



"There are no little people in God's sight, so there are no little places."

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

SMALL PLACES PLANTING

2020 PROPOSAL

MISSIONAL IMPORTANCE

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Jesus' home town was a small, insignificant place. The bulk of Jesus' ministry was to small towns — Paul went to large, metropolitan areas. Both are missionally substantial! Rural America numbers 42-60 million souls and is relatively unreached. Rural America has the highest rate of suicide because of hopelessness caused by joblessness, poor education, generational patterns. These factors also contribute to the epidemic of opioid and meth addiction.

42
MILLION
souls in rural America

GOSPEL FOOD DESERTS

In most urban centers, the poorest areas are food deserts. That means there is no access to a quality supermarket within the geographic area. People are required to get their food from dollar stores and convenience stores. Since people still eat, they receive terrible nourishment which leads to a host of other health problems.

The rural south is often gospel-less. It is a gospel food-desert. Many of these towns are overpopulated by Jesus-plus (fundamentalist) and Jesus-minus (liberal) churches.

There is almost no gospel-centered presence. The people are spiritually hungry, so they still eat. But they are not eating the healing food of the gospel.

SMALL PLACES CHURCH PLANTING PROPOSAL



"How many...invisible, names, powerless little places are there in this world? All the world, as a matter of fact, is a mosaic of little places invisible to the powers that be."

JABER CROW

OUR STRATEGY

We want to target small towns with a population of 20,000 or smaller in Middle Tennessee. For instance Lewisburg, Lawrenceburg, Pulaski, Shelbyville, and Fayetteville.

Each church will begin as a traditional daughter church of Zion (with ZPC acting as the provisional Session). The church planter must be approved by a church planting assessment center. His first year will be spend identifying a place, fundraising, and recruiting people from within Zion.

Trust is a commodity in small towns. So, we want to give a man some time to develop relationships. Initially, we want to give him a five year timeline. Our dream is to plant every three to five years.

Eventually, we think that we need to develop and train men from within the church plants to stay in the area. So, we need to consider alternative educational models like LAMP for seminary education. Also, bi-vocational ministry will be important for sustainability, but also for credibility.

Because of our structure, we are able to handle some things that will reduce costs and facilitate ease. Our business office can handle receipting, donations, health insurance, shared non-profit status, etc. We can leverage our strengths for more productive church planting efforts.

OTHERS WHO ARE DOING THIS ALREADY

Village Missions. "America's rural communities need loving, caring, compassionate pastors who serve in places that may feel isolated or are even struggling to keep their country churches alive. When a pastor invests in his community and builds deep relationships, he cares more deeply about the people's physical, emotional and spiritual journeys."

www.villagemissions.org

Small Town Jesus. "Small towns are big mission fields that are almost totally neglected by modern church planters & leaders. City ministry has become, for many, the definition of godly ministry. However, we need to hear a call to take the gospel everywhere, big or small, because that is what Jesus told us to do. Small towns are facing brokenness and pain that only the gospel can solve. Culture needs to be engaged, leaders need to be raised up and church members need to be taught how to be missionaries."

www.smalltownjesus.org

Small Town Summits. "Big cities and suburbs are considered more strategic, more influential, and more desirable places to live and work. After all, they're the centers for culture, arts, and education. More and more people are leaving small places and moving to big ones...But the gospel of Jesus is often unstrategic."

[A Big Gospel in Small Places](#) by Stephen Witmer.

**TAKING THE GOSPEL
WHERE IT IS
NEEDED**