



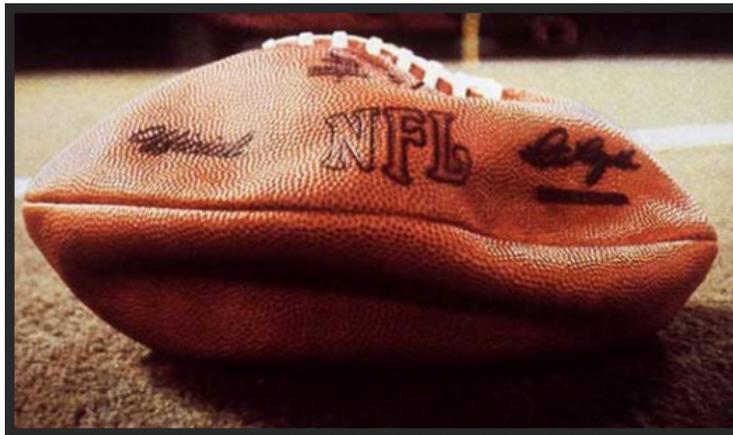
Center for United States Missions

## Mission Moments



# Avoiding Mission Deflation

February 1, 2015 - by Rev. Michael Ruhl



One continues to marvel at the massive movement toward a more *incarnational* approach to church planting. Looking beyond the more traditional and attractational models of church planting, church planters have discovered that discipleship is more than simply attending worship services and supporting church programs. Because discipleship is both missional and transformational, many new churches are being planted through the multiplication of missionary cells - commonly called 'missional communities'. This approach to new church development is more organic, operating on the premise of bringing the church to the people in the community - instead of attracting the people in the community to the campus of the new church. This trend has resulted in the escalation of Christian service ('mercy ministry') and neighboring, as disciples in missional communities serve people and groups in their community, many of whom are in need of a gospel witness.

We celebrate the great courage and vision of church planters who seek to plant new churches that are more transformational and less organizational. The fact remains that an important key to the "kingdom success" of this model of church planting continues to be keeping the missional communities ... missional. It is the salvation of lost souls which stirs the human heart to acts of Christian service in the missional community. Care must be taken to emphasize that, while basic human care is both good and godly, Christian service in a missional community has a deeper purpose than the simple alleviation of

human suffering and deprivation. Therefore, acts of service and mercy are not ends in themselves - but are the means to a greater end, which is the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ with blood-bought souls who are still far away from God.

This dynamic is mindful of the *Deflate-Gate* scandal which is rocking the world of the National Football League. Some have said that by *deflating* eleven of twelve team footballs, a professional football team may have lost its integrity and cheapened its victories. And when a missional community allows Christian service to become separated from authentic evangelism, the result is *mission deflation*. The missional community suffers a loss of integrity and morphs back into more of a self-nurturing small group. Courageous church planters will recall the old cliché ... *in the house church design, many people are more interested in the **house** aspect* (fellowship, fun, fulfillment food and fireplace) *than the **church** aspect* (Missio Dei).

Thank you, Incarnational Church Planters, for keeping your missional communities "pumped up" for the Mission of God in the world.



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## Questions for Discussion

Personal or Group Reflection



1. How effective was your most recent Christian service project?
2. How did that Christian service project fit the skills and interests of the people in your Missional Community?
3. How did that service project expose your community to greater need?
4. How did that service project serve to build relationships that lead to making disciples?
5. How did that service project provide opportunities to "go deeper" in spiritual conversations?
6. Do you have a hard time trusting that a service project will lead to "greater things?" Why or why not?

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## Resources You Can Use

Related Books and Links



**[Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture](#)**, by Brandon Hatmaker (Zondervan, 2011)

**[Barefoot Church Primer: An Eight-Week Guide to Serving through Community](#)**, by Brandon Hatmaker (Missio Publishing, 2012)

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## What's Happening?

News from the Center



**C4USM Connections** - is our e-newsletter sent out monthly. It is designed to keep you informed about the training, research, and resources offered by the Center for U.S. Mission. [Click here to subscribe](#).

**Mission Moments** - is our twice monthly mission blog designed to discuss current topics related to church multiplication. [Click here to subscribe](#).

Please pray for these training events in the upcoming months. [For more information click here](#).

### February 2-3

Church Planting Essentials - Missouri District

### February 5-7

Church Planter Assessment Center - Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

### February 16-17

C4USM Cabinet Meeting - Concordia University, Irvine, California

### February 25-26

NAME Meeting - Phoenix, Arizona

**February 26-28**

Best Practices for Ministry Conference - Christ Church Lutheran, Phoenix, Arizona

**March 4**

Six Pack Conference - Hot Springs, Arkansas

**March 7-8**

Church Planting Introductions - Regional Congregation Mission Convocations, Kansas District

**March 13-14**

Churches Planting Churches - Living Word Lutheran Church, Seward, Nebraska - Nebraska District

**March 17**

Church Planters Leadership Forum - Missouri District

**March 20-21**

Churches Planting Churches - Christ Victorious Lutheran Church, Chaska, Minnesota - Minnesota South District

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