

Church Planting Ecosystem Strategy

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”- Ephesians 4:16

This whitepaper provides an overview of our vision for an ecosystem and the role we seek to play in it.

OVERVIEW

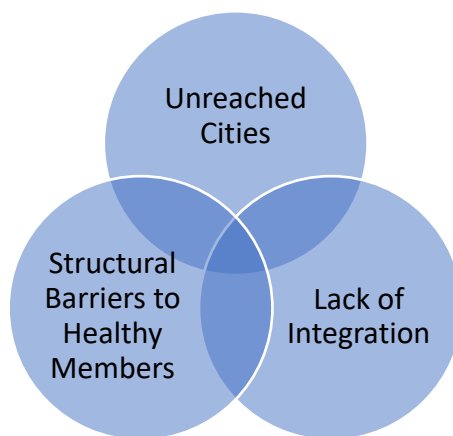
Vision: Healthy local churches that are a display of God’s glory in unreached cities, multiplying beyond to the nations.

Why Important?

- **Churches display God’s glory (Ephesians 3:10):** We desire to see healthy churches shaped by God’s Word, whose members are worshipping God and loving one another. These churches equip the saints to make disciples, displaying God’s glory through being a light to the surrounding community and by planting or supporting other churches, with the goal of seeing the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
- **Cities have many people (Jonah 4:11):** We have a particular desire for God’s glory to be displayed in cities, since the world is becoming increasingly urban.
- **Christ deserves to be proclaimed among all peoples (Romans 15:20):** Within cities, we focus on peoples and places that are less reached because there is the opportunity to proclaim Christ where He has not been known.

Challenges

- **Unreached Cities:** Many cities lack healthy churches that display God’s glory and live out a Biblical vision for the church
- **Structural Barriers to Healthy Members:** Where there may be healthy churches or a strong pastor, there may be few opportunities for mature expat believers (whether professionals or missionaries) to support the work of that church by living and working in that city (estimated [40%]+ of global cities)
- **Lack of Integration:** Where there may be mature expat believers, there is a lack of integration of church planters, missionaries, professionals, and businesses around the local church



Our role is at the nexus of these challenges.

Our Approach: Build great businesses that bring together church planters, missionaries, and mature Christians to collaborate through the local church

Specifically, we launch businesses to enable local believers, missionaries, professionals, and their families to live in unreached cities and be embedded within the local church and reach out to underserved populations. Our desire is for these individuals to be mature believers and to be able to serve their churches as elders and deacons.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition	Our Requirements
Church	Body of Christians who have affirmed one another as disciples of Christ and gather together through the regular preaching of the Word and the practice of the ordinances (i.e., Lord's Supper and baptism)	Requirements for health: Baptist, healthy church (including in body life), missiologically engaged
Pastor/Elders	Shepherd and overseer of a church, (1) whose responsibility is the teaching, oversight, and loving care for a church body, (2) who meets the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and (3) is an example to the flock	Faithful to the Word, committed for the long-term, [regulative principle-minded]
Church Planter¹	Elder-qualified man who has been sent out by a church to plant another church	Faithful to the Word, expressed commitment for the long-term
Missionary or Intentional Worker¹	Cross-cultural worker with primary focus on evangelism and discipleship with a goal toward church planting among underserved population	Faithful to the Word, values planting healthy churches
Members Sent Through a Business	Members (including elders and deacons) who are in regular membership in a church and work cross-culturally & make disciples in the marketplace	Live out the gospel in their daily lives (inside and outside the church gatherings) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exhibits basic level of Christian maturity; maintains sound doctrine, healthy church convictions; lifestyle of making disciples; Baptist; missionally engaged, etc.
Businesses	For-profit vehicles for employment and impact	Provide appropriate employment opportunities suited for the needs of

¹ Assumes they also meet requirements for Members Sent Through a Business

		that ecosystem and respected as valuable business to the local economy/community
Underserved Population	Groupings of people who have little access to the gospel (e.g., unreached people groups or population segments otherwise unreached by the gospel, based on quantitative factors and felt needs of local churches) or where there are comparatively few healthy churches relative to the total population	Some initial research validating the presence of underserved populations and ratio of healthy churches to total population.

CHALLENGES

1) Unreached Cities

Our concern is particularly with seeing healthy churches in unreached cities. Though a number of cities have churches in them, often such churches are not healthy. We desire to see more healthy churches flourish.

2) Structural Barriers to Jobs

In contexts where there are fledgling healthy churches, it can be extremely helpful to have mature believers working alongside the pastor, whether as church planter or missionary or elder or faithful member. However, there are a number of structural barriers preventing the ability of these people to work and live in such cities:

- **Governmental Restrictions:** These may prevent individuals from living in cities with a religious identity or visa; therefore, these individuals need to have other reasons to live in their city;
- **Economic Opportunity:** The city may be small enough that there are not many natural job opportunities for expats; or, the work culture could be such that there is not much freedom to engage in ministry.

3) Lack of Integration

Even in context where church planters, missionaries, and professionals are present, there may still be challenges in ensuring that all are working well together and thriving in healthy local churches:

- **Missionary Challenges:** When missionaries function in isolation from local churches, this approach leads to a number of difficulties:
 - **Lack of Personal Support:** Missionaries may face burnout on the ground and need help, particularly with their children but also as any normal Christians will need support that a church is uniquely able to provide.
 - **Loss of Ministry Partnerships:** Missionaries may not have had experience being in a healthy church and know how to think of the importance of the local church. Through discipleship in the church, a missionary could multiply their ministry by

equipping more saints for evangelism and spurring others on toward maturity. Through church planting through a church, a missionary can leverage wonderful examples of how to love one another, servant leadership, and growing leaders.

- **Lack of Long-Term Stability:** A missionary approach apart from the local church can be unstable over the long-term. Most missionaries do not stay in particular city/assignment for more than 5-7 years. By contrast, a church can endure over time and is less affected by the ebbs and flows of life in a frontier city.
- **Member Challenges**
 - **Immaturity:** Where churches exist, expatriate members may often not be strong believers and in the city primarily for a job. They haven't been part of a healthy church previously and may be young in their faith, regardless of their professional credentials.
 - **Transience:** Some members may be mature; however, few expats usually stay for a long time in one city. Turnover in such churches is usually significant, and pastors face the challenge of continually re-teaching and equipping a transient membership.
- **Church Challenges:**
 - **Lack of Knowledge:** With pastors focusing on their particular flock, it can be hard to navigate cross-cultural barriers. They may not have the experience or expertise to interact with people who speak another language. They have a desire to reach out to underserved populations but may not have natural contexts with which to do so. Missionaries can work collaboratively with local church members and pastoral staff to reach underserved populations with a church centered approach.
 - **Lack of Ability:** In a more frontier context, a fledgling church may need help equipping its members to be involved in reaching other people in the community. Its members may not have much business opportunity and need assistance with creating contexts for natural relationships for the gospel in the community. There is opportunity to connect business relationships with local church members for kingdom purposes.

Note: cities that already have a critical mass of mature members integrated within healthy churches are not a fit for us (e.g., Dubai through expats, Shanghai through locals). In other words, we are most helpful where (i) there is a need for more healthy churches; (ii) such structural barriers to jobs exist, and (iii) there is a lack of integration. To verify these assumptions, we check with local churches or church planters to see if they invite us to work together with them.

CHURCH PLANTING ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

We desire to see strong local churches supported by a network of relationships, from church planters and missionaries to businesses and professionals.

Ephesians 4 describes the primacy of ministers of God's word in the local church (v.11), whose role is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry until "we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness" (4:13).

This highlights the critical role members play in building up the body. As verse 16 states:

¹⁶ From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

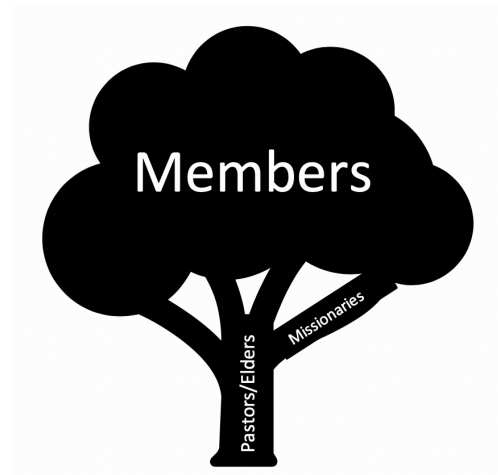


Figure 1 - Ecosystem

A church functions best when each individual member properly works together, thus building up the church.

By ecosystem, we mean this model of healthy local churches displaying God's glory in unreached cities as their mature members love each other and live out the gospel in their daily lives.

Benefits

Local churches benefit from this Church Planting Ecosystem Strategy as follows:

- 1) Focus on Local Church: believers model for locals what a church is like, as different people love each other in Christ and as elders shepherd a church in love
- 2) Shared Leadership: they receive people who can serve within the local church, sharing the leadership burden (e.g., helping teach, disciple believers, organize ministries) and display multiple models of Christian maturity
- 3) Greater Impact: in contrast to just having missionaries in a city, the diversity of like-minded people in an ecosystem helps the gospel to enter more segments of a society (e.g., working class and professionals, or those from different ethnic groups)
- 4) Encouraged Longevity: professionals share in the church and church planting efforts, provide continuity in transition, and contribute financially to the church, insofar as local churches exist for the sake of preserving Christians and the gospel's witness over time
- 5) Partnership Opportunities: creates or promotes a context where local churches may cooperate and coordinate their efforts among underserved populations
- 6) Mature Christians: more believers are able to live and contribute to the church

Components

- Pastor/Elder: At the core of a local church is a pastor who is qualified and committed
- Church Planter (if needed): A local church may have a church planter with a particular calling to help plant a church or churches out of that local church

- Missionary (if needed): The local church may have individuals working through it with a primary role of engaging an underserved population
- Members: The members of a local church minister to one another and help display the gospel to the community through making disciples
- Businesses (if needed): These enable the pastor/elder, church planter, missionary, and/or members to live in their city and also develop relationships with others in the community

Goals²

- Planting of a healthy church that equip and send
- Presence of elders or clear trajectory towards elder leadership for long term sustainability of local church
- 'Critical mass' of mature members through business OR one member equipped to bring more such mature members there (specific detail to be defined separately by each location)
- Financially self-sustaining churches

OUR ROLE

We launch businesses to enable local believers, missionaries, professionals, and their families to be embedded within the local church and reach out to underserved populations. Our desire is for these individuals to become mature believers and to be able to serve their churches as elders and deacons.

Our approach is to identify the right local partner (i.e., pastor or church planter) and learn from them how best to serve alongside their efforts. Therefore, we prioritize areas where we know there is a healthy local church or we partner with church planters who are looking to establish such churches in a particular area.

We work alongside parachurch ministries as follows:

- Missions sending agencies: we provide their missionaries with business solutions while doing so in the context of the local church. This strategy can fit under a comprehensive city strategy
- Pastoral equipping ministries: we indirectly help pastors by supplying and empowering mature members

Our Services for businesses:

- Industry network
- Advisors (e.g., country experts, legal, accounting)
- Support (back office, admin)
- Access to Talent
- Access to Capital

² Note: We do not directly impact these goals necessarily; they may be more indirectly accomplished

- Ecosystem support
- Oversight

How are we involved in a Church Planting Ecosystem³?

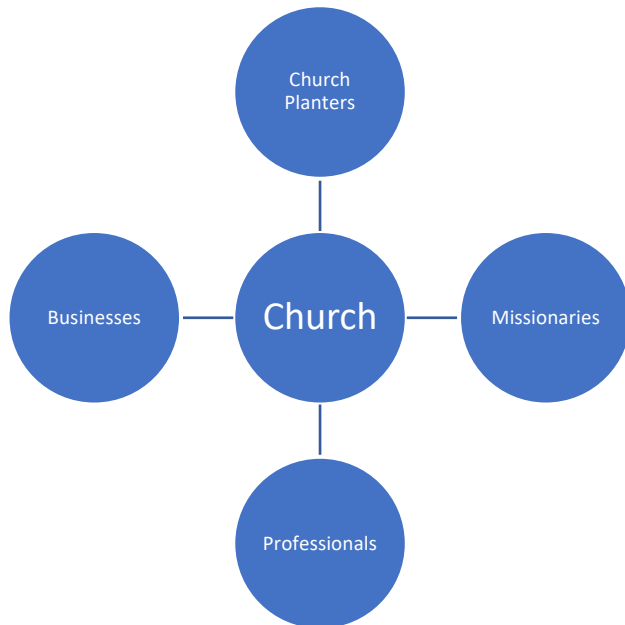


Figure 2 - Ecosystem (National Church as Core)

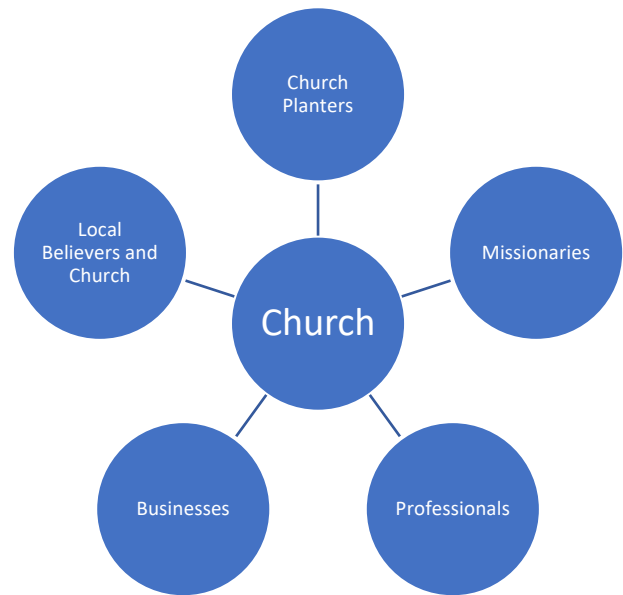


Figure 3 - Ecosystem (International Church as Core)

Scenario 1: National Church as Core

1. Our businesses provide employment for church planters, missionaries, and professionals to enter and be sustained within the ecosystem
2. Our businesses provide dignified, gainful employment for local believers
3. Our businesses make constructive contributions to the local economy/community
4. We support foreign businesses as they enter that market
5. We actively seek to promote cooperation and coordination between believers in that ecosystem

Scenario 2: International Church as Core

1. All the above, and:
2. Our expat employees/contractors directly strengthen the church
 - Ideally able to take leadership roles (activity coordinators, deacons, maybe even elders in some cases)
 - Exhibit Christian maturity, modelling healthy behaviors to church and wider community
 - Committed to healthy ecclesiology
 - Make meaningful financial contribution

³ Note: the distinction between a National Church and an International Church is a fine one and there may be overlap at times (e.g., in Nairobi, they would be one and the same)

If desired by the local church, we may work with pastors and church planters to help unhealthy churches to become more healthy by helping send and support more church planters, missionaries, or other professionals.

Metrics we use to evaluate our contribution

Corporately

- # of Church Planting Ecosystems
- Total profits/losses: in total, and split between: profitable businesses, unprofitable 'for profit' businesses, not-for-profit ventures

For each Church Planting Ecosystem

- Churches Assisted by us: i.e., supplied with members, and maybe even resources, ongoing training, etc.
- Churches Enabled by us: i.e., supplied with some leadership (deacons, elders, teaching elders, i.e., we would leave a big hole if we left)
- Employees Employed by us: in a table showing expat/local and believers/unbelievers
- Businesses Operated and Businesses Partnered, and for each: the number that are profitable and the number that are not yet
- Underserved segments of the population engaged by churches in ecosystem
- Level of coordination or networked relationship among players in ecosystem

[metric for health of ecosystem? 12 characteristics?]

FAQs

1) What does this mean you don't do?

We will typically not send business people to a situation without a local church partner.

2) Does this therefore mean you're not interested in unreached or unengaged peoples?

No. We work with intentional missionaries part of local churches who work with them. We facilitate professionals who meet them in the course of their daily lives.

3) When would you send a business person without a church on the ground?

Only in unique circumstances where the business person is also elder qualified and, we believe, able to handle both business and church roles adequately.

4) Do you send teams of people?

Depends on the environment.

Data to validate assumptions: if cities in 10/40 window, how many >5MM can professionals live in with a missional focus vs. how many can you not (discuss need for use case)?