

Mission Moments – March 9, 2007
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From the Center for U.S. Missions
Following Jesus into the U.S. Mission Field
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Micro to Macro:
The Call for Churches to Plant Churches
by Mike Ruhl

Reproduction of all kinds begins at the molecular level.

That humbles me somewhat, as I reflect upon the reality that God, the Author of Life, enabled me to begin my life as a zygote, a single cell formed by the union of a male seed and a female egg. And at an even deeper molecular level, chromosomes in the DNA strands define unique personal characteristics. It is a pattern of development that the Lord Himself wove into the fabric of creation. All reproduction begins at the molecular level and develops from the micro to the macro, from the simple to the complex.

It is the same with the advance of the Kingdom of God.

According to a study conducted by a prominent Christian denomination in the United States, only 4% of Christian churches in the United States will sponsor the planting of a new (“daughter”) congregation. If those figures are accurate, this means that 96% of the conventional Christian churches in America will *never give birth*.

Many saints in the Body of Christ see no problems or contradictions with that assessment. In fact, one can hear comments from some of them such as:

*We already have plenty of churches for our population.
Too many churches are sitting empty, so why start new ones?
We need healthier congregations, not more congregations.*

Such comments are well-intentioned, but they clash with the principle of Kingdom Advance. They focus on the “here and now,” but fail to embrace the long-term consequences of failing to generate a new audience for the Gospel. Can we imagine making similar comments in a discussion about people? *We have plenty of people. We don't need more people, just healthier ones. Why have more babies?*

What if it were suddenly discovered that 96% of American women were no longer fertile and could not have babies? Most people would conclude two things: first, that this is *not natural*, so there must be something wrong with their body's health; and second, that the future is in serious jeopardy.

Do you believe God is calling forth a church that can be fruitful and multiply through new church reproduction (church planting)?

We recognize that, for many church leaders and followers, church planting is a scary term. It calls up images of pain, hardship and loss, and even threatens the viability of existing church operations. But actually, reproduction is not hard. In fact, it is natural and even spiritually “pleasurable.” Reproduction comes from a natural desire inherent in all living things, and it is stirred by *intimacy* with God, His worship, His mission, His body of believers, *and the lost world*.

I would challenge you, dear pastor and ministry leader, to engage your church leadership team in a serious, prayerful discussion about the call of God to sponsor the planting of a new church or churches.

Moment Extras

“Planters are in the harvest field.”

Rev. Scott Rische, Senior Pastor
First Lutheran Church, El Cajon, CA

Questions for Reflection

1. Has my church daughtered a church? If so, is it time to do so again? If not, why not?
2. My church exists primarily to ...
3. Is my church pregnant?
4. If future church planters are in the harvest what will I do to get my church into the harvest?

Links

"Why Plant A Daughter Church?"

Why should churches plant churches? Multiplication. What's the point?"

<http://www.dcp.org/NewChurches/Daughtering/default.aspx>

God blesses churches that utilize the most biblical and most effective strategy of evangelism. Here are three Great Commission evangelism axioms:

1. The most Biblical method of evangelism is church planting.
2. The most effective method of evangelism is church planting.
3. The most effective way to plant churches is daughter church planting.

The article at the above location elaborates on these three points.

"Mission Frontier Congregations in the LCMS: Daughter Church Planting in San Diego"

<http://boss.streamos.com/wmedia/mission/national/churchplant-2006-sd.wvx>

An insightful and encouraging streaming video that focuses on Daughter Church Planting and outreach through small groups in San Diego, CA. The video shares principles that drive the small group ministry at First Lutheran Church in El Cajon, CA. The video is part of a larger collection of videos available from the LCMS World Mission (at <http://www.lcms.org/ca/mission/video/video-Churchplanting2006.asp>).

"Is Your Church Pregnant?"

Healthy churches can daughter new congregations.

by Glenn Gibson

<http://www.christianity.ca/mission/canada/2003/06.001.html>

Explore the possibility that your church may be pregnant and ready to daughter a church. The article includes four questions as part of a “pre-pregnancy” test, advice on getting pregnant and possible congregational pregnancy symptoms with a timeline.

The following items are available at www.centerforusmissions.org:

Bible Study by Mike Ruhl, available for free download: "Female and Fertile: Reproductive Capacity in the Local Congregation." (Resources > Bible Studies).

In the Center's store: DVD on Daughter Church Planting, \$15.00 (Store > DVD's)

News from the Center

Upcoming Training Events. See our website or contact us (office@centerforusmissions.com; 949-854-8002 x1780) for more information.

- March 16-18: Worship in the Urban Context; Milwaukee, WI
- April 13-14: Sharing Christ in the City; Gary, IN
- Basic Mission Planters Training, Mon-Fri July 23-27, 2007, Irvine, CA
- Igniting Congregations Event Wave II, October 12-13, San Diego, CA

At www.centerforusmissions.org, read about:

- the Center's Daughter Church Planting Seminar (Seminars > Seminars Available > Daughter Church Planting)
- hosting a seminar (Seminars > Host a Seminar)

Mission Moments, a biweekly electronic newsletter from the Center for U.S. Missions, brings information and encouragement to all who desire to share the God's great love in Jesus Christ with others. The Center for U.S. Missions provides research and training for mission work among unevangelized people in the United States. A partnership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Missions, Concordia University in Irvine, California, and the North America Mission Executives of the LCMS, the Center serves all Christian denominations.

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