



Church Planting Conceptual Models

People Group Models¹

Geo-demographic approach - Multicultural design is the vision and goal as the church planter or team incarnates into a specific geographic area of a city or region and targets several cultures in the context of the city or region.

Mono-cultural or Cross-cultural approach - This approach may or may not be geographically bounded. A specific ethnic, people, or language group is targeted such as Anglo, African-American, Korean, Russian, West African, specific tribal, or ethnic group.

Affinity based approach - The church plant targets a specific affinity group such as the deaf, people with disabilities, military, government workers, medical, post-modern, university students, artists, or families of those with HIV. The church focuses on that specific group in its overall strategy and work.

Purpose Driven Models²

"Purpose driven is not about seeker services. It is about evangelism. Purpose driven is a process by which you bring people in through evangelism, raise them up through discipleship, train them for ministry, and send them out on mission to the glory of God." - Rich Warren, 2001

Distinctives:

- ❑ *Five biblical purposes* - Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Service, and Evangelism

¹ Tom Cheyney, *Twenty-One Church Planting Designs / Models for the Twenty-First Century*. Article prepared for the Church Planting Village website of the North American Mission Board. Accessed October 8, 2009 from www.churchplantingvillage.net.

² Bradley Jason Weldy, *Ideal Types: Church Planting Models*. A paper presented in fulfillment of requirements for course 88500-The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, April 2007.



- ❑ *Advocating "crowd to core" growth* - The most effective way to develop a new church is by discipling a crowd into a core rather than trying to motivate a core to evangelize a crowd (e.g. ministries of Jesus and Paul); there may not be a crowd (cell church), but there should be sustained effort to gather more than one seeker for each conversation about faith in Christ
- ❑ *Culturally relevant worship style* - Worship is not necessarily contemporary, but culturally relevant.
- ❑ *Independent of buildings* - Research demonstrates that most churches build too quickly; the building then becomes the priority instead of the target group.
- ❑ *Targeted evangelism* - Church planters spend much time researching the target group, determining what bridges can be built to target the group's life concerns (ethnography)
- ❑ *Seeker-sensitive events* - Eliminating religious barriers is crucial so that the new person is put at ease.
- ❑ *Balanced small groups* - Small groups are balanced around the five distinctives which lead to health; church health is more crucial than church growth
- ❑ *Mobilization of the laity* - Members are the workers in the church; with multiple tasks and programs, the participation of the laity is expected
- ❑ *A paradigm, not a set methodology* - An exact model cannot be reproduced; however, principles can be drawn and implemented in different contexts.

Relational Models

All churches are relational in some way because the nature of almost any regularly gathered group is built on relationships. Moreover, the gospel itself is inherently relational. The relationally based church, however, is built on and through relationship. The term "relational church" is mostly used of smaller churches with tight relationships, loose structure and fluid organizations.

Types of relational churches:

- ❑ *House churches* - In the best sense, a basic Christian community that is usually autonomous and can be highly egalitarian or hierarchical. Many churches in sensitive regions of the world are house churches.

- *Intentional Christian communities* - Usually this term refers to Christians who live together in a household with a high value on communal life.
- *Cell churches* - Cell churches are loosely organized and organic. They value both community and evangelism, but not necessarily church reproduction. Each individual cell is a Christian community

Redeemer Model³

Tim Keller's Redeemer model articulates a unique model for new churches planted by the Redeemer Church Planting Center. Common theological and ministry values are:

- *Gospel-grace* - The gospel is the method and the means in church planting, bringing individuals, families, and groups into the Kingdom. Gospel and grace penetrate every aspect of the church's work. Gospel-focus leads vital churches away from legalism while at the same time calling people to repentance and obedience. The gospel not only transforms lives, but communities and institutions as well.
- *World and Life View* - The Lordship of Christ over every area of life prevents us from dividing life into secular and public, private and sacred realms.
- *City-Positive* - Contextualizing life and ministry in the city deepens, renews, and vitalizes the city.
- *Multi-ethnic* - Vital urban churches will mirror their geographic neighborhoods. They will seek to reflect more racial unity than their neighborhoods.
- *Holistic* - Churches will fall neither into the "word only" or "deed-only" ministry. Churches will be equally skilled to convert people and renew the city socially, economically, and culturally.
- *Cell-based* - Cell groups and house churches are critical for ministry. They are crucial for evangelism and pastoral care.
- *Church planting minded* - Churches are always planning and working

³ Timothy J. Keller and J. Allen Thompson, Church Planter Manual. Redeemer Church Planting Center, New York, 2002, pp. 40-41.

Missional Model⁴

Ed Stetzer's book, *Planting Missional Churches*, articulates the missional approach to church planting. A church becomes missional when it remains faithful to the gospel and simultaneously seeks to contextualize the gospel. The goal is transformation of the individual and culture. While sharing many distinctives of other models, this model is characterized by the following principles:

- ❑ *Missional* - Planting a church that is part (not separate from) the culture one is trying to reach is the overarching goal and philosophy of ministry. The church planter approaches people in culture.
- ❑ *Incarnational* - The church planter adopts an incarnational approach and lives in the midst of the target group, both geographically and culturally.
- ❑ *Solid theology* - Relevance to the culture should never clash with the power of the gospel.
- ❑ *Ecclesiological* - Culture is transformed by the presence of the church. Believers come together in churches, becoming stronger as individuals and formed into a body that transforms culture.
- ❑ *Spiritual* - Spiritual formation of members is a main focus. Christ-centeredness and gospel transformation are goals.

Reflection Questions

With which paradigms do you resonate?

What are the benefits and challenges of each church planting paradigm in your cultural setting?

⁴ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2006, pp. 1-15.