

CHURCH PLANTING 101

The establishment of the church at Corinth



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INTRODUCTION – We begin by considering some background information on our text for this evening (**Acts 18:1-11**)

WHAT MOTIVATED PAUL TO PREACH AND START CHURCHES?

Was it the Great Commission?

- a. Paul had been called to start Churches (**Acts 13:1-3**)
 - What was “the work” the Holy Spirit called them to? The work was starting new churches, because that’s what they did on this journey
 - This was a “general” call to a church planting Ministry

- b. Paul had several “ministry related” Visions
 - A Vision of Jesus – (**Acts 9:1-12**) as a witness to the resurrected Jesus he was qualified to be an apostle (**Acts 1:22**)
 - A Vision of Ananias (**Acts 9:11-12**)
 - A Vision of a Man of Macedonia – This was a call to go to a specific place (**Acts 16:9-10**)
 - A Vision of the Lord – (**Acts 18:9-10**) (**Our Key Text Tonight**)
 - Later before King Agrippa Paul states;

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven” (**Acts 26:19 NIV**)

- I believe that this statement recalls his experience with Jesus on the Road to Damascus
- There were possibly others visions that Paul experienced during his ministry
- **Acts 22:17** & **2nd Corinthians 12:2-3** are examples

- c. Paul had God, or we might say “the trinity” directing his life (**Acts 16:6-10**)
 - They were “Kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching in Asia” (**vs. 6**)
 - The “spirit of Jesus would not allow them” to enter Bithynia (**vs.7**)
 - They “concluded that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them” i.e. Macedonia (**vs. 10**)

“It is better to go to Troas with God, then to anywhere else without Him.”

G. Campbell Morgan (**Acts of the Apostles; pg. 377**)

- d. If God doesn’t show up it’s going to be very hard to start a church.
 - Let’s put this passage in perspective
 - First we have to “see the vision” (**vs. 9**)
 - Second we have to “Hear the call” (**vs. 10**)
 - ✓ This is “team ministry,” comprised of Paul, Silas, Timothy (**16:3**) and now Luke (who was apparently in Troas)
 - Third we must “respond to the challenge” (**vs. 10**)
 - ✓ “we got ready at once” this “we” includes Luke

PAUL'S THREE-FOLD STRATEGY FOR PLANTING CHURCHES

(Acts 14:21-23)

1. Evangelize the unsaved (vs. 21)
 2. Edify the saved [believers] (vs. 22)
 3. Establish the church (vs. 23)
- When new churches were established, Paul reported on the work that was being done (vs. 26-27)
 - They reported all things that God had done through them
 - That all included both the “good” and the “bad”
 - **“The Bad”** – Paul had been stoned at Lystra and left for dead (Acts 14:19) and John Mark abandoned them at Pamphylia (Acts 13:13)
 - **“The Good”** – God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles
- e. Paul lost his church planting team
- Luke stated behind in Philippi (Acts 16:40; 17:1)
 - They went to Thessalonica and were driven out of town by a riot
 - Silas and Timothy stay behind in Berea (Acts 17:4)
 - So they sent Paul to Athens (Acts 17:15)
 - After this Paul leaves Athens and heads to Corinth (Acts 18:1)
- f. Paul is alone and discouraged
- 1st Corinthians 2:3 reads;

“I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.”

- At Athens he was greatly distressed to see a city full of Idols (Acts 17:16)
- In Philippi they had been severely flogged and thrown into prison (Acts 16:23)
- In Thessalonica they had to leave by night (Acts 17:10)
- In Berea the brothers sent Paul to the coast, and accompanied him to Athens
- In Athens he had on a “few” who believed (Acts 17:34)

CHURCH PLANTING AT CORINTH

Athens was the intellectual and philosophical center of the Roman world. Paul now goes to Corinth the center of sensuality. It was the center of the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of sex. The temple to Aphrodite was on the Acrocorinth a hill in back of the city.

Every evening a thousand priestesses of the temple would come down to the streets to ply their trade as cult prostitutes. Corinth was very much like our own cities. We live in Corinthian conditions today. If there is any church with which we could particularly identify this is the one. It was a center of commerce and trade, a very rich city.

The commentaries say there was a population of from 100,000 to 500,000 in this city.

a. Receive a Vision from God

- He reasoned with the Jews and Greeks and not much happened
- Then he received a vision – “I have many people in this city” (**vs.9- 10**)
- These are “God’s people, not Jews, but “potential believers”
- This is true in our day as well, in every place God wants His “**lost**” people “**found**”

b. Develop a Church Planting Team

- Paul was out of money... he was broke
- He teamed up with Aquila and Pricilla
- They worked together as tent-makers it was the “**A&P Tent Company**”
- Timothy and Silas arrive to join the work
 - ✓ They brought an offering for Paul from Philippi
 - ✓ Now he could devote all his efforts to full-time preaching
- Paul always worked with a “team”
 - ✓ Paul and Barnabas (whom the Holy Spirit called together – **Acts 13:2**)
 - ✓ Paul and Silas; after he split with Barnabas over a disagreement about John Mark (**Acts 15:39**)
 - ✓ He also worked with Aquila, Pricilla, Timothy, Titus, Luke & others

c. Evangelize the Un-Saved and Establish the Church

- Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justice (vs. 7)
- In vs. 6 he had shaken out his clothes in protest, he had done the same thing at Antioch of Pisidia (**Acts 13:51**)
- Jesus had commanded His Apostles to do this when a city rejected their message (**Luke 9:5 & Matthew 10:14**)
- Paul’s message to them was loud and clear “Your blood be on your own heads” (**Ezekiel 3:18; 33:4-8 & Acts 20:26**)
- Crispus and Sosthenes, the rulers of the synagogue became Christians
- “Beating” is not a method of evangelism, but it worked here
- The Jews “beat” Sosthenes and he became a Christian
- “Many believed and were baptized” (**vs. 8**)

d. The Church was established! (**1st Corinthians 3:5-11**)

- Paul Planted
- Apollos Watered (baptizing many others)
- God made it grow!

CONCLUSION – We conclude by considering two lessons we can draw from our text as it applies to the world we live in.

Lesson 1 – We can't win the world with the churches we have in place, we're not doing it!

Lesson 2 – We need thousands more churches!

Consider the Population Clock – the world “birth-rate” is growing faster than the “new-birth” rate

In our World – 3 new births every second = 180 per minute

1 person per second hears and rejects the gospel = 60 per minute

2 people per second don't have adequate opportunity to hear = 120 per minute

1 person every 4 seconds hears and believes the gospel = 15 per minute

165 people per minute die without Christ, being lost forever!

LOSTNESS IS WINNING!

We need to stop the bleeding now!

God never asked us to do something that cannot be done!

Consider these words from C.S. Lewis

“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. IF they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful... whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.”

Mere Christianity Ch. 8 Par. 10