

Reports of Church Plants

1. Vital Point - Ron Baker

Vital Point is a church plant with a different plan to bring the good news. It's a multi-church site that reaches thousands of people who are exploring and growing in their knowledge and commitment to Jesus and His Church."

The main site is in Poplar Hill, near London, with Ron Baker as the pastor. They have another site in Exeter with a simulcast from Poplar Hill. David Baker is the community connector there. They hope to open another simulcast site in Clinton.

What they see happening right now is a significant move amongst the younger millennials and older gen Z. Recently they did their own internal conference and had 8 Fanshawe College students volunteer and help run it. One girl said after the first night, "I had no idea church was for young people." In both current sites, there is a growing passion to walk with Jesus. They are seeing new, unchurched people and churched walk together learning to follow Jesus. Many are inviting and bringing friends to the weekend gatherings. There's a hunger right now in the community that they have not seen in a long time.

18 adults and 10 children were baptized last year. The Connect Groups grew from 7 in 2021 to a current 40. They have moved to a gift based church where it has its greatest impact when people are discovering, developing and deploying their gifts.

Church planting is something that they believe was beneath the surface of VPC and in 2018 God really made it clear for them, specifically in rural, small town Ontario. They have this sense that they can help turn the volume up so more will hear the message of Jesus.

2. The Bridge - John Vander Stoep

In this church plant they have reached out to many in the community of Fergus through some activities. Working with other churches and businesses, they were able to make 500 meals to go for those marginalized people.

The pandemic was an opportunity to use zoom for worship and for discipleship groups and they found the level of vulnerability and confession of sin enhanced because they were on zoom. Making the transition to keep the vulnerability as they started meeting live after vaccinations happened was at first a challenge but they felt that God used all these things together to help them develop a DNA that is honest, humble, open toward each other's differences, and eager in their mission to love their neighbours in practical ways.

For the past two years, the planter has gained all of his income through real estate and this has allowed them to remain financially solvent; they have money in the bank, have not received any funds from outside the plant for two years (other than a small grant that subsidized part of our meal program), and are not requesting any funds at this time.

They are in the midst of a "Kingdom Experiment" where each household has been given \$200 and asked to pray for God's leading on someone (not an organization) to serve/help/encourage -- a pretty cool little exercise that is helping them rely on God's leading and prompting them to serve others for his glory.

3. The Journey

The last two years have been challenging because of the pandemic. For the longest time they could not meet at their rented facility so they met on zoom. This was a blessing as it gave them the opportunity to get to know their people better.

They engaged in a simple form of worship gathering which included songs, kids' time, sermon, and sharing time (where they all reflected and shared what God might be saying to them through the Scripture and sermon). They have since been able to meet in person again at their rented facility and they added Livestream. Due to the current restrictions, they are back to meeting online again.

Late last year their congregation voted to name Toyosi Awesu as the lead pastor. They are looking ahead with hope and renewed vision of what God has in store for them and is calling them to work together as a church community.