

Biblical church planting may be best explained by the Apostle Paul. As the premier church planter, Paul understood that he was just one instrument in the hands of God. He said in I Cor. 3:6, 7 *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”* In I Cor. 3:10, he further goes on to say that church planting is a ‘gift’. *“According to the gift of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.”*

Church planters are pastors and foundation layers who function much like masons, in carefully following the blueprint for building a structure. The foundation is critical- and when properly laid, the other craftsmen are able to do their work and finish the building. Church planters are laying foundation in the building of God’s house- the local church. A strong foundation consists of anointed preaching and teaching, sound Biblical doctrine and the practical role modeling of victorious Christian living. Once the Lordship of Christ and a Kingdom perspective has been taught to the core group, two major themes are critical for all believers to enter into: **Declaring** and **Demonstrating**. Declaring the love, wisdom and grace of the Lord Jesus to those in our sphere of influence and Demonstrating the power of God- to meet real needs in the lives of people. In the ministry of Jesus you will see He always ‘Declared and Demonstrated’ the Kingdom. He preached and healed the sick, He taught and cast out demons, He spoke and multiplied the bread and fish etc. The Great Commission in Mark 16:15-18 tells us as believers to *“Go into all the world...”* (Declare) and ‘signs’ will follow after us (Demonstration).

## Extending the Kingdom

Church planting is extending and expanding the Kingdom of God. It’s like buying a new house and needing to seed the lawn for the first time. You could find the center of the property and throw out the seeds as far as you could reach and then maybe get an air compressor and set up a type of cannon to shoot seeds out to the far reaches of your property- or you could just take the seed and walk throughout your property and sow the seed so that every area is properly and evenly seeded. The Word of God is like seed and church plants are the New Testament model for reaching out to each and every community

In a region, there will be many Christian churches reaching out to the lost. Each local church has unique and distinctive giftings in outreach to that community. By local churches working together as co labors in the harvest, more souls will be won- and demonstrate our love for the Scriptures and one another

### **My Testimony**

*In March of 1972, the Lord called me to start a full gospel campus ministry on Brockport State College. It was called Founders Christian Fellowship and eventually out of that base in 1976, a new church was founded- Christ Community Church. Responding to a request from another minister overseeing a Bible study in N. Chili, I left Brockport and planted a new church; N. Chili Community Church (later renamed New Hope Community Church). In 1988 another minister and I planted a new church in Henrietta (there were several families that lived in Henrietta that attended New Hope) this group became the core group in founding Covenant Life Church. While attending Bethel Christian Fellowship, my wife and I attended a home group. In 2004, the Lord again called me to plant a new church, MornignStar Christian Fellowship Church. The home group served as the core of the church with Pastor Ron Domina and Bethel church sending us out to help reach the community of Greece*

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# Church Planting

## *A New Testament Model*

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## What is 'Church Planting?'

Church planting is gathering people together to establish a new 'beachhead' from which to reach out to a region with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Church planting is the most effective way to bring the Gospel to each and every community. Although when a person becomes born again they immediately become part of the universal church; they live out their lives and should endeavor to influence those that they live around, work with and are relationally connected to. Because the needs and spiritual climate are different in each community- the local church is the only practical and effective way to reach a town or community with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## What about the 'Church Planter'?

In Ep. 4:11 the Lord commissioned Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers to lead His church.

Church planters should have an Apostolic ministry, working in collegiality with the other Ministry gifts of Ep. 4:11.

Apostles and Prophets working together will produce the strongest Biblical foundation for a new church.

Elmer Towns, A noted Christian author has described the church planter this way:

"The Church planter is performing the highest spiritual function given a pastor; he is bringing together a group of people who will be recognized as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. The Holy Spirit will dwell there (I Cor. 3:16) and it will be called a candlestick (Rev. 1:20, 2:1), it will have the presence of Christ (Rev. 2:5) and will be a mystery (Ep. 3:1-20)."

## How do you determine if an area needs a new church?

The decision of where to plant a new church is a critical one. There are many testimonies of church planters using demographics to locate the fastest growing communities in a region, or where a town is located that has no vibrant Christian witness. But my experience has been different. After starting a college ministry on Brockport State, many students decided to remain in Brockport after graduation. The 'need' arose for a church to be formed, but even more foundational than the need, is 'calling' or 'leading' or a prophetic word' from the Lord. There also needs to be a core group established- their size initially is not as important as their determination and commitment to reach the community they are living in.

My simple perspective and experience in church planting is to receive a clear leading from the Lord and then form a core group. A group that is Kingdom minded and willing to pray sacrifice and 'go the extra mile' that pioneering a new church always requires. .

## Is it possible to over-saturate an area?

Using the 'demographic method' of planting churches in growing towns or areas, there is a real possibility of several church planters, independently of each other- targeting the same growing community or region that lacks a clear gospel presence.

If such a case developed it would be best to try to coordinate or consolidate resources so as to have the greatest gospel impact in that community.

In the case of a church planter having a clear leading of God to go in an area (with confirmation of other spiritual leaders) and a core group formed or in the process of formation- they should exercise their faith, trust the Lord and plant the new church. It is always wise and courteous to inform other Christian pastors in the area of plans for a new church plant.

Just as God blesses unity and cooperation among all His people, so He delights for local churches in a region to accept, embrace and cooperate with church planters. Together they can best reach their community for Christ.

*"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

Psalm 133:1

## Biblical Church planting

The first church in the New Testament to send out missionaries as church planters was Antioch. In Acts 13:1-3 we read that through prophetic utterance the Holy Spirit teamed Barnabus and Paul together to be sent out to plant churches. We've already discussed how Apostles and Prophets working together are strong foundation layers. We see in this first sending forth from the church at Antioch the precedent and importance of:

1. Hearing a word from the Lord
2. Having confirmation of others
3. Being teamed together
4. Being commissioned by a local church to reach out and plant new churches.