

ONE PLANTS, ANOTHER WATERS.

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WRITTEN BY ASHLEY BELL

COVID CHANGED THE WORLD.

THE WAKE OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DISRUPTION WILL LINGER NOT ONLY AS A MEMORY BUT A FOREVER REALITY AS ONE CONSIDERS HOW MAINSTREAM MEDIA, WITH ITS PLETHORA OF SOCIAL MEDIA COUSINS, JUMPED ON THE BANDWAGON TO PUSH A PANIC AGENDA.

Confused messages from the scientific world helped politicians take advantage of a newfound power to control the masses. It was a season where death and despair revealed themselves as two distorted figures playing a sick duet, harmonising to their newfound dirge. The Church was massively impacted by lockdown resulting in much being put on hold until the favoured herd immunity could be reached. Churches that met in schools, hotels, community centres and theatres were worst hit, as these venues were closed to the public. When institutions plateau and no hope seems pending, it's easy for vision to leak. We forget that the Church is God's great activity in the world and whatever the future holds, one thing is certain, we need more Churches planted. God insists that we populate heaven, and planting Churches remains one of the essential tools to get this done. Jesus said that the authorities, schemes and intentions from hell would not prevail against His Church, so the future remains power-filled for His Church. Let's call the courageous and anointed to take their stand under God's eternal banner of protection

to keep at it. Yes, some will plant and others will water but it's GOD who gives the increase. This project has been written to help those who find themselves either a 'Planter' or someone who 'Waters', find their way to a place of victory and attaining their God-given dreams. I write as one experienced at both, and my subjective encounters resulted in me asking God for help. Often I have felt called to do things I cannot do. Perhaps you too have wondered at the assignment ahead, be it to plant a Church or transition the leadership of an existing Congregation, and see it as overwhelming. I have come to learn that in the midst of great adversity God proves Himself to be most spectacular. I have chosen to blend both the planting and the watering experience with the same challenges since both are about taking new ground for Heaven and pioneering new thought, change and growth for the people God gives us to lead.



THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN WRITTEN TO HELP THOSE WHO FIND THEMSELVES EITHER A 'PLANTER' OR SOMEONE WHO 'WATERS', FIND THEIR WAY TO A PLACE OF VICTORY AND ATTAINING THEIR GOD-GIVEN DREAMS.

OFTEN THE ILLUSTRATION OF A BATON EXCHANGE IS USED TO ILLUSTRATE THE HANDOVER FROM ONE VISIONARY TO THE NEXT.

HAVING USED THE ILLUSTRATION MYSELF, WHEN ASKED TO CONDUCT ONE OF THESE MOMENTS, I KNOW HOW EFFECTIVE IT'S BEEN. RECENTLY WE WERE APPROACHED BY A FRIEND WHO FELT THAT HIS SEASON FOR LEADING HIS CHURCH WAS NEARING ITS END, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER MAKING HIS CONGREGATION A SITE OF OUR CHURCH.

Sites, satellites, branches, daughter Churches, have all been a historic part of the Church's history. While methods may have changed, the idea has been floating in the Church world for decades. As a result, to even consider his request was not beyond what's considered normal for today. My prayer and preparation for this project took me to the first chapter in Revelations. The description of Jesus, with the Visionaries held in His hand, moving between the candlesticks disturbed me. Here was the high priest doing what he does best; "trimming the lamps" and giving the reason for His testimony in these Churches. He is busy nurturing and protecting what is His rightful property. His Church is never going to be mine. I keep reminding myself that, "We are the people of His pasture, He is the good shepherd, He died on the cross, He rose again and He is coming back for His bride and she will be beautiful for Him". My part is to make myself ready and also enjoy the privilege of serving His body by equipping it in the dynamics of its maturity.

RECENTLY I HAVE HAD A CHANGE OF MIND AROUND HOW BEST TO ILLUSTRATE THESE TRANSITIONS.

I think a fair comment would be to presume that each Local Congregation would have had God's word and promise spoken over it at some point in its history. This being so, we should be a lot more cautious in our quick snap-up of Local Congregations here and there. Often the motives can be carnal. The flip side of this is that many do gather people quickly, because of their dynamic personality or strength of individual gifting. Their motives could be "to be the biggest Church in the city", "size matters" or "we can be more effective with bigger numbers"....Who can argue? It's easy to feel that they have a point. I agree for the most part and feel that the least of us should be a thousand.

With these thoughts racing through my mind I began to hesitate and rethink the very attractive idea of accepting the proposal to embrace this Congregation as one of our sites. The idea of another Congregation with an already existing DNA and prophetic future became a very sobering thing. Surely this was a time to ask the Jesus of Revelation chapter 1, what He thought? His good friend John was lying face down fearing for his life at the sight of this powerfully portrayed Jesus. Having this picture cemented in my mind through persistent meditation, I began to sense that my decisions needed to be weighed up wisely in the light of whose Church this actually was.

CHURCH IS NOT A BUSINESS WHERE OUR GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE MEASURED AGAINST THE COMPARATIVE SUCCESS OF OUR CORPORATE OPPOSITION.

WE DON'T AND CAN'T STUDY MARKET SHARE AS THE BIG CORPORATES DO. WE ARE NOT TO BE THE ENEMY TO OURSELVES. FRIENDLY FIRE DESTROYS TOO MANY OF GOD'S PEOPLE BECAUSE WE ARE CAUSE-DRIVEN INSISTING ON THE WORLD'S PRAGMATIC WAYS.

I love growth and I will always support the big, large, super, and out of control. I support only what's on the top and will settle for nothing else but excellence and the best. I love the words "advance", "increase" and "technology". I love the Christian mandate "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth". I love the term "music genre". I love the phrase "more than enough". I love and live in the abundance of God's goodness. I am spoilt to be one of His sons. Yet in it all, I have also learned to be content and fulfilled with what God has for me. My boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places both Locally and Trans-globally and I enjoy the best that God has for me. But His people remain His people.

I began to see the act of handing over leadership to a Joshua as more like the passing on of a flaming torch, set ablaze by God Himself. A little more caution is required. An athlete's baton can be grasped at either end, not so with a blazing torch. This torch if dropped would not be recovered by a quick stop and fast pick up. There is only one way to recover it and that would be with caution. The DNA of promise, the history of testimony and changed lives, the prophetic future would all be ablaze with life at the end of that torch. This picture made me feel unsettled about

the inclusion of that specific Congregation as one of our sites. Its torch was still ablaze and rather than put our hand on it, we felt it would be better for us to leave it autonomous. Rather we would offer them leadership in the form of a young couple from our Congregation. An outstanding young couple who, frankly, was an ideal fit.

The release of this couple into that Congregation was celebrated by both ourselves and the receiving Congregation. It seemed that the wisdom and the fruit of the decision became apparent immediately. On another day in a different situation, we may well have considered things differently. My point being that rather than just going ahead, let's consider Him whose Church it is before we put our grubby carnal-hearted hands on His glowing candlesticks.

I HOLD A BLAZING TORCH, AS I LEAD A TEAM THAT LEADS A LOCAL CHURCH WITH MULTIPLE SITES. TOGETHER WE DO WHAT WE MUST TO STAY YIELDED TO THE HIGH PRIEST OF OUR FAITH, TO

KEEP ITS FIRE BLAZING. TRANSITION IS NEVER JUST TO BE ABOUT THE CHANGE OF HANDS, IT'S MORE ABOUT THE CHANGING AND EXCHANGING OF OUR HEARTS.

The Local Church and its people resources, make it a powerful instrument in God's hand for effective city evangelism. I have always been stirred by the following quote:

"Show me the thoroughfare in any great city, in which Christian Churches have pushed back evil institutions - back to the river's edge and into the river if possible.....To see such a city would be to see the beginning of heaven"
(J Parker).

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth"
(Acts 13:47).

Throughout my ministry years, I have regarded an autonomously governed Local Congregation as a vital part of any community's survival. They are like vital organs to the communities they are placed in. I choose to see them as the lungs of the community. They breathe in the polluted and breathe out God-given life. With that being the case, they will be subject to frequent enemy attacks. Demonic personalities will do anything to get God's people to hesitate and lose momentum.

The following is a brief opinion of what to expect when planting a Church, multi-site, or transitioning leadership from one Visionary to the next. As a scripture to springboard my thoughts from, I'd like to read Joshua chapter 9:1-2:

"And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. One other reference to this collective gathering of Canaan allies is referenced in Joshua 11:3-12: "And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. So Joshua came,



I BEGAN TO SEE THE ACT OF HANDING OVER LEADERSHIP TO A JOSHUA AS MORE LIKE THE PASSING ON OF A FLAMING TORCH, SET ABLAZE BY GOD HIMSELF.

and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them. And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them until they left them none remaining. And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded”.

Joshua having just transitioned the leadership of God’s people from Moses was now under persistent attack from these kings. They were not going to allow God’s people to enjoy their inheritance without a fight. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if folk could just recognize God at work and so back off and let His purposes be fulfilled?

LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT HEARING FROM GOD AND THEN HAVING THE COURAGE AND FAITH TO TRUST HIM. HEREIN LIES THE CHALLENGE: GOD IS HEART-FOCUSED, FOR SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT OUT OF THE HEART STEM THE ISSUES OF LIFE. THIS IS ALWAYS WHERE THE REAL BATTLE IS FOUGHT.

It’s for the hearts of men and women that Satan contends. Since our character is more important than our comfort, these journey tests

are there to build us up and make us to be a people of strong conviction and resolve. Having no opposition spoils us and God won’t allow us to be spoiled. It’s when we step out in faith and obedience that we enjoy His blessing and favour. That’s very different from appearing to be soft, preserved, and spoilt. All of God’s leaders will fight battles.....just make sure you choose the right ones to fight. If the results aren’t what you think they should be, don’t lose heart, as in due season we will reap a just reward. My observation has been that for both the planter and the one watering, these opposition spirits that existed then, are still at work today. Their motive remains the same, but their methods have taken on 21st-century appeal and appearance.

THE FOLLOWING IS WRITTEN TO HELP YOU TO SEE THAT THE SAME OPPOSITION SPIRITS THAT EXISTED THEN, ARE STILL AT WORK TODAY. THEIR MOTIVE REMAINS THE SAME, BUT THEIR METHODS HAVE TAKEN ON 21ST-CENTURY APPEAL AND APPEARANCE.

The Hebrew dialect is very descriptive and this is well illustrated in the names that were given to children and also tribes. For example, the name of God denotes His nature and His essence, the sum of all His properties and attributes. A good study of the twelve tribes of Israel and their names will reveal some insight into the point I make. The same was true for the surrounding cultures at that time and remains true even today around the world. At that time in history, names meant truths, and names were often the symbols of realities. Names given were based on simplicity and sincerity. They were drawn from a few simple sources, i.e. the characteristics of an individual or circumstances that surrounded the individual e.g. Moses “Drawn from water”, Benjamin “son of my right hand”. A religious idea of God or the gods would also be used.

These opposition kings representing their tribes, epitomise a description of what we can expect to be up against. It may be argued

that I have used a bit of preacher's license to make my point, and I wouldn't disagree. A personal example of this is the time when I was just beginning the transition into a leadership role as a Visionary Elder, and I was struggling with opposition from various quarters. When I read this text I felt an urge to use Strong's exhaustive concordance to do a search for the meanings of these opposition kings' tribal names.

I was shocked as I began to identify and link

what I was seeing on a daily basis with regards to the struggles I was having. As I began to write and identify these giants, I soon felt that I prayed with some degree of understanding. I was also able to identify who was behind what circumstance. In my challenge to lead, this study helped me form a strategy for resistance and also victory. My prayer life began to be more specific into these areas and within weeks I began to see favourable results. Here are some of the giants you may face as you go:

I. ANAK (6061) (6060) STRONG'S:

- *A necklace, as if strangling, to chain, to collar.*
- *The implication here is simple. 'To squeeze the life (vision) out of the Visionary'.*

Consider the trauma and horror of being strangled. The very action is designed to cut off your oxygen supply. Having no freedom to breathe, your vital organs are critically impacted. Your movement is restricted and you will eventually surrender. This collar and chain are designed to keep you prisoner. Notice, it's not a ball and chain but a tightly fitted collar and chain. It's more a picture of evil domination than of anything else.

Be aware of people who want to make you their possession and parade you before their friends. Being the new kid on the block, we as the new Visionary want to show ourselves to be friendly and in so doing make ourselves vulnerable and often available to people. We hope that by being available to all and sundry, we are showing ourselves to be all things to all men. "Surely that's being Kingdom-minded?" we conclude. We are duped into thinking that by "hanging" with them we are counting for God. Don't be surprised when influential people take you or invite you to dinner functions, and introduce you to their peers. In some instances, you will feel like you are on display as some religious puppet. Actually, God doesn't care for their protocol and despises their tradition of excluding Him with coarse and crass joking in their unrestricted conversation. You'll be

uncomfortable in that environment because you may have to compromise your values. You may wear the collar of a puppet and slave well, but soon you will find that it starts to strangle your God-given right to lead and envision the people.

Wearing the slave collar of a puppet makes it difficult to follow through with strategic decisions. Not every decision in leadership will make us popular and when this happens be assured that the Anaks will stand in your way with:

- ➔ *"Are you sure you have made a good call here?"*
- ➔ *"Have you forgotten who you are and who I am?"*
- ➔ *"We had something going didn't we, or was I mistaken?"*
- ➔ *"The horse I gave your daughter, the car I bought your wife, the building I just bought for the Church, the money we gave for extensions to your house!" The list is endless.*

CLEARLY, WHEN THIS HAPPENS, MOTIVES ARE REVEALED.

Don't allow yourself to be strangled by the Anak. These are people who want to be led on their own terms. Anaks are normally opinionated people whose opinions are hell-inspired. When listened to and their advice acted upon, you become strangled and enslaved. Identify the Anaks. Identify those who parade you around. You are just the puppet, they've stolen your breath. You're stymied in your decision-making. If you resolve to go God's way and not their way, they threaten to leave the Church and because of their influence, they don't go quietly. You are left afraid that the Church could split. You are collared.

No leader should allow himself to be tamed. God has put a roar in us that needs to be heard. Remember that it's always about the sheep. When we become restricted and our freedom to lead is hijacked, the sheep suffer. So for their sake, stay alert and you'll stay alive.

I remember while driving through downtown Paris, I noticed an advert for a famous shampoo

line being displayed on a bus shelter. They had taken a picture of a lion and cleverly designed and coiffed its mane into a soft-looking hairstyle. Knowing how lions should look, I was appalled by this misrepresentation. Everything bold and majestic about the lion's features was under threat by this perverted artistic impression. While scoring high on the brilliant advertising stakes, it was doing the lion species no justice at all. "Typical French!" I groaned, the most ferocious animal they have is the rooster. I felt God say: "That's what people are trying to do to you. They want to take the edge off your roar". Diluted leadership never gets anything done. Don't let the Anaks reduce you to where you feel emasculated, impoverished of life, and crippled. Just plain strangled!

THE FALCON WAS BORN TO FLY, BORN TO HUNT, BUT NOW THEY SERVE SOME RICH DIGNITARY COLLARED TO BE SLAVES LIVING A LIFE OF RESTRICTION. A VIOLATION OF THEIR DNA.

2. AMALEKITES (6002) (6003) STRONG'S:

- *Descendants of Esau (seller of birthright).*
- *The Jewish birthright was considered an honourable disposition and to forfeit it was beyond consideration.*

The Jewish definition of birthright is described in the earliest Jewish source: the Torah. Although principally an economic term, indicating preferential inheritance rights for the first-born child (especially male), it also has a wider religious connotation related to the duties of the priestly caste of Kohanim. Personal religious status (that is, "who is a Jew") is also related to birth, and unlike most

other areas of birthright law, the mother has favoured status in conferring religious identity. The earliest reference to the concept of a birthright is an exchange between Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of the patriarch Isaac. Esau is the first-born, and holder of this privilege, but when he returns famished from the hunt, he sells it to Jacob for a meal of lentils. The Torah clearly disapproves of this exchange, describing

Esau as someone who "despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:29-34). Later, when the blind Isaac wishes to confer a blessing on his sons, Jacob disguises himself as his elder brother and thereby usurps the preferential blessing (Genesis 27). Some Jewish thought suggests the following to be the practice:

"The description of the birthright in Genesis is principally spiritual, with no explicit reference to economic preference. In Jewish law, however, birthright carries a strong financial element. The first-born son receives fully double the portion of inheritance than his younger brothers would receive."

I maintain that it's the attitude within that makes us lose perspective of what is rightfully ours in a correct sense. We should value and respect our call as being God-given and therefore the need to protect it from any form of seduction. We must settle in our hearts that what we have so freely received, we must be responsible with. This was not the case with Esau. He despised his birthright! The question is how did he even get to that place?

It says of him that he despised his birthright. A deeper study on what it meant to despise one's birthright is revealed in the following definition:

A primitive root; to disesteem:--despise, disdain, contem(-ptible), + think to scorn, vile person.

In his moment of weariness, he thought nothing to disesteem that which those who don't have, admire with envy. The sale of a birthright would have been over a conversation, it appears. Very easy to do, but it would have a lasting consequence that would haunt the seller in later years. Imagine how furious his wives must have been. Which wife wouldn't enjoy a double portion to spend at the local shopping mall?

DURING A CHURCH PLANT OR TRANSITION, IT'S EASY TO LOSE PERSPECTIVE WHEN THINGS START GOING WELL. OUR HEARTS CAN

BECOME CONCEITED WITH ALL OF THE NEW COMFORTS AND IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE WE DO THE SAME. WE SELL OUT TO A SEDUCTIVE OPTION.

For me, this was about guarding my heart closely and not allowing entitlement to encroach on its horizon. The blessings and favour of God are to be enjoyed but with the understanding that it is God who made you what you are. Hold these blessings loosely. Success in ministry can result in material comfort. This sadly can make us lose perspective to the point where it now becomes our right to have what we want. The word is 'entitlement'. In a world where personal rights are being emphasised under the banner of 'new freedom and democracy', it's easy to bring this mentality into our leadership culture. We do this at great peril to ourselves and the people we are called to lead.

Actually, entitlement should not be found in our leadership style. When leaders speak of their rights meaning: 'what should be theirs unequivocally', we are misrepresenting the heart of God. Rights! ...do we have any? When Jesus says, "If any man will come after me let him deny (give up the right to your own life) himself and take up his cross and follow me", He was not offering us a career. He was calling us to a life of discipleship and service. Ours is a 'call' that lays aside comfort and convenience. Since when was it ever convenient to be crucified? To the wicked, he was conveniently crucified, but to we who understand the sacrifice, convenience is not a word we would use to describe discipleship. Someone once said: "We want a felt-padded, splinter-free cross to carry with us to our comfort surrounded world". Having said this it will be good for us to consider Paul's counsel around this issue of rights.

In 1 Cor 9, Paul claims the right to live a normal life like others (other Apostles). Eugene H. Peterson writes this chapter in a way that helps us get a very clear view of what Paul was on about. He describes Paul as ministering from a place of compulsion and not from a place of "entitlement and rights".

WE EMBRACE THE SPIRIT OF THE AMALEKITE WHEN WE BEGIN TO ATTACH OUR PERSONAL VALUE AND IDENTITY TO WHAT WE OWN, POSSESS, AND LEAD. THAT WHICH HAS COME TO US THROUGH THE BLESSING OF GOD.

When we no longer make ourselves available to visit the smaller Churches because the offerings aren't big enough. When we no longer want to minister in third world countries, where incidentally, most of the world's population live. It's in these, deprived of comfort regions, that we can remain alert to the sober truth that this world is not our home. When we like Eli, become cynical and irrelevant, as we shy away from confrontation, never wanting to upset the status quo. When we do this we would have been overcome by the Amalekites.

The Canada goose no longer feels the need to migrate. So while many do, it's equally true

that several don't. The reason is that they have everything they need given the modern city dynamic of the provision of shelter and food. This is a violation of their DNA. Designed to migrate they have allowed themselves to be restrained by the false comforts of city life. How often we hear leaders say "I've been doing this for some time and I think I deserve a few privileges and comforts!". If we encourage our people to honour the ministry leadership gift that God has given them, we may never feel tired and burnt out because the people will on their own want to reciprocate and keep a flow of life and blessing back into their leaders' lives. They are to do this out of conviction and love, never out of duty or obligation.

For us who lead Churches, Revelations chapter 1 describes our place of security and comfort: "In His right hand he held seven stars...". Let our focus be to rather cherish the divine comfort that comes from being held tightly in Jesus nail-scarred right hand. In this place, as we cherish this privilege, we will never exchange our birthright for a seductive option.

3. HITTITE (2850) (2845) (2865) STRONGS:

- *Terror, to make afraid, to scare.*
- *'They, know more than you do'*
'Sent to terrify, to get one to surrender, to break down one's fighting spirit.'
- *The psychology behind terrorism is one of intimidation.*
- *By definition: Threats and actions of harm intended.*

Intimidation has many faces. Not only does it have its obvious appearance of aggression, but it is also known to masquerade as an intellectual, very wealthy, most popular, and even very religious. But no matter how it appears, at its very heart, it desires to question you and your integrity. These carnal and evil spirits will:

Call your leadership into question. Leadership is about making decisions and sometimes making a call which you believe is godly, places you in a very lonely place. Simply because your decision will unfavourably impact them. These spirits thrive on power, especially what is illegitimate for them to have. They are so intimidating that more often than not they cause one to hesitate.

IN THEIR CHALLENGE TO YOUR LEADERSHIP, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF DEBATING THE FOLLOWING EITHER WITH THEM OR WITH YOURSELF:

- ➔ *"They have more than you have."*
- ➔ *"They are more important than you are."*
- ➔ *"They are legal so are untouchable."*
- ➔ *"They are right, so closed to anything you say."*

All suggesting that you're in trouble because they're more powerful and more influential than you are. If you have a shepherd's heart and are armed only with smooth stones and a sling when they are dressed up in fine armour and seem to have allies, all hard-hearted and angry, it's easy to feel very alone.

These carnal and evil spirits will question your calling as a 'ministry gift' to the Local Church. No surprises here as even Jesus had this happen to him. Satan said this: "If you are the son of God...." Immediately casting doubt on Jesus's mandate to be Saviour and Lord. The Jews did this all the time. The scribes and Pharisees joined in the cheers of "crucify him!". The title nailed above him, "King of the Jews" was done in jest and not recognition of who He really was. Expect these people to spread rumours about you not really being called of God. They will describe you as not moving in the sphere of an anointed person. It's easy to doubt your calling when these intimidators start their nonsense of trying to have you surrender your gifting and call. Your only place of refuge will be to lean up against the power of biblical promise.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord...that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." (Isaiah 50:10)

Take some good advice from a ship's captain:

"In fierce storms," said the old seaman, "We can do but one thing, there is only one way: we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there."

Nehemiah is a fine example of someone who stood his ground in the face of the Hittite spirit. I find myself in full admiration of his courage and from time to time I read Nehemiah 4 as a quick reference for strength. The Judeans' hurtful jibes, and sarcasm, their quick-thinking chirps and snide remarks no doubt would have resulted in laughter among themselves. "Even if a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones".

It's a big victory for the enemy if he can laugh us out of some worthy work for the Lord. As Visionaries we are fighting for the Church's continued spiritual existence, no wonder we are faced with such vehement opposition. Our roar should be like Nehemiah's, "Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!"

The reason for their intimidation can best be described as follows:

- ➔ *To get us to hesitate and slowly exchange our faith and confidence for doubt and uncertainty, and then ultimately to have us surrender our gifting.*
- ➔ *The merits of being filled with the Holy Spirit and carrying God-given enablement for leadership is devastating to Satan. His influence is greatly diminished when we are filled with faith and courage. He will do all he can to break down our fighting spirit.*
- ➔ *A courageous leader is confident, decisive, firm, and determined. Intimidation is designed to get us to falter on these virtues.*

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING DEMONIC STRATEGY.

These steps are seldom rapid and are designed to work themselves out slowly, thereby guaranteeing a near-impossible recovery.

1. INTIMIDATION

"THREATS OF HARM INTENDED."

These threats will manifest in a variety of ways. Here are some biblical examples:

a. Goliath

The brutal, those who have a reputation for war. Arrogant bullies. Unrestrained in their lust for domination they will settle at nothing less than your total downfall. They brag about their ability to bring those in authority down. They thrive on conversations where they look good. They are egotistical self-opinionated monsters in suits or dresses. They are incapable of sincere friendship and do very little for themselves. They pride themselves on being untouchable. They are self-acclaimed messiahs relieving our world of its evil. They are hero-worshipped by those of a similar spirit. Cursing is not far from their blood-thirsty mouths and they will advance with sword, spear, and javelin, declaring their trust in the pact they have with themselves and their ability. They are not selective or discerning about who they fight as their ego is insatiable, and as far as they are concerned every battle is theirs to win. They carve their names forcefully on all apostolic debates, bullying people with their selfish opinions and self-centred theology. They love the sound of their own growl.

b. Lion

Royalty and prestige are their identity. They prey on the weak and unsuspecting. When you are injured, expect to be ambushed from their craftily camouflaged lairs. These are masters at surprising you when you least expect it. You are left asking yourself "Where did that come from?" Be assured that the attack will be quick and unsuspected, and it will leave you bleeding. Its regal appearance hides its aggression.

c. Bear

The loner, now you see them, now you don't. The infrequent and inconsistent Church attender. Bent on their own survival. Not a team player. You never know what they are thinking. When challenged they rise up and strut their aggression. Just having them around makes one feel uncomfortable as you never seem to know their motives. You just have a bad feeling about them. Others speak well of them and it almost silences your caution about them. They make a point of avoiding you and their presence is more restricting than liberating.

d. Fiery Furnace

The red sea, the lion's den, the Jordan in flood: all of these seem like certain death. The overwhelming heat of the fire, the sound of the wind howling as it holds up two solid walls of water, the impatient hungry lions pacing the floor waiting for their next meal, the rushing gurgling surge of floodwaters sweeping away everything in its path. All very intimidating in appearance. All blocking a path to freedom and what was promised. Designed to have you surrender and admit defeat in the face of their noisy aggression.

e. King Saul

The javelin thrower. The person who will take his own family down. An insecure leader who would rather please the masses than make a stand. The coward. Once cornered they will justify their actions with clever speech "But look I kept the sheep to sacrifice to the Lord...". His was a self-preserving apology given to appease his conscience. They are timid in the face of real battles, happy to turn their back on you in your hour of need. Given the chance and even while being ministered to, will seek to throw a javelin at you. You find yourself doubting their consistency and struggle to trust them, always wary that they could turn on you. These are those who cannot say sorry. Apology and pride are incompatible and only one, not the other, was to rule in King Saul's heart.

f. Herod

The prophet killers. These are weak people who have no desire to submit. Flawed in character like a spotted hyena they will make alliances with the enemies of the Church and have no value or appreciation for Kingdom things. These are those who say they are believers but stay outside any Local Church commitment. Their lack of understanding of Kingdom dynamics does more harm to the Church than good. They have their own version of Christianity. They are happy to lead but know nothing of submission themselves. They have access to much and wield great power and influence but are ignorant of spiritual things. They listen to other seducing spirits and carry out their own desires, which will always be to hurt the Church. They are 'cause' driven and often embrace, or even lead a vendetta against the leadership.

g. Jezebel

Similar to Herod this person wants to stifle any prophetic edge you may have. While I'm sure it's possible to have men make good Jezebels, for the sake of where I'm going, let's keep her in a skirt as scripture does. Cow-like in their posture they flutter their made-up eyes. Their long, lifted lashes weighed down with 'special offer' mascara. Their botox-riddled lips protrude and signpost their unfaithful past. Their speech is laced with cobra-like venom to lure unsuspecting leaders who become mesmerised by their plastic beauty. Once they have befriended you, they drip-feed their seduction through compliments and flattery. All the while anaesthetising you to their wicked agenda, which is to hijack our worship and to replace it with their false gods of compromise and seduction.

h. Wolves

These are those who hunt in packs. Preferring to "copy by email" their pack of followers with their self-righteous initiatives. Their 'social media world' must know how hard they are trying. "Look at my email of sincere endeavour, and look now, how I have been rejected". Lifting its hindleg, it marks new Church plants with its acid-filled urine. They are sly and drip

with arrogance and independence. To align yourself with this pack will be detrimental to your freedom. They howl their threats from a long-distance about your inability to lead and offer advice that if listened to, will have you abort your divine God-given purpose.

i. Religious Systems

The denominational spirit is a most murderous spirit. This is what put Jesus on the cross. When did it ever change? It's still intent on nailing the Church to a cross. You will never change the heart of a religious organisation. Jealousy and comparison are at the heart of any man-made religious structure. It only takes a decade or two before something fresh becomes contaminated by personal ambition and politics. You can be constitutionally correct or biblically correct, the choice is yours. Legal ramblings and high court action are all too frequent in recent times. What happened to the urgent plea given by Paul to the Corinthians, "Rather be wronged!"?

j. Deserts

Parched and harsh in its temperament, little survives its ways. Extreme mood swings, cold then hot. Everything looks the same. It's a place of no shelter. Consistent attack. Certain death looms but for a miracle. No help, loneliness, and despair are your only companions.

k. Thickets of Jordan

Parched and harsh in its temperament, little Are just that. Impassable, an extremely dense intertwine of foliage that by all accounts seems impossible to penetrate. Sheep would become trapped in these thickets, thieves, robbers, and fugitives could make their dens and hide undetected for months in these thickets. A blanket of scratchy opposition covering the ground, purposefully obstructing your vision. It would be best to get a blazing torch and throw it in the thicket and watch the muck spill out driven by the heat and smoke.

All the above personify our challenges as a Visionary. Maybe if you lead a Church, you will understand.

2. HESITATION

A natural response when afraid. Any threat to our lives, family, or that which is sacred to us results in a brief moment of hesitation. We consider the threat, and how we respond determines whether or not we believe that the threat is real and potentially lethal, or harmless and can be easily overcome. The hesitation that allows for regrouping of thought is wise, as we can then change our strategy with every intention of overcoming the threat. It's when we hesitate and get stuck in the valley of indecision that we find discouragement and failure simply overwhelming. Once we entertain these threats and see them bigger than God, we slow down and our future dreams begin to dissolve and disintegrate.

3. LOSS OF MOMENTUM

Momentum is necessary for any job or task. Momentum is described as the propulsion that results from drive. When something has momentum, it can become a run-away train. Picking up speed; its mass and acceleration creates drive that makes the train unstoppable. This is also true for Church life. We work so hard to get momentum and when we become distracted by these illegitimate threats, we often lose what we tried so hard to get; the vibe that contributes to life and family, the excitement that God is doing things in the Congregation. Arriving at the meeting and feeling a sense of expectation and anticipation is very special and needs to be protected. Intimidation is designed to have us take our foot off the accelerator completely and surrender to its threats. It always amazes me how when we are succeeding, someone will think of a reason to stop us from enjoying our victories. Momentum is essentialdon't forfeit it for anything.

4. FRUSTRATION

The beginning of questions. Now what? All the effort, sacrifice, and money, the beginning of questions. Frustration is an emotion expressed when we realise an injustice has been served on us. Feeling hard done by, we can easily get discouraged. All the questions become loud and seem to persist while stubbornly denying us any peace. When we stay here, we automatically begin to doubt ourselves.

5. CONFUSION

Next, we face the gauntlet of many voices. Some stronger than others. Rumours abound, speculation persists. Did we do the right thing in the first place? Surely we heard God on this? Everything becomes urgent and one becomes drawn into crisis management. With emotions at unreasonable levels, we easily become unsure and doubt ourselves, resulting in confusion that is crippling to any possible recovery.

6. DIVISION

Disunity has ugly tentacles and a "house divided " means just that. There is now no common purpose. It's a case of hope deferred making the heart grow faint. What was going to happen, isn't. There is now a polarisation around different leading opinions. With the loss of hope, there will be a loss of faith.

7. UNBELIEF

Loss of hope leads to loss of courage leads to loss of faith, and paralysis comes through remorse-filled analysis. One is now forced to compromise and take the softer option which is the beginning of the end.

8. DEATH

A betrayal of purpose results in an aborted inheritance and eventually one forfeits the original mandate. A tragedy that undoubtedly has eternal consequences. The dream is finally buried. It's easy to doubt your calling. Satan would love to see us give up. Satan would love to see you discouraged and sprawled out on the heap of knackered and gutted pastors. His demons keep watch over this sad heap of wounded warriors shouting accusations and indictments, asserting blame on your bruised and tender shepherd's heart. The Hittites will gather themselves and heckle your efforts. They are difficult to love. My greatest victories over this motley crew would take place in the prayer closet while reading God's word aloud. I'd boldly declare the promises of God over myself, my family, and the Church.

4. PERIZZITES (6522) STRONGS:

· *'Inhabitants of the open country'.*

THESE WOULD BE SHEEP COMING FROM OTHER PASTURES AND HAVING ENJOYED A DIFFERENT DIET, THEY ARRIVE WITH UNSETTLED HEARTS.

Their nomadic ways and attitudes unsettle our flock. They sound foreign, they bleat differently. They practice 'looking through the keyhole' Christianity. They can tell you what you preached about but never engage fully, and seem to hold back on full integration into the Church. They keep their distance and never become sons or daughters in the house. They continually make comparisons with what you are doing and with where they are from. They love their difference and hold onto it as an identity. When they speak they sound forth another vision and other values i.e. "Well, I've been around, I'm well-travelled and in my experience, this would work better." They will suggest improvement but from the platform of their being disconnected.

FOR ME, THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE ABOUT FOLK WITH NOMADIC HEARTS IS HOW THEY INTERACT WITH NEWLY SAVED FOLK IN THE CHURCH.

They make it their business to share all their personal Church disappointments with these new converts. Their unbridled tongue oozes offence from their bitter hearts, resulting in contamination of the new convert or member. The result is that often the victim is beyond recovery. They will want the benefits of your Local Church but will never offer loyalty to your mandate and to those you partner with. They presume that they have the power to even suggest that we break partnerships with those that we have walked with for many years.

These nomadic types won't commit, submit, serve or preserve. It's not in their theology to tithe or even pray for the preservation of the ministry you lead. They are not team players and have no understanding of team. They want community and recognition but won't embrace any responsibility or honest commitment. They gravitate more towards parachurch initiatives because it's in that forum that they are celebrated.

Have you noticed that parachurch disciples generally won't allow you to confront them? They struggle with Local Church Eldership authority. This is usually based on the fact that they themselves are seemingly successful in their own initiatives. They are cause-orientated Christians, always carrying an opinion or a heavy emphasis on something else.

God's pattern is that Local Congregations led by Elders linked in team with Eph 4:11 'office gifts', equip the Church. Elders govern the Local Congregation by bringing direction, doctrine, and discipline. They do this by functioning as Overseers, Shepherds, and Visionaries. These Eph 4:11 'office gifts' that Paul speaks of should themselves all be rooted in a Local Congregation. These would be by description Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.

By being the Lead Elder, ('Lead Elder' describes function rather than another Church leader title) one assumes leadership of the team that leads the work, himself being one of these aforementioned gifts to the body.

These individuals could also be folk who share in the dynamics of Eldership, or they could simply be working their Trans-global and local itinerant work from a Local Congregation. To be based somewhere means that you feel and know that you are celebrated and loved by that community. They pastor you and when not travelling you attend meetings there.

SOME OF THE HALLMARKS OF PARACHURCH MOVEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(I write as a pastor who has to deal with the fruit of these organisations. This is not made-up detail, it's personal experience):

- *People who have spent any length of time in these organisations keep their parachurch identity.*
 - *They market what they do as a commodity.*
 - *Draw support primarily from Christians who are not excited by Local Church vision.*
 - *Draw God's people into their cause, especially new believers.*
 - *Invite financial support which very often includes a tithe.*
 - *When Local Church Elders want to move on to something special, these folk are already distracted so can't be depended on.*
- *Parachurch rarely builds towards the Local Church Eldership. Their fine-sounding argument is "We provide tools for the Church". True, but we must consider the fruit and how it impacts on the Local Church. Truth that is one degree off is no longer truth. There can be no such thing as adjusted truth. My opinion is that there will in time, be a greater working together around an understanding of Local Church as a priority for sustainable Trans-global work. Let's be praying that that day hurries towards us as unity around God's ways is essential for effective Kingdom extension.*

5. AMORITES (567) (559) STRONGS:

- *Publicity i.e. prominence in the sense of publicity as mountaineer.*

Gordon Macdonald speaks of 'Invitations to the false mountain tops of prominence and publicity'. Seemingly legitimate, but at its very heart, it's a distraction.

WE NEED TO FIGHT THE RIGHT WARS.

Dudley Daniel, a true apostle of the 21st century, wrote a book on 'Choosing Your Battles'. This means that I put effort, energy, gifting into the right thing. Where have I invested my time, treasure, talent, and travel?

Satan tried this with Jesus. He offered Him the world and instant popularity. All were temptations that certainly would have given Jesus a reputation. God has seen to it that there is no easy way for leaders to enjoy mountain top experiences. We will all at some point experience struggle and challenge. Being effective in the Kingdom is acknowledging that we are at war and that there will be casualties. There are no easy soft victories in the Kingdom. The old adage of "The bigger the challenge, the sweeter the victory!" is also true for Kingdom battles.

THESE OFFERS ARE OFTEN MASKED WITH 'NEED' I.E. "WE SO NEED YOUR INPUT!". IT'S HARD TO NOT FEEL THE PRESSURE WHEN A PROPOSAL IS SATURATED WITH NEED.

As pastors, we instinctively want to help. However, we sometimes legitimise our help with a selfish motive i.e. "This will give me more profile in the city or community I am trying to reach". Don't get me wrong, some God opportunities will come our way, and we pray for those doors of great effective ministry to be opened to us. This is a little different because it hides the enemy's barbed cunning subtleties. The Church Universal grows leaders who will be confident, passionate, and carry a conviction for being who they are. This is a rare find in the world. World leaders are trend and event-orientated. They change their colours like a chameleon. The sons of Issachar not only read the cultural seasons but knew what to do. So when one of our leaders arrives on the scene, showing a bit more initiative than others in the same room, they are immediately noticed. ..."Let's give them the responsibility" is the world's cry. This was true of David.

"Then the Philistine princes came out to battle, and when they did so, David had more success and behaved himself more wisely than all Saul's servants, so that his name was very dear and highly esteemed."

(1 Samuel 18)

WHEN YOU DON'T RESPOND TO THEIR NEED, THEY WILL REACT TO YOUR UNWILLINGNESS AND DESCRIBE YOUR CHRISTIANITY AS BEING IRRELEVANT.

Their offence will leave a smell in the Church and affects those close enough to be tainted by their self-indulgent bitterness. But to accept their invitation to their false mountain top will leave you stranded alone and exhausted.

"I do not accept praise (doxa: approval) from men, but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts."

(John 5:41).

6. CANAANITES (3665) (3669) STRONGS:

- *A peddler, merchant, trafficker.*
- *Hoseah 12:7-8 (New King James with commentary).*
- *"A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress. And Ephraim said, "surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my labours they shall find in me no iniquity that is sin." Implying one whose business practices are dishonest.*

Canaan [Israel—whose ideals have sunk to those of Canaan] is a trader; the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loves to oppress and defraud. Ephraim has said, Ah, but I have become rich;

I have gained for myself wealth. All my profits shall bring on me no iniquity that would be sin. [But all his profits will never offset nor suffice to expiate the guilt which he has incurred.]

A NEW CHURCH PLANT WILL NEED FINANCIAL INVESTMENT.

Financial breakthrough comes in proportion to our faith most times, and since Paul speaks about the fight of faith, don't expect this to be easy. Ours is a calling where we lay down the opportunity to make money.

The opportunities to invest unwisely are sadly plenty. Often it's folk in the Church who are the biggest wheelers and dealers and we can be easy prey for these mugsters who infiltrate our ranks. As you begin ploughing the fields of transition and pioneering, these people suddenly appear and propose their 'quick fix' plans and schemes. These options always sound appealing especially when we are under pressure to provide for our families and pay salaries to staff members on time.

THESE FOLK ARE NOT NORMALLY FAITHFUL WITH THEIR TITHE. THEY MAKE PAYMENTS IN KIND AND WILL GIVE A GOOD REASON NOT TO TITHE.

I realise I stand on toes at this point but my intention is to help you as Visionary identify those in the Church, who ultimately want a Christianity on their terms. So while they do give, their giving is normally well within their means. These are people who embrace a withholding spirit. This feeds their rebellion and demonstrates a lack of trust in the leadership of the Church and your ability to steward the finances well. Often they want to be involved in the administration of the Church's finances. Their reasons include that consideration be given to your youthfulness or inexperience in money matters. While both may be true and factors worthy of mention, we should never feel the pressure to involve such types in our financial decision-making. They will inevitably be controlling and you will find yourself restricted and having no freedom to move. Allowing them this level of involvement will feed their withholding spirit. It takes faith and trust to tithe and courageous men and women will. Wheelers and dealers will speak big numbers but never necessarily give according to their speech...

HAVING SAID THIS, MAY I HASTEN TO SAY THAT WITHOUT DOUBT, GOD WILL PUT SOME VERY GENEROUS FOLK INTO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AT STRATEGIC TIMES.

The initial planting and site pioneering or transitioning of leadership being such a time. These will be folk that are God-sent and their giving has no strings attached. They are folk who immediately seem to have a heart for the new plant or feel to support you as their new leader. Their generosity is accompanied by a happy heart for you and the new style that you may bring into the region or Church. Appreciate these folk and never take advantage of their generosity. Theirs is a God-given gift that can be easily exploited, so help them to live out their purpose in a way that results in it always being a blessing to themselves and their beneficiaries.

On the subject of generosity, it's important that you as Visionary must be the one who sets the example. Don't be slow to pay for meals, be hospitable, be a giver, be a tither. Don't be the victim, rather be front-footed when it comes to being generous. For good reason, Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive. The people need to see that this is a revelation to you.

PLANTING A CHURCH REQUIRES FAITH SO EXTEND THIS FAITH INTO YOUR GIVING. ENJOY THE FRUIT OF YOUR LABOUR BUT HOW ABOUT PLANTING A FEW TREES FOR YOUR FUTURE AS WELL? DON'T ALLOW STINGINESS TO SUFFOCATE YOUR SEEDS OF GENEROSITY.

7. NEPHILIM (5303) STRONGS:

- *A feller i.e. a bully or tyrant- giant. A fighting spirit. Descendants of Anak.*

This can refer to the strong man in the region. "Ruling spirits in the heavens" (Eph 6) As much as I have personified and described persons that will come at you, let's not forget that behind each one is a dark personality of influence that is well described in the aforementioned text.

AMAZINGLY, GOD HAS PROVIDED US WITH WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

These being the virtues of obedience, faithfulness, humility, passion, and courage. The smooth stones that David found in the brook were sufficient to bring down Goliath. These virtues are all best displayed without fanfare and trumpet call. I don't tell the world I'm obedient, faithful, humble, courageous, or

passionate. It's not in the display of virtuous pageantry that these are appreciated but rather in the closet of prayer that they are built, formed, and fashioned. But to have them is essential in the whipping of demonic strategies and personalities. Each one of the five virtues mentioned are giant killers in and of themselves. Obedience is described as being better than sacrifice. God is said to give grace in abundance to the humble. Faithfulness is one of God's splendid attributes and is the word used to describe His integrity to the children of Israel. Courage is what we see manifest on the cross. Passion is what hallmarks the acts of the apostles. Show me a humble servant and you show me a servant with the other four virtues relatively mastered. For me, these are the five stones I picked out as necessary to bring giants to their knees. There are many more, I'm sure, and it would be a good exercise for you to discover what works for you in your region.

8. HIVITES (2340) STRONGS:

- *A Villager.*
- *People with small-town thinking "Local is lekker! (Afrikaans for Nice)". "Locals rule!" a sign I was familiar with as a pro surfer.*

This parochial graffiti is never innocent. My competitive surfing days took me to many beaches and localism was never a pleasant experience. The protection of a local surf spot is always done with aggression. Stories abound of aggressive locals wanting to keep their spot to themselves. Localism is selfish in its inherent desire. 'Locals rule' simply is an announcement "No Sharing here! so why don't you just go away?"

Written into the heart of surfing is the 'Surf Safari', the deliberate quest to find new spots to surf since travel and surfing go hand in hand. To be strictly local is contrary to the surfing ethos.

THIS IS EQUALLY TRUE FOR THE CHRISTIAN.

In Jesus's last words to his disciples, He said that we were to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. He wanted us all to travel. Yet many believers don't even have the most basic essential for travel, a PASSPORT.....! "Oh! but that's only for those with a missionary call!" I hear you exclaim. The best way to evangelise a community is to plant Churches. We need everyone to be available to be a global blessing. God's people are to be a blessing to the nations. Why is it that the only time we think of travel is when it comes to sport, entertainment, and leisure? This will change as the Church realises that our primary call is to the nations. We don't do Jerusalem only, or 'Jerusalem first' as some would say. We do them all, at the same time. We will see the day when we are releasing more and more folk into the nations just as they did in the book of Acts. Paul never travelled alone, he seemed to always have 'fellow workers' with him. This is evidenced by the expression of gratitude he gives in his letters to numerous people, either sending a greeting or describing a partnership. Further research shows that many of these folk were travel companions.

WE LIVE A DIMINISHED CHRISTIANITY WHEN WE DISMISS THE CALL TO THE NATIONS AND SEE IT AS ONLY FIT FOR THOSE WITH ADVENTURE IN THEIR HEARTS.

The reasoning to stay local is well justified by many with fine-sounding arguments. i.e. "There is so much to do in my city! I'm not called to wear a grass skirt and have a bone through my nose. My culture is so different from theirs.... the sacrifice is too great! One day the Lord will lead me but it's not today". The reasons given for you as Visionary to not travel will also be amplified by those small-minded folk. "You're out too much!". "Does your wife have to go with you?". "What about your children?". "It costs too much!". "Why does the Church have to pay, why don't you pay for yourself?". The reason to perpetuate a Church planting culture will be resisted with: "We can't afford to lose that couple, they are too valuable to us!". But actually, God wants us to empty our showcases every now and then.

HE WANTS US TO CUT OFF THE GOOD FRUIT-BEARING BRANCHES THAT WE ARE SO PROUD OF AND GIVE THEM AWAY TO BE GRAFTED IN SOMEWHERE ELSE.

I remember being part of the leadership of a ministers' fraternal and the proposal was put forward that we all buy burial sites in the city as a demonstration of our commitment to the people in that city. I declined as that would've been in violation of our Christian DNA. One day, before God, you may need to explain your lack of interest in Acts 1:8. But let's leave that there for the moment as this project is designed to help those who have already responded to a call to Church plant. That call may well have taken you into a foreign culture. Well done! May the Lord bless your obedience to His global heart. "For God so loved the world ..." & "Make disciples of all nations ...", says it all, doesn't it?

It all begins in Genesis 12 with Abraham responding in Genesis 12:1-3:

"NOW [in Haran] the Lord said to Abram, Go for yourself [for your own advantage] away from your country, from your relatives and your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you [with abundant increase of favours] and make your name famous and distinguished, and you will be a blessing [dispensing good to others]. And I will bless those who bless you [who confer prosperity or happiness upon you] and curse him who curses or uses insolent language toward you; in you will all the families and kindred of the earth be blessed [and by you they will bless themselves]."

In fact, even Jesus was not committed to staying in one place and when people tried to get Him to stay He declined and insisted that He be about his Father's business. One time he even described His persistent mobility by saying that foxes and birds had holes and nests but He had no place to lay His head. This being

indicative of His call to stay mobile. When we plant, we should live as if we are there forever but in our theology, there should be a door ajar that enables us to respond to the nations' call. Reflecting on God's global heart is not an excuse to pack up and go when things get tough. We endure as faithful servants, fully aware that whatever abilities we have, God has given us. Remember one will plant and another will water but it's God who gives the increase. Yes, we do want to see his work established in a city or region, but being truly apostolic and prophetic means being available to respond to His call to the nations immediately. Having done both, a plant and also a leadership / Visionary transition, and now multi-sites, I have made sure that Acts 1:8 still burns like a fire in my heart.

SMALL THINKING HAS NO PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN HEART. SMALL THINKING OPPOSES THE BIGNESS OF THE TRANS-GLOBAL.

Strangely this was the biggest war to fight. Bringing a heart for the nations into comfortable communities was not celebrated. Comfort and convenience are our golden calves in a first-world context.

JB Phillips makes this statement about the First Century Church and how it looked by comparison with its shift in conviction and leadership over the years. He takes a two-handed grip of a two-edged sword and smites hard with it. He says that the book of Acts as we have it is a picture of the first-century Church before she became both fat and short of breath through prosperity, or muscle-bound through over-organisation. This Church, he adds, did not "say prayers, it prayed in the Holy Ghost; it did not write articles of faith (to be signed by its members), it acted in faith; it did not gather groups to study psychosomatic medicine, it healed the sick....."

IT'S TIME FOR US TO RETURN AND HAVE A COURSE CORRECTION AROUND OUR CHARTER OF SUPERNATURAL OPERATIONS AND CHURCH PLANTING.

Let's be praying for Heaven's touch on our lives.....It's never going to be easy in this world, but that's why God gave us the Holy Spirit. His empowerment and enablement are essential in our reflection of the Father's global heart. Don't allow the HIVITES space in your diary....you will never change their selfish hearts.

9. GIRGASHITES (1622) STRONGS:

- *Patrial*
- *Self-appointed fathers from the fatherland. The very self-righteous. Representatives of the so-called 'Hurting'. Declaring bravely and boldly that they are the "Voice for the people!"*
- *The Absaloms: "Now if I were leading this Church, I would make you a leader "*
"If I were you, then this is what I would do. I'm not saying you must do it my way, but the way you were treated, you have reason to be offended."

Their choice of words and phraseology are 'The people', 'They', 'Most', 'Everyone'. These are folk who seem to have the inside story on everyone's grievance. They have elevated

themselves to 'Supreme caregiver of all', and from their lofty position will prescribe upon you their inflated opinions on how the people should be pastored. These are selfish

gatherers, wanting to nurse an insecurity of self-importance. Very often they are deeply religious and legalistic.

THEY ARE OPINIONATED, POMPOUS GURUS WHO LOVE THE SOUND OF THEIR DARKENED COUNSEL.

They are the corridor whisperers always having a meeting after the meeting. If ignored, they will leave. Let them go, as to have them around will only result in great heartache. They will never share or celebrate the victories in the Church. They are not happy people and will never set you up for victory, it's contrary to their self-importance. You may have their heart but they will never have yours.

10. JEBUSITE (2983) STRONGS:

- *Trodden i.e. Threshing place.*
- *These are those who have been trodden on, the hurt, the used, and abused.*

REMEMBER THAT IT IS TO THE DOWNCAST AND THE HURTING THAT WE ARE CALLED.

This remains our mandate as spelt out in Luke 4. The hours of ministry and love that needs to be invested in a relationship with someone who is struggling with a terminal illness cannot be measured. It's our labour of love to endure their painful moments. To trust God for healing and then living with the disappointment of realities around each person. The rollercoaster ride of emotions, the elation of victory, then the comfort to those who mourn. The hours spent in counselling a couple struggling with issues in their marriage is possibly never enough.

However, there are those that the devil will send just to overload your pastoral reserves. These are the very draining people. They never get healed. Always the victim and always insensitive to your private time. It's like they nurse and rehearse their hurts. Anyone who will listen to them gets the whole download again. You can see them make a beeline for a visitor or some poor patient soul and it leaves you cringing. Generally, they have done the Church tour and you happen to be next on their list of unsuccessful (to them) Churches. This being so, only because they have exhausted everyone

and now it's time to move on. Someone said; "Hurt people hurt people". These folk are usually unrelenting and inflexible when it comes to ministry for themselves. It's all about them and also, when not ministered to adequately, are usually quite unforgiving. Their mess is always going to be their message!!

JESUS CAME TO SET US FREE FROM ALL BONDAGE. SO WHILE WE MUST STAY FREE WE MUST ALSO KEEP OUR PEOPLE FREE.

"Free people free people". Brave, courageous leaders are what people follow before they follow vision. Remember the vision of the Local Congregation that you lead is not as much before you, as much as it is in you.

When you choose to lead God's people, resign yourself to the fact that it will be a tough assignment and it will cost you everything. Don't let anyone distract you from taking hold of what you have been called to possess. What Heaven has given you no one can take away from you. (John 3:33-34)

AN HONOURABLE EXIT PATH

TO OBEY THE 'TO CHURCH PLANT CALL!' "IS THIS FOR ME OR SOMEONE ELSE?" ... CAN TAKE MONTHS OF INNER TURMOIL.

Do you think it was easy for Mary to say “yes” to the will of God? To being pregnant out of wedlock, when it meant vulnerability to misunderstanding. To ridicule when it could mean possible rejection by her fiancé or even being stoned to death? It was not easy for Mary, but because she was willing for God’s will, she was greatly blessed by Him. She was given the great privilege of bearing the Son who became our Redeemer. We implicate our reputations, both ours and our families when we choose to obey His will to serve His purpose in our generation. It makes sense then that much prayer and careful consideration be given to whether or not God is calling you. However, if you go, the exit from your Local Church is very important to your future success.

THE EXIT PATH CAN OFTEN BE LITTERED WITH HURT FOR BOTH THE CHURCH PLANTER AND ALSO THE PLANTING CHURCH. HERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT A PLANTING COUPLE SHOULD BE CONSIDERING AS THEY LEAVE. IN A PERFECT WORLD, WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO SUGGEST THIS.

Not everyone may feel as positive about your future as you do. When things are not in place, it can become a silent scramble where both parties will feel they have to grab onto what they feel is legitimately theirs. This is usually motivated by insecurity, relational legitimacy with folk in the sending Church, selfish ambition, and fear.

Even the distance and proximity of the planted Church to the sending Church often determines the measure of aggravation of the aforementioned. Scratchy Church plants are not always preventable, and in some cases are inevitable as the planters go through a real

rollercoaster of emotions as they prepare to leave. There are days in the build-up where they will feel very inspired and full of faith. They will hear messages that inspire them to think that anything and everything is possible. This can result in a state of mind that persuades them to think everything is going to be cool, and they won't need anything or anyone. Then, the exact opposite can also be true as the day fast approaches. One wobbles a bit when consideration is given to some of the 'What ifs' that get hinted at, and one's emotions can somersault a little. It's in these times that we can do insensitive things that will impact both yourselves and the sending Church. To be honourable requires humility.

“So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you.”
(1 Peter 5:6)

Remain faithful where you are. It's how you finish that matters to your integrity. Without integrity, people (especially pastors) will become wary of you. You must try and finish strong. This can be tough if there is negative support for your plant and being of the opposite spirit will take much patience and grace. I must turn the other cheek to 'insecurity manifestations'.

IF IT APPEARS THAT A BATTLE IS LOOMING, REMEMBER DAVID.

When David took on Goliath, he faced him as a shepherd and in shepherd's apparel, not in Saul's armour. Your greatest strength in any battle is to hear from the Father daily as to what strategy to employ.

HERE FOLLOWS SOME HELPFUL COUNSEL FROM MY EXPERIENCE:

Refer all nomadic sheep back to the Elders and any others who may have heard about the pending plant, and who now are indicating a desire to be part of it.

The Elders must be allowed to pray about the release of these folk. The Elders up to now have been responsible for these sheep and out of respect to Kingdom dynamics, it's healthy and wise to honour this. The last thing you want when you plant is to have high-maintenance people in your pioneer team. Don't go for numbers, it will set you back and be counterproductive to the plant.

Disclose to the Elders all financial gifts and tangible benefits from the planting Congregation that may accrue to you along the exit path.

A secure Eldership will appreciate your openness and transparency. The people-resources are for the Kingdom but God has put folk specifically into a Local Church and it's in or for that context that the resources should be enjoyed. People laid money at the apostles' feet so that they could steward it for the Kingdom on their behalf. Such action requires trust all around.

Trust God for your provision, not the Congregation or the Elders.

The principle of trust around finances is key to growing in leadership maturity and integrity. The very beginning is a good place to start when it comes to your financial integrity. The exercise of laying money at the apostles' feet was intended for Kingdom expansion. The context was blessing out of what one has, as well as sacrificial giving. But it's up to the Local Church Eldership to decide on the release of funds to yourselves. Don't be "On the Take", it's guaranteed to backfire.

However, let it be known that funds for the Church planter can also arrive from sources outside the sending Church. These are to be enjoyed and seen as God's provision for His work through these different sources. Let it be at your discretion should you desire to inform the Eldership of any additional blessing. The Eldership integrity would be at stake if they negatively used any volunteered information to influence a financial decision they were still to make regarding your plant. The facts are that while the plant is imminent, people from outside the Church will hear of it and may want to start giving. An insecure Eldership will not enjoy the fact that others recognise your move and are willing to offer financial support. In this regard, disclosure will be like casting pearl before swine. The exact opposite would be true if they were secure in themselves. They would rejoice and celebrate the goodness of God towards your obedience and be delighted by God's goodness to you. If this is the case, it would be helpful to even suggest that these bonus funds be channelled through the sending Church's bank account. If not, it's a good idea to open a separate account where those financial blessings can be deposited. Ideally, you want to be transparent on every level when it comes to finances. But the reality is that everyone will have an opinion. Don't let any generosity or some self-appointed benefactor block your line of sight to a generous God who has called you. Allow the Lord to build your faith and trust in Him.

Give fair warning of your departure.

This begins with an initial sharing of your dream. Throw in some possible dates for this to happen. Begin to work yourself out of 'a job' (if in leadership). The Elders need to be looking to fill any vacuums left by your pending departure. It's not your place to appoint your replacements over casual coffee dates. Make suggestions to the Elders since you know the people that you have worked with.

Don't recruit at all from the flock.

Subtle hints and special greetings to select folk, the wealthy, popular and stable, can be seen from a mile off. Those who recruit often deny it, but word is out that you tried to scoop one of the sheep.

A long stay in the Church after the plant has been made official will prove to be a big mistake.

When folk see you, they will want to talk about your plant and how it is progressing. Sheep mean well, and sometimes their actions only aggravate an already fragile relationship with the Elders. You'll be amazed at how sensitive these things can be. Depending on how secure the Eldership is, request a meeting with the folk that the Eldership team has agreed to release to the plant. In this meeting, require of them that they fully support the sending Church and not to save their tithes for the new plant. You'll be amazed at how their grace will also begin to wear thin and this makes them vulnerable to unhelpful decisions that they could make.

When you leaveLEAVE !..... Don't linger. Get on with it. Too many farewells are not a good idea. Don't trade on relational legitimacy and hang around. The truth is your relationship with the folk in the sending Church will change. God has given you your own relationship sphere, so get on and develop it. Once you are in your own planting zone believe me you won't have time to connect with folk from the sending Church. Whatever pastoral energies and reserves you have should be preserved for your new sheep. You will be consumed with pastoring "both" of them (Ok ok just joking there may be a few more). These thoughts are especially true if your plant is a 'close proximity' plant. On that point, if convenience is a motive for planting, then perhaps you shouldn't. If it's where your faith is at, then pay careful attention to the above paragraph.

Convenience, defined here as:

- ***"I don't have to give that much up!"***
- ***"I won't need to relocate!"***
- ***"No impact on kids schooling !"***
- ***"It will provide an income quickly!"***

Don't expect anything from the planting Church.

You may go with nothing. No money support, no people support, and even no prayer support whatsoever. From day one don't let anything block your line of sight to a God who loves you and has promised to provide for you. In some instances, you could be better off without any support. God may well have a surprise in store for you.

Having said that, don't do it alone.

No need to. List those of respectable Eph 4:11 reputation who are in support of your pending plant. To begin with, these will be those that you will be referencing. They will have faith for the plant and will be your frontline support initially. As you become your own person, you will begin to tweak adjustments to who you relate to. These Trans-global giftings will be both fertiliser and accountability references for yourself. Accountability to a structure never works. Accountability to an individual or several individuals would be far more beneficial. I do recommend that you have primary relationships and don't think that you'll just relate at a casual level and on an, "as I need you basis ". You will be flirting with disaster.



"NOTHING IS EVER DYNAMIC UNLESS IT IS SPECIFIC"

- Ash Bell

I ASK CHURCH VISIONARIES:

- 1. WHERE ARE YOUR ROOTS GROUNDED (NOT HISTORICAL ROOTS), BUT WHERE ARE YOU GETTING LIFE AND VISION FROM?**
- 2. WHO DO YOU PARTNER WITH? THESE ARE RELATIONSHIPS WHERE YOU CAN GIVE GENEROUSLY OF YOUR RESOURCES?**
- 3. HOW DO YOU KEEP THE MAIN THING, THE MAIN THING?**

(See my project on the "Legitimate Storehouse")

Partner with specifics in mind. I can relate to whoever I want to, (I have a relationship with Legend, my Golden retriever), but partnering is different and at the Church I currently lead, we have a history of bringing Eph 4:11 gifting

and giving them a platform in our city. With some we have friendship and with others, there is a real partnership. From the list of gifts mentioned in Eph 4, decide who can come alongside you in a co-Eldering role. Too many

voices in the early days will be unhelpful, as each voice could carry a different perspective.

REMEMBER GOD HAS RAISED YOU UP TO LIVE OUT WHAT HE WANTS FOR THE COMMUNITY, AND THE SUPPORT ONE NEEDS IS MORE IN THE FORM OF A SOUNDING BOARD AND SOMEONE WHO CAN HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE TO THE CALL OF GOD ON YOUR LIFE.

My personal opinion is that there can only be one leader, and the person in the role of co-Elder is not to be this to the Church. When I co-Elder I defer decisions to the new Visionary and get his thoughts first. If I feel differently, I should willingly give my perspective and allow them to make the final call. Lessons are never learned if there is no space to discover for one's self what actually works. Risk is required when learning to ride a bicycle and removing the support wheels is key to final development and confidence. One remains near enough to shout correction but it's both thrilling and satisfying when you see they are getting the hang of steering on their own.

TO THE ELDERS, I WOULD SAY, "DON'T HOLD THE PLANTERS BACK".

TO PUT THEM IN LIMBO INDEFINITELY WOULD BE DAMAGING TO BOTH THEMSELVES AND THE ELDERSHIP TEAM. THE REASONS FOR A HOLDUP WOULD HAVE TO BE AROUND THE FOLLOWING GLARING DEFICIENCIES:

-  ***The planters being ill-prepared***
i.e., theologically unsound, EQ deficient, not a team player, a novice or inexperienced in leading, marriage woes, socially inept, personal financial mismanagement e.g. debt. There may be debt but the question really is 'How has it been handled?'. Has responsible action been taken to pay it back? God doesn't punish obedience. If every effort is made to rectify the situation, then those are good signs, and consideration should be given to what's honourable (There is always a reason for debt and it's not always irresponsibility that gets you there). The 2008 world financial crash is a good example. Sickness in the family can result in an unplanned debt overload, but the point needs to be made all the same. Financial strain will rob you of all your creativity. This is one area where a Church planter's faith needs to grow. There will be times when " you will need to raise the dead financially". Looking at the Church finances will often bring you to your kneesmy view is that this is a good thing.
-  ***Undisciplined children.***
Who needs a Devil to keep the people away when we have your children doing his work for him.
-  ***Wife not convinced.***
If your wife is not with you, it's simple.....DON'T GO !!



Trail of relational hurt not dealt with.

You've heard the saying "Hurt people hurt people". You can't plant with unresolved relational issues. Some relational disappointments don't get fixed up to the point where the relationship may have been before. But there can be a breaking of bread moment. Who's right will be settled in heaven. The point is to do what's up to you to do in terms of the relationship's value. The scripture says to mark those who cause division, so it's simple, I'm not going to try and pursue a relationship with someone who is divisive. If there is a trail of broken relationships and you think you can plant, let me say to you, in your arrogance, that the path up the Church-planting mountainside is too narrow for you to be carrying any extra baggage. Frankly, you have suffocated your future by an inability to fix up where you have wronged. To be at peace doesn't mean that you now have a future together. Difference is a virtue and style may well have been the reason for the unhappiness. Look around you and you will see that there are some people that you will never work with, that's just how it is. Let's not confuse unity and togetherness. Tie two cats' tails together and throw them over a suspended line and you have togetherness but not unity. There are some folk that God will knit your heart with and then there are others with whom you won't feel the same liberty. It doesn't mean you are in a bad place, it's just reality that a partnership is unlikely to be formed with those people.



Rebellious or independent-spirited.

Normally this can be seen easily. These are folk who are always questioning, always shirking hard work. These are folk who want someone else's inheritance. These are folk who find it difficult to serve in the Church but want people to listen to them and also serve them. These folk are not worshippers as they usually carry their own agenda in their hearts.

A DISAGREEMENT ON TIMING IS NOT ALWAYS TO BE PERCEIVED AS REBELLION BUT RATHER A DIFFERENCE IN FAITH LEVELS.

"ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH SO BE IT....". THE PLANTERS WILL QUICKLY FIND OUT IF THEIR HURRY TO PLANT WAS INDEED FAITH OR JUST AN OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC BOLT OUT THE STARTING GATES.

This is a long-distance journey, not a sprint. These lessons need to be learned, so let them be learned. Sadly, sometimes it's at everyone's expense. Those who have planted will know that when the light turns green, often it's skid marks on the tar!! All you can think of is the plant. All you want to speak about is the plant. You become obsessed with the dream. It, therefore, becomes a huge challenge to keep

your focus on the thing that's fading. One's heart turns quickly and due consideration should be given to these bumps on the exit path.

Sometimes the Elders don't feel that the Church is in a good place to release the planters i.e. it may be too soon after a previous plant and the Church may itself be in a

leadership transition. A 'life dip' in the Church and the plant is perceived as a legitimate runaway. Insecure Elders will often blame a 'life dip' in the Church on your Church plant. Maybe there is inadequate financial provision for the plant and the supporting Church is waiting for a financial windfall. All are situations that may make Elders hesitate to show too much enthusiasm towards the new plant. These things need to be talked about. If the planters feel to go despite these dynamics, then it is advisable to release them because keeping them back will only result in tension on the team. Talk through and try and resolve what should take priority.

A COMMITMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN FROM BOTH SIDES ON A PREFERRED EXIT DATE, THEN THERE IS MORE HOPE OF PRESERVING FRIENDSHIP AND UNITY.

Our experience at the Church I currently lead has been that folk who plant out enjoy great levels of support from us relative to where they have planted. The mood and tone of their plant also inspires what the Eldership have had faith for. Several folk have left prompted by the call to plant and because they have been sons and daughters in the house have been celebrated when leaving with blessing and honour. The truth is that there is not always a similar desire from them to reciprocate in the same way. We have discovered that once they've left, they seem to forget their beginnings and choose to walk with "others". From the appearance of things, the "others" are more celebrated, even if there is no history or shared journey. The "others" receive greater celebration and honour and even get given preference in enjoying the fruit of the new plant. This can result in disappointment and mystery as no reasons are necessarily given. Those who go, are eager to get on with the task and so they should be, and perhaps in their new focus, no thought is given to the sacrifice and generosity of the congregants who were encouraged to support their new venture. So the rejoicing of the new plant and its Kingdom endeavours are done from a relational distance and also hearsay from others. In a perfect world,

courtesies are not forgotten.....but there is a big gap between the ideal and the real. Having said that I do believe that freedom should be given for planters to discover their own style and also now that they are eating with the grown-ups they will make their own choices from the menu of apostolic movements and personalities. And so they should, but never at the expense of honouring those who supported their plant with money, people, prayer, or any other resource deemed helpful at the time. So while some do fit this description, most are still intentional about including us into their futures. These are perhaps deserving of additional support and strengthening and fortifying their Kingdom efforts would no doubt help bolster their influence in the regions they find themselves. After all, it's together in honourable partnership that our futures are wrapped up in Jesus.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT WE CAN SCRIPT OUR FUTURE BY THE SEEDS WE SOW TODAY.

What we sow today determines the look of our future. Personally, I want to work with folk who I know have sown good seed. Actually, this determines whether one has a future that is spacious. When we criticise people, we so easily sow those very same seeds in our hearts. It's just not worth putting all your effort into relationships that have limited their future by sowing tainted seed.

Honour is nowadays being forfeited by ambition. People are ambitious to start, and their ambition blinds them to Kingdom courtesies. Don't let this happen to you. If you do, you will drag a big anchor into your future. At some point, you will hit a ceiling until you rectify your past. Who wants to follow someone with a glaring moment of dishonour tucked away in their history? There is a blessing in an honourable exit. Try and leave with honour. Unfortunately, we don't strike it perfectly and the insecurities and selfish ambition in both the Planter and Eldership team doing the releasing can spoil things.

TO THE VISIONARY/SENIOR PASTOR AND ALSO TO THE PLANTER I SAY THE FOLLOWING:

CHURCH PLANTING IS TO LET GO!

It does not mean to stop caring, it means if you stay you stagnate:

Visionary/Senior Pastor:

Don't keep what belongs to God. Empty that trophy cabinet of fruit-bearing leaders.

Church Planter:

Leave the comfortable and convenient...God has big things in store for you.

It means to start the adventure.

Visionary:

To be bumped out of the nest is part of growth and maturing

Planter:

Stagnation results in a bad smell. Things don't grow where there are too many who fit this description.

It is not to cut myself off, it's the realisation that I can't control another.

Visionary:

My support is from a distance. I'm not leading you anymore, you are eating with the grown-ups.

Planter:

Appreciate where I've come from. Greater freedom, greater responsibility.

It is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

Visionary:

The path called experience is filled with victories and disappointments. In the releasing of the planter, there will always be something new to learn.

Planter:

As you start out, you will live with the consequences of the decisions you make. Pray for wisdom as there is much to learn.

It is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

Visionary:

It takes faith to release but there is a comfort in that Jesus said He would build His Church.

Planter:

It takes faith to plant but there is a comfort in that you have been called to do this and the Holy Spirit will enable you to enjoy what God has promised.

It is to care for, and to care about.

Visionary:

The Great Commission. To care means that I prioritise leaders being raised up and released into what God has for them to become.

Planter:

It's having prayed and declared, "Woe is me if I don't do this". The realisation that people matter to God. Praying about whether or not to Go is actually the wrong prayer to pray....Pray about whether you should be staying. Jesus has already told us to GO!!!



**"PRAYER BLOWS WIND INTO THE SAILS OF
PROPHETIC PROMISES"**
- Ash Bell

It is not to fix, but to be supportive

Visionary:

Opportunity not to interfere but to be available to give perspective and not permission. Often it's to ask the question "What do you think?" Rather than provide a solution.

Planter:

Don't bow to the temptation to be everyone's messiah. Give a man a fish and you feed him a meal, but teach him to fish and you provide him with a sense of purpose.

It is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to effect their own destinies.

Visionary:

Give opportunity for prophetic destiny to unfold and make space for God to work His purpose through the Church you lead. Be hands-off on the new things he wants to do through those whom you feel to release. Jesus is the high priest of His Church and allow Him to trim it as He wants.

Planter:

Prayer affects and brings destiny closer. It's good to occupy the middle ground with prayer rather than organisation. Some say the Devil is in the detail but I say we are to remember that God is in the promise. The fact is God is in the detail as well. Expect the suddenlies after the steadilies.

It is to permit another to face reality.

Visionary:

Someone risked with you and no one is perfect. Leaders often grow into their new function so even while they may appear unready...time proves differently.

Planter:

It doesn't take long to realise deficiencies and one quickly comes to terms with the fact that you are not as good as you thought you were.

It is not to criticise, but to allow them to become what they dream they can be.

Visionary:

It's always sad when we have to demonise folk who think differently from ourselves. To broad-stroke the planter as independent is very harsh. Let's not confuse independence with being capable of thinking and acting for oneself in a certain matter.

Planter:

Your call to Church plant should include those with whom you feel to work with. There is no sin in that noble desire. Rather it's an acknowledgement that you prioritise partnership and accountability as essential to the successful outworking of your Church plant. Be careful that your ambition doesn't spoil your desire to honour those who have loved you. Don't be independent!!!

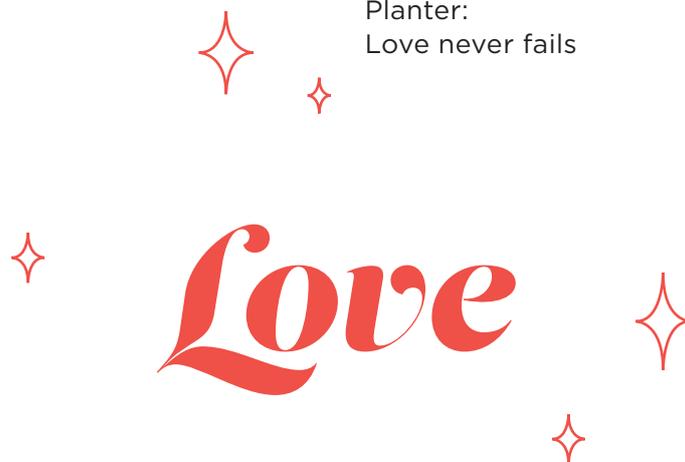
It is to love more.

Visionary:

Love never fails.

Planter:

Love never fails



IT'S THE VIRTUE THAT GOD IS BEST KNOWN BY.

HE IS ESSENTIALLY THIS IN NATURE AND BEING. WE ARE BAPTISED WITH LOVE WHEN WE ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, AND AT ALL TIMES LET'S REMEMBER THAT OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE, THE GREATEST IS LOVE.

Finally planting a Church takes courage and faith in a big Generous God!!! But it's for eternity and so it's worth it.

Go and do it and remember that you can only have what Heaven gives you. Don't force the hand of God to do what you want. God's hand can't be forced. If you go it alone, it will be at great cost to yourself and to those who go with you. We waste our resources, our energy, and our time.

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Go and do it and remember that you can only have what Heaven gives you. Don't force the

hand of God to do what you want. God's hand can't be forced. If you go it alone, it will be at great cost to yourself and to those who go with you. We waste our resources, our energy, and our time.

*“John answered, A man can receive nothing [he can claim nothing, he can take unto himself nothing] except as it has been granted to him from heaven. [A man must be content to receive the gift which is given him from heaven; there is no other source.]”
(John 3:27)*

And just by the way "When did you last lead someone to Christ?"...Your answer to this could well determine how successful your plant will be.

ONE PLANTS, ANOTHER WATERS.

* — *

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY BELL

NC
CB

For any more information, please contact
us at the church office between **8am - 4pm**
T 011 704 3051 | **E** reception@nccb.org.za
W nccb.co.za
