

Saturation Evangelism and Saturation Church Planting

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Biblical references:

“Jesus came and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ ”

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues standing before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ ”

Revelation 7:9-10 (NKJV)

I express to Dr Lee a thank you for allowing me to share in this session. I am grateful for the opportunity to share this challenge with you. The mission in the Pacific is about evangelism and church planting that we can do together. The islands of the Pacific need an intentional infusion of the gospel to overcome a cultural Christianity that has crept into our churches. I have called the plan saturation evangelism and saturation church planting across the islands.

Saturation Evangelism and Saturation Church Planting Defined

Saturation Evangelism and Saturation Church Planting is creating churches for people in their languages, cultural expressions, symbols and worship forms. The goal is to draw all people into worship of the Most High God as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ. The emphasis is a church for all people and the gospel for every person.

Worship of God is primary. Loving God and loving the people God loves is a natural response for all believers. Tribute, praise, honor, respect, reverence, adoration, glory and allegiance express the desires of all believers toward the Lord Jesus Christ. People who do not have a personal relationship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are at risk of eternal death.

Example: “Love Singapore;” Cheryl and I attended a month long session of the church planting movement in Asia in Singapore in 2001. We learned that in Singapore the high-rise housing complexes had been numbered. Churches were challenged to adopt a high-rise housing complex with an agreement that every household would hear the gospel at least once a year. All housing units were adopted. We were able to see the plan in action as we visited several churches during the one month we were in the city. It was a good plan. Every person would hear the gospel at least once a year.

The gatherings of believers provide peer support for facing difficult times. They provide celebration moments for joyous times. The gatherings provide the environment for God’s purposes to be revealed and taught.

Saturation Responsibilities for Churches

Churches are vibrant dynamic groups of believers committed to informing the uninformed of God’s plan for His creation. The mission of God is bringing new people into the presence of God and inviting them to become members of the family of God.

Churches are responsible for teaching all things that Jesus taught.

Churches exhibit the character and compassion of God to believers and unbelievers.

Churches interpret and exemplify how the teachings of Jesus apply to every day life in the cultural context of the community where the church is planted.

Church leaders are stewards of God’s people and God’s truths. They are responsible for teaching disciples how to worship, how to experience holiness, how to make disciples and how to model the character of Jesus.

A working definition of a church in the Saturation Church Planting strategy: “A church is a group of obedient followers of Jesus worshiping together, nurturing one another, proclaiming God’s love to unbelievers, growing in Christlikeness, ministering to people in Jesus name and who perceive themselves to be a church.”

Types of Churches

1. Campus based churches –Church is where people gather for care, instruction, Bible study, church activities and relationship are built. One central place is the norm.
2. Cell based churches –Church is the center for worship; cell groups, wherever they meet, are the extension of the church where relationships are built, where care of the members are carried out, where there is Bible study, instruction and activities for the edification of the members are experienced.
3. House based churches –Church is the center of activity, it usually encompasses about 15-30 people in worship, Bible study, instruction and care of members.

Disciple Making

1. Obedience training is doing what we know.
Example from the Singapore training event: “A model of a church in China was shared with the group. The model involved a person who had accepted the salvation of Jesus. The presenter of salvation would teach one Bible lesson to the new believer. The new believer had to teach the lesson to one other person before the next lesson was given. The emphasis was a disciple teaches what he knows.
(Teachers teach in a way that the lesson can be taught by the students. The goal is to raise up disciples for Christ.)
2. Knowledge training is gaining knowledge for knowledge sake. (This method is good only if the knowledge is shared with others)

Churches and their Mission

1. The church is charged with total transformation of their community. (The church is the catalyst that makes a difference in a community. The church needs to take advantage of the power of Jesus it has been given.)
2. The church is charged with church growth. As the number of members are added to the church each person’s gifts expand the role of the church in community. It is important for the leaders of the church to assess the giftedness of each new member and train them on how they can be involved in community.

Church and Culture

As churches reach into a new culture is important for the church to listen to the cultural leaders. We know what church looks like in our culture, but what does it need to look like elsewhere. We are presenting the gospel of Jesus to the people, not our style of church.

Example in Denver, Colorado; A pastoral missionary came from Australia to work in the city among American Indians who were transplanted into the city. In the city they called themselves first nation peoples. They may have come from different tribal ancestry but in the city they were first nation people. The missionary began to gather the first nation people together and asked them what a church should like in their culture. They said, we would sit in a circle. It is an insult to sit with our back to a person when we are engaging in holy things. As people became believers he formed several sacred gatherings of about 16-20 in each group. They worshiped and did their Bible study in this format. (I asked if there was a sacred number to

the group size, he said there is no limit to the number, But for practical purposes the smaller the number the better, because each person is given a chance to respond to the sermon or Bible Study. He said if the number is too large the service can be lengthy.)

How to Plant Churches

1. Pray intentionally for the people living in the area. Pray to discern what God wants to do.
2. Seek the person of peace. The person or people God has already prepared.
3. Draw together the people who have a passion for helping the people learn to worship God.
4. Saturate the community with abundant relationship building activities included in the mix is abundant gospel seed sowing.
5. Gather people who have an interest in Bible Study or Spiritual issues dialog.
6. Be intentional in discipling new believers daily with the intent they will teach others what they learn.
7. Teach the value of obedience to Jesus is greater than gaining more knowledge.
8. Model every believer is a leader-in-training.
9. Introduce reproducible worship as soon as 2 or 3 people are gathered.
10. Give every new believer a ministry assignment and teach them to minister.
11. Teach total transformation of a community is the goal of every church.
12. Start multiple home units using new believers as co-leaders or facilitators.
13. Celebrate with large corporate groups as God allows opportunities.

How to Deliver the Gospel to Remote Island Citizens

1. Pray intentionally for the people in the remote islands
2. Seek the person of peace from the remote island living, visiting or working in our communities.
3. Build friendly relationships with the people from the remote islands.
4. Share the gospel with the new friends.
5. Learn what a church should like in their setting.
6. Begin with Bible Study or Worship with the group that is gathering.

The question followers of Jesus need to ask is:

What will it take to bring the Kingdom of God to Earth as it is Heaven? Are we willing to give up our personal agendas, if doing so would allow God to fully come into our midst?