

An Overview of Church Planting Movements

Planting Churches that Will Themselves Plant More Churches, Leading to a
Church Planting Movement

The Seeds of the Church

Planting the Right Seed

All living things come from a seed or an egg. Inside the seed or egg is a set of instructions, called DNA, which determines at the beginning of the plant or animal's life what type it will be, what it will look like and to a large extent what it will act like. Your DNA was passed down from your parents and determined what you look like, how tall you are, what color your hair is, and a whole host of other characteristics you take for granted. Apple DNA will always produce an apple tree because the seed planted came from an apple tree. When sheep have a lamb, it will always grow up to be a sheep because its mother and father were sheep. The parent's DNA was given to the lamb. The lamb can never grow up to be a goat.

In a sense, disciples and churches also have a DNA. Think about your own church. Why does it act the way it does? Why does it emphasize certain things? Why does it believe one way versus another? It is too simplistic to simply say it's because of the Bible or the Holy Spirit. If that were the case, most churches would be similar if not identical.

No, your church is the way it is largely because of the seed planted *when it was started*. Churches have a definite personality because of the expectations planted in it when it was started, because of the emphases made in the beginning by the leadership, and often because of a common heritage it shares with others.

Now, whatever DNA was put into your church will flavor, to a large extent, what it expects to do. If your church was started with an emphasis on the importance of Biblical teaching, Bible teaching will form a large part of your time together whether through worship, small groups, teaching, etc.

The Early Church

What was the DNA like in the early church in the book of Acts? The Scripture says that when the early disciples were persecuted in Jerusalem that . . . *Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.* Acts 8:4

These early disciples preached the word everywhere they went. Might this not be the DNA planted in the churches by the Apostle Paul? Does it not say that while Paul taught in Ephesus . . . *This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.* Acts 19:10

While Paul was there the Gospel spread all over Asia. The early church in Acts exploded and spread rapidly because the DNA put into every new congregation was to be involved in witness, planting churches and even cross-cultural witness. Every disciple was to be a part of the ministry; it was not the job of only a select few. Therefore, when they were scattered, they did what was most natural – preach the Word and most likely, start churches wherever they were. It was their “spiritual DNA.”

The Opportunity to Plant Biblical Seeds

You have a unique opportunity before you. As you make new disciples you will not be building on another man’s foundation. Most of what these disciples think will be formed by you. And the birth of new disciples *is* the birth of a new church. As these disciples, the church, come together, you will be influential in their early instruction. You have the opportunity to plant the seed of the church; to form its spiritual DNA. You will instruct and model what a disciple is like and what a church should do. Everything you do among them will communicate what the church should be. So, what seed will you plant?

Interestingly enough, the concept of a “spiritual DNA” inside the seeds that are sown is inherent in what the Scripture teaches:

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Galatians 6.7

Reproducing Churches

If we are going to reach the nations for Christ, then we cannot afford to produce disciples or churches that do not reproduce. Obviously, unless we plan to live forever and reach millions of people by ourselves, we must move from strategies where we are counting converts, to the multiplicative, Biblical model where every disciple is a Disciple-Maker.

In the seed of the new church, we must teach and model that it is normal and expected that a new church will not only witness to neighbors, but also start churches right away in areas farther away. If we want to see a church planting movement begun we must plant reproducing churches. If the church is planted with that seed, it will become a pattern of that church and subsequent daughter churches. What kind of churches will you plant? Reproducing, multiplying churches or ones that only grow but don’t reproduce? The choice is yours.

What is a Church Planting Movement (CPM)?

One example can be seen among a Hindu people group in India. Initial evangelism and church planting began among them in the early 19th century. However, 170 years later there were still only 28 churches among this population of 90 million people. Furthermore, progress in reaching the people had ceased, with no new churches planted among them in over 40 years.

In the late 1990s, however, things began to change radically. Between 1989 and 1991 eight new churches were suddenly started in this formerly stagnant setting. By 1994, the number of churches had grown to 78, the following year to more than 220, a year later to 547! Then, by 1997, there were more than 1000 new churches among this predominantly Hindu population. And the growth rate shows no signs of slowing. In all, a total of more than 50,000 new disciples were recorded in the decade between 1989 and 1999.

The best term for this phenomenon is a *church planting movement*. A church planting movement is a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches within a people group. And this is not the only example; there are currently dozens of church planting movements in progress around the world among Buddhists, Muslims, Latinos, Chinese, Hindu, etc.

How to start a CPM

The first thing to know is that only God can start a CPM. In fact, only he can draw anyone into the Kingdom. But He does command us to join with him, as He saves His elect from humankind, by making disciples. So it is up to us to put the right kind of DNA into these disciples and, consequently, into the church; DNA that is most likely to lead to CPM. In this way we can put into place the proper mechanics to take the gospel of salvation to every nation, tribe and people of the earth.

Understand CPM Church –There are at least 4 different styles of church:

A. Traditional church –

- Disciples meet together in a church building.
- An Evangelistic Crusade may be held once per year.
- They hope that every member is able to bring at least one person to Christ each year so the church can double in size but at the end of the year the number usually hasn't changed much.
- The growth that usually does occur is not from new disciples.
- Finances go for the building and minister's salaries.
- These churches have many programs, but rarely grow by more than 5% each year.

B. Cell Church –

- Small groups of 6 to 12 people meet in homes with unpaid leadership.
- Each person is reminded that they are the ministers and are encouraged to share their faith and bring friends to the cell meeting.
- It is hoped that within 6 months the cell can double their size and split into two small groups.
- There is usually a congregational meeting in which cells come together for corporate fellowship, worship and teaching.
- Finances go for the congregational meeting and a few salaries, but more money is available for outreach.

C. G-12 church –

- Similar to cell groups, but they hope that every church member can lead 12 other people to Christ.
- These 12 people must be trained before they also begin training others.
- In addition to meeting with their original fellowship, each church member also leads their own group with the 12 that they have led to Christ.
- Growth can be more rapid.
- Much emphasis is placed on academic training.

D. CPM Church –

- **Every disciple becomes a disciple-maker.**
- Every disciple is trained to find at least three non-Christian friends in a week and share their testimony with them.
- On the second week, they learn the first of seven fundamental lessons, go back to the people who heard their testimony, and teach the first lesson to whoever is interested.
- They share their testimony with others to keep their number of weekly contacts to at least three.
- On the third week, they teach the second of the seven lessons to whoever has heard the first lesson, they teach lesson one to whoever has just heard their testimony but is still interested, and they share their testimony with anyone new, keeping the number of weekly contacts to at least three.
- **The point is that they are teaching about Jesus with their testimony and the lessons that they are learning to at least three people every week.**
- The disciples meet as home groups at least once each week and new disciples are added to the group.
- Each new disciple is immediately taught how to share their testimony and sent out to share it at least three times that week. The next week they are taught the first lesson and they are on their way to Disciple-Making.
- This training is called JITT (pronounced “jeet”) which stands for “just in time training”.
- Groups can multiply like cells, according to the G12 format or in any way.

Strive to make disciples and start churches that have the DNA for CPM; that is, they multiply, multiply, multiply. Remember, the seed that fell on the good soil produced 100, 60 or 30 times what was planted (Matthew 13:3). Just think of that. When a seed is planted into the ground and dies (John 12:24) it can reproduce itself up to 100 times! And, if this DNA of multiplication is passed on to the new seeds (disciples) each of them can multiply up to 100 times, and so on until “the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas.” (Hab 2:14).

TEN PRINCIPLES OF CPM—put these into the DNA of each disciple!!!

1. Prayer

- Mark 11:24 - whatever you ask for will be given
- I Thess 5:16-18 – pray without ceasing. . . for this is God’s will

2. Saturation Evangelism

- II Cor 9:6 – sow the word of God generously
- Acts 6:7 – the word of God spread

3. Intentional Disciple-Making

- Matt 28:19-20 – Jesus commanded us to make disciples
- Luke 10 – disciples were given instruction how to go out

4. “POUCH” Churches – participative, obedient to the Lord, unpaid/untrained leadership, cells, meet in houses

- I Cor 14:26 – 33 – each one participates as the Lord directs him
- John 14:21 – people that love Jesus follow his commands
- Titus 1:5-9 – elders and overseers are from among the community
- Col 4:15 – the church is meeting in homes

5. Healthy Churches - worship, evangelism, training, service to the community, ministry to the body, fellowship, and prayer

- Acts 2:42-47 – the early disciples were devoted to these things

6. Smaller Churches Reproduce Faster - rabbit reproduction versus elephant reproduction
 - Acts 2:46-47 – the Lord added to the house churches every day.

7. New Churches Must Start New Churches - plant horses, not mules. Multiplication, not addition.
 - 1 Cor 14:24-25 – unbelievers come into the church and get saved.

8. The Resources are in the Harvest - Every disciple is a disciple-maker of disciple-makers
 - John 4:35–39 – the people of the village believed the testimony of the Samaritan woman.

9. Training Cycle - model, assist, watch, leave
 - II Tim 2:2 – the things you have seen me model, teach others, who can also teach others.

10. Trust in the Promises of God – He is Faithful
 - John 14:1-14 – Trust in Jesus, and you will do the same things that He did.