

NewChurch

I often get asked the question, “where is the best place to plant a church?” My answer is always the same. “Step out on your front deck and have a look around and see if there isn't somebody broken and lost in your neighborhood or your community!”

The truth is that we have been called to be salt and light in a broken and needy world. There are three fundamental realities in play today.

First, the gospel **never changes**. It is the power of God. Paul said it is the only thing that brings about life and change and hope in humanity. What is the intent of the gospel? It is that people's lives would be liberated, that they would be transformed and that they would be restored.

When it comes to planting churches, it really comes down to how do we engage the world around us with the gospel? Our focus is to help people discover a life changing experience with Jesus and then walk with them, helping them become disciples of Jesus.

Church planting therefore becomes a matter of establishing disciple making communities more than an attractional gathering as we have understood it in the past. It changes how we think about what a church might look like.

Second, though the gospel never changes the world **has changed**. It has changed socially, it's changed generationally, it's changed culturally, it's changed ethnically, it's changed economically, and it's changed politically.

Our values have changed, there are just so many things in the world right now that are different even in the last ten years or so. Understanding how the church engages in those changes becomes a critical question when anticipating what a church planting movement will look like.

Third, if the gospel never changes but the world has changed the reality is that the church **has to change**. My conviction about what the “NewChurch” movement will look like is going to be considerably different than what we have done up to this point.

To be clear, I am not critical of the local church as we currently understand it. God is clear about not being judgmental of the local church in its many and varied forms, not attacking it or being negative about it.

The local church model as we understand it, serves a valuable role in caring for people and for supporting and nurturing people. However, when it comes to our missional engagement I think we are coming up short.

The future of church planting comes down to what are we going to do and how are we going to focus our efforts in reaching the lost and the broken in our world?

NewChurch Values:

As I said, the gospel never changes. The power of God and the grace of God are the two primary experiences that bring transformation to a person's life.

A second value is that we have to be highly engaged in seeing the Kingdom advanced and demonstrated in power. Throughout the scriptures and in the instructions of Jesus, the demonstration of the power and the authority of God always accompanied the message of the Kingdom of God.

I think in many ways we have lost our determination to see the demonstration of the power of God when it comes to engaging in the brokenness of our culture and society.

I believe that we need to change our model for doing church if we're going to be missionally impactful.

I think that our addiction to the Sunday-centric, pulpit-centric approach to communicating the gospel is not as effective as it once was for seeing people come to Jesus and being disciplined into passionate followers of Jesus.

I like to say that if there is not a lineup of lost people at the front door of your church on Sunday morning, then we probably need to rethink how we do what we do.

I think that there's going to be a leadership model shift away from the pyramid approach to leadership. The cream rising to the top mindset where we have to somehow encourage our best to aspire to the "Pastoral" role needs to be re-thought. There must be a shift toward recognizing that God has called everyone to be engaged in Kingdom ministry.

We must change our metrics of success, from attendance on Sunday mornings and the totals of our offerings to how many disciples and passionate followers of Jesus are we actually seeing made.

Finally, developing disciples who make disciples who make disciples is the mission of the *NewChurch* movement. Multiplication of disciple makers needs to be how we measure our success.

In trying to discern the leadership of the Holy Spirit as to what the future would look like around church planting, I sensed that God challenged me to plant 3000 churches over the next 10 years.

I said to the Lord I don't have enough leaders for 3 churches never mind 3000. At that point God dropped something into my heart that has revolutionized my perspective on how to focus and move forward with the *NewChurch* movement.

I felt like the Lord said to me, "*most of My leaders aren't saved yet.*" That has profoundly rattled my perception of how to do church and how to envision a desired future for the *Newchurch* vision.

I have always focused on what I call the five percenters, the outliers, the cream of the crop, the top people, the best leaders, the best preachers, the most gifted individuals, and I felt like the Lord said to me, “I built my church on the 95 percenters”.

The future of the church will be built by the average person who goes to work every day, who learns what it means to communicate the gospel in the context of their daily lives.

Therefore, when it comes to leadership, I need to shift my thinking away from the top of the pyramid and change the model of leadership to a circle instead of a pyramid, where everybody around the table are contributors to the expansion of the Kingdom.

“**NewChurch DNA**”

I would like to offer what I call the “**NewChurch DNA**”. What would it look like if we were to bring people together on a weekly basis centered around the normal context of their lives.

Neighbourhoods, marketplaces, social, or recreational gatherings, etc. What if we developed a strategy that didn't focus on Sunday mornings, didn't focus on the pulpit but focused on the development and equipping of individuals at whatever varying levels of maturity they might be and work towards the equipping them as disciple makers? What would that look like?

The “*NewChurch DNA*” has seven core elements to it that anybody can apply, and anybody can engage in regardless of the context they live in.

1. There must be study, worship, prayer, and ministry. A focus on the word of God, meeting together to pray for one another, and learning what it means to walk with Jesus in an intimate and personal way.
2. There must be fellowship and care. Community is a core part of the *NewChurch DNA*. People need to feel like they are a part of a fellowship where people care about them, that they have meaningful relationships. This typically is built around a meal. Throughout the scriptures, food is a major part of disciple making. It's a major part of evangelism.
3. The groups need to be intentional and highly committed to a mission. What can we do together to change the world? There are cues in the Bible that help us understand how we can create a meaningful missional plan.

Look after the poor, the needy, the widows, and the orphans. These are obvious in the Bible and are close to the heart of God. I think we should look for the “person of peace,” the people in your neighborhood, in your community, in your circle of relationships that have an interest in the things of God. How do you connect with them, how do you reach them and serve them?

Thirdly I think that everybody has a certain holy discontent. There are just some things that you look around that need to be fixed.

A fourth area—in every community there are spiritual strongholds. Family issues, addictions, abuse, poverty, the list can go on and on. Every group needs to have a specific mission that as a group they are committed to being involved in.

4. The “*NewChurch DNA*” is based on making passionate disciples of Jesus. The objective is not just getting together for fellowship, study or even missional activity, but we're committed to



intentionally making disciples who make disciples. People who are passionate about following Jesus and helping others to become passionate followers of Jesus.

5. The fifth core element in the “*NewChurch* DNA” is that we create a follow up evangelism strategy. Every person has a circle of relationships and people they know and communicate with that don't know Jesus. How do we support each other in reaching those people.

6. The sixth part of the “*NewChurch* DNA” is that these groups must intentionally and strategically multiply regularly and frequently. The multiplication of the groups continues the proliferation and extension of the gospel throughout the world.

Do the math around the daunting task of planting 3000 churches; If we were to start with 30 church plants, then every group duplicated itself once a year for ten years, we would end up with over 36,000 churches. Multiplication must be held as a high value.

7. This core element is that each group must be networking and relating to other groups and identifying with other groups and meeting together periodically to worship together, encourage one another and equipping one another. No group is an island unto themselves. We are committed to networking with others and being accountable to the larger body of Christ.

Conclusion

I believe that God is doing a fresh thing today. It's not just a fad or a new trend. I believe that the mobilization of every believer as a missionary, the multiplication and commitment to making disciples of lost and broken lives is the heart of God.

It is what the spirit of God is doing in our time. The “*NewChurch*” church planting model is not defined by a rented facility, a sandwich board sign and somebody who can play a guitar (even though it could be that).

As a church planting mission, we are asking, “What does it look like to be a disciple making movement?”

More than, “How do we find the perfect players, and the ideal location to attract our preferred consumer!”

The primary definition of the *NewChurch* vision is to multiply by sending. The world is broken and confused. They typically distrust the church that we love and understand. Therefore, our mandate is to “GO” to where they are and make disciples!!