

Church Planting is a Team Sport Marc Bigelow, President



King Solomon wrote: "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work....Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves." (Ecclesiastes 4:9,12) I have recently come to realize more fully how true those words are, and how important teams are for church planting.

Just a few weeks ago, a church in Texas agreed to partner with us to plant a daughter church. We are finding that having a mother church as well as an association leads to much stronger daughter plants. We now have partnering churches in 15 states that are on the team planting churches with us.

Earlier this fall I attended the National Church Planting Executives Conference with over fifty church planting leaders. Around the room, over coffee, and in late night meetings new partnerships have been forged to plant even more churches between associations.

Finally, we are continuing to find partnerships and cooperation between the Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ to plant churches across the country. We have several Churches of Christ who are partnering with Stadia and with Christian Churches to plant new churches in Texas and beyond.

To all of those who are partnering in church planting, we say, "Thank you." To those who are not yet partnering, we say, "There's a place on the team for you."



Stadia: New Church Strategies

Marcus W. Bigelow
President

Tom Jones
Southeast Regional Director

Mark Leeper
Sierra Pacific Regional Director

Bruce White
Southwest Regional Director



Joe Beam Leads Southeast Church Planters Retreat

Stadia's Southeast church planters and their wives recently enjoyed a two-day marriage retreat led by Joe Beam, president of Family Dynamics (pictured front row, right). Joe is a highly sought-after speaker who willingly donated his time to support the couples and their work in the Southeast. Dr. Bob Harrington, Southeast Director of Planter Care (pictured front row, center) and his wife Cindy coordinated the event in partnership with Harpeth Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee.

The couples stayed in a beautiful hotel, experienced a very encouraging seminar, prayed for each other and shared the trials and joys of church planting. The seminar is just another example of how Stadia provides more planter support...so that more people are saved!

Six Great Months in Goodyear, Arizona



"I've been blown away by some of the things God has been doing in our church." Those are the words of Stadia church planter Troy Gardner, who launched Valley Fellowship Christian Church in Goodyear, Arizona last March.

Before they even began holding worship services, Troy and the team at Valley Fellowship could see God's hand at work. Although Goodyear is a predominantly white community, the church's mailers featured pictures of people from all races. Troy recalls how, after receiving a promotional postcard from Valley Fellowship, two separate families called him to ask if African American people were welcome at the church! The answer, of course, was yes, and today the young church is one of the most ethnically diverse in the Goodyear area, welcoming Hispanic, Asian, black and white families.

But diversity is hardly the only story. Since Valley Fellowship's launch in March, eighteen people have already accepted Christ. Among those new believers were two women who became acquainted when one had an extramarital affair with the other's husband. The women somehow became friends through the ordeal and decided to visit Valley Fellowship together! Both women have since accepted Christ as Lord, and they now attend regularly with their children.



One year ago Troy Gardner and his family didn't know anyone in Arizona, but today the transplanted Californians are ministering to a growing body of believers – attendance hit 172 on a recent Sunday – in their new hometown. By emphasizing what Troy calls "the personal touch," Valley Fellowship Church even continued to grow during the summer months, when church attendance typically declines.

We rejoice at the way God has blessed this young church, one of Stadia's first churches in Arizona, and we can't help but agree with Troy, who says, "Church planting is the best – it's absolutely the best."

For more information on Valley Fellowship Christian Church, visit www.ValleyFellowshipChurch.com.



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STADIA

CHURCHLAUNCHCALENDAR

January 2005

- Charlotte, North Carolina**
Church Planter: Dave Milam
- China Spring, Texas**
Church Planter: Rick Cobb
- Windsor, California**
Church Planter: Bill Gardner

February 2005

- American Canyon, California**
Church Planter: Jim Spellman
- Anthem, Arizona**
Church Planter: Steve Wyatt
- Cypress, Texas**
Church Planter: Nate Liston
- Queen Creek, Arizona**
Church Planter: Jeff Myal
- Rancho Cordova, California**
Church Planter: Steve Hinton
- Stockton, California**
Church Planter: Ken Hasekamp
- Tallahassee, Florida**
Church Planter: Mark Michael

March 2005

- Reno, Nevada**
Church Planter: Jon Gaus

Launch Date TBA

- Oxnard, California**
Church Planter: Enrique Martinez

A Time of Harvest and Thanksgiving

From the Southeast Region

It is harvest time in Stadia's Southeast Region. The workers have been deployed, the soil has been tilled and the seeds have been planted. Several months of prayer and hard work will now result in Kingdom growth. The Southeast harvest will see five new churches coming to life and bearing fruit this fall: in Charlotte, Atlanta (2), Baton Rouge and Nashville. By the time the harvest ends, these five will be added to four others – for a total of nine new churches in the past twelve months!

Fall is also a time for Thanksgiving. These new churches, like any good harvest, could not happen without a lot of behind-the-scenes activity. We give thanks for our great church planting teams, committed prayer partners and sacrificial donors who financially undergird the harvest.

We also have other key team members who make the harvest possible: our parent organization, Provision; our national team in Vacaville, California; our partners at Passion for Planting; our coaches and mentors who serve as safety nets for the planters; and of course our Regional Director of Planter Care, Dr. Bob Harrington and our Associate Director, Debbie Jones.

The Lord says "the laborers are few," but the quality of our team members make up for the lack of numbers. Please accept my personal thanks for making this special harvest season possible. Let's do it again!

Tom Jones
Southeast Regional Director

Six Churches and One CPN Prepare to Launch

From the Sierra Pacific Region

Six new churches are in various stages of "gestation" in preparation for their birth in cities throughout northern California and Nevada: Santa Maria, Windsor, American Canyon, Rancho Cordova and Stockton, California; and Stead, Nevada. Your prayers and support of these church planters and plants are appreciated!

Our very first Church Planting Network (CPN) launched on October 1 under the leadership of Dennis Murphy, pastor/planter of Hope Christian Church in Cordelia, California. Encompassing Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties north of San Francisco, this CPN will be the pilot for the restructure of the Sierra Pacific region. Our goal is to reorganize the entire region around smaller, geographical areas to provide better planter care and to create the grass-roots synergy needed to develop more church multiplication opportunities. Each CPN will have a part-time leader who seeks collaboration among the new and existing church pastors for church planting within that targeted area. Dean Pense, Associate Director of the Sierra Pacific region, will be overseeing the implementation of this new model.

The opportunities for planting new churches in this region are incredible. Right now I have core groups from four different communities crying out for us to send them a church planter. Would you pray with me that God will raise up both the planters and the finances needed to meet this urgent need?

Mark Leeper
Sierra Pacific Regional Director

New Churches on the Horizon in 2005

From the Southwest Region

God is blessing our efforts as we strive to plant more churches to reach lost people throughout the southwest. Because of His provision, our plans for 2005 are already beginning to bear fruit.

Two new churches will launch in Arizona early next year: one in Anthem (north Phoenix valley) and one in Queen Creek (southeast Phoenix valley). The planters for these churches have been assessed and trained, and now are working on their "pre-launch" strategy and building their core teams. Both of these plants are a direct result of strategic partnerships with local churches.

Two new churches likely will launch in southern California in 2005: one in Beaumont and one in the Rancho Cucamonga area. God has provided us with church planters for these locations, and we now are prayerfully building partnerships to provide the funding and the core team to support these planters.

As a result of our special partnerships with CMF and the Crossmont Institute, we will also be involved in as many as four Hispanic church plants next year. The planter is already in place in Oxnard, where a bilingual church will be planted to reach middle-class Hispanics. The other three church plants will be Spanish-speaking, and will be placed in communities with high concentrations of people who prefer to worship in their native language.

We know that all of these plans will come together in His timing...and our desire is that this would be just the beginning. Should God bring us more planters, more workers, and more funding, we will plant even more churches in 2005.

Bruce White
Southwest Regional Director

Diary of a Church Planter

Caryl Strange, Mt. Juliet, Tennessee



While a lot was taking place beforehand, I officially went on Staff with Stadia on April 1, 2004. This summer I have been traveling back and forth from my home in Atlanta to Mt. Juliet on a weekly basis, coming home on weekends. I was blessed to have a launch team mostly in place when I arrived and I have been able to stay with a family in Mt. Juliet who allowed me to work out of their home.

The launch team consisted of about 30 when we first began. The team

met bi-weekly during the summer, studying the *Purpose Driven Life* book. We are meeting twice a week now, once for study and prayer time, and once for planning and fellowship.

We've already had several good events. We partnered with the city for the Fourth of July children's bike parade where we passed out water bottles with our logo and refrigerator magnets. We provided a dinner for the city police department, rescue squad, and fire department, and were privileged to meet the Chief of Police and his family that evening. They are looking for a church home and were very interested in our church. The day before our launch we will host the city for a picnic at the park.

We have been blessed to retain Wilson Central High School, the newest high school in the city. I have built a good relationship with the principal, and on August 15 we attended a faculty meeting at the school. We gave every staff member a water bottle, brochure, business cards, a brief note from me, some teacher supplies, and home made cookies. On Sunday mornings we will have use of the school's 500-seat auditorium, the cafeteria, and two classrooms.

We have already hired a part-time administrator and are in the process of hiring a full-time worship minister. We are working on our sound system, and also the purchase of a trailer. Three weeks prior to launch we will be sending weekly mailings to nearly 25,000 homes. That same week Lakeshore Christian Church (our sponsoring church) will be giving us a "baby shower" to help us get our nursery up and ready.

It's been a busy summer for New Heart Christian Church as we gear up for our launch on October 10. We have accomplished a lot, but still have much to do!

For more information on New Heart Christian Church, visit www.NewHeartCC.com.

Sign up today to receive "Twelve" (the Stadia e-newsletter)

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