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THE FOUNDATION, DNA, AND METHODOLOGY OF
BEING A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH
ACCORDING TO VINTAGE CHURCH
OF NEW ORLEANS

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THE FOUNDATION, DNA, AND METHODOLOGY OF
BEING A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH
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This project is dedicated to my wife and our children, who are my greatest support,
my parents, who are my greatest encouragement,
the leadership of Vintage Church, who are my greatest friends,
and the current and future church planters of the Gx Network,
who are my greatest motivation.

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PREFACE

This project was completed because of the incredible support of so many people in my life. First, I want to thank my amazing wife, Annabeth Wilton, for believing in me and allowing me to pursue this doctorate. It would have been absolutely impossible for me to remain faithful to all of my various ministry responsibilities on top of this doctoral project without her sacrificial love and support. I am so thankful for the way that she has served our family. Each day I have grown to love her more as together we have served Jesus.

Second, I would like to thank our kids Bolt, Mack, Birk, and my princess, McCall, who also had to make sacrifices for this project. During this project I had to spend a lot of time away from home in order to attend classes, study and research, and write this project. Every hug and kiss from them has kept me going. One of the greatest joys of my life is getting to be their dad.

Third, I would like to thank my parents, Don and Karyn Wilton. From day one they have pointed me to Jesus with an unwavering pursuit of Jesus and an unconditional love for me. Their faithfulness to God, sacrifice in the ministry, and belief in making a huge impact around the world has driven me throughout life and this project. I am so blessed by their generosity and encouragement to me throughout this project.

Fourth, I would like to thank the leadership of Vintage Church for giving me the support and margin to complete this project. Every pastor, staff member, and leader within Vintage Church has not only provided the foundation, DNA, and methodology of this project but has also become a dream fulfilled in my life. I am so blessed to serve Jesus alongside the greatest church staff in the world and I know that the best is yet to come.

Fifth, I would like to thank the current and future church planters in the Gx Network. Their willingness to step out in faith to plant a new church has been a major inspiration for this project. I am so thankful for the privilege of serving as their mentor and I pray that the work we accomplished together in this project is going to serve current and future church planters in the Gx Network. I also pray that our partnership together would result in a catalytic movement of church planting churches all over the world.

Sixth, I would like to thank my cohort and Dan Dumas, who have supported me through this project. Dan Dumas's leadership and mentorship has not only grown me as a minister of the gospel but most importantly as a follower of Jesus. I believe that the relationships that have been formed with my cohort will last a lifetime and will result in great impact for the gospel around the world. I would also like to thank my supervisors, Eric Geiger and John Klaassen, for their guidance through this project. It has truly been a joy to study at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

I hope that this project will serve to unite, equip, and multiply church planting churches all over the world. Although a primary audience of this project might be a pastor or church planter, I pray that this project might also encourage a future church member to multiply the gospel throughout their church while possibly inspiring that church member to also plant churches. I have written this material with the purpose of inspiring Gospel multiplication through church planting churches.

Rob Wilton

New Orleans, Louisiana

May 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to present the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church of New Orleans, Louisiana, as a church planting church in order to unite, equip, and multiply other church planting churches. The foundation of Vintage Church in this project will be defined as the biblical and theological support of the church and church planting. The DNA of Vintage Church in this project will be defined as the specific statement of beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission of Vintage Church. The methodology of Vintage Church in this project will be defined as the strategic mission of uniting, equipping, and multiplying as a church planting church.

Goals

The specific goals of this project were (1) to examine the historical account of Vintage Church and the biblical foundation of being a church planting church, and (2) to establish the DNA of Vintage Church and methodology of uniting, equipping, and multiplying a church planting church according to Vintage Church, and (3) to evaluate the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church according to Vintage Church in order to unite, equip, and multiply other church planting churches.

The first goal was to examine the foundation of uniting, equipping, and multiplying through the historical account of Vintage Church and the biblical foundation of being a church planting church. This foundation examines the ministry context of a historical account of the planting of Vintage Church, the launching of a second location of Vintage Church, the planting of other churches by Vintage Church, and the strategic

partnership of planting churches with other churches and networks. The goal also included the biblical foundation of being a church planting church.

The second goal was to establish the DNA and methodology of uniting, equipping, and multiplying a church planting church according to Vintage Church. Establishing the DNA included a presentation of the mission and vision of Vintage Church, which unites Vintage Church as a church planting church. A second part to this goal was to establish the methodology of being a church planting church through the equipping and multiplying strategy of Vintage Church as a church planting church.

The third goal was to present the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church according to Vintage Church. This narrative presented how Vintage Church (1) started as a church plant, (2) then planted other church plants, and (3) through their church planting created a church planting network that has empowered the churches they have planted to plant other churches. This goal will conclude with a reflection from the church planters of this network on the effectiveness of Vintage Church being a church planting church.

By accomplishing these three goals, Vintage Church is able to continue to be a catalyst for uniting, equipping, and multiplying other church planting churches. It is also the hope of this project that by accomplishing these goals other churches would be equipped to become church planting churches as well. Because of the church planting success that has already occurred through Vintage Church, a new network of churches has been formed called the Gx Network. This project also serves as a guide that would equip all churches in this network to also become a church planting church.

Ministry Context

Vintage Church Is Planted

Vintage Church officially began in the spring of 2008. However, this church and the DNA that makes up this church really began in my life at the age of seven. In the spring of 1988, the gospel of Jesus Christ saved me in the city of New Orleans. I had

grown up in New Orleans as a first generation New Orleanian and even American. My parents surrendered to the gospel ministry and a call to America from their homeland of South Africa in 1979. They came as missionaries to America to study at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Before I came to faith in Jesus, I had traveled the world with my family as my dad, Don Wilton, was a traveling evangelist with his own ministry and The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. During this time, he received degrees in preaching and evangelism at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Throughout this childhood, Christ placed a passion in my life to proclaim the gospel in the city of New Orleans and around the world. The night that I received Jesus, I witnessed my dad share Jesus as passionately with the small church where I was saved as he did on large platforms for Billy Graham in Australia. God has embedded that same passion in my life.

Although my family moved away from New Orleans when I was a teenager, I soon returned after college. The Lord called me into ministry after my freshman year in college and then after getting married I returned to the city with a clear call from God in 2005. As I studied at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, I ministered in the projects of New Orleans through the game of basketball and Upward Sports. I also traveled and spoke around the country and world with my mentor, David Platt.

In the fall of 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans. My family and I had evacuated to South Carolina and over the weeks that followed, we began to receive a burden to rebuild the city of New Orleans. This burden from God soon followed with an opportunity for us to return and begin this mission.

At first I worked with a rebuilding ministry called MissionLab that hosted faith based groups who were coming to help rebuild New Orleans. Eventually my family and I united with some friends who had a passion to see the city reached by the gospel through the church. This group began a once a month worship gathering that had the specific mission of connecting young adults to Christ and to the church. Hundreds rallied at these

gatherings and a passion for a spiritual rebirth of New Orleans began to spread. While my wife was working Uptown in New Orleans, we became friends with her coworkers and fell in love with the community. Over dinner one night, my wife and I had the privilege of leading one of her co-workers to the Lord and this eventually became the call from God to start a bible study and a church.

During this time, one of the oldest remaining baptist churches in New Orleans heard about our ministry. In the fall of 2007, I accepted the call to become the pastor of this church, Valence St. Baptist Church. The Bible study my wife and I had started also joined this new opportunity. Although this was not exactly what I had envisioned, the time at Valence St. Baptist Church was beneficial as it enabled our core team of people to gather. This also helped to solidify the location of this new work and my family moved into the heart of the community.

Unfortunately, because of the passionate drive to reach the lost and the fact that the remaining members of Valence St. Baptist Church did not have that same vision, this church decided to ask me to leave. After a few months of conflict and struggle, I led the core team of our new church to leave in the spring of 2008. Upon leaving Valence St. Baptist Church, I began a Bible study in my home and a worship gathering in a coffee shop. God had not called Vintage to maintain a church building; God had called Vintage to that community to be the church and reach the lost.

In January of 2008, Vintage Church began with twenty-five people. From January to September, Vintage Church grew from one community group and one worship gathering to multiple community groups and a worship gathering that met in a variety of different locations. Vintage was on the move and multiplying from day one.

The foundation and DNA of Vintage Church would be simple. Vintage was called to gospel multiplication. Vintage groups started to multiply through a very simple process. This process was to unite, equip, and then multiply.

Uniting happened through establishing and teaching the mission, vision, and values of Vintage. Church members were also encouraged to unite by making a covenant with God and each other through membership. The equipping happened through the teaching of the bible, the Vintage DNA, and the future leaders of Vintage. The multiplying happened as a result of establishing the Vintage foundation and DNA with the strategic methodology of multiplying individuals, groups, and gatherings around New Orleans and beyond.

An example of this multiplication was driven through our community groups. The first community group of Vintage Church eventually multiplied into seven community groups by the time Vintage officially launched in September of 2008. The first group began to get too large for my home. I targeted two leaders who I believed could serve as leaders of two new groups. These leaders had made a covenant with the church and had displayed the competency to lead a group. While together as one group, I equipped those two leaders with an opportunity to grow toward multiplication. After this group enjoyed some food and a time of prayer, the large group divided into three small groups and spread those three groups around the house. Earlier that week, I had equipped those other two leaders with the material and content for the Bible study time. Now the one large group had become three smaller groups under one roof. Eventually my house could not hold any more people and Vintage Church had a multiplication party that sent out two new leaders to start two new groups in February of 2008. Because of this foundation, DNA, and methodology of our first multiplication, this happened again and again until eventually we had seven community groups around New Orleans.

In regard to the worship gatherings on Sunday nights, Vintage Church began in a coffee shop and very quickly had to find a larger place. For the Vintage gatherings, I taught on the books of 1 and 2 Timothy with the purpose of listening to the advice of the apostle Paul on how to be the church. Vintage ended up moving a few times and soon found out that every time our church would move, a new opportunity came to reach new

people. From day one Vintage saw the beauty of being a church that is on the move. Eventually, the Lord granted our church an amazing gift by providing an upstairs event room that also served as a bar for our worship gathering. We served the owner of this room by hosting parties and events during the week and then having a Vintage worship gathering on Sunday nights. By September 2008, mainly because of the multiplication of community groups, there were too many people for one gathering. For our official launch of Vintage Church, we simply rallied some leaders in our first gathering and asked if they would be leaders for a second gathering on Sunday. Once again, Vintage united, equipped, and then multiplied from one gathering to two gatherings on a Sunday. Vintage Church had officially launched with the foundation, DNA, and methodology of multiplication.

Vintage Church Plants a Second Location

With the foundation, DNA, and methodology of multiplication solidified at the launch of the church, Vintage began to grow rapidly. By August of 2009, Vintage Church had over ten community groups and three worship gatherings on a weekend. Around this time our community groups had begun to multiply in new communities in the greater New Orleans region.

Multiplication even spread through church members to other cities around America and even the world. Vintage began to attract a lot of young urban professionals who were only in New Orleans for a short time. Because of our foundation, DNA, and methodology of multiplication, Vintage celebrated any opportunity to multiply business leaders, college students, and even other ministry leaders to other cities. In June of 2010, Vintage also sent our first missionaries to India in partnership with the International Mission Board. This was an amazing celebration as Vintage began to see a vision of multiplication that was not only around our city and nation, but that was now happening around the world.

Inspired by this multiplication, one of the Vintage community group leaders began to unite, equip, and multiply all over the neighboring Jefferson Parish region of the city. Eventually this leader approached the Vintage Church leadership about the possibility of starting a second worship gathering location in this area. At first the leadership discussed sending this group to start a new church plant. This leader prayerfully expressed that because of his desire and calling to plant a new church in his hometown of San Antonio, he felt that a second location of Vintage Church would be the most effective way for Vintage to impact this new region of New Orleans. Once again Vintage recognized this as an opportunity for gospel multiplication.

Over the next year Vintage began to unite, equip, and multiply in this new region of New Orleans and then the Lord provided an amazing gift. Highland Baptist Church was searching for answers for their future. This church had once been a strong church in their community but had been without a pastor for a couple of years and had dwindled down to less than twenty people. Highland reached out to their local Baptist association for help around the same time that Vintage reached out about wanting to start a new work in that area. Eventually, both churches started to unite in ministry and have a conversation about merging together as one church. After some weeks of this conversation and prayer, God provided a church property for this new work in Jefferson Parish through Highland Baptist Church. The Highland Baptist Church family celebrated that the work that they had planted in the 1950s was going to continue into the future even though their name and methods would change. On December of 2010, Highland Baptist Church officially merged with Vintage Church and together both churches began a process at our second location of establishing the Vintage foundation, DNA, and methodology of multiplication.

One reason this merger became a strong success is because of the established DNA of the Vintage community groups that had already multiplied all over this region. The once smaller church found themselves surrounded by close to one hundred people.

The Highland Baptist Church members went through the Vintage membership process and even joined community groups. The Vintage staff had to multiply as Vintage was now going to oversee two locations and regions in the city. This was another great opportunity for Gospel multiplication.

As we moved toward this multiplication, we decided to rally both regions for a united Easter worship gathering. This was an amazing celebration as Vintage united at Tulane University with over three hundred people. Over the next few months Vintage did a lot of renovation and repair work on the property, multiplied more groups in the region, and then officially launched the second Vintage Church location in September of 2011. Over four hundred people came out to celebrate. A highlight of this time was when a former member of Highland Baptist Church that had helped to plant Highland Baptist Church in the 1950s was found weeping in joy because the Lord was now continuing to multiply the gospel as Vintage Church.

Vintage Church Plants a New Church

The community group leader who had now become the location pastor of our second location started to pursue the Lord's call upon his life to return to his hometown of San Antonio to plant a new church. Although a lot of the Vintage Church equipping ministry was unorganized, I immediately started to equip this leader with everything that I knew about planting a church. This aspiring church planter and I read through books together, took trips to learn from other church planters, connected with church planting networks, and even traveled to San Antonio to pray for God's provision and direction.

While Vintage trained this leader, the leadership of Vintage shared with the entire church about these plans. This vision was a celebration of Vintage becoming a church planting church. Because this was the first church plant for Vintage, Vintage certainly struggled finding a balance between building our brand new church location in Jefferson Parish and also focusing on planting a new church in San Antonio. Although

there was a struggle, it was a healthy tension for the Vintage leadership as Vintage was able to keep the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Gospel multiplication at the center of conversation and plans.

After a lot of prayer and provision in God's timing, Vintage sent out the first church planter to San Antonio in May of 2012. This became an even greater celebration for Vintage Church as another couple from Vintage was sent to help them plant this church. Gospel multiplication for Vintage Church had now become church planting.

Vintage Church Partners with Churches to Plant Churches

Because Vintage Church believed that the bible supports that planting a new church is one of the most effective ways to reach this world for the Gospel, the enemy brought a lot of attacks in order to prevent this mission. From the moment Vintage faithfully sent this new church planter to San Antonio the enemy began to attack Vintage Church. Contextually, I believe that the enemy has a unique presence in the city of New Orleans and he decided to unleash on our church because we were pursuing Gospel multiplication.

On top of these attacks from the enemy, New Orleans suffered with the impact of Hurricane Isaac. The hurricane caused major damage to the second Vintage church property and Vintage scrambled to find a temporary location. Eventually a door opened for Vintage Church to gather in a building on Sunday nights in a new region of the city. Around this time, the first location of Vintage Church had been forced to move to a couple of different locations because of space limitations. When the Vintage property in Jefferson Parish was repaired, Vintage members requested that they remain in the newest location and region in order to launch a third location. Once again, because of the Vintage foundation, DNA, and methodology this opportunity was embraced and was the beginning of an extremely challenging season for Vintage Church.

Vintage Church had moved too quickly with little time to unite and equip. Multiplication cannot happen without a united vision and solid equipping of that vision. This will be discussed more in future sections of this work. Because of the strain on the leadership and resources of Vintage, some of the leadership burned out and quit. During this difficult time, one of the potential church planters even decided to do training at another church instead of Vintage. Because of this challenging season, the leadership of Vintage agreed it was the best decision.

The Vintage Church staff became extremely busy spending all of their time, energy, and resources hosting three Sunday locations. Because of this the uniting and equipping of individuals and groups began to suffer. At first Vintage decided to rally once a month for a united worship gathering. However, it became an exhausting work each month as we struggled finding places that were large enough. A lot of the Vintage members did not want to leave their gathering locations and community. Eventually the Vintage leadership had to make some tough decisions by deciding to refocus back on uniting and equipping instead of multiplying for a season. God eventually blessed Vintage with a united location in the middle of the city that simplified Vintage for a Sunday worship gathering at one location. At this time, Vintage Church rallied as one church in one location in September 2013 to restart the church.

Restarting our church meant that there was a lot of praying, repenting, and seeking outside partnership and wisdom. From day one, I had pursued outside partnerships for Vintage Church. So many churches, ministries, and individuals had already generously given their time, expertise, and resources. At this time I had a new desperation for this partnership. Vintage immediately began to pursue outside partnerships that could help guide our church into the future. The leadership of Vintage opened up all finances and plans to other church leaders and gave them permission to speak wisdom and give direction. The Vintage ministry slowed down in order to focus on uniting and equipping with a long term purpose of returning to multiplication. Looking

back today, I have no doubt that the Lord saved Vintage in this season. Vintage might not be alive today if it were not for this season of healing and retreat.

As Vintage was gaining strength, our church also began to grow again not just numerically but also with a renewed sense of calling and purpose. Vintage had united our leadership on the weekends and in the homes with some amazing equipping resources for multiplication in a healthy way. Vintage restarted the membership process and even changed our language from Vintage membership to Vintage partnership.

As Vintage then journeyed into the end of 2014, the church unexpectedly lost the united worship venue and had to multiply back to two locations. Although this came to the leadership of Vintage at the last moment, the church was now healthier and ready for multiplication. Vintage was united, equipped, and now ready to multiply. As Vintage wrapped up this exciting season, the church celebrated the sending of their second global missionaries to Malaysia. The church also celebrated the official launch of their first church plant in San Antonio, helped plant a church in New Orleans on the west bank of the city, and then reconnected with a church planter who had completed his training at another church in order to plant a new church in the city of Des Moines.

As we journeyed into 2015, I had established some strong partnerships with other pastors, networks, and even church planters around the country. God had begun to place upon my life a calling to not just be a church planting church, but a catalyst for helping the Vintage church plants become church planting churches as well. God also started to give me clarity in regard to our vision of multiplication around the city of New Orleans as we envision planting locations in all the surrounding parishes in our region. In June of 2015, Vintage sent a fourth church planter to New York City and began to train a fifth church planter that will be sent to plant a new church in the fall of 2016.

With these exciting new opportunities and clarity of vision, the church leadership has recently presented a two-year vision called the “More Initiative.” Not only does this vision unite, equip, and multiply Vintage Church in New Orleans but also

around the world through church planting in our nation and world. As a part of the More Initiative, Vintage launched a network called the Gx Network that is working alongside other networks and will serve as a catalyst for multiplying new churches all over the world.

Rationale for the Project

This project helped to solidify the foundation, DNA, and methodology for Vintage Church. Although Vintage Church is a church planting church, there was never a focused effort to solidify the foundation, DNA, and methodology for future work. Finalizing this information and strategy was absolutely vital to the future church planting efforts of Vintage Church. Vintage believes that in order to be a church planting church one must unite first around a common mission and vision. Without this unity a church planting church movement would not hold together or remain focused on the same goals. This is a top priority for the future church planting efforts of Vintage Church.

This project will also help a church recognize the past, present, and future implications of being a church planting church. When these implications are presented, a church planting church will be able to not only see the possible successes but perhaps more importantly the possible dangers. Church planting has definitely become more popular and a lot of churches are being planted. The recognition of the past, present, and future implications will educate all future church planting churches in order that they can plant a church in a sustainable and healthy way.

This project will also help a church to become a church planting church. By establishing the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church, a church will have the resources and knowledge of what it takes to become a church planting church. So many churches have the desire to plant churches and this project will encourage all churches unite and equip them toward multiplication.

This project will also help a church planter launch a church as a church planting church. In considering the story of Vintage Church, a church planter will be able

to recognize the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church from day one. Vintage Church immediately began to teach multiplication from day one and as a result they have planted churches. This project will help equip a church planter to accomplish this mission.

Definitions

As stated in the purpose, it is important to recognize the distinct definitions of the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church according to Vintage Church of New Orleans.

DNA. The DNA of Vintage Church in this project is defined as the specific statement of beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission.

Foundation. The foundation of Vintage Church in this project is defined as the biblical and theological support of the church and specific mission of church planting.

Methodology. The methodology of Vintage Church in this project is defined as the strategic mission of uniting, equipping, and multiplying as a church planting church.

The follow definitions also serve to bring clarity to the purpose stated in this project.

Church planter. A church planter as one who launches a new local church in a city or region through an evangelistic work and calling from God. J. D. Payne defines a church planter as one who is sent to preach the gospel and establish churches through making disciples from the harvest fields. He goes on to say that though churches can be planted with individuals and families that are already kingdom citizens, the church planter following the biblical paradigm of making disciples focuses on abundant gospel sowing in the hearts of those outside of the kingdom and allows the Holy Spirit to work in those hearts to birth kingdom citizens and new churches.¹

¹J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009), 381-82.

Church planting. Aubrey Malphurs defines church planting as an exhausting but exciting venture of faith that involves the planned process of beginning and growing new local churches, based on Jesus' promise and in obedience to his Great Commission.² J. D. Payne concludes that church planting is simply evangelism that results in new churches.³ In their work *The Challenge of the Great Commission*, Thom Rainer and Church Lawless conclude that biblical church planting follows the way modeled by Jesus and imitated by the Apostolic Church for global disciple making. It is a methodology and strategy for bringing in the harvest, raising up leaders from the harvest, and sending leaders to work in the harvest fields. It is evangelism resulting in congregationalizing. Under the leadership and work of the Holy Spirit, biblical church planting seeks to translate the gospel and the irreducible ecclesiological minimum into any given social context, with the expectation that new communities of believers in turn will continue the process in their contexts and throughout the world.⁴

Church planting movement. David Garrison in his book *Church Planting Movements* defines a church planting movement as a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.⁵

Church planting network. A church planting network as a committed cohort of multiple churches that have united around a common mission and vision of church planting.

Church planting residency. A church planting residency as a process of assessment, recognition, training, and enlistment for an aspiring church planter to become

²Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 19.

³Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 4.

⁴Thom S. Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *The Challenge of the Great Commission* (Louisville: Pinnacle, 2005), 107-8.

⁵David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTAKE, 2004), 21, italics original.

equipped to plant a church.

Church planting resident. A church planting resident is one who has received a calling from God to plant a church and has submitted to a local church for a season of assessment, recognition, training, and enlistment in hope to plant a new church in the future.

Multi-site church. A multi-site church can have a number of different frameworks, however, for this project the definition of a multi-site church is taken from *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*. The definition is this book states that a multi-site church is one church meeting in multiple locations—different rooms on the same campus, different locations in the same region, or in some instances, different cities, states, or nations. A multi-site church shares a common vision, budget, leadership and board.⁶

Limitations and Delimitations

This project provides one model among hundreds of models of being a church planting church. This model does not establish an exclusive model but rather one of the many models that can be implemented. Much of the story of Vintage Church's becoming a church planting church happened as a result of the grace and providence of God.

The leadership pipeline opportunity of Vintage Church is unique with its being in a city where there is a seminary with students who are pursuing the calling for church planting. This situation has certainly helped to attract future church planters and plant churches. Throughout the history of Vintage Church, seminary students have been a key component of leadership for Vintage Church. However, it should be noted that only a few churches in New Orleans have successfully used seminary students to help their mission

⁶Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 18.

in New Orleans by successfully starting new church plants around the city of New Orleans and the world.

The current status and popularity of church planting in America is at an all time high and the results of this popular push towards church planting are yet to be determined. Although church planting is not a new method of mission and is a biblical model found in the book of Acts, the recent methods of church planting are new. As time passes, a more accurate evaluation will be possible. A lot of evaluation is yet to be determined.

Research Methodology

The research process for this project revolved around the elders of Vintage Church, the staff/church planters that have been sent out by Vintage Church, and the membership of Vintage Church. Three goals determined the effectiveness of the project.

The first goal was to examine the foundation of being a church planting church through the historical account of Vintage Church and the biblical foundation of being a church planting church. To accomplish this goal, specific research was gathered internally with the Vintage Church elders, staff, church planters, and membership. Biblical and theological resources were also gathered as stated in the bibliography.

The second goal was to establish the DNA and methodology of uniting, equipping, and multiplying a church planting church according to Vintage Church. To accomplish this goal, specific research was gathered from a variety of books and resources as well as internally with the Vintage Church elders, staff, church planters, and membership.

The third goal was to present the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church according to Vintage Church of New Orleans. To accomplish this goal, research was collected from the leadership of Vintage Church and church planters that had been sent out to plant from Vintage Church and that are connected through the Gx Network.

For this project, I gathered this research with the hope of serving not only Vintage Church, but also any church that wants to become a church planting church.

CHAPTER 2

A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF BEING A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH

Introduction

The foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church's being a church planting church has been established because Vintage Church has a strong understanding and application of a biblical foundation of the church. The purpose of the next two sections is to establish the biblical foundation of a church and the biblical foundation of church planting.

A Biblical Foundation of the Church

With a new excitement of popularity around church planting, so many new contemporary expressions of church planting have evolved. Although there are many different methods and expressions of churches there is only one true doctrine of the church. In order for a church plant to truly become a church, that church must uphold the foundational elements of what the Bible defines as a church. Mark Dever expresses this importance in his contributing work to *A Theology for the Church*:

The doctrine of the church is of the utmost importance. A theology for the church would be incomplete without a theology of the church. Though many earlier systematic theologies have largely omitted ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church is a crucial component of Christian truth. It is the most visible part of Christian theology, and it is vitally connected with every other part. A distorted church usually coincides with a distorted gospel. Whether such a distorted church results from misunderstandings of the gospel or leads to them, serious departures from the Bible's teaching about the church normally signify other, more central misunderstandings about the Christian faith.¹

¹Mark Dever, "The Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel Akin (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 766.

Because establishing a solid biblical understanding of a church is so important, the following section will explain the purpose, description, and mission of the church.

Purpose

Many passages point to a biblical foundation of the church. The apostle Paul, who is the author of 1 Corinthians and founder of the church in Corinth, presents some foundational truths about the church in his introduction of this letter. This introduction is similar to his introductions in his other letters. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, these introductions provide a foundational framework for a correct theology of the church. In I Corinthians 1:2, Paul writes, “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.”²

The literal Greek translation of “*To the church of God that is in Corinth*” is actually “*To the church of God being in Corinth.*” The word from which “church” is translated, *ekklesia*, occurs 114 times in the New Testament. No other word translates into the English word *church*.³ The church, as the people of God, have been given a distinct purpose from God that is found in the apostle Paul’s writing. In further understanding of a biblical foundation of the church, the apostle Paul presents four truths about the church: the church is created by God, saved for God, together in God, and focused on God.

First of all the church is created by God. *To the church of God.* In I Peter 2:10, Peter tells his readers that “once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.” The church is created by God and as a result does not exist outside of God.

²All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

³Dever, “The Church,” 771.

Second, the church is saved for God - *to those sanctified in Christ Jesus*.

Knowing that the church is the people of God who have been saved by Jesus, why do so many churches act as if the church was created for them? To be sanctified by God means to be set apart. The church has been set apart not for her own glory, but for the glory of God. The supreme purpose of the church is to glorify God. The church is the body of people called by God's grace through faith in Christ to glorify him together by serving him in his world.⁴ Too many churches celebrate more about themselves than they do God and this is completely against the very purpose of the church. God desires for the church that he created before the foundation of the world through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to always exalt God.

Third, the church is together in God—*called to be saints together with all those who in every place*. When Paul encourages the saints to be together, he is encouraging those within each church family to be together and he is rallying the universal church around the world to unite for the glory of God. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, fashioned by the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, affirms that Christians believe in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” These four adjectives have been used historically to summarize biblical teaching on the church.⁵ These four adjectives rally the church toward a common purpose. In Ephesians 4:4-6, Paul writes to the Ephesians that “there is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” The church must be together in God.

Fourthly the church is focused on God - *call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours*. One of the many reasons why God will remove his

⁴Dever, “The Church,” 768.

⁵Ibid., 775.

blessing from the church is when a church stops focusing on Jesus. Sometimes a church can be so busy for Christ that a church can actually forget about Christ. Take the warning to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2. They had forgotten their first love and God threatened to remove his lampstand of blessing. No matter what happens with each local expression of the church, God demands all focus and all glory. Wayne Grudem explains that a first and primary purpose of the church is to worship God. Worship in the church is not merely a preparation for something else; it is in itself fulfilling the major purpose of the church with reference to its Lord.⁶ God has appointed the church in Christ to live for the praise of his glory (Eph 1:12). The church must remain focused on God.

These four absolutes are a biblical foundation of the purpose of the church. For a lot of churches these absolutes seem impossible to attain and this is exactly where God wants his church to remain. The gospel message is a message of grace through faith in Christ alone. Man cannot accomplish the task of being obedient to these four absolutes without the grace of Jesus. Where man runs into the impossible, God steps in and makes it possible through Jesus. In conclusion to his introduction, Paul offers this encouragement found I Corinthians 1:3, “*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” The church is not only created by God but also sustained by the grace and peace of God.

Description

Throughout Scripture there are different images that reflect an understanding of the church. In Revelation 19:7, Jesus loves his church as the bride of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:27, Jesus lives through his church as the body of Christ. In Ephesians 2:22, Jesus lives within his church as the dwelling place of Christ. Mark Dever summarizes some of these images as representations of the nature and mission of the

⁶Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 373.

church. The great images are familiar: the church as the people of God, the new creation, the fellowship or communion in faith, and of course, the body of Christ.⁷ The nature of God is found throughout the church of God as the church carries out the mission of God. The church's mission and purpose lie at the heart of its nature, attributes, and marks; and right practices of membership, polity, and discipline serve those purposes. Mark Dever goes on to suggest that the proper ends for a local congregation's life and actions are the worship of God, the edification of church, and the evangelization of the world. These three purposes in turn serve the glory of God.⁸

Although the church is a local congregation of believers, the church is also a connected universal movement of multiple congregations all over the world. This universal church is the kingdom of God. As Paul traveled from city to city in the book of Acts, he was not only serving an individual church but rather a universal church that is ultimately led by Jesus Christ. Theologian Wayne Grudem says that "in the New Testament the word church may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church."⁹ He goes on to explain that one must be careful to reject a house church or a citywide church as a church. He concludes that the church is the community of God's people at any level and at any place around the world.

Every individual church has been given the responsibility to share the gospel to the world. Jesus commanded the church to go and make disciples of all nations.

The task of the church is to make the invisible kingdom visible through faithful Christian living and witness-bearing. The gospel of Christ is still the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 24:14; Acts 20:25; 28:23, 31), the good news of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit through entering a disciple's relationship to the living Lord (Rom. 14:17). . . . The Spirit was poured out, and a new way of life, namely life in Christ and with Christ, became a reality of this

⁷Dever, "The Church," 771.

⁸Ibid., 809

⁹Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 364.

world. Thus the new internationalism of global church fellowship and global evangelism was born (Eph. 2:11-18; 3:6, 14-15; Rev. 5:9-10; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:28-29).¹⁰

The kingdom of God is a movement that unites as one universal church but also as a united complexity of local churches that go into every corner of the world. Aubrey Malphurs encourages readers with a defense of why we need more churches.¹¹ Some of his response speaks against those who have concluded that there is no need for church planting as well as those who have become self-centered in their Christian life to reject an advancement of witness. Malphurs states that the world needs more biblical church plants because of the overwhelming need of people to hear the gospel on top of the fact that many churches are plateauing or declining. In his defense, he presents Matthew 16:18 where Jesus says, “And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” A true understanding of this verse helps one recognize that first of all Jesus is going to build his church. Secondly, nothing that the enemy brings will be able to stop it. Malphurs then concludes by sharing that when you plant a new church there are many advantages such as faster growth, better evangelism, great leader credibility, and a more flexible congregation.¹²

This project will display the historical foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church. This purpose is rooted in a biblical understanding that the church is a multi-congregation movement around the world. Knowing that Jesus has promised to advance his kingdom through the church, Vintage Church is pursuing a church planting movement that will spread all over the world. In David Garrison’s book, *Church Planting Movements*, he unpacks five parts to a church planting movement: rapid reproducing, multiplication, indigenous movement, churches

¹⁰J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993), 194-95.

¹¹Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 38-40.

¹²*Ibid.*, 43-46.

planting churches, and multi-ethnic impact.¹³ The prayer of Vintage Church is to be a part of this type of catalytic movement where multiple churches unite to plant multiple churches all over the world.

Mission

Church planting is part of the mission of the church. In order to gain a more in depth understanding of the church, various authors have provided a comprehensive definition of the mission of the church. Many contemporary writers describe the overall mission of the church in a number of different ways. Theologian John Stott argues that the mission is not everything the church does, but rather describes everything the church is sent into the world to do.¹⁴ Reggie McNeal says that the missional church is the people of God partnering with God in his redemptive mission in the world.¹⁵ Mark Dever shares that the church ultimately exists for the glory of God. Whether pursuing missions or evangelism, edifying one another through prayer and Bible study, encouraging growth in holiness, or assembling for public praise, prayer, and instruction, this one purpose prevails.¹⁶ Wayne Grudem shares that the evangelistic work of declaring the gospel is the primary ministry that the church has toward the world.¹⁷ Kevin DeYoung presents this definition: The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now

¹³David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTAKE, 2004), 22-23.

¹⁴John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World: What the Church Should Be Doing Now!* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 30.

¹⁵Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 24.

¹⁶Dever, "The Church," 815.

¹⁷Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 373.

and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.¹⁸ Vintage Church supports these definitions as biblical definitions of the mission of the church. The specific Vintage Church definition of the church will be presented in later chapters.

As previously stated, God created the church. God also created the mission of the church. This mission is introduced and executed in Scripture. Jesus made a promise in Matthew 16:18 that he would build his church as he was led to the cross. When Jesus died upon the cross, the world was troubled and believed that his promise would never be fulfilled. However, the cross became the launching pad of the church as Jesus arose from death and conquered sin and hell. The victorious power of Jesus defeating sin brought salvation to all who would repent and believe in him. After the resurrection in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus instructed his followers to “go and make disciples of all nations.” As he instructed them with this mission, he also gave them a promise before he ascended into Heaven. This promise is found in Acts 1:8, “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.” At this time, the disciples numbered around one hundred and twenty people. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came down upon the church and the church grew to thousands. This movement is recorded throughout Acts and the New Testament as the gospel spread throughout the church from Jerusalem and has continued to spread throughout the world.

In obedience to this mission, the church obediently administers various ministries through various offices. Tim Keller shares in his book *Center Church*, that doctrinal foundation leads to theological vision, and theological vision then leads to ministry expression.¹⁹ This ministry expression is what makes up the distinct functions of

¹⁸Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 62.

¹⁹Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 20.

the church. Two contemporary pastors and authors have been a primary influencer in developing a biblical foundation of the ministry of Vintage Church: Mark Dever and Mark Driscoll. Both have contributed comprehensive summaries. Mark Driscoll presents a breakdown of Acts 2:42-47 by giving this definition:

The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy.²⁰

Mark Dever presents nine marks of the church. These biblical marks include:

expositional preaching, biblical theology, an understanding of the gospel, conversion, evangelism, membership, church discipline, discipleship and growth, and leadership.²¹

He also shares in his book called *Church Membership* that “a church is a group of Christians who regularly gather in Christ's name to officially affirm and oversee one another's membership in Jesus Christ and his kingdom through gospel preaching and gospel ordinances.”²² These biblically based summaries as well as other biblical resources have helped to shape the biblical foundation of the church that is found in the ministry of Vintage Church. In the following chapters of this project, the specific mission of Vintage Church will be presented.

In conclusion, the biblical foundation of a church provides the purpose, description, and mission of the church. This foundation has driven Vintage Church as a local congregation to become a church planting church.

²⁰Mark Driscoll, *Vintage Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 38.

²¹Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 59-119.

²²Mark Dever, *Church Membership* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 62-63.

A Biblical Foundation of Church Planting

The biblical foundation of the church as stated in the previous section is the driving foundation that has led Vintage Church to be a church planting church. In the first section it was explained that the mission of the church is to evangelistically obey the Great Commission. Peter Wagner says, “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”²³ In support of this statement, *Spin-Off Churches* proposes the following question: Can the Great Commission be fulfilled without the planting of new churches?²⁴ As confirmed in the book of Acts, the answer to this question is that it is impossible to fulfill the Great Commission without planting new churches. There is a supporting biblical theology and narrative of church planting found in the book of Acts and the main vehicle for fulfilling this mission of the church: “In the book of Acts, Luke usually referred to specific local gatherings with the word *ekklesia*. This is how he designated the assemblies in Jerusalem, Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, and Ephesus. These churches met and sent out missionaries.”²⁵ The purpose of this section will be to support a biblical foundation of church planting in the book of Acts.

Church planting began in the book of Acts through the empowerment of the church by Holy Spirit and obedience to the command from Jesus. The mission of the church as described in the first section is to make disciples of all nations.

According to the New Testament, every church is called to go into the world and proclaim the gospel, establish other New Testament churches, and teach the disciples to observe the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. All these mandates are known as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8).²⁶

²³Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 21.

²⁴Rodney Harrison, Tom Cheyney, and Don Overstreet, *Spin-Off Churches: How One Church Successfully Plants Another* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 8.

²⁵Dever, “The Church,” 771.

²⁶G. William Schweer, “The Missionary Mandate of God’s Nature,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman

The book of Acts demonstrates this mission and encourages the church today to continue this mission. Placing the contemporary church against the one depicted in the Acts of the Apostles makes clear how much the prophetic witness of the church has been compromised by its many strategies of adaptation and survival over the centuries.²⁷

There is an importance of leaders and churches that plant new churches alongside a network of other leaders and churches. The early church was formed as the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to preach of the gospel. As the gospel was received the community of believers became a community that continued to advance the gospel to others through the planting of more churches. Community was formed for the strengthening of the church and also the advancement of the gospel. When Paul would travel from city to city preaching the gospel, he would continue to establish new churches that followed the example that was set by the early church. Records of Paul's journeys are recorded in Acts, Romans, and also the Pauline Epistles. In these books, Paul connected a network of Christ followers and churches that served to assist him and others in continuing to advance the gospel and plant churches around the world. As Paul proclaimed Jesus, he was intentional to surround himself with followers of Jesus in order to equip them to lead the church in their city and also partner with the church around the world. The book of Acts records these missionary journeys and proves the importance of greater impact when leaders and churches connect in partnership in order to keep planting churches and advance the gospel.

Church Planting in the Book of Acts

Almost everywhere in the book of Acts new churches are planted. This came as a result of the command that Jesus gave his followers before he ascended into Heaven. Even before Jesus died and arose from the grave, he challenged his disciples to bear fruit

& Holman, 1998) 125.

²⁷Harrison, Cheyney, and Overstreet, *Spin-Off Churches*, 10-11.

as it is found in Luke 19:13-26. In Matthew 10, Jesus sent his disciples out two by two into all the surrounding villages to proclaim the Good News and establish the kingdom. When Jesus did ascend into Heaven and fulfill his promise to send the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the movement of the early church began to multiply from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. The following is a list of some of the cities where these new church plants were started:

Rome, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus. These places were all identified as church plants during the immediate thirty years after Pentecost. Before the close of the first century, additional scriptural accounts attest to churches established in Thyatira, Smyrna, Sardis, Philadelphia, Pergamos, and Laodicea.²⁸

This movement of church planting spread through believers that united in homes or in public places for prayer, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the apostles' teaching (Acts 4:32-35). The believers were unified not only spiritually (one in heart and mind) but also materially.²⁹ These examples rarely show these early believers going their own way. The first church was truly organically formed with no seminars, no coaches, no consultants, but there seemed to be an intentional embrace of life after conversion both in corporate gatherings and smaller groups within a vibrancy of community.³⁰ Small congregations were united under local leadership in order to carry out the mission of using their spiritual gifts to preach the gospel: "God's plan for His kingdom is not individualistic autonomy. It is the genius of the church working interdependently that propels unstoppably the great purposes of the kingdom."³¹ The concept of planting churches came as a result of the gospel being preached, received, and lived out as a

²⁸Harrison, Cheyney, and Overstreet, *Spin-Off Churches*, 14.

²⁹S. D. Toussaint, *Acts*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 364.

³⁰Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 175.

³¹Jeff Christopherson, *Kingdom Matrix: Designing a Church for the Kingdom of God* (Boise, ID: Russell, 2012), 195.

community of believers. Instead of being some sort of mission strategy, church planting occurred as a natural result of that community truly living in partnership with each other. This community put into practice what was eventually spread all over the world through church planters like the apostle Paul. These practices cultivated a generosity and caring that is needed to propel the mission to the ends of the earth. This example is described in Acts 4:32-35:

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

This passage shows the foundational practices of community in the early church. The early church was built on relationships that modeled love and trust. The sharing that happens in this community is never forced but rather motivated by the grace of Jesus that is voluntary. The leaders in this community served as an example of generosity and taught that Jesus ultimately modeled living generously. The church must be a missionary in its work and in its self-understanding, precisely because Jesus himself was essentially missionary.³² These were the marks of the early church that not only served to meet the needs of their congregation but it also served to advance them to reach more people with the gospel and multiply these marks in other churches around the world. Eventually the early church had no choice but to scatter all over the world because of persecution. God created an environment prohibiting the church from staying and taking root in Jerusalem and instead scattered the believers towards the fulfillment of the Great Commission.³³ As the Holy Spirit sent the apostle Paul to plant churches on his missionary journeys, these marks became the principles that Paul would teach churches to have with other churches.

³²Robert Garrett, "The Gospels and Acts: Jesus the Missionary and His Missionary Followers," in *Missiology*, 63.

³³Harrison, Cheyney, and Overstreet, *Spin-Off Churches*, 9.

The missionary journeys of Paul present examples of church planting. Every journey was led by the Holy Spirit and connected in partnership with the church to plant churches that planted churches. This mission was the essential part of Paul's faithfulness to the mission that he had received from Jesus. The following sections will demonstrate from Paul's missionary journeys that when churches plant churches they will unite the mission, protect the mission, multiply the mission, encourage the mission, and advance the mission.

Church Planting Unites the Mission

The book of Acts presents the witness of the gospel spreading from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Paul was used by God to share the gospel with different regions and people groups all over the world. Despite all the complex diversity of backgrounds and perspective, Acts records the uniting of all of these people around the gospel. Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird make this observation about the united church in Acts:

The Book of Acts demonstrates a wide variety of people groups that are all brought into one church to the point, as Paul explains later, that in Christ "there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free, but Christ is all, Christ is in all" (Col 3:11, *Good News Translation*). Paul explains how Gentiles have been "grafted" into the same vine as the Jews (Rom. 11:17), and how God "brought Jews and Gentiles together as though we were only one person...when he united us in peace...by uniting Jews and Gentiles in body" (Eph 2:15-16).³⁴

Everywhere that Paul planted churches, you can find the people that united with Paul in order to lead other churches. Paul and his coworkers participated in a partnership that helped to advance the gospel all over the world through church planting. Every missionary would be trained to be a missionary that would in turn train other missionaries. This was accomplished not individually but rather as a community.

Connection with other believers is important because it is the context for which we are to live out the Christian life in accountability. It is important because together is the only way we can ever accomplish the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is

³⁴Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird, *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 8.

important because it says everyone is important, yet it breaks us of individualism. Connection with other believers is important because it reflects as the earthly kingdom of God the future kingdom of God in heaven.³⁵

In Acts 16:1, Paul partners with Timothy in Lystra. In Acts 20:4, Paul partners with Gaius in Derbe. Also in Acts 20:4, Paul partners with Aristarchus and Secundus in Thessalonica. In Acts 18:2, Paul partners with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. In Acts 18:24, Paul partners with Apollos in Ephesus. To this church came the gifted Apollos from Alexandria in northern Africa. As a Jew, he knew the Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament, well.³⁶ These are some of the many examples of Paul's missionary strategy to reach and partner with others in order to continue to advance the gospel through church planting. The end of the book of Romans is another example of Paul's desire to partner with others. Romans 16:1-2 says,

I commend to your our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Paul displays a love and support of Phoebe who helped to deliver this letter to the Romans and then compels the church in Rome to take care of her needs for continuing in ministry. After these two verses, Paul provides a long list of people that he is thankful for in helping him advance the gospel. Romans 16:3-16 says,

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with

³⁵Bob Roberts, Jr., *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 102.

³⁶Toussaint, *Acts*, 409.

them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

This list of names provides an overwhelming support of the necessity of strong community in a local church and among local churches for the advancement of the gospel. Every name in this list represents a picture of partnership to Paul and serves as a testimony to the church to serve as ministers of the gospel together with the hope of advancing the gospel through the church.

The apostle Paul launched his missionary journeys with others. At the end of Acts 24, the Word of God was increasing and multiplying in Antioch. Paul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch with Barnabas and Mark ready to continue this movement into Asia Minor. Acts 13:1-3 presents the rallying of the leaders of the church in Antioch in order to pray and send Paul and his team. The laying on of hands was an act of blessing that the church in Antioch used to deploy their first missionaries.

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.

The ordination service plainly denotes that the missionaries and the church are united in mission work.³⁷ The church in Antioch became a base of operations for the early church and especially the apostle Paul for mobilizing church planting. Not only did Paul work with this sending church, but Paul also traveled with other believers as he preached the gospel. Partnership was a foundational element of Paul's ministry and together they planted new works all over Asia Minor.

Church Planting Protects the Mission

Acts 15 is another example of church planting. This example shows how partnering together to plant churches will protect the mission. Wherever there is gospel

³⁷S. J. Kistemaker and W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 456.

proclamation there is a resistance to the gospel being proclaimed. The enemy is on the attack and this is clearly displayed in the book of Acts. To be in community is to be in a place of accountability and protection from the enemy. Throughout Paul's first missionary journey, he faced physical and spiritual resistance that intended to end or divide the mission. Paul depended upon his network of new churches to keep him focused on mission.

The gospel creates community. Because it points us to the One who died for his enemies, it creates relationships of service rather than selfishness. Because it removes both fear and pride, people get along inside the church who could never get along outside. Because it calls us to holiness, the people of God live in loving bonds of mutual accountability and discipline. Thus the gospel creates a human community radically different from any society around it.³⁸

When Paul returned to Antioch he gathered this community for a report of what the Lord had done where he also received some encouragement from his sending church in Antioch. This served to teach the church the importance of staying in partnership with those new churches in Asia Minor. During time of rest, Paul was brought into a disagreement concerning circumcision. Many Gentiles were receiving the gospel and some Christian leaders were adding a requirement of circumcision for salvation. The church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to engage in this disagreement. While in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul worked with the church leaders in Jerusalem to form a decision that would be shared with churches all over the world. This decision was eventually made in the form of a letter that Paul shared with the Antioch Church. The Jerusalem Council is another example of the necessity of church planting in the early church as it served to protect the church. The larger the network of churches, the stronger the protection against the enemy.

Church Planting Multiplies the Mission

When the church unites to love as Christ, the church mobilizes to love those who are far from Christ. This is the heartbeat of the gospel. Multiplying the gospel

³⁸Keller, *Center Church*, 311.

happened throughout the book of Acts, even when there were disagreements in the church. Church planting is the most effective way to continue the mission forward.

After some time in Antioch, Paul embarked on another missionary journey. Because of a disagreement about Mark, Paul and Barnabas decide to go different ways. Mark had abandoned the first missionary journey and Paul no longer trusted him. Barnabas wanted Mark to journey with them back to Cyprus and their previous missionary track. Eventually this disagreement ended the journeys of Paul and Barnabas together. On the one hand this was discouraging however this also presented an opportunity for multiplication.

The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas multiplied the gospel as two missionary journeys were formed. Barnabas and Mark headed back to Cyprus. In God's providence, not one team of missionaries but two teams leave from Antioch. Even if we know nothing about the result of the work performed by Barnabas and Mark, we still see God's marvelous care for the believers in Cyprus.³⁹ Paul and Silas headed towards Macedonia and cities that had yet to hear about Jesus. It was on these journeys where Timothy joined Paul to plant churches in the strategic region of Asia Minor in the influential cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Throughout these journeys Paul would preach the gospel, witness people saved by the gospel, and then train those new believers in the gospel to lead the church and do the same. The Holy Spirit led Paul to these cities that were strategic urban centers of influence. When the same church planting focus that had happened in Jerusalem also took root in these cities, the gospel began to spread exponentially. What the enemy tried to destroy, God redeemed to advance his mission. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was redeemed from being a story of division to a story of multiplication.

³⁹Kistemaker and Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 570.

Church Planting Encourages the Mission

In Paul's third missionary journey, Ephesus served as the base of operation. Paul planted and established a strong church while also raising up local leaders of the church. Paul spent around two years in this city. During this time he never forgot about his global mission and used the influence of Ephesus to strengthen the global church. The Ephesian church helped to spread the gospel to "all Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia" as it says in Acts 19:10. It was here that Paul help to plant eight other churches that are mentioned in Revelation 2-3 and Colossians 4:13 (Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis). In Ephesus, he also wrote the letters to the church in Corinth in order to encourage them to continue in the faith. There was a lot to be thankful to God about while Paul was in Ephesus. This confirmation of calling from the Lord combined with the biblical partnership that Paul experienced in Ephesus helped to encourage the mission of church planting.

Biblical community serves as an encouragement to those who are on mission for Jesus. It reminds the church of the gospel and focuses us on proclaim the gospel. Paul was encouraged by this partnership but his main encouragement came from the advancement of the gospel through church planting. As 2 Timothy 2:10 states, "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul had received a call by Jesus to continue to take the gospel to places that had not yet received the gospel. It was his desire to take the gospel from Ephesus and eventually to Spain. To leave the church in Ephesus was difficult for Paul not only because of the inevitable persecution that he would face in these travels, but also because of his love for this church. Paul had a great love for the church in Ephesus and this love is recorded in Acts 20:36-38.

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

This picture in Ephesus confirms not only Paul's love for the church in Ephesus but it also confirms how important partnership among all the churches in the gospel was to him. Community shapes the nature of our witness and our engagement in mission.⁴⁰ This encouraged his mission. Paul was thankful for what Jesus had established in Ephesus and desired for all people around the world to experience the same fellowship they had received in Christ. Paul sailed off to keep giving his life to Christ, thus providing us with an example of how we should approach life and ministry.⁴¹

Church Planting Advances the Mission

The church has been given the mission of advancing the gospel around the world. The Greek word *euangelizo* means "to gospelize," to tell people the good news about what Jesus did for us, and in the book of Acts literally everyone in the early church does it.⁴² Romans 15:22-29 presents a concluding defense of how church planting advances the gospel to the ends of the earth. In this passage the apostle Paul is writing to the church in Rome during his third missionary journey from Corinth. He hopes to get to Rome in order to encourage the church in Rome to continue the movement of Jesus to Spain.

This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

⁴⁰Keller, *Center Church*, 311.

⁴¹Kent R. Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 185.

⁴²Keller, *Center Church*, 277.

This passage of Scripture supports Paul's passion to partner with the global church for the purpose of advancing the gospel around the world through church planting.

From the moment that Jesus saved Paul in Acts 9 on the road to Damascus, he relentlessly proclaimed and advanced the gospel around the world. Paul passed along this mission to every church that he planted and served. In this passage Paul first of reminds them of the work of the gospel that has happened around the world for Jesus. He states that the gospel has been established in these regions that are recorded in the book of Acts. Because of the strength of the partnership with the churches throughout his missionary journeys, Paul shares that he longer has a reason to work in their region. His drive is an act of obedience to Jesus who calls us to be witness all over the world. On his way he is going to bring aid that was collected in Macedonia and Achaia to the saints in Jerusalem. Throughout his drive to advance the gospel Paul illustrated the importance of partnership among all churches to continue to plant more churches.

The last recording of Paul's life is found in Acts 28:30-31. In Rome, Paul was allowed to live under house arrest with a soldier guarding him. While under house arrest, Paul organized two meetings with strategic religious leaders. In the first meeting Paul shared his story and the gospel. Those that gathered became intrigued and wanted to hear more. Instead of sharing right away, Paul encouraged them to bring more people for another meeting in order that more people would hear the gospel. From morning till evening Paul shared about Jesus from the Scriptures and many believed in Jesus. Acts 28:30-31 illustrates that the apostle Paul relentlessly advanced the gospel of Jesus even when he was restricted: "He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

In conclusion, the Bible clearly displays a mission of church planting that is modeled in one local church and extended to all churches around the world. Church planting unites the mission, protects the mission, multiplies the mission, encourages the

mission, and advances the mission. The lessons learned from the church planting in the book of Acts can serve as a guide to inspire churches to become a church planting church with churches around the world.

Conclusion

A biblical foundation of the church's purpose, description, and mission will drive a church toward fulfilling the Great Commission. As a result of walking through examples in the book of Acts, it is confirmed that the primary way to fulfill this mission is through planting new churches. Planting new churches will unite the mission, protect the mission, multiply the mission, encourage the mission, and advance the mission. This affirmation is a primary conclusion and foundation that has driven Vintage Church to be a church planting church.

CHAPTER 3

THE DNA OF VINTAGE CHURCH

Introduction

As stated in chapter 2, church planting is a primary method of advancing the message of the gospel around the world. Vintage Church has become a church planting church because it is a core foundation of the church in Scripture. From the very beginning of Vintage Church in 2008, there has been a passion for not only planting Vintage but also other churches around the world. In seven years, Vintage has supported and sent out multiple churches with a similar DNA for planting churches. Although the leadership of Vintage did not always recognize the clarity of framework that is presented in this project, the following framework was implemented throughout the congregation and now into other church plants.

Three major categories make up the DNA of Vintage Church being a church planting church: unite, equip, and multiply. The unite category will be described in detail in chapter three. Together with the biblical foundation that is stated in chapter two, this chapter will present the statement of beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission that unites Vintage Church. Without a unity around these core beliefs it is impossible to generate a movement.

The categories of equip and multiply will be presented in more detail in chapter four. These two categories include an explanation of how Vintage Church trains and sends out church planters. The multiply section will even introduce readers to a newly implemented network of church plants that is serving the church plants that have been sent out by Vintage Church. The hope of this new network is to catalyze a movement of multiplying churches around the world. Chapter five will share in more

detail the narrative of Vintage Church being a church plant church and how this new network formed.

Unite

Statement of Beliefs

Every church that has ever existed should remain focused on glorifying God through making disciples of all nations. However, each church is uniquely called to reach each unique culture in each unique time. This is called contextualization. It is really important for a church to connect the gospel in a unique way so that their culture understands it. In the book *Missiology*, contextualization is defined as the ability to communicate the gospel and plant churches in a way that is untainted by the missionaries' own culture.¹ Although the concept of contextualization is something that can be supported in the missionary journeys of Jesus and his disciples, the authors go on to state that the specific term of contextualization was only brought into language in the early 1970s. Ultimately, contextualization allows the gospel to fully integrate into any culture around the world.

During the first couple of years, Vintage Church created a mission statement and values without a consideration for a contextual relevance to New Orleans. Those statements were really long core values and a pretty complicated mission statement. One problem with a lot of new church plants is that they create a mission statement and core values from some good Christian books or from a church that they admire. Unfortunately, Vintage Church was guilty of this mistake as well. One of those core values was “*The exclusivity of Jesus Christ in all things.*” Although Vintage agreed and still agrees with this statement today, it did not help connect the mission of the church to the community. Too many people in New Orleans had been burned by doctrinal exclusivity and

¹John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson, eds., *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 257.

fundamentalism. Too many people were skeptics against religious talk. Vintage Church quickly learned that creating some simple and generic core values that most people in our city would agree upon would help to connect with the community. This was done intentionally because of the mission of Vintage Church of connecting people that are from God to God. Eventually through a season of study, prayer, and reliance upon the Holy Spirit, Vintage was led to develop the following mission statement and core values.

Vintage Church summarizes their biblical foundation with three core values of truth, love, and community. The simplicity of these values has become the front door and established DNA of Vintage Church. These core values have also helped to establish the DNA of Vintage Church as church planting church.

(1) Truth is all about “living the gospel.” Taking the foundational truth of salvation in Christ and the foundational truth of God’s Word into every part of our life in order that Vintage Church might know and serve Him. (2) Love is all about “serving the city.” This not only includes a love relationship with Jesus but it also extends to a love relationship with people. Because Christ first loved and served the church, the church in return commits their life to loving God and others. I John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” (3) Community is all about “being the church.” God has created man to live in community and he has created the church to be the main avenue for fulfilling this plan and his mission of making disciples of all nations.

As Vintage Church started, there was a strong need to confront some misconceptions about the church in our culture. A strong misconception of the church is when it is described as a building instead of a people, or an event instead of life. A church will no doubt have an identifying name, a possible building, and many different events. However, these realities are not the foundation or biblical identity of the church. As stated in chapter two of this project, in order for a church to become a church planting church, they have to know a biblical foundation of the church. Wayne Grudem has a very simple definition of the church: the church is the community of all true believers for all

time.² Gregg Allison also contributes his definition: the church is the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into his body through baptism with the Holy Spirit.³ From the very beginning, Vintage Church has implemented a correct teaching and understanding of this biblical foundation.

From the launch of the mission of the church in the book of Acts, the church has evolved into many different shapes and sizes. There are certain elements of the church that the church has freedom to change, but there are also elements of the church that should never change. As Vintage Church began in 2008, the difference between our personal preferences, personal convictions, and absolute truth was established by following our statement of beliefs. This difference was embedded into the life of Vintage Church because it was embedded into my life from my dad. These three distinctions were the DNA of the home that I grew up in and in turn became the DNA of my ministry. The following explanation is summarized childhood teaching of my dad. Every church has personal preferences like style of worship, length of worship gatherings, etc. However, Vintage Church is committed to never allow personal preferences to be substituted as absolute truth. Every church has personal convictions like parenting philosophy, mission philosophy, cultural engagement, etc. However, Vintage Church is committed to never allow personal convictions to be substituted as absolute truth. Absolute truth is the Word of God and that alone has to be the foundation for the church. The Bible is God's infallible and inspired Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16 states, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve

²Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 363.

³Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 29.

or disobey God.⁴ From the absolute truth of the Bible, Vintage Church has created a summary statement of beliefs that serves as a biblical foundation:

1. The Bible is the Word of God.
2. There is one true God who exists in three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
3. God created all things for His glory.
4. Men and women were originally created in the image of God without sin.
5. Man rebelled against God, causing sin and death to enter the world.
6. All humans are now born completely sinful.
7. Jesus Christ came to earth to reveal God and redeem sinful man.
8. Salvation is from God's grace alone, through Christ's blood alone, by the Holy Spirit's work alone.
9. At conversion, the Holy Spirit indwells believers and gives spiritual gifts to them for the glory of God.
10. The Church is the community of Christians for all time who have been loved and saved by Jesus to serve Him by making disciples of all nations.
11. Jesus is returning to establish His Kingdom on earth.
12. Heaven is the eternal reality for those who surrender to Christ; Hell is the eternal reality for those who reject Christ.⁵

As a church planting church, Vintage researched, studied, and worked hard to develop a statement of belief especially for the church. This framework of belief has served as a foundational guide and DNA of future church plants that would be sent out by Vintage Church. A more extensive biblical definition of the church in the statement of beliefs is the following:

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination but rather made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel.

⁴Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 33.

⁵A more detailed explanation of these beliefs can be found at Vintage Church, "Our Beliefs," accessed January 28, 2016, www.vintagechurchnola.com/beliefs.

The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to serve Him by faithfully doing His will in the earth. All members of the Church universal are to be vitally connected and committed to a local church. In this context, they are to live in this present world as the people of God, demonstrating the reality of the kingdom of God, manifesting the purity of the life of God, and living solely for the glory of God. Believers are to use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given in order to build up the church and preach the gospel, ministering and making disciples throughout the world. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22–23; Acts 2:42–47; I Peter 2:9–10; Matthew 28:18–20)⁶

Leadership

The Vintage Church leadership is summarized in the following way: Vintage Church is an elder-led, deacon-served, partner-responding church for the sake of reaching New Orleans with the gospel of Jesus Christ. A summary of our biblical understanding of the leadership of Vintage Church may be found in appendix 1.

Church Leadership is another important biblical foundation of Vintage Church being a church planting church. For the church, God has appointed a leadership structure or government consisting of church offices, the leaders who serve in those offices through various responsibilities and the authority that is fitting for those duties, and a relationship between those two officers and the other members of the church.⁷ Although there are multiple leaders of congregations around the world, there is only one universal church and only one ultimate leader. Jesus is the Senior Pastor of his universal church. The scriptures are extremely clear about this truth.

The head of the church is Jesus Christ who, by virtue of his ascension, was given as head over all creation to the church (Eph. 1:19-23). He promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18); he is its one foundation (I Cor 3:11) and cornerstone (Eph. 2:20); he is its chief Shepherd over all human shepherds (I Pet 5:4). He is the one “who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands” (Rev 2:1), exercising “sovereign administration over the affairs of the churches,” to whom he gives royal edicts (Revelation 2-3), including the authoritative threat to terminate a particular church’s existence (2:5). The supreme headship of Jesus Christ over his church has important implications for the church, its government, and its officers.⁸

⁶Vintage Church, “Our Beliefs.”

⁷Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 205.

⁸Ibid., 252.

God delights in using his people to lead the church. Most of the New Testament was written to the various churches in places like Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossae, and Thessalonica. The leadership of these churches and any local church is under the headship of Jesus.

The leadership of Vintage Church has functioned according to a biblical foundation of church leadership. The Bible teaches that there are three specific positions/functions serving under the headship of Jesus: elders, deacons, and members. Because all church leadership falls under the ultimate authority of Jesus, Vintage Church believes in a plurality of local church leadership. The Vintage elders serve as a team, the deacons serve as a team, and the members serve as a team. However, within each team Vintage has established functional leaders. For instance, among the Vintage elders, I serve as a “first among equals” with the specific position of the lead pastor. The function of “first among equals” falls in line with what is taught in Scripture. Peter, James, and John are mentioned as the top leaders of the other disciples and Peter functioned as the ultimate leader of James and John (Luke 5:7, 10). The advantage of the principle of “first among equals” is that it allows for functional, gift-based diversity with the eldership team without creating an official, superior office over fellow elders.⁹ Ultimately, the Lord, who is head of the church, chooses a “first among equals.” Elders, deacons, and partners are all equal in value under Jesus but they are not equal in function.

Along with this teaching, Vintage Church believes that the Bible teaches a complementarian leadership structure in the home and in the church. A complementarian view states that there is equal value but not equal function between men and women. Only men who have been appointed by God and meet the qualifications of an elder can serve in this office. Women are not allowed to serve in the office of elder, but rather use their spiritual gifts in order to minister in every way that other non-elders do. On the

⁹Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 47.

other hand, the office of deacon permits women to serve in this office. As deacons a woman can teach, lead worship, serve communion, be in a full-time paid ministry position, etc. 1 Timothy 3:11 and Romans 16:1 point to men and women serving as deacons. This is one of the main differences between elders and deacons. Once again, this example supports that biblical church leadership that reflects an equal in value but not equal in function model.

Elders are servant leaders and the overseers of Vintage that have been raised up with the purpose of the overall oversight of Vintage Church. There are two categories of elders at Vintage Church: elder board and executive elders. The elder board function as the servant leaders who have pastoral oversight over the entire church. Those who serve on the elder board have a distinguished oversight over the personnel and financial responsibilities of the church. The executive elders, which the elder board is included in this category, function as servant leaders who have pastoral oversight over a specific ministry. Both categories of elders must uphold the qualifications and responsibilities of eldership in the New Testament. The qualifications of the office of elder are found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Under the sovereign direction of Jesus Christ, the elders of Vintage are responsible for teaching, leading, praying, providing vision for, and shepherding the church, which exists in multiple locations. Vintage Church is always in the process of building up more elders that serve in a variety of executive and location specific roles. All elders unite together as the leadership for the entire church in the areas designated as their responsibilities. Coming together regularly, the elders support one another in prayer, share ministry resources, hold one another accountable, prepare sermons together, address challenges as a team, and manage the church budget.

Our ministry staff, community group leaders, and vision team hold the office of deacon. The ministry staff are leading servants that lead specific ministries. The community group leaders are leading servants that lead weekly community groups and apprentices, which are the future community group leaders. The vision team serves as

leading servants that support and advise the elder board in various responsibilities and decisions. The qualifications of the office of deacon is found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Compared to the list of qualifications of the office of an elder, this list does contain some similarities and some differences. In regards to the differences, deacons are not required to be able to teach. As stated previously, Vintage Church also believes that Scripture supports that women can serve in the office of deacon. Deacons have a primary function of serving the church. While elders are dedicated to the work of teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding, the deacons are devoted to serving in all the areas of the church. These areas can include men's and women's ministries, family, youth, and children's ministries, music arts, media arts, counseling ministries, urban renewal, benevolence, and mercy ministries, missions and church planting ministries, and many more.

Membership

The membership of Vintage Church is called "partnership." The change in semantics has been done with intentionality because Vintage believes that semantics matter. Much like Vintage will express the importance of semantics through stating that Vintage will not just go to church but to rather be the church, Vintage also teaches that membership is partnership. Being a member at Vintage Church is less about privilege and more about partnership. Vintage partners make a covenant with God and each other to carry out the foundation and DNA of the Vintage Church mission. Romans 12:4-5 states, "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Under the leadership of the Vintage pastors and specifically Dustin Turner, who serves as the equipping pastor of Vintage Church, Vintage has created the following explanation of what it means to make a covenant and become a Vintage partner. Together with the elders of Vintage Church, Turner developed a summary on making a covenant with Vintage Church. This summary is presented as the DNA of being a Vintage partner.

Being a Vintage partner is really about being part of a family. Partners who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher standard of responsibility and service. At the same time, the church leadership is covenanted to assist partners first and foremost by loving and leading, providing counsel and aid, and praying for, teaching, and guiding the body. Vintage Church has been given a great responsibility to proclaim the gospel throughout New Orleans and around the world. Because of that Vintage needs a strong core team within the church that will serve as the leaders of this mission.

In order to keep Vintage partners focused on this mission, Vintage will practice biblical accountability and discipline under the authority of the Bible through the Vintage pastors. The goal of any discipline and even dismissal is not exclusion, but restoration. Every Vintage partner is in need of accountability and discipline from time to time. For those who receive such discipline, the heart of the Vintage pastors is to restore them to Christ and the church. The Vintage Church pastors hold the Vintage partners accountable to their commitments to Christ and his church. Under the supervision of the pastors, the community group leaders also help to keep our Vintage partners accountable. Any partners who have not upheld the partner covenant will be notified throughout the year by their community group leader in order to encourage Vintage partners to remain faithful to their covenant. Failure to do so will result in the loss of partnership with the Vintage Family. Restoration is always the goal and is always available to those who submit to the leadership of the Vintage pastors.

Vintage Church takes membership serious because of what the Bible speaks about concerning being a covenanted member of a local church. A covenant is an enduring agreement, which defines a relationship between two parties who seek out the good of each other. From the beginning of time God has developed relationships with people through covenant. In both the Old and New Testaments God reached down to humanity and initiated a relationship with humanity. In the Old Testament God initiated a

covenant relationship with many people including Adam and Eve at creation (Gen 1-3), Noah and his family (Gen 6-9), Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17), Israel through Moses (Exod 19-24), and David (2 Sam 7). All of these Old Testament covenants find their ultimate culmination in God's new covenant through Jesus. The covenants of the Old Testament were incomplete because humanity could not uphold its side of the agreement. Therefore Jesus as God came down to earth, put on flesh, and died on the cross for humanity's sin. Because of Jesus' death, the world can now have a fully restored relationship with God.

Just as God desired to create a relationship with humanity, Vintage Church has a desire to have a committed relationship with one another and the church. In I Corinthians 12:18-20 Paul writes "God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body." Here Paul highlights the importance of the body of Christ. For the church to function properly every believer is needed. While church membership might not be explicitly taught in the New Testament, it does provide countless examples of believers' commitments to one another and the church. Therefore church membership is about a living commitment to one another and the church. This commitment is about a relationship that is established through a covenant between God and each other. Vintage Church believes in church membership because of necessity of supporting and caring for one another as the church serves Christ. By making a covenant with Vintage Church, one will commit to support the church, its pastors, and ultimately Jesus Christ. The partner covenant of Vintage Church may be found in appendix 2.

In order to become a Vintage Partner, one must complete the following steps. First of all, potential candidates must attend a connect dinner where they will meet the Vintage leadership and learn more about Vintage Church. An explanation of what it means to be a Vintage partner is also given at the connect dinner. No commitments are asked for at the connect dinner. The prayer and purpose of the connect dinner is to present information that would inspire prayer and consideration of being a Vintage

partner. At the end of the day, Vintage Church is praying that what unites Vintage Church will be a common calling on mission not a sales pitch at a dinner.

Following the connect dinner, the second step toward becoming a Vintage partner is to see people join a community group. It is impossible for one to become a Vintage partner without joining a community group. As stated earlier, the community groups are circles of relationships that encourage one another to live for Jesus. Community group leaders consistently throughout the year encourage Vintage Church attenders to become Vintage partners. It is in this environment where conversation about making this covenant is best heard and processed. Each community group leader is equipped to walk with someone who is interested in becoming a Vintage partner.

The last step in becoming a Vintage partner is making the commitment by agreeing with and signing the Vintage partner covenant above. This is a commitment of faithfulness to being part of a community group, attend gatherings, serve on a volunteer team, and financially give to Vintage Church. In order to complete the Vintage partner process, every partner must fill out the Vintage partner covenant, have it signed by their community group leader, and turn it in to one of the Vintage pastors.

Mission

When Vintage Church first began in 2008, it was given a very specific mission from God, the same mission that is found in God's Word for every church. This mission is the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), which unites all churches around the world. The four Gospels are a record of the Spirit-led ministry of Christ, and they set the stage for the continued Spirit-led ministry of those disciples who followed Christ and continue His mission to the ends of the earth. These followers of Christ are alive today as the church. The book of Acts then records the selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. The distinct features in the book of Acts are great stories of healings, salvations, deaths, relationships, etc. There are great speeches from early church leaders like Peter, Stephen, and Paul. There are also great journeys like the three

missionary journeys of Paul. A continuing cycle occurs in the book of Acts as believers share the Gospel, people are saved and baptized, the church multiplies, people are persecuted and face resistance, God intervenes, and the mission continues. Acts 1:8 is a key passage in the book of Acts as it introduces the mission of the church which is to be witnesses all over the world. What began with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is now a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit that continues today through Vintage Church.

The following is a summary of how we explain the mission of Vintage Church, which includes our values, strategy, and measures. It is really important for our church to stay militantly focused on what God has called us to do. This is a primary DNA of what has made Vintage Church a church planting church. In order for a church to be a church planting church there must be a united mission. From the very beginning, Vintage Church has desired to proclaim the glory of God through gospel multiplication. No matter if we are starting a new location, adding a staff member, going on a mission trip, launching a new community group, or planting a church, we will always make sure that everything fits within this vision framework.

Our mission statement is that Vintage Church exists for gospel multiplication. In a longer description of our mission statement we explain gospel multiplication in the following way: Vintage Church is committed to live the gospel, serve the city, and be the Church by multiplying individuals, community groups, and gatherings in New Orleans and beyond. This statement not only includes our mission but also our core values and methodology on how we will carry out this mission. The foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church is found in this mission statement. In order for Vintage Church to accomplish this mission, a three-fold strategy has been implemented. These three strategies are encouraged at every level of Vintage and is one of the reasons why Vintage has been so successful at being a church planting church.

Strategy 1: Individual expression. This strategy area is the launching pad & foundation of all mission through Vintage. Every person that is saved by the gospel is empowered by the gospel to be a witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is core to the gospel. Just as Christ came to the world and the church is called to go to others as well. In the first few years as a church, the Lord blessed Vintage with the influence and leadership of Jason Dukes who wrote the book *Live Sent*. The following excerpt from his book became a driving anthem as our church began:

Simply stated, we were made to live beyond ourselves. That's how humanity works. That's how love is demonstrated and how relationships happen. Too often, however, we live our lives "saved" in the "draft" box of life's inbox, inwardly living in the INbox instead of outwardly living in the OUTbox. Instead of actually denying ourselves and "taking up our cross" - this mission we were made for with a distinct message to carry into culture - we deny our mission, and the message written on our hearts is never "sent." Emails and letters were intended to be sent. Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Paul followed this teach by introducing a very picturesque and challenging metaphor in 2nd Corinthians 3. There, he defends the focus and authenticity and credibility of the message he delivered and the ministry he lived. He said that the people who received this message were now letters written by the Spirit of the living God. The implication - the church must be SENT, not just gathered. Letters from God into culture.¹⁰

Believers in Christ must follow Him daily. This means that Christians must grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18), live a life of holiness (1 Pet 1:14-16), serve God with the gifts (1 Cor 12:4-6), give and receive Scriptural correction, (2 Tim 3:16), and love God and people (Mark 12:29-31). When the church steps out individually with an ownership and a desire to be used by God, a movement begins that is unstoppable and decentralized. The gospel is being multiplied through the individuals of Vintage Church.

Strategy 2: Community Group expression. Community groups are an intimate group of people who encourage each other to become more like Jesus. One of the most important aspects of Jesus' ministry was the time He spent with the people He

¹⁰Jason Dukes, *Live Sent* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2011), 12.

loved. He ate meals with them, prayed with them, spoke the truth to them, and met their physical and spiritual needs. Acts 2:42-47 is the biblical guide for our community groups.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

These principles are connected to the Vintage Church core values. Vintage pursues truth in community groups by studying the bible (v. 42). Vintage pursues love in community groups by focusing on a relationship with God and each other (vv. 44, 46). Vintage pursues community in community groups by getting involved on mission in our city and world (vv. 45, 47). Vintage community groups can either be location or focus groups. Location groups are specific to a neighborhood or region. Focus groups are for specific studies and people. The gospel is being multiplied through the community groups of Vintage Church.

Strategy 3: Gathering expression. The New Testament presents that the church gathered for times of worship. The gatherings had both small and large expressions. Vintage Church has two different forms of gatherings within each region of New Orleans: corporate gatherings and group gatherings. Corporate gatherings are a time for the Vintage Church family and friends from all over a region to unite in a specific location to worship Jesus. Each gathering includes a time of fellowship, prayer, singing to God, and preaching from the Bible. Group gatherings happen within a region in order to unite for an extra time of worship (prayer gathering, Bible study, etc.), mission (working with our local outreach partners, churches, ministries, etc.), or networking (pool party, watching a sports game, hanging out in the city, etc.).

The gathering expression of the Vintage Church mission also includes launching new locations and church plants around the world. This mission will be

covered in more detail in the next chapter but it is important to note that whether Vintage is launching a new location or church plant, the same strategy applies. Our second location of Vintage Church was started because an individual multiplied community groups and eventually formed a gathering. That same leader eventually was sent out as an individual to plant a new church in another city. That same process and DNA has now multiplied the gospel in this new city. The gospel is being multiplied through the gatherings of Vintage Church.

There are so many incredible stories over the years of how this vision has multiplied the gospel. Each story has served to confirm that the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church has not only been taught but has also been received and implemented throughout the city of New Orleans and around the world. One specific story of a Vintage partner named Tamara serves as a great illustration of how Vintage Church has multiplied the gospel through individuals, community groups, and gatherings.

As Vintage began to teach this strategy, Tamara was led by God to volunteer her time at a local prison. She went specifically called to love on the families of those who family members had gone to prison. A few months before Christmas, Tamara was exposed to a need for adopting the children of these families in order to bless them with Christmas presents. As an individual, she went back to her community group and shared with them this ministry opportunity. The community group became very excited to get involved. When Tamara went back to this prison ministry she found out that the need was too large for her group to serve alone. Her community group leader then reached out to the Vintage Church staff with the need of adopting all of these children for Christmas. Much like the community group, the staff became extremely excited about this opportunity. Within a month Vintage Church rallied together and dedicated an entire Sunday to this outreach ministry. One individual on mission multiplied the gospel throughout Vintage Church and led a movement that resulted in many lives that were saved by the gospel.

As Vintage Church implements these strategies, we are always assessing our effectiveness. The desire of Vintage is to be most effective in making disciples of all nations and multiplying the gospel. In order to do this Vintage has created some measures of effectiveness for our Vintage partners. As stated previously and explained in further detail in the section on membership, a Vintage partner is a covenant member of Vintage Church. The following measures are another important part of the DNA of Vintage Church being a church planting church.

The first measure of success is that every Vintage partner should be pursuing Christ through the Spirit. Perfection will never be attained but a pursuit of Christ is possible. Vintage Church facilitates many different opportunities for pursuing Christ through Vintage. Instead of stating that a person has to reach a certain point of knowledge, holiness, giving, etc., Vintage affirms the fruit of the pursuit. Every Vintage partner should pursue Christ as an individual, with a community group, and united at gatherings in order to unpack the Bible, follow the Holy Spirit, and grow in Christ-likeness as they multiply the gospel in New Orleans and around the world.

The second measure of success is that every Vintage partner should be reflecting Christ through all relationships. A Vintage partner is one who is saved by the Gospel of Jesus. It is impossible to reflect Christ when Christ has not saved a person. Because every Vintage partner has a relationship with Christ, partners should reflect Christ in their relationship with God, the church, and the world. As the world looks at the Vintage Church family, the prayer of Vintage would be that the world would see Christ. Unfortunately, a lot of people in New Orleans have decided to reject Jesus not because Jesus, but because of people who have said that they love Jesus and aren't reflecting Jesus. This second measure is extremely important to our DNA.

The third measure of success is that every Vintage partner should be serving Christ through our team. Vintage Church partners with many great organizations and even other churches around the world. Every day Vintage Church is confronted needs in

New Orleans and around the world. In order to serve the world, Vintage continues to serve with these organizations. This partnership is important, but it is also the prayer for Vintage Church to be a united army of Christ-followers around a common vision as one local church. Jesus has called Vintage to unite as one local church that is connected with the global universal church in order to serve God and the world.

Ultimately the summarized mission statement of Vintage Church is that Vintage exists for gospel multiplication. The Gospel is the only thing that can save this world. The focus of Vintage Church has to be on the gospel. The reputation of Vintage Church in the world has to be the gospel. A lot of churches will agree with this focus but have unfortunately segmented how they present the gospel to the world. In accomplishing this mission holistically, Vintage Church is committed to showing the gospel, sharing the gospel, and defending the gospel. Showing the gospel involves being the hands and feet of Jesus to a hurting world. Sharing the gospel involves proclaiming the message of Jesus to a searching world. Defending the gospel involves engaging a searching world with the truth of Jesus. All three of these methods are important to the mission of Vintage Church and all three methods are encouraged to every individual, community group, and gathering.

In defense of this DNA, the values of truth, love, and community are expressed as missional statements. The core value of truth is described as “living the gospel.” Living encompasses every facet of one’s life. If Vintage were only a church that showed the gospel, Vintage could possibly get caught up in social justice movements and never share the truth. If Vintage were only a church that shared the gospel, Vintage could possibly start yelling at people on the corner of Bourbon Street instead of loving them. If Vintage were only a church that defended the gospel, Vintage would only hang out on a Seminary campus or at a Christian conference and never interact with the lost who are in need of a Savior.

Lesslie Newbigin in his work on missional engagement teaches about what it means to contextualize the gospel in every facet of our life. “The church needs to have an unwavering commitment as God’s people to the gospel, in the culture, as the church.”¹¹ Basically Newbigin is talking about a combination of our 3 core values. Our prayer is to be truth, love, and community. This mission is also spoken of in I Corinthians 9:19-23 by the apostle Paul. This passage is a primary Scripture for Vintage Church in describing the DNA of mission.

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Paul voluntarily became a servant for the good of others that he wanted to win for Christ. As a Jew that was primarily called to reach the Gentiles, he never lost a passion for his own people. Before Christ saved him, he claimed to be faultless according to his own account in Philippians 3 with regard to legalistic righteousness. When Jesus changed Paul he became a new man (2 Cor 5:17). Everything that he had placed his faith in was now considered loss.

Because of this grace, Paul was willing to become whatever in the gospel in order that all people might come to know Jesus. He was willing to abandon his past boundaries of religion in order to win the Gentiles to Christ. Paul became weak to win the weak. Economically Paul walked this talk. Although Paul belonged to the upper class of society, he voluntarily became a tent-maker in order to relate to all people. Paul adapted himself to different situations in every culture for the sake of gospel. He was convinced that as he preached the gospel, God would open the hearts all people. As he preached,

¹¹Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 45.

counseled, labored, suffered, and encouraged he had an understanding that God would use him to draw people to God. However, Paul understood that the actual work of salvation belonged primarily to God. That is why Paul was so ambitious. He knew the assignment, he was amped up by the possibilities, and he trusted the victory despite the risk.

Because of Paul's testimony of multiplication, Vintage has recognized that people are in need of Jesus, the gospel is alive and is the answer to that need, and we are called to multiply as well. Vintage is driven to become all things to all people that by all means people might be saved. There are three main mission elements that are found in I Corinthians 9:19-23: adapt, link, and labor (ALL).

Adapting is the "becoming all things" part of the mission. This isn't just a change of some superficial part of society, even though it has validity. Adapting is an inner change of one's way and viewpoint of life. In the book of Luke are amazing stories of Jesus travelling from town to town seek out the lost. Jesus was the ultimate example of adapting as he came and dwelt among the world. Adapting is an absolutely essential part of the multiplication of Vintage Church.

Linking is the "to all people" part of this mission. This forces the church beyond normal relationships and even culture. God sees his most cherished creation that chose to sin against him. He sees the scars in his Son's hands as a picture of the love for this creation. He sees all people from all over the world worshipping and being with him for all eternity. There is no discrimination in the gospel (Gal 3:28 – neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female) and Vintage Church is called to link to all for the mission of gospel multiplication.

Laboring is the "by all means" part of this mission. This takes a lot of work and sacrifice. Most of people functioned only in their comfort zones but God has called the church out as missionaries into the world with the saving message of the gospel. God

is asking for the church to sacrifice time and resources, and to even deny their own life in order that all people will experience the gospel.

Vintage Church is compelled by this mission of gospel multiplication to become all things (adapt), to all people (link), by all means (labor). In following the patterns of the New Testament church, Vintage Church is committed carry out this mission by multiplying the gospel through “individuals, community groups, and gatherings in New Orleans and beyond.” The early church would multiply in a number of different places as they advanced the gospel. They would multiply in homes, throughout a city and region, and then eventually toward the ends of the earth. As the church would multiply the gospel they would establish new churches that would continue to serve locally and support globally the gospel mission.

All of these examples confirm the call upon Vintage Church and the church around the world to take the gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After launching in 2008, Vintage Church has multiplied the gospel in many different ways and in many different locations. The future calling and focus of Vintage Church is to continue to multiply throughout New Orleans, throughout our country, and into the ends of the earth. Vintage is praying and believing that God will continue to bless the advancement of His kingdom through this mission.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the DNA of Vintage Church. The unique statement of beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission of Vintage Church combined with the biblical foundation of being a church planting church is what has united Vintage Church to become a church planting church. Church planting is a challenging vision because it is a decentralized mission. Because of this challenge it is an absolute necessity that Vintage Church and any church to have a united foundation and DNA of church planting. As Vintage continues on this mission, Vintage desires to celebrate the sending capacity around the world as mush as the gathering capacity in New Orleans. In order for this

happen and be effective, the unity around our biblical foundation of the church and church planting alongside the unity around the DNA of Vintage Church has to remain as the vision framework of the movement. Within that framework, Vintage Church has established a methodology of how Vintage will continue to unite, equip, and multiply church plants all over the world. Chapter 4 will take a more in-depth look at this methodology.

CHAPTER 4
THE METHODOLOGY OF VINTAGE CHURCH
AS A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH

Introduction

The methodology of Vintage Church as a church planting church is the following three strategies: unite, equip, and multiply. Chapter two explained the biblical foundation of the church and church planting that unites Vintage Church. Chapter three explained the statement of beliefs, leadership, mission, and membership that unites Vintage Church. In this chapter, the second and third strategies will be explained in more detail.

Once again the equipping and multiplication strategy of Vintage Church can only be possible if there is unity in calling and mission. Over the years, many people and even future church leaders have not continued their ministry partnership with Vintage Church because of a difference in beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission. Vintage Church does not desire to promote that their foundational unity is a superior unity than other churches. Vintage believes that the Lord is using multiple churches with multiple strategies all over the world. Vintage Church is thankful to partner with many different churches, denominations, and networks from all over the world. However, in order to keep our movement healthy and united, Vintage has implemented a prioritized a united foundation and DNA. This uncompromising commitment goes beyond the beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission to even how Vintage equips and multiplies individuals, community groups, gatherings, and even church plants. The hope and prayer of Vintage is to remain united around these strategies into the future in order to keep multiplying the gospel all over the world.

For the specific goals that have been stated in this project, I will primarily focus on how Vintage Church equips and multiplies church planters and church plants. Everything that Vintage Church has implemented into our vision framework can apply to any Vintage partner. For example, a community group leader will apply the same principles that will be posted in this chapter as they equip a future leader to multiply another group. Or a volunteer team leader could apply these principles as they equip a new leader to multiply a new volunteer team. Because of the simplicity and consistency of our methodology, the church planting and gospel multiplication potential at Vintage Church is exponentially strong. Vintage believes that every individual, community group, or gathering could potentially plant a new church.

Equip

In order for Vintage Church to establish a solid equipping ministry, the Vintage Church staff that leads the equipping ministry must remain united around a common vision. The Vintage staff includes all leaders at Vintage Church that serve in leadership under the office of elder and deacon. In order to lead our church in the mission, Vintage has implemented a staff guideline called the Vintage Church staff v-code. This guideline helps to focus the leadership of Vintage Church on fulfilling the mission of gospel multiplication.

The first staff v-code is to be Spirit-led. Being Spirit-led keeps the staff united around our first core value of truth, which is described as living the gospel. This involves a focus upon Scripture, prayer, God inspired vision, and spiritual gifts that empowers and strengthens the staff. The second staff v-code is to be relationship-driven. Being relationship-driven keeps the staff united around the second core value of love, which is described as serving the city. This involves a focus upon being flexible, accountable, compassionate, teachable, and enjoyable. The third staff v-code is to be team-focused. Being team-focused keeps the staff united around the third core value of community,

which is described as being the church. This involves a focus upon being family, loyal, unselfish, excellent, and productive.

Whether a Vintage partner serves as a community group leader, volunteer team leader, staff member, pastor, or even a church planting resident the requirement is that you must be militantly devoted to the staff v-code. This v-code is reinforced to every leader because Vintage Church has created a standard leadership assimilation process that applies to every leader at all levels of the organization. This is the base assimilation process that eventually applies to a prospective church planter. There are four stages to the Vintage Church leadership assimilation process: assessment, recognition, training, and enlistment. This process was inspired by the first leadership multiplication experience as Vintage Church was planted. The following story will help to gain an understanding of how this process was organically implemented.

When Vintage Church was meeting in my home as a small group of people, our attendance began to outgrow our home. Immediately, I began this process. As stated before, I did not have clarity in regards to the points and structure of this process until later but the principles were applied. I immediately (1) assessed my group to establish two leaders that I would eventually send out to start two new community groups. My assessment included a basic observation of each of these leaders' commitment and ability. After this assessment, I reached out to (2) recognize their leadership potential and asked if those leaders would consider being sent out as a leader. As part of the recognition phase, we began to discuss the qualifications and responsibilities of a community group leader. Time was also spent time recognizing whether or not God had called them to be a leader. Once this calling was confirmed, the process of (3) training began. Training included reading materials as well as receiving some opportunities to lead while the group was still together. Instead of sending out these leaders without some leadership experience, I multiplied the group under one roof into three groups for a few weeks. The group would rally together for a meal and for prayer at first and then multiply

into three groups for bible study and discussion. This gave my two leaders the opportunity to lead while also giving me the opportunity to see them lead and give them some constructive training in regards to their ability. Once they had established a solid understanding of their calling and responsibility on top of being trained and equipped to lead, the process of (4) enlistment was implemented. In order for the enlistment of two new community group leaders to be most effective, I not only prepared the leaders but also the church for this multiplication. After a couple of weeks after I announced the details of the new leaders and locations, the group celebrated the launch of two new groups in two new locations. This multiplication happened within three months of the beginning of Vintage Church and by the time Vintage publicly launched in our seventh month the groups had multiplied from three groups to seven. The Vintage community groups continued to multiply because of a leadership assimilation process that was celebrated as the foundation and DNA of our church.

Before I share about these four phases in more details, it is important to note that I truly believe that it is impossible for an aspiring church planter to truly be equipped to multiply as church planter without the guidance of a local church. Churches planting churches is the most effective way to plant. Networks, denominations, church planting organizations can be a great assistance to the church planting process but they should never work outside of the base and foundation of the local church. The wisdom that Vintage Church shares throughout this project is by no means an exclusive or superior system. However, this system is strong because it is grounded in God's Word and administered through a local church that has recently been planted. This combination of wisdom is an extremely helpful and effective process for future church planters.

In order to understand this process specifically for a future church planter, here is a more extensive breakdown of these four phases.

Assessment

There are so many examples in Scripture of God using people who were not equipped for the task that the Lord had given them. Consider the story of Moses. He could hardly talk and yet the Lord called him to go to Egypt and declare to Pharaoh that he should let the people of Israel go. Most of the disciples were uneducated, simple men and yet Jesus chose them to launch His church. My story of planting Vintage is a story of me being placed in a position where I felt completely overwhelmed. I had never been a pastor or planted a church and yet God called me to start Vintage Church. The assessment phase can be a challenging phase because most people are called by God to do things that are beyond ability. In fact, I believe that Jesus wants to keep placing his future leaders in a position where they have to desperately lean upon him at every stage of their ministry. God desires for His glory to be proclaimed above all. Why would he give anyone an assignment where they would receive all the glory?

There are many assessments for church planting today. The assessments from the SEND Network, the Acts 29 Network, Redeemer Church City to City Network, the New Thing Network, and the Summit Church Network are producing some quality church planters and churches. One challenge of any assessment process is that an assessment can immediately discount someone based upon an evaluation of one's ability. God can call a leader into an overwhelming task regardless of their ability. However, there are also some foundational attributes that a future church planter should have in their past and present that will help a church planter remain faithful to God's call upon their life. During the assessment phase, Vintage Church is looking for someone with the following characteristics: faith, family, faithfulness, and fruit.

Faith speaks to the future church planter's risk taking. I know that ultimately faith in Jesus is no risk at all. Jesus is completely victorious and the Christian life is blessed to serve him knowing that in Christ is always victorious. However, faith needs to be assessed for a future church planter. First of all, has this person placed their faith in Jesus Christ? One can never plant a church for Jesus without Jesus. For some this might

seem strange but unfortunately I have had enough experiences in ministry to never take this for granted. Because of the new popularity and even support around church planting, many are choosing this as a career move without even having a genuine relationship with Jesus. Faith can also speak to the one who knows Jesus. What has he done in his life that reflects a leap of faith? What mission trips, career moves, etc. has he done? The last consideration around faith is their initial pursuit of wanting to answer God's call upon their life to plant a church. Future church planters typically do not wait for someone to tell them to plant a church, they aspire and initiate because of their call. If I am spending more time selling or persuading them to plant then they have most likely not received a call to plant. Church planting requires amazing faith.

Family speaks to the future church planter's home. Before beginning to train a church planter I want to spend time in his home. If he has a wife and even kids, what is their home situation like? Is there uncontrollable chaos? Is his family united around this calling? Will they be able to handle a cheaper lifestyle with very little consistency and structure? Do they love each other? Scripture is very direct about it being impossible to lead the church if one cannot lead the home. Sadly, I have seen too many church planters in my life leave the ministry because of their home.

Faithfulness speaks to the future church planter's track record. As you hear about his journey with the Lord is faithfulness a strong attribute? What has he been a part of in his past where he has shown perseverance, loyalty, and consistency? Being a church planter is one of the most challenging assignments that you can receive in ministry. Everything ministry of this new church plant has to be built and this takes a long time. If one has a track record of quitting quickly, one most likely will not survive as a church planter. Faithfulness can also apply to his relationships. As you assess his life, has he been faithful to his family and friends or have their been quick relationships filled with conflict and unfaithfulness.

Fruit speaks to the future church planter's productivity. What has he done? I find it extremely difficult to ever support an aspiring church planter if he has never led anyone to Christ or if he has never led a group and seen that group grow and multiply. Does this person have disciples who are now making disciples? Do people follow him and listen to him? Has he led a ministry and has he ever preached? I also find it very difficult to support an aspiring church planter who has never served a local church. How can someone expect to lead the church if they haven't served the church? Talk is cheap and anyone today can have a desire to plant a church. This is not always the case, but a lot of time the past will predict the future.

It is extremely difficult to draw conclusions about these four assessments in a short amount of time. Vintage Church has created an incredible farm system of leadership that gives aspiring leaders opportunities to lead. A non-negotiable for someone who desires to plant a church with Vintage Church is that they become a faithful Vintage partner. Most of our church planters have come from within our church and served faithfully for a few years. One of our church planters came from another church but we received an affirmation of faithfulness at his previous church. Vintage Church would never support an aspiring church planter who has never served faithfully at a local church. The length of time of the assessment phase and all the other phases for that matter are under the pastoral leadership of Vintage Church.

Recognition

Once a future church planter has displayed faith, family, faithfulness, and fruit, the recognition phase of the Vintage equipping process begins. The recognition phase is exactly what the title describes. During this phase, a future church planter will walk through an equipping process that will help him recognize whether or not he has been called to plant a church. For some church planter assessment, they combine this and the training program. I have learned through the implementation of this process that it is important to wait on the training until there is complete clarity of the 4 C's: calling,

character, competency, capacity. If you begin to train someone who does not have this clarity, the training will get scattered, be unproductive, and there is a greater risk of not finishing. I have also begun the process of recognition with a few aspiring church planters who realized that the calling, character, competency, and capacity was not there. When it is clear that a future church planter is not ready, an overseeing pastor has to be willing to boldly remove, stop, or slow down the process. I know that I have some aspiring church planters that are upset with me to this day. I can rest with peace in know that because most of them have still not planted a church, I might have possibly saved their family from a lot of heartache and pain. Establishing clarity around the 4 C's is of utmost importance. As it was stated earlier, the timing of the recognition phase is at the discretion of the pastoral leadership of Vintage Church.

Calling is something that is completely subjective between the future church planter and God. At the core, I could not fully describe my calling to plant a church in New Orleans. It was something that God placed upon my heart. However, there were also some things that happened in my life to affirm this calling. In reflection to the four phases of assessment, I had experienced a confirmation of all of them. Specifically, I had already been in ministry for four years and started four different ministries. When Hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans, my life was called to the city of New Orleans to rebuild the city but I had no idea that one day I would plant a new church. That came after years of post-Katrina ministry where I was leading people to Jesus. Through this ministry and my time in the Word, the Lord called me to start a new church. Every calling in my life has been unique so I am fully aware that this is almost impossible to evaluate through a system. However, I do believe that there are some great resources, life experiences, and the Word of God that will give you a confirmation of call.

One of the newest and most clear resources on determining calling is from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary called *The Call To Ministry*. This workbook is filled with contributions from R. Albert Mohler Jr., Donald S. Whitney, and Daniel S.

Dumas. The two overarching themes that are unpacked in this resource are the internal call and the external call. This resource provides different quotes, teachings, and even questions for process through these two themes. For those aspiring church planters there is even a section to clarify a calling to plant a church. Jim Stitzinger, who is the director of the Bevin Center for Missions Mobilization, describes the church planter's call as a combination of: exemplary character, entrepreneurial capability, earnest convictions, endurance capacity, evangelistic compulsion, equipping competence, effective communication, and epic confidence.¹ Another great resource that Vintage Church recommends to future church planters about calling is Darrin Patrick's book *Church Planter*. Patrick unpacks the foundation elements of a church planter: the man, the message, and the mission.²

Character is about recognizing the qualifications of being an elder. The top requirement for any position in ministry should be godly character, but especially for a church planter. A church planter is immediately placed into a position of being a pastor of a church. This can be extremely dangerous if an aspiring church planter hasn't recognized the qualifications of being an elder. For the future church planters that have never gone through an elder process, Vintage Church walks them through a 13-week study in Alexander Strauch's book on *Biblical Eldership*. This book helps to teach the qualifications of being an elder.

When we started Vintage Church I sought out networks and organizations that could assist me in leading this new church plant. A friend of mine introduced me to Darrin Patrick, Lead Pastor of Journey Church and Vice President of the Acts 29 Network. My wife and I decided to go through their assessment process even though

¹Jim Stitzinger, quoted in R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Donald S. Whitney, and Daniel S. Dumas, *The Call To Ministry* (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2013), 115.

²Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

Vintage Church had already started. The assessment process became one of the most impactful times for my life and my marriage at the time. Acts 29 walked me through the following qualifications in 2009 and I've been walking future pastors and church planters at Vintage Church through a similar process ever since. The following is a summary from the Acts 29 Assessment of the qualifications of eldership.

The elder qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are virtually identical and are the base minimal criteria that should be expected of any man being considered for eldership. Therefore, the lead planter must at least meet these minimal criteria if he hopes to plant a church that honors God and is blessed by the Holy Spirit. The following criteria are taken from 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The first criterion focuses on a relationship to God. A lead planter must be a man (masculine leader, not a female), above reproach (without any character defect), able to teach (effective Bible communicator), and not a new convert (mature Christian). The second criterion focuses on a relationship to family. A lead planter must be a husband of one wife (one woman man, sexually pure), has obedient children (successful father), and manages family well (provides for, leads, organizes, loves). The third criterion focuses on a relationship to self. A lead planter must be temperate (mentally and emotionally stable), self-controlled (disciplined life of sound decision-making), not given to drunkenness (without addictions), and not a lover of money (financially content and upright). The last criterion focuses on a relationship to others. A lead planter must be respectable (worth following and imitating), hospitable (welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism), not violent (even-tempered), gentle (kind, gracious, loving), not contentious (peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive), and a good reputation with outsiders (respected by non-Christians).

Competency is about recognizing the specific responsibilities and spiritual gifts of a church planter. Not every church planter has to look or act the same, but there are some foundational characteristics and responsibilities that are needed in order to plant a church. Most church planting denominations and networks have adapted some form of

Charles Ridley's Essential Characteristics of an Effective Church Planter.³ By walking through these thirteen essential characteristics a future church planter will be able to recognize their competency for church planting (see appendix 3).

Capacity is about recognizing the “what,” “where,” and “when” of the new church plant. Establishing these final questions helps to solidify the next phase of training. By recognizing these questions a church planting mentor or pastor can make the training experience more custom to the needs that were presented in the assessment and recognition phase. The sequence of this process adds to the effectiveness of the training.

What? The answer to this is connected to a future church planters specific function. I do believe that too many guys are planting as lead pastors when they should instead be a supporting staff on a church planting team. I know that I would not have made it over the last seven years without a strong group of support church planters around me. For those who are affirmed as lead planters, a process of working on strengths and weakness will begin to happen during the training phase.

Where? The answer to this is connected with the future location of the church plant. Most people today are being encouraged to plant a church in the city, however I believe that you should plant a church where God has broken your heart. I love to travel all over the world and even on mission trips in other cities I can feel a difference between the way my heart breaks for the city of New Orleans compared to other cities. That tug on your heart will help you to determine where God is calling you. There is a need to preach the Gospel everywhere. Never allow some statistic or speech to compel you to go anywhere. God can use those, but ultimately one must listen to Jesus and go where He says to go. Once again, by answering this question training will be more efficient.

When? The answer to this is really important as well. I share with almost every aspiring church planter that I know to slow down. If I could travel back in time with the

³Charles R. Ridley and Tweed Moore, *Evaluating and Reporting* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 2000), 130-42.

wisdom that I have now, I would have loved the opportunity to train under the leadership of an older church planter for at least two years before planting a church. I had never planted a church and because of that my first three to five years were a lot of trial and error. It took me a while to figure out my leadership philosophy, my preaching rhythm, my core beliefs, how to organize my staff, and many other important things. For a lot of guys, the question of when is a huge question. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to really serve our church planters who have respected the timetable that the Vintage leadership has put in place. For those who are moving into a new city, Vintage Church requires at least one year of training in that new city before a church planter can begin implement ministry plans for their new church. For example, our church planter that was sent to New York City is spending his first year in the city walking through a church planting assessment with multiple churches and organizations.

Training

After an extensive time of assessment and recognition, a future church planter can begin training. This training phase is a custom designed time of equipping. For example, when an elder candidate arrives at the training phase that elder has already confirmed the specific function that they will serve in. A future elder that has confirmed their calling to serve as the Vintage Church student pastor will begin a season of training that will specifically prepare him for that role as an elder. A future church planting candidate will begin training according to what was determined in the previous time of assessment and recognition. Some of what is taught in the training phase applies to all potential staff members, elders, and even church planters. The first methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church is that Vintage Church remains united. There are certain principles that apply at any position of leadership within our church.

Another unique element of the training phase is an application of what a candidate will learn through some hands on experience. Those who reach the training phase will get more opportunities to lead. When Vintage has given our church plant

residents opportunities to lead, there is always a strategic teaching of multiplication. This process was similar to how Jesus taught his disciples. After going out on mission with his disciples watching him, he then released them to go and love the world like he had. As the mentor I want to do first, and the future church planter must watch. Secondly, I am going to do and he will do alongside me. Thirdly, I will watch and he will do. Fourthly, he will do and he will then get someone else to watch him with the purpose of multiplication. With this implemented process at Vintage Church, we have witnessed this happen with ministries and even future church planters. Our current church planter that just moved to New York City had a major impact on our current church planting resident who will be going to Denver.

The training phase has multiple levels of residency at Vintage Church. A first level of residency happens without a program at Vintage Church. This residency also happens at all levels of Vintage Church. For example, a volunteer leader will take a future volunteer leader through a residency process. The four phases of assessment, recognition, training, and enlistment apply. Requirement for this level is faithfulness as a Vintage Partner.

The second level residency is applied to those who have a specific need for training to begin for a specific ministry position. The same four-phase process applies at every level and at any position of this residency. The second level residency is led by the Vintage equipping pastor and is primarily for potential staff that will be serving in the office of deacon. Multiple pastors with the purpose of equipping future pastors of Vintage Church lead the third level residency. The fourth level of residency is primarily led by me and is for potential church planters. Future church planters that are assimilated into leadership at Vintage Church are required to complete the second level residency. For aspiring church planters that are sent to Vintage Church for residency, there is a requirement of faithfulness in ministry and training at a previous church. The goal for each level of residency is a one-year process. A current year two and three residency

program is custom built for the specific needs of an aspiring church planter. A level three residency is the custom program for a future church planter that will be planting in Denver (see appendix 4).

Enlistment

The enlistment phase of our methodology connects Vintage Church with the third and final strategy: multiply. A more detailed explanation of this strategy will be presented in the next section. The hope of every enlistment is that the process would multiply again with new exciting relationships and leaders. The greatest prayer of Vintage is that through this methodology leaders would unite, equip, and multiply more and more people who receive salvation in Jesus. For a church planting resident, this is a time of celebration as they are being sent to plant a new work in a new part of the world. I am so thankful that Vintage Church has had the privilege of sending church planters to San Antonio, Des Moines, New York City, New Orleans, and Denver coming this year. Vintage Church is continuing to believe that the enlistment of individuals, community groups, gatherings, and new churches around New Orleans and the world will continue to be a primary celebration of Vintage Church.

Multiply

The church in Jerusalem had a massive growth issue and yet they remained as one church. They went from 120 to thousands in one week. Despite this growth challenge and persecution this new church remained as one church and rallied around the apostles teaching. There wasn't a realistic way for the church to gather in one location, so they became a multi-site church spreading out in homes and in smaller gatherings in temple courts or Solomon's porch as it says in Acts 2:44 and 5:12. This mega-church equipped more leaders and got organized in Acts 6 when the people and their needs began to get overwhelming. Eventually this movement spread from Jerusalem into the surrounding region and churches began to get planted as the gospel continued to spread.

Multiplication is part of the foundational DNA of every church no matter if one is talking about a house church, the city church, the regional church, or the universal church. Because of this, Vintage Church has existed in multiple locations for the purpose of reaching the Greater New Orleans area and the world. This vision is accomplished through being multi-site church in New Orleans as well as planting churches in New Orleans and around the world. We believe that one of the most strategic ways for us to share the gospel is to launch new locations all over New Orleans. We are called as missionaries to New Orleans that reach out to the neighbors in each region of the city. Multiplying locations and churches involves multiplying local individuals, community groups, and gatherings in order to expand the reach of Vintage into all the different areas of our city, region, and the world.

Thanks in large part to the work of the Spirit in each and every one of our Vintage partners, the name “Vintage Church” means something in New Orleans. The current Vintage partners live all over New Orleans and many more people in various parts of the region are reachable by Vintage Church. Because of this truth, Vintage will continue to be a church that embodies the passion of becoming all things to all people with the gospel in any neighborhood that it reaches.

Our methodology behind multiplying is expressed in our mission statement of gospel multiplication. Vintage Church is committed to our core values of living the gospel (truth), loving the city (love), and being the church (community) by multiplying individuals, community groups, and gatherings throughout New Orleans and around the world.

Locations

In order for a new location to form Vintage believes that there must be a call from God, a location leader or pastor, multiple Vintage partners and community groups in that region, and the established DNA. The current Vintage locations serve as the equipping and launching centers around their region. Each Vintage location will share the

statement of beliefs, mission and values, website and branding, executive eldership, bank account, gathering formats, core ministry divisions, and ministry strategy. The location differences are the unique location staff, facility and aesthetics, music and media arts, and special ministries and events.

Vintage believes that gospel multiplication is the most effective way to accomplish growth, nearby Vintage partners being the church, and nearby Vintage guests experiencing the church. In order to be a good steward of our resources and protect our DNA, Vintage will send out staff leadership and resources in order to launch these locations. Each new location will also send a strong team of Vintage partners and leaders so that the new location will already be equipped with the Vintage DNA and will serve as the core team for the new location.

According to the convictions of the Vintage leadership, planting a new location is of equal value to planting a new church. Strategically, we feel that planting new locations around New Orleans is an effective way for Vintage to reach a ton of people for Jesus. However, the leadership of Vintage Church would never hesitate if God ever called Vintage to send out a church planter and team instead of a new location pastor. This issue isn't an either/or issue; it is a both/and issue for Vintage Church. Vintage will continue to passionately pursuing both under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God is certainly using both to make disciples all over New Orleans and the world.

Church Plants

Vintage Church is passionate about church planting and Vintage is praying that many church planters will be equipped and sent out all over the world. This passion is in our church DNA and it is reflected in our budget, the amount of time we spend training planters, holding classes, accepting and training residents, taking mission trips, and coaching future planters. As shared in the first chapter, Vintage Church has already sent out church planters around the country and around the world and Vintage desires to continue to do so much more. New Orleans could use hundreds of new church plants that

are committed to proclaiming the gospel. Church planting is all about impacting people. When praying for an impact on a city, church planting is one of the most effective ways to accomplish this mission.

Because of the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church, God called Vintage to launch the Gx Network. This network was formed because Vintage is called to plant churches. We believe the local church is the means by which Jesus is bringing his kingdom to earth. The focus of this church planting strategy is to plant healthy churches that will start more healthy churches. These healthy churches will be a key component for church multiplication.

The Gx Network was also formed because we love being a part of church planting movements. Church planting movements are composed of multiple churches and church planters that want to experience unity, equipping, and multiplication. Simply put, this network has been formed because Vintage Church is in the multiplying process of sending out a fifth church plant in seven years and Vintage believes that this is the beginning of a church planting movement. Vintage was already praying, giving, and going to each of these churches and I was already spending a lot of time serving these new churches as they have launched these new works. The Gx Network has become an effective way for Vintage to be good stewards of this amazing ministry of being a church planting church. Vintage is also praying that through the Gx Network all of our churches would unite, equip, and multiply as church planting churches as well. The term “Gx” has been a missional term for Vintage Church as it recognizes our mission statement. The “G” stands for the gospel and the “x” stands for gospel multiplication. Vintage Church exists for gospel multiplication. As we have launched the Gx Network, Vintage is praying for gospel multiplication through this network around the world.

In the final chapter of this project, I will present a narrative of how this network has already begun to make an impact in the lives of each of these new church plants. This new network is empowering us to unite, equip, and multiply (see appendix 5).

Conclusion

Through the simple strategy to unite, equip, and multiply, Vintage Church has become a church planting church. The potential for Vintage Church to keep multiplying the gospel is limitless because of an established foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church. As Vintage Church has already planted other churches, the Gx Network has been created in order to serve as a catalytic movement of churches that will also unite, equip, and multiply new churches all over the world.

CHAPTER 5

A NARRATIVE OF VINTAGE CHURCH AS A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH

Introduction

As a result of the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church, Vintage Church has begun to plant churches. In chapter one, I summarized the journey of Vintage from planting a church in 2008 to launching a church planting church network in 2016. As stated in chapter two of this project, the mission of church planting unites the mission. Throughout the book of Acts, the apostle Paul works alongside many different church planters and leaders that helped to not only accomplish the mission. These relationships also served to confirm his calling from God. Paul and his coworkers participated in a partnership that helped to advance the gospel all over the world through church planting. He partnered with Timothy in Lystra, with Gaius in Derve, with Aristarchus and Secundus in Thessalonica, with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, with Apollos in Ephesus, and with many others.

A dream from the Lord is a fantasy alone but can be a reality with others. The Lord designed his mission to be accomplished in community as the church. One of the many confirmations of this vision of gospel multiplication from God of being a church planting church has been the actually churches that Vintage has had the blessing of planting. Vintage Church has been so excited to send and also serve the Lord alongside churches in cities like San Antonio, Des Moines, New Orleans, New York City, and in the near future Denver. Vintage Church believes that this is just the beginning. This relationship and partnership in the gospel through the Gx Network is a confirmation of this vision of being a church planting church.

In order to truly understand the impact that a church planting church can have on other churches, I asked for the five church planters in the Gx Network to answer four questions about their church planting experience with Vintage Church: (1) How did God call you to plant a new church? (2) What ways has Vintage Church equipped you with this mission? (3) What methodology from Vintage Church will you implement in your church in order to be a church planting church? (4) How will the formation of the Gx Network serve you and your church?

**Church Plant 1:
The Well Community Church, San Antonio,
Church Planter: Jonathan Griffin**

How Did God Call You to Plant a New Church?

God used a number of things to call me to plant a new church, but Pastor Rob and Vintage Church were an integral part in helping me discern the call. There was a time when I did not think that the world was in need of “new church starts.” I was of the opinion that there were plenty of dead or dying churches in need of new pastors that there was no need for a new church. While attending seminary in New Orleans, I felt most drawn to attend Vintage Church and quickly saw that Pastor Rob was passionate about planting the Gospel and he helped me see the need for new churches. I felt burdened to plant and when I brought that to Pastor Rob he allowed me to learn from him and to lead in different places within the young church plant. I fell in love with planting the Gospel and seeing people in a community come to know Jesus through a new church start. It was through these many different circumstances and a lot of prayer that God called us to plant the Gospel in San Antonio.

What Ways Has Vintage Church Equipped You with This Mission?

God has used Vintage Church to equip me most in the areas where I am weakest. I struggle with the fine details of organization in leading the local church. God

has used Pastor Rob and Vintage Church to help mold some of the systems and organization of The Well. Another way God has used Vintage Church is through generous giving. The Well would not have made it in our first year if Vintage Church would not have believed in us enough to generously give The Well \$25,000. Vintage Church has also equipped me through consistent advice and general counsel. Much like a “big brother” or “father figure” in planting, Vintage Church has 7 years of experience on us and we love learning from all that God has brought them through.

What Methodology from Vintage Church Will You Implement in Your Church in Order to Be a Church Planting Church?

We plan on implementing the three main things from the methodology of Vintage Church. First, the preaching of God’s Word that is contextualized for the city that God has called us to reach and contending for the Gospel in our community. We love the expositional preaching of God’s Word and want to continue that legacy. Second, community groups as the “backbone” of our church. From the very beginning Pastor Rob would say that “our CGs are the backbone of our church.” We believe that methodology begins with a group of people on mission together and ends in deep community for that group. Vintage Church has displayed a great community group system and we want to pattern ourselves in that same manner. Finally, we want to reach and gather as many people as possible in order to rally those people to give generously to planting churches all around the world.

How Will the Formation of The Gx Network Serve You and Your Church?

One of the most powerful ways the Gx Network is serving me is through the mentorship relationship and peer group God has provided through this network. It is extremely helpful to have a group of planters that are on the ground experiencing some of the same struggles and hardships I do. I’m lonely, maybe the most lonely I have personally been, leading the church. With the Gx Network, God has provided a group of

men who understand the loneliness and are able to coach me through some of the tough times. It will serve our church in many ways but the most helpful I believe is through the co-learning environment opportunities that the Network is providing. The Well now has a place where my Creative Arts Director can learn together with other Creative Arts Directors in a small cohort-type learning space. Also, we have the ability to share resources, at the current age of The Well we are learning that it helps to share the financial burden and it helps to share resources with other like-minded churches. I am thankful for Pastor Rob and Vintage Church for the vision and formation of the Gx Network.

**Church Plant 2: Vertical Church, Des Moines,
Church Planter: Matthew O’Mealey**

**How Did God Call You to
Plant a New Church?**

When moving to New Orleans to start seminary I wasn’t sure what God was calling us to, but church planting was for sure far from my mind. I wasn’t just unfamiliar with it, but had not seen it modeled well or had a healthy understanding of God’s plan for Gospel multiplication through reproducing the church body as a whole besides just through individual discipleship.

As I finally approached graduation with my M.Div, I had to really dig into what God had been calling me towards. In His plan, our first neighbors in NOLA were Vintage leadership and they invited us to some of the preview gatherings where we knew we had found our home as well as where God would grow us both in immeasurable ways as we learned and served there. So looking back on that (among many other things), it became apparent God was preparing us to be involved in, if not leading in church planting as I graduated. As we pursued that call more I began to see God was pushing me to pastoral leadership in church planting, and that it would be in an important place that was in need of new churches, which Des Moines is as it grows quickly in size and prominence.

What Ways Has Vintage Church Equipped You with This Mission?

Being a part of leadership in various stages, and enjoying the real camaraderie and discipleship was a huge help. We can't do anything in ministry by ourselves very well. Vintage, though not always perfect in this, always stressed the importance and biblical necessity of accountability and friendship within the body and especially its leadership. This was another thing I hadn't seen modeled well, so it was an eye opening lesson and a thing I miss about Vintage, and pray God will grow well into in any new ministries we create now and in the future. They also gave me room to grow and flex my leadership muscles. I used to not be well equipped to facilitate small groups but as I was given more responsibility, feedback, and resources, it became a favorite part of my ministry. I still have so much to learn, but being given the space to grow and mess up and try things was invaluable.

What Methodology from Vintage Church Will You Implement in Your Church in Order to Be a Church Planting Church?

The notion that all things really lead towards Gospel multiplication as we disciple those God has put in our circles to pour into. As people come to faith, groups grow, and leaders are trained up and equipped, God will multiply His church. So for instance, in small groups even in the beginning stages of starting groups, it's made known that as we grow we multiply, and if possible already having other co-leaders and apprentices in place and given responsibility and opportunity to lead, so when groups grow over capacity it's a natural flow for those already in active leadership to continue leading but take on their own portion of the group and be sent out, and so on...

How Will the Formation of The Gx Network Serve You and Your Church?

There's the obvious of financial and prayer support that new churches and pastors desperately need. But I think the bigger positive that the Gx Network will facilitate is that camaraderie and accountability that has always been in Vintage's DNA,

and knowing that there's others, whom you know personally and are in regular contact with, who are praying for you and understand what you're going through. Also Gx will bring opportunity to serve in a bigger mission, such as overseas and in the various Gx plant cities, that new churches wouldn't necessarily get a chance to be a part of reaching with the Gospel on their own.

Church Plant 3: Life Church, Algiers-New Orleans, Church Planter: Ryan Rice

How Did God Call You to Plant a New Church?

In 2008 my wife and I began praying about God's direction for our lives. After several months of praying the Lord began to not only direct our hearts back to New Orleans, but give us a burden to see a multicultural, multiplying church in the Algiers community. At this current time in our life, we never thought of moving back to New Orleans or even planting a church. Our call to New Orleans was God providentially guiding our steps and hearts to reach our home with a message of Hope, Healing and Restoration found in Jesus Christ.

What Ways Has Vintage Church Equipped You with This Mission?

I was blessed to be part of a church planting apprenticeship at Vintage Church. During this year-long apprenticeship I was able to learn from the pastors and staff about discipleship, outreach and church membership. New Orleans is such a unique place to plant a church. To see a healthy church that is reaching and discipling believers to be the church was a great blessing for me. This is our heart as a church within the city.

What Methodology from Vintage Church Will You Implement in Your Church in Order to Be a Church Planting Church?

One methodology I have taken away from Vintage as church plant is to become and continue to foster a culture of multiplication. Gospel multiplication within

our city and nation is the greatest way we will see people reach with the Gospel.

There are so many similarities between what the Lord has placed upon my heart and what Vintage Church is already doing. We want to exist to serve the city of New Orleans by proclaiming a message of Hope, Healing, and Restoration through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The way Vintage does this is through their individuals, community groups, and gatherings. Their movement has now become fluid and I am praying the Life Church will begin to see that type of movement as well. We have already taken a few resources, sermon series ideas, and community group strategies to our church as well.

How Will the Formation of The Gx Network Serve You and Your Church?

Coaching and Brotherhood are huge to any church planter. The Gx Network will provide just that. Being apart of this network will not only help me grow as a leader and planter, but one of the biggest blessings is the inclusion of my wife. The reality of church planting is tough, but having a great support network of other pastors/planters will greatly increase chance of success and health as a planter.

Pastor Rob has been talking about how this first year we are going to focus on friendship and impact. Those are two things that my family and I are praying for in a major way. Planting a new church can be lonely and we are excited to grow close with all the other churches in the network. We are also praying that through the Gx Network our church can learn how to keep reaching more people in our city and world. I'm already amazed by the generosity of Vintage Church and their financial commitment to our church and network over the next year.

Church Plant 4: Restoration Church, New York City, Church Planter: Rob Russell

How Did God Call You to Plant a New Church?

I fully believe that one's calling is best discerned in the context of community, and I am incredibly thankful that God used my time at Vintage Church and the wonderful

staff there as an integral part of directing and sending my family to begin a new church in New York City. During the fall of 2013, while I was serving as one of the pastors at Vintage, God began to turn the hearts of my wife, Riley, and me towards something unexpected and new. As much as I value being able to rationally process through decisions and plans, God humbled me by speaking in what seemed to be a rather irrational and emotive way. After seeing the skyline of New York City while watching a TV sitcom that August, I immediately felt a knot in the pit of my stomach. “What if God dramatically impacted New York City? What if the love and grace of Jesus spread throughout every facet of life and culture in the most important and influential city in the world?” These questions flooded my mind that night, and, as I shared more with Riley, we began to wonder if God was calling us to Manhattan.

As a response, I started to pursue Christ more through prayer, reading my Bible, and fasting. Some of our greatest affirmations during these couple of years, however, came through the community that God placed around us in New Orleans. I had been a part of Vintage Church since its launch in the fall of 2008 and had become incredibly close with the members and staff there. When the possibility of moving to Manhattan came up for our family, I quickly reached out to the rest of the pastoral team. Following their discernment, I approached my calling to New York City in two phases: my competency and our location. In December of 2013, the Vintage pastoral team affirmed my capacity to plant a church. Once the new year started, I began processing the second phase, finally making plans to take an exploratory trip to New York City. Our pastors reviewed our itinerary and prayed for Riley and I before we left. Shortly after returning, everyone agreed that God was moving us to invest our lives in this new city, and Vintage Church went above and beyond to pray and commission us out on this new adventure. Through much prayer, fasting, and counsel, God confirmed his calling upon our family to invest the rest of our lives in the flourishing of New York City and the advancement of the gospel by starting a new church in Manhattan.

What Ways Has Vintage Church Equipped You with This Mission?

Above all else, the greatest asset and encouragement Vintage Church has given us during this journey has been prayer. It is impossible to be a multiplying church without being a praying church, and both the staff and members of Vintage have consistently prayed for our discernment in calling, equipping for mission, and holistic provision during every stage of our journey.

In unison with this dedication to prayer, the pastoral team at Vintage Church took proactive steps to help prepare my wife and I for our new roles as church planters in a center city context. Since there was no formal process in place to train and deploy church planters when I first approached the team about our calling to New York City, the pastoral team at Vintage took a great deal of time and effort to build one in the form of a multi-tiered residency program. I was able to spend nearly a year and a half sitting in a cohort environment with my peers discussing both the theoretical and practical aspects of ministry and church planting, learning the answers to many questions I did not even know to ask. In its own history as a church plant, Vintage has always embodied a culture of building whatever was lacking in the church's pursuit of gospel multiplication to the ends of the earth.

What Methodology from Vintage Church Will You Implement in Your Church in Order to Be a Church Planting Church?

By God's grace, I was able to experience the benefit of a church planting residency firsthand while serving as a pastor at Vintage Church. Developing a process to identify, assess, equip, and send church planters does not require a tenured and self-sustaining church; it only takes intentionality and commitment. As a result of my experience with Vintage, I have already begun to establish a yearlong ministry residency for Restoration Church in order to create a culture of developing and deploying future ministry leaders throughout our city. It is my prayer that Restoration Church will reflect

our sending church's passion for gospel multiplication both in our missional language and DNA as well as in what we celebrate as a congregation.

How Will the Formation of The Gx Network Serve You and Your Church?

As globalization continues to shape our world, cities increasingly resemble one another more than the geographic regions where they're found. I am excited for Restoration Church to be a part of the Gx Network because it simultaneously challenges our congregation to look beyond ourselves and take a kingdom approach in our mission while also holistically resourcing (e.g., prayer, people, planning, and financial partnerships) the work that God has called us to at home in New York City. Personally, I am thankful that the Gx Network provides me with a relational brotherhood of fellow planters in a variety of strategic urban areas that can relate to my circumstances as a planter and offer a complex array of perspectives that will undoubtedly make me both a better leader for our church and better follower of our Lord, Jesus. From the personal support and encouragement to the collaborative pursuit of starting new churches together, I cannot wait to see all that God desires to accomplish for his glory through the Gx Network in the years to come

Church Plant 5: Church Name Coming Soon, Denver, Church Planting Resident: Josh Cook

How Did God Call You to Plant a New Church?

I felt a call to church work when I was 15 years old, but the call was always an obscure one. Throughout the years, the call began to narrow. I fell in love in cities. I began to feel a passion for leading a whole church. Through seminary and Vintage Church I became aware for the great need for more churches, especially in the large cities in America. It was then that God revealed to me that he had been equipping and leading me towards church planting. He burdened me with a love for seeing new churches planted

and new believers come to know him and used godly men and women to confirm this calling in me.

What Ways Has Vintage Church Equipped You with This Mission?

Vintage has come along side me throughout this mission. Even in the time when I was processing God's call, leaders at Vintage would serve as a sounding board and as wise counsel. Vintage then helped to train me formally through the Residency Program with Dustin Turner and through the Church Planting Residency with Rob Wilton. Vintage also helped, perhaps even more so, through informal ministry training. I have had the opportunity to serve on different teams and in different roles throughout the church. I have been given the freedom to process my thoughts about ministry as well as the freedom to try out new things and both succeed and fail in ministry. I have also been given the opportunity to serve closely with leaders at Vintage and learn from them. Moving forward, Vintage is connecting me with other churches and enabling to learn from them and partner with them.

What Methodology from Vintage Church Will You Implement in Your Church in Order to Be a Church Planting Church?

There are a few elements that I would like to integrate so that my church could be a church planting church as well. The first is that Vintage intentionally celebrates sending. Vintage intentionally brings people on stage and in front of the church to send them out with the full support and encouragement of the church. This small intentionality puts every member of Vintage church into the world of church planting. Second, Vintage uses young people as leaders in the church to train and equip them. Often, these very same leaders become church planters. Third, Vintage celebrates and prays for churches around the world.

How Will the Formation of The Gx Network Serve You and Your Church?

The Gx Network first and foremost puts me into contact with other church planters so that I can be encouraged by them and learn from them. I believe that this type of friendship and partnership will be so very important when church planting gets difficult and when I need help making a difficult decision. It also puts me in contact with fellow church planters so that we can share resources and ideas. I hope that one day we have mission teams and even potentially staff members that we can send back and forth among Gx churches.

Conclusion

Planting a church in New Orleans has been one of the most challenging yet most fulfilling journeys of my life. The enemy has come really hard at Vintage Church and I have started to ask the Lord for clarity on these attacks. My lack of experience and wisdom combined with an already challenging mission field has definitely been a challenge. Every week I hear of a new story of a sickness, or a fight, or someone got laid off, or one of our leaders is moving. Vintage has reached a lot of transient post-Katrina young adults who have recently been far from God and need a lot of ministry attention. Vintage has even recently been featured on national news for a legal battle with neighbors while trying to expand our one of our properties. I truly believe that as I have been working on this project and as our church launched an exciting new initiative, Jesus has revealed to me why the enemy has been attacking Vintage Church.

Right before Christmas of 2015, I had the privilege of traveling with a team from Vintage to New York City. It was so incredible to see the impact in New York because of the church planter that we sent out. On the first Sunday in 2016, Vintage Church officially launched the Gx Network while I was preaching out of town. The current church planting resident preached for me and shared that Vintage is launching this Network and would also be sending him to plant another church in Denver, CO. The response in our church was an overwhelming excitement. Vintage is excited about

praying, giving, and going with the Gx Network. The next Sunday, Vintage used this momentum and launched a new series walking through the book of Luke called “1MORE.” In this sermon series, I preached that Jesus has called the church to follow in His steps and continue to reach “1MORE” in our city with the Good News of Jesus. In the middle of this series, I invited another Gx Network church planter in New Orleans to preach for me. I was going to San Antonio to preach and encourage our first church planter in San Antonio. As our church planter in New Orleans was preaching at Vintage, he had a future leader preaching for him. Within a month I had experienced the gospel multiplication movement of Vintage Church through four different churches.

God moved in a powerful way that weekend in New Orleans and San Antonio. After I preached in San Antonio, one of the volunteers of this new church plant came up to me and gave me a huge hug. He wanted to take a picture with me and said that I needed to share something with Vintage Church. He said that because Vintage Church multiplied to San Antonio, Jesus has changed his life. He continued sharing that just over a year ago he was close to death and hooked on drugs. Our church planter in San Antonio met him on the street, loved him toward Jesus, and Jesus radically changed his life. When I got back home the next Sunday I began my sermon with this story of thankfulness. As we celebrated this story Jesus revealed to me why Vintage had been facing so much resistance. The enemy hates gospel multiplication and Vintage Church is accomplishing this mission.

Over the last few years Vintage has multiplied the gospel through individuals, groups, and gatherings and thousands are hearing about Jesus all over the world. Vintage Church has sent out business leaders, church planters, students, missionaries, and many others all over New Orleans and the world. Because Vintage has been willing to act upon a foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church from day one, an amazing movement of God is spreading throughout the world. The details of the future of Vintage Church might be uncertain, but there is one thing that will continue to remain:

Vintage Church will continue to exist for gospel Multiplication.

Because of the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church, Vintage Church has faithfully launched a church planting movement. This movement is a result of obedience to the command of God to make disciples of all nations. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this vision is through being a church planting church. All churches that are started and called by God can unite, equip, and multiply the gospel through church planting with an application of the principles that are found in this project.

APPENDIX 1

A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE VINTAGE CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Jesus Christ

Primary Function: Lord, Founder, Senior Pastor

Biblical Support: Ephesians 1:9, 22-23; 4:15; 5:23

He rules and reigns!

Elders (Servant Leaders):

Types: Elder Board, Executive Elders

Primary Function: Lead (Teach, Prayer, and Study of Scripture)

Biblical Qualifications: I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9)

Submissive to Jesus and each other.

Deacons (Leading Servants):

Types: Ministry Staff, Community Group Leaders, Vision Team

Primary Function: Serve

Biblical Qualifications: I Timothy 3:8-13, Philippians 1:1

Submissive to Jesus, the elders and each other.

Partners (Servants):

Type: All who have joined the Vintage Partnership

Primary Function: Respond

Biblical Qualifications: Romans 12:4-5, Ephesians 2:19, Acts 17:26-27

Submissive to Jesus, the elders, the deacons and each other.

APPENDIX 2

VINTAGE PARTNER COVENANT

Church Leadership Commitment

- We commit to love God and to love our families above all things.
- We commit to care for our partners and seek their growth in Christ.
- We commit to provide teaching and counsel from the whole counsel of God's Word.
- We commit to help in time of need.
- We commit to lead as elders and deacons under the guidelines found in God's Word.
- We commit to pray for our partners regularly.
- We commit to be on guard against false teachings.
- We commit to exercise church discipline when necessary.
- We commit to help our partners become equipped to serve Christ.
- We commit to follow Scripture and the Holy Spirit in regard to future plans for the church.
- We commit to lead by example.

Partner Agreement

- I have been saved by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - Date of Salvation: _____
- I have communicated this commitment to Christ through believer's baptism.
 - Date of Baptism: _____

Partner Commitment

- I commit to pursue Christ through the Spirit.
- I commit to reflect Christ through all relationships.
- I commit to serve Christ through our team.
- I have attended a Connect Dinner.
- I am part of a Community Group
 - Leader Name: _____
- I will be faithful to attend Vintage Gatherings.
- I will be faithful to serve on a vTeam.
- I will be faithful to Financially Give.
- I will be faithful to attend Partner Meetings.
- I will be faithful to stay connected with the Vintage Community.
- I have completed an interview with a Pastor (Seminary Students only)

APPENDIX 3

CHARLES RIDLEY'S ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH PLANTER

Visioning Capacity¹

- Builds projects, business, or ministries from scratch.
- Initiates efforts to build.
- Communicates vision consistently in an inspiring, persuasive, and creative manner.
- Projects into the future consistently; has a future orientation.
- Mobilizes human and financial resources to accomplish significant tasks.
- Copes effectively with non-visionizing elements.

Intrinsically Motivated

- Shows a high energy level and stamina.
- Handles large workloads and significant responsibility.
- Self-manages projects and completes them in a timely manner with little or no supervision.
- Consistently puts forth one's best efforts and strives for excellence.
- Maintains commitments, integrity, and character in tempting, challenging, or less-than-ideal circumstances.

Creates Ownership

- Recruits others consistently.
- Delegates to others to broaden their areas of responsibility.
- Coaches others to attain higher levels of performance.
- Reproduces leaders who reproduce others.
- Instills in others a sense of personal responsibility for the growth and success of ministry.

Relates to Lost and Unchurched People

- Intentionally builds relationships with non-Christians.
- Brings the unchurched to a decision for Christ.
- Assimilates new Christians into the church.
- Sensitively relates with the unchurched on a personal level while remaining non-compromising.

¹Charles R. Ridley and Tweed Moore, *Evaluating and Reporting* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 2000), 130-42.

Spousal Cooperation

- Agree upon respective roles and expectations in ministry.
- Sets healthy boundaries regarding workload and its impact upon family life.
- Models wholesome family life before church and community.
- Communicates openly and resolves conflicts in a healthy manner.
- Shares convictions regarding church planting.

Effectively Builds Relationships

- Initiates the starting and building of relationships.
- Demonstrates a sincere interest in people.
- Constructively handles criticism and relational difficulties.
- Develops a strong social network.
- Responds with urgency and compassion to individuals' physical and emotional needs.
- Relates to a diversity of people.

Committed to Church (Kingdom) Growth

- Seeks training in church growth principles.
- Implements church growth principles effectively.
- Establishes and maintains growth-oriented priorities.
- Critically evaluates church growth principles, concepts, and models of ministry.
- Appreciates growth taking its own course while not preoccupied with superficially fast growth.
- Understands the inherent nature and demands of growth.

Responsive to Community

- Finds the unique pulse and character of local communities
- Develops programs which meet specific needs in a community.
- Utilizes community outreach to build the church.
- Adapts philosophy of ministry to fit the character of the community.
- Prioritizes ministry opportunities on the basis of resources and potential impact.

Utilizes Giftedness of Others

- Systematically helps people identify their areas of spiritual giftedness.
- Helps people use their giftedness by matching them to a ministry where they can be most effective.
- Equips, develops, and trains other to maximize their giftedness.
- Releases people into ministry when they are ready.

Flexible and Adaptable

- Maintains open-mindedness.
- Refocuses and make mid-course corrections during times of change or ambiguity.
- Adapts to unexpected events and disruptions while staying on course.
- Manages multiple tasks and responsibilities simultaneously.
- Promotes and encourages vision-based innovation.

Builds Group Cohesiveness

- Harmonizes people despite their differences.
- Resolves group conflicts and divisive issues quickly and sensitively.
- Monitors and maintains the morale of people.
- Utilizes small groups effectively to accomplish ministry objectives.
- Promotes assimilation of other into the body-life of the church.

Resilience

- Remains optimistic and perseveres when convinced they are in God's will.
- Makes good use of one's support system during times of crisis, setback and disappointment.
- Bounces back quickly from loss or discouragement.
- Evidences emotional stability through the joys and disappointments of life.
- Experiences unjust situations without lashing out or lingering bitterness.

Exercises Faith

- Maintains one's spiritual vitality through practice of spiritual disciplines.
- Takes significant faith risks and is not resistant to major change.
- Is convinced of church planting call.
- Positively impacts the faith of others.
- Sustains in prayer even when answers are delayed.

APPENDIX 4

VINTAGE CHURCH RESIDENCY

Level Two Residency Program

RESIDENCY DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this residency program is to equip men and women for ministry in the local church in various roles and positions. The residency program will focus on growing in (1) Personal Care & Leadership, (2) Pastoral Care & Leadership, and (3) Organizational Care & leadership through knowledge, attitudes, and skills learning.

RESIDENCY OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

- To understand the significance of a personal walk with the Lord for the sake and success of your ministry.
- To learn and understand the tasks necessary for an effective ministry.
- To learn and understand the tasks necessary for effective organizational leadership.

Attitudes

- To value their relationship with the Lord and your family above your role in the local church.
- To value the work in which God has called you to.
- To value organizational leadership within the local church.

Skills

- To learn how to develop and grow a relationship with the Lord and your family while in ministry.
- To learn and practice tasks needed for the shepherding ministry.
- To learn and practice tasks needed for organizational leadership.

Methodology

- Various reading assignments from books and articles
- Cohort learning environment
- 1 ministry assignment per month
- Practice of specific spiritual disciplines
- Other various assignments

Residency Requirements

- Faithfully attend and participate in the bi-weekly cohort sessions.
- Complete reading and assignments for each week's meeting.
- While the Equipping Pastor realizes that currently no one is getting paid

for this residency program and that the participants have other jobs, school, and family, it is important to give this residency 100%. The program will only be as useful as the time and energy the participants put into it.

Resources

The resources necessary for this Residency program will be announced a month in advance prior to the discussion of the topic so the resident has adequate time to acquire the resource and begin to use it. If you have questions on how to get the resource or where to find it please see the Equipping Pastor. While the Equipping Pastor is open to loaning books, he has a limited number of books. Therefore not everyone will be able to loan from his library.

Policies

1. Attendance and Participation

As noted above, attendance and class participation are necessary for meeting the requirements of this residency. Residents are expected to be attentive, prepared, and participatory for each session. If you will not be able to make a session please give the Equipping Pastor two weeks notice.

2. Late Work

Because life and ministry happen, late work will be accepted. However, late work will greatly hinder the success and effectiveness of the residency. Remember that when one participant fails to complete an assignment, it not only hurts the participant but also the others who are a part of the residency. Do everything you can to complete assignments on time.

Level Three Residency Program

Vintage Gx SEND Residency
Josh Cook - Denver, CO
(June 1, 2015 - July 31, 2016)

Objectives:

- Serve on Staff (vKids/CityView/CG Leader/CreativeCatalyst)
- Meetings (at least 2/month)
- Read Six Books
- Take Three Training Trips
- Develop the Planter's Life, Leadership, Legacy
- Complete Ordination Process
- Finalize Church Plant Game-Plan
- Send Planter to Apprentice in Planting City

Personal Training Needs:

1. Devotional Life
2. Ministry Philosophy
3. Elder Training
4. Staff Building

5. Personal Ministry
6. Finances
7. Networking
8. Fundraising
9. Catalyzing Movement
10. Kingdom Partnership

Goals:

The Planter's Life (Part I)

Books: *The Imperfect Pastor*, *The Contemplative Pastor*

Topics: Salvation, Calling, Marriage, Parenthood, Home, Devotional Life, Finances, Vacation, Physical Health, Hobbies, Friends)

The Planter's Leadership (Part II)

Books: *Biblical Eldership*, *Church Planter*, *Planting Growing Churches*

(Position, Theology, Ministry Philosophy, Preaching, Elder Training, Execution, Planning, Staff Building, Vision Casting, Personal Ministry, Finances, Budgeting, Risk, Perseverance, Hiring/Firing, Discernment, Seizing Opportunities, Networking, Fundraising, Partnering, Pace)

The Planter's Legacy (Part III)

Books: *The Catalytic Leader*, *Make Vision Stick*

(Mentoring, Catalyzing Movement, Empowering, Kingdom Partnership, Future Assimilation, Long Range Planning, Succession Plan)

APPENDIX 5

GX NETWORK OVERVIEW

Our Name: Gx Network: Multiplying New Churches

Our Mission: Multiplying The Gospel Through the Church Around the World

Our Values

The Gospel

We value Multiplying the Gospel

The Church

We value Multiplying the Gospel through the Church.

The World

We value Multiplying the Gospel through the Church around the World.

Our Strategy

Unite

Brotherhood and Friendship

Annual Retreat

Global Training and Mission Trips

Equip

Shared Online and Print Resources

Shared Staff Resources

Equipping Resources

Annual Conference

Multiply

Residency Program

Collaboration of Personnel

Strategic Coaching and Mentoring

Networking & Fundraising

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ABSTRACT

THE FOUNDATION, DNA, AND METHODOLOGY OF BEING A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH ACCORDING TO VINTAGE CHURCH OF NEW ORLEANS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Eric Geiger

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this project by stating the purpose and goals of the foundation, DNA, and methodology of being a church planting church according to Vintage Church of New Orleans. This chapter introduces the ministry context and rationale of how Vintage Church started a church plant, planted other churches, and has now started a network of churches that will do the same.

Chapter 2 presents a biblical understanding and overview of the church. This chapter also presents a biblical understanding of church planting specifically as it is found in the book of Acts. This biblical understanding is the foundation of why Vintage Church is a church planting church.

Chapter 3 reveals the specific DNA of Vintage Church that has mobilized their mission of being a church planting church. Explained in this chapter under the category of DNA are the statement of beliefs, leadership, membership, and mission of Vintage Church. This specific DNA establishes what unites Vintage Church around being a church planting church.

Chapter 4 establishes the strategic methodology of Vintage Church as a church planting church. This chapter includes a full explanation of how Vintage unites, equips, and multiplies. Vintage Church unites around what is presented in chapters 2 and 3 of this project. In chapter 4, the strategy of equipping and multiplying is explained in more

detail. Equipping involves a thorough and consistent assimilation process. Multiplying is executed at all levels but strategically through planting new locations and church plants around New Orleans and the world. This methodology is not only relevant to the mission of church planting but is also implemented at every level of Vintage Church with the hope and potential of sending out many more church plants.

Chapter 5 describes how the foundation, DNA, and methodology of Vintage Church being a church planting church has resulted in the formation of a new network of church plants called the Gx Network. Presented in this chapter are the confirmations and testimonies of five church planters who have been sent out by Vintage Church as a result of uniting, equipping, and multiplying. The mission of the Gx Network is to unite, equip, and multiply church planting churches around the world.

VITA

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EDUCATION

B.S., North Greenville University, 2004

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MINISTERIAL

Collegiate Minister, First Baptist Spartanburg, Spartanburg, South Carolina,
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Camp Director/Pastor, MissionLab, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2005-2012

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