



A Manifesto on Church Planting: NEW GROUPS FOR NEW PEOPLE Executive Summary

EMCC embraces church planting that recruits, equips, deploys and networks self-sufficient teams to pioneer creative and relevant expressions of the Christian church: NEW GROUPS FOR NEW PEOPLE

Church Planting for the EMCC will follow a “**God-modeled, Jesus-Led, Spirit-Empowered**” **Community on Mission** approach. Our **Church Planting will flow out from the Mission**. In order to **reclaim the mission entrusted to us as followers of Jesus** we will let “**sentness**” drive us, we will not let a **particular level of resources bind or restrain us** from taking on the task, and we will **value the practice of ‘simply living on mission.’** In our Church Planting efforts we will be **values-driven rather than methodology-driven** as well as being **led by a clear declaration of what it means to follow Jesus**.

Note: The same values and principles are applicable to every congregation that is committed to NEW GROUPS FOR NEW PEOPLE, whether or not they understand this as ‘church planting’ and irrespective of the deployment of ‘self-sufficient teams.’

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The “God-modeled, Jesus-Led, Spirit-Empowered” Community on Mission

Because we serve a God who is on mission, we who serve are also on mission. The mission of God to redemptively bless the world is the thread that ties all of Scripture together. It is Luke who unfolds the story of Jesus’ Gospel, who tells us that we must read the (OT) Scriptures both messianically and missionally, and who opens his second volume (the book of Acts) about the birth of the Church by informing us of ‘all that Jesus continued to do!’

From the beginning of Scripture to the end, it is God Who is on Mission! In the book of Acts, we are witness to the first ‘missional communities’ – communities that were born of the life imparted by the followers of Jesus, who are live ‘life on mission.’ His followers continue the task that has been on the heart of God from the beginning. His followers carry the message of God reconciling the world through Christ. His followers embody the life of Jesus. The Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, has come to mediate the presence of Jesus and the Father in the life of His Church – that is, His community. And His community has a mission. And community is intrinsic to His mission.

The work of reconciliation is about reversing the Fall, and its killing effects. God was in Christ reconciling the world and we have been enlisted in this same mission. (See 2 Corinthians 5.) We, too, have become His agents of reconciliation to those still resisting His blessed rule. The prayer of every follower of Jesus is, ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ That kingdom is present where the King is present. The King is present where His people embody Jesus, His passion, His priorities, His purpose, His posture. The touch of King Jesus is life-giving, and so are His followers who form His community – when they live on mission!

The Book of Acts establishes what happens as Jesus ‘continues to do His work.’ The Good News of Jesus is proclaimed. The people of God carried along by His Spirit overcome their fears and their self-centeredness. The power of His rule, His kingdom, changes people and changes society. The mission of His people is to bring His blessing to others.

Each follower carries the seed of a new community. The DNA of the Life of Jesus is what God has supernaturally imparted to each follower of Jesus. The Life of Jesus is ‘viral.’ Like reproduces like. Where there is one, then there is two, then there is a community. The Book of Acts describes this ‘social epidemic.’ The history of the Church is the tale of irresistible power of the Life of Christ in the lives of His followers. It is rooted in that relationship first.

Church Planting that Flows from Mission

With the God of Mission leading us, we see the multiplication of healthy churches flowing from this framework:

1. We believe that each individual is called to follow Jesus. As such it is important to express the 'bottom line' in simple terms – It is all about following Jesus.
2. We believe that it is important to empower each follower of Jesus by articulating the life of a disciple in simple, memorable terms. (See the Seven Fold Way of Following Jesus statement below.)
3. We believe that our primary purpose is to establish new communities of faith that will proclaim and demonstrate the gospel in their 'neighborhood' – 'new groups for new people.'
4. We recruit and work through teams who are responsible for their own work's support. We acknowledge that there may also be birthing through mother-daughter or by a catalytic leader. In each case the planting church or individual is responsible for the support.
5. Teams are expected to think in fresh ways, to dare and dream, to explore new ways of being church.
6. We are not interested in imposing models of church. There is no one model of church that we advocate. Teams are expected to listen very carefully to the local community and to discover ways of being church that are rooted in this culture. (See below for the characteristics of a vital Jesus Community.)
7. We provide support and training using an 'in-service' model.
8. We believe that it is vital that each believer OWNS the importance of following Jesus – It is not up to the pastor or the church. Jesus said, 'YOU, follow ME.'

North American Church Realities

God's mission is good news, but the story of the Church in North America is not all good. While the growth of the Church in its authenticity as the body of Christ is evident throughout history, it has not been uniform. At the moment, the Church in North America is in decline.

Efforts at 'church planting' have depended heavily on an attraction-based system. Attraction is crucial in the Kingdom: our lives must shine Jesus, who draws all people to Himself through us. But what happens if attraction to events and meetings replaces the attractiveness of Jesus in the life of His followers? The effort can create (and in some cases has embraced) a 'consumer' mentality. The Great Commission has become a 'systems project' rather than the fruit of each follower living on mission. This has permitted many North American Christians to live in a bubble. In North America the 'franchise' approach has been popularized. The church growth/planting approaches have often been focused on methodology rather than following Jesus. The target has often been on those who have had some church connection. And we are running out of those people, who represent about 15% of the population. The Church has little relevance to the rising generation.

In the words of David Fitch (*author of The Great Giveaway, a pastor of Life on the Vine and the B R Lindner Chair of Evangelical Theology at Northern Seminary. www.reclaimingthemission.com*), **“We cannot depend on an already interested “market.”** And God’s people, very often devout have been intimidated, afraid or uncertain how to interact with society and the larger culture. This estrangement has created a situation in which ‘outreach’ happens through very skilled individuals and the creation of attractional programs and events. Engagement with the domains of society has been the exception rather than the rule.

The mega church phenomenon has helped us think about “seekers outside the church”, but has not changed the general trend. Whatever the relative merits of this kind of concentration of resources the reality is that the trend to mega churches has not increased our penetration into the larger society. In developing new congregations, large or small, we must work hard to keep mission as the essential to the nature of the church. Some have spoken a three-fold shift that must happen in the North American Church: FROM internal focus TO external focus; FROM church focus TO kingdom focus; FROM program focus TO people focus.

How will we reclaim the mission entrusted to us as followers of Jesus?

First, “sentness” must drive us.

Let us understand what we have been called to. We have been ‘sent’: ‘Throughout the scriptures, we see God calling his followers to live a life of “sentness”. Stability, social comfort, relational control, safety, success, respect, or clarity were not expected. People had to go purely out of obedience, a personal sense of calling, in faith, and simply because they loved God. Outcome didn’t matter; faithfulness did.” (Halter, *The Tangible Kingdom Primer*). Rooted in the intention of God, in the promise to Abram, we are called to be a people who will be the means of ‘blessing’ the entire world (Gen 12:1-4). We are at our best when we simply have the sense that we are sent to bless others in the name of Jesus.

Second, the particular level of resources must not drive us.

Let us stop looking to big money, systems approaches that are much more successful at attracting the already churchd, than they are at advancing the kingdom. As Eugene Patterson puts it, “we have become shopkeepers in which we compete with each other for ‘customer loyalty’.”

Third, the value of simply ‘living on mission’ must be affirmed.

Because of the inertia of too many of God’s people, there is merit in considering an approach that embraces the deployment of ‘missional orders,’ that is, teams of followers of Jesus committed to radical living on mission.

There are 2 examples in the appendices the illustrate flesh the concept of ‘missional orders’ or new communities being “seeded”. **Appendix 1** is the MoveIn Initiative, and **Appendix 2 quotes** David Fitch on

'Seeding a New Community.' In both the MoveIn and David Fitch articulations, the emphasis is on teams or 'missional orders' that commit themselves to live on mission, to move intentionally into communities that need the presence of Christ. The connection is 'incarnational', inspired by Jesus who 'became one of us and moved into our neighborhood.' (See John 1:14). MoveIn is more open in that it does not decide what shape the new community of Jesus might take shape. Fitch is clearer. In some ways Fitch has conceptualized the pattern for what might be called Phase 2 in the MoveIn approach.

Having reviewed the importance of mission to guide our church planting efforts, let us now move to fleshing out the framework for church planting, beginning with the right values.

EMCC embraces church planting that recruits, equips, deploys and networks self-sufficient teams to pioneer creative and relevant expressions of the Christian church.

We are values-driven rather than methodology-driven.

Here are some core values to underpin church planting.

- We value our relationship
 - with God, the Father revealed in Jesus, and Father and Son present by the Holy Spirit
 - with the larger family of God
 - with the EMCC family
 - with our team and growing community of Jesus.
 - with others who are on the same journey of life
 - with those that Jesus misses the most
 - with those who most need the mercy and compassion of Jesus
 - with the 'neighborhood,' the community where we have been called to share our lives with others and learn from others who share their lives with us.
 - With our network of mutual support and accountability, recognizing that we as individuals and churches need each other.
- We value courage, the need to take risks and meet the demands of mission
- We value creativity and diversity as we try to discover relevant ways of being church in different contexts, believing that it is acceptable to fail.
- We value the freedom to try new things, to reflect more deeply on biblical truth as we live on mission.
- We aim to be catalysts, encouraging and releasing creativity in both church and community as we seek and share God in the inner city.
- We value empowering leadership, raising new leaders from the harvest for the harvest.
- We value the freedom to learn and grow in our expressions of worship and service to God, and our

love for God.

- We value the leading of His Spirit on our journey, knowing that as He led into this work for this time, He will continue to lead.
- We acknowledge our dependence on God and affirm our continual need of prayer and God's empowering Spirit.
- We value all people, believing that all people are loved by God, regardless of age, gender, education, class, ethnicity, sexuality or physical/mental health and that God works through all believers – and others besides.
- We value others, respecting others working alongside us with gratitude for the foundations laid by the many who have gone before.
- We value the experience of others, seeking to shape what we do in light of the experiences, discoveries, successes and mistakes of fellow-workers.
- We value God's provision, recognizing that it is God who provides or withhold and that we are not to covet the resources of others, but to be an encouragement and support to them.
- We value living uncluttered lives, holding possessions lightly, and recognizing that all we have is to be at God's disposal.
- We value humility -- we are not indispensable and we are just a part of a much bigger picture

We are led by a clear declaration of what it means to follow Jesus

The Seven Fold Way of Following Jesus

1. I have begun following Jesus, and am **depending on the Spirit** of Jesus in my journey.
2. I am **being sent** by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.
3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my **attitudes, behaviours, character**.
4. I am learning to love God by obeying Him and loving others by serving them.
5. I am learning the **teachings** of Jesus.
6. I am helping someone and someone is **helping me** to be a growing follower of Jesus.
7. I am participating in a **community** of followers of Jesus **on mission** to the world.

This statement is all about following Jesus. It is a unified whole, in that every point contains all the others. Nevertheless, there is value in pulling it out into the seven statements. They serve as the matrix for a lifetime of following Jesus.

- The statements are Christ-centred – It is about following Jesus!
- The statements are Trinitarian – there are explicit references to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- The statements are empowering – I don't need someone else to tell me what is involved in following Jesus. I am not a copy of a copy of a copy.
- The statements are simple – understandable to an eight year old; abstract terms are almost zero.

- The statements are memorable – short enough to remember
- The statements have lifetime value – a follower of Jesus will never outgrow their direction
- The statements express humility – no one has ‘arrived’ as a follower of Jesus
- The statements are incarnational – it is all about being ‘like Jesus’
- The statements are missional – we have been ‘sent’ by Jesus to invite and help others follow him, too.
- The statements are personal and individual – the onus is the ‘I’ to follow Jesus.
- The statements are corporate – The life of following Jesus is with others and for others -- working together, learning together, walking together.

Whatever we do in community must not disempower me as a follower of Jesus, so that I am given the impression that I cannot follow Jesus unless I enroll in this program, or am taught by this preacher. The greatest gift I can give is the signal strongly, clearly, continually and repeatedly that I already know enough to take another step forward and that God the Holy Spirit, empowers me to live in obedience.

When we follow Jesus, we will be motivated to unity, responsive to godly leadership and teaching, but we will not abdicate our own ‘priesthood’ in Jesus.

Each new community must have clarity not only in what it is to be a follower of Jesus, but also the leaders need to be committed to the ‘like reproducing like principle,’ that is, The fruit of a leader is another leader.

As such there are some guiding statements on leadership development:

1. I **am modelling** growth as a **(7Fold Way)** Follower of Jesus.
2. I am **responding** to the Spirit’s leading for my Disciple-Making **context** (Where? Who?).
3. I am **exercising spiritual discernment in identifying** potential **leaders** .
4. We are developing others using the 7Fold **pattern**.
5. We are **mentoring** to the Fourth Generation.
6. We are **training**, refining & releasing leaders according to their gifts.
7. We are participating in **community on mission** together.

While we cannot recommend a particular model of church, we can state that there are certain characteristics of Jesus’ community on mission.

1. Jesus’ Community devotes itself to Jesus and His teaching, understanding all of Scripture in the light of His Coming and His Mission.
2. Jesus’ Community follows the example of Jesus in His attitude, behaviours and character.
3. Jesus’ Community discerns spiritual giftedness, equipping all for service.
4. Jesus’ Community identifies and nurtures empowering leaders, as Jesus did with the 12.
5. Jesus’ Community moves outward in service to others, blessing the world in His Name
6. Jesus’ Community encourages practicing the presence of Jesus in all-of-life worship, and celebrates His presence in corporate acts of worship in its various freedoms and forms.
7. Jesus’ Community supports each follower to follow Jesus in the Seven Fold Way

How do I get started?

1. You do not need to wait for anybody to start living on mission. God speaks best to those to those who are learning to live a life of obedience. Learn to live on mission now; learn to live in dependence on Jesus now.

2. Start asking God to identify the community that He is directing you to – where are you going to 'LAND.' (Ask RM to work through 'Where is God working?' tool with you.)
3. Start asking God to identify those who are to be part of the team. (See Appendix 2.)
4. Start recruiting: speak with the other potential team members, dreaming and praying together.
5. Keep living on mission: encourage and partner with potential team members in living on mission. Learn what it is to live 'the missional rhythms of life'. (See Appendix 2.)
6. Figure out how you are going to support yourselves. (See Appendix 2.)
7. Seek out spiritual directors – those who are alive to Jesus AND His Mission. Include your RM.
8. Continue building your team and refining your plan and seeking input.
9. Identify your longer term 'support team' including your 'coach.'
10. Identify your key strategy to 'land' – to 'move in to the community.' – to connect.
11. Set a tentative launch date for the 'move in.'
12. Be accountable.

Is there other support?

- Ongoing, inservice coaching – RMs will facilitate coaching relationships and networks for to be reviewed at 3 months and six months. In order for this to be a multiplication model, the support will depend on 'peer coaching' for the longer term.
- Keystone Canada: Under Development -- a comprehensive training that addresses the fundamentals of 'new groups for new people', not the mechanics.
- Seed funding: The team is responsible to fund itself. Team members will figure out the best way to 'land' in the community, including finding employment in the community. However, there is some 'seed funding,' that is, funds that can provide a little extra boost at any point in the course of the new plant. We have two kinds of funding which are available for new initiatives:
 - **EMCC Ministry Seed Fund (MSF)**
 - *All works, great or small, may qualify (based on Great Commission focus and positive affirmation through the adjudication process) for Seed Funding through the MSF. Depends on the availability of funds in MSF.*
 - **EMCC Church Planting Initiatives Fund (CPIF)**
 - *This fund is a zero interest loan fund and best fits situations where a community has a reasonable prospect of developing a self-sustaining work. The applicants cosign as guarantors of the loan. Depends on the availability of funds in CPIF.*

APPENDIX 1

The MoveIn Initiative

MoveIn is about copying Jesus' example (Phil. 2:5-7) by literally moving in to the neighbourhood. We have discovered that something amazing happens when a group of Christians intentionally moves into a neighbourhood to pray (Acts 1:14) and be. In doing so, they have chosen to become part of the neighbourhood. Rather than visiting or serving and then going away, they will share in their neighbourhood's joys (Rom. 12:15), and in its troubles (Rom. 8:17); and they will have an opportunity to be right in there as salt (Matt. 5:13) and light (Matt 5:14) - as the hands and feet of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Matt. 25:35-40) - with a cup of cold water in one hand (Mark 9:41) and the good news (Isa. 52:7) in the other....

The stated purpose of MoveIn is 'to see praying teams of Christians moving into some of the most broken neighbourhood patches in Toronto and beyond. With a cup of cold water in one hand and the good news in the other, we are praying that these communities will discover Christ's love and pass him on. In some cases, churches will be planted. In others, missionaries will be raised up. In every case, we are praying for Christ's "Kingdom come" to lives and communities from "Jerusalem ... to the ends of the earth."

The 'methodology' is simple and minimal. A team moves in: (1) Christians moving **RIGHT** into a predetermined neighbourhood patch. (2) A commitment to pray together for a full evening per week, and to have a high level of commitment to the neighbourhood. (3) Part of the light but critical MoveIn accountability structure.

There is a conviction that the best witness is one that just *happens*. The Christian is called to 'incarnate' Jesus, that is, to 'be Jesus' in the everyday fabric of life: 'We've discovered that most God-moments are unexpected and happen along the way to someplace else. They will seem like interruptions, but if you begin to look for God's fingerprints in your day and in every relationship, in every coffee shop, in every conversation you have with your neighbor, there's a good chance you will see God's incarnational presence.' (Hugh Halter, *The Tangible Kingdom Primer (TTKP)*) It will mean adopting a different posture: 'Our posture is what wins a person's respect and heart and helps them be open to God's ways. While poor posture communicates judgment, Christ-like posture displays love.' (Halter, *TTKP*)

APPENDIX 2

Seeding a New Community – David Fitch

David Fitch advances a somewhat different model but the impulse is the same: *'We cannot enter a place expecting them to "come to us" on our terms. We cannot even expect the way we talk about God, sin and Jesus to make sense apart from a way of life (and a displayed Story) from which such words take on flesh.'*

Fitch believes that a new church is best planted by 'seeding a new community'. Certain factors are important in this seeding. Here are his 5 factors:

1.) DISCERN THE 3 (4 or 5) LEADERS. We (our church body) must discern the team of leaders who will be responsible for leading the theological integrity of this new community. This will be a team of leaders (as opposed to single superstar entrepreneur) who are on the same page philosophically, who will be bi-vocational, who will compliment one another in their giftings (APEPT), who have proven themselves in character and theological integrity so as to lead a community. Such a multiple bi-vocational leadership pushes the church outward instead of inward. Once assembled they will model THE 3 (4-5), THE 12, THE 120 seeking to build a strong shepherd/elder leadership who then each shepherd 3-5 people. Together we learn the ways of "revolutionary subordination" – where God inhabits every conflict for the growth and furtherance of this community into the center of what He is doing in the community.

2.) They must then LAND (as opposed to a "Launch"). They will have to get jobs, places to live close enough together, start a small rhythm of life, a worship gathering, a communal meal, teach the children. Luke 10:17 tells us to "go eat there" – have a regular meeting with Jesus to be sent by Him (verse 1) from and return to (verse 17) to be grounded in Incarnate Christ. We enter not from power, but from humility ...the goal is to become imbedded in sustainable and engaging ways of life with our surroundings.

3.) EXEGETE THE COMMUNITY (as opposed to doing a market survey) Again following Luke 10, we look for places to bless which usually means looking for the poor. We look for persons of peace (you will need relationships). We seek out the poor where God is working among the "poor in spirit" disenfranchised from the structures of power. Here we can find God at work and the harvest. Here we can learn about the Kingdom. We enter a community not to market, not from power, but meekly to discern where the hurting are.

4. TEACH MISSIONAL RHYTHMS. (As opposed to attractional events) We learn to inhabit and live among the places God has put us. We learn how to listen, pay attention, and take notice of those in our path as places where God is already working. We set places where we regularly visit same time same place every week. We seek out a time every month/week to be present among the poor (of all kinds). ALL WITHIN THE DAILY RHYTHMS OF LIFE (Luke 10.3 says "on your way," 10.7 "remain eating and drinking"). We work not to build an evangelistic organization to individuals, but a missional way of life where God is at work. Luke 10:2 – the harvest is plenty; all we need is laborers out there.

5. PREPARE FOR A SUSTAINABLE WAY OF LIFE OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. (as opposed to projected growth and financial sustainability after three years). EXPECT GROWTH TO BE SLOW, BUT OF MIRACULOUS VARIETY. YOU MAY START WITH 10-20 PEOPLE, EXPECT NO SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS. IT TAKES FIVE YEARS TO BUILD A MISSIONAL PRESENCE. BY THE FIFTH TO EIGHT YEAR, GROWTH WILL HAPPEN.