

# *“Planting Churches for Jesus Christ”*

By Pastor Pete Anderson

The church of Jesus Christ is valuable, so valuable that Jesus came to earth to die for her. Christ has promised that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

For the past fifteen years, Trinity Church here in Hawaii has been involved in church planting in East Africa. Our goal is the establishment of networks of Biblical, grace-filled, Christ-centered, gospel-preaching, self-supporting and reproducing churches. This is basically a three step process:

**Step one, preparing for the birth of a new church**, often takes several years. It involves carrying out a long-range strategy to plant churches among a specific people group, who, in turn, will eventually grow their own spiritual leaders and plant more churches. This stage of church planting includes selecting and training local pastors, sending them to seminary, mentoring them, and assisting them in learning to share the Gospel.

Eventually it involves selecting a church site and purchasing property. Ideally the first year there are crusades and interns throughout the year, witnessing and gathering a core group. Two signs of progress are the gathering of at least 50 believers and the identification of a mature trained pastor, preferable a graduate of Westminster College and Seminary.

The pace picks up as the time comes near for the birth of the new church. There are times of prayer and the recruitment of local helpers, team members, and translators. Financial supporters are needed as often there is a building to be built. The core group is enlisted to help in every aspect of ministry and construction. Pastors and others serve as an advance party preparing the community. During this time our teams in the US are also trained.

Recently we purchased a building in Dahlonga, which will house Trinity Center for World Mission. There we plan to train our groups before they go.



**Step two, the birth of the local church,** is a special, supernatural time, when God changes hearts, calls men women and children to Himself, and the new congregation is formed. Days before the birth, more teams visit in the local community and share the Gospel. Crusades are usually held each evening and Christian films are shown to the surrounding community. In addition, we often provide bedding, clothing, seeds and medical care to the poor and needy families in the community.

This can also be a time of great testing. Satan does not give up without a fight. Often rumors about the new church circulate; other churches may be threatened.

At last, the day of birth arrives. Often several hundred come; the congregation usually includes community leaders and pastors of neighboring churches. The new pastor is ordained and installed. The initial service is often five or six hours long.

**Step three, nurturing the newly born church,** is vital to help her grow. The missionary/church planter and several pastors and evangelists stay after the opening Sunday. They teach and train the new converts to be disciples of Jesus Christ, through their words and examples. They Before leaving our missionary presents the new church with Bibles, Sunday School materials, a sound system and generator, and musical instruments. Local pastors stay with the new pastor and together they pray, fast, and follow-up new converts. Bible studies, choirs and prayer groups are formed. Regular visits are scheduled for the encouragement and care of new disciples. We make a commitment to support the new pastor and his family for the next two years. We encourage the pastor to visit every convert and disciple each one. We also encourage the disciple to start a project that will help sustain his family financially.