



mna

Mission to North America
Presbyterian Church in America

*“The single most effective evangelistic methodology
under heaven is planting new churches.”*
- C. Peter Wagner

Alan Foster
CHURCH PLANTER RECRUITING DIRECTOR
Mission to North America
Presbyterian Church in America



God's Plan

The local church is the hope of the world.

- *The local church is the visible expression of Jesus. The hope of the world is not found in physical solutions, but in spiritual ones. The world needs Jesus.*
- *The local church extends the Kingdom of God throughout the world, one community at a time.*
- *The local church communicates God's power and his love, person by person.*

God has chosen the **local church**, with all of her faults and flaws and failures, to represent him in the world. God's people are gathered through evangelism, the gospel is preached from the Scriptures, worship takes place, believers mature into faithful disciples, and the Great Commission is carried out in word and deed through the local church. *And so, the great need of the hour is to plant new local churches.*

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Jesus promises to build his church even to the point that the efforts of Hell will not succeed against it (Mt. 16:18). But in doing so, he uses men. Called, gifted, trained, and equipped church planters are needed to plant new churches.

If we are going to take seriously the Great Commission, we must plant new churches. To not do so is simply not an option.

The Need

The *need* to plant more churches is huge. When Jesus went from village to village, he saw the crowds and he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless. They were like sheep without a shepherd (Mt. 9:36). The sheep are out there; they need a shepherd.



As of the time of this writing (January, 2013):

- *There is one PCA church in all of the greater Cleveland, OH, area, with a population of over 2 million.*
- *There is one PCA church in all of the greater Detroit, MI, area, with a population of over 4 million (and it is a church plant).*
- *There is one PCA church in all of the greater Milwaukee, WI, area, with a population of almost 2 million.*
- *There is not a PCA church in Montreal, Canada, with a population of almost 4 million.*
- *There are major university towns in the U.S. without a PCA church, like Lawrence, KS, Minneapolis, MN, and East Lansing, MI.*
- *There are very few PCA churches in the major population centers of the west, like San Francisco, Denver, Phoenix, and Portland.*
- *There are 20 million people in metro Los Angeles and there are only 12 PCA churches.*

And these are just the areas where churches are needed. The offices of Mission to North America get about *five calls* per week from churches and presbyteries asking for a church planter for their area, but we are only planting on the average about one church per week. So we are not even keeping up with the demand *within our own denomination*.

Besides all of this, studies show that more people come to faith in Christ in the first five years of the life of a church than at any other time.

Bio - Alan Foster



I am an ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). After serving on the staff of Perimeter Church in Johns Creek, Georgia, for six years, I planted East Lanier Community Church in Buford, Georgia. When I began the church, I asked God to use it as a place for young men to be trained and sent out into ministry. And God did that. Four men who served on my staff have gone on to plant a church, or are preparing to do so. I have coached

four different church planters, was on the leadership team to begin the North Georgia Church Planting Network, and have mentored two church planters who did an internship at East Lanier.

As I told the elders in my previous church of this new ministry role, they said, “Well, we don’t want you to go, but we can’t imagine a better person for this position.”

“The great need of the hour is to plant new local churches.”

My Role

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

Simply put, these words of Jesus are my job description. My role, as Church Planter Recruiting Director, will be to pray for, identify, and recruit laborers for the harvest to plant the scores of new PCA churches needed to impact North America with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I will work with local churches, presbyteries, and networks in finding men to plant churches in their area. At the same time, I will approach previous church planters, campus pastors, and staff pastors to challenge them to consider planting a new church, matching them up with the appropriate needed area.

Recruiting is one of the 12 Critical Factors in Church Planting, as identified by Mission to North America (MNA). Ted Powers, Church Planting Coordinator for MNA, says, “Recruiting is clearly the most important factor in planting new churches.”



Two Stories

Two stories illustrate the need for me to be fully-funded and carrying out this role as soon as possible.

As Mission to North America (MNA) Church Planting Coordinator Ted Powers and I began talking about this new position, Ted said something like this: “Alan, there are planters out there; we just have to find them. We believe that God has provided the men; we simply must identify them.” Then, with some frustration in his voice, he said: “I have a list of 50 names on my desk of men that could plant a church, and I simply have not had the time to follow up with them.”

I was the chairman of the Church Planting Committee for the Georgia Foothills Presbytery for six years. Our committee identified 15 areas in our presbytery that needed a new church. To my chagrin, we were unable to meet that need. None of us, as pastors or ruling elders, had the time to find the men to plant those churches.

It is time for the PCA to have someone dedicated full-time to finding new church planters.

Your Role

You can be part of seeing people come to faith in Christ and the kingdom of God extended into new communities all across North America. First, please pray for this effort. Pray for me now as I raise the necessary finances, and pray for me as I begin this new ministry role. But also, please give financially. I must raise all of the needed finances for this position—salary, benefits, and ministry expenses—totaling about \$120,000 per year.

I want to challenge you to give:

- Based on Prayer – give what God leads you to give, not simply what seems feasible.
- Based on Faith – give full of faith that God will meet all of your needs.
- Based on Joy – give with delight, knowing that your greatest joy comes from being part of things that will last forever.

I am praying for:

5 partners @ \$500 per month = \$30,000 per year
10 partners @ \$250 per month = \$30,000 per year
35 partners @ \$100 per month = \$42,000 per year
30 partners @ \$50 per month = \$18,000 per year

Donation Information

There are no fees charged by MNA for cash management services. 100% of your contribution goes directly to meet my need. You may send your donation through the mail or you may contribute online. You can even donate stock or other assets. If you have any financial questions, contact MNA at 678-825-1200.

1. Mail your donation along with the enclosed donation card to:

Mission to North America
1700 N. Brown Road Suite 101
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143

- Please make your checks payable to Mission to North America
- In the check memo line specify Alan Foster or Church Planter Recruiting Director

2. Contribute online by going to www.pcamna.org and clicking on the Support MNA tab. There you can choose to Give Online. Choose your giving option. Type my name and click Search. Once you have done that, simply enter your amount, proceed to indicate whether it is a recurring gift, and then enter your personal information.

Go to my website (www.afoster.org) for a direct link to donate online, or use your smart phone to scan the following QR code.



Contact Info



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How important, really, is this position?

Without someone in this role, the PCA will continue to place about 50 church planters in the field each year. But we will not make the needed impact in our culture and we will not see the conversions that we long to see unless we increase that number.

Let me be plain. We must plant new churches. To not do so is not an option. Recruiting new church planters is critical to the task of the Great Commission.

Why give scarce money to you and not to an actual church plant?

I certainly want to see new church plants fully-funded. But compared to supporting an individual church planter, money put toward my role will not simply see one church planted, but many.

How many locations have been identified that need a new PCA church?

There are roughly 140 locations that have been identified as needing a new church. MNA gets about five such requests each week. So despite planting about 50 churches annually, the need for church planters continues to increase.

Why must the senior staff of MNA raise their own support?

PCA committees and agencies are supported by voluntary giving from churches and individuals. That giving funds the infrastructure, administrative efforts, and office staff for MNA, but just as it is with most Christian ministries, those who are actually involved in ministry are funded by designated gifts. The urgency to plant new churches and the great opportunity to impact the culture and communities of North America with the gospel, however, continues unabated.



Church Planting “Tree”