

Why Plant Churches? - Living the Passion Seminar 2015

The Church Planting Initiative – what is CPI seeking to do? www.cpi-britain.org

Book Suggestions

“Fresh Shoots in Stony Ground – the challenges of church planting” published by the Church Planting Initiative and by Partnership

“Planting Churches – a framework for practitioner” by Stuart Murray and published by Paternoster Press

We have a rich tradition of planting independent churches resulting from the significant fruit of mission and evangelism and receptivity to the gospel, particularly in the nineteenth century.

Recent experience has been one of decline and closure:

- Ageing profile and reducing numbers – few conversions
- Increasing secularism
- Changing cultural norms and expectations- lack of engagement with people?
- Failure to retain people, especially young people
- Failure of churches to adapt and remain relevant to people – need to contextualise
- Challenge of recognising committed and visionary leadership
- Encouraged in the gospel but discouraged in ministry?

2014 saw a landmark event. For the first time for many years, the number of churches planted in the UK exceeded the number of churches closed.

Encouraging church planting – but what do some people say? (Thanks to Stephen McQuoid for next two sections)

- Aren't there enough churches already – shouldn't we fill them first?
- Doesn't church planting tend to weaken existing churches?
- Aren't bigger churches better?
- Church doesn't “work”, does it?
- It must be incredibly challenging!

Why should we consider new church planting?

- A new start in all sorts of ways
- Flexibility
- Encourages discipleship, commitment and mobilisation of members
- Releases new leaders
- It's Biblical!

Opportunities for church planting (Thanks to Stuart Murray)

- New housing developments through initiatives of Christians who move in, through local churches outside the area having a burden for the development and discussions with developers
- Growing population in an area
- Planting more local churches so that the gospel may be more effective and community served
- Replacing churches that have closed
- Replacing ineffective churches in carefully consultative ways
- Discipling new Christians when existing churches may not be appropriate
- Finding fresh ways to engage unchurched and de-churched people

- Redistributing Christians from areas of high concentration and from growing churches
- Accommodating emerging church and those who find traditional church models challenging
- Sharing certain ways of doing church or beliefs in different areas “denominationally”
- Accommodating special cultures – e.g. workplace churches, shared interests and shared gathering places, specific sub-cultures (affinity based?) and of course ethnic cultural needs
- Fresh expressions
- Pioneering on behalf of existing churches
- Releasing gifted people
- Splits!!!

..... What is God saying?

What about helping to revive churches “in decline”?

Issues to think about when planting a church

- What sort of church am I planting? Lots of models – programme-based / organised for non –Christians seeking faith / focussed on specific purposes / based around relationships rather than meetings / flowing out of ministry initiatives. Attractional models of Church (come) and incarnational models of Church (go)
- Where should I plant a new church? Engaging with the local community? Process of seeking God and practical investigation. Consultation. Mapping. Prayerfully understanding areas, needs and opportunities
- Do I need a church building?
- With whom? Building a team. The larger a church planting team, the more likely that the church plant will succeed.
- Finances for the church and yourself

..... What is God saying?

Different sorts of church planting

- Planting from, out of or involving other churches?
- Simple home-based relational churches
- Spontaneous churches flowing from missions, outreaches or cultural identities
- Pioneer planting

What about me? What “might it take” to be a church planter?

- Visionary / Strategic
- Motivated
- Good family base
- Community minded
- At ease with non-Christians
- Flexible
- Loves people
- Releasing gifts in others
- Good discipler
- Spiritual maturity
- Training?