



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CULTURE, CONTEXT & CHARACTERS

Church Thoughts.....	2
Info about Folsom.....	3
Our Journey to Church Planting.....	4

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Purpose – how we plan to do it.....	5
Mission – what we plan to do.....	5
Vision – what that looks like ultimately.....	5
The Worship Gathering.....	5
Small Groups.....	5

## BELIEFS & VALUES

Getting us from theory to practice in 12 months.....	6
Core Values	7

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Getting us from theory to practice in 12 months.....	8
--	---

# CHURCHTHOUGHTS

If you're reading this Launch Plan I probably do not need to tell you that America is in desperate need of new churches that boldly live, breathe and preach Jesus.

Modern churches.

Emerging churches.

Young churches, and senior churches.

Traditional churches.

Trendy churches.

Boutique churches, mega churches, and everything in between.

We need them all, because all of these types of churches reach all the types of people who are living in the communities where these churches are planted. People who are on a course to live a life of emptiness and bondage which retires in Hell unknowingly are depending on these new churches. We need new churches that will share Jesus and model His life-giving message of repentance, service and authentic community. We need new churches that will rethink the dogmatic approaches to the "Worship Service" while holding fast to the beautiful ideals God gives us in Scripture for how we are to operate and focus as the Body of Christ. We need churches that are ready to rediscover the beauties of the Bride of Christ and focus so much on who they are IN HIM that they begin to see the world like Jesus sees the world.

We need new churches, right now, that will enter communities armed with the truth of God and a Call to reach out with love, care, truth and fun! In the U.S. we have not seen a single state that has experienced a net church growth in over a decade. In addition, on average it takes 89 attendees of a typical established evangelical church to lead one person to Christ each year. Yet in new church plants it takes only 3 attendees to lead one person to Christ each year. I don't mean to cheapen the Gospel or oversimplify what is a complicated undertaking, but if McDonald's was losing customers in every state, every year for over a decade; and it took them 89 employees to make one hamburger there would be some serious restructuring.

We need more new churches that will offer ancient truths about the realities of Jesus and His new life offered in language and context that fits the culture. We need new churches that target nothing less than daily adding to the number of those being saved.

It seems, like the Apostle Paul, you could move into almost any community that still has signs of life and establish a Biblical Church that reaches the lost and heals the hurt. Add to that God's Call on a group of passionate people who are naturally drawn to a particular region that is on the cusp of significant growth, and you have a perfect storm in the makings for red-letter transformation in lost people.

# GROWFOLSOM



As you drive east out of Sacramento, Ca. on Highway 50 you pass several communities on your way to South Lake Tahoe. But just at the base of the sierra foothills, on the edge of Sacramento County is Folsom, Ca. Folsom has been around a while, incorporating back in 1946, but over the years Folsom has grown and evolved a great deal. A popular and lively city, just 20 minutes south of Roseville/Rocklin, 20 minutes east of downtown Sacramento and an hour from South Lake Tahoe. This growing community is quickly becoming a hub for vibrant young professionals and families who want convenience and centrality. Historic Folsom comes alive after 8pm most nights with trendy restaurants, bars, night clubs and boutique shops. The East Bidwell area of town is full of all the popular restaurants and stores you see in most planned developments. There are dozens of parks, cycling trails, The American River and even a pristine lake for water sports. Surprisingly enough, even in these uncertain economic times Folsom continues the construction of several institutions that point to continued growth including Kaiser Permanente, a massive new mall and dozens of new restaurants.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

It's been said that 97% of all statistics are created at the point of need. There is likely some truth to that statement, so I will keep the stats minimal. Below are some statistics from Census Research that help one gain a perspective for the life and future of Folsom, Ca.

### Population Information

Residents: 62,945 (69,445 including prison inmates)

Males: 55.2%

Females: 44.8%

Median age: 35.9 years

Percentage of adults 25 and older with Bachelor's Degree or higher: 44.5%

Median household income: \$78,317

# OUR JOURNEY

In 2006 while experiencing God's miraculous hand of transformation in the lives of students in the Redding Area, Jen and I accepted an invitation from JD Pearing, a long-time friend and Director of GHC Network, to attend a church planter's assessment in Green Lake, Wisconsin. We were flattered at the offer and while youth ministry felt like the perfect ministry fit at that time we were also feeling a tug at our hearts to eventually plant a church. We were busy serving in full-time ministry as well as running our family owned restaurant, so some time away was a novel thought. A week with no kids in a state we had never visited sealed the deal and we were off to assessment with no expectations outside of sleeping through the nights and changing zero diapers (we had little ones at home).

Through the course of the week we felt confirmed more and more that church planting was indeed God's desire for us as a couple and yet after being recommended to do so we sensed an undeniable sense from God that the timing was still off. Soon after that we moved to the Sacramento area where I would serve another few years as a High School Pastor before moving into the role of Glocal Reach Pastor. In that space of time we were also privileged to have exposure to Multi-Site concepts of church multiplication as I researched and visited many multi-site church gatherings to form what would be some guiding thoughts in Church of the Foothills multi-site journey. All along the way I jumped at any chance to get around church planters. In 2008 I was invited by Ray Van Gilst, Church Planting Director for the Central Pacific District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, to attend a Strategic Multiplication Conference, and again, sensed God laying more foundation for His timing in our journey of church planting.

Once again it was an assessment that played a pivotal role in God moving our steps: Jen and I served in September of 2008 on staff as assessors in Elk Grove at a Discovery Center and we heard God asking us things like, "why not now?" And "I am ready for you, are you willing?" –We felt like James and John tending our nets, meanwhile being invited into a much more exciting Call. As the week came to a close we came home to a great job on a great staff team at Church of the Foothills. We were hoping to shake the voices and write them off as "idealistic excitement". But the feelings never moved, and God's voice never diminished.

Meanwhile former students of ours whose lives had been transformed by God through our ministry in the Redding area began to move near us. They said things like "we always thought after college we would just get jobs in Redding and volunteer in the ministry where God changed our lives..." but that ministry had changed and so here they were, with us, but for what?

God was putting the pieces of puzzle together.

It was time to sit down and really talk this over and find out if these pieces all went into assembling the church planting puzzle or if GHC Network had just fed us bad sushi. When God continued to confirm, in very mysterious ways, like only He can, we knew it was God saying, "Go now."

# STRATEGIC PLAN

**Purpose** – (Why we exist): To make disciples who make disciples.

**Mission** – (the specifics that we will employ to achieve our vision and purpose): An ever evolving creative approach to the corporate worship gathering where Jesus is central and people are engaged; Life changing small groups where authentic community & Biblical devotion are celebrated; Passionate and courageous evangelism.

**Vision** – (What is our dreamed outcome): We see the unchurched and dechurched of Folsom re-engaged with Christ and His church as they become fully committed followers of Christ in an environment that challenges their thinking, moves their hearts and appeals to their senses.

## Specific Strategies –

So what “makes us different”, you ask? What are the defining marks of this church-to-be that ensure it will not only attract those far from God but also intimately engage them with Jesus in ways that transform them to live with abundant mission? We are not of the mind that all church plants are best advised to offer dozens of ministries and staff roles from day one. Our approach from day-one will be to offer just a few significant ministries that will be done with creative excellence.

- **Corporate Worship Gathering** – Unfortunately some things never change...The Sunday Worship Service is one of them. In 300 years little but the volume and the attire has changed in most evangelical services. We sense that in our zeal to stay true to the core elements Scripture reminds us to celebrate in worship we have settled largely for a 300 year-old expression of elements that should be alive, creative and engaging. The flow of our Worship service will likely feel more like the Tonight Show or Oprah than what most 20, 30 and 40-something’s experienced as kids or adults. There will be consistent Biblical Preaching, passionate worship, ‘audience’ interaction through open-mic and ‘text-in’ Q&A, corporate and individual prayer as well as many other beautiful elements. We dream of a worship service where the sermon experience never feels like 45 minutes of information transfer, but rather interactive, thought provoking, and at times, unresolved.
- **Small Groups** – It seems that after the Day at Pentecost the next move was logical: meet in places where we already live and eat...then live and eat-with all these new people as the key vehicle for disciple making and world change! We are so dedicated to this process that we have a staff person who will serve from day one to see to it that people get connected and plugged into a group for a deepening “red-letter” experience.

# BELIEFS & VALUES

I have my doubts about whether people even read these things anymore. Maybe it's because it's such dry reading...I hope that's it, because these are the truths that guide us, even more than Core Values, Master Plans and Strategy Statements. These are the tenants of the faith...so much bigger than just our local body of Christ-followers and Christ-investigators.

We want to approach this simply, without trying to nail things to the floor God might not have intended to be- this side of heaven (So I guess I just gave away that we believe there is a real heaven eh?). At the same time we know that there are things God never intended to be thought of as "maybe's"  
So with that all being said, here is a list of things we believe...

## ABOUT GOD

- He is one-of-a-kind...there is no other HE IS REAL
- He exists in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- He is the creator of all
- He was completely glorious before we told him so
- He is eternal
- He knows everything
- He is everywhere
- He is not lovING, He IS love (there is a difference)

## ABOUT JESUS

- He is the Son of God
- He was fully God & fully man
- He was born of a virgin Mary
- He was sinless
- He died on the cross willingly
- He rose from the grave

## ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Is Divine
- Is very active in lives of Christ-followers
- Is God's voice of conviction, judgment & righteousness regarding sin

## ABOUT PEOPLE

- We are really screwed up
- We are hopeless on our own to do good or approach God
- We were created IN God's very image
- We are intended to be in relationship with God

## ABOUT THE BIBLE

- We as Christ-followers and as a local church are under it's authority
- People have used it to commit atrocities never condoned by God
- It confuses us all the time and it's mysteries are healthy for you and me
- It's central themes are 1) God's glory, 2) our sin and 3) God's story of redemption through Christ

## ABOUT SALVATION

- God provided for it through Jesus
- It's about way more than a prayer or a t-shirt
- Requires the abandonment of a former life

#### **ABOUT THE CHURCH**

- Jesus is in charge and calls all the shots
- It is led by imperfect people
- It is the Bride of Christ and should be treated as such
- It's messy and full of liars, fakes and cheats
- It's the greatest hope this world has to meet and live for Christ

#### **ABOUT BEER**

- It tastes good, especially on tap.
- drinking it in excess or in dangerous company saddens God...just like eating till you're sick or working till your family leaves you.

#### **ABOUT CHURCH MUSIC**

- Most of it is poorly written and sung off-key. But verbalizing in melody the greatness of God is still beautiful.
- It does not have to be 300 years old to honor God, and it does not have to be 3 days old to sound cool.
- It usually sounds better loud.
- It gets way too much attention and argument that ultimately distracts us from our mission. If you want to argue with us about ours, you might be wasting your time.

#### **ABOUT WOMEN**

- They are way more than baby factories to God and this church.
- Some should lead in the church and some should not (just like men).

#### **ABOUT MONEY**

- Being in love with it is the root of all evil.
- The amount of it you give to any given cause is a direct sign of your commitment to that cause, mission or movement.
- If you are a committed part of this community you will be invited to invest finances generously and regularly out of joy and passion not guilt or obligation.

**Core Values – simply put: Changed lives for God, Changed Folsom for the world.**

**Here are the specific filters: Real Relationship with God & Real Relationships with People.**

#### **Below are the tangibles that we look for to know “it’s” working**

Red-Letter Transformation – We become more like Jesus through truth and experience.

Passionate Prayer – Jesus said, “My house is to be a house of prayer.”

Authentic Community – We are connected deeply through small groups and ministry teams.

One-on-One Discipleship – We are growing spiritually & relationally WITH someone.

Courageous Faith – We desire to achieve God’s purposes by taking faith-filled risks. This involves change.

Cultural Engagement – We know our surroundings and they know us.

Creative Excellence – We value artistic expressions of love and devotion for God pursued with excellence.

Leadership Development – We believe leaders develop leaders.

Reproduction – We not only make disciples, we make new churches with an Acts 13 passion.

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

*28"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'*

*31"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. Luke 14*

As we begin to wrestle through all the details on our minds, and prepare for all of the surprises that are sure to come our way, our focus is on God. A church planter once said to us that planting a church is a little bit like walking the plank off a pirate ship – it's true. The feeling that continues to overwhelm Jen and I is that of a young child on a roller coaster. You wait in line for hours just to take this ride. You talk about what the ride will be like and you even study the map, but it's not until you sit in that seat and hear the "BANG" of the gears engaging that the terror of what is ahead sweeps over you and temporarily replaces the earlier emotions of anxious anticipation. We are so excited to be living right in the center of God's design for our ministry life, and yet petrified at the same time. It has been a while since we felt that way in ministry and we are finding it strangely peaceful.

We have enjoyed thoroughly the process of putting together this Launch Plan and we pray that God honors our efforts to seek His will in all these things. We approach this new adventure with our "Plans in Pencil" and eyes on Jesus. He has a clear desire for what Disciples Church will be to the community of Folsom. He has already been preparing the hearts of thousands of lost people whose sensibilities for Jesus will be tapped in unique ways through Disciples Church. For that pending opportunity, we are grateful.

Respectfully written and submitted,



Stu Streeter  
Lead Pastor, Disciples Church  
[stu@discipleschurch.net](mailto:stu@discipleschurch.net)  
[www.discipleschurch.net](http://www.discipleschurch.net)