

# Church Planter Proposal





...“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>1</sup>

- Jesus -

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”<sup>2</sup>

- Isaiah -

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...<sup>3</sup>

- John -

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28:18 - 20

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 6:8

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 7:9



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# Sonlight Church Vision

## Why do we exist?

We exist to seek the welfare of the City of Lynden because we believe that God's Grace restores everything<sup>4</sup> to His Glory.<sup>5</sup>

## How does that happen?

Through a community who is empowered by the Gospel<sup>6</sup> to both bring and be good news for the city.<sup>7</sup>

## What does this look like?

We **Gather** for corporate worship that is Rooted, Reformed, and Relevant. Rooted in the historic liturgy of the church. Reformed by centering on the Sovereignty of God over all Creation as well as the doctrines of Grace.<sup>8</sup> Relevant to the upcoming generation in the Pacific North-West.

We **Grow** through gospel-centered discipleship that enables us to know God and know ourselves and therefore frees us to live in community with one another.

We **Go** into our relationships, neighborhoods, city, and world to both bring and be the good news of the gospel.

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<sup>4</sup> Revelation 21:5a “And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 2:20 - 21 “<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

<sup>6</sup> Colossians 1:6 “the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth

<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah 29:7 “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

<sup>8</sup> Further, we at Sonlight believe these doctrines are clearly expressed in the Three Form of Unity.



# Why Plant a Church in Lynden?

First, we are biblically mandated to spread the good news of the gospel.<sup>9</sup> The most effective way that we at Sonlight believe that we do this is by means of planting new churches.<sup>10</sup>

Second, Lynden is a mission field. Lynden is located in the Pacific North-West of the United States and like much of the Pacific North-West while the town is marked by many church buildings only 33% of those living in Lynden actually affiliate themselves with a church or religious organization.<sup>11</sup>

Third, there has been much church stagnation in Lynden. The last viable church plant in Lynden occurred 20 years ago. During this time the cultural winds have shifted, and a new generation has been raised within the Secular Age.<sup>12</sup> Therefore we at Sonlight believe that we need to plant churches that are well-versed in the cultural pressures of the Secular Age and able to clearly articulate how the Gospel is able to alleviate these pressures to the Glory of God.

## Church Plant Values

### Gospel-Centrality

The Gospel: It is the power of God<sup>13</sup>, it is of first importance<sup>14</sup>; it is what the heavenly hosts long to look into because of its beauty and wisdom<sup>15</sup>, and it is what was preached to

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28:18 - 20: <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

<sup>10</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Growth* (Glendale, CA: Regal), 168.

<sup>11</sup> US Census Bureau, Synergos Technologies Inc., Experian, DecisionInsite/MissionInsite


<sup>12</sup> We use the term Secular Age as used by Charles Taylor in his work *A Secular Age*.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 1:16 - 17: <sup>16</sup> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* <sup>17</sup> *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

<sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1 - 5: *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

<sup>15</sup> 1 Peter 1:12: <sup>12</sup> *It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*





Abraham and the prophets of old.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, as it has been said: *“If there’s anything in life that we should be passionate about, it’s the Gospel. And I don’t mean passionate only about sharing it with others. I mean passionate about thinking about it, dwelling on it, rejoicing in it, allowing it to color the way we look at the world.”*<sup>17</sup>

Too often, when we Christians think about the Gospel, we either assume that it is only relevant on the day that we die as it gives us a ticket into heaven, or we assume that the gospel is only relevant to us on the day that we are converted as it brings us into the family of God. The Gospel, however, at its core not only converts us, and not only enables us to be with the Lord forever, but the Gospel also is the living and active power of God that continually transforms us from the inside-out.<sup>18</sup> As Tim Keller says: *We never “get beyond the gospel” in our Christian life to something more “advanced.” The gospel is not the first “step” in a “stairway” of truths; rather, it is more like the “hub” in a “wheel” of truth. The gospel is not just the A-B-C’s but the A-Z of Christianity... We are not justified by the gospel and then sanctified by obedience, but the gospel is the way we grow and are renewed.*<sup>19</sup> We at Sonlight, then, believe that the gospel must be central to the church plant.

## Worshipping-Priority

Evangelism begins with Worship; Selling one’s possession and giving money to the poor begins with Worship; Loving one’s neighbor as yourself begins with worship; All of this begins with worship because in our lives what we behold is what we become.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is a priority that the Sonlight Church Plant provides a space where the church can corporately gather in order to encounter God for when our hearts are captivated with wonderment for God through His Gospel, we become joyfully set-free to make much of God by denying ourselves and living for Him.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Galatians 3:8: *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’*

<sup>17</sup> C. J. Mahaney, *Living the Cross Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Peter 1:5 – 9 “...make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.”

<sup>19</sup> Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 115 <sup>2</sup> ... Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” <sup>3</sup> Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. <sup>4</sup> Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. <sup>5</sup> They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. <sup>6</sup> They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. <sup>7</sup> They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. <sup>8</sup> Those who make them become like them...

<sup>21</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18 <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.





## Missional-Activity

Jesus commands his followers to Go and make disciples.<sup>22</sup> Therefore following the command of our Lord the Sonlight church plant will relentlessly seek to bring the good news of the Gospel to those who are lost<sup>23</sup> and to those for whom the beauty of Jesus is dim. This will be accomplished through both personal evangelism<sup>24</sup> as well as collective communal events which seek to demonstrate the goodness of our Lord in Word and Deed.<sup>25</sup>

## Contextual-Relevancy

The Gospel is never changing but is also transcultural and therefore to be embodied in every culture. In light of this Sonlight's church plant will both recognize that we live in the Secular Age<sup>26</sup> and therefore seek to minister to the Secular Age.

# Church Planter Profile

## Characteristics:

**(1) Spiritual Vitality:** Sonlight's Church Planter will love the Gospel and apply the Gospel to their lives on a daily basis via bible reading, meditation, and prayer. The mark of such a life will be humility.

**(2) Strong Home life:** Sonlight's Church Planter will be one whose house is in order for as Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:5, If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew 28:18 – 20 <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

<sup>23</sup> Luke 19:10 <sup>10</sup> ...For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

<sup>24</sup> Mark 16:15 <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2:42 – 47 <sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

<sup>26</sup> The Secular Age is first, an age of expressive individualism where we form our identity by looking inside ourselves to find the thing that we think gives us a sense of self-worth, and then we take that thing and express it to the world with the expectation of acceptance. Second, the Secular Age is an age of emphatic ethics where empathy and authenticity have replaced the highest moral virtue of love and self-denial. Third, the Secular Age is an age of immanence where we have removed the idea of the transcendent (heaven) and essentially have pushed it down into this world. Meaning, we in the secular age no longer hope that we will one day find flourishing, rather we expect to find it in this world. Fourth, the secular age is an age of negative freedom where freedom is thought of not as the presence of right restriction, but instead in the removal of all restrictions. And finally, fifth, we have learned that the Secular Age is an age of technological redemption, where stave off our fear of death via our hope of technological advancements.





**(3) Theological Clarity:** Sonlight's Church Planter will love the Sovereignty of God, the Doctrines of Grace, and the Lordship of Christ over all of Creation.

**(4) Preaching:** Sonlight's Church Planter will love to Preach the Word. They will understand both the importance of the art of preaching as well as the science of preaching.

**(5) Missional Lifestyle:** Sonlight's Church planter will be involved with various communities outside of the church understanding that the church is to seek the welfare of the city.

**(6) Disciple-Making Skills:** Sonlight's Church planter will be able to grow others in the gospel. Teaching them how to apply the gospel to their lives in such a way that produces gospel-laden character.

**(7) Entrepreneurial Aptitude:** Sonlight's Church planter will be entrepreneurial. They will be a self-starter, self-motivated, and open to taking risks for the Glory of God.

**(8) Visioning Capacity:** Sonlight's Church planter will have a clear vision for why the church exists, how the church shall fulfill the why, and what that will look like on the ground.

**(9) Managerial Prowess:** Sonlight's Church planter will be able to manage various projects, understanding both people and systems displaying the appropriate giftings to execute the vision for the church.

**(10) Leadership:** Sonlight Church planter will know their leadership style and be wise enough to raise up individuals who fill in gaps within their leadership abilities.

**(11) Cultural Exegete:** Sonlight's Church planter will understand the pressure points of the Secular Age and know how the Gospel can bring relief to these pressures.

**(12) Strength of Call:** Sonlight's Church planter will have experienced both the internal call and the external call to plant churches.

## Qualifications:

**(1) Education:** Sonlight's Church Planter will have a Bachelor of Arts degree, as well as either a Master of Arts or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited institution.

**(2) Experience:** Sonlight's Church Planter will have at minimum three-years of pastoral experience.







# Church Plant Yearly Markers

The markers provided below are intended to provide a guide and point of reference for the church planter. As the church plant situation evolves, the markers may evolve as well. Changes in the markers must be approved by both the church planter and the Sonlight Elders. Markers which are not attained may result in a re-evaluation of the church plant by the Sonlight Elders.


## Year Zero (Pre-Launch):

- (1) **Spiritual Vitality:** Sonlight's Church Planter will love the Gospel and apply the Gospel to their lives on a daily basis via bible reading, meditation, and prayer. The mark of such a life will be humility.
- (2) **Accountability:** Sonlight's Church Planter will prepare monthly written reports to the Sonlight Elders and Council. The monthly reports will detail the progress in developing the church plant and will summarize significant meetings as well as a list of people who have been contacted.
- (3) **Discipleship:** Sonlight's Church Planter will meet with a spiritual and administrative mentor on an ongoing basis. The Church Planter will also be actively discipling one or more people on an ongoing basis.
- (4) **Mission:** By the end of year zero, Sonlight's Church Planter will have engaged 200 non-churched or de-churched people in discussion about the Gospel and the new church. Sonlight's Church Planter will also have established a core group of Sonlighters who are either committed to support or who are committed to join the new church.
- (5) **Stewardship:** Sonlight's Church Planter will be actively fundraising with a goal of raising at least \$60,000 in order for the year one finances to be released.

## Year One (Post Launch):

- (1) **Spiritual Vitality:** Sonlight's Church Planter will love the Gospel and apply the Gospel to their lives on a daily basis via bible reading, meditation, and prayer. The mark of such a life will be humility.
- (2) **Accountability:** Sonlight's Church Planter will prepare monthly written reports to the Sonlight Elders and Council. The monthly reports will detail church plant progress and challenges.



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- (3) **Discipleship:** Sonlight's Church Planter will meet with a spiritual and/or administrative mentor on an ongoing basis. The Church Planter will also be actively discipling several on an ongoing basis.
  - (4) **Mission:** The church plant will hold worship weekly services. The launch core group members will be actively discipling those in their communities or new church members. The Church Planter will engage 100 non-churched or de-churched people annually in discussion about the Gospel and the new church.
  - (5) **Stewardship:** Sonlight's Church planter will be actively fundraising with a goal of raising \$50 000 of the church year 2 budget in order to release funds.

## Sonlight Financial Support

### Sources of Funding

The Church Plant will use five streams of financial support. (1) The Legacy Fund<sup>27</sup> (2) Sonlight Church Fundraising<sup>28</sup> (3) Ministry Shares<sup>29</sup> (4) Budget<sup>30</sup>.

### Yearly Distribution:

Year Zero | Estimated budget: \$110 000

Funding Streams:

\$35,000 from Legacy Fund  
\$ 5,000 from Sonlight Fundraising  
\$60,000 from Ministry Shares

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<sup>27</sup> The Sonlight Legacy Fund is a fund provided through memorial gifts and managed by the Legacy Fund Committee. Following biblical principles, this committee manages the fund investment and recommends a yearly allotment for disbursement to a ministry effort that spreads the Good News of the gospel.

<sup>28</sup> Sonlight Church Fundraising refers targeted giving from both members of Sonlight as well as interested investors from outside of the community. All funds raised via method will remain outside of the yearly church budget.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry Shares: The Christian Reformed Church asks each congregation to yearly and voluntarily pay \$346.48 per professing member to the denomination in order to help fund the various denomination ministries. Classis Pacific North West also asks each congregation to yearly and voluntarily pay \$55 per professing member to the Classis in order to fund various Classical ministry incentives. At Sonlight we have decided to voluntarily give 10% of our budget towards Ministry Shares which in 2018 totaled \$95 000. The reason we wish to use Ministry Shares for the Church Plant is because we believe that the most effective way that we could help serve the denomination is by planting healthy gospel-centered churches.

<sup>30</sup> Sonlight Budget: The Sonlight Budget is estimate of income and expenditure per year and is typical funded by those who attended Sonlight Church.





\$10,000 from Budget

## Year One | Estimated budget: \$60 000

Funding Streams:

\$60,000 from Ministry Shares

## Year Two | Estimated budget: \$50 000

Funding Streams:

\$50,000 from Ministry Shares

## Year Three | Estimated budget: \$25 000

Funding Streams:

\$25,000 from Ministry Shares

## Year Four | Estimated budget: \$11 000

Funding Streams:

\$ 11,000 from Ministry Shares

