

Chapter Two

Saturation Church Planting: Current Needs and Recent Progress

Murray Moerman & Lorne Hunter

How can Canada and its rich tapestry of languages, cultures and people groups be introduced to Jesus Christ and brought into a saving relationship with our Heavenly Father for eternity?

Evangelism in all its forms¹ and programs remain vitally important to the church. Every congregation should identify an evangelism “point-person” to ensure that the church continually reaches out and ministers to those who are yet outside of any Christian community.²

Yet most congregations reach out primarily or exclusively to people like themselves. Many congregations do not actively reach out to those outside their circle of established relationships. Who then will reach and disciple those of other languages, cultures and sub-cultures?

Even evangelistically active congregations have limits as to the number of new people it can reach, disciple, incorporate and equip for leadership. Structural, relational and time constraints slow and eventually stop meaningful growth simply because churches, while of divine origin, are also human institutions hindered by constraints implicit in all human structures and organisms. What then?

The Centrality of Church Planting to Completing the Great Commission

To reach for Christ the numerous peoples outside the practical reach and ability of a given congregation, new churches must be established.³

The first essential missionary task, in Canada as elsewhere, is to establish a viable, indigenous church planting movement in each people group⁴ in the nation which does not yet have the benefit of such a church planting movement.

Every church in fact must contribute to these emerging church planting movements by planting at least two new congregations while it is able: one to replace itself, because like humans, no congregation lives forever; and a second to extend the Kingdom.

Pioneer Church Planting

The establishment of viable, indigenous church planting movements begins with “pioneer” church planting; i.e. planting engaged cross-culturally by those desiring to establish the church and a church planting movement in a people group not yet disciplined to Jesus Christ.

Most missiologists consider the “pioneer” stage of church planting missionary enterprise to continue until at least 2% of a given people group has been disciplined to Jesus Christ or until the newly established planting movement is itself vigorously planting within that group at a rate at which the possibility of discipling the group to its “fringes” can be envisioned in a life-time.

While technical discussions among missiologists will sharpen and lengthen the following list, it is the author’s view that additional pioneer church planting efforts are urgently required among Canada’s French, Aboriginal, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist populations, among others.

Brian Seim⁵ points out India has overtaken China as the country from which we receive most immigrants and will continue as our primary source for the foreseeable future. Until recently, migration from India has been predominantly Sikh or from south India. Currently however the Hindu majority have started to move - Brahmans, untouchables and all the classes between.

Many animists already live in Canada – including aboriginal religions, parts of the Buddhist and Hindu practice, folk Islam, and Shintoism. While communism and consumerism in Asia have both transformed and hidden some of the face of animism, animism continues as the dominant power that is faced in every day life of many people from Burma, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, China, North and South Korea and Japan – and remains the dominant religious barrier we face in sharing the gospel with them.

In addition, many educated people of most major countries, if they are not from the principle ruling tribe - Gujarat, Bengali, Tamil, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakke, Inca, Aztec, and Maya - are more likely to try immigration than to seek to make it in their own nation's cities.

We need to remember that such new-comers to Canada are most receptive to the gospel in the first three years of their migration.

With people from over two-hundred nations, 500 languages and dialects, and more than a thousand tribes, arriving each year, we can simply hold up an opened, 'Operation World' and say 'here is our need.' Overseas mission endeavors must continue and expand, but most of Canada’s cities have certainly become “global mission fields'.

Of course we cannot forget Quebec- especially the city of Montréal, with 0.3% of its population indicating association with an evangelical church – well within the definition of unreached people groups.

Each of these groups must become and remain the priority of compassionate efforts to establish new communities of Christ and pioneer church planting movements among them.

The Canadian church has tended to plant churches within more reached people groups where the likelihood of “success” is highest, leaving more difficult pioneer church planting work to overseas practioneers. This must change. Christ calls his disciples to make disciples cross-culturally, as well as within more familiar cultures.⁶

Ease of planting is not to be the criterion to choosing where new disciple-making communities are to be established, rather need, beginning with people groups most requiring pioneer church planting.

Saturation Church Planting

When 2% of a people group has come to be discipled to Jesus Christ and gathered into disciple-making communities, the focus of missionary church planting turns to “saturation” church planting.

A point of “saturation” is viewed to have been reached when an adequate number of healthy churches have been planted so as to be able to disciple the entire people group. When is a group of disciple-making communities able to do this?

This point is generally viewed to have been reached when there exists one evangelistic congregation for each 1000 persons of a given people group in a given geographic area. At the end of 2003, evangelical churches in Canada existed in a ratio of one for each 3,189 Canadians. We still have far to go but, as we go, we must seek to plant churches strategically, that is to say, we much seek to plant churches in those regions and people groups with the highest ratio of church-to-population.

If a given area of Montreal or Toronto or people-group within Montreal or Toronto has a church-to-population ratio of 1:4500 and another area or people group has a church-to-population ratio of 1:2000, we must focus on the area or people group with the 1:4500 ratio even if it would be easier to plant an additional church in the 1:2000 ratio area or people group.

We must not plant where it is easiest to plant – though planting is never easy and is always resisted because it takes from the kingdom of darkness – but always seek to plant where a new disciple-making community is most needed, i.e. where the church-to-population ratio is highest.

As we work and pray and God gives grace and the church-to-population ratio for an area or people-group declines, we must remember that movement towards saturation church planting does not indicate the completion of the Great Commission, but rather a necessary condition penultimate to full obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).⁷

Saturation church planting is a necessary prerequisite to strengthen the larger church numerically to a point where it becomes able to fully disciple the community for which it bears responsibility.

Church Planting Movements:

Church planting strategy in response to the Great Commission, as described above, may seem to some to be a disciplined missiological approach gaining ground as one new congregation is planted at a time, requiring Herculean effort akin to that of early farmers gaining agricultural land through the hard work of removing stumps and stones, planting crops and praying a harvest will result.

If that were so, it would be worth it! John Piper is fond of pointing out: “mission exists because worship doesn’t.”⁸ Church planting exists for the purpose of bringing glory to God by adding worshippers to that number gathered around the throne (Revelation 5:6-14).

Individuals, in our culture, most commonly come to Christ one-at-a-time along relational network lines.

Yet there are encouraging signs that God desires this process to be advanced in broader and more rapid church planting movements (CPM’s). David Garrison has studied

CPM's in recent years seeking to understand how church planting efforts become church planting movements. Garrison now defines a church planting movement as "a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches which sweeps through a people group or population segment."⁹

A key component Garrison has observed in CPM's is that virtually every church is engaged in starting multiple new churches, with a miraculous result analogous to Jesus' multiplication of loaves and fishes. In these situations local church DNA comes to believe that every church should plant churches, outside missionaries and denominational leaders cease to have hands-on involvement, and a "tipping point" occurs when multiplication and exponential reproduction results.

While CPM's cannot be engineered, God's means and intentions can be better understood by careful observation of "surprise" CPM's and, as in other areas of God's work, we must be aware that CPM's can be vulnerable to human tampering.

Most CPM's currently bringing 1,000s into Christ's kingdom, Garrison observes, are growing in contexts which exhibit many or most of the following factors:¹⁰

A climate of uncertainty in society due to political instability, social unrest or extended oppression, poverty or large scale shifts such as war or internal displacement.

Insulation from the influences and resources of the outside world seem to cause local church leaders to depend more heavily on God and on one another.

A high cost for following Christ. CPM's flourish where persecution refines the church and believer's commitment levels are uniformly high.

Bold faith overcoming fear and concern for personal safety and security.

Family-based conversion patterns in which new believers take the gospel to their family first and families make decisions together.

Immediate enlistment of new believers as opposed to traditional hesitance to putting new believers to work until they have proven themselves.

Worship in the heart language, rather than trade language of a people group enabling new believers worship and share Christ in the language of their birth.

Divine signs and wonders in which new believers may know Christ in dreams or as healer before coming to know him as savior.

On-the-job leadership training – churches planting churches require a constant supply of leaders often trained in two-week modules and ongoing apprenticeships.

Missionary suffering – resistance from the prince of this world frequently brings great hardship to those who are used of God to initiate CPM's, especially those who let their guard down in the busyness of their work.

Reflecting on this list, western readers may conclude CPM's are not possible in our narcissistic setting. While it is clear church-planting-churches is not currently in the DNA of the average western church, history makes clear God can and has made the drastic changes necessary to thrust his church out into her calling.

While some of the contextual factors highlighted by Garrison's study cannot easily be produced by church leaders, many can be prayed for and several, such as 5, 6 and 9, can be instituted to prepare for Canadian CPM's at such time as Christ's church is prepared and desirous of being used for God's purpose by such means.

“Century 21”

In addition, efforts are broadly underway in Canada to identify and implement such learning and practical components as will help increase the capacity of the church, in its current condition and context, to produce an increasing rate of new disciple-making communities.

At present, the following elements, largely drawn from the work of Kevin Mannoia,¹¹ Bob Logan¹² and Bill Malick¹³ are the focus of efforts of the Resource Team¹⁴ and regional facilitators¹⁵ of Church Planting Canada under the term “Century 21”¹⁶:

Parent Church Networks: encouraging all churches, large or small, to take primary responsibility¹⁷ for planting daughter and multi-campus churches. Parent Church Networks seek to train, coach and resource churches as they move through the birthing process.¹⁸

- *Recruitment*: helping church leaders seek new potential church planters among students, lay and business leaders, finishers¹⁹ etc.
- *Assessment*: assisting church leaders in assessing skills and characteristics of potential planters
- *Training*: encouraging and developing classroom-based church planting courses and network facilitator training. Church Planting Canada encourages every Bible School and Seminary to offer a course or ideally place exposure to church planting needs and principles into their core curriculum.
- *Church Planter Summits*: offering intensive 3-5 day "pre-launch" training (aka "bootcamp")
- *Church Start-up Networks*: seek to gather church planters regionally in pre-launch, launch and post-launch phases for peer support and resourcing.

Church Health Networks: helping churches become healthier and more vigorous in order to be able to plant more frequently and effectively.

While each component is not currently operating to capacity in each region of Canada as desired by the Church Planting Canada network, good progress has been made and we encourage the reader's involvement, either in cooperative interdenominational networks functioning in your region or via independent initiatives.

National Planting Rate Shows Gradual Improvement

Church Planting Canada seeks to measure church planting progress in the Discipling a Whole Nation process and was pleased to be able to share an encouraging trend during its 2003 National Church Planting Congress²⁰ in Vancouver.

Research²¹ indicates that the national net rate of church planting has been slowly improving in recent years, with the exception of 2003, as in the following chart:

Canadian Average Annual Evangelical²² Church Planting Growth Rate

1999	.08% increase over previous year
2000	1.0%
2001	1.6%
2002	1.9%
2003	1.5%

We trust the slower rate of church planting growth in 2003 will prove to be an anomaly.

Another indication of incremental movement in the desired direction is revealed by a review of church-to-population ratios nationally, and by region.

Evangelical Church-to-Population Ratio Nationally

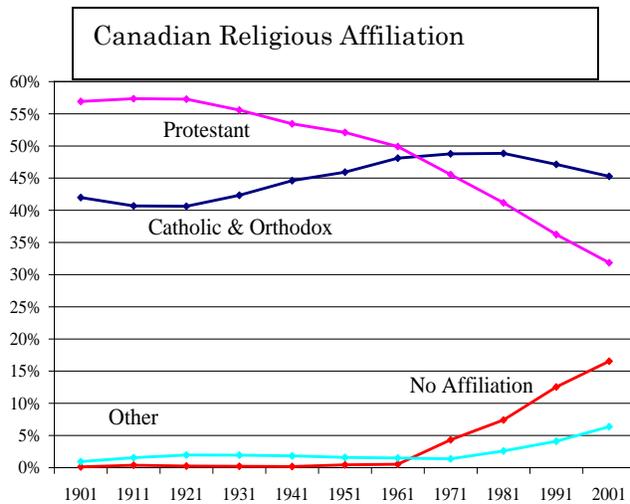
	Church-to-Population Ratio
1989	1 : 3,474
1997	1 : 3,277
2003	1 : 3,189

While the improvement is small towards the goal of one church reaching out to 2,000 Canadians, we may be encouraged that this key national indicator is pointing in the right direction in a time when Canadian cultural values have moved generally further from Biblical theology and ethics.

This general trend toward improvement is found in each of Canada’s thirteen provinces and territories, as detailed in the Appendix A.1 titled: “Five-Year Report on Church Planting Progress”

Religious Affiliation

While Canada’s government takes a national census each five years, the question of “religious affiliation” is asked only every ten years, most recently in July 2001. A summary of results follow:



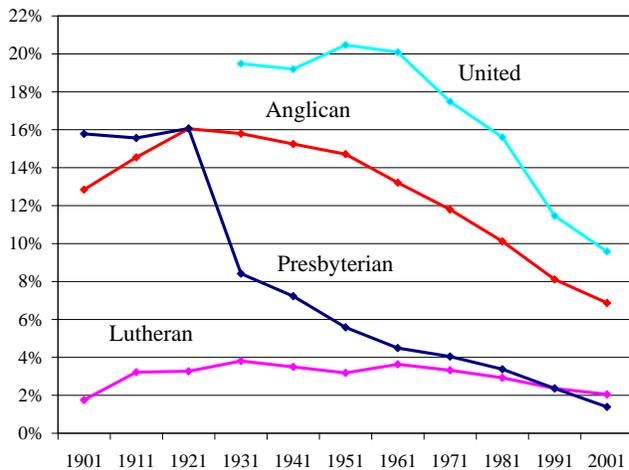
OVERVIEW: the 2001 census shows a continued decline, as a percentage of total population, among Canadian Catholics (-2%) and Protestants as a whole (-5.7%), with increases among those with no religion (+3.9%) and those holding to non-Christian religions (+2%) in the last ten years.

As Christian leaders seek to interpret and respond to a complex situation, the results seem at minimum to mark movement towards:

- The end of Christian nominalism. There is no social pressure for anyone to go to church or pretend to be Christian.
- Additional movement towards the religious pluralism of the first century into which the Gospel was first born.

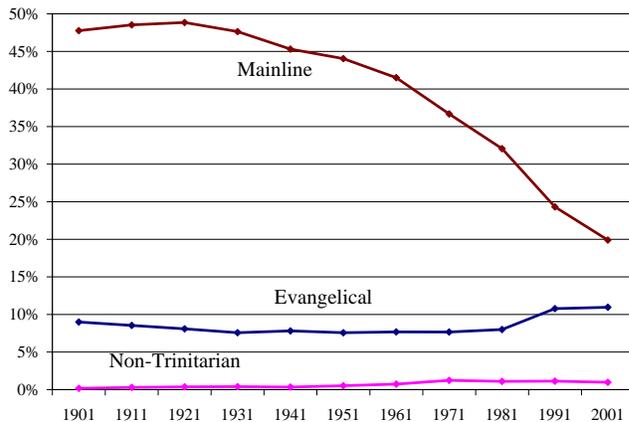
Note also the significant growth among those who hold to “no religion” and the growth of “other” religions, i.e. Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, etc. in the above chart, largely attributable to the rate of immigration from countries where these religions pre-dominate.

The need for revival and increased church planting has never been clearer.



MAINLINE PROTESTANTS: Mainline Protestant decline in the last decade was more precipitous than was Roman Catholic decline. The decline affected all major denominational traditions. (While we recognize a 100 year history is not of interest to all, we offer it to those who value the larger context. [Historical note: the reason for the drop in Presbyterian affiliation in the 1920's was the formation of the United Church in Canada.]

(Charts: Lorne Hunter, OC Research, 2003.)



EVANGELICALS: The graph to the left shows affiliation with Evangelical denominations (sometimes known as conservative Protestants) as related to Mainline (or Historic) Protestants.

While the 2001 census brought almost universally bad news for Canadian

Christians, perhaps the only encouragement found was that Evangelicals did not share in that decline and in fact grew very slightly from 2,907,925 affiliates (10.8% of population) in 1991 to 3,244,155 affiliates (10.9% of population) in 2001.

Non-Trinitarian groups generally, in the 1991-2001 decade, saw no net growth (Jehovah's Witnesses -8.1; Mormons +3.9).

Statistics Canada has made the complete survey results, and related materials, available from its website²³.

A summary, derived from the official government report, follows:

“Major Religious Denominations, 1991¹ and 2001 in Canada”

	1991	2001	% Change in Affiliation of total population
Roman Catholic	12,203,625 (45.2%)	12,793,125 (43.2%)	- 2 %
Orthodox	387,395 (1.4%)	479,620 (1.6%)	+0.2%

Protestant	9,427,675 (34.9%)	8,654,845 (29.2%)	-5.7%
Christian (not included elsewhere) ²	353,040 (1.3%)	780,450 (2.6%)	+1.3%
Muslim	253,265 (0.9%)	579,640 (2.0%)	+1.1%
Jewish	318,185 (1.2%)	329,995 (1.1%)	- 0.1%
Buddhist	163,415 (0.6%)	300,345 (1.0%)	+0.4%
Hindu	157,015 (0.6%)	297,200 (1.0%)	+0.4%
Sikh	147,440 (0.5%)	278,415 (0.9%)	+0.4%
No religion	3,333,245 (12.3%)	4,796,325 (16.2%)	+3.9%

¹ For comparability purposes, 1991 data are presented according to 2001 boundaries.

² Includes persons who report “Christian”, as well as those who report “Apostolic”, “Born-again Christian” and “Evangelical”.

% of Canadians agree

	1993	1996	2003
Forgiveness through Christ	61%	63%	66%
Jesus not God	16%	20%	24%
God is an old superstition	22%	23%	24%
Committed life to Christ	29%	35%	44%
Attend Weekly	23%	21%	19%

Christian Beliefs up – Church Attendance Down

Since most Canadians do not participate in “organized religion,” it may not seem surprising to see indications of Christian “religious affiliation” in general decline.

What is interesting in this context is the 2003 Ipsos-Reid poll²⁴ showing:

- an increase in key shared beliefs between evangelicals and the Canadian population (i.e. a growing understanding of forgiveness in Christ and commitment to Christ), declining relationship of Canadians with Christian community (i.e. decreasing attendance)²⁵, a simultaneous increase in distance between foundational evangelical and secular beliefs (i.e. Jesus is not God; God is superstition) suggesting less neutral ground between those who hold to basic Christians beliefs and those who reject them.

A challenge to the church as a whole, and church planters in particular, is the question “Why do an increasing percentage of Canadians believe in forgiveness through Christ and claim to have committed their lives to Christ, while simultaneously, a decreasing percentage of Canadians gather with other Christians for worship?”

Some will suggest that it appears Canadians don’t like the kind of churches Christians have formed, while others will argue for the presence of more subtle cultural factors, but the heart of the matter remains: Christian’s beliefs are up, attendance is down.

Canadian Christian must be willing to pray and experiment widely to learn how to develop discipling communities which will incorporate unchurched Canadians who claim to believe in the forgiveness of Christ and to have committed their lives to Christ.

It is clear predominant forms of Christian community require alteration. Perhaps they will become simpler, more relational and compassionate, more open to criticism of models which worked well for previous generations; perhaps the church will become more centered in homes and other forms of small groups.

Certainly we need to passionately seek the Lord's direction, dialogue about what we sense the Lord saying, be willing to risk and explore, and trust the Lord to bless as we gain His heart for His lost sheep²⁶.

Primary Mission Fields

The Canadian mission field requires creative church planting most urgently in at least five overarching settings.

Established Postmoderns (80%)²⁷: mainstream Canadians - particularly government, education and media influencers – largely interpret human experience uncritically through the postmodern worldview characterized generally by relativism, pluralism and the denial of absolute truths such as the uniqueness of Christ and the cross. Postmodernism, ranging from a gentle narcissistic existentialism to the more melancholy “nihilism with a smile,” poses a major challenge to the church which, for the most part, witnesses only from the margins of society.

New Canadians/Visible Minorities (13%): A declining internal birthrate has contributed to an immigration policy generally inviting the upper classes of developing nations, and a smaller number of refugees, to Canada. Most new Canadians are Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and adherents of other religions, bringing many - from nations to whom Canadian missionaries in previous generations were sent - into Canada and a greater diversity of the mission field to the Canadian church. In the decade of 1993 – 2002 a total of 2.2 million new permanent residents were registered. Cross cultural hospitality and church planting is urgently needed. Some new Canadians are being reached through “intentionally intercultural churches”²⁸

French (21%): at 6.5 million persons, French Canadians comprise the largest unreached people group in North America. Of this number less than 1% are evangelical and for the most part in smaller struggling churches rejected by mainstream French culture as “cults.” Since the “quiet revolution” of the 1970’s when Quebec broadly abandoned the Roman Catholic Church, less than 1% of baptized Catholics are involved in parish life according to an estimate by Catholic bishops. This despite continuing identification with Catholicism on census questionnaires as reflected in the following table:

Protestant and Catholic Identification in Canada (2001)

	Quebec	Canada
Roman Catholic	86%	41%
Protestant	6%	30%

Aboriginal (3%): though Canadian aboriginals participating in recent Canadian censuses have generally identified themselves as Christian, First Nations churches remain few, small, and frequently lack indigenous leadership. In addition, many native reserves remain without a Gospel witness. This situation is complicated by new movements, motivated by a search for cultural heritage and encouraged by government programs, resulting in many Canadian Indians returning to native spirituality including animism, spiritism and syncretism.

Multi-family Housing (41%, of which are 5.8 million in apartments): high-density housing contains, of course, each of the above groupings in our lost and broken world so loved by God. The primary challenge presented by multi-family housing is that residents are 1/7th as likely to attend church as residents of single family homes. Combined with the difficulty, due in increasing measure to security barriers, of engaging residents of many such complexes relationally, “cocooned” residents

of high-density housing have become almost invisible to most churches, are largely outside the scope of outreach efforts, and as such have become a “hidden” people group. Church planters will need to move into and establish at least house-churches or “simple churches”²⁹ in each larger high-density housing complex to bring this growing percentage of Canadians to Christ.

Church Planting to Serve Language-Specific Groups

While many new Canadians, particularly 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants, may be incorporated into “intentionally intercultural” church plants, many new Canadians continue to speak a “heart language” other than English or French when they are at home. Such people will best be reached by developing Christian communities reflecting their language and cultural preferences.

The chart below shows Canadian needs for additional “language and culture specific” churches. Please note:

while a church-to-population ratio of one church serving 2,000 persons (as in the table below) is a reasonable interim goal, our ultimate goal must be one church serving each 1,000 persons of any given language in order to disciple all the “ethne/nations” (Matthew 28:18) to Jesus.

The population of those speaking a given language at home is much smaller than the number of those who continue to prefer their “heart-language” even while continuing to pursue proficiency in English or French as “trade-language.”

Comparative Church Planting Needs by Language/Culture

Home Languages	2001 Population	Evangelical Churches 2002	Current Population to Church Ratio	Evangelical Churches Needed
Non-Official Languages				
Punjabi	132,370	6	22,062	60
Italian	110,275	21	5,251	34
Polish	53,320	6	8,887	21
Arabic	58,105	11	5,282	18
Persian (Farsi)	41,970	6	6,995	15
Urdu	30,750	2	15,375	13
Greek	33,505	6	5,584	11
Russian	37,895	9	4,211	10
Gujarati	18,300	0	18,300	9
Portuguese	63,895	23	2,778	9
Serbian	16,725	0	16,725	8
Tamil	45,860	15	3,057	8
Bengali	12,840	0	12,840	6
Croatian	10,635	0	10,635	5
Inuktitut (Eskimo)	14,425	2	7,213	5
Chinese	444,395	217	2,048	5
Serbo-Croatian	9,615	0	9,615	5
Vietnamese	64,660	29	2,230	3
Hindi	14,160	4	3,540	3
Macedonian	3,575	0	3,575	2
Cree	20,585	9	2,287	1

Armenian	10,400	4	2,600	1
Hungarian	11,580	5	2,316	1
Czech	2,695	2	1,348	0
Ukrainian	14,315	9	1,591	0
Romanian	16,310	10	1,631	0
Khmer (Cambodian)	6,225	9	692	0
Dutch	3,695	8	462	0
Japanese	10,260	12	855	0
Finnish	2,220	8	278	0
Lao	5,010	10	501	0
German	48,070	67	717	0
Tagalog (Filipino)	36,710	62	592	0
Korean	44,250	67	660	0
Spanish	70,355	144	489	0

Official Languages

French	5,861,145	457	12,825	2,474
English	18,267,835	8,044	2,271	1,090

Where Should Your Next Church be Planted?

For many readers the above overview will be adequate to highlight church planting needs in their own neighbourhoods.

Others will benefit from more specific pointers to neighbourhoods in which next generation disciple-making communities most need to be planted.

Ultimately, there is a single primary criterion for identifying such locations, whether one's next church plant in one's own community or in another province, whether the surrounding population is growing or declining, urban or rural, ethnic majority or visible minority.

The criterion is generally this: the current church-to-population ratio of the people group or geographic region - the higher the ratio, the greater the priority for planting in that sub-culture or location. .

The initial goal of reaching our nation with the Gospel of Christ is to commission one church to serve each 2,000 people in a given area or people group by 2015. Ultimately a ratio of one church for each 1,000 people in urban areas and 500 people in rural areas will be needed.

Here is how to determine the church-to-population ratio in your own community or in another community:

Estimate the number of people in the "people group" you wish to serve within a 10 minute driving distance. You can check with the planning department of your city hall or municipal planning office. Outreach Canada's Research Department may be able to assist.³⁰

Count the number of active churches in the same geographic area seeking to reach this people group.

Divide the number of people by the number of churches for the church-to-population ratio of that people group.

Remember, church planting decisions must not be made on the basis of where a new congregation may be most easily formed (pragmatic motivation), but on where a new congregation is most needed (missionary motivation).

The following table shows church-to-population ratios for 25 of Canada's larger cities.

Church Planting Needs in Canada's Twenty-Seven Largest Cities³¹

Census Metropolitan Area	July 1, 2003 Population	Known Evangelical Churches	People per Evangelical Church	New Evangelical Churches Needed to Have One Church for Every		
				2000 People	1000 People	500 People
Quebec	705,500	29	24,328	324	677	1,382
Saguenay	155,000	7	22,143	71	148	303
Trois-Rivieres	140,400	14	10,029	56	126	267
Montreal	3,577,400	367	9,748	1,422	3,210	6,788
Sherbrooke	160,400	17	9,435	63	143	304
Ottawa-Gatineau	1,131,600	153	7,396	413	979	2,110
St. John's	178,700	27	6,619	62	152	330
Toronto	5,114,500	939	5,447	1,618	4,176	9,290
Oshawa	324,000	61	5,311	101	263	587
Greater Sudbury	161,100	34	4,738	47	127	288
Windsor	328,600	78	4,213	86	251	579
Victoria	328,200	79	4,154	85	249	577
Hamilton	704,800	190	3,709	162	515	1,220
Calgary	1,018,900	282	3,613	227	737	1,756
Halifax	376,900	107	3,522	81	270	647
Kingston	155,700	44	3,539	34	112	267
Thunder Bay	126,800	36	3,522	27	91	218
Vancouver	2,140,600	634	3,376	436	1,507	3,647
Edmonton	990,800	294	3,370	201	697	1,688
London	457,600	138	3,316	91	320	777
Winnipeg	697,100	226	3,085	123	471	1,168
Kitchener	444,700	148	3,005	74	297	741
Regina	197,300	67	2,945	32	130	328
St. Catharines-Niagara	394,400	162	2,435	35	232	627
Saskatoon	232,600	105	2,215	11	128	360
Saint John	126,300	58	2,178	5	68	195
Abbotsford	156,300	97	1,611	-19	59	216
Totals	20,526,200	4,393	4,672	5,870	16,133	36,659

For visual clarification of comparative church planting needs within census tracks of specific cities, color maps are available, as well as additional custom maps relevant to your context.³²

Detailed information regarding church planting needs are included in Appendix A.

Harvest Field:

- A.1 Overview of Planting Progress by Province and Territory (1998-2003)
- A.2 Religious Affiliation of non-Christian adherents in Canada's 25 Largest Cities
- A.3 Church Planting Needs by Aboriginal Reserves
- A.4 Church Planting Needs by "Home Language"³³ (2001) for Canada's largest cities³⁴
- A.5 Comparative Church Planting Needs by City in each Province and Territory.³⁵

Common Vision - Common Labour

Undoubtedly it will take the focused efforts of the whole church to disciple the whole nation under the grace and power of God's direction and Holy Spirit. By "whole church" we mean:

Congregations: The local church holds the key to church multiplication. It is important to note that Paul's church planting missionary journeys were commissioned by the local church in Antioch (Acts 13), rather than by an association of congregations. Each pastor must repent of any focus on the appearance of personal success in the local church and commit to pastoring the city by birthing new disciple-making communities. These new congregations may be released as they mature or may continue under a common board as expressions of a multi-campus ministry.

Every congregation must plant a minimum of two reproducing churches in its life-time; one to replace itself (because no congregation lives forever), another to extend the Kingdom beyond its own reach, (preferably in a people group with a church-to-population ratio weaker than its own). Once a congregation has planted two or more daughters, it is hoped God's "planting DNA" will have seeped into its genes with the result that it will passionately continue to plant as often as possible, perhaps alternating between Canada and oversea locations in planting to reach and serve the lost.

To assist in this process we suggest beginning with the checklist provided in [Planting a Church That Keeps on Growing](#) by Bob Logan and Jeff Rast.³⁶

Denominations: Associations of congregations best function as "grandparents" – i.e. not planting directly so much as training their members for parenthood and resourcing their congregations through the birthing process. More specifically, denominations serve by developing and maintaining missional environments, prioritizing planting in their publications, recruiting and celebrating church planting heroes during conventions, and of course supplying, as able and required, supplementary finances during the early years of the plant. Denominations are also encouraged to gather their key planting personnel to hold annual denominational "summits" to evaluate progress and make appropriate adjustments.

To assist in the goal setting process refer to Appendix B for more tables and a worksheet.

Harvest Force:

Church Planting Progress by Denomination (1993 – 2003)

Guide to Setting Denominational Faith Goals.

Denominational Leaders' Worksheet: Our "Faith Goal" and our "Working Goals"

Schools: In addition, every Bible school, Christian college and Seminary is needed to help train leaders for the harvest, particularly through courses and internships in church planting, evangelism and discipleship. A positive step in this direction would be to expose each student, at minimum, to a module on the Canadian and international needs for church planting and the nature of church planting movements, and ideally, to a full course with the option of a concentration in church planting.

In a survey of denominations in 2000³⁷ two questions were asked regarding such means of formal training for church planting. From a response of 38 denominations the following results emerged:

“Does your bible school or seminary train potential church planters through a course or formal program? “

Elective – 21%

Core Curriculum – 13%

Concentration/Major – 13%

“Has your denomination formally communicated its priority for church planting and Canadian missions training to its bible school or seminary?”

Yes – 37%

In Process – 11%

No – 24%

Mission Agencies: We are pleased to observe that more mission agencies, many with established strong traditions of evangelism and discipleship, are increasingly engaging in forming new disciple-making communities in Canada.³⁸ This development is vital and most welcome. Positive models are developing and more are anticipated.³⁹ Mission agencies must, in every sense of the word, become full partners in church planting.

Housechurches: Further, many Canadian Christians are able to begin housechurches in their homes and places of work, initially with tools like *Alpha*, support and recovery groups and other simple, reproducible, relational ministries. Many denominations are simplifying their definition of “church” and a national housechurch network is developing under the Vision Canada leadership of Ken Stade.⁴⁰ While the diversity of “simple” church⁴¹ models raise questions in the minds of some seasoned leaders, the potential of housechurches - given their millennial history and recent global impact for Great Commission advancement - must be resourced and stewarded in Canada.

What is Church?

As the Canadian church begins to see the centrality of church multiplication for discipling the diverse people groups in our nation the question, “*what is the nature of the church?*” arises with increasing frequency. This is a welcome question and, in the experience of the authors, usually asked in one of two ways:

Size and function: Some ask the question with an ecclesiological backdrop when beginning to keep records of newly emerging churches in a given network - often in this form: “what size or essential functions are an irreducible minimum for a newly established discipling making community to be considered a church?”

One of the denominations wrestling with the question in the current context of seeking to develop new church planting movements was the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists. Paul A. Johnson⁴², National Church Planting Consultant for the CCSB, has reported five simple criteria used by the movement to determine if a new gathering is a church:

a recognized leader

12 people involved, other than children

meeting for 3 months

meeting regularly for worship, bible study and outreach

giving, or collecting funds to give, to missions

The definition is deliberately simple to include home-based churches.

Dynamic Church Planting International suggests: “A church is a group of professing believers who meet regularly for biblical teaching and worship, are led by at least one biblically qualified pastor/elder and whose goal is to fulfill the Great Commission.”

Church Planting Canada has offered this response to the question: “A church is a Christian community with recognized leadership meeting regularly for public worship and holding the intention of permanence and multiplication.”⁴³

Ability to impact: Others ask the “what is church” question in the sense of “what kind of church must be established to effectively impact the community with the power, grace and glory of God?”

This question is rooted in the concern that many existing churches serve their members in buildings which dot the community but make little or no impact on it.

Those raising this question essentially doubt that the multiplication of unengaged churches, regardless of their number, will in fact contribute significantly to the discipling of our nation.

The view of the author is that the question is an important one, in fact important enough to warrant further discussion in a later chapter: “Church and Culture: the Transformation Factor.”

Given the complexity of the issue, the question of community impact must nevertheless be engaged “on the go” as new churches are seeded into various Canadian cultures. The question must be wrestled each time anew along with the call to know, love, serve, engage, and on occasion confront, that culture. Conversely, we must not wait until “we have it figured out” because the culture will at that point doubtless again have changed and the challenge to be God’s presence in the community will again be new.

There is no doubt in Scripture that God expects His people to bless the surrounding nations, or in history that the Gospel has frequently challenged and impacted social ills. We must never give up.

The impact of each new church begins with individuals, households and family networks, and moves - as the church grows in maturity and links with other expressions of the Body of Christ – to impacting entire local communities. Then as new cells of the Body of Christ multiply in each community, progress is made towards the discipling the people groups of our nation and, by God’s grace, the world.

Simple Reproducible Structures

A key to church multiplication, not to be overlooked in today’s complex world, is the re-discovery of simple and reproducible models.

Many have noted the divergent results when comparing the life’s work of John Wesley and George Whitefield: Wesley gathered converts into simple house-gatherings facilitated by lay-leaders and tended by circuit riders; Whitefield took no steps to gather the new believers into supportive communities, leaving little lasting evidence of his life’s work. Wesley saw the development of Methodist movement, fruit that remains and is reproducing to this day.

The difference was Wesley’s “method” – derided as “methodism” in his day and generally undervalued in ours – a simple, reproducible method allowing almost unlimited growth. This “method,” infused with the power of the Gospel and vast amounts of prayer and work by Wesley and his circuit riders, is credited by historians with the salvation of England from the violent trajectory of the French revolution.

Are there simple, reproducible structures for church multiplication in western culture today? Neil Cole thinks so.

Cole gathered a small church of about 35 persons and, before it became so large as to require highly skilled and specialized leadership, hived off a small percentage of the group as the core of

another small church, and continued to repeat the process. Cole calls the process “organic church planting” and writes:

“In our first year we saw 10 organic churches planted. The second year 18. The third year we started 52 churches. Our fourth year we started over 100 churches and this year we are on pace to see over 180 start. If our current pace for the year continues (averaging 15 church starts each month) this will put the total number of viable churches close to 400 in only five years (including some attrition).”⁴⁴

The strength of the process is its simplicity and its simplicity is related to its reproducibility. Participation does not require advanced schooling but, like Jesus, simply mentored obedience.

George Patterson is another who agrees with this approach. Patterson began church-planting overseas where he developed his biblically based “obedience-oriented” approach to mentoring for leader reproduction and church multiplication. He has since applied the principles in North and South America, Europe and Asia.⁴⁵

Bob Logan is another who has given much thought to cultivating church multiplication movements. Bob’s work is geared to equipping teams of denominational leaders to implement reproducible systems, including:

Spiritual Dynamics

Shared Vision

Mobilizing Church Planters

Assessing Church Planters

Training Church Planters

Coaching Church Planters

Healthy Church Multiplication

Developing Multiplying Networks

Planning for Church Multiplication

Funding a Church Planting Movement⁴⁶

Does Neil Cole intend to begin a denomination? Probably not, nor did Wesley, or Patterson or Logan. They simply want to reach increasing numbers of lost people with the grace and power of Christ. The fact that church planting movements often result in denominations, or that most denominations begin as church planting movements is secondary.

What *is* important is the right motivation, and simplicity for the sake of reproducibility.

National Progress in Relation to 1997 Goals

Those who have been following recent efforts in Canada’s church planting movement will know that a long-range goal was adopted at the National Church Planting Congress in Bramalea, Ontario (1997). The goal was to establish 10,000 new disciple-making communities by 2015.⁴⁷ It was the first time in the history of the Canadian church that such a broad national church planting goal for discipling our nation was adopted.⁴⁸

The numeric implications of these goals, in five year increments, were reported in *Transforming Our Nation*.⁴⁹

Anticipated Canadian Evangelical Churches

Year End	2000	2005	2010	2015
Number of Churches	9,968	12,192	15,101	19,001
Projected Canadian Population	31.4 M	33.3 M	35.7 M	37.5 M
People per Church	3,149	2,733	2,342	1,976

It is noted that research to date shows progress since 1997 to be in the desired direction but below the growth rate envisioned:

Actual Canadian Evangelical Churches

Year	Evangelical Churches	Population	C:P Ratio
1997	9,152	29,987,214	3,277
2000	9,449	30,769,669	3,256
2003	9,919	31,629,677	3,189

The reasons for this may be numerous but research also shows that for each two churches planted, one older congregation closes – requiring both an emphasis on church health and a re-doubling of church planting efforts.

Shall we be discouraged? Definitely not!

Why? Because:

God still loves Canada, is committed to its redemption, and always accomplishes His ultimate purposes.

Over 1500 churches were planted in the five years between 1997-2003 resulting in thousands of Canadians touched with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well as thousands becoming integral parts of disciple-making communities, fruit that is reproducing even now.

Had the 1997 goal been gross rather than net, we would be close to on track for progress to 2015.

The Canadian evangelical church-to-population ratio has improved slightly in all provinces and territories across the nation.

The rate of church planting national is on the increase, as shown in Table 1 of this chapter.

As we work, pray, trust God and risk boldly in love - exponential multiplication may result in reaching our original goal, or surpass it.

And if not, God is still using the developing church planting movement in Canada to bring more people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ than if we had not taken these initial steps of faith, hope and love. For this reason...

I pray that out of His glorious riches God may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all God's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations..." (Ephesians 3: 16-21)

Questions for Reflection and Action:

1. How can the vision and practice of church planting be restored to the DNA of the average Canadian disciple-making community (aka: "church")?
2. Who are three leaders with potential as church planters you can encourage this week?
3. Have you considered joining or initiating a church plant in your neighbourhood?
4. Is church planting, in Canada or abroad, on your daily prayer list?

Bibliography / Suggested Reading:

"Forward" of Moerman, Murray, ed., Transforming Our Nation: Empowering the Canadian Church for a Greater Harvest. Richmond, BC: Church Leadership Library, 1998

Montgomery, Jim. DAWN 2000: Seven Million Churches To Go. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989.

About the Authors:

Murray Moerman is Outreach Canada's Church Planting department head, founder of Church Planting Canada, and chair of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's National Evangelism Partnerships.

Lorne Hunter serves with Outreach Canada as it's Research Department head and as facilitator of the Research Track of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's 'National Evangelism Partnerships'.

Chapter Notes

¹ Including proclamation evangelism, friendship evangelism, compassion evangelism, power evangelism, life-story evangelism, etc.

² Info: www.growingleadership.com/ministries/aepp/aepp.asp

³ Additional reasons for church planting are outlined in the author's chapter in Transforming Our Nation, pp. 29-36, available upon request from mmoerman@outreach.ca or www.outreach.ca/ton.

⁴ "People groups," as sociologists and missiologists normally use the term, are those segments of society that tend to marry chiefly within their own group. Such groupings have a distinct consciousness of being unique and different from other groups in ways important to those within the given sub-culture. People groups can be further distinguished by language, religion, occupation or interests. Examples might include university students, factory workers, government bureaucrats, trades people, skateboarders and farmers. Usually individual members of a people group do not mix significantly with members of other people groups. People most trust people who are viewed as being from within their own group. How many of such sub-cultures and people groups exist within Canada? —Hundreds, probably thousands.

⁵ Brian Seim leads *Vision Canada's* Intercultural Ministries Track www.visioncanada.net and SIM Canada's Ethnic Focus ministry.

⁶ The Acts 1:8 mandate speaks of Samaritans as well as "the ends of the earth."

⁷ It is the view of the author, for instance, that lobbying for social legislation reflecting Biblical values is likely to bear minimal fruit that remains - as trends in recent decades strongly suggest - until the church grows through purposeful, evangelistic, strategic church planting and disciple-making activity to a point where large numbers of lives are transformed by the grace and power of the Gospel.

⁸ Ralph Winter, Stephen Hawthorne, eds., Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Pasadena: William Carey Library (1999), p. 54.

⁹ Garrison, David. Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World. WIGTake Resources, Midlothian, VA. 2004. Page 21ff. www.churchplantingmovements.com

¹⁰ Garrison, chapter 13.

¹¹ Kevin Mannoia, Church Planting: The Next Generation, Light and Life Press

¹² www.coachnet.org

¹³ www.cmtcmultiply.org

¹⁴ Chaired by Dr. Ron Bonar, bonarr@cmaccd.com

¹⁵ www.outreach.ca/cpc, click "Regional Networks"

¹⁶ www.outreach.ca/cpc, click "Century 21"

¹⁷ Primary responsibility lies in the hands of the local church rather than its denominational association.

¹⁸ An international study of 9000 congregations conducted in 2003 found churches that plant churches generally more healthy (with average NCD score of 53 vs. 48) and growing more effectively (adding 47 attenders per 100 over 5 years, vs. 15 new attenders per 100 over 5 years) than sterile churches. More at www.outreach.ca/cpc (click: "DAWN Research" > "Finishers")

¹⁹ "Finishers" are those who are or could be in early or semi-retirement who desire to "finish well" by investing their closing years in mission work.

²⁰ Church Planting Canada has been organizing a National Church Planting Congress every second year since 1997. Information on recent and planned Congresses is available at www.outreach.ca (click: "National Congress")

²¹ Lorne Hunter leads the Research Department of Outreach Canada, Lorne.Hunter@outreach.ca, www.outreach.ca/research

²² Church planting statistics in this chapter generally reflect evangelical churches, i.e. churches self-defined as giving priority to biblical authority and committed to evangelism. The authors recognize arguments for a broader definition of church as well as the fact that approximately 1 in 7 active participants in historic church are evangelical. Nevertheless our view is that “harvest force” churches in the Canadian “harvest field” are primarily those with evangelical commitments, due to the fact that historic denominations, continuing as a whole in decline, generally do not function effectively as “harvest force” movements. In some charts however, columns including historic denominations are provided for comparative and statistical purposes.

²³ www.statcan.ca, or to link directly to www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/companion/rel/contents.cfm.

²⁴ Results of the full poll, commissioned by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada through its *National Evangelism Partnerships* Research Track in cooperation with partner organizations, is available in PowerPoint form from www.outreach.ca/research (click: “The Church”)

²⁵ Reginald Bibby suggests in *Restless Churches* that worship attendance may again be going up in some segments of the church. The authors hope this will prove a broadening trend.

²⁶ Luke 15:1-7.

²⁷ Percentages exceed 100% because some are legitimately included in more than one category. It is acknowledged that the 80% figure for postmodernism is a broad estimate.

²⁸ Brian Seim bkseim@sympatico.ca of www.sim.ca/SIMCanada_Ministries_Ethnic_Focus.asp has researched and championed Intentionally Intercultural Churches.

²⁹ www.dawnministries.org/regions/nam/simplechurch/index.html

³⁰ Email: Lorne.Hunter@outreach.ca or phone: (604) 952-0050 ext. 304.

³¹ For smaller cities visit www.outreach.ca/cpc, click “Regional Networking” and select your region from the left menu bar.

³² Visit www.outreach.ca/research, click on “Resources Available” and “Mapping.”

³³ “Home Language” is the language preferred and normally used at home (regardless of which language is used at work).

³⁴ Data or maps for languages used in smaller cities are available by request from Lorne.Hunter@outreach.ca or 604-952-0050 ext. 304.

³⁵ Due to the length of Appendix A.5, we limit ourselves to towns with population exceeding 2000 persons and first nation reserves with population exceeding 500 persons. A listing of all communities and reserves, along with updates of “churches per capita” showing relative church planting needs more comprehensively and currently, is available from www.outreach.ca/don

³⁶ Electronic form available from www.outreach.ca and click “materials”

³⁷ Full results available from www.outreach.ca/OC2-Planting/4-DAWN/SurveyResults-Denominational.htm

³⁸ Such as The Navigators, http://navscanada.gospelcom.net/ministries/community/church_plant/index.html

³⁹ A PowerPoint outlining developing models is available from www.outreach.ca - click “Materials,” “Resources” and scroll down to “Seminars, Forums & Workshops”

⁴⁰ kenstade@moderndigital.net or www.outreach.ca/housechurches

⁴¹ www.dawnministries.org/regions/nam/simplechurch/index.html

⁴² pjohnson@ccsb.ca or www.ccsb.ca

⁴³ Church Planting Canada recognizes denominations will define “recognized leader” differently but encourages simple criteria here also, including temporary and lay leaders. The full document “Principles for Measuring Progress” is available from www.outreach.ca click “Planting” > “FAQs”

⁴⁴ This and future updates are posted at www.organicchurchplanting.org/articles/cma_movement.asp

⁴⁵ www.servants-inc.org

⁴⁶ www.coachnet.org. David Chiu serves with CoachNet in Canada - DavidChiu@CoachNet.org

⁴⁷ For full Congress Declaration www.outreach.ca/cpc, click “National Congress”

⁴⁸ Some Western Christians are uncomfortable with goals. The reasons range from dislike of “numbers,” “management by objective,” fear of failure, unease with implied accountability – to name a few. It is certainly acknowledged that goal setting can be rooted in the hubris of unredeemed human nature.

Nevertheless a national goal to reach the unreached can have positive motivation and results: including a “John 17” unity of purpose, clear focus, and alignment with the heart of God for the redemption of the lost, the needed criteria for wise allocation of limited resources, among others. Jesus depicted the heart of God seeking lost sheep to be highly focused and purposeful. This national goal, whether God gives grace for “success” or if only many but not all of the envisioned new churches are established, is simply rooted in the desire to be focused on that on which the heart of Jesus was focused: to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)

⁴⁹ P. 132, for full text www.outreach.ca/ton