

SEVEN MODELS OF PARENT CHURCH PLANTING - John Sweetman

While churches are often planted by individuals, usually a church plant has more access to resources and a greater chance of success if it is planted by a parent church. But sometimes the relationship between the parent and the plant can be difficult because of differing expectations. This article outlines seven different models that can be used for a parent church plant. My suggestion is that the initial model be agreed on by both the parent church and the church plant.

THE MODELS

1. *Base/satellite or multi-site model.* The parent church replicates the church in a different location. While a different size may necessitate a slightly different structure, the church plant is a clone of the parent and remains under the authority of the parent. The preaching is often by video, streamed from the parent.
2. *Cell church model.* The parent church plants cells in communities. These cells operate according to a structure decided by the parent church and are accountable to the planting church for their operation. Resources are usually pooled and are under the authority of the shared leadership.
3. *Multi-congregation model.* The parent church plants separate congregations that target different groups and operate in different ways. Congregations remains committed to most of the core aspirational values of the parent church and pursue an aspect of the vision. Staff members are usually accountable to the parent church. Resources are usually pooled and are the responsibility of the parent/whole church leadership.
4. *Networking model.* The parent church plants a congregation that decides on its own structure, leadership and vision. However, the congregation remains committed to most of the core aspirational values of the parent and therefore benefits from a strong relationship with the parent that may include forms of accountability, support and guidance.
5. *Multi-church model.* The parent church plants a congregation that may use the same building/resources, but pursues a different direction and has different core values. Basically the plant is an independent church, but some measure of coordination is necessary because of the shared facilities.
6. *Supported church plant model.* The parent church initially plants and resources a congregation that then runs independently of the parent in a different location. The parent church usually has limited authority over the plant, but may continue to support with resources and pastoral accountability or be approached for help and guidance.
7. *Independent church plant model.* The parent church does not solely initiate the church plant, but may offer resources and support to the church plant. The plant could be initiated by individuals, the denomination, or a cluster of churches.

POSSIBLE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENT

Responsibility for	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Initial Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Ongoing Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?
Relationship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	
Values	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Pastoral Appointments	✓	✓	✓	?			
Vision	✓	✓	?				
Finances	✓	?	?				
Structure	✓	✓					
Preaching	✓						

POSSIBLE AUTHORITY OF PARENT

Final Authority for	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?
Values	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Pastoral accountability	✓	✓	✓	?	?	?	
Staffing	✓	✓	✓	?			
Vision	✓	✓	?				
Budget	✓	?	✓				
Structure	✓	✓					
Leadership Appointments	✓	?					
Operation	✓						
Teaching	✓						

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