

"END-VISIONING"

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey says that we should have the habit of beginning with the end in mind: "To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction...If the ladder we are climbing is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster. We may be very busy, we may be very efficient, but we will also be truly effective only when we begin with the end in mind."

The "end-vision" for the Southeastern New England Baptist Association is to create a church planting movement among the different ethno-linguistic people groups and the different cultural groups that exist in the population. Each new congregation will be a multiplying congregation.

Churches will reflect the cultural/ethnic make up of the population. There will be all kinds of churches, such as traditional, contemporaries, blended, cell churches, and house churches.

The pastors of the new churches will be New Englanders from the different cultural groups/ethnic groups, or those who have first hand knowledge of the group they are to focus on in New England. Pastors will have a deep sense of calling to shepherding God's flock. The pastors will equip those who are to follow in his steps of shepherding, as well as church planting.

The churches will be vibrant organisms in charge of spreading the Gospel, nurturing new believers in the faith, and sending out those called by God.

Lay leaders will be active in advocating reproduction. They will believe that God is ready to bring about revival and reproduction, and thus God is waiting on us to pick up the challenge of the Great Commission. God is ready to use us if we are willing and obedient.

The above will create an atmosphere where the Gospel can have a pronounced influence in the community. Teenage pregnancy will disappear, crime will be nonexistent, and other issues such as poverty will be dealt with in a manner that honors Christ. The name of Christ will be honored in the homes, and also in public. Christians will be seen as people who benefit the community bringing about blessings:

Partnership with other associations to extend the Gospel to other areas will be developed. Everybody in the Association will get to hear the Gospel and have an opportunity to respond to it in the next five years. The above end-vision will be accomplished as we take the following steps (not necessarily in the order in which it appears, but rather in a dynamic way)

Initiate appropriate research to segment the population according to ethno-linguistic and cultural groups. Gather and analyze data through an adequate software program.

Select appropriate strategy coordinator personnel.

Organize prayer teams to create the right environment for witnessing/harvesting.

Organize prayer teams asking God for the workers needed to multiply.

Bridges, barriers, and gatekeepers in the area will be identified.

Partnership with Great Commission Christians will be strengthened when already in place, and new ones developed---inside and outside the association.

All training will be contextual.
Leaders will come from the harvest.

CHURCH PLANTING MASTER PLAN

We will pilot our strategy by focusing on three people groups. The people groups selected are the Hispanic, the Cambodian, and the Anglos living in the greater Providence area.

Worldview and demographics:

There are upwards of 30,000 Hispanics in the greater Providence area. There is a mix of South, Central Americans, and people from the Dominican Republic. In this people group we have to contend with the first, second and third generation. Each one of those groups has a different worldview (culture), and thus ethno linguistic segmentation for the first generation, and cultural segmentation for the second and third generations, will have to be conducted. Presently we have three small congregations in the city.

The Cambodian population of greater Providence is about 12,000. We will have to do a worldview study, or profile, of this group to know the characteristics prevalent in those who live in the city. At the same time we have to do a cultural segmentation for the second generation in order to understand them better.

The Anglo population will take time to study as it is composed of people from many cultural backgrounds such as English, Irish, French, Portuguese, and others. A cultural segmentation will be done, selecting a maximum of four worldviews for this first year.

Prayer and Missions Focus:

It is our goal that every congregation in our association will have the opportunity to be involved through prayer and mission's education. Presently pastors and lay leaders are being contacted and asked to participate in this endeavor.

In May of each year we will have a Missions Banquet where we will highlight the work being done, as well as the results so far. People will have the opportunity to meet those involved in doing outreach, evangelism, discipleship, etc. The object is for prayer warriors to meet those they pray for, hear a report first hand, and commit themselves to focused prayer for the workers. Other partners will also be invited to come and celebrate with us what God is doing in our midst.

Scripture:

We will make sure that Scripture is available to all the groups in the original strategy. We will avail ourselves not only of printed Bibles, but also of the Oral Bible developed by the International Mission Board (SBC), whenever necessary. We will also use the Bible in cassettes for people to listen to it while driving on long trips.

Witnessing:

In December of 2002 I conducted training for pastors and lay leaders in using Operation Lydia for strengthening churches, and for starting new ones. Operation Lydia consists of five principles:

Prayer: 14 days to prepare the field in selected geographical areas of the city.

Oikos: or circle of influence of a person of peace.

Person of Peace: a person open to receive Christ, or open to host a Bible study in his/her home.

Evangelism: five weeks of evangelistic Bible study—Biblical stories.

Discipleship: three to six months of nurturing the person in the faith.

The system is one of modeling to new Christians how to evangelize and disciple others, thus it serves as a teaching and mentoring system. At the end of the discipling phase the new Christians will be ready to be supervised in bringing others to Christ and follow the cycle.

Ongoing training will be provided through the Church Planters Network (CPN). Once per month I meet with the planters to dialogue about the work, victories, problems, to pray together, and to provide additional training as necessary. I meet with church planters individually throughout the month to focus on issues not taken up in the network.

Communications:

The strategy coordinators will assess what kind of communication tools to use with each people group. We want our communications to be more effective in engaging them for the purpose of eliciting a response to the Gospel.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

SNEBA will support the church development plans of each local congregation that shares such plans with the association. This will respect the autonomy of the local congregation, and at the same time, affirm its mission locally, regionally, and globally.

SNEBA will encourage each congregation to discover what God is doing in their communities, get involved, and commit to bringing about change in their communities through Gospel proclamation.

SNEBA will seek to resource each congregation to get the work done.

Teaching Churches:

As part of church development I believe we must partner churches within the association. There are congregations that have much to offer in terms of training, personnel (lay or otherwise), that could help emerging congregations with evangelism, discipleship, prayer, worship, etc.

Church Development Partners:

At present we are seeking associations, churches, and other organizations/individuals to partner with to carry out our strategy.

God makes it clear in the Scriptures that He wants us to be obedient so revival will come to the land. In other words, He is waiting on us to get on board, just as He waited for Jonah to get on board so He could bring salvation to Nineveh.