

NEW CHURCHES

MULTIPLICATION TODAY, MOVEMENTS TOMORROW

PRACTICES, BARRIERS, AND AN ECOSYSTEM

by ED STETZER AND DANIEL IM

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Authors
Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im

Special Thanks To:
Phillip Connor and Josh Laxton

LifeWay Christian Resources
One LifeWay Plaza
Nashville, TN 37234

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PRACTICES, BARRIERS, AND AN ECOSYSTEM

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MULTIPLICATION REQUIRES INTENTIONALITY

I (Ed) have been planting churches for all of my adult life. But prior to my call to plant, I cut my spiritual eyeteeth as a young believer in a new church. It wasn't too long after my teenage years that I planted my first church in Buffalo, NY (at 21).

Since then I've never stopped planting. Why? Because I believe in church planting and am committed to it. I believe church planting is the greatest strategy or method of evangelism. While I love planting individual churches, it's not the ultimate goal as far as congregations go. For me, the bigger goal is multiplication. Multiplication requires not planting one church, but planting churches that plant churches.

Much more than planting one church, I desire to see a multiplication movement of churches. That's why Warren Bird and

I wrote *Viral Churches*, with the subtitle, “Helping church planters become movement makers.” And hopefully if you are reading this book, it’s what you want as well. Therefore, Daniel and I have partnered together for this book to address how churches can move towards multiplication and eventually ignite a movement of multiplication.

Planted Like 7-Eleven’s!

When I (Daniel) was a child, one of my favorite things to do was to go to a local 7-Eleven to buy a Slurpee, nachos with cheese, and some chewy soda bottle candies. Since 7-Eleven’s were everywhere in Vancouver, I could multiply the times of doing this—whether it was after school, before softball practice, or with my friends on the weekend. Obviously, I loved that 7-Elevens saturated Vancouver. But, little did I know that their saturated presence and large market share were the result of an intentional strategy.

The funny thing about 7-Eleven’s, and other convenience stores like them, is that they have a strategy for multiplication. They don’t haphazardly place stores wherever there’s cheap rent, nor do they wait for entrepreneurial leaders to show up at their doorstep. They are intentional—incredibly intentional. They do their research on the best location for future stores and they have an intentional leadership development

process because they know that the success of their stores rises and falls on leadership. For companies like 7-Eleven, intentionality is the birthplace of multiplication.

The same is true for church planting. Intentionality—the deliberate, purposeful, and strategic thinking about something—is the oxygen of multiplication. Intentionality allows multiplication to breathe. Therefore, without intentionality, multiplication is stifled. Some may push back and wonder where’s the Spirit in all of this? As my (Ed) mentor John Mark Terry comments, “Certainly we believe that the Holy Spirit does guide Christians today; however we firmly believe that the Holy Spirit can guide our planning [including our intentionality] as well as our work” (Terry 2013, vii).

Intentionality Makes a Difference

When we conducted the largest and most thorough research project ever done on church planting, we discovered that intentionality, with action, plans, and strategy, was central. You can download the U.S. version of the report at NewChurches.com (the Canadian and Australian versions are forthcoming).

For the U.S. version, we partnered with 17 denominations and church planting networks¹ and invited over 12,000 leaders of new church plants,

revitalizations, mergers, and sites, of which 1,200 pastors and leaders completed the survey. For this book, our data and insights find their origin in the 843 church plants that started in 2008 or later and are still operating today.

Among the church plants that we surveyed, we discovered:

- Church plants that were intentional with evangelism had more unchurched people in their congregation.
- Church plants that were intentional at having a highly public presence had a larger worship attendance.
- Church plants that were intentional at starting at least one daughter church within their first five years saw a consistent increase in attendance.
- Church plants that prioritized leadership development saw more people make a decision for Christ.

And the list goes on and on. The fact is intentionality makes a big difference.

Intentionality and Multiplication Movements

In our research, we discovered that in 2014, over 4,000 churches were launched and 3,700 were closed in the U.S. If we were to break that evenly on a weekly basis, that would mean that

every week, 77 churches were being planted, and 71 were being closed.

When I (Daniel) was doing mission work in China, we had Chinese classes every day. Now, I have to admit, I was not the best student, since I was slightly preoccupied with flirting with my wife-to-be, Christina. However, when the teacher called on me to read from the board, I did it with gusto and confidence, since I was trying to impress Christina.

After reading the last word, the teacher exclaimed, “Good!” And my classroom broke out in a standing ovation. I thought to myself, “Whoever said Chinese was difficult must’ve not been as smart as me. Sure, there’s no alphabet in Chinese, and there are four variants of tones on every word, but as long as you pay attention and work hard, anything is possible!” I felt like I could conquer the world, until I heard what my teacher said afterward. “That’s *good*, Daniel...not *very good*.”

That’s how we feel about these statistics. The numbers are good, but not very good.

The seesaw numbers reflect the reality that we are experiencing movements of addition, not multiplication. In other words, after the dust settles we are only experiencing a net gain of around six churches a week—and we need hundreds a week.

If we want to keep up with population growth in the United States and around the world, we will need more established churches remaining healthy and self-sustaining, new individual churches being planted, and both established and newer churches sending out more planters. In short, to revise the pattern of addition and to initiate a movement of multiplication, everyone needs to be intentional.

Where are the Church Planting Movements?

David Garrison popularized the term “Church Planting Movements” in his 2004 book. Garrison defined such movements as, “A rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”ⁱⁱ

We’ve seen these rapidly indigenous reproduction movements in several locations and cultures around the world, but not here in the West. All reports we have indicate such Church Planting Movements have not stood up to scrutiny.

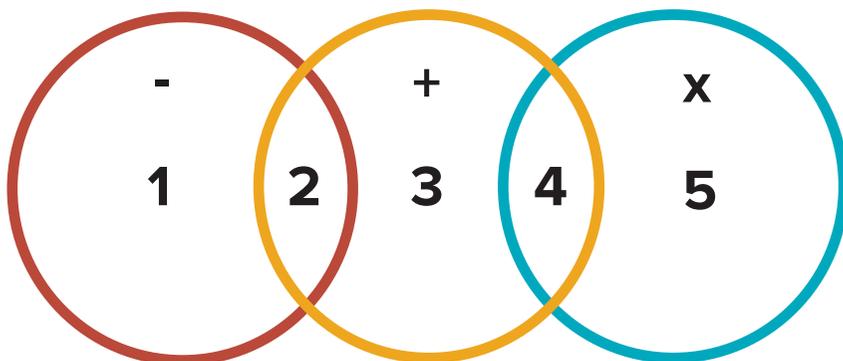
For example, if we were using the five-fold metric system created by Steve Addison in his book, *Movements That Change the World*, I would say that our collective church culture doesn’t experience a reproduction movement because: we are fragmented over cause (mission) and how that cause is

fulfilled (the words and deed debate); we struggle building relationships with people that are diverse from us; we have a difficult time rapidly mobilizing due to over-institutionalization and spiritual consumption (consumerism); and we have trouble adapting (message, means, and method) to an ever-changing culture.ⁱⁱⁱ

Church Multiplication Movements

Now, this does not mean that a movement of sorts could not happen here, in our context, as in other contexts around the world. It may mean that our efforts should target a different goal. In *Viral Churches*, Warren Bird and I (Ed) proposed a Church Multiplication Movement as an alternative. It does not have the exponential growth characteristic of Church Planting Movements, but it has a 50 percent growth in the number of churches in a given year with 50 percent conversion growth that continues to the third generation.

That’s nothing compared to a Church Planting Movement, but it’s light years ahead of where we are now. Yet, we believe that this is an attainable goal in the West, and we have even seen it during our lifetime with groups like Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard. However, to experience a movement like this will, once again, require intentionality.



**LEVEL 1: SUBTRACTING // LEVEL 2: PLATEAUIING
// LEVEL 3: ADDING // LEVEL 4: REPRODUCING //
LEVEL 5: MULTIPLYING**

Intentionally Becoming a Level Five Church

We believe a Church Multiplication Movement is possible in the West, but it starts with intentionally creating a common language so that we know how to get from here to there. This is why we have joined with our friends at Exponential in seeking to change the scorecard, using the new “level five” language Todd Wilson and Dave Ferguson introduced in their eBook, *Becoming a Level Five multiplying church Field Guide*.

Level Five Churches and Our Research

Amongst the churches we surveyed, we noticed a number of characteristics that are present in multiplying churches started between 2008 and 2012. When comparing these churches to the characteristics of a Level Five multiplying church we found many similarities:

- They are very visible, both publicly and digitally
- They are intentional in their programs and activities that are focused on outreach

THE FIVE LEVELS

LEVEL	TITLE	DESCRIPTION OF A CHURCH AT THIS LEVEL
1	SUBTRACTING	Struggling to survive, tension in finances, congregants leaving, scarcity mentality, and there's no plan for developing leaders. Multiplication is not happening in any form or fashion.
2	PLATEAUING	Living in tension, since they are struggling in some areas and growing in others, while ultimately being constrained by their scarcity thinking. Multiplication is a distant hope rather than a current reality.
3	ADDING	Increasing attendance, focused on growing the church, lots of resources allocated towards the weekend service, program and event driven, and staff led. Multiplication is about adding services or sites.
4	REPRODUCING	Living in tension between releasing/sending and accumulating/growing. Multiplication is more activity-based than values-based. Multiplication is more deliberate and planned than spontaneous.
5	MULTIPLYING	More focused on multiplying new churches than growing their attendance. Intentional with finances, vision, and strategy towards church planting. Multiplication happens spontaneously and is not limited to paid staff. Every disciple is a potential church planter/team member.

- They are devoted to membership assimilation and leadership development
- They have an intentional stewardship plan to move their church to financial self-sufficiency
- They are contributing financially to other church plants
- They are regularly communicating a commitment to multiplication to their church body
- The pastors of these new churches are well trained and prepared
- The pastors of these new churches also have adequate provision to take care of them
- They are intentional about multiplication and create specific pathways to make it happen

In other words, churches that are engaged in multiplication are relentlessly intentional about it. They prepare, plan, and execute their strategy to not only see a new church begin, but to invest their energies and resources to see many new churches begin. In essence, they work tirelessly toward a movement of multiplication.

Imagine this. If every church plant intentionally planted another church within the first five years of their church, and then they did it again, and again, and again, while, at the same time, those churches that they planted also planted again, and again, and again, we would see a movement of multiplication in our generation. In

fact, we would see the scales tip by witnessing both existing churches move up the scale, and new churches skip levels two to four and move straight from level one to five.

Steps Toward Becoming a Level Five Church

As we've been noting throughout this chapter, a multiplication movement requires intentionality. God can do what He desires—and a movement can be birthed. Yet, historically, there have been intentional actions of prayer, obedience, multiplication, and more that have preceded most movements.

Movements have often required planning, deliberation, strategy, and effort. Although God promises to bring in the harvest, He calls for the workers to go out into the fields. We believe churches, networks, and denominations can do the intentional work of cultivating the ground for a Church Multiplication Movement harvest.

Though certainly not an exhaustive list, there are five basic steps that churches could take that would help make multiplication movements a higher priority.^{iv}

1 | Have multiplying leaders who serve as catalytic mobilizers.

With regard to a movement of multiplication, leaders cannot make a movement, but they can shape the culture of a movement by sharing the vision, developing leaders, creating processes, and mobilizing teams. In other words, level five leaders serve as catalytic mobilizers through intentionality. Thus, having humble, persuasive, and passionate leaders who lead the charge of multiplication is a great place to start.

2 | Inspire others through transformational stories of the gospel.

Stories grant the information and the emotional connection of how the gospel, the greatest story ever told, is moving in and transforming the lives of people, families, communities, and cities. Thus to help motivate and mobilize a church and believers to join the train of multiplication, find and tell stories of the impact the gospel—through church plants—has had on communities and individuals.

3 | Celebrate both the small and large wins of your church.

Remember, what you celebrate, you become. In parenting, we call it positive reinforcement. If your child behaves appropriately, you celebrate and reward them. The celebration and

reward instills in the psyche of the child to continue acting in the same manner. When your church participates in giving towards church planting, brings in a planter to apprentice, goes on a short-term trip to help a church plant, or sends out a church planting team, celebrate it! By taking the time to celebrate your church's involvement in church planting—regardless of how small or big—you focus your people's attention on the goodness of multiplication, and, over time, you construct a culture that actively pursues multiplication.

4 | Be aware of the opposition and negativity towards multiplication.

There's always a cold-water committee in every church—even in newer ones. There will always be those who are content with their one church. And nothing can splash cold water on a tiny spark of a movement quite like someone dismissing or undermining a church planting work. For a Church Multiplication Movement to succeed, you will need to have leaders willing to confront and respond in love to the opposition and negativity towards multiplication. Don't let one match who strikes against multiplication turn into a forest fire that destroys it. While it's not necessary to have 100% buy-in from everyone in a church about multiplication, there is the need to have unity.

5 | Trust and follow the Spirit.

When we follow the Spirit, He, in accordance to His Word, empowers us to share, show, and spread the gospel, which in return births a disciple making movement that becomes an exponential movement toward multiplication.^v

Conclusion

When I (Daniel) was on missions in Thailand, I remember talking with the pastor of the orphanage we were serving in. He asked me if I had noticed how many 7-Eleven's there were in Thailand. Initially, I didn't notice—maybe because I grew up with so many 7-Eleven's peppered throughout Vancouver. But after he asked me the question I realized that every community we drove through had a 7-Eleven in it, or close to it. He then shared with me, "That's my church planting vision for Thailand. Everywhere there's a 7-Eleven, I want there to be a church."

Just as my pastor friend desires to see a 7-Eleven type of movement in Thailand, we too desire to see a Church Multiplication Movement in our generation. But to even have a chance to see one, we must not only pray to the Lord of the harvest, but we must be **intentional** in cultivating the ground from which the harvest will come.

PRACTICES OF CHURCHES THAT MULTIPLY

When Jesus commissioned his disciples to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20), he was explicitly commanding them to go and make disciples, not plant churches. Jesus knew that when the disciples focused on sharing the gospel and multiplying themselves by making other disciples, churches naturally form. This pattern is exemplified in the New Testament with the church in Antioch (Acts 11) and with the founding of the church in Corinth (Acts 18).

Herein lies the problem; it’s so easy to focus on the details of planting and building our church (i.e. programs and ministries) that we forget to keep the main thing the main thing—the

commission to make disciples. As a result, we end up planting a church that fails to make disciples. Now if we only understood the following truth, then everything would change: you can plant a church without making disciples, but you can't make disciples without ending up with a church.

When we go forth sharing the gospel and making disciples, Jesus promises that He will always be with us as He builds His church. After all, isn't that how the Great Commission ends in verse 20? "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." We see the same thing in John 20:21–22, where Jesus promises the Holy Spirit after He commissions His disciples, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." After saying this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

We believe that obedience to the Great Commission will lead churches and believers to focus on making disciples that make disciples, which will inevitably result in planting churches that plant churches. Just as true discipleship does not end with the making of one disciple—true church planting does not end with the establishment of one church. At the core, discipleship involves reproduction, especially given that the bedrock of God's mission is to create a people for Himself. If reproduction ceases to be a part of the equation, then discipleship becomes solely

individualized as the focus shifts on "becoming a better you." The reality is, when a disciple matures, they should be ready to make another disciple; in the same way, when a church matures, they should be ready to plant another church.

If an apple tree doesn't produce any apples we would say something's wrong with the tree. In the same way, if a disciple doesn't produce another disciple, or a church doesn't produce another church, Jesus would probably say something's wrong with them. Jack Redford puts it this way: "Church planting is a normal and natural function for a church. If it does not take on this task, it has become rootbound."^{vi}

Six Practices of Multiplying Churches

Not too long ago I read *Onward* by Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks. In his book, Schultz discusses how he returned to Starbucks as the CEO—a position he had held before—to revitalize the struggling chain. According to Schultz, Starbucks didn't need a new heart, but it definitely needed more than a face-lift. For Schultz, Starbucks had wandered from its vision, and thus the practices that made them who they were. Success derailed their vision.

Schultz writes, "If not checked, success has a way of covering up small failures, and when many of us at Starbucks

became swept up in the company's success, it had unintended effects. We ignored, or maybe we just failed to notice the shortcomings."^{vi}

In taking back the job as CEO, Schultz gathered a team around him to create—what they called—the Transformation Agenda. The Transformation Agenda was a clear, concrete plan that framed the company's bold goals and articulated exactly what Starbucks would do to achieve their desired future.^{viii} There were “Seven Big Moves” each with specific tactics. They were:

- Be the undisputed coffee authority
- Engage and inspire our partners
- Ignite the emotional attachment with our customers
- Expand our global presence—while making each store the heart of the local neighborhood
- Be a leader in ethical sourcing and environmental impact
- Create innovative growth platforms worthy of our coffee
- Deliver a sustainable economic model^{ix}

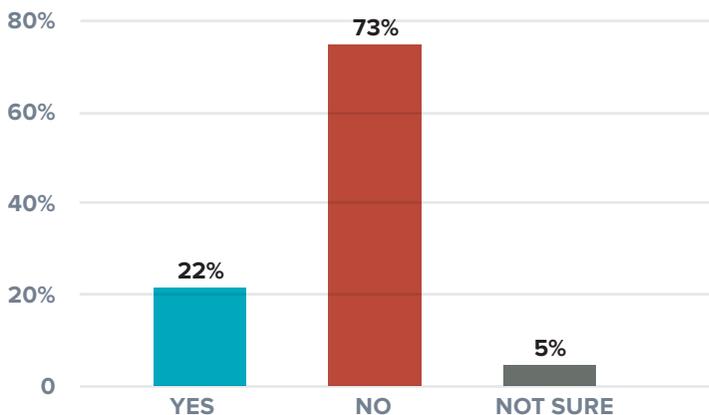
Note all the verbs that Schultz used to express what Starbucks was going to “do” in order to reach their desired destination. At the close of the book, Schultz shared how his team had navigated Starbucks through their tumultuous two-year journey of reclaiming and realizing

their vision. And to commemorate and celebrate Starbucks' 40th Anniversary, including their recent turnaround and transformation, Schultz asked his coffee team to create a special coffee blend. Their team created the Tribute blend.

Just as Schultz developed goals and practices that Starbucks would concentrate on and implement to lead towards their desired future, I believe there are also practices of churches that lead towards their desired future of multiplication. So, just what are the practices of churches that multiply? What makes one church more likely to multiply than another?

When we looked at the data from our recent *State of Church Planting in the U.S. 2015 Report*, we found that only 22% of churches—that started in 2012 or earlier—started at least one daughter church within five years of existence. Amongst those 22% that multiplied, and based on our experience, we discovered six statistical characteristics of a multiplying church, compared to those that did not multiply.

That does not mean that these are the only activities in which they were involved, and it is important to consider how research works here. These are what we call statistically significant factors, but there are certainly other dynamics at work. But, based on



AMONG THOSE STARTED IN 2012 OR EARLIER, 22% STARTED AT LEAST ONE DAUGHTER CHURCH WITHIN 5 YEARS OF EXISTENCE.

our data, these qualities proved to have a statistical correlation with church multiplication when other factors (church plant characteristics and church planter characteristics) were held constant.

1 | Embracing A Kingdom Vision.

Multiplication starts with a vision for the Kingdom. This is the starting point for any church that wants to multiply. It's not about the church's kingdom; it's about God's Kingdom. It's not about the pastors' name and fame; it's about

Jesus' name and fame. J.D. Payne, in his research, found something similar. He says, "Based on my findings, the reasons for the lack of established churches being involved in church planting are at least three in number: 1) Ignorance, 2) Turfism, and 3) Lack of Kingdom Vision."^x We saw this with Pillar Church. Here's a story from our recently updated version of *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply* (2nd ed.):

"Pillar Church has the same vision, but their focus is not just

to reach their city; it's to reach and plant a church in every U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) base in the world. When Clint Clifton planted Pillar in 2005, he planted in Quantico, Virginia, which is the crossroads and hub of the USMC. As a result this church has always had a burden to minister to both active and retired marines and their families. This love for the marines, coupled with a passion for church planting, is what led to their current vision to train marines to plant churches when they get reassigned to another USMC base. They are calling this the Praetorian Project. They've planted six churches so far with future plans to focus first on four of the major USMC base regions and then eventually on every USMC location across the world."^{xi}

A Kingdom vision requires a church, its pastors, its staff, its launch team, and its core members to have a vision much larger than its own four walls, or its own two acres. When a church extends its focus, prayer, resources, strategy, and efforts beyond their local context into regional, continental, and global contexts, then the church is well on its way to embracing a Kingdom vision.

To accomplish such a vision will require the church to reproduce and multiply leaders and churches to reach such areas. Thus embracing a Kingdom

vision is the foundation to becoming a multiplying church rather than a macho church (a church that does it all on their own) or a monument church (a church that wants people to come and see them). If churches are to move from competition to cooperation, a Kingdom vision must be adopted. It is only then that the church will practice and understand what Steve Moon calls "boundarylessness."^{xii}

Ray Chang agrees. He says, "This is not about building our own kingdom or our own brand. Rather, it is about expanding God's kingdom. While we see our incubation strategy as a way to multiply, our first and foremost desire is to see God's rule and reign multiply through the planting of healthy new churches."^{xiii}

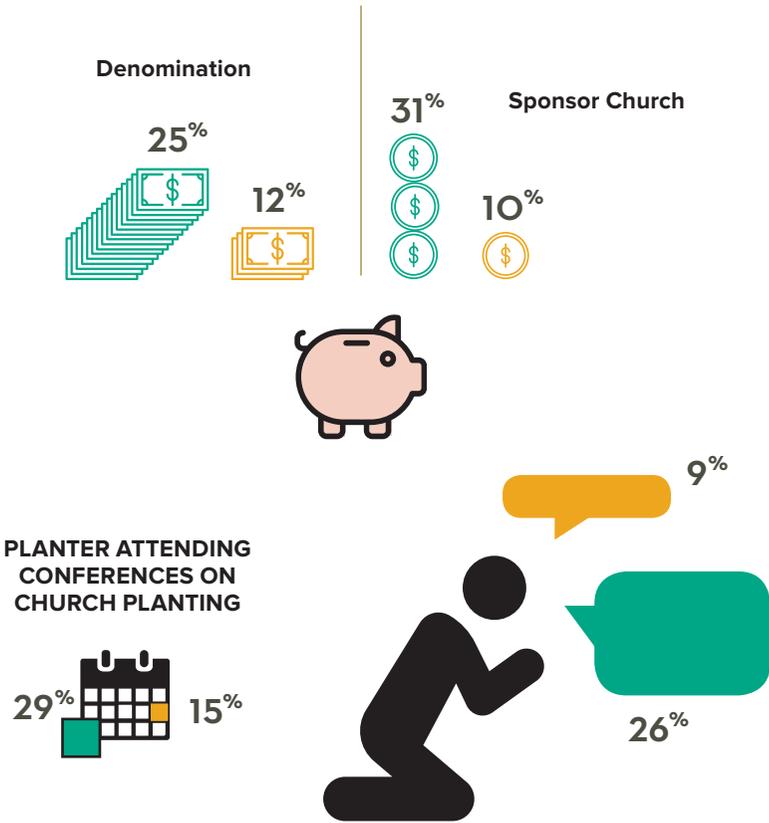
2 | Preparing the Planter.

One of the ways that this Kingdom vision gets birthed in the heart of the planter and embedded in the DNA of the church plant is through proper and thorough preparation. After all, I (Ed) can't tell you how many times I've met people who have gone and planted churches without taking courses on it or reading books on it. It's absolutely bizarre and absurd. That's why we developed our Essential Church Planting course on NewChurches.com (newchurches.com/essentialchurchplanting).

PERCENTAGE STARTING DAUGHTER CHURCH WITHIN 5 YEARS DID/DID NOT ...

● Did ● Did Not

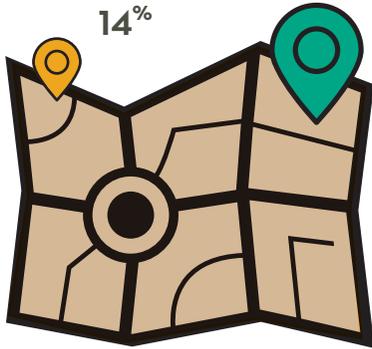
PLANT RECEIVED FUNDING FROM ...



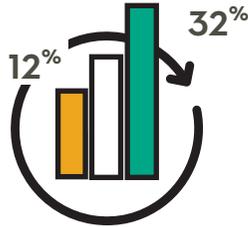
PLANTER ENLISTING SEVERAL PERSONAL PRAYER PARTNERS PRIOR TO ENGAGING THE NEW WORK AND CONTINUED ENGAGING THEIR PRAYER SUPPORT DURING THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF THE NEW CHURCH WORK

PERCENTAGE STARTING DAUGHTER CHURCH WITHIN 5 YEARS DID/DID NOT ...

● Did ● Did Not



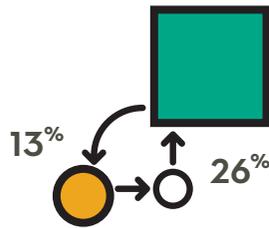
PLANT RECEIVING DEMOGRAPHIC AND/OR RESEARCH EXPERTISE



PLANT CONDUCTING DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH



PLANTER BEING ASSESSED BY A DENOMINATION OR CHURCH PLANTING NETWORK



PLANTER ACTIVELY ENGAGING IN A PLAN OF PERSONAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION DURING THE DURATION OF THE NEW CHURCH WORK

Based on our observations, we found that when planters prepared their hearts—for the challenges that were going to come with planting—by engaging in a plan of spiritual formation, they were more likely to multiply and start a daughter church within their first five years. This was also true for planters who enlisted several personal prayer partners prior to starting the church and also during the first few years of their plant. Being assessed by a denomination or church planting network, as well as attending conferences and taking courses on church planting positively affected a church planter's chance of multiplying.

So, according to our research, the more a planter is personally prepared to plant, the more likely they are to multiply. This also proves to be true for the planter's logistical preparation. In other words, when planters received denominational funding, and/or received funding from a sponsoring church, they were more likely to multiply than those who didn't. The same thing was true for planters who received demographic analysis and research of the community—it resulted in a higher likelihood to multiply within the first five years. The data is clear—preparation matters for multiplication.

3 | Loving the Lost and Intentionally Evangelizing.

Churches that multiply not only have a deep love for the lost, they are

intentional at evangelism. Regardless of the strategy—whether sending mailers or offering sports leagues—multiplication naturally occurs when a church's heart and hands extend towards the lost. For example, among the churches we surveyed, we saw that churches who continually sent mailers to their community—announcing their church and/or the activities of their church—consistently saw a higher number of new commitments to Christ than those who didn't. We saw the same thing for churches who offered a sports league to their community.

Although there seems to be pockets of evangelistic success, it seems that evangelism has fallen on hard times—and this is reflected in the lack of evangelism focus in many church plants. People will come to church planting conferences, but not evangelism conferences. Although some denominations still have evangelism conferences, they seem to be shrinking in attendance and enthusiasm. That was not always the case. A few decades ago, such conferences were booming. In fact, classes in evangelism training typically were well attended.

Now, don't misunderstand my point. I'm not saying we need more conferences or that churches need to offer more classes on evangelism training. Although they were popular at one time, classes alone did not change

AVERAGE NEW COMMITMENTS BY CONGREGATION CONTINUING TO MAIL INVITATIONS



AVERAGE NEW COMMITMENTS BY CONGREGATION CONTINUING TO OFFER A COMMUNITY SPORTS LEAGUE



people’s hearts. Churches still weren’t involved in church planting, and most believers never shared their faith. So, while I don’t think more evangelism conferences are always the answer, I do believe that the lack of many is a symptom of a larger problem.^{xiv}

One reason why evangelism passion has waned is because many have

traded evangelism for social activism. While we believe the *missio Dei* includes both word and deed, people don’t ultimately experience conversion through social justice—they experience it through verbal proclamation. Social justice may manifest implications of the gospel, but sharing the gospel with individuals gives them a personal invitation to follow King Jesus. For

multiplication to occur—both in micro (making disciples) and macro (planting churches) ways—we must recover the priority of sharing the gospel. When we share the gospel—the good news of Christ’s life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and soon return—there will be people who pass from death to life.

Sharing the gospel should be a priority for us since it was a priority for Jesus. Harold Mare states, “Jesus in his first coming did not put Christianizing the world through social and political action as primary in his own life or as primary in his goals for his Church.”^{xv} Mare argues that this bears itself out in a careful study of the words and actions of Jesus. He asserts the summary of Jesus’ purpose is clearly set forth in Matthew 20:28: “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.” In addition, when Jesus began His ministry the Bible says, “Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near’” (Matt 4:17).

As self-evident as this may seem, it was interesting to discover that churches who were intentional at evangelism were the ones that had a higher likelihood of being made up of a majority of attendees who were unchurched than those who didn’t. We saw this in churches who conducted the following events/ministries as outreach: special children’s activities, sports leagues, food banks, clothing

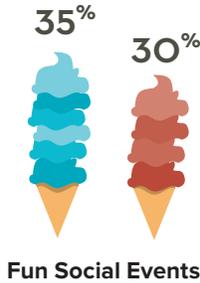
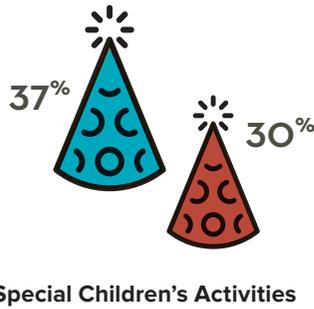
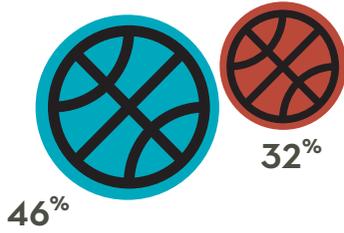
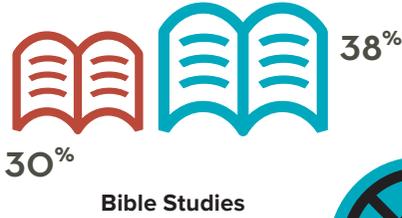
giveaways, shelters, drug/alcohol recovery, outreach Bible studies, and fun social events.

Unless you love the lost, you will never reach the lost. And if you aren’t reaching the lost and discipling them, then it’ll be difficult to multiply your church because you won’t have enough people to send out as your next launch team—that is, unless you’re consistently growing your church via transfer growth, but that’s a topic for another book. So, how can you tell if your church has a love for the lost? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the pastor speak with them in mind? In other words, when the pastor addresses the congregation—whether it is during announcements or the message—do they attempt to include people far from God?
- Does the church create environments designed for the lost? This could be using curriculum like Alpha or Starting Point, which are designed for unbelievers to be able to explore the faith and ask questions.
- Does the church carry resources (if they have a resource center) for people who may not know Christ? They could carry resources such as Tim Keller’s *The Reason for God*, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*; Paul Barnett’s *Is The New Testament Reliable?*; Lee Strobel’s

**REGULARLY CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES AS AN OUTREACH
ACTIVITY (Percentage Majority Unchurched)**

● Activity Offered ● Activity Not Offered



The Case for Christ; Ravi Zacharias' *End of Reason*; Antony Flew's *There is a God*.

- Does a portion of your budget go specifically towards engaging the lost in your community? In other words, does your church put their money where their mouth is? If we say we love the lost, shouldn't a portion of our resources—outside of what is given to networks, associations, and denominations—be allocated to the lost in our community?
- Does your church create environments, begin ministries, or host outreach events that purposely place believers around lost people?

The data is clear though, a love for the lost and intentionality at evangelism matter, and they have an affect on a church's likelihood to multiply. Let's look at churches that conduct sports league activities as an outreach activity, for an example. As we saw earlier, these churches had a higher number of new commitments, and they had a higher percentage of majority unchurched people in their congregation. As a result, these churches are also the ones that have a higher likelihood to multiply and start a daughter church within their first five years. As we see in these graphs, the data is clear: intentionality matters.

Evangelism entropy is very common. We may begin with an emphasis on evangelism, but this discipline can

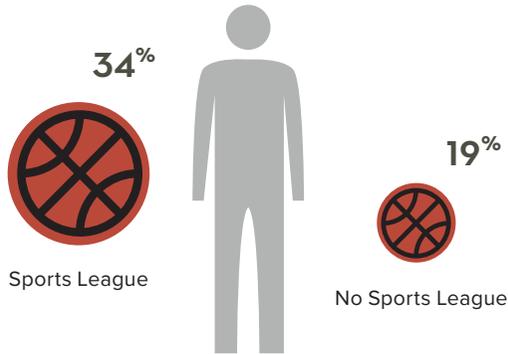
easily be placed on the back burner. In addition, many people have slipped into the mindset that evangelism is a gift that some believers have and others do not. The reality is that when someone becomes reconciled to God, He sends them out to reconcile others. That's not a gift, it's a corporate calling. Thus we all have the responsibility to take Christ to others.

Pastoral leadership can go a long way in shifting those mindsets. Pastors and church planters can and should equip the church body to understand their role in evangelization. Among other things, a church can do six things to encourage the spirit and practice of evangelism, and thereby be intentionally evangelistic:

Remind people we evangelize because at some point someone evangelized us.

The greatest motivation for evangelism is our own relationship with God. We must teach people that our "foundness" should drive us to "lostness." Also, reminding ourselves of God's love for us should lead us to show and share God's love with others. The problem for many believers (and many churches) is that they have forgotten what it's like to be lost. As a result, their passion for evangelism has waned. But those who constantly remember their relationship with God—the God who displayed great grace and mercy by pursuing and finding them—recover the greatest

REGULARLY CONDUCTING SPORTS LEAGUE ACTIVITIES AS AN OUTREACH ACTIVITY



Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years

motivation to be the conduit by which God pursues and finds others.

Teach people how normal evangelism should be.

Evangelism is about meeting people where they are, and leading them to where Jesus wants them to be. Jesus made evangelism look natural and normal. For instance, Jesus engages the woman at the well (John 4) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19) with great ease and comfort—not to mention he experiences incredible transformational results. For Jesus, meeting and talking with people was as natural as breathing. Yet, it seems that meeting and talking

with people overwhelms many today. We get it; many people are intimidated about sharing their faith. But we must teach them the art of evangelism seen in the life of Jesus—simply meeting people where they are, talking with people and allowing them to expose their deepest hurts and areas of brokenness, and then sharing with them how Jesus can meet and satisfy their deepest needs. Evangelism isn't technical or complicated; it's relational and conversational.

Utilize multiple evangelism methods.

Multiple approaches to reaching out to people provide multiple avenues

for them to hear the gospel. Churches seeking to be intentionally evangelistic may create a variety of environments—both planned and spontaneous—where people can either bring others to hear the gospel or meet others to share the gospel. Also, keep in mind that just because you have an event where unbelievers may be present, like an Easter egg hunt, doesn't mean that you always have to make sure they hear a formal presentation of the gospel.^{xvi}

I know some may push back, but I think sometimes trying to formally “fit” the gospel in certain events can seem to unbelievers like a “bait and switch.” Thus an evangelistic method can be utilizing certain events as a platform to initiate relationships with unbelievers.

Celebrate and share stories of members who have met Christ.

When you hear stories of how your people have lived on mission and engaged others with the gospel, be sure to share that with your people. Sharing how normal, everyday believers have engaged in evangelism with their family, friends, co-workers, or neighbors, will empower and embolden others to do likewise.

Make sure the leaders are cheerleaders for evangelism.

Pastors, whether during the announcements, the weekly message, the conclusion of the service, or the latest church bulletin, should encourage everyone to be a prayer,

bringer, or teller. Also, as cheerleaders hand out pom-poms, shakers, and/or foam fingers to help encourage fans to cheer, pastors should be creative and hand out bookmarks, invitation cards, and other tools to help remind their people to be engaged in evangelism.

Teach the gospel consistently well.

The Easter egg event mentioned above is an inroad, or a bridge, that hopefully establishes a relationship to the point they will feel comfortable enough to come to a service. Thus we want to bridge relationships from something as simple as a children's event to an opportunity for them to hear the gospel. This is why it's important for pastors to share the gospel consistently. And we don't just preach about the resurrection on one Sunday a year. But we can preach Christ every week for we know that Christ is found throughout the Scriptures. As a result, our people understand that after they bring their friends to the community event, there will be a gospel thrust at the weekend gathering.

It's a full-court press. We do all of these things in waves at the same time, but we don't do them all the time. Spring and fall, summer and winter, on mission to share Jesus. Everyone is on board. Everyone understands that our church leadership will provide opportunities for their friends to hear the gospel, but *their* friends are *their* responsibility. I don't know their friends. They do. I can't invite their friends. They can. And

they must. Evangelism is everyone's responsibility. We can complain about the lack of evangelistic activity in our churches, but this goes back to leadership. We as leaders create the culture of evangelism. When the church sees we are intentional and serious about creating a pathway, they will be more likely to engage their friends and invite them on the pathway.

Let's return to where we left off. Here is the fourth characteristic of a multiplying church.

4 | Committing to Discipleship.

As mentioned earlier, churches that multiply understand that multiplication begins with discipleship. Discipleship cannot be an afterthought, or be relegated merely to a program for the devout and committed. Discipleship needs to be normalized in and throughout the life of the congregation, and it needs to be for everyone in the congregation: from the newcomer to the long-time member.

Some churches become absorbed with technique and mistakenly conclude they are missional because of their increasing attendance. Their trendy techniques cause a rapid rise in attendance, giving them a false sense that what they're doing is "working." As a result, they may be more willing to throw discipleship out the window as a goal if that helps them retain more

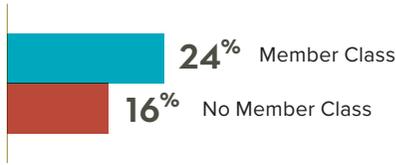
warm bodies in their services. That's a compromise a biblical church won't make. Ultimately, our goal is much more than creating a large attendance; it's making disciples.^{xvii}

Starting with the newcomer, we found that churches who had an intentional plan to welcome newcomers via a new member's class were more likely to start a daughter church within their first five years, as seen on page 26.

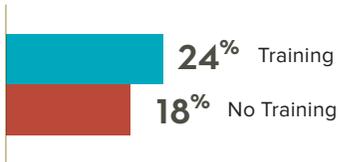
Many church planters are afraid that by teaching theology they will be introducing subjects that won't interest seekers, thus driving them away. However, both statistically and anecdotally, we've found that a church that correctly applies the concept of true discipleship will accomplish both goals: growth and depth. In fact, studies show that the higher the standards of biblical teaching, the longer people remain engaged. Today's seekers are seeking depth. They won't interrupt a fine Sunday morning of sleeping in to attend a church that serves up shallowness, at least not for long.^{xviii}

Next, we found one-on-one discipleship to also be an effective tool to normalize discipleship throughout the life of a congregation. One-on-one discipleship is a proven tool to disciple new Christians and/or lukewarm Christians, since it's highly reproducible. It's also very effective

CHURCH HAVING A NEW MEMBER'S CLASS



CHURCH HAVING EVANGELISM TRAINING INCLUDING ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING OR A CLASS OR WORKSHOP



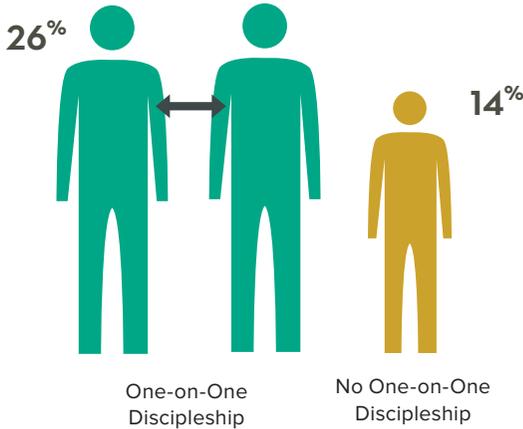
Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years

since the disciple is led through a scope and sequence of curriculum, and the learning is personalized—so they can ask any question they like. Much like one-on-one discipleship, mentoring is also a great discipleship tool, which is often used to intentionally develop high capacity leaders. No wonder churches that offered either of these programs were more likely to start a daughter church within their first five years, as seen in the graph on page 27.

The ability to evangelize is one of the most important things that a Christian needs to be disciplined in.

This is especially true for churches that want to reach the lost and multiply themselves, as we saw in the previous point. Now whether this training in evangelism takes place as a one-time workshop, ongoing class, or even in a one-on-one fashion, the fact is, the presence of this training is more important than the method or model. Among the churches we surveyed, we found that those who intentionally disciplined and trained their people in evangelism had a higher likelihood to multiply themselves and start another daughter church within five years, as seen in the graphs on page 26.

**CHURCH OFFERING A ONE-ON-ONE
DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM OR MENTORING PROGRAM**



Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years

Lastly, a church cannot say that they are truly committed to discipleship unless they have an intentional stewardship development plan that cultivates their congregation's understanding and investment of their time, talent, and treasure. This is not the same thing as just preaching on giving once a year. A stewardship development plan consists of both macro and micro issues. The macro issues are ones that relate to the church becoming self-sufficient and not relying on any outside sources for funding. For example, how does the budget look like year-over-year?

Are expenses exceeding giving? What percentage of the budget goes towards salaries and benefits? Is giving increasing on a month-by-month basis?

The micro issues in a stewardship development plan relate to how each individual in the congregation is disciplined in their understanding of their time, talent, and treasure. For example, is the plate merely passed around as a ritual or a necessity, or is it envisioned as a vital part of one's worship? How often is giving talked about? Are first-time givers celebrated in any way, or recognized? What happens when an

individual suddenly stops giving in your church? Does anyone notice? Do you have a process to contact them?

Based on the churches we surveyed, those who were intentional with a stewardship development plan had a higher likelihood to multiply themselves and start another daughter church within five years, as seen in the graph on page 29.

5 | Developing Other Leaders.

Churches that multiply do not see their volunteers as hirelings to carry out grunt work so that the pastors can do the real work of ministry. Rather, churches that multiply live out Ephesians 4:11–13 and believe that every member is a minister. That's why, as we saw in the previous point, multiplying churches had stewardship development plans that not only cultivated the church member's treasures, but also their time and talent.

Leadership development is not just about teaching people leadership principles, or giving church members a place to serve. Leadership development is about helping every member discover their God giving calling, grow in their skills, and develop their competencies so that they can continue to grow in their kingdom impact. For example, while some churches may just be glad to find nursery workers to fill an empty spot, churches that multiply place each nursery worker on a development path,

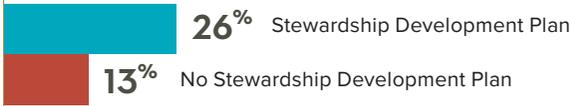
where that volunteer is not only serving, but also growing in their character and competencies. In other words, being a nursery worker is not the end; it's rather the means to maturity in Christ and the development of one's leadership skills.

According to our research, churches that focus on leadership development are not only being biblically faithful in living out Ephesians 4:11–13, but they are fruitfully experiencing more commitments to Christ, reaching financial self-sufficiency faster, and more than likely multiplying within their first five years of existence. In addition, our research on leadership development revealed the following:

- Church planters that mentored leaders of other new churches had a higher average worship attendance
- Church planters who participated in, at least, a month-long leadership training course on church planting also experienced a higher average worship attendance
- Church plants who had a leadership development plan for their membership saw a higher number of decisions made for Christ
- Church plants who had a leadership development plan for their membership also became financially self-sufficient at a quicker rate

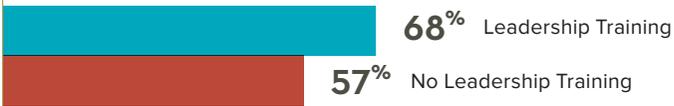
There's nothing in our research here that surprises us, given that we believe maturity generally leads to depth,

CHURCH HAVING A PROACTIVE STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN ENABLING THE CHURCH TO BE FINANCIALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT



Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years

CHURCH PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR NEW MEMBERS



Percentage financially self-sufficient

AVERAGE NEW COMMITMENTS BY CONGREGATION HAVING LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR NEW MEMBERS



**CHURCH COMMUNICATING TO THE WHOLE
CONGREGATION ITS COMMITMENT TO BEING
A MULTIPLYING CHURCH EACH MONTH**



Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years.

width, reproduction, and multiplication. But maturity doesn't happen haphazardly—it requires intentionality. While I don't think anyone will deny that leadership matters, what we are trying to point out is that developing a plan to develop leaders matters greatly! It's the difference between addition and multiplication. So don't wait until you get larger or more complex to focus on

developing leaders. Make this a part of your DNA and culture from day one.^{xix}

6 | Creating A Clear Strategy to Multiply.

The five previous points lay out practices that affect the likelihood of a church being able to multiply within their first five years. In other

words, these practices help move a church towards multiplication, without specifically focusing on the act of multiplying. This last practice is about laying out a clear strategy to multiply.

Churches that multiplied within their first five years did a few things at a far higher percentage than those that didn't. The first thing is that they were consistently ruthless about communicating their vision to multiply on a monthly basis. Multiplying churches didn't just preach about it once a year, occasionally take up a special offering, nor did they relegate their plan to multiply to a dusty old pamphlet. Instead, they communicated a vision of multiplication consistently and clearly to their whole congregation on a monthly basis starting from their very first Sunday.

The second thing that multiplying churches did was that they partnered with another organization to plant churches. Partnering with another church, network, or denomination to plant a daughter church is far more effective than doing it alone. Plus, partnering is a natural result of the first characteristic, as well: a Kingdom vision. God has a plan for your city, and it's going to take more than just one church to saturate your city with gospel preaching churches.

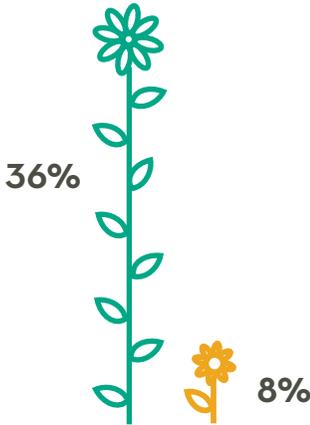
Churches that multiplied not only had a clear strategy of constantly

communicating the vision and partnering with others for multiplication, but finally, they invested holistically into other church plants. In other words, multiplying churches invested time, energy, resources, and finances into other plants. Following the biblical imagery of reaping what you sow, churches that experienced the fruit of multiplication were churches that sowed the seeds of multiplication.

Think about a farmer. Unless a farmer invests money, time, energy, and labor into a field, he will fail to yield a crop. Likewise, unless a church is investing time, energy, resources, and finances into other church plants, they will fail to become a multiplying church. One of the ways multiplying churches sowed seeds of multiplication was for their staff to regularly invest in new or potential planters at least quarterly via mentoring, coaching, residencies, training, and/or internships.

But the investment didn't stop there. They poured resources and money into other plants by designating a percentage of their budget to newer works because they realized that while having a future planter speak at your church is great and sheds light on the concept of multiplication, it doesn't necessarily make you a multiplying church. Thus, what's better for them is sending out short-term mission teams, commissioning their own launch teams, and financially contributing

**CHURCH STAFF INVESTING
IN NEW OR POTENTIAL
CHURCH PLANTERS AT
LEAST EACH QUARTER**
(MENTOR, TRAIN, INTERNSHIP,
RESIDENCY, COACH, ETC.)



**CHURCH FINANCIALLY
CONTRIBUTING TO OTHER
CHURCH PLANTS**



Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years.

to other church plants. Possessing a clear strategy of investing holistically into church planting is connected to churches multiplying within their first five years of existence.

Conclusion

Multiplication doesn't happen naturally; it requires intentionality. As you look at the six practices of multiplying churches, which ones do you and your church already embody? Which ones are absent? Take a moment and examine your church so that you can move towards becoming a multiplying church.

BARRIERS TO MULTIPLICATION

In every story and aspect of life, there always seem to be opposing forces. On our planet, you have night and day. In *Romeo and Juliet*, you have the Capulet's and the Montague's. In *Star Wars*, you have the Rebellion and the Empire. In Marvel, you have the Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. and Hydra. And in life, you have the close talkers—who don't know what a breath mint is—and everyone else who seems to have a good handle on personal space and emotional intelligence.

In the same way, we see similar forces when it comes to church multiplication. There are characteristics that lead to multiplication, as well as factors that prevent multiplication. In the same way, there are characteristics that can lead your church to becoming a Level Five church, as well as factors that will prevent that and stall you at Level Two or Three. In this chapter, we will examine barriers that prevent a church from multiplying.

Eight Barriers to Multiplication.

1 | Fear.

Church planters would do well to heed Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:7). Paul knew that fear of anything other than a healthy reverent fear of the glory and sovereignty of God would prevent believers from fulfilling the call of God. Even Marie Curie, a scientist who won the Nobel Prize multiple times, understood the paralyzing power of fear, which is why she noted, "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood."

The reality is that the fear of the unknown, the fear of losing friends, the fear of losing tithers, the fear of change, and the fear of failure are all factors that prevent churches from multiplying. For example, fear often drives churches to sooth their growing pains by starting another campus, instead of planting another church. Now don't get us wrong, we are for multisite, but only when it's a strategy that comes alongside church planting. For many churches ridden with fear, they never plant a church because they're afraid it won't succeed. Multisite needs to be seen as an alternative for building a bigger building, rather than as a replacement for church planting.

Also, fear of people's murmurs and spats of complaining about planting another church paralyzes leaders (and thus churches) from taking the leap of faith. Some of your people may wonder why you're talking about planting another church when you haven't even broken the 200 barrier, as if a church has to be running over 200 to plant another church. But if you probed deeper you would find that the murmurs and complaints are coming from a fear of losing friends or even losing control.

If these fears are not "understood" and addressed on a global scale, and in every ministry and system within the church, then your church will never be able to multiply. Vaneetha Rendall reflects on three Hebrews in exile (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) and offers cogent counsel to those of us who find ourselves vacillating between fear and obedience. She states,

"Even if the worst happens, God's grace is sufficient. Those three young men faced the fire without fear because they knew that whatever the outcome, it would ultimately be for their good and for God's glory. They did not ask "what if" the worst happened. They were satisfied knowing that "even if" the worst happened, God would take

care of them. Even if. Those two simple words have taken the fear out of life. Replacing “what if” with “even if” is one of the most liberating exchanges we can ever make. We trade our irrational fears of an uncertain future for the loving assurance of an unchanging God. We see that even if the worst happens, God will carry us. He will still be good. And He will never leave us.”^{xx}

One of the easiest ways to gauge whether or not the fear of multiplication is present within your church is to talk to your small group leaders about multiplication. Ask them if they (or their group) are open to multiplying themselves? If they resist and balk at the idea, then you know that there’s a greater measure of fear than faith towards multiplication in your church.

2 | Perceived and Actual Scarcity.

“What’s the right size to multiply your church?” There’s a rumor out there that goes like this, “It’s 25% larger than your current church. So if your church is currently at 100 people, then it’s when you’re 125; or if you’re 1000, then it’s when you’re attendance is at 1250.” The problem with this “statistic” is that it’s driven by a perceived scarcity mindset, which will ultimately keep your church from multiplying.

Let me explain, this mindset says that you cannot multiply until you have enough leaders to fill the potential vacancies, or until you have more than enough tithers to replace those who are leaving. If this is your mindset, then you’ll never have enough to reach that 25% mark because there’ll always be more needs and additional ministry to do. The opposite of a perceived scarcity mindset is an abundant mentality. So instead of thinking that you’ll lose band members or small group leaders when you multiply, you need to understand that others will step up and fill those vacancies when those leaders leave. We’ve seen this happen time after time.

There is a difference between perceived and actual scarcity though. For example, there are times and seasons when planting another church would not be wise. This could be three months after your church launched if your church is going through a split, or if there’s been a scandal or a moral failure in your church. During these moments there is an actual scarcity of trust, resources, and people. But for the majority of churches, it’s perceived scarcity that prevents them from multiplying. We would do well to remember Hudson Taylor’s words: “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.”

3 | Bad Math.

There's a myth going around where some think that it's a more effective use of time, resources, and energy to just add people to your church, rather than expend the energy to plant a whole new church. This is problematic. In fact, it doesn't make any sense numerically. When you plant churches that multiply and plant other churches, that plant other churches, you will reach a far greater number of people than if your church were to just add seats and services. Furthermore, we have discovered that new churches have a higher likelihood of making an impact and are more successful at reaching new people than existing churches. So let's do good math—addition is fine, but multiplication is better. John Mark Terry and J. D. Payne speak to this reality:

“The Church Growth Movement has always contended that church planting is the key to fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The first century Christians obeyed Jesus’ command by planting churches all over the Roman Empire. Church growth research has demonstrated that new churches are more evangelistic than older churches and more active in church planting. In other words, new units multiply more rapidly than older units. It is easy to see why the Church

Growth Movement advocated aggressive church planting.”^{xxi}

4 | Church Centricity.

One of the greatest temptations for pastors and churches is over focusing on your church at the expense of church planting. I understand this temptation. Truth is, there will always be needs and ministry opportunities at your church. You will always be tempted to purchase a building before planting another church—especially if you're portable. Members will always be lined up outside your office for counsel, although your time may be better spent developing leaders who could counsel those church members. In church life, as in personal life, there's always the temptation to spend the extra time, money, and resources on ourselves rather than investing them in others. Thus, church centricity is the antithesis to the first characteristic of a multiplying church, which we covered in chapter two, a Kingdom vision.

We must overcome the church centricity barrier by moving from an “inward focus” to an “outward focus.” So, what does a church with an “outward focus” look like?

In our research on transformational churches, churches that met our criteria as a transformational church had 67 percent of members agree that, “Our church leaders think as missionaries



CHURCH COMMUNICATING TO THE WHOLE CONGREGATION ITS COMMITMENT TO BEING A MULTIPLYING CHURCH EACH MONTH.

Percentage starting a daughter church within 5 years.

and work to understand the cultural context in our region.”^{xxii} In addition, 71 percent believed, “Our leadership senses a call to our local city or community,”^{xxiii} and 77 percent said, “Our church leadership understands the context.”^{xxiv} Such beliefs and behaviors display an outward focus. By having such a mentality churches seem to embrace a Christ-centered, gospel-centered mindset—where they love God and others—which propels them to become a church that is mission-oriented and multiplication bound.

5 | Don't See the Need for Multiplication.

Before churches can multiply, they need to see it first. The problem is, many churches don't see the need for multiplication. They assume that multiplication is not for them. Their reasoning is predicated on the

assumption that other churches will multiply. While they may understand the vision behind multiplication, they just don't have a personal conviction to multiply.

We believe every church should not only embrace a vision of multiplication, but personally engage in multiplication. Leaders do need to assume that even some of the most committed Christians will not have a pre-existing favorable disposition towards multiplication, and will see multiplication as the church's responsibility and not theirs. This is why it's vital to share the vision for multiplication, consistently, clearly, and in different forms and fashions each time. We saw this clearly in our research. Churches who regularly communicated a commitment to multiplication were more likely to multiply within their first five years than those who didn't.

Until your church sees multiplication as a personal conviction that they should embrace and enact, you will be facing an uphill battle. So work on communicating Jesus' commitment to multiplication to the entire congregation through different means, like vision talks, sermon illustrations, state of the union addresses, print pieces, stories, and video. And if you're worried about sounding like a broken record, don't be. After all, "vision leaks."

6 | Absence of a Change Management Strategy.

Your efforts to multiply and plant a daughter church will never launch off the ground without a vision for multiplication. However, unless you have a clear change management strategy, your efforts will always stall mid-way. This change management strategy has to address each level of leadership in your church and every venue for public communication. For example, you may be publicly communicating your vision for multiplication to the adults during the worship service, but are children and youth hearing this same vision? How are the deacons, elders, and leaders of your church contributing to multiplication? What about the special needs ministry, singles, seniors, and staff? Do not ignore the wisdom of literature out there that addresses the nuances of change management, like John Kotter's, *Leading Change*.

7 | No Incentives.

There are times in my parenting that I (Ed) have given my children incentives for good behavior. By offering them incentives, I am reminding them of the joys of obedience. I think failing to remind churches of the incentives and rewards of multiplication prevents them from passionately engaging in God's mission. Thus, I think we should remind people of the incentives and rewards for participating in multiplication.

I know what some of you are thinking, providing incentives don't produce an obedience of the heart, but it promotes behavioral modification. That may be true to some degree. But the Bible speaks of rewards. For instance, Proverbs 11:18 states, "The wicked man earns an empty wage, but the one who sows righteousness, a true reward." Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, says, "You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matt 5:11-12). The writer of Hebrews in the context of the hall of faith expresses, "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him" (Heb 11:6).

Possibly one of the best passages to highlight the idea of rewards is

Luke 19:11–29, where Jesus shared the parable of the Ten Talents. In the parable, the servants who wisely invested their talents and yielded interest were given more. But the servant who hid his talent, ended up losing it. And Jesus said, “I tell you, that to everyone who has, more will be given; and from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away” (Luke 19:26).

The reality is that God does reward his people for their obedience. People (including churches) who seek to honor the Lord with their life—their time, talents, and treasures—will experience great reward. Some rewards may be an increase in responsibility, an increase in influence, seeing trophies of grace, perhaps sensing a greater and deeper joy, and keeping the lampstand burning. And then some rewards may not come until we pass from this life and enter the next.

So while we don't want to modify our churches' behavior, we do want to intensify their hearts towards obedience to the Lord and His Great Commission by reminding them of the rewards of making disciples and planting churches.

8 | Debbie Downers.

Debbie Downer, according to Wikipedia, is a slang phrase that refers to someone who frequently

adds bad news and negative feelings to a gathering, thus bringing down the mood of everyone around them. Many churches, as well as pastors, are infected with Debbie Downers that act as an oppositional force preventing them from experiencing multiplication.

Debbie Downers remind us of the spies who came back from the Promised Land and gave a negative report. Although God promised Israel the land, the Debbie Downers came back and told all the people it would be impossible to overcome the inhabitants and conquer the land. Because of the Debbie Downers, Israel spent 40 years wandering in the desert eating manna.

If you don't address the Debbie Downers, you may find yourself in a similar predicament as Israel: wandering and missing out on God's best.

Conclusion

Even the most well intended churches are going to face barriers when it comes to multiplication. After all, the last thing that the enemy would want is for your church to multiply and move towards becoming a Level Five church. Which of these eight barriers are you most concerned about? What would it take for you to overcome them and move your church towards multiplication?

AN ECOSYSTEM OF MOVEMENTAL CHRISTIANITY

As mentioned earlier in chapter one, Church Planting Movements (CPM) are unlikely to happen in our Western context and within our generation. However, we believe that Church Multiplication Movements (CMM) have occurred and are continuing to occur—and that CMMs are needed to reach our North American context and to shift our thinking towards an understanding of gospel reproduction, multiplication, and movements.

As Warren Bird and I (Ed) explained in *Viral Churches*, these Church Multiplication Movements happen when the number of churches grow by 50 percent in a given year, with 50% conversion growth, and that growth continues to the third generation. For example, if your church has 100 people, then the next year you would be 150, and that growth

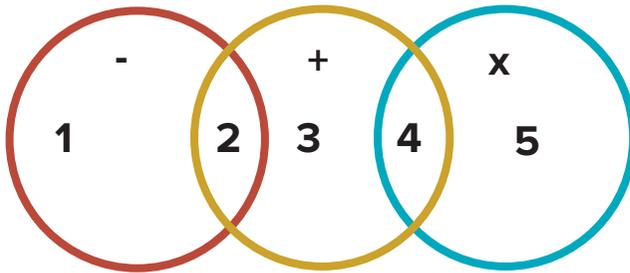
would be mostly from new converts, not transfers, and on and on to the third generation.

If a Church Multiplication Movement is our goal, then how do we move towards it? How do you get your church to grow by 50% in a given year, with 50% conversion growth, continuing onto the third generation? That's where the five levels come into play from Todd Wilson and Dave Ferguson's *Becoming a Level Five multiplying church Field Guide*.

The idea of progressive levels of involvement and success are key to understanding the journey of a

movement, and it's in that Field Guide that this concept is laid forth in an easy to understand manner. These five levels give us steps and a scorecard, while informing and challenging us to move towards multiplication and a movement mentality.

So which level are you? Are you a Level One Subtracting church that is struggling to survive, since congregants are leaving and there's a constant tension with your finances? Or are you a Level Two Plateauing church that's wrestling with a scarcity mindset that manifests itself in the way that you look at leaders, finances, and multiplication? Perhaps you are



LEVEL 1: SUBTRACTING // LEVEL 2: PLATEAUING
// LEVEL 3: ADDING // LEVEL 4: REPRODUCING //
LEVEL 5: MULTIPLYING

a Level Three Adding church that feels healthy since your attendance is increasing, your staff is leading well, and you're adding services and sites. If you are a Level Four Reproducing church, then you have moved beyond feeling satisfied with an increase in attendance, and now you are struggling with the tension of releasing and sending your people out versus accumulating and growing your church. You are beginning to plan and systematize multiplication, and it is at this point that you are beginning to exhibit the practices of multiplying churches as outlined in chapter two. However, it's not until you become a Level Five multiplying church, that multiplication becomes spontaneous because it's infused in your vision, strategy, and the way you look at and allocate your finances.

If you want to move towards multiplication and become a Level Five multiplying church, you have to do something. After all, it's better to do something and fail, than not do something and stay the same. Perhaps your starting point is to examine whether or not you exhibit any of the practices of multiplying churches as outlined in chapter two? Or maybe you want to start with the factors that prevent multiplication in chapter three? Or perhaps you would like to skip to the conclusion of this book and take our multiplication audit?

Wherever you start, here are eleven principles and concepts that, if embraced, embodied, and enacted, can help create a culture of movemental Christianity and put you well on your way to becoming a Level Five multiplying church.^{xxv}

Movemental Ecosystem

Over the last few years, I (Ed) have been thinking about what it might take to see movemental Christianity break loose in the West. It's based on global observations, history, missiology, and what we've seen even in recent decades. To see a genuine breakthrough, we'll need to see church planting, but not *just* church planting.

As such, I think there are attributes that will be around those movements, and will help inform how Level Five churches break into church multiplication.

The movemental ecosystem will help birth an outbreak of church multiplication, and that ecosystem would include several actions.

A movemental ecosystem will include more action than just these, but seem to frequently include:

- 1. Pray, Pray, Pray, and Then Pray Some More**
- 2. Connect Multiplication to the Missional Nature of God**

3. **Multiply Everything**
4. **Model Multiplication**
5. **Make, Not Find, New Planters**
6. **Develop A Missional Imagination**
7. **Count the Cost and Pay the Price of Multiplication**
8. **Empower Others to Lead**
9. **Work for Diversity**
10. **Scale the Structure**
11. **Refuel with God's Grace and Joy Throughout the Journey**

1 | Pray, Pray, Pray, and then Pray Some More.

God provides prayer for his people to communicate with him. But what are people to communicate to God in prayer? According to Tim Keller, in his book *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, “[P]rayers should arise out of immersion in the Scripture. [We] speak only to the degree we are spoken to...The wedding of the Bible and prayer anchors your life down in the real God.”^{xxvi} The more one knows and understands God's Word, the more one will know and understand how to communicate with God. As a result, people come out of prayer as Moses came down from the mountain—ready to reflect a life that has spent time with a glorious God.

Prayer not only provides an opportunity for people to communicate and encounter God as a means to know Him and take on His identity, but it also provides a means to communicate

about what one needs in advancing His mission in the world. According to John Piper, prayer is a wartime walkie-talkie for believers to communicate to God in order for Him to deploy the weapons of war according to His will.^{xxvii}

If prayer is a means for individuals to commune and communicate with God about becoming more like Him and being used to advance His mission in the world, it seems that prayer would be paramount in experiencing movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five multiplying church. What are you and your church praying for?

2 | Connect Multiplication to the Missional Nature of God.

God is a missional God. From the very beginning of Scripture to the end, God is on mission. If God's mission was a piece of popped popcorn, the kernel would be the creation of a people for Himself. In other words, to summarize God's mission from the very beginning to the end: God is on mission to create a people for Himself and for His glory. You can trace this mission through the epochs of Scripture: Adam and Eve, Israel, the Church, and then the vision of the New City.

In each era and period of human history God is in the process of creating a people for His renown who will reflect His glory to and throughout the created order. And it was through

Jesus, that God provided the means for His people to be cleansed, reconciled, redeemed, and empowered to live for His glory and carry out His mission. It is also in Jesus we have our King and leader with whom we are to follow, obey, and emulate.

If we will lead our people towards movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five church, we will need to connect our church's vision to God's historic and global mission. We must remind them constantly that if it weren't for God's mission and the mobilization of His people to multiply disciples and churches throughout the world, we would have never been reached. Thus, we participate in mission and seek to multiply because His Church—comprised of local churches around the world—is the vehicle by which He will continue to ransom, redeem, reconcile, and rescue a people for Himself.

3 | Multiply Everything.

I (Ed) actually stole (or better yet, borrowed) this phrase from a national gathering of the Wesleyan denomination. Just before I spoke, they explained to their churches that they didn't want to just discuss church planting, but that they wanted to remind everyone to multiply everything: disciples, groups, ministries, and churches.

For a multiplication movement to occur, multiplication has to be at every level of a local church body—and it should

be there from the very beginning. If multiplication is just being preached from the denominational or district level, then every church will think of it as something on a larger scale about which they should be concerned, but not personally involved. Also, if people only hear about multiplication from denominational, network, and district heads, they may feel a little overwhelmed when such talk finds its way into their local church. As a result they may be timid about multiplication.

I understand the fear. I've experienced it first-hand. The second church I planted (in Erie, PA) included some of this fear. At the end of three years we were about 350–400 people and I remember going to our leadership team to present a need to church plant. I had heard an undocumented statistic that if I didn't plant a church within three years we would never plant one.

So, I announced that we were not going to plant just one, but two churches. On the same day we said we were having twins. I brought in our new planters and gave them a “fishing license,” telling them they could “fish out” whoever they wished to go start a new church with them. (I would be lying, though, if I didn't admit that there wasn't even a small part of me that wanted to guide them away from the big titers, or best musicians). Even some of our leaders were concerned about the move so early in our church development. It even became a bit of a crisis point because I made the mistake

of not communicating multiplication from the beginning. We planted those churches and they went well, but it would have gone better if we were living multiplication from the start.

Remember we are on a multiplication mission. One of the first commands God gave Adam was to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill (expand throughout) the earth;” God told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the shore, and that through Abraham, God would bless all the families of the earth; and before Jesus’ ascension He told his followers to make disciples of all nations. God’s vision from the beginning has been one of multiplication, and yet I think a lot of churches have forgotten it.

Let me explain a little church math principle: too many churches have never experienced addition, nevertheless multiplication. For these churches, when multiplication is presented to them and they are asked to start a new church, it’s shocking because they see multiplication as division and subtraction. Multiplication is viewed as diminishing people and resources to that local body with an end result of everybody being weaker for it.

But let’s think about the strength and power of multiplication. Take the area of leadership for example. Would you say that multiplying another leader in effect makes a church weaker?

Not at all! In fact, it makes the church stronger when a leader multiplies himself or herself. The church, because the leadership has multiplied, has doubled the capacity to oversee and lead others. What about small groups? If a church had four functioning small groups and trained four new small group leaders to start four new small groups, does that make a church weaker? Absolutely not. It expands the church’s capacity to reach and connect more people into community and fellowship. As a result, the church becomes stronger.

When people hear and [tangibly] see the strength and power of multiplication locally, in their own context, they will be armed with understanding the strength and power of multiplying regionally, domestically, and globally. Thus, the cultural value of “multiply everything” becomes a freight train that picks up momentum that eventually reaches the destination of movement.

4 | Model Multiplication.

If you want to be a part of something unprecedented in your context—a Church Multiplication Movement—you need to not just talk about multiplication from the pulpit, but you need to live it. We’re suggesting that, from the very beginning, you start showing your congregation what it means to multiply believers, leaders, and other churches. There are at least three ways to model multiplication.

First, you can model multiplication by personally doing multiplication. Think back to when you were in elementary school learning how to tackle multiplication. What if your teacher talked about multiplication and told you the importance of learning multiplication, but never showed you how to do multiplication? You would have never learned how to multiply. You learned how to multiply by watching, observing, and learning from the teacher who modeled multiplication.

There's a good chance that unless you make a proactive, conscious effort to model multiplication, your people will never follow suit. They may know of multiplication, but never experience and learn multiplication. Implementing the cultural value of modeling multiplication serves the body and future church [plant] bodies as a means to not only teach the vision of multiplication but also allow others to catch the vision of multiplication. In addition, by modeling multiplication you are not asking others to do what you yourself aren't willing to do.

If you're the leader, and you're wondering where to start multiplying, begin with leaders and lost people. We spend time with other leaders so that we can multiply more leaders. We spend time with the lost so that we can multiply more disciples. Too often, we miss out on time with these groups

of people because we're spending it listening to everyone else.

I'm not trying to minimize the importance of pastoral care, but if you spend all your time maturing the saints rather than reaching sinners, you'll never have a movement. A movement doesn't happen when we are keepers of the aquarium, but rather when we are fishers of men. In addition, as we move our churches to fish for more men, we will need more leaders to man the boats because one boat will not be enough to hold all the fish. Thus, if you want to multiply a movement, you have to be multiplying leaders to accommodate God's wave of fruitful mission. So, start modeling multiplication by picking a few leaders to invest in and a few lost people to begin a relationship with. Remember, it's almost impossible to lead a church to do something you aren't doing personally.

Second, you can model multiplication by personally and passionately sending out the message of multiplication. While you can certainly do this via videos, social media, and handouts, you will find that weaving personal stories and examples of multiplication in your sermons can be an effective way to help craft a culture of multiplication among your people.

I know what you're thinking, not every message (or passage of Scripture) is

about evangelism or multiplication. I agree. But you could share with your people how you had a conversation with a church planter the other day, and the way you were talking about this topic. Moreover, what about a message about marriage; couldn't sharing a personal story about a conversation you had with someone you're trying to share the gospel with regarding their struggling marriage be considered, albeit subliminally, sending the message of multiplication? Of course it could. In both cases, you have told your people, naturally in a message, that you are connected to a church planter and someone far from God.

Third, you can model multiplication by providing a platform for your people to personally engage in multiplication. I've heard numerous effective pastors and leaders say that it's not wise to ask your people to do something that you haven't prepared a platform for them to do. For instance, it's not effective leadership to tell your people they need to be engaged in overseas missions, yet never offer an opportunity to take them overseas. It's not effective leadership if you encourage your seniors in high school to give up a year of their life at a Christian Bible college overseas to learn the Bible and another culture but never offer them the platform.

In the same way, we cannot talk about modeling multiplication personally

and weaving stories and examples of multiplication within our sermons and corporate gatherings and never provide a platform for our people to engage in multiplication. Provide your people a platform via a short-term trip to help a new church with their community outreach, or a weekend volunteer team to help a young church plant for their corporate gathering. As you provide smaller platforms for your people to engage in multiplication, you then can provide the biggest platform—and the scariest and faith-based platform at that—inviting them to leave and join a new plant.

5 | Make, Not Find, New Planters.

The Western church has adopted a mentality of “clergification,” believing that the only people who can plant churches are full-time, paid pastors. As a result, we have a long line of prospective planters (because church planting is definitely the hot thing right now) all waiting for someone to say, “You’re clergy. You’re full-time. Here’s your money.” And there’s not enough money for all of them. We’ve bought all the church planting that we can buy, and that’s not enough to start a Church Multiplication Movement. So there they are...thousands of planters, stuck in line waiting for their turn and their funding. Unfortunately, many times, we let one’s funding determine one’s calling.

The problem is remarkably unbiblical. Some might say, “Well, I believe in clergy. I believe in biblical offices in the church, such as the distinct role of pastor.” That’s fine. Actually, so do we, but invariably someone reads into what we’ve written. Let’s try not to.

Some denominations have what we call lower ecclesiology and liturgy (low church). Other denominations have a higher ecclesiology and liturgy (high church). Some with a high ecclesiology may believe pastors are necessary to partake in the sacraments. Others with a low ecclesiology may believe anyone can engage in these things together, under the auspices of a local church.

If you are Lutheran, Baptist, Calvinist, or Pentecostal, you really do agree that clerification is a bad thing, even if you hold to the role, office, or function of a pastor (as I do). And, you really do think that the Protestant Reformation emphasis on direct access to God was just a reflection of the biblical teaching that Jesus is the one mediator between God and man.

The solution is not to stop fully-funding planters, but it’s to open up other lanes and paths towards church planting, either from non-clergy or to make new pastors “from the harvest.” For example, we need to create a strategy that helps some pastors become bi-vocational. We need to help them

find other jobs and teach them how to lead a church while doing it. Another lane would provide permission to ethnic leaders to go ahead and plant churches rather than having to walk through several layers of Anglo hierarchy to do so.

Strange as it may seem, permission is all that many people need. They need some way to say, “What I am doing is legitimate.” Granting new people permission to step into church planting, especially in low-polity denominations, should be a commonality, and yet so many have an unspoken understanding of not thinking it proper for new people to plant churches.

Yes, we believe that there are qualifications for the office of pastor (though not all churches need to be planted by pastors—that could come later). Passages like 1 Timothy 3 lay out those qualifications, but they do not list a full time salary and a seminary education.

Baptists and Methodists did not wait for permission in 1795 when they launched a Church Planting Movement in Kentucky and Tennessee. Nor did the Pentecostals in the 1920s. Or, the Vineyard in the 1980s. They raised them up from the harvest, gave them permission, they planted churches, and they trained them in place. So it should be with us, and then Christian colleges

and seminaries can partner with us to train those planter/pastors “just in time.”

Permission is something that needs to be continually renewed. Left alone, the permission-giving structures of a former era become the traditional parameters of the next. Baptists gave lay people a “license to preach” and plant churches in the midst of their massive multiplication movements in the nineteenth century. Now a “license to preach” means that someone has permission to preach in a Baptist church, not plant one. That’s quite a shift, but that is what happens: lanes get more formal over time. We need to constantly open new ones.

Beyond giving permission, we need to celebrate when people leave our church to plant another. They’re not betraying us; they’re following Jesus on His mission. We need to abandon territorialism and set aside our own egos and usher people from our own church into new lanes. As we do so, we will create systems of permission, letting people see others similar to themselves doing the same thing they’re doing. The system might be small at first, but it can grow over time into something revolutionary. So, find ways to *make*, not just *find*, new church planters.

6 | Develop a Missional Imagination.

As we noted a few principles ago, we must connect multiplication to the missional nature of God. That is more the general concept that we must dangle constantly in front of our people. But there’s something more specific that we must do as well in order to lead them towards movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five church, and that is to develop a missional-incarnational imagination.

There are some good people, particularly scholars, that do not like it when people use the term “incarnational” to describe the posture and presence of the church. They reason that the incarnation only applies to Jesus since He was the incarnate God born of a virgin. We couldn’t agree more. But it is the Incarnation where we see the principle of incarnation—God “pitching His tent with man”—clearly manifested. John communicates early in his Gospel, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

While Jesus is the Incarnate God, He physically represented (incarnated) the presence of God in a specific time, place, and culture. In other words, he wore the clothes, spoke the language,

and lived within the rhythms of the culture of a first-century Jewish man living in Palestine. As the incarnational presence of God, Jesus radiated His Father's glory to the degree that God through the ministry and life of Jesus brought healing and salvation to people. Just as Jesus entered a particular time, space, and culture to be the manifested presence of God that brought healing and salvation, so, too, do we (the church) become part of the fabric or our particular time, space, and culture to be the manifested presence of Jesus that will be the conduit by which He brings healing and salvation.

Developing a missional-incarnational imagination is the process of a church understanding how it can become the manifested presence of Jesus—or the hands and feet of Jesus—in its particular time, space, and culture. Developing such a missional-incarnational imagination will require three elements.

First, a missional-incarnational imagination will require **observation**. In order to craft a missional-incarnational imagination, a church will need to understand the culture in which God has planted them. This will require observation—observing the patterns, worldviews, languages, hopes, struggles, and needs of the cultural milieu.

The apostle Paul practiced observation. For instance, when he was in Athens the Bible says, “his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols” (Acts 17:16). Later on in that passage when Paul is addressing the crowd in the Areopagus, we get a better idea of what he meant when he said that “he saw that the city was full of idols.” He tells the crowd, “I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:22–23). Paul, through observation, realized the Athenians were religious people. Yet, in their attempt to honor and worship many gods, they were unsure if they knew all of them, thus they had created an idol to an “unknown god” just to be safe.

Second, a missional-incarnational imagination will require **contextualization**. As a church observes the culture in which God has planted them, and they start formulating an understanding of the [cultural] patterns, worldviews, religious devotion, language (and use of language), hopes, struggles, and needs, they will need to begin the process of contextualization. The process of contextualization takes these facts about culture into account, and involves “presenting the unchanging truths of the gospel within

the unique and changing contexts of cultures and worldviews.”

Dan Gilliland offers a full definition of contextualization. He defines contextualization as a tool “to enable, insofar as it is humanly possible, an understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ, the Word, is authentically experienced in each and every human situation.”^{xxviii} Such a tool is necessary because “while the human condition and the gospel remain the same, people have different worldviews which in turn impact how they interpret themselves, the world and the things you say.”^{xxix}

Both Jesus and Paul practiced contextualization. Jesus lived his earthly life in Palestine as a first-century Jew. He entered the culture of His day and “was so thoroughly a part of His culture that, when being betrayed by Judas, He had to be identified by a kiss.”^{xxx} Paul’s ministry also involved contextualization. For the most part, contextualization is displayed in Paul’s sermons. Paul intentionally addressed his Jewish listeners one way but addressed pagan philosophers differently. When he addressed Jews, Paul began with Scripture. When he addressed Gentiles, he began with general revelation. Also in Acts 17, while in Athens, Paul contextualized the gospel through the lens of observation. Through Paul’s observation he shared,

“What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” During his oration, Paul contextualized by quoting some of their own poets and cultural writings (see Acts 17:27–28).

Contextualization, then, is simply about sharing (and even showing) the gospel well—correctly handling (and demonstrating) the word of truth, yet in a way that is culturally relevant and meaningful. If you know how to handle the truth correctly yet fail to relate it to the host culture in a meaningful and relevant way, you fail at contextualization. That’s why being meaningful and relevant to the host culture—while maintaining biblical fidelity both through verbal proclamation and physical demonstration—constitutes an element of developing a missional-incarnational imagination.

Third, a missional-incarnational **imagination** will require implementation. As a church develops an understanding of the culture through observation and starts considering how they can communicate (contextualize) the gospel—both verbally and demonstrably—in a meaningful and relevant manner, they will need to finalize a missional-incarnational imagination by charting a way forward to implement their contextualization.

I believe there are many churches and Christian leaders who understand aspects and characteristics of the cultures (and even subcultures) they live in. They understand the worldviews, the religious diversity, the brokenness, the needs, the hopes, and the struggles present within their community, but fail to do anything about it.

Years ago when David Platt was the pastor at the Church of Brook Hills (prior to him becoming the president of the International Mission Board), he had learned about a large population of children needing foster parents in the Birmingham area. After learning about this need, he challenged Brook Hills to get involved. As a result, many families of Brook Hills answered the call and went through the necessary training to become foster parents. This is an example of implementation. After observing and contextualizing the need, the church responded through implementation.

Developing a missional-incarnational imagination, being the manifested presence of Jesus in one's context, through observation, contextualization, and implementation, helps set a movemental ecosystem and enhances a church's progression towards movemental Christianity and in becoming a Level Five church.

7 | Count the Cost and Pay the Price of Multiplication.

With all this talk about multiplication and being part of a movement of multiplication, we don't want you to think for one second that what we are hopeful for, and what we believe God desires to do, is easy. In fact, multiplication and movements are anything but easy! A movement of multiplication is a move of God's Spirit in the life of His church to empower them to accomplish what only God can do. In other words, you cannot manufacture or manipulate a move of God.

In the context of counting the cost of following Jesus, Jesus shares the following with the great crowds that accompanied him, "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? . . . Or what king, going to war against another king, will not first sit down and decide if he is able with 10,000 to oppose the one who comes against him with 20,000?" (Luke 14:28, 31). Here's a principle we can take away from what Jesus taught: before saying yes to something, count the cost of what you are setting out to do.

We believe progressing towards movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five church will cost churches in at least the following two ways.

First, it will cost churches financially. We've already touched on the notion of churches putting their money where their mouth is as it relates to multiplication. But another aspect of the financial cost of multiplication is spending less on a church's building—and the contents therein—so that it can spend more on mission. For instance, according to J.D. Greear, Lead Pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh Durham, The Summit spent less on their warehouse building and decorating it with all the bells and whistles so that they could invest more money into the mission of the church. They wanted to make sure they could afford to continue giving generously towards church planting and multiplication.

We understand the excitement and strategy of renting or building a church facility. And we do understand that our buildings can be a missional tool used to reach and disciple people. But to be a church that progresses towards movemental Christianity and Level Five, a church should avoid becoming building rich, and multiplication poor. In other words, churches should invest minimally in their building—by spending less of a percentage of their overall budget on their mortgage (or rent) and facilities' expenses—so that they can invest maximally in church multiplication.

Second, it will cost believers their family and friends, and their comfort and security. Not too long ago I was speaking with a mature believer about multiplying a small group so that we could have another small group option for new people. The person responded by saying, "I love my small group. I really don't want to leave them. They are my friends." This mature believer's response manifests the reality that multiplying requires people to leave their friends. Some of you may identify with this believer. Giving up your friends and your group would be tough. While this was just a small group, what about asking people to leave the church to be part of a church planting team? Think about what we are asking them to give up—not only their friends but also their church family.

Some may say that not everyone is called to leave friends or their church family in an effort to multiply. While not everyone may be called to leave a certain local context and church family to be on a church planting team, we do believe that everyone is called to multiply—to make disciples and expand their sphere of influence through discipleship.

We understand the difficulty of multiplication and expansion. In fact, we believe that its human nature to want to contract rather than expand and multiply. Let us explain. In Genesis 11 we read, "At one time the whole

earth had the same language and vocabulary. As people migrated from the east, they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there” (Gen 11:1-2). You may be asking, “What’s the big deal?” The big deal is that God had called Adam and Eve to, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth....” Settling down isn’t filling the earth. So, not only did these people reject an aspect of God’s creation mandate, but they also rejected God by wanting to build a city for their own fame and name. In the end God confused their language and “scattered” them throughout the earth.

This wasn’t the only time people had a difficult time expanding, multiplying, and scattering. Fast-forward to the Book of Acts. After Jesus had told his disciples that they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world, and after the Spirit of God had fallen on and filled them, they had a difficult time leaving Jerusalem. In fact, it wasn’t until Acts 8, through persecution, that believers “scattered” and took the gospel to other parts of the world.

The truth is that the cost of following Jesus in multiplication and movemental Christianity will require expansion (Christians willing to move out) rather than contraction (Christians moving in). We understand people love settling in. They love the comfort and security that comes with being settled. But we must not lose sight that Jesus wants us to

scatter—to leave our places of comfort and security for His glory and others’ good. This may happen by being part of multiplying a small group, discipling a new set of young believers, or in joining a church planting team. In any case, as you can see, counting the cost and paying the price of multiplication requires great faith and sacrifice. And those who progress towards movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five church will possess such faith and offer such sacrifice.

8 | Empower Others to Lead.

We should allow the leaders we develop to lead the way they have been designed and created to lead. The problem is that many leaders try to lead vicariously through the leaders they develop or mentor. Rather than release them, they retain them. Rather than create disciples and mentor leaders, they create their clones. And rather than overseeing, coaching, or counseling them, they try micro-managing every little thing they do.

When leaders try to micro-manage other leaders—ministry directors, pastors, and church planters—they not only stifle the growth of the leader, but they stunt the growth of the organization and the ability for the organization to multiply. To prevent this from happening, churches and pastors would be wise to intentionally develop a leadership pipeline that recruits,

trains, equips, mentors, coaches, and releases leaders empowering them to fulfill their calling.

Todd Adkins, Director of Leadership Development at LifeWay, shares at least five steps for developing a leadership pipeline for leaders who will serve as multiplication catalysts, whether they are multiplying disciples, ministries, campuses, or churches. Download his free eBook, and learn more, by going to www.lifeway.com/leadership.

- **Teach them core *CONVICTIONS*.** Developing leaders without core convictions is like raising children with no boundaries. Usually, if parents raise children with no boundaries or no moral compass, they grow up to be wild and chaotic with morals and a lifestyle that are all over the map. According to Todd, if the church is to build an army and not an audience, it will need to develop leaders whose lives are built upon a gospel-centered theology. This lays a solid theological footing for the other four steps of leadership development.
- **Concentrate on developing *CHARACTER*.** Character takes you where competency cannot. John Maxwell wisely notes, “Character creates a foundation upon which the structure of your talent and life can build. If there are cracks in that foundation, you cannot build much.”

Given that character is paramount to leadership development, Todd warns that we can be guilty of prematurely promoting competent people for ministry positions when their character is lacking. If the goal of leadership development is leaders who develop leaders and pour into others, we need to monitor what they are becoming and what they are pouring out.

- **Train them in core *COMPETENCIES*.** If developing character is teaching leaders who they should become, training them in core competencies is teaching them what they should do. The important part here is understanding what you want them to do.
- ***CULTIVATE* a relationship with them.** Cultivating a relationship makes leadership development personal and communal, not just informational and mechanical. Aside from the Spirit of God working within individuals, the cultivation of a relationship that includes teaching core convictions, developing character, and training in core competencies aids in the transformation of individuals. This coincides with the understanding that transformation happens relationally and communally.
- **Serve as a *COACH* for their continuous development.** As we release people to lead, we must have a structure in place for

their continuous development. In other words, we should serve as coaches who not only give people ministry and tasks, but also provide them feedback and a sounding board as they seek to fulfill their ministry and tasks.

Leaders who tend to micro-manage probably do so because they (for whatever reason) haven't developed a leadership pipeline that serves to empower people for ministry. By developing a mechanism to empower and release leaders capable of multiplication, churches are in a better position to progress towards movemental Christianity and become a Level Five church.

9 | Work for Diversity.

Another principle for churches to implement, in hopes of experiencing movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five church, is to welcome diversity. A church may be able to experience the multiplication of homogenous disciples in their local context—more particularly if their local context is homogenous. But if they are going to be part of a movement of multiplication through the planting of churches, they will have to embrace diversity.

Diversity can include race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic class,

background, and generation. Interestingly, the early church struggled in this area.^{xxx} In similar fashion, it seems that many churches in America, still struggle with diversity.

It was Martin Luther King, Jr. who famously referred to Sundays as the most segregated day of the week.^{xxxi} But, while some are addressing the lack of racial diversity among the church,^{xxxii} the problem of segregation also includes the lack of diversity between generations, socio-economic statuses, and preferential worship styles. But, according to Mark DeYmaz, “[An] increasing numbers of pastors, professors, reformers, and researchers alike are recognizing that the multi-ethnic church is not only biblical but also critical to the advance of the gospel in the twenty-first century.”^{xxxiii} Thus, a church that seeks to strive towards movemental Christianity and Level Five status, will create environments that welcome diversity.

What are some practical ways churches can welcome diversity? One way churches can seek diversity on their local campus is by implementing a mixture of music styles.

Another practical way churches can build environments that welcome diversity is through recruiting a multiracial staff.^{xxxiv} Scott Williams, author of *Church Diversity*, simply notes, “No diversity on the staff,

plus no diversity on the platform, equals no diversity in the church.”^{xxxv}

Furthermore, according to Damian Emetuche, church diversity can be achieved through the intentional planting of multi-ethnic churches.

What are some barriers to diversity? When believers begin making definitive claims about gray and tertiary issues—whether theological, political, cultural, practical, or stylistic, and thereby isolating those who would hold opposing views—not only is a dividing line (of fellowship) drawn, but smaller more homogenous groups are formed. Think of it this way: uniformity breeds homogeneity. Consequently, this is a reason why many denominations have been created, churches have split, and many churches are filled with people of the same color of skin, socio-economic status, and political affiliation. When this takes place, the church will have a difficult time experiencing movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five multiplying church.

10 | Scale the Structure.

One of the greatest ways to prohibit movement is to under-structure and over-institutionalize yourself to the point your church cannot bear any more weight.

Many churches scratch their heads wondering why their numbers from year to year stay relatively the same while they can look at their records and see that many guests came through the door. For many churches, the reason why people fail to stay isn't a ministry issue; it's a structural issue. They simply don't have the structure in place to see reproduction and eventually multiplication. Just as chairs are designed to support a certain amount of weight, so too church structures are designed to handle a certain amount of people. Sadly, most churches don't realize they are perfectly designed to stay right where they are.

What if your church runs 80 adults and every one of those 80 invited a friend the next week? Does your church have the structure to accommodate them? What if the 1200 people that attended the Easter egg helicopter drop showed up at your church the following week? Could you accommodate that many new people? When churches live in their small mindedness, they don't scale their structures to envision and include more people, and as a result movements never ignite.

In addition, many churches (including church plants) are not only practically under-structured for multiplication, but they are organizationally over-institutionalized for multiplication. For many churches, it would take an

act of congress to authorize bringing on a church planter for an internship or residency and eventually send him out—not to mention mothering a church plant. It would have to go through this committee, then be heard by this group, and after much prayer and discussion (by both groups) be brought up in the next church business meeting, where it would then be discussed, tossed around, and possibly tabled until the next meeting. After months of discussions, prayer, and deliberation, a topic that was birthed in the heart of God and seen in the pages of Scripture (church planting) finally is approved in the life of the church. Rather than moving at the speed of the Spirit, churches end up moving at the speed of committee.

Churches should be structured, practically and organizationally, for God to move rapidly reproducing disciples and birthing new churches. Structures must be catalysts for God’s movement rather than bottlenecks.

Here are five characteristics of structures that serve as catalysts rather than bottlenecks for God’s movement:

- **Simple.** Is your structure simple? Do people understand the various roles and positions within the church? And do people understand their roles and responsibilities in the positions where they serve?

- **Reproducible.** Is your structure something you could hand a potential church planter and it become a skeleton for them to implement? Is your ministry structure for small groups easily reproducible? What about your children and student ministries?
- **Flexible.** Do you build margin and flexibility in your structure that can accommodate sudden moves of God?
- **Accountable.** Does your church know who’s accountable for leading them towards gospel-centrality and mission orientation?
- **Missional.** Does your structure facilitate the mission of God or does it prohibit it? Is there oxygen within your structure for the mission to breath?

When church structures are simple, reproducible, flexible, accountable, and missional, churches organizationally and practically prepare themselves to both experience movemental Christianity and become a Level Five church.

11 | Refuel with God’s Grace and Joy Throughout the Journey.

The journey of mission, and thus of movemental Christianity and multiplication, is like that of a life-long roller coaster. There will be moments where you feel as though you and your church are atop the mountain basking in the glory of God’s grace—praising

Him for moving so powerfully. And then, seemingly just a few moments later, you'll realize you plummeted from the summit and are struggling to unite and move the church forward in mission.

Whether you are atop the summit, in the depths of the valley, or in the barren land of the desert, it will be vital for you personally (and the church corporately) to refuel your spirit with God's great grace and His abundant joy as you move through the journey of movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five multiplying church.

Throughout Scripture, those who participated in the mission of God always faced opposition and hardships. Take Paul for instance. Paul provided a list of all his difficulties in ministry and even noted that he had a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 11,12). But, in the midst of difficulties and experiencing a thorn in the flesh Paul shared that God spoke to him and said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness...For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:8, 10). In the storm of difficulties and hardships God's grace was the peace agent that calmed the heart of Paul and moved him onward in mission. That same grace can and will encourage you when

you face difficulties in your journey of multiplication.

In addition to refueling with God's grace, it's important that you be filled with His joy and His happiness. I understand that it's easier to be joyful when all is well versus when all hell is breaking loose. Yet, James exhorts us to, "Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (James 1:2-3). Why should we choose to be joyful and to be happy in the midst of difficulties? Because it is in those moments God is shaping us and modeling us into the people He desires us to be. Paul puts it this way in Romans, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Rom. 8:28-29). Because God is doing a work in us—conforming us into the image of Jesus—as we face "all" sorts of things, we can refuel our spirits with God's abundant joy knowing that what He is doing in us will eventually come out through us. Thus, the "joy of the Lord is [our] strength" (Neh. 8:10).

Are you hoping to begin the journey towards movemental Christianity and becoming a Level Five multiplying church? Are you in the journey, but

facing some difficulties? Are you at the top of your game? Remember that what God has showed you and put inside of you at the moment of salvation is His grace and joy. May these elements refuel you constantly as you press onward in His mission.

Conclusion

By embracing, embodying, and enacting these principles and concepts, churches create an ecosystem that helps them move forward in mission. With intentional strategy, they position themselves in becoming Level Five multiplying churches. It's not that these principles and concepts are magic wands a church can wave to incite multiplication movements; it's just that these principles and concepts position a church to experience a move of the Spirit who then empowers the church to be the spark that ignites a movement of the gospel in both micro and macro ways.

We know that Church Multiplication Movements have existed although most groups see them as the "golden days" (just ask a Methodist about a circuit rider). Nevertheless, we believe the golden days of Church Multiplication Movements can rise again in the West if we will live on mission and position ourselves for the Spirit of God to move mightily.

CONCLUSION

YOUR NEXT STEPS: A MULTIPLICATION AUDIT

When it comes to multiplication, do not feel that you have to do it alone. Now obviously, if you are able to recruit, identify, assess, train, fund, and send out church planters by yourself, all the power is to you, but for most churches, this is not reality. Church planting initiatives, within denominations and networks, exist to provide you with expertise and specialization in assessment and training, along with funding. In addition, NewChurches.com exists to provide you with resources, training, and coaching to help you plant and multiply. So when it comes to church multiplication, the goal is not to be an island unto yourself, but rather to start somewhere and then incrementally do more.

When I (Ed) planted our most recent church, I wanted our church to be a church planting church. So on our very first Sunday, not only did I communicate this vision, but we also set aside our first Sunday's offering completely for church planting. Subsequently, we sent a couple to Brazil

to plant churches as missionaries, while being their largest financial supporter. In Nashville, we recently sent one of our pastoral apprentices to plant a church, along with the people and funds to help them get off the ground. We are not doing everything for those two churches, but we are doing something.

The key here is to start your involvement in multiplication—and then to grow it. And, if you’ve started it, grow it some more. Everyone wants a movement, but too many want it to happen without us changing much. Well, it won’t. To

move to Level Five churches, it will take new commitments and actions, but the results will be worth it—a Church Multiplication Movement.

You see, a Level Five church, when combined with other Level Five churches, is what we’ve called a Church Multiplication Movement (see *Viral Churches*). We don’t want to just plant a tree, we want to plant an orchard. But, that starts with one tree—the one that God has given to you as a stewardship. So, let’s start here.

AN AUDIT

What would it look like for your church to move towards multiplication? Fill out this audit to determine where you are, and what your next steps are:

AUDIT QUESTIONS	CURRENT	DESIRED	COMMENTS
What percentage of your budget are you giving towards church planting?			
How many hours a month are you investing in other church planters?			
How many hours a month are you investing in future church planters?			

Are you sharing resources with other planters? (curriculum, books, processes)			
How many hours a month are you praying for church planters and your city?			
How many hours a month is your church praying for church planters and your city?			
How frequently is your church hearing your vision for multiplication?			
How many of your current staff members are in a pipeline to become future planters?			
How many of your current church volunteers are in a pipeline to become future planters?			
How many people have you sent out from your church to help launch other church plants?			

You may not be able to carry the full load, but you can be a key part of planting other churches. You can't do everything, but you can do something. In light of this audit, what are your next steps? Who do you need to share this with and talk to?

ENDNOTES

Multiplication Requires Intentionality

i Sponsors of this study include: Path 1 of the United Methodist Church, North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Vineyard, Evangelical Free Church of America, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Converge Worldwide, Christian & Missionary Alliance, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Free Methodist Church, Baptist Missionary Association of America, New Thing Network. Denominations and networks which participated in the survey include: Assemblies of God, Baptist Missionary Association of America, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Nazarene, Converge Worldwide, Evangelical Free Church of America, Free Methodist Church USA, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Missionary Church, New Thing Network, Presbyterian Church in America, Project Jerusalem, Southern Baptist Convention, United Methodist Church, Vineyard Church, and The Wesleyan Church.

ii David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Colorado: WIGTake Resources, 2004), Kindle Edition Locations 247-248.

iii Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World*. (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press), 2009.

iv Note, that these are just basic steps to help a church make a multiplication movement more of a priority. But in Chapter 4 we will address principles and concepts for churches to embrace and enact in order to create a culture of movemental Christianity and to become a Level Five multiplying church.

v Adapted from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/october/is-your-church-level-five-multiplying-church.html>.

Practices of Churches That Multiply

vi Jack Redford, *Planting New Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 23.

vii Howard Schultz, *Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life Without Losing Its Soul* (New York: Rodale, 2011), 40.

viii *Ibid.*, 105.

ix *Ibid.*, 106–08.

x J.D. Payne, "The Mother Church and Church Planting," 2006.

xi Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 322-323.

xii Steve S. C. Moon, "The Recent Korean Missionary Movement," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* vol. 27, no. 1 (January 2003): 14.

xiii <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/january/incubation-multiplication-by-addition-part-2.html>

xiv <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/january/where-have-all-evangelism-conferences-gone.html>

xv W. Harold Mare, "The Cultural Mandate and the New Testament Gospel Imperative," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1973), 141.

xvi "Part 2: Intentional Evangelism" video. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2009/july/comeback-church-videos-part-2.html>

xvii Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 24.

xviii *Ibid.*

xix <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/november/multiplication-is-impossible-without-intentionality.html>

Barriers to Multiplication

xx <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-if-the-worst-happens>

xxi John Mark Terry and J.D. Payne, *Developing A Strategy For Missions* (Michigan, Baker Academic, 2013).

xxii Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 53.

xxiii Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 50.

xxiv Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 59.

An Ecosystem of Movemental Christianity

xxv Note that some of these principles have been adopted from Ed Stetzer's "Ten Marks of Movemental Christianity in the West." You can find the original ten either in *Viral Churches* (p. 169) or online at, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2008/july/monday-is-for-missiology-movemental-christianity.html#bmb-1>.

xxvi Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 55, 56).

xxvii <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/prayer-the-work-of-missions>.

xxviii <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2010/july/calling-for-contextualization-part-3-knowing-and-making.html>.

xxix Dean Gilliland, "Contextualization," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, edited by Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000).

xxx <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2010/july/calling-for-contextualization-part-3-knowing-and-making.html>.

xxxi <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2011/september/monday-is-for-missiology-some-thoughts-on-contextualization.html>

xxxii Many early Jewish believers, because of their traditions, rituals, feasts, customs, rules, and practices found it hard to worship with Gentile believers. In many cases, Jewish believers resorted to teaching Gentiles that in order to fully be accepted by God in Jesus, they would need to conform to Jewish traditions and practices.

xxxiii Laura Meckler, "How Churches are Slowly Becoming Less Segregated," *WSJ*, n.p. [cited 28 Jan. 2015]. Online: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-church-of-many-colors-the-most-segregated-hour-in-america-gets-less-so-1413253801>.

xxxiv *Ibid.* In addition, LifeWay Research study presented that racial diversity was more a dream for pastors and churches than a reality. While 85 percent of pastors polled said that churches should strive for racial diversity, only 13 percent said they have more than one predominant racial or ethnic group in their congregation.

xxxv Mark DeYmaz, *Ethnic Blends: Mixing Diversity Into Your Local Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010), 20.

xxxvi This could also include a multigenerational staff.

xxxv Scott Williams, *Church Diversity: Sunday The Most Segregated Day of the Week*, (Green Forest, Ark.: New Leaf Press, 2011), 61.

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