

Nine Myths about Church Planting

Remember that churches successfully plant churches, not yearly meetings! This is adapted from an article recently published by the Evangelical Covenant Church of America.

#1 Myth: Planting will hurt the parent church.

FACTS:

- Seldom true – in fact, most parenting churches find a new season of vitality after parenting.
- God honors the giving, brings in new leaders, and raises up those who have been waiting for an opportunity to serve.
- We are blessed when we are a blessing.
- Statistics show that churches that plant grow 3 times faster than those who don't.

#2 Myth: Planting hurts existing churches.

FACTS:

- New churches set new standards and raise the quality of ministry in a community.
- Planting helps existing churches recapture their Missional heart and edge.
- New churches seek to reach the unchurched. In most communities this is well over half the population. Many more new churches are needed to reach them.
- Statistics show that within our region only 17.8% of the population regularly attends church.
- New churches often reach different age, ethnic, or socio-economic groups.

#3 Myth: There's no room for another Friends church in our area.

FACTS:

- Most new churches are reaching out to a completely different age, ethnic, or demographic group than our existing churches.
- New church plants are reaching out to unchurched people, not trying to "shuffle the sheep" from one church to another.
- The ministry style and worship of a new church will be very different from the existing churches and will draw new people.
- The statistics show that more churches of the same denomination in an area actually strengthen each other's ministries. Both churches often end up growing substantially and can more readily transform a community.

#4 Myth: Planting usually fails.

FACTS:

- The Bad News: Some estimates say that 4 out of 5 new churches will fail and only 1 in 10 sustain at larger than 100 people in worship.
- The Good News: The success rates increase dramatically when the new church takes advantage of training and coaching from experienced church planters.
- Mid America Friends propagates "well-conceived projects" in church planting, which includes assessing church planter pastors, providing training to planting pastor and team, utilizing a qualified coach, and starting with appropriate parent church partnerships for support in early years.
- The success rate of planting well-conceived projects in the Evangelical Covenant Church after 4 years is 86%.

#5 Myth: We're too small to plant.

FACTS:

- Many small churches have successfully helped start new churches. Several small churches can partner in starting a new church.
- Statistics show that churches that plant grow 3 times faster than those who don't.
- It's not uncommon for parenting churches to replace those sent out, plus grow by 10% within a year's time.
- Large churches sometimes have a more difficult time persuading people to go out to plant a new church than do small to medium-sized churches.
- More important than size in the ability to plant is the health and the Missional heart of the people of that church.

#6 Myth: Planting causes churches to break apart.

FACTS:

- This only happens in unhealthy churches that are already heading for a split.
- With a strong Kingdom vision, the parenting church blesses those who choose to go forth to start a new church.
- Most parenting churches will grow as they recapture their passion for local mission.

#7 Myth: New churches will replace existing churches.

FACTS:

- This is not generally the goal, or the truth.
- New churches often reach people who existing churches struggle to impact.
- Often the existing churches are strengthened and grow because of the increased Christian "presence" in a community.

#8 Myth: Church planting causes a leadership drain.

FACTS:

- We should be sending our best and most gifted into the mission field, whether it's next door or abroad.
- Starting new churches gives younger, gifted leaders a chance to step up into leadership roles.
- Almost every church has unused capacity with potential leaders sitting idle because there isn't a spot for them to serve.
- When God calls people out, He always provides for His church.

#9 Myth: America is over-churched.

FACTS:

- The true measure is not the number of church buildings in an area, but rather the number of unchurched people.
- The fact is we could double the number of churches in America and still not be close to meeting the current need.
- The population is growing 8 times faster than we're currently starting new churches, and existing churches are closing at a rate of 3,500 per year.
- Less than 18% of Americans attend church on any given weekend.