

Q & A about the Odessa Church Planting

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Planting

If you are interested to support us, the 17 following questions have their legitimacy, as you would want to know exactly what we will do.

If you are not, you will discover principles that will challenge your view of the Church.

What is so special about your 9 core values?

My 9 core values have one purpose only: to help us becoming more like Jesus.

I seek to have relationship with God that has passion, a willingness to seek the truth and to embrace any painful changes with faith.

I view all Christian relationships primarily through one lens: will my character improve?

I see this lost world in one way only: win and disciple as many as possible, through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

In Ukraine, such values are good news because people there are deeply longing to have totally open, truthful and grace-oriented relationships.

In the following youtube video of 26 minutes, Yves Perriard explains in a very clear, challenging and practical way why such 9 core values have the power to bring radical changes to our lives: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83MXWj-2PD8>

What is the relevance of having a LARGE church of a few thousand people?

For the sake of the poor and the forgotten. In our western context, large churches rarely revolutionize the social landscape of their cities, because most believers are expected to be financially independent and the poor can always rely on the government for help. In Ukraine, people fight their battles completely on their own because it is impossible to count on neither the government nor anyone for financial help. This is why a church of 10 000 Christians who have been trained to trust and help each other can really become a mini-society that can effectively help the poor.

What makes you believe that the Odessa Church will have such a numerical growth?

We will use the Master' strategy:
every Christian will be trained not only to convert, but to disciple the people they have converted. This is what Jesus did when he focused on only 12, and this model explains the exponential growth of the early church.

We will have high retention rate thanks to our strong emphasis on mutual friendships (see our 9 core values)
We will have "power evangelism" (healings, miracles, prophetic, interpretation of dreams, etc..) on the streets and sometimes within the house churches.
Every day all our evangelists will spend a few hours in prayer and the rest in street evangelism and friendship evangelism.
We will have seeker-sensitive worship services (see below)
Every small group will double its size within 1 to 2 years and start another small group (evangelists will train small group leaders who themselves will train their future group leaders. Some of those leaders will eventually become the future pastors of the house churches)

What makes you so convinced that the supernatural will regularly happen in your church?

First of all, it is clearly God's will that those who "eagerly seek the spiritual gifts" receive them (1 Cor.14:1). Secondly, since I have personally ministered to thousands of people with healing, deliverances and prophetic words, and trained many to reproduce my own experience, I am convinced that the same will happen in Odessa. All it takes for a church to move in the supernatural is that their main leaders have a good experience of it, and that that they train their people to do the same.

Why do you want your large "City-Church" to be decentralized into a network of autonomous churches?

In Ukraine, the biggest challenge of leadership is trust and therefore delegation. When the founding leader of a large church keeps on controlling everything and everyone, he eventually slows down his numerical growth or loses some of his leaders who will leave him to start their own churches. This is why wise leaders empower and fully delegate their authority to their followers so as to create a decentralised, flexible and organic church structure. This is the best way that strong leaders can keep on working together, while being at the same time autonomous. Additionally,

a decentralised network of independent churches is the best protection against doctrinal divisions and persecutions.

Since trust and open communication is such an issue in that culture, how will you build unity ?

Initially, I have the cultural "advantage" of being more trusted since I am NOT Ukrainian. I will use this to train all my leaders to build totally open and truthful relationships with each other. Furthermore, our unity will be more based on building deep loyal friendships and winning the lost, than fully agreeing on every doctrinal point.

What is the big deal about restoring the biblical role of evangelists ?

It has the most crucial and strategic importance to determine who is influencing the Church for evangelism. Today the Church has a structure in which pastors and teachers are the main influence, so that very few churches know how to be evangelistic and move in the supernatural. This is why most evangelists are relegated to work alongside or outside churches, which is not the biblical model.

In the early Church, evangelists had a direct and powerful influence on the churches they had started, and this lasted long after they had left. The reason is that those men led and temporarily "pastored" the churches they had founded, and this is why Timothy, who was an evangelist (2 Tim.4:5), received 2 letters that are called "pastoral". After some time, evangelists appointed local pastors (Titus 1:5), and therefore maintained the loyal and mentoring mentorship that naturally comes in being spiritual parents. (see Paul with his churches)

This is why all our evangelists in Odessa will be in a position of directly influencing pastors. They will not only start churches

through healing and the supernatural, but train the pastors they have chosen to be evangelistic. After they have left to start other churches, evangelists will maintain a mentoring and very encouraging relationship with those pastors. This way the whole atmosphere and structure of the Odessa church will be strongly evangelistic.

What is then the main difference between evangelists and pastors?

Evangelists are more sensitive to the "outsiders", while pastors to the "insiders", but it does not imply that pastors should be introverted and not evangelistic. On the contrary, they should win the respect of outsiders (1 Tim.3:7), be hospitable, and even have a strong faith for healing (see the incredible faith of elders in James 5:16!).

At the same time, the primary gift of pastors is to keep the harmony of their flock and work together with other pastors (I believe in the plurality of pastors within ONE local church). These are qualities that evangelists must learn from pastors if they want to have a more sensitive and group-oriented leadership.

In other words, mature pastors must learn to be evangelistic,

but mature evangelists must develop pastoral qualities.

This is the primary reason we need to restore a church structure where they are closely working together, so as to mutually influence each other. These 2 ministries were never meant to be stuck in their primary gifts and hardly interact with each other. The model of the NT is a deep interdependence of all ministries, so that we all learn from each other and grow to the fulness of Christ.

And what is the difference between evangelists and apostles?

Many tend to think that supernaturally empowered leaders who have planted many churches are "apostles", when in most cases they are simply evangelists. True biblical apostles are exceedingly "far more" than evangelists: they have seen the Lord directly, they train young evangelists to plant churches, they plant on no one else's foundation in new and challenging areas, they have frequent and extraordinary miracles, and because of their incredible impact at the highest level and on vast areas, they have ongoing persecutions and often are viewed as the scum of the world! Such biblical features not only redefine most "apostles" today, but it sets the bar of self-denial, love and true biblical authority at the right height. Myself, I am only a simple evangelist, which is why such apostolic characteristics inspire me and challenge me to take it higher!

What about prophets?

By God's grace we hope to raise some in our midst, but since it takes time, the first few years we will invite mature prophets from outside. These men or women will all be accountable to a good local church and have a solid reputation that can be thoroughly tested. Solo-Weirdos who listen to no one are not going to be invited.

What will be special about your Sunday church services?

We will bring 2 characteristics which are difficult to merge, but when they do, it is an explosive chemistry :

1)
Being radically "seeker-sensitive"

We will have short and very relevant sermons, no religious language or dress-code, an emotional atmosphere and a music that speaks clearly and directly to outsiders. For instance, depending on the kind of services (for young or older people), we will use and even mix together all kinds of musical genres that "speaks" to outsiders, whether it is Christian rap, techno, hill song, jewish, acapella, classical or Ukrainian folk music. To have an example of how we could reach students in Odessa, you can go to the following links ("morethan12.org" is a original and fantastic Canadian church I helped starting in East Vancouver, by far the most unchurched place in North America):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePkxUUcha5c> (this is what I understand by seeker-sensitive)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSzYTQA6Q6E&feature=player_embedded#! (mixing up classical music and rap with the rest!)

2) Being totally "God-sensitive".

At the same time, we will intentionally use the spiritual gifts of the most mature Christians (whether healings, prophetic words, interpretation of dreams, etc...) so that all Christians will be edified while unbelievers will "fall on their face and declare that God is our midst".

Because of the above, the much "deeper" biblical teaching will be given within the house churches during the week.

Why such a special love for the Jews?

Jews have always played the most crucial role in God's strategy to

change the world. The more will know their Messiah, the more it will be like "life from the dead" for this world. Odessa has more than 50 000 Jews, and the city has been always been known for its strong Jewish influence. (25 years ago, it had more than 30% Jews). This is why we will not be afraid to be known as a haven of protection for them, as anti-Semitism is growing in Ukraine, and to integrate some Jewish elements within our church culture. This way our church will have a mixture as unique as the "jewish" city of Odessa.

How will you use the Church offerings of the Odessa Church?

We will use money for evangelists to be raised in the ministry, because the more of them can work full time, the more the church will grow in numbers. Then the remaining will go to evangelistic projects, to the poor, and finally to some pastors who are gifted in teaching. Since we will not have any kind of church centralisation, there will be hardly any money for administration and we will not build any church building.

How and with whom will you start the Odessa Church?

We already have 3-4 other evangelist couples (2 on the pic below), a dozen of mature leaders and skilled musicians, and about 50 Christians from a Church in Odessa with whom we could start our work. In other words, the potential to start "fast and furious" is very good.

Initially, we will all remain together in one growing church. Eventually, our couples will divide and start all over the city their own house churches that will have all sorts of small groups. I will equip them to do all the teaching and leadership training within those house churches. We will all meet together every week in a rented place for a common worship service.

Who
will be your sending church to whom you will be financially and
spiritually accountable?

Spiritually, it
will be the home church with whom we have been the last
few years in Canada, the Lifeway Church (<http://www.lifewaychurch-bc.ca>), but
we will develop strong ties of prayer and mutual encouragement with
all our financial supporters.

Financially, we
will be accountable (and even "auditable") to the mission
organisation to whom you will send your money,
whether it is in the US or in Canada.

How
will you keep us updated about your work?

I will send a short
weekly newsletter of just one page (400-500 words), to which I will
sometimes add videos links. That letter will be posted on FB as
well.

What will be unique and never heard
of in our missionary partnership?

Whenever I will
be visiting your church on a missionary furlough, I will do
"more" than sharing about our missionary work.
If possible, I will always have healing and prophetic ministry such
that it will be a win-win situation in
which you can be touched by God and at the same time I can
inform many people about our work.

