

## Some Basic Questions

### A Starting Place for "Whatischurch"

Mike Bishop, *whatischurch.com* editor

If someone were to ask me about my church planting strategy, here is how I would reply: More than anything else, what defines a church plant should be knowing how to ask the right questions. The following have been particularly helpful in our journey:

- What is church? (Or what did Jesus intend his church to be?)
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus (or what does it mean to be an authentic Christian?)
- Why do we really need the spiritual disciplines in our life?
- What does it mean to be authentically spiritual? (In light of the culture's definitions of spiritual - i.e. 'Oprah Spirituality')
- What does it mean to be a leader in Jesus' church?

Now some would argue that this is not much of a strategy but I would strongly disagree. Some would decry the fact that it includes no two, five, or ten year plan. Planning is valuable, but only after a proper foundation is laid. Contrary to popular teaching on church planting and leadership development, it takes more than a few weeks to build a core group. Paul's warnings in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 still haunt me: *"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."* Church planting is not fast-food, instant-dry kind of work.

But I think these questions are not just helpful for church planters, they apply to anyone who is leading or connected with a church. What do you think is the purpose of church? Why do you ascribe to the Christian worldview and practice? Why do you bother to read your Bible, meditate, pray, worship, evangelize, and gather with other believers? How do you respond to your friends who are crying out for spiritual reality? How do you lead others in this process with the heart of Jesus? These are all massive questions with answers that may take a lifetime to discover. But, the beauty is, we get to grow along the way and really learn what it means to "Follow Me."

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