

The Biblical Baptist Pattern of Church Planting

I understand our justified fear of new things when so many churches are changing and far more are changing for worse than better but to learn something new with a scriptural basis is not apostatizing. I want to keep growing spiritually so sometimes I will be in territory that I have never been in before. If I try the spirits by the spirits and make sure it is backed by the Word of God then I know I am moving in the right direction and my change is for good. Studying the Bible should guide me as I study History and the World around me.

I believe our pattern for church planting has been lost because of many reasons but the main being that we have patterned ourselves after Protestants and their partial obedience to the great commission. R.A. Torrey may have had thousands of people saved but because he never scripturally baptized any of his converts or started one church, what God used him to do only lasted for his generation. R. A. Torrey's partial obedience of the great commission had consequences and he should not be copied any more than D.L. Moody or Billy Sunday for the same reasons. We are Baptists because our obedience to the Bible is different than a protestant or a reformer. In other words we observe and defend the ordinances. We are supposed to be out to obey all three parts of the great commission not just the first third of it. I believe Paul Raider worked very hard at getting people saved but because he didn't observe the ordinances and did not therefore have a legitimate church the Chicago Gospel Center now has a Wal-Mart where the Chicago Gospel Center once was. The Cato Tabernacle in Indianapolis, Indiana became the largest church in the world but because they didn't baptize their converts they no longer exist.

If I read the book of Acts with all of the great commission in mind instead of the first third I come to some very basic conclusions. First, the church at Jerusalem was scattered because it would not go into Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The church in Jerusalem kept getting bigger and bigger in Jerusalem until the Lord allowed persecution to come to the church in Acts 8 to get them to scatter. The church in Jerusalem is not to be our model. The church at Antioch ends up being the Apostle Paul's home church. On Paul's missionary journey's he leads thousands of Gentiles to Christ and plants many churches and ordains men to Pastor those churches and tells those men to do the same. The pattern of church planting is very easily seen in the book of acts if you don't read it with a protestant mind set. As Paul was pasturing he was doing the work of an evangelist. His church planting always crossed over into his pasturing and his pasturing crossed over into his church planting or his doing the work of an evangelist.

If I apply this pattern to us then I realize one of the major thinking patterns that keeps us from planting churches is the mindset that you cannot plant a church unless you are a church that has a Bible college. Paul did not have a Bible college at any church but he was always training and teaching men. I like our Bible college. I am very much for and excited about Old Paths Baptist College. Francis Wayland (The President of the first Baptist college in America) wrote in "Notes on Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches", that we will fail to reach the people of our nation if we rely upon the colleges to supply the Pastors that are needed. Francis Wayland said that Bible colleges can only supplement what must be done by every individual Pastor. Every Pastor must be involved in reaching men and training them to Pastor and plant churches also. I did not say that every man in a church can Pastor a church but the men that can teach others also are to be looked for in reference to II Timothy 2:2. If we rely upon colleges only to start churches we will be overrun. I believe most Pastors are for what I am teaching because when ever any one says "We need to get back to starting churches or we are done for!" you always hear a lot of "AMENS". But the danger is most people think that the statement only applies to churches with a college because of our protestant mind set.

Before I give the historical pattern from history I think it would help if I explained what church planting is not. It is not church branching where several families leave a church to go start a church somewhere. As a matter of fact, if you follow this true pattern of church planting it won't cost you any church members. It is not missionary fund raising where you throw \$20,000.00 at a guy and tell him to go start a church far away. You cannot treat the responsibility of church

planting like the democrats treat problems by just spending a bunch of money on it. Some of those who have received that amount have bought a new car and left the ministry because they didn't understand how to do what they were being sent to do. Church planting is not team missions where no one knows who the pastor or sending church is. Church planting is not college led efforts. Colleges are not to start churches. Churches plant churches. Church planting is not church group efforts of starting a church. This isn't wrong but it is not the pattern of our Baptist forefathers. Church planting is not just getting a group of people together and starting a church from that meeting. Church planting is not an isolated outpost mission. Church planting is not overseas missions.

According to what happened in the Bible and our own Baptist heritage and history is Pastor led church planting. This is where the Pastor leads in the planting of other churches. The church follows the Pastor in that lead. The model is churches planting churches through the leadership of their Pastor. This model involves the Pastor finds a man for the new work. As the Pastor is establishing a new church he is looking for a man to train and comes along his side to take the work. The model for church planting is an Evangelist, a Pastor and a new Church planter working together to help the planted church to be established. An Evangelist is someone who wins people to Christ and brings them into the local church and if there is no church then he is commissioned by the church that sent him to form a local church. Evangelists are church planters just like Pastors are church planters. When we think of Missionaries as church the only church planters we hurt the cause of Christ. In the New Testament Pastors were Evangelists and Evangelists were Pastors and their duties at times overlapped. During the Separate Baptist revival the New Testament pattern was observed and Pastors in the South were pasturing two and three churches at a time and they multiplied at an astonishing rate.

In our churches we have different ministries, why do we not have a church planting ministry like we have a bus ministry? The fruit of a Christian is another Christian. The fruit of another church is another church. A church that is not reproducing itself is in a state of dying. Someone went out and worked and planted the church that you are a part of. Our heritage tells us of the Vaudois had five different churches where Preachers would come and learn to pastor and they would then go out and cover Europe. The Novationists did the same thing. The Donatists planted churches that planted churches. Patrick the Baptist planted over 360 churches in 60 years. All of the ancient Baptists were church planters. In the Separate Baptist revival under Shubal Stearns ministry, 17 men were ordained and planted churches and by the 3rd generation there were 1,000 churches that had been planted as the result of Shubal Stearns church at Sandy Creek (Liberty), North Carolina. Daniel Marshal went to Georgia at age 65 and started the first Baptist church in Georgia and within 5 years there were over 100 churches as the result of that one church. Why would we not want to learn from these men.

In Acts 9:31 it says "...the churches... were multiplied," not the disciples, but the churches and naturally if the churches were multiplied then also the disciples were multiplied. In Titus 1:5 "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:" a microcosm of every church is pictured and obeying Acts 1:8. Titus was supposed to plant churches in other cities and ordains Pastors in those churches. If you look in the Bible you easily see church planting as long as you don't read it with a protestant mind set.

Church planting churches have a "Church Sitting" ministry. This is where 3 or 4 families would sign up for 2 Sundays in a month to go and help in the planted church service that particular morning. These families would help in working in the church and working the invitation. In the evening those families would attend the home church so that no members were traded from one church to another. This continues until the planted church gets established. Proper church planting does not trade members one from another.

As an illustration of what damage we have done by imitating the "Empire" or "Mega" churches and by abandoning church planting take Detroit for an example. Detroit was the home of the great Temple Baptist Church pastored by J. Frank Norris. Detroit has 100 Muslim mosques, 48 Mormon churches, 22 Jehovah Witness Watchtowers and there are 5 Baptist churches. How about Los Angeles? 260 Kingdom Halls, over 300 Mormon churches, 48 Muslim mosques and only 4 Baptist churches. How about New York city? 300 Mormon churches, 100's Jehovah Witness Kingdom halls, 57

Islamic centers. Do you realize that the Muslims have only been in our country birthing their mosques for 15 years? Look at what they are doing! Do you know what the Muslims are emphasizing? They are emphasizing their style of church planting. An Egyptian Journalist reported “the U.S. will be transformed into an Islamic Republic” and this journalist reported “The rate of converts to Islam in the U.S. is very high. This is of great alarm to the Zionist circles in the U.S., because this rate is rising on a daily basis. These converts adhere to Islam with total conviction. **They become preachers themselves**, (the emphasis is mine) and convince others to convert to Islam.” The Muslims are over running us because they emphasize what they learned from the Paulicians – church planting.

If you take any major city and do your own study (which is easy to do because of the internet) you will find the same thing. We keep modeling ourselves after these single generation “Empire” or large churches and then we wonder why what we are doing isn’t working. We must get back to the Biblical, Historical pattern of planting churches. If the Lord allows you to have a big church I think it is great and I am all for it, but if you abandon church planting so that you can focus more on how your church can get bigger then I believe our measure of success is according to Protestants not the Biblical pattern. Success should be measured on how many churches has your church started, not how big can you make your church. Please help us Lord Jesus.