

PMA Multiplication Study Group Presentation  
PMA Stated Meeting September 28, 2018

Joshua 1:1-9

God gave the land to Joshua and the nation of Israel that he led, picking up where Moses left off. I'm sure people wondered how the conquest would fair with Moses no longer at the helm. But it wasn't about the power of Moses was it? It was about the power of God and, of course, it still is.

Just over 10 years ago, this presbytery, numbering about 30 churches at the time, accepted a challenge. That challenge was to step up from being simply an administrative body to being a missional body, wrestling with the question, "What would it take for us to become a missional presbytery?" That initiative led to my being contracted to serve with the PMA in helping determine that path and living up to that challenge. Over these past 10 years, this journey has led to the founding and national expansion of the GO Center and the PMA has almost quadrupled in size to over 100 churches.

God, of course, knew this was coming, and I believe He positioned us to be a missional force, a Great Commission force, not in the taking of the land, but in the taking of hearts and minds of those in the harvest that are en route to coming into the family of God by His divine decree.

In examining our growth to date, however, we quickly realize that our growth has been mostly transfer growth and not transformational growth. It's a wonderful thing that the EPC has provided a truly evangelical safe harbor for pastors, leaders and congregations who are leaving heretical affiliations, but the overriding call is to go and make disciples. The PMA Multiplication Study Group senses that God will continue to grow the missional ministry of this presbytery, but not by transfer. The vision is for growth in the future that will be a transformational growth through church planting, church vitalization and church revitalization as we become more committed and more skilled at going and making disciples.

The truth is that we have become something of a mega-presbytery with roughly one-sixth of our denomination clustered in a single presbytery. We are far larger than most EPC presbyteries and, while some churches are genuinely investing in our missional initiative, many are not. So, the challenge that the Study Group has engaged is a two-sided challenge. First, how do we best reach the lost in the communities that surround our churches and, second, how do we best engage the lion's share of our pastors, leaders and congregations in missional ministry?

By God's grace, and through months of prayer, discussion and discernment, we have come to believe that the missional way forward is best pursued by the PMA's multiplying into three mission presbyteries. No, we are not going to divide or split the presbytery, we are going to multiply the presbytery into three presbyteries, each larger than the PMA of 10 years ago.

In my GO Center report to the General Assembly in June, I made this statement: The EPC has become a denomination of 600+ churches and each of those 600+ churches is at the center of a domestic mission field. We believe that PMA<sup>3</sup> is the path to take, and we believe that the time is right to move forward. Let us be bold and courageous.

Submitted by Ken Priddy