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Innovate Church: Church Planting

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INNOVATE CHURCH: CHURCH PLANTING

By Dave Earley

The How of Church Parenting

“I’m a Missionary to America”

Five years ago, I met a man from Nigeria named Sam. As we talked during our initial conversation, I asked Sam why he had come to America. I was shocked by his answer. He said, “I am a missionary to America.” He went on to tell me, “God has sent me here to bring the Gospel and start churches.”

Let me assure you that Pastor Sam is not the only missionary to America. For more than two hundred years, western nations sent missionaries to Africa, South America and Asia. Today, in a remarkable and astonishing turn of events, the world has begun sending missionaries here to preach the Gospel, make disciples and plant churches. This news should send a collective shiver down the spine of every Christian in this nation!

After meeting Pastor Sam, I left with a greater resolution to participate more fully in the job of sending out missionaries within our own nation. I determined that if I did nothing else the rest of my life, I would get involved in planting churches in North America. This has become my heart’s great desire. And I want to encourage more pastors and more churches to also get involved in this critical effort.

“Tell Me How”

“The most effective method of evangelism is church planting.
The most effective method of church planting is church *parenting*.”¹

I was recently speaking with a pastor who leads a healthy, growing church. He said, “OK, I am convinced that God wants our church to be involved in planting churches. Now what? Tell me how to do it.”

“I am glad you asked,” I said with a grin. “Let me tell you several practical steps you can take to get involved in church parenting.” And in this chapter, I would like to share with pastors and church leaders the same practical steps I outlined to my pastor friend that day. I pray that these steps will invigorate your soul and your ministry. I further pray that you will catch the vision of church planting and see the urgent need for this effort in our nation.

STEP 1: Cast the vision of multiplication to your leaders.

Effective ministry rises and falls on leadership; effective leadership is born out of vision. Successful leaders are not only able to see the vision, they are able to *share* that vision. No church leader has ever led their church to plant churches without first casting the vision to do so.

Here are some key ways in which pastors and church leaders can cast the vision for planting churches in our nation.

Start by Painting the Big Picture

People are largely unaware of the need to plant more churches in America. Christians in our nation need to know that America is actually the third-largest mission field on the planet. They further need to understand that North America is rapidly becoming as post-Christian as Western Europe.

When casting the vision for church planting, use the statistics, quotes and principles offered in the previous chapter in your teachings. I have never shared that information with serious Christians who did not walk away understanding that we do need plant many more effective churches in North America.

Show the Need in Your Area

Nothing is dynamic until it becomes specific. You need to help your church leaders begin to understand the specific need for more churches in your own community. Let me suggest two simple exercises you can use to help your staff and leaders begin to see the need.

People with No Seat This Sunday

A. Record the population in your area: _____

B. List the churches in the area, the number of people they can seat in their worship facilities and how many Sunday services they hold each week.

Church	Number of Seats	Weekend Services	Total seats available for worship each weekend

Total: _____

C. If every person in your area decided to go to church this Sunday, how many people would not have a seat? Subtract B (the total number of available seats for churchgoers in your city) from A (the number of people in your city) in order to determine the answer to this question.

$$A - B = C$$

A: _____
 - B: _____
 = C: _____

Our church (New Life Church Gahanna Ohio) was in a town of 30,000 people. There were 20 churches in our town with a combined seating capacity of 9,700 people. That meant that if everyone in our town decided to go to church on any given Sunday, 20,300 people would not have had a seat.

On Any Given Sunday

The western world is the only major segment of the planet in which Christianity is not growing.² In fact, church attendance in North America continues to plummet, dropping from 60 percent attendance after WWII, to 49 percent in 1991, to the current 18 percent.³

Another exercise you can use to help your staff and members catch the vision of church planting is to figure out how many people in your community are not involved in church on any given Sunday.

We found that even on Easter Sunday, two-thirds of the people in our town did not attend church. On any given Sunday, the weekly worship attendance was about 20 percent of our town's population. That means that with a population of 30,000, the attendance on any given Sunday was about 6,000 people, meaning 24,000 did not attend church. Further, 1.3 million people lived in our metropolitan area. If 20 percent attended church on any given Sunday, that means that more than a million people did not.

A. Record the population in your area: _____

B. List the churches in the area and the number of people they had attend church on average per week last month.

Church	Number of people attending church per week

Total: _____

C. How many people attended church per week? How many did not attend? Subtract B (the number of people attending church per week), from A (The number of people in your area) in order to determine the answer to this question.

$$A - B = C$$

A: _____
 - B: _____
 = C: _____

Pray!

Thomas Road Baptist Church founder Jerry Falwell used to say, "Nothing of eternal significance ever happens apart from prayer."⁴ Prayer uniquely links our hearts with God's hearts. Take every opportunity you can to pray about the need to plant churches. When you pray publicly during your weekend worship services or during deacons meetings, begin to mention the need for more churches.

Specifically, you can lead your church to pray for eyes to see the harvest. Also, pray for the future soil to be cultivated and for the workers to be raised up. Finally, ask Jesus to give you His vision, direction, timing and blessing for church planting.

STEP 2: Challenge the culture of your church.

The task of an effective leader is to closely monitor the culture of their church. Whenever it strays from the Scriptural ideal of being a healthy, growing, multiplying army for God, we need to challenge the culture that permitted the demise in the first place.

Refuse to Give in to Excuses

Often when pastors begin to probe their church with the concept of becoming more involved in church planting they encounter reasons why it would be easier to not be involved. Are any of these excuses holding your church back?

Four Common Reasons (Excuses) for Not Being Involved in Church Planting

1. “We aren’t big enough yet.”

I find that many pastors have some ideal size their church needs to get to *before* they will even think about planting churches. This apparent magic number is usually (and conveniently) about twice their current size. If their attendance is 100, they think they need to wait until their attendance reaches 200. But this type of thinking is about as reasonable as when people say they will begin to tithe when they begin to make more money. It just doesn’t work that way.

The reality is that a church of any size can be involved in helping to plant new churches. Churches merely need to be willing to get involved. Many new churches are, from their very beginning, placing multiplication into their collective DNA, and they are successfully starting daughter churches within three years of their own launch.

Even small, brand new churches can pray. They can send teams of people to pass out literature or send a crew to watch the nursery when the embryonic church has a planning meeting. They can take up a special offering and partner in any number of ways with other congregations to help launch the new church.

2. “We aren’t healthy enough to start new churches.”

While this may sound logical at first, we need to realize that helping to start new churches is something God wants to use to help your church *become* healthy. Nothing is as beneficial for a struggling church as getting the congregation’s eyes off themselves and onto helping others. Nothing helps a church get healthy like getting involved on the frontlines of fulfilling the Great Commission.

3. “We might fail.”

This excuse flows out of a failure to comprehend Matthew 16:18, a pivotal verse wherein we see Jesus make an authoritative and powerful promise: “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Jesus is the church builder; not us. If we try to do it all in our strength, we will certainly fail. However, if we are cooperating with Him in His work, we cannot fail. Instead of letting a fear of failure cause us to be passive and unreceptive to the need of church planting, we must allow the apparent need to drive us to pray as hard as we can, learn as fast as we can and work as hard as we can to bring about needed change.

4. “We cannot afford it.”

I would be amiss if I led you to believe that starting new churches won’t cost you anything. Let me make it very simply: Successfully starting new churches will cost you time, money, manpower, attention, energy and prayers. It will put your church on the enemy’s radar screen and make you the target for genuine spiritual warfare.

Yes, church parenting is costly. Yet, God promises to bless those who give: “Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38).

We like to use this promise to generally encourage our people to be generous with their resources. As I noted in the previous chapter, we frequently tell them, “You cannot out give God.” Yet, we are often simultaneously stingy when it comes to leading our churches to give away manpower and money to plant daughter churches. God promises to bless those who give. And there is no limit to how much He can give back to churches that follow His call.

Four times in six years our church planted a daughter church. During the four years we gave away money and teams of people to launch a new church, our baptism rates increased, our giving rates increased and our attendance increased. We discovered that you cannot out give God. It was a true lesson in miraculous living.

Churches that plant other churches have a renewed zeal for evangelism and have a deepened passion for the Great Commission. They learn new strategies of effective evangelism from planting daughter churches.

The human body is remarkably designed. When you give blood, your body will quickly replace all of it. The church is the body of Christ. Similarly, when we give away leaders, members and money to plant a daughter church, God quickly replaces those leaders, members and finances with new ones. You can’t out give God.

Yes, on paper planting a new church may seem like a steep endeavor. But when you consider the fact that people are going to hell because they are not hearing the Gospel, you cannot afford *not* to plant churches. When you consider the need to keep your church outwardly focused, you cannot refuse to get involved. And when you consider the fact that you can literally never out give God, you cannot afford not to help start new churches.

Build Multiplication Values into your church culture

Before a church can effectively “mother” a daughter church, there often needs to be a shift to multiplication values. The left side of the following chart shows several common church values. The right side reveals biblical values that are needed for multiplication. As you examine the chart, note the values in which your church needs to grow so that it becomes a church-planting multiplication center.

Necessary Multiplication Value Shifts

Fear	to	Faith
Territorial	to	Kingdom mindset
Safety & Selfishness	to	Sacrificial Generosity
Isolation	to	Involvement & Partnership
Complacency	to	Commitment
Laziness	to	Learning and Leadership

How to Build Multiplication Values into Your Church

1. Model Multiplication Values

Before a church will ever adopt multiplication values, the leaders need to model those values. Our congregations are more likely to do what they see before they will do what they hear. Let me ask you:

- Are you a person of active, growing faith?
- Are you more interested in building God’s kingdom, or you own?
- Do you practice sacrificial generosity?
- Do you partner with others to accomplish God-sized goals?

- Are you a person of deep personal commitment?
- Are you always learning and improving as a leader?
- Of the essential multiplication values (faith, kingdom mindset, sacrificial generosity, involvement and partnership, commitment, learning and leadership) which is/are your strength(s) and passion(s)? Which one(s) needs improvement?

2. Preach, Teach, and Expose Multiplication Values

Brainstorm all of the various ways your church can teach the multiplication values of faith, sacrificial generosity, a kingdom mindset, involvement, partnership, commitment, learning and leading. Work these values into everything you do. Also, use the following Scriptures references into as many messages as possible: Matthew 18:16; John 12:23-27; John 15:8; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:1-3. Consider using a sermon series, guest speakers, seminars, daily devotionals, testimonies, sermon illustrations, slogans, signs and songs to drive these values deep into the culture of your congregation.

3. Encourage and Lead Multiplication Values

Once a church can begin to multiply on the micro level, it is much easier to multiply on the macro level. If individuals can share their faith, lead people to Christ and disciple them (micro multiplication), the church is given a picture of how it could happen on a larger scale by starting a new church (macro multiplication). If a small group can multiply into several groups (micro multiplication, the church is given a picture of how it could happen on a larger scale by starting a new church (macro multiplication).

STEP 3: Influence the Influencers, Inform the Members

“Basic Leadership 101” tells us that people are naturally down on what they are not up on. If people resist change, it is likely related to their need for more information. Whenever you attempt to move a church in a new direction, there are two primary groups that need attention and communication, as defined here.

First: Influence the Influencers

Until the most influential people in your church have bought into the vision, any plan to launch new churches is unlikely to lift off the ground. There are five primary keys/steps to influencing influencers. All five are necessary before going to the rest of the congregation about the details of the plan to plant a daughter church.

1. Identify the top ten influencers in your church.

These persons are the E.F. Huttons of your church. When they talk, people listen. In a meeting, they are the ones everyone looks to for answers. On Sundays, they are the ones people gather around in the lobby. They may have a title, but not always. They also are likely to have standing in the community, but again, not always. Your top ten members (or “Big Ten”) could include staff members, church officers, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, worship team members, former pastors or the head of the ladies Bible study. List your “Big Ten” below.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

2. Invest in the influencers.

People typically buy into the leader before they buy into their vision. You should directly invest in people. If they are the same gender as you, start spending more time with them. If they are the opposite sex, you and your wife should do things with them as couples. You may have several of these types of couples join you in a variety of occasions: to your house for dinner; to your house to watch a big game on television; to attend a concert.

You can also invest in them by ministering to the people they care about the most. This may involve ministering to the couple's teenaged son, visiting their mother in the hospital, or winning their neighbor the Christ. List each of your top ten and one specific way you can invest in them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

3. Individually communicate the vision of church planting according to influencers' passions and experiences.

After you have won over the influencers in your church, begin to talk them about church planting. Individually begin to communicate the vision of becoming a mother church. If one of these individuals loves kids, talk about how the new church will reach more young people. If one of them grew up on the other side of town, share how you hope to plant a new church in that area. If one of them loves evangelism, talk about how many more souls will potentially get saved by launching a new church.

List each of your "Big Ten" and their "hot button" issues.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

4. Involve the "Big Ten" in the process.

If you leave your "Big Ten" out of the process, church planting will die because it is simply your idea. But if you involve them in the process, they can carry the ball because church planting has also become their idea. Influencers won't own a vision until they participate in carrying it out. Get them involved in the planting of a new church according to their strengths and interests. This may involve asking some of them to study the financial needs of a new church. Others can be asked to prepare Bible studies on church planting, while some can do demographic studies of prime areas. Some members may lead pray meetings specifically aimed at church planting, while some may

plan evangelistic efforts. All of your “Big Ten” can help you consider how to sell the vision to the congregation.

List each influencer and how they may participate in the process of planting a new church.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

5. Ignite the “Big Ten” to persuade others.

Motivate your influencers to be contagious about church planting. Encourage them to invite other couples to their homes for dinner or other gatherings so that they can specifically talk about how they too can help in a church-planting effort.

Second: Inform the Members

Once the influencers are on board with a church-planting project, you can effectively and aggressively inform your members about the specifics of your church’s involvement in church planting. Use everything at your disposal — including sermons, banners, slogans, signs, announcements, newsletter articles, and anything else at your disposal — to let them know all of the specifics regarding your church’s role in launching new churches.

STEP 4: Determine what type of daughter church planning you will do.

There are several common models of intentional mother daughter church planting that I would like to highlight. Each model listed here has its own set of strengths and weaknesses. In fact, a given church may use one model in one situation and a different model for a future church-planting effort.

1. The Missionary Model

The example of the Missionary Model is the church at Antioch, which sent out Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1-3) to plant churches a considerable distance from that city. This is probably the method that was used most frequently from WWII until the turn of the century. In this model, the mother church sends out a planter to launch a new church. For example, when we launched our church in Ohio in 1985, we were sent out by the Lynchburg, Va.-based Thomas Road Baptist Church with a \$546 dollar offering and a prayer.

In 2000, First Baptist Church of Woodstock (Ga.) sent out a team of young couples to Las Vegas to help plant the Hope Baptist Church. Johnnie Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, asked Vance Pittman of Memphis to lead the Las Vegas team. Vance was joined by Mike Laughrun, the small groups pastor, and Jeff Riley, the worship pastor, in February 2001 to help start the new church. Seven years later, nearly 2,000 people worship with the church each Sunday. Plus, the church has planted four churches and helped start two others since its founding.

2. Passing the DNA Model.

Richard Harris of the North American Mission Board says, “Besides God Himself, the greatest resource for church planting is the mother church.”⁵ This model involves the mother church giving away members to serve as workers, givers, inviters and leaders in the new church that will start nearby. The image is that of passing the DNA of the mother church on to the offspring church. The biblical example of this is the large church of Ephesus sending out teams to nearby areas to form at least six other churches (see Revelation 2-3).

Our church in Ohio used this method to plant five new churches in an eight-year period. We would send out a planter and a team of 35-70 members to serve as the core group for each daughter church project. Our goal was to plant a new church within half an hour drive from the mother church. We also paid the planters’ health insurance for three years and took up a large offering to pay for their startup costs. In addition, we also made available to them our office supplies, copiers and bulk mailing permit. Occasionally, we put the planter on our paid church staff for several months prior to the actual launch.

In church planting, just as in physical birth, the larger the birth weight, the bigger the baby. Just as a baby that is born premature with a birth weight of two pounds has a difficult chance at survival and thriving, the same is true of new churches. A church that launches with several hundred people in its first service has a much greater chance of not only surviving, but of growing large and healthy enough so that it later begins to plant churches. We have discovered that the larger launch team, the larger the attendance for the first public service. And the larger the attendance at the first service, the greater the odds are of success. Therefore, mother churches should send as many people as they can to become a part of the daughter church.

3. The Partner Model

The Partner Model refers to those occasions when several churches partner together in order to plant one new church. Each of the participating churches contributes some money, possibly a few people and much prayer. These churches may also send their youth groups to canvas neighborhoods with door-hangers, or a crew to staff the nursery during the new church’s first public launch service, or any number of other actions to facilitate the early success of the daughter church.

The strength of this method is that it allows smaller churches to get involved in starting new churches. This is the method that has been largely used by Southern Baptist churches over the years, as they partner with area associations to launch hundreds of new churches each year.

4. The Multi-Site Model

In this model, we see one church meeting for worship in two or more locations under a shared vision, budget, leadership and board. This is done in order to continue to maintain momentum and growth that is not limited by the need to keep building new buildings. It also enables a church to fine-tune its ministry to reach diverse elements of the population.

This model has been used by several large churches to start satellite churches, wherein live worship teams are present in alternate locations, while a video of the sermon from the main church is utilized in the satellite churches. Seacoast Church, which calls itself “one church in many locations,” wrote the book on this method (*The Multi-site Revolution* by Greg Surrat, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird). At the time of this writing, Seacoast has eighteen nearly *identical* weekend services meeting in nine locations in North and South Carolina. After live worship, a video of Pastor Greg Surrat’s sermon is shown live via video feed to the other locations. Each campus has its

own pastor and worship leaders. The strength of this model is that it uses the brand, credibility, experience and resources of the mother church to speed the growth of the daughter churches.

Multi-site campuses can also be used to tailor the approach to better reach a specific niche of society. For example, California's Saddleback Church has eight venues each weekend, with each being designed around a different musical style. Styles range from contemporary praise and worship, black gospel, rock and roll, island style, classic hymns and Spanish. Live musicians lead the worship in the varying venues while a video feed of the Sunday morning message from the main campus is shown in seven of the eight venues.

5. The Single-Site, Multi-Ethnic Model.

There are about two hundred people groups that comprise the eighty-five million-plus citizens of the United States. America has obviously become a multi-cultural, multi-language nation. Many churches are recognizing this phenomenon and are subsequently planting new ethnic congregations in their buildings. Spanish and Korean are the most popular of these undertakings, while other churches are now hosting congregations that worship in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Russian and other languages.

STEP 5: Determine the Commitment Level of Your Church.

The kingdom of God expands through sacrifice. If you and your church are going to get involved in successful church parenting, you will need to count the cost. Let's examine the seven areas in which your church may pay an additional cost within the frame of a church-planting effort.

1. Time

A successful birth is a nine-month process. After that period, the real parenting begins. Church plants are similar in that they require time spent in finding the church planter, working with the church planter, assisting the church planter, praying for the church planter (as well as the plant), etc.

2. Money

Church plants require money for staff, start-up, facilities, equipment, advertising, printing, etc. You need to determine what costs will be covered by your denomination or association, what part by the church planter, what part by the people who join the church-planting launch team, and what costs will be covered by your church. Realize that there are people who will financially support church-planting projects even though they have not typically given to special offerings in the past.

3. Attention

Launching a new church will draw attention from other activities in which your church is involved or may be contemplating. Consider this factor before you plan for big campaigns or ways to do the launch in conjunction with the campaign.

4. People

You must be willing to send some of your people to join the launch team. Be prepared to send your best people. The launch team should not consist of people I describe as EGRs (Extra Grace Required persons). The launch team should rather consist of people I refer to as MMPs (Most Mission-minded People).

5. Enemy Attack

New churches are more likely to rescue captives from the kingdom of darkness and deliver them into the kingdom of Light. The enemy does not like it when his kingdom is plundered. Therefore, as you become involved in church planting, you need to step up the prayer ministries of your church.

6. Prayer

The most important resource you can give a church-planting team is prayer. The team cannot reach its potential apart from concentrated and constant prayer from the sending church.

7. Communication

Whatever of the aforementioned models you use, most problems can be avoided if the doors of communication remain open between the mother church and the church planter. I suggest that you make a simple written commitment that will specifically spell out what is expected in terms of prayer support, financial support, oversight, responsibilities site selection, equipment, facilities, the launch team, expectations for communication and the level of connectedness that should be expected between both churches.

Defining Your Church Legacy

Every person and every church is faced with the question of legacy. We all have a driving need to know that our lives have counted for something bigger, deeper and more lasting, specifically within the framework of the kingdom of God. The knowledge that we are leaving a good legacy infuses life with a wonderful sense of meaning, purpose, personal congruence and contribution.

My question is this: What legacy will you leave? I want to identify four primary choices that you have.

1. Legacy of Survival

This is the mostly self-centered decision to “get by.” Too many churches are merely holding on by solely focusing on paying the bills and limping slowly into heaven. If this defines your legacy, allow me to ask you a question: Did Jesus come to earth, undergo torture and die so we could merely get by? I believe that we should be willing to cheerfully pay a price in return for all that God has done for us.

2. Legacy of Status Quo

This legacy is the notion of comfortably sticking to a business-as-usual plant. Risk, in this regard, is avoided at all cost. Let me remind you that there is no faith without risk. The only thing for which we ever see Jesus rebuking His disciples was their lack of faith. God is not a God of the status quo. Further, Jesus did not die for the status quo. Read the parable of the talents and see what He said to the man who buried his talent in the ground (Matthew 25:24-27).

3. Legacy of Success

This is the legacy of measuring success by what we acquire. In individuals, the acquiring of larger houses, better vacations, the accumulation of more “toys,” and leaving a big nest egg for our kids is often the measurement of success. But wouldn't a better “nest egg” for future generations be a legacy of faith, sacrifice and generosity?

For churches, the legacy of success is measured by the three B's: bigger Buildings, larger Budgets and more Bodies in the pews on Sunday mornings. Remember, Jesus

was extremely unimpressed with the man who spent his energy greedily building bigger barns for himself (Luke 12:13-21). Wouldn't it please the Lord more if, instead of merely building bigger churches, we also left the legacy of several healthy daughter churches that were impacting more areas of our communities? Think of the difference it could make if your church parented several new churches over the course of the next several years.

4. Legacy of Significance

A hundred years from now, it won't matter how many things we acquired in this life. The level of our earthly success will be insignificant and forgotten. However, we can have a significant eternal significance in terms of lives we impacted for Christ. If we can lead many to righteousness through church planting, our legacy will shine forever and ever!

I want to close by highlighting a wonderful verse that shows the importance of the legacies we, as Christians, leave behind: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:2).

Notes:

1. *Church Planting Churches*, seminar notebook, DCPI, 5. For many more details about mother daughter church planting, I highly recommend *The Dynamic Daughter Church Planting Handbook* by Paul Becker and Mark Williams. It is available from DCPI International, 800-255-0431 or www.dcp.org.
2. Tom Clegg and Warren Bird, *Lost in America, : How Your Church Can Impact The World Next Door*, (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, Inc, 2000), p.33
3. Dave Olsen, <http://www.theamericanchurch.org>
4. Jerry Falwell, "Falwell's Five Fundamental Facts of Life," TRBC, <http://trbc.org/new/sermons.php?url=960804.html>
5. Richard Harris, quoted in *Seven Steps for Planting Churches*, Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, 2004, 1