Church Planting in Brazilian Slums:
A Case Study with Living Bread Ministries

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will describe the process Living Bread Ministries (LBM) is utilizing to church plant in the Brazilian *favelas*.[1] I will emphasize three primary aspects of church planting as demonstrated through our church plants in urban areas of southern Brazil. First, I will focus on identifying, training, and mentoring pastors in slum communities. Second, I will discuss the process of church planting including: evangelism, discipleship, and social ministry. Third, I will explore the role of global partnerships in this process. These three aspects will provide a well rounded overview of LBM's church planting efforts among the desperately poor in Brazil.

A basic understanding of the history and structure of LBM will help to bring clarity to this case study. In 2006, LBM founded *Ministério Pão Vivo* (MPV); a church planting ministry focused on the urban poor in Brazil. MPV is led by a national board of directors and is supported, in part, by partnerships with Brazilian churches and individuals. The day to day operations are under the leadership of Pastor Joacyr Magioli, a Brazilian pastor with over thirty years experience in church planting. Since 2006, LBM has worked in partnership with this organization to plant eight churches in slum communities in southern Brazil; primarily in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre.

I have interviewed four church planters as well as the leadership of MPV. The church planters have been working with MPV for up to three years, and Pastor Magioli has been with the ministry since its inception. Each church planter comes from a similar community, and has a good understanding of life in the *favelas*. Their church planting experience is clearly limited, but their understanding of ministering in a context of urban poverty is profound.

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[1] *Favela* is a Portuguese word meaning slum or shanty town.

Calling and Equipping Pastors

There are unique difficulties inherent in planting churches in a context of severe urban poverty. One of the more significant difficulties is in identifying pastors who are called to work among the desperately poor. This problem is compounded in a region like southern Brazil, where the evangelical population is very small.[2] The approach we have taken to identify, train, and mentor pastors has been very relational in nature.

The process of identifying potential pastors begins at the local church level. Through the discipleship process, which includes hands on ministry together, local pastors and leaders identify members of their congregations who exhibit spiritual gifts and abilities that reveal an aptitude for pastoral ministry. Competency, or ability for pastoral ministry, is "extremely necessary because whatever community he [the pastor] is in, he will be the leader, the pastor, and the counselor."[3] A potential pastor must have received gifts that equip him to fulfill these roles.

Several of our church planters have described their call as coming through the process of ministering tangibly with their own pastor. Pastor Lindomar, in recalling the year he spent ministering directly with his pastor, states; "I believe that these experiences with my brother in Christ Jesus allowed me to be called to be a church planter."[4] Pastor Bira speaks of how God used many people to call him. He cites the same type of relationship with his pastor. However, he also credits the church, his family, friends, and seminary professors for contributing to the "formation" of his call.[5]

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[2] According to the IMB the evangelical population of Porto Alegre is 0.3% to 0.8%. See Allan Myatt and Nolen Pridemore, "The Status of Evangelicals in the Mega-Cities of Brazil: A Preliminary Survey" (International Mission Board, South America Region, Brazil, December 14, 2007), 5.

[3] Pastor Joacyr Magioli, interview with author, October 17, 2011.

[4] Pastor Lindomar Silva Jacques, interview with author, October 18, 2011.

[5] Pastor Ubirajara "Bira" Müller Alves, interview with author, November 1, 2011.

Pastor Magioli, Executive Director of *Ministério Pão Vivo*, has been responsible for identifying church planters for our work among the urban poor. He has utilized his own network of pastors and leaders to find candidates. For him, an essential part of affirming someone's call is the affirmation of their church and pastor. Involvement in local church ministry is essential. Regarding the call to church plant among the poor and needy, he states that it is also important for a church planter to have "the face of the community where he works."[6] So, an aspect of calling is the ability to identify with the people to whom you are being called to minister.

In most cases, the understanding of the call to ministry has come through a relational process. The call has not been understood simply by the individual, but has been arrived at in community. The call has been affirmed and confirmed in the context of relationships including the local church body, family, pastors, and other church leaders. It has also been affirmed and confirmed through the process of hands on ministry.

Once a pastor identifies someone whose gifts and abilities reveal a potential call to pastoral ministry, they begin the training and mentoring process. The process is essentially the same for all believers. Pr. Magioli notes regarding Pr. Lindomar's training: "It was the same discipleship used for the other members; however, he stood out because of his dedication which afforded us more opportunity to be together."[7] The latter part of this statement reveals the relational nature of the training and equipping for ministry where training is done through a process of modeling by the more experienced pastor. Thus, being together is essential.

This is extremely important in a context of urban poverty where people have limited education and seminary may not be an option. Pastors called from the urban slums often lack the

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[6] Pastor Magioli, interview.

[7] Ibid.

foundational education to attend a formal program. In addition, poor pastors from smaller cities do not have the ability to commute for classes. This is the case for Pr. Lindomar.

He was discipled by Pr. Nivaldo, who led him to the Lord. He spent one year following Pr. Nivaldo. During this time he was taught basic doctrine and practical ministry. He was able to assist Pr. Nivaldo and be involved in tangible ministry at the local church level. In much the same manner in which the Disciples learned by following and observing Jesus, Pr. Lindomar was also equipped for ministry.

After a year of intensive training, Pr. Nivaldo connected Pr. Lindomar with Pr. Magioli and MPV. Lindomar's call to ministry was affirmed by these pastors as well as the leadership of MPV and he was called as a church planter. In this role, Pr. Magioli became his mentor in ministry and continues to train and equip him.

Through his role as mentor, Pr. Magioli is imparting practical ministerial wisdom into the lives of young church planters. He believes "mentoring varies according to who the worker is and the work he will be doing."[8] Regardless, this mentorship process is based on relationship. Pr. Magioli believes that the church planter should not be isolated and values an open relationship. He firmly believes that church planters "need friends and helpers to facilitate their work more than bosses determining what they are to do."[9] The concept of facilitating is an important value between the church planter and MPV, as well as MPV and LBM. The organizations exist to assist church planters in fulfilling their calling.

MPV invests in Pr. Lindomar and the other church planters through the mentor relationship with Pr. Magioli. Regular visits by the other church planters in the organization also provide time for encouragement, sharing of ideas, and mutual edification as they sharpen one

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

another. In addition, MPV routinely provides books and educational resources, including

hosting training sessions with national and North American leaders. These relational approaches

to mentoring and training are essential and fruitful.

Church Planting Process

There is no cookie cutter approach to church planting, it "should happen in a natural

way."[10] Every church planter is different, as is every community. Also, among the priesthood of

believers the gifts and calling of each individual are unique. For these reasons MPV does not

implement strict models in its church planting efforts. As mentioned above, the role of MPV is

to assist called church planters and local bodies in reaching their communities with the

transforming gospel of Jesus Christ. For the purposes of this paper, we will take a general look

at three aspects of church planting: evangelism, discipleship, and social ministry. It is not my

intent to communicate a distinct separation of each, but rather to communicate their practical

outworking.

Before discussing these three aspects, it will be beneficial to understand how MPV

pastors view church planting in general. In most cases, the incarnational themes of relationship

and modeling are recurring. When asked what he had done from a human perspective to plant

the church, Pr. Jocelito stated he had "developed true friendships; I cried with those who suffered

and rejoiced with those rejoicing."[11] Pr. Ubiratan echoes this sentiment when he states, "The

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[10] Pastor Jocelito dos Santos Marques, interview with author, November 7, 2011.

[11] Ibid.

church has to live the pains and joys of the community."[12] They see the gospel advancing

through proclamation in the context of relationships.

Pr. Lindomar points to Acts 2:42[13] as being a guiding verse in his church planting vision.

He reflects on the necessity that he be equipped in the doctrines of the Apostles. He also

emphasizes the importance of the biblical model of Jesus' life and ministry. He believes the

church will grow only when people are prepared to "live here [on earth] as if we were already

with our God."[14] Thus, he sees church growth happening when the world sees the church living

and acting according to the teachings and example of Jesus.[15] "Nowadays, people do not want to

be with Jesus, they do not see the need to be in the church because they look at us and how we

live, and they see people conformed to this world like them. It is necessary that we live what we

preach."[16]

Pr. Bira discussed the importance of walking with Jesus. He understands the need for his

ministry to be incarnational; "In essence therefore this is the mission of Jesus' followers, to walk

in Jesus' steps."[17] As he walks with Jesus, attempting to "do the same as he would do,"[18] people

are drawn to Christ. A life of holiness (walking like Christ) is a clear contrast to the fallen

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[12] Pastor Ubiratan Marques, interview with author, November 29, 2011.

[13] "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42 ESV).

[14] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Alan Neely, as quoted in *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*, Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 99.

[18] Pastor Bira, interview.

world, and is attractive in nature.[19] Likewise, Pr. Lindomar explains the necessity for him "to be

the example of a relationship with Jesus; it is not through our words but through daily living the

word that we become imitators of our Savior."[20]

He goes on to explain the importance of not only modeling Christ, but identifying with

the community: "I need to show the church, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that like them I

face trials, suffering, and persecution, and we reach the victories in all things if we remain

faithful to the end, living united in prayer, in communion in the church, sharing what we have,

placing it all at the feet of Jesus…"[21] The themes of incarnational ministry, including

identification with Christ and the community, and relationship in and outside of the church, are

important in the practical outworking of their church planting efforts. Their understanding of

mission is clearly shaped by Jesus' commissioning of his disciples in John 20:21.[22]

Evangelism

With this in mind, we will begin our discussion of the three aspects previously listed; first

is their practice of evangelism. In light of the above, it is to be expected that their view of

evangelism is one of proclamation in the context of relationships. Individuals in the churches are

equipped and encouraged to share their faith through relationships. Pr. Jocelito notes that tract

distributions and large events are not effective. He describes how he attempted these approaches

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[21] Ibid.

[22] "Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21 ESV).

until he finally realized that evangelism should be done "one on one."[23] He says this one on one

approach has been much more effective because it is personal.[24] Events are occasionally utilized

as a means of evangelism, but they are connected with a long term church planting effort that is

relational in nature.

Each church planter has utilized multiple approaches to evangelism, but one is universal.

They all speak of the importance of home visitations. The poor love to have the pastor visit them

in their homes and this is a necessary part of relationship building.[25] Lindomar does home visits

most days, but he is intentional in who he visits. He focuses his efforts on the families whose

children attend the weekly Bible study or people he is referred to by church members.[26]

His approach is to begin a relationship from the outset. Initially, he does not force the

conversation to spiritual things. He focuses on learning about them and building a friendship

based on mutual respect. If he is asked directly about spiritual matters he is quick to respond, but

he does not force it.[27] He has learned that because of the suspicion in the community, resulting

from the damage done by the prosperity gospel, this is the best approach.[28]

In general, the approach to evangelism is one of an incarnational model. As the church

walks with Christ, they see and respond to needs in the community. The relationships that

blossom from these encounters become the basis for evangelism and discipleship. As the church

loves God, they love their neighbor. Since they love their neighbor, they respond to all of their

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[23] Pastor Jocelito, interview.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Pastor Jocelito, interview.

[26] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Author's personal conversation with Pastor Lindomar, June 2011.

needs; spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational. In the context of relationships, their message is both proclaimed and validated.

Two difficulties stand out among the several mentioned by the pastors in regards to evangelism. The first is the religious pluralism prevalent among the urban poor in southern Brazil. The people are animistic in their worldview and are quick to add other beliefs. They are seeking only what works. As Pr. Jocelito put it, "things don't have to make sense."[29] The second is the neo-Pentecostal movement and its prosperity message. Many of the poor have been taken advantage of by the proponents of this movement and have become suspicious of "Evangelicals." These issues are best dealt with in the context of a relationship built on mutual respect and trust.

Discipleship

The next aspect to discuss is discipleship. Two things are seen as essential when it comes to discipleship: it must be biblical, and it must be relational. The process of discipleship is simply teaching someone to obey all that Christ commanded (Matt 28:20), that is, to surrender to Christ in every facet of their lives. "The person who hears the gospel and responds positively sets out to follow Jesus, a process of transformation lasting a whole lifetime and extending to every aspect of life."[30] Knowledge of the word of God is an absolute necessity in this process. Additionally, it is the word of God that the Holy Spirit uses to transform us; therefore, there can be no discipleship apart from knowledge and application of the Bible.

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[29] Pastor Jocelito, interview.

[30] Tetsunao Yamamori and Carlos René Padilla, eds., *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*, Brian Cordingly, trans. (Buenos Aires: Kairós Ediciones, 2004), 29.

In general, the church planters believe that this type of teaching is done best in the context of relationship; specifically one that includes not simply teaching, but the modeling of obedience to the commands of Christ. MPV's pastors all speak of disciple making in the terms of "walking with" someone. Initially, each new believer is discipled by the pastor, either individually or in a small group setting, in preparation for baptism and church membership. This beginning phase can take up to several months and includes not only teaching basic doctrine, but performing tangible ministry together. Once completed the members are equipped to pass along what they have learned and are plugged into ongoing discipleship ministries.

Since everyone is different and responds differently, the pastor must "know his sheep well to know what each one needs."[31] This reveals the personal nature of disciple making, which is to say, walking with the sheep. Programs are considered less important and ineffective when compared to relationships. Love and patience are important attributes for a pastor in this process. In a context where people are imprisoned by addiction, idolatry, lack education and culture (manners), over time, love can make a difference.[32]

The difficulties expressed with discipleship are the same as in other contexts. "The difficulties that I have today, I believe, are the same [as] in the time of Jesus: people prefer to be religious…"[33] "The problem is the commitment required by Christ."[34] People's unwillingness to submit to the Lordship of Christ in all facets of life is a recurring theme:

> Today no one wants to deny self, take up their cross and follow Jesus. No one wants to upset their parents, husband, wife, or children by sharing the gospel; no one wants to face

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[31] Pastor Jocelito, interivew.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[34] Pastor Bira, interview.

difficulties… No one wants to be a living sacrifice or renew their mind to experience the good and perfect will of God.[35]

These difficulties are best addressed through bold preaching and teaching and the modeling of faithful application of the word of God.

Social Ministry

The final aspect to discuss is social ministry. A wide range of social ministries are found at our various church plants. There are several types of feeding ministries, counseling, help for addicts and their families, clothing and blanket distributions, sports programs, children's programs, music programs, assisting local elementary schools, etc. These are all the result of the different community needs and the gifts and abilities of the churches. Rather than focusing on specific ministries, we will discuss the common undergirding principles for all of these.

The first principle to be discussed is the need for the church to be in tune with the Holy Spirit. The church must be walking by the Spirit as it seeks to minister in the community. This is necessary because the Spirit is already at work in the community. If the church would join the Spirit where he is already working, they must be in tune with him.[36]

The second principle is the belief in incarnational ministry. This is best explained by Alberto Fernando Roldán: "The Son of God remains active in the Father's world through the action of the Spirit, but for that very reason the church, constituted in Christ as a body, furnishes the means whereby Christ continues to do his work on earth."[37] Christ who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth continues to work by the power of the Spirit through his church.

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[35] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Alberto Fernando Roldán, "The Priesthood of All Believers and Integral Mission," in Yamamori's, *The Local Church*, 163.

Therefore, social ministry is not a means to an end, but Christ continuing his work through his body; thus the mission of Christ is the mission of the church.

The third principle is derived from the understanding of Christ as our model for mission (John 20:21)[38]. This leads to a view of the church as "a servant to all."[39] This is true because Christ himself was a servant (Mark 10:45, Luke 22:27).[40] "He [Christ] supplies us with the perfect model of service, and sends his church into the world to be a servant church."[41] Pr. Bira expresses his desire for the church to serve the community when he asks: "If this church did not exist, would that make a difference to this community?"[42] Pr. Jocelito echoes the same thought when he explains that their social ministry benefits the community more than their members, but that is good because it "actually helps the community see the work being done."[43] This, he says, leads their church to be well respected and has given them a reputation as being different from other churches.[44]

The difficulties found in social ministry have been lack of leadership and getting the membership involved. The needs can become overwhelming when they become the focus. Like many other churches, the majority of the work is done by a minority of the members. The process of cultivating leaders in an environment with rampant addiction and lack of education is

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[38] See note 22.

[39] Pastor Lindomar, interview.

[40] "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 ESV). "For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27 ESV).

[41] John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2008), 39.

[42] Pastor Bira, interview.

[43] Pastor Jocelito, interview.

[44] Ibid.

difficult. However, Pr. Bira notes that the Lord builds his church, and he has given "growth and the development of both local leaders and healthy believers."[45]

In summary, four incarnational themes are recurring. The first is relationship; where in all three aspects of the church planting process the pastors speak of their importance. The second is the understanding that Christ continues his work through his body, the church. The third is modeling; where more mature believers model the Christian life for less mature believers, and all believers model it for the surrounding community.   A fourth theme is the Lordship of Christ; where the goal of discipleship is orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

Global Partners

Having discussed three aspects of church planting, we will now explore the role of global partnerships in our church planting strategy. There are two ways in which global partnerships affect the church planting work in Porto Alegre. The first is through the facilitative role of Living Bread Ministries. The second is through partnerships between LBM and Western churches.

LBM was founded in early 2004 with a vision to church plant among the urban poor in South America and beyond. From the beginning, a driving principle of LBM was to work behind the scenes to facilitate church planting by national pastors. Realizing the needs in southern Brazil and the lack of an organized vision to reach the urban poor in that region, LBM committed to begin working in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

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[45] Pastor Bira, interview.

With the desire to be a catalyst for a national church planting movement among the poor and needy that would spread into neighboring countries, *Ministério Pão Vivo* was established by the founders of LBM and a group of national believers. MPV was conceived to be a Brazilian led and supported church planting ministry focused upon the poor and needy. LBM played a facilitative role in beginning a movement that is being led by MPV and continues to work behind the scenes as partners to plant churches in southern Brazil.

Pr. Magioli captures the nature of the facilitative role LBM has played when he states, "LBM has been the spring board of our work."[46] He goes on to say that the leadership of MPV is "encouraged by the vision LBM has passed on to us, this vision keeps us going."[47] This demonstrates a blending of what Tom Steffen calls the pioneer role and the facilitator role.[48] Similar to a pioneer, LBM has cast a vision for ministry and has facilitated the beginning of a movement of nationals to implement this vision. Currently, LBM fulfills the role of a "Facilitative Church Multiplier" by working behind the scenes to encourage a sustainable, national, and holistic church planting movement.[49]

With this type of relationship, dependency is always a concern. However, we agree that "the problem of dependency is rooted more in Western practices that express our sense of superiority than in indigenous propensities for seeking subsidy as a way of life."[50] We have worked to diminish this by humbly transferring power from the onset of our partnership. While

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[46] Pastor Magioli, interview.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Tom Steffen, *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 62.

[49] Ibid, 39.

[50] John Rowell, *To Give or Not To Give? Rethinking Dependency, Restoring Generosity, & Redefining Sustainability* (Atlanta: Authentic Books, 2006) 25.

the relationship between LBM and MPV is currently unequal, from an economic perspective, it is "…interdependent, relying on reciprocity. It's bi-directional because both need each other in order to succeed."[51]

Virtually all agree that interdependence is the proper response to a concern of dependency and paternalism.[52] According to John Rowell, it is more important to foster interdependence than to fear dependency, as interdependence is God's design for his church, the body of Christ.[53] Furthermore, René Padilla states "The corrective for paternalism is not independence but interdependence; interdependence comes with a deeper understanding of the nature of unity in Christ and of the situation in which other members of the body of Christ live."[54] Interdependence describes the partnership between LBM, MPV, and the individual church plants.

Through LBM, Western churches are able to work with national leaders to plant churches in southern Brazil. These global partnerships are an expression of what Samuel Escobar calls the "cooperative model of mission."[55] Within this partnership model, the relationship with MPV provides the additional benefit that resources go "…through a local accountability structure of mature Christian leaders."[56] The benefits of these types of partnerships are many.

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[51] Steffen, *The Facilitator Era*, 106.

[52] Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 219.

[53] Rowell, *To Give or Not to Give*, 24.

[54] C. René Padilla, *Mission Between the Times: Essays on The Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 137.

[55] Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel From Everywhere To Everyone* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2003), 67.

[56] Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 294.

The poor and needy benefit because a local church is established in their community ministering in a way that is contextually relevant. The Western churches partnering with LBM are blessed as well. They learn about mission and the importance of the local church.[57] The partnership keeps them connected to the global church, and by reminding them of the needs outside of their four walls, it helps guard against self-centeredness.[58] In keeping with the desire for interdependence, it also allows for an opportunity to be involved in meaningful short term missions, where long-term relationships are cultivated and both sides learn from one another.

Conclusion

As revealed in this study, a theological understanding of incarnational ministry is essential to the church planting process utilized by MPV and LBM. The recurring themes of identification with the community, modeling as a means of pastoral training and discipleship, and ministering in the context of relationships all flow from an incarnational approach grounded in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. René Padilla summarizes this using the words of John Perkins, "the church is called to be the replacement of Jesus in a given community, doing what he would do, going where he would go and teaching what he would teach.'"[59]

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[57] Robson Araújo, elder at The Church at Lake Guntersville, Guntersville, AL. Interview with author, November 26, 2011.

[58] Tom Ward Jr, former Associate Pastor at Eastpoint Community Church, Newark, DE. Interview with author, November 25, 2011.

[59] John Perkins, *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development*, as quoted in Yamamori *The Local Church Agent of* Transformation, 37.

When Christ took on flesh he identified with humanity. As a result, he is a High Priest who is able to sympathize with us.[60] Likewise, the missionary or church planter working among the poor and needy must be able to identify with the people he desires to reach.[61] Regarding incarnational ministry among the poor, Viv Grigg states identification "is not becoming destitute, but demonstrating, by actions of love and deeds of spiritual power, the fullness of Christ."[62]

The incarnational concept of modeling as a means for training and discipleship is grounded in the life and ministry of Christ and his disciples. When Jesus called his disciples to follow him, his intention was that they would physically follow him and become trainees.[63] When Jesus sent them out, he not only instructed them to proclaim what he had been proclaiming, but to do what they had observed him doing.[64] Likewise, Paul, in discussing what can be described as an incarnational approach to ministry, instructed the Corinthians to "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1 ESV).

Beyond training and equipping church planters, modeling is important for the church as a witness to the community. "Just as Christ's life revealed in word and deed what God is like, so too the Christian witness' pattern of living must reveal what God is like and be commensurate

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[60] "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15 ESV).

[61] "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings" (1 Corinthians 9:19-23 ESV).

[62] Viv Grigg, *Companion to the Poor: Christ in the Urban Slums* (Federal Way: World Vision, 2004), 61

[63] Frank E. Gæbelein, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 119.

[64] "And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food" (Matt. 10:7-10 ESV).

with the gospel."[65] The believer's mission is to make disciples whose lifestyle reproduces the example of Christ: exhibiting unconditional love of God and neighbor, humility, solidarity with the poor, a commitment to truth and opposition to hypocrisy.[66] This type of modeling of the example of Christ marks both ends of the discipleship process at our church plants.

In stating that our church planters minister in the context of relationships, we are not saying ministry outside of this context is inappropriate. There is a place for proclamation and social ministry outside of personal relationships. However, we maintain that the most biblical and effective way to advance the Kingdom among the poor and needy is through an incarnational approach that requires one to enter into their existence. This necessarily requires the establishment of personal relationships.

In addition to the importance of a theological understanding of incarnational ministry, this study has illustrated the necessity for missionary facilitators. The role LBM is playing in this church planting movement demonstrates the implementation of a new era for Western missions.[67] This facilitative role is both effective and biblical. It incorporates the global body of Christ in mission in a way that is reflective of the interdependence the church has been called to and effectively utilizes the joint resources and talents of all participants.

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[65] Ott, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 98.

[66] Yamamori, *The Local Church*, 31.

[67] Steffen, *The Facilitator Era*, 32.

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