



LEADING YOUR CHURCH IN

CHURCH PLANTING

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

**J. D.
PAYNE**

Leading Your Church in Church Planting: Taking the First Step

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About the Author

J. D. Payne is the pastor of church multiplication with The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama. He has served as a pastor with churches in Kentucky and Indiana, on church planting teams, with a mission agency, and as a seminary professor. J. D. is the author of many books and articles. He is married to Sarah and has three children, Hannah, Rachel, and Joel.

When he is not looking for the best micro-roastery and espresso, he is considering how to become a pit master or a lead guitarist from the 1980s.

He blogs at jdpayne.org and may be found on Twitter @[jd_payne](https://twitter.com/jd_payne) or contacted at jpayne@brookhills.org.

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes the most difficult thing to do is to venture down a new path. Fears, doubts, and insecurities often interfere with our first steps.

Or, maybe we find ourselves struck by the paralysis that comes with excessive analysis. We want to make certain that every step we take is so perfect that we continue to ponder without movement.

Yet, we have to take that first step. We must do what we are supposed to do.

Imagine what the sailors experienced when everyone told them they would sail off the edge of the earth. And if you don't fall off the edge, the dragons will get you,

they warned.

Yet, the sailors hoisted the sails. We have failed to tell the story of lostness in our own backyard.

Imaging what everyone told Chuck Yeager when he contemplated breaking the sound barrier. You'll die in the process. There is a demon that lurks in the sky. He'll disintegrate your test craft with you in it. But, he climbed inside the Bell X-1.

What do you think people said to John Glenn before he took that first manned trip to orbit the earth? It has never been done. What if you just keep going up and out?

Yet, Mercury took off that historic day. I am assuming that you are considering leading your church to be involved in church planting. For your church, this is a new path into the great unknown. As a pastor, you have been hearing and reading about church planting for some time. Some of the information you have received has been good. Some of the information you have received should have stayed in the box on the bottom shelf...way in the back...where no one ever looks.

But, something is keeping you from taking that first step. You want to hoist the sails, jump inside the plane, and don your space suit, but just can't get started. Your mind and heart are telling you to go but your feet won't move. You need a push. And that is why I have written this e-book.

This book is not for everyone. I am writing specifically to pastors in the United States and Canada who want to lead their churches to become involved in church planting. Some of you are already doing such ministry. If so, that is wonderful. Keep up the great work. Assist other pastors to get started. Just remember as you read the next several pages that this book was not written with you in mind. While you may find some elements of this work to be of assistance to you, other portions will be seen as too elementary.

While I have written several books, this is my second attempt at publishing an e-book, with no plans for it to be made available in a hard copy. What you are getting here is a raw product, without professional editorial work to make my sandpaper grammar all nice and silky-smooth. But the price is write and I do right real good...

If you find this book to be of value to you and your ministry, please encourage others to obtain a copy. My desire is for this work to remain free to all. I would like to ask that in return for this small gift that you—and anyone else who downloads a copy—would subscribe to my blog (www.jdpayne.org) and tell at least three other people about this free book.

Portions of this book come from a series of blog posts and my book *Discovering Church Planting*. Most of the posts remain unedited and in their original form. They have been compiled here in a workbook fashion.

While I take full responsibility for the content of this work, I must offer a great word of appreciation to my secretary, Amber Walsh, who assisted me with numerous format and design matters.

LEADING YOUR CHURCH IN CHURCH PLANTING

I want to begin by providing you with seven reasons for leading your church to be involved in church planting. I am sure some of you are already convinced of the need to be involved in such Kingdom work. If so, let me encourage you to use this information to assist your people in having a better understanding of the importance of church planting. Take it and contextualize it for your ministry setting.

Before we begin, I must provide you with my definition of church planting. You need to know where what I mean when I write “church planting” (and church multiplication). While there are many ways to plant churches today, biblical church planting is evangelism that results

in new churches.

DID YOU CATCH THAT?

Evangelism that results in new Churches.

Not transfer growth

Not church splits

Not revitalization

Not adding another campus

When we look to the Scriptures for a definition and model of church planting, we come to understand that the emphasis is on the birthing of churches from the harvest fields. While churches can be planted with long-term Kingdom citizens—and this is not necessarily a bad thing—the weight of the biblical evidence is upon the evangelistic work of those missionary teams following an apostolic paradigm. Now that you know that I am not talking about church splits, let's take a look at these reasons.

THE BIBLICAL REASON

As already noted, the Bible sets forth an example of

healthy church planting. While we are not commanded to plant churches, it is an inevitable result of obedience to the Great Commission and following the apostolic pattern.

Soon after Paul and Barnabas departed Antioch on the first missionary journey, they found themselves moving from city to city. What did they do? First, they evangelized the people. Second, they gathered those new believers together to be local churches. Third, they departed to the next town (often because of persecution). Fourth, they returned to appoint elders/pastors over those churches (Acts 14:23). Fifth, they would often return and visit, write letters, and send others to follow up with the churches.

THE EVANGELISTIC REASON

Church growth studies generally show that younger churches baptize more people per church members than older, well-established congregations. As churches age, their evangelistic zeal typically declines. One study noted, on average, evangelical churches 3 years of age and younger baptize 10 people for every 100 members while churches older than 15 years of age typically baptize

three people for every 100 members (Churches Die with Dignity, Christianity Today (January 14, 1991), 69.) Another study among Anglo churches revealed that churches ten years old and younger baptized 10.8 people per year, per 100 members.

Churches older than ten years of age, baptized 2.5 people per year, per 100 members. (Charles Chaney, New Churches and the Unserved, Mission USA (January-February 1995), 12.).

According to Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, Among established Southern Baptist churches. . . there are 3.4 baptisms per one hundred resident members, but their new churches average 11.7. That's more than three times more! Other denominations offer similar numbers (Vital Churches, 25).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC REASON

The population of the United States is presently 312 million, making it the third largest country in the world. Canada has approximately 33 million people. Among this North American population are men, women, boys, and girls representing various socio-economic and educa-

tional levels, a diversity of ages, ethnicities, backgrounds, and various family structures. The majority of these people live in urban areas; however, a very large percentage of the population can still be found in rural communities.

It will require new churches to reach such a great and diverse population with the gospel.

THE CULTURAL REASON

North America has a great amount of cultural diversity. A large portion of the United States' population growth is related to immigration. The Hispanic community has now become the largest minority in the United States. Miami is a city unlike the rest of the state of Florida. New Orleans is another example of much diversity.

In places such as Vancouver, Canada, we are more likely to hear Chinese spoken than English. Over half of the population of Toronto is non-Canadian born citizens. In most of Quebec, French is the dominant language.

We must always preach a never-changing gospel; however, our methods must be contextualized to the people to whom we are called to serve.

Each church has its own unique and distinct culture because of the people that make up that congregation. Such is normal. It is not always a bad thing. However, we cannot expect unbelievers to embrace our cultures (especially our church culture) in order to hear the gospel.

Missionary work is about meeting people in the highways and hedges, sharing the truth, gathering the new believers together as a local church, and allowing the cultural expressions to develop. The only stumbling block should be the cross (I Corinthians 1:23), not our cultural expressions of our methods.

THE HISTORICAL REASON

I always find it humorous whenever someone tells me that my church is a church plant. I recognize that usually this brother or sister is attempting to communicate that their church was recently planted. The truth of the matter is that every local church is a church plant. There was a time when the churches in any given country did not exist.

Yet, we are guilty of forgetting (and not knowing) our

histories. It was because of the faithfulness of some church planters that the Holy Spirit birthed our churches. Through a long chain of obedient disciples, the gospel arrived in our communities, resulting in new churches. We came to faith because of church planters. We are part of a rich history.

Churches that are involved in church planting are standing on the shoulders of the faithful who have gone before them, sacrificing so that others could hear the good news. The church that is involved in church planting communicates, “We will not allow centuries of history to stop with us. We will not allow the faithfulness and sacrifice of our brothers and sisters to stop with us. We will look beyond ourselves (if the Lord delays) to a future generation in need of this same gospel!”

THE ECONOMIC REASON

Clearly, some methods of church planting are very expensive endeavors. And, unfortunately, in the U. S. and Canadian contexts they are the examples that get the most attention. They are the examples that impress upon our minds that the church planting norm must be a costly ministry.

If we allow the Scriptures to provide both our definition for a local church and the principles for church planting, we soon realize that such exorbitant resources are not necessary to plant healthy churches.

Evangelism that results in churches does not have to be expensive to be biblical, and thus fruitful.

But know this: The money our churches invest in missionaries and resources for church planting is a very wise and necessary investment for Kingdom work. We need to be good steward of our finances by using them for such Great Commission activity.

THE DENOMINATIONAL REASON

Denominations go through life-cycles. Denominations that cease to plant churches today are denominations that will cease tomorrow. According to David T. Olson, 3,700 churches in the United States cease to exist at the end of every year (The American Church in Crisis, 146.). That is over 71 churches per week.

While I am certain there are more than seven reasons

for being involved in church planting, these are excellent points to ponder. As you share these with your church, feel free to add other important reasons for church planting. You may even have some that are specific to your context. If so, by all means use them in speaking with your leaders and church members.

CHAPTER 1 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: Are there other reasons for becoming involed in church planting?

2: Aside from the biblical evidence, which of the other six reasons are the most likely to convince your church of the importance of church planting?

THE OTHER WING OF THE AIRPLANE

In this chapter, I am going old school, Missiology 101 — How Churches Grow. Foundational matters matter. It is important to start here before moving into the practical issues.

When the Church Growth Movement began to impact North American churches in the 1970s, emphasis was placed on growth that would continue to enlarge a single congregation. We came to expect that healthy church growth was primarily numerical growth. And such growth was to be limited to the number of people we could place in our building.

But, such was not the case in the beginning. Donald Mc-

Gavran, the father of the movement, argued that the paramount task, opportunity and imperative in missions is to multiply churches in the increasing numbers of receptive peoples of the earth (Understanding Church Growth, 1970, pgs. 62-63).

As church growth principles were taught to American pastors, “this paramount task” was somehow omitted. Now, this point is not something we should simply gloss over. The Church Growth Movement was one of the most significant evangelical movements in the 20th century. And while most of the churches in North America have been influenced by this movement, few have any knowledge of this task that was not passed on to them. In light of this shortcoming, it is worth our time to consider the four types of church growth.

The first type is expansion growth. A congregation experiences this type whenever they lead people to Christ (conversion growth), see believers transfer their church membership from one congregation to their congregation (transfer growth), and whenever children are born to members of the church (biological growth).

The second type of growth is internal growth. This type of growth comes from overall spiritual growth (sanctification) among a church's members. Another variation of internal growth is related to expanding the campus and/or facilities of the church. For example, building an educational space or adding on to a parking lot is a type of internal growth. It is usually these two types of growth (expansion and internal) that most North American churches consider when they hear the words "church growth."

I like to refer to these two types of church growth as one wing of the airplane. And, as we all know, it takes two wings to fly. The aerodynamic truths that God built into His universe require two wings for an airplane to function properly.

A problem we face in North America today is that we have been attempting to fly an airplane with one wing. We absolutely must have expansion and internal growth in our churches! But that is only 50% of the story. And now the rest of the story...

The remaining two types of church growth are direct-

ly related to church planting. They are connected to the paramount task mentioned above. These types represent the other wing of the airplane.

The first type is extension growth. This growth is church planting that occurs among a similar culture as that of the mother church. For example, a younger, middle class, African-American congregation experiences extension growth whenever they plant a church among other young, middle class, African-Americans.

The second type is bridging growth. This growth is church planting that occurs among a slightly or even radically different culture as that of the mother church. A middle-class Anglo congregation participates in bridging growth whenever they plant a church among migrant Hispanic workers or lower income, first-generation Asians.

These latter two types of growth are just as legitimate as expansion and internal growth. Yet, many churches and denominations do not reward or recognize those who practice them. For example, consider the following statements from church planters from different locations

and denominations.

A church planter from Kansas shared with me:

“THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO NEW WORK MANY TIMES IS THE EXISTING PASTORS IN THE AREA. EVERYONE WANTS TO GROW A BIG CHURCH AND FEELS THREATENED BY NEW WORKS THAT MIGHT TAKE PROSPECTS OR MEMBERS. WE AS A DENOMINATION LIFT UP, WRITE UP, AND LIGHT UP THE BIG CHURCH PASTOR TO THE POINT THAT MANY OF OUR BEST WOULDN’T CONSIDER STARTING A NEW WORK. AND EXISTING PASTORS KEEP STRIVING TO GET TO THE TOP FOR THE LIMELIGHT.”

An Evangelical Free church planter echoed similar thoughts. He wrote to me,

“I BELIEVE MANY CHURCH LEADERS ARE LIVING IN THE „BIGGER IS BETTER” SYNDROME. THIS AFFECTS THE WILLINGNESS OF A CHURCH SENDING OFF. . . PEOPLE TO BE A GREAT STARTING CORE OF A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANT.”

While I recognize that these statements simply represent two comments from two individuals, I believe it is fair to admit that they reflect much truth about our present atmosphere for church planting in the United States.

CHAPTER 2 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: Why do you think most pastors in North America were never taught about the other wing of the airplane?

2: Have you only thought of healthy growth as one wing and not the other? If so, why? What do you think your church believes about healthy church growth?

Big is rewarded. Church planting is strange. The fact that I have to write this book is just another piece of evidence showing how far we have moved from that “paramount task.”

We have exited the hanger, taxied down the runway, throttled up, released the brakes, and are trying to take off, not noticing that we simply left one of our wings back in the hanger!

Churches plant churches. We see this in the Scriptures. (e.g., Acts 13:1-3) Until church leaders are convinced that a great need of the hour is both healthy extension and bridging growth, churches are likely to have a limited Kingdom vision and impact.

And the paramount task will continue to be neglected.

3

SOME RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

I wish to share a few resources to provide you with some assistance in taking that first step. While there are numerous resources available on the topic of church planting, few resources exist on leading an established church in this area of ministry. The following are specifically related to the established church.

BOOKS:

Phil Stevenson, [The Ripple Church: Multiply Your Ministry by Parenting New Churches](#) (Indianapolis, IN: The Wesleyan Church, 2004). If you can only afford one book, this would be the one that I would recommend.

([HERE](#) is my review of Stevenson's book.)

Ralph Moore, [How to Multiply Your Church: the Most Effective Way to Grow](#) (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2009).

Rodney Harrison, Tom Cheyney, Don Overstreet, [Spin-Off Churches: How One Church Successfully Plants Another](#) (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008).

Jack Redford, *Planting New Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978). This book is long out of print. It contains helpful information on working with the established church to plant churches.

Rodney Harrison, [Seven Steps for Planting Churches, Partnering Church Edition](#) (North American Mission Board, 2004).

While I do not offer a complete book on the topic, two of the chapters in my work [Discovering Church Planting](#) address the role of the mother church in church planting. Ed Stetzer also offers a chapter on churches planting churches in his book [Planting Missional Churches](#). Aubrey Malphurs includes a chapter on the need for new churches to plant churches in his book [Planting Growing](#)

[Churches](#) (2nd ed).

Here are some free online resources that I have written related to the topic of leading your church in church planting.

ON-LINE LINKS:

[The Art of Vision Casting for Church Multiplication](#)

[The Great Commission and Church Planting](#)

[The Mother Church and Church Planting](#)

WORKBOOK:

Paul Becker, Mark Williams, and Jim Carpenter [The Dynamic Daughter Church Planting Handbook](#) (DCPI, 1999). The section addressing how to overcome objections to church planting is worth the cost of the resource.

RESOURCE KITS:

North American Mission Board, Church Planting Starter Kit (North American Mission Board). This

is an excellent resource that includes workbooks and video resources for adults, youth, and children. While it was written for Southern Baptist Churches, it includes a great deal of information that is relevant to other groups. Check out the PDF [New Churches Needed: Our Church Can Help](#)

Unfortunately, the full kit is presently out-of-print. If you contact the Southern Baptist state convention office in your state (or Canadian National Baptist Convention) and ask to borrow a copy, they may have one and may loan it to you if you are very nice and promise to return it at the appropriate time.

Robert E. Logan, [Churches Planting Churches](#) (Church Smart Resources). This resource contains a workbook, audio, and video sessions.

CHAPTER 3 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: I've listed a few resources in this chapter. Who are some people to whom you can speak regarding leading your church in church planting?

2: Can you find 4-5 excellent on-line resources to assist you? If so, write them here so you can return to them later.

4

AVOIDING THE NESTEA PLUNGE

I recognize that for most churches and pastors the notion of church planting is a strange concept. Most of the examples of so-called “healthy” and “effective” church planting today use methodologies that are extremely expensive and not reproducible by most churches. As a result of being exposed to such methodological mania, pastors often think, “If that is church planting, then there is no way we can do that.”

And they are usually right.

So, in light of the thought that exists in the minds of many churches today—that church planting is just too complicated and too expensive—I want to encourage you

to begin by leading your church into some small level of commitment in church planting. As churches begin to understand the biblical expression and healthy missiological principles, they will hopefully develop a much better picture of this great ministry and engage at a deeper level.

Do you remember the late 70s early 80s commercials that revealed the Nestea Plunge? Some of you do. And for those of you who were only in the heart of God at that time, [HERE](#) is a YouTube video clip for you.

When it comes to leading your church in church planting, I greatly fear that some leaders and churches feel that in order to be involved they must take the Nestea Plunge, falling without restraint, wisdom, or direction into this ministry. That involvement is an all-or-nothing type of ministry.

I believe any level of involvement in church planting is better than no involvement. A church does not have to jump into the deep end of the pool (to use another aqueous analogy). Most pastors are wise to lead their churches into unfamiliar territory at a steady pace. Feel free to

enter in at the shallow side of the pool.

While the following is not an exhaustive list of commitment levels, it does help you to consider the numerous possibilities of involvement for you and your church.

PRAYER SUPPORT.

Consider devoting a portion of the Sunday morning worship time (every week) to pray for specific church planting teams. A Wednesday night prayer meeting could also be focused on praying for known teams in North America. Lead your church to prayer walk a community in which a team is working. Lead your church to have prayer meetings in the homes of church planters and pray for their ministries. Allow church planting teams to recruit prayer warriors from your congregation to pray for their work.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND A BODY OF IDENTITY.

As much as possible, missionaries need to be a part of the on-going fellowship of established churches. Lead your church to offer encouragement and fellowship to church planting teams. They need a body that will embrace

them and love them, for it is likely that church planters in your community are miles away from their home churches and family members. Consider giving church planting families gift cards to restaurants or supermarkets. Lead your church to be that local church with whom missionaries can identify as their family.

PASTORAL MENTORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

Who pastors the missionaries? We usually do not think about this question. Consider providing your pastoral services to such church planting teams in your area. They need people with whom they can share concerns. Help mentor and provide accountability for them.

PROVIDE TRAINING.

While you may not be able to provide church planters training in church planting skills, your church can assist in providing training in other ways. For example, you may want to consider providing the costs for the missionary teams to attend a church planting training event.

GIVE THEM THE PLATFORM.

Invite local missionaries to give a testimony about their church planting work in your area. Give them five minutes on a Sunday morning to share about church planting. Allow a church planter to preach for you when you are present (and not on vacation). This shows your support to the ministry of church planting.

PROVIDE RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

Okay, I finally stated it. Yes, consider giving money to assist them in Great Commission work. The lack of money (personal finances) is a significant common concern on the minds of most church planters (and their families) serving in the United States and Canada today.

Consider leading your church to assist in other areas. You may be able to allow a church planting team to use your photocopier, office space, administrative assistants, van, or building. Your church may be able to provide Bibles, food and other supplies for outreach events, or people to assist in ministry activities.

These are just a few ideas to get you started in moving your church from the shallow end of the church planting pool into the deep end, eventually sending out your own

missionary teams to plant churches in your community, region, and throughout the world.

CHAPTER 4 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: If you believe that your church is not ready for a “deep” level of church planting involvement at this time, what are five things you will do with them over the next three months to help them recognize that they can avoid the Nestea Plunge?

2: What will you do each month for the next year to lead your church deeper into the church planting waters?

FIVE STEPS FOR VISION CASTING FOR MULTIPLICATION

I want to share with you about casting a vision for church multiplication. You may want to check out my article, [“The Art of Vision Casting for Church Multiplication”](#) for some additional assistance.

By now, I assume that you have a good theological and missiological foundation for church planting. If not, let me encourage you to check out my book [Discovering Church Planting](#).

The writer of Proverbs notes, “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will

draw it out” (Prov 20:5, ESV). While the vision for leading your church in church planting may be within you, it also needs to be within your people. Casting or drawing out that vision so that your people will own it, requires great understanding.

Casting the vision for church multiplication is the ability to paint both prayerfully and patiently a picture of: 1) what the Spirit has shown to be a multiplicative growth possibility with churches both historically and in contemporary societies; and 2) what the Spirit can do working through your church to plant multiplying churches.

This picture must be painted with enough detail that your church will be attracted to the vision and motivated to minister to carry out that vision. The picture must be broad enough to allow for the flexibility and creativity of the Spirit to work as He desires through the gifts, talents, personalities, and abilities of His people.

Vision casting for multiplication is about revealing the possibilities. It enables church members to “see” where they can fit into such a work. It causes people to say, “Yes, by God’s grace, I can see our church (including my-

self) involved in church planting.”

STEPS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS

The following five steps are to assist you in your context.

PRAY

Assuming you have a vision to cast, pray for God’s leadership in the process. Pray that He would be glorified in the process. Pray that there would be no ungodly conflict related to the vision. Pray for spiritual protection for both you and your church. Pray for wisdom in communicating and leading in this area of ministry.

You must also pray that you will have patience with your people. Just as the Lord was gracious to provide you with much time to think about and discuss church planting with others, you must also extend such grace to your church as they hear about this matter for the first time. If it took you months or even years to get on the church planting bus, then it is unfair for you to expect your people to hop on in a matter of minutes.

UNDERSTAND WHAT COMMUNICATES WITH

YOUR PEOPLE

If you have a vision for something as important as church multiplication, then it must be communicated effectively to your church. You must know your people and how they receive and process information. Clear communication is extremely important here. Unhealthy communication will hinder the vision from becoming a reality.

KNOW THE POSSIBILITIES

You must educate yourself and your church about the possibilities of church multiplication. Teach them what the Spirit has done with churches in the past, as well as the present. Always, begin with the Scriptures. Ask the question: “What was required of the believers to be used by the Spirit in the disciple-making movements that resulted in the planting of churches across the world?” Even if you do not agree with all of their theologies, take a brief look at the church planting labors of the early Moravians, Methodists, Baptists, and Pentecostals. And even look outside of the country for examples of the Spirit’s work as well. Again, I’ll direct you to [Discovering Church Planting](#) for additional with this step.

RECOGNIZE AND OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

A good portion of your time is likely to be spent in understanding and overcoming the barriers that prevent your church from being involved in church multiplication. What theological, missiological, cultural, structural, and/or denominational barriers exist that must be overcome? Again, I will direct you to my [article](#) on vision casting where I address some of these.

COMMUNICATE THE VISION REDUNDANTLY

Rick Warren recommends restating the vision every twenty-six days (The Purpose-Driven Church, pg. 111). Begin with your leaders. Keep the vision before them. Work to keep the vision before the people. Make the vision part of your sermons, lessons, classes, announcements, blog posts, tweets, newsletters, etc. Keep reminding the people of the biblical and theological foundation for why your church needs to be involved in church planting. Keep reminding them of the missiological reasons as well (see chapter one).

The process of vision casting is more art than science. So, what are you waiting for? Get out your pencils, paint brushes, and pens and draw out that purpose found in your heart. And start sharing it.

CHAPTER 5 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: For each of the five steps listed in this chapter, list 1-2 practical things you can do to accomplish each step.

2: Of each of the five steps, which do you find the most challenging? What will you do to overcoming the challenges?

6

ANTICIPATING OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH PLANTING

In this final chapter, I wish to bring to your attention a few of the most common objections toward church planting. One thing I learned when pastoring established churches was that objections will come. In light of this reality, you need to be proactive by anticipating and developing a healthy response to them.

By far, the best resource I have found containing information on overcoming objections is [The Dynamic Daughter Church Planting Handbook](#) (DCPI, 1999) by Paul Becker,

Mark Williams, and Jim Carpenter. These men address and respond to numerous objections to church planting (some listed below). I cite from their work when I address this topic in [Discovering Church Planting](#). Here is also an excellent paper from Grady Smith on [Addressing Objections to Church Planting](#).

Here are some of the more common objections to church planting. Before casting your vision for church planting (see last chapter), consider the following:

Why do we need to plant churches?

There are already enough churches here.

We need to concentrate on revitalization instead of planting other churches.

It will cost too much.

We will lose our fellowship.

We're too small to plant churches.

We will plant churches when we reach _____ members.

We do not have the leaders.

Our growth momentum will slow down.

We already support missions in other ways.

If the lost want to attend a church, then they are welcome to meet with us.

If we plant another church in this community, we'll be competing against each other.

Can you think of other concerns that your congregation will mention? How will you respond to these concerns? Make certain that your responses are thoroughly biblical and built upon healthy missiology. Be gracious and humble in your responses. Remember, the writer of Proverbs wrote: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly" (Proverbs 15:1-2, ESV).

As noted before, the Lord has extended to you a great deal of thought and time to consider church planting. You have been praying over this matter for months, maybe even years. You have been eating, sleeping, and

breathing church planting. Just as the Lord has been gracious to you in moving you toward deeper convictions regarding such missionary activity, please extend grace to your people. If their involvement in missions has been limited to sending money overseas, then they will likely need some time to study the Scriptures and pray through the process. Be a leader. Take them by the hand. Pray for them. Pray for yourself. Search the Scriptures.

Take the first step together along this Great Commission path.

CHAPTER 6 - PERSONAL REFLECTION

1: Are there other objections that you anticipate hearing from the church? If so, what are those objections?

2: Write out your brief response to each of the anticipated challenges.
