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INDICATORS THAT YOU MIGHT BE LEADING A CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH

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Can you imagine if Thomas Edison desired to invent only one light bulb? Or, if Henry Ford wanted to produce only one Model T? Or, if Apple wanted to design only one generation of iPhones? Or, if Jesus desired to make only one disciple?

Something just doesn't feel right about those pictures does it?

Some things were just meant to multiply.

One of the TV shows I love to watch is Make Me A Millionaire Inventor. The show capitalizes on inventions that have the potential to be highly marketable. I don't know a whole lot about an inventor's process, but I know there is a moment for every inventor where the light bulb goes on and he or she recognizes his or her invention has the ability to multiply.

Shortly after the Pentecost event, Jesus' disciples had a flame-like light bulb moment. I can envision thoughtful Thaddeus sighing, "Ah... So Jesus wants us to come up with a discipleship path ultimately leading to those disciples being sent out into our town, the neighboring town, the town across state, and the town in a far away place. Hmm... I think I see what Jesus wanted!"

Light bulb moments are not something we can force; they tend to come when we least expect them or maybe even after we've already given up. John Wesley is a good example from church history of an apostolic leader who saw the light, felt the warmth, and decided to take responsibility for the brokenness and lostness in the world. It's important to note, Wesley never set out to start a denomination—he wanted to start a multiplication movement, which is exactly what happened.

Not everyone is going to go down in history as an instigator of a Great Awakening, but I am convinced there are more apostolic leaders, like Wesley, within the church at large who could potentially light up and lead

their church to become a church planting church.

Journey with me a moment and consider five things that may indicate if God has uniquely designed you and your ministry to be a church planting church. You might be a church planting church:

1. If you dream about reaching other communities besides your own.

Do you feel a spiritual burden for the surrounding communities outside of driving range from your church? Do you wish your neighboring zip code had a life-giving church in it? Do you strategize about how to leverage your missional resources for other communities?

2. If you think more about sending capacity than seating capacity.

When you picture your church, do you obsess about how many people you can fit in your worship space? Or, do you obsess about how many people you can send out over the course of the next year? Do you get excited about sending people out into the mission field (locally, regionally, and globally)? Do you enjoy developing intentional missional strategies for your church?

3. If you enjoy spending a large portion of your time developing leaders.

Do you find yourself desiring to connect and meet with people who demonstrate a leadership gift mix? Do you view time with leaders as your greatest ministry investment? Do you have some sort of leadership development category in your church budget?

4. If you are willing to develop a church planters residency experience.

Do you enjoy raising up and training future multiplication-minded leaders? Could you envision your church starting a 9-12 month residency or internship program for budding church planters? Do you have a burden for future church planters and are willing to invest in to their life spiritually, mentally, and financially?

5. If people find you and your ministry to be inspiring and encouraging.

Are emerging leaders drawn to you and your ministry? Do you regularly have people experience a call to ministry under your leadership? Do people find you to be a source of ministry encouragement? Do you believe in people?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're not crazy. You just have a really big heart for those who are missing from Christ and the church. You may or may not realize it, but you are leading a church planting church.

You may not currently have a strategic plan within each of these categories noted above yet, but maybe there is enough grip there for you to prayerfully ask the Lord to give you a vision and strategic plan for being a church planting church.

Maybe after processing these questions the Holy Spirit seems to be affirming an unstoppable vision buried inside of you to not only spark one church, but also do your part in the multiplication of many. If this is the case and the light bulb is going on, consider taking a next step and begin praying what I call the Harvest Prayer. In Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus said,

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest."

Notice, Jesus didn't say to pray over a town or an area—he said to pray for the workers. So, don't run to your board inferring that you feel led to plant 50 churches and campuses in five years launching on the 5th of every month throughout your five neighboring cities. Just start small and ask God to send you one worker for the harvest that will in turn multiply into a family of multiplication maniacs.

One of the things I love to do is talk with older pastors who have been serving our Lord's church for 30 or 40 years. What's interesting to me is that they don't tend to talk about their church sizes, how big their budget was or how many buildings they acquired. These wise leaders love to talk about the people they poured their lives into that now have thriving ministries. They walk around with a smile knowing they didn't just invent one generation of iPhones—they invested in a multi-generational ministry

model. Wouldn't it be amazing to look back on your ministry one day and celebrate how God used you to multiply the branches of your family tree?