

# Planting Churches in an Unchurched World

by Stewart Ruch

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*Stewart Ruch emphasizes the necessity of church planting as a response to the spiritual occupation of America, encouraging Christians to actively engage in their communities with hope and mission.*

**Duration:** 35:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:14, Matthew 9:37

**Topics:** "Church Planting"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker explores the theme of living as Christians in an un-Christian world. He emphasizes the importance of living supernaturally and full of hope, contrasting it with the despair and smallness strategy of the soldiers on the eve of a great battle. The speaker references the story of Gideon in the Book of Judges as an example of someone who lived with desire for God and hope. He also acknowledges the radical cultural changes that have occurred in the last 50 years and the influence of the devil in stealing, killing, and destroying what God has made.

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## Transcript

On the night before the day that many would say was one of the most important days in the 20th century, it was that day when Allied forces got onto the ground of occupied France and decided and chose and acted to occupy, for the sake of the French and for the sake of the Allied forces, that which had been occupied by the Axis forces. What many of us may not know about is actually what happened on June 6th, the night before that remarkable morning in Normandy. While there were many soldiers preparing to hit the beaches, there were also soldiers who had been dropped behind enemy lines and a group of soldiers who had been dropped behind enemy lines found themselves on the ground there in France.

They looked for a place to spend a few hours of the evening before they would set out on early morning to support the troops coming on the beaches. They found a barn and it being France in that barn, they actually found vats of red wine and in a moment that no one who's ever been through the pressure these men have been to can fully relate to, but in a moment they made a split decision and they opened those vats of wine and amidst the incredible pressure that they were experiencing in this occupied hostile land, they proceeded to get absolutely drunk and then they slept hidden, crouched within this little barn on the countryside in France while all of their comrades went to the thick of what proved to be a most pivotal battle in a heinous and tragic war. They were called to occupy what was a hostile occupied land, but they slept and they shrunk themselves and hid themselves away.

And we'll look this morning at another occupied land, occupied by a hostile force as well. It's land of Israel occupied by a people group called the Midianites and we look and see that in the same way that these soldiers had that reflex and any human would have that reflex in the face of great challenge and great pressure and hostility, they too in Israel sought to make themselves as small as possible, to hide themselves away from the Midianite wrath and just wait it out and hope that one day somehow those oppressors would roll on to their next victim. I want to draw an analogy this morning to our country and where we are today here in America.

I want to talk about how we too live in an occupied land, similar in the spiritual realities, different than what France experienced or what Israel experienced, but similar in the way that there's a hostile spiritual force that has taken over the workings and the interworkings and the culture and the relationships of our country, that we too are occupied and in the face of that called to occupy the land that ultimately belongs to the Lord for all things ultimately belong to the Lord. This is how we live Christian in an un-Christian world, by occupying and planting churches amidst an utterly un-churched country, an un-churched world. We've been working on this series in 1 Peter, living Christian in an un-Christian world, and some of you saw that we were shifting gears and moving to judges this week, and you thought, oh I was glad you were dismayed, I'm glad you're tracking with our Peter teachings.

We are in a different text, we're working with the same theme, living Christian in an un-Christian world. I want to specifically explore with you how we do that, how we live lives that are filled with desire for God, who desires to love and save this world, hearts that unlike those soldiers on the eve of that great battle, their hearts despaired. Indeed they chose to live small and hidden, but we as Christians are called to live supernaturally and full of hope, and if that's what marked the life of Gideon, who we'll study here in the book of Judges, and that's what's marked you to the resurrection, to mark our diocese, and to mark your lives as well.

I want to answer the question for you, why church plant? Which is really a question that speaks to why seek to occupy amidst an occupied people? Turn with me in your bulletins, if you haven't already, to Judges 6. Two key thinkings here, one is an occupied people, and another is an occupying people. Verse 11, an occupied people. Verse 14 to 16, and then 24 to 27, an occupying people.

Look at this in verse 11, now the angel of the Lord, that's a really important phrase, it came to be known that that angel of the Lord figure was actually a kind of pre-incarnate Jesus, who has always been and always will be, and he is coming to earth to do a work. Indeed whenever God, he ministers and brings his present to earth, there's a kingdom intersection and all things are absolutely changed. The angel of the Lord has come, he's come to speak to one of his servants, and he comes to Gideon, verse 11, who's beating out wheat in the wine press to hide it from the Midianites.

That's why he's beating out wheat with something that's actually made to use wine. It's hidden, it's lower, it wouldn't be up on a high hill as those who make wheat would usually do, but down lower. And what we learned even earlier in the book of Judges chapter 6 is that Israel has been occupied by a foreign force.

Occupation can be defined like simply, it's what was once home is no longer home, because someone has occupied your land. What was once home is no longer home, because someone or something has occupied your land, and everything has changed. Israel doesn't have a king yet.

If you're familiar with the history of Israel, they have a series of many, many kings. There's no king yet. This is a group of people who have come after Moses and come after Joshua.

They're a group of people leading, they call them judges, who have some level of authority and power, but not much. It's a time of chaos, it's a time of vulnerability, it's a time when you're not sure what your leadership is doing, and who really is leading, or what's really happening. They're very, very vulnerable to foreign forces like the Midianites, and the Midianites roll right in and don't lose an opportunity.

The way that the Israelites respond is we read that they actually make for themselves dens in the mountains and caves to hide in, verse two of chapter six. They're going small. Their strategy amidst this incredible occupation is to go small, to go hidden, to just hunker down, circle the wagons, and just wait this hideous moment out.

I want to make a direct analogy that America too is occupied by a hostile force. It's a spiritual force. We've never known the reality that so many countries have suffered with where a foreign force actually occupies their land, and what was once home no longer feels or acts at all like home.

But we are in the midst of a profound spiritual reality. Let me speak of it simply culturally, and even legally in terms of legal decisions that have been made. I hope you don't hear an angry screed or charge here, because I'm actually not angry about what's happened to our country in the last 50 years.

I'm heartbroken, but this is where God has placed me to do the work of the church, for God has placed you to do the work of the church. So we must understand, understand what's happening. Conservative, liberal, political perspective, socioeconomic perspective, however you look at it, everyone agrees, some cheer it, some bemoan it, that in the last 50 years there's been a radical cultural change in our country.

I'm 47, so I have lived my entire life amidst a profound shift. Some call it the sexual revolution, certainly has been profoundly influenced by technological revolution, a digital age. So many things have happened in so many different ways, there's no possible way with the short period of time I have to fully capture it.

And actually we'll be teaching more in the spring on this cultural change that we're in the midst of and how we can respond to it, but I want to speak specifically to the call of church planning in the midst of this. And let me just put out three events in the life of our country that have brought profound change. Again, some cheer these, some bemoan these, but all agree they've changed our country radically.

1969, California is the first state to legalize no-fault divorce. That may seem like a blip on your thinking, or perhaps you're not even aware of what that is, but it has statistically speaking, and they've been able to compile remarkable statistics since 1969, an unbelievable transformation the way Americans think about marriage. Now remember, law teaches.

One of the main purposes of the law is to teach, and what the law taught before that point is that you had to have an extremely specific, focused, and unusual reason to ask the state to grant you a divorce. Divorces were very hard to come by, very difficult to get, which caused incredible deterrent to many people getting divorces. In 1969, you could divorce your wife or divorce your husband for no fault whatsoever except you no longer wanted to live with them.

Then there was no longer an external reason out there that you needed. All you needed was an internal motivation as you as an autonomous being could decide. Radical shift, perhaps the most radical shift we've seen in how we think about family, man, woman, marriage, arguably.

1973, four years later, the federal government through a judiciary system makes legal abortion in all states at any time so that now every day 300 children are exterminated, 4,000 a year, decade upon decade upon

decade. Most of us in this room have only known our country when abortion has been legal, so we don't necessarily have a lived experience of what it was like prior to that, but we always had a radical change in how we think about life and the argumentation around life, how we understand what a person is and what makes a person, is there a soul or not a soul, how is the mind involved in person, all kinds of swirling questions around that profound decision. 2004, third decision, the state of Massachusetts legalizes what they call same-sex marriage, the first state to do so.

Now understand, and now you can see it, can't you? It's just flowing out of the stream that started in 1969 and before that as well. It actually isn't the most radical decision, although for us as Christians who understand the teaching of the scriptures, it's what we must understand clearly and understand that marriage is very clearly defined beautifully in the scriptures as between a man and a woman. But again, it's had a profound effect.

The family is now being discussed as what kind of entity it is and will be in the future in our country. There's a national conversation happening about this, and what we as Christians understand is that there is amidst this an occupying reality, a spiritual force that is confusing the minds and the hearts of so many of us outside of the church and within the church. And that this country is a country that is very different than the country that was 50 years ago, just factually speaking.

Of course, we have emotion about that, but factually speaking, that's a reality. And we know from the Bible that there's a thief, he's called the devil, and he's come to steal, to kill, and destroy that which God has made. And contrasted to the devil, Jesus has come that we may have life and have it abundantly.

And that will be the overcoming word and the last word, be assured of that. But amidst that, how do we respond? Do we go smaller? Do we dig out caves and places to hide ourselves and our families amidst this occupied season? Do we tsk-tsk and just wish we'd lived in a time when America was more Christian, but we don't. And so what we do is we hunker down.

And just like Gideon, one of the great marks of despair and one of the great marks of the smaller strategy is the kind of nostalgia for what used to be, a nostalgia for how great God used to be, how powerful God used to work within our forebears' lives. Do you hear it in Gideon? Look with me. Gideon says to the angel of the Lord in verse 13, please, sir, it's as if he's been thinking about this.

If the angel of the Lord ever appears to me, I have a question to ask him. If the Lord is with us, why then has all this, my people living in caves, me hiding in a winepress to thresh my wheat, our children being taken, our wives being mistreated and taken away as slaves, Baal and Asherah, which would be fertility cults that involve sexual immorality as part of the worship practice, why has all this happened? And where are his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from out of Egypt? Where are the good old days? I mean, if you get caught in a place of despair or a smallness strategy, you will find that nostalgia, which isn't in itself always wrong, but nostalgia will always accompany that. So perhaps it's that you just wish you lived in Little House on the Prairie when things were much simpler and people died a lot younger and lived miserable through winters and all those things.

You're nostalgic for the days of the Revolutionary War, the founding of our country, when 17%, as opposed to 55%, 100 years later, 17% of Americans said that they were devoutly religious, one of the most unchurched eras in our whole country. So watch your nostalgia and where you go. Be careful, historically accurate about what you're nostalgic for.

World War I had the highest degree of Americans saying, I want to be religiously connected and involved, about 57 to 60%. How do we respond? We're taught exactly how to respond. By the way in which the angel of the Lord speaks to Midian.

There's no smallness strategy here. He says in verse 14, go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Do not I send you.

An occupied people are to become the occupiers in the strength and the supernatural power of the Lord. For all things belong to the Lord. They start with him and will all return to him.

And what the Lord is saying is this is my land. Israel's my land, not Israel's land, but my land. And I will send you to occupy that which has been occupied by the enemy.

Go, he says in verse 14. Save, he says in verse 14. I send you.

Over the last 20 plus years here at Resurrection, we've watched different generations. And I mean this less kind of numerically or even age-wise and more sort of spiritually. In the 90s here at Resurrection, if you know anything about our story, we had a kind of Moses generation.

Catherine and I were here in those days. And we were called actually to leave a place that we had known and to go into a place that we did not. We left the Episcopal Church in 1993.

We were called to go out into another world, another way. And we were a Moses generation stepping out and trusting in God to provide for us an identity, a people. In the 2000s, the aughts, we then moved kind of a Moses generation to a Joshua generation.

I taught a whole series early in 2000 on the Joshua generation that now we were taking the Moses generation a mantle and taking the baton from them when we were running. And like the Joshua generation, we were called to take a land, to trust God to literally do things like part waters when they wouldn't part so we could walk across them like \$5 million buildings being sold to us for \$400,000, which is what happened here. That we'd be a Joshua generation that would take the land that God had already claimed for us, but that we must fight for it in the presence and the power of the Lord and construct His people there amidst that reality.

And there's still a Moses generation in our hearts. There's still a Joshua generation in our hearts, but I think we're at a shift here in 2013. I think a shift is coming.

And again, the same way that Moses handed off to Joshua, I think Joshua's handing off to Gideon. There's a Gideon generation that's being raised up. It's a generation that amidst an occupied people are being called by the Lord to go, send, save, do this work now.

Don't you dare adopt the smallness strategy the Lord is saying to us. Don't you dare hide yourself away amidst the great work that I am doing for the battle is always the Lord's. He's saying, occupy.

Okay. Someone said something to me a year and a half ago, and it was very intense and I had no idea what they meant. It was here as a direction.

We were hosting a national church planting conference for Anglicans called Anglican 1000. And we had some African-American brothers that were with us because they're considering bringing their African-American denomination into the Anglican church, which is a great story in itself. And I was walking

through the res cafe and one of the African-American pastors stopped me.

I'd never talked to him and never had a chance to meet him before. Big guy. And he stopped and he actually put his hands on my shoulders right away.

And so he had my full and complete attention. But then he looked at me straight in the eyes and he said, occupy. And as if I hadn't heard it the first time, he literally leaned in a couple more inches and he said, occupy.

And then he walked away. And I was left with 18 months of going, what could that have possibly have meant? I really didn't know what it meant. I knew it was from the Lord.

I resonated with it. I just didn't know why that verb, such a unique verb, occupy. Why? Until Thursday when I'm studying this text and all of a sudden the spiritual coin went to the spiritual soda machine and out popped the revelation Coke.

And I went, ah, this is it. Now I know. I got it.

Occupy. It was a word for us. It's a word for me.

It's a word for you. It's a word for now. It's a word for our generation.

No, we're not doing church in a different generation, but maybe we would nostalgically love to do it. We're not doing church in a beautiful Anglican English cathedral. It's not what we're doing.

We're in an old factory building in a modernist structure right here in Wheaton. Maybe you want to be somewhere else. We're here, but we're called to occupy.

It's clear. It's so clear. And that's how we're to respond.

Oh yes, the culture is in some ways darkening. It's true. And things are changing radically.

It's true that we must not go smaller. We must not despair. God takes small things like little Gideon's.

He loves to take small things, but hide themselves away and do his work. What's this work? Well, God speaks to Gideon. And we see this in verse 24 and Gideon builds an altar there to the Lord and calls the altar.

The Lord is peace. It's an altar of worship. You plant altars, which is another way of saying you plant churches.

You plant places where the power and the glory of Jesus and the power of the resurrection and the crucifixion and heaven absolutely intersecting to this world and moving to everybody's lives. Everybody's nooks and crannies of their everyday lives and great power and influence. You plant churches.

You plant altars. He plants an altar of worship. And then he turns around and in the midst of sexual immorality and the worship of false gods called Baal and Asher, he tears them down and he plants a second altar, which is an altar of mission.

And you raise up worship and you raise up mission. And the word of God goes forth in power. And little by little, church by church, you occupy.

I was asking Ben who works in the middle of Nigeria, archbishop, who was part of my consecration here as bishop. There are very specific Islamic jihad forces that are working against Christians in his area. They're called Boko Haram.

They literally kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls in the spring and are still holding them. And I said to Ben, how do you handle this? What do you do with this reality? You're an occupied people. He said, we are.

And I finally faced into it and I spent a week in fasting and prayer and tears. I was so broken hearted. What do I say to my people? How do I leave my people when entire villages that were Christian are no longer Christian? Kath and I were sitting there at the Thai restaurant, just looking at him.

And he just said, God told me plant churches, plant as many churches as you can, Ben. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Prez in New York City, who has planted many churches through his ministry and such a good thinker about church. And so that the essential call of Jesus is the call to plant churches, which is why Jesus says, go preach and baptize, which only the church can do.

But the essential call of Jesus is to plant churches. Hundred and twenty-five million unchurched people in our country by several polls. If that were a country in itself, it'd be the 10th largest country in the world.

And you know how I love the nations and we'll keep sending to the nations and partnering with the nations. But we're also here to occupy our nation. I'd love the McMahons to come forward.

One reason why we felt it was so important to get this in front of you now and interrupt our first Peter series is that during prayer 100, God met with both the crawls and the McMahons separately, but simultaneously and stirred both of them toward church planting. And now it's kind of getting out there and you guys are hearing about it. People are coming to me going, do you know that people might plant church in Aurora? And I'm, no worries.

We're on it. We're good with it. But we've realized that you all needed a clear communication, not just a biblical understanding, which I'm trying to do, but also just a clear understanding of what we see God doing here at resurrection.

So we are interrupting our series because we think it's important now because God is moving now to get this to you. The timeline on this is still open. We're still discerning it, but we do sense very strongly all of our leadership teams that were to bring it to you today.

So I've asked the crawls and the McMahons to share their story of what God is doing as the McMahons heart forms for Aurora and a church plant there, and the crawls heart forms for Elgin and a church plant there. Thank you, Bishop. I just want to share what God's been doing in our family, in our hearts for the last year.

We've always talked in our 10 years of resurrection with leaders here about the possibility of one day resurrection sending the McMahons out to plant a church. And last summer of 2013, Bishop Stewart and our worship pastor Steve met with us and said, we think it's time. Let's start praying about this.

So we put a prayer team together and we set aside time to pray. And for six months, we really didn't hear a strong leading from the Lord. And then we started prayer 100, our 100 days of 24-7 prayer.

At the beginning of that, I preached a sermon here, and the text that was given to me for that sermon was Matthew 5, which says, you are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. And the Lord just used that text to really just break our hearts for all those people who live in darkness, who don't see the light of Jesus shining.

And we felt in that passage a confirmation that God has a hill for us that he's going to send us to to plant a city of light. But we didn't know where. We were studying different cities, and we had a list, but we didn't want just a list.

We needed to hear from the Lord. A few days after that sermon, the pastors here, as we were praying in the prayer chapel, and we were praying over the passage from Matthew 9 that says, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.

And spontaneously, the staff gathered around me and they started praying for this church. And Fr. Kevin had a word.

He said, I think the Lord is saying to you, you have everything you need to go. And I said, no, we don't. We don't know where.

We don't know where we're going. That night, Bonnie and I prayed about that. The next morning, Bonnie woke up and she said, I think, I think the Lord is speaking.

I just remembered that Aurora is called the city of lights. That's its tagline. That's what it means.

So we said, well, Lord, if you're saying we have all we need, this is all we have. So this must be enough. We'll obey and we'll go and we'll take a step toward Aurora.

And if it's the right place, confirm it and keep opening doors. If it's not, redirect us. And for the next several weeks, the Lord opened door after door after door.

He confirmed it with leaders from Aurora. I had a chance to meet with half a dozen pastors just a couple of weeks after that. And the first thing they said to me, pastors from Aurora, they said, we're always praying to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.

And if that's you, come join the team of what God's doing in Aurora. And leaders here at Resurrection have affirmed and confirmed that word as well. And people have come up to us and said, God wants us to pray about going with you.

Where are you going? Because God is at work. We were spending one of our first days we spent in Aurora. We're sitting and having bagels.

And in walks a couple from Resurrection. And we're like, what are you doing here? They're like, we live here. We didn't know.

And they said, we just had a dream. The wife said, we just had a dream. And Bonnie, you were leading worship in that dream.

But it wasn't at Resurrection. Not only is God orchestrating these connections, but he's giving dreams and he's confirming it. And we told them, we're praying about planting here in Aurora.

And they said, well, we've been praying for a church in Aurora for months. And you're an answer to our prayers. God is at work.

He's at work because there are people who are far from him who are living in darkness. And God wants to see those people come to Christ. He wants to see them find a home in his church.

He wants to see the church be a light to its city. God is working. He's working here in Resurrection.

He's working in Aurora. He's working in these two plants. We would love to tell you even more about this.

I'd like to just personally invite you. We're going to do another informational storytelling meeting in a couple of weeks. And Brett will tell you the details.

God is at work, Resurrection. Have faith. Have faith.

Brett's going to share a little bit about their journey. Thanks, Trevor. About a year ago in January, the clergy team invited Julie and I to come and share what the Lord was stirring in our hearts as far as our future call to ministry as part of our continuing to discern ordination.

So prior to that meeting, I said to Julie, well, let's pray about this. Let's talk about it. So we spent some weeks praying and talking it through and found ourselves having nightly discussions at the dinner table where we were a little bit surprised but seeming to get clarity that the Lord was asking us to plan a church, where we had kind of felt more the Gideon mentality of we're unlikely candidates.

But it was clear the Lord said, maybe, but will you still go? And we said, yes, we will. We brought this to the clergy team and we shared what the Lord was doing in our hearts. And there was immediate excitement there.

Stuart bounced out of his chair and started buzzing all around the room. If you can imagine that, I don't know. And from that meeting in January forward, we have not been able to stop thinking, talking, or praying about Elgin.

And when people talk about the Lord laying something on your heart, now I understand what that means. Pretty soon after that meeting, people were coming to us and saying, tell us what the Lord is doing. Similar to what Trevor shared, we had a couple come to us and say, we're going.

We said, do you want to hear more about it? Like, sure, but that's not going to change anything. We're going. The Lord's been working in our hearts already.

And through that season of 24-7, 100 days of prayer, the Holy Spirit moved in some pretty miraculous ways to bring a unity of prayer, words, and visions with the team of people that were up there. The clergy asked us when we said, hey, we're going to plant a church. That's what the Lord's laying on a heart.

They said, where? And immediately we said Elgin because we'd been at the pastorate for about a year there, growing in friendship, seeing the Lord just bring fruit there, and also knew that there was a group there that wanted a church to be there. So we knew right away it would be Elgin. We kind of joked that the McMackens were chomping at the bit to plant a church.

They just didn't know where. We never thought we'd plant a church, but we always knew it would be in Elgin. So with that group of other folks who were up there discerning, the Lord brought a lot of images, and

I can't share all the stories, but they're principally around this image of a river of living water flowing from the Lord, bringing life to dead places.

The joy of salvation, the life of the Lord, and as the Lord was confirming that word through prayer image after prayer image and just uncanny Holy Spirit kind of stories, we started saying, okay, this is not our doing. It is actually Jesus himself who is planting a church in Elgin, and he's asked us to be the human instruments of that. I'll tell you one of the stories.

So Lane Severson is one of the guys up in Elgin. He's been there for a while, and he was talking with a friend who is an older woman, a prayer warrior, part of the Vineyard Church there at Elgin, and she said, Lane, tell me what's going on these days. And he said, well, Joyce, we're actually a group of us asking the Lord, do you want to plant a church here in Elgin? And without dropping a beat, she says, he does.

And he thought, okay, tell me more. She'd been in prayer earlier that week, and in prayer she had an image of dried and withered trees along the river, the Fox River, and she came to understand in her spirit that these were churches that had forsaken the Lord and become withered and dry, and she was praying for their renewal. And the Lord said, don't pray for that.

I don't want you to pray for that, because I want you to pray for new trees to be planted, new churches to come to Elgin. So we're hearing these things, discerning, and as Trevor said, there's more of a story to tell, and we'd love to tell you the fuller account. So in two weeks, on October 12th at 1.30 in the children's worship space here at Resurrection, we're going to share the fuller account, both of Aurora and Elgin, and then we're also going to split after that, and if you want to hear more about Elgin, if you want to hear more about Aurora, we'll do some Q&A, so you can ask specific questions.

We don't know a lot of the details, but we'll tell you what we do know, and we'll tell you what we don't know. But that meeting is two weeks from today, October 12th at 1.30, so we'd love to see you there. Thank you, Carl's McMackens.

Well, Rev, looks like we're having twins. Yeah, that's what we're clapping about. That's what we're clapping about.

That's kind of a Res thing. As a matter of fact, it's possible that in the Elgin church plant, there may be up to four sets of twins, and you always count children when you do numbers of church plants. That's going to be good.

Resurrection has been working to help plant churches for the last 10 years. As a matter of fact, over the last 10 years, we've had kind of a relational church planting strategy. When someone that we were in relationship with felt called to plant a church, we discerned it, prayed about it, and sent them out, and sometimes very involved, sometimes less involved.

As a matter of fact, I see Father Eric and Jeannie are here. Didn't know they were going to be here, and the Olsons were sent out to plant a church up in Kenosha area, and now at the heart of our diocese. We're delighted to have them here with us.

But now we sense a shifting as part of this Gideon generation shifting in the Lord from a relational model to a regional model. See, now we're set here in Wheaton. We know where God's put us, and you look at that map, and you see Wheaton, and you just push out 20 to 30 minutes from Wheaton, and most folks don't travel more than 30 minutes to go to church.

Some of you are an exception. You have a whole ring of communities without any vibrant three streams work, a whole ring. And you push out from there as those churches then plant other churches, you have a whole other ring.

It just kind of goes and goes and goes by the providence of God and the plan of God. We have some time. We're at the beginning of this process.

We have some time to understand more details, and we'll be giving more to you about timeline and how all that goes, at least a year plus before they'll actually start public Sunday services weekly, and we'll share more details. But I want to be clear with you what you can do now. This began in prayer.

It will continue in prayer. So we will pray. As a matter of fact, Res Fast on the 15th of October, we fast and pray a day every fall together, and we pray together that night and meet together that night.

That will be October 15th, and that Res Fast will be primarily and exclusively about our Aurora and Elgin Church plants. You can attend the meeting on October 12th as well to be a part of that. Then also let me just call you to continue to give generously to Resurrection.

We'll share more detail about how Resurrection will be resourcing and helping to finance these churches, but they'll be very connected to us, even more than our first five church plants were. So more details about that opportunity will also be coming. And don't worry.

I know it's hard to see such core, pillar, young leadership families like these two planning on going, but don't worry. This is what the church looks like. This is how she lives her life.

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