

How Does Church Planting Relate to God's Mission?

Every church involved in a new church, and every church planter starting one, needs to answer the question: **what is church planting?**

For some, the word planting comes across as insider language. In the sub-culture of the church planting world there is an entire language mostly unknown to the outside. We've all heard of planters talk about "doing a parachute drop church plant," or "starting with a launch team." What do these words even mean? More importantly, what is church planting about?

That's an essential question, really.

Church Planting or Church Starting?

When we talk about church planting it can be a little different than church starting. What's the difference? Well, I think church starting happens a lot of ways. The most popular church starting strategy involves a group of people getting mad, leaving their home church, and starting another church. In most cases I wouldn't advise this strategy.

Church planting, on the other hand, involves an individual, mother church, and/or a group of people going out to start a church for the purpose of engaging a community through gospel proclamation and demonstration.

Church planting, unlike church starting, should/must be mission driven.

Church planting grows in the soil of lostness (hence "planting") where men and women far from God are challenged with the claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ by a group of intentional believers.

Church Planting and Gospel Movements

Church planting is about planting the gospel. And growth in church planting comes from making disciples.

As such, any movement of churches that's going to be serious about reaching the lost world is going to be involved in church planting. In fact, most of us who write in the field of mission believe that any movement or denomination desiring to grow through conversion should aim for at least a three percent rate of church planting every year. (Take a look-- most growing groups and denominations have over that percent and most declining ones have under that percent.)

Think of it this way, if a movement has a hundred churches one year they need to plant three the next year-- at the very least.

Church planting is essential to the growth of the Kingdom and the work of Christ through His church. The networks, movements, and denominations that are thriving are thriving because

they're planting new churches. The key thing to remember here is that church planting is reaching lost people through the making of disciples that then gather into congregations.

Planting and the Mission of God

How does church planting relate to the mission of God? The mission of God is bigger than church planting, but it certainly includes church planting. Why? You can't love Jesus and despise His wife. The church is the bride of Christ, and if you love the work of Christ you love the church.

Now, you and I both know that the church is a mess sometimes. While the church is the stunning bride of Christ, she sometimes looks more like Shrek than she does beautiful. But again, you can't love Jesus and hate His wife.

Ultimately if you're going to love the mission of God, you have to love the church of God which is sent out for the mission of God. Ephesians 3:10 tells us God has chosen the church to make known His manifold wisdom. Therefore the church is the tool or instrument of His Kingdom agenda.

If you want to change the world, and if you want to see God at work in the world, plant change agent churches. I think anyone who loves Jesus and His church would, by extension, love and be about the mission of God proclaiming the gospel of Christ-- and that is done effectively through church planting.

Conclusion

So is it the mission more than planting?

Yes, it certainly is more than that. Is every church that's planted necessarily a good thing? No, there are always exceptions, but as a whole, I think church planting is integral to the advance of the Kingdom. And more church plants doing more of what God wants us to do is a good thing.

For this reason I think church planting and multiplication is so essential to the mission of God.

None of our churches should be a cul-de-sac on the Great Commission highway.

Instead, as we plant churches that plant churches that plant churches, the Kingdom advances. The gospel is preached, men and women become believers, churches are formed, and those churches become agents of gospel transformation.

So, want to be missional? Great-- just don't forget church planting.

Read more from Ed [here](#).