

How Many Churches?

“We already have enough churches in our community, why do you need to plant another one?”

Church planters are often confronted with that question, or a similar one, when it is learned that a church plant is being considered in any given community. One might think that there is an unwritten rule that a community can only have a certain number of evangelical, Bible believing churches and that the appropriate “quota” is tied to the size of the population in that community.

While such an assumption may be understandable, when one “does the math” it is clearly revealed as an assumption that is seriously flawed.

You Do the Math

A short lesson in Church Planting Algebra is helpful here. Consider the following formula:

$$P - (NC \times 300) = PNC$$

Now apply this formula to your particular community where:

- **P** = total community population.
- **NC** = number of evangelical Bible believing churches.
- **300** = an arbitrary but generous estimate of the number of people who attend each of those evangelical Bible believing churches.
- **PNC** = people in your community who are un-reached for Christ and in need of a Bible believing church.

You do the math. Using this formula, what is the value of PNC in your community?

The reality, however, is that not all of the evangelical Bible believing churches in a given community will have 300 attendees so let's make it a little more realistic with the following formula:

$$P - ECS = PNC$$

Apply this formula to your particular community where:

- **P** = total community population.
- **ECS** = the total number of seats in the community's evangelical Bible believing churches.
- **PNC** = people in your community who are in need of a Bible believing church.

You do the math. Using this formula, what is the value of PNC in your community?

Once again, however, the reality is that not every seat in every evangelical Bible believing church in your community is filled each Sunday. In light of that fact, let's use an even more realistic formula:

$$P - AC = PNC$$

- **P** = total community population.
- **AC** = total number of people found attending all of the evangelical Bible believing churches in your community on any given Sunday.
- **PNC** = people in your community who are un-reached for Christ and in need of a Bible believing church.

You do the math. Using this formula, what is the value of PNC in your community?

It is almost universally true that the value of **PNC** in any given community is a very significant one, revealing far greater numbers of people than the existing churches have the capability of reaching effectively.

Even in ideal situations, when every church in a community is actively and successfully reaching out to the lost, there will still be many who remain un-reached. The reason for such is often overlooked and little understood. Most towns and cities are an amalgam of multiple sub-communities. Each of those sub-communities can be identified by social, economic, racial, ethnic, generational, cultural, and various other lines of demarcation. For a church to effectively cross all of those lines in its outreach is a very difficult task.

Another factor is that every local church has its own “personality.” A church's “personality” is a product of the people who

attend and, to a great extent, the Pastor and leadership of the church. Some people in the community will be attracted by that “personality” and others will not. It’s not a matter of one personality being right and the other being wrong. God created us with diversity. We do not all have identical tastes and preferences even in selecting a church. Churches, even biblically based ones, are not like stretch socks where “one size fits all.”

When all of these factors are considered, the relevant issue is not how many Bible believing churches exist in any given community. Rather, the issue is how many people, who are currently un-reached, could be reached for Christ through the biblical ministry of an additional church.

Regardless of what formula one uses, in the light of eternity, the value of PNC is eternal in nature. It is as high as the value of the life of the Savior who died in order that, through faith in Him, all might have the forgiveness of sins and guarantee of eternal life. Every day, people who are un-reached for Christ are entering into a Christ-less eternity while believers discuss, and sometimes argue over, whether there is “room in this community” for another church that could reach the un-reached.

California Church Extension is intent on permeating every identifiable California community with the hope of the Gospel through the biblical ministry of a reproductive, IFCA International Church.

If you will do the math, CCE stands ready to assist, in a variety of ways, to do the work needed in reaching more lost people through the ministry of reproductive, IFCA International church plants.



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California Church Extension is the IFCA International church planting agency in California.

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