

4 Objections to Church Planting

By Clint Clifton

My friend Shane Critser specializes in helping pastors move from interest to action in church planting for Send Network, in the Los Angeles area. After years of working to get pastors on mission, Shane wrote down the four most common objections he hears from church leaders when considering church planting:

It costs too much

I think most people feel this way because when they think of starting a new church, they begin to think about their own church needs, too. Their church may have a building, programs and maintenance that cost money to maintain. They think about the challenges their church faces each day and cannot comprehend starting another church and doubling the same challenges financially. The truth is, not all church planting costs a lot of money. Some church plants may not cost any money, depending on the model and the context. And even if the church wanted to be a part of something requiring high financial costs, partnering with other small churches can spread the burden of resources.

We can't afford to lose our best leaders

I believe you can't afford NOT to! I think God is just as concerned, if not more, with how many we send as He is with how many we seat in our Sunday morning services. Yes, you may "lose" your best, but don't minimize the awesome fact that another church is receiving your best. And by sending—not losing—your best, you open up spots for other leaders to become your "new" best! A church is meant to be a launching pad for God's kingdom and a place for people to join in on what He's doing. This is actually a great leadership development strategy. By sending them out, you are forced to make new leaders! Jack Welch, former CEO of GE, said, "If the best person to take over as CEO is an outsider, your company has failed. You send the message: 'You are not good enough, you stink and I have to go outside to shape you guys up.'" When we don't develop our lay people to do big things and be our churches' best, what are we communicating to them.

It will destroy our growth momentum

I've actually seen the opposite effect. When people visit your church and they see you celebrating people's leadership capabilities and sending them out to do great things, this inspires new people to join in. People are drawn to churches where big things are happening. There are plenty of clubs people can join to have their preferences and expectations met. A church is meant to be a launching pad for God's kingdom and a place for people to join in on what He's doing. And don't ignore the simple truth that God often blesses you with more people when you send them out. I know this was true for the church I was a part of most recently. Every time we sent 50 out to help plant a church, God would send us new people. Our momentum never slowed. It actually increased and allowed us more seats for all the new people who came to watch God move. Sending out is also a great solution to overcrowded services.

We're too small

This objection stems from a misunderstanding of church planting. When most people hear their pastor discuss a possible church plant, their mind immediately goes to what their church looks and acts like now. They think about buildings, programs, staff, maintenance and the budget it takes to do all those things. But in reality, most new churches will not, and may never, need those things. We have to lead our church to understand that the new church may not look like us. So we can't think of it as duplication. It's multiplication. While a new church will contain aspects of your DNA, it will not be a mirror image of your established church. Pastors must lead their church to understand the new church may not look like us. If you need an illustration, consider my two daughters. Thank the Lord they don't look just like me. They would be ugly girls if they did! My wife gave birth to daughters, not duplicates. Help your church members understand that when you start a new church, you are birthing a daughter, not a duplicate.