

QUESTION #2:

How can we strategically approach the task of church multiplication in ways that fit our theology and history and which meets the needs and situations of the 21st century?

PRIMER for discussion

If we don't think strategically, who will?

"The Need for Antioch Style Churches" by Jimmy A. from Southwest Church of Christ (Jonesboro, Arkansas)

- The Southwest Church (SWC) became an Antioch-style church.
- 2 years ago church planting was not on our radar screen.
- Our vision of States-side missions was keeping struggling US churches alive.
- SWC was in need a new dream.
- Dream Criteria #1: We didn't know what the dream would be, but we knew it must be something beyond ourselves (beyond Jonesboro).
 - Time to move past navel-gazing. We wanted a vision linked to a larger Vision.
 - We knew God blessed us to be a blessing. It's about stewardship.
 - We started to ask ourselves legacy questions: "What will be our legacy?" What can we do to maximize our ministry influence?
 - How can we be part of something that is healthy? How can we pass the baton to the next generation? How can we do something that is not just part of our church but part of the whole kingdom?
- Dream Criteria #2: It must be part of what God is doing. If it happens, it has to be big/impossible enough for us to point to it and say, "God did it!"
- Then we heard about successful States-side church plants in Northern California (Stadia). Heard that Stadia wants to partner with a cappella churches.
- Caught church planting dream.
- Vision grew from planting *a* church → to planting *several* churches → to being a church that supports a *church multiplication movement!*
- Met Granbergs and Kairos.
- "So you want us to raise a million dollars? To plant churches. You haven't planted any churches yet? You don't know how this is going to go? Well, we've spent a million dollars on a lot of other things that didn't work in the past."
- The Need: We were a church looking for a dream, and Kairos was a dream looking for a church.
- Shared the dream with the rest of the church. Our church people needed to be educated over a period of several months. We had thought church planting meant: some of your members go off somewhere else, and usually it's not a positive thing. Our congregation came together and raised 2.4 million dollars, 1/3 of which will go to church planting over a period of years.
- We want to help Kairos plant one new church per year. This fall we help the Hiltys launch.

- What this has done for us as a church:
 - It's been a huge educational process. Moved from not knowing what CP is to understanding what it is, and embracing the dream.
 - Some of our members are wondering how they can be part of the church plant, or plant churches in their own neighborhood!
 - It has raised the bar on the expectations of our people. If we cast the vision, give them the opportunity, and they believe they are part of what God is doing in the world, they will give!
 - Our hope is that church planting will become part of the DNA of our local church.
 - It has brought a kind of creative dissatisfaction to our people for reaching people who are not like us in our community.
- The need: Consider becoming an Antioch church. Kairos needs a couple of more churches right now. We need some more regional area churches. We need church planting churches that will support (or partner with other churches to support) church planters. We need some church planters.

"The System Kairos Uses for Supporting Church Planters by Larry Deal (Kairos Coaching Director)

"Our job as leaders is not to figure out where to go, but to figure out where God has gone. If I figure out where to go, I'll go the wrong way."

Strategy: Kairos Supports Church Planters

2 Kings 2

- Now it was time for Elijah to confirm Elisha's call.
- Elijah asked, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha replied, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." (The English metaphor: Tell me that I'm ready to follow in your footsteps. Tell me that you really want me to take over the family business. Tell me God really wants me to do this.) Elijah's response: If you see me go, you'll know.
- The rest of the story.

There are some roles in the kingdom that are not for everyone.

- There are numerous other biblical examples of leaders raising up leaders.
- Great leaders in the scripture are supported leaders. (Great leaders don't raise up on their own!)

CP is the hardest thing they've done in their lives. It's not fair to ask them to do it on their own! That's why Kairos exists. (Goal = there will be no more need for Kairos.)

Kairos is about church planter support.

- Kairos does not plant churches; we support church planters.
- Church planters plant churches.
- The mission of Kairos is to recruit, equip, and support church planters.

Conversation 1

- You are discussing a community that needs the gospel but your church is not able to reach. (For language reasons, socioeconomic reasons, geographic distance, ethnic reasons, generational differences. Or, if we're honest, we're too old and stuck in our ways to make the changes necessary – or make the changes quickly enough - to reach a postmodern generation around us. It's okay for modern churches to continue being modern to reach modern lost people. But more and more, we are going to need modern churches to support the planting of postmodern churches.)
- There are some churches that have the resources.
- But not enough, not yet.
- Kairos is needed to raise awareness and centralize expertise so that we can get started well.

Conversation 2

- A person that is on fire for God, passionate about the lost, able to rally others into service.
- How do we respond to them?
 - We're afraid they'll take resources with them.
 - We don't know what to do with those kind of people.
- Let's respond to them by saying, "There are 100 million pre-Christians (but who will be when people like you reach out to them) in this country, and you are just the right kind of person to reach them, to plant a church, and let me introduce you to some people who can help you make that happen."

Personal Support

- Introspective Application
- Discovery Lab (the Elijah-Elisha experience described in 2 Kings 2)
- Mentors
- Coach

Group Training

- Strategy Lab
 - During the first several months, just getting to know people in their community; gathering core team and leaders of the church.
- Launch Booster (mid-course correction as needed)
- Team Building Camp
- Planter Huddles

We have been great church planters.

- Campbells and Stone
- Following WWII

We can be great at it again! Will only happen if CP consumes us!

It is time for church planting to consume us again.

- The question is not, "Is God able?"

2005 Seek the Future Summit (St. Louis, MO)

- The question is, "Are we willing?"
- God is able.

We must be willing to...

- Call our best to this most difficult ministry,
- Equip them for the task ahead,
- Support them until they are ready to take up the mantle.

How can we create a strategy of CP that spreads throughout our fellowship?

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Responses from Southwest Regional group:

1. We've got to tell the stories to our congregations of how God is working, successful church plants, focusing on conversion growth!
2. We've got to do leader-to-leader conversations, helping each other to get over mega church issues, self-interest issues and competition issues.
3. Need to do more regional meetings.
4. Do something to harvest this faith resource of dying churches.
5. Have to move away from radical autonomy to just autonomy. Collaborate! This requires us to move away from church-centered theology to kingdom theology. We care about the kingdom in other places!

Responses from other regional groups:

1. There are other groups needed besides Kairos.
2. It's not going to happen through parachurch organizations. It's going to happen through churches. By God's power.
3. We can't keep this to ourselves. We've got to share this with people in our region.
4. As we share this vision with people...
 - God is so big it's not a threat to your church to send people off to plant other churches. B/c God has thousands of sheep on thousands of hills, and he'll sell us those sheep if we ask. We just don't ask.
 - We need stories to tell. We'll have stories in the future.
 - As we talk to these leaders, we need to talk about legacy. What can we do that is beyond our time with this church?
 - We need to help mega churches realize they can reproduce, too! (Reproduction is sign of health.)
 - This is not an either/or, this is a both/and proposition. We will plant different kinds of churches. In some areas we may not need to plant churches at all. Go back to scripture to see the theological diversity that God has put there.

We're not comfortable with talking about strategies b/c we don't do it very often. But it is needed.

We need to give our people a vision they can grab a hold of, and a plan that will give them the confidence to do it.

[Note: the vision is about joining God in what He already is doing, and the plan is immersed in prayer / dependence on God in all we do. First and final steps of plan = pray, pray, pray!]

- Need theological reflection before doing strategic planning (think then do). – Gailyn Van Rheenen
- Recruit young Christians from Christian and secular colleges and universities of various.
- Be open to diversity of spiritual expression.
- Hold to the core of gospel while being open to dialogue and collaborative efforts with other faith traditions.
- Open to different models.
- Need stories of success in sending, so our churches will not be threatened by the idea of sending their very best.
- Involve campus ministries.
- A prayer focus. (Luke 10:2b virus)
- Hispanic is not one unified group. Need to educate Anglo churches about Hispanics and Hispanic ministry. Need to educate Spanish-speaking preachers and missionaries in history and culture about particular Latinos they are reaching (in addition to bible training).
- Need success stories of Hispanic ministries. There are a lot of failures.
- Hispanics are particularly disjointed in Churches of Christ. Need help with this.
- Forming partner churches.
- Communicate role of parachurches like Kairos to our churches who may be resistant to this idea at first.
- Form an ongoing discussion group (about church planting movements) in our area.
- The power of data – to help our people understand what is happening.
- The power of success stories (post on Kairos web site?).
- Have Kairos come to our church/city to do a workshop.
- Make sure we don't over-professionalize church planting. Don't have to have PhD or be ordained in the clergy.
- Need to re-embrace the "apostolic" kind of role – a person who will launch new churches and move on to launch more new churches throughout a region for a lifetime (not just the founding pastor who stays with a church for a number of years).
- Internships and apprenticeships.
- Be relationally-sensitive when casting vision to other churches (even dying churches). Instead of telling them what they're doing wrong, tell 'em what God is doing and call them to join in what God is doing.
- Church plant on good terms with established churches.

Expanded Notes:

We have a historical theology for planting churches; we don't have a current theology for planting churches.

Caution to Kairos: Many parachurches end up being self-serving, where most of money raised goes to pay salaries and perpetuate the organization. When the day comes that Kairos is no longer needed, discontinue!

Need to pray Luke 10:2b!

Need to rely on God to do it!

Accept that the new churches will be our brothers but not identical twins!

What are some resources for addressing the following tough issues in ministry among Latinos?

Anglo churches need to be educated on

- history & culture of particular Latinos we're reaching
- how to view and minister among Latinos
- need high knowledge of both Latino culture and bible
- raising up indigenous leaders

ANCILLARY QUESTIONS

What are the implications of the challenges, demands and dangers of the 21st century for our fellowship?

Need for "education" and "assurance":

- Misunderstandings about what CP is.
- Misunderstandings about why we want to plant churches. (Feel abandoned, rejected by those who "leave" to plant new churches.)
- Misunderstandings about what it takes to daughter a church.
 - We don't have enough money.
 - We've got too many problems we're dealing with right now.
 - We're in survival mode (just keeping our doors open).
 - No, we want to go mega church (get bigger).
 - No, we had a bad experience with CP in the past. (Need to redefine healthy church... If we saw a couple didn't have kids, we'd say not healthy. A mega church that never plants other churches is not healthy!)
- Fears about "losing" valuable people and resources.
- Need to understand that new churches will look different from us.

Collaborate with area churches to cultivate a regional church multiplication movement. Transition from radical autonomy to just autonomy.

What kinds of things can we be doing?

- Talk positively of CP and Kairos in pulpit, bulletins, kitchen talk, ministry leaders meetings.
- Tell stories!
- Need a couple of success stories of mothering churches, daughter churches, church planters, etc.
- Need leader-to-leader conversations in our region. (Meet with each other's elders.)
- Have regional Kairos meetings.
- Have regional CP/Kairos meeting at Pepperdine.
- Need to share the vision and passion for the lost with ministers and their elders.
- "There's no competition between lighthouses."
- We have to really love the existing churches. "What about giving attention to the churches that want to grow?"
- Start small. Let things snowball.
- Let people feel good about their last few days as a church – that the decisions they're making are going to make a lasting effect on the kingdom. Let our tombstones turn into cornerstones. We're birthing something! The work is continuing!
- Churches in Southern California are sitting on real estate that has lots of market value!
- Need more dialogue between preachers / elderships. Need more dialogue between English-speaking churches, White/Black churches, Spanish-speaking churches, Korean-speaking churches. But this only will work if we have stories to tell.
- We need an extraordinarily strong commitment to conversion growth (vs. transfer growth – rearranging the deck chairs).

What strategic vision should we be asking God for locally, regionally, nationally?

LOCALLY?

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REGIONALLY?

-

NATIONALLY?

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What might we expect if we do/do not strategically engage church multiplication in the 21st century?

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What is the role and work of para-church ministries like Kairos in church multiplication in our fellowship?

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