I. Introduction

The **purpose** of the Church Planting Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church is to know Christ and make Him known.

The **mission** of the Church Planting Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church is to help churches plant healthy churches that proclaim Christ to a hurting world.

The **vision** of the Church Planting Commission is that the Evangelical Congregational Church becomes a Church Multiplication movement, realized when churches plant healthy churches that plant healthy churches.

The **Evangelical Congregational Church is a church multiplication movement when**—

- God is raising up leaders, mainly from within our churches, to be church planters and pastors.
- The Evangelical Congregational Church is a movement likened to that found in the Book of Acts, where new believers are added daily.
- The Evangelical Congregational Church is intentionally partnering with like-minded individuals, churches and ministries.
- Our denomination sees church planting as an integral and core component, part of the DNA of every local congregation, and each congregation is able to identify its role in church planting.
- Our denomination anticipates and provides for an appropriate number of Conference Ministers, trained volunteers and other resource people to fully care for our pastors, church planters and congregations.
- Our National Conference Sessions are alive with anticipation of receiving new churches that reflect the communities in which they minister.
- The Evangelical Theological Seminary is offering multiple courses on discipleship, evangelism, church planting and the church multiplication philosophy.
- The Church Planting Commission, Conference Ministers and District church representatives are identifying least-reached areas beyond our current ministries.
- The Church Planting Commission is routinely providing for the assessment of candidates to become church planting pastors.
- Each pastor is leading his congregation by aggressively challenging and leading them to reach out into the communities in which they live and to intentionally begin small groups in which the Good News is shared.
- Individual members of the Evangelical Congregational Church are compelled to pray that God will continue to raise up church planters for future harvests from the current harvest.
Why plant churches?

1. **Church planting is the most effective means of evangelism.**
   Lost people matter to God! It only makes sense to evangelize in the most effective way. Statistics have shown that, among evangelical churches, those under three years old will win ten people to Christ per year for every hundred church members; those 3 to 15 years old will win five people per year. After age 15, the number drops to three per year.

2. **New churches tend to grow much faster than older churches.**
   New congregations have a higher level of commitment toward evangelism. They realize that their survival as a church depends on constantly reaching new people. Bob Logan, a leading researcher in church planting, notes that in a two-year-old American church, it takes two attendees to lead one person to Christ. In a five-year-old church, it takes 73 attendees to lead one person to Christ. When a church is ten years old or older, it takes an average of 200 attendees to lead one person to Christ. (“Church Multiplication” by Dan Kopp. A report of the Church of the Brethren in Christ.)

3. **New churches are a blessing to established churches.**
   Satan desires to deceive us into thinking that a new church planted in our area will hurt our attendance and income. But no individual church is going to be effective in reaching the entire community or city. One of the exciting things about starting new churches is that they are often able to reach people who have been unreached by all other existing efforts of established churches. A quote from Peter Wagner—
   *Some are reluctant to start new churches for fear of harming those churches that are currently located in the target community. They feel that doing so could create undesirable competition between brothers and sisters in Christ. I mention here that in more cases than not, a new church in the community tends to raise the religious interest of the people in general and if handled properly can be a benefit to existing churches. That which blesses the Kingdom of God as a whole also blesses the churches that truly are a part of the Kingdom.*

4. **New congregations raise up new leaders.**
   Many established congregations do not foster the development of new leaders, either because the church has not grown enough to reap the benefits of all of the potential leaders or the church is simply not training leaders. New churches provide opportunities for ministry for people who want to be better used of the Lord. As the new church continues to evangelize, the Lord provides a wealth of leadership resources to the new congregation. By planting more new churches we can develop more leadership opportunities which means more people can serve and reach their leadership potential by using their gifts and graces.

5. **New congregations reach other cultures.**
   It's very difficult for existing congregations to refocus and incorporate other cultures. Over 60% of our nation is composed of cultures other than white Anglo-Saxon. They, too, are in dire need of knowing Christ.