

Running Head: CHURCH PLANTING

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Foundations of Church Planting

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Position Paper - The Missional Spirit and Church Planting

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Part A –Healthy Relationship with Christ to Missional Spirit

When a person decides that he wants to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a life-change that takes place at the moment of repentance and acknowledgment of Christ as Lord and Savior. When we understand that Jesus paid for all of our sin, at that very moment, the old way of life begins a transformation to a new way of life (2 Corinthians 5:16-18). The new way of life is not only about one's actions--it is an attitude. The new attitude comes from following Jesus Christ and living a life of humility and compassion (Philippians 2:5-11).

Living a life of humility and compassion is the essence of living a Christlike existence, and it is the foundation for this new life, new attitude and new existence in sharing with others the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This sharing comes from the joy of one's life experience in Christ, and we see it in the desire to serve God and to be willing to move according to the direction of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:13).

A healthy relationship in Jesus Christ is a growing relationship. The growth comes from a desire to be obedient to Him, and to act according to His will. These are the people that God uses to not only reach the unsaved, but also to build up others within the body of Christ. Every believer must aspire to grow in wisdom and knowledge in Christ in order to be able to effectively share the gospel with others. This is the *missional spirit* of a believer. The desire to share is a missional spirit rooted in one's love for Jesus Christ and for all of His creation--especially the unsaved (Mark 16:15). God's desire is also the heart's desire of the missional person (Psalm 37:3-7).

Part B – To be missional is to be ready and willing to plant churches

A missional person is to "be like Jesus, by living freely within the culture as missionaries who are as faithful to the Father and his gospel as Jesus was in his own time and place." [1] In order to live as a missionary, a missional person must be is sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and is ready and willing to move according to His voice. A missional person is more than just being a missionary that is sent to foreign lands. While it is an excellent trait for missionaries, to be a missional person is to live with an attitude of Christ in reaching others with the gospel, wherever they may be.

A person who is sent out to plant churches must be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and a person with a missional spirit. This missional spirit is a person's attitude—a way of life. It is in the relationship with Jesus Christ, in its ongoing growth and development that drives a believer with a missional spirit to seek the lost for Christ's saving power.

A person with a missional spirit desires to plant churches because of the following:

1. To be obedient to Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

18 Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The planting of churches is the establishment of Jesus Christ for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel to reach people for Christ and to fellowship for the purpose of strengthening believers.

The Great Commission is an ongoing effort until such time when the "end" comes.

This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14 HCSB)

The Great Commission, as a result, is to be proclaimed before men in obedience to Christ until the end of the age. A person with a missional spirit is obedient to His call to reach the lost.

2. To fulfill a desire to please Jesus Christ in a growing relationship (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12).

A person with a missional spirit pleases Jesus in faith.

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6 HCSB)

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. (Matthew 6:33 HCSB)

A missional spirit does not do anything for the accolades or praises of men.

For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ. (Galatians 1:10 HCSB)

A missional spirit pleases God in compliant love for Him.

If you love Me, you will keep My commands. (John 14:15)

If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love. (John 15:10)

3. A heart for people in the same way that Jesus loves His people.

In order to see people in the way that Jesus sees them, a person with a missional spirit humbles himself before God in submissive prayer and before others. (2 Chronicles 7:14-15)

A missional spirit projects the fruits of the Spirit in attitude, behavior, love and compassion for all people (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). In doing so, he is patient and allows the Spirit to work in and through all things for the purpose of reaching the lost and to glorify God.

The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

Part C – Church planters are missional, biblical and transformable in Christ

Each of these characteristics of a person with a missional spirit is, according to Ed Stetzer, significant for church planters. Stetzer notes that church planters are missional, incarnational (changeable and transformable as the Spirit works from within and throughout the church group), theological (solid biblical teaching to support the gospel), ecclesiological (strength within the church and the body of Christ) and spiritual (Christ-centered growth). [2]

Dave DeVries notes five biblical distinctives that are foundational of a missional perspective:

- *The Church is sent by Jesus Christ* (John 17:18; 20:21, Luke 9:2; Matthew 28: 19–20; Acts 1:8)
- *The Church is sent with the Cross* (1 Corinthians 1:18, Ephesians 2:16, Col 2:14, 1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17–24)
- *The Church is sent in Community* (Acts 2:42–47; 5:42; John 13:34–35; 1 John 3:16–17)
- *The Church is sent to every Culture* (John 1:14; Matthew 20:28; Acts 17:22–34; Luke 5:29)
- *The Church is sent for the King and His Kingdom* (Matthew 10:7; 25:34; Luke 4:43; Revelation 11:15–17; Jeremiah 10:7; John 18:36) [3]

Interestingly, these characteristics are very much in line with the Fourfold Gospel, which is the "Christological summary on which the core values of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is based" according to its founder, A. B. Simpson. Jesus is Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King. [4] By observing these characteristics daily, the person with a missional spirit lives out these values as he lives for Christ and loves everyone—especially those who need Jesus Christ.

Bible verses that support planting new churches:

Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15

Matthew 24:14

Matthew 9:35

Matthew 16:18

Mark 10:45

Luke 5:27-32

Luke 10:2

Luke 19:10

Luke 24:47-48

John 3:14-17

John 20:21-23

Acts 1:8

Acts 14:23

Acts 16:31

Romans 10:9-10, 13-14, 17

Philippians 2:9-10

1 Timothy 2:3-4 / 2 Peter 3:9

1 Mark Driscoll (2004). *The Radical Reformation*, pg. 40. Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids MI.

2 Ed Stetzer (2006). *Planting Missional Churches*, pgs. 2-3. B & H Publishing Group, Nashville TN.

3 Dave DeVries (2007). *Missional Transformation, Funding Missionary Movements That Transform America*, Pgs. 8-12. Bakke Graduate University, Seattle WA.

4 Website - Fourfold Gospel (n.d.). The Christian & Missionary Alliance, Colorado Springs CO. [cmalliance.org](http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/fourfold-gospel). Retrieved June 14, 2014 from <http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/fourfold-gospel>

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