

Could You Create a Church in 30 Days?
by Ken Behnken

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The other day when I was surfing the Internet for interesting information to share with you in this newsletter, I ran across an article by C. Michael Johnson who has worked with 2000 churches in all kinds of situations. He has been creating and field testing effective, research-based outreach programs. Thirty years of ministry marketing experience give him impetus for his ministry.

The article he wrote on his web page <http://breakthroughchurch.com> was titled "Create a Church in Thirty Days." He starts the article by saying, "I've always been intrigued by entrepreneurs who claimed that they could 'parachute' into a strange city and build a thriving business in 30 days. Why? Because, frankly, many have done it."

For several years I have been studying similarities between the church planter and the entrepreneur. There are many similarities. They both are starting something from nothing. Both must be willing to put all their efforts into their project. They must have a vision and a plan. Incorporating people into their team who have the gifts and talents they don't possess is critical for implementation. Being able to sell their vision and lead their team through the plan is also critical.

For the entrepreneur, his future depends on making it happen. He has only so much funding and he needs to make it last until the new start becomes self-supporting. Church planters will say, "This sounds familiar!"

C. Michael Johnson continues in his article to say that this idea of starting a church in thirty days has a way of challenging who I am as a follower of Christ, sort of boiling it all down to the essential core of mission...a way of measuring our saltiness or "social skills" as citizens of this world and the world to come.

But how would you do it? What would you do first? Who would you seek out? What would be your key message, your universal attraction? What forms would the "church" take? Could it become self-reproducing? What tangible impact would it have on the city?"

"The fact is," Johnson states, "if your life depended upon it, you could do it. And if you did it, what you learned could be worth everything. If indeed, you can create a church in a relatively short timeframe, one not only self-sustaining but also self-reproducing, can there be anything more important to your ministry, to your city, and to the fellowship of churches you influence?"

Now how would you go about starting this church? What steps would you take? How would you identify an effective strategy? Johnson says that in his view, there are at least ten key parts that need thoughtful consideration. They are:

1. What's not working, and why?
2. How can we get in sync with God's heart and strategy for those we want to reach?
3. How do we find the best way to correct or realign the skewed image of God (and the church) held by those we want to reach?
4. How can we harness the power of media and the Internet in the most credible, tasteful, relevant, costefficient, and responsive way with the continuity and ease of an ongoing plan?
5. What are the easiest, most natural, and most readily available ways to connect to people and initiate a relationship?
6. What should be the manner of our approach, the focus of our conversation, and the strength of our deepening relationships?
7. What outcomes should we expect and plan for?
8. What systemic framework will allow us to build the holistic solutions needed for lasting growth?
9. How can we internalize a propensity for healthy reproduction in a way that not only generates multiplication, but at a rate that will, by an acceptable time, achieve exponential growth?
10. How can we create an environment for self-renewal, spawning fresh ideas and insights based on sound wisdom and a practical experience, always ready to turn on a dime at the Spirit's lead?

These are entrepreneurial questions. They are hard questions that force us to seriously ask, "What is God going to do here in this place through the ministry of this new church?"

Our call is most important. We have been called by the Lord of the universe to build His church in this place. Our vision is to have a church that will reach the unchurched, share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, become involved in the community, meet the needs of God's people and form a worshipping community that brings praise, honor and glory to the Triune God.

Could we create a church in thirty days? No, we couldn't, but God could. The better question would be: could we start a church in this place with God's help? The answer is "yes!" The time frame is in God's hands.

Michael Johnson suggests that it's very important to stretch our thinking and keep a radically short time frame as our objective. It is important that we catch again that apostolic fervor of going into a community and doing all that we can, as quickly as we can, to get the good news of Jesus Christ into peoples' minds and hearts. The Holy Spirit will take over from there.

Johnson's full article can be found on <http://breakthrough church.com/thirtydays2.html> ■