life that made this such an effective replacement planting movement.[183]

Many denominational leaders are weary of engaging in new church planting efforts while experiencing an overall decline, simply because they fear it may stretch their resources too far. Churches that close, therefore, may not necessarily be replaced. But as Murray correctly points out, a failure to engage in replanting may serve to exacerbate the decline, or at the very least, do nothing to arrest it.[184] Replacement planting must become a model adopted by some denominations in South Africa if these denominations are to turn the tide.

---

[182] Ibid p92
[183] Stuart Murray: *Church planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p94
[184] Ibid p95

Sectarian Planting

Although the name may be misleading, sectarian planting refers to the mode of planting churches in areas where churches of the same denomination exist in order to express and embody distinctive doctrinal or ecclesiological convictions.[185] Population growth and demographic changes often necessitate this mode of church planting.

Many successful examples of sectarian church planting exist in South Africa. There are, for example, more than 6 Dutch reformed churches in the different suburbs of Springs. 3 Methodist congregations exist in 3 different suburbs, as well as 3 Assembly of God Fellowships, and three Apostolic Faith Mission congregations. As the different suburbs of Springs grew, so the need for more churches grew.

Sectarian planting has however had its fair share of criticism. Some feel that sectarian planting merely re-organizes the Christian community – it encourages Christians to move from one congregation to another. As a result, much of the growth that takes place is transfer growth, not conversion growth. While this may be true in some instances, such a dilemma is easily overcome – provided the congregations within a town work closely together and keep their respective evangelistic vision, this problem need never surface.

Saturation Planting

Saturation church planting refers to the practice of establishing more churches in areas where churches already exist in order to further enhance the ability of these churches to become involved in missions in these areas.[186] Saturation planting differs from the other three modes of planting in that it does not seek to impact new areas within a community, to

---

[185] Stuart Murray: *Church planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p89
[186] Ibid p89

recover lost ground, or to develop new kinds of churches within an area.[187] The emphasis is on planting more churches within an already churched area. The idea behind this mode of church planting is simply to saturate all nations with churches. Increasing the number of churches in any given locality is regarded as likely to soften the area towards the gospel and to promote church growth. Exponents of the saturation mode believe this to be one of the most effective ways of transforming a community. Jim Herrington, a leading city-reaching consultant says:

> Transforming… is about reaching a critical mass of believers who are so empowered by the gospel of Christ that they change everything they touch – family, workplace, schools, businesses. As this critical mass is achieved, the power of the living God brings significant changes in the problems that plague our cities today – poverty, crime, addictions, gangs, divorce, violence – and a dramatic increase in the things that characterize the Kingdom of God – mercy, justice, prosperity and compassion. [188]

Jim Montgomery elaborates:

> With a witnessing congregation in every small community of people, it is now possible to communicate the gospel in the most direct, contextualised and productive way to every person in that land. Every person now has a reasonable opportunity to make an informed, intelligent decision for or against Jesus Christ. Everyone now has a church within easy access both in a practical as well as a cultural sense where he or she can attend and be further trained in discipleship should he or she become a believer. The Church can now do the works that demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ on a face-to-face level with every person in the community. [189]

While saturation church planting has enjoyed success on a worldwide scale, its effectiveness is in mobilizing a whole nation. Unless this model is used widely, it could result in some areas being saturated while others remain unreached.

---

[187] Ibid p99

[188] Jack Dennison: *City Reaching – On the Road to Community Transformation* (Pasadena, California, USA: William Carey Library, 1999) p106

[189] Jim Montgomery: *Dawn 2000 – 7 Million Churches to Go* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1989) p13

The DAWN movement has adopted a saturation church planting vision with great success. DAWN (an acronym for Discipling a Whole Nation), aims at mobilizing the body of Christ in whole countries to a determined effort to complete the Great Commission within that country by providing an evangelical congregation for every village and neighborhood of every class, kind and condition of people in the whole country.[190] With a witnessing congregation represented in every small community of people, it is possible for the gospel to be communicated in a direct, contextualized and productive way to every person in that land.

Examples of Saturation Planting

Arguably the most successful example of saturation planting is to be found in the Philippines, where the number of local churches grew from 5,000 to 50,000 in just 27 years. Another successful example of saturation planting took place in South Africa among the IFCC churches, and in particular, through the evangelistic vision of Hatfield Church in Pretoria. In just 33 months from mid 1984 to April 1987, IFCC saw their flock increase from 22 congregations to 154, which represents an average annual growth rate of 90%. The total average attendance of the mother churches and daughter churches increased from 4,500 to 42,000.[191]

6.2 <u>CHURCH PLANTING MODELS AND METHODS – MODALITY MODELS</u>

Just as there are many different models of cars, so there are many successful models of church planting. The sociological make-up of the area in which the church is being planted, the ecclesiastical structure from which the plant is taking place, and more importantly, the leading of the Holy Spirit, will determine the model and method used.

---

[190] Jim Montgomery: *Dawn 2000-7 Million Churches to Go* (Highland Books 1989) p12
[191] Ibid. p16

Over the centuries, church planters have developed a multitude of successful methodologies. While the examination of different models and methods falls within the scope of this study, and while we will try to examine these models comprehensively in this section, I feel it appropriate to bring in a balance at this juncture. A common mistake made by many church planters is to adopt a rigid, unchanging methodology or strategy based on past successes or the successes of others. Dr Towns warns against this:

> When viewing church growth, we must remember the following: (1) Techniques and programs are not the same as biblical principles. While a technique or program may accomplish a biblical result because it contains some biblical principles, techniques and programs are not absolute truths. (2) Techniques and programs may be used effectively by certain people at certain times in certain circumstances, but will not be equally effective overall. (3) Principles alone are biblical; they transcend programs and techniques. (4) Programs and techniques tend to change with time and culture. (5) Programs and techniques may be effective in one contemporary setting but not the next. (6) Some programs seem to be effective when used in a specific time frame, but with changing circumstances they become ineffective. The program, while effective because it applies biblical principles, becomes less effective when circumstances change. Principles do not change, but the way principles are applied must change.[192]

James Feeney probably says it best:

> The Holy Spirit's guidance is always superior to man's most ingeniously devised plans. Charles Brock has correctly cautioned that the planter finds proper soil to the degree that the Holy Spirit's leading is followed… Church planting strategy is not a substitute for the leadership of the Holy Spirit… A danger faced by all church planters is that a strategy may become so methodical that the conscious dependence upon the Spirit fades away. [193]

With this in mind, let us now examine the various successful models and methods of church planting. We can arrange them into two main categories - modality models and sodality models.

---

[192] Elmer Towns: *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg: Church Growth institute 1985) p69
[193] James H. Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p23

Defining the Difference Between Modality Models and Sodality Models

A modality model is simply a method of church planting in which one congregation gives birth to another. Sodality models are those church plants that are carried out by denominational or Para-church organizations.[194]

Mother-Daughter Church Plants

By far the most common model of church planting is the mother-daughter church plant. In this model, the planting agency is the local church. A pre-determined core group or "nucleus" of believers relocate to the area in which the new church is to be planted, and become the founding members of the new church plant. This is the most popular method of planting, one of the obvious reasons being that it begins with a "ready-made" congregation rather than a core group. Initially, the daughter church enjoys the support of the mother church, but is expected to become more self-sufficient in time. It is a tried and tested model of church planting, and most books and training materials focus predominantly on it. Five successful methods of the mother-daughter approach are:

i) Hiving Off

"Hiving off" is the most common method of mother-daughter church planting. It involves members from a local church forming a nucleus or core group at a pre-determined time, which will move out under the leadership of a church planter or church planting team to form a new congregation. This model is mainly used when a new congregation is being formed in the same geographical area as the existing church (either in a neighboring suburb or community) so that those who feel called to "hive off" do not have to relocate in order to do so.[195] The selection of the core group or nucleus of members is usually random, and consists of all those who feel the prompting of the Lord to respond in this manner. Dean

---

[194] James H. Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p60
[195] Ibid p60, 61

Merrill, author of *Mothering a New Church*, conducted a survey which showed the average size of a nucleus group to be 43.[196] Timothy Starr strongly supports this strategy:

> Without question, this (hiving-off) is the best way. Just as a mother gives birth to a child, so a church gives birth to a new church. It is the best method because support and experience of a stronger church are available to the new work. Using this method, the parent church commissions several families to launch a new church several miles from the parent work. This is done by taking a survey of church families and finding clusters in a needy area.[197]

ii) Colonization

Another method of mother-daughter planting is called colonization. It is different to the "hiving-off" method in that it requires the members of the core group to relocate to a different geographical area, which will result in core-group members having to find new homes, new jobs and new schools within the target community.

Wagner makes the following comment about colonization:

> The colonization method of church planting presupposes such a high level of Christian commitment to the Great Commission that some are surprised it functions at all. But it does happen, and its frequency has been increasing throughout the decade of the 1980's.[198]

James Feeney, author of *Church Planting by the Team Method*, gives an example of how this model of church planting can prove very successful. Feeney describes how Abbot Loop Christian Center began colonizing in 1967, and by 1987, had planted 40 existing churches as well as 15 church plants that had failed. The successful plants had started 17 new works in turn. In 1987, a survey was conducted in 10 of the original 40 churches, and it was found

---

[196] Dean Merrill: *Mothering a New Church* (Leadership, Winter 1985) p100
[197] Timothy Starr: *Church Planting, Always in Season* (Toronto, 1978) p43
[198] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p63

that the original group of 137 people, who had moved out to colonize the new areas, had grown to 2,068![199]

Murray recognizes several important implications of this method of church planting. Firstly, it represents the challenge and opportunity to target an area that is more under-churched than its immediate locality. Rather than adding another suburban church to the tally, a new church is planted in a community in which not many churches exist. The growth of suburbs has seen a natural migration away from urbanized areas, which in turn has often had an adverse affect on churches within these areas. As a result, colonization is a very effective way of reversing this trend, by relocating Christians into urban areas,[200] which in turn makes it more possible to evangelize these areas successfully.

iii) Home Churches

Another approach to mother-daughter church planting involves the use of home churches. While not all home churches become autonomous local church plants, it is a very successful method of the mother-daughter model of church planting. From the very inception of the church, Christians have gathered in homes.[201] They also used to gather at Solomon's Temple until they were thrown out. The Bible and history reveals that the birth of Christianity was met with much resistance and persecution. As a result, home churches were the major places of worship.

It is not clear exactly when church buildings began to be used. Some sources indicate that very few church buildings existed until after Constantine became Emperor of Rome in A.D.

---

[199] James H. Feeney: *Church Planting by the Team Method* (Anchorage, AK: Abbot Loop Christian Center, 1988) p.43

[200] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p269

[201] Acts 2:46

312, and that it was his idea to erect them.[202] Other sources, such as the writings of Eusebius translated into *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine,*[203] and *A History of the Christian Church* by Lars P. Qualben, believe that buildings were erected in Edessa, Arbela and the surrounding vicinity before A.D. 200.[204] However, the most widely accepted place of meeting was from house to house. This is still a very effective method of church planting which is widely used in many countries around the world.

iv) Mission Sunday Schools

Another method of planting is the Mission Sunday School model. Churches reproduce by establishing a mission school. Once it has grown sufficiently, it evolves into a New Testament church.

v) Bible Study Groups

Another approach is the Bible Study Group. This method is very similar to the home cell strategy and is in frequent use today. Elmer Towns describes the process:

> First, the church planter goes to an area and begins a bible study in his home or a neutral location. His long-range goal is to begin a church, but his immediate goal is to gather a nucleus of people, win them to the Lord, and nurture them in the word of God. In essence, the Bible study is a half-way house to a church. When the Bible study is large enough, the church planter turns it into a church.[205]

This method was used extensively by Abbott Loop Christian Center in the 1970's to establish several churches.

---

[202] Graydon F. Snider: *Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (The Seed Sowers, 1985) p67

[203] G.A. Williamson: *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (New York, Dorset Press, 1965) pp300,319,326,330,353-56,373,376-77,382-84

[204] Lars P. Qualben: *A History of the Christian Church* (Thomas Nelson publishers, New York, NY 1958) p382-384

[205] Elmer Towns: *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg Church Growth Institute 1985) p67

Problems Associated With Mother-Daughter Church Planting

In as much as this proves to be the most popular method of church planting, the mother-daughter approach also has one of the greatest capacities to damage planting churches.[206] It requires members from the existing church to move on, which can result in a loss of vision in the mother church, "church planting fatigue", feelings of bereavement, disappointment with the new church, strained relationships, and financial pressures which can take a heavy toll on the mother church. Murray cautions that:

> One response to this is to ensure that there are substantial periods for recuperation before embarking on a further church plant.[207]

Although these problems are avoidable, those desiring to become involved in church planting need to realize that it is not something to be taken lightly. It requires a great deal of prayer, forethought, planning and cost-counting!

Another disadvantage of the mother-daughter church plant approach is that it is a relatively slow process. It tends to involve a great deal of planning and preparation, which cannot be rushed or diminished without risking damage to the mother church, the daughter church or both.[208]

A third problem is that this method could result in 'cloning' rather than 'planting'. Murray points out that the larger the planting team and the stronger the links with the mother church, the less flexibility and creativity there is likely to be in the new plant.[209] Although these problems are common to the mother-daughter planting model, they are neither

---

[206] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p263
[207] Ibid p263
[208] Ibid p263
[209] ibid p263

unavoidable nor insurmountable - which is why the mother-daughter model still remains one of the most popular and effective models of church planting.

Adoption

Church adoption, like human adoption, involves someone else giving "birth" to the church that in turn becomes part of the church plant family. It involves adopting a struggling or small local church, and investing resources and time into seeing this church become a healthy, vibrant local church within the community.

Parent-Child or Satellite Planting

Although the parent-child church planting model works on similar principles to that of the mother-daughter church planting model, the main difference is that mother-daughter church plants give rise to churches which become self-autonomous, whereas the parent-child approach gives rise to churches which are only semi-autonomous in that they continue to have an organic relationship with the parent church. [210] In most cases, the senior pastor of the mother church serves as the senior pastor of the satellite church plant as well.

The second largest church in the world, the Jotabeche Methodist Pentecostal Church of Santiago Chile, has grown through planting satellite churches. With a total membership of 350,000, 40 satellite churches exist through the city of Santiago. While each church enjoys a level of autonomy (with their own church buildings and congregations numbering several thousand each) they consider themselves to be part of the Jotabeche Church, under the pastoral leadership of Javier Vasquez.[211]

---

[210] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting For a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p66
[211] Ibid. p66

Satellite churches are flourishing in many different countries, including Chile, Brazil, Nigeria, the Philippines, the United States and South Africa. Hatfield Baptist church, the second largest congregation in South Africa, operates very effectively on a satellite system of church planting.

Team Planting

Team planting is a very successful model of church planting. It has both New Testament and other historical precedents, including the Belgian Evangelical Mission, as described by Johan Lukasse in his book entitled *Churches With Root*.[212] Although very similar to the colonization model of church planting, the team approach has a number of features that set it apart. Team members will be drawn from a local church and will continue to receive support from that local church, be it financial or other. Once the plant has taken place, the team responsible for the plant then moves on to the next church plant.

As Murray points out, this model has a number of distinct advantages:

a) It allows for the mobilization of gifted and committed members form a wide range of sending churches, including those that would otherwise not be in a position to be involved in church planting.

b) By forming teams from several churches, the mother church is not weakened as significantly as could be the case with the "hiving-off" of "colonization" approach.

c) Each team comprises members with specific gifts and experiences of church life.

d) Financial self-sufficiency that is often employed in team ministry benefits both the sending church and the team, in that it does not hinder flexibility.

---

[212] Johan Lukasse: *Churches With Roots* (Bromley: MARC/STL, 1990)

e) It gives the team the opportunity to move on once a plant has been carried out successfully. This in turn allows for a much faster plant of new churches in a far wider sphere.[213]

Care needs to be taken to ensure that the team receives adequate pastoral support, ongoing training and accountability so as to prevent the team becoming isolated, overwhelmed, or simply to develop unhealthy independent attitudes. Selection of team members is also critical. Strong relationships need to be cultivated and maintained.

Pastor Iverson of Portland, USA, has had considerable experience in team planting both in his own congregation and in sending forth teams to plant new churches. Iverson argues that the team approach to church planting gives rise to a more rounded and complete ministry. It also facilitates growth by enabling the leadership to handle pressure better:

> Team ministry is also profitable because it best facilitates growth. In fact, in most cases, it provides a growth factor that has unlimited potential. The pressures and stress that accompany continuing growth are too much for any one man to bear alone. It is just common sense that more people require more attention, and make more demands on a minister's time and resources. A team can shoulder the 'growing pains' with much more ease than a single pastor ever could.[214]

The Multi-Congregational Model

Multi-congregational churches refer to local churches which minister to several different ethnic groups separately yet simultaneously. If properly managed, they are very effective in urban areas where different minority groups live in close geographical proximity to each other. Some of these multi-congregational churches enjoy shared facilities with ethnic congregations maintaining their own autonomy, while others choose to function under one church administration. This model is more suitable for ministers and teams that are

---

[213] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting For a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p66

[214] Dick Iverson: *Team Ministry* (Bible Temple Publications Portland, Oregon 1984) p42

equipped with a special ability to minister cross-culturally, which is, as Wagner puts it, the missionary gift.[215]

The Multiple Venue Model

The multiple venue model involves one local congregation led by the same group or staff that operates weekly worship services in more than one venue. One budget and one membership role exists. Wagner notes:

> The jury is still out as to whether the multiple campus model is a desirable long-range plan for a church. Two of the United State's largest churches are currently using it. Pastors Paul Walker of Mt. Paran Church of God in Atlanta and Jack Hayford of The Church on The Way in Van Nuys, California are preaching in two locations on Sunday mornings and reporting excellent results.

The Sole Planter

The sole church planter is a church planter who is sent out by a local church or organization, or who goes out on his own initiative to plant a church. As such, this model could fit equally well under the modality or sodality models of church planting. He may or may not receive financial support. His ministry involves going into a new area, developing a nucleus for a new church, and then moving on once it is established in order to plant a new work elsewhere.

6.3 CHURCH PLANTING MODELS AND METHODS - SODALITY MODELS

To recap, the sodality model focuses on the church planting efforts and programs of an agency, denomination or organization, separate from the local church.

---

[215] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting For a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p68

The Mission Team

Mission organizations sometimes recruit a mission team to plant a new church. It mirrors the team approach to church planting - the only difference is the starting point or sending organization.

The Founding Pastor

A founding pastor is one who is sent out by a mission agency with the purpose of founding and pastoring a local church for an indefinite period of time. Wagner identifies this model as the most commonly used sodality model of church planting.[216] Frequently, the founding pastor is bi-vocational.

The Apostolic Church Planter

A new and effective model of planting new churches is the apostolic church planter approach. This ministry exists primarily in the Charismatic denominations that hold to the current operation of each of the five-fold ministry gifts listed in Ephesians chapter 4. Many of those who function in the role are founding pastors of new churches who work in team ministry and use their local church as a base for church planting operations. The church planters usually emerge from within the congregation. The "apostle" confirms their call to full-time ministry, trains them, ordains them, and sends them out to plant a church.[217] The new church is usually an autonomous church.

6.4 <u>CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES</u>

Now that we have outlined various modes, models and methods of church planting, let us take a moment to briefly define various strategic church planting initiatives.

---

[216] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting For a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p71
[217] Ibid p73

Consultative Church Planting

Contemporary church planting efforts are giving more attention to research and consultation - to the great advantage of the church plant. Congregational audits, community surveys and discussions with local church leaders often pre-empt the establishment of new congregations, enabling the local church to act responsibly and to deploy their resources effectively.[218] This enables churches to be established in areas where the greatest need exists, rather than plant too many churches in areas where there is already a healthy evangelical representation at the expense of under-churched areas.

Co-operative Church Planting

Occasionally consultation between the planting church and local churches in the area leads to co-operation as other local churches commit personnel and resources to the new church plant.

Collaborative Church Planting

Collaborative church planting involves leaders of local churches, denominations and mission organizations meeting together to consider the possibilities of reaching their city or area together. They do this by identifying under-churched areas, discovering the personnel and resources available to the new plant, and selecting appropriate methods and models of church planting, in order to respond to the needs within the community. This has helped to develop bonds of friendship and trust that supersede denominational and parochial attitudes.

---

[218] Stuart Murray: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998) p285

Closing Remarks

This concludes the first section of this study. We have considered the impact that church planting has had on the nation to date, and have identified the imperative role it is yet to play.

Looking at South Africa from a contextual perspective has helped to highlight the fact that it is not good enough to plant churches simply for the sake of it, or because we believe it is vital. To plant churches without trying to identify the characteristics that contribute to a successful church plant is short-sighted and counter-productive. Is it possible to learn from the experiences of those who have already been involved in church planting? Of course it is! It is also essential that we do so!

Not only do we need to see churches planted in South Africa, but we need to ensure that the churches we are planting are healthy, vibrant expressions of all that God has intended His Church to be. With this in mind, we will now attempt to identify and to define the characteristics that mark a successful church plant.

CHAPTER 7: IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING

THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

OF A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANT

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Now that we have adequately defined church planting, summarized the various methods of church planting, revealed the important role church planting has played and is yet to play in South Africa, and established the importance of ensuring that the churches we plant will be relevant and effective, we will begin to identify the common characteristics of a successful church plant.

7.1 DEFINING OUR OBJECTIVE

It would be appropriate at this juncture to define what we mean by the terms "characteristics" and "success" as they relate to this study.

How Do We Define "Success"?

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines success as:

> A favorable outcome or accomplishment of what was aimed at.[219]

This definition may be accurate when dealing with absolutes, but does it effectively describe a process as diverse and abstruse as church planting - an activity that can be measured both practically as well as idealistically? When it comes to ministry, it is difficult to measure success in absolutes. *Your* definition of success may differ vastly from *mine*. The same is true of church planting. One person may define a successful church plant as one which gives rise to the rapid numerical growth of the new plant. Another may define success in terms of the spiritual development of the individual members who make up the local church. Still others may measure the success of a church plant by its ability to reproduce itself through a new plant. When used to measure the value of a ministry, success is a very relative term indeed!

---

[219] "success" as defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* - Sixth Edition edited by J.B. Sykes (Oxford University Press 1976) p1152.

How then do we define success as it relates to this study? We will define a successful church plant as follows:

A successful church plant is one which finds its origin and identity in a clearly recognizable call by God to reach a specific group of people within a culture or community, giving rise to the formation of a healthy, vibrant local church as a place where believers are effectively discipled and brought to maturity in the faith, serving under the Lordship and Headship of Jesus Christ, and who are taught to utilize their gifts and talents to the glory of God.

Built into the ethos of a successful church plant is the desire to be involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the proclamation of the whole message of the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and to uphold and proclaim the fundamental truths of the faith both to the lost and the saved, thereby facilitating the growth of the Church.

What is a "Common Characteristic"?

When we speak about a "characteristic" as it relates to this study, we are referring to those fundamental elements or qualities that ensure the success of a church plant. Our objective therefore is to determine whether there are any identifiable qualities or principles that combine to ensure the success of any given church plant.

The Divine Factor

It is imperative that we understand that it is God who builds His Church. I am not for one moment suggesting that our success is to be found in principles and not in God. The farmer can plant the seed, but God is the One who causes it to grow! When it comes to church planting, Paul makes this abundantly clear:

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.[220]

When God is involved, we cannot overlook His grace. The fact that any church plant grows is, after all, a divine act of grace! Furthermore, God can cause something to grow despite the terrible mess we make! Nevertheless, there are principles that the farmer needs to follow if he wants to see his crop grow. If he doesn't plant the seed in the right kind of soil, or furrow the soil appropriately, or if he neglects to water the crop, there will be no growth. Similarly, if there are any common characteristics or principles that church planters can follow that combine to facilitate the success of a church plant, then these very characteristics, as vital as they are, still find their origin and fulfillment in God.

It is thus not my intention to focus on the pragmatic aspects of church planting at the expense of biblical or spiritual insights, or to suggest that we can plant a successful church outside of God – He builds His Church! By identifying the common characteristics, I hope the reader will realize just how deeply routed they are in the mighty workings of Almighty God!

The Human Factor

When trying to identify the common characteristics of a successful church plant, it is imperative that we consider the examples of those who have already planted churches. Just as a farmer will learn to plant a crop by watching others, so we will determine any common characteristics that do combine to facilitate the success of a church plant by studying actual church plants.

---

[220] 1 Cor 3:7 The Holy Bible, New International Version (International Bible Society 1973, 1978, 1984)

Defining our Scope

Although the first portion of this study has dealt with identifying the need for church planting specifically in South Africa, the scope of the second portion, which deals with identifying the common characteristics, will be universal, since, by nature, characteristics are universal. If we are trying to identify common characteristics that contribute to the success of any given church plant, regardless of place, time or method, then these principles should be as applicable in South Africa as they are in any other part of the world. Our scope will therefore not be limited to South Africa only. We will deliberately measure these characteristics from a global perspective.

7.2) RESEARCH PROCEDURES – THE FIRST SURVEY

I went about identifying the common characteristics in the following way:

The First Survey and Interviews

I contacted more than 500 church planters, church planting directors, church planting organizations and church planting movements (via email, by post, by telephone or through personal interviews) to try to understand what those who have had experience in the field of church planting identified as being essential to the success of any given church plant. I received 99 responses (I will call those who responded the 'survey group'). Some of those who responded had only planted one church - others had been involved in church planting movements that had resulted in more than 700 local churches being planted in just three years! Collectively, the survey group had been involved in more than 2,500 church plants. This would give me a very clear indication of what the essential characteristics that contribute to the success of any given church plant could be. From this, I would be able to form a hypothesis, and thereafter test this hypothesis against actual case studies.

A Description of the First Survey and Interviews

I had one objective in mind when I conducted the first survey and the initial interviews – to identify what those who have had experience in church planting believe to be the common keys to a successful church plant. Following is a copy of the survey I sent out:

7.3 OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS – THE FIRST SURVEY

Once I had received all the surveys and interview results, I arranged the data under relevant key sub-headings. This enabled me to identify what the survey group considered to be essential to a successful church plant. This allowed for the formation of an hypothesis, which I could later test by way of further detailed case studies.

A Presentation of the Survey Results

The following points were identified during the survey. I have arranged all the data under the following headings; the church planter, prayer, evangelism, assessment, the coach/mentor, the leadership team, the vision, the calling, planning & research, the community/culture, the church plant, training, discipleship, finances, theology, lay ministry, and marriage and the family:

1. THE CHURCH PLANTER / TEAM LEADER

Absolute commitment of the church planter
Adequate pre-assessment & training
A submitted personality - I.e. not one personality type, but planters who are personally submitted to God.
Articulates vision in a way people want to be part of new plant
A strong gathering ability
Has the ability to multiply his passion in others.
Ability to recruit and place the right people in the right place and/or ministry
Not easily discouraged.
Extra-ordinary sense of calling and purpose
Resourceful
Constantly developing plans and vision to stay ahead of growth curve that makes sense to the congregation and leadership
Ministry style matches the area or enough people in the area to sustain a healthy church.
Is an encourager
Models integrity and can be entrusted with member's spiritual future.
Has an intuitive sense of what steps are necessary for progress
Visioning capacity
Intrinsically motivated
Creates ownership of ministry
Relates to the un-churched
Effectively builds relationships
Committed to church growth
Responsive to community
Utilizes the gifts of others
Flexible and adaptable
Builds group cohesiveness
Resilient
Exercises faith
Planter must be called of God
Must be gifted for the task
Must have the ability to plant
Experience of the planter is vital
Planter must be able to adapt to his location
Church planter must focus on making disciples, not planting churches.
i.e. the principle to follow is to plant church by making disciples
Disciple-making should not only be in the DNA of church planting, but the DNA of church planting
Church Planter must EMPOWER LEADERSHIP! He must equip the saints for works of service.
A solid Bible believing and Bible-practicing individual who is fully committed to church planting
God-called and God-led who responds to the leading of the Holy Spirit and who determines to go anywhere God will send him.
Must have solid Bible and theology training.
Must be in close communion with the Lord, I.e. a person of prayer.
Carefully screened
Adequately trained
Able to relate well to others
A passion for the Great Commission
Strong pastoral leadership
Passionate Spirituality - Revealed through a good devotional life, a growing, intimate relationship with God.

THE CHURCH PLANTER… (CONTINUED)

A passion for lost people
A vision-caster - a leader with the ability to articulate core values
A natural leader with string leadership qualities. Trying to plant a church with a weak leader is like trying to light a fire with a wet match!
Able to ignite a vision and draw people to that vision & to share the ministry.
A person who can network and build relationships with "not yet" Christians, I.e. one with a natural orientation to evangelism and a track record in soul winning.
One who is teachable.
Someone who is willing to be trained, who is Spirit-filled with a clear call of God.
Loyal to and in relationship with an umbrella organization.
Self-disciplined
Hard-working
Willing to make sacrifices
Always willing to learn and network
Workers that are under the lordship of Christ and totally dependent on the energizing work
Teachable and sensitive to the persuasions of those ministering to.
Has a natural visioning capacity
Has spousal and family support
Tenacity and endurance.
A good catalytic leader who is able to raise up lay leaders
A person who finds their identity in Christ, not in their ministry.
A self-starter
Incredibly persistent in the face of overwhelming challenges
Optimist
A person of great faith in what God can do
The ability to trust in the Sovereignty of God as it related to the ultimate growth of the church
A person who is able to equip and delegate to strong leaders
A person deeply immersed in personal spiritual disciplines
A person who does not compare themselves with the success of others
A person willing to seek out and actually heed wise counsel
A person who has strengths in organizational leadership and inter-personal relationships
A person who is not co-dependent and who is able to say "no".
A person who is able to accurately assess themselves and recruit people to compensate for their weaknesses
A person who is not overly controlling
A high "I" on the disk profile - an influencer
A vision-caster and motivator
A good preacher - able to communicate well
A person willing to be accountable to others
Gifted planter who fits the profile of a successful church planter
A clear vision
Trained planter
Adequate rest
Church planter should live and/or work in the area.
The church planter should display a practical, living faith coupled with the ability to share their faith in their context.
The choice of church planter is crucial to the success of the church plant.
A planter who is a visionary with directional leadership abilities
Strong gifting in communication
A passion and gifting for evangelism
A strong relationship with God

THE CHURCH PLANTER… (CONTINUED)

Emotional health and self image

Able to relate to people

Support of spouse and family

Personal integrity

Ability to motivate others

A clear vision and philosophy of ministry

Able to evangelize

Leadership gifts and abilities

An entrepreneurial organizer

Public Ministry skills

Enthusiasm

Faith/ Spiritual wisdom

Productivity

Knowledge of church planting/ growth

Discipline

Well developed and growing prayer life

Demonstrated competence in preaching

Demonstrated ability to lead someone to Christ

Evidence of having discipled an individual or small group in the last three years

Demonstrated leadership qualities - others have followed his leadership,

he has led other groups successfully; others trust his leadership and believe he is called.

A burning desire to save the lost

Some administrative abilities - organizer

A clear understanding of their personal profile - a church planter must have a good understanding

of who they are as a leader and what God has called them to do. This will help them to choose

a disciple-making strategy, which fits both them and their target audience.

Visionary leader

A strong public speaker

A risk-taking spirit - a willingness to take bold steps of faith. Nothing significant ever happens

when you require the resources and answers in advance.

Visioning capacity

Intrinsically motivated

Creates ownership of the vision

Relates to the lost

Effectively builds relationships

Committed to church growth

Utilizes the giftedness of others

Responsive to the community

Flexible and adaptable

Builds a team

Resilient

Exercises faith

Correct assessment of the church planter

A history of successful ministry

A true love for God - passionate spirituality

A true love for each other (team)

A true love for the harvest (style of dressing, language, type of music, style of preaching etc)

Must be drawn to his ministry by a sense of love for the people he is ministering to.

Commitment

Discipline

Courage

THE CHURCH PLANTER… (CONTINUED)

Patience
Faith
Holiness
The right planter - this is the most important factor
A clear sense of God's call
A willingness to innovate, to colour outside the lines, to try things nobody else has
Envisioning capacity.
Ability to coalesce a group
Preaching - ability to communicate in a public, often-times non-sympathetic setting.
Discerning - ability to know WHAT to do, WITH whom, and WHEN
Insight into people - make wise calls regarding their hearts
Insight into circumstances - using the available resources properly.
Perseverance
Desire and willingness to take the initiative
Competitiveness
Strong need to achieve
Self-confident ("holy boldness - the Caleb factor)
Good health
Outgoing, able to befriend un-churched and cultivate growing relationships
High energy level
Creativity and willingness to be innovative
Flexible
Passionate Spirituality, which includes a good devotional life and a growing, intimate
Relationship with God. Out of this will flow a passion for lost people who need Christ.
A vision-caster with the ability to clearly articulate core values - what the church will be and
what it will not be.
A natural leader with strong leadership qualities. If the planter is not a strong leader, it will be like
trying to start a fir with a wet match. He must have the ability to ignite a vision and draw people
to the vision and to share the ministry.
Someone who is teachable - we don't want the kind of person who has read a few books and thinks
he knows it all.
a LOVE FOR God and His Kingdom
Real concern for lost people - if we are going to be around lost people, then we must
love them as Christ loves them.
A willingness to serve, to work and to sacrifice
A commitment to have community with other believers
A willingness to give sacrificially
The ability to learn from mistakes and to remember that it is not about us, but about God
Person of prayer
Regularly invites people to follow Jesus Christ.
Shares leadership roles with other members of his team. He is not insecure.
The planter does not give up.
A good leader who is able to raise up lay leaders. Their operation is more one of discipling than
doing.
The right church planter is the most important factor.
A leader who possesses the characteristics of a successful church planter.
A leader who is a good match for the cultural groups being targeted.
Integrity in all things.
A love for people
A life-long learner.

THE CHURCH PLANTER… (CONTINUED)

A disciple of people
A hard worker
An initiator
A vision caster
A person who never, never, never gives up!
A willingness to work hard and faithfully.
A positive, sweet spirit.
Give appreciation and encouragement to lay people who come into the new church.
Someone who is primarily responsible for the church plant - it is good to have a team, but
one person must be clearly linked to the effort.
Strong family/spousal support.
Visionaries
Missionaries
Facilitators
Long-term workers.
Don't neglect your family.
Commitment by the church planter.
Has a visioning capacity
Is intrinsically motivated
Creates ownership of the ministry
Relates to the un-churched
Has spousal co-operation
Effectively builds relationships
Committed to church growth
Responsive to the community
Utilizes the gifts of others
Flexible and adaptable
Builds group cohesiveness
Demonstrates resilience
Exercises faith.
You can't beat work, work and more work.
It takes good organizational skills and time spent with people.
Character that has been tested over time.
Toughness of character that bounces back from disappointment, looking to God.
A flexibility to adapt to a changing environment.
An ability to work in a team with others who will often disagree.
The pastor's own walk with the Lord must be healthy and functional. He must spend
considerable time in personal; prayer seeking God's particular will in his ministry
and for his flock
The pastor must be about the mission of the church personally, actively and visibly. It is about him
doing, and leading others to follow. This means personal involvement in worship, evangelism
and discipleship.
The pastor must be a reasonably good preacher. He must be able to hold people's attention
for 30 minutes and say something worth hearing in a way that makes sense.
The pastor must be a leader. People must be willing to follow him, and he must be willing to lead
them, where, at times, they do not want to go. He must be willing to ask for the kind of
commitment and sacrifice that people do not generally want to make but for which they will
thank him n eternity.
The pastor must have a heart for the lost. He must care about their temporal and eternal needs.
He must be able to share a compelling testimony and logically sound reasons to
believe. And he must be able and willing to ask for a decision to surrender one's life to the Lord.

2. PRAYER

Consistent, meaningful prayer life

A righteous, powerful prayer base.

Prayer from church planters & prayer support from others.

Being led by the Holy Spirit rather than formulas or methods.

Church planters ascribe to proven principles of church planting, but avoid formula-based methodology.

Church plant must be continually immersed in prayer

Keep emphasizing the need to seek God diligently and to pray for the city they are called to.

Prayer and a solid prayer support group

Prayer and personal commitment to Jesus Christ by the church planters.

The success of a church plant is based on the imperative of a close walk and communion with Christ.

Strong emphasis on intercessory prayer

Realizing that each kingdom advance is opposed by Satanic forces

Is based on prayer

Prayer is vital

Personal prayer life of the planting pastor

Strong relationship with God

Intercessors recruited and planter's prayer life deepened

A strong prayer backing form, e.g. a mother church

A large network of prayer partners

Prayer network developed for interested intercessors

Spend considerable time seeking God's will for your life & the plant

An intercessory prayer team to lift up the planters and the harvest field.

Constant communication with and feedback from the team.

Prayer is essential for the planter and the new locale

Prayer is a priority

Prayer and fasting

A support network of Christians who will be prayer partners

Prayerfully planning and ordering life and ministry under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as

Head f the Church

The planter is a person of prayer and listens to the Lord for strategy.

A strong prayer support base

Practicing empowering prayer individually and corporately.

A church planter with an evangelistic focus.

The ability of the church planter to integrate local converts into the growth process.

Have a clearly defined prayer mobilization strategy.

Mobilize intercessory prayer for new ministry.

Maintain intercessory prayer and implement a prayer ministry.

Recruit prayer support and other partners.

Pray and seek God's face daily for favor with the city/area and people.

Prayer is crucial.

The pastor and leaders need to be men and women of prayer.

The effort has a group that is bathing it in prayer.

Earnest prayer for God's direction and strength

The effort must be bathed in prayer.

Focus on prayer.

The number one contribution to the success of a church plant is relationship with Jesus Christ.

Just as in Acts 4, we should commit ourselves to prayer and to the preaching of the Word.

Prayer, prayer, prayer and more prayer!

A LIFE of prayer

Adequate personal prayer and prayer support.

3. EVANGELISM

Need-oriented evangelism
Every member must be trained to share their faith
Service opportunities which identify spiritual gifts and motivate church members to function according to their gifts
Evangelism which does not ignore the felt needs, but which does not see them as determining factors
A careful laying of a Biblical foundation for evangelism both on a personal level as well as on a public proclamation level.
Personal follow-up and discipleship of new converts
Strategic evangelism - identifying the "felt-need" of the local community.
N.B. see Don Oates email submission for story - if the river could talk.
A commitment to intensive evangelism.
Need-oriented evangelism
Evangelism that is sensitive to context
Evangelism relevant to the needs of the un-churched (lifestyle, friendship evangelism)
The love of God for a world of people needing God's reconciliation
Clear commitment to evangelism
Remaining focused on evangelism rather than getting caught up in institutionalism
Ongoing evangelism and outreach
Evangelism through social outreach - neighbors, friends etc.
A passion for gifted evangelism
Motivated evangelism
Evangelism must be a priority
A seeker-focused service
Hospitality - need oriented evangelism (food etc)
A balanced ministry that meets the needs of the believer while reaching out to the unbeliever.
For a church to be healthy and truly doing God's work, it needs to have a means for
drawing in the un-churched person
Strong gifts in evangelism
A "God-inspired laser focus on the lost" - Jeff Christopherson - church Planter - Alberta, Canada
The ability to communicate spiritual truths with the un-churched, uninitiated audience in a relevant and meaningful way.
A clear vision for reproducing
Multiplication as the biblical goal for converts, groups and leaders
Evangelism and ministering to the needy in the community.
Seeing church planting as a primary vehicle to reach those who have not yet
experienced life transformation through a relationship with Jesus.
A willingness to befriend the un-churched and cultivate a growing relationship.
Deliberate commitment to reach "pre-Christians".
Keep evangelism as an ongoing priority.
Ongoing evangelistic passion and practice.
Meet and recruit new people into a network of evangelism.
Start evangelistic small groups in homes.
Initiate and partner with need-meeting ministries.
Evangelism is seen as a priority.
There must be a simple, clear presentation of the Gospel - repent and believe.
Focus on family in evangelism and discipleship
Focus on evangelism and missions.
Relationships with those we are trying to reach - trust is built on relationship, and we can't speak into people's lives without it.

EVANGELISM… (CONTINUED)

Need-oriented evangelism (like medical and dental work) played a key role in many of the churches planted in Romania. Which gave the planters credibility and accelerated the birth of the new church
Evangelism that is targeted into the community.
A perceived need for Christ in the people.
Evangelical outreaches into the community.
Don't expect people to come to you - you must go to them with the good news that you have.
Take time to spend time with the folks you are reaching.

4. ASSESSMENT

An in-depth assessment of planter/team to determine ahead of time if person has the gift-mix needed.
Determine amount of training needed in various areas.
Adequate and thorough assessment of church planter/team
Screening involves interviews with candidates & wives, group exercises, observation by a team of qualified assessors, and interviews with a licensed psychologist to be sure they are ready for the new church assignment
Careful screening of personnel.
Adequate screening is essential and should include a look into how the planter relates to other ministries/ministers.
Adequate assessment of the church planter
Adequate and thorough assessment of church planter is vital.
See also church planter
Find and mobilize church planter - prospects identified, evaluated, and recruited
Match planter to the appropriate target community
Planters commissioned and mentoring established
Both the planter and his spouse should be assessed in an approved assessment center if possible.
Psychological assessment and counseling from a professional counselor who understands church planting.
Church planter must go through church planter assessment.
Adequate assessment
A comprehensive assessment of the church planter and his spouse.
Essential that the right planter be found through assessment (four day evaluation process)
Screening of potential church planters is essential. A church planter needs more than a good heart and a desire to win the lost - he also needs a personality people can identify with and a solid work ethic.
Also, the wife/spouse of the church planter has to be equally equipped to handle the challenges of church planting
A proven track record in other ministries - how does he relate to people, un resolved issues, etc.
The planter has received a positive assessment report regarding his/her suitability
Assessment of the church planter is number one on our list (North American Baptist Church Planting Division)
Church planter must be assessed thoroughly.
A thorough job assessing and checking references. Past behavior is often the best predictor of future behavior.
Assessment centers which develop deeper relationships with potential plant pastors, and identifies areas for growth and accountability.
Pre-recruitment process through apprentices and internships.
A church planter assessment program which is thorough - we provide a four day evaluation process.

5. THE COACH/MENTOR

A Coach or mentor to lean on

Ongoing coaching of the planter

Supervisors who understand the church planting process or model.

Pastor needs support through prayer, emotional support and accountability

Mentoring established after the planter has been commissioned.

Mentor leaders during new church development

Coaches for planters mobilized and functioning

Supportive relationships for planters and leaders cultivated

On-the-job training provided to meet needs

Facilitate church multiplication - keep the chain going to form a regional church planting movement

A mother church which provides a foundation for prayer and financial support

A coach to help as an ongoing source of encouragement, wisdom and strength

Strong relationships to work through problems, give advice and get feedback

Coaching network

Connection with a church planting movement

Church planter sent forth under the clear recommendation of assessment mentors/mentors.
Coaches

A coach/mentor for the personal and professional growth of the planter.

Supportive mother church and partnering churches

A support network for the wives of planters

Encouragement must be given to the planter and his team

A support system is vital.

Coaching and encouragement

A mentor who will support and give gentle guidance

A support network of prayer partners who will be occasional workers

Healthy Gathering churches commit to parent and assist new churches in ways that grow and reproduce more new churches.

The planter has a supportive mentor relationship.

Initiate and develop personal support networks.

Make sure you have the full support from the leadership of your organization/ area of local churches.

Monitors who can provide encouragement, a listening ear and prayer support.

A coach to help the leader and team develop and implement an effective plan.

Strong support from a mother church.

A coach or mentor for the church planter.

6. THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

A strong core of leaders ready to support the pastor's vision
Committed ministry partners who will die on the hill of that church
Responsive to community
Committed to church growth
Good use of ministry gifts
Cohesive group
A clear understanding that God is the leader.
Understand the need for a plurality of leaders.
Team approach to ministry and committed core team.
Service according to spiritual gifting for laity
Workers that are under the lordship of Christ and totally dependent on the energizing work
of the Holy Spirit
Strong leadership
Adequate leadership team will prevent burnout of the planter pastor.
Developing healthy lay leadership expanded from original core
Identify a leader from the local area to work alongside you
A leadership team which is able to share the load and support the planter pastor
Dedicated "second-level" leaders (cell leaders etc.)
Humble leadership
A team, whether staff or volunteer, which make us a balanced picture of the Body of Christ.
A wider spectrum of spiritual gifts are needed than one lone church planter can provide.
Building a ministry team is essential.
A team consisting of at least two other paid or unpaid staff members
Leadership, which is transferable from leader to emerging leader, is encouraged.
Ministry teams of two or more
The team approach seems to have a great deal more success. Team work is vital.
One or two other leaders to confirm the call and become "yokefellows".
The planter is part of a larger leadership core team. Beginning alone is more difficult.
Shared leadership roles.
The leadership team owns the vision and is committed to demonstrating the core values
of their ongoing behaviors.
We offer God our very best, but always acknowledge and accept that He is in charge.
Develop disciple-making leaders and apprentice leaders.
Mobilize and support all essential ministry teams.
Help leaders expand their people networks.
Help leaders gather and multiply groups.
Understanding the importance of team as identified in Scripture - Moses and Aaron,
Paul and Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Timothy… Ask God for leaders, seek them out and knock
on their doors. Share the vision and let God plant it in their hearts!
Team work is vital to the success of a church plant.
An anointed leader with a strong leadership team in support.
A team working alongside the leader.
Members of the church planting team must have a finely tuned personal relationship with God
through Jesus Christ.
Team members must clearly understand the way God is working to build
His Church and be obedient as they join that work, forgetting self and totally relying on
God.
Team members must establish and maintain relationships with people in the community.
A leadership team (music, youth, small groups etc.) that is in place before the church plant - this
Is not always possible, but is the best option.

7. THE VISION

Church multiplication rather than church planting - churches are planted by other churches rather than by a single church planter. Are usually more successful and focused.

The planting church should see church planting as the natural extension of its own vision, purpose and growth.

A vision to make disciples rather than a vision to plant churches. Plants that are done within the context of making disciples yield stronger, healthier churches.

In an unreached area, disciples are made, and as a natural result, a church is birthed.

Have a kingdom-vision - be committed to the big picture of the movement of Christ in the area

A God-centered vision that submits to the omniscient and omnipotence of God.

A vision that focuses on making true disciples of Christ (see discipleship notes).

A total commitment to depend on Christ

A passion for missions: Great Commission

A clearly articulated and received vision which leads to a mission to reach the unreached in the community.

A clear vision which is clearly understood

Vision and philosophy of ministry clearly communicated and understood

Cultivated and shared vision for church planting

Vision and values imparted

A clear and compelling vision - if you don't know where you are going, no-one will be willing to send you, support you or join you.

Clear stated values of the new church

The ability to cast the vision for the church consistently and clearly to the congregation

A clear sense of what the vision and mission of the church should be

A vision for reproducing from the beginning

Defined philosophy of ministry – goals

God's leading

A clear sense of call and vision

The ability to clearly and repeatedly communicate that vision

A vision that is driven by God- centered passion which the leadership and initial members truly buy into.

The vision must be God-sized, so that it will only be accomplished as God puts His hand to it.

A faith in and trust in God ultimately.

A vision that encompasses a desire to evangelize and develop a community of faith.

Develop foundational vision and values

Verify selection and role of missionary pastor.

Focus your mission statement and goals.

Cultivate and expand ownership of vision and values.

Define and confirm official relationship with denomination.

Cultivate a commitment to new church parenting.

Determine your parenting strategy.

A vision that shares the main motivation of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Become obsessed as a community with the Great Commission - preaching the good news, making Disciples. Nothing will stand in the way of a church or man of God who is consumed with fulfilling Jesus' vision for enlarging the Kingdom of God.

A vision that incorporates a clearly defined philosophy of ministry - goals.

A vision that takes steps to focus on the community.

A vision that clearly preaches the Word of God.

Church planting which is undertaken by missionaries who have the big picture in mind.

8. THE CALLING

A mutual sense of calling from both husband and wife

Must be based on an indisputable call of God, not just a great idea.

Know that God loves people more than we do and will lead if we will trust and follow.

Let God write the story - allow Him to lead instead of trying to make it happen.

Having a clear call from God to church plant both for planter & spouse.

The number one priority is the assurance that it is what God wants and where He wants you to be.

God's leading / will

A definite call by the Lord through His word

God's timing which comes together in the move of His Spirit, the readiness of the field and the call of the church planter.

There should be evidence of a definite call from God to the planter

Deep spiritual life and a sense of call to church planting

A passionate, clear call of God

A pastor with a clear sense of God's call

Having a clear call from God to plant a church both in the planter and the spouse. If either have doubts, then at the first difficulty, there will be the temptation to bail out of the situation to something that looks more attractive.

The planter feels called of God to the task

Planting churches is not something WE choose, but something God calls us to, as with any other ministry.

Called by God - not man or good opportunity.

A clear call from God to plant a church.

A called church planter - someone who believes with all his heart that God has called
him to this task in this place.

A clear sense of God's call both to the caller and the location of the plant.

Dependence on the Holy Spirit, and not on self.

A clear call from God that will sustain the planter through those dark times

The pastor must know his calling in intimate detail. He must be able to articulate it to himself and those he is leading in clear, unambiguous language.

9. PLANNING & RESEARCH

A careful, well though out, practical, biblical plan for reaching a community.

Must have a clear vision, mission and core values in place before they start

Have a working plan in place before they start

Allow form to follow function. Planning is necessary but should not be so rigid as to adapt to purpose and needs.

Comprehensive evangelistic worship style and ministry strategy based on demographics, marketing and field study

Clear understanding of what "success" is and what strategy is needed to make it happen.

Networking relationships established

Permissions secured

Field surveyed

Focused strategy - appropriate reproducible methods determined, resources gathered and workable action plans developed

A proven disciple-making strategy/process that is open to change/adaptation. Innovation and risk taking should be built into the DNA of the church planter, but they do not replace the need for a clear and hopefully proven strategy

Planned grand opening/launch

PLANNING AND RESEARCH… (CONTINUED)

Intensive preparation: surveys, training for the church planter and team
In the right place - "hot spots" I.e. cities or countries with large populations that are growing rapidly
The right plan - each church plant is required to complete a "business plan" document which
is approved by the church planting committee.
A clear plan for making disciples.
Flexibility
Establish and update ministry goals and objectives in planning cycles
Pray and plan for healthy new church ministries to reach pre-Christians.
Focus your mission statement and goals.
Clarify your primary ministry strategy plans.
Plan and prepare all essential ministry systems.
Arrange for finances and initial structures.
Make sure that your house is in order. Never enter into an adventure of faith without properly
preparing - financially, materially etc. Don't have a lot of debt which could distract you
from the ministry and slow you in achieving the vision for the church.
Make sure that you have properly defined your target audience and that you have an idea of
how you/the team will reach that audience. Simply understanding how people think
is a wonderful aid in fulfilling the vision.
Planting a church is the right place - "Hot spots" - cities or countries where a population is
growing rapidly.
Each church plant is required to complete a "business" plan document for approval by the
church planting committee.
The strategy (including philosophy, model and methods) is appropriate for the target group.
The strategy has carefully thought out how large the future church should be.
A strategy which:
Defines the location
A clear vision for new effort in the area
A place that has a lack of evangelical churches.

10. THE COMMUNITY/CULTURE

Community must be understood, & dynamics of the micro-culture incorporated into the strategy
of the church.
A strong sense of community & fellowship
Church must be responsive to community
Service opportunities that identify spiritual gifts and motivate church members to function
according to their gifts.
Understand the context into which you are called to plant, and come in as a student,
learning about the culture of the area.
Involvement and visibility in the community. This is essential, and can be done through the use of
surveys and servant evangelism.
A warm, accepting community of faith with no sense of insiders and outsiders. Lots of grace
A refusal to be identified with any popular movement, political group, etc. so as not to exclude
anyone sincerely seeking Christ
Get involved in the community - don't merely do outreaches. Serve, participate, contribute -
society is often full of consumers - make sure you and your church are contributors!
Groups that give back are often accepted simply because they are contributing something. As
a Christian organism, we should give life to the community we are serving in by serving the
people in that area.

THE COMMUNITY/CULTURE… CONTINUED

One of the key factors in the success of a church plant is the involvement and visibility in the community.

Know the community in which God has placed you. Find out the needs in that community.

A community that needs a church.

Focus on touching your community.

Trust between the church planter and community is essential.

The church plant must have a sense of community.

A deep understanding of the community in which the church will be planted.

Building personal relationships within the selected community where the church will be planted

You must learn to identify with the people you are trying to reach so that you can communicate effectively to them.

Target a specific segment of the community, not everyone at once.

A team dedicated to meeting the needs of the people with whom they are working, willing and able to deal with cultural and other issues.

Flexibility to adapt to a changing environment.

The pastor must know the needs and passions of his community. He must know what people struggle with and what they worship.

Acceptance of individual that transcends economic/social position within the society.

A serious commitment to 'learn the language' of the people to whom you will go

Church planters identify well in language, living style, background etc.

Do your homework regarding the community you are reaching. I.e. kind of area, youth/older people, blue collared/ white collar, religious backgrounds.

Recognizing the right of people to worship in a way which is both biblical yet comfortable to their context.

Taking seriously the contextual and cultural factors of the target people

Adequate site selection matching the church planter with the target community.

Those in the church planting situation must be sensitive to the culture and to the needs of the people.

Knowing the local language and "world view" of the people would also be important.

Take relevance seriously in messages

A culturally sensitive strategy which becomes intrinsically united with the plant's purpose and mission.

Relevant preaching

Contemporary worship

Quality children's ministry and building a core group

Relevance - Just as the apostle Paul made himself 'a slave to everyone to win as many as possible', So new church development ministry is to be incarnational, indigenous and contextual to the community and to the people served.

The church planter must integrate himself into the community by learning the local language, attending celebrations and funerals, visiting the sick, etc. Know people's needs and people's names.

Build relationship by learning the language, the culture and the customs of the people.

Teaching must be presented in a way that fits in with the culture on the one hand, and yet confronts area of the culture that is contrary to God's Word on the other.

11. THE CHURCH PLANT

Solid Bible-believing and Bible-practicing church which is committed to church planting

A clear understanding of the type of church you are planting - pastor run or community based etc.

Program driven or purpose driven?

Recognize the needs of the church - identify what is important to local church.

Dynamic and relevant seeker-oriented worship services

Relationship-oriented

Accountability relationships for each person

Church plant must be a church planting church

It is important to plant an indigenous church, working to train up and work alongside the "people on the ground"

Prayer is vital in the choosing of the correct planter/s

Plant a church which understands the importance of church planting - keep the chain growing to establish a regional church planting movement.

Understand the point of the plant - not a collection depot for the previously churched.

A clear understanding of the church's mission and vision and a willingness to fulfill it despite outside pressures.

New and emerging churches develop interdependent partnerships with other churches and ministries across cultural, geographic and economic lines.

New and emerging churches participate as full partners in denominational life appropriate to their stage of development.

Church planting is built into the DNA of the church plant. The church plant must investigate it's role in future church planting - not view it as a once-off experience.

Organizing and equipping the community of faith for mission.

Recruit and mobilize a core group.

Begin regular worship and other public meetings.

Implement children's and other age-appropriate ministries.

Support and encourage new church multiplication.

Church plants don't always pop up overnight. Do not grow weary in doing well!

A strong, caring ministry

Ministry opportunities for the laity according to their spiritual gifting

Comprehensive evangelistic worship style and ministry strategy based on demographics, marketing and field study

Worked with the premise - every person has something to contribute

A balanced ministry that meets the needs of the believer while reaching out to the unbeliever.

Authentic New Testament models for congregating, worship, ministry and evangelism.

Quality music, children's ministry and youth ministries as soon as possible.

Leadership with an ability to coalesce a group

A visioning capacity

To meet the needs of the whole person, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually.

New and emerging churches assume responsibility for their own ministry development as soon as and as fully as possible, including their own vision, staffing, training and financial support.

Keep process relevant for enfolding newcomers.

Evaluate and ensure ministry effectiveness.

Ministry that recognizes the importance of God's role in the plant. Without a move of God's Spirit, the church will struggle to get a start.

Ministry to the children.

THE CHURCH PLANTER… (CONTINUED)

Great childcare.
A love for people
A love for people that exemplifies godly humility and transcends personalities, cultures &
other prejudices.
The focus should be people rather than programs or property.
Property should serve the programs, and programs should serve the people.
People are not the means to the end, but the end itself.
Personal time with people (visiting etc.)
The love of God for a world of people needing God's reconciliation

12. TRAINING

Leadership training of faithful men
Preparation from the beginning of missionary's departure to places where Christ is not known.
Adequate training
Adequate teaching ministry
Strong emphasis on leadership training
Development of spiritual gifting of the laity.
Training is important, but it is the training of a spirit-filled person with a clear call.
Training of lay leadership
Continual training
Adequate preparation of church planter essential
Developing healthy lay leadership
Bible teaching which is without error and in context
Church planter/team adequately trained for the task
On-going training
Interactive, highly participative Bible study that is kept simple
Training of church planters is vital.
Empowering and support of indigenous leadership is a key to the authentic development of
mono-ethnic and "multi-think" churches.
Gather and multiply disciple-making leaders, groups and communities.
Training is important, but we would rather have a person that is Spirit-filled, teachable and a clear
call than someone with lost of training who will not listen when suggestions are made or an
adjustment to strategy is needed.
Loyalty to the denomination - feels good about who he is working with and is loyal to the
umbrella organization.
An attractive personality - a person who is hospitable, accepting of people who are
different, self-disciplined, works hard, willing to make sacrifices, always learning, and always
networking.
A person who can network and build relationships with the "not yet". Christians - he has a
natural orientation to evangelism and a track record in soul winning.
The planter has received planter training
Good training
Ongoing training that deals with gifts and growth areas for the missionary-pastor.
One of the main functions of our office is to provide support, coaching, mentoring and training of
new church planters.
The leader and team have adequate training.
Focus on training and empowering of local leadership.
Qualified church planters who have experience in pastoral ministry.
There needs to be a lot of preparation - it is always best to have some training and experience.

He must be prepared and obedient, joining God in His work in the community.
Adequate training of the church planter prior to departing to the field of work.

13. DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship before and after evangelism - to bring many to a clear understanding of the basic doctrinal themes before they can make a true choice to follow Christ, not just add Him to their belief structure.
After evangelism - Making true followers of Christ who have depth to their faith!
A commitment to discipleship of those who come to know the Lord.
Adequate teaching ministry.
Emphasis on and systematic discipling of new believers
Disciple-making which implies planting churches faithful to the Great commission in the spirit of the great commandment.
Remains focused on discipleship rather than getting caught in institutionalism (staffing, budgeting, building, programming
Lessons that are pre-planned, in proper order and comprehensive, teaching a whole doctrine.
Give notes where this is possible.
2 Tim 4:1-10 - equipping the saints for works of service
A balanced ministry that meets the needs of the believer while reaching out to the unbeliever.
Christians need support, programs for growth, and equipping for outreach.
New Testament ministry built on relationships, vital for evangelism, ministry and development of new leaders.
A clear plan for making disciples. Presenting every person mature in Christ is your top goal.
Lots of prayer, risk-taking and abiding in Christ.
Discipleship must be seen as an ongoing priority.
Implement processes of enfolding newcomers.
Implement processes for mobilizing members according to gifts.
Discipling of people is essential.
God's activity must be communicated and celebrated with other believers.
Focus on building people
Focus on family in evangelism and discipleship
The Great Commission was to make disciples, not converts - but many are making only the latter, and not disciples. Equipping believers for the work of the ministry is what discipleship is all about.
Small groups.
The pastor must be committed to making disciples and not just decisions. He must have a passion to see people mature in their faith to the point of being wholly committed to Christ.
He must be committed to seeing them develop in each of the spiritual disciplines, and he must lead them to practice biblical stewardship of their resources, including their money, their time and their lives.
The personal ministry of God's practical Word for the progressive sanctification of the soul.

14. FINANCES

Adequate finances
Adequate funding
Long-term financial support.
A modest level of financial support

FINANCES… (CONTINUED)

Long-term and/or perpetual dependence on outside financial sources tends to be injurious to healthy church development.

All emerging congregations are to be fully informed of and expected to contribute to personnel costs from the very beginning.

Ministries encouraged to contribute to denominational ministries as an expression of partnership with the denomination.

Congregations which have not achieved financial independence within a 6-8 year time frame will likely not do so under the same leadership and ministry model.

Having a full-time salaried pastor is not always the most appropriate leadership or ministry model.

Ministry pastors are encouraged to teach and actively promote faith and good stewardship in financial matters from day one.

Ministry leaders are encouraged to recommend and model the biblical concept of the personal tithe

Members are encouraged to contribute the major portion of their tithes and offerings To their local congregational ministry.

The effort is adequately funded, but does not rely on outside funds too long.

The sponsoring institution is appropriately supportive - not too involved, yet not too aloof.

15. THEOLOGY

A strong, solid theological foundation

Proclaim the whole counsel of God, from the simple Gospel to the most difficult theology.

Faithfulness to the full proclamation is vital to the salvation of men & maturation of the Body of Christ.

Biblically centered teaching which challenges the individual to submission to God's design for their life

A clear understanding of what a church is

A deep commitment and understanding that the Good news really is good!

A commitment to true biblical indigineity (both as a goal and as a determiner of methodology and practices

Consistent, systematic biblical teaching.

Hold to a set of fundamental doctrines without compromise.

The proclamation of one message - the Gospel of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ

Be sensitive to culture, but do not pollute the pure message. Paul carried over the trans-cultural and universal commands of Christ and the message of His grace.

Teaching that is biblically sound and lived as well as taught

There must be a simple, clear presentation of the Gospel - repent and believe.

Communicate the Gospel in a way people will be able to understand.

The goal is not just to share the Gospel, but to share it in a way people can understand it.

An adequate understanding of the whole of God's Word to meet the challenges that will come up in the church plant, but also to provide a good foundation that will keep the church going in the right direction.

16. LAY MINISTRY

Work with the premise, "Every person has something to contribute".
The ability to have good programs and ministries without burning out a few people.
Pastor is the coach, people are the players. A single pastor/pastoral staff can only grow the church so far. Real growth comes when people get involved in ministry.
Every person has a role in the kingdom of God.
All people are gifted, but not equally gifted - the principle of "complementariness".
Developing a healthy lay leadership who expand from the original core.
Challenging people to commitment and participation (getting them 'on-board').
Develop and mobilize new church leaders.
Our work isn't complete until we have raised up others to do what we are doing and let them replace us or send them out to do the same in other places.
Use both your personal strengths and the strengths of people coming in.
Utilize the gifts of others.
Build group cohesiveness

17. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

A strong, healthy marriage relationship
A whole-hearted commitment to the work from church planter's whole family.
Spousal co-operation
Has spousal and family support
Commitment of both planter and spouse is essential
Support and involvement of spouse and family
Spousal support is necessary.
Spousal support
If married, a spousal call as well. You can get away with limited spousal co-operation in pastoring an existing church, but not in church planting.

Key Points

The following key points were identified by the survey group:

1. The church planter – character, gifting and personality

2. Prayer

3. Evangelism

4. Assessment of the planter/team

5. The presence of a coach/mentor

6. A leadership/ministry team

7. A clear vision, communicated clearly

8. A definite calling to plant the specific church in the specific area

9. The planning of and preparation for the church plant

10. Sensitivity to the community and culture

11. The role, ethos and core values of the church plant

12. Training of the church planter, planting team and lay ministry

13. Effective discipleship of the converts and church members

14. The impact of finances and support on the church plant

15. The theology of the church plant

16. The use of lay ministry

17. The support of the church planter's spouse and family

Because some of the key points are related (prayer and a godly vision, for example, would be closely related), it would be appropriate to summarize this list even further, grouping related key points together under suitable, relevant sub-headings, so that we can present a workable summary outline.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARIZING THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFIED BY THE SURVEY GROUP

OUTLINE

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

We will now form a summary outline of what the survey group identified as the common characteristics of a successful church plant.

8.1 A GODLY VISION

The first characteristic of a successful church plant is the understanding (and the subsequent application) of a vision that finds its inception, identity and fulfillment in God. The survey group identified a successful church plant as one in which the planter or planting team recognizes the sovereignty of God as being core to the success of any given church plant. As such, prayer plays a vital role in the inception and implementation of the plant. Furthermore, church planting takes place from the premise of a clear understanding of the biblical mandate given by God to His Church, and a divine calling to the actual plant.

The Priority of Personal Prayer

The success of any given church plant is based on the imperative of a close walk and communion with Christ. The personal prayer life of the planting pastor and the planting team must therefore be consistent and meaningful.

The Priority of Purposeful Prayer

The church planter, the church planting team and the church members must prayerfully plan and order their lives and ministries under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the rightful Head of His Church. Prayer should permeate every area and stage of the plant. The planter must be a person of prayer who listens to the Lord for strategy, and who daily seeks God's face for favor with the city and its people. The planter/team should be people who earnestly pray for God's direction and strength.

The Priority of Prayer Support

Further to identifying the important role of personal, purposeful prayer, the survey group also emphasized a strong prayer backing as being crucial. The planter and planting team should deliberately mobilize an intercessory team for the new ministry. Regular feedback to

and from the intercessory team is beneficial. The motto should be; "When you think you've prayed enough, pray some more!"

A Clear Understanding of the Biblical Mandate for Church Planting

In addition to the role that prayer plays in establishing a godly vision, the survey group also identified a good understanding of the biblical role of church planting as being key. The understanding of the biblical mandate for church planting is reflected in the life and ministry of the planter, the team and the congregation, and forms part of the core values of the church plant. It often finds expression in the new plant's subsequent involvement in church planting.

The Vision

The vision for the new church plant is one that submits to the omniscience and omnipotence of God, that focuses on making true disciples of Jesus Christ, and that reflects an ongoing passion for mission. The vision needs to be both clear and compelling, and must be well articulated. If the planter or the people involved in the plant do not understand where they are going, few will be willing to send, support or join the cause. The vision should thus include a defined philosophy of ministry goals and clearly stated values of the new church.

Central to the church's vision must be a clear understanding of the need to make disciples rather than converts. It encompasses a desire to evangelize and develop the community of faith. It is a vision that commits to the big picture of the Great Commission, and that is fulfilled in the spirit of the Great Commandment. The new church has clearly stated values and objectives with a defined philosophy of ministry that is understood by all.

The Calling

The church plant and the commissioning of the planter/team must be based on an indisputable call of God, not just a response to a great idea or a perceived need. There needs to be a clear assurance that the planter and planting team are where they need to be - where God wants them to be. The calling should be recognized by a sending body or denomination. It should also be shared mutually between husband and wife in the case of planters who are married, since both will need the assurance of such a calling when things get tough. There should be a clear understanding that planting a church is not something we choose, but something God calls us to.

8.2 A COMPETENT CHURCH PLANTER/ CHURCH PLANT TEAM LEADER

The second key characteristic in a successful church plant has to do with the church planter or church plant team leader. The choice of church planter has been identified as one of the greatest contributing factors to the success or failure of a church plant. Having the right planter in the right place is vital! With the above in mind, we will examine the quality and character traits of a successful church planter.

Quality Traits of a Successful Church Planter/Team Leader As Identified by the Survey Group

A successful church planter is not simply someone with the right qualifications and gifting. The survey group identified specific qualities and character traits in a successful church planter/team leader. These are detailed below:

i) A Submitted Personality

The planter/team leader is teachable and approachable. He is willing to be trained. He is able to take correction and advice. He seeks out and heeds wise counsel. He has a clearly

receptive conscience. He depends on the abiding and empowering presence of God in his life and ministry.

ii) A Love for People

The church planter/team leader is a people's person. He has an ability to relate well to people, with a natural tendency to focus on people, not programs. He is outgoing, and is able to befriend both the churched and the un-churched, cultivating relationships. He is a life-long disciple with a heart to disciple others.

iii) A Personal Integrity

The church planter/team leader is a person of integrity. He exemplifies the qualities of an elder as defined in Scripture. He is faithful in his personal relationship with God.

iv) A Secure Personality

The church planter/team leader is not competitive or easily threatened by others. He finds his security in a well-developed sense of his personal calling and godly purpose.

v) A Passionate Spirituality

The church planter/team leader is someone with a passionate spirituality revealed through a strong devotional life. His love for God is displayed through a passion for the saints and a hunger for the lost. He seeks to handle the Scriptures in a responsible manner. He finds his identity in Christ, not in his ministry.

Character Traits of a Successful Church Planter/Team Leader As Identified by the Survey Group

i) An Entrepreneur

A successful church planter/team leader has been identified as a person who is willing to innovate - to 'colour outside the lines' - and to take bold steps of faith. He is willing to take the initiative.

ii) Flexible and Adaptable

He is able to adapt to change. He adapts well to the area in which he serves, and assimilates well with the people in that area.

iii) A Hard Worker

A successful church planter/team leader is not afraid to work hard, with a willingness to serve, to sacrifice, and to lead by example.

iv) A Motivated Personality

A successful church planter/team leader is prepared to walk the extra mile. He never, never, never gives up, and is intrinsically motivated.

Gifting and Abilities of a Successful Church Planter/Team Leader

i) A Strong, Visionary Leader

The survey group defined a successful church planter/team leader as one who is able to multiply his passion in others. He has the ability to recruit and place people in the right gifting and ministries. He has a natural visioning capacity, and motivates others to run with the vision through directional leadership abilities.

The spiritual gift of leadership/administration is present. The Greek word for "administrator" is "kubernesis", which denotes the ability to pilot or steer.[221] The chief task of the helmsman or pilot of a ship was to keep his ship on course, steering the vessel away from dangerous rocks above and beneath the surface. He would map the direction of the craft, know the craft's limits and capabilities as well as the skill and experience of the crew. In this sense, the church planter is someone who can envision, recognize gifts and ministry abilities, and "steer" the church and the ministries within the church in the right direction.

ii) A Good Communicator

The successful church planter/team leader should have public ministry skills, and should be gifted with the ability to preach and to communicate vision.

iii) A Proven Ministry

The church planter /team leader should have a proven ministry. His faithfulness and abilities must have already been tested and recognized by others.

Preparation and Support of the Church Planter/Team Leader

i) Assessment of the Church Planter/Team Leader

Another essential element which survey participants identified as being vital to the success of a church plant is correct and comprehensive assessment of the church planter/team minister. Because the church planter contributes so strongly (either to the success or to the failure of a church plant), assessment becomes vital, especially in a situation where long-term relationships are not possible. The assessment process should include interviews with candidates, and where possible, an element of observation which serves to identify ministry skills and character traits.

---

[221] W.E. Vine: An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Thomas Nelson Publishers 1985) p. 276

Assessment is also vital because of the quality traits and ministry gifting needed in the church planter. Screening should include a look into how the planter relates to other ministries and ministry leaders. A church planter needs more than a good heart and a desire to win the lost – he also needs the gifting vital to church planting, with a personality people can relate to, and a solid work ethic. Assessment is vital where established relationships do not exist between the church sending team and the church planter/team leader being sent.

ii) Adequate Preparation of the Planter/Leader

Adequate preparation of the church planter/team leader is also essential. Ongoing training should seek to address the gifts and growth areas of the church planter/team leader.

iii) Spousal/Family Support

The survey group noted that church planters/team leaders who are married must have a strong marriage relationship. A whole-hearted commitment to the work is required from the whole family. One may be able to get away with limited spousal or family support in a pastoral capacity, but not in church planting.

iv) Relevant Support Structures

Support plays a vital role in the life of the church planter/team leader. He will discover very soon that inadequate support will have an exacting impact on him.

- *The Role of the Coach/Mentor*

The survey group indicated that every church planter/team leader should look for a coach or a mentor to lean on as an ongoing source of encouragement, wisdom and strength. A support network for the wives of planters should also be encouraged.

- *Adequate Financial Consideration*

Survey participants noted that adequate finances for the church plant are important – for the simple reason that the planter/team leader and the church plant will incur living and running costs. Having a full-time salaried pastor/planter was not always seen as the most appropriate leadership or ministry model. Many successful church plants took place with the planter/team leader working bi-vocationally. Whichever model the planting team chooses, appropriate consideration must be given to the financial matters of the church from the very outset. Church planters/team leaders who will be working bi-vocationally should have researched and secured employment before the actual plant takes place.

A modest level of financial support from the denomination/sending body was encouraged. Long-term or perpetual dependence on outside finances, however, often proved injurious to the church plant. Congregations that had not reached financial independence within a 6-8 year period were not likely to do so. The sponsoring institution should aim at being appropriately supportive – not too involved, yet not too aloof. If financial support is given, a realistic target date for financial autonomy should be agreed upon.

The emerging congregation must also be fully informed of and expected to contribute to the personnel and running costs of the plant from the very beginning. Ministry pastors are encouraged to recommend and model the biblical concept of the personal tithe.

8.3 AN ADEQUATE MINISTRY TEAM

The third characteristic of a successful church plant, as identified by the survey group, relates to a team approach to ministry. Whether a sole church planter is first appointed to initiate the plant (raising up a lay ministry team during the process of the plant), or whether

a team approach is adopted from the very outset, an adequate ministry team is invaluable. Let us take a moment to summarize what was said about the leadership team, the lay ministry team and spiritual gifting within the plant:

i) The Leadership Team

The leadership team consists of a strong core of leaders ready to support the pastor's vision. They are committed ministry partners who will be prepared to 'die on the hill' of the church plant. The ministry team consists of leaders who submit to the Lordship of Christ, who help share the ministry load, and who support the planting pastor/team leader. The leadership team takes ownership of the vision and lives out the core values of the church. Although having a strong leadership team in place before the actual plant is not always possible, it has been identified as one of the best options.

ii) Lay Ministry

A healthy and vibrant church plant is one that is able to raise up and to encourage healthy ministries and programs, thus preventing the burn-out of a few key people. Ministry is undertaken from the premise that every person has something to contribute. One of the key purposes for the existence of the five-fold ministry, as evidenced in Ephesians chapter 4, is to perfect the saints for works of service. Survey participants identified successful church plants as those plants where leaders and members of the new church plant understood that the role of the pastor or core leadership team was not complete until other ministries had been raised up, and the gifting of church members recognized, developed and utilized - either in the existing church plant, or in other parts of the harvest field. Real growth took place when people were encouraged and allowed to get involved in ministry.

8.4 <u>FOCUSED AND SUSTAINED EVANGELISM</u>

Participants of the survey identified the crucial role evangelism plays in any given church plant. It may appear that we are stating the obvious when we mention evangelism as a key contributor to the success of any given church plant. However, it is a focused and sustained evangelism that aims to present the life-changing message of the gospel in a relevant, caring, homogenous manner. Evangelism should thus be sanctioned, central and specific.

i) Evangelism that is Sanctioned, Central and Specific

Members must be encouraged to share their faith through a careful laying of the biblical foundation for evangelism, both on a personal level, as well as through public proclamation. A deliberate commitment to see the lost won for Christ must form part of the biblical priority for every convert, member, group and leader. In this way, it must be clearly understood that evangelism is something that has been sanctioned by God – it is not to be treated like an 'add-on' activity after all else has been taken care of. It must always be seen and treated as one of the God-ordained priorities of the church plant – one of the reasons why the plant exists in the first place. Evangelistic programs and activities must also have the simple proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ at the core. Evangelism that works is sanctioned, central and specific.

ii) A Clear Message Communicated Clearly

There must be a simple and clear presentation of the gospel - a call to repentance and faith in Christ - in a manner that will be easily understood by the target community. It is thus a message communicated clearly in the context of the community.

iii) A Community Focus

The methodology of evangelism should not ignore the felt needs of the community, but should not necessarily see them as determining factors. Evangelism should be relevant to the needs of the un-churched without taking away from the centrality of the gospel message.

Survey participants reported that need–oriented evangelism played a key role in many of the plants, and helped to give planters credibility, thus accelerating the birth of the new church. People could see the Great Commission communicated in the spirit of the Great Commandment, and this often won respect and trust. However, the church planter and planting team must be careful not to allow the simple message of salvation to be compromised or replaced by programs or social responsibilities.

Church plants should be seen as a primary vehicle to reach those who have not yet experienced life transformation through a relationship with Jesus Christ. The planter and team must trust the Lord for relevant ways to deliberately, purposefully and continually reach the community in which they have been called to serve.

8.5 ADEQUATE TRAINING & TEACHING

The Preparation of the Planter/ Team leader and Planting Team

Adequate preparation of the planter/team leader and the planting team have also been identified as vital to the success of any given plant. While there are clearly some ministers who are very effective despite never having received any formal pastoral or church planting training, it is more often the exception, not the rule.

It is training that is pre-emptive and progressive. It will be far easier for the planter and planting team to begin a plant as prepared as they can possibly be, rather than having to do all their training 'on the job'. While it is true that we will never be fully prepared for the task at hand, we must not renege on our responsibility to be as prepared as possible for the task and area we have been called to.

The planter and team should also strive to ensure their training and preparation is an ongoing process, thus identifying shortcomings and weaknesses, and undertaking to continually better themselves.

The Role of Discipleship

Not only is the ongoing preparation of the planter and the team vital, but the need for discipleship is also key to the success of any church plant. Reaching the lost and presenting every believer mature in Christ are two of the top priorities. The church planter and team should always remember to focus on discipleship rather than getting caught in institutionalism (staffing, budgeting, building programs, etc.). Christians need support, programs for growth, and equipping for ministry. A clear plan for making disciples is necessary, and should include the following:

i) Discipleship in the First Principles of the Faith

New converts must be brought to a clear understanding of the basic doctrinal cornerstones of the faith. Discipleship must therefore incorporate in its program steps to teach those who are young in the faith.

ii) Discipling the Mature

Discipleship should also look to ensure that true followers of Christ mature in their faith. The planter and planting team has a responsibility to lead the whole church to practice biblical stewardship of their resources, their time and their lives through the personal ministry of the practical Word for the progressive sanctification of the believer.

iii) The Theology of the Church Plant – The Message Behind the Ministry

It does not help to plant a growing church that has no strong, solid theological foundation. The planter must ensure that he proclaims the whole council of God – from the simple gospel to the most difficult theology. Consistent, systematic, biblical teaching should challenge individuals to submit to God's design for their lives. Steps should be taken to be sensitive to culture, but not at the expense of the pure message. The church planter/team leader should always seek to maintain a balance between teaching in a way that, on one hand, fits in with the culture, and on the other, confronts areas within the culture which are contrary to God's Word.

8.6 <u>PLANNING AND RESEARCH</u>

Survey participants identified planning and research as another key characteristic. But what kind of planning and research did they identify? Planning must focus on three important aspects - the people, the place and the program.

i) The People – Planning That Takes the Dynamics of the People / Community into Account

If one is to effectively reach a community, one must first understand that community. The dynamics and micro-culture of the community will invariably influence the strategy the church adopts in reaching them. The church planter/planting team should approach the area

as students, learning about the culture of the people (to communicate the gospel effectively, the planter and team must be able to identify with them). Learn to know what difficulties people face, and what they worship. Just as Paul made himself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible to Christ, so the development ministry of the new church must be incarnational, indigenous and contextual.

ii) The Place – Planning That Understands the Community and the Context

A comprehensive, evangelistic ministry style is necessary based on a clear understanding of the target audience. Understanding how people think, for example, is a wonderful aid in fulfilling vision. The planter and team must have a clear understanding of their purpose within the community, the people they are aiming to reach, and how each facet of ministry will be birthed or adapted to reach them. The planter or team must learn to take the contextual and cultural differences of the community seriously, and fashion their ministry accordingly. This takes planning and research. By learning the language, culture and customs of the people, the gospel can be presented in a way that accommodates the culture on the one hand, yet confronts the areas of the culture that are contrary to God's Word on the other.

iii) The Program – Planning That Allows Form to Follow Function

A careful, prayerful, thoughtful, practical and biblical plan for reaching a community is vital. The planter/team must have a clear vision, mission and understanding of core values in place before they start the plant. However, planning should not be so rigid as to be unable to adapt to purpose and needs.

8.7 <u>THE CHURCH PLANT</u>

The seventh dynamic identified by those who participated in the survey addresses the type of church being planted. Survey participants defined a successful church plant as one that is evangelical, multiplicative, envisioned, active, and autonomous.

i) An Evangelical Church

It doesn't help to plant a church that doesn't keep to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, as this defeats the very purpose for planting a church in the first place. It is imperative to plant a solid, Bible-believing, Bible-practicing church that clearly understands and adheres to a clearly communicated statement of faith, and that emphasizes core Christian fundamentals.

ii) A Multiplying Church

Survey participants emphasized the importance of planting a church that accepts and responds to the challenge of church planting, i.e. plant a church-planting church! The church plant must understand and embrace its role in fulfilling the Great Commission.

iii) An Envisioned Church

The local church clearly understands and implements the vision, i.e. the church knows why it exists, and actively seeks to fulfill its purpose. Any successful church plant must understand the reason why it exists. It has not been established simply to become a collection depot for the churched. A clear understanding of the church's mission and vision will be the motivation needed when outside pressures come. Authentic New Testament models for congregation, worship, ministry, evangelism and discipleship must be understood and implemented.

iv) An Active Church

The successful church plant is one that has a balanced ministry of meeting the needs of the believer, while taking care to reach out to the unbeliever. The leadership has the ability to coalesce a group, providing adequate teaching, training and ministry opportunities for the laity according to their spiritual gifting.

The church is active within the community. As a Christian organism, the church gives life to the community it is serving. One of the key factors in the success of a church plant is its involvement and visibility within the community. The church plant must actively focus on touching the community.

v) A Loving Church

Survey participants report that successful church plants provide a strong, caring ministry. A love for people permeates every avenue of the church, exemplifying godly humility while transcending personalities, cultures and other prejudices. The focus should be people, not programs or property. The church plant must always strive to live out the love of God in a world needing reconciliation.

vi) An Autonomous Church in Ongoing Relationship

The ministry recognizes and acknowledges the importance of God's pre-eminent role in the plant. The church is thus wholly dependent on it's Head. It recognizes the importance of relationship and fellowship with other churches/denominations. However, each local church should have as its goal, a long-term vision for autonomy from perpetual dependence on outside financial sources. Congregations that have not achieved financial autonomy within a 6-8 year period will likely never do so, no matter the leadership or ministry model.

8.8 A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Let us take a moment to summarize the above information into a seven-point outline:

1. **A GODLY VISION** for the church plant resulting from a clear calling from God, directed through the priority of personal, purposeful prayer, sustained by effective prayer support and motivated by a clear understanding of the biblical mandate for church planting.

2. **A COMPETENT CHURCH PLANTER/TEAM LEADER** who displays a submitted and secure personality, a love for people, personal integrity and passionate spirituality, with the right mix of character traits and spiritual gifting.

3. **AN ADEQUATE MINISTRY TEAM** comprised either of a strong initial ministry core group, or as the result of the purposeful and ongoing development and use of lay ministry.

4. **FOCUSED AND SUSTAINED EVANGELISM** that is sanctioned by God, central to the vision and specific to the target community, and that effectively and accurately communicates the gospel message.

5. **ADEQUATE TRAINING AND PREPARATION** of the church planter and planting team, and effective discipleship of the converts and church members through the presentation of a comprehensive, practical and systematic theology.

6. **PLANNING AND RESEARCH** that seeks to know the dynamics of the people and the community, and that arrives at a prayerful, biblical and adaptable plan.

7. **A CHURCH PLANT** that has an evangelical heart, a multiplicative goal, an envisioned motive, an active purpose within the community it seeks to reach and serve, and a loving disposition both to its members and to the lost within its target group.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GROWTH PATTERNS OF THE CHURCH PLANTS AND THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFIED BY THE SURVEY GROUP

INTRODUCTION

After I had concluded and summarized the common characteristics as identified by the survey group, I measured these results against 12 case studies. I chose church plants which had shown good patterns of growth since their inception, church plant which had grown and then reached a plateau and finally, church plants which had failed after their initial launch.

This was an extensive study conducted primarily by means of interview. I concluded that there was a very definite connection between the church plants and the common characteristics I had compiled from the input of the survey participants. Church that grew displayed strong evidence of every single characteristic identified. Church that plateaued had evidence of most of the common characteristics, but not all of them. Church plants that failed lacked evidence of several of the common characteristics.

Church Plants that Grew

Of the successful church plants, every single one had strong evidence of the presence of all seven common characteristics. Each church plant scored a maximum total of 20 points in the summary chart analysis.

Church Plants that Stagnated, Declined or Failed

Again it was very clear that a lack of one or more of the common characteristics identified by the survey group had a very definite impact on the church plant. We see this not only through the evidence presented to us, but also through the views expressed by the planters. When alluding to some of the mistakes they made (or things they neglected to do) and how they would rectify the situation were they ever to plant again, planters often highlighted one or more of the common characteristics identified by the survey group. We can therefore conclude that the absence of the common characteristics identified by the survey group had a very definite, negative impact on the subsequent growth patterns of the church plant.

CHAPTER 10: BIBLICAL AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANT

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Now that we have summarized the common characteristics of a successful church plant as identified by the survey participants and measured these findings against actual case studies, we will consider whether any biblical and extra-biblical evidence exists to further support our findings before drawing a conclusion to the study.

10.1 IN RELATION TO A GODLY VISION

1. **A GODLY VISION for the church plant resulting from a clear calling from God, directed through the priority of personal, purposeful prayer, sustained by effective prayer support, and motivated by a clear understanding of the biblical mandate for church planting.**

A Clear Calling from God

The first recorded commissioning of men to a church-planting ministry is recorded in Acts 13. As the early church leaders prayed, God singled out Paul and Barnabas as chosen instruments. God anointed them for the task to which He had commissioned them. The call was recognized and authenticated by other church leaders:

> In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping 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 fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.[222]

A Surrendered and Submitted Vision

Further biblical evidence supports the fact that Paul and his ministry team relied on the leading and envisioning of the Holy Spirit during their missionary journeys:

> Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 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 from Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at

---

[222] Acts 13:1-4: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.[223]

The Role of Prayer

Again there is clear evidence to support the priority prayer played in church planting in the life of the early church. Indeed the very first call to a church-planting ministry was birthed in prayer. As we have already seen in Acts 13:1-4, it was while they were worshipping and fasting that the Lord commissioned Paul and Barnabas to the ministry of church planting. They immediately spent more time fasting and praying, and then placed their hands on the two before sending them out.

The Biblical Mandate for Church Planting

The early church understood the need not only to preach the good news to the lost, but also to see new converts organized into a local church. Wherever they went, Paul and Barnabas ensured that disciples were being strengthened and edified in their faith, and appointed elders to oversee them:

> They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.[224]

Extra-Biblical Evidence

Church planting is thus an essential ingredient in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, since it strives to fulfill each of these components. Church planting involves a deliberate

---

[223] Acts 16:6-10: Ibid
[224] Acts 14:21-23: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

pursuit of lost people, it requires effective and active methods of evangelism, and the newly established church seeks to bring all believers to maturity in their faith and to the place where they can use their gifts and talents to the glory of God. Having a clear understanding of the Great Commission involves having a clear understanding of the part that church planting plays in it.

David A. White agrees that church planting is the only way to effectively and comprehensively fulfill the Great Commission. In his book, *Your Church Can Multiply,* White points out that to fulfill the Great Commission, believers have to "make disciples" of all types of people. Without a local church this becomes practically impossible, since disciples need to be taught to obey all that Christ has commanded. This teaching takes place through the local church. Pointing to problems encountered in the Philippines, White relates how some Christians, zealous for evangelism, have traveled the length and breadth of the Philippines evangelizing, and many people have received Christ as a result. But often, because no local church was established to bring these believers to maturity, many of those who were led to Christ were left behind, and the Great Commission was thus not fulfilled.[225]

White continues:

> To conserve the fruit of evangelism, we must bring new believers into the church. This could be through an existing church, or through planting a new church. The only way to conserve the fruit of evangelism in places where there is no church is through church planting. Even in places where there is a church, we will normally conserve far more fruit from evangelistic efforts through planting new churches.[226]

---

[225] David A. White: *Your Church Can Multiply* (Philippine Challenge Inc. 2000) pp 16,17
[226] Ibid p.17

Larry Lewis supports the need for a godly vision and a clear understanding of the biblical mandate for church planting:

> The incentive for starting a new work comes with a heavy burden for the lost and a direct vision from God of a need to be fulfilled and an opportunity to be met. The Bible says, "Except there be a vision, the people perish." If some pastor and some church do not see the vision for establishing a new work in that community, the people there will perish in their sins and be doomed and damned to hell forever. Likewise, if the church itself does not have a mission vision, it will likely perish even in the midst of thousands of people waiting to be reached for Christ.[227]

In his book entitled *Vision America: A Strategy for Reaching a Nation*, Aubrey Malphurs highlights the importance of vision. Focusing on America in the 21st century, Malphurs points out that those who aspire to leadership, whether in the nation's capital or in the marketplace, must have vision.[228] The importance of vision cannot be understated -whatever the context. Indeed vision is recognized as one of the 3 chief components that make a leader. Vision is also vital to the success of any ministry. The church plants that proved successful consisted of leaders who had a clear understanding of the biblical mandate for church planting and a clear vision of what God had told them to do.

Dale E. Galloway, author of *Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church* says it best:

> George Bama says that only 4 percent of pastors have a clear-cut vision for their churches. That's so unfortunate because a church will never rise any higher than its vision. A leader without vision is like an octopus on roller skates, going everywhere and nowhere. If a TV antenna can be tuned to find an invisible signal and translate it into a focused picture, then why can't Christian leaders, as God's instruments, likewise discern the Holy Spirit's leading and then communicate a focused idea of what the church should be and do?
>
> Vision involves far more than a committee's putting together a mission statement. A clear-cut vision gives focus. It keeps you on target, telling you who you are, what to do, and what not to do. It forms the goals you set, both short-term and long-range. Vision centers on the marvelous things God has done and will do. The leader's job is to influence key

---

[227] Larry L. Lewis: *The Church Planter's Handbook* (Broadman Press 1992) p18
[228] Aubrey Malphurs: *Vision America – A Strategy for Reaching a Nation* (Baker Books 1994) p85

people and bring them together around God's vision. That may be the most important thing you do as a pastor! A compelling vision can raise any church above mediocrity. Visionary leaders see God's future work so clearly that it's as good as already done. Vision keeps leaders from being bogged down in the "stuff" that comes from the day-to-day tyranny of the urgent.[229]

Vision is vital. Church planting is not a random mosaic of events and activities; it is a goal-driven, vision-oriented process that finds its origin and fulfillment in God. Lyle Schaller illustrates the importance of vision in *The Seven-Day-A-Week Church*. Here he focuses on a number of rapidly growing churches in America made up of churchgoers born after World War II. He cites the number one reason these churches have become so large as follows:

> The number one reason is not location or favorable demographics of seven-day-a-week programming or a particular theological stance. The number-one factor… is transformational leadership by a visionary pastor who knows how to rally people in support of a cause. To be more specific, these formational leaders are completely convinced that people's lives can be transformed by the power of the gospel. That is the number one distinctive characteristic of these senior ministers. In addition, these transformational leaders (1) can conceptualize a vision of a new tomorrow, (2) can articulate that vision so persuasively that people rally in support of it, and (3) know how to turn that vision into reality.[230]

Schaller makes a distinction between vision and mission:

> The reason for this confusion is well founded – both vision and mission answer the important "what" question – What is the church's ministry? The mission of the church is clearly Christ's Great Commission, and as such, it is timeless… the mission of the church is more goal- or objective-oriented. It is a basic "nuts and bolts" statement of the church's mission as found in a planning document. . The vision… serves not as part of the planning process but as a vital part of the communication process. At the very heart of the vision statement is the mission statement... When a pastor plans the direction of his church, he develops and uses a mission statement. When he communicates that mission to his congregation, he translates it into a vision statement using fresh, contemporary terms that create pictures in people's minds.[231]

---

[229] Dale E. Galloway: *Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church* (www.churchofthecovenant.com/gallow.html)
[230] Lyle E. Schaller: *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church* (Nashville: Abington Press 1992) p58
[231] Ibid. pp. 98,99

While Schaller adequately defines the term vision, I believe it is important at this juncture to emphasize that the church plants which enjoyed a high level of success were those who not only had a clear vision, but a vision they believed to be in keeping with the Lord's will and purpose for them. A God-centered vision is essential to the success of a church plant. Vision is vital. Without vision, people perish. But a God-given vision is one that will enjoy the favor, blessing and sanction of the Lord. Without a clear vision of the church to be planted, the church plant will be stifled and will not reach its full potential, no matter how committed the planter or team may be. What a blueprint is to a builder, a God-centered vision is to a church planter.

Communicating and clarifying that vision is just as important. Schaller emphasizes this point:

> A ministry cannot accomplish anything of spiritual significance without a clear vision. Often when passengers board an airplane, the captain positions himself at the door of the aircraft and welcomes each one on board. Suppose that one passenger asks jokingly, "What's our destination?" and the captain replies seriously, "Beats me! Where would you like to go?" Would you climb on board? A plane cannot leave the airport unless the captain and crew know where it is going. To begin with, the leadership team must understand the vision. If they cannot articulate the dream for themselves, then they are not qualified to lead a flock, and they should not be surprised when no one follows them.
>
> Next, the people who make up the ministry must clearly comprehend where they are going. Even if the leadership has a clear vision in mind, people cannot possibly follow unless they, too, clearly understand and own the vision. Consequently, an important aspect of leadership is vision casting. Leaders must articulate the dream for their people or experience tremendous frustration.[232]

---

[232] Lyle E. Schaller: *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church* (Nashville: Abington Press 1992) pp 99,100

10.2 IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH PLANTER / TEAM LEADER

The second common characteristics was defined as follows:

A COMPETENT CHURCH PLANTER who displays a submitted and secure personality, a love for people, personal integrity and passionate spirituality with the right mix of character traits and spiritual gifting.

Is there any biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support this?

The People God Chose

We have already seen that it was the Holy Spirit who chose Paul and Barnabas for the work to which He had called them. But why did the Holy Spirit choose **them**? Are there any reasons we can identify from Scripture that will assist us in knowing the kind of person God chooses to plant a church?

They Were Men in Relationship With a Proven Ministry

Paul and Barnabas were not 'fly by nights.' They had been around for many years. They were well known and respected by the early believers. People had the opportunity to speak into their lives, assess their character, and confirm their call. Their ministry had been proven and tested:

> News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch… But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, called Mark.[233]

The Value of Assessment

The value of relationship and accountability was held in very high regard in the early church. By living out their lives and ministries under the gaze of other leaders and church members, ministries could be recognized, and in God's time, released. Assessment plays an equally important role today, especially where close-knit relationships like those in the early church are not always possible. Aubrey Malphurs believes that assessment is key to the success of church planting:

> Personal assessment enables us to discover our divine design… God is the author and source of our make-up long before we're born into this world. Our divine design includes such things as our temperaments and our natural gifts, talents and abilities. When we accept Christ, God adds to this other things as well, including our spiritual gifts. All of this constitutes our divine design or makeup, our special wiring or chemistry.[234]

They Were Passionate About Their Mission, Hard Workers and Motivated

Paul expressed a clear desire to see the lost saved. It was a passion that drove him and kept him even through the direst of circumstances. He would endure shipwrecks, floggings, imprisonment and even death for the privilege of fulfilling the call (Acts 11:24-28).

They Were Flexible and Adaptable

Paul tells of his love for the people he was called to serve and his willingness to minister in a way that was uncompromising of the truths of Scripture, yet sensitive to the prevailing culture (Acts 9:16-23).

---

[233] Acts 11:22-26 & 12:24-25: *The Holy Bible - New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

[234] Aubrey Malphurs*: Planting Growing Churches for the 21st century* (Baker Books 1998) pp82,83

They Were Gifted

In his examination of *The Gift of the Apostle*, David Cannistaci says:

> This tells us that the appointment of apostles is a Spirit-led activity, that is done publicly and in the context of prayer and worship, and that several proven leaders need to agree…To proceed in apostolic ministry without the keys of a prophetic, public and plural ordination by proven ministries would be entirely out of order… each candidate for the apostolic ministry must wait upon this kind of experience before pursuing the fullness of… a call.[235]

They were called of God to this Ministry

As we have already seen, the author of Acts makes it clear that Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4). It is fair to say that the early believers never chose the first 2 missionaries – they were chosen by God! The first imperative when choosing a church planter or team leader is to recognize whether or not God has called him to plant churches.

Faith Hamilton, Administrative Coordinator of the Church Evangelism Department in the national division of Home Missions of the Assemblies of God emphasizes:

> The number one consideration is to know that you are called. When you know that God has called you to a place, you and your family can trust Him to provide for you and for the new church.[236]

Many experienced church planters believe that a church must be born in the heart of a man. The church planter may be a pastor, evangelist, a missionary or a layman. The primary essential is to be chosen of God for the task. Jesus told us to pray that the Lord would send laborers to the harvest. Those whom He chooses to send can always be successful if they will be obedient.[237]

---

[235] David Cannistaci: *The Gift of Apostle* (Regal Books 1996) p52
[236] Opal L. Reddon: *Planting Churches that Grow* (Central Bible College Press, 1990) p52
[237] Ibid. p48, 49

They Had a Passion for People

Paul became all things to all men so that he might win some – such was his commitment and love for the people he had been called to serve. Malphurs defines passion as:

> A God-given capacity to fervently attach ourselves to an object (people, a cause, an idea, and so on) over an extended period of time to meet a need... Firstly, passion involves fervency. It's an emotional concept. It's a feeling word; it's what we feel strongly about. It might be described as a "burning gut-feeling that a certain ministry is the most important place that God would have you." In essence, Paul had a passion for church planting. Second, passion has an object. We say that someone has a passion toward something. It often includes people such as the lost, the un-churched, the unborn, the poor and oppressed, or unreached people.[238]

Like Paul, the church planter must have a passion for people. He must have a deep desire to see the lost saved and Christians prepared for works of service. As a people-person, the planter will be able to motivate others to fulfill their God-given potential. Paul gives us a wonderful biblical example of passion. His passion was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in places where Christ was unknown and in the process to see the church established.

They Were Able to Lead

As leadership goes, so goes the church! Church planting involves being able to communicate a vision and to inspire people to the fulfillment of that vision. As such, a church planter must be a leader. Leaders inspire. Galloway defines the importance of leadership as follows:

> Everything rises and falls on leadership. Build leaders, and they will build ministries. Build leaders, and they will build churches.[239]

---

[238] Aubrey Malphurs: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st century* (Baker Books 1998) p88
[238] Ibid pp82,83
[238] Ibid. pp 87-90

[239] Dale Galloway: *Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church* (www.churchofthecovenant.com/gallow.html)

Robert Logan concurs:

> The effective church planter prays fervently; exercises faith; has visioning capacity; is committed to church growth; is intrinsically motivated; is responsive to the community; utilizes the gifts of others; is flexible and adaptable; has spousal co-operation; builds a cohesive church body.[240]

10.3 IN RELATION TO A MINISTRY TEAM

AN ADEQUATE MINISTRY TEAM comprised either of a strong initial ministry core group, or as the result of an adequate development and use of lay ministry.

Although individual church planters have responded to the call to plant a church, and have been successful in the process, one of the key characteristics identified by the survey group was an adequate ministry team. While an initial planter may begin the process, he will inevitably have to raise up a team of lay leaders and ministries if the plant is to reach its full potential.

The early church understood clearly the importance of team ministry. Paul and Barnabas were sent as a team, as we have already seen. The second missionary journey saw two teams being sent out; Paul took Silas along with him, and Barnabas went with Mark (Acts 15:36-40). Furthermore, Paul understood the significance of raising up elders and nurturing new ministries. Timothy, Epaphroditus, Luke and Titus are but a few examples of his clear understanding of team ministry.

---

[240] Robert Logan and Jeff Rast: *Church Planting Workbook* (Charles E. Fuller Institute of Church Growth 1989) p149,150

The Team Approach – A Growing Trend

Churches are being started with a number of different and successful methods. But the growing trend is to ensure that there is an initial team approach, as well as a need to raise up local ministries.

James Feeney states:

> For too many years, churches have taken many of their fine young men and have encouraged them to go forth alone into the harvest fields. But now many church leaders are taking a second look at this procedure and are asking if the team concept is not the preferred one. Pastor Dick Iverson, of Portland, Oregon's Bible Temple, is a man with experience both in growing a local church and in sending forth teams to begin new churches. Concerning 'team ministry' he believes that the church must rid itself of the mentality that to be a minister one must to able to be a solo minister. We have denuded the church of strength because we have shipped men off to go it alone, instead of making them part of a team where they can major in their own unique gift. Our whole concept of ministry has to be readjusted.[241]

Aubrey Malphurs points out the value of a team approach in relation to ministry gifting:

> The same gifts of leadership, faith, evangelism, preaching and apostleship are necessary for a church-planting team, but may be spread out among the various members of a team.[242]

Opal L. Reddin also highlights the importance of raising up a team ministry when planting a church. Quoting John Palmer he says:

> John Palmer, church planter and pastor, has made an invaluable contribution to the kingdom of God with his book, *Equipping the Saints.* He tells of his experience when he sincerely thought that as a new church planter-pastor he was to do all the work of the ministry in the church. Because he wanted to do all that God had called him to do, he told his people that he was available any hour day or night to help them in any way he could. During a time of exhaustion, he made the astonishing

---

[241] James H Feeney: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Center 1988) p27,28
[242] Aubrey Malphurs: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21ˢᵗ Century* (Baker Books 1992, 1998) p 97

discovery that his main calling as pastor was to equip the saints for the work of ministry… The discovery transformed Palmer's attitude toward "the work of the ministry." His implementation of what he discovered led to the release of ministries in the church, and to greater blessing and growth than he thought possible. It also kept him from physical collapse. He says to all church planters: make the discovery today that the lay workers you need today are part of your church today. You may have only one or two of each, but God will always raise up people in the body.[243]

The Value of Homogenous Lay Ministry

In their book, *Creating Communities of the Kingdom*, David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman relate how, for many years, the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary has been teaching homogenous principles of ministry. This principle recognizes that people feel more comfortable among others of their own group. Sometimes whole villages come to Christ after one prominent leader in the community takes the first step - the reason being that "one of their own" has become involved.[244] The use of lay ministry is thus a very effective means of reaching a community. There is therefore ample biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support the 3rd common characteristic.

10.4 IN RELATION TO EVANGELISM

The fourth common characteristic is:

FOCUSED AND SUSTAINED EVANGELISM that is sanctioned by God, central to the vision and specific to the target community, and that effectively and accurately communicates the gospel message.

There is a lot of biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support the need for focused and sustained evangelism in a church plant.

---

[243] Ibid. pp 256-257

[244] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) p136

Paul highlights his heart to see the lost won for Christ:

> … So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.[245]

However, as we have seen from some of our case studies, evangelizing just for the sake of evangelizing is not always successful. Survey participants mentioned evangelism that is sanctioned by God, i.e. evangelism that is sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, that is in keeping with the vision of the church, that is specific to the target community, and that effectively and adequately communicates the gospel.

Let us see if there is any biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support this kind of evangelism in relation to church planting.

Evangelism that is sanctioned by God, central to the vision and specific to the target community

It is clear that Paul never used one fixed method in every city or town he went to. Although he had a definite pattern, he was open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and sensitive to the culture of the community.

Paul went where he was led. We have already seen how he obediently followed the Lord and listened when God closed or opened doors to him. The events in Cyprus record how Paul and Barnabas, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4), soon found themselves in Cyprus. Hearing about their arrival, the proconsul sent for them and was amazed at the teaching of the Lord, and believed (Acts 13:12). Here, simply by obediently following the

---

[245] Romans 15: 19b-20: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

leading of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas saw their first convert. In other instances, Paul

would go to the local synagogue and preach the gospel message there (Acts 17:2). Once

they ministered to a group of women near a river outside the city gate (Acts 16:13). At other

times Paul debated with the philosophers:

> While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols…. Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Aeropagus and said:" Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you.[246]

They were clearly led by the Holy Spirit and willing to respond to any and every

opportunity God gave to them to minister.

Paul also sought to minister in a way that was **specific** to each and every community:

> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all this to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.[247]

A Contextual Response

In their book, *Creating Communities of the Kingdom*, David W. Shenk and Ervin R.

Stutzman highlight the importance of context when presenting the gospel message:

---

[246] Acts 17:16, 22-23: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

[247] 1 Corinthians 9:20-22: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

The way the gospel speaks is always different, for the good news needs to be involved in ongoing dialogue with the local culture and local perceptions… For the Kelchi Indians in the highlands of Guatemala, the gospel will often be heard primarily as the good news that Jesus is risen and has triumphed over the evil spirits. For the childless wife of a farmer in the Congo Valley, the gospel may be heard as a the good news that barren women will also go to heaven, the news that children contribute nothing to one's salvation. To the secularist in Massachusetts who has always lived within a naturalistic framework, the gospel may become the good news that God loves and cares for people and wants to become personally involved in one's life. For the Hindus in Madras who have always believed that human life is a tragedy – that history is a cycle of meaninglessness – the gospel is the good news that life is eternally meaningful.[248]

He was Careful to Communicate the Gospel Effectively and Accurately.

Paul was careful to share the gospel message in a manner that the community could easily

understand and relate to:

I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.[249]

Opal L. Reddin says that the message that plants churches will be one that is understood.

When Jesus preached, the people "got the message." He loved them too much to obfuscate the meaning of the eternal truths He proclaimed. He made ultimate concepts understandable even to "babes." (Mt 11:25)… When a messenger loves people, he will not vaunt or show off his erudition, but he will bring the truth to them in words they understand.[250]

Again, ample biblical and extra-biblical evidence exists to support the 4th common

characteristic.

---

[248] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) p 133
[249] 1 Corinthians 2:3-5: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)
[250] Opal L. Reddin: *Planting Churches that Grow* (Central Bible College, Springfield Missouri 1990) p65

10.5 IN RELATION TO TRAINING AND PREPARATION

The 5th common characteristics is:

ADEQUATE TRAINING AND PREPARATION of the church planter and planting team, and effective discipleship of the converts and church members through the presentation of a comprehensive, practical and systematic theology.

What biblical and extra-biblical evidence is there to support this characteristic? To understand the importance of training as it relates to ministry, be it pastoral ministry, evangelism or church planting, we need to begin to consider the example Jesus set. When Jesus appointed His disciples, it was for the purpose of training and equipping them for the ministry to which He had called them:

> 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.[251]

The disciples were not merely sent out to minister. They had to learn from the Master, and follow His example. They were sent on training missions like the one mentioned here in Mark. They were instructed to wait in Jerusalem until they had received power from on high (Acts 1:4). Only then were they released into their respective ministries.

In His book, *The Secret of Soul Winning* Stephen F. Olford emphasizes this very point when he says:

> You will notice that He (Jesus) did not send them forth at once; even though Andrew and Phillip seemed to be natural soul-bringers from the very start. For three and a half years the Master trained His men – by instruction, by discipline, and by example – in order that He might send them forth to be witnesses unto Him to the far ends of the earth.[252]

---

[251] Mark 3:13-15: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

[252] Stephen F. Olford: *The Secret of Soul Winning* (Moody Press 1963) p41

It is clear that early believers placed a great deal of emphasis on training and preparation for service. On one mission, Paul met a young man by the name of Timothy. After leaving Lystra, Timothy went with him, and for several years, he learned from Paul by watching him work and by assisting him in his work. The pattern in the early church was discipleship.

Paul also invested himself into whole communities, taking time to ensure the church was firmly established. One example is Ephesus, where Paul stayed and ministered for close on three years. David Shenk and Ervin Stutzman confirm Paul's commitment to see this community developed into a thriving congregation:

> The Ephesus "Bible Institute" must have been an exceedingly exciting experience. … By watching Paul in action, believers learned how to pray, how to evangelize, and how to pastor a congregation. Undoubtedly, he occasionally took the students with him into the marketplaces to assist him in evangelistic conversations. In this way they developed the pastoral and evangelistic skills needed to extend the kingdom throughout all of Asia Minor.[253]

Training and preparation was comprehensive, practical and systematic.

---

[253] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) pp 153, 154

10.6 IN RELATION TO PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Is there any biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support the 6th common characteristic as it relates to church planting?

PLANNING AND RESEARCH that seeks to know the dynamics of the people and the community, and that arrives at a biblical and adaptable plan.

Paul understood the people he ministered to. He understood their culture. He took time to find out about the community. A case in point is the example we have quoted earlier of Paul ministering in Athens about the statue to the Unknown God (Acts 17:23). Paul took time to understand the community!

C. Peter Wagner highlights the importance of planning and research in church planting:

> As you begin the process of planting a new church, my best initial advice to you is to start planning to plan. Solomon knew this when he said, "The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts." (Prov. 14:8 *TLB*)… I fully realize that planning can be overemphasized; some of my friends, I'm afraid, seem to spend all their time planning and they very seldom get around to doing. Planning can become an end in itself, but there is a balance, a happy medium, where an appropriate amount of previous planning multiplies efficiency when the actual work begins... All too many of us find ourselves described variously as chasing rabbits, spinning our wheels, shadow boxing, wasting our time, or reinventing the wheel – principally because we did not plan or did so poorly. Planning takes time. It takes mental energy. It takes patience. At times it takes using the eraser more than the pencil. But doing it is more than worth the cost.[254]

The most successful church plants took steps to ensure they were reaching their respective communities in a language and style they could identify with. The most effective methods

---

[254] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) pp 43,44

of evangelism were those that took cognizance of the whole person in order to minister to the whole person. This takes planning and strategy.

J.J. Kritzinger, PGJ Meiring and WA Saayman aptly describe the importance of homogenous worship and need-oriented evangelism in their book *On Being Witnesses*, written from a South African perspective. They highlight a very clear mistake missionaries of old made in their efforts to evangelize the people of South Africa:

> Often in the past our approach in mission rested on the somewhat insensitive certainty that we know exactly what people need… Both the missionary and the mission organization, being as it were tied to their own perspective and culture, are inclined to 'absolutise' their own needs and either assume that the other's needs are the same, or downplay it when it is found to be different. Much of what missionaries did in the past were reactions to their own perceptions of the needs of people…did the people of Africa and Asia ask for the western style educational system? Did they need… church buildings with steeples, pews and organs? Granted, it is easy to criticize the results, but very difficult to imagine how it could have been done differently. The point we want to make is that missionaries, with all the best intentions in the world, often downloaded institutions, structures, and manners on people who would eventually come to question their right to have done so. Why? Because they themselves were not consulted, not taken into account, were not regarded as real equal partners in defining their needs.
>
> The gospel (good news) will not be regarded as such when the bad news of the situation is not addressed. We may refer to Jesus' example. He always looked at people with compassion, was touched by their needs, and then dealt with them. Whether it was illness or hunger, or a spiritual question, he started with the existential question they posed. He knew that their felt needs were important, and He dealt with them. He usually also dealt with the convert, the often unknown needs, but never without first touching the people where it hurt. That should also be our approach. It is not enough merely to try to address the ills of society, because we should also communicate the eternal gospel, but we can in no way ignore the real needs.[255]

What Kind of Planning?

Survey participants identified planning which has a clear spiritual dimension, and which is open to change. Professor Herbert Kane of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School evaluated

---

[255] JJ Kritzinger, PGJ Meiring, WA Saayman: *On Being Witnesses* (Orion Publishers 1994) p116

the church growth movement in recent years as one of the most dynamic movements in missions circles. But he cautioned:

> The proponents of church growth, with few exceptions, have emphasized the human factors and all but overlooked the divine factor.[256]

Echoing Professor Kane's sentiments, C. Peter Wagner adds:

> The more deeply I dig beneath the surface of church growth principles, the more thoroughly convinced I become that the real battle is a spiritual battle and that our principal weapon is prayer… Many of our technical church growth principles could be used to grow fast food restaurants or insurance companies of tire stores. These can succeed without prayer because they are human institutions. Churches cannot. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mt 16:18), and He is the only one who ultimately does it. We are instruments in His hands for the task, and therefore we must be in tune with what He is doing and how He wants it done if we hope to be useful and effective instruments.[257]

10.7 IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH PLANT

The final common characteristic identified by the survey group dealt with various aspects surrounding the kind of church being planted:

A CHURCH PLANT that has an evangelical heart, a multiplicative goal, an envisioned motive, an active purpose within the community it seeks to reach and serve, and a loving disposition both to its members and to the lost within its target group.

An Evangelical Church With a Multiplicative Goal

Evangelism must be an on-going process in the life and ethos of the new plant. But what evidence do we have from a biblical and extra-biblical perspective to support this view?

---

[256] J. Herbert Kane: *The Christian World Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Baker Book House, 1981) pp 201, 202
[257] C. Peter Wagner: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990) p46

The early church was an evangelizing church. The first century church in Philippi is a case in point. This congregation knew the joy of seeing lives transformed by the power of the gospel. Lydia, a demonized slave girl, a jailer and many others came to salvation through the faithful witness and proclamation of the gospel message. However, they also had a vision for missions beyond their own city. They sent offerings to Paul to aid him in his church planting activities. Evangelism was clearly a mark of this early church.

David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman add:

> The intention of Jesus is that every congregation experience the joy of evangelism in its normal life together. This is true of so-called "established congregations"; it is also true of newly planted churches. It is no wonder that when Jesus called His first disciples to follow Him, His first words to them were, "Follow me. I will make you fishers of men." The discipling church is an evangelistic church. The touchstone of authentic discipleship is the evangelistic vitality of a congregation. New congregations need to concern themselves with leading new believers into a full commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior… The test of the disciple's faithfulness is compassion for the lost.[258]

Richard B. Wilke, United Methodist Church Bishop and author of, *And Are We Yet Alive?* writes:

> We have become a church turned inward. Our structure has become an end in itself, not a means of saving the world… when John and Charles Wesley encountered this in 1745, they said, "You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore, spend time and be spent in this work." [259]

Opal L. Reddin sums it up best:

> To try to decide which ministry is more essential is like trying to decide which we could better give up: our head or our heart… The evangelizing of lost, hell-bound sinners is the ministry that is uppermost in the heart of

---

[258] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) p212
[259] Richard B. Wilke: *And Are We Yet Alive?* (Abington Press 1986) p 29,30

God. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Lk 19:10)… Our burden and determination to reach the lost is a measure of our love for God. To the degree we love Him, to that degree we will love what He is about in the world. The Good Shepherd is out on the mountain; He is in the inner city; He walks the streets, often wondering why there are so few to stand in the gap with Him.[260]

An Envisioned Motive

Secondly, the church plant needs to be envisioned. They need to know what their purpose is, and their purpose needs to be in keeping with the Great Commission. Robert E. Logan and Thomas T. Clegg share how important vision is to a church. They share how people are motivated by vision, not by need. Just seeing needs can become overwhelming. Having a compelling vision will help the church to focus their energies, understand that they can make a difference, and lead to real needs being met.[261]

They go on to say:

> A vision is only strong when it is shared by others. People are committed to what they help develop.[262]

A Loving Disposition both to members and to the Lost

Every new church plant must understand that the central qualities of authentic mission are love and unity. The early churches were diverse in nature, yet called to live in the unifying power of God's love. Even though the church at Philippi was diverse, with very little sociological glue to hold the congregation together, in and through Jesus Christ, they understood and experienced unity. This was unprecedented in their time. As Shenk and Stutzman point out, this miracle of grace astonished the traditional community. In Philippian society, it was unheard of for a wealthy businesswoman like Lydia to have

---

[260] Opal L. Reddin: *Planting Churches That Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers, 1990) pp. 276,277
[261] Robert E. Logan & Thomas T. Clegg: *Releasing Your Church's Potential* (Church Smart Resources 1998) p2.8
[262] Ibid. p2.9

fellowship with a slave girl. The same thing happened in Antioch, where Jews and Greeks were united in Christ. The church was composed of Africans, Asians and Europeans.[263] A love in action is the measure of our discipleship. It is also the measure of the surrendered and submitted heart of a new church plant.

Summary

It is clear that overwhelming biblical and extra-biblical evidence exists to support each of the 7 common characteristics identified by the survey group. This further serves to substantiate the imperative role these common characteristics play in contributing to the success of any given church plant. While methods have changed, the characteristics have remained the same for more than 2000 years.

10.8 DRAWING A CONCLUSION

Let us conclude by summarizing what we have discovered during the course of this study.

Our first objective was to determine whether or not there is still a need for church planting in South Africa.

Church planting is a ministry that is yet to be exhausted. We have seen during the course of this study the overwhelming role church planting has played, and is yet to play. South Africa is just one of many nations in desperate need of more churches for various reasons - from urbanization, to sociological changes, to paradigm shifts. The impact of current church planting activities on the growth of several denominations against common trends substantiates the importance of planting new churches.

---

[263] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) p213

Furthermore, the context in which the Church exists in South Africa has made it clear that simply planting churches without considering the culture in which these churches are planted is both short-sighted and counter-productive. Context impacts greatly on the Church and therefore must be considered in the light of future plants.

Identifying the Common Characteristics of a Successful Church Plant

The second objective of this study was to identify the common characteristics of a successful church plant. By means of surveys and interviews, we were able to identify what those who are experienced in the field of church planting believe to contribute to the success of any given church plant. 7 common characteristics were identified. To determine whether the hypothesis was accurate, we measured the common characteristics against actual case studies.

Our case studies supported the view that there is a distinct link between the common characteristics identified by the survey group, and the growth pattern of the new church plants. The presence of the common characteristics impacted positively on the growth patterns of the church plants. Church plants that did not have evidence of all the common characteristics experienced patterns of stagnation, decline or even failure, suggesting that there is a very distinct link between the existence of the common characteristics and the success of the respective church plant.

We also saw that there is ample biblical and extra-biblical evidence to support the existence of these characteristics.

A Need to Return to Our Roots

It is clear that church planting among all the people of the world is one of the most important tasks the church has been called to. Only when the gospel has been communicated to all people can history reach its conclusion. Local churches today are often a hub of activity. There are Sunday worship services, home cells, Bible Schools, Sunday School classes, youth meetings, Christian Primary and Secondary schools. All of these ministries are valuable and exciting. However, we must never neglect the centrality of Christ's command to go and make disciples of all the nations of the world. Biblical examples and extra-biblical evidences verify that the Commission is best fulfilled when local churches are established. My prayer is that the church will stand up and be counted in these last days. Until Jesus comes, we cannot count the task as complete. There is still much to be done!

David Shenk and Ervin Stutzman sum it up best:

> As we see it, our world desperately needs a multiplication of clusters of redeemed people. We believe that every community, every city block, every language, every hamlet and village on earth deserves to have in its midst the signs of the Kingdom of God which are present wherever two or three or more meet in Jesus' name. We believe there is no other hope for humankind, for we know there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus. Surely there is no vocation, no enterprise, no vision, and no commitment more precious to God. Surely nothing is more significant to humanity than the multiplication of redeemed communities of people who love the Lord with all their mind, heart and strength, and who also love their neighbors![264]

South Africa needs more churches! We dare not ignore the obvious reality that stares us in the face. Whether we choose to admit it or not, many congregations that once enjoyed unprecedented levels of growth are now experiencing decline. Others have embraced a

---

[264] David W. Shenk & Ervin R. Stutzman: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988) pp 217,218

desire to see the Great Commission fulfilled through active and deliberate church planting. Without exception, they are experiencing patterns of growth. But against population growth statistics, the Church is still losing ground.

South Africa is a nation in metamorphosis. While the gospel has not lost its power, we need to take a moment to re-evaluate whether we are truly being effective within our context, or whether we need the Lord to give us His eyes for our people. Jesus always touched people at their point of need. He will do so again – if only we will trade our traditions and agendas for His will and purpose.

We need more churches. But we need to ensure that we plant healthy, vibrant, growing churches. Like the farmer, we look to God for growth. But we also know that He has given us principles to follow. And if we put these principles to work, trusting God for the increase, then surely we can conclude that as dark as times may seem to be, God has not finished yet! Build Your Church, Lord Jesus!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A

Allen, James P: *Church Planting Manual* (Church Planting Ministries Lafayette, 1998)

Allen, Roland: *Missionary Methods - St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962)

Anderson, Allen: *The Prosperity Message in the Eschatology of Some New Charismatic Churches* (Missionalia Vol. 15, No. 2 – 1987)

Arn, Win: *The Pastor's Manual for Effective Ministry* (Monrovia, Calif: Church Growth, 1988)

Age Distribution of South Africans in Five-Year Demographics - Data from the 1996 South African Census (Christian Info 2000)

B

Bedell, Kenneth B: *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, 1996 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989)

Bliss, David: *Foreword to Andrew Murray - The State of the Church* (Andrew Murray Consultation on Prayer for Revival and Missions: Kempton Park RSA 1985)

Bosch, David: *Foreword - The South African Context for Mission* (J.J. Kritsinger, Lux Verdi 1988)

Bosch, David: *Transforming Mission* (Markynoll, NY: Orbis, 1991)

Bowen, John: *Church Planting and Evangelism* (Good Idea! A Resource for Evangelism and Congregational Development Vol. 7, no. 3, Autumn 2000)

Buchanan & Hendriks: *Meeting the Future* (Randburg Knowledge Resources 1995)

Bullock, Warren D: *Why Another Church?* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/0004/028_why_another_church.cfm)

Burger, Dr Isak: *CPA Church Planting Conference 2000*

Business Report Newspaper: *Aids Planning is Crucial*, Sunday 9/5/99

C

Cannistaci, David: *The Gift of Apostle* (Regal Books 1996)

Combrink, Johannes: *Christian Origins and Growth in South Africa -A Dutch Reformed and Charismatic Church Case Study* (Thesis presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, March, 1990)

Cox, Harvey: *Fire From Heaven - The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995)

Cox, Harvey: *The Secular City* (Macmillan: New York, 1965)

D

DAWN Fridayfax 1995 No.35 (http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/1995/dawn9535.html)

Denison, Jack: *City Reaching – On the Road to Community Transformation* (Pasadena, California, USA: William Carey Library, 1999)

Division of Home Missions: Fuller Theological study in *American Horizon* (Vol. 8, No.4)

Drost, Paul: *35 Years of Church Planting: 1965-1999* (http://ag.org/dhmchurchplanting/director_messages.cfm)

Drost, Paul: *Assemblies of God Church Planting Welcome*
(http://ag.org/dhm/churchplanting/cp_index.cfm)

E

Employment and Unemployment Demographic Data from the 1996 Census – SA Christian Handbook (Christian Info 2000)

F

Feeney, James H: *The Team Method of Church Planting* (Abbot Loop Christian Centre 1988)

Forster, Roger: *Ten New Churches* (The Chaucer Press, Suffolk England 1986)

Foster, Roger: *Models of Church Planting*, (Ichtus Media Services),

Froise, Marjorie: South African Christian Handbook: 1986/1987 (World Vision of Southern Africa 1986)

Froise, Marjorie: *The Church in Context* - South African Christian Handbook, 1999-2000(Christian Info 1999)

G

Galloway, Dale E: *Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church*
(www.churchofthecovenant.com/gallow.html)

Gerhart, Jay: *The Baptist Union – Interview with Angelo Scheepers of the Western Province Baptist Association* (CPA Publishing 2000)

Graham Jr., Preston: *Church Planting as an Essential Element of Christian Mission* (http://www.yale.edu/cpc/studycenter/pamphlets/planting.html)

Growth in Number of Churches from 1989 to 2005 (CPA Publishing 2000)

H

Hathaway, Brian: Church Planting in New Zealand (www.   )

Hendriks, H J: *The South African Christian Handbook*, 1999-2000 (Christian Info, 2000)

Hendriks, J.H: *Religion in South Africa - Census '96 -* South African Christian Handbook; 1999-2000 (Christian Info 2000)

Huffaker, Pastor: *Grow Magazine: A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship* (Spring Edition, 2000)

I

Iverson, Dick: *Team Ministry* (Bible Temple Publications Portland, Oregon 1984)

J

Jacquet Jr., Constant H: *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1988* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989)

Jones, Ezra Earl: *Strategies For New Churches* (New York: Harper & Row 1976)

Jones, Phil: *An Examination of the Statistical Growth of Southern Baptist Convention - Understanding Growth and Decline 1950-1978* (New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1979)

Juliano, John: *Church Planting Manual* (http//www. Christian-faith.com)

K

Kane, J H: *Christian Missions in a Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids 1976)

Kane, J. Herbert: *The Christian World Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Baker Book House, 1981)

Kritzinger, JJ: *South Africa: The Context for Mission* (Missionalia 1988)

Krupp, Nate: *God's Simple Plan For His Church – And Your Place in It* (Solid Rock Books, Inc. 1993)

L

Lake, John G: *The Adventures of God* (Harrison House Inc. 1981)

Larson, Brian L: *Church Planting Mother-Daughter Style - A Study of Procedures and Results* (D. Min. Dissertation, Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, CA, 1984)

Lewis, Larry L: *The Church Planter's Handbook* (Broadman Press 1992)

Logan, Robert and Rast, Jeff: *Church Planting Workbook* (Charles E. Fuller Institute of Church Growth 1989)

Logan, Robert E & Clegg, Thomas T: *Releasing Your Church's Potential* (Church Smart Resources 1998)

Logan, Robert E: Church Planting : *The Most Successful Form of Church Growth* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/0004/012_most_successful.cfm)

Lukasse, Johan: *Churches With Roots* (Bromley: MARC/STL, 1990)

M

Malphurs, Aubrey: *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Baker Book House Co. Michigan, 1998)

Malphurs, Aubrey: *Vision America* (Baker Book House Co. Michigan, 1994)

Mannoia, Kevin W: *Church Planting - The Next Generation* (Light and Life Press 1994)

Mead, Loren: *The Once and Future Church* (Alban Press, 1997)

Merrill, Dean: *Mothering a New Church* (Leadership, Winter 1985)

Missions Memo: Missions USA, July-August 1988

Moller, Valerie: *Finding the Lost Generation* (The Bulletin, June 1997)

Montgomery, Jim: *Dawn 2000 - 7 Million Churches to Go* (Highland Books 1989)

Morning Live – A Production by the South African Broadcast Corporation, November 6, 2000 (SABC 2000).

Mostert, W.P: *Demographic Trends in South Africa – Perspectives on the Future* (Owen Burgess Publishers 1988)

Murray, Andrew: *The State of the Church* (Andrew Murray Consultation on Prayer for Revival and Missions: Kempton park RSA 1985)

Murray, Stuart: *Church Planting – Laying Foundations* (Paternoster Press 1998)

N

Nodding, Peter: *Local Church Planting* (London: Marshal Pickering, 1994)

O

Olford, Stephen F: *The Secret of Soul Winning* (Moody Press 1963)

Ormond, R. Sutter: *The Freedom Charter* (The Apartheid Handbook 1986)

P

Pate, Larry: *Starting New Churches* (International Correspondence Institute, Irving TX 1984,1987, 1991)

Peters, George C: *A Theology of Church Growth* (Chicago Moody Press 1972)

Ponraj, S.D: *Church Planting and the Great Commission* http://www.abcog.org/plant.html)

Q

Qualben, Lars P: *A History of the Christian Church* (Thomas Nelson publishers, New York, NY 1958)

R

Rae, Rev Terry: CPA Conference on Church Planting 2000 – 24 October, 2000

Reddin, Opal L: *Planting Churches That Grow* (Central Bible College Press Publishers, 1990)

Republic of South Africa Church Statistics as revealed in the appendix of *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000)

Roslim, Suwandoko & Duncan, David: *The Bible and the Church, an Independent-Study Textbook* (International Correspondence Institute 1987)

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell: *Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition* (The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago 1986, 1994)

S

Salcedo, Berna: *Insights into Peru* (CPA conference South Africa, 23-25 October, 2000)

Saturday Star Newspaper 4/10/1999: Street Survey Wises up on Crime Stats (The Saturday Star, 1999)

Schaller says SBC Must Decide About New Church Starts, (Biblical Recorder, June 15, 1991)

Schaller, Lyle E*: 44 Questions for Church Planters* (Abingdon Press, 1991)

Schaller, Lyle E: *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church* (Abington Press 1992)

Schaller, Lyle E: Why Start New Churches? (The Circuit Rider, May, 1979)

Schwarz, Christian: *Natural Church Development - A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream: Church Smart Resources, 1996)

Shell, Dr Robert: *AIDS, We Must Go to War* (Reader's Digest, July 2000 edition p 51)

Shenk, David W & Stutzman, Ervin R: *Creating Communities of the Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1988)

Siaki, Paul: *What is the State of Christianity in South Africa?* (CPA Publishers, 2000)

Simms, Jack: *Baby Boomers - Time to Pass the Torch?* (Christian Life, 1986)

Snider, Graydon F: *Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (The Seed Sowers, 1985) appearing in *Grow - A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship* (The Church of the Nazarenes, Spring 2000)

South African Council of Churches Statistics 1986-2000 – *Transforming South Africa through Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing 2000)

Starr, Timothy: *Church Planting, Always in Season* (Toronto Press, 1978)

Sullivan, Bill M.: *Mission of Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grow Magazine, Spring 2000 Edition)

Superintendent Hall – quote – 2000 CPA conference on Church Planting

Sykes, J.B: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Sixth Edition* (Oxford University Press 1976)

T

The Holy Bible: *New International Version* (Zondervan Publishing House 1973,1974, 1978, 1984)

The World Fact Book 2000 (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/sf.html#Econ)

Tinsley, William C: *Upon This Rock - Dimensions of Church Planting* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1985)

Towns, Elmer: *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg, Church Growth Institute 1985)

V

Vermeulen, Danie: *The Strategic Value of Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing, 2000)

Vermeulen, Danie: *A Biblical Basis for Saturation Church Planting* (CPA Publishing, 2000)

Vine, W.E: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Thomas Nelson Publishers 1985)

W

Wagner, C. Peter: *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Regal Books 1990)

White, David A: *Your Church Can Multiply* (Philippine Challenge Inc. 2000)

White, James Emery: *Why New Churches Fail* (http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org)

Wilke, Richard B: *And Are We Yet Alive?* (Abington Press 1986)

Williamson, G.A: *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (Dorset Press, New York, NY 1965)

Z

Zunkel, C. Wayne: *Growing the Small Church* (Elgin, Ill. David C. Cook 1982)