

A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it... Genesis 1:28 (KJV)

Before we establish a Biblical basis for church planting, we have to answer the question for ourselves "What is Father's vision for the world?" Once we have somewhat of an understanding of Father's heart for a lost a lost world, we will start to appreciate His strategy.

ADAM AND EVE'S COMMISSION

Adam and Eve, created in His image, filled with His glory, reflecting His righteousness, were commissioned with a one-sentence command: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it..."

They were created with a natural fertility according to their kind. It was expected of them to put their fertility into action, so that the replenishment could take place. This was the beginning of an earth filled with a God-kind of people – a human race in constant fellowship with their Creator – a kingdom that would rule over the animal world.

God had no intention to grow this race by adding more to it, but chose for them to multiply themselves. This would cause a hereditary multiplication of that which God had created in His image, giving man the pleasure to create with God, through a natural ability placed within him. To this day, every parent is filled with awe at the birth of a child. The thought that they had a part in this wonderful creation is overwhelming.

Father's vision was that the expansion of the human race should result in a replenishment of the earth. The vision was an earth filled with a people expressing the glory of God living in a state of complete righteousness and enjoying an intimate relationship with Father.

However, the sad story is that the first Adam failed through sin and thus the entire human race fell into a hereditary cycle of sin and death. Did it change Father's heart for the world? No, not at all. From the moment that God declared "And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel."(Genesis3:15), Father put in place a rescue plan and doomed satan to defeat. In an instant, the heavenly announcement echoed through all eternity, declaring the promise of the last Adam who would crush satan's head.

THE LAST ADAM'S COMMISSION

So, what does this have to do with church planting? Let the last Adam unfold it for us. He took up the commission of the first Adam to restore everything that Father had in mind for us (Acts 3:21). Father's vision is to see all men saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Christ, the last Adam, came to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death. He restored righteousness by becoming our righteousness. He came to establish God's Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven

be fruitful...

The commission to the first Adam was “Be fruitful ...” It is written about the last Adam that “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” (Col 1:15) “And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead...” (Col 1:18) Jesus is showing His fruitfulness through His body – the church. Just like the first Adam was made fruitful to multiply the human race, so the last Adam is made to multiply His body (the church) throughout the earth. He said, “...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matt 16:18)

The prophet Habakkuk declared Father’s vision for the earth when he said, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14) How is Father going to do this unless it is do through His bride, the church? The church is the reflection and carrier of His glory. In Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians he says “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Cor 3:18)

...and multiply

The last Adam is fulfilling Father’s vision by multiplying His church throughout the earth. Through this reproduction the earth is receiving the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. As the church multiplied, it brings the incarnate presence of Christ into a community.

If this is true, then church planting should be natural result of church life, just as reproduction is a natural result of the marriage relationship. Stuart Murray writes, “The practice of church planting may encourage the conclusion that reproduction is as fundamental a feature of the church as it is biological organisms. A healthy church does not just develop internally and expand in size and social impact, but naturally expresses its life in new forms and structures”

Ellis and Mitchell say “if a church exists which never thinks about reproduction itself...never expects or anticipates that this is the natural business of growing up, then it is actually sterile. Could we go so far and say that churches that do not engage in some form of church planting and remain like that for a number of years, “Perhaps it would be better to regard reproduction through church planting as normal, and the survival of ecclesiastical structures for more than a couple of generations as abnormal and problematic

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

If the church is a body then it has all the necessary “DNA” to reproduce after its kind. We can conclude that both Jerusalem and Antioch were “mother” churches.

The best example is the church at Antioch. Through the church planting of Barnabas and more specifically Paul, many churches were reproduced from one local church. The essence of Paul’s ministry resulted in a church but he undoubtedly expected a multiplication of churches to take place.

He writes to Timothy, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Tim 2:2) It was not Paul’s expectation but in several places it actually happened. It happened in Thessalonica (1The 1:7-8) - Epaphras started the church in Colosse (Col 1:7) and someone else planted a church in Laodicea. (Col 2:1).

Jon Haley says, “For Paul, faithfulness to the Great Commission meant more than preaching evangelistic messages here and there. It meant completing a sequence of activities that would result in mature churches. We could say without overstating the case that, for Paul, to “make disciples of all nation “(Matt 28:19) required planting churches.”

THE KINGDOM OF GOD GROWS THROUGH CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

...Replenish the earth and subdue it...

Christ, the Last Adam, announced the new Kingdom (Matt 4:17). Father's vision for this people to "replenish the earth and subdue it..." was clearly portrayed in Jesus' words and ministry. There is a literal "replenishment" theology in the following Scriptures:

"There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe." (John 1:6-9) (NIV)

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself (John 12:32) (NIV)

"This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:2) (NIV)

"And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations (ethne) and then the end will come." (Matt 28:13) (NIV)

"Therefore go and make disciples all nations..." (Matt 28:19) (NIV)

"...but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him..." (Rom 16:25-26) (NIV)

Jesus' first sermon was to announce the new Kingdom (Matt 4:17). He said He would build His church and that the gates of Hades would not stand against it. We can therefore conclude that this new Kingdom is made up of churches, that He will subdue the Kingdom of darkness, penetrate it and rescue those in bondage through His that. (Col 1:13-14, Eph 3:10-11, Rom 5:17)

Where the light shines, darkness disappears. When a church is planted within a community, the Kingdom of God arrives in that community – a force directly opposed to the kingdom of darkness, with a vision to fulfill the last Adam's mission, "...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8) (NIV)

I conclude with the words of Dr. C. Peter Wagner, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.

NEW CHURCHES CAN STIMULATE EXISTING CHURCHES

It is sad to say that in most cases, when a new vibrant church is planted within a community where there are already existing churches; there is often hostility toward the new church. Pastors are afraid to lose members to the new church. My advice to pastors is: Just keep growing green grass in your church and the sheep will not wonder.

Older churches that have stagnated are often "challenged" by the newer churches into caring for their flock more effectively. New churches raise the level of religion interest.

The essential criterion for any community with more than one church is to see each other as part of the team that Jesus has called to “destroy the works of the evil one” (1John 3:8) When a pastor can pray for more workers to come to the harvest field where he is laboring, he has truly become a Kingdom minister.

CHURCH PLANTING WILL BRING A NEW AWARENESS AND COMPASSION FOR THE LOST

It is almost hard to believe that most churches spend 90% or more of all their resources on the already saved. The average church spends at least 90% of its finance on church members who have heard the gospel repeatedly. The average pastor spends at least 90% of his time on church members who are already saved.

And so we can go on and on. Churches stagnate when they become introverted in their church life, when they are overwhelmed with their own needs and wants. Such churches lose vision and fall into “religiosity” rather than being shakers and movers in God’s kingdom.

As a child often watched the farm workers on a Sunday afternoon gather their dogs to go rabbit hunting. Whilst there was no rabbit in sight, these dogs would snarl and snap at each other, but the moment they saw a rabbit they forgot about each other and went for the kill. So it is in a church, where there is no vision for the lost, church members will bite at each other. After 22 years in the pastorate, I know this to be a fact.

When a church becomes involved in a church plant, a new passion for the lost will become evident. It is like a mother giving birth to a new baby. These are new interests, new passion that occupy her time. It is the same for the church that becomes involved in a church plant.

CHURCH PLANTING WILL BRING A WORLD VISION TO YOU CHURCH

Often, Christians hide behind the walls of their church. They are told not to mix with the “world” and sometimes they are discouraged to read secular material such as newspapers. How sad. We need to know what is going on in the world we are living in.

There are thousands of Christians that know nothing about the unreached peoples of our world, the 10/40 Window or the or the lostness of Generation X! Churches that become involved in church planting are always looking for the unreached, unreached and ignored. It is then that their eyes open and they become aware of the harvest.

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

What is saturation church planting?

- It the church ministry to reach out to every person, anyone and everyone as stated in 1Timothy and 2 Peter.
- These passages make it clear that God wants every man, woman and child to hear understand the gospel and have the opportunity to believe in and fully obey Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. An important part of the Christian life as being a part of a local church where God’s word is believed and taught.
- It is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the gospel through the witness of a local church.
- Is the vision, strategy and ministry of filling nation, regions, cities, villages and neighborhood with churches that will take the gospel to every person in their language and through their culture

Church planting breaks through barriers:

- Show me a denomination in decline and I will show you a denomination without a church planting vision
- Show me a country where the Christian population is stagnant or in decline and I will show you the denominations within it, with no church planting vision.
- Many countries of the world have engaged in church planting and there are evidence of growth e.g. Ghana, China, Brazil, etc.
- Church planting movements are breaking through the barriers of evil resistance and bring glory to God.

Why saturation church planting:

- Take advantage of growth prospects and breaking new grounds.
- Church planting a new breath and vitality in the community, e.g. it like a newly born baby who brings joy to the family.
- Variety is a spice of life, every pioneer should be willing to attract a certain crowds e.g. having programs that will be fully focusing on reaching the youth.
- It develops new leadership. For any church to attract growth it should be willing to embrace new people who are birth through the gospel who will overtime be trained as leaders of God's work.
- It helps the church to survive: Every church requires lots of people to see it reach more people through the resources it provides through its members.
- It is the best method of evangelism: every area field with God's presence will leave no opportunities for foreign religion and accultism.
- New church can stimulate existing churches: Old churches have a need to work with newly established church to penetrate our communities with the gospel. We cannot afford to work in isolation and against each other. We will have to swallow our pride and focus on the work at hand.
- It brings awareness and compassion for the lost. It brings awareness to the leaders to focus majority of resources to the lost than already saved.
- It brings a world vision to our church: It propels us to move beyond the four walls and reach out to the lost.
- It emphasizes the sowing and reaping principle: It is only churches that focus on reaching out to the lost who will experience growth in new converts.

How does a church planting works practically:

- It must be Christ-centered in its approach.
- Every program is based on winning souls.
- It focuses on systematic occupation of the land
- Takes advantage of the practical and emotional values whole country approach.
- Releases the incredible power information.
- Deliver a prophetic message to the church to realize what God desires with our communities.
- Focus on measurable goals as you move along.
- Releasing great potentials in people.

