



PLANTING PITFALLS



Momentum stealers to avoid

5. Inward Focus:
Keeping the foot
on the missional
accelerator



Inward focus

It is not enough for the Church to be established in a place where many are coming and going unless the people who come and go not only learn the Gospel, but learn it in such a way that they can propagate it

...At many of the strategic points where we have established our concentrated missions it is noticeable that the Church rather resembles a prison or a safe or a swamp than a mint or a spring or a railway station.

Roland Allen, *Missionary methods*, 1912, Ch. 2

If I had to add one more mark to what you're about to read, it wouldn't be missions or prayer or worship; but it would touch on all of those things. I think that I would add that we want our congregations to be **outward-looking**. We are to be upwardly focused – God-centered. But we are also, I think, supposed to reflect God's own love as we look out on other people and on other congregations.

This can show itself in many ways... We pray in the pastoral prayer each Sunday morning for the prosperity of the Gospel in other lands and through other local congregations... We have internships ... [because] the local church is responsible for raising up the next generation of leaders ...All of this is for the building up of other congregations.”

Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 2004 preface.

Outward looking

Antioch itself was a missionary situation. It was a young church which owed its origin to informal missionaries. It could well have argued that they had plenty to do in Antioch, and could not bother about anything beyond their borders. But... Antioch was a church which looked beyond itself... Hence their support of the Jerusalem Christians when famine struck. Hence their readiness to send Paul and Barnabas on the missionary journey to Cyprus and South Asia Minor... Just imagine the sacrifice involved in allowing two of their most gifted teachers and leaders to depart on some mad excursion, not knowing... whether they would ever see them again.

Is there not an important lesson here? We shall be fired to evangelism in our own locality in proportion as we are willing to neglect our own needs and look to needier places... which we can support. It is the church which waters others that is herself watered. But how few churches seem to believe this.

Michael Green, *Evangelism Now and Then*

Mission drift

- Disconnection from non-Christians
- Division of focus
- Consumerist transfers
- Confusion of vision, values and mission (Stetzer)
- Lack of fear of the Lord (1 Peter 3:14-15)
- Lack of pursuit of Christ (Sibbes, Song of Songs 5:6-6:1)

What can we do to embed a culture of evangelism?

- Culture change = modelling + consistency + normalising + communication + time
- Vision, vehicle, vocabulary, values
- Imagery
- Celebration





- Preaching that engages non-Christian issues, jargon-free, full of Jesus, full of weightiness
- Morning prayer
- Finding third spaces
- Harnessing arts and music
- Equipping to tell your church story
- Surveying neglected points of contact
- Addressing challenges for Christians/non-Christians

5 Friends 5 Ways

praying regularly for friends, family and colleagues

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Giving **each** person, in **all** the Mount Barker region,
every opportunity to respond to Jesus.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors,
certain that God is making his appeal through us.
We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

2 Corinthians 5:20

5 ways to pray

for those you have listed on the front of this card

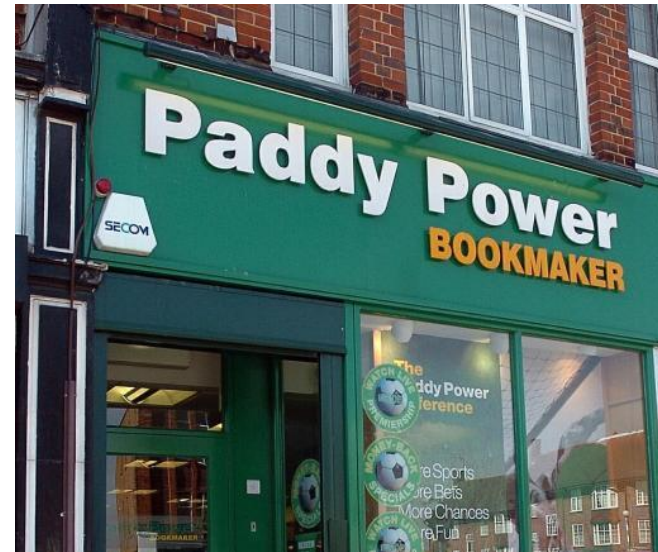
1. That you will grow in your **love and concern** for them.
2. That your life will show the transforming **power and grace** of the gospel of Christ.
3. That God will create opportunities to **talk about Jesus**.
4. That what they hear will interest them and they will **want to learn** more.
5. That they will put their **trust in Jesus**.



Visiting a secular church

- What do you notice as you walk in the door? What's welcoming / unwelcoming?
- What are the “regulars” doing? What does “fitting in” look or sound like?
- How did you feel?
- Make a note of the language you hear and see; verbal, signage, etc. Are there unfamiliar words or phrases? Is there a way of finding out the meaning of any language you don't understand?”

[Clayton Fopp]



Most planters do not have the capacity, financial resources or team needed to develop a comprehensive strategy. Instead they narrow their focus to 3 to 5 "table banging" priorities they will be "mean" about in the early days of the church. The limited number of priorities becomes the filter for saying "yes and no" to ministry initiatives and is vital for avoiding drift.

Ed Stetzer, Casting Vision and Avoiding Mission Drift



1. What is our church's biggest barrier?
2. What will be our bread and butter tool?
3. What will we need to neglect?
4. What should we try?