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**A resource for evangelism & congregational development**

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### **Growing as Disciples of Christ: One Priest's Experience of Anglican Church Planting** by Silas Ng

The Church of Emmanuel started with its first worship service on September 8, 1996. Three and a half years later, on January 1, 2000, we became a parish. What started from nearly zero now has an average Sunday attendance of 180 and approximately 350 parishioners. There are now four choirs, five Bible study groups, four discipleship groups, five Sunday school classes, four fellowships and seven house groups.

#### *A bishop's vision*

During these past four years, we have experienced deeply the truth of Jesus' words, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) As we have done so, we have begun to understand why the early church had such zeal and power. For the past four years, the Church of Emmanuel has tried its best to do only one thing: "listen and obey".

The vision was initially that of Bishop Michael Ingham, who saw the need for a new Mission in Richmond, and requested clergy from the five area parishes to discuss the possibilities, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Jim Draper, then the Ministry and Congregational Development Officer for the diocese. Planning took place over a period of fifteen months. On October 11, 1995, Bishop Michael accepted the recommendation that the new Mission be a Chinese-speaking one.

The primary purpose of this Chinese Mission was to provide pastoral care and community life in the form of Sunday worship and other related church activities to Anglicans of Chinese origin in Richmond. (There were at least five large Chinese Evangelical churches in the area, but none in a liturgical tradition.) At the same time, however, it was our vision and hope that Chinese non-believers would come to faith in Christ through our ministry.

#### *A volunteer core group*

Our first service was held on September 8, 1996. The first members were parishioners from the Good Shepherd (60) and St. Luke's (12) who had filled out a response form indicating their willingness to be part of the new venture. The present membership still includes some from the original sponsoring congregations, but over 60 are Anglicans who have immigrated to Canada, mainly from Hong Kong. About 75 are new Christians who have come to faith through the Mission, and currently more than 50 are people of all ages who are exploring Christian faith at Emmanuel.

At first, a Board consisting of myself and representatives from the "parent" parishes, plus Jim Draper (later Eric Law) from the diocese, did the work of a Parish Council. The day-to-day operations of the

Mission were run by an Administrative Committee consisting of three members of the Mission's core group and myself. This structure continued until January 2000, when the first Vestry took place, and the first Parish Council was elected.

Financial support to start the Mission came from the Anglican Initiatives Fund of the Diocese. About \$330,000 CN was budgeted for the first five years of the Mission's life, \$80,000 a year at first and then decreasing annually. However, the Mission was able to become self-supporting after only three and a half years.

Since the beginning in July 1996, the Mission has been using the facilities of the Parish of St. Alban's. They let us use all the rooms on a "first come, first served" basis. They also rent to us the ground floor of the former Rectory as our Office. Our service is at noon, theirs are at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Currently, I am the full-time rector, and there are three part-time staff, the Church Secretary, the Music Minister and the Program Worker. Laity are strongly involved in the ministry of Emmanuel, however. About 120 parishioners serve as follow-up leaders, group leaders, lay administrators, servers, readers and in many other roles. It is the planning efforts of lay people, for example, which have led to the success of our last four weekend "Gospel Camps." ( Attendance has doubled to 200 since the camp began in 1997.)

#### *Varied outreach programs*

The church operates many varied outreach programs ranging from the Emmanuel Children's Chorus to the lawn bowling group, from a Cantonese opera class to the children's cartoon drawing class. Each year we offer "good tips fortnight" with a series of talks and workshops covering a variety of topics of interest to the community, such as Christmas Gift Wrapping Techniques, a Make-up Beauty Workshop, Car Maintenance, First-Aid, and Parenting (in conjunction with the Vancouver Health Department). It is not unusual to have 120 at such events. All of these programs are run and maintained not by the clergy but by gifted parishioners who try daily to listen for and to obey the Lord's call.

We try to offer a range of worship styles. Once a month, the Schola Cantorum Emmanuel, an a capella choir singing mostly 16th century music, serves as the choir for a mid-week Taize service. The first and third Sundays of the month are "Praise Morning Prayer," led by a ten-member worship team using all kinds of popular instruments. The second, fourth and fifth Sundays, on the other hand, are Eucharist, celebrated with high liturgy. On major feast days we also use incense.

Every November, All the music groups get together to take part in our annual concert. Last year, around 1000 people came from all over Greater Vancouver.

As well as our outreach programs and music ministries, there are many programs to help parishioners to grow in discipleship, to pray and to understand the Bible. There is the "Prayer Partner's Covenant" and a twenty-four hour prayer chain two to three times every year before important events. Parishioners are also introduced to a method for helping them with daily devotions and prayer. In the last year, we have been promoting an "Eat the Scroll Campaign" (based on the words of God to Ezekiel), to encourage our parishioners to read the whole Bible.

"Operation Jericho" happens whenever we launch an evangelistic meeting. For a week beforehand we have a 7 a.m. Eucharist, followed by a silent 30-minute walk through the neighbourhood. Then, on the seventh day, we walk seven times round the venue of the meeting. This past July, we ran Operation Jericho before and during "Gospel Camp 2000." We had a remarkable response to the teaching of the Gospel from those who had never heard it before. In the words of many who went, the experience of the Holy Spirit at this event was like a powerful earthquake!

### *Baptising new Christians*

Baptismal/Confirmation classes take place in 22 sessions once a year, though in October of this year that will be increased to twice a year. In the past three and a half years, 38 adults and 26 children were baptized and 53 parishioners confirmed. Probably 95% of these are people who are new to Christian faith.

For new Christians, we have more than 25 follow-up leaders doing a 13 week follow-up program on a one-to-one basis. All our groups are designed in a simple way to help make every member understand the Word of the Lord and to become disciples of Jesus Christ. This is to fulfil our Mission Statement:

The Church of Emmanuel is a “Disciple Church” to prepare parishioners as disciples of Jesus Christ. Through fellowship, discipleship, ministry, mission, and worship, we magnify our Lord and experience Emmanuel.

In a sense, this is perhaps the only purpose for which we are striving. Although difficult it is very rewarding!

### *A simpler way*

This is my 14th year since my ordination. Looking back, I believe I spent too much of the first nine years working on such things as marketing strategies, which in our context just became complicated and lifeless. For the past four years the Lord has taught me a simpler way: to pray and understand Scripture, to listen and obey.

If you ask me what would I do differently if I were starting now, I would say I would try to keep everything more simple and more focused. I would want to spend more time teaching parishioners to pray, to listen to God, and to obey more--so that we can really become disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Since January 2000, the Rev. Silas Ng has been the Rector of the Church of Emmanuel, Richmond BC.*

### **A Beacon of Hope: A Diocesan Perspective** by Helen Patterson

When the Emmanuel Children's Chorus sang at our recent Diocesan Synod, we caught a glimpse of what a diocese is, and we were reminded of one of the greatest strengths of our Anglican way of being church. We are not alone: we are a collective. We are not simply individual congregations; we are part of a larger community of faith, and we work together to share the joy and hope of the Gospel.

The Emmanuel church plant underscores for me that great gift which the Anglican Communion offers the church. In a way, it returns us to our Hebraic roots, where it is community which is emphasized, for the diocese is an expression of the corporate nature of the Body of Christ. The very direct way our diocese was involved in this venture illustrated this so well. From the way that neighbouring parishes were part of the initial governance group to the diocesan staff and volunteers who encouraged and assisted, from the financial support to the bishop's own personal commitment, this was evident.

What does this mean for the diocese? We showed ourselves that it could be done! The Church of Emmanuel is a beacon of hope. At a time when so many in the church are despairing, it is a sign of new life and of a new future. The idea for this new community came from the Diocesan level, specifically, from our Bishop Michael Ingham. For this idea to come to fruition, it was clear that it would require financial as well as prayer, moral and staff support. At this point, I would like to particularly acknowledge the leadership of The Rev Jim Draper and The Rev Eric Law, previous Ministry and Congregational Development Officers, who contributed so greatly to the success of this project. In other words, it's fine

to have a vision, but be prepared to contribute to its coming to life. We are fortunate that several years ago, the Anglican Initiatives Fund was established. This endowment fund's purpose is to foster new ministry initiatives. The Church of Emmanuel, with its specific and targeted ministry to the Chinese speaking population of Richmond qualified for and received financial support. One important aspect of this support is that it was given on a decreasing basis: in other words the new parish was expected to become self-supporting, accountable and responsible for their own stewardship.

*The Rev Helen Patterson is Ministry and Congregational Development Officer (interim) for the Diocese of New Westminster.*

### **Church Planting and Evangelism** by John Bowen

What has church planting to do with evangelism? In the Episcopal Church in the USA, statistics suggest the 80% of new Christians in the denomination are in church plants, compared with only 20% in established congregations—all the more remarkable since there are far more established churches in the USA than there are church plants!

#### *A new church every two weeks*

This kind of information has piqued my interest in church planting over the past year or two. The Episcopal Church of the USA is planting new churches in many dioceses; the Church of England has been planting an average of one congregation every two weeks for some years; and in Canada many of the evangelical denominations, including the Free Methodists and the Salvation Army, have been working at planting new congregations. But mainline denominations in Canada, with a few notable exceptions, have not followed this path of potential growth.

What are the advantages of church planting, and how does it contribute to evangelism? Often the problem for an older church which wants to grow is its "DNA"—those habits of mind and action which have formed over the decades, habits which may have been appropriate for a Christendom kind of culture but which are often unhelpful in the contemporary world. With a brand-new church, however, there is a chance for the founders to set the DNA, to establish habits of mind and heart which can bring vitality to contemporary congregational life.

Part of that new DNA is the way a church chooses to relate to the community around. And, for whatever reason, it seems to be easier for an unchurched person to start attending a new church than an old one. It may be simply that the new church is closer at hand. Maybe too people sense that a church which is new is right for those for whom faith is new. Apart from anything else, newness means that all sorts of new people will be hanging around, so one more newcomer won't be conspicuous.

How then does a church plant work? Most commonly a "mother" church, or group of churches, as in Richmond, gives birth to a "daughter" church, sending a core of existing members to form the nucleus of the new community. They may go to an area of the parish where there is a new housing development. They may start a church among a particular sociological grouping—as Silas Ng did among the Chinese. They may go to the inner city where there are few churches but plenty of redundant church buildings. The possibilities are endless. Wherever there is no living witness to the Christian Gospel, there is a place for a church.

#### *Diocesan support*

What then makes a church plant "successful"? There are structural necessities and personnel requirements. On the level of structure, diocesan support—including the bishop's—is essential. (Several US dioceses even have diocesan officers whose job is solely to facilitate church planting.) The degree of diocesan support for the Emmanuel church plant in Vancouver is significant.

Often it is at the diocesan level that work such as demographic research takes place: where is a church

most needed and most likely to take root? The diocese will normally find the church planter, and may be helpful in finding members for a church planting team with the right mix of gifts. (Church planting is never a one-person show.) And often, as in Richmond, the diocese will provide some seed financing and help locate suitable premises. (One church plant in the Diocese of Virginia used a disused cinema for several years; another took over an abandoned Baptist church.)

On the personnel level, the key factor is the church planter him or herself. Frankly, people with gifts of church planting are unusual in mainline denominations. After all, the gifts needed to maintain and pastor an existing congregation are very different from those needed actually to start a new congregation. Church planters are people for whom evangelism is a priority, and who have a track record of already having initiated new ministries. They will be self-starters and problem-solvers. They may not always be the easiest people to get on with, because they can be impatient of maintenance, opinionated and even abrasive. This is another reason diocesan support is so important: to protect them, from themselves as much as from their critics!

### *What a church planter needs*

There are generally three steps to getting a church planter established.

Firstly, there are widely used tests to determine a candidate's suitability for this kind of ministry. Much heartache can be prevented if people are screened early on in the process.

Secondly, there are different intensive forms of training for the nitty-gritty of church planting. In North America, a one-week "boot camp" for the team is normal; in the Church of England, a series of training weekends serves the same purpose.

Thirdly, a "coach" is assigned to the church planter who is available twenty-four hours a day for the first 18 months to two years of the new venture. (This person should not be the same as the church planter's supervisor in the diocesan structure: the two have different roles.)

Does church planting "work"? The number of new churches still viable after three years, at least in the USA, is nearly 80% where these three requirements have been fulfilled.

Yet there are dangers which can derail the original vision.

Sometimes disgruntled Anglicans from other parishes will migrate to the new parish, hoping that finally this will be the perfect church. Their enthusiasm will wear off when they realise that this one too is less than perfect.

Some Anglicans will come simply because this church is closer to their home than any another, rather than because they share any sense of mission. They can dull the edge of the vision which is necessary to fire a church plant.

Some experienced church planters say some dioceses are so eager to encourage church planting that they give too much money too soon, and thus foster an unhealthy tradition of dependence. (It is a sign of health that Emmanuel managed to reach self-sufficiency ahead of schedule.)

The leadership structure needs to reflect the founding vision. A new church that was planning to major on small group ministry, for example, would have a leadership team consisting of all the group leaders.

(Emmanuel, I note, had an Administrative Committee drawn from its core group, rather than a conventional parish council.) After the DNA has been established, generally after three years, then more conventional forms of leadership become appropriate.

Church planters are more idealistic by nature, but by the same token they are more prone to discouragement. Hence the importance of coaching and support.

At a conference on church planting I attended in Texas earlier this year, I spoke with the Rev. Cathy Newman of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and asked her to walk me step by step through the process by which the new church had come about.

### *Planting the light of Christ*

It began, she said, with her personal vision, what she believed was a God-given desire to plant a church. Then she spoke with her bishop (who has, incidentally declared the diocese "a missionary diocese") and received his endorsement. She was already priest of a thriving church, so Cathy had next to share the vision with her congregation, and see if they were open to this challenge. They were. Budget issues were soberly considered. Cathy went through the three stages of preparation—assessment, boot camp, and linking with a coach. The church searched for and found a new rector to replace Cathy when she went to the new congregation. Cathy and her team moved to the new area (they are currently meeting in a school), and began to host public events—a children's festival had recently happened when I met her--to catch public attention.

In a video available from the Diocese of Virginia, Bishop David Jones comments, "Church planting is perhaps the best way to fulfill the great commission." After all, as one church planter said, "To plant a church means to plant the light of Christ in a community where it may burn for a hundred years or more!" Now that's vision.

*John Bowen is Director of the Wycliffe College Institute of Evangelism.*

### *Purchasing the Church Planting Video*

Copies of the video from the Diocese of Virginia, created by Canon Victoria Heard, Diocesan Missioner for Church Planting, and narrated by Bishops Peter Lee and David Jones, is available from the Institute at a cost of \$20 plus p&p.

### **Books on Church Planting** Reviewed by Mark Graham

An excellent introduction to the whole subject is C. Peter Wagner's, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*. Wagner argues that planting new churches is the most natural vehicle for effective evangelism. He makes his case both from Scripture and from the reality of modern day culture, which, far from being homogeneous, displays an ever-increasing diversity. Every church, says Wagner, can only effectively reach a few of these distinct "people groups," with the largest urban congregations ministering to four or five of them at best. Yet an urban centre has at least fifty identifiable groups by ethnicity, lifestyle, socio-economic status and so forth. It is easier to plant a new congregation which will reach at least one or two different groups than to attempt to bring them into the existing churches. Wagner is also quick to point out that a new church plant does not mean that other churches in the area will experience a decline in attendance. Rather, it seems that a new church tends to raise the spiritual interest of the whole surrounding community, with the result that all churches experience a surge in attendance.

While there is no "right" way to plant a church--Wagner lists twelve, all of them "good" by his evaluation--he does state that the easiest way to start a new congregation is for an existing church to "give birth" to a daughter congregation. In this way, the people and resources needed for the new work are culled from within the established church. Moreover, the "mother" church can provide ongoing support via its missions budget, or through the involvement of individual members. Again, one might expect this activity to deplete the resources of the mother church, but in fact the opposite is true: planting a new congregation tends to invigorate the mother church with a vision and a sense of purpose, and ultimately help its growth.

If your church should consider "having a baby," then a useful volume would be Aubrey Malphurs' encyclopedic work, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Malphurs, a long-time church planter and Director of Field Education at Dallas Theological Seminary, covers every major aspect of the challenging task of church planting: casting the vision and building a team; discernment around God's call to lead, or participate in, a church plant; building a worship service and an effective ministry; and helping the new church to reproduce as well! Eminently practical, the book includes worksheets and exercises intended to reinforce and personalize the material in the book for the church planting team members. It

thus allows them to discover their own special gifts and contributions to the new church, as well as the unique cultural and social community to which God is calling them to minister.

It so happens that both of these books are authored by Americans and directed largely at Americans. For a distinctly Canadian perspective on church planting, a recent and extremely useful compilation is *Transforming Our Nation*, edited by ??????. Produced by the church planting arm of Vision Canada, in association with AD2000 and Beyond and DAWN (Discipling A Whole Nation) Ministries, this book aims to facilitate the planting of 10,000 new churches in Canada over the next 15 years. It includes articles by Dr. Reginald Bibby and Dr. Arnell Motz.

*Mark Graham recently graduated from Wycliffe College with an M.Div. degree. Mark and his wife Eunice feel called to church planting. One of Mark's last courses was a reading course on church planting.*

The books reviewed above are available at reduced prices from the Wycliffe College bookstore:

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

Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*

Arnell Motz (ed.) *Transforming Our Nation*

For information in how to order these books, see below.

### **A Strategic View of Church Planting** by George Carey

What is church planting? The term seems to suggest a building; but that is not the case. In most cases, church planting is rather the planting of Christians in an area where the Christian presence is weak...

On likely reason for the current interest is the conditions now prevailing, which make church planting a relevant and helpful model of discipling. First, the mood in the church suggests we are ready for new initiatives. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 must be seen as recording this new mood, as the bishops demanded a massive shift in mission orientation throughout the Communion. The resolutions did not ignore social concern or pastoral care but emphasized the priority of evangelism as underscoring other aspects of mission. . . .

The time will shortly come when bishops will have to develop a strategy for church planting. Initiatives which advance beyond parish boundaries should not be left for DIY [do-it-yourself] enthusiasts. Such a strategy will start from a partnership between the local church and the wider church represented by the bishop. On the one hand, a large church might wish to say to its bishop: "We are here to be a resource: how can we be used by the wider church?" . . . On the other hand, there is the bishop's vision for his diocese. Where are the areas in which the church is weak or under-represented? What churches might be able to contribute to the life of those places? . . .

Church planting is a tool of mission, not the final purpose of mission. It is not a replacement for the parish church, but an extension of its life. That is why I encourage all parishes of moderate size to consider church planting in their own area. It must be done carefully and prayerfully. . . .

One of the strengths of church planting is that it takes seriously the whole church working together, and particularly by lay people. An enormous amount of commitment is required by any group which convenants to leave the security of a larger fellowship for a ministry which for months and years may not be particularly fruitful. But the rewards can also be very great. . . .

Not attempt should be made at church planting without considering the ecumenical implications. Anglicans cannot afford the luxury of thinking that what is done in their patch is their own affair. Any new venture will affect other Christians . . . Others must be consulted and drawn into the planning, so that even where they may not agree with the vision, they may understand why it is being carried forward. . . .

There is a new confidence abroad; the sap is rising, and new life is flowing. Church planting along with other initiatives, has great potential as an exciting and positive resource for the church, and the fulfilling of that potential is my hope and my prayer.

*George Carey is the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is an extract from his chapter, entitled "Church Planting, Ecclesiology and Mission," in a book entitled Planting New Churches: Guidelines and Structures for Developing Tomorrow's Church, edited by Bob Hopkins with Tim Anderson (Guildford UK: Eagle Books 1992). The book is not available in Canada.*

### **New Youth Ministry Initiative at Wycliffe College**

Wycliffe College is pleased to welcome Dr. John H. Wilkinson as an adjunct professor in the upcoming academic year. Dr. Wilkinson has been teaching youth and family ministry courses for 25 years. He also has extensive background in Christian summer camps, church youth ministry, and parachurch leadership. He has just been appointed Executive Director of Youth Unlimited in Toronto.

This fall, Dr. Wilkinson will be teaching a course called "The Adolescent Experience and Christian Formation" in the Diploma in Lay Ministry program at Wycliffe College. The course will be held Wednesday evenings from November 15 to December 13, 2000 from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

In the Spring 2001 term, he will be teaching a course called "Youth Ministry in Congregations" at the Masters level at Wycliffe. The course will be held Thursday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. from January through April 2001.

For more information about these courses, please contact Paula Thomas at (416) 946-3525 or [pj.thomas@utoronto.ca](mailto:pj.thomas@utoronto.ca).

### **Sources of Resources**

#### New Dare Booklet

*Faith, Hope and U2: the Spirit of Love in the Music of U2* by Henry Vanderspek is the latest Dare booklet, just published. It is available at a cost of \$5 plus p&p (reductions for bulk orders) from the address below.

### **Building Healthy Congregations**

Tapes of the plenary talks from the Institute's conference, Building Healthy Congregations, in early June, are now available. A set of three tapes costs \$20 plus p&p.

The tapes contain three talks by Harold Percy:

Changing our DNA (15 minute introduction)

Four Categories of People your Church can Reach

Jesus' Model of Evangelism (a study of John 4)

There are also three talks by John Bowen:

What is the Church?

What is the Gospel?

What is Evangelism?

### **Ordering Institute of Evangelism Resources**

All resources mentioned in this edition of good idea! may be ordered from Kelly Duffett at the reception desk of Wycliffe College.

Write to her at Wycliffe College, 5 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto ON, M5S 1H7

Phone her at (416) 946 3535 or

Email her at [wycliffe.college@utoronto.ca](mailto:wycliffe.college@utoronto.ca)

Payment may be made either by cheque (made out to "Wycliffe College") or by VISA.