

## Reflections: City to City Intensive

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*"You're the God of this City  
You're the King of these people  
You're the Lord of this nation"*

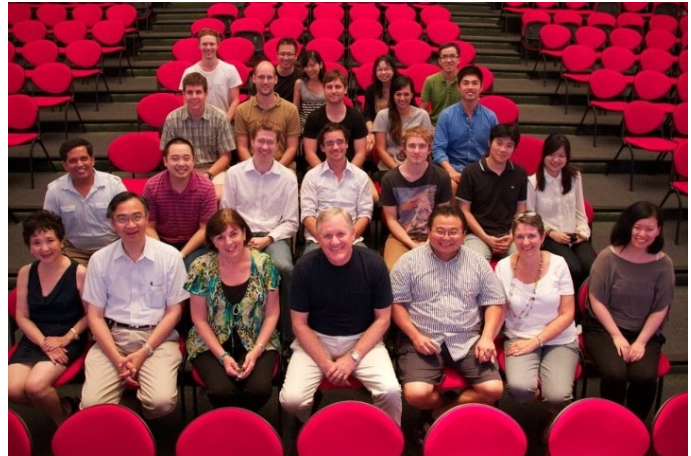
I have returned to Mackay after a five week Church Planting Intensive journey throughout four cities in Asia: Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur. We visited numerous church plants, listened to the stories and testimonies of many church planters and business men, and attended many different teaching sessions.

Was this Intensive worth the effort? Absolutely! Looking back, allow me now a moment to share what impact this incredible journey had on my life. Having just started in a new town with a new church plant I guess there was sufficient reason not to go.

Looking back, I can now testify with certainty that there was no better timing! What God accomplished without me in Mackay is simply a testimony to demonstrate that He is in control - we need not fear!

Redeemer City to City Asian Intensive invited 14 potential church planters to be part of this journey. Ahead of the journey we were sent heaps of pre-reading allowing each participant to prepare ahead of the intensive: from *Gospel Theology* to *Proposal Preparation* to *Kingdom Centered Prayer* to *Contextualized Preaching*!

This journey was more than a "what's in it for me." Our 14 guys started our journey on the first day by sharing our testimonies!



Over the course of 5 weeks we ate church planting, drank planting, and even dreamt planting. We worked through the ups, downs, positives, and negatives of different church plants. From initial awkwardness we quickly grew into a close knit group of planters!

Kingdom centered prayer. Prayer walks. Talks, discussions, visits, prayer, conversations....

What differentiated this Intensive from any other conference? Brutal honesty! Openness, intimacy! No tip-toeing! Not information download, but reflecting the glory of Christ through testimony to expose the sin under sin, yes even in the heart of honest church planters!

This accountability, intimate discipleship along with all the turbulence back home forced me to see myself for who I am and appreciate God for what He can achieve through broken vessels! And to be grateful!

From the get go, many aspects of neglect were addressed: especially the neglect of self discipline of prayerfulness and Scriptural



meditation. They know the characteristics of a church planter - energetic, entrepreneurial, passionate and always on the move - has down side: the difficulty to stop. The danger of running ahead of God, on his behalf, the danger of running church plants like a project manager instead of following Him.

What changed?

I made a note in one of my diary entries: "I wished I had this training years ago!"

I was reminded not to compromise. Never. Gospel DNA, Theology, Spirituality, and Durability sessions sharpened our Toolbox!

It impacted my approach to community, the way I see the local city. The local people! Sessions touched on how to preach to secular people.

The Session on *Missional Community* refreshed my view on how people perceive religion. The climate has changed - people are more skeptical towards exclusivity of faith.

In the presentation of our proposals we were challenged to promote our church plant to the rest of the team. Researching one's own town make you aware of your local community, more than simply acknowledging the fact that they are there! How can your church impact society?

It also changed my spiritual approach to my children, especially my youngest. I realized I need to contextualize the gospel to

my youngest and not the other way around. How easily do we expect people to become like us to become like Christ!

I have learned that, like Paul, we are to contextualize the gospel to the hearer without sacrificing the truth of the gospel!

## What Did I Learn?

### **Contextualisation:**

If I am not able to speak the "language" of my city, I am spilling valuable resources and energy - like treading water; it uses a lot of energy, it looks like swimming, but it does not get you anywhere!

### **Discipleship:**

Matthew 28: 18 - 20: All authority has been given unto me. Therefore, make disciples as you go!

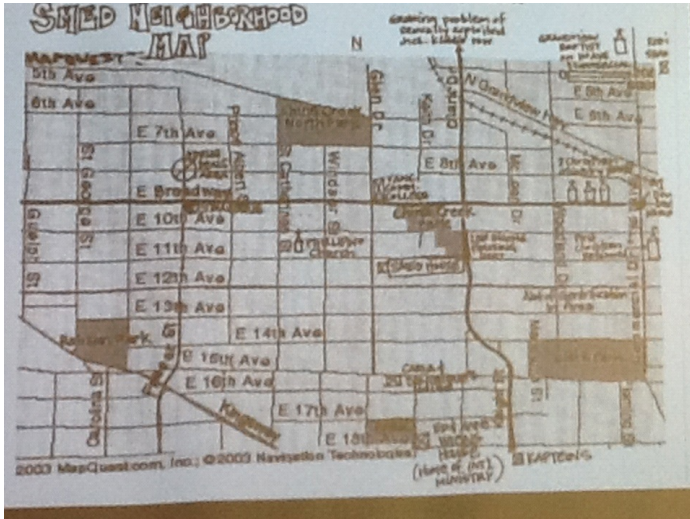
Luke 14: 27: Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Easier said than done, but in some cities it was given a whole new meaning in the context of their ministry!

### **Three ways to live:**

Usually we preach the two ways to live, but I always had this agonizing incompleteness of this analogy. Three ways to live addressed this so accurately that I could only say "Amen to that!"

Three ways to live simply splits the two ways into three: non-believers, religious folk and Jesus people. Non believers, religious folk and Jesus people share the same condition: we have all fallen short of the glory of God! The difference is that both non-believers and religious folk need to acknowledge the fact of their shortfall!

Jesus people has been convicted by the Spirit of their own inadequacy, and rejoices



that a new righteousness apart from the law has been made known to man: Jesus Christ!

#### **Prayer walking:**

God has strategically placed us for his kingdom purposes. Prayer walking is a simple way of walking through your neighborhood, praying for the guidance of the Spirit to make your team aware of the spiritual needs of your city!

#### **Integrative Ministry:**

How do discipleship and life integrate? There are many more sessions not even mentioned here such as *Marriage* and *Leadership on the Line* that truly benefited me!

#### **His way, not mine:**

One thing that made the whole experience worthwhile was the renewed reminder that it is God's church, not mine. It is God's Kingdom to be multiplied, not mine.

God operates outside our realm of our understanding! I have experienced God's providence to our church plant - I can claim no credit to the unity and renewed focus among our team - all glory to him! He accomplishes his will, not because of us nor for us, but for the glory of his holy Name!

I am humbled (and deeply pruned) as I write this reflection on how The Lord exposed the "partnership" idol in my heart. "Lord, I can do this, please bless my vision" has now become: "God, I can't contribute any good to this vision of the multiplication of your Kingdom, unless your Spirit has saturated my heart to give me a willing focus; willing to let you accomplish your sovereign will through me, a broken vessel!" Paul states it perfectly in his letter to the Philippians: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." My journey over the last two months was more than knowledge, more than a theological correct saying, but the only way ahead! I praise God for bringing me to this humbling point!

Soli Deo Gloria! To God be the Glory!

*"For greater things have yet to come  
And greater things are still to be done in this City  
Greater things have yet to come  
And greater things are still to be done in this City"*

(words by Chris Tomlin)