

Why Plant Churches?

By Les Dennis

There are at least three reasons for starting a church in any community: (1) when existing churches are not teaching the foundational beliefs of Christianity, (2) when important doctrinal differences hinder Christian service in existing churches, and (3) when there is a need to reach specific unreached people groups in the community.

Just as the foundation of a house needs to be maintained to protect the whole structure, the foundational beliefs of Christianity need to be maintained to protect Christianity. Sometimes that means starting a new church.

Churches are responsible to stay on a biblical path. In attempting to reach youth, seniors, the downtown core, etc. churches must keep the foundational beliefs of Christianity alive. These beliefs include the following:

Verbal Inerrancy of Scripture

Divinity of Christ

Virgin Birth

Substitutionary Atonement

Physical Resurrection and Return of Christ

These beliefs are so important that to lose these beliefs is to lose Christianity itself.

In addition to the foundational beliefs, there are other important doctrines that should be maintained, which brings us to our second reason for starting a new church. If I join a church with whom I differ on an important doctrine, it is likely that I will cause the church problems by speaking out in opposition to the statement of faith of that church. It would be possible to refuse to comment on certain Scriptures, but neither option is acceptable to me. I am faced with being a trouble maker, compromising my convictions, or starting another church in the community. In that situation, I should start another church.

The third reason for starting a new church is to fill a need. One church is better at reaching seniors, and another church is better at reaching youth. One church appeals to rural families, while another church appeals to families in the centre of town. There is a need for a wide variety of churches so that the whole community can be reached with the good news of Jesus. If the churches in an area are not effectively meeting a need, starting a new church that targets the neglected need is sometimes necessary.

For the reasons given, it is important to continue starting churches and to send church-planting missionaries to reach the lost with the Gospel. There is an abundance of communities that need a church that maintains foundational beliefs, that teaches important doctrines beyond the foundational beliefs, and/or reaches unreached people groups in the community.