REACHING OUT Through CHURCH PLANTING
Why We Plant New Churches

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples, and the starting of new churches is the New Testament pattern for fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Lost people matter to God. It is one of the most effective ways to reach people for Christ.

The U.S. unchurched population is the largest mission field in the English-speaking world and the third largest globally.

Estimates show only 2 out of 10 Americans attend church on any given Sunday.

Church planting breaks down cultural and racial barriers. Nearly 50% of our new churches are among populations of color or are intentionally multi-ethnic from the start.

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

Church Planting is a Biblical pattern for mission. Your church is part of a rich history. 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 other congregations committed to living out the hope of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

“Church Planting is the nearest thing to a guaranteed method of evangelism ...”

— Lyle Schaller
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 800 other Covenant churches, we have developed an “ends of the earth” world mission enterprise twice as large as the Covenant in North America. So, we are strong here and far away.

Church Planting helps us fill in the map of mission by reaching into neighboring communities (our Judea) and cross-cultural contexts (our Samaria).

Is planting a new church something we can do? Yes, 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, this missional focus often provides an additional source of vitality for many existing churches. Remember, you can’t out-give God.

The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future.

— Inscription at the entrance of The National Archives

Effectiveness of Church Planting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Evangelical Churches</th>
<th>All Covenant Churches</th>
<th>New Covenant Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversions per 100 attendees*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures from Interest Ministries (a research group) and the Annual Survey of Covenant Churches
The NWC and the ECC provide Assessment, Coaching, Training and Support to each new church that is planted.

Church Planting in the Covenant is a 3-way partnership consisting of the Northwest Conference, the Evangelical Covenant Church, and a parenting church (or a group of partnering churches).

Parenting or partnering churches provide the “seed” to begin a new church. These churches provide prayer, people, a portion of the financial support, and short-term hands-on ministry support (greeting, worship, children’s ministry, etc.).

The Church Planter and the new developing church then face the challenge of reaching out, making disciples, and transforming their community. During this time the help given by your church is critical in providing support on many levels.
Did you ever stop to think that the true fruit of an apple tree is an orchard? You can count the number of seeds in an apple, but you can’t count the number of apples in a seed.

“The primary mission of the Church and, therefore, of the churches 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; thus new congregations are to be planted throughout the world.”

— David Hesselgrave
HOW YOU CAN PERSONALLY GET INVOLVED

PRAY You can commit to pray for the Church Planting pastors and new churches within the Northwest Conference.

ENCOURAGE Ask your church leadership to step out in faith and get involved in reaching the lost through parenting or partnering to plant a new church.

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.

HELP If presented with an opportunity, commit to assist in a new Church Plant in whatever way(s) you can.

COMMIT Become a Northwest Conference Church Planting Partner. Through ongoing financial support, you can accelerate the development of new churches in the Northwest Conference.

HOW YOUR CHURCH CAN GET INVOLVED

PARENT Your church can decide to be a Parenting Church. As a Parenting Church, your church agrees to provide a portion of the needed funding for the first 3 years.

PARTNER Your church can commit to join a Partnering Church Network where several churches join together to plant a church, sharing the costs and the commitment. This puts Church Planting within the reach of every Covenant church in the Northwest Conference.

SEND Your church can commit to send some people out to help in the planting of a new church.

PRAY Your church can commit to pray for the new church you have helped to birth.

COMMIT Your church can provide resources through its annual budget for Church Planting. Your church can also commit a portion of money raised during a capital campaign or other fundraising initiative.

―Jean Fleming

“Living as Christ desires but simultaneously playing it safe is impossible. Faith presumes risk. What risks are you taking?”

If you’d like to get involved, please contact:
Mike Brown
Director of Church Planting
(800) 756-6692 • (612) 721-4893
mike@northwestconference.org