

MINISTRY & MISSION

Church Planting Research & Strategy Recommendations

Church Planting 2008 and into the future.

Ministry & Mission Committee

Church Planting Research & Strategy Recommendations

By John A. Macintyre



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Why Bother Church Planting?

“Continued planting of healthy churches is the single most effective strategy for numerical growth of God’s people” Tim Keller Redeemer New York.

The aim of this report is to establish a well organised set of principles and practices to guide Ministry and Mission as it encourages churches of our denomination plant new congregations.

1.1 The Gospel Truth

Most Christians would agree evangelism sometimes known as outreach or mission, is one of the most important roles for the Church. We do so for good reasons.

The first compelling reason for evangelism is found in Matthew 9. Here we discover Jesus’ has a heartfelt compassion for the lost.

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. **36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:35-36

As Jesus teaches, heals and shares the good news of God’s kingdom he is deeply moved with compassion towards the spiritually lost. They are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Our Lord’s compassion is even more striking when we consider who makes up this diverse crowd. The crowd contains the whole range of human existence from the most rebellious given over to every kind of human depravity to ordinary mums, dads and children with their own manner of socially acceptable sin. These people will only be made right with God and have their lives transformed as they hear the good news and come to faith. Jesus wants his followers to share in this mission so he asks them to pray!

37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. **38** Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:37-38

Presumably the disciples prayed and then almost immediately Jesus sends them to reach out to the lost.

6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. **7** As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' **8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 10:6-8

The disciples are sent and doubtless they would have carried Jesus' attitude of deep and sincere compassion for the lost. Evangelism matters deeply to the church because it reflects the character of Christ.

The second compelling reason biblical Christians are motivated in outreach is because we know we are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ!

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

The story of the church over the last 2000 years is the spreading of the gospel through our world, certainly great things have been achieved but we are far from finished. It is calculated 2.72 billion people today still remain unreached and unreachable without sustained missionary effort.¹ Equally disturbing are the millions of Australians living in our own cities & country areas who remain unreached even though we live in the same streets, speak the same language, watch the same movies, go to the same schools and work in the same offices and factories. Australian Christians still need to hear and most importantly obey the great commission not only to go overseas but go into our own neighbourhoods!

1.2 Reaching People Effectively

But the question remains how can we reach people most effectively?

Church planting is the single most effective way to reach unchurched people. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church New York, explains
"Continued planting of healthy churches is the single most effective strategy for numerical growth of God's people,"² Redeemer is not only a recent church plant with thousands now attending but it is also a planting church.
New churches are more effective at reaching: a) new generations, b) new residents and c) new people groups.

- a) **New Generations:** Keller explains that younger adults have always been disproportionately found in newer congregations.³ Older established churches develop traditions and mores such as worship style, times, music, sermon topics, emotional responsiveness levels and a multitude of customs that reflect the sensibilities of long time leaders from older generations. This generational gap is arguably the Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA) in New South Wales' (NSW) greatest hurdles in reaching the younger generation and explains much conflict over "style" of worship and church operation that has been experienced between a younger generation of ministers and the aging congregational base. The power in our church is invested in life-long eldership and one of the legacies of life-long eldership that we need to address is resistance to change. One could reason if a trained minister at 40 years of age has trouble adjusting to a dated style of church how can we hope to reach the unchurched younger generation? The simple answer is plant churches more suited to younger unchurched people.
- b) **New Residents:** New residents according to Keller are almost always better reached by new churches.⁴ In established churches it might take 10 years to be accepted as a leader or be allowed to minister whereas in a new church new residents tend to enjoy equal say and involvement as long time residents. This is certainly the experience of Tamworth Community

¹ <http://www.joshuaproject.net/index.php> Cited 15 February 2008

² T. Keller, *Why Plant Churches* <http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/why%20plant%202%2011%20TLeders.pdf> Cited 14 February 2008.

³ Keller, *Why Plant Churches*, 2.

⁴ Keller, *Why Plant Churches*, 2.

Presbyterian Church (planted 1992) where the fastest growing demographic in that church was found to be people recently moved to the city.

c) **New Socio- Cultural Groups and Non English Speaking Background:**

New cultural groups are best reached by churches that intentionally set out to reach them by creating cultural room and shaping ministries to better suit the values and needs of that group. This is nothing new, in fact the apostle Paul shapes his ministry in this same way *“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”*⁵

When we think of new cultural groups we immediately think of foreigners but it can mean any sub-group in our society that remains unchurched because of the cultural distance e.g. disparate world views, values, language, education, racial biases, social class, even a core value tastes in music or clothing that makes outreach by an established church ineffective. Examples include Maroubra Surfers Church recently started by Steve Bligh⁶ or the Mt Druitt Aboriginal work headed by Pastor Rick Manton.

Occasionally a highly motivated Non English Speaking Background (NESB) seeker will bridge language and cultural differences in order to become a Christian and be disciplined in an English speaking church; however this is the exception rather than rule. To wait for the NESB people to assimilate into Australian culture and language before engaging them with the gospel would be an unacceptable delay. The most effective way of reaching NESB sub-group is by churches ministering to people in their own language recognising culture and worldview of this group. Table 2 below shows the surprising number of new NESB churches that have been started under the Presbyterian banner in NSW since 1981.

The telling statistics

The reason for pursuing church planting with missionary zeal is because it is the most effective missionary method.

Conversion

New church average conversion rates were 10 in year one, 11 in year two, 13 in year three and 14 in year four.⁷ It may not seem a lot but it takes far fewer established Christians to convert one unchurched person in a church plant than in an established church. Imagine many church plants achieving this sort of growth rate; it really is reaching our country one person at a time.

1.3 New Churches Grow in a Healthy Fashion

Experience and research are showing us that new churches tend to reach out more effectively and reach younger generations and enjoy a greater sense of health as a church.

a) **Reaching Out:**

United States (US) research reveals the average new church gains 60-80% of its new members from the ranks of the unchurched whereas churches older than 10-15 years gain 80-90% of new members through transfer! That means the average new church will bring 6-8 times more new people into the church than an older church of the same size!⁸ There are likely to be a multitude of reasons to explain the difference. One example would be that new churches must focus on the needs of the unchurched just to get off the ground whereas older churches are more likely to focus on the needs of its established members or servicing its own organizational needs such as building restorations or denominational programs.

An accurate picture of the Australian church landscape is available through the work of Bellamy and Castle. Using National Church Life Survey (NCLS) data they found 16.5% of attendees at church plants are newcomers whereas the average in established churches is

⁵ 1 Corinthians 9:22

⁶ S.P.Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007),46.

⁷ G. Smith, *Improving the health and survivability of new churches* 3.

⁸ Keller, *Why Plant Churches*, 3.

only 9.6%.⁹ The very best newcomer attendance rate at an established church can achieve is 11.7% and that is with highly effective evangelism programs and follow-up in place!¹⁰ The difference between church plants and established churches becomes even more marked when Pentecostal churches are removed from the data. Mainstream church plants achieve 17% newcomers whereas established churches achieve only 7%. Clearly church plants are way out in front of established churches in reaching newcomers!¹¹



Cornerstone ... Photo collage

b) **Reaching Younger:**

Not only are new churches reaching all newcomers more effectively they are reaching a younger demographic with more than 69% aged between 15-49 years, compared with only 48% in churches generally.¹² There is also a slightly higher proportion of males in church plants.¹³

c) **Reaching Health:**

Not only do church plants have more newcomers, younger people and more males but church plants score better in health. Across twelve indicators of church vitality used by NCLS, dealing with such indicators as minister inspiring others, experiencing growth in faith, growing sense of belonging and inviting others, church plants scored higher than established churches.¹⁴

1.4 What is a Church Plant?

Having discussed some of the merits of church planting let's take a moment to define what church planting is:

Church planting at its simplest may be defined "as mission carried out by forming faith communities."¹⁵

Another definition:

"The formation of a new community of faith that exhibits the values of the Kingdom of God; principally making and growing disciples of Christ."¹⁶

Another definition:

Church planting is creating new communities of Christian faith as a part of the Mission of God, to express his Kingdom in every geographic and cultural context."¹⁷

⁹ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* (NCLS Research October 2003) Cited 14 February 2008. 4.

¹⁰ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 4. One notable exception are interest based groups such as bikers, divorcees, environmentalists reached 15%.

¹¹ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 14.

¹² J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 9.

¹³ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 11.

¹⁴ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 12.

¹⁵ J. Bellamy & K. Castle *The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings* 7.

http://www.anglicare.org.au/live3/index.cgi?E=heatfuncs&PT=SL&X=getdoc&Lv1=web_res&Lv2=0002 Cited 14 February 2008.

¹⁶ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* 29.

¹⁷ *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/mission Cited 25 March 2008, 29.

Still another is:

“Church planting is the process by which a seed of the life and message of Jesus embodied by a community of Christians is immersed for mission reasons in a particular cultural or geographic context. The intended consequence is that it roots there, coming to life as a new indigenous body of Christian disciples well suited to continue in mission.”¹⁸

Each definition captures the twin realities; firstly church planting has a missional emphasis and secondly church planting results in creating new entities.

According to the Church of England’s **Mission Shaped Church Report** a church plant usually displays the following characteristics:¹⁹

- It arises from a conscious evangelistic purpose to inaugurate a congregation.
- It involves the transfer of people from an initial congregation to create or revitalize another congregation.
- It has a known corporate identity and style.
- It has an identified leadership recognized by others inside and outside the plant.
- It has identifiable pastoral structures.
- It is intended to serve an identifiable group, culture or neighbourhood.



Southern Cross.....A Photo Collage.

Harry Reeder in his book **From Embers to a Flame** argues that church revitalization is an essential strategy for the church and, as such, an alternative to church planting. In this approach *revitalization* means to work with an unhealthy church and turn it around.

*Church revitalization is nothing more than following God’s prescription for church health. Church health naturally leads to conversions and improved personal discipleship, for our good and God’s glory.*²⁰

Unfortunately *revitalization* is also used by others as an example of a church planting launch strategy where *revitalization* means to take over an existing church and restart at the same site.²¹ Such an example is given in chapter 4. The use of this same term to describe two completely contradictory approaches can be confusing so for the purposes of this report we will define **revitalization** as working with an existing church and its leadership to return that church to health.²²

The type of church plant where a church planter and often a team come into an ailing church and commence a new work whilst maintaining the existing congregation or even restarting the congregation will be defined as **repotting**. Often in repotting there is a clear vision set out beforehand and an understanding that the existing congregation will be giving the planter a good measure of freedom to determine future ministry while the planter gives the existing congregation a commitment to minister to

¹⁸ Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context, 32.

¹⁹ Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context, 29.

²⁰ www.emberstoafame.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=34997&PID=349880. Cited 7 April 2008.

²¹ Ssee 4.2.2 chapter 4

²² This is consistent with definitions adopted by Ministry and Mission Committee in December 2006 as follows: A **church revitalisation project** is an endeavour to re-establish the viability of an existing congregation, which endeavour has been sanctioned by the relevant presbytery and classified by the Ministry and Mission Committee as a church revitalisation project. Similarly, the Committee defined a **church planting project** as “an endeavour to establish a Presbyterian congregation where none presently exists, which endeavour has been sanctioned by the relevant presbytery and classified by the Ministry and Mission Committee as a church planting project.”

them in a caring and relevant way. Good examples of repotting are the work that has happened at Drummoyne and Newcastle East since 2000. Repotting sounds like revitalization but the difference is a new work is begun and the planter is not held back for the time it would take the revitalizing pastor to patiently win over a leadership to support gospel orientated ministry. Instead the planter has authority and support from the leadership to implement gospel shaped initiatives immediately.

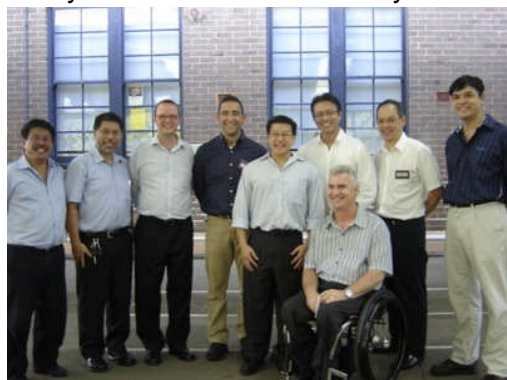
1.5 Yes... We Really Need More Churches

Now that we understand the mission imperative and we have defined church planting the question remains: do we actually need more churches in Australia?

The weight of numbers tells us that we do need more churches. While older suburbs may be well served by a number of good bible teaching churches, newer suburbs can often have almost no visible Christian presence. Local Christians need a local church, not only to be encouraged by but to minister and worship with and to help them reach their neighbours and friends. Christians may well drive good distances to worship with an established church but very few unchurched people would ever make such a sacrifice. The simple truth is we need a gospel teaching, kingdom shaped community of believers to be a part of and these churches need to be in our communities in order to reach our communities.

In Australia at this time there are approximately 10,000 churches. This means a church for every 2100 Australians. It is believed that 1 church per 1000 people is a good ratio to aim for. This ratio would require more than double the number of churches we have at present. However as population keeps increasing, even more churches will be needed. It is expected that the population is going to reach 24 million by 2021 which means 14,000 more churches are needed in order to reach the 1 church per 1000 people ratio.

As Australia embraces more NESB citizens the need to plant NESB and culturally mixed congregations grows. We must make every effort to cross cultural and linguistic bridges, with the gospel presented in a way that will make sense to the particular group we are reaching. This may require particular language ability and cultural sensitivity that many churches and pastors are ill-equipped to meet. A new congregation built to reach across language and cultural barriers can be used by God in wonderful life changing ways.



Pictured are the Cornerstone elders. Cornerstone was planted in 1994 by C.S. Tang (4th from right).²³ More recently Cornerstone has planted a second congregation at Eastwood. C.S. Tang pastors the new congregation while Mark Powell (4th from left) pastors the original congregation at Concord.

It may be guessed from the make-up of the Cornerstone Session that the church has a focus on people with Asian background (many of whom are first generation Australians) but uses English as the church language and so Cornerstone has picked up people of Anglo-Saxon background as well.

A common criticism of the church planting movement is expressed by the question, "Why plant new churches when we have all these other churches that need to be revitalized."²⁴ One of the features of our denomination are church facilities and manses belonging to congregations smaller than a football team. "Surely", the rationale goes, "those churches deserve our attention." Of course they do but this focus on revitalizing cannot come at the expense of starting new congregations. The need for new churches is so great we simply cannot ignore it.

In addition struggling churches can greatly benefit from church planting as well. New churches and ministries are free to be more creative, flexible in reaching the unchurched. Lessons learnt there may provide insights for other churches. One example would be the production, by Southern Cross, Lismore,

²³ http://cornerstonepc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=30 cited 18 March 2008

²⁴ H.L. Reeder, *From Embers To A Flame-How God Can Revitalize Your Church*, (P&R Publishing 2004), 20-22.

of valued ministry resources (The ministry papers) and the raising up of new leaders into the **metro**²⁵ pre-college system and into theological training. Craig and Cathy Tucker who led the Western Blacktown church plant from 1990 for 10 years have been able to use ministry experience gained in church planting to both report and revitalize the Drummoyne Presbyterian Church.



Should revitalizing struggling churches be a priority in our denomination? The answer of course is “yes” but we need to balance this with the needs of the unchurched. How will they hear the gospel unless we plant new churches aimed at them? How will we respond to whole suburbs with hardly a church? What about whole people groups migrating into Australia with no one speaking the gospel in a manner they can understand? Clearly church planting must be a central priority to any denomination that believes in the gospel and our Lord’s great commission.

²⁵ www.metro.pcns.org.au Ministry, Equipping, Training and Recruiting Organisation Ministry of the PCNSW Evangelism Committee and from 2007 by the Metro Committee of the PCNSW cited 18 Feb 2008.

Who is Planting Churches

Churches that plant have senior pastors who believe in planting and tend to have the vision of planting written in as goal from their inception.

Any discussion of Australian church planting should note the impressive rate of new church plants attempted by Pentecostal denominations. In Australia the Pentecostals are the fastest growing subset of the Christian faith with 45% of the 190 church plants studied in the 5 years leading up to the 2001 NCLS' research being Pentecostal.²⁶ Not only has the Pentecostal growth rate been impressive but they remain ambitious about their future prospects. The Australian Christian Churches - Assemblies of God in Australia already 350 churches strong in NSW planned to plant 7 churches in 2007 and their future target is 385!²⁷

In the USA the rate of church planting has increased from 1100-1500 per year in the late 20 century to 4000 a year. Traditionally denominations have played the dominant role in starting these churches but now increasingly church planting networks are making a growing and significant contribution.²⁸

2.1 The Churches Planting Churches

Some church planting churches were studied by members of the Joint Task Force on Church Planting. In 1997 the research group visited St James Capetown, Redeemer New York and Perimeter Ministries Atlanta. Each of these church planting movements came from church planting churches.²⁹ US research reveals the less local churches rely on denominational organisations to plant churches the more likely they will aggressively plant churches themselves.³⁰ These churches may well feel the growth of the gospel (mission) is their responsibility rather than something to be left to a denomination head office. This fits well with PCNSW Ministry and Mission's approach supporting local initiatives rather than initiating church plants itself.

Good DNA

"Transferring DNA" is a newer term that captures the advantages of churches planting churches. In other words a growing healthy sponsor (parent) church is able to pass on essential ministry styles or ethos (DNA) that contributes towards a successful new church. Often the leader of the new church will have been recognised and then trained within the sponsor church and the launch team (core

²⁶ J. Bellamy & K. Castle The Effectiveness of Church Planting Some Initial Research Findings 9.

²⁷ Church Planting in NSW www.churchplanting.com.au/state.php?Doo=ContentView&id=280 Cited 25 February 2008

²⁸ G. Smith, Who starts new churches (Leadership Network: 2007)

http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/State%20of%20Church%20Planting%20Report_Who%20Starts.pdf Cited 14 February 2008. 2

²⁹ K. Murray, Ian Smith, C.S. Tang & C. Tucker, Investigation of Church Planting in South Africa and the United States of America (Joint Task Force on Church Planting Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW, 1998)

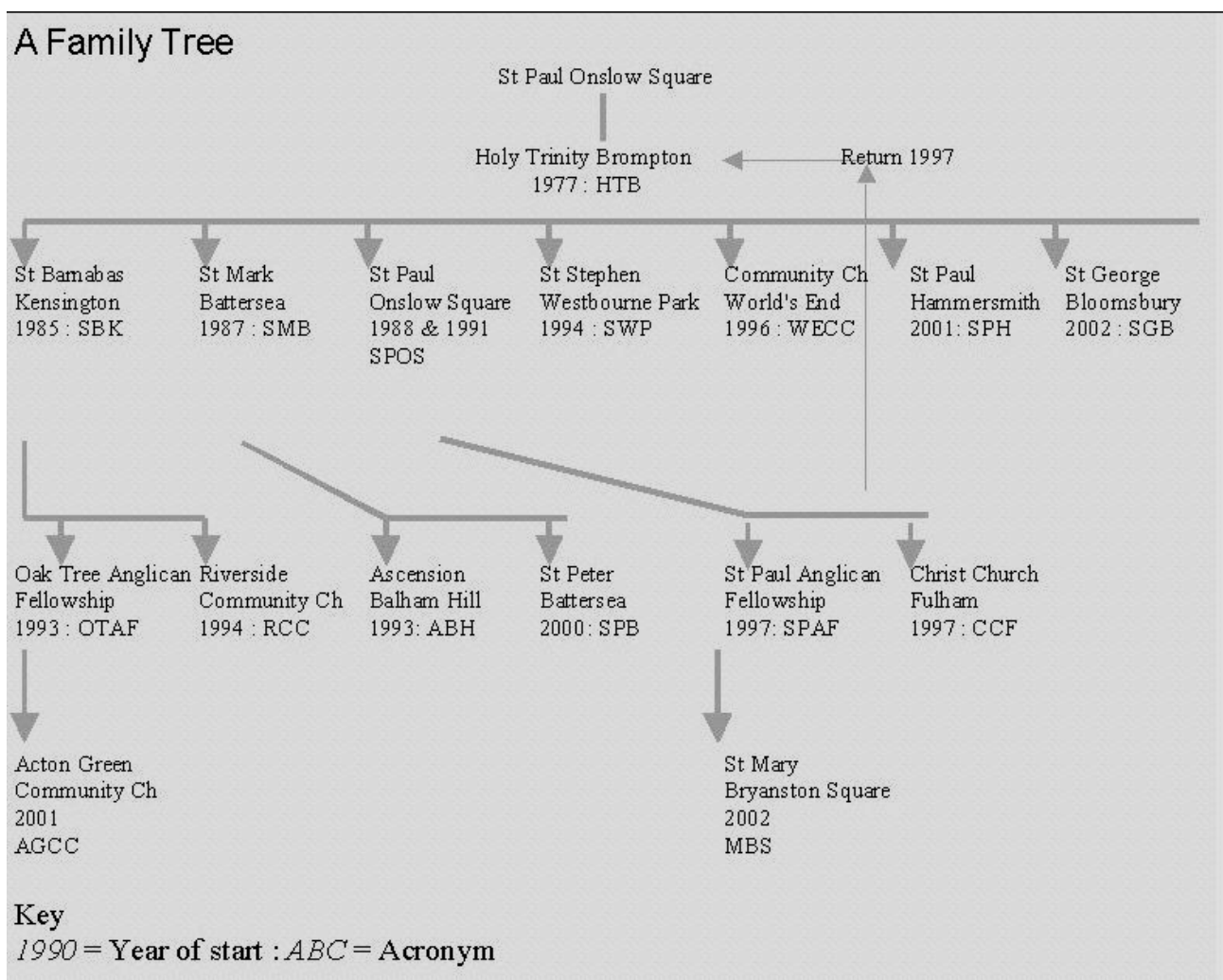
³⁰ G. Smith, Who starts new churches 4

group) also comes from the sponsor church. In this scenario chances of a conflict between the leader and the launch team are minimised as they share common values and ministry approaches. In addition there is a healthy sense of ownership of the plant by the sponsor church which better motivates prayer and support for this new venture.

Smaller Churches The research reveals that, in the US at least, Churches that are 200 or less are four times more likely to plant a church than those of 1000 or more!³¹ Churches that plant have senior pastors who believe in planting and tend to have the vision of planting written in as goal from their inception. Churches that are aggressively planting churches are organised differently to other churches they may often have staff assigned to church planting. Some produce church planting training courses and manuals such as Redeemer New York.³²

Single churches are quite capable given the right encouragement, emerging leaders and growing congregational base to become a church planting movement as illustrated below.

Holy Trinity London church planting family tree³³



One of the daughter churches St Mary's is now planting churches in England, New Zealand, Brazil and the US!³⁴

³¹ G. Smith, Who starts new churches 6.

³² www.redeemer.com/about_us/church_planting/ Cited 26 February 2008

³³ Holy Trinity family tree www.steveaddison.net/wp-content/St%20Paul's%20Family%20Tree-1.jpg Cited 29 February 2008.

³⁴ S. Addison, The next 1000 Australian Churches http://next1000.org/files/next1000ebook.pdf Cited 14 February 2008, 40.

2.2 Networks Supporting Planting

Church planting networks are para-church organisations set up to propagate church plants. Church Planting/Ministry Networks³⁵ may provide coaching, resources, planter assessment and in some instances finances and in return often expect the church when self-funding will reinvest in the network. US Networks report 93% of new churches have an average attendance of 143 by the first anniversary and appear to be numerically greater than denominationally supported churches! This growth of networks is being mirrored in Australia, two examples are the next1000 Australian churches³⁶ and the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches where the latter's first of seven stated purposes reads "to encourage and provide support for the continued planting of independent evangelical churches".³⁷ The fellowship boasts a group of 14 churches all planted in the last sixteen years. Thirteen of these churches are found in NSW and the ACT.

2.3 The Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA) NSW & ACT

A strategic way forward must learn from previous church planting experiences, both the successes and failures of the past. Table 1 below represents known English speaking church plants attempted within the PCA NSW since 1980 but notably misses many congregational plantings as often these are not reported.³⁸

Table 1

Year Established	Congregation	Outcome	Type of plant	Planter
Ca. 1981	Tuggeranong	Growing healthy church Av. Attend 110 in 2007.		David Mitchell
1982	Cherrybrook	Stable independent congregation of about Av. Attend. 60 in 2007.		John Irvin
1983	Berrigan	Part of Tocumwal-Finley-Berrigan pastoral charge. Av. Attend. 20 in 2007.	branching	Paul Cooper and Bruce Meller later Bruce Meller
?	Belconnen	Av. Attend. 30 in 2007.		Alex Cozadinos
1987	Weston Creek	Congregation of St Andrews Canberra Av. Attend. 16 in 2007.		John Mercer?
Prior to 2003	New life Gungahlin	Attendance 130 in 2007 2 staff		
1988? Closed	Plumpton	Never reached stability. Was financially self- sustaining but with unstable lay-leadership. Closed in 2000	Branching from Tregear	Rod Thompson
1987-2004 Closed	Parklands	Never reached viability. Began 1/2/87, closed Jan. '04	Pioneering	Richard Quadrio followed by Peter Morphew
Circa 1989	Yamba	Healthy Congregation of Lower Clarence Charge employing 1 fulltime Home Missioner-	Repotted	Non-Ordained personnel

³⁵ Networks is not to be confused with the UK use of the term networks to describe church plants amongst existing social networks and in disregard to parish boundaries.

³⁶ www.next1000.org cited 25 February 2008.

³⁷ Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Home page www.fiec.org.au Cited 25 February 2008

³⁸ Ministry and Mission report on Church planting in the Presbyterian Church of NSW (June 2005 is probably the most comprehensive report recently completed on church planting in NSW. The table draws much information from that report.

Table 1 Continued

Year Established	Congregation	Outcome	Type of plant	Planter
1989 Closed 2008	Woolgoolga	Congregation of Coffs Harbour (failed to prosper after significant problems in early years.)		Non-Ordained personnel
1990	Parramatta City	Multi-Congregational Church going well employs 1 minister & 2 assistants	Pioneering	David Thurston
1990?	Dubbo	Revitalization Multi-congregational church Now employs 3 ministers and one assistant. After Church Union there were two very dis-united congregations: East and West Dubbo. Many attempts were made to serve them together – unsuccessfully. Today the church is prospering.	Repotted,	Bryson S
1991 Closed	Rooty Hill	Closed 1998	Branching from Plumpton	Jonathon Boyall, Jr
1991 Closed	Pottsville – as offshoot of Murwillumbah	Terminal problems within the starting core group lead to the closure in 1994.	Branching-colonisation	An elder followed by Maurie Cropper
?	Winmalee	Project charge in 1992, but not really a church plant – always an outreach of Springwood.	Branching	
1991?	Blacktown West	Initiated by Blacktown East Now employs 1 minister. Sponsored Glenwood Av. Attend 50 in 2007	Branching	Craig Tucker
1992	Tamworth Community	Shared initiative between mother church and denomination was employing 2 ministers now employs 1 minister. Av. Attend. 140 in 2007.	Branching	John Macintyre
1993	Batemans Bay	Outreach of Moruya-Tuross Head-Narooma became separate in 1993 Never reached independent viability Av. attend 21 in 2007	Pioneering	David Hocking, HM
1993?	Cornerstone	Asian English speaking plant out of Chinese Presbyterian Surry hills Concord-Ryde Av attend. 140 in 2006	Pioneering	CS Tang
1998	Southern Cross	Now employs 1 minister and several assistants. Influences Metro and graduates to ministry in PCA Qld & candidates in NSW. Av. Attend 190 in 2007.	Branching	Steve Cree
1996	Forestville-Killarney Heights	Aftermath of Church Union. Sponsored by Doug Murray when he was at Roseville. Achieved independence and employed Philip Chang but went backwards (not owning a manse) and in 2004 became a congregation within Beacon Hill – Narraweena.	Branching-colonisation?	Skip Forsyth (from USA, returned to USA)
1999	Central Sydney	Self-sustaining pastoral charge employing 1 minister and a metro assistant Av. Attend 85 in 2007.	Pioneering	David Thurston
1999?	Drummoyne	Staff of 2 or more Av. Attend 120 in 2006	Repotted	Craig Tucker
2000	St Philips/Surfside	Employs 2 ministers & 1 Metro trainee and 1 Women & Children's Pastoral Assistant Av. Attend. 136 in 2007	Repotted	John Macintyre
2000	Westlakes	Initiative of Gosford congregation. Never achieved independence (always needed significant M&M aid) which ceased Jan 08.	Branching/Pioneering	Esa Hukkinen
2006	Terranora	Wednesday night church New and third congregation of Tweed Heads Pastoral charge Av. Attend. 42 in 2007. Using Philip Bryant's workbook	Branching	Steve Taylor

Table 1 Continued

Year Established	Congregation	Outcome	Type of plant	Planter
Prior to 2003	Macquarie Chapel	Av. Attend. 270 in 2006.	Transplanting	Richard Quadrio
2003?	Forster	Revitalisation sponsored by Preb. of Hastings under John Thompson's leadership. Av. Attend. 90 in 2007	Repotted	Peter Flower
2003	Ashtonfield	Sponsored by some churches of Presbytery of the Hunter. Repotted into Maitland Presbyterian 2007 providing that congregation with much-needed leadership. Av. Attend. 37 in 2006.	Pioneering With small core group	Russell Vandervelden
2005	Glenwood	Vision of Blacktown East Progressing slowly. Av. Attend 25 in 2007.	Branching-colonisation	David Balzer-Peter Williamson
2005	Helensburgh	Vision of Caringbah Presbyterian Struggling Av. Attend. 10 in 2007.	Repotting - Pioneering	David Enderby
2006	Cornerstone Eastwood	(Concord)Ryde is the parent church CS Tang Eastwood & Mark Powell at Ryde Av attend. 44 in 2006	Branching	CS Tang

Table 2 Non English Speaking Background (NESB) Churches

Year/Group	Special Interest Congregation	Outcome	Type of plant	Planter/Pastor
12 Korean				
Mid 90's 1996	Antioch (Strathfield)	Av. Attend. 195 in 2006 Approx 300 in 2008	Pioneering Some English speaking	Ki Ok Jung
Late 70's-early 80's	Canaan (Petersham Presbyterian)	Av. Attend. 30 in 2007	Korean first generation Korean ministry	Won Young Moon (present)
1986-7	Hallelujah (@ Ashfield Presbyterian)	Approx 50-70	Korean first generation	Byung-gun Kim, Jounge-Yeol, Kim (present)
1998	Ho Ju Young Rak (Homebush)	Av. Attend 30	Korean first generation	Stephen Kim
1999	Kalos (Gladesville),	Av. Attend 85 in 2007.	Korean first generation	Jong-Suk, Park Byong – Ok Bang (New processing)
1998	Rainbow (Carlingford)	Av. Attend 60 in 2007	Korean first generation	Chi Woo Jwa
1992-3	Siloam (Strathfield) meets at the RC University	Av. Attend 325 in 2007	Korean first generation	Byeong Jae Ryu

Table 2 Continued

Year/Group	Special Interest Congregation	Outcome	Type of plant	Planter/Pastor
Korean cont'd				
1993	Spoken Urim	Av. Attend 120 in 2007	Korean first generation	Man –Kyung Kim?
Early 80's	Young Nak (Telopea)	300 + Korean & English speaking church each week	Korean first generation	Chang-Sik, Kim Myeong Gu-Lee (present)
2005	Chester Hill	English speaking & Korean language services with possibility of an inner city plant. Av Attend. 45 in 2006	NESB Repotting Korean?	Luke Yoo
Current	Mok-Yang Presbyterian Rose Bay	?	Korean first generation	Kyung-Cheon, Oh
?	Pal-Bok Presbyterian	?		Jung-Tae, Kim
1 Chinese				
1999	Burwood	CPC Surry Hills has grown back to around 750 and Burwood CPC is up to 750 (est. total growth of 50%) Multiple congregations and staff. 4 services @ the Burwood and Auburn locations. Av. Attend 458 in 2006	Branching NESB Cantonese English speaking Burwood @5 congregation	Dennis Law Assisted by Eugene Hor
1 Brazilian				
2006	Brazilian Christian Church Manly PC	Still in initial stages; around 30 mainly unconverted Brazilian youngsters attend Sun pm service, plus 14-20 attending mid-week Bible Study groups	NESB Brazilian	Wilson Fernandes
5 Indonesian				
1987	Hurstville Indonesian	Hurstville Pres. Sponsor church Av. Attend 97 in 2007. Commencing in 1987 as bible study Home mission in 1990 Pastoral charge 2003. Approx 200 in attendance	Pioneering	Robert Benn
2005	Earlwood	By Hurstville Indonesian Presbyterian Church Multicultural Service Av. Attend. 17 in 2007.	NESB Indonesian	
2007	HIPC Lane Cove	By Hurstville Indonesian PC Av. Attend. 30 in 2008.	NESB Indonesian	Harrijanto Rusli
	Randwick	Sponsor church Av. Attend. 470 in 2007.	NESB Indonesian	
2007	City Centre	By Randwick Indonesian Small congregation meets at Scots PC	NESB Indonesian	Joni Stephen T'jong & Joe Mock
2 Arabic				
?	Merrylands	English speaking Sami Gerges Arabic speaking 400+ Good relationship with PY		Hamdy Awad
?	Toongabbie	Also hosting Ghanaian Grp. Arabic cong. Av. 77; Eng Cong. Av.33 in 2006		Nabil Zakhary
2 Samoan				
?	Lakemba	Av. Attend. 78 in 2007	Pioneering	Fa'au'uga Si'itia
?	Newcastle	Approx 65	Pioneering	Setu Amosa
1 Cook Islands	Sydney South	Av. Attend 50 in 2006.		
Vietnamese				
Prior to 2003 Closed	Hoi-Thanh Tin Lahn Truong Lao	Met at Chester Hill.	Pioneering	Stephen Coxhead

Church Planting Manuals & Assessment Centres.

“Talent hits a target no one else can hit; Genius hits a target no one else can see.”

Arthur Schopenhauer German philosopher (1788 - 1860)

3.1 A Review of Manuals, Reports

There is a range of church planting manuals available ranging from simple single model to multiple model and even detailed strategic approaches. Below is a review by chapter headings of the various manuals.

3.1.1 The Way Ahead in Church Planting for the Presbyterian Church³⁹

This manual was produced, it appears, by some committee of the Victorian Assembly (Author and other such information are not printed in the book) on or before 1991 when it was given to this reports author. It is a single model approach using the “pioneering method”.

The chapters are listed below and take only 7 pages.

1. Developing an Area Strategy
2. Church Planting Personnel
3. Forming a Nucleus for a New Church
4. Internal Development of the Nucleus



Bibliography lists nothing written after 1976.

It also contains some appendices:

- Some practical Guidelines in developing a strategy for new church development
- Sources for gathering information
- Community Survey Questionnaire
- Sample letter of invitation to a meeting for potential members of a nucleus
- Sample letter to potential members of a nucleus
- Suggested agenda for the first meeting with a potential nucleus
- Potential Growth in Church Extension for the next five years –(an analysis of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Presbytery by Presbytery)
- Major NESB concentrations in Melbourne’s metropolitan regions

³⁹ *The Way Ahead in Church Planting* (Victorian Home Mission Department Prior to 1991?)

Whilst this manual is a snapshot of what Victorian Presbyterians have attempted at a particular point of time its helpfulness is limited by its age. The manual suggests a single launch strategy approach and its methodology arises out of a time when, to start a new church, one simply looked up those who call themselves Presbyterian in a new urban area and invited them along. This ministry context is radically different to the one in which we now find ourselves.

3.1.2 Church Planting Workbook

This 101 page manual (copyright 1992) by Philip Bryant is likely the most commonly available in Australia for the last 15 years. After successfully planting a church in 1985 the Victorian Baptist Union (BUV) asked Philip to chair a Church Planting Task Force in 1986. By 1987 Philip became their Church Planting Field Worker. They established a church planting vision for the BUV and later a training program (Frontline Training) designed specifically for Church Planters. In 7 years they planted 39 churches!

Philip wrote the manual by pulling together his papers and training material into a workbook format that anyone could use. Whilst the workbook has no bibliography Philip acknowledges he was influenced by English Baptists especially by Spurgeon's College also the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Texan Baptists and Rick Warren of Saddleback Church (then in its infancy). That said, Philip says his primary inspiration was trial and error from his experience in the Australian scene.



Philip, at the time of this report, is working for the Baptist Union in Western Australia - Ministries as a Church Health and Planting Consultant. Asked what changes would Philip would make would make, if publishing today, he says he would review and streamline the research chapter to bring it into line with the current Census data, review the chapter on Leadership and include more details on alternative models of church planting – especially multi-congregation and multiple campus models.⁴⁰

After taking one page to set out why we should plant churches, a common theme in manuals, the rest of the manual is a very practically laid out in the steps needed towards planting a church. The headings are below.

Steps in Planting a New Church

2.1. "Conception" Phase of Vision pages 1-33

- 1.1 Feasibility Study and Selection of Target Group
- 1.2 Selection of the Church Planter
- 1.3 Confirmation of Sponsor Church or Group
- 1.4 Developing the New Church's Project Plan
- 1.5 Defining the New Church's Purpose Statement
- 1.6 Defining the New Church's Values
- 1.7 Developing the New Church's Vision Statement

This section has some very practical helps in organizing the first stage. The project plan is a helpful list that gives focus to a new church plant and calendar dates by which to achieve preparation steps. The section on organizing the mission or purpose statement is biblically based but perhaps not as focused as the advice given by Harry Reeder in the *From Embers to a Flame* chapter Mission and Vision.⁴¹ The values section is confusing given that it encourages you to ask people what they value and then over

⁴⁰ Based on email correspondence

⁴¹ H.L. Reeder, *From Embers To A Flame-How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (P&R Publishing 2004) 145-165.

the page the correct values are outlined. Such an approach where their values are listened to and then overridden could easily generate unnecessary conflict. The vision section is helpful in the way it brings mission/purpose statement, values, feasibility studies together to synthesize a vision. The section on communicating the vision and particularly casting the vision is very practical and helpful. Philip argues for churches to be planting churches so he includes a section on the sponsor church and its relationship with the new church plant.

2.2. "Gestation" Phase of New Church Development pages 34-42

- 2.1 Selection of Steering Committee
- 2.2 Selection of Prayer Team
- 2.3 Selection of Name and Meeting Place
- 2.4 Determine Financial Support
- 2.5 Define Accountability and Relationships
- 2.6 Advertising the New Church
- 2.7 The Public Interest Meeting

This section is packed with simple but helpful road tested wisdom, the real nuts and bolts stuff for a generic church plant that probably would work well in a new suburb but may not go the distance in an already well - churched area. It relies on a public interest meeting in order to build the core/launch group. Whilst this manual is tailor made for the Baptist denomination it is not hard to make the leap to another setting. The funding section is particularly helpful.

In locating a new church Bryant suggests 4 core elements: visibility, access, parking and facility qualities (these should at least match community standards). He also suggests the church name should include the name of the targeted region and should include some denominational signifier so that the plant states openly and honestly who they are.

2.3. "Prenatal" Phase of New Church Development pages 43-75

- 3.1 Establishing a Core Group
- 3.2 The Core Group Studies
- 3.3 Selecting, Equipping, and Mobilising Leaders
- 3.4 Determining Evangelism and Discipling Method
- 3.5 Developing Community Contacts

Valuable practical advice is given in forming a launch team (core group). Philip suggests at least 6 families prior to first service however this may well be too few if the size of first service and survival statistics are considered.⁴² Bryant supplies examples of 11 studies that cover everything from the kingdom of God to leadership. Unfortunately it carries some unhelpful pneumatology claiming a second and subsequent repentance is required in order to become a "spirit filled Christian". These studies could be used as a guide but must be used with theological discernment.

There is a very useful section on the recognition, delegation and training of ministry leaders that all ministers in established churches could well benefit from. There is also great advice on the types of evangelism that may be appropriate for the launch team, given their gifts and opportunities.

2.4. "Birth" Phase of Church Development pages 76-87

- 4.1 Develop a Plan for the First One Hundred Days
- 4.2 Develop a Two Year Plan

⁴² P. Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook* (Baptist Union of Victoria 1992), 44.

4.3 Plan the First Public Worship Service

This section of the workbook has some useful ministry planning sheets that help shape, give focus to and even review ministries started in the early days of the church plant prior to and following public launch. They would work well with a "Mission Minded" approach to ministry where ministries are deliberate and target particular stages along the process from unchurched to ministering themselves.⁴³ It makes an attempt to measure ministries against the mission/purpose, values and vision of the church.

This manual has much that is helpful. At 16 years old it is a little dated and like *The Way Ahead in Church Planting in the Presbyterian Church* is committed to a one launch strategy approach to planting. However the simple yet useful tools this manual delivers would be a real help to church planting coaches and planters who have the discernment to use what is relevant to their situation.

3.1.3 Starting Mission Minded Churches

This manual is 89 pages long (first printed in June 2007) and is written by a man many NSW Presbyterians would know. Stuart Robinson pictured with his family is graduate of Moore Theological College and now pastors Chatswood Anglican Church. His ministry and church planting experience are laid out below.⁴⁴ Robinson's main influences seem to be from the UK US sources figuring less on his list of recommended resources.



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- 2 years as an associate minister in a wealthy seaside suburb
- 2 years in a public housing community.
- In late 80's planted [Quakers Hill Anglican Church](#)
- Parklea Anglican Community church which closed after 4 years. Began a student ministry at the University of Western Sydney.
- Late 90's commenced work as Senior Minister [St Paul's Tervuren](#) in Brussels and [The English Church Liege](#), Belgium. His task was to relocate and grow the former and relocate, 're-pot' and make self-sufficient the latter.
- Later returned to Sydney to work as a consultant with [Evangelism Ministries](#)
- and led the team that planted [Peninsula Church in Pyrmont](#)

The chapters of his manual are listed below

1. Starting Mission-Shaped Churches: An Introduction
2. Biblical Foundations: A Brief Survey
Reality Check: Lanyon Valley Anglican Church - Jonathan Holt.
3. Planters and Pioneers
4. Methods and Models
Reality Check: North Forbes - Lyn Bullard
5. Five Big Questions: Target, Task, Team, Timing, Tools
6. Writing a New Ministry Profile
7. Recruiting a Core Team
Reality Check: Maroubra Surfers Church - Steve Bligh
8. The Mission Action Plan – MAP
9. Biblical Values- MAP I
10. The Mission Statement - MAP II
Reality Check: Berkeley Life Centre - Wayne Pickford

⁴³ P. Bolt Mission Minded

⁴⁴ Biographical notes on Stuart Robinson www.next1000.org/index.php?q=node/76 cited 19 March 2008.

11. The Vision Statement -MAP III
12. Key Ministry Areas - MAP IV
13. Prayer and Faith Goals - MAP V
Reality Check: Church by the Bridge - Paul Dale
14. Going 'Public'
15. The Last Word

Appendix 1: Mission Shaped or Mission Flavored?

Appendix 2: Resource List

This manual describes itself as a guide for starting (planting) mission shaped churches that will start mission shaped churches.⁴⁵ In 2005 Robinson co-authored Mission Action Planning (MAP) and his church planting manual draws heavily from the MAP approach to ministry.⁴⁶ One of the interesting things about this manual are the 5 reality checks placed between chapters. Each is an example of a church plant in progress. The diversity of the types of plants is notable; clearly not all plants are nice family churches in clean new sub-divisions.

Robinson believes planters can be all sorts of people regardless of age gender, and even health nevertheless he advocates that planters ought to exhibit a track record in evangelism, disciple making, small group leadership and measure up to the standards we would expect in elders 1 Tim 3:1-10.⁴⁷ Stuart also provides a self assessment guide however the usefulness of it is limited as it does not provide a ranking score to help the person rate themselves as suitable or not. The self assessment guide covers most of Ridley's 13 characteristics (see chapter 6) and adds a few that reformed evangelicals would highly value such as "*a clear (and biblical) theology of mission; a confidence in the efficacy of the gospel.*"⁴⁸ additional questions of a theological nature regarding the gospel and preaching is also a feature of the Redeemer online self assessment process.

This manual has a very limited analysis of various launch strategies, recognizing just 4 approaches,

- 1) The minister's family alone,
- 2) Mixed economy model (in others words, a service targeted at a particular subgroup of the community e.g. early adults)
- 3) Local start up (where the push comes from residents in an area wanting a church)
- 4) Repotting, (restarting churches in new areas or change of ministry leadership).

Robinson advocates asking 5 questions leading into the church plant.⁴⁹

- **Target:** who are we seeking to reach?
- **Task:** how will we reach them?
- **Team:** who will oversee, organize and orchestrate this ministry? (Planter or Planters)
- **Timing:** time tabling leading up, launch, review etc this is not unlike Philip Bryant's Project plan.
- **Tools:** all the nuts and bolts, equipment, budget and the all important mission action plan (MAP). Unlike Philip Bryant's workbook, which has the steps written in (just fill in the blank spaces), Robinson tends to speak in theory and let you work it out in practice.

Robinson has a very helpful section on recruiting a core/launch team, which is one of the greatest challenges in Presbyterian churches where many of our sponsoring churches are even people poor.

The last sections of the book speak of the Mission Action Plan in detail which if followed should give you

- a schedule of **Biblical Values**,
- a clear statement of **Mission**,
- a compelling **Vision**

⁴⁵ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007) 11.

⁴⁶ S.P. Robinson, C.Smith & M.K.Wilson, *Mission Action Planning for the Churches and Organisations in the 21st Century* (Anglicare, Diocese of Sydney, Evangelism Ministries 2004)

⁴⁷ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007) 22.

⁴⁸ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007) 23-24.

⁴⁹ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007) 33-37.

- Activities grouped under **Key Ministry Areas**
- Set of achievable **Goals** for each key Ministry Area

3.1.4 Church Planter Manual

This 265 page manual was produced in 2002 by Redeemer Church Planting Center New York and is co-authored by Timothy J. Keller and J. Allen Thompson. This manual seeks to avoid two shortfalls: only telling us why to plant churches or giving only one model in which to reproduce churches. Three main principles underpin the manual. The first is a real belief in the power of the gospel for evangelism and planting. The second is contextualization, meaning that effective ministry happens when biblical truths and the realities of the context and the gifts of leaders are all given appropriate attention. The third, which may seem strange to those with little prior experience of Redeemer, is the belief that churches grow best when they aim to serve the shalom/peace of the city they are in.

The chapters are as outlined below.⁵⁰

INTRODUCTION

PART I. OWNING THE CHURCH PLANTING VISION

Chapter 1 Clarifying Biblical Rationale

- 1.1 Why plant churches?
- 1.2 What kind of churches do we plant?
- 1.3 What values should we own?

Chapter 2 Getting to Know the Context

- 2.1 Why the city is important
- 2.2 Exploring urban church planting models and methods
- 2.3 Selecting a people group or neighborhood.

Chapter 3 Understanding Church Planting Leadership

- 3.1 Church Planter leadership qualities
- 3.2 Essentials of a call.
- 3.3 Assessment: Selecting Church Planters



PART II. LEARNING AND PLANNING

Chapter 4 Doing Neighborhood Research

- 4.1 Types of research.
- 4.2 Writing "people profiles"

Chapter 5 Developing a Philosophy of Ministry

- 5.1 What is a "Philosophy of Ministry"?
- 5.2 The importance of ministry design.
- 5.3 The process of ministry design.
- 5.4 The elements of ministry design.
- 5.5 Designing linking strategies.

Chapter 6 Writing an Action Plan

- 6.1 Definitions and assumptions about planning
- 6.2 Elements of a church planting plan.
- 6.3 Sample of a planning document.

PART III. LAUNCHING THE CHURCH

Chapter 7 Connecting People to Christ (Stage 1)

- 7.1 Evangelistic networking:
- 7.2 Recruiting and training a launch team
- 7.3 Developing a kingdom-focused prayer team

⁵⁰ T.J. Keller & J.A Thompson *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planter Centre, 2002).

- 7.4 Evangelistic worship
- 7.5 Group-based outreach
- 7.6 Church-Life bridge.
- Chapter 8 Building Christians into Servant Leaders (Stage 2)
 - 8.1 Benefits of a Disciple-making plan.
 - 8.2 Exploring learning dynamics
 - 8.3 School of Gospel Foundations (S.G.F.)
 - 8.4 Identifying and training community group leaders
 - 8.5 Preparing the church for mercy ministries
- Chapter 9 Training and Releasing Servant Leaders (Stage 3)
 - 9.1 Developing spiritual maturity and leadership skills
 - 9.2 Mentoring as a method of training leaders
 - 9.3 Officer selection and training

PART IV. SPIRITUAL RENEWAL DYNAMICS

- Chapter 10 Renewal Dynamics Overview
- Chapter 11 Individual Renewal Dynamics
 - 11.1 Law and love axis
 - 11.2 Repentance
 - 11.3 Living by faith
- Chapter 12 Corporate Renewal Dynamics
 - 12.1 Theology and spirituality
 - 12.2 Dynamics: Intake, Combustion, Power

PART V. CHANGING THE FABRIC OF THE CITY

- Chapter 13 Applying the Gospel to Culture
 - 13.1 Church as embodiment of the kingdom of God.
 - 13.2 A "missional" church
 - 13.3 City growth: A map
- Chapter 14 Spiritual Change: Ezra model
 - 14.1 Church multiplication: a priority
 - 14.2 Ephesus case study: a church planting movement
 - 14.3 Elements of a church planting movement
- Chapter 15 Social Change: Nehemiah model
 - 15.1 Lessons from Nehemiah
 - 15.2 Case study: New Song Community Church
- Chapter 16 Cultural Change: Esther model
 - 16.1 Esther's role in the marketplace
 - 16.2 The marketplace church.

CONCLUSION: LEARNING FROM REDEEMER'S HISTORY

Redeemer's approach is highly organized and built around spiritual renewal and mission oriented thinking. It deliberately and unashamedly focuses on the importance of cities within God's plans and wants to correct what it sees as an evangelical fear of cities and city based ministry. They want to add to the culture and well being of their city where they work and a part of this is a real self-belief in the importance of and value of what the gospel brings to the people they reach through church planting.

The manual at times feels very Redeemer focused (its examples and stories nearly all come from Redeemer's experience) nevertheless the manual is broad enough to act as a guide for anyone establishing a course in church planting, coaching church planters or indeed for use as a self-training manual for a potential church planter.

3.1.5 Coaching Urban Church Planters

This 135 page manual is meant to grow visionary leaders, vital churches and multiplication movements in the city. Its author J. Allen Thompson of Redeemer New York has years of church planting assessment and training experience. Its teaching on coaching could be applicable to other situations but the focus is really planting. There is no reason why this manual could not be used by experienced church planters as a guide to coaching emerging planters in Australia. An obvious pre-requisite would be working through the **Redeemer Church Planting Manual** and some adaption to the Australian and mostly suburban environment where we are more likely to be planting.

3.1.6 The Next 1000 Australian Churches

This next document by Steve Addison is available online and comes more in the way of a vision setting document for church planting movements.⁵¹ The documents simple presentation undergirded by web links understates the author's good understanding of church planting. Make no mistake, the headings Addison uses signify a wealth of knowledge and serve as a good guide to anyone who wants to see church planting grow into a successful movement.

Steve Addison has been studying church planting for years and has a great interest in church planting movements in others words churches that plant churches that plant other churches and usually lots of them. His research has him looking at everything from conservative denominations to Pentecostal churches both in Australia and overseas.

Steve planted a Baptist church in the 1980s in Melbourne where he currently lives. His interest in Christian movements carried over into a Doctor of Ministry with Seminary. Steve is currently serving as Director of *Church Resource Ministries (CRM) Australia*, a member of the *CRM* global community.



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3.1.7 Mission Shaped Church

Mission Shaped Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context is 175 page report on the state of church planting in the Church of England first published in 2004. It is available to be purchased as a book or downloaded online.

The chapters are listed below

- 1 changing contexts
- 2 the story since *Breaking New Ground*
- 3 what is church planting and why does it matter?
- 4 fresh expressions of church
- 5 theology for a missionary church
- 6 some methodologies for a missionary church
- 7 an enabling framework for a missionary church
- 8 recommendations

This manual is what you expect from the Church of England spending much time reviewing an earlier report *Breaking New Ground* and carefully defining all aspects to do with church planting down to and including parsing the words "plant" and "church".

The Church of England (C of E) encompasses a wide theological tradition from Anglo-Catholic right through to charismatic and just about everything in between. With Episcopal sensitivity this report glosses over theological labels but reading between the lines one finds the Anglo-Catholics doing very little planting and the Evangelicals-Charismatics doing most. A good example is Holy Trinity Brompton

⁵¹ S. Addison, *The next 1000 Australian Churches* <http://next1000.org/files/next1000ebook.pdf> Cited 14 February 2008.

(home of the Alpha course) planting 15 churches in 15 years leading up to the report (see the church planting tree in chapter 2).

Clearly many in the Church of England find church planting threatening especially when it encroaches on traditional parish boundaries or the expression of worship in the new churches does not reflect traditional styles. However they are coming to see church planting as a necessity and more importantly a part of their mission role as a missionary church to England.

This report makes for interesting reading particularly as it is an example of a very traditional parish orientated denomination trying to come to terms with church planting and finding that church planting does not fit their neatly organised administrative schema. One almost feels the grinding frustration of those who are highly motivated to plant churches within the C of E and sense the reason why church planting networks are arising. The recommendations chapter is worth consideration as a window into how a traditional denomination can make church planting an important priority.

3.2 Church Planter Assessment Centres

The seven reviews above help us to evaluate some of the tools that are available. They are limited in their effectiveness. Many denominations, networks and church planting churches take a more committed and organised approach not only in the assessment of potential church planters but also training and coaching church planters. Two examples of assessment and training approaches are shown below.

3.2.1 Presbyterian Church of America

The Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) runs a Church Planter Assessment system. The first element is a two day readiness seminar to help potential church planters determine if they might plant a church. This is followed by a four day Church Planters Assessment Center (CPAC).⁵² ⁵³ These are usually attended by husband and wife. If the couples are deemed suitable they are offered ongoing denominational training, coaching and leadership/ ministry training.⁵⁴

3.2.2 Redeemer Presbyterian Church New York

Redeemer Presbyterian Church New York offers a 5 step process towards becoming a church planter:

1. Self-evaluation (available online)
2. Application,
3. References,
4. Assessment,
5. Training.⁵⁵

The author, a veteran of two church plants, tried the self evaluation and just scraped in as a potential planter.

⁵² www.pca-mna.org/churchplanting/assessmentcenter.php cited 1 April 2008

⁵³ not to be confused with the Christian churches' Church Planting Assessment Center (CPAC)

⁵⁴ G. Smith, Who starts new churches 2.

⁵⁵ Becoming a Church Planter www.redeemer2.com/rcpc/rcpc/index.cfm?fuseaction=process Cited 26 February 2008

3.3 Need in NSW

A potential church planter assessment would be a valuable tool for the PCNSW. Planter Assessment tools are needed to aid churches that intend to plant churches. Few in local church leadership have the experience, knowledge and tools to predict, with confidence, the emerging leaders most suitable for church planting. By developing an assessment process like that run by the Presbyterian Church of America or Redeemer albeit in a simplified form we are better positioned to avoid unnecessary failure and suffering not only for the pastors and families placed unsuitably in planting situations but for those who make up the launch team. The necessity for assessment of potential planters is amplified by the challenging church planting situations we are likely to be placing people into.

Our denomination requires a process that will serve as a helpful assessment method, predicting which prospective church planters are more likely to effectively start a new church from those who would be better suited to serving the Lord in another ministry situation.

Launch Strategies and Models for Church Plantings

A model is the broad brush strokes, the big picture and is not to be confused with the much more detailed methods used.

4.1 Model

There is some confusion in the terminology applied to church planting. For the purposes of this study we will employ the *Redeemer Presbyterian Church New York* (Redeemer) approach where the term **model** is used to describe the type of church e.g. *A Community Church* serves local residents within a geographical area whereas an *Urban Professional Church* will reach out to a strata of society and will use different approaches such as an excellence in arts and communication.⁵⁶

“A model is a preliminary representation of something, serving as a plan from which the final, usually larger object is to be constructed.”⁵⁷

This definition of a model is helpful because it actually recognises how our minds work. When my wife, Louise, and I were sent to country NSW to plant a new church (Tamworth Community Presbyterian Church) in 1992 we already had an embryonic image of a church in our minds. We wanted to be a part of a church that taught biblical truth with the gospel central. We wanted to get past some of the cultural restraints that caused us frustration such as archaic religious language. We wanted the corporate worship to communicate, to be real, enjoyable (read good music, the best of traditional and contemporary with children’s music thrown in) and be a place you could bring friends to hear the gospel and see how the Christian faith makes a positive difference in real people’s lives. We wanted a church that had the foundation of small group bible study. Our experiences in our home church, Caringbah Presbyterian, and later Plumpton and Rooty Hill, St Mathias and Scripture Union Beach Mission, were all blended into this mixing pot and we were keen to take what we valued most from each of our ministry experiences.

Later when we finally met our Tamworth based launch team we found they were comfortable with our model and helped further shape it. This happened during a series of team study, worship and planning meetings at our home prior to public launch.

One of the limitations of older church planting manuals and mindsets is the commitment to a single model of church plant. We have a conservative picture of what church looks like, prayer and preaching all neatly packaged with four hymns or songs - but such an approach fails to recognise that our society

⁵⁶ T.J. Keller & J.A Thompson *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planter Centre, 2002), 56.

⁵⁷ T.J. Keller & J.A Thompson *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planter Centre, 2002), 53.

is increasingly diversified. A single style of church will only work for some people. It places a great limitation on the variety of models that we could utilize and the different communities and sub-groups we could be reaching.

Using different models of church has allowed younger generations, and many different NESB groups to be reached and whole range of societal sub-groups such as art students, bikers, and drug addicts.

Perhaps by employing a different model of church plant we could turn the tide of rural church closures into rural church openings. The population in rural areas has decreased dramatically over the last few decades; this coupled with falling church attendance rates generally has led to a number of formerly viable single minister churches becoming unviable. Our traditional model requires a full-time minister on location providing Bible teaching and leadership. Unfortunately we can no longer afford to provide a minister on location for small congregations. What will we do? We could continue to turn these smaller centers into preaching places of neighbouring churches and possibly burn out the ministers at those centres or we could consider an approach to church that is being used in the US called multi-site church.

A multi-site church often takes advantage of modern technology, live and in real time. A central church beams a message and music often with a local service leader adding local flavour and encouraging members to participate rather than just watch. Why couldn't we reach our rural communities with the same approach? Certainly a satellite service will not be as good as a larger live gathering yet our rural communities have learnt to make other adjustments such as setting up a local bank when the big banks have closed. Such a multi-site approach coupled with a ministry plan that draws all the people together for occasions such as a church camps, woman's, men's and youth events, shares bible study material and encourages good local lay ministry and what it starts to sound like is a model of church that could work across the big geographical distances in our country.

4.2 Launch Strategy

A launch strategy in its simplest form is the approach or type of church planting method used. The launch strategy when properly reasoned through should answer the question what do we have to do in order to launch this church? In other words the launch strategy is the behind the scenes planning, governance, financing and even staffing of a church plant.

4.2.1 A Simple Analysis

Sydney Anglican and Church planter Stuart Robinson presents church plant launch strategies very simply as one of three approaches⁵⁸.

1. **Multi-congregational church plants:** This is simply commencing a new congregation. An excellent and often cheap way to reach more people and different interest based or sub-groups. On most occasions original church government structures, be it parish councils or elders, will retain ongoing oversight and support for the new congregations.
2. **Local start ups:** This is a new start in a distinct geographical or social setting where the church will be or become a separate entity with its own oversight and leadership. This approach requires a strong commitment to mission and high level of intentionality.
3. **Repotting and transplanting:** involves new leaders (often a team) assisting an ailing fellowship to start again either by commencing a new congregation whilst maintaining the existing work or commencing in new direction involving the existing members. Transplanting is moving geographically in order to become more effective.

⁵⁸ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* 27.

4.2.2 A More Detailed Analysis

Another analysis by Steve Addison (Director of Church Resources Ministry Australia) drawing on work in the Church Planters Toolkit (a decade old American tool by Bob Logan) describes the various launch strategies for church planting as follows:

1. **Pioneering:** starting a new church from scratch e.g. Cornerstone?
2. **Branching:** (Mother-daughter or even strawberry runners) Hiving off a group from a mother church. e.g. Tamworth Community Presbyterian Church, Southern Cross
3. **Colonizing:** physically relocating a core group from a mother church to a new community.
4. **Seeding:** capitalizing on moves of key lay leaders to form core groups in the community.
5. **Adopting:** embracing core groups and or churches that seek help e.g. some of our NESB churches.
6. **Partnering:** cooperative venture between several churches and or denominations to get a new church started. E.g. Ashtonfield Presbyterian Church, Forster
7. **Revitalizing:** take over and restart at the same site. This definition is probably unhelpful in PCNSW where we understand revitalization as returning an existing church to a healthy condition.
8. **Transplanting:** selling and relocating a church, sometimes to several new starts.
9. **Propagating:** multiplying a network of cell groups through theological education or evangelism by extension.
10. **Catalyzing:** prominent leadership by a person or church that sparks a multitude of new churches

4.2.3 Even Greater Detail

Table 3 represents a more detailed analysis of the various launch strategies.⁶⁰

Type	Vision	Leader	Coaching	Resources	Core group	Location
One at a time "Independent"	Of a God called church planter to plant a church	The new senior pastor and their vision Very little assessment.	About 50% of the time no coaching. Other times through an parachurch church planting group	Usually raised by the church planter and the initial core group	Gathered by the church planter based on planter's networks and ability	Decided by the planter and core group.
Denominational Church Plant Typical	Of a denominational leader or combination of leader and potential planter	Potential planter Sometimes assessed through church planting assessment process.	From the denominational system or those they outsource to another group.	From the denomination and the core group. Sometimes land and facilities are handled by denomination.	Often solicited from other churches in the denominational group.	General area targeted by denomination.
Denominational Church Plant Mother Church Plan	Of a Mother Church with denominational support	The Mother Church and potential planter with denominational support Sometimes assessed through church planting assessment process	Shared between Mother Church And denominational system	Raised in combination with Mother Church and denomination.	Often raised from mother church as well as gathered by church planter	Decided by Mother church and denomination
Church Planting Church	Of a Senior Pastor of a Church Planting Church	Chosen by Senior Pastor and team from Church Planting Church. Assessed using formal or informal system	Often trained as intern or staff member of mother church From Mother church and their designated church planting coach The peer group of planters from that network	From a combination of mother church, church planter and the core group	Sometimes from mother church, other networks of the church planter.	Determined with guidance from the mother church and vision of the planting pastor.
Church Planting Church Movement or Network "Traditional"	Usually one primary church planting pastor as visionary, other pastors that come along side	Chosen by primary church planting pastor or another pastor in the network. Assessed using formal or informal system Often trained as intern or staff member of mother church	The church planting coach for the network. A peer group of planters from the network From the mother church as well as the network.	Some networks have a "loan" or percentage gift system.	Sometimes from the mother church, the other network churches as well as the planter's ability to gather up the core group.	Determined by the planter with input from the network.
Church Planting Movement "non traditional and house churches."	Usually from a primary church or movement leader. Others catch the vision for rapidly multiplying groups	Self selected, trained and blessed in a distributed way.	Continuous and real time with coaches and other leaders.	Very little resources needed. All "volunteer" force.	Found and reached by planter.	Determined by target group they are trying to reach.
Multi Campus or Multi site Ministry ⁵⁹	Of a Senior Pastor of the Church with a multi site or multi campus ministry	A campus pastor who is a part of the larger church system. Selected, trained by the base church.	At times, the campus pastor is also a specialist for the whole system as well as the "face" for the campus. Sometimes the Sr. Pastor of the primary location is also the Pastor of the second or third campus.	As a part of the larger church system.	Resources derived from the primary location and then found in the harvest. From the primary location especially people who live in that region and commute to the primary location. Persons identified and targeted by the new location.	Determined by the primary church and their vision

⁵⁹ Multi-site Ministry is a means for a church to spread its ministry to multiple sites often using a video stream. Thus the speaker, band, music from the primary location is broadcast to another location or even several locations. The internet makes this not only possible but affordable. Singing and other aspects of the service at the second location are led by someone on that location. It should be noted that multi-site approach to ministry is a growing phenomenon and we will see it in Australia. This would not be a bad option for many small country churches that would otherwise be struggling to provide good quality bible teaching and music.

⁶⁰ *Church planting Typology* (Leadership Network 2002) www.leadnet.org/downloads/churchplantingtypologyreport1.pdf Cited 24 February 2008.

The good number of launch strategies listed above demonstrates the great variety of ways of creating church plants. It encourages us to be more creative than simply adopting a one method strategy such as is suggested by some of the manuals. The important thing is where we are aiming rather than how we get there. Any strategy carried out in a godly manner is just as valid as another. Flexibility is a key characteristic found in successful planters and so we should be open to a great deal of flexibility in launch strategies.

The advice and accepted wisdom prior to the planting of Redeemer New York was don't try and plant in the city, evangelical churches belong in the suburbs, not the city. Instead they developed a strategy that is based on people rather than property. Using models of church that better matched the different sub-groups that make up New York. They thought outside the box and God used that to plant a great number of churches not only in that city but in other cities around the world.

Keys to New Church Survival

99% of new church plants survived the first year, 92% the second, 81% the third and 68% the fourth.

5.1 Healthy DNA

Probably the most common mistake in church planting is to plant a church that simply isn't healthy. Experience shows a sponsor church which has little or no mission energy - no drive for outreach to the unchurched - will give birth to a new church that is just like it. Although such an effort, with a large starting group may at first look as if it is a successful plant, it will be unlikely to continue growing or ever plant further churches. A new church with faulty DNA is not worth the energy, expense and disappointment.

It is imperative to commence churches that are healthy and to do this requires mission intention built in from the first planning stages.

"Planting is a process, but unless and until the kingdom and the mission are in the DNA of the seed of the church, what is planted will prove to be sterile. If mission is not located within the identity of church, planting is very unlikely to recover it."⁶¹



Fellowship just prior to Baptism Newcastle

When a sponsor church has a healthy approach to ministry and the church planter and the majority of the launch team are immersed in that church culture it is often enough to set up a new church plant that mimics the parent church. Of course you would expect the new church plant over time will gain a culture of its own and its ministries may well reflect the gifts of the participants rather than simply aping what was done at the sponsor church. However this success is predicated on the community being targeted being similar to that of the sponsor church. E.g. Ministry suitable to university graduate Anglo-Saxons is

⁶¹ *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context, 33.*

not likely to work well with NESB needs in the next suburb. We need to be deliberate about the type of DNA that is being written into a new church.

5.1.1 Healthy Churches Start at the Planning Stage

For the most part planting a healthy church that will grow disciples and effectively outreach into a community requires a level of intentionality from the beginning. Close attention will need to be given to understanding what makes for healthy churches and establishing mission principles appropriate to reaching the people group the church is aimed at.

Surfside (a congregation of St Philips Newcastle) is intentionally reaching young adults, many of whom attend, or have attended, Newcastle University. Multi-media lectures are common at university today so this has become a normal teaching component during sermons. Young adults reach young adults so an important part of the church culture is getting young adults trained and involved in ministry.



St Philips & Surfside Camp (5 years into replotting)

5.2

Ma

King Church Plants more successful

A review of the PCNSW church plant initiatives in tables 1 and 2 reveal that there have been 58 churches planted since 1981. Of these 33 are English speaking and 25 are NESB.

Of the English-speaking church plants

- 46 % have grown to healthy self-sustaining size.
- 9 % have a tenuous yet independent existence (less than 60 adults)
- 27 % are now preaching centres of other churches.
- 18 % were closed or merged into other churches

Of the NESB church plants

- 56 % have grown to healthy self-sustaining size.
- 24 % have a tenuous yet independent existence (less than 60 adults)
- 12 % are now preaching centres of other churches.
- 4 % were closed or merged into other churches
- 6 % unknown

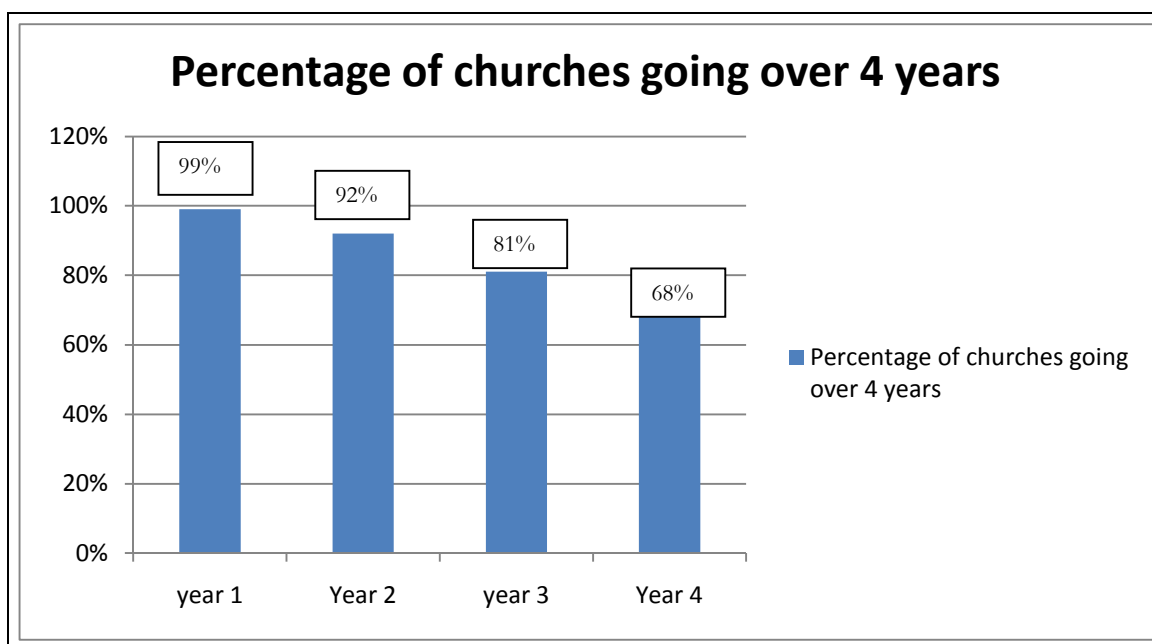
Some churches have prospered and gone on to become large healthy growing churches whilst others have failed to thrive. Some churches that failed to thrive are still functioning but their existence is tenuous. Other churches only exist as small preaching centres while others have closed altogether. A success rate of only 46% for English speaking and 56% for NESB church plants suggests a long-term failure rate of around 50%. This is deeply worrying given the damage to morale of ministers involved, their families and congregational members, not to mention the loss of finances involved. We should explore whether such a failure rate should be expected when planting new churches? We also need to

know if the failure rate is inevitable or are there measures we can take to improve the church plant survival rate?

5.2.1 Survival

2006 US research conducted over 12 denominations and networks taking in more than 1000 churches reveals the following illuminating statistics. 99% of new church plants survived the first year, 92% the second, 81% the third and 68% the fourth.⁶²

Table 4



5.2.2 Key Factors Influencing Survivability

Researcher Ed Stetzer made some important discoveries while researching over 600 planters and testing over a 100 factors. A few key factors make significant difference in the growth rate of new church plants.⁶³

5.2.2.1 Assessment

Church plants of pastors who have been through an assessment process experience 20% higher church attendance rates than pastors who have not been through assessment.⁶⁴ (See more on assessment in chapter 6.)

5.2.2.2 Planter mentoring

Meeting regularly with a mentor, coach or supervisor is also related to faster growth. Weekly meetings produce a better result than monthly.⁶⁵ Coaches and supervisors often have small tips, gained through their own education and experience that gives great results.

⁶² G. Smith, Improving the health and survivability of new churches (Leadership Network: 2002) http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/file_492.pdf Cited 14 February 2008, 2.

⁶³ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study RESEARCH REPORT(A Publication of the Center for Missional Research, North American Mission Board 2007) http://www.namb.net/atf/cf/%7BCDA250E8-8866-4236-9A0C-C646DE153446%7D/RESEARCH_REPORT_SURVIVABILITY_HEALTH.PDF?tr=y&auid=2440992 cited 12 March 2008, 14.

⁶⁴ G. Smith, Improving the health and survivability of new churches 7.

⁶⁵ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 4.

5.2.2.3 Church planter training

Church Planter Basic training is related to faster growing congregations. This may be in the form of a “Church planter boot camp” or a course such as Redeemer New York offers.

5.2.2.4 Church planter peer group

When church planters meet with their peer group at least once a month the odds of survivability increase by 135%. Planters who met with a peer group experienced an 83% survival rate whilst those who didn’t meet with their peers experienced just a 67% survival rate.⁶⁶

5.2.2.5 Providing lay training

When the planter provides leadership development and training for new members, odds of survivability *increase* by over 250%. 79% of churches that provided training and development for leaders survived compared to 59% survival when no training was offered.⁶⁷

5.2.2.6 Church type

Program orientated, purpose driven and seeker sensitive churches all achieved a higher growth rate than ministry or relational model churches.⁶⁸ The point of relevance for NSW Presbyterians is that we tend to provide ministry and relational model churches and need to become more purposeful and program orientated.

5.2.2.7 Membership standards

The presence of high membership standards (tithing, signing a membership covenant, ministry involvement, new members, small group involvement were all tested) and demonstrate a positive correlation to growth and size of the congregation.⁶⁹ The church that has high expectations of its members grows quicker and bigger.

5.2.2.8 Stewardship plan

The church plant with a proactive stewardship development plan enabling the church to be financially self-sufficient, *increases* the odds of survivability by over 178%. Of church plants with a stewardship development plan, 81% survived whereas only 68% of church plants survived among those without a stewardship plan.⁷⁰ Surprisingly 30% of new churches attained self – sufficiency in the first year whereas 30% were not self sustaining by year five.⁷¹ We should learn an important lesson here. **Those churches that intentionally and openly deal with the stewardship issue have less financial worries than those that don’t.**

Some NSW new Presbyterian churches, out of a desire to overcome any feeling “we are only after their money”, have de-emphasised giving by placing a box at the back of the church and under-promoted the need and necessity to get behind the plant by giving sacrificially. Bishop Frank Retief, when asked about this approach to giving at a church planting conference, said he would never use this method. He explained “people need every reminder to give to the Lord’s work and no excuse to forget.”

5.2.2.9 Church planter expectations

“If the church planter’s expectations of the church plant meet the reality of the church planting experience, the chance of survivability *increases* by over 400 percent. Of those who said their expectations were realized, 87% of their churches survived compared to only 61% of church plants

⁶⁶ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 14.

⁶⁷ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 14.

⁶⁸ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 6-7.

⁶⁹ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 10-11.

⁷⁰ E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 14.

⁷¹ G. Smith, Improving the health and survivability of new churches 3.

survived among those who did not have their expectations met.⁷² The learning point here is that training and preparation has to be realistic. Planters need to know it will be tough so they will prove more resilient when the plant goes slower than expected or trouble is experienced.

5.3 Faster Growing Churches

Although some network churches tend to grow at a faster rate the average church plant does not pass 100 people in attendance in the first four years.⁷³ This means we need to be realistic in our expectations. Planting is hard work and it will take time. The launch group needs to be committed. We also have to learn from the faster growing churches. They tend to use small groups and preview services prior to public services. Fast growing churches start with more seed families and have teen and child ministries in place at the time of launch and offer at least three ministries to first time attendees.⁷⁴

Fast growing churches (larger than 200 in the first 3 years) were compared to slower growing struggling church plants.⁷⁵ In the fast growing new churches it was found;

- 88% have a church planting team (More than one paid staffer)
- 63% have a core group/launch group of 26-75 people (Truism in the Australian context of church planting: the first 30 are the hardest to gather, later people will come easier, U.K. study mentioned 50 as a barrier to work through)⁷⁶
- 75% have contemporary worship styles
- 80% spend one tenth or more of the budget on evangelism.
- 16% have higher rate of full time pastors
- 63% raise additional funding

5.4 Factors related to Negative Outcomes

There are numerous factors that may negatively affect survivability. Not surprisingly a pastor who is more maintenance and nurturing orientated will not do well. The prospects diminish if a church plant attracts too many nominal Christians or hurting Christians who may remain unhelpful models for new believers, failing to serve and demanding too much of the leadership's attention.⁷⁷ If a new church has too many members who are unwilling to seek and welcome new attendees, survivability will also be reduced.

The question has to be asked why some church plants have gone on to become multi-staff congregation planting churches themselves, whilst others have closed or failed to grow as they might. Is it the planter? Problems in the core group? Was the project an unlikely prospect in that area or demographic? Was the planter or launch team lacking training? Likely, no simple answer will suffice, however the American experience is that failure rates have dropped significantly over recent years as the Americans have implemented planter assessment, training and coaching.⁷⁸

⁷² E.J. Stetzer & P. Connor Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 14.

⁷³ G. Smith, *Improving the health and survivability of new churches* 2.

⁷⁴ G. Smith, *Improving the health and survivability of new churches* 6.

⁷⁵ G. Smith, *Improving the health and survivability of new churches* 5.

⁷⁶ *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*, 55.

⁷⁷ G. Smith, *Improving the health and survivability of new churches* 5.

⁷⁸ G. Smith, *Who starts new churches* 2.

Identifying Potential Church Planters

"The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour."

6.1 Most Important Ingredient

The single most important factor in successfully planting churches has to be the choice of church planter. Great care needs to be taken when selecting a potential church planter or when replacing a church planter.

"A desire to plant a church is not the same as a call to plant a church."⁷⁹

The Church of the Savior in Wayne Pennsylvania should stand as warning for us. They had successfully birthed three churches but one of the most promising a 300 strong congregation was decimated to less than 70 by the wrong choice of a new and almost unknown pastor. The style and approach of the pastor was so mismatched with the original vision of the pre-existing core group there was bound to be problems.

In the past, the choice of planters in PCNSW has owed much to availability, intuitive guess work and sometimes vague notions of church planters being more outreach orientated and or more abrasive or aggressive than the average minister. Such an approach has fostered ill-conceived plants and caused the personnel and families sent to plant churches unnecessary disappointment and discouragement. The truth is that not all ministers are suitable for church planting. Nor is every church planter suitable for every type of church plant.

A review of church planter identification methods around the world reveals a range from no recognised process to a highly formalized assessment method. Four key areas to identifying potential church planters are outlined below. If Ministry and Mission is to help our denomination develop church planting, we must be equipped to help motivated sponsor churches to identify potential church planters. This is a key area where M&M could develop a competence beyond the capacity of most local churches.

6.2 Identifying Prospective Church Planters

Outlined below are four key methods that can be used individually or together to better assess whether a planter will be able to successfully lead a church plant.

⁷⁹ J. Hunt Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches
<http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/Finding%20Church%20Planters.pdf> Cited 14 February 2008. 5

6.2.1. Working with someone you know

Personal observation is the first and most obvious measure to use in identifying potential church planters. This method has been used successfully by South Africa's Bishop Frank Retief. St James Capetown has no formal assessment method, instead suitable men having been converted and shaped by Bishop Frank Retief's ministry are identified and encouraged to pursue church planting.⁸⁰ Such an approach can work well in a strong church planting environment, where potential planters are well known and prepared for planting new churches that are shaped according to a similar model or "DNA" as the sponsor church.



The advantage of using someone you know is that you have had the opportunity to observe them over time: dealing with people; under stress; relating with their family; whether their wife is committed to ministry; whether their approach to ministry is likely to be a good match with any launch team you may be placing them with, etc. Some churches will bring a potential church planter on as an intern or associate to allow an opportunity to observe as well as train before taking a risk on them in a church plant.⁸¹ Still other churches may take a risk on someone who has been referred through a friend or network. Churches that plant churches spend time with prospective church planters. Not in a classroom taking notes but time casually and in ministry situations. To be together like this gives opportunity to check whether formal assessment has got it right.

Choosing someone you know has served the Church of England in South Africa well but how does a whole denomination or a church that is planting for the first time identify suitable potential church planters? The simple answer used increasingly by church planting churches, church planting networks and denominations is church planter assessment.

6.2.2. Objective Standards

Assessing potential church planters requires objective standards. Any discussion on objective standards ought to mention that most are built on work done by a US University professor Dr Charles Ridley of Indiana University.⁸² Ridley conducted extensive research on church planters within thirteen U.S. denominations.⁸³ From this research he developed a Church Planter Performance Profile (CPPP). Out of forty-eight behaviors, Ridley found thirteen to be critically important.

Dr. Ridley contends that this assessment is helpful because:

"The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour."

The table below is a summary of the thirteen behavioural qualities Ridley found in successful church planters.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ K. Murray, Ian Smith, C.S. Tang & C. Tucker, Investigation of Church Planting in South Africa and the United States of America 7.

⁸¹ J. Hughes, *The Characteristics of a Church Planter*, ?.

⁸² www.indiana.edu/~iuncate/facultyvita/cridley.html, Cited 29 February 2008.

⁸³ J. Hughes, *The Characteristics of a Church Planter*, <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/16373.htm/> Cited 14 February 2008.

⁸⁴ J. Hughes, *The Characteristics of a Church Planter*, 6.

Table 5

<p>1. Visioning Capacity: Being a person who projects into the future, able to develop a theme highlighting the vision and philosophy of ministry; ability to persuasively “sell” the vision to the people; establishing a clear church identity related to the theme and vision. Challenges are approached as opportunities rather than obstacles, with ability to cope effectively with non-visioning elements, with the overarching belief in God’s capacity to do great things.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>2. Intrinsically Motivated: Having a desire to do well with a commitment to excellence; persistence; willingness to start from nothing and work long and hard; self-starter with high energy level and physical stamina; having initiative and aggressiveness without negative connotations.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>3. Ownership of Ministry: Helping people to feel responsible for growth and success of church; gaining commitment of people to the vision; establishing a congregational identity; avoiding stereotyping of congregation by imposing unrealistic goals for which it cannot claim ownership.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>4. Relates to the Unchurched: Communicating in a style that is understood by the unchurched; understanding the “psychology” of the unchurched and breaking through the barriers erected by them. Ability to move and function in the “personal space” of the unchurched without fear; quickly getting to know them on a personal level. Able to handle crises faced by the unchurched.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>5. Spousal Cooperation: Having an explicit agreement regarding each partner’s respective role and involvement in ministry; agreeing upon and sharing the ministry vision, functioning as a team through individual and collective action; with explicit rules regarding the use of home as an office and having a strategy for dealing with strangers; deliberately planning and protecting private family life; evaluating the consequences of ministry demands upon the children and modeling wholesome family life before church and community.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>6. Effectively builds relationships: Responding with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of people, displaying Godly love and compassion to people ,getting to know people on a personal basis making others feel secure and comfortable in one’s presence, not responding judgmentally or prejudicially to new people , appreciating and accepting a variety of persons , spending quality time with present parishioners without overstepping them for new people</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>7. Committed to Church Growth: Believing in church growth as a theological principle and seeing the church project within the larger context of God’s Kingdom; committing to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth (more and better disciples); appreciating steady and consistent growth without preoccupation with the quick success factor; recognizing that non growth is threatening and self-defeating; establishing the goal of becoming financially self-supporting within a specific time frame; not prematurely falling into a ministry of maintenance.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>8. Responsive to Community: Understanding the culture, character and “pulse” of the community and adapting the philosophy of ministry to the community profile; identifying and assessing community needs; not confusing these identified needs with what the church wants to offer; responding to community needs on a priority basis such that resources are most efficiently used; determining successes and failures of other organized religious attempts to respond to community needs.</p>	<p>Low ————— High 1 2 3 4 5</p>

<p>9. Utilizes Giftedness of Others: Discerning of spiritual gifts in others; equipping and releasing people to do ministry; matching giftedness with ministry needs and opportunities; not prematurely assigning ministry tasks before adequate equipping; delegating effectively in areas of personal limitation and to avoid personal overload; not placing unwarranted restrictions on others' spiritual giftedness.</p>	<p>Low _____ High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>10. Flexible and Adaptable: Coping effectively with ambiguity, constant and abrupt change; doing "whatever" is necessary "whenever" necessary; shifting priorities and emphasis during stages of church growth; adapting oneself and one's methods to the uniqueness of the church planting project.</p>	<p>Low _____ High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>11. Builds Group Cohesiveness: Developing a nucleus group(s) as a foundation and engaging others in meaningful church activity; quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships, monitoring the morale of people; utilizing groups effectively; dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully.</p>	<p>Low _____ High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>12. Resilience: Experiencing setbacks without defeat; expecting the unexpected; rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure; riding the "ups and downs" (i.e. attendance).</p>	<p>Low _____ High 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>13. Exercises Faith: Possessing a conviction regarding one's call to church planting ministry and believing in God's action; having expectation and hope; having a willingness to wait for answers to specific prayer requests.</p>	<p>Low _____ High 1 2 3 4 5</p>

An objective assessment process can be constructed based on Ridley's characteristics or indeed an alternative such as church planter competencies described by J. Allen Thompson of the *Redeemer Church Planting Centre* New York.⁸⁵ These characteristics can be measured with questionnaires. A simple questionnaire that self scores is available at the Redeemer church website as a self administered test. It is the first stage of their church planting assessment and training process.⁸⁶

Such questionnaires can be administered to ministry acquaintances of the potential planter with the results measured against the planter's self evaluation. Similar answers or significant differences will give feedback on whether the potential planter has good self-understanding and also how he comes across to others.

Whether Ridley's or another objective standard is employed, those who train, equip and sponsor church planting on a regular basis have learnt the value of an objective standard.

6.2.3. Behavioural Interview

Research in the early 20th century revealed unstructured employment interviews are unreliable for predicting future performance.⁸⁷ Even interviews by a panel of experts produced little agreement over which applicant belonged in the top or bottom of the interview group! Later research demonstrated if a job could be broken down into specific skill sets, needed to be successful in the workplace, a series of questions could demonstrate whether the applicant has shown this capacity in the past.

Remember:

"The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour."

⁸⁵ T.J. Keller & J.A Thompson *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planter Centre, 2002) 69-70.

⁸⁶ <http://www.redeemer2.com/rcpc/rcpc/index.cfm?fuseaction=selfeval> Cited 28 March 2008.

⁸⁷ J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 9.

The best candidate to start a new church, following the above logic is someone who has successfully done it before. This is proven by experience in the PCNSW where there is a small group of pastors who have all planted churches successfully more than once e.g. David Robson, David Thurston, Craig Tucker, CS Tang, John Macintyre, etc. We cannot rely on just a small and limited group to do all planting for us, however. Instead, by breaking down the skill sets needed in church planting and then asking questions related to that skill set, the interviewer is able to predict with some degree of accuracy the likelihood of success of a potential church planter. The potential planter may never have planted a church but they may well demonstrate each of the skill sets required to do so.⁸⁸ A behavioural interview seeks to discover whether the interviewee is already exhibiting the skill sets required in church planting.

Below is an example of behavioural interview questions used by West Ridge Church in Atlanta, an 18 year old church that continues planting new churches, runs its own church planting school, and employs a pastor solely to focus on their planting program.⁸⁹

West Ridge Behavioural Interview Questions⁹⁰

- *Describe a situation in which you were able to cast a vision and the group bought it.*
- *Describe a time when you were able to motivate yourself to do something that was difficult for you.*
- *Give a specific example of a time when you were able to instil in a group of people a sense of ownership and personal responsibility.*
- *Give an example of a time when you connected with an unchurched person. Tell me about a time when you were able to develop rapport with someone who was far from God and did not have a lot of experience in church.*
- *Recount a time when you had to change and adapt to deal your plan.*
- *Describe a time when you stuck with it when you wanted to quit.*

NorthWood (sic) church in Keller Texas planted 10 new churches in 2005 alone. Add this to the 65 churches planted by daughter and granddaughter churches and they had 75 new church plants in one year!⁹¹ That is a lot of experience. They use the following behavioural questions

NorthWood Behavioural Interview Questions⁹²

1. Having a commitment to church growth

What have you done in the last two years to help yourself grow in this area? What have been the growth patterns of your past ministries?

2. Having a visionizing capacity

When you had a vision for a God-sized project, how did you gain it? How did you develop and communicate the vision?

3. Being flexible and adaptable

What did you do the last time a ministry project didn't go as planned? How did you react emotionally?

4. Being personally motivated

What is the largest, most effective project you have accomplished, and what motivated you to accomplish it?

5. Building group cohesiveness

What process have you used to assimilate people into teams or groups?

6. Creating ownership of ministry

Describe a ministry or situation where people "owned" a project you were leading. How did that happen?

⁸⁸ J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 9.

⁸⁹ J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 3.

⁹⁰ J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 10.

⁹¹ J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 10.

⁹² J. Hunt *Finding Church Planters- Discovering and Discerning Those God Has Called to Start the Next Generation of Churches* 11.

7. Utilizing giftedness of others

How have you helped people utilize their spiritual gifts once they were identified?
Give examples.

8. Exercising faith

What is the most faith-filled step you have ever undertaken?

9. Reaching the unreached

What have you done to deliberately connect with unchurched people?

10. Responding to community

What are you doing now that has cultural relevance to your community? How do you know?

11. Building relationships

What methods have you used to build relationships with people over the last two years?

12. Gaining spousal support (if married)

Describe how you and your spouse have functioned as a team in your past and current ministries.

13. Having resilience

How have you maintained ministry momentum in difficult circumstances?

It is not difficult to see the NorthWood's questions are shaped around Ridley's 13 key behavioural qualities. To gain a sense of the applicant's honesty and self knowledge, one could get the applicant to self assess using Table 4 and then, if they come through with a reasonable score, follow up with a behavioural interview similar to the NorthWood questions.

6.2.4 A Call to Planting?

The concept of the "call to ministry" has either been in favour as *God's tap on the shoulder* required if someone would venture into pastoral ministry or out-of-favour, dismissed as being too subjective and out of step with how a person's gifts and Christian character should properly be assessed by the church. Nevertheless, reference to a "call to church planting" is something that occurs again and again in overseas literature.

The Redeemer Church Planters Manual recognises 3 elements to a call. When all of the elements are present and pointing in the same direction, this suggests a person may discern a call.⁹³ How can you know whether you have a call? Firstly you must have the ability to do the job. **Ability** is part **endowments** in other words the necessary intellectual capacity, self-discipline, ability to teach God's word, and good judgement. **Experience** then demonstrates whether or not the gifts are developed (or developing) in order to be able to do the job.

Not only is ability needed but the person must want to do the job, they must have a real **desire** to do the job. This is called **affinity**. *Affinity* includes an awareness of the needs of an area or group and a *desire* to meet those needs. The desire must come from a **mature** response and not out of immature motivations like a need to be needed or to make a name for oneself.

Lastly there must be an **opportunity** to do the job. Ability and affinity do not, in themselves, make a call to church planting. There must be real **unmet needs** in the church or community and there should be other people who catch the planter's vision and **share** the burden to reach that people.

The ability has an inward element and the planter needs to not only self evaluate but be evaluated. The affinity and opportunity aspects require the potential planter to look away from themselves to the needs of others and opportunities for ministry. Together all three make up what Redeemer would say is the call to church planting.

⁹³ T.J. Keller & J.A Thompson *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planter Centre, 2002) 65-66.

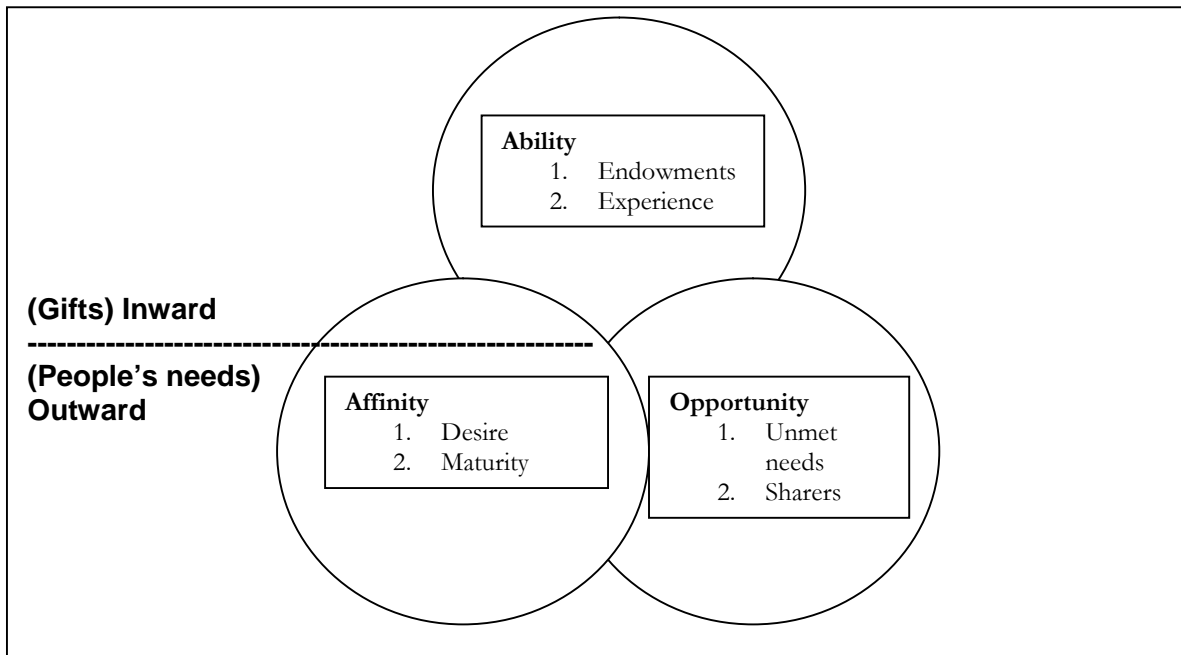


Diagram illustrating the call factors

6.3 Bringing it All Together

It makes sense and it is quite within the means of Ministry and Mission, to bring these tools together to form a simple assessment process.

Over time, church planting churches will develop a depth of experience in assessing a potential planter's suitability by working with them. At first however this method cannot be greatly relied on unless the person making the judgement has a good deal of experience in church planting. Nevertheless there is great value in people developing this method, particularly within team ministries, where they intend to plant churches.

An objective tool such as the simple self-assessment available on the Redeemer website, is a great idea as it is available 24/7 and gives anyone an opportunity to peek into whether they might be suitable as a planter. Furthermore it helps the wider church realize that only some are suitable for church planting.

Once someone has used the self-assessment questionnaire they may apply to be considered for church planting assessment. This would take the form of more detailed questionnaires to be filled out by themselves and 2 referees. The results would be tabulated and later followed up in the behavioral interview. The call concept should be considered in relation to the person and a deliberation must be reached by the assessment personnel. The person applying to be considered as a potential church planter would be sorted by the process into 1 of 4 categories.

- Category A Suitable Potential Church Planter
- Category B Suitable Potential Church Planter with good Supervision
- Category C Church Plant Team Member with future possibilities
- Category D Other Ministries outside Church Planting

Who are we trying to Reach?

It is a mistake to simply see every church as the generic church for a specific geographical area.

7.1 Who is out there?

One of the critical issues we must grapple with in planting new churches is the question, “who are we trying to reach?” We need to research and know the area or cultural group we believe may need a good gospel-based church. Where do they live? What are their hopes and aspirations? Are there needs that we could lovingly serve as we outreach into that community? Much of the literature refers to the people group that the church is being planted amongst as the target group.

Our research will reveal whether there really is a need. If that area is well catered for e.g. more than 1 bible teaching church for every 1,000 people then perhaps we need to focus on another area with greater needs.

Research will help us to determine who it is that we are trying to reach and even the model of church established. Only a fool would go into a retirement area and run a hip contemporary church, likewise running an erudite formal liturgical style service in a working class area would be equally ineffective. It is not enough to sidestep this question by just saying we want to reach everybody, the generic unchurched in a particular location. To do so would be to shape a ministry on guess work or along the DNA style that the church planter and launch team are used to, which may be quite out of step with the unchurched target group they hope to reach.

7.2 We need to ask diagnostic questions.

It is a mistake to simply see every church as the generic church for a specific geographical area. We do not live in the village society of England / Scotland two hundred years ago. People are not all the same and their networks of workplace and relationships no longer neatly fit into defined geographic areas.

Neighbourhood or Network

In planting churches we need to identify who we are going to be aiming to reach. So the first and most basic question that needs to be answered is will this be a neighbourhood or network church?⁹⁴ Glenwood Presbyterian would be an example of a

⁹⁴ Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context, 106.

neighbourhood church, whilst “Christians in the Media” would be an example of a network church.⁹⁵ The answer should play a large role in determining strategy.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

If we choose a geographic area, we should be asking, “Who lives here?” What are their values, goals and needs in life? What barriers do we have to overcome in order to share the gospel with them? What sort of church meeting is going to warmly resonate with these people? Is one approach enough in this community or are multiple approaches required due to the different sub-groups within the community?

SPECIFIC CULTURAL GROUPS

If we choose a specific cultural group, who are they? What is the language and culture like? Who can reach them most effectively? Most commonly we think of particular NESB groups such as a Korean speaking church for Koreans, but this category can equally apply to generational groupings, hearing impaired or specific interest sub-groups such as the Maroubra Surfers Church headed by Anglican Steve Bligh.^{96 97}

7.3 Understanding Cultural Gap

Another way of approaching different types of people groups is determining the cultural distance or the gap that needs to be crossed when bringing the gospel to people. North American missiologist and lecturer Dr Ralph Winter divides people groups according to the cultural gaps that must be bridged in order to reach these groups with the gospel.

Winter very helpfully divides up evangelism by the degree of difficulty or distance (cultural or linguistic) that needs to be traversed in order to reach someone with the gospel.

E1 Extension Growth

E1 is where the only barrier needed to be crossed to listeners in proposed evangelistic efforts is the boundary between the Christian community and the world immediately outside. E1 is sometimes termed *near neighbour* evangelism. This is the kind of evangelism that most people have in mind when they talk about evangelism. The biggest gap is crossing the frontier between church and world outside.

In church planting terms it means planting churches amongst people of identical culture. An example would be Tamworth Community Presbyterian Church, planted with a launch team of people who were long term Tamworth residents amongst an almost exclusively white Anglo-Saxon population. This is the easiest gap to cross.

E2 Bridging Growth 1

This means planting a church among people of related culture. E2 involves crossing a second frontier of significant but not monumental difficulty of language or culture. Winter gives the example of learning Spanish which is not unlike English and being able to reach Spanish speakers who were not culturally unlike yourself. In North America this is perhaps not uncommon with the large number of Hispanic people living there. Another example would be professional people intentionally moving from an established suburb into a large housing commission area such as Mt Druiitt (Western Sydney) in order to plant a church amongst long term multi-generational unemployed people. It takes a significant mind shift and effort to bridge the cultural gap.

E3 Bridging Growth 2

⁹⁵ *Christians in the Media* www.christiansinthedia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=164&Itemid=101 cited 27 March 2008.

⁹⁶ *Korean Presbyterian* www.korpec.org.au/sub2_1.html cited 27 March 2008.

⁹⁷ *Maroubra Surfers Church*

http://72.14.235.104/search?q=cache:0_JYweJ_agj:www.maroubrasurferschurch.org.au/stevebligh.shtml+site:www.maroubrasurferschurch.org.au+Maroubra+Surfers&hl=en&ct=clnk& Cited 27 March 2008.

E3 involves crossing an even greater cultural/language gap in order to reach people who live work, talk and think in languages and cultural patterns that are utterly different to those of the evangelist. An example of this would be white English-speaker learning Arabic and then attempting church planting amongst Islamic people in Lakemba (Sydney suburb). E2 and particularly E3 are what we usually have in mind when we talk about missionary work.

7.4 What can we gain from understanding the gap?

E1 evangelism is considered by Winter as being the most effective and powerful in reaching people. He argues that it is wrong and even wasteful to have a Missionary working in an E3 basis when a national can be working much more effectively at an E1 basis. The missiological application of these categories has helped recognise some of the different types of language and cultural gaps that must be bridged in order to make disciples of Christ. In a nation that is becoming increasingly multi-cultural we need to realize these principles are applicable in Australia. The E1 approach should be the bread and butter of our church planting efforts. It should make churches easier to grow, less likely to fail and cheaper to support.

To enable E1 church planting in an increasingly multi-cultural Australian context, we should be recruiting and supporting an appropriate number of church planters from amongst significant NESB language-cultural groups who are immigrating.

As much as possible we should aim to set up E1 church plants. More financial churches might consider sponsoring church planting by a lower socio-economic church to a lower socio-economic class suburb rather than providing people who probably will have great trouble crossing the cultural gap between professionals and the working or unemployed found in lower socio-economic areas. Furthermore some consideration should be given to the staffing in these areas. Perhaps the average Presbyterian minister, holding two tertiary degrees or more, is not the best choice for church planter in this area. A closer E1 fit would be pastor with less education and perhaps a trade or more working class background.

When E2 plants are considered, a good deal of research needs to be done on the culture that is being targeted. What are their values, world view, and educational levels and how can we best speak the gospel in their language? Is it really not possible to obtain an E1 church planter? If not does the planter need special training in order to be more culturally aware? Is it possible to get some E1 Christians to be part of the launch group?

If E3 is to be attempted we should first check that we cannot recruit a planter who is E1 even if it be from overseas. If there still is the will to go ahead we need to make sure that the planter and launch group have some basic missionary training and ideally experience in cross-cultural mission. We would do well to recognise this planting is going to take a long time and likely require as much external funding as we would expect in supporting a missionary overseas. Robert Benn helped put together a good example of an E3 plant in Hurstville Indonesian Church. Robert's background as a missionary in Indonesia, his language skills and his great affinity for Indonesians certainly gave him a good platform to launch such a plant and he quickly built E1 leadership into the plant.

7.5 Openness to Attending a Church Plant

Research in the UK in 1998 revealed their society could be divided into 5 groups based on their current or previous church attendance.⁹⁸

Regular Attendees Approximately 10% of the population attended a church perhaps 5–8 times in a two-month period.

⁹⁸ *Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*, 37.

Fringe Attenders	Approximately 10% of the population attended a church perhaps 1–3 times in a two-month period.
Open De-Churched	About 40% of the population are ‘de-churched’. This means at some point they were attending church but no longer did so. Of de-churched about half (20% of the whole population) are open to returning if suitably contacted and invited.
Only 20% open to an Invitation	The open de-churched are the only sub group of the population that will respond to an invitation to people to retry church, communicating along the lines of “this is church but in a new way or relevant and modern.”
Closed De-Churched	The other half of the de-churched (20% of the whole population) for whatever reason, has no intention of returning.
Non-churched	About 40% of the population have not been to church except for the occasional funeral or wedding.
60% Available	Assuming the UK research would yield similar results in Australia; this means that at least 60% of the population even in a church area are available to be targeted in a church plant. Viewed from the opposite perspective, 40% of the population will not be receptive to an invitation to a new church either because they are already church or they are closed de-churched people.
40% Need Us to Go to Them	The 40% of non-churched in the community are going to have to be reached with special sensitivity. They don’t know Abraham from John the Baptist, they may only sing publicly when drinking and the whole concept of sitting in a church meeting for one hour every week may be completely foreign to them. The gap between Christian and the non-churched may seem as wide as any experienced by a cross cultural missionary. ⁹⁹ Clearly a “ <i>come to us</i> ” approach is not going to work instead <i>we need to go to them</i> .
Deliberate and Strategic	We need to give some thought as to how we can go to people. As we commence church planting there must be some bridge building into the community so that we can establish a hearing for the gospel amongst the 60% of the community who are not going to be attracted by an invitation or other kind of publicity. Outreach needs to be deliberate and strategic.

7.6 Research Method

It is common practice in missionary work to survey the field looking for mission opportunities and to assess the most strategic place or people to reach. Surveying the field is just as relevant to planting.

7.6.1 Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides research data that is easily accessible and free from the ABS website.¹⁰⁰ In just a few minutes, data for a discrete geographical area such as Stockton (suburb of Newcastle) or Glenwood (suburb in western Sydney) may be downloaded. These are available in an Excel format.

In this case data for both the 2001 and 2006 census are available so trends and changes are observable. I was able to gather background information about any community in Australia down to the individual suburb. The data is presented in 45 different tables, addressing everything from socio-economic status to the number of blended families, numbers in each age group, income, and educational breakup of the community.

⁹⁹ Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context, 40.

¹⁰⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au, Cited 24 April 2008.

Taking time going through the ABS statistics will help us understand who makes up the community where we are considering church planting. Such knowledge ought to shape the strategy and model of church to be planted and even what type of church planter might suit these people.

7.6.2 National Church Life Survey

It hardly makes sense to plant a church in a heavily churching location where there are already many good bible teaching churches effectively reaching the community. The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) website has a handy and easy to use Church Search tool that provides a list of the known churches in the area.¹⁰¹ The results for a search on Stockton are available below (by way of example). A similar search on the Glenwood revealed no churches listed as meeting in that area. The white pages search function serves as a handy and up-to-date adjunct to the NCLS Church search and will pick up any recently commenced churches presuming they have a telephone listing.¹⁰²



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Search results

5 churches found



St Giles Presbyterian Church Stockton

Presbyterian Church
 Fullerton & Hereford St, Stockton NSW 2295
[More Info](#)



St Peter In Chains Catholic Church

Catholic Church Australia
 13 Dunbar St, Stockton NSW 2295
[More Info](#)



Stockton Anglican Church

Anglican Church
 Church St, Stockton NSW 2295
[More Info](#)



Stockton Mc Congregation

Uniting Church
 Mitchell & King Sts, Stockton NSW 2295
[More Info](#)



Stockton Seventh-Day Adventist

Seventh-day Adventist
 48 Forfar St, Stockton NSW 2295
[More Info](#)

You can find maps to these churches at



Refine search

Suburb/Town or Postcode State Search Radius

Add more detail:

Denomination

Name/Keyword Search

¹⁰¹ The National Church Life Survey, www.ncls.org.au Cited 24 April 2008.

¹⁰² Whitepages www.whitepages.com.au/wp/initBusSearch.do Cited 24 April 2008.

<input type="text"/>	(eg: 'St Johns', 'Chinese')	
Programs of interest		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups

7.6.3 Interview the Area

As helpful as ABS and NCLS information are, a personal survey helps to put a human face on the community where the church plant is being considered. The potential planter, launch team and even the sponsor church can help do this survey and not only will it put a human face on the community, it will help all involved to begin to get a heart feel and concern for that community.

Below are the introduction and six questions Australian Baptist Church Planting Consultant Philip Bryant suggests for such a survey.¹⁰³

Community Survey Questionnaire

The following questionnaire may be used in a door to door survey. It is a survey designed to promote a positive image in the community and should be carried out by appropriately prepared and dressed people. At all times the interviewers should be polite and positive about the establishment of the new church.

The survey is anonymous and should focus on the unchurched.

1. Are you active in a local church?
2. What do you feel are people's greatest personal needs today?
3. Why do you think most people do not attend church today?
4. What do you feel are the greatest needs of this community?
5. If you were looking for a church to attend what would you look for?
6. What advice would you give to a new church that really wants to help people?

¹⁰³ P. Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook* (Baptist Union of Victoria 1992), 16.

Organising a Launch Team

“A tug of war over values and vision can kill a new church,”

8.1 Launch Team Better than Core Group

“Core group or launch team?” that is the question. Much of church planting literature uses the term **core group** to describe the initial group that starts a church. Increasingly, however, the term **launch team** is being used. Is this just semantics or does each term communicate a different approach?

“Core group” sounds permanent. When we use the term *core group* it sounds as if it means this group is central, not only to the planning and everything that happens in the new church plant but, as the church grows, they will remain central in decision making and leadership because they are the core group. In a similar way it is common to hear people refer to the “core group” even years after the plant commenced and this is damaging, communicating a cliché mentality and working against the inclusiveness found in healthy plants. Unfortunately it is possible to be a member of a church plant core group and believe this carries no greater commitment than turning up. This is not a helpful concept.

“Launch team” in a positive sense sounds like the church plant is a team event where everyone has a role. Just turning up isn’t going to be good enough. We are used to sporting teams requiring commitment. Commitment to come to all training sessions; wear the team uniform and perform at your best for the team. The launch team like the core group will be central to the commencement of the new church but this carries no promise of remaining central to all decision making. Such flexibility allows road testing of key people prior to any allocation of permanent leadership roles (eldership and other positions) and the very real possibility that some new people not in the launch team may quickly take up key roles. This flexibility helps to quickly adapt ministries without having to dance around the sensitivities of every member of the core group. It is the mission driving the church and anyone can join the team as you go along.

Using the term *launch team* also communicates in a positive way that the church is only in its infancy and although some good things are happening now, it is going to get better and likely bigger which most find positive for the morale in the young church.

Whilst identifying potential church planters deserves due attention, it would be negligent to ignore the importance of a healthy launch team. A new church plant can be wonderfully blessed (or, indeed, be undone) through the contributions of the launch team. For this reason some church planting networks require the whole launch team to be assessed.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ G. Smith, Who starts new churches 5.

8.2 Pulling the Launch team Together

Philip Bryant suggests 4 sources for putting together a launch team or what he terms a *core group*.¹⁰⁵

1. Parent or sponsor church
2. Churches of the same denomination with people living in the area.
3. Christians already living in the area who are not attached to a church and
4. Christians as they move into that area.

Probably the most common form of church planting is branching or hiving off. A sponsor or parent church has people already living in an area they are considering for church planting. In a similar way if a congregational church plant is being considered the sponsor church will in all probability already have number of people in that sub-group. e.g. 17-25 year olds for a young adult congregation. All NESB churches should consider planting of new congregations aimed at children of NESB people. These second generation churches or congregations will reflect the new blended culture and use of English by that generation.

The new church plant will always have a personality of its own could be very different to the sponsor church life. Typically after prayer the sponsor church pastor or the church planter with the sponsoring churches permission will ask people from the sponsor church whether they would want to consider being a part of the church plant. Internal advertising newsletter and emails may be used.

People's personal networks can be used as they invite others to prayerfully consider joining the church plant. Sometimes people will leave the sponsor church and move into the area that is being targeted (colonisation). This requires a great deal of commitment but often results in joyful service and a sense of purpose in what they are doing.

What resources are we willing to lose?¹⁰⁶

Ministers of churches that plant new churches need to be willing to lose for the sake of Kingdom of God. It may mean losing staff; valued and gifted congregational members; and sacrificial givers whilst at the same time making financial pledges to the new church, all from a diminished giving base. Often the very best people will be drawn to church planting and real care needs to be taken that the sponsor church is not left too short of leadership. This is especially true when the sponsoring church is small.

Sheep Stealers

A word of caution should be mentioned here. Some unscrupulous planters have been known to obtain and use other churches phone lists or join another local church, work their way into leadership and then leave taking a number of people from that church with them. Others attend established local churches and invite people there along to their plant. These practices are wrong, it is known as sheep stealing and cannot be good for the Kingdom of God. The end does not justify the means.

Size

Stuart Robinson advocates a launch team of 12 or so, he reasons this gives participants a greater opportunity to know each other and be known; accountability and sense of responsibility tends to be higher. Their absence is felt and they want to ensure whatever assignments they have are completed.¹⁰⁷

Robinson's views on the launch team size do sound admirable, however research reveals that the smaller the launch group at launch the greater the failure rate of church plants. The ideas he builds around the launch group would be better suited to a leadership group or ministry team.

Furthermore planting new churches requires a great deal of work prior to the launch and it is better to launch with a bigger group say 30 rather than 12 people, remembering that a starting group of at least 26-75 people is a considerable factor in faster growing church plants that go on to survive.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ P. Bryant, Church Planting Workbook (Baptist Union of Victoria 1992), 43.

¹⁰⁶ S. Brown, Becoming a Church planting church 8.

¹⁰⁷ S.P. Robinson, *Starting Mission Shaped Churches* (St Paul's Chatswood, Sydney 2007) 42.

¹⁰⁸ G. Smith, Improving the health and survivability of new churches 5.

Gift & People Mix Practical experience would suggest that a good gift and personality mix is helpful in the launch team. Music is so basic to most church worship it is important to get a good musician or musicians into the group early. Recorded music is not the most moving or attractive service feature. Bible study leaders and those gifted and experienced in evangelism and discipleship are worth their weight in gold. If they are not present they will have to be developed. A reliance on the pastor for all these ministries will certainly hold the church back from growing.

8.3 Developing the Launch Team

Much of the work with a launch team is done before a public meeting. Bryant suggests the very minimum time a launch team should meet together weekly prior to public launch is 3 months. The meetings should include worship, training, prayer, planning and offering. Bryant offers a range of preparation study papers to work through which help shape the new church prior to launching.

It seems the American approach is to place a lot of weight and expectation for the starting vision and leadership on the planting pastor or pastors expecting that the pastor or pastors (see the 4 rules below from the Stadia church planting network below) will develop much of the vision and planning whereas both Bryant and Robinson, Australian authors, seem to place much weight for developing vision on the launch group.

8.4 What type of people?

The qualities to look for in a prospective core group/launch team member Bryant suggests are¹⁰⁹:

1. Active prayer life
2. Concern for reaching the unchurched with the gospel
3. Concern for being a disciple and making disciples
4. Agreement to the vision of the church
5. Dedication to the word of God
6. A firm commitment to be involved in the new church plant
7. Persistence: Planting is hard work
8. Potential leaders: for all sorts of ministries
9. Firm commitment to the denomination

Bryant's list sounds like the ideal congregation!

A word of caution is needed here. Church plants attract difficult people like moths to the flame. Often difficult people (such as: those with a critical spirit; a judgmental attitude; a need for too much acknowledgement or recognition, those who want to lead but don't want to serve, or with an axe to grind are drawn to new church plants. Christians are usually too polite to say "no" to other people but in this instance a line must be drawn. These people will cause trouble and generally need to be left out of any launch team. If these people are found attending in the early days they must not be given a vehicle to speak negatively into the life of the plant.

Stadia new church strategies teach the following four rules to becoming an effective new church plant member. Given the large number of church plants Stadia has been involved in, one would assume these rules have come out of hard experience.¹¹⁰

1. **You don't come in with seniority.**
Every member comes in just like everybody else—as a seeker that is following Jesus Christ.
2. **You are going to follow the pastor.**

¹⁰⁹ P. Bryant, Church Planting Workbook (Baptist Union of Victoria 1992), 43.

¹¹⁰ S. Brown, Becoming a Church planting church 6.

“Agenda harmony” is a priority for a new church and the church planter sets the agenda. “We believe God has called the pastor and given him a vision. There is not room in a new church for competing visions. It’s just too fragile. A tug of war over values and vision can kill a new church.”

3. **A new church plant is not the place to “get well.”**

If someone wants to join a launch team, it needs to be someone who is spiritually and emotionally healthy. “This is not the place to get well. A new church plant needs leaders who have togetherness in their lives.”

4. **A new church plant is not the place to sit back and watch.**

Effective launch team members have a servant attitude of “all hands on deck.”

Healthy church plants start with the launch team. Developing the launch team is a worthwhile investment.

Funding

“too much denominational funding means no church planting churches”

9.1 How Others are Paying Their Way

In the US there is an expectation even amongst denominational church plants that the planter and the sponsor church will seek funding pledges directly themselves. Pledges are sought in much the same way as we are used to missionaries gathering support. This funding approach seems to be similar to funding arrangements observed in the Evangelical Church plants in NSW.

Churches that are pursuing church planting aggressively tend to expect church planters to raise a sizable proportion 50-80% of the church planting budget themselves. One example, Cross Pointe Church in Orlando, has sponsored 5 churches and only gives an average of \$25,000 US to each plant. Northwood, in Texas, tends to give still less to its 6-8 churches planted each year. “Many of the more aggressive parent churches assign 10% or more of their overall budgets to domestic church planting.”¹¹¹

Denominations still fund churches in the US but often it is in partnership with regional and sponsor churches.¹¹² The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod funds new church plants as a national church and at a regional level. The local region may give \$50,000 US per year while the national church gives \$30,000 US over three years.¹¹³ Typically the national funding will finish at 3 years and the regional funding may extend for 3-5 years.

Church planting networks do not always fund new churches but when they do, it is usually at a rate less than 33% of the total costs and often with an expectation that the money will be paid back. Instead the parent church and the planter himself need to raise the funding.

9.2 Surprising Correlation

One surprising finding, that ought to sound a warning trumpet for any central funding body, is the negative correlation between the amount of funding coming from the central body and the number of parent churches in that denomination.¹¹⁴ In plain English, too much denominational funding means no church planting churches. If we want sponsor churches (churches that give birth to other churches), which happens to be the most effective way to do church planting, *we must be careful not to overfund church plants* directly from the denomination.

¹¹¹ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 5.

¹¹² G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* (Leadership Network: 2008) http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/State%20of%20Church%20Planting%20Report_Funding.pdf Cited 14 February 2008 2.

¹¹³ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 2.

¹¹⁴ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 3.

The Victorian Presbyterian experience has been one where there is a large amount of central funding available but hardly any planting initiatives. The few church plants they have undertaken have been dependant for long periods of time on central funding and have not gone on to become planting churches.

Funding needs to be titrated in a way that keeps local initiative, vision and motivation in clear focus and prevents the creation of welfare-like dependence on central funding.

9.3 How are Church plants being funded?

How are church plants funded? Listed below are results found in recent US research.¹¹⁵

- The average length of denominational funding is 32 months.
- Only 7% of church planters are fully funded.
- 27% of church planters raise all their own funding!
- 55% of church planters report they receive denominational funding and raise their own support.
- The average amount of support from church planting networks is \$172,200 US/church and this may be received over 3-4 years.

Church plants commonly have a healthy emphasis on stewardship especially among the initial launch team. In one example the 10-12 families in the launch team are committed as missionaries giving an up-front “first fruits offering” and then a monthly tithe along with working evangelistically in the targeted area for up to a year prior to the public opening of the church.¹¹⁶

Funding church plants requires a level of diligence in the determination of realistic opportunities and associated personnel. It is best for a denomination to fund a qualified and well-trained church planter with a modest funding package for 3 years or less! The funding should be modest so that the planter will aggressively work to build the church and it should be over a short time frame so that the newly developing church will not become dependent on outside income.¹¹⁷

9.4 Costing a Church Plant

A basic costing for a PCNSW plant with a full time minister is listed in the table below.¹¹⁸ This is based on a 2008 salary package. These figures may vary greatly according to local circumstances such as free provision of a manse and meeting place (e.g. Southern Cross), or free provision of the manse only (e.g. Ashtonfield and Glenwood). In addition superannuation liability will be met from the McCaughey Estate for recognised church plants during the first five years of operation.

In addition to the recurring costs, which tend to grow as ministry expands, there are basic one off equipment costs which should serve the need for the first 5 years. A laptop computer, data projector and supply of bibles would be a basic approach etc. Depending on the facilities and ministry growth an audio system may also be required.

Table six shows financial modeling for the first four years of operation with a starting group of 20 adults people assuming this group will double in four years¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁵ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 3.

¹¹⁶ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 5.

¹¹⁷ G. Smith, *Funding New Churches* 5.

¹¹⁸ 2008 *Stipend, Salaries and Allowances* (Ministry & Mission Website) mm.pensw.org.au/files/Stipend2008_-_with_lhd.doc Cited 12 March 2008.

¹¹⁹ Financial modelling by Bruce Meller superintendent Ministry & Mission 25th August 2008.

Table 6

Funding of Church Plants									Σ by Item
Item/Year	1 2009		2 2010		3 2011		4 2012		
Income	\$		\$		\$		\$		
Internal - Direct giving	44,593		66,559		90,658		125,403		327,214
External - M&M	40,000		30,000		20,000		10,000		100,000
- Presbytery/Sponsor	12,000		6,000		3,000		0		21,000
- McCaughey (Super)	6,194		6,441		6,699		6,967		26,300
- Other	5,000		4,000		2,000		500		11,500
Total Income	107,787		113,001		122,357		142,870		486,015
Expenditure									
Stipend	41,290		42,942		44,659		46,446		175,336
Travel	10,053		10,455		10,873		11,308		42,690
Accommodation	20,000		20,800		21,632		22,497		84,929
Superannuation	6,194		6,441		6,699		6,967		26,300
LSL	640		687		715		743		2,785
PAI	175		182		189		197		743
Workers Comp	750		780		811		844		3,185
Insurance	1,500		1560		1,622		1,687		6,370
Rent	5,500		5,720		5,949		6,187		23,356
Utilities	125		130		135		141		531
Advertising	500		520		541		562		2,123
Evangelism	2,000		2,080		2,163		2,250		8,493
Presbytery Assess	0		0		0		200		200
Assembly Fund	100		100		100		100		400
Operating Expend.	88,827		92,397		96,089		100,128		377,441
Initial set-up	10,000		Nil		Nil		Nil		
Initial removal cost	3,500		Nil		Nil		Nil		
Total Expend.	102,327		92,397		96,089		100,128		
Surplus/(Deficit)	5,460		20,604		26,268		42,742		
Attendance (Adults)									
Adults	\$Giving	#	\$Giving	#	\$Giving	#	\$Giving	#	
- committed	41,290	20	53,677	25	66,989	30	92,891	40	254,847
- concerned	2,477	2	10,306	8	20,097	15	27,867	20	60,747
- casual	826	2	2,576	6	3,573	8	4,645	10	11,620
Total Adults	44,593	24	66,559	39	90,658	53	125,403	70	327,214
Children (0-12 yrs)		4		5		6		8	
Youth (13-18)		4		5		6		8	
Total People		32		49		65		86	

Notes

Modelling based on 2009 costs indexed by estimated 4% CPI adjustments

Assume 4% CPI growth annually

Assume city rate

9.5 Bi-vocational

Bi-vocational ministry (sometimes known as tent-making) is where the trained minister or pastor works in a secular occupation in order to support him or herself in ministry. This approach is used more in network, independent and Pentecostal churches but is less common in mainline denominational church planting. The bi-vocational approach to ministry may limit growth of a church plant and even raise stress levels as the minister attempts to balance a demanding workplace with a demanding ministry schedule, however balanced correctly it can give a church planter good networks into a community and a level of visibility they simply would not have access to if they were not working outside the congregation.

In a slow-growth plant a bi-vocational approach may be the only realistic way to keep a trained minister working in the church. Bi-vocational ministry would be an ideal way of church planting into a rural area where people are recognised and valued for what they bring to the community and the church will likely only achieve a small size and thus always struggle to meet stipend. Further consideration should be given to this approach to Church Planting.

9.6 Principles for Funding a Church Plant

Careful consideration needs to be given to how church planting is funded. Given our desire to encourage the growth of church planting churches and discourage the growth of a culture of dependence we need to be sure that funding approach has healthy balance between getting the job done and avoiding creating dependence.

Shorter Funding Periods	For the reasons outlined above funding needs to be given for shorter periods – typically 3 years with a re-assessment possible if the church is close to being self-funding at the end of the initial 3 year period.
Partnership with local initiative	It is best that central funding only be applied when the local church is carrying a sizable share of the burden for funding. It ensures local commitment to prayer and sufficient people committed to the launch team to give the church plant an opportunity to succeed.
Follows Assessed planters	Given the better survival rate of church plants where the planter has been assessed, funding should only be applied to church plants where the planter has been assessed using an approved church planting assessment process.
Supporting local Vision	Funding should be conditional upon a clearly articulated and locally owned vision. The church plant should be supported by a parent church or churches or the planter should have formed a team and gained significant support in prayer and pledges before central funding may be provided.
Funding sometimes needs to come to an end	If 68% of churches are closed by 4 th year it is possible that denominational funding can get locked in and even ramped up for a church plant that is doing poorly and either not growing well or showing real signs of failing. This would be a mistake. After reviewing this struggling church plant, the denomination would be better served by kindly supporting the pastor and congregation into other viable alternate churches and deploying that funding into new church plants that have a better probability of growing.

Facilitating Planting

This chapter contains recommendations, in broad principle, aimed at facilitating church planting by Presbyterian Churches in NSW. These recommendations are meant to be a guide for policy implementation by Ministry and Mission.

Ministry and Mission should promote church planting as the most effective outreach tool available. As congregations begin to gain a vision for church planting and become involved in church planting, they need to know that Ministry and Mission is well equipped to help them identify an appropriate planter, assist with funding and facilitate appropriate coaching or peer support.

10.1 Raising the Church Planting Vision

Ministry and Mission should seek to promote church planting whenever reporting to the Assembly. Ministry and Mission needs to lift the profile of church planting and explain the benefits of church planting whenever possible. The Committee will establish either a separate website or dedicate a part of the ministry and mission website to church planting.

The web presence will contain, among other things:

- stories from church planters;
- a self-assessment form for use by potential church planters;
- application forms;
- dates of assessment activities or other church planting related activities
- publicity concerning church plants in progress, and
- tools for use in church planting.

In addition, articles promoting church planting should be submitted for inclusion in *The Presbyterian Pulse* and *Australian Presbyterian*.

10.2 Church Planter Assessment

10.2.1 Four Step Process

A four step assessment of potential church planters is recommended. This assessment is to be based on Ridley's 13 characteristics¹²⁰ of successful church planters and reflect the reformed/evangelical

¹²⁰ See chapter 6

theological stance of the PCNSW. This theme will be followed through all 4 aspects of the assessment process. The steps should be taken in the order indicated.

1. Web Based Self-Assessment
2. Application accessed online and emailed to the ASAP (see below) coordinator - (similar to the Metro application process)
3. Questionnaire sent out to potential planter; one person who has ministered alongside them; someone who is supervisor; and one who is presently being ministered to by the potential planter.
4. Behaviour Based interview (with wife)

An assessment will be made of the applicant's suitability for church planting and a recommendation will be made to the applicant in terms of the following categories.

- Category A Suitable Potential Church Planter
- Category B Suitable Potential Church Planter with good Supervision
- Category C Church Plant Team Member with future possibilities
- Category D Other Ministries outside Church Planting

10.2.2 Administered by Planters

The assessment process should be administered by experienced church planters. Currently we have church planters immediately available to the Committee and there may be other planters, outside Ministry and Mission, who would share this vision and want to be a part of it.¹²¹ The efficacy of the assessment process could be raised by recruiting repeat church planters to this process. Each assessment should involve two assessors but observers, for training purposes, could be allowed. If the planter is married both husband and wife should attend.

10.2.3 ASAP

The Ministry and Mission Committee should establish a working party known as ASAP (Australian Special Assessment of Planters). That working party should report to the Executive through the Superintendent. This name deliberately suggests that the service will be provided as soon as possible (i.e. within a calendar month) after receiving all necessary documentation. It should also be provided as the need arises and on an individual basis (which would fit well with the Committee's pattern of monthly meetings). I estimate that each candidate would require one day from the ASAP team for reading, preparation, interviewing and processing. This service could be sold as a consultancy to organisations outside our NSW denomination. Charges should be set to cover the time that assessors would be away from their other work (this amount to be reimbursed to the employer) along with any incidental costs.

The ASAP team will also assess Church Plant Applications and report to the Committee's Executive on the merits or otherwise of each application with appropriate funding recommendations. Church Plant funding will be reviewed annually by ASAP with subsequent advice being provided to the Executive.

¹²¹ John Irvin-Cherrybrook, Maurice Cropper -Pottsville and John Macintyre -TCPC/St Philips

10.2.4 No Assessment no Funding

Given the central importance of the planter's role in any church plant and the value of the assessment process any church considering planting should be encouraged to make use of the ASAP service. When funding from Ministry and Mission is sought the ASAP service should be mandatory and the planter should require a category A recommendation prior to any funding grant. (Category B could be considered if the committee was satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision will be provided). In plain language: no assessment no funding.

10.3.1 Church Plant Application Process

An application form will be available to download from the church planting Website and lodge with supporting information to ASAP. The deadline for applications should be 31st July each year for following year funding. In the case of a church plant proposing an exit student as the planter, an application should have to be submitted by 23rd May for a following year commencement.

The following general timeline would then apply:

1. Applications submitted by 31st July
2. Church Planter screening is completed by 31 August.
3. Sponsor church or organisation representative is interviewed along with the proposed planter by 31 August.
4. Recommendations are processed at the September meeting of the Ministry and Mission Executive and all parties are notified.

10.3.2 Application Outcomes

Applications are processed and funding is only granted if the proposed planter has been recommended category A or, under limited circumstances, category B.

Applications can be classified as either:

Category 1 Approved and funding provided

Category 2 Approved but no funding granted (When the church has not requested funding, when the planter is not assessed or recommended category A or when there are no funds available).

Category 3 The church plant is not approved. Reasons may be given and this will help those making the proposal to shape any future approaches.

10.3.3 Sponsor church pastor interview

If the application is being made by a sponsor church and that sponsor church is going to have a close ongoing relationship with the plant the sponsor pastor should be interviewed along with the planter. This is a separate process to the church planter assessment.

10.4 Funding

When funding is granted such funding will seek to avoid two extremes, either placing the church in undue financial stress or creating a welfare like dependence. Funding should follow a reducing scale and generally not exceed 3-5 years. A percentage (probably at least half of the funding) should be arranged by the sponsor church or churches and or the planter through organised support.

If the church quickly reaches financial self-sufficiency, denominational funding should cease in order to allow a deliberate focus on other new plants. Funded churches should expect the cessation of funding in this situation.

Financial support for church plants is decided on an annual basis and reviewed against health and growth indicators.

If the church plant fails to thrive and is not growing, or there is little indication that it will grow, Ministry and Mission, following advice from ASAP, will exercise both compassion and good management by reviewing financial support and not renewing that support in the upcoming grant window.

10.5 Coaching & Peer Support

The aim of church plant coaching is to help planters endure and overcome some of the challenges that are routinely faced in church plants. Coaching provides advice from a trusted source that not only helps the planter to develop a good ministry but also helps them in difficult situations. An experienced church planting coach will likely know many of the common mistakes that can be made and tactfully steer the new church planter clear of many of these obstacles. Ministry and Mission will seek to build a group of experienced church planters who are then able to coach new planters.

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