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DEVELOPING A CHURCH PLANT LAUNCH TEAM  
AT CITYVIEW CHURCH IN PEARLAND, TEXAS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

DEVELOPING A CHURCH PLANT LAUNCH TEAM  
AT CITYVIEW CHURCH IN PEARLAND, TEXAS

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I dedicate this project to my amazing wife, Allison, who has lovingly walked with me through the pressures and pains of church planting and project writing.

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## PREFACE

This project was the result of many amazing people in my life who contributed in some way or another. First, I want to thank my unbelievable wife, Allison, for allowing me the opportunity to pursue my doctorate. With three young boys at home and the responsibilities of planting a church, she sacrificed untold amounts to allow this pursuit to take place. I am so thankful for this unbelievable woman with whom I get to serve every day. She loves Jesus. She loves and supports me. She loves and cares for our family. I love her more now than I did the day I married her. Outside of salvation, she is the greatest gift I have ever received.

Second, I would like to thank our kids, Drew, Blaise, and Judson, who made big sacrifices to help make this project happen. The days I spent away from home doing seminars, studying, researching, and writing were days that I sadly had to spend away from them. I am blessed with wonderful boys, whom I look forward to seeing grow into men. I pray that they trust Jesus and love the gospel. It is my pleasure to and privilege to be their daddy.

Third, I would like to thank my wonderful parents, Robert and Sandra Crandall, and in-laws, Wayne and Janice Meyr. They have been a support and tremendous help as this degree was pursued. They have helped us by watching children, encouraging in the process, and loving prayer support. I am so thankful for these people who love us well.

Fourth, I would like to thank the people of CityView Church, our leadership team, and especially my friend Travis Duke, executive ministries pastor at CityView Church, for allowing me to pursue this degree and to be their lead pastor. Our young church is an inspiration to me. They have bought in to the vision of planting churches



and sacrifice so much to make that goal happen. They give up their own comfort and ease for the weekly rigors of being part of a portable church. They are generous and loving and it is my joy to lead them.

Fifth, I would like to thank those who participated in this training and are now actively planting CityView Alvin. I am especially thankful for Cary Perrin, lead pastor of CityView Alvin. He encouraged and helped keep me on track in the planning phases. His passion for Jesus is admirable and the stuff that makes great church planters.

Sixth, I would like to thank my cohort friends, Mark Ashley, Mark Kuykendahl, Jason Fevig, Jason Wredberg, Toby Havens, and Joel Smelley. These men have encouraged me during times of anxiety tied to the beginning of CityView and have helped in so many ways as it relates to my doctoral work. These friends will be lifelong brothers in ministry, and I am excited to see the impact that they will make in future years for the kingdom.

My desire is that this project will serve CityView Church, the CityView Collective, the Gulf Coast Baptist Association, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, and other churches as they seek to make disciples through church planting. My desire was to write training that I could not find when I was searching to train my own team. I pray that aids the body of Christ deeply.

Jason Crandall

Pearland, Texas

May 2016

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train and send out a church plant launch team from CityView Church, a newly planted congregation in West Pearland, to Alvin, Texas.

#### **Goals**

The first goal of this project was to develop an eight-week residency training program for church plant launch teams. This goal was achieved through studying the residency programs of ten existing churches that plant churches, compiling their training methods and materials, and writing a curriculum for CityView Church. This goal was measured by the utilization of a rubric completed by CityView Church's residency advisory team to evaluate the biblical fidelity and practicality of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Success was demonstrated when the leadership board verified that 95 percent of the rubric's standards were at the sufficient level or above.

The second goal was to identify and enlist members of the launch team. This goal was measured by the use of a rubric. Through this rubric, launch team applicants were selected by CityView Church's residency advisory team.<sup>2</sup> A lead planter who possesses the characteristics of a biblical elder found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 was selected. Success was determined when CityView Church's leadership team approved a prospective launch team.

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup>See appendix 2.

The third goal was to implement the training program for lead planters and their launch team in order to increase knowledge of church planting processes and strategies. The curriculum developed in the first goal was taught to the lead planter and the team. The goal was measured by administering pre and post-series surveys that tested participants' grasp of theological foundations and understanding of the practical aspects of church planting.<sup>3</sup> The goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores.

The fourth goal was to secure the commitments of the launch team members to be sent. The goal was measured by means of a commitment card signed by the lead planter and his launch team.<sup>4</sup> Success was determined when a lead planter and at least one other launch team family committed to the launch team to help plant CityView Alvin.

### **Ministry Context**

The goals of this project were completed at CityView Church of Pearland, Texas. First Baptist Church of Pearland officially launched CityView Church on September 15, 2013. First Baptist launched CityView with 6 core families and some financial backing. In 2014, at the beginning of CityView Church and this project, there were 33 adults associated with the church. Twelve of these adults came from First Baptist Church of Pearland, and the other 21 adults have been gathered through existing relationships and a deep desire to reach lost people in Pearland, Texas.

Twenty-eight of these adults spent the majority of their lives as members of a conventional church. These adults participated in church ministries and went on church mission trips. They are spiritually maturing individuals who confess Jesus as Lord and

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<sup>3</sup>See appendix 3.

<sup>4</sup>See appendix 4.

Savior, have been baptized by immersion, do regular devotions, tithe cheerfully, regularly share their faith, faithfully attend weekend worship, and seek to lead their families in godly ways.

These adults were approached and asked to join a church plant launch team in the spring of 2013. After a period of prayer, evaluation, and confirmation, they responded affirmatively. None of the 33 adults had previously planted a church or helped to plant a church. These adults lacked the basic knowledge that would make a church plant successful. They were inexperienced, but were learning and responding very well. The congregation at CityView is growing and has already held its first baptism service. People are inviting their friends, outreach events have been successful, and will continue to be scheduled, and the church should continue to grow.

Houston, Texas, is experiencing immense population growth. Nearly six million people live in the Houston metropolitan area.<sup>5</sup> As of 2011, upwards of 2,300 people were moving to Houston, Texas, every week.<sup>6</sup> Conservative estimates indicate there will be approximately 3,500,000 people moving to Houston, Texas, over the next twenty-five years.<sup>7</sup> This growth is primarily being realized in the suburbs of Houston. Growth is due to the bustling job market in Houston, specifically in the technology, medical, and energy fields.<sup>8</sup> Houston is already the fourth largest city in the country, and it is expected to pass Chicago as the third largest city within the next five years. The city is growing and all of the surrounding areas are growing as well.

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<sup>5</sup>City of Houston, "About Houston," accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.houstontx.gov/about/houston/houstonfacts.html>.

<sup>6</sup>David Ruth, "When It Comes to Population Growth, Houston Is No. 1," *Rice News*, July 13, 2011, accessed November 10, 2013, <http://news.rice.edu/2011/07/13/when-it-comes-to-population-growth-houston-is-no-1/>.

<sup>7</sup>City of Houston, "About Houston."

<sup>8</sup>Ruth, "When It Comes to Population Growth."

People are coming from all over the state of Texas, the United States, and the world. While some of the growth is through reproduction, most of the population's increase will not be native Houstonians. Houston is the most ethnically diverse city in the country with more than two hundred people groups and ninety different languages spoken.<sup>9</sup> There is great need for new churches to be planted and the gospel to be proclaimed in the Houston metropolitan area.

Four men within CityView Church were theologically trained and could potentially lead a new launch team into a yet-to-be-determined area in the Houston metropolitan area. They were trained in worship ministry, children's ministry, and student ministry. They have abilities in administration and preaching. These men had never before planted a church. Any of these men needed a significant amount of training and preparation before they were sent into the field to grow a new gospel-centered church plant. They proved themselves to be good leaders within churches, but needed to be assessed, trained in the world of church planting, and prepared. These men were serving in various positions of leadership at CityView and growing in their understanding of church planting.

The vision of CityView Church is make gospel-centered disciples of Jesus and to plant one hundred churches in twenty-five years in the greater Houston area. From the beginning, CityView Church has set aside money on a monthly basis to send out a lead planter and team for August 2015. From the beginning we have also challenged launch families and those who were joining CityView with the idea that they may be called to go and help plant a new congregation out from CityView Church. This mentality is a necessary part of the church planting church's DNA. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus gives the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. Due to the large ethnically diverse

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<sup>9</sup>City of Houston, "About Houston."

population, making disciples in Houston, Texas, will mean making disciples of all nations and making an impact in this world.

The greater metropolitan area of Houston is experiencing dynamic commercial and residential growth. These people need to hear the gospel of Jesus and have a chance to respond to it. New churches are the most effective means to accomplish this goal. The people who make up CityView need to respond to the biblical mandate of making disciples and this needs to be done within the rapidly expanding context in which they live and work.

### **Rationale for the Project**

There is great growth in the Houston metroplex and there is greater need for the gospel to go out with strength in power through churches. Other churches are planting churches, but more are needed.

The apostle Paul writes to Titus, “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you” (Titus 1:5). Paul told Titus to appoint elders in towns in the populated areas of Crete. Essentially, Titus was training church planters to go into specific towns and plant the gospel in those towns. CityView Church needs to have this same mentality. CityView Church needs to be a church that plants churches that plant churches. Churches must actively make ways for this to happen from their own church for the kingdom of God to expand.

Launch teams first need to be birthed from a church that has a church planting mentality. CityView Church teaches and preaches the need for planting gospel-centered churches throughout the Houston area. Church planting is highlighted and encouraged in weekly gatherings, life groups, and discipleship groups. Gospel-centered multiplication needs to be the background of all that CityView Church does and says. Additionally, church planting is receiving 9 percent of the annual budget of CityView Church.

Launch teams need a leader who is called and burdened to plant a church. Choosing and developing appropriate leaders is of deep importance. Emerging church planters need to be qualified as elders from the Scriptures in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. These planters need to be men with strong convictions regarding the gospel. They need to be men of conviction and calling to a particular area and people with the ability to teach sound doctrine.

This project aimed to build an effective gospel-centered launch team to be sent out into Alvin, Texas, to start a new church. This project benefited CityView Church by providing a strategy to build, train, and deploy launch teams. This project began to address the evangelistic needs of Houston by sending a launch team to start a new church in the Houston area.

### **Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Definitions**

The following definitions of key terms are used in this ministry project.

*Church planting.* Church planting is an “exhausting but exciting venture of faith, the planned process of starting and growing local churches based on Jesus’ promise to build his church and in obedience to his Great Commission.”<sup>10</sup>

*Disciple-making.* Disciple-making is the process by which an individual goes from spiritually dead to an ever maturing follower of Jesus Christ. Malphurs writes, “Making disciples begins with evangelism and continues with edification or the building up of the saints in the faith with the ultimate goal of their attaining spiritual maturity.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), locs. 163-64, Kindle

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, locs. 265-66.

*Launch team.* A launch team is “the church plant’s core or launch group, who are all the people who make up the initial congregation.”<sup>12</sup> For this project, the launch team was those sent with the lead planter to plant the new church.

*Lead planter.* The lead planter is “the individual whom God directs to take the lead in starting a church.”<sup>13</sup> For the purposes of this project, the lead planter was a part of the launch team he was leading.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation was the fifteen-week project duration. I originally envisioned a year-long residency program; however, this program was shortened significantly to deal with more focused training at the end of a year-long residency program. The second limitation was the size of CityView Church. CityView is new and does not have a large base from which to draw a lead planter or a launch team. The third limitation was that the location was not decided upon for the new church at the beginning of this project. Finding a location is something that the lead planter needed to play heavily in, but was a limitation to this project.

### **Delimitations**

The first delimitation was that this project would address only the preparation process of sending a launch team to plant a church, but not the actual starting of that new church. Success was judged on the sending of the core team. The second delimitation was that this project focused only on the preparation and sending of a lead planter and core team in the Houston metroplex. While there would be overlap to other areas in the country it was specifically focused on sending to this locale.

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<sup>12</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 683-84.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, locs. 346-47.



## **Research Methodology**

The research methodology for this project included a curriculum evaluation rubric, a launch team selection rubric, a pre and post-series evaluation survey, and a commitment card.

The first goal of this project was to develop an eight-week residency training program for lead church planters, the functionality and biblical fidelity of which will be evaluated by a rubric. The training program was composed of the most helpful aspects of the ten residencies that were studied and then synthesized into the context at CityView.

The curriculum dealt with the theological foundations of church planting and the practical aspects associated with church planting, such as personal leadership, team building, selecting an area of accountability, fundraising, and leadership development. The curriculum was submitted to the residency advisory team five weeks before the beginning of the residency program. The rubric led the residency advisory team to evaluate the residency program based on its fidelity to Scripture, practicality, and clarity. If less than 95 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, then the residency advisory team’s feedback was used to modify the series, after which the material was submitted again to the residency advisory team for approval. This process continued until 95 percent of the indicators scored at sufficient or above, at which point the first goal was considered successfully met.

The second goal of the project was to select a prospective launch team. This prospective team was selected from applicants<sup>14</sup> who went through an informal interview and were then evaluated by CityView Church’s residency advisory team through the use of a rubric.<sup>15</sup> The rubric led CityView Church’s residency advisory team to evaluate the applicants, who were covenant members of CityView. They were evaluated on their theological and practical understanding of the gospel, commitment to church planting

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<sup>14</sup>See appendix 5.

<sup>15</sup>See appendix 2.

vision, financial participation, discipleship, and leadership ability. Covenant members who meet 90 percent of the indicators with a “sufficient” or above rating were approved to join the prospective launch team.

The third goal of the project was to train the church planter and the launch team through the residency program curriculum created in goal 1. A pre-residency survey was administered to all of the prospective launch team members.<sup>16</sup> The survey evaluated the applicants’ understanding of the theological and biblical foundations of church planting, practical aspects of church planting, personal spiritual disciplines, and their preparedness to join a church plant launch team..

This survey was distributed, via internet form, one week before the formal training program began. The launch team went through the eight-week residency training program and then completed the post-residency training survey, which was again administered via internet form.

A *t*-test for dependent samples<sup>17</sup> was used to determine if there was a positive significant difference between the pre-series and post-series scores. The third goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive significant difference between the pre-residency and post-residency scores.

The fourth goal was to secure commitments of the launch team members to be sent. A commitment card was presented to those who successfully completed the residency training program.<sup>18</sup> This card asked for a commitment to the launch team as it went to plant a new church. This card was signed by those agreeing to join the launch team. The fourth goal was considered successfully met when a lead planter and a team, consisting of at least one other family, committed to be a part of the new launch team.

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<sup>16</sup>See appendix 3.

<sup>17</sup>Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 207-8.

<sup>18</sup>See appendix 4.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CHURCH IS GOD'S PLAN FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF LOCAL AREAS

Disciple-making is at the heart of biblical Christianity. The desire to accomplish the Great Commission has been the focus of every generation of believers that has walked on this planet. Different methods of disciple-making have risen in popularity and then faded away in this modern era. However, one method has been proven since the earliest days of the church: church planting.

It is the aim of this chapter to show that the church is God's plan for disciple-making in local areas. An exegesis of relevant passages to the advancement of the Great Commission through the church is provided in this chapter. Once each passage is exegeted, attention is given to the specific way that churches should be planted according to the Scripture. This chapter argues that church planting through sending launch teams is the most effective way to make disciples in local areas.

#### **The Church Will Prevail**

The church will prevail eternally over the domain of darkness that Satan oversees in this world. The Bible supports the fact of the church's power. Matthew 16:13-20 provides a sufficient basis to uncover what Scripture says on this subject. This passage unveils Jesus' plan for the church to overcome the gates of hell:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in

heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt 16:13-18)<sup>1</sup>

This passage is the first mention of the church in the New Testament and is one of two passages where Jesus mentions the church in the Gospels. He is certainly speaking of the church universal and asserting that “the gates of Hades are not strong enough to prevail against his church; that church will never die.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus is making the clear point that assembly will ultimately win.

### **The Location Is Important**

The location is important in understanding the basis for the prevailing church. Jesus takes his disciples to Caesarea Phillipi, which is about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee at the foot of Mount Hermon. This city had a long and well-noted relationship with idolatry. The city was also formerly known as Baal-gad and a center for Baal worship.<sup>3</sup> Later it was taken by the Greeks and renamed Paneas. Leon Morris writes, “One of the sources of the Jordan issues from a cave near this city, and there was an ancient shrine in the cave. When the Greeks came they dedicated the shrine to ‘Pan and the Nymphs.’”<sup>4</sup>

Later, under Phillip the Tetrarch, the city was renamed Caesarea Phillipi and it became a center for the worship of Caesar. Allen Myers states, “The Romans assigned the district to King Herod the Great (20 B.C.), who erected a white marble temple there in honor of Augustus and placed the image of the emperor near the altar of Pan.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 425.

<sup>3</sup>D. F. Payne, “Caesarea Philippi,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 154.

<sup>4</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 419.

<sup>5</sup>Allen C. Myers, “Caesarea Phillipi,” in *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, ed. Allen C. Myers et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 180.

Jesus used this place to set the stage for his ensuing dialogue with his disciples about the church and their coming mission. Craig Blomberg observes, “Matthew does not tell us why Jesus and the disciples went here, but it is easy to imagine them once again foreshadowing the more extensive Gentile ministry that lies ahead.”<sup>6</sup>

### **The Question Reveals the Point**

The question revealed the point of the day trip to Caesarea Phillipi. Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” “Son of Man” is Jesus’ favorite title for himself and should not be seen as a commentary on the title as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Instead the focus is certainly on the perception of who the people understand him to be. Blomberg explains, “He questions their perception of the crowds’ views of his identity, not for his own information but to correct the misconceptions that have arisen.”<sup>8</sup>

There are multiple opinions among the people—John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet are all possibilities in the minds of the common people of Israel. Blomberg continues, “All the opinions the disciples report are complimentary and demonstrate that Jesus remains quite popular. The crowds view him as some kind of spokesman for God.”<sup>9</sup> At that time, Jesus was apparently well known and well thought of by the people. However, his aim in asking this question of his disciples was not “to obtain information from the disciples, but to build a platform from which to call forth the confession that will be voiced by Peter.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 250.

<sup>7</sup>This title, of course, was Jesus’ favorite self-designation (see in 8:20), and it is clear that he was asking a question about how he himself was regarded by people outside his circle, not inquiring about how they interpreted Dan 7:13. See Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 419.

<sup>8</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 250.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>John Nolland, preface to *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 659.

## **The Confession Demonstrates the Foundation**

The confession of Peter demonstrates the foundation of the prevailing church. Jesus used the backdrop of Caesarea Phillipi and the misunderstanding of the typical Jew to ask one more question in Matthew 16:15 regarding his identity: “But who do you say that I am?” This was the real question Jesus was trying to get answered in the first place. John Nolland explains, “By changing the verb from ‘asked’ to ‘says,’ by dropping Mark’s emphatic ‘he’ (αὐτός), and by introducing asyndeton, Matthew makes it clearer that this is not a second question but where the earlier question was leading from the beginning.”<sup>11</sup> Jesus’ focus in teaching his disciples this day was who they understood him to be. This was a decisive moment “in which the separation of the New Testament ἐκκλησία from the Old Testament theocracy was to be made. The hour had come for the utterance of a distinct Christian confession.”<sup>12</sup>

Peter answers quickly: “You are the Christ the son of the living God.” His answer should not be seen as merely his answer, but the answer of the group as a whole. Morris explains, “We are apt to concentrate our attention on Peter as we reflect on this passage, but we should not forget that he is the spokesman for the Twelve as he answers a question addressed to them all.”<sup>13</sup> Peter speaks, but Jesus’ question was addressed to all of the disciples and his answer is to be understood as the common thinking of all of the disciples.

This is the first time the term “Christ” has been attributed to Jesus in Matthew. Blomberg writes, “Here is the first time in Matthew that anyone in Jesus’ audiences has unambiguously acknowledged him as the ‘Christ.’ Peter immediately adds the title ‘Son

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<sup>11</sup>Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 661.

<sup>12</sup>John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, *Matthew: A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 294.

<sup>13</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 420.

of God' as in 14:33, where all the disciples had acclaimed Jesus with this form of address."<sup>14</sup> All the disciples had seen him to be the Son of God before, but now these two titles were linked. The disciples did not yet know what all of this meant, nor did they have a fully formed Christology, but they did have the highest possible view of who Jesus was. In regard to the confession, Morris observes, "He was certainly giving voice to an exalted view of Jesus. He could not have ascribed a higher place to him. His words bring out the essential being of our Lord in the most comprehensive expression in the Gospels."<sup>15</sup>

Jesus encourages Peter vigorously: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 16:17). Peter is blessed, "a word that signifies godly felicity. It means not worldly happiness, but religious delight; nor does it signify gloomy piety but rather holy joy."<sup>16</sup> This understanding of who Jesus is brings deep, soul-stirring joy. This confession and those who share it are the ones who are given this holy joy.

The understanding of Jesus' identity is not an academic exercise, Blomberg states,

Jesus attributes to Peter's confession insight stemming from divine revelation rather than human deduction. The language does not specify how God revealed himself or require some sudden flash of insight, but it does affirm that God has led Peter to his correct understanding.<sup>17</sup>

Peter confessed who he and the other disciples believed Jesus to be. Jesus extended his affirmation of this confession by Peter: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). This is one of the most controversial verses in Scripture and needs to be

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<sup>14</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 251.

<sup>15</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 421.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 251.

understood carefully in light of the full context of the passage. Jesus was certainly speaking to Peter directly and used his name as a play on words.

The expression “this rock” almost certainly refers to Peter, following immediately after his name, just as the words following “the Christ” in v. 16 applied to Jesus. The play on words in the Greek between Peter’s name (*Petros*) and the word “rock” (*petra*) makes sense only if Peter is the rock and if Jesus is about to explain the significance of this identification.<sup>18</sup>

Giving Peter this title is not affirming some sort of excessive preeminence to Peter. Peter certainly has an eminent role in the early church, but he has no papal role. Morris deals with this issue: “If Peter was here given the chief place, the question of the disciples just a little later as to who would have that place (18:1) is inexplicable. They at any rate knew nothing of Peter as the supreme pontiff.”<sup>19</sup> Rather, Peter is the first to make this confession, and as such, the church traces its roots back to this first understanding of Jesus’ identity. Morris concludes his thought: “So perhaps it is better to think of the church as built on Peter as the man who has received the revelation.”<sup>20</sup>

Peter and his first spoken confession are the first stone in the foundation of Jesus’ church. This confession is the earliest of Christian confessions and

the first and fundamental Christian confession of faith, and the germ of the Apostles’ Creed. It is a confession, not of mere human opinions, or views, or convictions, however firm, but of a divinely wrought faith, and not of faith only, but of adoration and worship.<sup>21</sup>

In a very real way this confession made by Peter, but shared by the all the disciples, is the foundation that the assembly that prevails must be built on. Faith in who Jesus is undergirds the prevailing church.

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<sup>18</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 252.

<sup>19</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 423.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Lange and Schaff, *Matthew*, 295.



## **Jesus' Blueprint for the Church to Prevail**

The church will prevail and reach every nation with the good news of Jesus Christ. This was the plan that the Lord laid out for his disciples after the resurrection and directly before his ascension. A skeleton blueprint for the church to prevail is given in Acts 1:4-8:

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "You heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

This passage is the last of the Great Commission passages recorded in the New Testament and gives the final and most specific instructions to the disciples regarding their ministry from that day forward. First, they were to wait until Jesus' promise of a greater comforter was fulfilled. Second, the disciples continued to display their lack of recognition of Jesus' plan. Third, Jesus rebuked and redirected the disciples with the plan before them.

### **Wait for the Promise**

Jesus had been appearing to his followers over the last forty days showing them he was alive and teaching them about God's kingdom. In his final occasion with his disciples, he told them to stay in Jerusalem, or as Polhill observes, "The Greek construction can be rendered quite literally, 'Stop departing from Jerusalem,' implying that at this point the disciples had been coming and going from the Holy City."<sup>22</sup> The time was at hand when they needed to wait. The church was going to prevail beginning in Jerusalem and the disciples needed to patiently wait.

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<sup>22</sup>John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 83.

They were to wait in Jerusalem for something very specific. They were to wait for the fulfillment of a promise. Darrell Bock explains, “This promise they had heard about from Jesus. This theme of the Father’s promise is an allusion to the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49, clothed with power from on high) and is a theme Luke traces from early on in his two volumes.”<sup>23</sup> The Holy Spirit was coming and he would give them power from on high to begin the great task that Jesus was calling them to undertake. This power was going to propel them forward.

Jesus spoke of the coming promise in terms of a baptism and compared it to John’s baptism. This baptism was different though. John B. Polhill writes, “John’s was a baptism of repentance. . . . Unlike John’s baptism, the new converts would also receive the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>24</sup> The baptism of the Holy Spirit was going to happen to them, it was going to happen in Jerusalem, and it was going to happen soon. They needed to wait.

### **The Disciples Are Perplexed about Their Immediate Future**

The disciples were assembled and standing at the Mount of Olives (v. 12) and asked a question that seemed logical to them: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). This question is understandable considering the typical Jewish mindset at the time. Polhill explains, “In Jewish thought God’s promises often referred to the coming of Israel’s final salvation. . . . Likewise, the outpouring of the Spirit had strong eschatological associations.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), locs. 1858-60, Kindle.

<sup>24</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 83.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 84.

The hope of the disciples is that Israel, as a nation, will be restored under the rule of Jesus. They understood God’s kingdom coming to be Israel immediately restored. F. F. Bruce writes, “The apostles evidently maintained their interest in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God realized in the restoration of Israel’s national independence.”<sup>26</sup> They wanted their positions. Bock observes, “The disciples are not even thinking in mission terms here. Their question reflects a nationalistic concern for Israel’s vindication and the completion of the promise.”<sup>27</sup> Governmental overthrow was not the Lord’s plan at that time, which the disciples quickly discovered.

Israel’s restoration was not Christ’s purpose in these last moments with his disciples. Jesus did not say the event the disciples are looking for is not going to happen. Bock adds, “There is no indication in Jesus’s reply, however, that anything they asked was wrong except that they are excessively concerned about when all of this would take place.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus’ concern was for a different entity—his body. He wanted to focus them on worldwide mission, so he quickly rebuked them and refocused them in this direction.

### **The Powerful Plan**

Jesus directed his disciples back to his purpose and focus and unveiled the blueprint of his plan to see the church prevail. The disciples were not far off in their question, but they were limited in their understanding of restoring the kingdom. Jesus was going to restore the kingdom, but in a way beyond the disciples understanding. According to Polhill, he was about to teach his disciples that “the ‘restoration of the kingdom’ involves a worldwide mission.”<sup>29</sup> Jesus made two promises for the future

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<sup>26</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), loc. 1977, Kindle.

<sup>27</sup>Bock, *Acts*, loc. 1985.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, loc. 1992.

<sup>29</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 86.

accomplishment of this worldwide mission: power and witness. Disciples will be empowered and disciples will witness everywhere on earth.

**The empowerment will come.** There are two promises made to the disciples in verse 8. The first is that they will receive power. They will not receive political power like they may have anticipated based on their initial question, but they will receive something greater. Bock explains, “The disciples’ calling, concern, and mission are not to focus on the timing of the end. Rather they are to receive the enablement that God will give in the Spirit.”<sup>30</sup>

They were going to be able to speak boldly, and they were going to be able to speak without fear and do mighty works because of power they would receive when the Holy Spirit came on them. Bock continues, “The Spirit is tied to power (δύναμιν, dynamis), which refers here to being empowered to speak boldly by testifying to the message of God’s work through Jesus.”<sup>31</sup> The fulfillment of this promise is seen first in Acts 2 at Peter’s first sermon and is then demonstrated throughout the book of Acts.

The plan cannot be executed without the Holy Spirit; they cannot be effective without the Spirit’s help. F. F. Bruce writes, “When the Holy Spirit came upon them, Jesus assured them, they would be vested with heavenly power—that power by which, in the event, their mighty works were accomplished and their preaching made effective.”<sup>32</sup> Their effectiveness as witnesses would depend on the Spirit’s power in them.

**The world will hear and the church will prevail.** The second promise made to the disciples in verse 8 is that they will be witnesses. Lenski writes,

They are to be more than heralds (preachers) who proclaim only what they are ordered to proclaim; they are to be herald ‘witnesses’ in the sense of 1 John 1:1,

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<sup>30</sup>Bock, *Acts*, locs. 2024-25.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., locs. 2026-28.

<sup>32</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, loc. 1990.

men who have themselves seen, heard, touched, experienced, and are qualified, even called, to testify accordingly.<sup>33</sup>

They are going to speak about what they have seen and what has happened through Jesus Christ. They are going to do it in a gradual and unfolding manner that serves as a general outline throughout the book of Acts.

The apostles were first witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem as referenced in Acts 1-7. The witnesses then went to Judea and Samaria as seen in chapters 8-12. Finally, the rest of the world is brought into scope in chapters 13-28 as the gospel traveled all over the known world and to Rome. Frequently, scholars felt that the “ends of the earth” referred to Rome, however, Polhill shares,

The phrase is often found in the prophets, however, as an expression for distant lands; and such is the meaning in Isa 49:6, which may well lie behind Acts 1:8. In fact, the final verse in Acts (28:31), with Paul preaching “without hindrance” in Rome, suggests that the story has not reached its final destination—the witness continues.<sup>34</sup>

The witness is still being taken to those who have never heard and the church continues to prevail against the gates of hell throughout the ends of the earth. The witness that the apostles began is continuing and is empowered by the same Spirit. Jesus’ blueprint is being followed and his body continues to grow.

### **The Prototype of Church Plant Launch Teams**

Jewish believers were persecuted in Jerusalem and forced to flee, which enabled the gospel witness to spread throughout the world. Acts 11:19 indicates these believers went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Antioch was the first place the gospel reached Gentiles. The Jerusalem church heard of this and sent Barnabas to preach and encourage them. After a short time, Barnabas went to get Saul who was in Tarsus. Together they taught in the church for one year and grew leaders for the church. Antioch

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<sup>33</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 31.

<sup>34</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 86.

was the first place followers of Jesus were called Christians. Antioch was also the first church that sent a church plant launch team.

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

This strong congregation loved Jesus, the church, and those far from God.

When the church heard of the extreme persecution in Jerusalem they sent funds by Paul and Barnabas to the church to help. Polhill writes,

The Antioch church was the first Christian congregation to witness to the Gentiles in its own city (11:19f.). It then became the first to send missionaries forth into the larger world. Judging from Acts, Antioch was the first church to catch the vision of “foreign missions.”<sup>35</sup>

This church, with its love for Christ, love for his body, and evangelistic zeal, present the exemplary plan to send missionaries that launch churches.

### **Strong Church Leadership**

The key to healthy missionaries who launch healthy churches is having a strong church leadership that sends them. This is certainly the case in Antioch at this time. Paul and Barnabas had only been there a short time teaching and preaching, but they were able to grow leaders within the church. Bruce explains, “The church of Antioch had among its leaders some very remarkable men. In addition to Barnabas and Saul, three receive special mention as ‘prophets and teachers.’”<sup>36</sup> The men presented here as Antioch’s leaders were varying in race and background, but “the remarkable diversity of the backgrounds and origins of these leaders was ‘appropriate to the cosmopolitan context of Antioch.’”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 288-89.

<sup>36</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 244.

<sup>37</sup>David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 375.

These men were prophets and teachers and they led the church at Antioch. They operated within their giftedness and led the church at Antioch with their spiritual gifts. It is not clear who had which gifts, but the gifts were present throughout the leadership and “although it is possible grammatically to construe the first three as being prophets and the last two as teachers, it probably is best to see all five as comprising the congregational leadership as prophet-teachers.”<sup>38</sup> They were leading the strongest church of the day and their leadership enabled the first set of missionaries to go and launch the worldwide mission effort that Christ spoke of in the Great Commission.

### **Spiritual Preparation**

The second key to launching healthy churches is the spiritual preparation that goes in to launching. Acts 13:2 says, “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” The idea of worshiping here is not necessarily an organized worship service, but rather, as Bruce observes, “As these prophets and teachers were carrying out their appointed ministry in the church, the Holy Spirit made known his will.”<sup>39</sup> They were in the middle of leading within their giftedness. They were not striving after their own personal ambitions or desires, but after serving the Lord in Antioch. In their consistent service the Lord made known his will to them.

They were also fasting together. Fasting seems to be a common practice for the leadership of the church. These men regularly prayed and fasted together for the life of the church. David Peterson states, “In the present context there was probably a commitment to fast as an aid to prayer. Perhaps these leaders were actively seeking the Lord’s will for the progress of the gospel in the Gentile world.”<sup>40</sup> These men were

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<sup>38</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 289.

<sup>39</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 245.

<sup>40</sup>Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 375-76.

engaged in serving the Lord in their giftedness and communing with him together through fasting and prayer. God chose these avenues to set apart Paul and Barnabas.

### **Selfless Sending**

The church at Antioch had strong leaders who were serving the Lord in their own giftedness and spiritually prepared to hear from the Lord. They were going to need this in order to endure the loss of the caliber of leaders that they were about to commission. Bruce speaks to this: “It is perhaps worth noticing that the two men who were to be released for what would nowadays be called missionary service overseas were the two most eminent and gifted leaders in the church.”<sup>41</sup>

Paul and Barnabas were important to the daily life of the church and were understood to be the best leaders of the church. Bock writes,

God calls those among the most gifted out from the larger community. These two are an integral part of the community, having ministered there for at least a year. Those sent are qualified to plant new works on the basis of their previous contribution to the church.<sup>42</sup>

It is important for churches to recognize that they need to be raising up and sending out their best leaders as the Lord directs.

The sending of these men from Antioch represented a deep commitment to the gospel and to God’s calling on them, which should be the actionable intent of all churches. Peterson explains,

Effective Christian leaders will likewise see the need to discern God’s gifting for ministry in others, to support (and where necessary train) those whom God is leading to local ministry or mission elsewhere, and to affirm them by acts of ordination or commissioning.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 246.

<sup>42</sup>Bock, *Acts*, locs. 10968-70.

<sup>43</sup>Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 376.



Churches cannot horde leaders, but rather need to recognize their abilities, spiritually prepare them, and then selflessly send the best leaders for the work God has prepared for them.

### **Qualifications for the Leadership of a New Church**

Paul left Titus in Crete to complete the work of starting churches. The gospel had been planted, men had been discipled, and now it was time to setup leadership:

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5-9)

Aside from a focus on the gospel, the qualities of leadership are of supreme importance in a new church. Leaders need to exemplify the gospel in their own lives. Leaders must be men who are qualified. They have to have some abilities to help lead the church, but they also have to have character that causes others to follow them. These qualities should already be at work within men before the office is assumed. Lea and Griffin note, “These are qualifications that a man must meet in order to become an elder; they are not characteristics that a man should assume after he becomes an elder.”<sup>44</sup> These men need to be above reproach in three key areas: family, personal character, doctrine.

#### **A Family above Reproach**

Paul began by laying out the first qualification for elders. The first set of qualifications addressed the elder’s primary ministry: his family. The elder must lead his family well before he is capable of leading God’s church.

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<sup>44</sup>Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 279.

**One-woman man.** The elder is to have a mind and heart for only one woman. Crete was a heavily pagan culture and this qualification would call others to a higher standard of marriage than may have been normative in the culture. The man must be above reproach in this way. He must have one wife and this must be the full content of his life. Philip Towner writes, “The phrase translated ‘faithful to his wife’ (lit. ‘husband of one wife’) describes fidelity within marriage and does not specifically delve into matters of polygamy or remarriage.”<sup>45</sup>

This qualification raises questions about those who have never been married, those who have been widowed, and those who have been remarried. These issues are to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. It is sufficient to say that singleness due to the death of a spouse does not preclude one from being an elder. Lea and Griffin explain, “Under the normal circumstances of the death of a spouse and a subsequent remarriage, it would not appear likely that the man would be considered blameworthy.”<sup>46</sup> The case of a single man who has never been married is more difficult because he does not have the demonstrated character within marriage, but he is not disqualified either. Lea and Griffin continue, “Attempts to prohibit unmarried men from becoming elders on the basis of this phrase misinterpret Paul’s intention as well as ignore his teaching on marriage in 1 Cor 7. Surely, remaining unmarried would not be considered blameworthy.”<sup>47</sup>

The most difficult question surrounds men who have been divorced and are now single or remarried. This situation needs to be addressed carefully and individually. “The interpretation of Paul’s phrase ‘husband of one wife’ is determined in large measure by the interpretation of biblical teaching with regard to divorce.”<sup>48</sup> Men should not be

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<sup>45</sup>Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), locs. 12415-16, Kindle.

<sup>46</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 280.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 281.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 280.

automatically disqualified due to a divorce, but the aspects of that divorce need to be clearly investigated and then the content of that man's character needs to be carefully examined from the time of the divorce and potential remarriage. The question of life pattern needs to be looked at carefully when considering these men for eldership. If his pattern is that of a one-woman man throughout his life, then his divorce should not be held against him as an elder candidate.

**Faithful children.** The next qualification for the elder is that a reflection of the gospel in the lives of his children be present. The word translated "believers" in the English Standard Version can also be translated "faithful." Faithful does not necessitate that the children are believers, but carries more of the meaning of submission and obedience to their parents.<sup>49</sup> This understanding of the word faithful helps when considering elders who have children who are infants or very young and not able to believe and also adult children who are not Christians. They are not disqualified. Rather, these children are under their parent's direct care, who are following their father's faith.

The potential elder must be able to influence his home in the gospel. The church plant leader must be able to lead his first church, his family, before he is able to lead the church that God entrusts. Leadership of the home is a vital characteristic in assessing the ability of church planters.

### **A Character above Reproach**

The church planter needs to have a character that is above reproach as well. Paul breaks into some eleven character qualities that an elder must have. Five are negative qualities that need to be avoided and six positive qualities that one must possess.

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<sup>49</sup>George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 289-90.

**The elder cannot have these five character qualities.** There are five vices laid out that the elder cannot have as central to his character. Lea and Griffin quote F. D. Gealy: “Since the office of bishop is one of authority and power, the vices named are those to which persons in such positions are tempted.”<sup>50</sup> The leader of God’s church cannot be arrogant, quick-tempered, a drunkard, violent, or greedy.

The church plant leader cannot be arrogant. The word translated “arrogant” can also be translated “self-willed.” Knight explains, “Its negation implies the corresponding virtue and thus may find its positive counterpart in ἐπιεικής (gentle, kind, gracious).”<sup>51</sup> The large idea is that the church leader cannot be prideful or selfish. Towner writes, “At the root is a fundamental selfishness that compels one to ride roughshod over others in the effort to satisfy oneself.”<sup>52</sup> This attitude is not an acceptable trait for one managing God’s church.

The church plant leader cannot be quick-tempered. The leader of the church cannot be one to get angry quickly and explode with rage. Paul teaches this trait in the affirmative to Timothy by using the term peaceable. The elder has to be one who can control his temper. Towner states, “From the use of this term in the Wisdom writings of the LXX, this weakness develops a strong association with the behavior of the godless who are to be avoided (Ps 17:49; Prov 22:24; 29:22).”<sup>53</sup> The person stewarding God’s church needs to be able to control his anger and direct it appropriately.

The church plant leader cannot be a drunkard. The term literally means “not given to much wine.” Griffen explains, “One cannot be dogmatic that he requires total

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<sup>50</sup>Lea and Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 283.

<sup>51</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 291.

<sup>52</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, locs. 12512-13.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, locs. 12517-19.

abstinence in the elder.”<sup>54</sup> However, the elder must not be addicted to alcohol and be careful in its consumption. Dealing with alcohol is an issue of discipline for the church plant leader.

The church plant leader cannot be violent. Violence is also an issue of discipline for the steward of God’s church. Violence and drunkenness in this passage are closely tied and it is easy to see how one can lead to the other. It is important to note “physical violence is certainly unnecessary and unbecoming to a position of leadership.”<sup>55</sup> Violence must not typify the leader’s character. He must seek to lead without physical intimidation.

The church plant leader cannot be greedy. This term is used in all of the lists of church officers for both elders and deacons. Money can capture the heart unlike anything else. Knight observes, “When a person serves it, he cannot serve God (Mt. 6:24).”<sup>56</sup> The elder needs to keep his heart free from loving money and keep his heart focused on stewarding resources for God’s kingdom work.

**The elder must have these six character qualities.** The church plant leader must possess six representative virtues. These character qualities are non-negotiable in the stewarding of God’s church. The leader must be hospitable, loving good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

The church plant leader must be hospitable. Elders needs to care for those under his spiritual care. They need to “be devoted to the welfare of others.”<sup>57</sup> Their desire is to see others grow and to care for those who are weak. This would include the

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<sup>54</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 292.

<sup>57</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

opening of a home, but also the more general care of those who are lacking. The church plant leader needs to set the example in hospitality.

The church plant leader must love good. The leader is looking for and striving after good things and people. The phrase “describes the leader generally as one inclined to pursue things and people that are virtuous, inherently good.”<sup>58</sup> The church plant leader needs to pursue good things and good men as he leads God’s church.

The church plant leader must have self-control. This trait is one of the cardinal virtues in Greek thought and “includes mastery of his mind, his emotions, his words, and his deeds.”<sup>59</sup> The elder needs to be able to practice restraint in many areas in his life. This virtue has much to do with the inner thought-life of the leader. The general need of self-control in leading people toward Christ is important because the leader needs to be able to say no to things in order to say yes to Christ’s call.

The church plant leader must be upright. The elder needs to have the outward actions that make obvious their self-control. The leader needs to have a firm commitment to doing the right thing regardless of the outcome. He is to set the example in righteousness to those who are following his leadership.

The church plant leader must be holy. He has to be “committed to a life especially separated to devotion and service of God.”<sup>60</sup> He needs to be set apart in his actions and attitudes and focused on the Lord. Paul is teaching Titus that the leader must have “a condition of inward purity that has outward results.”<sup>61</sup>

The church plant leader must be disciplined. Lea and Griffin explain, “The

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<sup>58</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, locs. 12535-36.

<sup>59</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, loc. 12558.

term denotes power of lordship . . . over oneself or over some-thing.”<sup>62</sup> Discipline and self-control are very similar, although discipline has more to do with the outward self-restraint of the body and appetites. The leader must have the characteristic of discipline within his life in order to lead the people God entrusts to him.

The character of the elder is of extreme importance. The leader needs to be able to lead out of a well of character that is highly respected both within the church and outside of it. Towner writes,

Paul means, and Titus understands, that leaders of sound reputation, who bear the marks of the Spirit, are to be chosen. Leaders of this caliber give no grounds for accusations against them: this is the meaning of ‘blameless’ in this context of respectability and reputation.<sup>63</sup>

### **A Doctrine above Reproach**

The leader of Christ’s local body needs to understand the Bible well. He needs to grasp tightly the word and doctrine. The phrase “expresses the idea of unwavering adherence (to ‘the trustworthy message’ [*pistos logos*]) just as in the prophets it stressed ‘clinging to’ the law (Jer 2:8), the covenant (Isa 56:2, 4, 6), and God himself (Isa 57:13).”<sup>64</sup> The elder must love the truth of the Word of God and also the orthodox teachings of it for two specific reasons.

**Give instruction in sound doctrine.** The church plant leader needs to have a great devotion to the Word and to doctrine so he can encourage his followers in the gospel. When speaking about the teaching of the elder, Towner states, “Within the sphere of Christian instruction (where it belongs here; cf. 1 Tim 6:2), the sense is of practical authoritative teaching that compels believers to implement the faith in all

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<sup>62</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

<sup>63</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, locs. 12569-70.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, locs. 12577-79.

aspects of life (2:15).”<sup>65</sup> The church plant leader needs to give good instruction of the Scripture in accord with doctrine. Solid doctrinal teaching encourages the follower and also gives a systematic response to those who do not adhere to orthodox doctrine.

**Rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine.** The other practical side of holding firmly to the trustworthy teaching is to be able to point out when others are falsely teaching God’s Word. Paul is not telling Titus to refute those outside the church, but is especially interested in correcting believers who are understanding doctrine incorrectly. Griffen explains,

The goal of the refutation of false teaching is not to destroy the opponent but rather to restore him to ‘sound doctrine.’ This necessarily implies that the false teaching to which Paul referred was coming from *within* the church, i.e., from those who professed Christian faith.<sup>66</sup>

Rebuke is about bringing the brother back into true fellowship. The goal is restoration and instruction when error is being presented.

### **Conclusion**

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ need to live their lives leveraged for their savior and focused on the Great Commission. Disciple-making is the directive given to each believer individually and as a result needs to be carried out by the body of Christ corporately. The church cannot get distracted by lesser goals, but needs to let disciple-making be their heartbeat. The body of Christ must act in obedience to its head and follow the plan of spreading the gospel by means of local church planting. These local churches need to be started and led by strong, biblically qualified men. When Christians bear this mantle of disciple-making, God will be glorified, Christ will be adored, and the Great Commission will be fulfilled.

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<sup>65</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, locs. 12602-3.

<sup>66</sup>Lea and Griffen, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 286-87.



CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED  
TO SENDING OUT A CHURCH PLANT  
LAUNCH TEAM

The gospel is paramount to the planting of churches. The gospel is the reason churches begin and without gospel centrality churches are social assemblies of people. Social assembly is not the reason Christians were given the Great Commission. The church is an unstoppable organism that is not meant to terminate on itself. Christians are meant to multiply, and as a result, churches are meant to multiply as well.

There is a process by which gospel-centered churches are multiplied. First, a sending church has a mindset toward multiplying the gospel and makes preparations for multiplication. Second, a group of people who have been transformed by the gospel and are literate in its reproductive nature are called to go start a new work. Third, leadership arises to lead these gospel-literate people. These men are enthralled by the gospel and provide leadership through their giftedness and certain proven character traits to grow and lead the transformed people in the gospel. Finally, a focused location for a church is decided upon by the leadership and is affirmed by the people called to help plant the new church.

**Gospel Multiplication**

Gospel multiplication happens when churches focus on God's eternal kingdom more than their own tiny fiefdom. Multiplying churches instill in their individual members their need to be disciple-makers that make disciple-makers. This exponential mindset creates a lasting impact for the kingdom and naturally creates an understanding for the need for more churches.

Churches set on multiplying also make practical preparations to encourage church planting beyond their own congregation and into other cities, states, and countries. Churches that desire to multiply and advance the kingdom need to have a multiplying mindset with a concentration on practical preparation in order to make a lasting impact for the sake of Christ and his church.

### **Mindset for Multiplying**

A mindset of gospel multiplication has to be instilled in church members. This multiplying mindset is rooted in the gospel and God's call for all Christians to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20), and to do all of this work in community with one another (Acts 2:42-47). Believers are to make an impact through the gospel that expands far beyond them and ripples throughout eternity. A ripple effect of this magnitude happens through a personal love for the gospel, a desire to reproduce this love for the gospel in others, and an understanding that every believer needs to live as though they might be sent.

**Love the gospel.** Christians need to love the gospel and allow this love to soak into every area of their lives. When the gospel permeates the life of a believer and a church, sending happens naturally. J. D. Greear suggests, "What your organization does best grows out of what it loves most. To send effectively, we must love the glory of God and the lost more than we love anything else. Then sending comes naturally."<sup>1</sup> Believers need to love the glory of God and those who are far from God, realizing that they were once far from God also.

All believers were brought near to God by the good news of Jesus and this should be leveraged to motivate believers for mission. J. D. Greear writes "Motivation

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<sup>1</sup>J. D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches That Send* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 58.

for mission grows out of deep, personal experience with the gospel. When we are amazed at the grace God showed in saving us, going to great lengths to save others seems an insignificant thing.”<sup>2</sup> When the depth of human depravity is properly understood and the lengths that God went through to save his people are considered deeply, a rich heart love for God and his glory are developed.

The motivation to reproduce comes from meaningful exposure to the gospel and regular reminders of what God did for them. In other words, the gospel, properly applied, is all that is needed to motivate believers to be reproducers. Greear summarizes, “Everything in the Christian life grows out of the gospel. Thus, the deeper you and your people go in the gospel, the higher you will soar in the mission.”<sup>3</sup> Loving the gospel means seeing what God saves the individual from and what he saves them to and then desiring to see the same work done in others by means of intentional, exponentially minded, disciple-making. The gospel-loving Christian needs to learn to reproduce himself.

**Reproduce themselves.** The Scripture calls all believers everywhere to be reproducing disciples of Jesus. Second Corinthians 5:18 calls all believers to be ministers of reconciliation. All believers in Jesus are to meditate on the gospel personally and share it regularly. When believers are reminded of the gospel frequently and their call to make disciples individually, their desire to be obedient grows.

While their desire may grow to make disciples, the enemy will use many intimidating factors to keep them from reproducing. Big Christian words like evangelism, discipleship, and commissioning are used in the realm of disciple-making. For believers to reproduce themselves, an approach that incorporates these important aspects of Christian growth, and that is easily replicated, needs to be imparted to them.

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<sup>2</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Neil Cole of Church Multiplication Associates offers a helpful solution he calls D.N.A. groups. D.N.A. is an acronym that stands for divine truth, nurturing relationships, and apostolic mission. He argues that these components “are needed in every part of the church, from its smallest unit to its largest.”<sup>4</sup> These aspects should be apparent in all of the church’s disciple-making structures. They should be apparent in corporate worship, small groups, children’s ministry, outreach ministries, gender-based ministries, and more. The D.N.A. components are a means to make disciple-making simpler and reproducible in daily relationships.

Cole begins his explanation of D.N.A. aspects with divine truth: “Truth comes from God. It is the revelation of God to humankind. It is best seen in the person of Jesus and the Scriptures.”<sup>5</sup> Disciple-making needs to be centered on the person and work of Jesus as found in the inerrant, infallible Scriptures. When believers want to begin the process of making disciples it needs to be around some study of the Scripture. This study could be as simple as asking a few coworkers if they would like to study the Gospel of John or some new believers if they would like to look deeply at the book of Acts and how God sends his people. Making disciples requires looking at the Scriptures and considering the claims of Jesus and what he calls believers to do in this present world. Disciples are not made without looking into God’s Word.

Cole goes on to describe what nurturing relationships are:

Humans were never created to be alone. We are social creatures and have an intrinsic need for relationships. Our relational orientation is a reflection of the image of God in us. God Himself is relational and exists in a community—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

Humans crave relationship because that is the way God designed people in his own image. Disciples are made and grown through relationships, which includes the person

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<sup>4</sup>Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), loc. 1482, Kindle.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., locs. 1482-83.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., locs. 1487-88.

far from God who is looking to understand more about the Bible, Jesus, and the church. Disciple-making also encompasses the newly saved woman who has a hunger to grow as a believer. The believer who has walked with Christ for years also grows best through nurturing relationships that point him to the Scripture.

Apostolic mission is Cole's final part of the D.N.A. acronym: "Apostolic means sent as a representative with a message. We are here for a purpose. We have been given a prime directive to fulfill: to make disciples of all the nations."<sup>7</sup> An innate part of discipleship is an understanding and imparting of one's individual mission to share the good news with others. When making disciples, mission needs to be conveyed to the one being discipled. Mission might be shared through an actual evangelistic challenge to the one far from God. Mission may also be conveyed through an accountability challenge to a believer to be on mission sharing the gospel regularly.

**Be ready to go.** Believers need to love the gospel, be able to reproduce themselves, and then be ready to go. When believers are gospel-saturated and discipled toward multiplication, then being sent is a regular part of their vocabulary and going somewhere on mission is at the very least on their radar. Pat Hood writes, "If Christ has called you into relationship with Him, you are called to be a missionary. The call to discipleship is a call to missions."<sup>8</sup> This call to missions starts where the believer lives, but may not finish there.

Being ready to go incorporates the idea of being unleashed for the sake of the gospel in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools, and also having the understanding that God may want the believer to be part of something new and to be ready to move across the world, across the country, or across town. Greear explains,

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<sup>7</sup>Cole, *Organic Church*, locs. 1489-90.

<sup>8</sup>Pat Hood, *The Sending Church: The Church Must Leave the Building* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 181.

If we want to be sending churches, we cannot relegate “missions” to a specific department in the church. Being a disciple means being sent; so sending should pervade every aspect of discipleship development. Everything we do and learn in the Christian faith ought to be in the context of the Great Commission.<sup>9</sup>

Believers need to realize they are always on mission in daily life and need to be ready and willing to go be a part of God’s mission in other parts of the world or even their own town. They need to be challenged regularly that God may be calling them to do something audacious for the kingdom’s advance for God’s greater glory.

### **Practical Preparation for Multiplying**

Churches need to instill a multiplying mindset into their members through discipleship. This focus builds a culture of Great Commission minded believers who understand the need to send and to go. This mindset is not all that is necessary though. Practical measures must be taken by the sending church in order to plant churches that plant churches. Leaders need to be developed, funds must be raised, and plans must be clear.

**Develop leaders.** Sending churches need to have a strong leadership development culture. They need to think about growing leaders from the very beginning. Greear shares this insight regarding church planting: “At its core, planting churches is really about developing leaders who make disciples. Good leaders plant healthy churches.”<sup>10</sup> As well-developed leaders grow, many will develop into church planters who will help fulfill the vision of planting more churches. Greear goes on to write, “The real measure of multiplication is not how many churches we plant, but how many leaders we develop. After that, church planting becomes easy.”<sup>11</sup> Churches need to be about developing healthy leaders if they want to multiply church plants.

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<sup>9</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 159.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 230.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 232.

While developing leaders is of utmost importance within sending churches, there is also a place for recruiting leaders in the beginning of a new church in order to set a culture of a church toward church planting. Ed Stetzer sets the idea of planting pregnant as a goal for church planters.<sup>12</sup> These churches begin with the understanding that soon after the initial church is started the next church will be sent out in twelve to eighteen months. The leaders who will plant the new church out of the young church plant usually need to be recruited from outside and involved in the initial launch of the sending church.

**Raise funds.** Churches that want to multiply need to take the practical step of raising funds for the new church that they will start. Ed Stetzer shares, “Many of the more aggressive parent churches assign 10 percent or more of the overall church budget to domestic church planting.”<sup>13</sup> Churches that want to multiply need to place considerable funds aside to help new church starts. Action must follow the talk of multiplication and leadership development.

Denominational involvement is also helpful in the starting of new churches. Typically, denominations will financially help sending churches in their endeavor to multiply churches. Stetzer writes, “Most denominational agencies have aggressive and measurable goals to increase the number of parent churches within their denominational circles.”<sup>14</sup> Denominations want more churches started through parent churches. There is assistance available, but the amount of money might be less than expected. Stetzer shares

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<sup>12</sup>Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 43.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 141.

from his research that “the denomination [is] typically providing less than one-third of the needed funds.”<sup>15</sup>

Churches need to set aside funds for planting and they need to be able to introduce lead planters to funding sources like denominations for help, but they also need to facilitate a culture of giving on the new church’s core team as well. A culture of giving can come through many different methods, but is done most effectively through the parent church sending tithing families with the new planter that make up a missional core.

This missional core sees their involvement with the new church plant as their mission work and gives to it on a sacrificial basis.<sup>16</sup> Hill Country Bible Church in Austin, Texas, sets a “goal for each planter to build this missional core of at least twenty lay missionaries who are ‘farming’ the target community along with the church planter.”<sup>17</sup> Through creating a strong leadership development culture and effective fundraising, a sending church can take huge strides in the process of church planting.

**Clear planning and communication.** Clear planning is a vital aspect to the sending of churches and is frequently overlooked in the sending of new churches. Clear planning allows the sending church to communicate well to its membership the reasons behind the actions being taken in church planting. Communicating the plan aids in the discipleship of new members and regular attenders to understand the importance of multiplication. They have to understand that “church planting cannot be an afterthought, someone else’s ministry, or a department.”<sup>18</sup> Church plant planning needs to be taught to people though and the connection made clear for them through to the gospel.

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<sup>15</sup>Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*. 156.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 156-57.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 188.



Clear planning also allows churches to plan budgets and communicate the reasons behind their budget decisions. Clear budget planning is necessary so the sending church is able to continue to support the sent church when it needs support the most—over the first two to three years of existence. Sending churches must realize there is a parenting relationship with the sent church for years to come and financial allotments need to be set aside to help the new church flourish. Clear planning and communication of these plans mitigates against some of the issues that may be faced when sending beloved leaders and setting aside large amounts of money in the budget. It also teaches the church to see the big picture when thinking about its mission in the world.

### **Gospel Literacy**

Gospel literacy is paramount among church plant team members. Gospel literacy includes a transformational gospel experience of their own, an understanding of the effects of the gospel, and the ability to communicate the gospel to others. These people have responded to the good news of who Jesus is and what he has done, have an understanding that the gospel impacts every area of their lives, and are able to communicate the good news to others in an effective manner.

### **Transformational Awakening**

Church plant team members need to have a transformational awakening from the gospel. This statement sounds like an obvious reality, but recent research would suggest that many Americans claim to be Christians, but do not hold the most basic Christian beliefs.<sup>19</sup> These beliefs are part of a transformational awakening of the gospel,

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<sup>19</sup>Matt Carter, *Released: The Power of Everyday Christians on Mission* (Austin, TX: Austin Stone Resources, 2012), loc. 21, Kindle. Of the 90 percent of Americans who call themselves believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, a much smaller amount would say they actually believe these things: absolute moral truth exists. The Bible is completely accurate in all of the principles it teaches. Satan is a real being or force, not merely symbolic. A person cannot earn their way into heaven by trying to be good or by doing good works. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth. God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. Nine percent of American Christians believe these things.

but many American Christians do not hold to them. This sad reality would indicate that many people who call themselves Christians do not actually know Christ as Savior and are not actually following him. At best they are confused as to what the Bible teaches and at worst they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

A transformational awakening when the Lord opens the eyes of the heart and they understand that the gospel is good news for them is vital to the planting of churches. Church plant team members must confess certain beliefs about Jesus from a heart that has been awakened by Jesus. While it is impossible to know exactly where another person is in their belief system, a basic understanding of the following doctrines betrays an orthodox understanding of the gospel. First, the transformational gospel awakening contains an understanding of God as the righteous creator of everything. Second, the person must have an understanding and confession of their personal sin and the penalty of it. Third, they must possess an understanding of Jesus as the Savior from sin via his substitutionary atonement on the cross. Fourth, there must be a response of faith and repentance.<sup>20</sup>

Church plant team members must have this understanding before they can help call others to this transformation in Jesus. David Putman addresses this issue and calls the gospel an announcement by explaining the good news:

The announcement is that God sent Jesus, in his perfection, to take the wrath of our sin and punishment upon himself. The time had come that in one moment in history Jesus took all of our past, present and future sins upon Himself, absorbing their wrath and setting us free from their consequences. These sins are never to be held over our heads again. This is indeed good news!<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>This list is adapted from Greg Gilbert and D. A. Carson, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 31.

<sup>21</sup>David Putman, *The Gospel Disciple: Moving beyond the Weekend* (Chicago: Exponential, 2012), locs. 99-101, Kindle.

This good news is what American Christians need to understand in regard to their faith in Jesus and understanding of the gospel. This experiential knowledge of the gospel is essential for successful gospel-centered church plant launch teams to be effective.

### **Effective Gospel Knowledge**

Church plant launch team members need to have been positionally sanctified, transformed by the gospel individually. They also need to be in a state of progressive sanctification whereby they are being transformed by the gospel continually. Dave Putman writes, “The gospel as an announcement of good news that we are redeemed is just the beginning. This same gospel is renewing us.”<sup>22</sup> Effective gospel knowledge means that team members understand that the gospel is the catalyst that transforms them and this gospel affects every area of their lives. This fresh understanding of the gospel includes their personal spiritual walk, their home and vocational lives, and their interaction with people within the church.

**Personal spiritual walk.** A personal spiritual walk is a vital part of effective gospel knowledge. Individual members of church plant launch teams need to have personal spiritual vitality that is rooted in the gospel. Growth as a disciple is not based on effort, but centering on the gospel. Jonathan Dodson explains, “A gospel-centered disciple rejects the pursuit of perfection and embraces the gift of repentance. In short, a gospel-centered disciple is a repenting disciple.”<sup>23</sup> The spiritual maturing process is accomplished by a continual look at the cross and repentance of sin.

Gospel-centered disciples practice regular repentance and also the spiritual discipline of remembering the gospel regularly. To this point Putman states, “This is why we must not only preach the gospel to lost people, but we must preach the gospel to

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<sup>22</sup>Putman, *The Gospel Disciple*, locs. 129-30.

<sup>23</sup>Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 85.

ourselves. We need to be reminded of His mercies to be transformed.”<sup>24</sup> It is by the constant memory of the gospel that believers are changed into the image of Jesus Christ.

When this regular practice of spiritual vitality takes place, believers walk well and live uprightly. J. D. Payne writes, “Walking uprightly with the Lord enables the team members to know how to live in relation to God, to other team members, and to those outside the Kingdom of God.”<sup>25</sup> This kind of vitality pushes believers outward and the gospel becomes present in their interactions with others in both their personal and professional lives.

**Home and vocational lives made effective by the gospel.** The gospel changes the disciple from the inside out and causes the disciple to care deeply for his roles both within the home and outside the home. Dodson states, “The gospel-centered disciple serves Jesus at work and at home, in the study and in the projects, in church and in culture. His aim is public obedience of every kind. He does this, not for approval, but from resilient approval in Christ Jesus.”<sup>26</sup>

The source of the power for this service is the approval of Jesus. This approval calls the disciple to be a more grace-filled husband, a more Christ-focused father, a more God-honoring worker or boss, and a more loving citizen within his city. When the gospel is center to the individual, roles are fulfilled well and God gets ultimate glory. Church plant launch team members need to be witnesses in their homes of the gospel’s effect and also in their careers or vocations.

**Church life is made effective from the gospel through encouragement and appropriate conflict resolution.** The gospel empowers the growth of the church and the

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<sup>24</sup>Putman, *The Gospel Disciple*, locs. 151-52.

<sup>25</sup>J. D. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Team Members* (Birmingham, AL: self-published, 2012), 17.

<sup>26</sup>Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 48.

gospel empowers the work of the church. The gospel also empowers relationships within the church to be God-honoring.

Church plant launch teams must be replete with encouragement. The ministry of church planting is filled with potential discouraging pitfalls. Payne explains, “A team of encouragers who speak and act in a manner that reflects the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit is a team that is better prepared for the struggles ahead.”<sup>27</sup> This regular encouragement is necessary in the undertaking of the gospel work of launching a new church in a community.

Church plant launch teams need to deal appropriately with conflict. With the pitfalls of discouragement there will inevitably be conflict. It is important in these desperate moments to remember the gospel. Payne writes,

As teams enter into stressful times, the members must constantly remember their witness before others and seek to treat one another with a Christ-like love. Being aware of conflict and addressing it in an appropriate manner can make or break a team and its labors for the Lord.<sup>28</sup>

Love for one another makes appropriate conflict resolution possible and this love is rooted and empowered by the gospel.

### **Gospel Communication**

The gospel must be at the center of the church plant team member’s transformation, spiritual vitality, and must also be on the lips of the team member as it concerns those who are without Jesus in their community. Evangelism is key to the gospel-centered launch team member. David Putman states, “Disciple making isn’t an add-on or a program in our church. It’s our very mission. It’s who we are as the church.”<sup>29</sup> Disciple-making is the job and mission of a church plant team.

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<sup>27</sup>Payne, *The Barnabas Factors*, 112

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 125-26.

<sup>29</sup>Putman *The Gospel Disciple*, locs. 206-8.

The best form of evangelism is in person-to-person conversation that is initiated via personal relationship. Tim Keller addresses this type of evangelism: “Gospel renewal in the church spreads through renewed individuals talking informally to others. It is in personal conversations that the gospel can be applied most specifically and pointedly.”<sup>30</sup> Evangelism should not be a cold activity, but a heartfelt conversation that overflows from the follower of Jesus speaking out of the abundance of his or her heart to someone with whom they have a relationship.

The goal of church plant launch teams is to bring the gospel to people who do not know it. Transfer growth from congregation to congregation does not accomplish this goal. Payne explains,

The Kingdom of God grows through the making of disciples. True missionaries who follow in the footsteps of Jesus and the apostles are not content with the planting of churches through transfer growth. Rather, conversion growth is the first step on the path of fulfilling the Great Commission.<sup>31</sup>

The kingdom needs to be advanced and it is advanced one soul at a time through passionate gospel communication, transformation, and gospel knowledge.

### **Gospel Leadership**

Church plant launch teams must be gospel literate, but they also need strong leadership. Many opinions exist over what makes a successful gospel leader of a church plant launch team. Josh Burnett writes,

I’m not looking for a planter who wants to play it safe or work toward stability—even if I think that person could grow a church. I want a risk taker, and someone who will be focused on planting more churches so we can reach more people with the gospel. Over time, this plan will pay better dividends.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Timothy J. Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 75.

<sup>31</sup>Payne, *The Barnabas Factors*, 78.

<sup>32</sup>Josh Burnett, *Start a Movement: Plant Pregnant* (Chicago: Exponential, 2014), 327-29, Kindle.

Many church planting organizations and leaders have come up with certain qualifications with which they assess church planters. J. Allen Thompson has eighteen character qualities, which are divided into three character clusters,<sup>33</sup> used within Presbyterian circles: personal,<sup>34</sup> ministerial,<sup>35</sup> and interpersonal.<sup>36</sup> Acts29 lists ten vital qualifications for planters that they use in all of their assessments: Spiritual Vitality, Strong Marriage and Family Life, Theological Clarity, Missional Lifestyle, Emotional Health, Entrepreneurial Aptitude, Disciple-Making Skills, Leadership Abilities, Clarity and Strength of Calling, and Relationship Building.<sup>37</sup> Charles Ridley of Texas A&M and the creator of Church Planter Profiles utilizes thirteen traits that assess a planter's preparedness for the work of planting.<sup>38</sup> These are all helpful scales when assessing potential gospel leaders in church planting and there is definite overlap between the qualifications each group uses.

Church plant launch teams need good leadership that is both biblically qualified and possesses certain traits that accord with success in planting. Aubrey Malphurs speaks about successful planters: "Three important factors in a person's divine design are his gifting—both spiritual and natural—his passion, and his temperament."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>J. Allen Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies as Perceived by Church Planters and Assessment Center Leaders: A Protestant North American Study" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 1995).

<sup>34</sup>Prayer, Spiritual Vitality, Integrity, God's Call, Family Life, Conscientiousness, and Humility.

<sup>35</sup>Leadership, Evangelism, Management, Preaching, Philosophy of Ministry, and Training leaders.

<sup>36</sup>Flexibility, Likability, Emotional stability, Sensitivity, and Dynamism.

<sup>37</sup>Acts 29, "10 Qualifications of a Church Planter," April 21, 2009, accessed May 25, 2015, <http://www.acts29.com/10-qualifications-of-a-church-planter-2>.

<sup>38</sup>Charles Ridley, "Thirteen Essential Qualities for Successful Church Planters," Christian Reformed Church, accessed May 25, 2015, [http://www2.crcna.org/site\\_uploads/uploads/crhm/guidelines/B1-14b.pdf](http://www2.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/crhm/guidelines/B1-14b.pdf).

<sup>39</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of*

God can certainly use other giftings, abilities, and temperaments beyond what would be considered typical, but many recognize the following traits as important leadership factors in church planting.

### **Spiritual and Natural Giftings**

Certain giftings are consistently observed as being present within church planters who lead launch teams well. These giftings fall into two general categories: spiritual gifts and natural gifts. For the purpose of this writing, spiritual gifts are those specifically listed in Scripture (1 Cor 12:1-31; Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:1-16). Natural gifts are those gifts present before salvation. They may also be called aptitudes or abilities.

**Several spiritual gifts lend themselves to success in planting.** Malphurs states, “I believe that a lead church planter will usually have most of the following gifts: apostleship, leadership, evangelism, teaching (this includes preaching or communication), and faith.”<sup>40</sup> Chad Clarkson, executive director of the Houston Church Planter’s Network, echoes Malphurs: “Evangelism, leadership, apostle, and some teaching component are typically gifts that are seen in successful planters.”<sup>41</sup> Spiritual gifts that contribute to successful leaders of church plant launch teams involve a mix of apostleship, evangelism, leadership, and teaching. These aspects help coalesce launch teams and help direct them well.

**Natural gifts also help church planters lead launch teams.** These gifts might also be characterized as abilities or aptitudes that they have learned in environments outside the church. Donald Hintze, executive director of the Gulf Coast

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*Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), locs. 447-48, Kindle.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., locs. 458-59.

<sup>41</sup>Chad Clarkson, telephone interview by author, May 28, 2015.



Baptist Association, says he sees three basic skills at work within successful planters: relational skills (specifically the ability to connect with people), strong communication skills, and organizational skills.<sup>42</sup> Malphurs writes, “Two natural gifts that often characterize the lead church planter are leadership and communication.”<sup>43</sup>

Chad Clarkson adds to the discussion that he observes there is a “starting mentality and an entrepreneurial tenacity, these men are not guys who are easily deterred.”<sup>44</sup> Leaders of launch teams need to be able to communicate and lead by connecting and organizing people and they need to have an entrepreneurial bent that helps enable the vision of the new church and keeps team members focused when discouragement inevitably comes.

## **Passion**

Passion can be defined as an intense desire or enthusiasm for something. Passions are things that intrinsically stir the leader and result in action. Hintze has observed three passions in successful planters: “A passion for making disciples that come out of the unchurched, a passion for leadership development, and a passion for hurting and lost people.”<sup>45</sup> Clarkson says, “When I speak with potential planters about why they want to plant, usually every story begins with the lostness of people.”<sup>46</sup> The desire and passion of the gospel leader is to see the person far from God come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and be discipled and grown toward Christlikeness.

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<sup>42</sup>Donald Hintze, telephone interview by author, May 28, 2015.

<sup>43</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 458-59.

<sup>44</sup>Clarkson, interview.

<sup>45</sup>Hintze, interview.

<sup>46</sup>Clarkson, interview.

Lead planters want to see the gospel take root in people’s lives. Malphurs agrees: “Often lead church planters have a primary passion for lost people, unchurched lost people, and the Great Commission.”<sup>47</sup> Without a passion for the gospel illiterate, the planter may just be trying to build a successful organization or a place for him to preach. Neither of these designs is evil, but they are not part of an effective church plant launch team strategy.

## **Temperament**

The temperament of the planter is a very important factor in the leading of a team that launches a church. After consulting with multiple church planting agencies, it was apparent that three temperament profiles are frequently utilized: The DISC, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator 2, and the Clifton StrengthsFinder. These profiles provide insight into the personality of the leader.

**DISC is a behavior assessment.** DISC is an acronym for dominance, inducement, submission, and compliance. A person will have one or more dominant areas and scores in each of the four areas create his behavioral profile.

Malphurs explains, “When lead or point church planters take the DISC, they are usually one of the following: the developer (D), the results-oriented person (D), the inspirational person (D/I), or the persuader (I/D).”<sup>48</sup> The “I” also frequently comes into play in successful planters as this aspect indicates the ability to inspire others around them. Clarkson shares this feeling: “A high D is almost always in the mix and I is also helpful, but keep in mind that God will override personality where necessary.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 483-84.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., locs. 508-9.

<sup>49</sup>Clarkson, interview.

A certain amount of dominance is important in the leader of church plant launch teams. The leader must be able to lead toward a vision, inspire others to come along, and to start something where nothing currently exists. This trait is inherent in someone who has a high D. Beau Crosetto states, “The call of the planter is to lay foundations. It is to start ministry where it is not happening.”<sup>50</sup> Leadership of this type requires a certain type of personality that is not easily deterred and helps bring others along.

**Myers-Briggs and Temperament Indicator (MBTI) profiles the personality.** This assessment is an inventory that makes Carl Jung’s personality types understandable. The MBTI takes a look at four dichotomies: Introversion versus Extraversion (I versus E), Intuition versus Sensing (N versus S), Feeling versus Thinking (F versus T), and Perception versus Judging (P versus J). Those who take the temperament indicator are assigned a combination of these dichotomies. Sixteen types of personalities are indicated in the MBTI.

When writing about successful planters and their MBTI results, Malphurs explains, “Church planters are usually the inventor (ENTP), the leader (ENTJ), the people person (ENFP), or the persuader (ENFJ).”<sup>51</sup> Clarkson indicates that the ENTJ type is, in his observation, the most successful at church planting, although other types are also successful, but they almost always are extraverted.<sup>52</sup> According to these leaders, extraversion and intuition appear to be very important in the leader.

**StrengthsFinder is utilized to indicate the motivations and strengths of a leader.** Donald Clifton created the assessment with thirty-four distinct patterns, called

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<sup>50</sup>Beau Crosetto, *Release The APE* (Chicago: Exponential, 2014), locs. 621-22, Kindle.

<sup>51</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 511-12.

<sup>52</sup>Clarkson, interview.

talent themes. These themes indicate strengths and the participant is given their top five themes. The subject typically has one dominant theme. The Houston Church Planter's Network uses this profile for their residents and Clarkson shares that they typically see a correlation of success when there is a combination of activator, arranger, achiever, belief, competition, or focus at work within the candidate.<sup>53</sup> These strengths betray an inner motivation that pushes the planter forward.

While God can certainly use any type of person to accomplish his will, this research indicates that a person with certain gifts, passions, and personality traits will be more successful, on average, than others. Lead planters should typically have spiritual gifts that encompass leadership, teaching, and evangelism gifts. If they are to help lead a movement of church planting, they should likely also possess the gift of the apostle. Their natural gifts should include an entrepreneurial aptitude and tenacity that helps them think outside of the box and stay focused at their task at hand.

There should be an underlying passion to see the gospel at work in the lives of people and a desire to decrease lostness in their area of service. This person would typically portray a level of dominance in their personality while also being able to inspire others to be part of the mission. Lead planters should likely hold the dichotomies of extraversion over introversion and intuition over sensing. They should also have a mix of strengths that include activator, arranger, achiever, belief, competition, or focus. These are key aspects in the identification of a strong church plant launch team leader.

### **Gospel Location**

The successful launch of a church plant launch team includes gospel literate team members, strong gospel-centered leadership that arises to give vision and direction, and finally a location decided upon to center the efforts of the fledgling church. Location

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<sup>53</sup>Clarkson, interview.

is important for many reasons. Malphurs writes, “Setting provides a place from which the church can minister to the community. Setting provides the church with strategic advantage.”<sup>54</sup> The location is a town or neighborhood where a church will be located. When choosing a location, three factors should be considered: demonstrated need, dedicated people, and a decided plan.

### **Demonstrated Need**

The goal of launching a new church is to reach new people for the gospel. Transfer growth is not the goal, but instead, fresh conversions to God’s kingdom. The church plant launch team must understand the needs of an area before they can effectively serve that locale with the gospel. Several factors indicate a demonstrated need, including spiritual climate research, demographic research, and psychographic research.

**Spiritual climate research indicates gospel presence in an area.** Spiritual climate can be assessed on many levels. The most general being how many churches are in a specific location and basic demographic information regarding church attendance available from census data. However, a strong understanding of spiritual climate goes further than this high-level analysis. There must be an understanding of the type of church and the teaching that goes on at the local churches in the given area. This information can be obtained by meetings with pastors, the perusal of the churches’ websites, and regular interaction in the community

There is also a need to understand the people in a face-to-face manner, which can be done via phone or door-to-door survey. This survey would provide the launch team with a greater personal understanding of the spiritual climate of an area and also the

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<sup>54</sup>Setting provides the church with a means to an end. Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 3410-14.

opportunity to create personal contacts. Sam Douglass, president of Just Coach Me, does not allow the church plant teams that he is coaching to launch their church without first doing at least one thousand surveys in their area.<sup>55</sup> This practice insures that a team knows the simple likes and dislikes of the people they are trying to reach.

**Demographic research indicates who lives in an area.** Demographic research is essential to understanding who lives in an area. Demographic research on a location can be obtained through the United States census, denominational agencies, local governments, and professional groups like demographics.com and thearda.com.

Helpful demographic research includes age, education levels, marriage information, homeownership data, gender, and racial makeup. This data gives a general understanding of the people who make up a community.

**Psychographic research indicates what type of people live in an area.** Demographics give an outward look on a community, psychographic research gives a look at the inner ideals of a community. Malphurs states that this research “helps you understand their values, what motivates them, and their perceptions of the church in general.”<sup>56</sup> This information can be gathered through services like preceptnet.com. Understanding feelings and motivations are invaluable in the understanding of communities and reaching them with the gospel.

### **Dedicated People**

The team and the leader must match the area where they will plant the gospel. Tim Keller and the Redeemer Church Planting Network ask three basic questions to potential planters when they are choosing a location: “Who am I? Where do I feel at

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<sup>55</sup>Sam Douglass, telephone interview by author, May 5, 2015.

<sup>56</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 2475-76.

home? How culturally adaptable am I?”<sup>57</sup> This match of mindset, demographics, and psychographics lend themselves to greater success in church planting and will cause the team to be more dedicated to that community.

The personal makeup of the team and leader should be taken into consideration when choosing a location, as well as the neighborhoods where they live. They should be comfortable and understand their location well. Malphurs wisely advises teams:

Consider who is already in your church plant and the kind of community they will attract. If you as the church planter feel led to reach a community that is different from you—ethnically, racially, social-economically, linguistically, or in some other obvious way—you should first recruit people to your church-planting team who are like those in the community and let them take the lead in reaching out to the community.<sup>58</sup>

These people need to be dedicated to the location and match the location well. They need to love the place where they are ministering the gospel. It is also preferable that the lead planter and the launch team members live in the town or neighborhood in which they are ministering. If this is not economically feasible, it is important to live as close to the area as possible.

### **Decided Plan**

There needs to be a sure plan about the type of church that will be planted. The plan needs to match the location and the people who are implementing the plan. Hintze speaks about the plan for the church launch team: “God has prepared through training or experience to reach certain types of people.”<sup>59</sup> Without significant training, it is inadvisable to plant a significantly different type of model than the church launch team is used to ministering within or the leader is used to leading.

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<sup>57</sup>Timothy J. Keller, *Church Planting Manual* (New York City: Redeemer City to City, 2002), 59.

<sup>58</sup>Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, locs. 2488-90.

<sup>59</sup>Hintze, interview.

Clarkson shares that they have seen significantly more success when planters take into account the type of people who are part of their launch team and their location when creating their strategic plan to reach a community. The plan needs to match the team, the leader, and the community.<sup>60</sup>

The mission of the church is to bring the good news of Jesus to the world. Church plants are the most effective means of evangelism in the world. Church plant launch teams need to be properly prepared. These teams must include gospel-literate people. They must be led by gospel-loving leaders who have certain character traits that correlate with successful planting. These team members must also settle on a location with a demonstrated need, a dedicated people, and a decided plan.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated the observable factors that lend themselves toward the establishment of strong church plant launch teams and eventually gospel-centered churches. These factors revolve around a firm understanding of the gospel. First, the gospel calls believers to think about multiplication both in theory and practice. Second, the gospel compels believers to live in such a way that Christ is seen in their actions and interactions in every walk of life. This gospel-centered walk is foreign to an unbelieving world and brings much glory to Jesus. Third, strong men who are vigorous for gospel fidelity need to lead churches in line with their God given giftings and abilities. Finally, these teams need to be determined to take the good news of Jesus into areas where his name is not famous and strive to see it praised and glorified. When these factors are taken into account, then multiplying, gospel-centered churches will be the result.

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<sup>60</sup>Clarkson, interview.



## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The development of this project was motivated by the need to send gospel-centered church plant launch teams throughout the Houston area. A wealth of material about planting churches specifically focuses on lead planters, but very little training exists for preparing church plant launch teams to go along with the lead planter. After reviewing the biblical basis for church planting in chapter 2 and the personal, cultural, and theological issues often faced in church planting, a course was developed to meet the need for church plant launch teams to be trained in the important aspects of church planting.

#### **Intent of the Project**

The desired outcome of the project was to equip a group of CityView Pearland members to start a new church in Alvin, Texas, called CityView Alvin. This team would be prepared and sent from CityView Pearland as a newly formed launch team to plant CityView Alvin. This group would be commissioned by CityView Pearland to go and begin a new congregation in Alvin, Texas, a growing suburb of Houston. CityView Pearland is seeking to plant 100 churches in 25 years in the greater Houston area. The desire is to build a program to prepare launch teams that are going to be a part of the CityView Collective of church plants. These new church plants will be loosely affiliated for the purpose of training, funding, and sending other fledgling congregations. The evaluation of the project goals are discussed in detail within chapter 5.

## Course Development

The development of the training course was an extensive process that had its roots in a recognition of needed training for launch team members, an informal surveying of the landscape of church plant launch team training, and then a formal evaluation of training materials available for launch teams.

### Background

Before beginning this project, I was privileged to be a part of the Clear Creek Community Church residency program. This program was specifically tailored for lead planters. However, at several times throughout this program we were encouraged to bring along members of our team for the specific type of training being offered whether that be discipleship, evangelism, leadership development, or a myriad of other training topics. Whenever a team member came along with me, a notable difference was made in their preparation for leadership within our existing church plant. However, we were not able to bring team members to every training session. This limitation in training caused me to begin to search for training sessions for launch teams. I could find very little existing training specifically for launch teams. I agree with J. D. Payne who spoke about the lack of resources on this subject in *The Barnabas Factors*. Payne writes, “I have likened this particular aspect of church planting to a desert. Church planters wander in need of something to quench their thirst, yet very few resources exist to assist them in this area of their journey.”<sup>1</sup>

It seemed obvious that strong launch teams were important for the potential health and success in the early months and years of a church plant. Ed Stetzer indicates that churches that are started with teams grow more quickly in terms of attendance.

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<sup>1</sup>J. D. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Team Members* (Birmingham, AL: self-published, 2012), 6.

These teams can be composed of lay leaders, professional staff, or a combination.<sup>2</sup> Elmer Towns and Douglas Porter communicate this idea well: “Churches planted by an effective ministry team tend to be stronger, and their future tends to be more secure.”<sup>3</sup> Teams are obviously important for the viability of a church plant, but training for these teams simply does not exist.

Doing some more expansive, informal research, I found this to be the case in all the church planting training centers I contacted. The topics that I was taught would be exceedingly helpful if they were tailored and taught to teams of mostly lay people who would help to launch a new church. These lay people would be better trained and more prepared for launching a church.

The team development followed four specific goals. First, a survey period determined important topics to be taught to a church plant launch team. Second, an application process and rubric was utilized to form a prospective launch team from CityView Pearland. Third, the training program was implemented and growth measured through pre and post-series surveys. Fourth, those who completed the training needed to commit to go and launch CityView Alvin.

### **Survey Period**

I contacted churches and organizations that I could determine had lead planter resident programs or participated heavily in the training of lead planters. I contacted Clear Creek Community Church, Prestonwood Baptist Church, The Austin Stone Church, Hill Country Bible Church, The Summit Church, Covenant Community Church, Fellowship Associates, the Houston Church Planters Network, the Southern Baptist of

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<sup>2</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 74.

<sup>3</sup>Elmer Towns and Douglas Porter, *Churches That Multiply: A Bible Study on Church Planting* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2003), 146.

Texas Convention, and the Gulf Coast Baptist Association, which includes churches in Brazoria County, Texas. In all, I made contact with ten church plant training centers.<sup>4</sup>

I asked for a list of their training topics, curriculum, and whether or not they were doing any kind of launch team training for their residents. They varied significantly in the amount of help they would provide to me in my research. Some groups considered their training proprietary and would not share details of what was taught or how they taught the material. However, they all shared their program overview of topics. Clear Creek Community Church, the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention, and Covenant Community Church were gracious and shared their curriculum content as well. None of these training centers was doing any kind of launch team training specifically for lay people.

I analyzed the training topics and curriculum and found commonalities. Different phrasing was used from church to church, but the emphasis was clear. Through this analysis, significant overlap in topics became obvious and specific training topics began to emerge. The topics that were taught across at least four training programs are displayed in table 1.

After reviewing the content provided from these particular training programs, I found the overlapping segments and disregarded items that were obviously lead planter specific. These disregarded topics were fundraising, preaching, small group development, strategic planning, church administration, and the understanding of personalities. These topics might have some value for a team, but were not the most valuable topics on which to focus.

I created an outline of topics to be covered in the curriculum. These topics were based on the overlapping items from the initial residency survey and an informal

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<sup>4</sup>There are many church planting organizations like Acts29, Converge Worldwide, Stadia, and others. These organizations were not contacted for the purpose of this project because they are primarily funding or networking organizations, and training centers for church planters.

inquiry into CityView’s initial launch team. I asked them what knowledge would have served them best before committing to a church plant launch team. Based on the overlapping topics and the feedback from CityView’s initial launch team, I created an outline and submitted it to the CityView Church leadership team. This outline included the purpose of church planting, the importance of understanding the gospel, the basics of spiritual vitality, an evangelism primer, how to live a gospel-centered life, church leadership development, and communication within church.

Table 1. Training center topic survey

Topics Taught at Training Centers	Percentage of training centers teaching this topic
Understanding the Gospel	100
Spiritual Vitality/Disciplines	100
Evangelism	100
Fundraising	100
Gospel-Centered/Missional Living	100
Church Leadership	90
Small Group Development	90
Strategic Planning	60
Preaching/Giftings	50
Church Administration	50
Church Communication	50
Understanding Personalities (DISC, Myers Briggs)	50
Purpose of Church Planting	40
Core Team Development	40

The leadership approved the outline unanimously with a few suggestions as to where to improve the actual curriculum. Their suggestions revolved around the nature of what was being taught. The leadership team wanted the curriculum to generally go from philosophical to practical in each session. They also asked that each lesson be centered on Scripture and wanted each lesson to have Bible study elements that connected philosophy with Bible and then showed the practicality of what was being taught.

Because the vision of CityView is to plant 100 churches in 25 years, suggestions were made that the webinars be taught using CityView specific terms and reinforcing CityView’s vision. Their reasoning was that this curriculum would be suited for all launch teams to be sent from CityView and they wanted to see consistency throughout the plants.

Originally I wanted to use this material more broadly beyond the scope of CityView, but saw the wisdom of their suggestion. I decided if this curriculum is proven beneficial it can always be edited to be used more broadly. They also asked that when possible, to recommend at least one popular resource, such as a book or podcast, in each session to give the launch team some greater moorings in the subject. Overall, I received their suggestions and ideas and finalized the curriculum development outline.

This outline formed the basis for curriculum development and concrete learning objectives were created for each lesson. Curriculum development took roughly ten days as I thought through helpful parts of our team’s planting journey and found resources that undergirded these areas. Writing each session’s outline took roughly three to four hours each. Upon completion of the curriculum outlines, I sent the curriculum to the CityView Church leadership team along with the curriculum rubric for approval.<sup>5</sup> Having taken into account their initial suggestions to the outline, this curriculum was approved with 100 percent of criteria meeting sufficient standards or above.

### **Application Process**

The desire to be a church that planted multiple churches had been clearly communicated since CityView Pearland was launched. The plan had been shared with CityView Pearland’s launch team before they agreed to join the team. This vision was also continually shared through groups, teaching on the vision statement and core values, and through sermons explaining the importance of church planting for the fulfillment of

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<sup>5</sup>See appendix 1.

the Great Commission. The plan to plant multiple churches throughout Houston is consistently shared in a monthly, thirty-minute class for visitors called Next Step. This plan is also given ample explanation in the New Members class, which occurs on a quarterly basis and is required for anyone seeking to become a member of CityView Pearland. The need to take this desire from idea to reality was the next necessary step, and that meant finding people who would be willing to take the steps necessary to begin a new church.

### **Recruitment**

While the curriculum was being assembled, several announcements were made at CityView Pearland for covenant members who were interested in being part of a church plant launch team to apply. Announcements were made through multiple mediums that included email, social media postings, one-on-one recruitment, and general Sunday announcements. The desire was to generate interest throughout the church and get at least five applications that stood a good chance of being approved.

All of these recruitment platforms asked those interested to submit an application, which was available online or at CityView's Next Step Table. An application was developed that asked for basic information. Each applicant needed to supply their general contact information, family information, brief salvation testimony, baptism information, covenant membership affirmation, and their current life group involvement.<sup>6</sup> Fifteen applications were received. Twelve of the fifteen applications were from covenant, adult members of CityView Pearland. To be considered as a launch team member, the applicants had to have already completed CityView Pearland's membership process. Therefore, these three applicants were excluded.

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<sup>6</sup>See appendix 5.

## Evaluation

Using the church plant launch team member rubric, the twelve applicants were reviewed by CityView Church's leadership team.<sup>7</sup> The rubric was developed through asking the CityView leadership team what characteristics were important in launch team members that would not necessarily be able to be trained in the planned eight training sessions. These traits would need to be already inherent to large degree in the lives of these members. The traits revolved around CityView's core values of loving people far from God, living in authentic relationships, leading gospel-centered lives, loving biblical roles, living to see community transformation happen, and leading the way in church planting.

Other general measurable commitment indicators were also taken into account, including checking the application for their salvation and baptism testimonies, covenant membership, and life group involvement. CityView's membership database was queried regarding involvement in regular ministry within the church. Giving records were checked to see if these applicants were giving regularly and significantly. This determination was made based on knowledge of the individual, their job, and their giving trends, and not on a predetermined amount.

Additionally, the leadership team spoke to the applicants Life Group leaders to answer more subjective questions concerning their growth in spiritual habits, their understanding of biblical gender roles, personal involvement in discipleship relationships, active pursuit of personal evangelism, general church planting desire, and regularity in community service through the life group. Upon completion of these reference checks an informal interview was held with each applicant to assess in person their desire to be part of a prospective church plant launch team.

Ten of these twelve adult applicants passed standards presented in the rubric with 95 percent of criteria being at sufficient levels or above and were approved as a

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<sup>7</sup>See appendix 2.



prospective launch team to continue training. Two men who were part of these ten adults also met biblical standards of eldership and had significant education in ministry. One of those men felt called to serve as the lead planter of CityView Alvin, the leadership team concurred and approved him to train as the lead planter of the launch team. This leader had been participating in a church planter residency program at CityView prior to the application process and had been prepared throughout his tenure to understand what was necessary in the leadership of a church plant launch team.

### **Implementation of the Training Program**

The curriculum was complete and the prospective launch team was approved. The next aspect of the project was to implement the training for the team. This meant making definitive plans as to when the training would take place and the measurement of statistical growth for the training.

#### **Timeline**

Training for the prospective team was to begin on June 15, 2015, and conclude by August 15. Many of the families had vacation plans already made for the summer, which caused a layer of complexity that I had not foreseen. Additionally, in some instances, these families lived over an hour away from each other. After multiple conversations with the prospective launch team members, the determination was made that aligning a meeting time for ten busy individuals with families would be too challenging throughout a summer. Therefore, we decided to shoot training videos that would be uploaded to a private website and then viewed at the leisure of the launch team throughout the agreed upon schedule. These videos were available on June 15 so that the training program could begin and would remain available through August 15.

My creative arts director, Jayson Lindley, and I shot all eight training sessions over a two-day span and then edited and uploaded them to the CityView website. I included the written curriculum in Adobe PDF format to be downloaded and utilized

along with the specific videos that would be viewed.<sup>8</sup> Through the use of video I was able to emphasize points through on screen graphics and text that we hoped would aid in greater retention of the topic.

The handouts associated with each video had several blanks to help the viewer pay close attention to each point. I created a pre-training survey on Wufoo.com that was to be taken before viewing the first video.<sup>9</sup> We set the videos so that they would not open until the pre-training survey was completed. I also posted an identical post-training survey to be taken upon completion of the final training video.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the viewer was taken to the post-training survey directly after the final video finished. These two surveys were used to demonstrate statistical growth using the *t*-test for dependent samples.<sup>11</sup>

### **Training Course Summary**

The training for the prospective church plant launch team began on June 15. All ten participants took the online pre-training survey that day. Upon completing the pre-training survey, the videos were unlocked to view and the handouts were available for download through the website. They were instructed to go through the trainings in sequential order, but if they missed something or wanted to review something they were welcome to go back and watch that particular session over again.

**Session 1: The background of church planting.** This lesson asked the prospective team, “Why do we plant churches?” This session teaches the biblical and theological reasons behind church planting and connects what they would be doing with the larger mission of God. This session shared the big picture of church planting and

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<sup>8</sup>See appendix 6.

<sup>9</sup>See appendix 3.

<sup>10</sup>See appendix 3.

<sup>11</sup>See appendix 7.

emphasized Jesus's teaching about the church and the early church in the book of Acts. This session drew from *Center Church* by Tim Keller.<sup>12</sup> The goal of this session was for the prospective launch team to understand the biblical moorings of church planting and to help distinguish it from other Christian movements.

**Session 2: Gospel transformation.** This session dealt with gospel literacy and specifically the understanding of how the gospel changes believers by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The objective of the session was to help prospective launch team members understand the basics of sharing the gospel through their individual testimonies and to aid them in being prepared when the opportunity presented itself. The session challenged them to write their personal salvation testimony in a simple format and to share that testimony with at least one other person before they began session 3. The strong recommendation was made that this person be someone who does not have a personal relationship with Christ.

The format for the testimony was drawn from the passage in Acts 26 when Paul is standing before King Agrippa. Paul's basic outline for sharing his testimony is a simple introduction, what my life was like before I met Christ, the circumstances of how I met Christ, what happened after I met Christ, and then an appeal for the person hearing the testimony to repent and believe the gospel. A similar format was taught to me as a teenager and it provided a simple way to share the gospel in a personal way. The emphasis was made to not glorify a sinful life style when sharing about their life before Christ.

**Session 3: Spiritual vitality.** Session 3 taught the basics of spiritual vitality from 2 Corinthians 3:15-18 and through the use of CityView Church's Six G's of

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<sup>12</sup>Timothy J. Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

spiritual vitality.<sup>13</sup> These six points are touchstones of spiritual growth: gospel, grow, gifts, good stewardship, group, and go.

When talking about the gospel, the session emphasized that salvation and sanctification are both through leaning on the gospel. This leaning on the gospel is essential for salvation, but also for spiritual growth. Since the Six G's strategy focuses believers on their growth, it is essential that they understand that leaning on the gospel is both the starting line and the track of spiritual growth. The emphasis was made that true spiritual growth cannot happen apart from the good news of Jesus Christ.

Grow speaks to the practical aspects of spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship. These areas are typically considered spiritual disciplines or habits that more easily enable spiritual growth in the life of a believer. As CityView leaders speak about growth we continue to encourage the congregation to lean on the gospel as they read the Bible, pray, and worship corporately and privately.

The gifts portion challenges the trainee to uncover, develop, and utilize his or her gifts for the sake of the gospel. If they were not already sure of their spiritual giftings they were encouraged to go to CityView's website and take a spiritual gifts inventory in order to help them begin the process of uncovering their gifts. After someone completes this inventory they are encouraged to schedule time with a CityView elder to discuss how they can edify the body through their gifts.

Good stewardship challenges the trainee on how he was managing his time, talent, and treasure, and emphasizes the responsibility of the believer to be a good steward in these areas. The emphasis was that each person possesses the assets of time, talent, and treasure. With the exception of time, they are possessed in different measure, but every born-again believer has been given these things as a stewardship from God. As

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<sup>13</sup>CityView Church's 6 G's of spiritual vitality is adapted from Clear Creek Community Church's spiritual vitality program. I learned about Clear Creek's program through a residency program that I was a part of from September 2013-May 2014.

a result, these assets need to be used for the sake of God's kingdom and the edification of Christ's body.

The group section taught the important aspects of a dynamic life group. The session shared CityView's one-four-one strategy for groups that calls groups to celebrate together once every six weeks, study together for four weeks, and finally serve together for one week. Celebration can be spending time together as families at a park, eating a large meal, going to a ball game or restaurant together, or any activity that causes the group to let their guard down and build deeper relationships.

Groups need to spend the majority of their time in Bible study. For the most part these Bible studies are centered on the text that was preached on Sunday morning during the worship service, which gives groups the opportunity to dive more deeply into the Scripture and to apply it on a more personal level than is possible in a Sunday worship gathering. Groups also need to serve the community together. Groups at CityView are the main way that community mission needs are met. Groups at CityView and CityView plants need to be in this regular rhythm to help build strong relationships that are vital to the health of a local church and the individual believer.

Go challenges the believer to share the gospel in personal relationships. Prospective CityView members are required to have a top ten list of unsaved people before they can become covenant members of the church. This aspect of the Six G's pushes the individual to ask themselves how they are sharing the gospel personally and causes them to seek accountability in personal evangelism. The challenge is also given for them to consider being part of a church plant launch team or to consider joining the CityView residency program for lead planters to one day lead their own launch team.

The overall objective of this session was that launch team members would understand the holistic nature of spiritual vitality and that they would see that each touchstone is an important part of their growth. The hope was that believers would check their hearts regularly concerning each of these touchstones and make adjustments

accordingly. The point was made that without a transformational understanding of the gospel, spiritual vitality could not be pursued effectively.

**Session 4: Effective gospel knowledge.** Session 4 taught the specifics of how to live the gospel out at home, work, and in the neighborhood. The first part of this session emphasized biblical gender roles in the home and how to operate within them. Ephesians 5 was taught and special focus was brought to the importance of marriage in displaying God's glory and Christ's sacrifice on earth.

Emphasis was also made in seizing gospel opportunities at work and in their neighborhood. Believers need to be hard-working colleagues and good neighbors. The objective of this session was to give a richer understanding of the way God intends interpersonal living to demonstrate the gospel and to help launch team members recognize that the people they have been placed next to are their greatest mission field and discipleship opportunity.

Several texts were drawn from in preparation for this session. In discussing marriage, *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerichs<sup>14</sup> was drawn on heavily. When speaking about the home, *Gospel Family* by Jonathan Williams<sup>15</sup> was used to inform discussion and recommended as a resource for family discipleship. When the session turned to neighborhoods as the most obvious place to demonstrate the gospel, the *Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon<sup>16</sup> was given as a helpful resource.

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<sup>14</sup>Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), Kindle.

<sup>15</sup>Jonathan Williams, *Gospel Family: Cultivating Family Discipleship, Family Worship, & Family Missions* (Magnolia, TX: Lucid, 2015).

<sup>16</sup>Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

**Session 5 and 6: Gospel communication.** These sessions taught the importance of biblical communication within the church. They dealt with both the upside and the downside of communicating to other believers. Session 5 dealt with the basics of communication with other Christians. Specifically, this session dealt with the mindset that is needed when dealing with other believers on a regular basis. Session 5 found some roots in chapter 7 of the *Barnabas Factors* by J. D. Payne.<sup>17</sup> The objective was to help launch team members understand that good, gospel-centered communication is important within a local church. The way the launch team members communicated with one another would resonate throughout the lifetime of the new church they were starting.

Session 6 specifically explained how to deal with disagreements and conflict within a church. The ultimate reason to deal with disagreements is because believers are part of one family with God as the Father and through believers dealing well with one another in love, God is given greater glory. The objective of Session 6 was to give launch team members tools to use when inevitable issues arise due to church planting. Chapter 8 of *The Barnabas Factors* speaks to responding appropriately to conflict and was helpful in the planning of this session.<sup>18</sup> This chapter discusses appropriate ways to deal with inevitable conflict within a church. *Instruments in the Redeemers Hand* by Paul Tripp<sup>19</sup> was also offered as a further resource.

**Session 7: Gospel proclamation.** Session 7 presented the basics of an effective personal evangelism strategy. These basics included the development of a top ten list of people far from God; a list of people that an individual prays and seeks to share the gospel with on a regular basis. This session also included an explanation of CityView

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<sup>17</sup>Payne, *The Barnabas Factors*, 101.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>19</sup>Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002).

Church's P.L.E.A.D. strategy. P.L.E.A.D. is a relationship-building tool for the purpose of sharing personal salvation testimonies and the gospel. 'P' stands for pray for your top ten list. 'L' reminds the believer to listen to their top ten list. 'E' stands for eat with people on your top ten list. 'A' asks the believer to actively serve the people on their top ten list. 'D' challenges the believer to dive into the gospel when the opportunity presents itself.

The point was made that there is no one right evangelism tool, but there are many useful ones. An exhortation to learn an evangelism tool was made and the Romans Road was given as an example to share the gospel. The session concluded with a way to deal with questions that might be brought up in the middle of an evangelistic conversation that respects the one asking the question and also keeps the prospective launch team member from answering a question incorrectly. The objective of this session was to help breakdown walls that exist that keep believers from sharing the gospel and to give prospective launch team members a strategy to implement the early stages of personal evangelism.

**Session 8: Gospel leadership.** Session 8 explained a biblical leadership model. This model emphasizes the qualifications of elders as taught in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The session focused on what gives elders the right to lead: they live lives that are above reproach.

The session also focused on the role of an elder to guard doctrine, give direction, and handle discipline issues within the church. An emphasis was also on the response that a congregation should have toward an elder. According to Hebrews 13, elders should be imitated and obeyed. The objective was to instill in launch team members what they should expect from their lead church planter and what their response



should be to him. Alexander Strauch's *Biblical Eldership*<sup>20</sup> was drawn on in the creation of this session.

On August 15, the post-training survey was taken by the participants of the training program. The team received the survey via web form. The post-training survey was identical to the pre-training survey. The results were downloaded from the survey provider and compared to the pre-training survey results.

### **Commitment to Launch**

After the completion of the training sessions, the ten prospective launch team members were each asked to sign commitment cards. These commitment cards certified that they were born-again believers, had been baptized by immersion, agreed with all of the doctrinal standards established by CityView Pearland, would support the new plant with their time, talent, and financial resources, and would commit to help launch CityView Alvin for at least eighteen months.

The commitment cards were fashioned after pledge cards that are used for capital campaigns with the intent of the signer understanding that he or she is pledging more than just a sum of money, but their lives to be spent in the cause of the gospel. The commitment was a key factor to a strong launch team. These cards were signed on August 16, 2015, at the commissioning celebration and sending of CityView Alvin.

### **Conclusion**

The project followed the plan of preparing a launch team to go plant a new church. The initial survey revealed a great deal about the lack of launch team training that is available to church planters. This dearth of training was something that I sought to correct. The need has been addressed through this project and with some editing to the CityView specific material, it can serve other churches in a meaningful way as they seek

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<sup>20</sup>Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth, 2011).

to launch new churches through a team approach to church planting.

The new launch team is a group of men and women who felt called to serve in this new work, went through the application process, were approved by CityView Pearland's leadership team, were trained through webinar, and then committed to being part of a new church. Each one of the approved prospective launch team members completed their training even though the summer was filled with work, vacations, and multiple interruptions. They also signed their cards and began planning the public launch of CityView Alvin. This material and training will serve this team well as they seek to plant CityView Alvin.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

CityView Church in Pearland is a young church that launched on February 9, 2014. The church was founded with the vision of planting 100 churches in 25 years. These new churches need to be started with as strong a probability of success as possible. The desire to have strong new church starts necessitates an emphasis on building and preparing strong church plant launch teams. These teams need to be selected well, trained, and committed to the new church start.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The project intended to prepare a group of CityView Pearland members to plant a gospel-centered church in Alvin, Texas, and to provide a blueprint for more church plants in the future that will be birthed from CityView planted churches. Houston is rapidly expanding and so are all of the communities that surround it. Alvin is one of these suburbs experiencing dramatic growth already and that will continue for years to come as a major highway is built directly through this town and the economy in the town is very healthy. With this notably strong population growth, Alvin is in need of strong gospel-centered churches that have a love for people far from God.

This launch team was made up of four of the individuals from the original launch team of CityView Pearland, but most of them joined after CityView Pearland's first anniversary. Many of the people on this team were lacking in areas that are abundantly necessary for church planting. This team needed to be specifically equipped to understand the basics of church planting, personal growth, evangelism, interpersonal communication within a church, and leadership development. For these reasons it was necessary to train this group of people to plant a church.

The purpose of the project was biblically-sound and sociologically necessary as there is very little, if any, significant training for launch teams specifically. This purpose was accomplished by choosing a launch team through careful criteria, creating a gospel-centered curriculum of church planting for a mostly lay launch team, and then training them with it. The curriculum was focused on giving a theological foundation for church planting and a practical understanding of the subject with significant personal application points. Upon completion of the training, the team was asked to commit to be a part of the launch team. The purpose of sending a team versed in the issues of church planting and committed to helping start a church in a growing area around Houston was completed.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

The project had four specific goals. First was a curriculum development phase. Second, an application process and rubric were utilized to form a prospective launch team. Third, the training program would be implemented. Fourth, those who completed the training needed to commit to plant the new church.

#### **Goal 1**

The first goal of the project was to create an eight-session residency training program for church plant launch teams. To accomplish the goal, ten existing church plant training centers were contacted and their training materials were analyzed and evaluated. An outline was created based on these training materials that would have value for both a lead planter and a mostly lay launch team. This outline was sent to the CityView Church leadership team.

The outline was received well by the leadership team and they approved of the direction of the topics that were going to be taught. The team also brought back some helpful suggestions that centered around the way the curriculum would be taught in each session. The leadership team wanted each lesson to have a systematic rhythm that went

from a theological and philosophical exploration of a topic to a very practical application of that topic. They wanted the curriculum to have a heavy Bible study focus. This Bible study focus was something I had taken for granted in the development of the curriculum outline because I was thinking mostly of the practical applications they could make. Their critique proved to be very useful. I had written the initial outline assuming a higher level of theological and biblical knowledge than the average lay person has. Due to the diversity of CityView's leadership team, this problem was caught early and their suggested changes made the curriculum more valuable for the theologically trained and lay people with a lesser degree of training.

After receiving the critique on the initial topic outline from the leadership team and their desired direction with the curriculum, I began to create curriculum outlines for each webinar. Within a week, the curriculum outlines were completed and the materials were given to CityView's leadership team for review. A rubric was also given to evaluate the material's biblical fidelity and practicality. The leadership team reviewed the curriculum and agreed that 100 percent of the rubrics standards were at or above the sufficient level, exceeding the predetermined success rate of 95 percent.

## **Goal 2**

The second goal was to identify and enlist members of the launch team. Announcements were made at CityView's worship services, through social media, and emails to covenant members to apply to be part of a launch team. Twelve applications were received throughout the course of two weeks.

These 12 applicants were evaluated by CityView's leadership team by the use of a rubric. Ten of the 12 applicants were approved to be part of the team. Four of the 10 people were single without children in the home and another couple did not have children either. This was interesting demographically as it indicated that those who had fewer dependents might be more likely to take up the call to join a launch team.

Two men of these ten adults also met the biblical standards of eldership as observed by the CityView leadership team and had significant background in ministry. They had both been ordained for the gospel ministry previously.

The leadership team met with both of these men individually and spent time in prayer with them. It became clear that we were blessed with two wonderful men to help lead this plant, but that one possessed stronger leadership qualities and giftings that are more in line with that of a lead planter, such as the gift of leadership and teaching, and had been engaged in the leadership of CityView Pearland since its launch in February 2014. The other possessed strong gifts of mercy and administration and indicated that he would rather be a support to the lead planter than the one leading the mission. He also worked a demanding full-time job and did not feel he could devote the time necessary to taking the lead role in a plant.

The man who possessed the stronger leadership gifts came to the leadership team and indicated a deep sense of calling to lead the plant. The leadership team concurred and approved him to train as the lead planter of the launch team. The second elder-qualified man joyfully received this leader and willingly submitted himself under his leadership. This goal was accomplished when the leadership team approved a launch team and a lead planter through the use of the rubric.

### **Goal 3**

The third goal was to implement an eight-session training program for the launch team. To accomplish this goal, the curriculum developed in goal 1 was utilized. This curriculum was both theological and practical in nature. The curriculum was delivered via webinar to the ten approved applicants. Before being able to view the webinars, a pre-training survey was administered. Upon completion of the training the same survey was administered. All 10 of the adults who began the training completed the training.

The participants indicated that all of the sessions were helpful in some way or another and they could see applications for each session; however, some sessions were more helpful than others. Informally, they all indicated that they struggled with the first session that dealt with the reasons behind church planting. This session was heavy on theology and philosophy behind church planting. The general consensus around why they struggled with this video was because they had already effectively answered this question in their own hearts and minds when they applied to be part of the launch team. They indicated that they appreciated understanding the background, but felt like they would benefit more if this session were shortened or incorporated throughout the other sessions.

They also indicated that session 4, which talked about demonstrating the gospel in the home, at work, and in the neighborhood, would have been more helpful had it been broken up and made into two or three sessions. They felt that while the video was informative, they would have captured more and been able to implement more into their personal lives had this one session been made longer.

The participants also shared that they felt like there was a lot of overlap between sessions 2 and 7. Session 2 dealt specifically with the importance of a gospel testimony: how to write a gospel testimony and how to share this testimony. Session 7 presents strategy in evangelism. When putting the curriculum together it was obvious that these two sessions would have commonalities, however, it seemed important to include both of them. Upon deeper reflection, these sessions could have been a two-part session emphasizing personal evangelism foundations and strategies and not spread out so far apart from each other in the webinar curriculum.

The sessions that seemed to have the greatest impact were sessions 2, 3, 5 and 8. Session 2 helped the team write their testimonies through the example of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa and then gave helpful commentary and critique on how to share their testimonies well. This session also challenged them to share their testimony

with someone before they started the next session. The lead planter in training indicated that he liked this aspect specifically because it got them out of their comfort zones and caused them to take steps to share their faith with others. He felt like this was something all of these team members know they should do, but that they need a little push as well.

Session 3 dealt with specific touchstones in spiritual vitality: the six core areas that CityView desires members to look to as they seek to grow in their sanctification process. They were thankful that this was broken down simply and made clear what was important in terms of their spiritual walks. One team member remarked that he enjoyed the emphasis on gospel-centrality throughout these touchstones. Another said she liked the way it was presented—not as a checklist of things to do, but as a list of things to check one’s heart against frequently.

Session 5 spoke about the importance of clear communication and the basis for communication within the church. Session 5 was part 1 of a two-part mini-series in the training sessions that dealt with positive conversation between believers. The interesting thing was that session 6 was not really remarked upon at all as either a positive or a negative. This session concerned how to deal biblically with negative verbal communication within a church. I pressed the participants as to why session 5 was one of their favorites, but session 6 was not really evaluated negatively or positively and they had some harmony around the idea that it was important to know, but since they were a new team, disagreements had not truly arisen yet. Session 6 needs to be reviewed as to its importance at this stage in the development of launch teams.

Finally, session 8 also seemed to be one of the more impactful webinars. The participants shared this session was helpful because it gave them a framework for how to view leadership within a church. Some had been confused how deacons and elders differed as they had come from churches where deacons acted as elders. They shared that this session was helpful to understand who should lead churches and why they should lead churches. One team member did not realize that there were biblical qualifications



for the office of elder. This team member was the youngest both in age and in his walk in the Christian faith.

A pre-training survey and a post-training survey were utilized to capture knowledge of training objectives before and after the training webinars were viewed. A *t*-test for dependent samples was utilized to determine whether there had been a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-training scores. This goal was accomplished when there was determined to be a statistically significant improvement ( $t = 8.329, p < 000016$ ) from the pre-training scores to the post-training scores.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2. Questions with the increase of 2 points or more pre-training survey and post-training survey

Training Survey Question	Numeric growth
I can identify the 6 Gs of Gospel Growth	3.125
I can identify the 5 Great Commission passages	2.6
I know what the bedrock for gospel communication is	2.6
I know my 8 nearest neighbors by name	2.5
I understand the actions of gospel communications	2.2
I can identify who is supposed to plant churches	2.1
I understand the role of the elder	2
I can explain the PLEAD strategy	2

#### Goal 4

The fourth goal was to secure the commitments of the trained launch team members to be part of the new church. These commitment cards indicated that they were born-again believers with a testimony they were willing to share, they had been baptized by immersion, they agreed with all of the doctrinal standards established by CityView Pearland, they would support the new plant with their time, talent, and financial resources, and they would commit to help launch CityView Alvin for at least eighteen months. The 10 adults who completed the training all signed the commitment card to

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix 7.

become part of the new launch team. This included the lead planter and his wife. This goal was accomplished when the entire team signed commitment cards indicating their desire to be the launch team sent from CityView Pearland to launch CityView Alvin. At the time of this writing, six months after CityView Alvin's commissioning, all of the launch team members who signed commitment cards are actively participating in worship, life groups, and serving within CityView Alvin.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The first strength of the project was the evaluation of the material of ten other residency training centers to find correlation in what was taught among successful sending churches to planters. The information received was invaluable in the creation of a topic list and curriculum to be taught. This research gave a good cross-section of important topics taught and utilized in training lead planters.

The second strength of the project was the number of covenant members recruited to apply for the prospective launch team. Multiple mediums were used to find CityView Pearland members who would apply in the hopes of recruiting five strong applicants. There were fifteen applicants, 12 of whom were covenant members, and 10 of them were approved as launch team members.

The third strength of this project was the level of completion among those who applied and were selected. I had assumed there would be some level of attrition from approved applicant to completion of the training program; however, everyone who was approved completed training and signed a commitment card. This showed the strength of the selection process from recruitment to application to approval and training. Prospective team members were serious about what they were working toward and they felt a sense of calling to the work of church planting.

The fourth strength of this project was that it dealt with a significant need. This need was uncovered when speaking to other residency training centers and realizing

the lack of training for launch teams. There is a need for general training material for church plant launch teams. This project addresses that need directly.

The fifth strength of this project was demonstrated in the way the training was delivered to the subjects. The online deliverable nature allowed the training to proceed when the participants were available and did not depend on lining up specific times. It also utilized graphics and onscreen text to emphasize points made throughout the teaching, which allowed for a higher than anticipated level of retention of the material. This online method is now the preferred method in training church plant launch teams.

The sixth strength of this project was a dramatic increase in church planting knowledge. I had anticipated an increase in knowledge associated with church planting, but there was a dramatic increase in the factors that our leadership team deemed important. There are a few reasons why there would seem to be such strong statistical growth. First, many of the participants are new believers who have limited biblical knowledge. Second, some of the verbiage used in the questions described specific CityView terms that are covered in membership material and taught frequently within the church; however, an emphasis is not given to the specific term as much as the biblical basis behind the term. The actual terms may have been unfamiliar in the pre-training survey, but after receiving the training are much clearer.

The seventh strength is that the launch team felt more prepared, and as a result, committed to the new work of planting a church. Several team members mentioned that they felt much more prepared for the work of planting after completing the material. This growth in perceived preparation addressed a previously unstated psychological concern that many of them had about joining a team that would launch a new church. Through informal conversations before the project began it became clear that there was some unspoken doubt as to whether they could actually accomplish the monumental task of planting a church.

## **Weaknesses of the Project**

The first weakness of the project was that it was difficult to find and contact churches or training centers that were sending church planters consistently. I made phone calls and sent email queries, and I rarely heard back from these places that were supposedly sending many church planters. Originally, I had thought I would be able to find a list of ten churches pretty easily. However, after spending a great deal of time searching, I had to turn to denominational groups and networks that were training lead planters. I would have liked to have found churches exclusively that were sending. As a result, I feel like the project is weaker because I was not able to glean from churches specifically that had to navigate similar issues as we did.

The second weakness was that once contact was made with the church plant training centers there was an inconsistency in the types of materials being provided. Some training centers sent everything they had and others would only send their topic overviews. This made it difficult to see what specifically was being taught and their methods for teaching these areas of church planting.

The third weakness of this project stems from the size and relative age of CityView. We were not able to draw a very large group of people to be part of the training and eventual launch team. The group of participants was significant; however, a group of 15 to 20 adults would have been preferable. We were thankful for those who volunteered, but had this been implemented in a larger church there would have been a larger number of subjects. Additionally, the maturity of CityView members became apparent in the training of the launch team as the pre-training survey indicated a dearth of general Bible and practical knowledge. This caused greater statistical increase throughout the project, but when there is such a long way to go, the concern is that perhaps they will not retain some vital pieces of information.

The fourth weakness was that there is not a technical mechanism to determine if this training is actually successful in the launch of the new church. The people felt better about the endeavor and the statistics showed knowledge growth, but the concern

remains whether this training will translate into practical growth of the new church and if elements taught will actually prove valuable.

The fifth weakness was that it was impossible to know which participants increased the most in knowledge. Because I wanted participants to be as honest as possible, the survey was completed anonymously, with no indicators of who completed each survey. I would have liked to know the increase in knowledge from individual pre-training survey to post-training survey. If each participant had created a code in their pre-training survey and then re-entered the code in their post-training survey, then the anonymous nature of the survey would have been preserved and comparisons could have been made.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

The first change that I would make would be when I begin the initial recruitment of a prospective launch team. The recruitment and application phase began in the late spring and many people already had summer plans on their minds. They were not thinking of this part of CityView's mission. The timing of recruitment led to fewer people being involved in the initial training.

The second change I would make would be preaching about the importance of church planting before beginning the recruitment of a church plant launch team. A sermon series emphasizing the importance of church planting would have given people a deeper understanding of why we were going to be implementing this training and would have encouraged larger numbers on the launch team.

### **Theological Reflections**

Reflecting on this project theologically I become even more convinced of the importance and necessity of church planting. I can see clearly its importance in two very specific and related areas: evangelism and leadership development.

## **Evangelism**

Through deeper biblical study in Matthew 18 and throughout the book of Acts, I became more convinced of the importance of church planting throughout the duration of this project. Church planting is the most effective means of biblical evangelism as it calls believers to become actively engaged in their communities for the real cause of seeing people far from God come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

An important factor in the evangelization of the nations in the Great Commission is the planting of churches that reach out to surrounding areas as first seen in Acts 13:1-3. Paul and Barnabas went and made disciples in many different cities. However, they did not stop there. They made disciples and taught them to obey Jesus commands. They also trained and sent leaders to these fledgling churches to train more leaders that would grow and multiply the church. These early apostles did not hold a mindset of adding to their churches, but instead had a mindset of multiplying the church to see Christ's body prevail against the gates of hell.

If this mindset of multiplication can be imputed to twenty-first century Christians, then the completion of the Great Commission could truly be within our grasp. However, this lofty goal depends on churches being open-handed with their money. Churches need to consider where their money is being spent. If a church does not prioritize missions, and specifically church planting, in their budgets then they are missing out on a great blessing and the only guaranteed way to see the kingdom expand.

## **Leadership Development**

Leadership development is key within churches of all shapes and sizes, but when more churches actively engage in planting churches, a greater opportunity for leaders to develop is created.

**Lay leaders.** Church planting unleashes laity to become disciple-makers and aids in their growth as leaders. In established churches, these laypeople would normally leave this task of disciple-making and leadership development to professional pastors and

staff to evangelize through passive evangelism strategies that encourage the church member to invite a friend to an event or a church service. There is nothing wrong with this type of invitation except that it does not go far enough. When a church is being planted and in need of people to function, and the life of the church is at stake, the layperson is much more likely to feel urgency to share the gospel and to grow in his or her own leadership gifts within that congregation. In this church planting model, leaders grow out of necessity, not guilt or compulsion.

Churches need to leverage their best leaders for the sake of the gospel and mobilize them to go out. Losing great leaders who can operate many different ministries within their own church would understandably make many pastors nervous; however, in this leadership vacuum created by sending church plant launch teams, other leaders are given the opportunity to rise up and be developed to their full potential while somewhat stronger or more developed leaders are going out to help plant churches.

**Elders.** I also reflected a great deal on the offices in the church and the giftings given to believers. All pastors have been given gifts that they need to operate within, which is the same for all believers. The pastor though is given the specific call to equip the saints to do ministry. Equipping can happen very effectively in church plants and can give the layperson a greater amount of ownership within the church and can give the biblical elder a greater sense of accomplishment knowing his people are actively doing ministry.

A subtle temptation exists for pastors to build large churches that will increase their own personal fame and give them greater influence. These opportunities need to be carefully considered in each instance. It is not wrong or sinful to have a large church—this may very well be God’s will for that church. However, as Shane Pruitt of the Southern Baptist of Texas Director of Missions likes to say, “A church is not measured by its seating capacity but by its sending capacity.” Large church pastors should also be

concerned with equipping saints for the purpose of sending them out to accomplish the Great Commission.

Church planting enables greater work in Great Commission tasks, larger engagement in the laity of the church in the mission, and a more biblical approach to membership and leadership than is typically seen within the American church.

## **Personal Reflections**

### **Doctor of Ministry Program**

Throughout my work within the Doctor of Ministry program at Southern Seminary, I have been stretched as a leader. I was deeply challenged in all areas of my leadership and grew significantly in the areas of educational ministry, administrative leadership, membership process, team building, and leadership development. Each of these areas has served me greatly as I have planted a church that has now planted its own daughter congregation.

This project really has fingerprints from each of my doctoral seminars all over it. I developed a philosophy of education in my first seminar, taught by John David Trentham, that has proved to be integral in our discipleship process at CityView Pearland and stretches now to CityView Alvin. This philosophy informs how discipleship happens through groups at CityView and is the main way that accountability and individual spiritual growth occurs.

My class in administrative leadership, taught by Michael Wilder, helped me understand personality types and how they fit with spiritual gifts, which I have learned are vital aspects of effectively and efficiently equipping saints and finding strong church leaders in a variety of contexts. I am called on by our state convention, association, and other networks to do church plant assessments now. This understanding of administrative leadership has grown me to be a better assessor of church planters and a better pastor in the equipping of my own congregation.



My volunteer leadership seminar, led by Danny Bowen, taught me a great deal about church membership. The main point that I pulled from this class was that church members should be held to a higher standard. It got me thinking as to what could happen if church members did more than just sit in pews, but were instead unleashed for the sake of the gospel. It made me realize afresh something I already latently knew: lay leaders can do more than the professional pastor typically gives them the opportunity to do. This helped me realize that sending out great lay leaders would not be the end of my church, but would be the strengthening of it. Sending leaders meant the ability to grow more leaders. Sure there would be growing pains, but we would have an exponential impact.

I learned about team building and transformational leadership that gives people a vision for what they could accomplish and then aids them in getting there. This view of leadership has helped me in so many ways in personally discipling leaders of all different kinds. Through this brand of leadership I can cast vision for the newly saved person of who he can be in Christ and just as adeptly cast a vision for an elderly church member who has walked with Christ for decades as to what her next step could be. I coach church planters and young pastors and this tool of transformational leadership has impacted them to be better, more focused leaders and accomplish much for God's kingdom.

Every class has made an impact and every class has grown my leadership and this project is the culmination of that growth as a leader. As the lead pastor at CityView Pearland, which as of this writing has just turned two years old, I have been able to see a small launch team grow to a church with a covenant membership of 135 and more than 225 regular attenders in a month. We have been able to take that small team and instill in them the need to be a multiplying church and the simple ways that can be done through planning, saving, and praying. This project represents a blueprint for the reasons why we plant churches and the way we can do it well.

### **Doctor of Ministry Project**

Throughout the duration of this project, I was blessed to see the fruit of some

of these topics understood by people going through my project training program. People were evangelizing effectively and we saw a lot of growth in how people understood how to communicate with one another. During this project I was encouraged by the amount of ownership being taken by the launch team members in the planting and planning of the new church. Many of the participants indicated how helpful it was to be shown what they could accomplish and then be taught how to get there through a simple teaching of church planting basics.

It was encouraging to see that so many people were taking up the cause of Christ to learn and grow and be part of something new, realizing that God could use them more than they had ever hoped or imagined. They were serious about making a difference for the sake of the gospel in Alvin, Texas, and they saw the training as a necessary part of that work. Additionally, I heard great stories of connections being made by the Alvin launch team and the gospel being shared throughout the course of the project. This was not an officially measured goal, but it was a welcomed byproduct to know that the project was not just a distilling of information, but helped get people on mission.

### **Convictions**

Recently, CityView Pearland has been recognized as a sending church within our state convention. This has brought much-needed attention to the cause of church planting for churches large and small. We firmly believe churches do not have to be big to multiply; they just have to have the right mindset. Big churches can multiply more quickly if they find that correct mindset. CityView needs to set an example for this type of thinking. We have to help give large and small churches alike a vision of what they could do if they would think deeply about multiplication rather than addition. I am deeply convicted that CityView Pearland cannot stop with planting one congregation. We must continue to push out and plant more. This will enable us to see more come to Christ and more members stepping up to lead in multiple areas and hopefully influence

many other churches to send people on mission rather than seat them in their giant auditoriums.

### **Conclusion**

Church planting is an endeavor in which all churches should have active participation. This is the model that was laid out in the book of Acts and is a glimpse of what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 16. Churches that wish to see an exponential impact made for the kingdom of God need to find ways to participate in church planting and should work toward sending their own launch teams to underserved areas. They should be willing to sacrifice leaders and money to make multiplication happen. Christians cannot be territorial in their hope to see the Great Commission fulfilled. Believers need to think about Christ's glory and those who need to hear the gospel.

This project was completed to assist CityView Church in Pearland, Texas, in preparing church plant launch teams to infiltrate locales and to share the gospel. These efforts will not end with this project. This project created a simple system to train teams as they head out from CityView in months and years to come. I was honored to complete this project for the sake of the gospel in Houston, Texas, and surrounding areas. I truly believe that CityView Church in Pearland and CityView Church in Alvin have benefited from this project.

## APPENDIX 1

### CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The purpose of this rubric was to evaluate the curriculum written for the residency program. The leadership team of CityView Church evaluated the curriculum with this rubric. This curriculum ensured biblical fidelity to the residency program. The rubric provided a grading area and the opportunity to provide comments where explanation was necessary.

## CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Directions: After reading the residency curriculum created by Jason Crandall, please evaluate the curriculum with the following evaluation tool. Place a checkmark in the column to score the specific criteria. Make comments where necessary to help improve the section. Please use a separate form for each lesson.

Residency Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The curriculum is clearly relevant to a church planting launch team.					
The material is clearly biblical.					
The material is theologically consistent.					
The theses of each lesson are clearly stated.					
The points of each lesson clearly support the thesis of that lesson.					
Each lesson contains points of practical application.					
Each lesson is thorough in its coverage of the material.					
This curriculum is consistent with the core values of CityView Church.					
The curriculum is consistent with the purpose of CityView Church.					
The curriculum is consistent with the mission of CityView Church.					

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX 2  
SELECTION RUBRIC

This selection rubric was used in choosing potential members of a CityView launch team. The leadership team of CityView Church used this rubric in working through potential applicants. Selecting strong launch team members is integral to the success of a church plant. The rubric provided a grading area and the opportunity to provide comments where necessary.

## SELECTION RUBRIC

Directions: Use this selection tool to evaluate applicants who wish to be involved in the launch team. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column for the specified criteria.

Launch Team Selection Tool					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The applicant professes faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.					
The applicant has been baptized by immersion.					
The applicant is actively involved in a discipleship relationship.					
The applicant is actively involved in serving the life of CityView Church.					
The applicant gives financially to CityView Church					
The applicant has a demonstrated love for those far from God.					
The applicant is actively involved in building personal spiritual disciplines.					
The applicant is actively involved in a CityView Life Group.					
The applicant is content and active in their biblical gender role.					
The applicant actively seeks the gospel good of their community.					

Additional Comments:

Recommendations:

APPENDIX 3  
ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The purpose of this survey was to gauge biblical, theological, and practical aspects of church planting. The survey was given before the implementation of the residency curriculum and afterwards to those who completed the program. The survey took place via online form and was sent to all approved applicants. The survey was multiple choice.



## ASSESSMENT SURVEY

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by Jason Crandall for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in the project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by circling the appropriate answer.

1. I can identify the five Great Commission passages in the New Testament
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
2. I can identify who is supposed to plant churches
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
3. I understand where churches are supposed to be planted
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
4. I can identify the type of church that we will plant
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree

5. I can explain when a new church should be planted
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
6. I know the essential elements for sharing my salvation testimony
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
7. I can identify the six G's of gospel growth
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
8. I understand the aspects of good stewardship
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
9. I know the essential elements involved in a life group
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
10. I know biblical marriage roles as communicated in Ephesians 5
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
11. I know basics taught in Deuteronomy 6 regarding the teaching of children
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree

12. I know my eight nearest neighbors
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
13. I know what the bedrock for gospel communication is
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
14. I understand the actions of gospel communication
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
15. I understand how to resolve conflicts within the church
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
16. I have a current Top 10 list
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
17. I can explain the P.L.E.A.D. strategy
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
18. I can identify at least one passage that talks about elder qualifications
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree

19. I understand the role of the elder
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree
  
20. I understand my appropriate response to biblical elders
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Somewhat Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Agree
  - e. Agree
  - f. Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 4  
COMMITMENT CARD

Upon completion of the residency program, launch team members were asked to sign a commitment card indicating their desire to be sent by CityView to start a new congregation. This card was signed and dated to indicate that the member was committed to the launch of the new congregation.

## COMMITMENT CARD

Directions: Complete the following commitment card signifying participation in the launch team being sent from CityView Church.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to be a member of the launch team sent from CityView Church.

- I am a born-again believer in Jesus Christ and have been baptized by immersion.
- I agree with CityView's doctrinal statement.
- I will support the new plant with my time, talents, and financial resources.
- I commit to be a part of CityView Alvin for a minimum of eighteen months.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## APPENDIX 5

### APPLICATION TO JOIN A CHURCH PLANT LAUNCH TEAM

The purpose of this application was to give an entry into the church plant launch team evaluation process. The leadership team of CityView Church utilized the completed applications. The application standardized the entry process.

APPLICATION TO JOIN A CHURCH  
PLANT LAUNCH TEAM

Directions: Complete the following application to signify your desire to join the church plant launch being sent from CityView Church.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you married? Yes or No

What is your spouse's name if applicable? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the names and ages of your children?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a born again believer in Jesus? (Continue on back if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized by immersion? Yes or No

Are you a covenant member of CityView Church? Yes or No

Are you involved in a CityView Life Group? Yes or No



APPENDIX 6  
CURRICULUM OUTLINES

A curriculum was taught to those who entered the launch team training sessions. The outlines of the curriculum follow.

## CURRICULUM OUTLINES

### Session 1 – Foundations for Church Planting

#### 1. Why do we plant churches?

- The church is the vehicle by which the Jesus' kingdom prevails  
**Matthew 16.16-18**  
*[16] Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
- Church planting fulfills the great commission  
**Matthew 28.18-20**  
*[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*  
**Mark 16.15**  
*[15] And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*  
**Luke 24.46-47**  
*[46] and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*  
**John 20.21**  
*[21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."*  
**Acts 1.8**  
*[8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

#### 2. Who plants churches? Disciples of Jesus plant churches.

*[16] Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. [17] And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. [18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,*

*baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20 ESV)*

- Jesus is speaking to His disciples
- These men would go all over making disciples
- These disciples would form churches
- These churches would make more disciples
- These disciples would form new churches

3. What kind of churches? Gospel-Centered Churches

- Focused on God
  - *“baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28.19*
- Teaching what Jesus taught
  - *“teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28.20*
- Remembering what Jesus did
  - *“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.” Luke 24.46*
- Spreading the gospel
  - *“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’” Mark 16.15*

4. Where do we plant churches? We plant churches where there is need.

- Matthew 28.19 – All nations
- Mark 16.15 – All the world
- Luke 24.47 – All nations beginning at Jerusalem
- John 20.21 – Where we are sent
- Acts 1.8 – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, end of the earth

5. When do we plant churches? When the Holy Spirit leads

Acts 13:1-3 ESV

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

## Session 2 – Sharing Your Testimony

Christ brings dead souls to life

### **Ephesians 2.1-10**

*[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—[3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Christ transforms lives

### **2 Corinthians 5.17**

*[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

We are called to share our new life

### **1 Peter 3:15**

*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,*

How do we share it? **Paul's Model**

Paul's testimony in Acts 26 is a biblical model you can follow in writing your own personal testimony.

#### **1. LEAD IN to his testimony – Verses 2-3**

*[2] “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, [3] especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.”*

#### **2. BEFORE he met Christ - Verse 4-11**

*[4] “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. [5] They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. [6] And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, [7] to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! [8] Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?[9] I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. [10] And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. [11] And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”*

### 3. HOW he met Christ - Verses 12-20

*[12] “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. [13] At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. [14] And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ [15] And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. [16] But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, [17] delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you [18] to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ [19] “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, [20] but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.”*

### 4. AFTER he met Christ – Verses 21-23

*[21] “For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. [22] To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: [23] that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”*

### 5. CLOSE respectfully – Verses 24-29

*[24] And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” [25] But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. [26] For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. [27] King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” [28] And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” [29] And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”*

Here are some suggestion for developing the before, how, and after sections of your personal testimony.

#### **BEFORE I met Christ**

Many people’s actions spring out of their unsatisfied deep inner needs. What were one or two of your unsatisfied, deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus Christ? Some examples of inner needs are:

- Lack of peace
- Fear of death
- Something missing
- Lack of security
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of significance
- No meaning to life
- No real friends
- Desire to be in control
- No motivation
- Loneliness

Non-Christians are usually trying to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. In the past, what unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? As you develop your testimony, list positive as well as negative solutions you may have tried. Some examples are:

- Marriage/family
- Work
- Drugs/alcohol
- Sports/fitness
- Money
- Education
- Hobbies/entertainment
- Sex
- Wrong friends

### **HOW I met Christ**

1. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. Identify the events that led to your conversion. In some cases this may have taken place over a period of time.
2. State specifically the steps you took to become a Christian. If there is a particular passage of Scripture that applied here, you may want to use it. Usually, you will simply paraphrase it.
3. Include the gospel clearly and briefly. The gospel includes: All have sinned; Sin's penalty; Christ paid the penalty; You must receive Christ.

### **AFTER I met Christ**

Share how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs. In the BEFORE you expressed your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want to carefully show the difference that Christ has made in your life.

## Session 3 – Gospel Growth

### 2 Corinthians 3.15-18

[15] Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. [16] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [17] Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

#### **The 6 Points**

1. Gospel: “I am leaning on the gospel.”
  - Salvation is through the good news of Jesus Christ
  - Sanctification is through the good news of Jesus
2. Grow: “I am seeking to grow in the gospel.”
  - Personal Worship
    - Prayer
    - Bible Study
  - Corporate Worship
3. Gifts: “I am seeking to use my gifts for the work of the gospel.”
  - Uncover gifts
  - Develop gifts
  - Utilize gifts
4. Good Stewardship: “I give what God has given me to participate in the gospel.”
  - Stewardship of time
  - Stewardship of talent
  - Stewardship of treasure
5. Group: “I am a part of a life group that aids in my growth in the gospel.”
  - Celebrate together
  - Study together
  - Serve together
6. Go: “I am actively seeking to share the gospel with others.”
  - Through personal relationships
  - Through church planting

## Session 4 – Gospel Home

Effective gospel knowledge needs to be displayed within the home. This knowledge is visible in the way we interact with our spouse, our children, and our neighbors.

1. Marriage demonstrates the gospel unlike any other human institution (Ephesians 5.22-33)

*[22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

*[25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

- Wives submit to husbands like the church submits to Jesus (vv 22-24)
- Husbands love wives like Christ loves the church (v 25)

2. The home is the foundational disciple-making environment (Deuteronomy 6.4-9)

*[4] “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

- Teach them about the Lord (v 4)
- Teach them to love the Lord (v 5)
- Make the teaching obvious (vv 6-9)

3. Our neighborhoods are the most obvious place to demonstrate the gospel

*[34] But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. [35] And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. [36] “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” [37] And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

- Our biblical neighbor is not just our physical neighbor
- Our biblical neighbor is not less than our physical neighbors



## Session 5 – Gospel Communication (Part 1)

### The bedrock of gospel communication: Love One Another (John 13.31-35)

*31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

### The thought process of gospel communication: Think the Best (1 Corinthians 13.4-7)

*[4] Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant [5] or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; [6] it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. [7] Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

### The aim of gospel communication: Unity through Humility (Ephesians 4.1-3)

*[1] I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

### The actions of gospel communication:

- Encouraging each other (1 Thessalonians 5.11)  
*[11] Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*
- Speaking truth in love (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*[15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*
- Pointing to the gospel (Ephesians 5:19-20)  
*[19] addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, [20] giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

## Session 6 – Gospel Communication (Part 2)

The resolution of conflicts in gospel communication: Talk To Each Other (Matthew 5:21-24 & Matthew 18:15-17)

- If you think your brother has something against you then go to them  
*[21] “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ [22] But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. [23] So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:21-24 ESV)*
- If you have something against your brother then go to them  
*[15] “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17 ESV)*

The extent of gospel communication: Burden Bearing (Galatians 6.1-2)

*[1] Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. [2] Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

The result of gospel communication: God’s Glory (Romans 15.5-7)

*[5] May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, [6] that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [7] Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

## Session 7 – Gospel Proclamation

1. Develop a Top 10 list
2. Earn the right  
PLEAD Strategy  
Pray for them  
Listen to them  
Eat with them  
Actively serve them  
Dive in to the gospel
3. Share your story
4. Know your bible  
Romans Road
  - None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. - Romans 3:10-11
  - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, - Romans 3:23
  - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 6:23
  - But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. - Romans 5:8
  - Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. - Romans 10:9-10
5. Deal with questions
  - Answer what you know
  - Delay what you do not know

## Session 8 – Gospel Leadership

### 1. The Right (Titus 1.5-9; 1 Timothy 3.1-7)

- Family above reproach (Titus 1.5-6)  
[5] This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—[6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.
- Character above reproach (1 Timothy 1.7-8)  
[7] For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, [8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.
- Doctrine above reproach (1 Timothy 1.9)  
[9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

### 2. The Role

- Doctrine: Guard the teaching ministry of the church
- Discipling: Ensure the spiritual care of the church
- Direction: Oversee the trajectory of the church

### 3. The Response

- Imitate them (Hebrews 13.7)  
*Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*
- Obey them (Hebrews 13.17)  
*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

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## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPING A CHURCH PLANT LAUNCH TEAM AT CITYVIEW CHURCH IN PEARLAND, TEXAS

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Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this project by describing the early circumstances for CityView Church. This chapter introduces the church's background and the rationale for focusing on this topic.

Chapter 2 explores the biblical justification for church planting and leadership within a church plant. This chapter focuses on what the church must do and how church plant launch teams should be sent. Additional focus is given as to who should lead a church plant launch team. There are many pragmatic strategies to planting a church, but they must fall in line with the biblical mandate and purpose for church planting.

Chapter 3 gives information regarding aspects of church planting vital to success and health in new churches. This information helps churches evaluate which factors will indicate greater success in church planting.

Chapter 4 provides the implementation of the project that begins with curriculum design, selection of a prospective team, training, and commitment to the team. This section also provides brief explanation of each session's training objectives.

Chapter 5 describes the results of the project. Theological reflections are included to aid in future learning on this subject. My personal reflections upon the doctoral program's influence on this project are also included in this chapter.



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