

DENVER CHURCH PLANTING

A REPORT SUBMITTED BY JOE BECKLER



God is at work in Denver. Our city is a place of great need, but it is not forgotten by God. Christians with kingdom minded perspectives are at work in our city. Within our local church leaders, homes, marketplace environments, and within our city government, God is at work. In my travels throughout Denver, I am convinced that God is doing something big. This is a unique time in the history of Denver, as we look to impact our city for Jesus. The question for our Mile High Baptist Association is simple: How will we join God in His work?

Church Planting News...

Funding Updates...

Church planting is alive and well within our association. Recently, Bob Ryan and I applied for \$103,200 in congregational assistance from the Colorado Baptist state convention on behalf of our church planting teams in the MHBA. These funds are specifically designated for church planting personnel. This seed funding helps our planters as they get started in the church planting journey. This funding is for a total of ten different projects. 6 are existing projects, 3 are new projects, and one request is to continue a urban church planting commitment with Riverside Baptist Church. (To learn more, see page 4)

In addition to the above funded projects, we have relationship with five other planting teams who are not receiving Congregational Assistance. These planters, along with our funded planters, create an ever growing network of leaders in Denver who are passionate about reaching people with the good news of Jesus. When you put together the number of planters associating with Colorado Baptists, it is an ever-growing force of leaders that are helping us better understand how to reach Denver.

Stapleton Project...

Stapleton is a growing community in the northeast corner of Denver county. It is a place of many challenges, as well as great opportunity. Rich and Missy Sivernell, feeling God's call as a church planting team, moved to Stapleton this August to plant *Elevate Church*.

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Visit our web site,
denverchurchplanting.org
to learn more!

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Rich and Missy, along with their daughter, live in Stapleton and are already building connections into the community.

The Sivernells have prepared for almost two years prior to arriving. Mentored and coached by Ryan Heller, pastor of *The Edge Community Church* in Southlands, the Sivernells have are prayerfully moving forward with a deep sense of burden for the community.

Along with Ryan Heller's mentoring, Ken Caryl Church serves as the lead sponsor for this new church planting project. Please be in prayer for the Sivernells as they follow Jesus in this exciting endeavor!

Reflections...

It seems that every week we have more and more interest regarding church planting opportunities in the Denver metro area. This is exciting and is also an indicator of God's activity in our city.

When I walk the streets of Denver, I feel overwhelmed and desperate. At times I feel broken and sad because of the lostness in our amazing city! This sense of burden draws me to pray. I'm praying for our communities. I'm also praying for Colorado Baptists to join God in His plan to reach Denver.

Churches plant churches. We need all sorts of expressions of church in our city. It will take all of us, working together in this endeavor. Be assured that your *denverchurchplanting* team is here to serve you in the process of joining God in His work!

- Joe Beckler

A Door of Opportunity... helping 100 Homeless Families

Mayor John Hickenlooper, Denver's mayor, sat in a meeting that included Christian leaders, as well as local homeless shelter leadership. Mayor Hickenlooper dreamed out loud with this group about solving homelessness in Denver. Christian leaders in the room took up the challenge. In addition, as far as helping homeless families get back on their feet, Denver Rescue Mission had a program with quantifiable results.

The result was development of the *Family and Senior Homeless Initiative*. This program, which has been going on for 4 years, has helped over 2500 individuals, mostly families that have hit hard times and need some help getting out of the cycle of poverty.

The program is simple and has an 89% success rate. A homeless family (or senior adult) is matched with a church. The church provides a mentor team (4 to 6 people) that coach the family over a three to five month period. The church, if feasible, also provides \$1200, which covers a rent deposit and one month's rent for the family.

The church's mentor team is trained by the Denver Rescue Mission staff. Denver Rescue Mission also works with families, making sure they meet the criteria for this program. Each family is screened prior to being matched with a church mentor team. So far, we have five SBC churches committed to this program. One of these churches has been involved for a long period. However, the other four churches are recently coming on board. So far, the four new churches are committed to helping a total of six families. That is six families that will have the opportunity for housing and a better way of life!

So why is *denverchurchplanting* involved in the homeless initiative? First, it is the right thing to do. Jesus commanded us to care for the poor. We have no choice in the matter. We must help.

Second, the Mayor of Denver is asking for our help! This is a unique opportunity for us to show our city that Jesus is the answer and that His churches will step up and help. Every family we help is a witness opportunity to the city. Every family we help increases our credibility and opens doors for church planting in Denver!

Third, the issues of homelessness this program addresses are not restricted to Denver county. Urban trends are now in our suburbs. These trends are in all our seven counties. We must act. We must show our city that Jesus' churches will step up and meet the challenge.

So what is the challenge? The challenge is for our SBC churches in the Denver area to overwhelm Denver. I am praying that our church network in the Mile High Baptist Association will help 100 families through this program. I am praying for each of our churches to seize a window of opportunity! As we serve Denver, God will grow His Kingdom. People will experience Jesus and churches will grow!

To learn more about the Mayor's Family and Senior Homeless Initiative, visit the *serve denver* link at denverchurchplanting.org.

Healthy Church Planting in Denver

Creating new missional outposts in Denver is our purpose for church planting. When North America was initially being colonized by European powers, the first structure to be installed was a fort. But the fort was not an end in itself. Instead, it was intended as an outpost of progress that would affect the surrounding territory. In the same way, we envision a Spirit-driven church planting movement that affects our communities in positive, spiritually transformative ways.

This will require a multi-faceted array of Biblical church expressions. One type of church model doesn't fit all, but the Gospel is designed to connect with every human on the planet! Healthy church planting movements are submitted to God's plans and designs. Our desire is to affect the world with the Gospel, using any and every means that God makes available!

Prayer, People, Place, Partner, and Person... Elements That Lead to a Good Plan

When it comes to initiating the process of church planting, there are several criteria we prayerfully move through in order to make a **Plan** that honors God.

Prayer comes first as we discern God's guidance in planting new churches. Under God's direction, we identify the **People** to be reached, as well as the geographic **Place** associated with target groups.

Believing that churches plant churches, we also require that church planters have at least one church **Partner** committed to standing with them through the process. Finally, we assess each church planter, making sure the appropriate **Person** is matched with the prospective planting venue.

Healthy church planting movements share common values. Below are some of the values that we use to guide our church planting strategy.

- **Believers actively praying.** Luke 10:2 calls us to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. Our local churches, burdened by the spiritual needs of Denver, have a terrific opportunity to do exactly as Jesus commands. We pray for Him to send workers into His harvest field. Denver belongs to God. It has always belonged to Him. Praying for the workers is our prayer mandate!

- **Churches sensing God's leadership to plant churches.** Healthy church planting is best initiated by churches praying for God to reach new communities, areas, and people groups. As our churches pray, the fun begins. God will answer our prayers and bring what is needed.

- **Church planters networked into proper support structures.** There are three relational support networks that we believe help our planters thrive. Each planter needs a coach, a mentor, and a network of leaders.

- ▶ The *coach* is someone who works closely with the planter. The coach is a friend, prayer partner, support, and encourager. The coach will talk "shop" with a planter. However, the coaches main goal is making sure the planter and planter's family are healthy, feeling supported, and resourced.

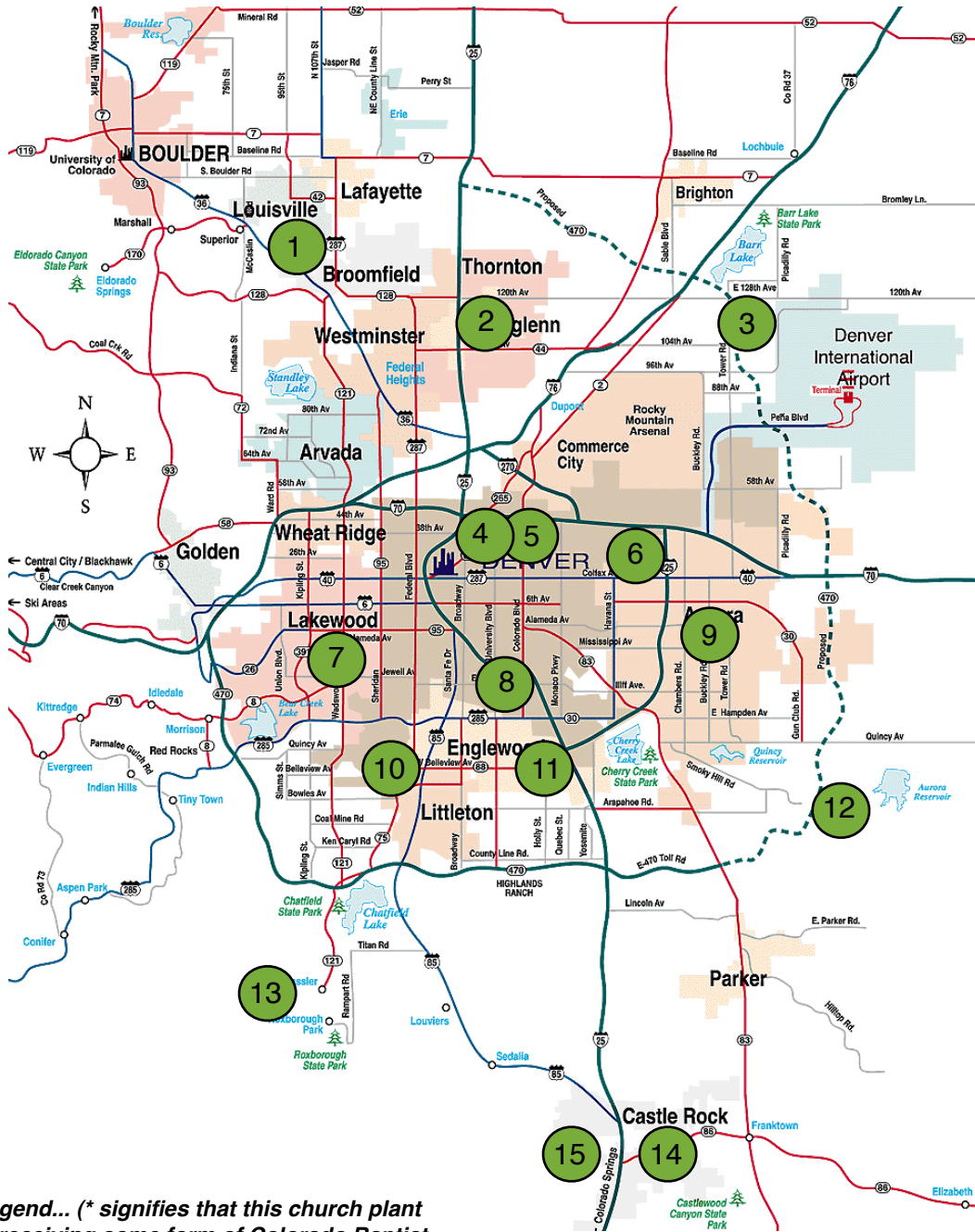
- ▶ A *mentor* is a seasoned church planter that works closely with the church planter, offering tactical advice. A mentor can address the church planting components on a "how to" level with the planter.

- ▶ A *network* is a broader group of support for the planter. A network will typically consist of other planters and church planting pastors. The network serves as a chief source of encouragement and balance. Church planting can lead to feelings of isolation for leaders. Networks create a baseline of reality as church planters learn from one another and realize they are not alone!

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:2b

Where our network of Church Planting Teams are located...



Legend... (* signifies that this church plant is receiving some form of Colorado Baptist funding.)

1. Christ Church, Scott Kelly
2. Encuentro Con Dios, Jose Tello *
3. The Forum, Jay Williams
4. High View Church, Brad Hovis*
5. Soma Church, Bryan Barley/ Andy Metzger (coming 2011)*
6. Elevate Church, Rich and Missy Sivernell*
7. Iglesia Oracion Y Accion, Carlos Lopez *
8. First Romanian Church, Dan Cuc-Capota*
9. Wellspring Community Church, Mike Morgan

10. Japanese Hope Mountain Family Church, Yoichi Mori *
11. Restoration Community Church, Ron Johnson
12. The Edge Community Church, Ryan Heller*
13. The Gathering at Roxborough, David Jarboe
14. Riverside Castle Rock, Multi-site *
15. Genesis Church, Rand Clark *

Our church planting network consists of a variety of planting teams. Some teams are funded with NAMB or Congregational Assistance resources.

Others are not funded and desire to be part of our network. Our variety of church plants are indicative of what God is doing in our midst.

In the same way that each church in the book of Acts looked different, each of our church planting projects are uniquely created by God to reach unique groups of people.

Pray for our church planters. Pray that God will help each of our planting teams discover how to offer the Gospel to people who are spiritually searching for God in our city.