



First United Presbyterian Church

Long-Range Vision Team
Report and Recommendation



June 26, 2018

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Background

The church is the body of Jesus Christ, which is called into being by the Holy Spirit, and guided by that same Spirit through the ordinary means of Word, sacraments, and prayer. Some things about the church are eternal. Other things adapt, even as our cultural context shifts dramatically. As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:22, *I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some*. Thus, we must *be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong* (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Part of this process, I believe, includes providing godly vision for our congregation: *Where are we going?*

In 2015, we had a series of meetings, open to the congregation, in which we discerned our vision (to know Christ and to make him known) and our mission (we pursue our vision through worship, spiritual growth, congregational care, and outreach).

Following this, we created a Mission and Vision Implementation Team, which resulted (in part) in the call of Ben Ruyack in the new role of associate pastor.

With the vision (where we're going) and the mission (how we get there) in place, Session commissioned a new team in May, 2017, to discern our congregation's core beliefs, and our core values (what makes FUPC unique). Along with these tasks, this team was asked to determine a challenging goal in line with our vision to provide focus and direction to our ministries over the coming years. This is sometimes referred to as a "BHAG" (Big Hairy Audacious Goal). According to Jim Collins, a "BHAG" is "simple, clear, and emotionally-compelling." It serves as "a unifying focal point of effort, and acts as a clear catalyst for team spirit. It has a clear finish line, so the organization can know when it has achieved the goal; people like to shoot for finish lines" (Collins and Porras, *Built to Last*).

The idea here is to have a clear idea of our vision (to know Christ and to make him known), and then challenge ourselves to pursue that vision through a specific goal that will both stretch and energize us. The goal should be *very* difficult, but *just* doable, with God's grace.

To that end, the Long-Range Vision Committee, after much prayer and study over the past year, believes that God is calling FUPC to plant a church in the Quad Cities area by 2022.

FUPC

Long-Range Vision

What is our Purpose? (Vision)

To know Christ and to make Him known

How do we do that? (Mission)

Worship, Grow, Love, Reach

(Worship God, Grow spiritually, Care for the congregation, and Reach out to the world)

What do we believe? (Core Beliefs)

EPC Essentials

What Is the FUPC Ethos? (Core Values)

Faith

Dependence on God
Seeking God's will through prayer and the Word

Love

Caring for children/youth
Being a physical and spiritual family in Christ

Service

Obedience—doing God's word
Passion for evangelical efforts

What is our big, hairy, audacious goal?

Plant a church by 2022

Overall FUPC Plan, 2018-2028

Part I. FUPC Internal Plan: 2018-2028

- A. **Alignment** Continue focusing all ministries according to our vision and core values

Challenge for each ministry committee:

1. Mission: How does your ministry team help us to know Christ and to make him known? (What is your committee's mission?)
2. Core Values: How can FUPC's core values help focus your ministry?
3. Goals
 - i. What are your 2-4-year goals?
 - ii. What are your 5-10-year goals?

- B. **Culture** Seek the ongoing reformation of individual and community life according to Scripture (through preaching, teaching, modeling, training, and equipping)

- C. **Systems** Streamline ministry systems, for example:

1. Breeze Database
2. Shepherding
3. Volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition
4. Staff evaluations
5. Online giving(?)
6. Committee operations
7. Increasing communication and cooperation between ministries
8. Training and equipping elders, deacons, and trustees

- D. **Outreach** Engage local outreach through community groups

- E. **New Goal** Set new BHAG ("Big Hairy Audacious Goal") before old one is complete

- F. **Revisit Vision and Mission**

- G. **Possibly Receive Consulting through the EPC's "Go Center"**

Part II. Church Plant (2019-22)

- A. Call church planter in 2019 to start in 2020 at FUPC
- B. First worship service in church plant, by 2022

(The detailed plan can be found below)

Why Plant a Church?

Rationale

1. Jesus commands us to make disciples, and church planting is one way to do that. (Matt. 28:18-20)
2. “Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven.”¹
3. For God to renew us spiritually—healthy churches plant churches
4. Local need

The Barna group ranks the Quad Cities as the 27th most unchurched² metro area in the United States. In 2015, Church attendance in the Quad Cities was **lower** than in the cities of Chicago; Detroit; Washington, D.C.; and St. Louis.³ 42% of Quad Cities residents have not set foot in a church in over six months—that works out to about 200,000 people, in our own backyard.

Objections and Responses

1. We’ve never done this before.

Jesus commands us to make disciples and God will help us.

2. We’re not very good at evangelism

God has chosen us to make Him known. We need to be faithful to what God has commanded, called, and empowered us to do by His Spirit.

Eph. 6:18b-20: Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Growth* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1987), 168.

² Definition: someone has not attended a church service in over six months.

³ <https://tinyurl.com/ya87a4ws>.

Proposed Goals for FUPC on Evangelism

- i. Preach evangelism
- ii. Train in evangelism
- iii. Practice evangelism
- iv. Plant a church

3. It's too expensive.

God is rich, and we can afford it, if we step out in faith.

The EPC has dedicated funds, and is committed to investing in a church plant. They have a person committed to this effort.

Philippians 4:19: My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

This is a three-year financial commitment, after which the church plant will need to support itself.

4. We can't afford to send any current members out to start a new church.

Have faith. God can raise up new members at FUPC. In fact, the spiritual vitality that results from planting a new church often leads to membership increases in the sending church.

We are called to be faithful, no matter the outcome:

Daniel 3:17-18: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Tom Ricks' response:

"God does not cannibalize one part of his kingdom to raise up another. When my congregation of 200 sent 80, we had 160 more a year later (and that was God). You have to step out in faith."

Tom Ricks is the EPC national consultant on church planting. He met with our Long-Range Vision Team on January 11, 2018.

5. It's hard, and we might fail.

Be strong and courageous. Go forth. God is mighty, and his Spirit will enable us. Be like Caleb and Joshua, rather than like the ten spies who shrank back (Numbers 13-14).

2 Timothy 1:7: For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Church Planting Testimonies from the Vision Team

Deb Flaughner

I am currently 66 years old and retired. I have been a Christian for 40 years. I am not anywhere near being perfect, but I have tried to be available for God to use me throughout the years of my Christian life. I have been a member of this church for 35 of those years, and I love this church. This church has been my support system, my family, and my life for many years. Lately, though, it seems like this church, at least to me, has just been treading water. It doesn't seem to me that a whole lot of exciting things are happening here. And as wonderful as this church is, I don't feel that we are doing a very good job at reaching the lost.

As I look at my life, I realize that I'm not that many years from the end of my life. So, that makes me think about what my mark on the world has been. I have touched many lives through my teaching, I know. I have touched the lives of my two sons, my daughters-in-law, and my grandchildren. I have also been blessed by God in that He used me as one of His instruments in helping a few other people make the best decision of their lives, to decide to give their lives to God.

But my life isn't over. I still am fairly coherent, and I can still devote my time left and my meager talents to God. I am excited about the prospects of our church being used by God to plant a new church. I am excited that God wants to use us to reach others for Him. I am excited that He will continue to use me, even though I am old and retired, to somehow reach others for His kingdom.

When I meet Jesus someday, I know I will see love in His eyes. When I approach Him, I know His arms will be open to receive me. But, whether it is tomorrow, or twenty years from now, I also hope upon hope that He will say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That's why I am excited about a church plant. It will motivate me to not just sit around in my retirement, reading books and walking the dog. It will force me to not just look forward to a warm vacation next winter. But it will force me to keep on running the race, and it will force me to use my talents for God, as long as I can. He will give me the strength, He will equip me to do what He wants me to do, He will bear me up with wings of eagles, and many souls will be added to the Book of Life.

George Kalemkarian

Spiritually I was raised until Junior High in my mother's small Armenian Brethren Church and father's Armenian Congregational Church, both in Philadelphia. We then moved to a United Presbyterian Church so that I could be with a larger group of teens to learn the Bible and have fellowship. I always was immersed in the Word of God at all these churches and believed I was a Christian. However, one specific night when I was 13 I kneeled down by my bed and just to be absolutely sure asked Christ to be part of my life.

After graduating from Temple University, I moved to Rock Island for a six-month Quality and Reliability Engineering Intern program. Upon completion I moved to Detroit for my work assignment, then back to the Quad Cities to work at the Engineering Management Agency located on the Rock Island Arsenal. In 1978 after completing my graduate degree at U of Iowa, God opened the door to work at Deere & Company for 36+ years. For 47 years I have participated at First United Presbyterian Church in Moline in various ways such as Session, Sunday School, and choir. God blessed me with my wife June in 1975, we have two grown daughters Tori and Katie, and three grandsons.

I believe Psalm 90:10-12 says it best "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years...For soon it is gone and we fly away...So teach us to number our days, That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom." If life is a 12-inch ruler I'm very close to the 12-inch line. But if the Lord allows I choose to model my remaining time after Caleb's prayer in Joshua 14:10-12. Caleb said "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. Now give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day;" I'm looking for the hill country that God has set out for me. There are sayings that have an element of truth "I want to wear out rather than rust out," and "you can lead a meaningless life and you can get away with it." As pastor Greg said in a recent sermon "every day is a significant day." Life is too short to just waste.

After fervent prayer and discernment, if God wants FUPC to plant a church then we need to obey and follow his will for our church. This will require time, effort, and finances. But do we want to miss out on what God plans for our church? It will not be easy, but we must ask "what hill" does God have for our church?

I recently read a statement that "the law of risk is universal and eternal: The more you're willing to risk, the more God can use you. And if you're willing to *everything* then there is *nothing* God can't do in you and through you."⁴ I ask myself am I willing to risk time, effort, and even possible failure in a church plant in order to be obedient to God's direction?

⁴ Mark Batterson, *In A Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day* (New York: Multnomah, 2006), 106.

Lisa Dellitt

The Long-Range Vision Commission has been meeting for about a year, praying and thinking about how God would lead us as a church. In the last five years, we have hired new staff including our administrative assistant and four full-time ministry positions; we have left the PCUSA and joined the EPC denomination. Now we look forward to what God would have for us five, ten, twenty years from now. We agreed in the Spirit that the Lord is leading us to plant another church in our area.

I believe it is important for FUPC to begin church planting because it grows the kingdom of God. It gives our church a **unifying mission**. The people in our congregation have many passions and varied pursuits in God's kingdom. Ministries have been established or grown by members of our church, and historically, the church has given a large percentage of the budget to missions. (I have personally benefitted from the support of this congregation when I was in full-time ministry with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Illinois State University.) When we take a look at the missions budget, it is terrific that we support varied ministries locally and globally. But what is the mission of our church? When visitors come, could they see or articulate what we're passionate about as a congregation?

Lord willing, planting another church would serve to start a fire in us and unite us with a single purpose as a congregation. **Multiplicative ministry** was Jesus's intention for his disciples, and it manifested in the early church as the Spirit moved them to spread the gospel and plant the church as they went. It ought to also be our purpose in **sharing the gospel** as individuals, and **planting a church** as a congregation.

That brings me to a question, **are we** sharing the gospel with people in our lives? We are called to be God's witnesses in our personal relationships by **sharing and inviting** friends to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. If we are not inviting people to follow Christ, we are disobedient to God's calling on us as His ambassadors. Loving others as a believer means that we bring the good news of God's redemption to the people around us who don't know him. **I admit** that I have not been diligent in sharing the message of abundant life in Christ. We need to **pray for revival** and **repent of our own sin** in not carrying forth the Good News. Will we seek the Lord and commit to support one another in personal evangelism? If we can do that personally, will we seek the Lord and commit to support the growth of His kingdom by planting churches? The Quad Cities area is one of the **top 30 most unchurched communities** in the US according to research by the Barna Group. So, as we support the church growing in Greece, in Thailand, in Moldova, let's also see the church grow in **our backyard**! Let's tell people about Jesus **and** plant a church so the circle can be widened. Acts 1:8 says, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The Holy Spirit is calling us to reach our Jerusalem, which is the Quad Cities.

Our calling is **not** to become comfortable in our lives on earth. Our calling is to **share Christ!** Let's use our gifts to reach others, let's use our homes to show hospitality and tell people about our Lord. Let's invite friends to follow Jesus our Savior. Let's plant a church to further the kingdom. As mentioned in Galatians 5:25, "let us keep in step with the Spirit" and not hinder his work.

Keith Erickson

On August 5, 1944, the American troops in **Operation Overlord**, continued their advance in the quest to liberate France. The 3rd Army of General Patton occupied Laval, Sainte-Suzanne and Mayenne. Things were heating up for a defeat of the Germans in France, with the eventual liberation of Paris.

I was born on that day. My parents had moved to Ottawa, Illinois, two years earlier from Chicago so that my father could fulfill his civilian duty to support the war effort by working in a shipyard building LST ships in the heart of Illinois. My parents began to attend a church **planted** by the LaSalle Baptist Church (of LaSalle, IL) named the Ottawa Bible Fellowship. It met with a few families in the Odd Fellows Hall above a tavern in downtown Ottawa. (My older brother says that Wednesday night prayer meetings were a competition between hearing the prayers and the jukebox downstairs.) A few years later, the Fellowship purchased an old historic mansion near downtown and began to worship there, naming themselves the Paul Street Bible Church. This was the community of believers in which I became involved in church life during my formative years. I made a public decision for Christ at age 11 and was baptized. The Paul Street Bible Church eventually built a new building on the south side of town in a developing area renaming itself Grace Baptist Church and became affiliated with the Baptist General Conference of Churches

The church was the center of our family life, with my father setting the example of being active in a variety of roles, and all of us five children attending **all** activities. My father, older brother, sister and I, known as the **Erickson Trio**, played musical instruments, traveling to a number of churches weekly providing special music during Sunday evening services (my sister was the accompanist and got no billing).

While church was always an important part of my life, when I moved away to Illinois State University, I soon began to avoid church, doing exactly what my parents had not wanted me to do. This was a time in my life when I was rebelling against the perceived legalistic atmosphere of my church and home. I never doubted my belief in Christ and that I had been redeemed by Him, but it was a time of searching for a faith that wasn't based upon "a list of have to's or don't do's". During my junior year a girl caught my eye by the name of Gene Wade (who attended college, however, lived at home). I began to attend the Lutheran church with her and her family (it meant more time with her and a free hot Sunday meal). I owe much to Gene and her example to me about the importance of connecting and attending church. From that time forward as our

relationship grew, became engaged and eventually married, so has the depth of our spiritual connection with Christ and dependence on Him. We have intentionally made church and our faith the center of our life. But there is more.....

While attending church has always been a high priority, personal spiritual growth is higher. That is what eventually led us to this church. The church experience is not just a Sunday experience. It is a means of energizing us for each week ahead for the calling God has placed on our lives. Christ himself set for us an example by always going to the synagogue on the Sabbath and opening the Word. The church is where we realize the need for one another in fellowship with Christ so that we can share, become strengthened and encouraged. And we come to church to worship and praise Him. Attending church helps me commune with God and stay connected with the body of Christ. Through the church I can find help and solace, as well as a place to live out my faith in service to Christ.

Throughout my life Christ has used events both good and bad to show me and teach me a dependence on Him. His Church is where I can connect with fellow believers, hear the truth and find examples of other men who can teach me to be more like Christ.

My introduction to and initial growth in Christ I owe to the **church plant** that drew my family to worship when I was an infant. It initially brought together a small group of dedicated believers to worship Christ in a city lacking an evangelical church experience. During my formative years that church experience provided me several opportunities to serve as a worship leader and youth leader. While God put many people in my life who contributed to the overall development of my faith in Christ, the **small church plant in Ottawa, IL**, sowed that seed of faith in my life, so that I would “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:10 Praise Him for His faithfulness!!!

Greg Graybill

Trusting in God and seeking his glory, FUPC should step out in bold faith and seek to plant a church in the Quad Cities.

This position aligns with my own personal faith, and it fits the way God has equipped me joyfully to take on a Big Project from time to time. Church planting is a worthy cause, and though it is difficult, God is able, and the outcome is likely very good—both for growing the broader body of Christ, and for infusing a new spiritual vitality into our own congregation. As our Western culture continues to darken by rejecting God, let us step out in boldness and faith, and shine the light of Christ as a beacon for God’s glory—for this season, and in this hour. Let it be written in the Lamb’s book (Rev. 20:12), that in the brief moment we lived in this fallen world, we acted with courage and faith, to reach the lost, and to proclaim the glory of God.

The Salvation of Human Beings

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior when I was a young child. I remember growing up, sitting in the pews at First Presbyterian Church in Walla Walla, Washington, thinking, “What is most important in life? What should I do with my life?” It came to me that the most important thing for us is to know God and receive salvation through Jesus Christ. Otherwise, what good is it to gain the whole world, and then forfeit your soul (Mark 8:36)? In the light of eternity, this life is but the blink of an eye. One’s eternal destiny is more important than any earthly circumstances or achievements. This conviction is part of the means by which God drew me into pastoral ministry. I want to see people saved for eternity, to the glory of God.

The Big Project

Another theme in my life has involved a passion for big, challenging projects—so long as the cause is worthy and the likely outcome is good. Such a project is energizing for me. In these cases, I rely on God, and seek wisdom in how to accomplish the task. With the plan in place, I can pursue it with dedication and consistency for as long as it takes. This is how I felt about pursuing a Ph.D. (four years), getting my doctoral thesis published with Oxford University Press (nine additional years), and facilitating FUPC’s denominational transition to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (2.5 years). Only now with church planting, instead of participating in the division of the body of Christ, we would be participating in its multiplication. In a way, to me, this feels like a fulfillment of what we began when we moved to the EPC—instead of retreating and fighting doctrinal battles against error, we are *advancing* and reaching out with the Truth to a lost and dying world for whom Christ died. No Big Project could bring me greater joy, and I would gladly lead, facilitate, and equip our church planting teams with everything I have to offer. I am passionate about this project, and would engage with it very closely. The detailed plan we have received from the EPC (see below) makes sense to me, and I would be honored to help our people navigate every detail of it.

A Worthy Cause

As we have already laid out in this document, church planting is a worthy cause. It demonstrates obedience to Jesus Christ in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), and it follows the example of the Apostle Paul in seeking to plant churches in growing population centers. The Quad Cities area is a growing population center, and it is also one of the most churchless cities in the entire United States (#27 in the USA, according to Barna⁵).

⁵ <https://www.barna.com/research/churchless-cities-where-does-your-city-rank/>

“Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.” John 4:35–36

A Likely Good Outcome

Planting a church is hard. About half the time, they fail, and even if they do not, it is costly to send dollars and people when we always need both in our own congregation. But we do not plant a church out of our own excess capacity (that was certainly not the Apostle Paul’s model!). Rather, we plant a church even in our own need—for when we are weak, then we are strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). The Gospel is not for those who have it all together, but for those who know that they don’t. Therefore, God gets the glory, and when he calls, he will equip us, he will fight the battles, and he will open the way.

And even so, from a worldly perspective we are not as weak as we might think—our congregation has no debt, we have a robust capital expenditures fund, and we have many passionate disciples of Christ in our midst who want to do great things for the Lord. Jesus said, *“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more”* (Luke 12:48). Though we have our own challenges, in comparison to the vast majority of other EPC churches, we are wealthy. Woe to us, if we bury the Master’s talents, rather than using them to multiply (Matthew 25:14-30).

But duty is not the only reason to pursue church planting—we can step out in faith, rejoicing, in the same way that we do in the area of generosity. For just as the generous man finds himself blessed in his own spirit, so the church that ventures into church planting often experiences a spiritual renewal themselves. Tim Keller lays out the evidence for this in his article on church planting. *Church planting often results in the revitalization of the sending congregation.* This was a key point in the discussions and discernment of our Long-Range Vision team when the Lord led us to the idea of church planting.

But even if church planting did *not* redound to the benefit our own congregation, our primary purpose in church planting is *not* to gain something for ourselves! Rather, it looks *beyond* our own little congregation, to the building of the overall body of Christ itself. This brings us out of an FUPC-only-focus, to a *kingdom-of-God* focus. And that is, after all, our vision at FUPC—to know Christ and to make him known! The radical obedience of church planting will both help *us* to know Christ better as we rely on him in this process, and it will also make Christ known better beyond our own walls. To engage in church planting is actually to fulfill our vision in a powerful way that we have never yet dared to do at FUPC. To the best of my knowledge, this endeavor would be our *first* church plant in over 125 years of history at FUPC. It’s a big challenge, but it’s time we took it on.

Light in the Dusk: A Call to Boldness and Faith

Do we plant a church? How do we decide? Do we look at our own strength and resources, or do we also look to *God's* strength and resources? Let us be bold and courageous, following Joshua and Caleb, rather than the ten spies who faltered (Numbers 13). Let's not be complacent. Let's be bold and courageous, and call upon God to show us his glory. Let's trust him. Let's plant a church.

Detailed Church Planting Plan⁶

Process

1. Begin with a prayer team
2. Identify a location
3. Develop a tentative budget
4. Call a church planter
5. Assemble a Launch Team
6. Assemble a Core Team
7. Launch

Prayer Team

Prayer is vital to the success of a church plant. The Long-Range Vision Team has begun prayer, and we will need to continue this very intentionally going forward.

Location

Demographic Study

Conducting a demographic study is critical in selecting a target area for the church plant. Here are some criteria to consider, according to the EPC's national church planting consultant, Tom Ricks:

1. How many churches are in the area? (Does this area really need a new church?) We are looking for areas *without* a biblically sound, Christ-centered congregation.
2. Is the area growing or shrinking or flat? (The Iowa side of the River is growing, while the Illinois side is shrinking).
3. Median income – could a local congregation sustain itself financially in this area? How much would we need to invest over three years to help start a church here?
4. Household make up – married, single, families?
5. Ethnic make up? For a first church plant, the new church should be ethnically similar to the parent church. Planting with differing ethnicities or cultures is best attempted in later church plants.
6. Median age – older empty-nesters, younger families, etc. – this helps inform the age of the church planter you will eventually call. You want someone within 5-6 years of the median age. Look for a younger area (NOT with an average age of 54 or higher)

⁶ Distilled from Tom Ricks, who provided us guidance on behalf of the EPC.

7. How are the schools? Usually decent schools mean a more stable community.
8. Cost of property? Would a church plant be able to afford to build something in 5-7 years in this area? Also, “Churches in newer suburbs are most likely to grow” (Paas, 159). The new church should be accessible and visible. It is helpful as well if some of our current members live in the region of the proposed church plant.

We should also look at the felt-needs of that community (look at clubs, etc. in the area).

Demographic Study

Initial hypothesis: *the location should be on the Iowa side of the River, somewhere on the north side of Bettendorf (where much growth is taking place)—perhaps somewhere in the area along Middle Road between 53rd Avenue and I-80.*

An article in the *Quad City Times* on Nov. 7, 2017, noted several new housing developments planned for this area, and stated, “The increase[d population] would require 1,520 acres for new housing units, commercial development (office, warehouse, retail) and additional needs, such as parks, **churches**, schools and other public buildings.”⁷ The city of Bettendorf is also constructing a multi-million dollar sports complex at the intersection of I-80 and Middle Road. This area is going to get greatly-increased traffic and visibility.

Here is how the eight data points above stack up for north Bettendorf:

1. How many churches in the area?

There appear to be two non-denominational churches in this area: River of Life Church, and the Valley Church. Neither appears to have an operational website. The closest Presbyterian Churches are PC(USA) congregations in Argo (a few miles north), Le Claire, and Bettendorf (closer to the river). There are no EPC churches in this area. Neither are there any PCA or OPC churches in Bettendorf (however, there is a small OPC church plant in West Davenport, called Sovereign Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church).

2. Is the area growing or shrinking or flat?

This area is growing rapidly.

3. Median income

Census data shows it on the border of two areas: \$87,000 and \$119,000 median incomes.

⁷ Alma Gaul, “The changing face of Bettendorf,” *Quad City Times*, Nov. 5, 2017. See also Devan Patel, “More multi-family residential development coming to Bettendorf,” *Quad City Times*, Nov. 7, 2017.

4. Household make up – married, single, families?

Average household size: 2.5

5. Ethnic makeup?

86% white

6. Median age

40.5

7. How are the schools?

Bettendorf schools are well-regarded

8. Cost of property?

Median home value in Bettendorf is \$197,700. (06/07/2018)

For comparison, the median home value in Moline is \$93,000.

What about the Bailey Retreat?

A detailed demographic study of Coal Valley would be helpful, in light of our existing property in Coal Valley. However, if the demography is unsuitable for a church plant, then we should not launch one there just because we own land there. Additionally, George Kalemkarian has expressed concerns that the Coal Valley Presbyterian Church—even though PC(USA)—is nearby, and takes a fairly evangelical approach to the faith. This might put two similar churches very near to one another.

Initial Rental of Worship Space

Additionally, church plants usually need to rent worship space at the beginning. So if one were to rent a facility to start out, is there a place available in this area? Perhaps a school? It would be helpful to secure a worship location right away. This will include many important technical details—e.g., insurance issues, who unlocks the building, snow removal, etc.

A first look at the Middle Road/53rd Ave-to-I-80 area shows that Forest Grove School is nearby, which is undergoing historical renovations. It's beautiful, but likely too small. Hopewell Elementary is also nearby, and a little further afield to the south are the Pleasant View and Pleasant Valley schools. Bettendorf High School is not too far away. Also, Tanglewood Hills Pavilion and Chapel are in this area, and provide rental facilities (their chapel holds 220).

Church Planter

Besides choosing a location, the calling of a church planter is key. The church planter is someone with a seminary education, who is specially gifted and trained for the purpose of church planting. This person (rather than us!) will take the lead and planning and leading the actual church plant.

The EPC, working through their church planting consultant, Tom Ricks, would help us connect to just the right church planter, primarily through our associated seminaries.

Assessment Program

This individual (and their spouse) will go through an assessment program at a specialized church planting assessment center. The next time the EPC will be running such assessments will be in 2019. There, the prospective church planter will plant a hypothetical church. As they do so, they are observed by a psychologist, seasoned church planting veterans, and a mentor couple. It's a week of being under the microscope. In the end, the assessment team will provide one of three possible grades:

1. Qualified
2. Qualified (but with some hiccups/strings attached)
3. Not Qualified

The goal of the assessment is to provide an objective voice on whether or not the prospective church planter is called and equipped for this challenging task. For example, the church planter **must** be a good preacher. He **must** have a high tolerance for risk (church plants have high failure rates, and often have no backup funds). Church planters who are "Quick Starts" according to the Kolbe Assessment Tool are by far the most successful candidates.

Residency Program

The qualified church planting candidate will also be a graduate of a church planting residency program. These are autonomous programs started by successful church planters. The EPC works with such residency programs through large churches in Brooklyn, San Francisco, and Charlotte (Brooklyn and San Francisco also provide excellent training manuals). Church planting candidates are required to complete field work in these residency programs, which usually last for two years.

Strong church planting candidates will be creative "idea" people, who have been through both the assessment and the residency program (which costs the candidate (not us!) around \$60,000). However, if we really like a particular candidate and he has not been through residency, we could explore the option of assisting him in going.

Additional factors: it's helpful if the candidate has previous pastoral experience. It is also helpful if they know this part of the country (that is, if they are native to the Midwest). At the very least, they would need to have an appreciation for the Midwest.

The church planter selected would be called to serve as an assistant pastor at FUPC for one year, during which we would provide a package similar to our associate pastor's. This would be our entire cost (around \$65,000) for the first year. The church planter would participate in the life of FUPC (and teach evangelism), while preparing during this year to launch the church plant.

Launch Team

The church planter will not work alone, however. He will need a launch team—this is a small group of leaders who will serve as the Session of the new congregation. They must be chosen very carefully. Those who put themselves forward for this task are not always those best-suited to lead the new church to success. We would need an application and evaluation process.

This launch team needs to be comprised of people willing to pour themselves out for the church plant. The church planting pastor would obviously be a charter member of the launch team.

The launch team should include a few people who live in the region of the church plant. This group will also need some seasoned leadership on the launch team—at least two elders in their mid-40s or older. The team will need someone with some wisdom and experience to counterbalance the typical lack of experience in the church planter (most church planters are in their early 30s).

It will be important that the congregation understand who is on the launch team, and pray for them. It's good to have a wide age range, and include eight to twelve people. The launch team is the *leadership team*. If we have more than eight to 12 people, then it becomes difficult to make decisions.

Spouses should not serve together on a launch team (this creates two votes from the same family on the team, which tips the scales). Spouses may be on the core team, but would not be voting members on the launch team.

The members of the launch team are very influential— so pick carefully. Don't invite people to join the launch team willy-nilly! Launch team candidates should go through a **leadership diagnostic** consisting of three pieces:

1. **Personality profile** (Myers-Briggs)
2. **Kolbe Index** (named after an industrial psychologist). This assessment tool measures how someone approaches a task (how you do a job). Knowing these tendencies ahead of time can help us structure a launch team that includes a variety of complementary styles (these are all available through the EPC).
3. **Core Motivator Study**: Why do you do what you do the way that you do?

The launch team is critical, because most young church planting pastors think they can do all aspects of pastoral ministry themselves—but they’re wrong! They will need help from the launch team in the areas of weakness for the church planting pastor. It is crucial to evaluate the overall team dynamic—and once the entire team has gained insights on how each member operates, then this builds excitement as everyone celebrates their differences. (However, if there is an individual on the team that thinks the *only* way to accomplish tasks is *their* way, then the planting pastor needs to weed that person off the launch team).

Core Team

After the planting pastor is called and the launch team is appointed, then a core team should gradually gravitate to the church planting pastor as he pursues his ministry at FUPC in the first year of his call. The core team is defined as everyone who will be involved in the church plant in any way. These are not the leaders—these are the worker bees. FUPC would need to send a core team of about twenty people to the new church plant. This is not a division of our present congregation, but rather a *sending*, for the purpose of further growth for God’s kingdom.

Budget and Timeframe

According to Tom Ricks, the average annual cost of a church plant (while renting space) in the Midwest with one full-time pastor and one part-time person (worship director or children’s director): is \$175,000 per year. The church planting pastor will probably need a total package of \$65,000 (as the total cost to the sending church—which would include insurance, retirement, etc.). It is important to treat the church planting pastor like a regular pastor, and compensate him appropriately. Therefore, the total three-year cost of the new church plant (from all parties) would be about \$550,000 to \$600,000. And yes, you do want a line-item budget—but start off with the big picture. Now—who pays for all this?

The church planting pastor carries the overall responsibility of raising the funds for the church plant. These funds should ordinarily come from three sources:

One-third from the parent church

One-third from the core team plus the launch team

One-third raised by the planting pastor.

The planting pastor will start on his share by approaching Rivers & Lakes Presbytery, which has a willingness to help fund church plants. The planting pastor needs some “skin in the game,” and should not have all his funding provided for him. He needs to be involved in the fund-raising.

The parent church (FUPC) should serve as the clearing house for giving for the first year or two (the new church needs to register as a 501(c)3). The new church plant does not initially add much extra administrative need—FUPC’s existing officers could handle this to start out. This practice will allow experienced officers at our church to see if someone’s skimming money off the top (fishy finances). Tom Ricks saw this happen once. The launch team should have a volunteer treasurer, who sits with the FUPC treasurer/officers, to learn how to handle these technical details (it’s a sort of apprenticeship).

The planting pastor will need to raise at least one full year’s funding before the kickoff worship service. Some churches go further and require raising two years’ expenses.

To get to the bottom line, if we assume the higher end of the projected cost window, then FUPC’s one-third share of the costs for three years would be approximately:

2020: \$65,000 (pastor’s salary in called position at FUPC)

2021: \$65,000 (church plant support)

2022: \$65,000 (church plant support)

Sources of Funding: Budget, Capital Funds, Special Giving, Rivers and Lakes Presbytery, neighboring EPC churches, and God

The Role of the Parent Church

Organizational Leadership

FUPC’s primary task in church planting is the provision of administrative support to the church planter and the launch team. We would be in the role of the parent, and we

would explore inviting other EPC churches nearby to participate either as partners or patrons (contributing funds).

FUPC would provide organizational leadership for the process, since church planting pastors often need assistance with this. We would schedule initial meetings and benchmarks in the process. Then the launch team and the planting pastor would plan the next six months, but we would keep track of ongoing communication. We would also need to provide an administrator (not the planting pastor). A detail-person is key here. Having a detail-oriented administrator on the team will free up the planting pastor to be the planting pastor! The administrator is vital—and should one not emerge, we will need to hire one.

Good Communication to our Members

While pursuing church planting as a form of organizational evangelism, we should simultaneously pursue our own local evangelism from within FUPC. We should preach evangelism from the pulpit, train evangelism, invite people to small groups—all the while stretching ourselves by planting a new church. *Organizational and personal* evangelism go together. And as we pursue this process, we will need frequent communication flowing through multiple channels.

Conclusion

If Session takes ownership of this audacious goal of church planting, then we will need to **tell the story** over and over—of the vision for the church plant. Members of the Long-Range Vision Team are prepared to share testimonies to this effect. Thus, we will need to have monthly three-minute talks in the worship service from the vision team, giving our enthusiastic rationale for this endeavor. Tell the same story over and over, from differing angles—giving both testimonials of life change from others who have been involved in church plants, along with data presentations and demonstrations of the need for more churches in the Quad Cities and beyond.

God will motivate us for this difficult task through the movement of his Holy Spirit, in obedience to God's Word—all animated by a clear vision, great passion, and a difficult challenge that will take all our faith and striving to achieve.

In the end, we are confident that this endeavor will reinvigorate our own congregation as we go such great lengths to reach the lost—all to the glory of God.

Recommended Reading:

Stefan Paas, *Church Planting in the Secular West* (Eerdmans: 2016).

Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016)