

Starting New Churches with \$0 budget: Reflecting on Sponsoring Churches.

Manoj Ingle New Hope Community Church of the Nazarene, Winnipeg

Introduction:

Few months ago while I was travelling I got into conversation with someone at the airport and during that conversation this person asked me a question. "Do you really have regular houses in Canada, or do you live in Igloos?" I thought he was joking, but he was serious. He also had another serious question. "If Canadians have cars or they just use Dog sledges?" The fact is that in Canada people live in regular houses and drive cars.

As we deal with the topic of "Starting Churches with \$0 budget." A natural thought of the economic condition in North America and the world comes to our mind. The world is feeling the effects of unstable economic conditions and recession. Some areas are affected badly than others.

Driving through one of our main streets in Winnipeg and I saw a very interesting board outside one business, which read like this; "We have decided not to participate in the recession." I thought that was a great attitude to have these days.

In fact some people are still willing to spend the money, on owning valuable and precious things. Even though they are few in number, people want to own valuable & precious things in their lives and are willing to spend any amount of money to own those precious things.

** Someone recently sent me an e-mail which shows different, unconventional, modern cars which cost lot of money, and even today people are willing to pay a high amount of prize to own these high value cars.

But, as followers of Jesus Christ, we do have something very valuable, precious and important to think about , and focus on and that is; the people who are lost without Jesus Christ. The mandate given to us is very clear "Make followers of Jesus Christ."

The reality is this ; We cannot take a break from sponsoring & starting new Churches because the economic conditions are not good and take a chance of not introducing people and the world to Jesus Christ.

1. This is what I am proposing:

“We can start and sponsor new Churches with \$0 budget.” Starting and sponsoring new Churches is not entirely dependent on how we are doing financially & economically.

Like that business owner on Winnipeg’s Main Street “our Church can decide not to participate in the recession. ”

2. What I am not proposing.

What I am not proposing is that, “we start and sponsor each and every Church without any financial support.” Off course, financial support is important, and if we have financial resources available our work becomes easier in starting new Church. Though, financial resources are an important factor but not the only factor in starting and sponsoring new Churches.

But, we cannot afford to stop starting Churches because of bad financial and economic conditions.

Let me give you examples what happened in Winnipeg through New Hope community Church of the Nazarene:

1. Hecla Community Church started few years ago as our multi site Church. Cost to us as a sponsoring church was \$0.
2. Den 205 Ministries was started as our multisite ministry. Cost to us as sponsoring Church , \$0
3. Riverton Community Church was started as multisite Church. Cost to us as a sponsoring Church , \$0
4. South Asian Church was started, and cost of starting this church, \$0.

Stories:

Following are the stories of how these Churches were started and the principles we learned as a result of these new starts.

Hecla Community Church:

Hecla is 90 miles north of Winnipeg. It all started when John and Maxine Ingalls a retired police officer and his wife felt that God is calling them to serve Him by focusing on this Island community. When asked, “if God was speaking to them to serve Him in a special way? The answer was, “yes!”

They own a cottage on this Island and they would spend summer months on Hecla Island. Many people travel to Hecla as tourists during summer months and the Island is also inhabited with Locals who own their cottages and live there all years round. Most of the locals are fishermen.

As good supporters of the Church they would travel to the Church in Winnipeg every Sunday, 90 miles one way, and go back to the Island. One Sunday as they were driving to Winnipeg they realized that large number of Cars are going towards the Island and very few people are driving towards the city. They realized that something was not right and they should be where people are.

So they decided to introduce Christ to people on Hecla Island. It all started with an Icelandic family reunion, and because the Icelandic community knew them as practicing Christians, and because of Maxine Icelandic Heritage they were asked to pray at this reunion. The idea was born in this family reunion to meet every Sunday, so they started meeting every Sunday. Local as well as visitors to the Island started attending the Sunday church service.

This is a fishing community and one of their highlights is the: Fishermen's Service where they invite fishermen and pray for them before the fishing season begins.

This Church is now a well known Church not only on the Island but in the City; people do talk about the Church on Hecla Island. Government promotes this Church in their tourist promotional material.

Recently, an anchor-woman Elien Hurst of the Icelandic Television show visited the Hecla Community Church, and she did a television show about the Church to be televised in Iceland. This famous anchor was so powerfully touched by the service, and the love of God, John and Maxine reported her words as she expressed how she felt, and I paraphrase , "I have never experienced God like this before, now I know God exists, and this experience is the highlight of my visit to Canada."

Riverton Community Church:

Long time ago God called Menno and Barb Friesen to preach the word of God. This farmer couple started visiting Hecla community Church and were very impressed with the services at the Church. So one day they asked, who are you? And what type of Church is this? They were told about the Church of the Nazarene, and the Church in Winnipeg.

They expressed the call God has placed on their life. We talked with them, invited them for the New Start training. Decision was made to start a church in Riverton to impact the community with the love of Christ.

They focus on people who do not go to Church, and people for some reason have dropped out of Church. They meet very creatively around the table for a meal. Once in a month they have a special event to gather people around the table. In other words every time they meet in a month, no two services

are alike. Menno and Barb are impacting the community of Riverton for Jesus Christ.

Den 205 Ministries:

A small Church was going through major conflict and finally this conflict resulted in a church split. For Hank and Betty Brandt, it looked like there was no hope, in this difficult situation. As they prayed about the situation and asked God to lead them in the right direction, one day they found an invitation for a prayer walk organized by New Hope Church. They came for the Prayer walk and later joined the Church. As they prayed, and talked about their future ministry they were led to start a ministry for emotionally and relationally wounded people, the people most of us don't know what to do with.

Den 205 ministry is now a Compassionate Evangelism Ministry. They work with broken people emotionally, relationally. People suffering from addictions and other issues. They focus on teaching and leading people to pray so that they allow God in their life to renew their minds and free them from their pain and self centeredness. People come and seek help at this place, who would never step into regular Church setting.

Den 205 has a Thursday night service, and also weekday special classes for men, women and couples. A community of broken people and also people with deep pain are ministered.

South Asian Service:

During Summer months the City of Winnipeg celebrates a festival called Fokarama. This festival is about enjoying different foods from around the world. During this festival a group of church members asked us if we would teach them to cook East Indian food. One Sunday afternoon we got together at our place to cook Indian food.

As part of this experience we visited the East Indian grocery store to buy spices. The store owner gave me a contact of a new Christian couple who had just moved from Toronto, they did not have many friends in the City. We contacted them and they started coming to the Church.

Few months later Raj and Shakshi shared their burden about gathering South Asian people so they can worship together. We sat together and made plans for this, they started making contact with other people in the city, and on Christmas day 2006 we advertized our first service and 45 people came for this service.

Now about 125 people gather to worship God, many of them are hearing the Gospel presented for the first time. For some reason high end professionals,

like medical Dr's, University professors, Directors of Research Institutes, Business owners are coming to these services .

A South Asian community and also community of high end professionals are ministered.

Following principles we learnt as a result of starting and sponsoring these Churches.

1. It starts with a dream

Nothing will come to a realization (reality) if we don't dream about it in our minds. You probably have heard the following phrase many places many times, "we become what we think or what we dream."

Six years ago when I came to Winnipeg as a pastor I dreamt of starting multiple Churches. I had no idea how I was going to do that but I dreamt and believed in God that it is possible. Scripture tells us (Mark 9:23)

"everything is possible for him who believes."

Stan Toler in his recent book called "Rethink your life." Quotes W. Clements Stone saying,

"What the mind can conceive you can achieve."

Of course there are other factors involved, but it starts with a dream in our mind. We cannot buy dreams with money. It really doesn't cost anything to dream big.

2. Embrace the creativity of the dreams.

God gives us crazy and creative dreams, these dreams are unconventional. We should never get afraid of these dreams but we should embrace the creativity of the dreams.

Now, Winnipeg is a very steady and slow city. Life goes on at a steady pace. It is a very traditional and conservative place. (I have heard in many conversations that Winnipeg is a very tough and difficult Market. If a business is successful in Winnipeg then it will be successful in any other place.))

It was unimaginable that a traditional church will embrace a creative dream of starting multiple locations of worship. But we had to embrace that unconventional dream.

Few months ago I was in conversation with Dr. Neil Wiseman and this is what he said; "God is a Maverick. He starts unconventional things. If we embrace those unconventional things we will move forward, if we don't we will be stagnant or die."

It is important to embrace the creativity of the dreams God gives us. And He will move us forward. We really do not need big \$\$ budget for this.

3. Look for the right leaders to start new Churches.

We never hired any leader to start new Church. It is important to look for leaders who are part of the community so that you do not have to relocate leaders and spend money on moving expenses and also their salary as they start the Church.

Look for Bi-vocational leaders, retired skilled professionals, semi retired people, or even young people who already have jobs in the community and can support themselves.

But having said this, please never settle for a wrong leader anyone who comes along. It is important that the leader has 1) an ability to start New Church. 2) He has the required skills. And God has called him for this specific ministry. 3) And has passion to do ministry.

If we look for the right leaders that will save us lot of money.

4. Send your best people to start new Church

Many times we want to keep our best people working in our mother Church because they are effective and doing wonderful ministry. We do not want to lose such people who are great support of our mother Church and ministry. We just want to do ministry just for ourselves.

We have found out that by giving your best people, & leaders for starting new churches, we have received beyond our imagination, which cannot be measured in money.

This is a stewardship Principle: In Giving we will receive.

We sent John and Maxine Ingalls who were great supports at our mother Church location. If they would have stayed there we would have impacted people in a limited way, but now more people are impacted on Hecla Island and it has opened up the possibility of starting work in Iceland.

5. Help the leader fulfill their dream

Don't force your methods and dreams on them as long as the objective of presenting the Gospel is not compromised.

It is important that, sponsoring Church and pastor give New Start leader freedom to do what they think is the right method of doing things. Give freedom to try out different innovative ideas, so that they can be creative in doing what they are doing.

Last thing we want to do is to create an identical Church which looks just like the mother Church. The style and method will drastically differ based on the 1. Dreams this leader has 2. The community he is serving and 3. The local culture.

It is important that we give them the freedom and also permission to make mistakes. (People who do not make mistakes are not doing anything.) The moment leaders know that they have 1. freedom, 2. support, and 3. permission to make mistakes, they flourish.

e.g. Barb and Menno Friesen could design a Church service where break bread and fellowship together is part of the worship service. They have designed different services which they offer each in a given month. They know they have the freedom, support and permission to make mistakes, while they are attempting to reach people for Christ.

6. Share your property for starting new Churches.

If we think creatively we can save lot of money by sharing our Church property. Renting a facility involves spending lot of money. This is a major expense can be cut down and start a new Church by providing your Church property rent free.

When we started South Asian Church, people were worried about where they were going to meet? And how they were going to raise money to support the rent? Solution was very simple. We offered our building rent free.

7. Share your programming

When we share the property we found it is also easy to share other ministry programs with the new Church. They do not have to think about hiring people to run these programs.

We do share children and youth program with South Asian Church. They can take advantage of the existing program which is already available. And especially *for second generation immigrants they are least interested in worship the way their parents are worshipping*, because they are North Americans.

8. Provide workers, to go and help out in special events.

A big support comes to new Churches is when they see workers and volunteers at their special events and make the events much easier to manage.

When we provide workers and volunteers to go and help out at special events and other events it not only helps them carry out the event effectively, but they really feel supported. I think that is real sponsorship.

9. Look for upside in downturn

There is always an upside to a downturn. And it is important to focus on the upside. When things are not going well, when there is conflict, and things look hopeless there is always hope in such situations.

Den 205 ministry was born out of hopelessness, conflict, and negativity. Hank and Betty looked at the upside in downturn. They took the Church split situation and turned it into an effective ministry to emotionally, relationally broken and addicted people.

10. Focus on a specific community

While sponsoring different Churches we learned a very important principle- To focus on a specific community to start new Church. Design the services for that culture and community so that their spiritual needs are met and the Gospel is presented effectively.

1. We focused on Icelandic and tourist community at Hecla Island.
2. Farming community at Riverton
3. South Asian community with high end professionals at South Asian Church.
- & 4. At Den 205, community of people who are suffering from emotional and relational pain and addiction.

While doing this an environment of community is created by simply breaking bread together as Jesus did many times during His ministry.

Conclusion:

Jesus went after one lost sheep risking everything. Mandate for us is clear to go after the lost world so that they know Jesus. We can go after the lost world by starting and sponsoring New Churches. We cannot make the lack of "finances", the main deciding factor of sponsoring and starting Churches. If we have money, Excellent! But if we don't have money we still have to figure out ways to start and Sponsor new Churches because there are people who are lost without Jesus.

As we Start and Sponsor Churches lets tell ourselves this: "We have decided not to participate in the recession."