

# The Church Planter's Toolbox

Ideas and Helps for Great Commission Workers • September 2007

## The Importance of Pre-planning

The success or failure of a church plant is often determined during the pre-planning stage known as the *Prenatal phase*, months before moving to the target area. In Luke 14:28-30 Jesus warned of the danger of undertaking a task without adequate planning. In spite of this, countless men start new churches without taking the time to think through the process or to assemble the things they will need to succeed.

There are thousands of details that need to be cared for and multiple decisions that need to be made BEFORE launching public services. Some of the things that need to be done during this pre-planning phase include:

**Develop a written philosophy of ministry.** Your philosophy of ministry defines who you are and outlines the priorities, emphasis, and style that make your church unique. It explains why your church exists (purpose), what it is supposed to be doing (mission), where it is going (vision), how it will get there (strategy), and what is important (values). Your philosophy of ministry is what holds the church together and attracts people to your ministry.

**Choose your church-planting model.** There are more than a dozen models ranging from mother-daughter plants to multi-congregational to single house churches. Some are more effective than others. You need to select a model that enables you to fulfill both your immediate goals and your long-range vision. It should also meet the needs of your focus group and be effective in your particular social context.

**Develop your legal documents.** These include writing the church's charter, cove-

## Why Plant More Churches in North America?

Part 2

The last issue of the *CP Toolbox* listed six reasons why we need to plant hundreds of new churches throughout North America. Here are six additional factors:

**Church planting replaces dying churches** - Churches go through a predictable life cycle of birth, growth, stagnation, decline, and death. About a dozen churches a day succumb to various "diseases" that sap the life from them. Over the next decade as many as 40,000 churches will become non-existent. Areas that were once evangelized need to be "rechurched" through an aggressive program of church planting.

**Church planting addresses the issue of American mobility** - The average American will move five or more times. Much of this migration in recent decades has been toward the South and the West where whole new "Boomburbs" have sprung up overnight, often with little thought given to the spiritual needs of people. Opportunities abound to reach these areas filled with new residents looking to reconnect and develop new friendships.

**Church planting promotes world evangelism** - Missionaries today are older, grayer, and fewer than at any time in the past hundred years. Thousands of new candidates are needed to replace those who are retiring. Millions of dollars must be found to finance the ever growing cost of sending forth laborers. Existing churches are stretched to the limit. Where are we to find the men and the money to sustain world evangelism? The answer is found in planting thousands of new churches. These new congregations can generate both the manpower and the resources to continue carrying the gospel to the ends of the world.

**Church planting combats growing pluralism** - The United States and Canada are the most religiously diverse nations on earth. In the past 150 years cults and religious movements have grown 3,000%. Over 20 million people are involved in cults and the occult in North America. The fastest growing religion in the United States is Islam with six million adherents. There are 2.4 million Buddhists, 1.2 million Hindus, 270,000 Sikhs, and 200,000 followers of Baha'i. Then there are 24 million non-religious, 2.7 million agnostics and atheists, and 775,000 Wiccan practitioners. We need to establish

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nant, constitution, and doctrinal statements. Each of these should be prepared by the church planter before starting to gather the core group for the new church.

**Devise a plan for core group development.** One of the secrets of a successful church plant is gathering and training a core group of lay people to help launch the church. This will usually take 3-6 months or longer, but it results in a bigger, stronger, and healthier public launch.

**Plan your church program for the first six months.** Church planters often try to

do too much too soon. It is better to do a few things well rather than many things poorly. Ask yourself, "What ministries and programs can we reasonably expect to launch in the first six months and what will we need to do it successfully?"

**Develop six month's of sermons and lessons.** You won't have time to study and prepare 2-3 sermons a week during the early days of a church plant. Plan what you want to cover and prepare the messages before you move to the area.

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*Pre-planning continued*

Then just dust them off and use them as needed.

**Pull together a survival budget and supporters.** How much money will you need each week to finance the new church? Include rent, utilities, promotion, equipment and a starting salary. Raise sufficient funds to cover these start up costs as well as your own living expenses. Inadequate funding is one of the primary reasons new churches struggle to survive, so don't minimize this important area.

**Develop promotional materials.** Design a visitation brochure and the advertising copy you will use in announcing the new church. Stress the benefits people will receive rather than just listing the features (programs) you offer. There are several good organizations which will help you with this task. Also obtain multiple pictures of yourself and your family in black and white as well as in full color for use in brochures, news articles, and web site development.

**Gather the equipment and supplies you will need.** This will include a desk, file cabinets, a computer and printer, a video projector, nursery equipment, offering plates and a communion set, a tape duplicator, and a host of other items. Consider projecting your music on a screen rather than buying hymn books. Sometimes churches will have used equipment that is still in good condition, but be careful about using old, outdated items that take more time than they save. You also need to gather tracts, Bibles, visitor packets, offering envelopes, and a financial record-keeping system.

**Enlist prayer partners and an accountability buddy.** We're not talking about the long list of people who receive prayer letters from missionaries, but a group of 10-20 people who are intensely interested in your ministry and who will pray regularly and fervently for you on a daily basis. You also need to have an accountability partner, someone one you can confide in and who will ask you the tough questions about your ministry and your walk with God.

**Develop a ministry team.** Church planting is a team ministry. No one can build a church alone. Regardless of whether you are using volunteers or recruiting other church planters to work with you, you need to recruit a team of people who will work in partnership with you to develop the new church.

**Build a web site.** A well-designed web site will attract more people than any other means of advertising. The basic site can be developed now and then expanded as the ministry is launched and grows. Check other sites to see what to include and then use the services of a company that designs web sites to ensure that you have a quality product to present to the community.

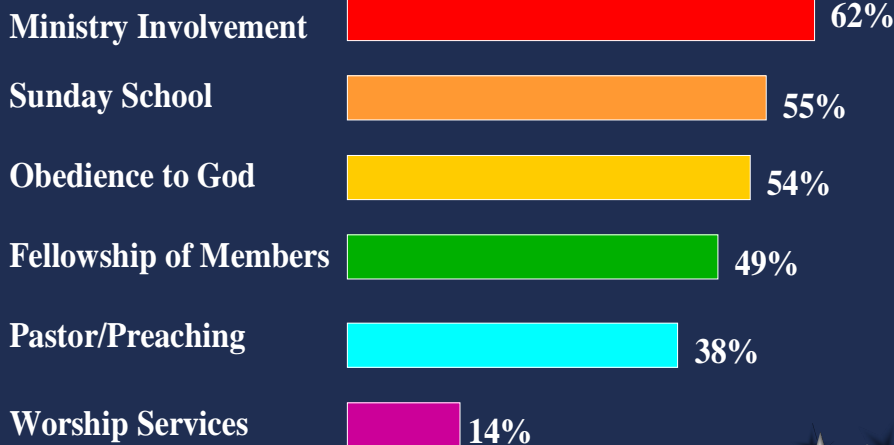
*Why Plant Churches continued*

thousands of new churches that have a passion for training their people to be effective witnesses in our pluralistic society and for moving outside the four walls of the church to lovingly share the gospel with their communities.

**Church planting fulfills the Great Commission** - Our Lord's last communication to his followers was to "go and make disciples" of all people groups. The "making of disciples" includes not only evangelizing non-believers, but the establishment of local congregations where believers can be baptized and brought into the fellowship of a local church, and taught to do all the things Christ commanded. The Apostle Paul modeled this process in Acts 14:21-23 where he evangelized the sinners, edified the saints, and established them into local churches.

**Church planting's ultimate motivation** - Revelation 5:9-12 describes the ultimate motivation for missions, church planting, and ministry. It describes a heavenly scene in which people from every kindred, tongue, people, and nation are gathered before the throne of God to lift their voices in praise to him saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne." Psalm 86:9 tells us people from all nations will come to worship God and to glorify his name. The ultimate purpose for Christ coming and for our going is that millions of people in North America and around the world might come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and thus to bring glory to our magnificent God.

## What Keeps You Active in the Church?



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