
Why Should West End Presbyterian Church Plant New Churches?

*The Strategic Necessity of Church Planting
in the Greater Richmond Area
and Around the World*

May 2015

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Introduction

We are convinced that the continual planting of new congregations is the single most essential strategy for growth of the number of followers of Jesus Christ in Richmond, Virginia and beyond.¹ Additionally, nothing is more crucial for the ongoing revival of existing congregations than starting new congregations. No other methodology, ministry, or evangelistic initiative can possibly have the dynamic, renewing impact of new congregations reaching people through a vigorous movement of church planting.

However, when most Christians are introduced to the concept of seeing a local church start multiple new congregations, several common reservations often surface:

“New churches? But isn’t there already a church on every corner in Richmond? There’s got to be plenty of room in existing churches for anyone who would want to attend one.”

“Isn’t the churchgoing public a dwindling segment of the population? Wouldn’t a new church just take people away from the older, established churches?”

“We’ve got some pretty good momentum at this church. Wouldn’t it be best for us to just keep on growing?”

“Planting new churches? Isn’t that risky? What if it fails? Wouldn’t that change us as a fellowship? I kind of like us the way we are....”

This brief paper seeks to address these concerns, and consider the reasons for West End Presbyterian Church to throw itself into seeing a dynamic movement of newly planted congregations dotting the map of metro Richmond and beyond. From its inception, we have envisioned our church to be a “mother” to a movement of planted daughter churches. Through neighborhood outreach and global missions, God has brought WEPC into meaningful relationship with people groups from all over the world. We have historically asked the question, “*How will our congregation, responding to the Truth of the Gospel, move out into Richmond, and the world, with the love of God in Jesus Christ?*” The ongoing discussion of the WEPC Church Planting Initiatives Team, working under the authority of the WEPC Session, has helped us in further development of a vision and strategy in church planting initiatives.

What Exactly Do We Mean by Church Planting?

We broadly define church planting as cultivating new communities of faith. Our goal is to plant Gospel-centered communities of faith where Christ is glorified and treasured (Martin Luther, *Thesis #62 of 95*). Whether these communities initially materialize as a more traditional start-up church, a prayer meeting for ESL individuals, or a Bible study for an immigrant people group, these communities represent places where believers’ union with Jesus—in his grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory as well as with each other (in gifts and graces)—are to be affirmed and enjoyed (*Westminster Confession of Faith*). Although not essential to us, we hope that the communities of faith will be places where the doctrines of the reformed faith are preached and treasured.

We pray that these communities will grow in wisdom, grace, and number, eventually becoming self-sustaining communities and recognized as particular churches. We also pray that they, too, will join a network of churches focused on seeing the Kingdom advanced, and the Good News preached, through the planting of new local churches.

¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, p.11.

We recognize that Scripture and practical wisdom call us to plant communities of faith that are culturally relevant and effective at meeting the particular needs of their participants. As such, we believe that the planting of such communities will often require that we step out boldly in faith, taking risks for the sake of the Gospel. Our daughter churches may very well not look like us in terms of:

- *Demographics* – These communities may not look like WEPC, socially, in terms of participants' income, age, education, language, or typical occupation.
- *Culture* – We seek to support or plant churches that are culturally relevant, meeting the unique cultural needs of the local community whatever they may be.
- *Location* – While we maintain a particular focus on the Richmond community, we seek to support or plant communities of faith around the world.
- *Denomination* – Although we aspire to see our church plants become particular churches within the PCA, we recognize the potential in partnering with other Gospel-believing churches across denominations.

How Does Church Planting Fit with WEPC's Vision and Mission?

A daughter church of Stony Point Presbyterian Church on the Southside of Richmond, WEPC began in October of 1993, meeting in the chorus room of Byrd Middle School. Since then, we have grown to a body of 800+ worshippers on Sunday mornings. With a strong identity as a church that exists to serve and proclaim the Gospel in the context of the community where God has planted us, WEPC has creatively sought ways to be faithful to the vision and mission that God has given us:

*"The Vision
of West End Presbyterian Church
is to be a community of faith
expressing itself through love."*

*"The Mission
of West End Presbyterian Church
is to make followers of Jesus
who bring the Gospel to bear
on every facet of life and culture."*

We have this vision and mission because of the Gospel. It is our deep, abiding conviction that our God has paid for our sins and given us new life by His grace alone. This has been accomplished, once and for all, through the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

And this Good News changes everything.

Everything.

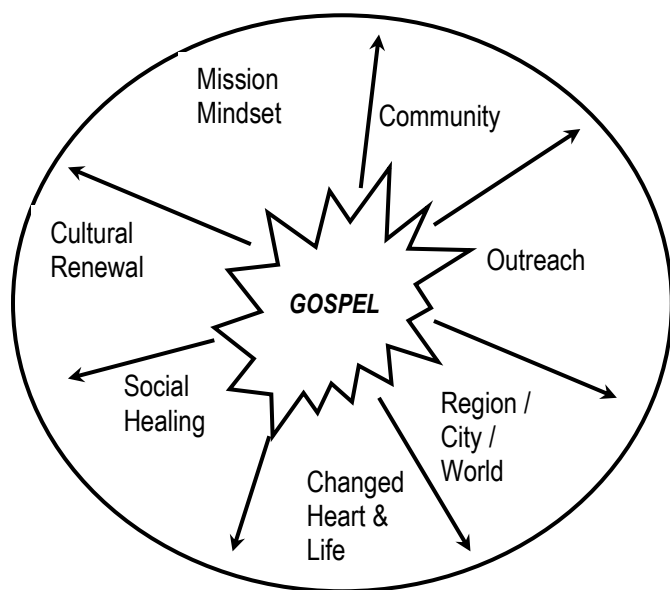
There is not one person, relationship, situation, people group, culture, or neighborhood that is so wrecked and sin-affected that it falls outside the redemptive mission of Jesus. No corner of this city, and no dark chamber of the human heart can escape the Holy Spirit's invasive and transforming work. The cosmic message and bold ministry of reconciliation that God has entrusted to his people erupts in and through the Church.

When what God had done for us in Jesus Christ is most precious to us, that brilliant vision propels us into the fields of this world that are white for the harvest. The congregation that is corporately amazed at her Heavenly Father's boundless grace is renewed and revived, and this inevitably prompts our moving out in unified mission—in the Name of Jesus Christ, and in the strength of His Spirit.

We believe that our God is a passionate Seeker. We know this because the Bible tells us that God's ministry is one of reconciliation (*II Corinthians 5:11-21*) and His heart is mercifully turned toward the lost (*Luke 15*). This is most profoundly demonstrated to us in the Incarnation of God's Son. As God becomes like us, we see Him live out His personal mission to "seek and to save what was lost" (*Luke 19:10*). As West End Presbyterian Church desires to actively express our faith through love so that many will trust Jesus Christ, we must first know that God loves us in Christ.

We believe that renewal in the life of the believer, and in the church, leads to mission. As the gospel becomes precious to believers, they become convicted that they have good news to share with those that they love. Therefore, outreach is always an expression of the love of God in Christ to sinners who, in turn, love others with the Gospel of Christ.

We believe that mission leads to renewal. In the spiritual dynamics of ministry, the ember of faith is often fanned into a hot flame in the midst of the risks taken by believers. We regularly see that while “stepping out in faith” is never the source of new life, it is the context. Desperate people are eager to believe, and straw hopes fail to supply what our Living Hope is for His church.



In light of the Gospel, the best way to act like “a community of faith expressing itself through love” is to engage in the church planting initiative as a Body. As we take risks following Jesus together, we will experience sweet fellowship in His purposes for the life of His people. WEPC must be committed to the large-scale renewal of Richmond, Virginia and beyond—spiritually, socially and culturally. We believe the most effective way of accomplishing our mission and changing our city is by building a movement of new churches in the greater Richmond area. Further, we believe the relationships God has cultivated through outreach and missions create opportunities to reach different people groups in Richmond and around the world.

Church Planting and World Missions

We seek to establish and nurture local and global communities of faith, hoping that one day they will become thriving, mature churches. In contrast to a more traditional model that focuses primarily on replicating a particular church model in a local geographic area, we view church planting as a global mission in which we partner with missionaries in other countries seeking to grow Christ’s church in their respective countries.

Why Should WEPC Pursue the Starting of New Churches?

We Pursue Church Planting because it is the Essential Nature of the Church

While the New Testament depicts a Church that is essentially missionary in nature, church history is dominated by a belief that the church is the *sender*, but not the *one sent*. Over the centuries, the task of outreach has been entrusted to the gifted few evangelists and missionaries who were sent out from the church to lead people into the church. The Church described in the Scripture doesn’t just *produce* missionaries and risk-taking proponents of the Gospel. It is—at the very core of its identity— a *community* redeemed and set apart for the purpose of bringing outsiders into this fellowship.

A renewed vision of our identity in Christ must include a sense that the Church is God’s messenger of the Gospel and Jesus’ agent for transformation in our fallen world. As we are made new by the power of the Good News, this will be a natural outpouring of what Jesus is doing in us.

This characteristic-- the Church’s existing for the sake of the world-- is most profoundly seen in **our being sent as Jesus was sent** by His Heavenly Father:

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus

said, 'Peace be with you! **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**' (John 20:19-21)

Here the disciples see our risen Lord Jesus present the wounds in His body that accomplished peace with God for us. We hear the radical charge of Jesus as He sends His followers into the world, as He has been sent by His Father in Heaven, to lay down our lives for others. And all that they would know that Jesus Christ has secured sinful humanity's reconciliation with the Almighty God for us.

Because of this powerful commission, the ancient creeds of the Church recognized that "We believe in one holy catholic and **apostolic** church" (*The Nicene Creed, 325 AD*). That the whole Church is *catholic* carries the meaning that the Church God has established is universal in nature. The Church is also *apostolic* in the sense that we are sent into all the earth after the pattern of Jesus' apostles. We read throughout the New Testament that the apostles were identified by God as the "sent ones". The apostolic church is the church, as a *whole*, sent into the world.

We Pursue Church Planting as a Part of God's Kingdom

Churches are microcosms of the Kingdom of God. The Church is called to be a sign, a glorious foretaste and a shouting herald of God's Kingdom-- the establishment of God's reign over all the earth. The church is not the Kingdom itself, but it is an agent of the Kingdom. As the Church lives out the Gospel in all areas of life it points at every turn to God's Kingdom-- the just, joyful, peaceable order that is present now as a result of Jesus' initial coming and that one day will be fully realized when He comes again. Knowing that God calls His people to be the sign, foretaste and herald of the Kingdom, we must regularly be asking ourselves as a congregation:

- "How are we living out the Gospel of the Kingdom?"
- "How are we called to manifest the reign of God in our midst?"

- "As the proper expression of the Gospel, are we regularly addressing our world's struggle and pain, and taking risks to bring healing to it?"

Because the Church is the primary agent of God's Kingdom, planting churches that are Gospel-driven and Kingdom-centered is a high priority. By proliferating such churches, we can be used profoundly by Jesus as He mends our broken world. We testify to our hope of Jesus' return when He will set all things right.

Each church, of course, will flesh out its commitment to the Gospel in different ways, depending on its context. They will develop different priorities and expertise. By living out the Gospel in their unique communities they will bring about Kingdom healing and point people to the One True King. All church plants are actually church based "community development efforts" seeking the welfare and prosperity of the community with the unique healing power of the Kingdom of God.

We Pursue Church Planting because of the Biblical Mandate

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)

These famous final words of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew's gospel have been the battle cry of evangelists for ages. But in the last 150 years, they have been popularly applied to the *individual* Christian's efforts to introduce others to Jesus. The corporate nature of these words is often overlooked. Most current evangelism strategies aim at getting an individual to "make a decision" for Jesus Christ. But these "decisions" often do not result in a changed life. While such a critical moment may be the occasion of someone's new birth as a Christian, it is often only one step in a person's story in seeking a spiritual connection with God. We cannot underestimate the significance of a worshiping community that models,

explains, loves and lives the Gospel life on an ongoing basis. This kind of inclusion in a fellowship of followers of Jesus provides a unique context for leading people into vital, saving faith. Careful study of the Scripture reveals that Christians are rarely commanded to “go out and do evangelism”, as if it were an occasional task or project. Rather, they are to live like a new community of redeemed sinners with an unmistakable new identity.

The Matthew 28 passage above, widely known as Jesus’ Great Commission, was not simply a call to “teach” and “make disciples” but also to “baptize”. Baptism in the New Testament meant incorporation into the worshipping community where there would be teaching, administration of the sacraments, and discipline (*Acts 2:41-47*). Also, Paul’s missionary strategy was to plant local churches and “...appoint elders in every town...” (*Titus 1:5*). The new converts to Christianity were organized and given direction for faith and worship in the living context of a local church.

We Pursue Church Planting Because of Practical Wisdom

New local churches best reach the unchurched.

As a congregation ages, powerful internal institutional pressures can lead it to allocate most of its resources and energy toward the concerns of its members and constituents, rather than towards those outside its walls. Every aging congregation is in constant danger of shifting its passions from reaching the community where it has been planted, to maintaining the momentum, accumulated wealth and property, and programs started by early entrepreneurs. However, the typical new fellowship is *desperate*, and is forced to focus on outsiders—the greater community. New churches have a sense of urgency about their growth, and have nothing to maintain—only a direction to go.

That is why dozens of denominational studies² confirm that the average new church congregation in the United States gains most of its members (60-80%) from outside any worshipping community, while churches over 10-15 years of age gain most of their

members (80-90%) from people moving from other congregations.³ New churches are 6-8 times more effective in drawing new people into the Body of Christ. If history continues to repeat itself, many churches in America that are a decade old have already introduced more people to Jesus Christ in their first 10 years of existence than they will in the full number of their remaining years.

While some in the Body of Christ will have a vision for renewing older churches, this initiative will likely be accomplished in part by a greater influx of new believers in a given area. Young congregations are less stable, and are therefore driven to be sensitive to visitors. Many who will enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ through a church plant will go on to be a blessing in more established congregations over the years. We have seen it happen countless times here at West End Presbyterian Church.

Still, the fact remains that the only far reaching way to bring large numbers of Christians into Richmond’s churches in a permanent way is to plant a movement of new congregations. And these new believers often have networks of non-Christian friends that long-time Christians do not, which opens up a multitude of avenues and relationships that were previously closed to the churches in this city.

New churches are the best means of reaching Richmond, Virginia...

New Residents. Transplanted people are disproportionately found in new congregations because newcomers do not need “tenure” before their voices are heard, or before they can exercise leadership and influence in the congregation. Church plants open up fresh pathways to leadership and spiritual growth for both new and old congregations

New Generations. Younger people are found in large numbers in new churches, because there is greater openness to new ministry approaches and leaders that need to “learn as they go”. Ministry is not done by experts and veterans in a church plant.

² i.e. C. Kirk Hadaway, *New Churches and Church Growth in the Southern Baptist Convention*.

³ D. MacGavran and G. Hunter, *Church Growth: Strategies that Work*, p. 100.

New People Groups. Immigrants and unreached indigenous groups often find a place in new congregations because of a contextualized approach to evangelism, worship, and discipleship (sensitivity in language, culture, and style).

- **At least 1,094,853 people live in Richmond and surrounding counties.**⁴
- Less than 1/3 (<365,000) report that they have attended a church service recently.⁵
- **More than 1/3 (>365,000) report that they have absolutely no faith involvement and preference for historic Christian religious affiliations.**⁶

Even if we assumed that only the people with absolutely no faith involvement needed to be reached with the message of the Gospel and welcomed into a body of believers, it would take more than 900 newly planted churches to reach them all (assuming large congregations of 400 men, women, and children). If any of the remaining 365,000 who report a Christian religious affiliation actually had no local church or saving relationship with Jesus Christ, there would need to be congregations accessible for them, as well.

Statistics are difficult to deal with-- however, even this basic analysis demonstrates that if all of the churches in Richmond planted 250 churches in the immediate future there would *not* be too many new congregations. In fact, due to a growing population, congregational attrition due to churches in decline and death, new spiritual seekers under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and a host of other factors, many more churches are likely to be needed. Is it too excessive to envision a new local church plant in every neighborhood?

⁴ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov

⁵ Source: Percept Group, Inc., www.perceptgroup.com

⁶ Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, and Percept Group, Inc.

Historic Reasons for Church Planting

In the first 300 years of America, the number of Protestant churches grew at a much faster rate than the population.

- 1820 - 1 church for every 875 residents
- 1860 - 1 church for every 600 residents (pop. increased 300%, number of churches 500%)
- 1906 - 1 church for every 430 residents (pop. increased 275%, number of churches 400%)

Summary: 1 new church planted for every 300 new residents in the 19th century.

During the same time period, there was a rise in the number of people who identified themselves with Christianity and the church:

- 1776 – 17% of the U.S. population who identified themselves as “religious adherents”.
- 1916 – 53% of the U.S. population who identified themselves as “religious adherents”.⁷

By 1906, over a third of the congregations of this country were less than 25 years old⁸, and the percentage of the American population that was involved in local churches steadily increased. For example, in 1860, 37% of Americans were church members, but by 1926, 58% were members. Since 1906, and particularly after WWI, new church planting slowed drastically, for a complex variety of reasons. Since 1906 the population has grown roughly 300%, but the number of Protestant churches has grown no more than 35%. This would mean that no more than one new church was planted for every 1,000 new residents now. As a result, mainline Protestant churches have had huge declines in membership since the 1960's, and Catholic church attendance has also fallen. *If we want to renew our country spiritually, we will have to plant thousands and thousands of new churches annually.* In light of this research, it is clear why America has become decreasingly influenced by a Christian world and life view. *It takes new churches to reach new generations, and new ethnic groups—but there are*

⁷ Roger Finke and Rodney Starke, *The Churching of America: 1776-1990*, p. 16.

⁸ Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, p. 14-26.

far, far fewer churches being planted. Established churches are like "full sponges" that are simply unable to assimilate many new people. As a result, the major denominations have shrunk drastically in the last 30 years, and overall church attendance in the United States is in rapid decline. *These trends cannot be reversed in any other way than in the way that it had originally been increasing. We must plant churches at such a rate that the number of churches per capita begins to grow again,* rather than diminish, as it has in the U. S. since World War I.

Refining our Reasons for Church Planting

It is tempting to initiate the starting of new churches for reasons that primarily serve the fellowship at WEPC. However, if our sights are set on any vision smaller than the expansion of Kingdom of God under the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be critically disabled in this initiative.

We cannot be primarily motivated by "limiting our growth" for our current members. A dynamic church involved in church planting initiatives is likely to attract many more people than we can send. We cannot be motivated primarily by "geographical convenience" for our current members. Yet we may view a number of households in a particular area of the city as an opportunity to reach that area of Richmond with the Gospel. We can only undertake the planting of new churches to proclaim the Good News and see the power of the Gospel change Richmond.

The Ultimate Goal in Mind: A Kingdom Movement

Our goal needs to be to become an organic network of churches, not a single superchurch, not a church that "lets off a little steam" with a plant. Mega-churches come and go, but a partnership of 20 Christ-centered churches saturating Richmond will have a deep and diverse impact on our city for decades upon decades. This network can be interrelated with other natural and denominational networks. Only a dynamic, interdependent family of churches would have the variety to reach into every

neighborhood, culture, people, language, and economic class of Richmond and the surrounding counties. We often feel false obligation to encompass them all. But a many-faceted network of congregations and partner ministries is the only way to ultimately have more resources than a mega-church, while utilizing the spiritual gifts of the saints to reach into specific people groups.

This is a radical vision. It means that, for some to be faithful to the vision and mission of West End Presbyterian Church, they will have to leave WEPC to be a part of one of her planted churches! Here we see Jesus' principle of the Kingdom in practice: We grow rich by giving away, and we gain our lives by laying them down for Christ's sake (*Mark 8:31-38*). WEPC can have the opportunity to bless and renew our city by giving away money, leaders, ministers, and members to new churches.

America is a post-Christianized society. Even in the American South, the predominant view of life is secular. Therefore, churches have to recover the initial mission and purpose of the church: to be an advance guard for the Kingdom of Jesus. Missionaries in new territories recognize this instinctively: reaching people with the Gospel, adapting their approach to the surrounding language and culture, raising up leaders from within through training and experience.

Our church must remember its missional status. New church planting is the only way believers in Richmond can see the number of followers of Jesus Christ increase while seeing existing congregations renewed. The Biblical, sociological, and historical reasons compel West End Presbyterian Church to give ourselves to the initiative of planting of new churches.

This Paper has been prepared by the Church Planting Initiatives Team of WEPC. We welcome your interaction:

*Roger Johnson, Chairman
Jerry Gill
Kevin Greene
John Hoade
Bob Littlepage
Mike McClure*

What is the Purpose of the Church Planting Initiative Team?

The team will investigate possible models, target areas, and develop an overall strategy for WEPC's role in seeing new congregations started in the Greater Richmond area; and, in certain circumstances, beyond Richmond in areas where WEPC has partnered with global church planting missionaries.

The team will lead the congregation in Kingdom-centered prayer and education regarding church planting.

The team will pursue viable church planter candidates & identify potential core groups.

The team will remember the scope of our task: Our goal is not just the planting of a couple of individual churches. We have a greater desire to reach the unchurched on the way to the large-scale renewal of Metro Richmond through a Kingdom-movement of new and renewed local congregations.

Ongoing Prayer Requests of the Church Planting Initiatives Team

Pray for a **missionary heart for unbelievers** in Metro Richmond.

Pray for **new and creative bridges to be built** from existing churches to the communities in which we live, work, and play. Pray that these bridges serve to fuel a "Kingdom Movement".

Pray for the **development of true fellowship in Christ's mission with newly planted churches**. Seeing 15 churches cooperatively planted in the next 10 years would be a small goal for a healthy network of new congregations.

Pray for an ever **increasing partnership with the existing Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) churches** in Metro Richmond area. Through our denomination and neighborhood partnerships, our local network includes:

- Covenant Presbyterian Church
Midlothian, www.covenant-pca.net
- Knox Reformed Presbyterian Church
Mechanicsville, www.knoxreformedpres.org
- Stony Point Reformed Presbyterian Church
(1969) Bon Air, www.stonypointweb.com
- Sycamore Presbyterian Church (1980)
Midlothian, www.sycamorepres.com
- All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church (1984)
Fan District, www.allsaintspres.org
- West End Presbyterian Church (1993)
Western Henrico County, www.wepc.org
- Grace Community Presbyterian Church (2005)
Hanover County, www.gcpres.org
- Spring Run Presbyterian Church (2006)
Chesterfield County, www.springrunpc.org
- City Church of Richmond (2007)
Richmond City, www.citychurchrva.com
- Sudan Christian Fellowship (2008)
Meeting at WEPC
- Evergreen Community Church (2009)
Powhatan County, www.evergreenpowhatan.com
- Iglesia Hispana (2010)
Meeting at WEPC
- Ray of Hope Nepalese Fellowship (2011)
Meeting at WEPC
- Northside Church of Richmond (2011)
Northside, www.northsidechurchrva.org
- Crown & Joy Presbyterian Church (2014)
Southside Richmond City, www.crownandjoy.com

Pray for God to raise up **workers for His harvest**.
This means both:

- **Church Planters.** Pray that God would lead us to the right leaders for this movement.
- **Core Groups.** Pray that God would stir residents of target communities to zealously desire a church for unbelievers in their immediate community.

Pray for an ever **increasing partnership with strategic church plants** in other US cities and countries overseas. Through WEPC's missions partnerships, our international network includes:

- Granada Church Plant (Granada, Spain)
- New Life Masih Ghar (Harrow, London)
www.nlmg.org
- New Life Suwarta Sangat (Southall, London)
www.nlss.org.uk
- Faith Community Church (Prague, Czech Republic)
www.faithcommunity.cz
- Christ Church of Wiesbaden (Wiesbaden, Germany)
www.christchurchwiesbaden.com
- Ephiphany Fellowship (Camden, NJ)
www.epiphanycamden.org
- Covenant Fellowship Church (Stuttgart, Germany)
www.cfcstuttgart.org
- Diocese of Mundri & Archbishop Ngalamu Theological College (Mundri, South Sudan)
www.mundri.anglican.org
- By Grace Community Church (Newport News, VA)
www.bygrace.cc

- Irish Bible Institute (Dublin, Ireland)
www.ibi.ie
- Projekt: Kirche (Berlin, Germany)
www.projektkirche.com
- La Iglesia Presbiteriana de Perales (Perales, Lima, Peru)
- Hispanic Leadership Development Initiative of the James River Presbytery; Frank Matthews

We are indebted to the following church planters and sources in the formulation of this vision for reaching Richmond, Virginia with the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

*Charlie Drew
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*Drew Field
Grace Presbyterian Church, Los Altos, CA*

*Bob Heppie
World Harvest Mission, London*

*Tim Keller
Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Manhattan*

*Fred Harrell
City Church, San Francisco*

*Jeff White,
Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Manhattan*

Blue Ridge Presbytery, Virginia

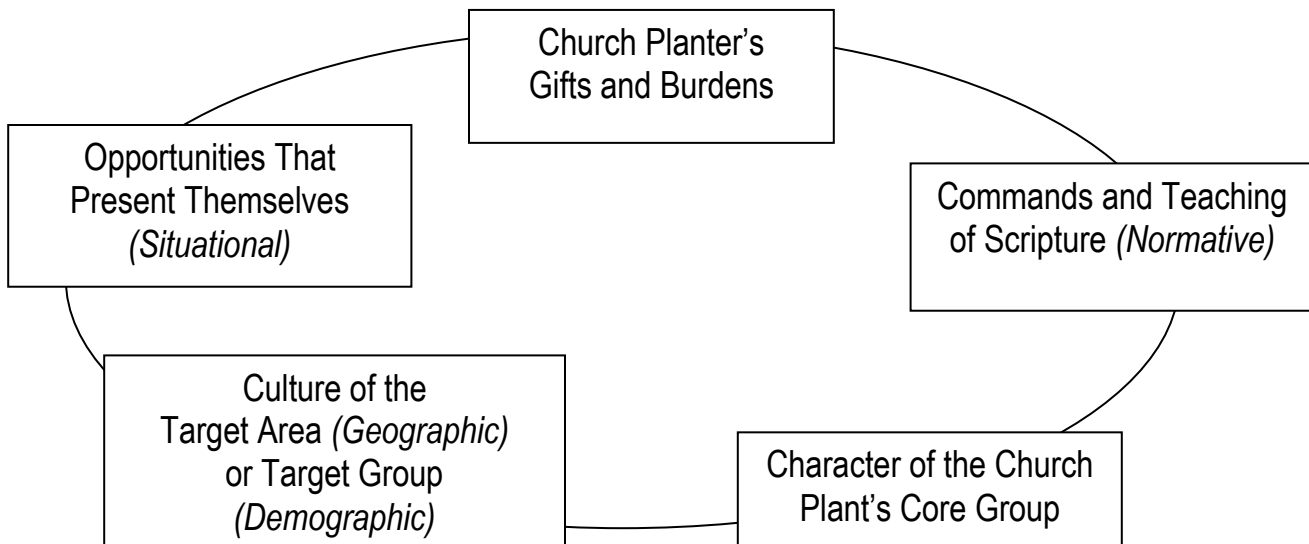
Appendix A

“What first steps would need to be taken on the way to planting a daughter church?”

The Church Planting Initiative team will continue to investigate possible models and target areas, and develop overall strategy. The team will continue to lead the congregation in prayer and education. Currently, the team pursues viable church planter candidates. Now is the time for WEPC to pray for God’s provision, leading, and wisdom as we pursue this initiative.

The planting of churches depends on the Holy Spirit’s leading us through the process as five key factors come into play. Each factor must be considered as the plan for a church plant is developed. For example, the particular gifts and passions of a church planter called by WEPC will greatly influence the target area and vision of the new church plant. Also, a high number of families active in the life of WEPC from a particular geographic area demands greater consideration as one of our initial daughter congregations. The five factors are:

- Need for New Churches to Reach Metro Richmond
- Member Families/Potential Core Group Members
- Church Planter Vision and Gifts
- Potential for Affinity in Richmond Area Church Planting Movement
- The Opportunities and Resources God Presents to WEPC



Appendix B

Metro Richmond Population and Growth Statistics

Source: US Census Bureau

www.census.gov

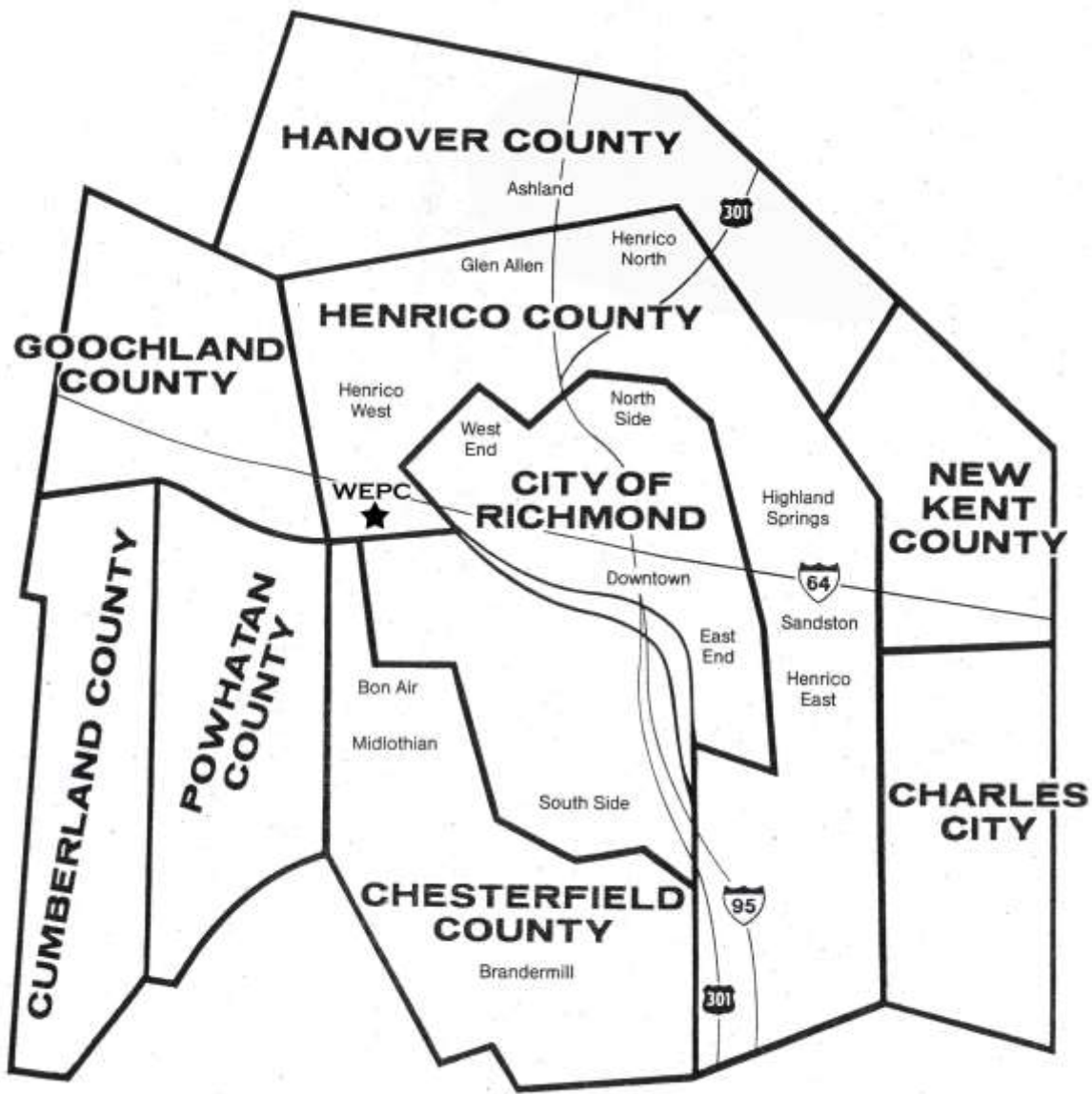
	Population (2013)	Three Year Growth
Chesterfield County	327,745	3.6%
Henrico County	318,611	3.8%
Richmond City	214,114	4.8%
Hanover County	101,330	1.5%
Goochland County	21,626	-.04%
Powhatan County	28,259	.08%
New Kent County	19,507	5.8%
Amelia County	12,745	.04%
Cumberland County	9,841	-2.1%
Charles City County	7,130	-1.7%
Louisa County	33,945	2.4%
Total Metro Richmond Population	1,094,853	

Appendix C

West End Presbyterian Church: Church Plant Target Areas

These initial target areas, or any others that God may present, are and will be given priority as we consider:

- Need for New Churches to Reach Metro Richmond
- Member Families / Potential Core Group Members
- Church Planter Vision and Gifts
- Potential for Affinity in Richmond Area Church Planting Movement
- The Opportunities and Resources God Presents to WEPC



Appendix D

Metro Richmond Church Planting Network Vision, Values, and Strategy

Revised September 2014

I. OUR VISION

"To multiply indigenous, healthy, Kingdom-minded churches through which the Gospel will transform Richmond (and the world) socially, spiritually, and culturally"

We believe that the partnership of a growing number of Christ-centered churches saturating Richmond will have a deep and diverse impact on our city for decades to come. Only a dynamic, interdependent family of churches has the ability to reach into every neighborhood, culture, people, language, and economic class of Richmond and the surrounding counties. Only a many-faceted network of congregations and partner ministries will provide the necessary resources, and utilize the spiritual gifts of the saints, as we follow Jesus in His great task.

Our vision is to multiply indigenous, healthy, Kingdom-minded churches, so that the Gospel transforms our society socially, spiritually, and culturally. We are working and praying for a church planting movement in which churches reproduce themselves, and display bold confidence in the Gospel through word and deed ministries in their communities. Knowing the Church will accomplish more together than any one church can do on its own, we cooperate as a network and will make alliances with other networks or parts of the body of Christ as appropriate.

II. OUR VALUES

- **Kingdom Minded**

The Kingdom includes people from every tribe, tongue and nation. Therefore we must cross ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and generational lines, and we will work toward loving unity, even as we celebrate our diversity in styles and emphases. Since God's Kingdom is bigger than any one church or group of churches, we will cultivate communication with other Kingdom-minded churches in our region and partner when the opportunity is right.

- **Gospel Centered**

We are "not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16). Our network is centered on the Gospel and will grow primarily through relentless, effective evangelism and discipleship which results in the regular conversion and transformation of individuals and families and sparks the planting of new churches.

- **Theologically Sound, Culturally Engaged**

Because our theology is integrated with all spheres of life, it drives our missional focus. We neither fear culture, nor embrace it, but engage it with the Gospel, and effectively create a new culture. This means each church will have to be intentional and thoughtful in its approach to sharing the message of the Gospel in the context of its culture. In any context, the church must be faithful to love its neighbors through deeds of mercy and justice as well as words of truth and love.

- **Prayerfully Confident**

Nothing of significance happens in the Kingdom of God without prayer. Like the early church (Acts 2:42) we must be devoted to Kingdom-centered prayer (as opposed to survival or self-centered prayer). Jesus told us to "ask for workers for the harvest", and for His "Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven" so we pray with confidence asking Him to deliver on His promises.

- **Leader Focused**

We are committed to care for and give ongoing training to our church planters and their families. It will not be enough to simply recruit church planters from outside our network. For a sustained church planting movement we must raise up leaders from the harvest for the harvest. This means our churches must work to train up new leaders at every level of ministry and send them to lead others both inside and outside our churches.

III. OUR STRATEGY

- **Planting Churches Cooperatively**

Among all cultures and people groups with the city itself as a missional priority. Network energy will be given to staffing, funding coordination, strategic planning and oversight.

- **Leadership Development**

Assessing, training and recruiting men and women for effective Gospel ministry utilizing a practical and reproducible mentor-based model that focuses on calling, character, ministry competency, and practical understanding of biblical and theological content. We also commit to pursue a diversity of Church leadership in an effort to reach into all of Richmond.

- **Cultivate Alliances**

We will develop relationships with other churches, networks, or ministries in order to produce systemic changes and bring about spiritual awakening in the culture of the metro area and neighboring cities and counties.

- **The Ministry of Justice expressed through Mercy**

Word and deed delivered close at hand and to communities in need.

- **Kingdom Centered Prayer**

The ongoing prayer requests of this network include:

Pray for a **missional heart for unbelievers** in Metro Richmond.

Pray for God to raise up **workers for His harvest**. This means both:

Church Planters. Pray that God would lead us to the right leaders for this movement.

Core Groups. Pray that God would stir residents of target communities to zealously desire a church for unbelievers in their immediate community.

Pray for **new and creative bridges to be built** from existing churches to the communities in which we live, work, and play. Pray that these bridges serve to fuel a “Kingdom Movement.”

Pray for the **partnership in Christ’s mission with newly planted churches**. Seeing 15 churches cooperatively planted in the next 10 years would be a good goal for a healthy network of new congregations.

Pray for the **partnership with the existing Presbyterian Church in America churches** in Metro Richmond area and strategic **partnerships to be forged with other evangelical churches**.

Metro Richmond Church Planting Network

Selecting Targets

OUR PRIORITIES

Where & When are We Planning to Plant Churches?

Our vision and prayer is to cooperatively plant 15 new churches in the Richmond Metro Region during the next 10 years (2014-2024). One of the first steps in moving towards this vision is figuring out where and when God specifically desires for us to labor in church planting. Below are listed several criteria that should be prayerful considered as we decide on church planting locations.

CHURCH LOCATION CRITERIA

Leading and Direction of the Holy Spirit

This is the most significant of the selection process. We will pray, listen and have the Spirit give us His leading—i.e. “it seemed right” and was later confirmed by our church body. We recognize that God may present situations to church plant that might not fit any of the below criteria.

Outreach Oriented Core Group

We must consider churches that are bridging directly to community needs and serving that community. While areas will rise to our attention from the traditional reason to plant a church “people come from that area to our church,” we want to see people already living out the gospel in an area before we plant a church.

Ministry Style

In areas where only a traditional or liturgical style of ministry/worship/preaching etc. is available, a church plant with a more contemporary ministry style could fit in the target area alongside the traditional and vice versa. This would also include ‘niche’ type churches.

Ethnicity

We are dealing now in Richmond with changes in demographics of ethnicity. We cannot assume that different ethnic groups will attend Anglo dominated churches. Therefore we must be partnering to plant ethnic based churches and multi-ethnic churches. While some of these churches might become denominational members of those represented in the network that is not our primary goal. We are thrilled to support the work of Christ across denominational lines. This network will do all it can to support church planting in Richmond wherever network values are shared.

Percent of Unchurched in Target Area

In some areas, the percent of unchurched is higher than the national average and therefore the need for a church plant (or even more than one) is needed.

Distance to Network Partnering Churches

(as well as other gospel centered churches outside of the network)

Linear miles are important factors to consider. However they are not to be considered alone. E.g. natural or man-made barriers such as lakes, rivers, or major highways and interstates are barriers to church impact and growth. Difficult traffic flow patterns make it more difficult for the “non-regional” based church to overcome.

Partnerships with Parenting Churches

We will work with network churches, which desire to daughter congregations, seeing their desire as “our plans.”

Projected Growth in Area.

We pay attention to high growth communities because new communities are more open to attending new churches than more established communities.

Strategic “Centers of Influence”

Places where the Gospel having influence makes sense, (e.g. colleges and universities, areas that are being revitalized, as well as major ‘hubs’ for new communities).

Population Density

We pay attention to where population is most dense. We will favor locations based on the amount of population correlated with gospel centered church witness. So, one area of city might necessitate more concentration of network church plants than other areas because so many people live there and it is underserved. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) generally works from a ratio of 1 PCA congregation per 50-60,000 people. While this is a helpful number to use, since we desire to a multi-denominational network, we will have to rethink that ratio in terms of holistic gospel witness needed for an area.

Church Planter Vision and Gifts

As God brings the right person along to plant a church, we will value his input in deciding on church planting locations. Working cooperatively with the passion and vision of church planters, we will treat each planting pastor and opportunity as unique. This criterion reminds us that it is God who brings the right people at the right time for the right location.

Commands of Scripture

While they are certain types of churches this network can plant more easily (e.g. middle class suburban churches currently), we recognize that this region needs more churches across, racial, culture, socio-economic, location and generational lines. Therefore, we will not just prioritize the “easier” church plant but will consider the region as a whole in deciding upon locations. As our network grows in diversity, we expect our ability to plant holistically to increase as well.

We have preliminarily identified the following potential ministry focus areas and groups in our region based on the above criteria. These areas and groups are worth our prayerful consideration over these criteria as we decide on what opportunities God is opening up before us.