

church planting can
happen in your building

TIME- share YOUR church



BY CONNIE CAVANAUGH

The world is coming to North America in droves. For example, without immigration Canada's population would be decreasing because of low birth rate.

Many established churches share their facilities with immigrants and ethnic groups in an effort to share their faith and give a hand to a new congregation. By planting a *church within a church*, congregations have become churches without borders.

"A large percentage of ethnic work is started in another church," said Rodney Webb, a manager for the North American Mission Boards Church Multiplication Team. Webb says sponsoring churches don't need to be big they just need to be willing.

They find that sharing facilities with ethnic, immigrant, refugee or special needs congregations is an opportunity to move from mission-mindedness to mission-handedness.

Mission mentality

"You've got to know the heart of God," said Lewis Markwood, former pastor of Cambrian Heights Baptist Church, Calgary, Alberta. "The church must be willing to be used by the Lord. Its necessary for the building of another church." During and prior to Markwood's 12-year tenure at Cambrian Heights, four ethnic congregations began in their building and each one became a Southern Baptist church. Cambrian Heights has shared its building since the early 1970s, helping to start Chinese, Arabic, Filipino and hearing-impaired congregations. "It was never hard for me," Markwood continued. "I inherited a church-planting church."

"We are multi-cultural," Markwood said. "Christianity is multi-cultural. Maybe we can worship better in one language, but I've had beautiful times worshipping with translation."

“Four Filipino nannies from a Southern Baptist background in the Philippines approached us and wanted to

Chinese Canadian Southern Baptists plant Anglo church in Edmonton

Canadians are celebrating a new day in church planting. Evangel Chinese Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, is sponsoring an Anglo mission. This is Canadian Southern Baptists first Anglo church started with an ethnic church as sponsor.

Since more than half of Canada's 153 Southern Baptist churches are ethnic, it seems fitting that this day would come. Although established congregations, Anglo and ethnic, have assisted most of these "language" churches, Evangel Chinese started without outside help of any kind.

"A healthy church that has been successfully planted will be able to plant a healthy daughter church," said Terence Chan, co-pastor with Roland Shum of Evangel Chinese Baptist in Edmonton.

"The issue is not whether the host church is ethnic or Anglo, but is it healthy?" added Chan.

Begun in February 1996 with 11 adults and five children, Evangel Chinese has grown to 165.

Pastors Chan and Shum graduated from Canadian Baptist Seminary with master of divinity degrees in 1995 and 1996 respectively.

In April 1999, D.K. Hale, Midwest Association Church Planter Catalyst, asked the nine Southern Baptist churches in the city of Edmonton (population 700,000) to pray about the possibility of sponsoring a church plant. Evangel Chinese responded to the challenge.

"We are located in southwest Edmonton," Pastor Chan said. "The new Anglo church was slated for the same area so it made sense for us to get involved." Evangel Chinese rents worship and education space from a public school. Having no building of their own doesn't hinder them from sharing their facilities with the new church plant.

Accepting higher rental costs, Evangel increased its room allotment with the public school, thereby creating space for another church to begin.

"We are still in the gathering stage," said Chan who indicated the group would not be ready for Sunday worship services for some months. The first public event was a Bible study held in June at the same time as the Chinese worship service.

Greg Idell and his wife, Shawn, Baptist Student Ministries directors on two university campuses in Edmonton, are coordinating the beginning work of this new church plant in Edmonton.

Evangel Chinese provides funds for publicity, increased rental costs and for a future full-time pastor. Chan, Shum and other leaders at Evangel also provide valuable counsel to the fledgling group and act as mentors for those giving leadership to the new church plant.

Connie Cavanaugh

be part of a Southern Baptist church," Markwood said. "We integrated them into our worship service and one of our members began a home Bible study with them." A Filipino Sunday school class was formed and it grew rapidly.

Markwood encouraged the Filipino group to realize their dream and form a church of their own. The Filipinos called a pastor and began regular worship and Sunday school in the fellowship hall at Cambrian. The Filipino church now larger than its mother church has had to move to another location to accommodate its growth.

Intentionally international

Kissimmee, Florida, near Orlando, is in one of the fastest-growing areas in the United States. And most of that growth is a result of people arriving from all over the world, looking for jobs and a chance at a better life.

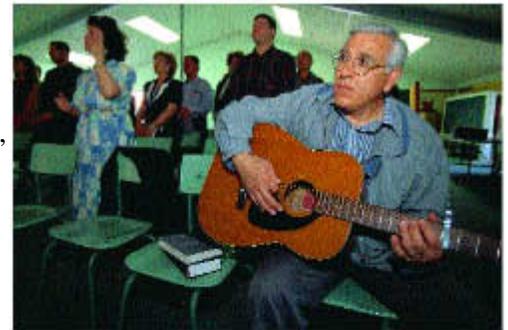
"We are an international church. The world is here. If we are serious about reaching our community, we must reach ethnics," said Tim Wilder, senior pastor, First Baptist Church, Kissimmee. First Baptist has been instrumental in

helping to establish Russian, Middle-Eastern, Hispanic, Korean, African-American and Haitian churches. "We have a desire for it we see ourselves as a mission-

sending center. Our facilities are used constantly. Were a revolving-door church," Wilder said.

A typical Sunday at First Baptist begins with early worship at 8:30 a.m., Sunday school at 9:30, and another service at 11. About 1,100 people attend these services. Simultaneously, a Haitian congregation worships in First Baptists smaller chapel from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. A Korean church takes over from 2 to 4 p.m. The Haitians gather again from 6 to 8:30 p.m., and a Russian church closes out the day by using the chapel from 8:30 to 10 p.m. Since Sunday is full, a Hispanic group meets on Saturday evenings. The Middle-Eastern congregation chooses to meet in homes for Bible study and prayer.

"If you have a desire to start churches, God will send people your way," Wilder says. "We didn't know there



Jake Sawalha has found the adjustment of moving from Jerusalem to Calgary easier by worshipping at Arabic Christian Fellowship. His playing often accompanies praise hymns.

were 600 Russians living within a mile of our church until a Russian pastor walked in and introduced himself.” Wilder learned that a large migrant population worked at Disney World.

“Most Russians have a two-year work visa and then they return to their homeland. So now we are a mission-sending agency,” Wilder said, referring to the Russians who become Christians during their American work stint and then return as missionaries to their home country.

Embracing opportunities

“One Sunday a family showed up in our evening service. They were from Estonia and had been sponsored by



Pastor Po-Yue Leung (far right) makes a point during a student Bible study at Calgary Truth Baptist Church, a Chinese church plant that has outgrown its first worship center.

another church,” Emmett Cook said. Cook teaches English as a Second Language and is the overseer of the Slavic mission at Southview Baptist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Although a different church had sponsored them, this Estonian family came from a Baptist tradition and they wanted to worship at Southview.

“We were invited to assume some sponsorship of Estonians,” Cook said. “We had more and more Soviet Union refugees coming to Lincoln.” Once a small group had formed, they needed a meeting place. Southview offered their building and a 10-year relationship still ongoing began with what is now the First Slavic

Evangelical Baptist Church.

Southview has also worked with Filipino and Cambodian immigrants.

Connie Cavanaugh is a writer and speaker living in Cochrane, Alberta.

Nine principles for effective church planting

Resources. Every host church has its own financial agreement with its mission congregations. Of the ones interviewed for this article none charges rent. Most of the host churches also assume the increased utilities cost. And some of them also contribute heavily to the support of the mission pastors.

- **Agreement.** “Churches are always started by a vote by our congregation. We’ve never had one person vote no,” said Pastor Wilder, First Baptist, Kissimmee.
- **Missions team.** The missions team serves as a liaison between the host church and the new church. This committee serves an oversight function for the new congregation.
- **Covenant agreement.** Every group that plans to share the facilities of the host church must sign a covenant agreement. This agreement clearly outlines the relationships, responsibilities, policies and expectations of all parties.
- **Pastoral involvement.** There must be a high degree of pastoral involvement mostly mentoring. The pastor(s) of the host church invest many hours with mission pastors.
- **Prayer support.** Prayer must be encouraged and practiced.
- **Scheduling.** Advance planning helps anticipate and avoid problems. Patience, flexibility and a desire to embrace diversity are vital.
- **Positive attitude.** Perspective is everything. When host church members choose to overlook small inconveniences, the greater good is realized.
- **Involvement.** Exchanging pulpits, sharing choirs or worship teams, hosting international dinners these are some ways to ensure rich cultural and spiritual interaction.



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