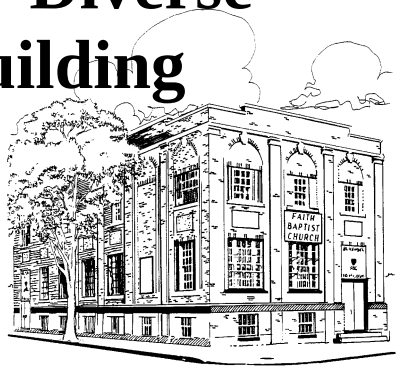
WORLDWIDE MISSIONS HAS COME HOME:
BUILDING A MULTI-ETHNIC MINISTRY UNDER ONE ROOF

How to Plant a Linguistically-Diverse Church in your Church Building



Pastor Vincent Sawyer
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and
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Part 1

I. The Philosophy and Procedures

of establishing an Ethnic Church in and through your church
By: Vincent Sawyer

While it is imperative that we not lose our focus on foreign missions abroad, it is equally vital that we not neglect the foreign mission field that has come to our doorstep in America. We can have a part in reaching the world by reaching the foreigners who have moved into our communities. This is especially true if you minister in or near a sizable metropolitan city where the influx of foreigners is greatest.

If there are foreigners who speak a different language than you do in your community, you still have a commission to reach them for Christ. We are commanded to "preach the Gospel to <u>every creature</u>" (Mark 16:15); Even if those "creatures" speak a different language than you do! Church planting must start at home in our "Jer**USA**lem" (Acts 1:8).

The only reason a church planter should have in planting a new fundamental church inside the building of another fundamental church would be due to a **<u>language barrier</u>** between the existing congregation and the target community. Cultural differences, differences of skin color, and economic differences should <u>not</u> be reasons to avoid integrating such people into your existing church. Salvation in Christ removes such barriers (Compare Eph. 2:14; 1 Tim.2:4).

Faith Baptist Church in Corona, Queens, NY is a multi-ethnic congregation, which by God's grace has no racial prejudice, color, cultural, economic, or social barriers. However, due to the fact that we have foreigners who speak different languages in our community, a need exists for us to plant churches to reach them in their dialect. It is for this reason that a need became apparent to us to establish linguistically-diverse churches. Since our immediate community is Hispanic, our first goal was to start a Spanish church. Because we have a building adequate to house two congregations, we volunteered our resources to this endeavor.

It is my prayer that many other churches will catch the vision of church planting; and if linguistically-diverse foreigners live in your community, that you would consider planting a church in and through your church.

A. The "MOTHER–DAUGHTER" Church Planting Philosophy

Just as a parent's goal in rearing children is to train them toward independence so that one day they might "leave father and mother" and begin a new family unit, so a church which "mothers" a "daughter" church should have as its goal, the autonomy and independence of the new work (while continuing the love, unity, and fellowship of both).

The goal in any church planting endeavor is that the Lord by His grace will establish a "self-nourishing, self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating congregation.

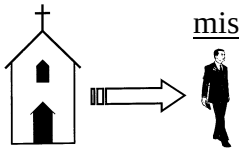
Continuing the analogy of "motherhood" and church planting, let's consider the following questions.

Before "giving birth" to a new church, ask yourself these questions:

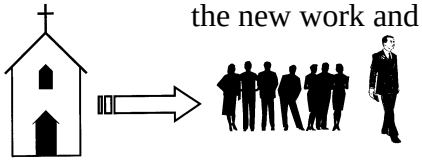
1. Is the "mother church" old enough (mature enough) to have a "baby"? (Is the "mother church" self-supporting? Could it finance the new work? Is its building adequate to house another work?)
2. Is the "mother church" willing to sacrifice her time, money, effort and resources for the "daughter church"?
3. Will the "mother church" be willing to rear the "daughter church" toward autonomy and "cut the apron strings" when the daughter church is ready to be autonomous? (If not, the new ministry will remain merely a department of the church, and its growth potential will be stifled. It will never reproduce itself).

B. The MODELS of "mothering" a new church:

1. **Model 1 -** The "mother" church supports the church planting missionary.



2. **Model 2 -** The "mother" church sacrificially gives willing volunteers for the new work and supports the church planting missionary.



3. **Model 3 -** The "mother" church allows the "daughter" to live at home in its facility for a time, sacrificially gives willing volunteers for the new work and supports the church planting missionary.



C. The BENEFITS of utilizing your church and church building to plant a new linguistically-diverse church:

1. Evangelistic benefit:

   You can fulfill the Great Commission by reaching everyone in your community, even those of a foreign language.

2. Growth benefit:

   The "mother church" may already have a nucleus of "seed families" who will enable the new church to get a "running start" in its growth and ministry.

3. Financial benefit:

   The "mother" church's facility and material resources will allow the new church to get started without the financial strains commonly experienced with church planting:

   a. The church planter avoids the difficulties and time loss of the deputation method of raising support.

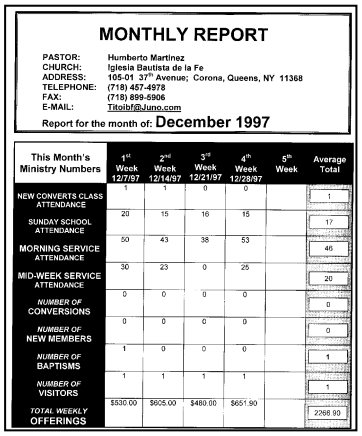
   b. The new "daughter" church will be better able to financially support its own pastor quickly.

   b. The new "daughter" church will be able to save money for their own building, while not expending a large amount each month renting a facility.

3. Administrative benefits:

   a. Pastoral Accountability

   Many churches support church planters (missionaries) and do not always know precisely how their investment is faring. However, due to the intimate nature of planting a church inside of a church, the pastor and congregation of the "mother church" have the benefit of direct oversight; immediate awareness of needs and problems; mutual pastoral encouragement and accountability.



MONTHLY REPORT

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Report for the month of: **December 1997**

This Month's Ministry Numbers	1st Week 12/7/97	2nd Week 12/14/97	3rd Week 12/21/97	4th Week 12/28/97	5th Week	Average Total
NEW CONVERTS CLASS ATTENDANCE	1	1	0	0		1
SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	20	15	16	15		17
MORNING SERVICE ATTENDANCE	50	43	38	53		46
MID-WEEK SERVICE ATTENDANCE	30	23	0	25		20
NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS	0	0	0	0		0
NUMBER OF NEW MEMBERS	0	0	0	0		0
NUMBER OF BAPTISMS	1	0	0	0		1
NUMBER OF VISITORS	1	1	1	1		1
TOTAL WEEKLY OFFERINGS	$530.00	$605.00	$480.00	$651.90		2266.90

   b. Organizational structure:

   The new church is immediately recognized as a branch ministry of the mother church, and functions under the "mother's" charter, constitution, tax exempt status, budget, insurance policies etc.

D. Our goals when we helped start Iglesia Bautista de la Fe:

General Goal:
To establish an independent, fundamental, mono-lingual Spanish Ministry under the "Mother Church" of Faith Baptist Church (FBC) of Corona, Queens, NY. This ministry will have its own pastor, deacons and its own budget category under the budget of FBC until it becomes independent.

Financial Goal:
The Spanish congregation will make it their financial priority to support Pastor Martinez. (Before any missionaries are taken on for support, the Spanish churches goal is to have their pastor fully supported in one year)

The Spanish people, who are presently members of FBC will be encouraged to continue giving their offerings to the general fund of FBC. (This way we will be able to gage (measure) the financial growth (increase) of the Spanish congregation, due to their increased numerical and spiritual growth. This continuity of giving will also alleviate any hurt to the present financial income needs of the tightly budgeted FBC congregation)

After the support for Pastor Martinez's salary is provided for, the remaining monies of the Spanish congregation will be divided up as follows:

> 50% will go to FBC as remuneration for the use, wear & tear, upkeep etc. of the Church building; utility expenses; Church supplies & materials etc. used by the Spanish assembly. (This will establish responsibility, and enable the Spanish congregation to begin a pattern to follow in preparation for when they have their own building in the future)
>
> 50% will go into a savings account for the future purchase of a building for the Spanish congregation as they by God's grace outgrow the present building and will be an independent, autonomous church.

Ministry Goals:
The ministry goal is to work in conjunction with Pastor Vincent Sawyer and Pastor James Swanson as a Spanish Co-Pastor, establishing a Spanish church, utilizing the facility, resources and organization of FBC with the ultimate goal of that congregation becoming totally self-supporting & independent, and reproducing itself through further church planting among the Hispanic population of NYC.

The goal is to utilize FBC's building and resources until the Spanish congregation either outgrows the facility or becomes financially able to purchase its own building. Until this detachment occurs every effort will be made to have a unified spirit and effort between the pastors and people of the two assemblies.

E. Reasons why some churches don't reproduce themselves:

1. **The Pastoral leadership and/or the congregation has no vision beyond their own church's four walls:**

   Due to:

   a. Laziness

   b. Complacency

   c. Self-sufficiency (The church is only concerned with paying their bills, not with starting a new work which will cost money)

   d. Lack of burden (for souls, evangelism, & missions)

2. The Pastoral leadership has an "Empire Mentality"

Many times due to "vain glory" motivations, a pastor is only interested in building a gigantic crowd around himself.

Whenever a church grows so large that the Pastor cannot personally know everyone of his "sheep" it may be time to start a new "sheepfold" with another undershepherd.

Beware: a church will lose a certain dynamic when it outgrows itself.

3. The Pastoral leadership lacks a pioneer spirit

a. Due to a lack of faith

b. Due to a fear (personal insecurities, etc.)

F. Qualities needed by churches desirous to plant churches in and/or through their own church:

1. A broader vision than your own church
   (Beware of the "tunnel vision" syndrome – cp. 2 Cor.10:16)

2. A church planting philosophy
   ("Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim.4:5); evangelistic work includes church planting)

3. A "divide and conquer" strategy
   (Think "multiplication" – Acts 9:30)

4. An unselfish spirit
   (Be willing to sacrifice time, money, material resources, and personnel - Phil.2:4)

5. A cooperative attitude
   (If everything must be "your way or no way" you won't work well in the endeavors of helping others plant churches)

6. A burden for all people and an unprejudiced view of them
   (Contrast Jonah with Paul [Eph.3:8-9])

7. A willingness to be flexible in methodologies

   a. A willingness to allow for differences
      (Not everyone has to "do Christianity" just like an American. How willing are you to accommodate the differences of others without ignoring or violating God's moral law?)

   b. A willingness to bend on non-moral issues
      (Compromises can be made on preferences and styles, never on convictions or principles)

   c. A willingness to adjust your ways of doing things so that you can plant a church and conform to the culture you are ministering to (without Biblical compromise).

   d. A willingness to alter your schedule to accommodate the new work being established in your church.

Part 2

II. The Need for Harmony and Unity

in establishing an Ethnic Church in and through your church

By: Humberto Martinez

Intro: Developing a multi-ethnic congregation under one roof is without doubt a unique endeavor. Challenges exist in this model of ministry that are not present in the average mono-cultural congregation. Of the many challenges that are presented, perhaps two of the greatest include *congregational integration* (bringing together two Christian communities with differing cultural and linguistic mindsets into a unified and harmonious whole for the purpose of worship within a common setting) and *pastoral harmony* (working together in a harmonious fashion despite differing ministerial viewpoints, cultural backgrounds, doctrinal suppositions and so forth).

Although admittedly challenging, this model can function effectively with relative ease provided that there exists a cooperative spirit within both the congregation and the pastors involved.

***Until the new church is autonomous and independent, the "mother" and "daughter" congregations must develop and maintain a spirit of cooperation while they worship and serve under the same roof.**

2 Essentials are needed for such cooperation:

1) **Congregational Integration**
2) **Pastoral Harmony**



A. Congregational Integration

- ♦ **Believers in a multi-ethnic ministry must learn to live together.**

1. By practicing congregational harmony

a. Through mutual participation in church functions and responsibilities. (I Cor. 3:9; Phi. 1:27) - This may include: special events, outings, programs, evangelistic endeavors i.e., tract distribution, baptisms, church work days, etc.

b. Through mutual edification in prayer (Eph. 6:18; Jas. 5:16) - The people in both congregations praying for one another. Sharing in the spiritual needs of both congregations. This could be easily accomplished by interchanging prayer lists.

c. Through mutual affection (Jn. 13:14; 34; 15:12,17; I Pet. 1:22;5:22).- Both pastors encouraging their people to be friendly and kind toward one another. Encouraging the people in both congregations to warmly greet one another. The pastors setting the example by being friendly themselves. A smile is understood in any language.

d. Through mutual forgiveness and edification (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32). - Never allowing bad feelings to fester between members. Clearing misunderstandings immediately and encouraging biblical solutions to problems that may arise between members.

e. Through mutual admonishment (Col. 3:16). - Being willing to admonish one another properly and being willing to be admonished. Never allowing things to slide because of the risk of hurt feelings. Remember, problems left unresolved today lead to bigger problems later.

f. Through mutual exhortation (Heb. 3:13; 10:25). - Encouraging mutual interaction and encouragement between members of both congregations. Encourage the people to communicate with one another despite the language gap. Sports are a great means to this end.

g. Through mutual service (Gal. 5:13) - Encourage members to pool their material resources and gifts for the purpose of helping one another in times of need. Have members provide rides to church for those who don't drive. "Big Brother" ministry for children of one-parent households. Providing meals for those who have given birth. Handyman help for widows or those who need professional services but cannot afford to send out for help.

2. By practicing congregational unity

a. By becoming aware of their "oneness" in the faith as a body of believers (Gal. 3:28; Ro 12:5). - Avoid the "they"/ "their" mentality; rather promote an "us"/ "we" mentality.

1) We are different yet similar (I Cor. 12:1ff; Rom. 12:5). - Teach that there is strength and beauty in diversity. We should never allow culture to divide us. Never allow race or nationality to become a divisive issue in your church.

2) We are many yet one (Rom. 12:5) - Teach that there is strength in numbers. Teach that God expects unity in the Church and hates division. We need each other!

b. By stressing their "commonness" in the faith as believers in Christ.

1) A common Father and Lord (I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6) - We belong to the same Father regardless of our race or culture.

2) A common goal (Phi. 1:27; Jude 1:3) - We are in a common battle against Satan and his schemes. Satan doesn't discriminate: he hates us all regardless of our background or heritage.

3) A common faith (Eph. 4:5) - We all believe and serve the same Lord and read the same Bible.

4) A common worship (I Cor. 10:17) - Worship to God is the same regardless of language or culture. Perhaps a combined service on occasion could promote unity.

5) A common salvation (Jude 1:3) - We all share in the same Saviour. Christ died for all and all are precious to Him; therefore, we should be precious to one another.

6) A common Spirit (Rom. 12:13) - The Holy Spirit indwells us all regardless or skin color or language spoken.

7) A common inheritance (Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:11; I Pet. 1:4).- Heaven will be our home someday, so we might as well get used to living together.

c. By becoming aware of their "brotherhood" as believers in Christ.

1) We are a family; as such, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ (II Cor. 6:18; Rom. 8:16). - Encourage brotherly love and affection through “holy” hugs, smiles and kind gestures.

2) We are a fellowship; as such, we should act with warmth and equality toward one another, avoiding an attitude of cultural supremacy (I Jn. 1:3; 7)[1] - The pastors should avoid this at all costs, especially the national pastor.

B. Pastoral Harmony

♦ Pastors in a multi-ethnic ministry must learn to work together.

1. By developing a kindred spirit.

a. Through consistent prayer - With each other, for each other (Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Jas. 5:16). - Praying together at the start of the day and keeping each other in prayer throughout the day.

b. Through open discussion - Shared ideas, personal concerns, insight etc. - Sharing your ideas with each other (i.e., sermon outlines, illustrations, new computer programs, book reviews, news items etc.).

c. Through unbroken loyalty - Allowing nothing to come between you and your associate (i.e., people, envy, bitterness, jealousy etc.). Never allowing people to talk bad about the associate pastor. Never making friends with the enemies of the associate pastor.

d. Through heartfelt concern - empathizing with your associate's struggles, trials, concerns (Rom. 12:15) - Having a listening ear. Being willing to carry the load through. Helping out with some of the responsibilities in the church.

e. Through sweet fellowship - becoming true friends (Pr. 27:17) - Taking each other out to breakfast, lunch (don't do dinner, however; the wife may get jealous!). Playing sports, fishing, hobbies, etc.

f. Through humility - esteeming each other better than themselves (Phi. 2:3) - Never thinking yourself better than your associate. You may be smarter and better looking, but God has given him gifts and strengths, too. He is just as important to the work.

g. Through Godly provocation - provoking one another unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24) - Encouraging one another in Bible reading, memorization, Godliness, excellence, accountability (watch that Internet). etc.

2. By developing a cooperative spirit.

a. Through personal sacrifice (II Cor. 11:16-33). - Being willing to burn the midnight oil when necessary; go out of your way to help the pastor when you perceive he needs your assistance.

b. Through hard work (I Tim. 3:1)- Don't be lazy in your service. This attitude creates bad feelings. No one likes to associate with a lazy person, except other lazy people. Be willing to do things for and with the pastor.

c. Through a willingness to make concessions (work together not against each other) I Cor. 3:9 - Don't be a legalist with your time. Be willing to adjust your schedule at times in order to help your associate. Be willing to make calls for and with him.

3. By developing a professional spirit.

a. Through respect for your associate and his God-given position (Rom. 13:7) - Call each other by your titles when in the public. Don't allow your guard down when in public, avoid clowning around and unconventional jokes. Remember your credibility factor. Never undermine his authority. Never criticize your associate to anyone, including your spouse and children.

b. Through appreciation for your associate's talents, strengths, achievements, efforts, motives. Always hold him in high esteem. Never demonstrate envy or hold a grudge.

[1] See "Shattering Your Church's Prejudicial Barriers", Vincent Sawyer, 1997 National Leadership Conference notebook, Workshop Session I #1.