

**SALT AND LIGHT COMMUNITY CHURCH
(Naghalin, Kananga, Leyte)**

**Starting and Sustaining a church plant with an
integration to the principles of Emotionally Healthy
Spirituality in Church Planting**

By

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Capstone Project Report

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Working Title of Project: Salt and Light Community Church (Naghalin, Kananga, Leyte): Starting and Sustaining a church plant with an integration to the principles of Emotionally Healthy Spirituality in Church Planting

Faculty you have consulted for this project: Ptr. Rick Harner (EHS), Dr. Lowell Tallo (Leadership), Dr. Cirilo Deguiles (Church Planting), Ptr. Ryan Ermac (NT1&2)

List the courses you've taken at CGST that you will be integrating into this capstone project: Counseling (EHS); Christian Leadership; Church Planting; NT1&2 (Acts)

Capstone Description (350 words):

What does a healthy church planting look like? There are two elements we would like to see in this project. First, we want to take a look at what makes a healthy church planter and second, we want to be able to see the components of a healthy church plant. This paper aims to be able to get the principles in church planting with the view of finding application in the context of rural areas, specifically, Leyte.

Church planting is directly intertwined with the great commission. Not only is a church planter having a goal of establishing a church but the church planter is also a missionary that is reaching people. Every believer has to be missional, that means having a mission because Jesus gave us a mission (the great commission), and we are to be incarnational, which means every believer must be able to establish a basis so people can come together. Church planting is therefore connected to the great commission (missional) and the great commandment (incarnational).

The background of this study comes from the observation that the majority of churches planted in the said area (Leyte) comes from church splits or mergers from churches. Compounding the issue is the lack of training for leaders and so we have churches with unhealthy leaders. Cults have penetrated the province that has a mixture of Christian beliefs and animistic practices.

In this season of my life in church planting, I am privileged to be able to plant the second church, but this time, in a rural area. I am not trying to re-invent what was already given but rather, what we want to do is contextualize the learnings into a way where church planting becomes doable and can be duplicated immediately. In the end, we want to have a leadership pathway that has the elements of New Testament church planting, Christian leadership, and emotionally healthy spirituality.

Approach and/or Methods (350 words):

The first approach is building the relationship of the core team via Bible study and small group discussion. We meet twice a week (Fridays and Sundays) with the purpose of strengthening biblical foundations. This would be a lecture type of teaching with feedback from the students. The Friday sessions focus on Old Testament/New Testament Survey while the Sunday sessions would be on Missional Theology to get the people to see where we are headed as a church plant. The Friday session consists of four couples while Sundays focus on the core team as well as those who are involved in the ministry of church planting.

The second approach is creating materials with the view of developing the leaders. This means that there will be printed materials to be read throughout the week where the participants will have to answer questions listed at the end of the reading material. They will also have time for coaching and mentoring via face to face or through social media applications such as messenger or zoom. Development of leaders would take more time in interactions rather than just answering a reading plan. While there are reading materials, the focus is on the relationship that we are building, not just the material we are developing.

Third approach in this study is mentoring through practical ways. This means that I will be creating small groups or ministries in which the pastor will assign the students to handle in the course of the program. This would be the mentoring approach where the teacher-student will be able to apply the lessons into practical use and not just be in the corners of the church grounds.

Timeline

While church planting would take longer than one semester, this timeline is fitted for the purpose of the capstone project. This means that we will only focus on the first six months. Tangible results will be seen in the course of this project but the final output will be seen when the community rises up to the challenge of having their own indigenous pastor or elder who would lead them. Another indicator would also be the church becoming self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

Stage	Description	Timeline
Planning Stage	This stage focuses on the plan on where to plant; scout the spiritual landscape, the physical terrain as well as looking for the man of peace who would be vital in this church planting project.	one month
Cultivating Stage	This stage focuses on the start of the small group; and in this situation, we started a couples group with four couples joining for a Bible study weekly.	eight weeks

Development Stage	The church plant can now start a Sunday service where the set up is going to be centered on the Word; ministry ideas are now open and will be created upon the need of the congregants.	one month
Growth Stage	Road to Maturity is now implemented as well as leadership lessons are taught in a separate class. Another set of lessons on Emotionally Healthy Spirituality will be taught in this category.	eight weeks
Organization Stage	The church can now organize itself with deacons and probably an elder. The church planter can also focus on strengthening the biblical foundations of the leaders as well as seek new areas of where to plant another church.	one month

I. Introduction

Planting a church can be a daunting task.

Why then should we plant a church? Two words: Missional and Incarnational.

First, a church plant is missional.

The goal of church planting is to reach people. Missional church planting means that we are planting a church that is part of the culture we are trying to reach. We need to learn about the mission field around us so that we can reach some as effectively as we can while we adapt our approaches while remaining true to the gospel (Stetzer, 20).

We are given the mandate by our Lord, Jesus Christ, in Matthew 28:19-20...Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

The best way to fulfill this mandate of evangelizing, baptizing, teaching obedience is through planting churches among various people groups and population segments of the world (Payne, 22).

In being a missional church, that means planting churches where it is needed.

A missional church is seen as a church that is “sent”, called out to engage with the world, rather than “gathered”, which is focused on internal fellowship and worship. A missional church would focus on meeting the needs of the community rather than simply inviting the

community to come to church. This is the definition of missional.

Second, a church plant is incarnational.

Many church planters are quick to turn to the pages of Acts for understanding church planting; however, much of what is revealed in Acts was established by Jesus in the Gospels (Payne, 67).

God made his dwelling among us (John 1:14) to both build his Church (Matthew 16:18) and show kingdom citizens how to live according to the kingdom ethic (John 10:10), we must view church planting in the light of an incarnational approach to missions - that is, an approach to missions that involves living among the people and serving them (Payne, 72). Just as Christ came to live among us, we dwell with the people around us. We are like the people in the community in many ways but we are changed, transformed; and because of that, we seek to change and transform. The concept of being incarnational as it relates to church planting emphasizes the importance of relationships in effective church planting. It's not about establishing a location for worship; it's about establishing a basis for coming together in the first place (Stetzer, 22).

An incarnational church places an emphasis on being “in the world” rather than separate from it, and seeks to engage with the community in a way that reflects the love and compassion of Christ.

In February 19, 2023, a family consisting of four couples along with a church planter and his wife started a church plant that aims to be missional and incarnational, these are the two key words of why the church “Salt and Light Community Church” in Naghalin, Kanangga, Leyte was born.

II. Background

A. Biblical Framework

In a survey done by the Philippine Statistic Authority in 2015, the total population in Leyte who are reported to be Roman Catholics is at 92.7 percent. Followed by Iglesia ni Cristo at 1.1 percent. It was followed by the Seventh Day Adventist at .8 percent (PSA 2015, 25). In 2020, Eastern Visayas where Leyte is located reported 92.3 percent as Roman Catholics (PSA 2020, 2), and Leyte has 92.6 percent as Roman Catholics (PSA 2020, 4).

What does this mean to us?

For a span of five years (2015 to 2020), include the pandemic in the situation, we see that we, as Evangelical Christians, need to do a lot of work in this province. We barely made a dent and this is evident during elections, or when we, as churches, ask for help through the local government units.

We have to go back to the Biblical framework of how to plant churches.

When Jesus gave the great commission in Matthew 28:18-20, it was a command given to the disciples (or roughly translated to those who are following him). He said:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Biblical church planting is evangelism that results in new churches, and church planting is a very simple means of making disciples of all nations (Payne, 77). The earliest churches obeyed the Great Commission by planting new congregations to carry out the assignments of discipling, baptizing, and teaching that would begin the multiplication process of planting more and more churches (Stetzer, 81). A lot of books have been written about the great commission and a lot of preachers have taught on this passage. One thing we could glean on is if this was a command, where is the sense of urgency when it comes to the local context, and in this author's case, the sense of urgency in Leyte?

We look at the pattern in the book of Mark 3:13-15 to see who were the missionaries that Jesus sent and what was their focus. The context of this passage is the calling of the twelve disciples, where we can also check Matthew 10:1-15 and Luke 6:12-16 for further study. Mark writes:

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

First, Jesus called the disciples. He is the one who called the disciples to follow him, he is also the one who calls us today. In terms of calling, how do we know we are a church planter? In the basic sense, everyone who follows Jesus is called to make disciples. Every believer is a minister. Every disciple is a disciple maker. A church planter is simply someone who is obedient to the call.

How do I know I am called? I would consider myself an accidental missionary or a reluctant one at that. We are all called (that is, if we are in Christ) to make disciples. In my case, I have planted a church in the urban area and now I am planting in rural areas. Discipleship happens in the local context. The church grows as the disciples make disciples as well. My job is to make disciples, and in the process, love the people whom God has placed in my care.

Second, Jesus appointed the twelve. There were a lot of people following Jesus but in Mark 3, Jesus specifically appointed the twelve. Similarly, it is God who appoints people to do the work he has intended for us to do. Paul said it in Ephesians 4:11-12 that it is God who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers. So we ask, are church

planters included? Definitely, God is the one who appoints people for specific work. While denominations or organizations affirm the call of church planters, it is God who appoints church planters in specific places. Our response is simply go where we are called to go.

In the case of this author, the burden of church planting is clear in this side of the country. There is always a choice to plant in urban areas but the desire to plant where there are none to a few Christians is where we should be sending missionaries and church planters.

Third, the specific task is (a) be with him, (b) sent out to preach and (c) have authority to cast out demons. The primary task of the apostles was to be with Jesus. Yes, they were called to preach the Kingdom of God, but pay careful attention to what Mark said:

...so that they might be with him.

In order to be able to imitate Jesus, the proximity of the disciples to him is crucial. They have to be with him. They have to see what his habits are. They have to come to a point of knowing what Jesus wants, and what displeases Jesus.

Pete Scazerro explains that a lot of times, Christ followers (or church planters, in this case) work for God but is not nourished by a deep interior life with God. There is a need to be productive, to get things done, to keep on doing a lot of work, that things will fall apart if I don't persevere and hold things together (Paraphrasing Scazerro, 30). Our activity for God can only properly flow from a life with God (Scazerro, 31).

Hence, a church planter has to be with Jesus before he preaches or plants a church. This is vital for the survival of both the church and the church planter.

In hindsight, a church planter's task is to be with Jesus, to preach the kingdom of God, and something happens when he does the task. In the case of the apostles, the authority to cast out demons. In my case, supernatural things happen (while casting out demons is not something I look forward to, I have seen what God can do supernaturally when we obey).

B. Current Models in the Province

There are three models we can look at in terms of church planting in Leyte. We have Ambassador Church of Christ in Tabon Tabon, Ambassador Church of Christ in Tanauan, and Jesus Our Anchor Church in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte. This is within the denomination, Evangelical Free Church of the Philippines, where the author is currently the chairman for the Leyte Samar Region.

Ambassador Church of Christ in Tanauan was planted in 2014 as a result of the disaster response for Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). This was made possible through the various relief efforts of Christian organizations which led to a church plant. A year later, they

were able to plant another church, which is our second model in this project, Ambassador Church of Christ in Tabon Tabon. Currently, the focus of these two churches are children and youth.

Jesus Our Anchor Church in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte was planted in 2008, two years after the massive landslide in the area in 2006. Again, the church was planted as a result of relief efforts and disaster response. Currently, the church has no pastor and is led by the leaders. They just celebrated their 14th anniversary last December, where the author was the guest speaker.

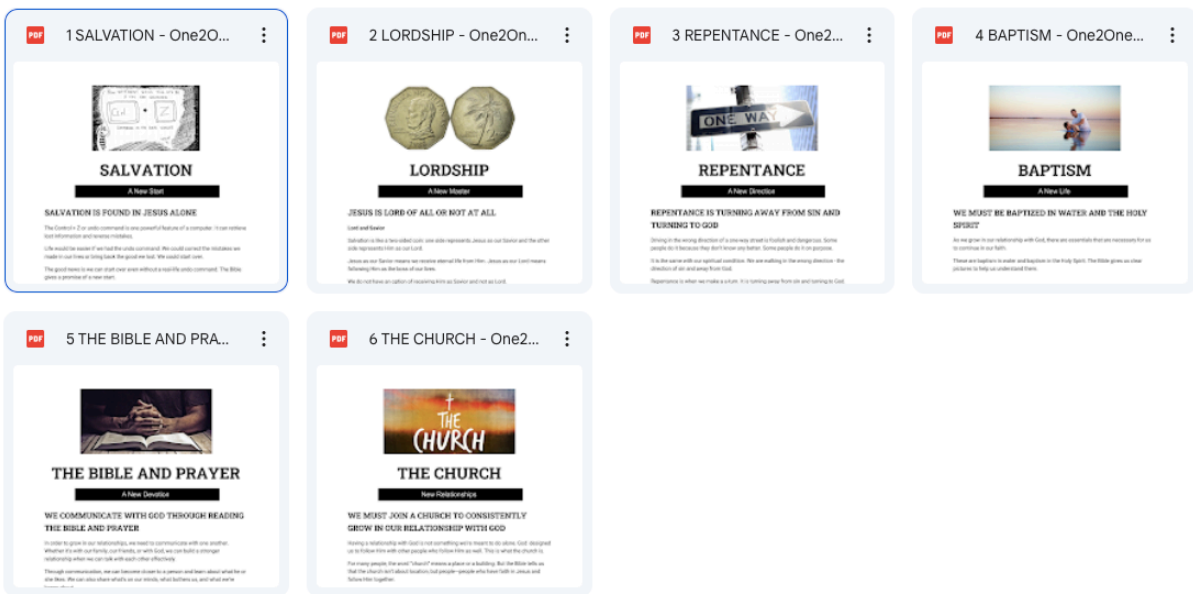
Most churches in the province are results of disaster response and relief efforts as the island is close to the ocean (Pacific) and is prone to have at least six typhoons in a year.

III. Body

A. Planning Stage.

The first step is finding a man of peace in Naghalin, Kananga. This student is introduced to Milan Pangilinan, a construction worker who lives in the said area. He is a father of two and his parents lived next door with him. We started with six lessons of discipleship which focuses on the basics of the Christian faith. The topics are listed below:

- Week 1 - Salvation
- Week 2 - Lordship
- Week 3 - Repentance
- Week 4 - Baptism
- Week 5 - The Bible and Prayer
- Week 6 - Church



For the benefit of those interested in using this material, you may download it at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1F9RwuqjUW-cc2J-dD8LZza8MNIhHyWNC?usp=share_link

In turn, Milan disciplined his brother while the church planter's wife disciplined the wife of Milan, Jhona. This led to a multiplication of disciples making disciples in the area. Jhona disciplined her classmates and now we have one community of people who are discipling others as well.



Milan Pangilinan and this church planter started one2one discipleship.

B. Cultivating Stage

In this stage, the concentration is gathering the disciples into a small group. In this situation, we started with Statement of Faith, which is the denomination's basic statement that we can study. However, this student modified the statement of faith into something more conducive for church planters. The topics are listed below:

- Week 1 - Scripture
- Week 2 - God
- Week 3 - Jesus
- Week 4 - Holy Spirit
- Week 5 - Man and Sin
- Week 6 - Salvation
- Week 7 - Church
- Week 8 - Church Government
- Week 9 - Church Ordinances
- Week 10 - The Second Coming

For the benefit of those interested in using this material, you may download it at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/169CYsClnLsgp4hx_Cb1uZOUpUEt6h-pk?usp=share_link

We also made it in Cebuano version that you may download at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ixZ6Wa9bxfw6g2hrDZ0T6zE-qsYSGpIj?usp=share_link

This stage saw the discipleship grew into four couples, Glenn and Ann; Leo and Regine; Milan and Jhona; Teddy and Marivic. From a one to one method, now we are in a small group that meets regularly once a week on Friday nights.

We also started a separate group for Old Testament Survey in this stage. Here's the link to the files for Old Testament Survey. This is good for 36 weeks.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bUAN4vSpL6Fo3bTAtJwlfwUqM6pZGbol?usp=share_link



In photo: Small group on Friday nights.

C. Development Stage

In this stage, a Sunday service is now possible and thus, the church planter moves from discipleship to teaching on a regular basis. This is also where we train the man of peace to lead the Sunday gathering where the set up is focused on Scriptures. This is where we also see the needs of the congregants and be sensitive to where the Lord is leading us in order to take care of the needs of the flock.

We rented a lot of 7,500 square meters for Php 10,000 a year. We placed a roof and six beams on the side. While this has no electricity yet, we connected it to the house of one of the congregants.

In this stage, we teach hermeneutics to the potential preachers and at the same time, share the pulpit to them by allowing them to preach at least once a month under the supervision of the church planter.

Here is the link to the files in teaching Hermeneutics, which consist of 12 weeks:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ij8A3RDehi6xwAS0MP9i67pm7vDvDdKc?usp=share_link

In our case, Milan and his brother, Glenn, is preaching once a month and thus, allows the church planter to be able to rest at least for two Sundays.



**Milan and Glenn Pangilinan
prep work for Sunday
Preaching**



**After being equipped and
coached, Milan preaches once
a week in Naghalin, Kananga**

Meanwhile, we reached out to the community by setting activities in line with the local barangay officials as a way to practice gospel preaching and evangelism in the area.



**Here is one of our community
activities, Gymbahan (Every
Basketball gym, a simbahan)**

Here is a list of the things in store for this season:
April 2023 - Basketball Clinic - Gymbahan Movement
May 2023 - Medical Missions
June 2023 - Operation Libre Gupit

We also started doing Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workshop for the small group. We are still in lesson 2. This is the prelude to going to the next stage: Growth.

In the drive to become Incarnational, we supported the community in doing livelihood projects such as the barbershop as well as selling baked products. This became an avenue for them to share the gospel and at the same time, have income which helped them become incarnational missionaries.



The women of Salt and Light Community Church doing baking products as well as homemade noodles for livelihood.



Barbershop as a livelihood project at the same time, a way to reach the community.

IV. Conclusion and Final Reflections

While church planting is a daunting task. It is doable. Attached to this paper is the three year plan for Salt and Light Community Church.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/>

[1vYFJB0S0pHIsC3Xo9f2v-99okzlnYeNQHMMtBd8u_6E/edit?usp=sharing](https://www.facebook.com/1vYFJB0S0pHIsC3Xo9f2v-99okzlnYeNQHMMtBd8u_6E/edit?usp=sharing)

A few things that I can share to fellow church planters.

First, learn to embrace your call as a disciple making church planter. Church planting is closely associated with discipleship. Those who follow in our footsteps will also duplicate our strengths and weaknesses, hence, we strive for Christlikeness.

Second, begin with a plan in mind. Start with one person at a time. The multiplication process is slow but it would be better with a strong foundation rather than creating a big event which is oriented on happenings rather than meeting Jesus in a personal level.

Lastly, don't rush. Church planting takes seasons, and there would be lean times as well as times of plenty. There will be times where it feels like the wilderness and there are days when it is smooth sailing. Go through the seasons and allow the Lord to shape you.

Being missional meant going to where the Lord sends us. In this case, Naghalin, Kananga, Leyte. Being incarnational meant being felt by the community as one who belongs with them. A church planter is missional and incarnational. This is what Salt and Light Community Church is all about. A church that flavors the community and a light that leads to Jesus.

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VI. Appendices

Student Signature

Date

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Date Received: ____ / ____ / ____

Approved by: _____