

## Midwest Multiplication Initiative

### *Our Developing Story*

(By Tom Planck – 9/2022)

In summer of 2012, the regional pastors from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and a few other interested Church of God leaders gathered in a conference room in Fishers, Indiana. The purpose of the conversation was to explore the idea of a partnership that could potentially accelerate church multiplication in the Midwest.

One conversation turned into two. **And by the end of a third conversation, the Midwest Multiplication Initiative was born!** Healthy Growing Churches joined the partnership at its inception and Tom Planck was appointed to be a co-catalyst alongside the regional pastors to spark a multiplication conversation in the Midwest.

**It was our hunch that if we could get pastors in circles having the right conversation we would get movement, movement toward multiplication.**

So that is exactly what we did.

We launched multiple cohorts to get leaders from all over the Midwest exploring multiplication thinking. Dozens of cohorts have been started and hundreds of pastors have participated in one of these learning communities since 2014. We started an annual gathering in Lima, Ohio so we had one full day each year where pastors from the Midwest could deep dive on what it might look like for their church to multiply. Hundreds of midwest pastors have gathered in Lima since 2014. We hosted several Discovery Days in hopes that other potential multipliers and established churches would say yes to launching something new.

Every year of the partnership we have leveraged the gift that is the Exponential conference and community. Hundreds of Midwest pastors have attended the national Orlando event or the Chicagoland regional. Beyond that, Exponential's vast library of resources has helped us build a common language that is also empowering us to continue to build a multiplication culture in the region.

A few years into our partnership, it became painfully obvious that we had been challenging churches to multiply on a macro level (churches that launch new multiplication ventures), but we had very few churches that were multiplying on a micro level (disciples that make disciples).

We knew we had to pivot and we did.

In 2020, just before the start of the pandemic, we launched Mission 120. Our goal was to raise up and resource 120 disciple making churches in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. It took us a couple waves of cohorts, but we finally have at least 120 churches in the region in the various staging of building and constructing their disciple making pathway.

**The results has been hundreds, maybe even north of a thousand new disciples made!**

It is hard to believe that it has been a full decade since that first conversation. We have learned a lot in the past ten years. We have also accomplished a great deal beyond what is mentioned above.

**It is beyond exciting to see the growing number of churches in the region who are fully engaged in answering the pressing question of what it will look like for their church to multiply.** We believe we are approaching a tipping point that will fuel our multiplication vision for the years to come.

**We have launched *twenty-eight* multiplication ventures since the partnership began!** We have launched new churches, several multisite campuses, a network of missional communities, and even the regions first *Fresh Expression* of church.

We are also thrilled to announce we have added Illinois Ministries to the Midwest Multiplication Initiative. We are excited to have Eric Livingston as a partner and look forward to the many ways we will see the church multiply in Illinois!

As we prepare for our eleventh year of partnership, conversations are happening to forecast where God is leading us in our developing multiplication story. **We are convinced that we are at the bottom of the J curve and fully anticipate an acceleration of what God has in store for our future.**

*Find a seat on the bus. Link arms with others. It is going to be a fun ride!*