

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS PLANTING 6,700 NEW CANADIAN
EVANGELICAL CHURCHESA Godly Response:

Declining biblical literacy, convictions, and attendance, make re-evangelizing Canada a formidable challenge.

Five to eight thousand new evangelical churches are needed immediately to provide an evangelizing church for every group of 2000 Canadians speaking a given "home language," and thousands more will be needed in the early 21st century.

The Great Commission demands great things of the church in Canada. We need not fear, but repent of our apathy, our prayerlessness, disunity, and complacency. We need no less than a fresh commitment to obedience to our Lord.

This will take sustained prayer, accurate information, bold, clear plans, and the commitment of new human and financial resources to the task of reaching those regions and peoples currently without the Gospel of Christ.

Most immediately Canada requires the planting of a

minimum of 6,700 new evangelical churches, 3,072 of them in French, by the year AD 2000.

But how can even this interim goal towards the accomplishment of the Great Commission in Canada be achieved?

In this chapter we wish to consider several practical steps toward this end, both nationally and locally.

A. National Cooperation

A very significant and encouraging step has already taken place nationally, with the development of the Vision 2000 Canada organization which produced the National Leadership Consultation on Evangelism in Ottawa May 16-20, 1990 using the motto "...He shall have dominion from sea to sea...".

A "DAWN Movement" has emerged in Canada! This mission movement must extend beyond the year AD 2000, from coast to coast, and across all evangelical denominations, parachurch organizations, and mission agencies.

This national consultation produced an unprecedented measure of co-operation and good will among evangelical leaders, sharing a common vision: reclaiming Canada for Christ. Moreover, concrete strategies were devised and a network of communication has been created for an ongoing commitment to our evangelical endeavors.

A followup consultation is planned for 1995, with subsequent meetings scheduled at five year intervals. Regional consultations will take place twice every five

years between national consultations. Furthermore, denominations and parachurch organizations are developing publicly defined goals and strategies for church planting and growth, some for the first time.¹

The experience of denominations and parachurch organizations participating in DAWN projects of other nations have revealed at least thirteen common ingredients that appear to be essential for a successful national church planting and growth program. Dr. James Montgomery has outlined his findings in this regard in the following denominational steps:

1. Dream great dreams, see large visions.

If we are without a dream from God in our hearts, we will stagnate. A great dream is the beginning of every great accomplishment for Him.

2. Develop, maintain and use a solid base of data.

We have sought to develop a portion of such a data base in this research project. Each denomination needs to keep accurate records of the growth of each of their churches, where they are growing and where they are declining, what their effective and ineffective methods are, and of the relative opportunity in each region of their ministry area.

3. Set challenging, realistic and measurable goals.

Goals must be challenging so as to excite people, realistic so as not to discourage them, and measurable so that people can rejoice at their accomplishment for the Kingdom.

4. Achieve goal ownership.

Goals must not be set at the top and "trickle down."

Rather many leaders in each denomination must wrestle with the challenge and participate in setting a goal they believe in and will work towards with strong inner motivation.

5. Give a name to your program.

A brief, colourful, challenging summary for your denominational vision is of great help and keeping the task in mind.

6. Develop a functional organizational structure.

As a denomination grows it will need to re-structure periodically to incorporate and support its new churches and provide adequate leadership at all levels. Organizational structure can work with or against growth.

7. Depend on prayer and the power of the Spirit.

A vital aspect of such re-structuring for growth is to build in many prayer groups, times of prayer at planning meetings and the expectation that the Holy Spirit will move powerfully if we ask. Leadership at all levels must make prayer their first priority as they work to reach thousands of people for Christ.

8. Keep your members motivated and informed.

Publications with pictures and progress reports, articles on the biblical foundations for the movement, periodic rallies, yearbooks with pictures of each church and the like are important aspects of the communication and motivation needed to keep the momentum at its maximum progress.

9. Train your members.

Training must be continual as new people enter the movement to provide a growing base of leadership. Leadership training must include all skills from faith sharing and leading and managing small groups to planting and pastoring new churches.

10. Create sound financial policy.

Denominations must examine just how they are spending their money to determine if money is being diverted to lower priority items rather than the challenging evangelistic work before them. Tithing and sound biblical principles of financial management must be taught and observed.

11. Send out missionaries.

Continual new mission work focusing on evangelism and new church planting remains a prime means to a program of continuing growth in any denomination.

12. Regularly evaluate progress.

Leaders must be aware of progress being made in each of these steps and know where changes need to be made in order to increase evangelistic effectiveness.

13. Make new plans.²

In some cases progress with require the adjusting of goals upward or perhaps downward and the making of new plans. As each goal is accomplished a new and more wonderful vision must be sought from God.

B. Local Steps

Central to the national plan of every Canadian denomination and mission agency must be not only missionary church planting plans initiated denominationally, but also plans which involve local churches in initiating missionary church planting. The task is far too great to be performed at the denominational level alone.

Every local church must be encouraged to plant one or more daughter churches, and to reach lost persons, including persons of other social and ethnic backgrounds. Most local churches will be able to reproduce themselves every ten years and some will be able to do so more frequently.

There may be some churches unable to parent a new church due to age, a lack of physical strength, spiritual vitality, or leadership resources. In such cases a local church may need to direct its church planting resources more indirectly through denominational mission agencies or parachurch organizations. Sole reliance for church planting on external structures, however, should be used only in such cases.

Basic steps towards a local church providing an evangelizing church in every Canadian community speaking the language of its people for each 2000 Canadians by AD 2000 will include the following:

1. Prayer.

History has shown that God does nothing of eternal significance without the prayer of His people. The challenge before us is far beyond our own resources. God will make us equal to the challenge only as we pray diligently, urgently, even with tears. Every local Christian leader must ask himself: "Will you commit yourself to praying an hour a day for the coming of God's Kingdom in Canada?"

2. Understand Accurately the Need for New Evangelizing Churches in Your Community.
 - a) Determine the anticipated population of your community (by language group, if possible) for AD 2000. The local Chamber of Commerce, library, or city planning office will be able to help.
 - b) Add the total seating capacity of existing evangelical churches (by language group, if possible). Multiply this number of seats by two (assuming each church will grow to offer two full worship services per Sunday).
 - c) Subtract the number of available Sunday morning church seats from the total number of people in the community to give the number of unchurched people in your community.
 - d) Divide this number by 2000 to determine the minimum number of new evangelizing churches needed to give every person in your community the opportunity to see, hear, and respond to the gospel by the year AD 2000.

Members of other Trinitarian traditions may wish to include all churches and divide by the unchurched population of your community by 1000 to determine the minimum number of new churches needed to reach your community.

3. Determine a Significant Location in Your Community where a New Evangelizing Church Should be Planted.

Such a location may be in or near a new or projected housing development, an area of particularly high-density housing, or simply in an area furthest from the nearest effectively evangelizing church.

Seek to determine also the kind of people not currently being reached by existing evangelical churches and the style of ministry most likely to reach such people. It is important to remember that many different styles of ministry, some perhaps untraditional, will be needed to reach the many different kinds of people (students, blue collar workers, yuppies, ethnics, and people of various economic and educational backgrounds) in your community. No single or small group of churches, however gifted or vibrant, will be able to reach them all.

Help in understanding the demographics of one's neighbourhood is available from:

Rev. Jeremy Bell
Baptist Union of Western Canada
Committee on Church Planting and Renewal
Kitsilano Christian Community
2680 West 4th Ave,
Vancouver, BC V6K 1P7

(604) 737-0169

For approximately \$50 you will be supplied with computerized statistical information comparing demographic trends between the last two census years in any one mile radius of your choice in Canada.

In addition, an inquirer will receive a Baptist Union of Western Canada publication by Bruce and Marianne Martin: Handbook on Exegeting Your Neighbourhood¹ (with worksheets) and verbal interpretation is provided if necessary.

4. Consider the Model for Church Planting most Suitable to Your Gifts, Resources, and Setting.

God has given a variety of models of church planting, both in the scriptures and in recent history. The study of church planting models will well repay the effort. Not all models will suit all situations or personalities. The correct church planting model must suit the church planter's personality, the philosophy of ministry which has grown from his understanding of the needs of the community, and the resources available to meet those needs.

The church planting models which follow certainly should not exhaust those you may wish to consider. Furthermore, citing the names of the practioners using these models does not imply particular excellence on the part of these church planters, but rather helpful examples of current Canadian church planting models which have been tried and the names of friends who are willing to share of

their experience.

- a) The "Door-to-Door Survey" Church Planting Model: Rev. Bruce Cryerman, (416) 895-4117, age 47, (Free Methodist), has planted churches in Bramalea and Agincourt, Ontario areas using these steps:
- (1) Look for a core group of Christians,
 - (2) Train this core group for door-to-door visitation in the community and assimilation of new people into the embryonic church,
 - (3) Together use a Ten-Question door-to-door survey to learn felt needs,
 - (4) From these contacts, form Bible study groups,
 - (5) Begin Sunday worship when several small groups show signs of stability.
- b) "Mother-Daughter" Model: Rev. Nick Stravopolus (416) 298-9932, came in 1981 to pastor a small daughter church (Rosewood Church of the Nazarene, 241 Alexmuir Blvd. Scarborough, Ontario, M1V 2W6) which since in turn has planted two "granddaughter" churches: an ethnic Chinese church in 1986 currently averaging just under 100 worshippers, then a second "granddaughter", this one English, in Markham with 27 people from the mother church and contacts gained in a telemarketing campaign. In each case the mother church invested heavily in its daughters, Homewood purchasing a .89 acre property for Rosewood in

1979, and Rosewood in turn purchasing a 1.48 acre property for Markham in 1987, in addition to carrying significant monthly operational expenses.

c) Satellite Model: Rev. Murray Moerman (604) 420-0761, (Reformed Church in Canada) came to the Vancouver area in 1976 to pastor a daughter congregation of the Hope Reformed Church. Three satellite churches in nearby municipalities have since been "launched" from that church attempting to take advantage of both the strengths of larger and smaller groups as follows.

- (1) Members of a core group living in the target municipality build community and are commissioned for planting,
- (2) Home trained pastoral leadership is selected,
- (3) Decreasing financial support is committed for three years from the common missions budget,
- (4) Satellite congregations share leadership training and support, equipment, programming, and occasional combined worship.
- (5) The satellite communities remain a single legal entity for as long as they benefit from such a relationship.

d) Pioneer Church Planting Model (Team Approach): Betty Milne and Joyce Oxnard, currently of Swift Current, SK, (306) 773-1568 (Baptist Union of Western Canada) share

several distinctive features: they are women, church planters, and have shared a single salary for 15 years. During this time they have planted four rural and one urban church mostly in the northern and western prairies. They use a pioneer approach: notices on bulletin boards, door knocking, volunteering for crisis help lines, organizing a gym night for young people: "find a need and fill it" is their motto. Mutual support and encouragement has been a benefit of their team model. "We do not feel threatened to admit: 'I feel weak,' and perhaps because we are women, we have been able to pastor people who have been wounded by church institutions.

- e) The "Constitutional" Model: Rev. Ernie Dyck is associate pastor of Crossroads Community, (403) 466-4685, (Associated Gospel Churches) which has written into its constitution the requirement of planting a new church every 3 to 5 years. Since doing so, they planted their first church in 1986 which has since grown to 120 persons in average attendance in 1989, and are planning to plant their next church in the fall of 1990.

- f) Small Churches Can Plant: Rev. Gilles Conn, (514) 353-9547, (Union of French Baptist Churches) has responded to a vision which came 8 1/2 years ago in the planting of a new church. Monthly prayer meetings culminated in the raising of funds to purchase a church building in the

Montreal suburb of Pointe-aux-Trembles in September 1989. Worship began the next month with 29 adults from the mother church. The new congregation began to grow and was declared autonomous early in the new year. The mother church had given \$100,000 for the building and will continue to pay \$400 per month toward the mortgage. This wonderful story is more wonderful still because of its encouragement to smaller churches: the mother church has 75 adults left after giving birth and plans to give birth again in five years. Small churches can plant!

- g) The "Student Church-Planting" Model: Students from Briercrest Bible Institute, Caronport, SK, S0H 0S0, are helping in the planting of a new Mennonite Brethren church in Regina, led by Gary Sawatzky, pastor. Students are involved in music, drama, education, and other practical planting ministries as part of a one year field education assignment at the innovative Sunrise Community Church which follows the Willow Creek model of evangelism. Briercrest offers two courses in church planting and graduates such as Maurie McNeil, who is currently planting a cross-cultural church in the province, puts to practical use the learnings of his studies, says Mr. Ian Lawson. Denominational leaders have yet to tap the resources of students, particularly in team-led planting opportunities.

- h) The "User Friendly" Model: Rev. Brian Hamilton, (902) 852-4456 (Atlantic Baptist Convention) arrived in a bedroom community of Halifax in September 1988 and soon discovered that people did not care for strangers knocking on their doors to invite them to church. Brian adapted to that fact by implementing a philosophy of ministry which focuses on
- (1) friendship evangelism,
 - (2) an aggressive professional mailer marketing program using striking graphics and non-religious language,
 - (3) informal, "user-friendly," 1 1/4 hour worship services concentrating on special music and topical messages geared to the non-churched, and
 - (4) weekly and monthly practical self-evaluation designed to remove and replace those elements which do not produce fruit. Attendance has grown from 16 to over 60 persons the first year.
- i) The "Associational Effort" Model: Rev. Doug and Sheila Green, (902) 368-7036, (Atlantic Baptist Convention) arrived in North River, P.E.I. in August, 1988 to pastor Cornerstone United Baptist, their second eastern Canada church plant. Following a successful New Brunswick plant in which the emerging congregation grew from 22 to 65 to 70 persons in two years, Doug and Sheila are supported by an associational effort composed of (1) convention support (which has made available 4 acres of land for the

new church), (2) support from a nearby church which provides funds and office space, (3) association support, (4) a part time chaplaincy position Doug has taken at the Atlantic Baptist Nursing Home, and (5) partial support from the 12 families which now make up the backbone of the new church. Doug does not view himself as bi-vocational, but certainly is a hard working church planter wearing many hats.

j) A "Releasing the Gifts of God" Model: Rev. David Ruis, (604) 762-4255 is one of the founding pastors of New Life Fellowship, Kelowna, B.C.: a new, rapidly growing, independent congregation. In 1986 30 believers met to pray and seek the Lord for His philosophy of ministry before going "public." The church did not start out to be a 'signs & wonders' church, but only to have open hearts and minds to all God might have for them. The church grew to 350 persons in rented facilities the first year and has since grown to over 600 persons meeting in leased facilities in a mall. The church emphasizes:

- (1) prayer and worship,
- (2) spiritual gifts and personal ministry (80-85% of adults participate in home groups),
- (3) the absolute nature of 'function' (ie. Acts 2: worship, nurture, community and mission) expressed through great freedom in 'form',
- (4) strong united plurality of leadership, and

(5) "openness to what God wants to do".

k) "One or Two People Around a Cup of Coffee" Model: Rev. Rene and Betty Hainaue, currently of Blainville, PQ (514) 437-0909, (Associated Gospel Churches) have been career church planting missionaries in Zaire (1950-68), and have since followed the same model used effectively there, planting 4-5 churches in Quebec (1975-1983). Their model is as simple as it is effective: win 1 or 2 unbelievers to Christ in personal friendship around your kitchen table, continue in weekly personal bible study, when the new believers are well grounded, begin a church. Rev. Hainaue emphasizes the necessity of such simplicity in Quebec where evangelicals are commonly viewed as cultists. "Quebec is rapidly moving to the indifference towards Christ characteristic of Europe," says Rene, "the time for urgency in evangelism is now."

Other church planting models could be cited and examples multiplied: the 'bi-vocational' model, the 'plant a new church through an additional service' model, the 'church-planting by phone' model, the 'mission Sunday School' model, and others.

5. Set Objectives and Timelines.

The plans for a denomination will be different from those of a district association, a group of local churches in an informal fellowship, or those of a single local church. Many

denominations will have the faith and foresight to set objectives that challenge each of their congregations to plant one new church in the next decade. District associations will set targets of adding additional churches. Local churches, bible schools, and church planters will prayerfully set further objectives. Each, however, must seek the Lord of the Harvest for plans unique to their situation according to the faith and resources given to them. Common to these plans in each case however will be at least the following elements.

- a) Prayer
- b) A consideration of the unchurched peoples in the area where God has called us to evangelize, form churches, and baptize new believers.
- c) A consideration of resources and models appropriate to those resources.
- d) Planning and dreaming.
- e) Setting specific objectives and timelines.
- f) A public sharing of these objectives for encouragement and accountability.

C. Applying the Data in a Specific Instance.

Let us conclude this chapter with an example of how the data generated in this national research is to be used in a specific area. For this example we will consider the capital city of Canada's most western province, Victoria, British Columbia.

Appendix 12 indicates that the capital region of Victoria currently has 71 known evangelical churches. The population of this region is expected to grow to approximately 300,000 persons by the year AD 2000. If no new evangelical churches were planted from the period in which this research was conducted to the end of the decade, there would be 3510 persons living in the capital area for each evangelical church to reach and incorporate. Since our goal for there to be an evangelical church for each 2000 Canadians by the year AD 2000, it will be necessary to plant at least an additional 77 churches.

But where in the capital region should these churches be planted? Field work will be required to determine this more precisely but the next step is to consult the portion of Appendix 14 which relates to British Columbia for a breakdown of the capital region. Here we find that the Saanich municipality will require 26 more evangelical churches, North Saanich 4 more churches, Central Saanich 2, Oak Bay 9, Victoria proper 19, the capital subdivision 10, and in Metchosin 2 new evangelical churches.

We need to know now also the language groups towards which these new churches need to be directed. As we turn to Appendix 16 we find that most of these churches (72) need to be directed towards English speaking people. Other language groups, particularly French, Punjabi, Portuguese, German, and Italian need also to be investigated. However we will need to enter the city to observe it and to interview its

community leaders to determine in which of the above mentioned smaller census areas the non-English speaking churches will need to be planted.

Other research will also be required. Victoria is well known internationally as the third most influential center for witchcraft in the world. Strong aboriginal spiritual influences continue in the region which will need to be taken into consideration even though most aboriginals now speak English. The city is also the provincial seat of power supporting the activities and life styles related to this desire for power.

It is suggested that denominations and church planters gather to share this data as well as the informal data uncovered locally before beginning the steps urged in Section "B" above.

Similar initial data for every other region in the nation is available in these appendices and is provided with the prayer that God will use this preparatory work to focus Canadian evangelicals on the unfinished task and spur us on towards the re-evangelization of our needy nation.

Endnotes:

- 1 Such as those reflected in the Baptist General Conference of Canada document, "Vision 2000 Canada: Goals and Strategies," with the motto: "Our Mission - to Plant and Grow Worshipping, Caring Churches." (photocopied)

The Reformed Church in Canada, in which the author has roots and holds membership, had never in its 40 year history developed public goals before encouraged by this DAWN movement to do so.

- 2 Jim Montgomery. DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches to Go
(Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989), pp. 211-219.
- 3 Bruce and Marianne Martin. Handbook on Exegeting Your
Neighbourhood (Vancouver, B.C.: Baptist Union of Western
Canada, 1989.) Photocopied.