



PARENTING CHURCH NETWORK: FULFILLING CHRIST'S CALL TO PLANT NEW CHURCHES



northwest conference
developing leaders. thriving churches.

The Northwest Conference • 3106 47th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406
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Every church
shares one thing
in common ... a beginning.

Contents

Nearby Mission Project	4
Adding To Our Outreach Efforts	6
The Missional Focus	8
Networking With Other Churches	10
Becoming Involved	12
Household Support	14

The heritage of the past
is the seed for
the harvest of the future.

+ inscription at the entrance of The National Archive

Every church was at some point a church
plant ... including your own. Every church shares
one thing in common ... a beginning.

You see, church planting is a Biblical pattern for mission. Your church is evidence. It was started at one point in time. And because it was, each of you has been touched. So have untold others through the years.

Now we have the opportunity to do for others what others first did for us. We can take the same spirit that founded our existing congregations and establish yet another congregation committed to living out the hope of Christ in word and deed.



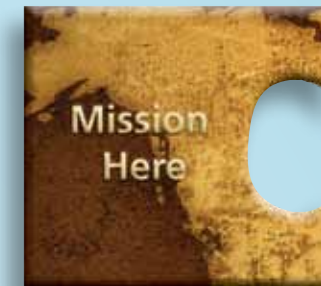


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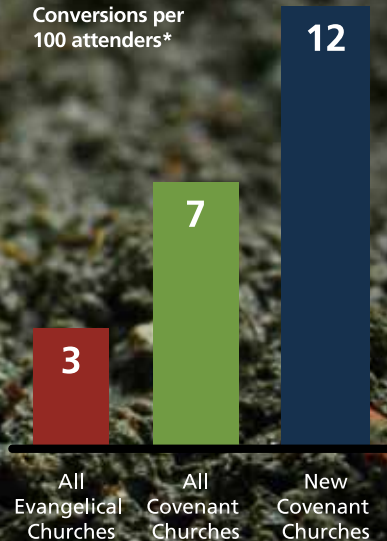
Essentially, church planting is simply a nearby mission project. In Acts 1:8, Jesus gives the map of mission when He says, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

On the mission map, Jerusalem is equivalent to where we live. It is, and remains, the primary focus of our energies. Then, together with over 775 other Covenant churches, we have developed an "ends of the earth" world mission enterprise twice as large as the Covenant at home. So, we are strong here and far away.

Church planting helps us fill in the map of the mission by reaching into neighboring communities, the nearby.



Effectiveness of Church Planting



*Figure from Interest Ministries (a research group) and the Annual Survey of Covenant Churches

Planting a church adds to our outreach efforts.

The Bible shows that good things happen in the lives of people when churches are planted.

For one, people come to faith. Church planting is a Biblical pattern for mission. The Bible shows us that the early church touched many lives as they created new congregations in new areas. The underlying logic is simple: More churches means more “mission outposts” with more opportunities to touch more people.

Repeated studies bear out the fact that church planting remains a highly effective means of evangelism today. Lyle Schaller, who may be the most respected analyst of church life, stated “church planting is the closest thing to a guaranteed method of outreach.”

By adding church planting to our mix of outreach strategies, we connect to a proven way of reaching people with the hope of Christ. It allows us to reach people and communities that we cannot fully reach from our own base of ministry.

God’s creation design is for living things to give birth to like kind. Elephants give birth to baby elephants. Kangaroos give birth to baby kangaroos. The Bible teaches that the church is a living creation. God’s design is for churches to give birth to new churches.

We find our life by giving it away.

A second good thing that happens is people come alive.

The Bible is full of examples of individuals whose faith was ignited by becoming involved in a church plant. Paul. Barnabas. Mark. Priscilla. Aquila. Lydia. Timothy. Silas. As you read their stories, each one experienced deeper vitality and growth through such a faith-dependent venture.

You see, new churches create new opportunities for new people to step up to the plate in service and sacrifice. As they do, they find their own faith invigorated by watching God build His church.

But it is not just those in the new church who are enlivened. Sponsoring churches routinely report added vitality in their own midst. You see, church planting provides a renewed missional focus for parenting churches. Church planting taps into the spiritual principle that Jesus teaches us: We find our life by giving it away.

A missional focus will provide an additional source of vitality.

Will planting a church detract from your ministry here? Clearly, the answer is no. Church planting is very achievable, especially since you will be partners with other churches in your

area, plus the Northwest Conference, and the Evangelical Covenant Church. In fact, a missional focus often provides an additional source of vitality for many churches.

How can you help? For a harvest, you need good seed, prepared soil, and care of the crop. Your church's role is simply to provide good seed. The much larger bulk of

responsibility for preparing the soil, watering the seed, cultivating the crop, and harvesting the crop is done by the church planter and launch team of the new church.

God will use you to provide good seed that will make planting a possibility. God will use the church plant to nurture the seed to make the harvest a reality.

Providing good seed is within the reach of every church and is absolutely critical to an abundant harvest.



Did you ever stop to think that the true fruit of an apple tree is an orchard? The apple in design is merely the conveyor of seed to plant the next tree. That it tastes good is a bonus! A fruitful church, then, is not measured just by its apples. It is also evidenced by other trees that take root.

Networking with other churches

puts church planting within reach of every local congregation.

1. The Apostle Paul's missionary journeys were primarily church planting works. What Paul began, we will equip your church to continue.
2. The goal of the Parenting Church Network is to help your church discover how to reproduce itself in a healthy way.
3. If necessary, the Network will connect you with 3-7 other churches that are also committed to reproducing healthy, new churches.

4. The Network will help you determine who you are best equipped to reach. "If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time."



5. We will help you mobilize the people in your church and help them get involved praying, funding, resourcing, and helping start new churches.
6. The Network will help your church catch the vision for multiplication and reproduction.

Providing good seed is very achievable and absolutely indispensable.

We are establishing church planting networks with other churches in the area. Together, we intend to provide the following seeds:

- intentional prayer focus
- referral of unchurched contacts in the area
- short-term "ministry muscle": occasional help with greeting, setup, music, child care and so on
- a sound financial base

- material support: for example, help with equipment, curriculum, and so on.

We believe these are highly achievable in ways that will not distract your church from its principle focus of ministry right where you are. The Northwest Conference and the Evangelical Covenant Church will additionally support each new project through:

- **A**ssessing: assistance in the recruitment of a qualified church planting pastor.
- **C**oaching: ongoing coaching with the church plant.
- **T**raining: consistent church planter training.
- **S**upport: additional financial and material support, and strategic planning and demographic assistance.

How effective are partnerships between local churches, the conference, and the Covenant? With these collaborative and supportive dynamics, most Covenant church plants are thriving and growing. They have resulted in fully-rooted congregations, reaching nearly 53,000 people in the last 10 years.

"The purpose of the church is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service, thereby planting new congregations throughout the world." — David Hesselgrave



We can all be involved
in this nearby mission project.

How can you connect to this mission? There are five ways:

1. **PRAY:** You can commit to pray for the church planting pastors and new churches within the Northwest Conference.
2. **DECIDE:** Encourage your church leadership to step out in faith and get involved in reaching the lost through parenting, or partnering with other churches, to plant a new church.
3. **GATHER:** You can begin to form a launch team of people who are willing to go out to plant in a nearby community or neighborhood.
4. **HELP:** If presented with an opportunity, commit to assist in a new church plant in whatever way(s) you can.
5. **COMMIT:** Become a Northwest Conference **CHURCH PLANTING PARTNER, OR CPP.** By filling out a commitment card you agree to support through prayer, and/or with ongoing financial support, the development of new churches in the Northwest Conference.

Finally, we hope every household will use this as an opportunity to model the importance of mission in the home. We are looking for a consistent group of friends, **CHURCH PLANTING PARTNERS**, each who will contribute regularly above and beyond their giving to their home church. The needs are great, and your giving is strategic.

Mammal or Reptile?

While reptiles generally abandon their young, mammals care for and nurture their offspring until they are able to fend for themselves. We do not take the birthing of a church lightly. Working with your church and the Covenant as a whole, we want to provide appropriate nurture to ensure that together we are planting healthy, growing congregations. We intend to be “mammalian” in our approach.



Household support

highlights the importance of mission in the home.

We estimate it will take \$180,000 of support to launch each new church over a 3-year period. This will provide salary, support, facility rental, and start-up equipment as the congregation moves toward self-sufficiency in its first 3 years. We believe God will raise up parenting and partnering churches to help provide a portion of this support, but the Northwest Conference realizes that additional funding is needed. The Northwest Conference estimates approximately 90 households are needed to be friends of each new plant financially, providing approximately 1/3 of the amount needed.

This table illustrates how a new plant could be underwritten during the next 36 months if 90

households were to respond at the various levels shown.

Would you prayerfully consider your response?

To participate, complete both the Personal Participation and Financial Participation portions of the “**CHURCH PLANTING PARTNERS**” card, and drop them in the mail or hand them in today. When they are received, the Personal Participation form will be processed for contact as needed. The Financial Participation portion goes to the Northwest Conference office for remittance and tax-deductible receipt processing. Your prompt return of both cards is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your support of Northwest Conference Mission initiatives.



EXAMPLES OF HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT

Commitments at each level	Individual monthly gift	Total annual amount	3-year total
10	\$10	\$1,200	\$3,600
21	\$15	\$3,780	\$11,340
29	\$20	\$6,960	\$20,880
21	\$25	\$6,300	\$18,900
9	\$30	\$3,240	\$9,720
90 commitments totaling			\$64,440



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