

Midwest Church Extension is the Church Planting Agency of IFCA International in the Midwestern States of Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, & Kentucky.

Planting Today ... for a Harvest Tomorrow

Every aspect of MCE's ministry is geared toward the permeation of every identifiable Midwestern community with the hope of the Gospel through the biblical ministry of reproductive IFCA International churches.

Chances are there is a need for an independent church in your community. Contact us soon to begin exploring the possibilities that may exist for establishing one.

Are you interested in the possibility of planting a church as an MCE missionary pastor? Call or write today and let's explore what opportunities might exist for which you may be suited.

MCE is a member organization of



www.ifca.org

Midwest Church Extension

Henry Vosburgh, Executive Director

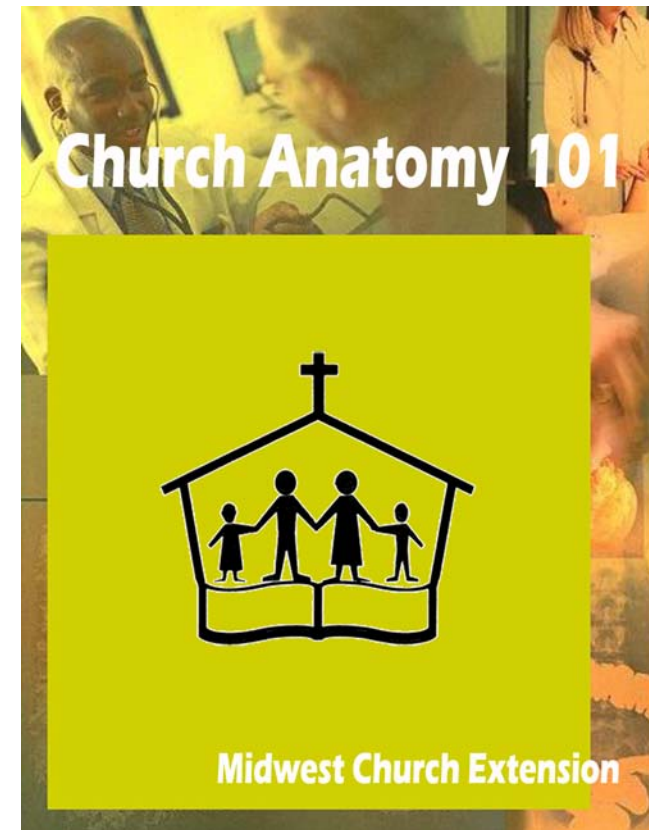
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Church Anatomy 101

Midwest Church Extension is engaged in the ministry of planting or re-planting independent churches. It is unfortunate that we live in an age when lines of distinction between various ecclesiastical labels and designations are being blurred and sometimes even obliterated. As a result, the phrase "independent church" takes in a wide array of churches which, upon close examination, will be found to have serious differences in doctrine and practice from the churches that are under MCE's umbrella of ministry. A brief anatomy lesson will help to clarify what you will find when you examine churches under MCE's ministry.



The Head

Churches planted by the followers of Christ in the first century were independent churches. Each one was free from outside control over its affairs. They were self-governing and chose their own officers (Acts 6.1-6). They exercised their own discipline (1 Corinthians 5.13), and internal problems were resolved by the local congregation (1 Cor. 6.1-5). Maintaining the doctrinal purity of the church was the responsibility of the local assembly (1 Tim. 3.15; Rev. 2.14-16).

Independent churches, when fully established under MCE's ministry, follow that same pattern. They recognize Christ, Himself, as the ultimate Head of the local church. They rely upon His direction, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13.1-3), in choosing their form of government, local leadership, and the specific shape of their ministry. These churches are free to call their own pastor and to invite into their pulpit any whom they deem to be sound in the faith.

Such churches will have complete liberty in regard to their missionary support, being free to follow God's direction in supporting those missionaries and agencies they find acceptable.

Independent churches are characteristically dependent upon the Lord, looking to Him for the provision of every need. Each one is self-supported through the free-will offerings of its congregation (1 Corinthians 16.1, 2; 2 Corinthians 9.6-8). This encourages prayer, faith, spiritual growth and service among its members.

The Feet

The churches planted by MCE hold to the historic "fundamentals of the faith", upholding the absolute authority of the Scripture over any teaching based upon human wisdom alone. As the foundation of the human body is found in the feet, the foundation of the churches established by MCE is found in such fundamentals as:

- ◆ The inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible
- ◆ The virgin birth, absolute deity and sinless life of Jesus Christ
- ◆ The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ to provide salvation for all
- ◆ The person and work of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ The universal need for salvation
- ◆ Individual salvation through faith alone, in Christ alone.
- ◆ The reality of Satan and his destructive work today
- ◆ The personal and bodily return of Jesus Christ
- ◆ The bodily resurrection of all men; some to eternal life and some to everlasting punishment

As a foundation, however, the Word of God is more than just a system of beliefs in churches established by MCE. The Bible is regarded as the guide for daily Christian faith and living. The preaching and teaching ministry is based directly on the Word of God and is largely expository in style. The ministry is focused on teaching and discipling people in the development and practical application of biblical values and standards by which to live.

"Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven."

The Heart

The heart of the independent church, established by MCE, is a heart for Great Commission ministry; reaching the lost with the Gospel, and discipling believers toward spiritual maturity, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and around the world. This is the heartbeat of Christ and must be our heartbeat as well. This includes a special emphasis on church planting.

Other Vital Organs

While the local churches established by MCE will exhibit a wide variety of characteristics that are specifically adapted to their particular ministry field, there are some characteristics which are generally true of all of them.

Membership

Members must have a testimony of salvation through faith in Christ.

Ordinances

The Lord's Table is open to all those who are truly born-again regardless of church membership and obedience in Believer's Baptism is exhorted for all believers in testimony to their faith in Christ.

Interdependence

All who have trusted Christ as Savior belong to the "body of Christ" (Ephesians 1.22-23). It is generally true that independent churches will actively seek to be interdependently involved in a network of fellowship and ministry with other like-minded organizations and churches.

Worship

Worship conforms to biblical principles while also being uniquely relevant to each individual church.

Family Orientation

The church seeks to provide a vital spiritual ministry to the entire family.