

Title: “The Biblical Church Planting Apostle”

Thesis: The biblical Apostle is a church planter.

Idea 1: The command of Jesus to his apostles was to “make disciples” by (1) bringing them through baptism and (2) teaching them how to obey all his commands.
(Mt 28)

All the NT examples of apostolic work resulted in new churches. See especially Ac 14. As the apostles went about making disciples, they called communities, households and individuals to repentance and baptism, then continued teaching them how to obey Jesus as groups!

Idea 2: God gives to every church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.
(Ep 4:11).

The term “apostles” is used in the NT in several ways: Jesus Himself (Hb 2), the Twelve, Paul and his associates (epistles), money-begging imposters (2 Co 11), messengers from one church to another (2 Co 8).

Most apostles were and are hard-working, visionary disciple-makers who form believers into cells and congregations where they learn to obey the commands of Jesus.

Idea 3: The NT model of disciple-making is house-based fellowships that sometimes meet in bigger congregations.

From Acts chapter 2 onwards, the believers meet together to obey Jesus. The one-on-one disciple-making practices of Western cultures was a response to failure of Western churches to follow NT practices. Individualist disciple-makers cannot make well-rounded disciples, because they lack most of the spiritual gifts and cannot practice body life with their one or two disciples. Some disciple-makers refuse to plant churches, fearing loss of financial support from traditional churches.

Idea 4: Cell groups and small congregations remain the best means by which to make disciples.

Small bodies of believers enjoy a better mix of spiritual gifts, can receive new believers into a community, learn to practice the one-another commands of the NT, serve communion to each other, and undertake good works and missionary activity.

Idea 5: Apostles make disciples and disciple-makers of new leaders by mentoring them and by appointing them as shepherds over cells and congregations, then move on to start new churches and train new leaders elsewhere. (2 Ti 2:2).

Normally, an apostle will remain with a cluster of new churches until there is one or more leaders who can ensure oversight and training of three generations of leaders. Even after moving on, they will remain in communication, serving as distant advisors without exercising direct authority over workers and churches.