



***broken bread***

**Broken Bread Church**

Prospectus



## Message From Jeff & Elaine

Thank you so much for considering supporting Elaine and I as we plant Broken Bread, a new church in Prince George. Our hope is that this effort will result in many lives being changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We cannot accomplish everything we aim to do by ourselves. First-and-foremost, it is Jesus who builds his church (Matthew 16:18)! However, Jesus builds using regular people like you and me (Romans 10:14). If we are to succeed, we will need many people like you to support us in many different ways.

We need people to join our core and team launch teams. We need financial support and resources. We need support from lawyers, accountants, and other professionals. We need encouragement. We need a building to meet in. We need a thousand other things that we don't even know about yet. We need prayer.



We're sure you have many questions; So do we! Many things remain unknown. We have, and continue to develop, a solid plan and to the extent that we have answers, we have attempted to document them here. We will try to answer the basic who, what, why, when, where, and how questions. Of course, things change and **we expect that many things outlined here will evolve** as we continue to build on this vision together.

In Christ,  
Jeff & Elaine Paetkau



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# Why Plant A Church?

I want you to think of a name. The name of someone you love. The name of someone who doesn't love Jesus. Someone you pray for often.

Maybe this person is a family member, a brother, a mother, or a cousin. Perhaps he is an old friend from school or she plays sports with you. I'm guessing you have been praying for them for a long time. Years. Decades.

**We want to plant a church so that the person you have in mind and many others like them put their trust in the name of Jesus.**

I'm thinking of a couple that Elaine and I have known for many years. Let's call them Bob and Eve. We got connected to B&E through mutual friends and through them have become connected to many of other friends in their circle. Of that whole group, we are the only Christians.

B&E and their friends are very much prototypical of the average family in Northern BC. They are reasonably well off. They are good people. They really like "stuff". At the same time, they are seeking something else. Something "spiritual". B&E, as well as some of their friends, have gone to a service or two at various churches. They know they need "something". We know they need the grace of Jesus Christ.

The churches in Prince George, including City Church (our sending church), are doing a faithful job of preaching the gospel, serving people, baptizing, and making disciples. People are getting saved and transformed! God is at work!

However, there are many people, like B&E and their friends, (and that person you are thinking of) that the existing churches in Prince George are not reaching successfully. This can be for lots of different reasons. For B&E, one major reason is that Sunday morning is valuable family time they aren't willing to give up.

Our prayer is that Broken Bread will reach B&E. Our hope is that they'll bring many with them.



# Does Prince George Really Need Another Church?

In a word: Yes!

In fact, we need **lots** more churches. We currently have about 40 christian churches operating in Prince George (*Appendix 2*) with a combined monthly attendance in the single digits in terms of percentage of the population. That means that more than 90% of this city have little or no connection to any christian church.

Church plants are not shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic. The goal is not to take people and resources from existing churches. Rather, the objective is to reach people with the gospel that are not being effectively reached by existing churches. Research shows that up to 80% of new members in church plants come from the community and are not taken from existing churches (*Appendix 1*). In fact, At the end of the day, many of these new believers actually end up in older more established churches.

New churches allow for a cultural diversity that is often impossible in more established churches. After a church has been around for a decade, or more, it is easy to keep doing what has always been done. This can be a great thing! The things that have worked for years have resulted in many people hearing the gospel, being discipled, and living God honouring lives. However, now these same things can be unintentional barriers to impacting those in cultural niches. New churches get around this by being different in ways that are effective at reaching new people but still hold fast to sound doctrine.

*“The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city and the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city” -- Tim Keller*

As you'll see in the next section, Broken Bread will be a church that will look very different from any of the existing churches in Prince George. Our hope, and expectation, is that by doing this we will get to proclaim the gospel to people who are not currently hearing it or experiencing it's power.

If you remain unconvinced, please continue reading more about this in Appendix 1.

# What Will Broken Bread Look Like?

## Our Vision

<b>Values:</b>	Jesus	People	Kingdom
<b>Vision:</b>	Gospel	Community	Mission
<b>Action:</b>	Teaching	Eating	Serving

Vision flows from values and action flows from vision.

Our primary value is the person of Jesus Christ. His is the name that is above all names (*Philippians 2:9*). We are absolutely enamoured with Jesus Christ. We love who he is. We love everything that he has done. We believe that **everything** of value is found in Jesus.

Because our core value is Jesus, our vision is to see his gospel proclaimed. We want as many people as possible to know about Jesus and what he has done for them. We think everybody should love Jesus and our goal is to give everyone that opportunity.

If our value is Jesus and our vision is his gospel then our action must be to teach and preach that gospel. Teaching has been a hallmark of every church everywhere ever since the early church in Jerusalem. In this, we are no different. Each service will feature a sermon where the focus is on Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished.

We can only make a credible claim to love Jesus if we love what he loves. **Jesus loves people and so we love people.** This is our second core value. If we build a great institution but fail to love people we will have failed (*1 Corinthians 13*). Love for people must be central to everything we do.

**After the gospel, our greatest need is community.** Our vision is to create, and be, a community that is like a healthy family. We desire a community that goes much deeper than spending an hour together once per week. Instead, it is our intention to create a community where the explicit expectation is one of deep personal integration of life together.



Of course every church wants to build deep community; how will Broken Bread be different? Our observation from scripture, from experience, from history, and from other cultures is that meals are an indispensable tool for building community. Thus, **one of the primary cultural distinctives of Broken Bread will be a shared meal as a central part of each service.** In a family, mealtime is often the nexus of life together. Why should this be different in our church family?

Our third core value is “kingdom”. We long for, as Jesus put it, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (*Matthew 6:9*). Jesus is at work in the world and we get to be a part of that. When Jesus came, he established his kingdom and then calls the church to go expand it into all nations (*Matthew 28:19*). There is a reason that this commission is called “great”; this is the core task which Jesus has given the church.

Now because we value the work of the kingdom, the vision for our gospel community is to be on mission together. It is not enough for each of us to be on mission individually, we will be far more effective as we do it as one body with one mind. Doing it together will help build our sense of community.

Jesus came to us as a servant and calls us to follow his example (*Mark 10:42-45*). It follows then that if our vision is to be on mission with Jesus, and we love people, then what we need to do is serve people. Serving our community will always be a central part of our activities. What this looks like exactly will change over time, but the plan will stay the same: love and serve the people of our city and of our world.

Thus, the following three statements describe our values, vision, and actions:

**Values Statement:** Jesus. People. Kingdom.

**Vision Statement:** Gospel. Community. Mission.

**Action Statement:** Teaching. Eating. Serving.



## A Picture of Church Life

Teaching. Eating. Serving. Let's flesh that out a little. What does that look like week-to-week? Let's first answer the question of "when".

**Our primary gathering will not be Sunday morning.** Because most churches hold services Sunday morning (although a few meet on Saturday or Sunday evening), it is our intention to do something different. While weekend services work well for many people, for others it does not. Many people in our community work shift work and are not available Sunday – at least not every week. For others, weekends are valuable family time they are not willing to sacrifice. Yes, there is a deep and rich tradition in Christianity of meeting on Sunday morning but for the sake of those that are not being reached we are going to mix it up a little.



*Illustration 1: St. Lydia's in New York City uses a meal-based model though with quite a different theology*

Our current plan is to **meet on Friday evenings**. This offers several advantages beyond being "not Sunday". It is at the intersection of week and weekend forming a natural inflection point in the rhythm of life. It leaves the weekend open for recreational or service activities together. It should be accessible to a wide – though not universal – cross-section of the population of Prince George. It is a time when many church buildings, and other potential facilities, are sitting idle. On Friday we say, "TGIF". Indeed, let's do that.

As mentioned in the vision section above, each service will feature a meal together. We will start as early as possible after 5:00, probably about 5:30pm. Each week, the service will open by celebrating the Lords Supper together which will lead into an actual family dinner.



**Putting on a meal every week will be our primary logistical challenges.** This will put constraints on our time, resources, and the buildings that are available to us. For the future, this will also put a practical ceiling on how large we are able to grow. We might do pot lucks or the church might have a specific team of volunteers that cook the food. We'll have to experiment to find what works.

After everyone has started eating and while we continue to eat, we'll start the sermon. This will be at approximately 6:00. It will probably be a bit of semi-organized chaos (*kids, getting seconds, spills etc.*) most times and we are okay with that. This is real life.

The sermon length will be on the shorter side coming in at about 20 to 25 minutes.

Although a longer sermon might be preferred, we will have to recognize that we have kids as well as people without a church background in the service. With this in mind, it is easy to imagine how things go sideways if we try to do an hour long sermon. There will be additional opportunities for teaching and learning together that we will encourage people to take advantage of.

The plan, at this point, is that the sermon will be delivered by video even when it is me preaching. This has a number of advantages. It will allow us to shift that work away from our meeting time and into the rest of the week instead. That will allow me, or whomever is preaching, to be more fully engaged in the other things that are happening in the room. Video will allow us the opportunity to do editing and opens the possibility of "higher production values" if resources allow. It also gives us an opening to interact with our community online. These things may not be "important" in any cosmic sense however they may prove to be an effective means to get our message to people who otherwise



*Illustration 2: The Table in Victoria, BC also uses a meal-based model*

wouldn't know we exist. There is at least one other possible benefit of habitually using video; when we hit barriers that limit our size, video opens up opportunities to keep expanding.

After the sermon is complete, the teaching is not over. One of the most powerful teaching tools is music. The service will end with about 1/2 an hour of corporate worship through song. We will be intentional in choosing songs that are easy for the congregation to sing and at the same time teach us powerful, life changing, true things about God and about us.

Depending on the resources we have in terms of people, time, talent, and equipment we may or may not have a live band. This will primarily depend on who God brings us to be part of the core and launch teams. If we are not able to do live music – and do it well – we will, like with the sermon, lean on modern video technology.

We want the whole family to be a part of the whole church experience. We want our children to eat with us, learn with us, worship with us, and serve with us. Having a full-on childcare program is great for tired parents. When Elaine and I visit family at churches with such programs it is wonderful, almost like a date! However, we think it is better for the family, for the children, and for the church that everyone is included in what the church is doing. While we won't have separate children, or youth, programs we will have space for parents to attend to the needs of their very young children and babies.

We will end the formal service at about 7:00pm so that families are able to get their children in bed at a reasonable hour.

On many nights – but not all – after the service we will encourage people to stick around if they are able. Of course, there will be cleanup to do. Then we might do any number of activities together. We might do something recreational such as board games, or bowling, or a movie. Other nights we might have an extended teaching time where we can do the hour long sermon. This is also when we might do “family meetings” to review finances, discuss direction, plan service projects or set in new elders and deacons.



We will **strongly** encourage the church, by our words and our actions, to include others from the church in their lives during the week. If you are playing sports, invite someone from church. If you are having a BBQ, invite someone. If you are helping a friend put on a new roof, then on Friday night rope a group of people from church into helping out. Although our weekly gatherings are a great start to building community it can't end there.

### **The church exists all week.**

Outside of our services we will serve our community together. We will use our Friday gatherings, as well as technology, to coordinate these activities which will change over time.

I expect that we will often partner with other churches and para-church organizations that are already doing great work in our city such as Ness Lake Bible Camp, Youth For Christ, the New Life Christian Centre, and the Pregnancy Care Centre. Other times we may partner in secular civic activities such as the annual garbage cleanup, the winter games, and many other things. Of course, we might also pioneer our own projects.

Even as we do what is described above, we will do so with an eye beyond our church and our city. There is a whole world out there who needs to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

## **Theological Distinctives**

In regards to primary issues we proudly stand with the rest of the evangelical church in affirming such things as the authority of scripture, the Apostles creed (*appendix 3*), and salvation only by faith in Jesus Christ. It is also important that you know where we stand on other important theological issues where there is often disagreement within the body.

### *Changed by Grace*

The good news of the gospel is that we don't have to do anything; Jesus has done, and is doing it all! This is true both of our salvation (*Acts 15:11, Titus 2:11*) and our sanctification (*Romans 6:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23*). We change our behaviour not because we try harder but because we see better. Rules and regulations are useless and counter productive (*Colossians 2:23*). Rather, we become more like Christ the more he reveals himself to us

and we keep our eyes on him. A “radical” grace produces not sin (*Romans:6:2*) but righteousness whereas law produces only sin (*Romans 7:8*), death, and condemnation. We truly are dead to the law (*Galatians 2:19*).

### *Christ Centred*

You will notice that our values start with Christ. The rest of our values, practices, and our theology all stem from this complete devotion to our saviour. Jesus is our all-in-all.

We are Christ centred in at least two important ways.

The first important way is in our practice. We are convinced that we need to point to Jesus and his finished work on the cross frequently and emphatically. The good news of Jesus death, burial, resurrection and what it means for our standing before God should be explained in every service in our teaching, our music, and our eating. This is one reason we plan to celebrate the Lord’s supper before every gathering.

The gospel is for both believers and visitors. We forget and get caught up in our own lives. One of the purposes of meeting together regularly is to remind ourselves of who God is and what he has done. And for those who don’t know Christ there is no more important news than that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, so they can be right with God.

Second, we are Christ centred in our hermeneutic. That is, we believe Jesus when he says that all of scripture is about him (*John 5:39, Luke 24:27*). Although, other tools are useful for understanding scripture, the primary lens through which we understand both the old and new testament is that of Jesus Christ. As we open the scriptures each week they will speak for themselves as they point us to Christ.

### *Reformed*

We hold a basically reformed set of theological beliefs. We affirm such doctrines as total depravity, the sovereignty of God, predestination, and unconditional election. Before God intervenes, we are “dead in our sins” and it is God who “made us alive” (*Colossians 2:13*). Dead people do not “choose” anything; they are dead. Lazarus is a great picture of how we are raised from the dead (*John 11*). We are dead with a “foul odour” yet Christ calls us and we immediately come to him.



## *Baptist*

The new covenant is by faith not by birth (*Galatians 3:29*). The sign of the new covenant, baptism by immersion, is reserved for those that have demonstrated evidence of faith in Christ Jesus. We encourage parents to dedicate their children to the Lord and to train them in his ways (*Proverbs 22:6*). We also note that God seems to be in the habit of working within families and Jesus very often saves the children of faithful parents. We also encourage those who were baptized as infants to be re-baptized if they have not already done so.

Baptisms are also cause for great celebration. They should be done publicly with much fanfare to call attention to the good work God has done and continues doing. This is both for the encouragement of the body and as an evangelistic tool to reach those who have not yet come to know Christ. Additionally, baptism should take place soon after someone, understanding the whole gospel, places their faith in Jesus as is the pattern we see in scripture (*Acts 8:38*).

## *Complementarian*

As people created in God's image, everyone is of immeasurable value, dignity and worth (*Genesis 1:27*). In our sin we come before God on the same basis: in the finished work of Christ. This is true of men and women, slave and free, Jew or gentile (*Galatians 3:28*). In the essentials of our identity we are all equal without reservation.

It remains true that men and women are different.

We affirm the teaching of scripture that God has given men and women different roles (1 *Corinthians 11*, 1 *Timothy 2*, *Ephesians 5*). God calls men to be the "head" of their house and love their wives in the same way that Christ loves the church giving himself for her. In the same way God calls wives to submit to and respect their husbands. In the church, the office of elder is reserved for biblically qualified men *in partnership (when married) with their wives (you cannot separate man and wife, Mark 10:8)*. Other leadership positions in the church, such as the office of deacon and task of preaching, are open to everyone qualified, acting in submission to the leadership of the elders.

We condemn, and call to repentance, those who twist these teachings into an abusive, autocratic, patriarchy. This is sinful and completely contrary to the teaching and actions of Jesus and the leaders of the early church. We acknowledge that it is far too common for these teachings to be abused in this way; this fact grieves us. Jesus specifically and explicitly rejected and countered his own culture on this point giving women dignity, respect, and leadership.

### *Biblical Leadership*

We wholeheartedly embrace the teaching of the NCMI team (*appendix 4*) on the subject of church governance. We believe in the autonomy of the local church under the direction of biblically qualified elders. We gratefully accept the godly service of deacons as serving the church. We thank God for his gift of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to the local church (*Ephesians 4:11*). New elders are to be appointed by “trans-local” apostles at the invitation of the elders.

Although the local church is autonomous it should not be completely independent nor unaccountable. It is our hope, and intention, to partner with the NCMI team to bring outside influence, perspective, and accountability along with national and international ministry partnership opportunities.

### *Charismatic*

We believe that the Holy Spirit is still active in power in the world today. God still heals. He still does miracles. He still gives dreams and interpretations. People still speak in tongues. He gives these gifts for His glory and for the good of His church.

It is our observation, from both scripture and experience, that the gift of tongues appears to be particularly common among those open to receiving it. However, we do not believe that this gift is, or should be, universal within the church. In addition, we are instructed to “desire the greater gifts” (*1 Corinthians 12:31*).



# What Has Happened So Far?

## The Call

This project has already been a 10 year journey. In 2007 Willingdon MB church in Burnaby hosted a conference for pastors called “reFocus”. The pastors at Westwood MB church in Prince George attended and brought along several of us young adults along for the ride. As the conference was only open to ministers, I recall they had to “exaggerate” on the registration form to get us in.

At that event, I had a brief encounter with one of the speakers where he looked me in the eye and said, “go plant a church!” Before that moment I don’t think I had ever thought of church planting even once. Since then I have been waiting and preparing for the moment where God decrees, “it’s time; go”! We believe that time is imminent.

## The Recent Past

In August of 2016 Leroy Martell (*the lead elder/pastor at City Church*) asked if I would consider leading a new church plant. The initial version of this document was produced in the following weeks as a vision casting document.

In the months following we met with Mike & Moe Rosenau (*lead elder/pastor at The Rock in Terrace & NCMI team member*). As they are so good at, they encouraged us in a great many things! In particular, they encouraged us to “double down” on our commitment to City Church during this process. They also strongly suggested that we work to build and strengthen relationships with other NCMI team members to form an extended support team.

Elaine and I strongly agree with both suggestions from Mike and Moe. We are more involved than ever at City Church and we are taking every opportunity possible to connect with the NCMI team.

Leroy and I have also been meeting with Brian Dean (*lead elder/pastor at New Life in Quesnel & NCMI team member*). His feedback, encouragement, and promises of future support have also been hugely helpful.

## Current Activities

For some time we have been carefully and prayerfully considering who to invite to be a part of our core and launch teams (*Appendix 4*). Now, in January 2018, this process of team building is beginning in earnest. These teams will work with us to flesh out the ideas in this document and then turn them into reality. We are asking God for 6 core team members (*plus Elaine and I*) and we hope to have them in place by early April. If you are reading this, that might include you!

At some point soon, we will begin the process of registering a new society, getting CRA charitable status, opening a bank account and so on.

We are also beginning to look toward sketching out answers to questions such as location, funding, and launch date (*likely September 2018*). However, for the most part, these are questions for later this spring and summer.

## Branding

### *Broken Bread*

The name broken bread is inspired by the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes.

*“Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.” -- Matthew 14:19*

Thus, the name speaks to many aspects of what we hope for this church. The story touches on the person and work of Jesus Christ, miracles, the importance of teaching, eating together, community, and service. As explained earlier, these are all things that are among our core values.

The name is also a practical description of what we do together: we break bread. That is we eat together.





Of course, broken bread is also the symbol Jesus chose to represent his body broken on the cross in the celebration of the Lords supper. We have communion with God and with each other only because of “broken bread”. This symbol is at the centre of what the church is about which is one reason why we intend to formally celebrate it every time we meet together.

Finally, the name broken bread evokes thoughts of brokenness, recognizing that at times we are broken. In our sin we are broken spiritually. Because of sin our world is broken. Our bodies are broken. Our minds are broken. We are emotionally broken. We want Broken Bread to be a place where people who are broken can find a home. We will ask God to heal our brokenness. Our God is one who “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (*Psalms 147:3*)

### *Logo*

The logo is mostly an extension of the same symbolism found in the name. Additionally, the table the bread is sitting on is broken into a 3 by 3 grid representing our values, vision, and action. There is no special significance to the colours other than a harvest colour scheme seemed appropriate.

## **Where Do We Go From Here?**

### **Bi-Vocational Ministry**

For at least the initial launch, I expect I will work about 20 hours per week in my business and 20 hours in the church. My business is almost to the point where I can work part-time yet still pull in an income that feeds my family. In the beginning I do not intend to take a salary or be paid by the church. That will change at some point in the future. When and how, no one but God knows.

This will allow 100% of church funds to go toward serving the needs of the church rather than feeding my family. Not being dependent on continual funding of my salary is important because it drastically reduces the risk that we have to close due to the lack of

funds. Lack of funds is one of the main reasons that church plants fail. This will also allow us to purchase needed equipment, supplies, and support without being as concerned about cash flow.

This model is intentional at being towards the lower end of the church planting cost spectrum. Some churches launch with several staff and aiming to get hundreds of people on the first Sunday. That can work well, but with this project we are aiming to be self sustaining for an extended period of low attendance and grow organically. This may take a long time.

I don't know how long a bi-vocational arraignment will last. It might last for a decade if we build much slower than we hope. On the other hand if we grow very quickly, and the church requires my full time attention, it might last less than a year.

## Budget & Funding

Please don't take anything I wrote above to mean that we don't need money. I have been assured that, "you can't raise too much money". We will need money, particularly up-front. I expect that equipment, rent, and food will be among our largest expenses at first. Once the church is large enough to move out of bi-vocational mode, you can add staff (*particularly my salary*) to that list as well.

We don't have a budget yet as we don't even have a basic idea what we are going to need. Getting a full 1<sup>st</sup> year budget together will be one of the first major tasks the core team faces. If I had to guess, I estimate that **we will need about \$100,000** in the first year. Because City Church has limited financial resources, almost all of this seed money will have to come from outside private donors. Please consider donating generously! After we have a reasonable budget to present, we will begin a fund-raising push (*probably in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2018*).



## Location

Finding the right location will be a major challenge. In my role as board president of the Pregnancy Care Centre, I spent 2 years searching before we found the right location! Broken Bread will require all the usual things a church plant needs plus we will need adequate facilities to prepare and consume a meal together with room to grow. Oh, and not too expensive would be nice!

Also, where we locate will effect who we attract as well. Any decision we make will be convenient for some people and exclusive for others. We will need to carefully and strategically pray for the right location.

## Launch Date

We anticipate needing about 6 to 8 months to complete all the prep work that will be required to get this church off to the best possible start. Our hope is to take advantage of the extra energy of the back-to-school season by launching in August or September 2018. However we are holding this somewhat loosely.

## Church planting church plant

We believe Prince George needs not just one but lots of new churches. We are praying for 10 new churches in the next 10 years. Prince George is a major strategic centre for the entire of northern BC. If we, and other churches in the city, can successfully reach strategic sub-communities – including university students, aboriginal leaders, those in the local media, and others – we can reach the entire north with the gospel.

Also, many people from Prince George feed into the larger (*and even more strategic*) centres of Vancouver and Victoria. From there influence extends into all of Canada, and indeed the world! It is important to look beyond our local context into how we can help the gospel penetrate deeper in these cities.

Our intention is to be a church planting church plant. We hope to plant another church within the first few years of our existence. This will be part of our teaching and messaging right from day 1. Eventually we hope to send planters all over Prince George, northern BC, and into BC's major cities.

## Humility

While preparing this document I found this quote online. I think it is a fitting close.

*“The military maxim, ‘No battle plan survives contact with the enemy’ applies to church planters. The planters who survive and thrive are able to adapt, modify or scrap their pre-determined model as they begin to understand their context. The planters who fail tend to be more in love with their model than the people their model is intended to reach” -- from <https://exponential.org/why-do-church-plants-fail-pt-2/>*



# WHY PLANT CHURCHES?

DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

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A vigorous and continuous approach to church planting is the only way to guarantee an increase in the number of believers, and is one of the best ways to renew the whole body of Christ.

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The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for (1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city and (2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing megachurches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting. This is an eyebrow-raising statement, but to those who have done any study at all, it is not even controversial.

The normal response to discussions about church planting is something like this.

- A. “We already have plenty of churches that have lots and lots of room for all the new people who have come to the area. Let’s get *them* filled before we start building any new ones.”
- B. “Every church in this community used to be more full than it is now. The churchgoing public is a shrinking pie. A new church here will just take people from churches that are already hurting and will weaken everyone.”
- C. “Help the churches that are struggling first. A new church doesn’t help the existing ones that are just keeping their noses above water. We need *better* churches, not more churches.”

These statements appear to be common sense to many people, but they rest on several wrong assumptions. The error of this thinking will become clear if we ask, “Why is church planting so crucially important?”

## WE PLANT CHURCHES BECAUSE WE WANT TO BE TRUE TO THE BIBLICAL MANDATE.

### 1. JESUS’ ESSENTIAL CALL WAS TO PLANT CHURCHES

Virtually all of the great evangelistic challenges of the New Testament are basically calls to plant churches, not simply to share the faith. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) is a call not just to “make disciples” but to baptize. In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshipping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41–47). The only way to be truly sure you are increasing the number of Christians in a town is to increase the number of churches.

Why would this be? Much traditional evangelism aims to get a “decision” for Christ. Experience, however, shows us that many of these decisions disappear and never result in changed lives. Many decisions are not really conversions but are only the beginning of a journey of seeking God. (Other decisions

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are very definitely the moment of a “new birth,” but this differs from person to person.) Only a person who is being evangelized in the context of an ongoing worshiping and shepherding community can be sure of finally coming home into vital, saving faith. This is why a leading missiologist like C. Peter Wagner can say, “Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2. PAUL'S WHOLE STRATEGY WAS TO PLANT URBAN CHURCHES

The greatest missionary in history, Saint Paul, had a rather simple twofold strategy. First, he went into the largest city of a region (cf. Acts 16:9, 12), and second, he planted churches in each city (cf. Titus 1:5—“appoint elders in every town”). Once Paul had done that, he could say that he had “fully preached” the gospel in a region and that he had “no more place . . . to work in these regions” (cf. Rom. 15:19, 23). This means Paul had two controlling assumptions: (a) that the way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities, and (b) the way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it. Once he had accomplished this in a city, he moved on. He knew that the rest that needed to happen would follow.

### RESPONSE

“But,” many people say, “that was in the beginning. Now the country (at least our country) is filled with churches. Why is church planting important *now*?”

## WE PLANT CHURCHES BECAUSE WE WANT TO BE TRUE TO THE GREAT COMMISSION.

Consider these facts:

### 1. NEW CHURCHES BEST REACH NEW GENERATIONS, NEW RESIDENTS, AND NEW PEOPLE GROUPS

First, younger adults have always been disproportionately found in newer congregations. Long-established congregations develop traditions (such as time of worship, length of service, level of emotional responsiveness, sermon topics, leadership style, emotional atmosphere, and thousands of other tiny customs and mores) that reflect the sensibilities of longtime leaders from the older generations who have the influence and money to control church life. The automatic maintenance of such habits does not reach younger generations effectively.

Second, new residents are almost always reached better by new congregations. Older congregations may require a tenure of ten years before someone is allowed into places of leadership and influence, but in a new church, new residents tend to have equal power with longtime area residents.

Third, new sociocultural groups in a community are always reached better by new congregations. For example, if new white-collar commuters move into an area where the older residents were farmers, it is likely that a new church will be more receptive to the myriad needs of the new residents, while the older churches will continue to be oriented to the original social group. Also, new racial groups in a community are best reached by a new church that is intentionally multiethnic from the start. For example, if an all-Anglo neighborhood becomes 33 percent Hispanic, a new, deliberately biracial church will be far more likely to create “cultural space” for newcomers than will an older church in town.

Finally, brand-new immigrant groups nearly always can be reached only by churches ministering in their own language. If we wait for a new group to become assimilated into the local culture, we will wait

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1. C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Growth* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1987), 168.

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for years without reaching out to its members. Note: Often a new congregation for a new people group can be planted *within* the overall structure of an existing church. It may be a new Sunday service at another time, or a new network of house churches that are connected to a larger, already existing congregation. Although it may not technically be a new independent congregation, it serves the same function.

In summary, new congregations *empower* new people and new peoples much more quickly and readily than can older churches. Thus they always have and always will reach them with greater facility than long-established bodies can. This means not only that we need church planting so that frontier regions or unevangelized countries can become Christian, but also that Christian countries will have to maintain vigorous, extensive church planting simply to *stay* Christian!

## 2. NEW CHURCHES BEST REACH THE UNCHURCHED—PERIOD

Dozens of denominational studies have confirmed that the average new church gains most of its new members (60–80%) from the ranks of people who are not attending any worshiping body, while churches over ten to fifteen years of age gain 80–90 percent of new members by transfer from other congregations.<sup>2</sup> This means the average new congregation will bring six to eight times more new people into the life of the body of Christ than an older congregation of the same size.

Although established congregations provide many things that newer churches often cannot, older churches in general will never be able to match the effectiveness of new bodies in reaching people for the kingdom. Why would this be? As a congregation ages, powerful internal institutional pressures lead it to allocate most of its resources and energy toward the concerns of its members and constituents, rather than toward those outside its walls. This is natural and to a great degree desirable. Older congregations have a stability and steadiness that many people thrive on and need. This does not mean that established churches cannot win new people. In fact, many non-Christians will be reached *only* by churches with long roots in the community and the marks of stability and respectability.

On the other hand, new congregations, in general, are forced to focus on the needs of its *non*members, simply to get off the ground. Because so many of a new church's leaders came very recently from the ranks of the unchurched, the congregation is far more sensitive to the nonbeliever's concerns. Also, in the first two years of our Christian life, we have far more close, face-to-face relationships with non-Christians than we do later. A congregation filled with people fresh from the ranks of the unchurched will thus have the power to invite and attract many more nonbelievers into the church's life and events than will the members of the typical established body.

What does this mean, practically? If we want to reach our city, should we try to renew older congregations to make them more evangelistic, or should we plant lots of new churches? That question is surely a false either-or dichotomy. We should do both! Nevertheless, the above shows that, despite the occasional exceptions, the only broad-scale way to bring many new Christians into the body of Christ in a permanent way is to plant new churches.

To throw this into relief, imagine that Town A, Town B, and Town C are the same size, and they each have a hundred churches of one hundred persons each. In Town A, all the churches are more than fifteen years old. The overall number of active Christian churchgoers in that town is shrinking, even if four or five of the churches get very "hot" and double in attendance. In Town B, five of the churches are fewer than fifteen years old. They, along with several older congregations, are winning new people to

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2. Lyle Schaller, quoted in D. McGavran and G. Hunter, *Church Growth: Strategies That Work* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 100. See also C. Kirk Hadaway, *New Churches and Church Growth in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987).

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Christ, but this only offsets the normal declines of the older churches. Thus the overall number of active Christian churchgoers in that town is staying the same. Finally, in Town C, thirty of the churches are under fifteen years old. In this town, the overall number of active Christian churchgoers is on a path to grow 50 percent in a generation.<sup>3</sup>

#### Response

"But," many people say, "what about all the existing churches that need help? You seem to be ignoring them." Not at all.

### WE PLANT CHURCHES BECAUSE WE WANT TO CONTINUALLY RENEW THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST.

It is a great mistake to think that we have to choose between church planting and church renewal. Strange as it may seem, the planting of new churches in a city is one of the very *best* ways to revitalize older churches in the vicinity and renew the whole body of Christ. Why?

#### FIRST, THE NEW CHURCHES BRING NEW IDEAS TO THE WHOLE BODY

There is plenty of resistance to the idea that we need to plant new churches to reach the constant stream of new groups and generations and residents. Many congregations insist that all available resources should be used to find ways of helping existing churches reach them. There is, however, no better way to teach older congregations about new skills and methods for reaching new people groups than by planting new churches. It is the *new* churches that have freedom to be innovative, so they become the Research and Development Department for the whole body in the city. Often the older congregations have been too timid to try a particular approach or absolutely sure it would "not work here," but when the new church in town succeeds wildly with that new method, the other churches eventually take notice and gain the courage to try it themselves.

#### SECOND, NEW CHURCHES ARE ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO IDENTIFY CREATIVE, STRONG LEADERS FOR THE WHOLE BODY

In older congregations, leaders emphasize tradition, tenure, routine, and kinship ties. New congregations, on the other hand, attract a higher percentage of venturesome people who value creativity, risk, innovation, and future orientation. Many of these men and women would never be attracted or compelled into significant ministry apart from the appearance of these new bodies. Often older churches "box out" people who have strong leadership skills but who cannot work in more traditional settings. New churches in a city thus attract and harness people whose gifts would otherwise not be utilized in the work of the body. These new leaders eventually benefit the whole body in the city.

#### THIRD, THE NEW CHURCHES CHALLENGE OTHER CHURCHES TO SELF-EXAMINATION

In general, the success of new churches often challenges older congregations to evaluate themselves in substantial ways. Sometimes it is only in contrast with a new church that older churches can finally define their *own* vision, specialties, and identity. Often the growth of the new congregation gives the older churches hope that "it can be done," and it may even bring about humility and repentance for defeatist and pessimistic attitudes. Sometimes a new congregation can partner with an older church to mount ministries that neither could do by itself.

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3. See Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 12. Schaller talks about "the 1% Rule." Each year any association of churches should plant new congregations at the rate of 1 percent of their existing total; otherwise, that association will be in decline. That is just "maintenance." If an association wants to grow 50 percent plus, it must plant 2–3 percent per year.



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#### FOURTH, THE NEW CHURCH MAY BE AN “EVANGELISTIC FEEDER” FOR A WHOLE COMMUNITY

The new church often produces many converts who end up in older churches for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the new church is very exciting and outward facing but is also very unstable or immature in its leadership. Some converts cannot stand the tumultuous changes that regularly come through this new church, and they move to an existing church. Sometimes the new church reaches a person for Christ, but the new convert quickly discovers that he or she does not fit the socioeconomic makeup of the new congregation and gravitates to an established congregation where the customs and culture feel more familiar. Ordinarily, the new churches of a city produce new people not only for themselves but for the older bodies as well.

In summary, vigorous church planting is one of the best ways to renew the body of Christ in a city, as well as the best single way to grow the whole body of Christ in a city.

There is one more reason why it is good for the existing churches of a region to initiate or at least support the planting of churches nearby.

#### WE PLANT CHURCHES AS AN EXERCISE IN KINGDOM-MINDEDNESS.

All in all, church planting helps an existing church best when the new congregation is voluntarily birthed by an older “mother” congregation. Often the excitement and new leaders and new ministries and additional members and income wash back into the mother church in various ways and strengthen and renew it. Although there is some pain in seeing good friends and valued leaders go away to form a new church, the mother church usually soon experiences a surge of high self-esteem and an influx of new, enthusiastic leaders and members.

However, a new church in the community usually confronts churches with a major issue—the issue of “kingdom-mindedness.” New churches, as we have seen, draw most of their new members (up to 80%) from the ranks of the unchurched, but they *will* always attract some people out of existing churches. That is inevitable. At this point, the existing churches, in a sense, have a question posed to them: “Are we going to rejoice in the 80 percent—the new people the kingdom has gained through this new church—or are we going to bemoan the situation and resent the three families we lost to it?” Our attitude to new church development is a test of whether our mindset is geared to our own institutional turf or to the overall health and prosperity of the kingdom of God in the city.

Any church that is more upset by its own small losses than grateful for the kingdom’s large gains is betraying its narrow interests. Even so, as we have seen, the benefits that new church planting offers to older congregations is very great, even if not initially obvious.

#### SUMMARY

If we briefly glance again at the objections to church planting in the introduction, we can now see the false premises underlying the statements. *Objection A* assumes that older congregations can reach newcomers as well as new congregations, but to reach new generations and people groups will require *both* renewed older churches and lots of new churches. *Objection B* assumes that new congregations will reach only currently active churchgoers, but new churches do far better at reaching the unchurched, and thus they are the only way to *increase* the “churchgoing pie.” *Objection C* assumes that new church planting will only discourage older churches. There is a possibility of some initial discouragement, but

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for many reasons new churches are one of the best ways to renew and revitalize older churches. And a final objection assumes that new churches work only where the population is growing. In actuality, they reach people wherever the population is *changing*. If new people are coming in to replace former residents, or new groups of people are coming in even though the net population figure is stagnant, new churches are needed.

New church planting is the only way that we can be sure we are going to increase the number of believers in a city, and it is one of the best ways to renew the whole body of Christ. The evidence for this statement is strong—biblically, sociologically, and historically. In the end, a lack of kingdom-mindedness may simply blind us to all this evidence. We must beware of that.

### FINAL NOTE: HISTORICAL LESSONS.

If all this is true, there should be lots of evidence for these principles in church history—and there is!

In 1820, there was one Christian church for every 875 U.S. residents. From 1860 to 1906, U.S. Protestant churches planted one new church for every increase of 350 in the population, bringing the ratio by the start of World War I to just one church for every 430 persons. In 1906 over a third of all the congregations in the country were less than twenty-five years old.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the percentage of the U.S. population involved in the life of the church rose steadily. For example, in 1776, just 17 percent of persons in the United States were categorized as “religious adherents,” but by 1916 that figure had risen to 53 percent.<sup>5</sup>

After World War I, however, especially among mainline Protestants, church planting plummeted for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons was the issue of turf. Once the continental United States was covered by towns and settlements, with churches and church buildings in each one, there was strong resistance from older churches to any new churches being planted in “our neighborhood.” As we have seen above, new churches are commonly very effective at reaching new people and growing during their first couple of decades. The vast majority of U.S. congregations peak in size during the first two or three decades of their existence and then remain on a plateau or slowly shrink.<sup>6</sup> This is due to the factors mentioned above: they cannot assimilate new people, or groups of people, as well as new churches can. However, older churches have feared the competition from new churches. Mainline church congregations, with their centralized government, were the most effective in blocking new church development in their towns. As a result, the mainline churches have shrunk remarkably in the last twenty to thirty years.<sup>7</sup>

What are the historical lessons? Church attendance and adherence overall in the United States are in decline. This cannot be reversed in any other way but the way it originally had been so remarkably *increasing*. We must plant churches at such a rate that the number of churches per 1,000 in the population begins to grow again, rather than decline as it has since World War I.

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4. *Ibid.*, 14–26.

5. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1992), 16.

6. Schaller, *44 Questions*, 23.

7. Schaller argues that a lack of church planting is one major cause of the decline of mainline Protestantism (*44 Questions*, 24–26). Finke and Stark show how independent churches, such as the Baptists, that have had freedom to plant churches without interference, have proliferated their numbers (*Churching*, 248).

## Appendix 2: Churches In Prince George (43)

These are all the churches in Prince George registered with the Canada Revenue Agency. There may be other smaller house churches or church plants. If you have any additions, or changes, to this list please let us know.

### Catholic & Orthodox (6)

- st. mary's parish
- sacred heart parish
- immaculate conception parish
- christ our saviour parish
- ukrainian catholic parish of st george
- greek orthodox community of prince george

### Mainline (7)

- grace anglican church
- heritage free presbyterian church
- our savior's lutheran church
- st gile's presbyterian church
- st. andrew's united church
- st. michael and all angels church
- zion lutheran church and christian school of prince george

### Baptist (6)

- central fellowship baptist church
- college heights baptist church
- fort george baptist church
- hartland baptist church

- prince george first baptist church
- spruceland baptist church

### **Pentecostal (5)**

- all nations pentecostal church of prince george
- calvary united pentecostal church of prince george
- gateway christian ministries
- hart pentecostal church
- pg tabernacle society

### **Other Evangelical (10)**

- christian reformed church of prince george
- lakes community church
- prince george city church
- westwood mennonite brethren church
- evangelical free church
- westside family fellowship society
- overcoming faith centre inc.
- the well - a gathering place (fellowship)
- lakewood alliance church
- timbers community church of the christian & missionary alliance in canada

### **Unknown Affiliation (6)**

- church of the resurrection



- faith alive fellowship inc.
- prince george bible missionary church
- prince george gospel chapel
- prince george korean church association
- the church of god of prophecy, western office

### **Not CRA Registered in Prince George (3)**

- Salvation Army
- Canadian Reformed Church
- Lighthouse

## **Appendix 3: Apostles Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit

and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen

## Appendix 4: Definitions

### Core Team

Every church has a “core”. These are the people that keep the ship sailing. They lead the worship team, they setup chairs, they preach, they lead bible studies, they show up to mid-week meetings, and they come an hour early to pray.

In order to get started, a church planter needs at least a few people like this. This is the “core team”. They should all be people of godly character and many will become the elders, deacons, and other leaders.

### Launch Team

The launch team is simply the group of people who help the church launch. This includes the core team but is a broader group. This team could include people who will attend the new church or go to a different church but still want to help out. It could even include people who have not yet come to faith but like what we are doing.



## NCMI

*“New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI) is a trans-local ministry team, with an apostolic heart, that is comprised of men and women who, through partnership, help pastors / elders build their local churches in doing the work of Jesus Christ’s Kingdom in their areas. Our work is in equipping and mobilizing believers for the fulfilment of the work of the Kingdom and the disciplining of the nations.*

*NCMI is not a grouping of churches, a denomination, a movement or an organization. It is simply a name given to a team with recognized Ephesians 4:11 gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) who partner in their commitment to the same vision of working, on a grass-roots level, with local churches to accomplish God’s mandate of making disciples of all nations. Church leaders partner with NCMI voluntarily and through friendship. There are no documents to sign, there are no headquarters, and there is nothing that makes our partnerships formal and legally binding.*

*We see the Church as a grouping of people that God has called out to bring and demonstrate his message of life, grace, reconciliation and redemption in the world (the “Priesthood of All Believers”), to make disciples of all nations. We have an “apostolic heart” because we believe in planting churches in every city, region and nation of the world; and we actively work in our partnerships in bringing this to a reality.*

*We are currently working in more than 100 different countries, and there are local churches in these nations that voluntarily partner with NCMI as a trans-local team.”*

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