

church planting manifesto

Whereas, the Bible teaches that God's plan for mankind is redemption through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4)

Whereas, Jesus came to seek and to save the lost

- Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)
- Heaven rejoices over the salvation of every person (Luke 15)

Whereas, Jesus established the church for the purpose of continuing his redemptive work in the world following his ascension

- The work of Christ was the work of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19)
- The church as Jesus established it is the body of Christ intended to continue the work of Christ in the world (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12)
- Prior to his ascension Jesus commanded his followers on several occasions to make disciples of all people (*ethne*) in the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)

Whereas, Jesus expected his kingdom to grow from its humble beginnings to encompass and include all people

- It is the nature of the kingdom of God to grow (Matt. 13:31-32)
- It is the nature of the kingdom of God to encompass all people (*ethne*) (Matt. 13:47; Acts 1:8)

Whereas, the early church set the example by sharing the gospel, establishing churches and making disciples of all people (*ethne*)

- Peter and other disciples boldly shared the gospel with all people, crossing geographic, linguistic, ethnic and culture barriers to do so (this is the story of the early church in Acts)
- This practice is continued today through church planting movements around the world

Whereas, we, an assembly of church leaders in Houston, on this nineteenth day of January, 2007 do acknowledge and affirm that

- We believe the command of Jesus to make disciples of all people (*ethne*) is intended for the church today as much as it was intended for the church in the first century
- We recognize that while it is the nature of the kingdom of God to grow the population growth of the greater Houston area is increasing faster than the growth of the church, which means that the church is losing ground in the city daily, and this troubles us
- We believe a strategy of starting new churches is a primary way to reach those not yet Christians with the gospel and to help them become fully devoted disciples of Jesus
- We realize that no one way of doing church will reach all people (*ethne*)
- We believe every person should have ready access to a church that is biblically based, doctrinally sound and contextually appropriate to them
- We believe a cooperative, coordinated strategy of church planting that embraces different kinds of churches will be the most effective way to reach all the people of our city and maximize the resources available to the church

Therefore, we, an assembly of church leaders in Houston on this nineteenth day of January, 2007 do sign this Manifesto in which we acknowledge our denominational and stylistic differences, but commit to working together to develop a strategy for church planting that will reach all the people (*ethne*) of our city.