Liberty University
DigitalCommons@Liberty University

Faculty Publications and Presentations

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Graduate School

7-17-2006

The Desperate Need for New Churches

David B. Earley
Liberty University, dbearley@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts_fac_pubs

Earley, David B., "The Desperate Need for New Churches" (2006). *Faculty Publications and Presentations.* Paper 143.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts_fac_pubs/143

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Graduate School at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.

THE DESPERATE NEED FOR NEW CHURCHES

Dave Earley 07/17/06

1. AMERICA HAS BECOME A HUGE AND IMPORTANT MISSION FIELD

- Recent research states that **there are now 195 million non-churched people in America**, making America one of the top four largest "unchurched" nations in the world.
- "The American church is in the midst of one of the largest mission fields in the world today. Only three other nations—China, India, and Indonesia—have more lost people."[1] Justice Anderson
- "Essentially, **what was a churched, supposedly Christian culture has become an unchurched, post-Christian culture. People in our culture are not antichurch; they simply view the church as irrelevant to their lives**."[2] Aubrey Malphurs
- In spite of the rise of mega-churches, **no county in America has a greater church population than it did ten years ago.**[3] Ron Sylvia
- During the last ten years, combined communicant **membership of all Protestant denominations declined by 9.5 percent** (4,498,242), while **the national population increased by 11.4 percent** (24,153,000).[4] Tom Clegg

2. AMERICAN HAS MORE PEOPLE, BUT LESS CHURCHES

- **Each year 3,500 to 4,000 churches close their doors forever; yet only 1,100 to 1,500 new churches are started**.[5] Win Arn
- **Even though America has more people, it has fewer churches per capita than at any time in her history**. Although the number of churches in America has increased by 50 percent in the last century, the population has increased 300 percent.[6] **There are now nearly 60 percent fewer churches per 10,000 persons than in 1920**.- Bill Easum

Table 1. Number of Churches per Americans[7]

1920	27 churches existed for every 10,000 Americans.
1950	17 churches existed for every 10,000 Americans.
1996	11 churches existed for every 10,00 Americans.

---

[1]Justice Anderson, in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History and Strategies of Word Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 243.

[2]Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 27.

[3]Ron Sylvia, *High Definition Church Planting* (Ocala, FL: High Definition Resources, 2004), 26.

[4]Tom Clegg, "How to Plant a Church for the 21st Century," seminar materials, 1997, author's collection, Gahanna, Ohio.

[5]Win Arn, *The Pastor's Manual For Effective Ministry* (Monrovia, CA: Church Growth, 1988), 41.

[6]Bill Easum, "The Easum Report," March 2003; available from http://www.easum.com/church.htm; Internet.

[7]Tom Clegg and Tim Bird, *Lost in America* (Loveland CA: Group Publishing, 2001), 30.

3. NEW CHURCHES ADOPT NEW METHODS AND ADAPT NEW STRATEGIES FOR REACHING PEOPLE AND MINISTERING TO THEM MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN EXISTING CHURCHES

- As America moves from a Christian to a post-Christian, postmodern culture, it will become increasingly important to plant new churches to present the timeless truths of the gospel in a new and timely manner. We must put new wine in new wineskins. A new army of well trained, effectively taught church planters is essential to win back the North American continent for Christ in the twenty-first century.
- "There is not a congregation that possesses the ability and the financial resources to attract, reach, and respond to the needs of all the residents of the community."[8] Lyle Schaller
- There exists a flawed understanding that the United States and Canada are already evangelized. While there is abundant access to Christian information, **many unchurched persons in North America are amazingly untouched by the evangelical subculture** because the Christian subculture is largely incapable of providing a culturally relevant gospel witness.[9] Ed Stezer

4. NEW CHURCHES ARE AMAZINGLY MORE EFFECTIVE AT REACHING LOST PEOPLE THAN EXISTING CHURCHES

- "Today, **of the approximately 350,000 churches in America, four out of five are either plateaued or declining** . . . . Many churches begin a plateau or slow decline about their fifteenth to eighteenth year. 80-85 [percent] of the churches in America are on the down-side of this cycle. **Of the 15 percent that are growing, 14 percent are growing from transfer, rather than conversion growth**."[10] Win Arn,
- **In the average year, half of all existing churches will not add one new member through conversion growth**.[11] Ron Sylvia
- One American denomination recently found that 80 percent of its converts came to Christ in churches less than 2 years old.[12] Ralph Moore
- "**On a per capita basis, new churches win more people to Christ than established churches.**"[13] Ed Stezer
- Churches over fifteen years of age win an average of **only three people** to Christ per year for every one hundred church members. Churches three years to fifteen years old win an average of **five people** to Christ per year for every one hundred church members, but churches under three years of age win an average of **ten people** to Christ per year for every one hundred church members.[14] Brian McNichol
- **"The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.**"[15] Peter Wagner

THEREFORE, WE MUST PLANT MORE NEW CHURCHES!

---

[8]Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville,TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 43.

[9]Stetzer, *Planting*, 9.

[10]Arn, 41, 43.

[11]Sylvia, 27.

[12]Ralph Moore, *Starting New Churches* (Ventura CA: Regal Book, 2002), 3.

[13]Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 6.

[14]Brian McNichol, quoted in "Churches Die With Dignity," *Christianity Today*, 14 January 1991, 69.

[15]C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 11.