

WHY CHURCHES SHOULD REPRODUCE CHURCHES

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Now consider another question for a moment. How are we doing in this process of church planting?

If we consider the facts, we are struggling in this most important area of ministry. We are investing a great deal of finances and getting little accomplished. Many mission boards are investing millions of dollars on various fields with only a few churches planted. Some missionaries spend their lives and only plant one church on the field. This is happening on fields where other missionaries are planting many churches. What makes the difference?

Whether at home or abroad, the problem stems from depending on church planters reproducing churches rather than churches reproducing churches. We need to rethink our philosophy of ministry regarding the Great Commission. Churches should reproduce churches, not church planters. There are several reasons why churches should reproduce churches.

I. IT HELPS FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION.

Matthew 28:18-20 clearly indicates the Great Commission is church planting and nothing less. It is evangelize, “teach all nations.” It is baptize, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” It is mobilize, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” How can we fulfill this command without planting a local church? The local church and the home are both

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ordained of God. The church is good for the believer as the home is good for the child.

The local church is the place where a believer is taught to observe all things.

Acts 1:8 tells us where we are to fulfill the Great Commission. We are to “be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Pastors and churches think fulfilling the Great Commission is only home and abroad and forget the middle area, their “Judea and Samaria.” By doing this, we are failing to reach this world with the gospel. Every church has the responsibility to reproduce churches which in turn reproduce churches.

How does the reproduction of a local church help us fulfill the Great Commission? First, it helps evangelize another “Jerusalem” with the gospel. This new church can reach those near their ministry, see them baptized, and help them grow in the Lord. Should we expect them to drive forty minutes to get to a good church and if they do, will their neighbors come that far when they are evangelized?

Secondly, this new church has a responsibility to reach their “Judea and Samaria.”

Where exactly is “Judea and Samaria” in relation to a local church? Every church has a “Judea and Samaria” just beyond where their church can effectively minister and get people to come to their services. The distance differs in many areas and on mission fields. It may be five miles or it may be fifty miles. It depends on the culture and the ability to travel. When a new church is planted, they have the responsibility to help reproduce another church in their local area.

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Thirdly, when a new church is reproduced, it creates new missionary dollars to support foreign missions. This helps us reach “the uttermost parts of the earth.” In North America, most Baptist churches have mission budgets that are full or nearly full. Every pastor openly admits that he cannot take on all the missionaries he would like and certainly cannot financially support all the missionaries that call him for meetings. When a new church is reproduced, it creates new missionary dollars to support these missionaries. This helps get them to the field more quickly and helps us fulfill the Great Commission.

II. IT ACTIVELY INVOLVES CHURCH MEMBERS IN THE GREAT COMMISSION.

When churches get involved in reproducing a new church, their people will get involved. They can canvass the area for prospects. They can attend a week of meetings with the purpose of reproducing a new church. They can work as ushers, nursery workers, help with refreshments, and encourage those who attend from the new area. Others can help with special music, or play an instrument for the offertory. These things help church members realize they can have a part in seeing a new church planted.

Why should our church members think it is only necessary to go soul-winning in their area or support missionaries on the foreign fields and not be responsible for reaching their “Judea and Samaria”? Most churches that get involved in this, find their people excited about doing it. Some church members who have been involved in the past are

anxious to do it again. They are thrilled at seeing a new church grow which they have helped reproduce.

III. IT IS CULTURALLY EFFECTIVE.

When churches help in reproducing churches in their area, it becomes culturally acceptable. Many missionaries tell us it is difficult to get those they want to reach to accept them and what they believe. They may not know anyone who believes like the church planter. They may also consider this as “American” and therefore not accept it.

When churches in the area are involved, it removes some of these obstacles. For example, in Quebec, several Baptist churches reproduced a church. This proved to those in the new community that one could be a Quebecois and not be Catholic. The American church planter, couldn't convince them of this as quickly as those within the Quebec culture.

Another reason it is culturally effective is because those in the area think like those in their culture. Some would argue that since they do not think like we think, they cannot be trusted to reproduce a church. Church planters are not to plant American churches but indigenous churches. This is true not only in other countries but in different parts of the United States as well. Anyone who travels extensively in the United States knows the differences in culture from North to South and East to West. Churches can help a great deal in effectively reproducing a new church within their geographical area.

IV. IT IS COST EFFICIENT.

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How much money does it take to plant a new church? Should it take \$100,000,

\$250,000, \$500,000, or more to get a new church planted? It would be interesting to

know how many churches are planted by missionary church planters in relation to the

amount of money invested by the mission board on that field. Granted, the local church

is accountable for the money they invest but many churches trust mission boards to use

it wisely. How can we get a church reproduced in a more cost-efficient way?

When churches reproduce churches, we can reduce the amount of time it takes to bring

a church to self-support and also reduce expenses in getting the church planted. Several

churches can take offerings to help get the new church off to a good start. One church

reproduced in Pennsylvania was planted with a total investment of \$25,000 and was

completely self-supporting within the first year. The temporary support given to this

pastor can then be used to help someone else reproduce a church. This church also gave

nearly 100,000 to missions within three years. This is a good return on the investment

in the new church.

Church planters have suffered because they have been financially responsible for

planting churches when the responsibility should be borne by local churches. They could

get the new work off to a much better start if churches would cooperate to help cover the

initial start-up costs of a new church. When churches do this, it also lowers the cost of

reproducing the new church.

Some churches take mission trips of thousands of miles to pass out tracts or help plant a

new church. Think of the amount of money spent traveling great distances when area

churches could spend a great deal less. This problem must be addressed. We must get

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churches to see that they can take a mission's trip without leaving home. It isn't as glamorous as going to another country or culture but it is no less a mission field that we are responsible to reach with the gospel. It also allows more money to be spent on actual reproduction of churches rather than travel and accommodations.

V. IT MAKES THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CHURCH STRONGER.

Someone has said, "Many hands make light work." This is very true when planting a new church. A church was reproduced in the metro area of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. Seven churches visited the targeted area, handing out 30,000 John and Romans advertising the new church and the week of meetings. These churches spent 1650 man-hours and developed 31 family contacts during the four weeks of visitation. The church started with 14 families in the first service of the new church. If the new pastor had visited 15 hours each week, it would have taken him two and one-half years to reach all of those contacts. In eighteen months, this church had a mission budget of \$13,700 and nearly \$50,000 in their building fund.

The church planter that works alone, finds one family at a time. He gets a family in church but there are few others in the service. By the time he finds another family, the first family has become discouraged and possibly moved on to another church. He must struggle to keep the contacts he gets. When churches help in reproducing a church, you can reach many at once and start off with a larger group.

A crowd draws a crowd. By getting the church off to a good start, they can begin to develop the excitement needed to keep it going. Most often, this only happens when

churches work together to help reproduce a new church. The new church has a stronger beginning and their reputation in the community is strengthened. The community will not see a small struggling group but a work that will grow and develop into a ministry that will impact the community.

VI. IT GIVES ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE NEW CHURCH.

One of the great problems facing a church planter is that his people see no one to encourage them. When churches help to reproduce a new church, the families in the new church have others who can be of great encouragement. They are impressed that another church would care about their area. They have others whom they can follow as an example of how they should live.

Reproducing churches could allow some of their members to attend the new church to help. This really aids in the reproduction of the new church. The new pastor has people who know where he is taking the new ministry. They can live what he preaches and share with the new believers in the church. They can help with Sunday School, nursery, ushering, and counting the money.

Even if they do not attend the new church, pastors may allow their people to attend some of the services of the new church. This lets those in the new church know that the reproducing churches care about them. Many church planters give up and quit because they and their people got discouraged. Churches should do everything they can to encourage the church planter and his people.

VII. IT LENDS CREDIBILITY TO THE NEW PASTOR.

When a church planter goes into a new area, invariably he will face questions about who he is and from where he came. This is especially true when he is in a different country or even a different area of the same country. People today are very cautious about preachers and churches. This credibility factor cannot be overcome by financial support. The only way to properly overcome this is for other churches in the area to have their people get acquainted with the new pastor and lend their physical and vocal support of him. It is great when someone else can say about the church planter what he cannot say about himself. When someone from the area says, “We believe in this man,” or “We love and support Brother So and So,” it says something that cannot be bought. These people are establishing credibility for this new pastor.

In one instance, a pastor attended an evening service where a new church was being planted. He had pastored a church in the area for twenty-five years and was a trusted man. He said, “This pastor has preached for me and I have checked him out. Our people love and trust him. We believe in this man and what he is doing.” For all those sitting in the audience who were from the area, this pastor established the credibility of the new pastor. The new pastor could not have done it for himself.

VIII. IT DEMONSTRATES WHAT THE NEW CHURCH SHOULD BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE.

Churches should band together and hold a week of meetings in the area where they want to reproduce a new church. During this week, they can demonstrate what the new

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church will be like. They can provide preaching, special music, offertories, and a spirit that will draw people to this new church. “Kind reproduces kind” and the atmosphere is being established for the new church.

Many people today are cautious about attending an independent, fundamental Baptist church. They have heard so many things about fundamentalism that they are unsure they want what we have. A week of meetings can help reduce their concerns and show them we are a sensible, caring people who love the Lord and His Word. We can demonstrate to them that there are churches which still stand for the truth and want to do right. Many Baptists have left what we stand for and there are those who are looking for a church that is remaining true. By holding this week of meetings, we can show them there are churches being planted that are holding to the truth.

During this week of meetings, those from the area will begin to develop a confidence in the new church. Some will immediately begin to attend and help support the new ministry. They can see the kind of music the new church will have and the kind of choir the new church will have. They can view young people that love God and see what kind of young people this new church will develop. This will cause them to stick with this new church when things are tough in the early days.

CONCLUSION

Should churches help reproduce new churches? The answer is obvious. This is the best way to get new churches established and reach the world with the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. Churches should not only help financially but actively participate in

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reproducing new churches. It is biblical and practical. The objective of Baptist Church

Planting Ministry is to help churches reproduce churches.