

Who are Church Planters?

by Mark Howard

It seems that one of God's main objectives with believers is to prepare them to reign with Him here and in the hereafter (2Tim.2:12; Rev.20:6, 22:5). In other words, all believers are in leadership training. All believers are to learn to lead others and, in that sense, we could say that all believers are intended by God to be "church planters". Naturally, there are different gifts and abilities and not all can be expected to be "mega-church planters" (Ro.12:6-8). However, I think it is obvious that God wants all believers to be spiritual leaders of others.

The perfect example of this is the family unit. It was created and used by God as an example of Christ and the Church (Ge.1:27; Eph.5:32). The family starts out with two people who reproduce. Some reproduce more and others less. Those families which are not able to or don't desire to reproduce are not carrying out God's command to multiply and fill the earth (Ge.1:28). The children which result from this reproduction start out defenseless. The parents care for them, feed them, teach them to walk, to talk, etc. Then as adolescents they start forming relations on their own and the parents take on a guiding role to move them toward adulthood. When the child is ready, he/she marries and starts a new family unit, separate from the parents, autonomous but not out of communion with the parents (Ge.2:24). Children who do not move out of the home are not fulfilling God's commands, and

parents who do not give independence to the new family unit are not fulfilling God's commands. God's original plan for every human was physical reproduction to form new family units (Mal. 2:15), and his present, spiritual plan for new believers is also to reproduce and form new church units (Mt. 18:20; 28:18; 2Tim.2:2). All believers are "church planters".

Therefore, all church planters should have as their goal to see the spiritual offspring become "church planters" too. The details and timing of that goal must be carefully committed to the Lord in prayer. Some children develop faster than others. If left too early, a child may not learn valuable lessons. If left too late, the child will either rebel or become excessively dependent.

Appropriate training is important. Princes are told from the first that they are getting special training so that they can some day become kings. They are aware of their destiny from the start and can begin to accept and work toward the challenge of their future role. Adolescents are given increasingly difficult chores and tasks so that they will have the home-making and job skills necessary for their turn at adult roles.

My father wanted to teach me to hoe in the garden. He would say, "Now watch how I do it." Then he would hoe for half an hour. Finally he would say, "Okay now, you hoe," and would pass me the hoe. I would do what I thought

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he wanted. But he would always be dissatisfied, grab the hoe and say, "No, not like that! Here let me show you again!" Then he would hoe for another half an hour. Needless to say, I never became a gardener or had any desire to do so, although it would have made my father very happy if I had.