

Project #3

What is God Wanting To Do – Through You?

Question: Why are you considering becoming a church planter at this exact moment?

Answer: Obviously, maybe God believes in you and your capability to affect the world. There are five things God sowing in you right now. Recognizing and applying these principles will determine the depth of your impact.

1. The mission of the local church is the mission of God.
2. Understanding the mission of the kingdom of God can overcome laziness, pride, polarization, and personal insecurity.
3. Mission is not an abstract thing. In the non-abstract world, priorities *always* relate to the context of a specific moment in time. Priorities change dependent on the need of the moment. This is particularly true with baby churches.
4. Missions is not just evangelism. At the same time, the mission stops being accomplished when evangelism stops.
5. Evangelism is a process to be continually developed, rather than a goal to be achieved.

According to Donald MacGavran, the father of the Church Growth Movement, the essential work of missionaries is “the saving of souls, the baptism of bodies, and the multiplying of churches.”

Now you must do some more work. If you are not willing to do this work and think about the matters, church planting is likely not for you. Let’s get started.

Project Objectives

Not all church plants are alike. One has a strong children’s ministry while another has a youth ministry. Some are “in your face” confrontational, another has quieter lifestyle evangelism, others focus on worship. So . . . what is God’s unique design for you and your baby church?

What about a Chinese...or any other person God puts in your path? As noted earlier, this is a primary reason for planting another church. If this is going to happen...you need to “manage the present in terms of the future.”¹

God’s Process - Always Involves Vision

Jesus Christ is Lord of the harvest. He has a specific vision for every church plant.

The relationship between Jesus Christ and His church is intimate. The church is described as the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way. Christ has a vision for each baby church. One who births a church is not to invent a vision or appropriate a successful vision from another church planter, but to discover Jesus’ vision for that church plant.

Look up the following passages and record your thoughts about the importance of vision and the need to communicate vision to other people.

A. Habakkuk 2:2-3

B. Amos 3:3

C. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

D. Proverbs 29:18

...the advantage of vision is it sets a direction for our lives. It serves as a road map. In this way, vision simplifies decision-making. Anything that moves us toward the realization of our vision gets a green light. Everything else is approached with caution.

¹ Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990).

E. Write your own personal definition of “vision.”

Your God-Given Vision

So what might be the philosophy of ministry that Jesus Christ wants established for a church you would possibly plant?

Doing the following activities correctly will take several days, even weeks, to complete. Don't hurry through this process.

1. Vision defined

- Vision is a snapshot; an ideal future as seen from God's perspective.
- God reveals vision to you as you pray, listen to Him and explore the assignment of partnering with Him in birthing a church.
- Vision describes what God's particular assignment for *you* is to be. Every person's vision is unique to them.

2. Receiving and writing your vision

- Ask the Lord Jesus Christ what He wants you to do through the church He may be calling you to establish. Keep a journal of the things God puts into your heart.
- If you are married, share your thoughts with your spouse and allow your spouse to share his/her thoughts too.
- Make yourself familiar with the needs of the community you may be going to. Do this through research, conversations and observation.
- Identify at least five needs you knew to exist in that community. What you are doing is known as ethnography. The answers you give are to be specific rather than general. A general answer would be, “They need Jesus” or “They need a truth-proclaiming church.”

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

- Describe how you identified those five specific needs:

It can be beneficial for a church planter to speak with community leaders and residents. Find people who want to make a difference. Ask these people what their vision for the community is. Ask what they think the community’s greatest needs are.

- As you do this, write down what you discover from these people about the community. (The more contacts you make the better. Create a separate log book if needed. These people are also excellent additions to your network. Send them a thank you note for the time they grant you.)

Name: _____ Role: _____

Needs identified:

Their vision for their community:

Name: _____ Role: _____

Needs identified:

Their vision for their community:

Name: _____ Role: _____

Needs identified:

Their vision for their community:

Name: _____ Role: _____

Needs identified:

Their vision for their community:

Name: _____ Role: _____

Needs identified:

Their vision for their community:

Pray for the people you contacted. Ask God to grant you the chance to share what He wants to do in the community and through them. Pray for “key people” in the community who will help give the new church favor.

Write down what He has shown you up to now about how this baby church might look.