

## **A Church That Plants Churches**

River Oaks Presbyterian Church has grown through the regular proclamation of one central message:

**Sin has left you more broken than you ever feared, and God has loved you more than you would ever have hoped.**

Every problem a Christian faces comes from a failure to understand or apply that message correctly. We exist to reach people for Christ and to equip them to serve. To accomplish that goal, we encourage everyone to find and love a church that preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ clearly. We believe that we as a church can facilitate that goal by planting churches.

## **Why Plant Churches?**

River Oaks plants Churches to Reach the Lost. The United States continues to become more urban. Small towns have lost the ability to produce the necessary jobs to maintain their population. Young adults find it necessary to move to cities to find work and the schools they desire. Metropolitan areas such as Tulsa must continue to plant churches to keep up with the demand of a growing population. The Tulsa Metropolitan Area is projected to add 100,000 people per decade for the indefinite future. Planting 20 churches per year would only keep up with that pace. Of course, we cannot plant 20 churches a year, but we must not foolishly believe that one church will ever grow big enough to meet the needs of our city. In addition, statistics show that multiple churches do a much better job of reaching a growing population than single large churches. For instance, a church that adds 20 members a year will have 400 members at the end of 20 years. But through multiplication a church that plants 1 church of 20 people, which the next year plants another church of 20 people, and so on for 20-years, will have reached over 10-million in the same period of time! Of course that kind of pyramid growth is unlikely, but the statistics give a sense of the kind of outreach unleashed by church planting. Finally, un-churched people are attracted to new churches. A visitor feels at home more quickly in new churches. As a matter of fact, statistics show that 80% of the members of new churches have no previous local church affiliation.

## **How Does Planting Affect Leadership?**

Planting Equips More Leaders! New Churches give committed people a chance to lead early. Established Churches inevitably develop ensconced leadership. A Church only needs so many leaders. Once those positions have been filled, the recruitment and training function of the church tends to decline. Church plants offer officer training to completely new and sometimes unexpected groups of people. More

people take the responsibility of ministry upon themselves, serving as teachers, leaders, deacons, elders and pastors.

### **How Does Planting Define a Church?**

We Plant to Create Better Defined Churches. Every Church has a personality-- choosing its own areas of focus. The sharper focus a Church maintains, the more capably it has of reaching its goals. Having more churches planted will allow us to have some churches focused on discipleship, others focused on fellowship, worship, missions etc. We do not dream of seeing ten clones of River Oaks in Tulsa one day. Rather, we hope to see ten very different churches reaching a wide range of people.

### **How Does Location Help a Church Plant?**

It is easier to be a vital part of a Church that is close to your house. Ideally, it will increase your missional living if you worship, work, and go to school near your home. It is much easier to invite someone to a church near their home, than to one the next town over.

### **How Does Church Planting Protect Pastors and a Congregation?**

Nothing has proven more detrimental to the Church in our generation than the cult like status afforded pastors of big churches. Having a college of 10 pastors all serving churches of 300 members provides each pastor with a cloud of mutual accountability that facilitates a healthy spiritual life. How is Church Planting a Blessing? We plant to bless our congregation actively engaging in the mission of Christ through planting Churches brings great spiritual blessings, but there is a more selfish reason. According to Ed Stetzer, when a mother church plants a daughter, on average the mother church grows 22%. We have already seen higher growth than that since we launched the Owasso church. According to that statistic, if we continue to have 350 per week in Worship until we launch our next church, then we should expect 420 in worship the year after we launch. We think there are some secular reasons to account for this growth, such as increased name recognition and market optimization. But primarily, we think God loves Churches who plant Churches.

### **How Does River Oaks Plant Churches?**

We plan to plant churches using a team concept. Our increasing community will maintain close ties. We hope to share as much administration cost as possible, even sharing office space when it is convenient. We may even share executives in the future if feasible. As a team we plan to work together to train church planters, and to plant a new church every 3 – 5 years. Currently, we are working to plant a church in

Midtown Tulsa under the leadership of Pastor Beau Berman, an Ordained Dallas Seminary Graduate, who has served as an Associate Pastor at River Oaks Presbyterian for approximately two years.

**Where Will We Plant Churches?**

We hope to see a minimum of 10 Churches planted in the Tulsa Area in our lifetimes. We hope to reach these areas: Tulsa Midtown, North Tulsa, Jenks, Broken Arrow South, Broken Arrow North, Sapulpa, Bartlesville, Muskogee, West Tulsa (Sand Springs, Gilcrease) and South West Tulsa Riverside. In addition to these locations, we also hope to see varieties of types of churches including: a racially diverse South Tulsa church, a Spanish Speaking Church – in progress and at least one African American Church among others.