



New Thoughts on Planting Fast Growing Churches.....

Data from a total of sixty fast-growing church plants was recorded for this study on Planting Fast Growing Churches.

According to the data, 77% of the fast-growing church plants involved in this study reached an average weekly attendance of 200 by the twenty-four-month mark.

Crowds attract crowds. Of all the problems that new churches experience, this may be the most difficult to overcome. Most church plants start too quickly and they end up settling to be a church of 75 to 150.

In order to stem this tide of stagnation, we must begin planting churches to which people will flock. A total of twenty-one significant differences were discovered between fast-growing and struggling church plants.

The Ridley assessment is a must. No planter should be allowed on the field unless he or she has been properly assessed. The higher potential planter scores on this church-planting assessment, the greater possibility he has of planting a fast-growing church.

“The success of a church plant has a lot to do with getting “the right people on the bus.” For me, this became more apparent when I compared the Ridley scores of the struggling church plant surveys against the fast-growing ones. This finding implies that a sponsoring agency wishing to plant a fast-growing dynamic church plant should take the Ridley test, or any other proven assessment seriously.”

Too Much or TOO LITTLE....Adequate financial support of a church plant is a must. A delicate balance exists between giving a planter too much or too little financial support. Let’s not be shy about it: church planting is very expensive. It requires a proper balance of funding from the sponsoring agency. Too much money can also have a negative effect on a

new church. It can fall into a welfare pattern. If a planter cannot bring a church to self-support within three years, this might mean that the wrong leader has been chosen. The “fast-growing” church plant group had a 16.8 % higher rate of full-time pastors than struggling church plants. A majority of fast-growing church plants were led by full-time planters.

Ownership and Vision....The new church plant needs a plan, a good hearty strategy, prior to its launch. The vision for a church plant must be birthed in the heart of the individual planting church. The results plainly show that the church planter with control over his or her own church vision is much more likely to succeed.

“A planter once told me that a denominational leader with a dream to plant a church had approached him. This leader mapped out the location: a fast growing city located in the American Southwest. For years, this denominational leader had carried a heart felt vision for this city. In response, the planter jumped on a plane, flew to the city, and immediately fell in love with the area. This man was a true church planter. He was called to plant and he loved a challenge. This planter had a deep and holy drive to follow the Great Commission. Yet, three years and \$250,000 later, this church plant was struggling to survive, and it ultimately closed.”

This is a story about a denominational leader who asked a pastor to start a church in a place that he had never considered. As a result, the planter tried, but the vision cast by the leader withered.

While this may not be the case in every instance, the data reveals a greater likelihood for a church plant to become a fast-growing plant if the vision comes from the individual planting the church. ***(This article will be continued in the next issue of Powerline.)***

Dr. Owen Weston is a recognized leading expert in church planting and church revitalization. In addition to starting and pastoring several churches, many of which grew to megachurch stature, he has spent years mentoring leading churches and pastors in turning dead and dying churches into life-giving, growing churches. Dr. Weston is also the CPR Director for Alpha Ministries.