

## "Cast A Wider Net"

By

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Jesus said, *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men* (Matt 4:19). And there are other scriptures that support the need to reach others with the love of Christ: *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations* (Matt 28:19); *You shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Matt 22:39); *I was a stranger and you welcomed me in* (Matt 25:35); *Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation* (2 Cor 5:18). While there are many scriptures that encourage missional outreach, it does require a unique and mission focused calling to plant a church. As a new church planter, have you considered planting a multiracial church? I ask this question with the understanding that certain community demographics will not sustain a multiracial congregation. However, if the location where the Lord is leading you to plant does include a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and races (Hispanic, White, African-American, Asian, etc...) consider casting a wider net as part of your evangelistic outreach. Regardless of your planned liturgy, praise and worship format, and preaching style, as long as Jesus Christ is in the center of what you are doing you have something to offer to all types of people. God can use a willing vessel. This short writing will offer best practice notes for planting multiracial churches:

### **Best Practice #1: Practice Intentionality**

Be intentional about knowing the community that your ministry will serve. Learn about the physical and spiritual needs. As you *learn* the community it will help shape your evangelism outreach and ministry focus. In our 21<sup>st</sup> Century context of church planting, we can no longer consider the thought that just because we open the doors that people will come. We have to take the church (the Gospel) to the people. Fish very seldom jump into a net without it being cast.

### **Best Practice #2: Encourage Racially Diverse Leadership**

Practice what you preach. If you feel God is calling you to plant a multiracial church, then your leadership team/core group should reflect God's leading and your intention. This does not mean that you should sacrifice quality to fill a quota, but prayerfully and carefully select willing vessels. You can always equip a willing vessel.

### **Best Practice #3: Be Inviting**

Whether you are beginning your new worship gathering in a home, an existing worship space, or school auditorium, be conscious about establishing an environment that welcomes all people. Greet, invite, and follow up with everyone equally. *A picture is worth a thousand words*. Church bulletins, biblical teaching material, evangelism flyers, and other media efforts should reflect your sincerity about reaching all colors of people. Preach and teach themes that echo the truth that Christ is for all and that He shows no partiality. *The sum of us is greater than the sum of one of us*.

### **Best Practice #4: Pray for Diversity**

In our society racial diversity does not always occur automatically. The church planter needs to be intentional, incessant, and aggressively habitual about prayer. There are artificial sweeteners but there are no prayer substitutes. Pray for the people groups in your community. Prayer will sustain you and bring the right people to your side to complete the mission. We cannot change the heart of a person, but prayer can. We personally may not be able to change the racial, cultural, and socioeconomic issues that divide a community but prayer can. When you pray for diversity among your congregation, you will be praying with the Father's heart. Pray with your leadership team to make this a reality. I pray that you will consider casting a wider net.

### **Encouraging Resources**

- Boyd, David. *You Don't Have to Cross the Ocean to Reach the World*: Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Publishing Group, 2008.
- Deymaz, Mark. *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation*: San Francisco, CA: Jose-Bass, 2007.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Planting Growing Churches: For the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*: Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Publishing Group, 2004.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting the Missional Church*: Nashville, TN.: B&H Publishing Group, 2006.
- Woo, Rodney. *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches*. Nashville, TN.: B&H Publishing Group, 2009.
- Yancey, George. *One Body One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2003.