

## **PARENT CHURCH ASSESSMENT: Are We Fit To Parent?**

Assessment is a critical element in church planting and is usually thought of relative to the church planter. Are they right for the job? The same question should be asked of the parent. The following are factors that can help you initially assess your congregation.

### **Yellow Light....proceed with caution.**

1. **General poor congregational health.** Parenting out of pain is rarely a good idea as it is likely to create an occasion for large numbers of people to flee the parent church and thereby do damage to that base. Church splits are not God's design for Kingdom advance! Healthy congregations are united in the great commission and great commandment. They are multiplying believers, leaders and ministries.
2. **Attendance decline.** Parenting usually involves the home congregation sending off people (ideally 40 adults) to help form a core group that will help launch the new church. Churches that have declining attendance can parent but need to consider specific models. Starting a second, alternate style, service or nesting a new congregation within the walls of the parent is an alternate way to respond to a declining congregation that may actually bring a positive outcome.
3. **Financial stress.** Parenting also usually involves funding help and can impact the sending congregation either through taxing the existing givers beyond their capacity or by the loss of giving units to the new plant. While it is important not to limit too quickly the partner sources of funding that may help, it is also important to not over leverage the funding capacity of the parent. Financial stress may limit your parenting options but it need not eliminate parenting all together.

### **Green Light....move ahead with confidence.**

1. **Your ministry is seeing evidence of multiplication.** New believers, new leaders, new ministries and new vision is springing up. A strong indicator would be when a congregation has begun to multiply services. That activity demonstrates that the sub-multiplication (disciples, leaders, ministries) is already taking place.
2. **Underleveraged resources are evident.** "Asset mapping" is a great exercise that may surface financial, facility, creative and volunteer assets that could be used in a church plant. Perhaps you have leaders that are under challenged. Ministry "bench strength" is a great thing until those who are on the bench begin to feel they never see the field!

3. **Multiplication values are evident in your congregation.** When your existing values are congruent with the values that tend to predict a parenting church you are likely to parent naturally with little impact on the health of the parent. Those values are likely to motivate your leadership to align easily around a parenting methodology. Check out the Values Assessment scale which can help you discern your VQ (Values Quotient).