



What it Takes to be a Church Planter

Rev. Jeremy Sin

The Chinese Baptist Fellowship has a desire to start many churches in North America. We are glad to see many churches respond to this initiative by becoming sending churches for church plants or getting involved in being supporting churches to pray for and to bless the church plants in different ways. However, if we want to see a movement of church planting among the Chinese population in North America, we must pray that the Lord will raise up a new breed of ministers called “church planters”. What does it take to be a church planter? Simply put: He is a follower of Jesus who knows and loves God, loves people, and the work of planting churches.

Know God

We need church planters who know God. Planting a church is never easy. A church planter often begins the work with just himself and his family. They undergo constant stress in advancing God’s kingdom and penetrating spiritual darkness with the Gospel. To cope with this kind of pressure, he has to know and experience the power of the Gospel. He must firmly believe that it is God who has called him to plant a church and it is God who changes things and transforms people.

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Knowing God is to know his calling. Jesus called his disciples to follow him and to be fishers of men. The resurrected Lord called Saul to proclaim His name to the Gentiles, and through the Macedonian Vision, to bring the Gospel to Europe. He has to know the calling of the Lord who is faithful so that he can have the faith to stay faithful through all challenges and difficulties associated with planting a church.

... and it is God who changes things and transforms people.

For someone who is praying about God’s guidance to go on the journey of church planting, consider the following questions: Do you know God as your Savior and Lord? Do you know God as the One who has called you to the task? Do you know God as the One who sends?

Know People

Church planters need to have a clear understanding of themselves and the people they serve. To plant a church, one puts himself under tremendous stress. It would be foolish for anyone to start running a Marathon without knowing the condition of his body as well as the condition of the route! Runners should also have a full understanding why they want to subject themselves to the torment of running the 26.2 miles. Paul, a missionary and a church planter, knew himself, and his weaknesses: “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.” (2 Corinthians 11:30) But at the same time, he knew of the power within him: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7) Know your strengths and weaknesses, as well as the capabilities that God has given you, to make you a unique individual!

It would be foolish for anyone to start running a Marathon without knowing the condition of his body as well as the condition of the route!

A church planter must search his heart. The Psalmist says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!" (Psalms 139:23) He must have a pure motive in the pursuit of planting a church.

A church planter has to work with the people to whom God has sent him. People are diverse. They come from different cultures, hold different worldviews, and have different preferences and religious backgrounds. The best approach to work with one people group might not work well at all with another group. An approach working with a people group ten years ago might not work with the same people group today! Take heed of what Paul says: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22) He has to take the time to know people he works with and to find the best way to communicate the good news.

Pastoring an established church is different from planting a new church!

Do you know your weaknesses and your strengths? Do you know your motivation for planting a church? Do you know the people God wants you to reach?

Know Your Work

Different ministry settings require different skill sets. Pastoring an established church is different from planting a new church! In an established church, a pastor preaches to people who already know and accept the authority of the Bible but a church planter preaches to people who might know next to nothing about the Bible. A pastor in an established church might have to spend most of His time caring for people who are already in the fold whereas a church planter constantly spends time and energy reaching out to new people and doing the work of an evangelist. When serving in an established church, particularly as a ministry team member, your leader or leaders would tell you what to do, while a church planter, on the other hand, must be a self-starter. He needs to recruit the whole team to serve together. In an established church, very often the budget is already in place, while in a new church start, he has to look for resources from different places. On making disciples, a pastor has the privilege to work with experienced believers in an established church, whereas a church planter often has to develop leaders from the harvest.

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What does it take to be a church planter? Who is equal to this enormous task? These are the people who, like Jesus, have compassion for people who are lost. These are people who sense a call from the Lord to be on mission. If you feel that God is calling you to be a church planter, I encourage you to start by reading books and online articles about church planting and attend church planting workshops. Visit with church planters, interview them, attend their worship services and even participate in their ministries so you can learn first-hand on what the work of church planting is like.

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The North American Mission Board is here to serve churches to be on mission and I am here to serve people to be on mission. If there is anything I can do to be of help, please contact me at jsin@namb.net.



Jeremy Sin serves as the National Church Planting Catalyst with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is a graduate of the Hong Kong Baptist College. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and the Doctor of Ministry degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminar (now Gateway Seminary). Prior to his service with NAMB, Jeremy served as a pastor in Macao, California, and Georgia, and is actively involved in the ministries of associations, state conventions, and the Chinese Baptist Fellowship. Jeremy has a passion of mobilizing churches to share Christ and plant new churches.



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誰可以去栽植教會

冼志儉牧師

美加華人浸信會聯會希望在北美栽植許多教會。我們很高興見到不少教會積極回應這倡議。我們很高興看到教會挺身而出，成為新栽植的教會的派遣教會，或成為支持教會：為新教會祈禱和以不同的方式祝福他們。但是，如果我們希望在北美華人人口中看見一個栽植教會的運動，我們必須禱告，求主興起一群合資格的栽植教會傳道人。誰可以去栽植教會呢？他們是跟從耶穌的人，他們認識並熱愛神，人，和栽植教會的工作。

認識神

我們需要認識神的植堂人。栽植教會並不容易。植堂人常常只有他自己並及他的家人來開始工作。他們在擴展神的國和用福音照亮黑暗時常常承受壓力。他必須親自認識並經歷福音的力量才能肩負這重擔。他必須堅定地相信神能改變事物並改變人的生命。他必須對呼召他去栽植的主有堅強的信心。

「如果對自己身體狀況不了解而貿然參加馬拉松比賽，是魯莽和危險的。」

認識神就是知道祂的呼召。耶穌叫祂的門徒跟從祂，成為得人的漁夫。復活的主呼召掃羅向外邦人宣揚祂的名字，並通過馬其頓的異象，帶領他把福音傳到歐洲。我們必須知道信實的主對我們的呼召，這樣我們才能有信心在各樣的挑戰和困難中保持忠誠。

「他必須堅定地相信神能改變事物並改變人的生命。」

栽植教會的傳道人必須親密地認識上帝，並有著明確的呼召：跟隨耶穌為祂的門徒，走上奉獻的道路，並在某個地方在某個時間中栽植教會。

若你正就考慮參與栽植教會而祈禱的話，請思考以下問題：你知道神是你的救主和生命的主嗎？你知道上帝在呼召參與事奉嗎？你知道上帝是差遣你的那一位嗎？

認識人

植堂人需要對自己和所服務的對象有清楚的認識。他在栽植教會中把自己置身於巨大壓力之下。如果對自己身體狀況不了解而貿然參加馬拉松比賽，是魯莽和危險的。參賽者要清楚知道自己為何要抵受奔跑 26.2 英里所帶來的痛楚，並知道這路線的狀況！保羅是一位宣教士和植堂人，他認識自己和自己的弱點：“我若必須自誇，就誇那關乎我軟弱的事便了。”（哥林多後書 11:30）但同時，他知道他裏面的力量：“我們有這寶貝放在瓦器裡，要顯明這莫大的能力是出於神，不是出於我們。”（哥林多後書 4:7）認識你的強項和弱點，以及祂賦予你的能力，這使你知道自己獨特之處！

「我們必須禱告，求主興起一群合資格的栽植教會傳道人。」

栽植教會的傳道人必須省察自己的心。詩人說：“神啊，求你鑒察我，知道我的心思；試煉我，知道我的意念。”（詩篇 139: 23）他必須有單純的動機來栽植教會。

植堂人必須向神所帶來的人一起工作。每一個人都是不同的。他們有著不同的文化，世界觀，喜好和宗教背景。在某個人群中的最佳方法可能根本無法用在另一人群中。十年前在某個人群中所運用的方法在今天可能完全不再適用！留心保羅所說：“向什麼樣的人，我就做什麼樣的人，無論如何總要救些人。”（哥林多前書 9:22）我必須不斷花時間去認識工作的對象，並找到傳講福音的最佳方法。

「牧養已建立的教會與栽植新教會的工作大不相同！」

你知道你的弱點和強項嗎？你知道自己栽植教會的動機嗎？您知道神要您向誰傳福音嗎？

認識你的工作

不同的工作需要不同的技能。牧養已建立的教會與栽植新教會的工作大不相同！

在一間已經成立的教會中，講道的對象多已接受聖經的權威。但在栽植的教會中，聽眾可能完全不認識聖經。在已經建立的教會中，牧師可能用上大部分時間來照顧羊圈裏面的人。但栽植教會的傳道人的時間和精力要用在不同的事情上，他必須不斷地接觸新朋友並向他們傳福音。在已建立的教會中，特別是作為團隊的成員，會有其他的領袖將告訴你該做什麼。但植堂人必須積極主動，他需要招募整個團隊一起工作。在一個良好的教會中，很多時候預算已經到位，但在栽植一個新教會時，傳道人需要從不同的途徑來尋覓資源。在建立的教會中訓練門徒時，我們可以在有經驗的信徒中工作，而植堂人常要從禾場中培養領袖。

「每一個人都是不同的。他們有著不同的文化，世界觀，喜好和宗教背景。」

誰可以成為栽植教會的傳道人？誰可以擔負這艱鉅的任務？這些人必須如耶穌一樣地關心失喪的靈魂。這些人感受到主宣教的呼召。如果你感到神在呼召你作栽植教會的傳道人，我鼓勵您閱讀有關栽植教會的書籍和在線文章，並參加栽植教會的講習班。如果可能，拜訪栽植教會的傳道人，訪問他們，參加他們的崇拜，如果可以，參與他們的事工，以使你可以直接了解栽植教會的工作。

「...拜訪栽植教會的傳道人，訪問他們，參加他們的崇拜，如果可以，參與他們的事工...」

美南浸信會北美宣教部在宣教事工上服侍教會。我非常樂意來協助你參與宣教。如有什麼我可以效勞之處，請電郵 jsin@namb.net 與我聯繫。



洗志儉牧師現任美南浸信會聯會北美宣教部教會全國栽植教會宣教士。他畢業於香港浸會學院、香港浸信會神學院取得道學碩士學位、及於金門浸信會神學院得教牧學博士學位。洗牧師於北美宣教部事奉前曾於澳門、加州、及喬治亞州牧會，並積極參與區、州浸信會聯會及美加華人浸信會聯會事工。洗牧師熱心推動教會傳揚基督和栽植教會。