IF I CAN DO IT
ANYBODY CAN!
A HANDBOOK FOR CHURCH PLANTERS

WRITTEN BY
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Newlyweds & Church planters
FORWARD

"Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." – Job 8:7

As I travel throughout the United Pentecostal Church participating in Church Growth Conferences, Camp Meetings and other services, I am often asked about the church my wife and I pioneered in Newport News, Virginia. This book covers some of the glorious, and not so glorious, highlights of our time as pioneer church planters. Without hesitation I would have you to know that the church planting years of our life were the most enjoyable. Elsy and I have found nothing else to equal the joy associated with church planting. To have been called of God to start a church and watch it grow is the highlight of our ministerial life.
I wish I had the space to write about every convert and the unique circumstances surrounding their new birth experience. We will share some of the more notable conversions and trust that these stories will bless and challenge you. Many lives were miraculously changed at the altars of the United Pentecostal Church of Newport News, Virginia.

If you are reading this book because you are giving serious consideration to planting a church, let us encourage you to take the plunge. If God has called you and the church has placed it’s blessing upon you, you will make it.

Elsy and I are not overly talented, nor do we posses a high level of intellect. For the most part, we are fairly normal people. We have learned, however, the secret of leaning on the Lord, and the power associated with being totally dependent upon Him. He has never failed us. No matter the situation or circumstance; He has never let us down. Jesus Christ has always opened doors and led us in the right direction to accomplish His will in our lives.

As you read the pages of this book you will find that Elsy and I are two people, average people, who are filled with a desire to do something for God. Know what? He has used us to do
some pretty awesome things. Of which, planting churches is among our favorite jobs we have performed for the Master.

As normal as I am He chose to use me to build a great church. If I Can Do It Anybody Can! May the Lord bless you and lead you as you give yourself to the up building of the Kingdom of God.

Jack Cunningham
THE CHALLENGE!

Chapter One

"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." -- Acts 16:5

HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

We were happy and content working with the United Pentecostal Church of Chicago, where Michael Anderson was Sr. Pastor, when God began to deal with us about pioneering a church on the east coast.

Not knowing exactly where we would begin a new church, we considered all our options. We could have returned to one of our home districts, West Virginia or New York Metro. We also considered North Carolina and upstate New York. We had visited both districts and were
impressed with their burden for the lost and their attitude toward planting and growing churches. One thing was for sure, we wanted to pastor on the east coast.

In the fall of 1980 we were invited to preach a revival for our good friend Pastor Robert Hall in Chesapeake, Virginia. While there he informed me that the church in Norfolk, Virginia was in need of a pastor. He encouraged us to preach for them, and consider allowing them to vote on us as pastor. We preached for them Sunday morning and evening, but did not feel the leading of the Lord toward accepting the pastorate of this group.

After informing Pastor Hall that we were not interested in the Norfolk church, he told us of another opportunity. The District owned a small building in the city of Newport News. As far as he knew there was one member left in the church, Sister Helen Williams, a sister seventy-four years old. He told us that the district intended to shut down the work because they had no pastor to oversee it. Brother Hall invited us to go with him to see the city, as well as the building, and to meet Sister Williams.
The building was less than attractive. In fact, it was in serious need of repair. The front doors had been nailed shut. When we pulled on the handle of the back door the whole door came crashing to the ground because the wood was so rotted. What a first impression!

The window openings in the building were filled with a Plexiglas material, and most of it was broken. The large gaping holes were large enough for neighbors and passersby to look through. When it rained the inside of the church would get soaked.

Lots of cleaning was necessary, as there were an abundance of cobwebs and dust. Though the building had fallen into bad repair, the basic foundation, walls, roof and mechanical were all sound.

The small block building had been built, several years prior to our arrival, through the personal sacrifices of Brother and Sister James Floyd. They literally built the building block-by-block, as they were able to save or raise the funds. Brother Floyd is a master builder, so the block work, cement floor and roof system was built to last.
The building was located in a wonderful and opportune place. It was right off the main four-lane road, Warwick Boulevard, which runs the length of Newport News. I liked it -- cobwebs and all! Something felt good about it.

Presbyter Hall telephoned Sister Helen Williams (the only member of the church) to ask that she join us at the building for a look around. When she arrived she said something I will never forget. As she laboriously walked down the center aisle of that little dirty church building, she was carrying a bottle of olive oil. Her feeble hands were trembling and tears were streaming down her worn face. The first words I heard her speak pierced my heart. I will never forget what she said "I have not had a pastor to anoint me with oil for six months. I'm very sick. I need a pastor. Would you pray for me?"

To say the least, this faithful saint of God touched me deeply. We prayed for her and the LORD blessed her wonderfully.

**THANK GOD FOR MR. HAUGHTON!**
It was that very same day that I met our closest neighbor, Mr. Red Haughton. I shall never forget. After looking around the building Presbyter Hall and I were about to leave when Mr. Haughton (Red, as we later came to know him) came running out of his house and across the lawn toward us shouting and cursing, "What are you guys doing in that church?"

Brother Hall responded, "I am the Section 1 Presbyter of the Virginia District United Pentecostal Church. I'm showing the building to this young man in hopes that he will start a new church here."

To that point Brother Hall had not mentioned to me his desire to see me start a church in Newport News.

Red obviously took note of the fact that I was very young, only twenty-one years old, and he began to laugh out loud at me. "That boy can't start a church here" he said. "There has been several men try to start a church here. No one has succeeded. There will never be a church of any size or significance here."
I have always been one to respond to a challenge. Red's challenge hit me right between the eyes. I'm not sure if it was the Holy Ghost or if I just didn't like his joy over the failure of the previous church planters at this location. It was like I felt the honor of God's Word must be defended. Whatever it was that hit me, I looked across the hood of the car at Brother Hall and said, "My wife and I will move to Newport News. By the help of the Lord, we will build a church here."

I surprised myself. What had I said? Brother Hall responded in faith, "The devil is a liar, and if he says there cannot be a church here, then there must be a great church in Newport News waiting to be born."

By the way, time always tells the story. Today, there is a thriving, growing church in Newport News. The church won the "Fastest Growing Sunday School Award", in its category, two years running. Since its beginning, the church has enjoyed the blessings of God spiritually, financially and numerically. As the founding pastors, we look at the church today, and say "Look what the Lord hath done".
There are also several daughter churches surrounding the city as a result of the Newport News church. I'll tell you more about them later.

Many pastors, who I have great confidence in, can point to a past spiritual experience where God called them and directed them to a specific city. I believe in and respect their special calling. I did not have such an experience ... No dreams, no visions, no specific word from God, no writing in the sky -- just “Old Red's” mocking challenge.

In my opinion (underscore "my opinion"), I believe that I could have started a church anywhere on the East Coast of North America. Not that I am a super-talented church planting machine. Rather, I actually feel that the will of God is to first "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." I feel like any city I would have chose to start a church in would have been the will of God ... in the broad sense of fulfilling His calling.

Everything we do should be based on the Word of God. The Scripture is our model for church planting. Through studying church planting in the Book, we are quickly made to understand that other than the account of Paul's "Macedonian Call", there are no other examples of a man of
God being called to a specific city or location to start a church. However, it seems clear that the early church felt it incumbent upon them to carry the Gospel to every creature.

There are in fact many examples where men and women of God simply carried the message of the Gospel to every city and people they came in contact with ... whenever and wherever.

Elsy and I found ourselves standing face-to-face with the greatest challenge and opportunity of our lives. The possibility of being used of God to plant a Home Missions church in Newport News, Virginia was exciting. We accepted this challenge with joy and thoroughly enjoyed the church planting opportunity... the good times and the not so good times.
YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE A SPECIALIST

Chapter Two

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” - 2 Timothy 2:15

Many times I have been ask “what special qualities or abilities do you posses which enabled you to plant and build a growing revival church?”

I guess the reason men ask such questions are that they are first of all looking for a key to being effective in the Kingdom. I would guess they are also asking because they want to know if they have what it takes to plant a church.
The answer, in a nutshell, is that Elsy and I don’t really have any special talents or abilities that would cause us to be any more effective church planters than any other couple.

As I look back over the years I realize that I did not do everything right as a church planter. And, I did not have all the answers to the hundreds of church planting questions that arise. In fact, I had many more questions than I did answers.

**I LEANED ON JESUS...**

Every leader knows his strengths and weaknesses. I am fully aware that God has gloriously blessed my life and ministry. There are things that have helped me along the way, and I have learned over the years to lean heavy upon these special blessings and disciplines.

First, I cherish the anointing that God has placed upon my life. I could not have accomplished anything without this special favor of God.
Secondly, I am a very determined and focused leader. I probably inherited this from my grandfather, J. C. Cole, and my uncle, Billy Cole. Both of these men have distinguished themselves as strong, determined and focused leaders.

Third, I am organized. This one word, “organization”, can make a world of difference in the success and failure of any endeavor or ministry.

Fourth, a very important quality in the character of a church planter, I am a team player.

JOHN MACARTHUR, JR.

The MacArthur Memorial is located in Norfolk, Virginia, just a few minutes from where we lived. Often I would take visiting ministers to this famous man’s home and museum.

One day as I was walking through the memorial buildings and reading the plaques on the wall I came upon something that has impacted my life and that I have shared with many men. Here is what the plaque said; “As a boy, John MacArthur, Jr., received the following admonition from his
father (related to leadership) that he applied to his entire life.” Here are the things MacArthur told his son:

1) **Start small.** Start with your room. Clean it then keep it clean. When something is out of place, train yourself to put it where it belongs.

2) **Be on time.** That may not seem very spiritual, but it's important. If you're supposed to be somewhere at a specific time, be there on time!

3) **Do the hardest job first.** Doing that will prevent the hardest jobs from being left undone.

4) **Organize your life.** Plan the use of your time; don't just react to circumstances. Use a calendar and make a daily list of things you need to accomplish. If you don't control your time, everything else will!

5) **Accept correction.** Correction helps make you more disciplined because it shows you what you need to avoid.
6) **Practice self-denial.** Learn to say no to your feelings. Occasionally deny yourself things that are all right just for the purpose of mastering doing it. Cultivating discipline in the physical realm will help us become disciplined in our spiritual lives.

7) **Welcome responsibility.** When you have an opportunity to do something that needs to be done, volunteer for it if you have a talent in that area. Welcoming responsibility forces you to organize yourself.

   It seems that our church expects church planters to be great orators, have a great education, exercise an awesome vocabulary, or generally be a spiritual and Scriptural superman. Some church growth speakers today perpetuate this myth about successful church planters by trying to convince those they speak to that they should strive to be all of those things.

   I have worked with hundreds of church planters and revival pastors. Some of them, quite frankly, couldn’t preach their way out of a wet paper bag. Some of them butcher the King’s English. Some of them struggle in the area of people skills.
In my own case, most of the men I speak to are better communicators than I am, they have a better education, a better vocabulary, they are fitter, and better dressed. If it took those things to build a church I would be left out and the great Newport News United Pentecostal Church would not exist. I am so glad that God can use vessels of wood, stone and silver ... we can’t all be golden boys.

**EFFECTIVE LEADERS...**

Dr. John Maxwell lists *Eight Disciplines of Effective Executives* (Injoy Life, June 1992) which he applies to church leaders and ministers. They also apply to the church planter.

- Time Conscious
- Results Oriented
- Strength Focused
- Optional Thinkers
Dr. Maxwell also lists **Eight Differences That Really DON'T Make A Difference!** When I first read this list I had to take a double take and think out each point carefully. Basically, what he is saying, is that we emphasize things that do not really make a difference when it comes to bottom line results. The things that don't make as much difference as we sometimes think are:

- Personality
- Appearance
- Education
- Structure
- Age
- Background
\{ Luck
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\begin{itemize}
  \item Denominational Affiliation
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We develop lists, in our minds, outlining what we feel an effective church planter should be. Like John Maxwell's second list, we are often "zeroing" in on things that really don't make a difference.

\section*{MY CREDENTIALS...}

My church planting credentials are certainly not the most impressive available in the United Pentecostal Church, and I would not even try to put myself up as the model church planter for the fellowship. However, I have had considerable experience and exposure to church planting. I will share with you things that have worked for me.
First of all, I grew up in a church that produced over fifty church planters. My grandfather, J.C. Cole, was a proven preacher builder and church planter. Men who were trained by my pastor and grandfather have started many great churches all over the world.

Second, I have had the privilege of preaching in hundreds of successful churches in my twenty-three years of ministry. I learn something from every church I visit. Old Brother Glass once made the statement "I learn something about preaching from every preacher I hear. Some help me to know how to preach, others show me how not to preach." Well I guess the same would be applicable to church planters. I have learned how to, and how NOT to, build a church.

Third, since entering the ministry I have personally participated in five church plant efforts -- Wheeling, West Virginia (working with Billy Cole); Queens, New York (working with John Hopkins, Jr.); Newport News, Virginia; Williamsburg, Virginia; and Gloucester, Virginia.

Fourth, I’ve been involved in district and national leadership for the past twenty years. During that time I have had the opportunity to work closely with men like, James Kelley, Robert Hall, Lewis Long, James Dunlap, Rex Johnson, Pat Williams, Jerry Jones, Jack Yonts, N. A. Urshan, C.
M. Becton, and many other great leaders. Each of the men that I have worked with has taught me much about leadership, people skills, organization, and cooperation.

**ATTRIBUTES OF A CHURCH PLANTER...**

Elsy and I share our church planting history in hopes that it will cause you to believe that you too can plant a church. If God can use us, He can and will use you.

Our desire, in writing down the stories of our life, is to share with you things that will perhaps help you in your church planting efforts.

Over the years, both as a church planter and as a Home Missions Director, I have found three things which are critical to the success of any church plant effort: (1) The Church Planter’s Attitude; (2) The Church Planter’s Priorities; (3) The Church Planter & Innovation.

**The Church Planter's Attitude**
It is imperative that the church planter maintains a proper attitude toward:

**The city or culture of his calling**

Over the years I have encouraged Home Missionaries to learn things about their city that will cause them to love their city.

**His abilities**

God doesn’t call losers. Every church planter needs to have confidence that he has, within his abilities, what God needs to build a church.

**The people he is working with**

A church planter must love the people he is working with.

**The facilities he has to use**

Instead of complaining about the church building, store front, rented hall, or whatever else you are using for a meeting place, make the best of what you have to work with.
The Church Planter's Priorities

There are many areas of priority for the church planter. I will deal with only three areas that are critical to the success of an Apostolic church planter;

His family

What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and looses the souls of his family?

The Church

Don’t ever loose focus of the fact that you are called to plant a church. Too many church planters allow the enemy, and other concerns, to divert their time and attention from the church plant.

His personal convictions

The fastest growing churches in North America are those which have clearly defined beliefs.

The Church Planter & Innovation
In order for a church planter to be effective he cannot be:

(1) An excuse maker. One who makes excuses for himself and the work, or lack of work, he is doing.

(2) A quitter. Some men want to quit the first time something goes wrong;

(3) Non motivated. A church planter must have inner-motivation. Must be a self-starter and self-motivator.
"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." -- Proverbs 18:22

Barbara Bush, wife of President George Bush, said she was told that because both she and her husband are Gemini’s, "we probably should never have gotten married." “But now”, she responds “I don't know what to do about it after more than 50 years of happy marriage.” Good for Mrs. Bush and so much for the merits of astrology!

My wife is from Colombia, South America, and Hispanic by birth. When I met her she had lived the previous ten years of her life in New York City. I am from West Virginia, hillbilly by birth, a real country boy. Some would have thought that we were unlikely companions; too many
differences to overcome to build a good marriage. On the contrary, we have built a great life together. We are best of friends and each other’s best advisors.

**WE’RE GOING TO VIRGINIA**

After making a commitment to Section One Presbyter, Robert Hall, that I would start a church in Newport News, I returned to Chicago to tell my precious wife of my decision.

"I have great news," I said, as we sit together in our little apartment, "we're moving to Newport News, Virginia.” My wonderful wife looked at me and asked, “What are we going to Newport News for?” “To start a church, I said!"

My precious wife had never seen, or even heard of, Newport News, Virginia. Yet, she did not resist me in the slightest. Thank God for a great wife who without hesitation or resistance was ready to follow her husband as he followed the will of God.
I sincerely thank the Lord that I have always enjoyed that kind of devotion and commitment from my wife. She believes in me. She believes I hear from God. She believes I walk with God. She has always been willing to follow me into whatever endeavor I have felt led of the Lord to pursue. She thinks I'm the greatest preacher in the world (please don't enlighten her). She even thinks I'm handsome. What a wife! What a blessing she has been, and continues to be, to the Kingdom of God.

I feel so sorry for men who have to struggle with their wife as they attempt to do the will of God. I know men whose wives are unwilling to sacrifice, leave their home and family, or to make the kind of commitment necessary to dig out a church. I also know men who have taken their families to a new city to build a church, only to have to struggle with an unbelieving wife every step of the way.

When a young preacher asks if he should pursue his burden to plant a church without a committed wife ... I answer "No". The devil tries to destroy the best of church planter's marriages.
When you enter into a high profile spiritual ministry, such as church planting, without a committed wife you are inviting the devil to hinder your work and destroy your home.

My wife has so many wonderful qualities. She is a prayer warrior, a soul-winner and a person who loves people. She has a strong personality, she is fearless, and she is a natural leader. There is no such thing as a "stranger" to her. I often think she has absolutely no fear of meeting people at all. Wherever we go, whether a restaurant, mall, place of business, or park, she will meet people and before long invite them to church.

There are people in every church who get on the nerves of the pastor. I had some of these type folks in Newport News. They never seem to get on my wife’s nerves though. She would work with them, love them, mold them, counsel them and usually win them. Some of the best saints we have in Newport News today are people I gave up on -- but my wife (and God) didn't. Thank God for a great wife!

On a personal note: When I informed her that we were moving to Newport News, Virginia to start a church, she informed me, "We're going to have a baby". I was so happy, but I must admit
that I was concerned at the prospect of starting a new church, without any promise of financial support, and now we have a baby on the way.

God gave us precious Elysa during our first year in Newport News. Our little girl has literally grown up with the church. The church was her family; I believe she loved them as much as her mother and I loved them. All she has ever known is home missions.

**LEAVING CHICAGO...**

Back in Chicago, we resigned our position of Assistant Pastor, packed up everything we owned in a 1976 Plymouth Voyager van, and started for Virginia. We were so excited as we traveled the one thousand miles.

We had a total of two hundred dollars in our pocket when we left Chicago. I look back at the faith we had in God and thank Him for giving us the opportunity to learn to walk with Him in this dimension.
On the way we stopped in Parkersburg, West Virginia to visit my family. My grandfather, J. C. Cole, gave us some wise counsel and another one hundred dollars to help us out. I was too proud to tell him we were going to a strange city and had no money or support. That kind of pride, I might add, I later lost.

From Parkersburg we traveled to Morgantown, West Virginia to visit our good friends the Harpers. They kindly invited us to stop by for dinner and service. We spent the night with them and the next morning, before leaving, Brother Harper gave us another two hundred dollars. Now I felt like a rich man.

We arrived in Newport News in the afternoon of October 9, 1980 (my birthday). I unloaded everything we owned into a classroom, gave my wife the grand tour of our new church home and called Sister Williams (our only member) to let her know we had arrived.

Some how Sister Williams had found out it was my birthday and brought a cake to the church that evening to celebrate. So, October 9th is not only my birth date, it's also the birth date of the First United Pentecostal Church of Newport News. We had our first service that night.
"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." -- 1 Timothy 4:14

At one time, Daniel Webster was considered the greatest of all living Americans. He was outstanding as a statesman, lawyer, orator, and leader of men. Twenty-five national leaders attended a select banquet in his honor. One man at the banquet asked Mr. Webster, "Sir, what is the greatest thought that ever entered your mind?" Without hesitation, Webster replied, "The greatest thought that ever entered my mind was the thought of my responsibility to God."
spoke, he wept, excused himself from the banquet, and went outside to get control of his emotions. When he returned he talked for thirty minutes about man's responsibility to God.

SECTION ONE PRESBYTER

Robert Hall was at the time, the Presbyter for Section One of the Virginia District. As a presbyter he was concerned about planting churches in his section. He aggressively worked at bringing new men and women into the district, and specifically into his section, to plant churches. Like Daniel Webster, he took his responsibility to God seriously.

When my wife and I arrived in Newport News we had no place to live and, as you already know we had very little money. Our presbyter invited us to stay in the evangelist quarters at his church. The Bible World members, who are some of the greatest people on earth, brought us groceries and for several weeks treated us like special guests. When I was a home missionary, the church was one of the most faithful supporters of our work in Newport News. They were conscious
of the struggles that we were facing as we planted a new church. I recently told a group of Virginia ministers “I always enjoyed shaking hands with our presbyter, it seemed like every time I shook hands with him, he put a twenty, fifty or hundred dollar bill in my hand.”

Every church planter needs to develop a relationship with the elders in their district. It is also beneficial if home missionaries will pick an established church where they can attend once a week, or at least once a month, for encouragement and blessing. I encourage all home missionaries to choose a presbyter, superintendent, a district leader, or a senior pastor in the district who you can lean on and take counsel from. I feel sorry for men who do not have an elder in their life whom they trust and confide in. Everyone needs a pastor. All ministers need someone they can trust without hesitation.

As a church planter I would have to say that our presbyter was used of God to be a great blessing to our family and church plant.

**FINANCIAL NEEDS MET...**
We went to Newport News without any promise of financial support. Home Missions later supported us with an $800.00 monthly offering, but at first, we were on our own without financial backing.

We did not pursue secular jobs because we wanted to give our complete attention to building the church, and felt that this was what God had directed us to do. Our bills were minimal, just a van payment, auto insurance, gasoline, and food.

There was no tithing income for the minister. Sister Helen Williams, our only member, was faithful with her tithing and gave generous offerings but all the church income went toward the mortgage and utilities on the little building. There was nothing left for the support of a minister.

My fellow-ministers, friends and family members made it possible for us to live while building the church. Men like Pastor James Kelley, then Superintendent of the Virginia District, gave us $50.00 per month. Brother Hall gave us $100.00 to $200.00 every month, many months he gave us several hundred dollars, as well as a place to live for three months. Pastor Edwin Harper gave us $100.00 per month. The Parkersburg church, where my grandfather and uncle were co-
pastors, gave us $200.00 per month. The Parkersburg and Chesapeake church members also assisted us with the repairs on the building.

I will always be indebted to these men who believed in us and were willing to invest in our ministry.

**NO MAN IS AN ISLAND...**

The beauty of the church, as a corporate body of ministers, is the strength, wisdom, support and encouragement we provide one another. The friendships and support we have enjoyed as church planters has made us to understand "No man is an island unto himself." We needed our brethren, and they came through for us.

One of the things Brother Yonts told me when I first entered Home Missions was to become involved with the district, and to make the members of the district board my friends.
The Home Missions Division has, for many years, taken the position that our missionaries should become involved in every aspect of their district’s functions (i.e. camps, conferences, retreats, rallies, etc.).

From my own experience, I have found that being involved in district functions was a great help in founding a new church. We canceled services for Camp Meeting and District Conference. Every member of the local church was urged to attend. They were exposed to ministries, music and teaching that we could have never afforded to bring into the home missions church.

Very often the ministers who were invited to preach at District Conference or Camp Meeting would preach or teach the same thing I was ministering at home. Their ministry always enhanced my own.

The church, as an organization, is a wonderful entity, which provides fellowship, strength, and encouragement for the church planter. Those who are intuitive enough to see the blessing of being involved in their district will benefit from their involvement. Those who stay aloof and uninvolved will miss much wonderful help only gained through involvement.
"For who hath despised the day of small things?" -- Zechariah 4:10
"Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." -- Job 8:7

Pay close attention! In this chapter I am going to write about some of the slim times we had while building a church. I am NOT, however, going to bellyache about how hard it was.

The years my wife and I spent building the Newport News church were by far the best years of our lives. Sure there were times that could be described as "tough times" even "bad times" but
they fade in our memories compared to the many victories God gave us. What a joy it was to be called on by God to plant a church. I choose to give God the glory, not the enemy.

I have a reputation for not talking about the bad, only the good. Some have even accused me of not presenting all the facts, because I will not "wallow" in the negatives, or ask for pity. I will be completely honest with you in the following pages.

One thing I often ask myself is, what if I granted the opportunity to do it all over again, what would I do? First, would I follow the church plant route if I had it to do over? Second, would I give so much of my time to the work? Third, would I sacrifice so much for the work? If I even know my heart a little, I would do it all again. And, enjoy every minute of it.

The church planting opportunities I've had, even though sometimes tough, have brought my wife, my family and I much happiness.

On an interesting note: Just today (as I was writing this book) I took time off to attend the birthday party of my uncle, Billy Cole. Our good friends Murrell and Joan Ewing were present. Joan asked Billy a question that caused me to go back a few years ... She asked him “What was the
happiest and most productive years of your life?” He thought about his answer for quite some time. I immediately knew what my answer would be. The happiest and most productive years of my life were the years I spent in Newport News planting a church.

In many of the minister’s offices I have seen the same plaque that reads, "The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you." I have found that to be true.

Our first official service was on a Sunday afternoon. In that service we had a total of three people, my wife, Sister Helen Williams and me. I preached that day as if I was preaching to hundreds. The Lord met us there, and He has never failed to meet with us since. When I was pastor in Newport News, I often reminded the church in my preaching that from the very first service God has been in our midst and we must never take His presence for granted.

GOD ALWAYS PROVIDES...
The Psalmist David said, “I (have) not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

Though there were lean times. God always provided for my family and I. There is not one single example to site where or when God did not come through for us. Whether it was the canned goods sent by my parents or the chicken and poultry donated by a new convert, or the salads brought weekly by another convert, God always met our needs.

There were times I would probably have liked to have more of a variety, but we never did without. If you have seen me (300+ pounds) you can easily see that God took good care of me (maybe too good).

My parents often brought us cases of canned goods from their garden. Money was tight so we made good use of the canned tomatoes, squash and green beans. I don’t think there is a way to cook squash, tomatoes or green beans that we have not tried.

God sent a raven. Within the first thirty days Winston Griffin and his family of five, backsliders, came back to the church. Brother Griffin worked at a poultry plant in Newport News.
God used him to feed the preacher. He would regularly bring us a case of chicken. We would buy large bags of rice and enjoy chicken, rice and canned vegetables. Do not feel sorry for me.

God added to the church. Brother Griffin won the Carranza family. Lewis Carranza was a professional fisherman by trade. So, we added fish to our diet. The Carranzas had raised two families. They had two boys Ray and Santos, who were teenagers. Later in life, they were blessed with two smaller ones, a one-year old and a newborn.

A MIRACLE...

The first time I met Lewis Carranza was on a Sunday afternoon during church. I was in the middle of my message when the back doors swung open and down the center aisle came Lewis and his wife with their newborn son. He walked to the front and stopped, facing me, standing right in front of the podium. I asked him how I could help him, "My boy has a tumor on the brain", he said.
Then pointing to Ray and Santos, who had attended Sunday School a few times and were sitting on the front row, he went on to say, "My boys tell me that you believe in healing. Please heal my son."

We prayed for the baby. He thanked me then turned and walked out. The next day I went to the King's Daughters Children's Hospital in Norfolk to visit the baby and the family. The baby's doctor told me that there was nothing they could do for the boy, and that he had a tumor, which covered his brain. They were going to take tests, observe the boy for a few days, then let him go home with his parents to die.

The few members we had prayed for a miracle that week. The following Sunday, again, in the middle of my message, the back doors swung open and in walked Lewis, his wife, Ray and Santos all carrying bags of groceries. They filled up the back row with groceries. Then Lewis came before the podium again carrying the little boy. He told the church, "The doctors don't know what happened! My boy has no tumor. Your prayers have healed my son." As of this writing, the boy is now a very healthy teenager.
It became very evident to me that day; God has something special in store for the First United Pentecostal Church of Newport News.
"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

-- Acts 2:47

God added to the church. At the end of the first year we had grown to approximately thirty in our Sunday service. And, by the way, I was just like every other Home Missionary who thought they would have five hundred members by the end of the first year. But, after working night and day, I was genuinely thankful for the thirty.

It is amazing how God always works things out for the good of His people. He always worked things out for us in Newport News according to His perfect will.
We invited an Evangelist to preach a two-week revival for us. The few members we had prayed, fasted, and worked hard teaching home Bible studies and inviting guests.

While attending a sectional rally, the week-end prior to the scheduled start of our first revival, I was surprised to find out (over the pulpit) that my evangelist had decided to go to a larger church in our section and cancel us. The speaker at the rally that night was our General Director of Home Missions, Jack Yonts.

Though I did not know Brother Yonts at that time he was very concerned, on our behalf, that we had made arrangements for a revival only to find out that it would not happen just days before it was announced to begin.

The next morning, after the rally, Ronald Turner brought Brother Yonts to our church to visit with us. What a privilege it was to have this great man of God in our humble apartment. It was the first time we had entertained anyone of Brother Yonts's stature. He was so kind to my wife taking time to admire the few nice things she had around the apartment. He made us feel like a million dollars, which I might add, is one of his most notable qualities.
I felt that it was time for us to have an ingathering of souls. When our evangelist canceled I was extremely disappointed. Brother Yonts came to the rescue. He called Evangelist (now pastor) Mike Meadows, who was working with Home Missions, and requested that he make his way to Newport News the following week so we could go on with revival as advertised.

Brother and Sister Meadows were absolutely sent from God. During their time with us, three-and-a-half weeks all total, we had forty-two filled with the Holy Ghost and thirty-eight baptized in water.

Looking back I believe this revival was the beginning of the great growth of the church in Newport News. Many of the foundation people of the church today were converted during this first revival.

**HAPPY EASTER...**
It was in this meeting that Michael Easter and his family were won to the Lord. Another new convert in the church, Brother Eric Morrison, was teaching Michael a Home Bible Study. The church affectionately calls Michael "Happy Easter" because of his happy outgoing and kind personality.

Since the week of his conversion Michael Easter has been a very effective soul-winner. He has filled entire pews, in fact several pews, with visitors. His mother, father, sisters, brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews, neighbors, and others were filled with the Holy Ghost during our revival with Evangelist Mike Meadows.

**PRAYER – THE KEY TO REVIVAL...**

God's power and presence was felt in the church like never before. We were genuinely in revival!

Evangelist Mike Meadows believes in prayer. He called special prayer meetings, he met people during the day, in the evening, before services, whenever possible, for prayer. He preached
to the church "Where there is much prayer, there is much power; where there is little prayer, there is little power; where there is no prayer, there is no power."

Brother Meadows instilled the necessity of prayer within the hearts of every believer. The emphasis he put on prayer in that first revival has stayed with the church through the years. There are several scheduled prayer meetings throughout the week and prayer before every service in the Newport News United Pentecostal Church.

The prayer motto that Brother Meadows introduced to the church is often quoted from the pulpit and is inscribed on the wall of the church to this day.

God has blessed me with a praying wife. Both my wife and I taught our staff and church to pray. Without hesitation I attribute much of the success of the church to the power of prayer.
"And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3) And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. 4) And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:"

-- Exodus 4:2-4

“The best investment is in the tools of one's own trade.” -- Benjamin Franklin

A pastor friend of mine from Maryland, one of our greatest preachers and church growth pastors, asked me, "What program or ministry are you using to have such rapid growth?" My answer was probably not what he was anticipating, I told him that we were using "anything and everything that works!"
I meant it! Our motto from the beginning has been, "If it works, use it. If it don't, trash it!"

Too many pastors use tools and programs that are not producing fruit. If it is not producing results for the Kingdom, give it a proper funeral then move on to another tool or program that will produce positive results.

**MINISTRIES THAT PRODUCE...**

We have used the following growth producing ministries "on and off" since starting the church in Newport News. These ministries worked for us. Some of them worked for a short time. When they quite working, we quite using them. Other ministries that we instituted in the beginning are still in operation in the church today.

{ **Finding the Field Survey** ... This program works well in the late 90’s. It is professionally packaged and palatable to the public. Most people in the 90’s will participate in a survey without hesitation. The survey opens the door for the church to offer its services to the community.}
{  Enroll to Grow ... A very effective program introduced to the fellowship by the Sunday School Division. Our friend, Edwin Harper, was instrumental in the development of this effective program. My wife and I personally walked many miles handing out packets of information. Through our personal efforts a city Fireman was won to the Lord.

{  Cell Ministry (Small Groups) ... Brother Jared Arango, who followed me as pastor of the Newport News church, is very knowledgeable in the area of small group ministries. He has effectively led the church into this area of ministry. He has also prepared one of the best manuals on how to get started in small groups. I highly recommend it. You can order one by calling 757-875-5454, or e-mail him at NNPastor@AOL.COM.

{  Hospital Ministry ... We have won several family members through hospital visitation. It is important to remember that when a family member is in the hospital, both the sick individual and their family will remember that you visited them. They will not remember what you said, only that you were there during their time of need. When you later invite them to church, they feel a sense of obligation to accept your kind invitation.
Jail Ministry … The Scripture teaches us to visit those who are incarcerated. One of the greatest revivals of the modern day church has been in the prisons and jails of North America. Chaplain Charles Mahaney has led this great spiritual offensive to claim the souls of men and women who are in such a hopeless situation. Literally thousands are being filled with the Holy Ghost, and being baptized in water annually.

A.C.T.S. … Another effective ministry in the 90’s is the program we call ACTS (Alcohol and Chemical Treatment Series). This program operates in conjunction with the prison/jail ministry, and through the courts and probation system. Pastor Rod Carpenter writes the lessons that are Scripture centered, informative, challenging and powerful.

Nursing Home & Retirement Center Ministry … Because of a deep feeling of compassion for the elderly, we have regularly visited the Nursing Homes and shut-ins. This ministry does not usually result in growth for the local church, as most of the people you visit are not physically able to get out to service. On the other hand, participation in this ministry of compassion does those who are involved a world of good.
Radio ... I preached on the radio for two years. We won one woman to the Newport News church through radio. There was another great victory that came to us through the radio though. The Lifeline Baptist Church, in our city, invited me to preach a service in their church because they had heard me preach on the radio. God filled 31 Baptist with the Holy Ghost in that service.

Door-knocking ... I cannot say that we ever won people directly from door to door outreach. A profound thing happened though almost every time we went out to knock on doors. After knocking doors we would invariably have visitors in the next service that no one had invited.

Bus & Van Ministry ... We have always provided transportation for those who did not have transportation. Also, we have won some wonderful people, who are productive members today, through the bus and van ministry. Several children who started on the bus are now productive adult members in the church.

Home Bible Studies ... I often told the church that there is no valid reason for not having enough time to teach a home Bible study. The Home Missions Division offers a twelve-week study, a ten-week study, a four-week study, a two-day study, a one-day study, and a thirty-minute study.
The people that we have won through home Bible studies are stronger saints. We keep a larger percentage of these people than we do from any other ministry.

{  **Sunday School Promotions**  ...  In my opinion, Sunday School is the most effective church building tool available to the church. We built the Newport News church around the Sunday School. We participated in promotions and programs. We taught the children the PPH material, but had a full evangelistic service with the adults and youth on Sunday morning. Possibly 75% of the total number who received the Holy Ghost and were water baptized in Newport News during my pastorate came in on Sunday morning.

During my pastorate I refused to be married to any program. I found out early that some things worked in Newport News and some things simply would not. Just because a neighboring church, or a church across the country, was having success with a program didn't mean that we would. I was always willing to try a new program to see if it would produce positive results for our church.
Some pastors are sold out to one evangelistic ministry, and they actually preach that using that particular ministry is the only way to build a church. I do not agree. In fact, those statements cause many pastors and churches to become frustrated. When they try the same ministry and do not get the same results, they become frustrated and feel like something is wrong with them.

Very often they will continue using a particular program because they were told that it is the only way to build a church. Long after they should have stopped using the program, and tried another ministry approach, they are wasting precious energy, efforts, man-hours, finances and faith.

My concept is so simple: If a ministry works for us -- we use it. If it does not work, or when it quits working -- we quit using it. We go to something that does work. We determined to use whatever brings the greatest results and not get into a "rut" using a program that is not producing results.
Pastors have told me, "If I close a non-producing program (ministry) in the church, there are leaders in the church who will get hurt, so I keep it going long after it has lost its effectiveness, because of them." In this case, there are several things to take into consideration:

{  **First** ... If the leader is really leadership quality, he or she will already know that their efforts are not producing positive results.

{  **Second** ... If they know its not producing positive results, they are probably frustrated and extremely discontent.

{  **Third** ... They may even think that you, as the pastor, don't know that their ministry or program is not producing. They are perhaps even waiting on you to redirect their efforts.

{  **Fourth** ... Don't take them out of leadership. It is usually not the ministry leader or participants fault. It is important that you redirect their efforts toward a new, effective and growth-producing ministry. They almost always appreciate the opportunity to move into something new, and something that works.
"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
– 2 Timothy 2:2

Most pastors who visit the Newport News United Pentecostal Church will immediately recognize, and often comment on, the quality leadership of the church.

One of the most important books I ever read was TOTAL CHURCH GROWTH, written by Tim Massengale. Through insights gained from his material, we were able to put together a winning
church organizational structure that led the church through a great revival, and continues to do so until today. I highly recommend Brother Massengale’s material to church planters and pastors.

**THE ARANGOS...**

Jared Arango, who followed me as pastor of the Newport News church and his assistant pastor, Michael Easter, are both men who grew up in the church and were a part of our ministerial training program for years.

Brother and Sister Arango have been members of the Newport News church since they were teenagers. Jared Arango is also my wife’s younger brother. The Arango family moved to Newport News within sixty-days of us starting the church.

Maria (Cowgill) Arango and her family moved to the Newport News area when she was fifteen years old. They were Roman Catholic and had lived in the historic city of Charlottesville, Virginia prior to moving to Newport News. While members of the Charlottesville church the
Cowgill’s lives were greatly blessed by the soul-winning efforts, and pastoral leadership of David and Nita Hale (who now pastor in Little Rock, Arkansas).

Both, Jared and Maria have been active soul-winners and have been a part of the leadership since their teen years. Maria worked mainly with the music, and Jared in Bus ministry and home Bible studies.

When my wife and I left the pastorate in Newport News to move to St. Louis to work with Home Missions, the church voted for Brother and Sister Arango as their pastors. Today, they are pastoring the church with excellence. I can happily say that the church has never done better.

They also serve as the Youth President of the Virginia District. During their tenure as President of the Youth they have set many attendance and fundraising records.

MICHAEL EASTER...
Michael Easter was baptized on his twenty-second birthday. Around midnight on his birthday, after a home Bible study with Brother Eric Morrison, they called me at home asking that I meet them at the church to baptize Michael.

Michael’s wife, Portia (Whetzel) Easter, attended Sunday School the first time in Wheeling, West Virginia, at age nine. I was just a teenager and running the bus ministry for Pastor Billy Cole.

At age eighteen, Portia moved to Newport News to assist us in starting the home missions church.

LEADERS...

I knew that if we were to ever have great leadership in the home missions church, I would have to develop leaders myself. The church could not afford to hire assistants, music ministers, youth ministers, etc. So, I begin weekly leadership training with young men in whom I recognized leadership potential.
At eight o’clock, on Sunday morning, I would meet with these men (and their wives the first Sunday of the month) for the purpose of teaching them leadership and ministerial skills.

One of my greatest life accomplishments is that I have had a hand in producing two pastors, one assistant pastor, three associate pastors, several youth ministers and Sunday school superintendents, as well as evangelists and various district level leaders.

The reason I made such a deep commitment to training and developing leaders was simple; To multiply the ministry effectiveness of the local church.

**MUSIC DEPARTMENT...**

One example of effective leadership training was our Music Department. God blessed our efforts and we were able to put together a great choir, musicians, develop soloist and singing groups. I do not play any instruments, I cannot teach parts, and I was not able to lend any technical help. Music, for the most part, is simply beyond my abilities. But through God’s help, and utilizing
leadership techniques, the Newport News church had one of the finest music programs on the East Coast.

In the early days, the church owned a piano but had no one to play it. One day, while studying in my office, I heard someone playing the piano out in the church. Whoever it was, they were actually playing the choruses we sang during worship. When I went into the sanctuary to check it out I found Sister Maria picking out and playing church music. I asked her how many songs she could play, I was amazed at the number of songs she had already learned. I told her to practice and that soon we would have her play in a church service. She was both excited and terrified.

One evening before service I told Maria, "Tonight is the night. I want you to play for song service. We will only sing choruses you know." She said, "I'm not ready, I'm not good enough, perhaps-another time."

"We haven't had any music before," I told her "You'll be great."

That night, she played for the first time in a church service and did fantastic.
Within a few short years, she was the full-time music director for the church, she played and sang for great crowds, she has directed the district camp choirs, and led the Newport News choir the year we were invited by the General Superintendent to sing at the annual General Conference.

I'm so glad that I didn't wait until we were able to hire help. Training our own men and women, who have been, and continue to be, loyal members of the local church, is one of the greatest accomplishments of my ministry. A man or woman trained by me filled every key position in the Newport News church.

At the time of this writing I'm not living in Newport News, nor do I have any direct pastoral responsibility in the Newport News church. I serve as Pastor Emeritus, a member of the church board, and Brother Arango honors me as his pastor and founding pastor of the church.

Though I am no longer directly involved, I find great joy in knowing that my ministry continues to flourish through those I have had the opportunity to train for ministry.

FREE ADVICE...
Home missions pastors are always looking for leaders to help them in the task of planting the church. Too often they look in the wrong places. They invite young evangelists to join the local staff, they call the Bible Schools looking for a willing and eager assistant. It seems that they look in all the wrong places. Often the best assistants are to be found “under your nose”, so to speak.

Instead of waiting until “Mr. or Mrs. Perfect Leader” shows up on your church doorstep, why not develop the people you pastor into church leaders.

I have found that the leaders developed from within the local church always make the most effective leaders.
I could not possibly talk about church organization without taking a moment to recognize the excellent efforts of Tim Massengale in the area of church organization. He has helped our church immensely with the task of establishing an effective church organization structure. His material TOTAL CHURCH GROWTH is the very best on the subject available today. I highly recommend it. Brother Massengale has assisted many pastors and congregations throughout the
world to organize their church. He helped us immensely in Newport News during our formative years.

I purchased the TOTAL CHURCH GROWTH notebooks in 1986 and immediately began to implement the ideas and concepts outlined within.

Because of the size of the notebooks, which home missionaries often say seems overwhelming, I decided to break the information into "bite-size" portions. I worked at separating out those ideas and concepts, which we could implement immediately. Then, I outlined the ideas that would be implemented at some point in the future.

I took the notebooks and cassettes, a cassette tape player, and a legal pad to an inexpensive motel where I spent two days formulating a working plan of action for the Newport News church.

Following the directions offered by Tim Massengale, I developed church growth plans in the following three categories:

1] Immediate Goals
2] One-Year Goals
IMMEDIATE GOALS...

I developed a list of departments and ideas, which I could implement immediately, knowing the members and resources I had available to me at that time. I created job descriptions, monthly reports, and set goals for each.

It is imperative at this stage not to overdo it. Use what you have. Don’t try to implement plans that are clearly beyond your finances, ability, talent or available staff. If you do you run the risk of frustrating yourself and the church, and possibly sidetracking the needed structure changes.

ONE-YEAR GOALS...
I then developed a second list of departments, ministries and ideas which I would try to have in operational within one-year. For each new department or ministry I wrote a short job description and defined the goals that I wanted each new department or ministry to accomplish.

I felt that it was also important that I would give considerable thought to the type of individual that I would choose for each position created.

FIVE-YEAR GOALS...

I carefully wrote out my five-year goals for the church because I wanted to set a specific direction for the future of the church.

I wasn't exactly sure how to plan so far in advance, not knowing if my immediate or one-year goals would be successful. So, at first, the five-year goals were dream-sheets. They served as a roadmap that we could look at now and then to make sure we were on track.

By the way, I believe in dreaming big dreams!
In 1990 we were privileged to have Tim Massengale visit the Newport News church. He looked over our entire organizational structure and made recommendations for future and continued growth. I am extremely thankful to the Lord for raising up men among us, like Brother Massengale, who have unselfishly applied their expert abilities to the furtherance of the Kingdom.

After we had customized the TOTAL CHURCH GROWTH program to work with Newport News's unique structure, I then developed an organizational structure that serves the church to this day. I would say, without hesitation, we would not have enjoyed the measure of growth we have without such a structure in place.

THE PASTORAL TEAM...

When I visited Life Tabernacle, in London, England, where James Dallas is Sr. Pastor, I found that Brother Dallas had developed and was using an interesting concept for the senior leadership. He called it the Pastoral Team concept.
Brother Dallas serves as the Sr. Pastor. Beside him, on the Pastoral Team there are three other men who are also given the title of Pastor. They are pastors, in as much as, they counsel, pray for the sick, preach, teach, lead meetings and perform other pastoral duties as assigned.

Each of the members of the Pastoral Team are required to work closely with, and answer directly to, Brother Dallas.

Discovering this type of pastoral leadership team structure was a Godsend for our situation in Newport News. I was traveling, preaching conferences and crusades, both in North America and around the world. Realizing that God was using me both in Newport News, and on the road, I wanted to make very sure that the church was properly cared for as I traveled extensively.

Though I was happy and thankful that the Lord was moving in the various meetings I was preaching, I was determined that the Newport News church would continue to experience growth. Also, I had to make sure that the church was well fed. I effectively accomplished these three critical tasks by developing a four-man Pastoral Team and by assigning each individual on the team specific duties and responsibilities.
One man on the Pastoral Team was given oversight of our daughter church in Williamsburg, Virginia. All ministries and programs operating within the Williamsburg church answered to and worked in conjunction with his leadership.

Another man was given oversight of all educational functions of the church. Which included Sunday School, New Convert Care, Bible Quizzing, Teacher Training, etc. The heads of these departments (and other educational departments) worked with this man.

The third man was given oversight of the Ministries of the church, such as, Youth, Ladies, Music, Home Bible Studies, Bus, Retirement, Radio, etc. Each of the leaders of these ministry areas worked with him.

The fourth man was given oversight of the Services of the church, which included Ushering, Greeting, Nursery, Audio/Visual, Bookstore, A.C.T.S., etc. Again, the leaders of these departments and ministries worked directly with him.
These four men, along with myself, made up the Pastoral Team. We met once each week from 8:00 - 9:00 A.M. on Sunday mornings. We discussed the growth of the church, situations pertaining to the church and its various departments.

The Pastoral Team has made, and continues to make, an invaluable contribution to the success and growth of the Newport News church.

I have never understood why, but it seems that many pastors feel most comfortable when they are doing everything their self. In my opinion, the “one-man-band” concept is not in accordance with the Scriptural plan for church government.

I knew there are other men and women in the church who could do many of the tasks that I would have normally done. There were men in my leadership structure who were well capable of performing task normally designated pastoral responsibilities. Knowing this, I decided to teach men to do some of the things I had been doing with the goal that someday they would be doing those tasks just as effectively as I could do them.
The team leadership concept provided me the opportunity to multiply my ministry many times over. As I have invested myself into each of these men I have enjoyed watching their ministry grow into thriving, anointed, highly productive ministries each in his own right. As I allowed each to minister in areas where they are qualified, I was freed to minister in areas where only I was qualified. In a nutshell, this is the beauty of leadership training.

An interesting side note. When I left the Newport News church in October of 1992, it was not necessary for me to put the church or myself through the grueling task of bringing in minister after minister trying to find a pastor for the church.

Many men contacted me expressing their desire to be considered for the pastorate. To me, forgive the example used, it was like rolling a dice. To choose a man who did not know the character of the church, our style of worship, the leadership structure, the standards I had taught, our dreams, or the people, was to ask for problems.
I moved the men on the Pastoral Team into places of higher leadership in the church. I asked the church board to consider one of them to be their Pastor and another man from the Pastoral Team to be Assistant Pastor.

Some have asked, "How was the transition?" The honest answer is, there really was not a significant transition. The church knew Brother Arango and Brother Easter, and they were already used to working with them. In fact, our members already regarded these men as “Pastors” because of their involvement in the Pastoral Team over the years.

It is important to me that during the time of my leaving the church and Brother Arango taking over, we did not lose a single disgruntled member. No church split. No mass exodus. Things just continued to run smoothly. Forgive the personal reference, but I consider this a great accomplishment.
I was privileged to work with Edwin Harper in Morgantown, WV at the Riverside Apostolic Church during 1978-79.

Brother Harper placed, in my hand, the first church growth book I ever read. There were only a handful of books available on church growth in those days. He provided me with most of them and directed me to read and report on each. He introduced me to many church growth concepts that I have used over the years.

He developed in me a deep desire to build a growing church. In fact, I was so anxious to try what he had taught me that I probably left the Riverside Apostolic Church long before I should have left.
In October of 1980 we started the Newport News church. I immediately applied church growth concepts gained in Morgantown.

From the very beginning the Newport News church experienced growth. In fact, in our short thirteen-year history, we have never gone any length of time without growth.

Over the years, I have found that certain growth concepts, which if applied by church or business, will produce positive growth results.

They are:

(1) Make new contacts – Continually expand your base.
(2) Aggressively pursue all leads.
(3) Develop goal ownership among the members.
(4) Maintain excitement.
(5) Provide a valid service -- Meet a valid need.
(6) Operate with excellence as a watchword.
CHURCH GROWTH DEPARTMENT...

The General Board of the United Pentecostal Church International appointed me to be the first National Church Growth Director of the newly formed Church Growth Department. The Church Growth Department, which would operate under the umbrella of the Home Missions Division, was formed to assist established churches to realize growth.

I took the job very serious and almost immediately begin studying and compiling notes on the unique characteristics of growing United Pentecostal Churches. It was my desire to study many of the growing churches in our fellowship to see if they had anything in common. And, if they did, to isolate those common denominators within all growing United Pentecostal Churches.

The following list has been nearly eight years in the making. It may, or may not, be a complete list. Each of these unique characteristics will be found in all growing UPCI churches.
TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A GROWING UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH...

(1) All growing United Pentecostal Churches are Worshipping Churches.

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” -- Psalms 100:4

Worshipping churches are exciting churches. Worshipping churches feel alive. Non-worshipping churches feel dead.

Baby Boomers and Baby Busters enjoy participatory worship. They want to clap their hands, sing and pray out loud, lift their hands and pat their foot. They are leaving traditional churches in mass because of the lifeless style of worship usually found in denominational churches.

If there is a single characteristic which all growing churches have in common, and there is never an exception, worship is that characteristic.

(2) All growing United Pentecostal Churches are Praying Churches.
“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” -- 2 Chronicles 7:14

Where there is much prayer, there is much power. Where there is little prayer, there is little power. Where there is no prayer, there is no power.

In our hurry-up get-going society, the church must be careful that we do not allow ourselves to become so busy that we don’t have time to pray. Any minister too busy to pray is simply too busy.

(3) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches have a Visionary Pastor.**

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” -- Proverbs 29:18

Nothing significant has ever been accomplished in any arena of life without a dreamer at the helm.

(4) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches generate a high percentage of Membership Involvement.**
“We then, as workers together with him...” -- 2 Corinthians 6:1
The most important statistic, for any local congregation, is the number of members they have effectively involved in ministry. We have traditionally measured the effectiveness and strength of a local church by the number on the Sunday School registry, or the number in attendance on Sunday night or in Bible study. None of these measurements are nearly as important as the number of people who are involved in ministry.

(5) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches maintain a high level of Enthusiasm.**

“Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.” -- 1 Kings 10:8

Enthusiasm builds and breeds faith. A great program can die for lack of enthusiasm, while I have seen many mediocre programs succeed wonderfully because of momentum and enthusiasm.
(6) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches have made a commitment to Aggressive Evangelism.**

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” -- Luke 19:10

Jesus plainly stated that the purpose of His earthly ministry was seeking and saving lost humanity. So is the purpose of the body of Christ in the earth today. Jesus told His disciples and followers in Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He considered “seeking and saving” to be His divine responsibility. To understand the purpose of the church better, *Seeking* is evangelism, and *Saving* is discipleship.

Growing churches make evangelism their highest priority.

(7) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches enjoy a High Level of Faith.**

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” -- Hebrews 11:6
Without faith it is impossible to please God. There is no way to effectively complete spiritual plans or programs without exercising faith in God. Those who accomplish great things for the Kingdom are those who are able to see what God desires to accomplish through them and believe Him to do it.

(8) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches have Clearly Defined Beliefs.**

“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” -- Psalms 16:8

People in the late 90's want to follow ministries, which know what they believe and why they believe it.

Boomers and Busters hate hypocrisy. They want to belong to a church, and follow a ministry, which practices what they preach.
The standards and doctrines, as taught by the United Pentecostal Church, are not hindrances to growth. In fact, some of the fastest growing groups in the world are much stricter than the United Pentecostal Church International.

It is statistically proven that the fastest growing churches in the United Pentecostal Church are those who believe and practice a strong standard of separation from the world.

(9) **All growing United Pentecostal Churches are Giving Churches.**

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” -- Luke 6:38

“There are some people God cannot bless, He is bound by His Word. There are others that God cannot refrain from blessing, again He is bound by His Word.” -- T. F. Tenney

The local congregation’s giving is a direct reflection of their burden for the lost. God cannot and will not bless a stingy individual, or church.
All growing United Pentecostal Churches practice Leadership Training.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” -- 2 Timothy 2:2

One of the responsibilities of the pastor is to find and develop potential leaders within the local church.

Then he has the responsibility of providing adequate opportunities for involvement for them.

The eleventh hour laborers of Matthew 20:6-7 have been scolded by many ministers for "standing idle" in the market place at the eleventh hour. It wasn’t really their fault though. When they were asked “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” They responded, “Because no man hath hired us.” It is clear that the responsibility of their idleness falls squarely on the shoulders of the leadership for not providing adequate service opportunities for the workers.

WELL-ROUNDED GROWTH…
In the United Pentecostal Church there exists an idea that church growth is tied to the number on the Sunday School board. That is clearly a wrong concept, there is so much more to well-rounded church growth than just numbers. Three distinct elements of growth are necessary to accomplish well-rounded growth:

(1) **Numerical Growth;** Attendance growth. Conversion growth.

(2) **Spiritual Growth;** Must follow Numerical growth. Discipleship.

(3) **Financial Growth;** Is the automatic result of numerical and spiritual growth, which makes it possible to start the rotation again, Numerical growth, Spiritual growth, and Financial growth.

Too many times we feel that we are not growing because we are not in a time of numerical growth. Yet, spiritual growth and financial growth are equally as important to sustain total growth.

When new people come into the church that is numerical growth. All good pastors know that when new people come in their job as pastor is just beginning. Numerical growth must be followed up with spiritual growth.
It is imperative that new converts enter a discipleship class as soon as possible after their conversion.

As new converts commit to God, and to the church, they will begin to participate in the financial growth of the church. As new people give of their finances the church can make plans for future growth through extended programs, larger facilities, printing and promotion, etc.

Each stage of growth compliments the other and works together to sustain the overall well rounded growth of the local church. Numerical growth without spiritual growth is not growth at all. Spiritual growth must be followed by Financial growth. In building a church the best kind of growth is the kind of growth that will last.
My father often told me growing up; “Anything worth doing is worth doing right!”

Wayne and Janet Trout have pioneered two great churches. One in Dover, Delaware, and the second in Northeast, Maryland. They also founded Kent Christian College in Dover.

Several years ago they asked me to be a member of the Board of Trustees for Kent Christian College. The first thing I noticed about Brother and Sister Trout, and their staff, is that everything
they do is with excellence. A high level of excellence was evident in their printing, music, offices, classrooms, presentations, ministry and staff.

Excellence is hard to achieve. It requires an extra investment of time and effort. No one has ever accidentally stumbled on to excellence.

Lord Chesterfield said, "Aim at excellence in everything, though in most things it is unattainable. However, they who aim at it, and persevere, will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable."

This generation does not respond to promotions, ministries, presentations, or services less than excellent. Fliers, letters, misspelled, messily typed, hand printed, no creativity, and the like is an instant turn off for today’s generation.

With the easy availability of computers and printers, both in homes and offices, it is easier to layout fliers and brochures today than ever before. If you don't have a computer of your own, you can find them at the Library (can be used for free), or rented at a local quick print shop (Kinkos,
etc.). Chances are a church member will have equipment they will allow you to use for church promotions.

**CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS...**

I was determined that the church in Newport News would always be clean and presentable. I actually took entire Bible study nights to preach to our people the importance of keeping our church clean and neat. Even when we did not have a large, or perhaps even a nice, facility, we always had a clean church.

The first thing a visitor notices when they attend our services is the condition of the church building or facility. It has been said, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” And, “first impressions are lasting impressions.” Therefore it is imperative that the church be kept clean and neat.
When I visit a church I always notice the cleanliness of the facility inside and out. Every pastor should teach their saints to be conscious of the way the church and grounds looks to guests.

I asked our people in Newport News to assist with the following. When they see something that needs done, they should simply do it. Church members should never say, "That's not my job". If they see something that needs done, they should do it.

(1) Pick up any paper on the ground in the parking lot.
(2) Wipe down glass doors if dirty when you come through the main entrance.
(3) Straighten the bathroom if messy.
(4) Stock the bathroom if supplies are out.
(5) Straighten chairs and tables.
(6) Pick up paper in the church.
These are simple requests that every church member should honor. Little things can make a big difference in the appearance of the church facility. Many will see an "attitude of excellence" in the way our people keep their church presentable.
More important than working hard is working smart. Many church planters put in lots of hours, but they are not effective at building a church. Sometimes it is because they are doing the wrong things. Make sure that you expend the precious few hours you have each week doing things that will produce positive results for the Kingdom of God.

Always remember that you are a human, not a superman. Your body and mind will get tired. My pastor insisted on us taking a day each week for ourselves. We would work around the house or go out of town (even if it was just to a neighboring town). T. F. Tenney often says, “The time a harvester spends sharpening his scythe is not wasted time.”
The following true story speaks to the matter of protecting your physical strength: “It is possible to throw our lives away foolishly by burning the candle at both ends. When Robert Murray McCheyne, only thirty years old, lay dying, he said to a friend at his bedside, "God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas, I killed the horse, and now I cannot deliver the message."

The horse was, of course, his body. Church planters should accept it that their service will be costly if it is to be effective, but they should be careful not to kill the horse!

**An effective church planter is SELF-MOTIVATED.**

The church planter is his own boss. This can be a blessing or a curse. If inner-motivation and a desire to do something significant for God drive you, you will push yourself to be an effective church planting pastor.
A church planter should outline his duties at the beginning of each day. He should also modify his monthly, quarterly and annual things to accomplish list each day. Anything left undone, from a previous day’s list, should be added to the present list of things-to-do.

An effective church planter is SELF-DISCIPLINED.

Because you have no one to tell you when to work and when not to, you have lots of freedom. Neither will anyone be telling you what things you should participate in and things to refrain from. Your ability to discipline your actions, habits, etc. could be your salvation. Many men have lost out with God because they had no self-discipline.

There are many things that must be worked into every day's activities if you are to succeed as a church planter. I've listed a few:

(1) Prayer and fasting
(2) Bible study and sermon preparation
(3) Self help studies (such as church growth principles, time management, etc.)
One thing that I have always done is keep good records. This requires discipline over the long haul, but it pays big dividends. We keep records of:

1. Baptisms & Holy Ghost
2. Attendance
3. Finances
4. Conversion stories
5. Miracles

An effective church planter is A SELF-ENCOURAGER.

You will soon find that you are all alone. There is no big church to go to. There are no friends, other couples to fellowship with, family and friends to encourage you. Most of the pioneer church planters I know are located miles from those they love.
When you get down, you have to be able to encourage yourself. If you cannot encourage yourself, the devil will get you down and cause you to give up. The key to success is, when you fall down, get back up quick. The Bible tells us that David encouraged himself in the Lord.

**An effective church planter must have a STRONG PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

Your actions and time will be unsupervised. No one is watching over your shoulder telling you to do this and don't do that. It is up to you to stay true to your convictions when no one is watching. That is self-discipline.

I encourage every pioneer church planter to adopt a pastor close to where they live. Everyone needs a man of God to help give direction to their life. You need a pastor who you will feel comfortable submitting yourself to. You need someone who will put an arm around your shoulder and give a word of encouragement.

The devil tries to trap young church planters. The advice of an older, wiser pastor will be invaluable to keep you from falling into the pit of the enemy.
An effective church planter must be a PROVEN SOUL WINNER.

I have never approved a minister from our local congregation to pursue a license with the church, nor have I approved a minister from the districts I superintend to advance his license, if he has not won a soul.

The Home Missions Board will not approve a man for Christmas For Christ who is not a soul-winner.

In my opinion, if a church planter was not a soul-winner in their home church, they will probably not be able to win a soul in their church plant. If they don't know how to win the lost, they WILL NOT build a church. It is that simple!

In a home missions setting the pioneer is usually the only potential soul-winner. If he don’t win the lost ... no one will.

The church planter must know that his calling is to seek and save that which was lost. He is going to a new city with the sole purpose of reaching the lost. Not to practice preaching, not to
build a business, not as a stepping stone for his ministry, but to reach lost people. If he doesn't know how to do that he will never successfully build a church.

**An effective church planter must be able to MAKE DISCIPLES.**

After winning a person to God the discipleship process begins. It is important that you exercise much patience and long-suffering working with new people. Can you lead a convert on to a relationship with God?

I wrote a discipleship course called THE JOURNEY. It contains twelve important lessons, accompanying quizzes for each lesson, an eighty-question test, and student handout sheets. This course effectively walks a new convert through salvation, doctrine, Christian living, and family life.

In my experience it has been more effective for us to get a new convert into the discipleship course as soon as possible. The sooner we start them in the class the higher the chance we have of keeping the convert.

Either the pioneer pastor or his wife should teach the new convert’s class.
An effective church planter must be TOLERANT.

Remember your new converts will not be like the established saints who have been a part of your home church many years. Discipleship is a process. Don't push them to line up so fast that you push them out of the church.

You are working with an educated generation. Boomers need to be taught. In fact, they will not settle for anything less than being taught. The days of "do it because I said so" are past. If you will take time to teach, to show new converts what is required of them, they will follow. Teach them, then give them time and encouragement.

Set goals for each convert you're working with. Be content if they are reaching each goal in a reasonable amount of time. There are very few people who change overnight. If you understand this concept of discipleship you will retain more of your new converts.

An effective church planter must be RESILIENT.
There are defeats in church planting. Anyone who tells you that church planting has no problems or defeats they are not telling you the truth.

The fact of it is, there are things that will happen to a pioneer that will break your heart. You can invest hours, days and weeks in the lives of some people and they will still leave the church. People you love dearly will get cross ways with you, and the church. They might even say something that will hurt you to the quick of your heart. You must be able to BOUNCE BACK from these and other defeats.

An effective church planter must be DETERMINED.

If you are sure that God has called you to a city. Don't allow anything to block you from building a church. Determination, on the part of the pioneer, separates the successes from the failures.
It has been said that men who make a life commitment to the church pastor growing churches. To be successful you must be prepared to stay with the church for a minimum of five years.

**An effective church planter must POSSES A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.**

The Apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me." If you are going to build a church, you will need to remove "I can't" from your vocabulary. God calls winners not losers. He does not call men to do things they are not capable of doing. If He has called you to a city, you posses all the qualities and abilities needed to reach the city.

Part of a positive attitude is the willingness and ability to improvise on things that may seem impossible. When you start a new church you won't have a fifty-voice choir, an orchestra, office equipment, and other things you are used to in your home church. Rather than "belly-ache" about what you don't have, improvise and make due with what you do have.

Appreciate and use what you have to work with:
(1) FACILITIES
(2) EQUIPMENT
(3) PEOPLE
When I was fifteen years old, a rebellious teenager, my pastor invited Sister Marilyn Gazowsky to preach in our church. She preached a message entitled “The Potter’s Wheel Or The Potter’s Field?” I will never forget the message or the night. After preaching she came straight to the pew where I was and asked that I go to the altar to pray. I refused. She stepped out in the aisle, raised her voice, pointed her finger at me and said “Okay boy, if you want to go to hell, I can’t stop you from going.” I almost ran to the altar. From that day to this I have never looked back.
Because of that experience, Marilyn has always held a special place in my heart, and always will. While Elsy and I were planting the church in Newport News she would visit often. Sometimes she would stay for two weeks at a time.

On my first visit to San Francisco, where she had founded a church, I asked her to take me to see the area of the city where all the gay people lived and worked. I heard about it this horrid place and wanted to see it for myself. She took me to the most beautiful neighborhood in the city. She showed me the homes of famous people. She pointed out the million dollar plus mansions that lined the streets of San Francisco’s elite neighborhoods.

The next day when we were going out, she asked again “Is there any place special you would like to go?” I told her that I would still like to see the gay area of the city. On this second day she took me to the nicest mall I have ever been to. We went to a wonderful restaurant and then went to the seashore and watched the sea lions.
On the third day I said, “Are you deliberately not taking me to see the gay area?” I will never forget her answer. She unveiled to me that day a principle for planting a church that I will never forget.

Sister Marilyn said to me, “I love my city. It is one of the most beautiful cities on earth. I know where all the wonderful, historic, fun and beautiful places are in this city.” She went on to say “There are some areas of sinfulness and debauchery in this town, but I am not going to show you that side of my beautiful city. If you want to go there, you’ll have to take a taxi.”

After all that, she proceeded to tell me that if I was going to build a great church in Newport News I would need to fall in love with the city. Learn about its history. Find its lovely spots and places of interest. “Effective church builders”, she said, “Love the city where they pastor.”

MAKE IT HOME...

Every place I have ever worked for God, I have loved the area and have made it "home".
I feel sorry for men and women who work in a city for any length of time and who despise every minute of it. A church planter once told me "I hate this city, its so sinful, ugly, crime-filled, nasty and unkind. I hate it. But God has called me here so I have to stay!" What a sad situation to get up to every morning. By my estimation, a pioneer will never effectively reach a city under those circumstances.

It is also a matter of much concern to me when the wife of a church planter dislikes the city they are trying to build a church. It causes harm when she expresses her unhappiness to her husband and members of the church plant. She not only adds pressure to her husband’s responsibilities, she opens herself up to the attack of the enemy.

Equally dangerous, If she speaks to her children against the city or church she will embitter them against the work of God. Many minister’s kids are lost to the world because they have such a negative opinion of the work of God.

The following checklist will help you learn about your city. The more good things you know about the city the easier it will be to love it and enjoy being there.

If I Can Do It Anybody Can! – Page 109
(1) **Learn the history of the area.**

   When was it founded and by whom?

   Where does the area (city, town, village, etc.) get its NAME?

(2) **Identify areas of local interest.**

   Locate historical sites.

   Take a tour of the city and/or historical areas.

   Locate parks and playgrounds for family rest and relaxation.

(3) **As homework, study the demographics of the area.**

   Breakdown by %...

   (1) Race

   (2) Nationality

   (3) Language

   (4) Income group

   What is the main employment in the area?
(4) People to meet within the first year.

One of the hurdles you have to get over is not knowing anyone in town or being known by key people in your city. Below I've listed two ways to meet people in your city to assure your church ministry a high profile.

(1) The A.C.T.S. program. This effective ministry/program operates under the umbrella of the General Home Missions Division, and is designed to be a ministry to the alcohol and chemically dependant segments of society. ACTS is recognized in many states as an alternative to AA. Many pastors have successfully used this program to introduce themselves to the mayor, sheriff, probation officers, high school officials, etc. Literally hundreds of men and women have been won to the kingdom through this new and vital ministry. I highly recommend the A.C.T.S. as a tool for introducing yourself to key people in your community.

(2) Pastor Edwin Harper has developed a checklist of people to meet in your community, they are:
(a) The banker
(b) The Mayor and/or City Manager
(c) The Sheriff
(d) The Chief of Police
(e) The Judges
(f) The Prosecuting Attorney
(g) The most influential man and/or woman in your community.

(5) Locate other churches within the area.
   The largest church of any denomination.
   The fastest growing church.
   The oldest church.
   Other oneness churches.
   Other United Pentecostal Churches.
OUTREACH EFFORTS WHICH PRODUCE

Chapter Fourteen

Some outreach efforts produce results for the kingdom. Other programs and projects just occupy the time of the church planter and produce nothing.

A church planter only has so much time to and energy he can expend for the church plant. He must use that time wisely. The main focus of the church planter should be the evangelization of his community. Or, as we have already stated, seeking and saving the lost.

Outreach produces converts. Inreach produces fun and fellowship. Though there is certainly nothing wrong with good wholesome and Godly fellowship among church members, too
much inreach impedes the churches ability to do outreach. Make sure that your inreach/outreach efforts are balanced. If you are to lean one way or the other, lean toward outreach.

A soul-winning revival church is an easy church to pastor. People involved in reaching the lost seldom gossip, manifest hatred, criticize the preacher, cause problems, etc. The best way to have a smooth running church is to keep that church reaching the lost.

There are many great outreach programs available to the church today. I have listed the ones I recommend a pioneer church planter to start with.

**NO... NO... NO...**

When we started the daughter church in Gloucester, Virginia we sent an elder there to be in charge of the plant. After his very first Sunday morning service, he came to my house on Sunday afternoon to get approval for his plans for the week.
He proceeded to tell me how excited he was about the great first Sunday and the 5-6 people who were present. He then said “I want to go on the radio this week, start a nursing home service and a jail service.” He then asked “Would all that be alright with you pastor?”

I didn’t really mean to stun him but I guess I did. I said “No, no and no.” No radio ministry, no nursing home service, and no jail ministry.

My reasoning was simple. The young man, who at that time worked a full time secular job, would only have so many hours he could give to the work in Gloucester. I wanted him to spend his valuable time on things that would build the church in its infancy (i.e. Bible studies, witnessing, follow-up and discipleship training).

These other ministries were all right if you have a number of people in the church that are looking for a place to become involved in evangelism. But when the primary soul winner is the church planter and his wife, he cannot spend his time on service related ministries. His time must be spent working directly with winning new converts and making disciples.
I will endeavor to list some of the areas which a church planter should involve himself with during the initial stages of church planting. Again, he must work in the areas where he can be the most effective.

HOME BIBLE STUDIES

(1) "Into His Marvelous Light" This two-day study is best for those who know the basics (such as: Baptist, Methodist, etc..)

(2) "Exploring God's Word" Is a 10-week study best for those who do not know the basics. It is also a great tool for building a relationship with a potential convert.

PERSONAL WITNESSING

(1) Treat everyone you meet as a potential member.

(2) In a Net Results magazine, several years ago, I read an article about a successful insurance company, whose salesmen sold more insurance than any other company. Herb Miller, writer
for Net Results, reported that they owed it all to "Five Marbles". Each salesman is given five marbles with instructions to place them in his left pocket each morning. Every time he makes a presentation he can move one marble to his right pocket. When he has moved all five, he is done for the day. They know that for every ten presentations they average one sale. The idea is to get all their salesmen making five presentations per day. I adapted this idea for the church. We purchased enough marbles to give them out to all the adults of the church. Using the same procedure I asked all the members to move the marbles each time they witness.

**CHURCH BROCHURE**

A quality church brochure outlining the ministries available through the church should be printed and available for distribution to good leads. If you print a quality brochure it will be too expensive to hand out to everyone you meet. This tool should be reserved for those who are interested in more information about the church. Remember the watchword is 'excellence'.
**CHURCH SIGN**

If you are in a permanent location you should put up a permanent sign. It has been said, "A business without a sign, is a sign of no business."

If you are not in a permanent location an "A" frame type sign can be easily carried in the trunk of your car, set up and taken down for each service.

**YELLOW PAGE AD**

This is the most important advertising you will do. We had more people visit our church from the Yellow Pages than any other advertising.

**FLIERS**

Make sure your fliers are informative, professionally designed and cleanly printed.
**VISITOR FOLLOW-UP**

Visitors to our church services represented our greatest source for new Home Bible Studies. Every visitor to our church was put into the follow-up program. We used a three-point plan. Within one week of the visit, the guest would receive; A letter from the pastor; A telephone call from a leader or minister; and A visit.

**BUS, VAN OR CAR MINISTRY**

Still one of the most effective ways to put people in the Sunday School.

**IN CONCLUSION**

Outreach should be limited to the most effective and growth producing ministries. I will list some areas that do not normally produce growth for the local church.

- RADIO or TELEVISION
- EXPENSIVE AD CAMPAIGNS
NURSING HOME SERVICES

FELLOWSHIP or CARE GROUPS

(Church is a small group already)

PRISON or JAIL SERVICES

If your time is limited, as a church planter, you should invest every available hour in soul-winning efforts that have the best chance of putting people on the pews.
HAVE LOTS OF GOOD FELLOWSHIP

Chapter Fifteen

According to Elmer Townes, President of Church Growth Institute, the Baby Boomers are relationship oriented. To win Boomers the church should provide opportunities to build relationships among the members.

When Boomers were asked why they chose one church over another, they number one reason was the opportunity to have fellowship with other people who face the same daily problems and opportunities they do.
Many of the first people we won to the Lord were won through fellowship and picnic gatherings. We found that people would attend our fellowship and picnic gathering sooner than they would a formal church service. So, we made it easy for them to visit our church the first time through these casual gatherings.

The following is a list of fellowship opportunities that we often used to build the church:

**PICNICS**

(1) All summer holidays
(2) Sunday dinner on the grounds.
(3) Fifth Sunday Singing

**CHURCH DINNERS**

(1) Thanksgiving & Christmas
(2) Church Anniversary
(3) Fifth Sunday Fellowship

**Attend DISTRICT EVENTS and SECTION RALLIES**
A CHURCH PLANTER'S PRIORITIES

Chapter Sixteen

A pioneer church planter goes to a new city with a very heavy burden. He is driven to reach the lost no matter the cost. Most effective church planters will have a story to tell about the early years and the price paid to dig out a church.

Nothing significant is ever accomplished for God without a price being paid by someone. Church planters are not exempt from having to pay a price to build a church. Show me a great church and I will show you a man and woman who have invested many hours or self-sacrificing labor.
Though there are many priority areas, in the church planting experience, that must not be overlooked by the pioneer church planter. Each church planter has personal responsibilities also that cannot and must not be overlooked. A wise church planter will see to it that he does not neglect his wife and children.

The needs of church members, the pulpit ministry, and evangelizing the city must be balanced so that the important people, and important areas, of your life are not neglected. Sometimes the balancing act is delicate, especially when it comes to giving your wife and children the time and attention they need and deserve from you.

There are many areas that I could write about … I will limit my comments to the following three important areas:

**Your FAMILY**
I recommend that every pioneer church planter attach himself and his family to an established United Pentecostal Church in the area. One of the basic purposes for this is that it will strengthen your family and provide them opportunity for fellowship during the church plant time.

Attend at least one service each week for the first year of your new work.

Do not involve yourself in the outreach or other leadership of the church. Accept no positions in the church. You are there to be fed, to provide your family an opportunity for fellowship, and to allow your children to participate in children and youth programs.

All of your outreach efforts should be expended in the church plant area. As you win new converts, take them with you to the established church. It will allow them to see that they belong to something established, larger than a house meeting and it will introduce them to Pentecostal worship and preaching.

Establish a FAMILY DAY from the very beginning of the church plant. One day per week should be set aside for your family. Don't ever allow them to believe that strangers mean more to
you than they do. Make them aware of your love and care for them by taking them someplace special once per week (i.e. city park, playground, mall, pizza, picnic, etc.).

**Your CHURCH**

Every church planter needs to remind himself daily of his purpose. He is a church planter. If you are not careful you will allow yourself to become caught up in things that steal your time and attention from the church plant.

The service schedule that you set up at first will have a lot to do with the amount of time that you have for family, church members and evangelism. Let me suggest a **Service SCHEDULE**:

-- Start with one MID-WEEK service.

-- When large enough start a SUNDAY MORNING service.

-- When you have children coming start a SUNDAY SCHOOL or SUPER CHURCH.

-- Last service to begin is SUNDAY EVENING.
Don't over tax yourself or church members with too many SERVICES and FELLOWSHIPS throughout the week. Outreach builds a church. Inreach maintains a church.

**Your DISTRICT**

The Home Missions Division has, for many years, recommended that a Home Missionary not accept any position in the district during the first two years. If you have district responsibilities the time that you spend working for the district will take away from the time needed to build the church. The first two years are critical to the success of the church plant.

Though we do not want a church planter to take a position in the district, we do encourage (and even insist) them to participate in, and attend, district functions. A church planter should support the district he belongs to, both in attendance and with finances.
Jack Yonts, Sr., General Director of Home Missions, preached the Virginia Camp during my first year as a home missionary in Newport News.

I wanted to make a good impression on him and wanted him to like Virginia, so I offered to help him any way I could. He had prepared a Home Missions slide presentation to show the district. He needed a screen to show the presentation on.

I looked the camp over and was unsuccessful at finding one. The walls of the tabernacle were made of rough lumber and therefore unsuitable for showing slides.

After failing to find a screen, I went to him and told him that he would not be able to show the slide presentation that day.
I will never forget his response to me, he turned and looked at me, pointed his crooked finger and said "Boy, if you are ever going to build a Home Missions church you'll have to learn one word. IMPROVISE!"

He told me to get a large white sheet off of a bed, thumbtack it to the wall, and it would serve as a perfect screen.

I learned the meaning of the word *improvise* that day. It has proven to be one of the most important words in church planting.

The following is a list of areas where I have learned to improvise:

**Service Schedule**

The service should serve the church, not the church serve the service. Set a service schedule that is comfortable for the people you are working with. For example, if your folks all work in a factory until 6:00 PM on Wednesday evenings, don't start church at 7:00 PM. Start at 8:00 PM.
If God is moving in the song service, allow the worship to continue. If you feel like giving a Bible study, instead of preaching, or if you feel like preaching ACTS 2:38 (because you have guest) and you had prepared a Bible study. Be flexible. Preach the Gospel to your guests, your Bible study will wait till next week.

**Music**

As I've already shared with you, we did not have music for the first two years in Newport News. This WAS NOT a hindrance to our growth. In fact, as I look back on it, I am somewhat glad that we had no music. The lack of musicians, or music talent, caused us to build the church on preaching. A great foundation was laid for the church as a result of us not having music.

If you don't have music you have other options, such as, singing without music, or using sound tracks.

The Home Missions Division can provide you with several computer based, or transparency based, programs for chorus and songs.
**Speaking**

If you feel like preaching after the song service ... go for it! If you feel like ministering and not actually taking a formal text to preach, do that. Learn to follow the Holy Ghost. Don’t be so set in your ways and rigid thinking that you cannot be led by God to meet the unique needs of a new church plant.

**Weekly Schedule**

Have service on days, and at times, you know you can get the most people out. If you can get a crowd out at 7:30 PM Saturday easier than 7:30 PM Sunday, you should have church on Saturday.
The bottom line is, be flexible and innovative in everything you do. There are souls at stake and you dare not miss reaching a soul because you are married to tradition and fail to meet the needs of a lost man or woman.
Emerson said, "Do the thing you fear, and the death of fear is certain."

You defeat worry and fear by filling your mind with the certain faith that you can do it. That is the best way to get rid of the worry and fear about the mountains that are before you.

As a child of God, and as a church planter, I had a promise that I held on to (sometimes with both hands) … "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not
overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” (Isa. 43:1-2)

When I was a boy, my pastor preached often from Romans 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us.” You need to realize that if God is calling you, or has called you, that He is going to keep you and not a foe on earth or from Hell can stop you.

To be a church planter it is not a requirement that one be the most talented, highest educated, or most articulate person on earth. In fact, many of the great leaders, pastors and preachers of our day are men who learned how to minister “on the job”; as well as improve their education while planting a church.

I grew up very poor. Our home was not the best. Though I had a very supportive mother and father, who loved me with all their hearts, they were not in the ministry. It was financially impossible for me to attend Bible School. I have a twelfth grade education from the local public school system.
I graduated when I was seventeen years old. Within two weeks of graduation I moved to Wheeling, West Virginia to work with my uncle, Billy Cole. It was like going to Bible School, perhaps even better. He was planting a home missions church and I was there to help. I learned so much under his ministry. Many things that I still use every day.

My wife and I arrived in Newport News, Virginia to plant our first church on October 9, 1980. We were very poor. Everything we had in the world was in the back of a beat-up 1976 van. We had only a few dollars in our pockets. Neither of us are college graduates. I spoke rough, hillbilly English. My wife, being Colombian by birth, spoke broken English with her Spanish.

If we were to have stood in a line-up with other young couples our age, you would not have chosen us as the ones “most likely to succeed” in church planting. But thank God, He doesn’t look at what we are not … but God looks at us for what we can be through Him.

It was hard work. There was lots of sacrifice involved (though we didn’t know we were sacrificing at the time). There were times of blessing and times of sorrow. There were many
victories and more than enough defeats. We were exalted a few times, and embarrassed ourselves more than a few times.

Every now-and-then we thought we had the tiger by the tail and had great faith that we were going to build a great church. Other times we just knew that everything was going to go belly up, and any day now we would have to leave town defeated.

We did not give up. We were not defeated. Though sometimes embarrassed by our own lack of ability and knowledge, we did not fail. God was always on our side. He always brought us through every trial and test.

The bottom line is this; there is a great church in Newport News today. I make no apologies for saying that it is one of the best in the fellowship. And, without sounding like a braggart, God used Jack and Elsy Cunningham to plant it.

All I can say to those of you who are reading this book and considering starting a church ... If I Can Do It... You Can Do It!

Go for it in Jesus name.

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