

NEW CONNEXIONS

*A national network of small evangelical churches
seeking to grow and multiply through effective
communication of the gospel in local communities*



**“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you to the very end of the age” *Mat 28:18,19***

Introducing New Connexions

“...a national network of small evangelical churches...”

At the start of the 21st century many small churches are wondering whether they can hang on much longer before the relentless tide of secularism sweeps them away! Their immediate neighbourhoods seem impervious to the gospel and if church were ever central to their community, it has become a marginal activity for the faithful few. Success stories from larger churches seem to compound the sense of failure and helplessness when so few people are trying to do so many jobs.

If that sounds familiar, New Connexions may be a network that can benefit you. We are not made up of a few large, well-resourced churches, but many smaller churches who aspire to grow. We understand the problems, because many of our churches are small, often working in unsuitable, inherited buildings in places that rarely get a mention. We know all about about lack of funding, manpower, equipment and the “redemption lift” that occurs when the most able Christians move away to nicer areas to live!

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We firmly believe, however, that it *is* possible for small churches to grow and make a difference in the area in which they serve. By making “New Connexions” with other small churches in this network, there will be real benefits for participating churches. We hope that you will not only be able to make new friendships and access new resources, but also to enable those beyond your fringe to make “New Connexions” with Jesus Christ as your church is able to share the gospel more effectively in its locality.

One bright flame may make a difference to an area of a large city, but many tiny flames burning faithfully in small towns and villages can make a difference to a nation!

New Connexions: six core values

- **Biblically disciplined**
- **Spiritually authentic**
- **Clearly prophetic**
- **Community focussed**
- **Culturally relevant**
- **Mutually committed**

The aim of this booklet

In this New Connexions publication, we simply want to set out and explain the six core values that underpin our network. Our prayer is that churches will read them, reflect upon them, then with God's help begin to put them into action.

In this way we hope these six values will begin to radically affect and shape church life in ways that will lead naturally to growth and the ability to affect the neighbourhoods in which we meet.

Further help

For further information about becoming part of New Connexions, study guide material and other help available to member churches please refer to the section at the end of this booklet.

Value 1: Biblically Discipled

The starting point for changing a community begins with the individual. Jesus called people not just to belief, but to discipleship, inviting them to experience a radically different life through following Him. New Connexions churches are committed to nurturing dynamic personal faith through a four-fold emphasis:

- **Belonging to Christ**

New Connexions churches seek to provide effective pastoral care through the loving community of the church. Our aim is to receive all who come with unconditional love. We seek to encourage people to commit to Christ and His church through baptism and membership. Those who belong to our churches will regularly meet together to care for one another, meeting together in small groups in local homes.

- **Growing in Christ:**

New Connexions churches want to encourage Christians to grow to maturity through personal daily prayer and Bible study, by helping one another put what they learn into practice through participating in small groups, and by providing challenging, life-changing biblical preaching.

- **Serving Christ:**

New Connexions churches believe each believer has a role to play, and encourage them to find and use their spiritual gifts. We place a high emphasis on training, encouraging and mobilising all believers to discover God's calling on their lives and how He wishes them to serve Him in His Church and the wider world.

- **Sharing Christ:**

New Connexions is passionate about taking the Good News of God's forgiveness and love into every area of society through its churches. Our churches seek to grow by continually engaging in mission in their locality, and proclaiming the Good News through words and works both in immediate neighbourhood but also through involvement in wider world mission.

Value 2: Spiritually Authentic

In a stressed out, materialistic world many are looking for a different way to live. New Connexions churches seek to provide a spiritual oasis in a frantic world where people can hear God's voice and experience His presence. We recognize that without God's Spirit, His church will appear to the world as little more than a powerless religious, social club with nothing to offer a spiritually hungry world.

We believe that God's indwelling presence brings meaning and purpose to all that we do, and transforms even the most desperate circumstances. Believers filled with the Holy Spirit will be people of vision and courage, able to speak of real encounters with God, and open to His leading in their lives.

New Connexions churches seek to be holy communities, dependant upon God's grace. They will constantly seek to submit themselves to God through prayer and fasting for His direction, empowering, and gifting so that they can be dynamic communities in which the presence of God is clearly evident in all that they do.

Value 3: Clearly Prophetic

Many people are looking to the church to give a stronger moral lead to our nation. New Connexions churches seek to be aware of contemporary issues and prayfully to keep in step with what the Spirit has to say now to the church, the nation, and our world.

New Connexion churches wish to engage with real questions facing people today, and to speak out with courage and love to express Biblical values and truths. Where there is a loss of absolutes, we wish to call people back to God's clear moral standards. We also wish to speak up for those in our society who have no voice and have become marginalised through oppression and injustice.

In seeking to be "clearly prophetic" we do not wish to adopt a negative or critical stance, but seek to encourage what is right and attempt live out our Christian discipleship by adopting true Biblical lifestyles in our homes, workplaces and through our involvement in our local communities.

Value 4: Community Focussed

God did not intend for us to live in isolation but in relationships with other people. New Connexions churches wish to affirm the Biblical importance of community and God's requirements for caring for our neighbours and needy members of society.

We believe God calls new believers into a relationship with Himself and His family the church. New Connexion Churches seek to be loving communities in which all people are accepted, valued and cared for, regardless of age, ability, nationality or background.

Our churches wish to be open communities, active in the wider locality and seeking to be an influence in the manner of Jesus' metaphors of salt, light and yeast. We recognise that in a highly individualistic and mobile society, community may be less about a defined geographical area, and more about engaging with people in the workplace, through local groups, events, networks and relationships.

Departure from life as God intended it has resulted in the disintegration of society through crime, family breakup, selfish individualism, lack of integrity, dependencies, abuse and many other ills. New Connexions Churches wish to make a difference by upholding the worth of individuals and the importance of community; by building relationships beyond the church fringe and seeking ways in which to work with other churches and agencies to actively love and serve their immediate neighbourhoods.

Value 5: Culturally Relevant

New Connexions Churches wish to communicate with people beyond the fringe of the church, by being culturally relevant without compromising or diluting our message. Our churches wish to keep in touch with real issues facing people today, using language and methods which enable the gospel to be more easily understood.

We wish to remove as many cultural barriers as we can, whether it is addressing the state of our poorly maintained buildings or up-dating our methods of communication to enable our message to appeal to and challenge people of today. New Connexions churches seek to welcome people by providing warm, welcoming, attractive environments with styles of worship, preaching and “doing church” that contemporary society can relate to.

Just as the Son of God became a first century, Jewish manual labourer, we believe the church is called to incarnational living where it both upholds and challenges contemporary culture, being in the world yet not of it.

Value 6: Mutually Committed

New Connexions believe we are stronger together than apart. We acknowledge the right for individual churches to be self-governing, but believe autonomy should not lead to isolation. New Connexions churches seek to network together at local and national level to learn from one another, share ideas, resources and to help and pray for one another both to grow and to make a difference.

New Connexions provides opportunities to express our commitment to one another through annual events for church leaders and the wider congregation to come together for worship, prayer, teaching and fellowship. Informally churches will develop relationships with one another through exchanging speakers, helping one another in mission, holding joint events and in other practical ways.

New Connexions encourages member churches to support one another where possible. We believe interdependence to be a better New Testament model than complete independence from one another. Churches will directly benefit from the New Connexions network in proportion to their willingness to be involved and to receive the input of resources that are available.

The New Connexions Network

- Resources
- Training events
- Support for leaders
- Church visits
- Help to develop local outreach
- links with other churches

The New Connexions network

We are over one hundred small churches who are seeking to grow and make a difference in our communities

We are an evangelical network and our statement of faith is set out below. If you can sign up to our doctrinal position and wish to join us we would love to hear from you.

Statement of Faith

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Other Resources and Further Help:-

New Connexions – a Study Guide for Churches

A separate church resource pack is available providing sermon outlines, small group resources and personal devotional material to enable churches and individuals to explore these six core values more thoroughly as they seek to work them out in their local setting.

Visits to New Connexion Churches

New Connexions are willing to visit churches who are serious about developing these core values to shape church life and make a difference in their local community.

If you would like a visit, further copies of this booklet, or the church resource pack or want to join the New Connexions network, please contact us at the address below.

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