

Multiplication Problems

Evangelical Free Church of Mt. Morris | September 25, 2016

What do we do if we choose “yes”? What do we do if we choose “no”?

Thankfully, some of the answers are much the same either way.

First, take a deep breath and pray.

YES: We have completed the easy part, which is just talking about church planting. Now we begin the hard work! “If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now...” This will be one of the biggest undertakings in EFCMM history—possibly what we will be remembering as a significant milestone ten years from now and beyond.

NO: This can be difficult, especially if the vote was close, or if there was a sizable majority in favor. It raises painful questions: Were we wrong to even propose it, or are we mistaken in our decision now? Where did we miss God’s will? How do we go forward in unity?

Second, get to work!

YES: We will be in contact this week with our EFCA Great Lakes District church planting director to accelerate our efforts in connecting with planters. We will appoint a search committee made up of some of our elders, some of those interested in participating in the plant, and perhaps some others.

NO: Our responsibility to take the gospel to the world remains. This discussion forces us to ask: If a Sterling church plant is off, what *are* we going to do to fulfill our calling? Is “Keep doing what we’re doing” a legitimate answer?

Both YES or NO scenarios have to address our “multiplication problems.” The best way to multiply congregations is to have been multiplying disciples and multiplying leaders. This is what every church is responsible to do. While we have been growing lately, are we seeing conversion growth or transfer growth? Are we developing the believers that we do have into mature disciples and equipped servant-leaders?

Multiplication is what we must do if we are going to plant a church, because we don’t expect that only those going to Sterling have to do this kind of work or take on this kind of challenge. We must join them in this approach because of our partnership with them, and because we don’t want to miss out on the blessing of being where the action is! We all will be on the front lines.

Multiplication is what we must do if we are not going to plant a church, because a family lives on only as new generations come along. Most of the opposition to our proposal to plant a church has been voiced in terms of protecting the health of the mother church in Mt. Morris, but EFCMM will die eventually if all we are doing is hoping more Christians move to town. Ministry is more than numbers, but it is not less than seeing people saved for Christ and his kingdom.

This topic will be continued at our next quarterly congregational meeting: October 16, 6:00 p.m.

Scriptures to Guide Our Prayers

The Great Commission

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matt 28:18-20*

¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word... [...] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." *John 17:18-20, 20:21*

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." *Acts 1:8*

Multiplying Disciples, Leaders, and Churches

¹ Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. *Acts 13:1-5*

²¹ When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. ²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. *Acts 14:21-23*

God's Greater Glory

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, ² that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! *Psalms 67:1-3*

¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! *Psalms 72:18-19*

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. *Habakkuk 2:14*

For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. *2 Corinthians 4:15*