

## “Planting Churches that Reproduce “

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Kindle Notes: Dave Kraft

Thus we can conclude that the evangelistic effectiveness of minichurches is statistically 1,600 percent greater than that of megachurches! Future church planters need to start at the small group level to understand the church planting process—since the small group is a microcosm of the future church plant. Abe leads a church-planting movement that is winning and discipling thousands for Jesus in Manaus, a city of 1.6 million residents located on the north bank of the Rio Negro. Abe has integrated one-on-one discipleship into the church’s training process. Each person who comes to a celebration service or a cell group is assigned a one-on-one mentor. The mentor and mentored meet weekly for encouragement and accountability.

The mentor guides the new person to participate in additional training classes and to attend spiritual retreats that are part of the equipping process— called MDA (Micro Discipleship Strategy). Charles Brock, well known church planter and trainer, once said: I believe a perverted and tarnished view of what a church is, constitutes one of the greatest hurdles faced by church planters. When, then, can a body of believers be called a church? I personally tend toward a simple definition: a body of believers can be called a church whenever that groups meets together regularly for mutual edification.

My own convictions about the church have led me to a few basic principles that I believe the New Testament shows should be present in any given church.

First, the church should have more than three people as mentioned in Matthew 18:15-35.

Second, those in the church should be accountable to God-appointed leadership.

Third, Scriptures make it clear that a church needs to operate under the lordship of Christ.

Fourth, churches should participate in the sacraments of both baptism and the Lord’s supper (see Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11).

Give away some of those layers of multiplication to a new church plant. Don’t try to figure out how to keep them all under the same roof.

God wants you to become a church planting movement— rather than growing your own church larger and larger. John Mallison writes, “It is almost certain that every mention of a local church or meeting, whether for worship or fellowship, is in actual fact a reference to a church meeting in a house.” The warm, caring atmosphere of the house church prevailed for some four centuries. Paul believed in releasing leaders and moving on. He practiced simple church planting. Church planting is so demanding that those who engage it, like Paul, must be called by God. It’s one thing to believe in a good idea, but good ideas come and go. When a person is called by God, he or she will stick with the idea until it’s accomplished. A lack of a true calling by God is why many church planters give up.

The feelings of failure only caused me to depend on Jesus Christ more. Where else would I go? Paul the apostle did not. Through the slow growth, however, I am learning to focus on being faithful and to give thanks for the changes I see in the lives of people. I've realized that my faithfulness to God is far more important in his sight than my success; it's about obedience to His call not about whether I get bigger numbers than anyone else or not. My observations over the years tell me that more new churches fold from an inability to confront disruptive people than from any other cause. My own Paradoxical as it may seem, I think that it is quite possible that the shortness of his stay may have conducted in no small measure to St. Paul's success.

There is something in the presence of a great teacher that sometimes tends to prevent smaller men from realizing themselves. By leaving them quickly, St. Paul gave the local leaders opportunity to take their proper place, and forced the church to realize that it could not depend upon him, but must depend upon its own resources. Aubrey Malphurs, a church planting expert and author of *Planting Growing Churches*, believes that the leader of the church planting team needs either a high D (driver) or high I (inspiration) personality. Jeannette Buller, an experienced church planter and coach, writes, "Starting something from scratch is a horse of a different color. Church planting involves making something happen that isn't currently happening. It requires a certain creative energy that not everyone has."

From research and field testing, here is a list of thirteen characteristics of effective church planters:

1. Visionizing capacity:
2. Intrinsically motivated:
3. Self-starter and works hard.
4. Creates ownership in ministry:
5. Spousal cooperation:
6. Reaches the unchurched:
7. Effectively builds relationships: Committed to church growth:
8. Responsive to the community:
9. Utilizes the giftedness of others:
10. Flexible and adaptable:
11. Builds cohesiveness in the church body:
12. Demonstrates resilience:
13. Exercises faith:

This person felt “called” to join us, and everything seemed to fall into place. It soon became apparent, however, that he was not a *gatherer*. He was an excellent pastor and worship leader, but he didn’t have the catalytic mix to gather people together—and that’s what we needed in those initial stages of our church plant.

Most would also agree that the call of God is more important than any type of assessment. He knows from experience the dangers of lone-ranger church planting and is quick to promote team ministry. He also believes strongly in gathering a larger, stronger core in home groups before beginning a weekly celebration. I read once that Cho was asked the secret to his success. He said, “I pray and obey.” Each church planter needs to pray and decide what God is calling the church to emphasize. Malphurs writes, “The days of the specialist who attempts to minister without a team in the context of the typical church are numbered. If these church plants survive, most will remain small and drain the leader’s energy and the sponsor’s finances.”

Coaching is critical in the life of a church planter. Great coaches practice: Listening Encouragement: Care Development: Strategizing: Challenging: Care-fronting means speaking the truth in love with improvement as the goal. So what can a church planter do to improve his or her aim? Jeff’s advice to church planters is, “Find some things you enjoy and then do those things around and with unbelievers.

The key is to realize that forming friendships and relationships are what church planters do. They spend time on the range. The essence of church planting, in fact, is finding those who God has sovereignly prepared. But what about the cell? The most common definition of a cell (and the one followed in this book) is: a group of three to fifteen people who meet weekly outside the church building to practice evangelism, build community, and grow spiritually with the goal of multiplying the group.

One major difference between cell groups and other small groups is the cell’s emphasis on evangelism, leadership development, and multiplication of each cell. Before Elim starts a celebration service in a city, they wait until there are at least five cell groups fully operating. They want to make sure the cell system is fully functioning before they go public.

What are some of the key steps to plant a simple cell church?

First step: recruit a team of prayer warriors

Second step: develop values and vision

Third step: invite people to the pilot cell group

Fourth step: multiply pilot group

Fifth step: start celebration worship

Launching a celebration service too early is a common problem. Resist the temptation to begin regular celebration services before establishing the infrastructure of the cell groups. We basically found ourselves in a crowd to core approach instead of a core to crowd.

I think it's best to wait until there are between 75-100 people in eight to ten cell groups before committing to a weekly celebration service. The church I helped plant in Boulder, Colorado, called Quest has now gone to once-a-month services, and the other three Sundays they hang out with their cell groups and bring along lost friends. They have programmed in enough free time in which they can actually spend time with each other and with lost persons, making friendships.

Statistics and experience have borne out that that's really the place Christ is introduced to a non-believer—through deep, committed friendships. When we know these two facts, then to throw all of our eggs in the relationship building basket makes complete sense, and doing anything that takes a lot of time and energy that does not build our cell or our outside relationships does not make much sense. Build the infrastructure. Plant new cell churches. The goal is to raise up a church multiplication movement. Bob Logan says, "Of all models of church, the cell church has the greatest multiplication of churches." Cell churches or house church networks should lay out a training path to maintain quality. God is using cell churches and house church networks to reproduce church planting movements all over the world. The leader set herself up as a Bible authority. The group lacked simplicity and reproducibility.