



Online Church Planting Tutorial

www.churchplanting4me.com

Getting Started

Where do you start? There is so much that must happen from the time you show interest in planting a church up through launch day. This tutorial (and our [free resources](#), our [online planning system](#) and our [full-service support](#)) are all aimed at helping a church planter launch a healthy church. The following provides an overview of the key items that a church planter must deal with through launch (not necessarily completed in this order). You can either follow this tutorial through sequentially by clicking on the "next" button at the top/bottom of each page (recommended path for completing this tutorial) or you can jump around. Click on the "tutorial site map" link at the top of each page to see a complete listing of the sections in this tutorial. Also, you can download a copy of the entire tutorial in pdf format by clicking the [tutorial download link](#) above.

- 1. Calling** - The first step is to verify your calling. Complete a pre-assessment (self-assessment) and a formal assessment. Pre-assessment involved completing a series of written surveys and reflections about yourself. Formal assessment is typically a 1-5 day, on-site, in-depth review that culminates in a recommendation regarding your readiness to plant a church. [Click here](#) for more information.
- 2. Equipping** - Learning about church planting and what is required to get a healthy new church started. Actions include reading (see our [books page](#) or our [bibliography](#)), attending conferences (e.g. [National New Church Conference](#)), networking with other church planters (see our [chat/blog](#) and the church planting forum at [www.pastors.com](#)), reviewing online resources (see our [church planting search directory](#)), and attending a [boot camp](#) or [planning workshop](#). See our [home page](#) for a wide range of online resources.
- 3. Church Planting Model** - There are a number of different models to use in starting a new church (e.g. house churches, parachute, team, independent, mother/daughter, etc.). Determine which model you will use. [Click here](#) to learn more.
- 4. New Church Location** - Determine the city or area where the new church will be located. Obtain [demographic information](#), visit the potential areas, and talk with other local churches.
- 5. Target (People)** - Develop a clear picture of the average family in your target area. Obtain [demographic information](#) to help assist you in defining who you will reach.
- 6. Church Planting Partners (sponsors)** - Will you have a primary sponsor (an established church, a denomination, an independent church planting organization, etc)? Recruit partners.
- 7. Prayer Team** - Get a prayer team started as soon as possible (one of your first actions). Use a group email program such as [Constant Contact](#). See how quickly you can get 50-100 people praying for you and get weekly prayer emails out. Prayer is

obviously one of the keys to the health of your new church. [Click here](#) to learn more about starting a prayer team.

8. Coach - Find an experienced coach with church planting experience to work with you through at least launch (preferably beyond). [Click here](#) to learn more.

9. Philosophy of Ministry - Before developing a detailed plan of action to get you from where you are to where you want to be at launch, spend time developing a Philosophy of Ministry (purpose, values, beliefs, structure, strategy, priorities, etc.). [Click here](#) for our template paper that will help guide you through this process.

10. Plan - Develop a detailed plan of action (customized launch plan) to get you from where you are to where you want to be at launch. We suggest starting with looking ahead to [opening day](#). What will it look like? Our [free template launch plan checklist](#) is a great place to start in turning the vision for the future into an action plan. We specialize in launch plan development and management via our [online planning system](#) and our [full-service support](#).

11. Schedule - After developing a detailed launch plan, put dates to the actions (i.e. develop a schedule timeline of when specific actions need to be completed to support your launch date).

12. Staffing - Staffing is one of the most important things you will do. Spend the necessary time doing your homework. Don't cut corners. Hire the right people at the right time. Click here for [free hiring resources](#).

13. Equipment - Equipment represents a significant percentage of total expenses for a new church. Simply managing the list of required equipment can be a daunting task. Find our more [here](#).

14. Legal Issues - To become a recognized legal entity, certain legal considerations must be made. Click here for a [step by step guide](#).

15. Budgeting / Fundraising - After developing a detailed launch plan, determine what the required funds are to support the plan. Don't be discouraged. Your first attempt at a budget that supports the actions you'd like to take will come up short. Generally the three largest areas in a new church budget are [staffing](#), [equipment](#) and [marketing](#). One of three things will happen at this stage:

- a. Cut back on the number and type of actions to reduce spending
- b. Commit to raising additional funds to support the plan of action. Use the plan as a vision tool for raising more money. Revise your fundraising plan.
- c. Some combination of a and b.

[Click here](#) to learn more about finance / budgeting.

16. Core Team Development - The health of your church at launch will largely rise or fall on the size and commitment of your core team. Make it a priority to stay focused on people; particularly your core team. You will feel a constant tension between the seemingly endless details that must be taken care of and spending time developing relationships.

17. Delegation / Help - Don't do anything in your launch plan that someone else can do. Delegate actions to your spouse, core team volunteers, part-time high school students, interns, staff, etc. There are many actions that can and should be completed by others. Be creative.

18. Networking / Evangelism - Like core group development, this takes time; a thing you will continually feel you don't have enough of. Strive to spend at least half your time during the pre-natal phase on relationships.

19. Name Recognition / Branding / Outreach - The prenatal phase through launch is all about building momentum. At launch, your strategy is to have a crowd. Drawing a crowd at launch will largely be based on your ability to foster a culture of "friends inviting friends" and the name recognition you have in the community. Constantly look for ways to brand your new church in the community and to build name recognition. Don't make the mistake that so many new churches make in relying on a direct mail campaign to develop name recognition. Instead, your strategy should be to develop broad name recognition before your large direct mail campaign is delivered. Our [Church Marketing Solutions](#) ministry specializes in helping new churches with their marketing and outreach plans. [Click here](#) to learn more about marketing and outreach.

20. Facilities - You must decide where the new church will meet. Most new churches meet in rented facilities such as schools, movie theatres and community centers. These facilities are "safe" for seekers and typically cost less than purchasing a facility. [Click here](#) for more information.

21. Launch - Start by defining "launch" in your context. There are several different definitions of launch. Some churches have a launch day, while others have a launch month. Some choose preview services with an official launch months later. Figure out what is best in your context.

22. Help - Don't be overwhelmed. There are so many resources available to help you. [Click here](#) for a list of recommended next steps.

Pre-Assessment

Assessment is the process of discerning whether a potential church planter is called to plant a church and whether the person is right for a specific new work. Assessment is often broken down into a pre-assessment (self-assessment) and a formal assessment (assessment by an independent group or organization).

Pre-assessment (self-assessment) typically includes the completion of a series of written "survey instruments" and tests (e.g. Myers Briggs Temperament Indicator, a DISC personality profile, and spiritual gifts profile). Additionally, most pre-assessments include a test of a potential planter against [Dr Charles Ridley's 13 knockout factors](#) for church planters. Here is a list of pre-assessment surveys to consider:

- The **Evangelical Free Church of America** and the **North American Mission Board** have two of the best pre-assessment profiles available online. ([EFCA](#) or [NAMB](#) to download a copy).
- The **Emerging Leadership Initiative** ([ELI](#) to visit their site) has a great preassessment survey (it takes several hours to complete but is worth the wait)
- Steven Childers (of **Global Church Advancement**) has a good set of questions for self-reflection ([GCA](#) to download a copy)
- [Starter Survey](#) from the **Reformed Church in America**
- [Keirseey Temperament Sorter \(Myers Briggs type\)](#)
- [DISC Profile](#)
- [Spiritual Gifts Inventory](#)

Emotional Intelligence Survey (Google search on Emotional Intelligence)

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The formal assessment can be as short as one day, but is more often 3-5 days in length. A formal assessment is often done in a group setting with other potential planters and includes a combination of interviews, group exercises, essays, and assignments. The evaluation team observes the potential planters in a number of different situations. Most assessments result in a detailed report and a formal out brief. For example, the [Church Planting Assessment Center's team](#) produces a 50+ page report on each candidate. This report includes strengths as well as weaknesses and makes a recommendation as to a candidate's ability to plant a church within the next 2 years.

Assessment History

During World War I the German Army realized the need to determine which soldiers were the best candidates for becoming officers. College diplomas were inadequate as predictors of success, so an assessment process was developed.

Later, large corporations identified a similar need to qualify employees for upper management. Drawing on the German model, a quantifiable process was developed to prepare better leaders for big business.

Industrial psychologists, familiar with military and corporate assessment, have applied a similar assessment process to stemming the tide of attrition in the ranks of foreign missionaries. Placing enthusiastic people in posts for which they were unprepared or unqualified showed itself to be extremely counterproductive and damaging to individuals.

For over a decade, assessment has been used by church planting strategists across North America. Borrowing from experts like Dr. Thomas Graham and Dr. Charles Ridley, a process has been developed to help interested candidates determine their giftedness and readiness for church planting, either as the leader of a team, a member of a team, or as a "solo" church planting pastor.

Church planting assessment integrates several lenses of evaluation to help a couple or individual discover as much about healthy placement in church planting as possible. These lenses include:

- Written expression, in the form of an extensive questionnaire, a professional resume, exercises, and projects, are evaluated by the assessment staff.
- Psychological instruments are employed to identify any potential issues which impact individual wholeness, marital adjustment, and professional interaction.

- Experienced practitioners observe candidates in simulation modules, team activities and personal interviews to provide real-life perspective for potential church planting scenarios.
- Peer assessment also occurs in the process, providing each candidate with invaluable input from others with whom she/he works during the center.
- Self assessment is perhaps the most important directional outcome of all. Processing all input available, the candidate (and spouse where applicable) is able to make a highly informed conclusion about placement and timing in church planting ministry.

Assessment Centers

[Church Planting Assessment Center \(CPAC\)](#)

[Evangelical Free Church of America \(EFCA\)](#)

[Emerging Leadership Initiative \(ELI\)](#)

[Stadia New Church Strategies](#)

[Dynamic Church Planting International](#)

[Global Church Advancement](#)

[Outreach North America](#)

[New Church Initiatives](#)

[Northwest Church Planting](#)

[PCA - Mission to North America](#)

[Church Planting Ministries](#)

[Fresh Start Ministries](#)

[Praxis Center for Church Development](#)

[Assemblies of God](#)

Bootcamp / Training

Church planting training workshops, seminars and conferences are often referred to as "boot camps." As you may have guessed, this terminology is taken from the military where new recruits are put through intense introductory training. Church planting boot camps are designed to teach and equip the planter in how to be the best possible planter. Boot camps are often intense 3 to 5 days training sessions that include experienced speakers, reading, practical exercises, and discussions. Boot camp is typically attended after assessment. Costs typically range from less than \$100 to over \$1500.

Why is training so important? Consider the following:

The average new construction home in America:

- costs over \$150,000 to completion
- takes 9-12 months from conception (idea) to completion (occupancy)
- requires the integration and completion of over 400 individual actions (e.g. framing, insulation, wiring, roofing, etc.) many of which are interrelated and must be completed in a certain order
- requires the coordination of many different contractors and people (vendors/service providers)

Sound familiar? Yes...starting a new church often requires a similar scope of work!

Can you imagine hiring a general contractor with absolutely no home building experience? Most people would never consider it. General contractors typically have years of training and experience. Yet God, in His wisdom, calls most church planters to accomplish a similar scope of work with very little experience (to ensure complete reliance on Him). You need training. You need help. Why fly blind and make mistakes that are avoidable? Bootcamp is a great place to start! Learn from others who've already walked in your shoes.

Sample 1: The following is a sample outline of topics covered at a bootcamp (sample taken from [EFCA Church Planting web site](#)):

Day 1 - Preparation

- Personal preparation
- Apologetic preparation
- Family preparation
- Financial preparation
- Emotional preparation

Day 2 - Conception

- Defining mission

- Clarifying values
- Targeting focus group
- Focusing vision
- Designing ministry flow chart

Day 3 - Prenatal Development

- Building shared vision
- Building a prayer team
- Building a launch team
- Building through evangelism
- Building through preview services

Day 4 - Birth - Public Worship

- Dynamic worship
- Money and ministry foundations
- Expanding small groups
- Essential start up ministries
- MAP: Ministry Action Plan

Sample 2: The following is a sample agenda for another 4 day church planting bootcamp (sample is provided from [Global Church Advancement](#))

Day 1	11:00 AM Registration 1:00 PM Opening Session 2:30 PM Break 3:00 PM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops** 4:30 PM Break for dinner 6:30 PM Worship 7:00 PM Basic Training* & Advanced Workshops** (Ending by 8:45 p.m.)
Day 2-4	8:30 AM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops** 10:00 AM Break 10:30 AM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops** 12:00 PM Lunch break 1:30 PM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops** 2:45 PM Break 3:15 PM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops** 4:30 PM Affinity Groups and Coaching Sessions 5:00 PM Dinner break 7:00 PM Advanced Workshops** - (ending by 8:45) (Thursday night Concert of Prayer)
Day 5	8:30 AM Basic Training* and Advanced Workshops**

10:00 AM Break
10:30 AM Closing Session - "The Main Thing"
12:15 PM Conference ends

*** Basic Training Sessions cover topics such as the following:**

- Clarifying the church planter's vision
- Confirming the church planter's call
- Determining the church ministry focus
- Clarifying the church purpose & mission
- Developing the church values & styles
- Designing the church strategies & structures
- Creating the church ministry models & plans
- Creating & refining a church planting proposal
- Establishing a core group & launch team
- Mentoring church ministry lay leaders & staff
- Developing gospel-centered ministries
- Leading the church to healthy growth
- Managing conflict in the emerging church
- Organizing church finances & administration
- Making the main thing the main thing

**** Advanced Training Workshops cover topics such as the following:**

- Coaching church planters and church leaders
- Planting churches in the emerging generation
- Developing marriage intimacy by grace
- Raising financial support & church administration
- Cultivating kingdom prayer ministries
- Raising up leaders for the harvest from the harvest
- Cultivating heart renewal by grace
- Planting & growing Hispanic churches
- Establishing a multi-site church plant
- Creating gospel-centered worship services
- Starting regional church planting networks
- Restarting a stalled church plant
- Managing conflict in the church plant
- Developing ministries of mercy in the city
- Avoiding church planting landmines
- Preaching gospel-centered messages
- Caring for people with sexual addictions
- Discovering Christ's voice in our worship
- Starting churches in smaller places

Here are a few organizations with solid church planting training programs:

[Church Planting Solutions \(CPS\)](#) - At \$30, this is a great way to get started.

[Church Coaching Solutions](#)

[Global Church Advancement](#)

[Evangelical Free Church of America \(EFCA\)](#)

[The Church Multiplication Training Center \(CMTC\)](#)

[Acts 29 Network](#)

[New Church Initiatives](#)

Prayer Team

No partner is more important than prayer partners. Planting a church is a big deal. Satan does not want you to succeed. Surrounding yourself and your team with prayer partners is the single best thing you can do to ensure success.

Many church planters underestimate the amount of spiritual warfare they will face over the six to twelve months leading up to opening day. Prayer must be a priority for the church planter. In addition to personal prayer, the Church Planter should solicit a growing prayer team.

As a top priority, the Church Planter should form an initial prayer team with at least 10 people praying regularly for him. The Church Planter should especially approach those individuals who are known to be consistent prayer warriors.

To recruit the first 10 prayer team members, consider the following:

- Brainstorm at least 10 people who would be committed to praying for you and the new church
- Contact them about being on your prayer team
- Initiate some form of weekly communication with them with specific requests.

Suggested initial prayer requests:

- You - You need God's wisdom, patience and strength
- Your family - specifically balance and health in your marriage and family
- Protection - Satan will attack you, your family, and anyone who wants to join you
- Vision - that God would guide your planning and give you a clear vision for the new church
- Launch Team - that God would provide the right people to form the core of the new church
- Finances - only God can provide

The Church Planter should not be shy in asking people to join the prayer team. Give thought to how you can use prior church experiences and relationships to recruit people. The Church Planter may ask supporting churches to make available e-mail lists/groups to invite people to join in prayer. The Church Planter should be careful not to SPAM or sign-up people who are not interested, but only invite people to join the team. It is much better to provide opt-in opportunities rather than to force people to opt-out. This also increases the likelihood that people on the team are actually concerned and praying for the new church. Recruitment of team members should also include contacting as many friends and relatives as possible and asking them to be part of the team. Each team member should also be asked to recruit additional prayer team members. The goal is to get hundreds (or thousands) of prayer team members actively praying for the new church. The prayer email is a great communication tool for keeping people informed and requesting prayer.

Prayer partners should pray for the specific needs faced by the Church Planter. To do so the Church Planter should develop a method to regularly present their requests to the team. A group e-mail program is usually the most effective way to do this. It is imperative that the prayer team e-mails clearly communicate the prayer requests of the Church Planter. Composing quality e-mails can assist dramatically in motivating prayer partners to pray.

Group email programs allow members to easily signup to receive emails and for church planters to email large numbers of people in a single email. Most group email programs also allow tracking to determine what percentages of emails are being opened. Church Planting Solutions recommends the Constant Contact group email program. It is a powerful, yet inexpensive program that produces professional looking group emails. The program has numerous pre-designed templates. The planter simply goes to www.constantcontact.com and signs the new church up for the program. The program is free for the first 60 days or indefinitely for groups with less than 50 email addresses. After setup, a simple signup box is added to the church's web site to make it easy for people to sign up to receive emails. The program requires very little administrative effort by the planter.

Summary of recommended actions:

- Recruit prayer team champion (point of contact)
- Recruit family and extended family to join prayer team
- Recruit friends to join prayer team
- Recruit neighbors to join prayer team
- Recruit co-workers, previous co-workers, other Christians in work place to join prayer team
- Recruit current and previous church memberships to join prayer team
- Recruit other church memberships to join prayer team
- Establish a prayer culture through regular and consistent reliance on prayer
- Prayer team members to recruit additional prayer team members
- Recruit prayer warriors
- Recruit people to pray for specific things (e.g. staff, facilities, finances, etc)
- Select and setup group email program (e.g. Constant Contact)
- Initiate weekly prayer team emails
- Day of prayer and fasting (set them aside regularly - not just once)
- Mail prayer request letters via USPS for non-email members
- Distribute prayer cards/reminders
- Community prayer walk (take your launch team on regular prayer walks in the community)
- Facility prayer walk (Jericho Walk) (take launch team on prayer walk around your facility)
- Prayer marathon (several days of round the clock prayer - prayer vigil)
- Regular prayer meetings (e.g. weekly, biweekly, etc)

Coaching

Have you ever noticed that Jack Nicklaus, Michael Jordan, and Barry Bonds all have coaches? Doesn't it seem like someone of that caliber wouldn't need a coach? Everyone needs a coach... whether in sports, business, or church planting. In sports the coach's primary role is to bring out the best in the athlete and in team sports to get all the players working together. In church planting these two goals still apply... to bring out the best in the church planter and getting the church planter working with God. These are primarily accomplished through asking the right questions and challenging the church planter to think God thoughts and make Godly decisions. This can include:

- to help train and empower the church planter
- to bring wisdom, experience and an external perspective to the church planter
- to be a cheerleader for the church planter
- to help the church planter see their blind spots
- to help the church planter balance the stress of being an entrepreneur with a demands of a healthy family life
- to provide a safe place for the church planter to have doubts and ask questions
- to ask the tough questions

To be effective, the coach should have personally planted a successful church or have other similar personal experience with church planting. Since the church planter hasn't planted a church before (usually), this experience is a great way for the church planter to learn from someone else's experience... both good and bad. As can be seen from the list above, the coach also provides support for the Church Planter as a mentor. In addition to overseeing the church plant itself, the coach should monitor the personal and spiritual health of the church planter. This helps ensure that the Church Planter will be able to perform their role well without sacrificing their family or own spiritual well-being. Often, these the role of coach and mentor is performed by two people.

Choosing the right coach is critical. Sometimes church planting organizations train and select coaches for the church planter. Other times the church planter chooses the coach. Regardless, the church planter must have a coach they respect both personally and professionally and with whom they share fundamental beliefs. As an absolute minimum, the coach should be available for a monthly conference call. A more ideal arrangement is a weekly 1 to 2 hour phone call with the church planter. The coach should commit to working with the Church Planter for 1-3 years. Whenever possible, the church planter should be involved in choosing the coach and/or mentor.

Building a church is complicated. It requires a great deal of broad knowledge that few church planters possess. Proverbs 9:9 says, 'Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.' and 12:15, 'The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.' We all need advice. We all need someone to bounce ideas off.

Frank had to pick between opening in February at an acceptable location, or waiting until April to launch in a fantastic location. He didn't know how to judge between gaining momentum for the summer by launching early, or choosing a better location. Through conversations with his coach he was able to determine the best choice for his church. Without the counsel of someone who has been there and done that Frank wouldn't have had anyone with experience to help weigh the options.

Bob has a different problem. His personality makes it very difficult for him to make big decisions. Since he doesn't have a coach, he struggles getting important things done in a timely manner. He finds it difficult to choose a church name. There are too many options and none stands apart. This has put him behind the ball in obtaining his 501(c)(3) recognition which jeopardizes his ability to send out a direct mail campaign. If Bob had a coach who was able to push him to make decisions, he'd be able to save thousands of dollars and focus on other things.

You may be tempted to save money and not hire a coach. Don't cut corners in this area. Make hiring a coach a non-negotiable action for yourself.

Suggested Actions:

1. Contact successful church planters you respect to determine if they are willing to coach or can recommend a good church planting coach.
2. Contact an organization or individual who offer professional coaching services (e.g. [Church Coaching Solutions](#))
3. Ask for and check references
4. Select a coach

Church Planting Models

Ask ten different organizations for a list of the different types of church planting models and you will get ten different lists (i.e. there is no universally agreed to list of church planting models). If you would like to see different lists, simply do a Google or Yahoo search on “church planting models” and/or “new church models”. Instead of providing a comprehensive list of all possible models, we will attempt in this tutorial to highlight the high levels considerations that distinguish different models.

Note: often people confuse “models” with “strategies.” For example, the decision to start a small coffee shop venue with candles and a dark intimate environment to reach post moderns is a strategy and not a model. In the context below, models are distinguished from one another by at least seven primary characteristics:

- 1. The relationship /autonomy of the church planter to the sponsor or sponsoring organization.** Does the church planter have a sponsor(s)? What is their relationship between the planter and the sponsor(s)? How much autonomy in decision making does the planter have from the sponsoring organization(s)? Where is the new church located in relation to the sponsoring organization(s)? Where is the funding for the new church coming from? Who selects the church planter? Who initiated the plant? Will the new church be autonomous or a ministry/campus of another church? Do the sponsor(s) have a preferred or required model of planting? Are there denominational requirements?
- 2. The strategy for discipleship including drawing people into the church and leading them into a deeper relationship with God.** Will you build a core team one person at a time through relationships with the lead planter? Will you draw a crowd through marketing and outreach? Will you develop fully devoted followers through one-on-one discipleship in small groups? Will you focus on reaching seekers and establishing easy “next steps” for them to get connected at their own pace through a range of “felt needs” based ministries and programs or will you reach people primarily through one-on-one relationships? Will you use a formalized class/curriculum based approach (e.g. 101, 201, 301, 401)? Will you hold regular Sunday worship services? What will the role of your small groups be? Will teaching be primarily done through Sunday sermons, through classes, or through smaller groups? Do you anticipate having a “public launch” or functioning on a more informal, relational basis?
- 3. What will your staffing philosophy / approach be?** Will the new church be able to financially support a full-time paid minister? Will the planter be the only staff initially or will the plant have the funding for a staff team? If bi-vocational, how much time will the planter have to dedicate to the plant? Is the plan to eventually become paid by the new church or to continue in a bi-vocational capacity?
- 4. Size of the Launch Team / Core Team.** How large do you expect the launch team/core team to be when public services are started? How do you intend to build and add to the launch team? Will the team primarily come from a single existing church, multiple existing churches, or from non-believers?

5. **How will you build community awareness about the church?** Will you grow exclusively through friends inviting friends and relationships? Will you use outreach activities to build awareness and start conversations in the community? Will you use marketing activities to build awareness and start conversations in the community? Will you attempt to establish a broad “brand” awareness and reputation in the community? If so, how?

6. **The purpose for starting the new church.** Is the new church being founded to reach more lost people in a new geographic area/location? Is the new church being formed as a result of a church split? Is the church being started to revitalize a dying church? Is the church being started to allow a new campus or site of an existing church to be started? If so, for what purpose (e.g. alleviate overcrowding at the main campus, for the convenience of existing members, to reach new people, etc)?

7. **Are there models or approaches to which you already have an affinity or bias?** Most of us have a hard time breaking past paradigms. Are you coming out of an experience that will bias you to a particular model? Have you seen a specific model in practice that you feel God may be calling you to? What model best fits your experience and gifting? Are there specific models that will best fit the geographic area to which you are called or to the people group you will be reaching?

Nearly every church planting model is distinguished by the answers to these questions.

So...how do these questions translate into church planting models? Most models fit into *one or more* of the following categories:

1. **Parachute** – A planter and their family move into a new location to start a church from scratch. The planter has very little connection with or existing support within the new area. The planter and their family are “pioneering” new territory. Where there is great risk, there is great reward, but this approach is not for the faint of heart.

2. **Sponsoring Church or Organization / Mother Church** – An existing church or church planting organization provides the initial leadership and resources (dollars and/or people) to get a new church started including the selection of the church planter. Often the church planter is selected from within the organization and has already bought into the vision, values and beliefs of the sponsoring organization. The existing relationship allows for a close working relationship between the “mother” and “daughter” churches. Although the new church is autonomous, the sponsoring organization often has significant influence in the new church (including decision making during the pre-launch phase). Advantages often include increased financial resources and the ability to draw core team / launch team members from the sponsoring organization.

3. **Collaborative Network / Partnership** – This is a rapidly growing trend where an organization (or many organizations) committed to church planting work together to plant churches. These informal alliances are referred to as collaborative or partnership networks. The participating organizations often share common beliefs and a passion for

starting new churches. Planters often get many of the benefits of the “sponsoring church” model but with increased autonomy in decision making.

4. **House Church / Cell Church Network** – Small (5-20 people) groups / cells form and multiply via a network of people meeting in homes. In some cases, the individual cells are connected in a larger network that meets together periodically in a large group setting. This relational model focuses on personal growth, care and teaching through one-on-one and small group discipleship. Groups are birthed through multiplication, and, often die, only to resurface months or even years later. This model requires very little funding.

5. **Satellite / Campus / Multi-site** – An existing church opens new locations. The idea is for one church to have many meeting locations. Motives range from reaching more lost people to making more room at an existing location. The evolving multi-site model is proving important in creating an entrepreneurial spirit of multiplication / replication within existing churches. It is still to be determined whether this model will spark an increased rate of new autonomous church planting.

6. **Restart / Re-launch** – An existing struggling church decides to bury the old and plant a fresh new church. The restart may or may not be at a new location and may or may not be with the same leadership. The resources of many older stagnant churches are a good way to bring new life to the community being served.

7. **Church Split** – Unfortunately, this model of church planting most often results from disunity. As a result, it is the most dangerous form of planting. A split typically occurs when competing groups conclude there is less energy required to “split or divorce” than to resolve differences and reconcile. The underlying factors causing the split often develop over years, only to “explode” in what seems like a spontaneous act. In many cases, the dysfunctional character traits of the old church carry forward to the new churches.

Note: The model is independent of the people group you are trying to reach. For example, any of these seven models could be used to reach a specific age group, demographic, or ethnicity.

Church Plant Launch Plan / Proposal / Action Checklist

You are called to plant a church. You've been praying and God has given you a vision that is growing more exciting each day. You are eager to turn this vision into action. One of your first steps is to develop a plan.

What constitutes a plan?

1. **Launch Plan / Church Plant Proposal** - The terms launch plan and church plant proposal are often used interchangeably. At a minimum, a launch plan is in written form (clear and concise) and answers a number of basic questions including why you are planting, whom you are trying to reach, where the church will be located, who will do it with you, how much it will cost, how will it be funded, what kind of church it will be, how you will gather a core group, and the critical success factors. More detailed launch plans identify key strategy areas with associated action plans. We suggest working through your Philosophy of Ministry before finalizing your plan (see next section of the tutorial).

2. **Action Checklist** - A written list of actions to be completed during the pre-natal phase through launch. Ideally, each action includes a cost/budget, a date for completion, and a lead person or organization assigned responsibility for its completion. Some church planters turn the action list into an integrated schedule to show the interrelationships between actions (i.e. many actions need to be done in sequence).

Why are these planning products so important?

1. **Focusing Your Vision** - It has been said that you don't really understand something unless you can write it down. The process of writing a launch plan will help you refine your vision and learn to communicate it more effectively.

2. **Feedback** - Your launch plan can be reviewed by other experienced planters and leaders. They will give you feedback that will improve your plan and save you countless hours of heartache by avoiding problems.

3. **Fundraising Tool** - Your launch plan will help you raise funds with potential donors and partners. Simply having a written plan communicates that you have your act together and MAY be worthy of a donor's trust. Ultimately, your vision and passion will sell your plan. The written launch plan is a tool for opening the door to further discussions with donors.

4. **Sharing Your Vision with Potential Launch Team Members** - Your launch plan is a great tool for recruiting potential launch team members.

5. **Priority Setting and Time Management** - Developing an action checklist will help you prioritize your time. You will get more finished in less time which results in a more time with people and a healthier launch.

Where can I see samples and get more information?

Checklists

- [Passion for Planting - Comprehensive New Church Checklist](#) - The most comprehensive list we've found with over 400 actions.
- [Global Church Advancement](#) - A Church Planting Checklist by Steve Childers
- [Church Planting Manual](#) - James Allen
- [Starting a Church That Keeps on Growing - Checklist for Each Phase of Development](#) - Bob Logan and Jeff Rast
- [Mississippi Baptists](#) - Startup Checklist for New Churches
- [Church of the Nazarene - New Churches - Starting New Churches Checklists](#)
- [Grace Brethren North American Missions](#) - Life Cycle Star
- [YWAM Church Planting Coaches - Church Planting Phases](#)
- [Seattle Church Planting - Church Planting Checklist](#)

Proposals

- [Passion for Planting - Sample Church Planting Launch Plan / Proposal](#) - Very comprehensive
- [Church Planter Proposal Workbook - NAMB](#) - Good template for preparing a church planting proposal
- [Guidelines for Church Plant Proposals - Missionary Church Florida District](#)
- [Guidelines for New Church Proposals - Reformed Church in America](#)
- [Eastpointe Church - Strategic Action Plan - NAMB](#)

Miscellaneous

- [Stuff They Never Told Me](#) - Steve Neger
- [Systems Thinking - Church Planting Network Resource - NAMB](#) - Some solid basics in planning and systems thinking for church planters
- [New Church Strategic Planning Process - NAMB](#)
- [Passion for Planting - Article on New Church Planning](#) - Some basic planning principles

Philosophy of Ministry

Just as the body's DNA defines the characteristics of the body, the philosophy of ministry shapes and defines the character of the new church.

Although all healthy churches seek to fulfill the Great Commission, no two churches are exactly alike. Church planters are each called to plant new and unique works as God has placed upon their hearts. Each planter has different passions and priorities. Many characteristics including the style of music, the formality of service, the style of teaching, the use of creativity/multimedia, and the approach to outreach shape and define the personality of the new church. Just as each person has a unique personality with specific likes and dislikes, so will the new church.

The Philosophy of Ministry is one of the most important actions that a church planter completes. Think of the philosophy of ministry as the church's filter for decision making. The long-term impact of these actions is profound. Fast forward the clock to the new church's ten year anniversary celebration. A healthy growing church can look back and see how previous decisions were consistently and faithfully made through the filter of this philosophy of ministry. From staffing to facilities, and from service styles to outreach events, decisions are shaped by the philosophy of ministry.

In his best selling book "The Purpose Driven Church", Rick Warren highlights the importance of churches making decision through the filter of purpose. The basic idea is to narrow the focus, do fewer things well, and be almost fanatical in living out your purpose. Don't try to please everyone or you will end up pleasing no one.

In their best selling book "Built to Last", Collins and Porras studied visionary companies that have stood the test of time and have made profound impacts on their industries. They studied the traits common to all visionary organizations. They found that organizations with "cult like cultures (i.e. organizations that fanatically lived out their purpose)" and organizations that remained steadfast to their core ideologies (they defined core ideology as core purpose and core values) became visionary organizations. Here is the key take away: they found that a steadfast diligence to living out the organization's culture and core ideology was far more important than what the specific culture and core ideology is.

At its heart, the philosophy of ministry shapes and defines the church's culture (unique DNA) and its core ideology. It is vitally important for the church planter to understand and define it before making other key decisions about the new church since the philosophy of ministry should shape the other decisions. Our experience at Church Planting Solutions has consistently been that church planters with a clear philosophy of ministry have a much easier (and more joyful) time in completing the prenatal phase of the new church. Spend the necessary time to get this at least roughly right!

The key parts of a philosophy of ministry include:

- Understand the concept of organizational alignment, DNA and culture

- Develop church purpose
- Develop church beliefs
- Develop church values
- Develop leadership approach
- Adopt team/structure philosophy
- Adopt process philosophy
- Develop church priorities/strategy
- Develop member expectations
- Develop discipleship/next step process

Church Planting Solutions has developed a point paper on the philosophy of ministry and its parts. This is a great place to start. [Click here to read the paper.](#)

A Picture of Launch Day (Define Opening Day)

There are many different approaches and philosophies to planning. No matter which approach is used; planning is simply a means to an end. Planning helps define the actions for getting from where you are today to where you want to be in the future. No matter what planning approach you use, the basic steps include:

1. **Define a clear picture of a preferable future (what does opening day look like?)** – Vision is all about painting a picture of a preferable future and then moving deliberately forward in pursuit of the vision. The preliminary launch plan starts with this end in mind: “We believe God’s vision for this church plant is to look like [fill in the blank] on opening day.” By defining a picture of the future, we can then identify specific actions to move us that direction. This tutorial page is focused on this first step of planning.
2. **Understand where we are today** - Before we can put a plan together for moving to where we want to be in the future, we must understand where we are today. This second step of planning leads us through the process of understanding where we are today. For church planters, the starting point is typically to create something from nothing. A big part of understanding where you are today is by going through a church planter assessment process.
3. **Plan of action for moving from where you are today to where you want to be** – After developing a vision for the future and assessing where you are today, the final step in planning is to identify steps to get you where you want to be.

Vision is all about painting a picture of a preferable future and then moving deliberately forward in pursuit of the vision. Your launch plan starts with this end in mind: 'We believe God's vision for this church plant is to look like [fill in the blank] on opening day.' From this vision of what opening day looks like, the launch plan is customized with church specific actions.

It is very important to define a concrete and clear picture of what you are shooting for on opening day. Examples include: two worship services with children's ministry during both services, at least two student ministry small groups, meeting in a school type facility that seats at least 300 people, opening day attendance of at least 300 people, at least 5 small groups ready to multiply to 10 by opening day to ensure at least 150 people can immediately be plugged into small groups, two worship bands, a setup/teardown team, etc.

The picture does not need to be perfect, only roughly right for what you sense God is leading your church to be. Consider the process of building a new house. The first step, before anything else, is to paint a description of the new house. What do you want the finished product to look like? Developing a clear picture of the new house influences nearly every aspect of turning the vision into reality. It affects the selection of a builder, of a lot, of how long it will take to construct, and of the cost. It is very difficult to develop a plan without a clear vision of the product.

The [What Does Opening Day Look Like Worksheet](#) helps the church planter work through specific aspects of Sunday morning (e.g. style of music, signs, food, level of formality, type facility, number of services, etc.). The template identifies over 50 characteristics of a Sunday morning experience for the church planter to consider. This will enable the Church Planter to develop a written list of specific/concrete expectations for what the church will look like on opening day. [Click here](#) to see a sample of a completed opening day worksheet.

NOTE: This description of opening day is not the final product. The church will end up looking different than this first draft. This action simply gets the church planter thinking through opening day and setting an initial target.

Recommended Actions:

1. Review the [What Does Opening Day Look Like Sample](#)
2. Complete the [What Does Opening Day Look Like Worksheet](#)

Demographics - Understanding the People You Will Reach

Approach - Looking to understand the people you are trying to reach? We suggest the following basic approach:

1. Identify General Areas of Interest: If you already know the meeting location for your Sunday services, make note of the address (street address or intersection). If not, identify addresses/intersections for potential meeting locations. In most city/metropolitan areas, your target area will typically be within a 5 mile radius of a specific meeting location. In rural areas, the radius can be significantly larger.

2. Educate Yourself on Census Data: Census data does not have to be complicated. The US Census Bureau has a short [educational paper](#) explaining the essential basics of census data that is a must read. [Click here](#) to read it.

3. Identify Variables of Interest: Demographic data is available for hundreds of different variables of interest (e.g. age, income, housing prices, race, etc.). The amount of data available will overwhelm most people. Decide the 5 most important variables of interest to you. Start by obtaining demographic data for these variables. You can expand your list to 10 later. Most of the sites below provide a list of the different variables available. [Click here](#) for a sample list of variables from the US Census Bureau.

4. Obtain Free Demographic Data/Reports: A number of organizations offer free demographic data. In many cases, the free data is based on the 1990 census rather than the 2000 census. Look for data based on the 2000 census. The level of detail in the demographic reports varies widely so look for a site that offers what you are looking for. We've identified a list of sites that offer free demographic information (see the list below). Most demographic data is provided in "raw" form leaving you with the responsibility to interpret results. Often, the sites that charge a small fee for data will provide the information in a more readable form with some assessment/interpretation of the data provided (e.g. Percept).

The best place to start is the [US Census Bureau](#) or the [Church Marketing Solutions](#). The Census Bureau site will allow you to interactively get demographic data and maps for areas you specify. The Church Marketing Solutions can also provide you free data and maps for areas you specify. [Click here](#) for a sample report available through the Church Marketing Solutions. If you would like a customized report, simply email the [Church Marketing Solutions](#) or call them toll free at 866-342-5264 with a list of zip codes that you are interested in.

5. Demographic Mapping: Demographic information is easier to interpret when it is mapped. Typically, data is mapped in different colors with each color representing a different range of values for the data. For example, dark green may represent average age of 35-40 while lighter shades of green represent different average age ranges. Maps allow you to see the data in specific geographic locations (down to small census tract

areas) and to easily compare how the data in one area compares to another. Many of the companies that offer free demographic data also provide some mapping support. Most paid demographic services offer mapping. Again, the US Census Bureau site is the best place to start with mapping. [Click here](#) to see the Census Bureau's site for thematic mapping. Click here for a sample report available through the Church Marketing Solutions. If you would like a customized report, simply email the [Church Marketing Solutions](#) with a list of zip codes that you are interested in.

6. Interpreting the Data: After collecting the data and maps, its time to figure out what it means. You should consider purchasing a report like the ones provided by [Percept](#). They offer a relatively low cost solution (under \$500) that will tell you what the data in your area means. This product is called a [Ministry Area Profile](#). (Click on products and then ministry area profile).

7. Carrier Route Mapping: Carrier route mapping is done to determine how many active households and businesses exist within individual mail carrier routes. Carrier routes become important for direct mail marketing because you will want to "saturate" an entire carrier route to obtain the lowest possible postage rates. Carrier route maps are typically done by mail shops (or other paid services) and are not available to the general public online. Organizations like the [Church Marketing Solutions](#) offer free route mapping for customers doing direct mail with them.

Demographic Sites Worth Checking Out:

- [American Fact Finder \(US Census Bureau\)](#) - Probably the best overall site available for obtaining FREE data tables and color coded maps. Simple enter an address of interest and then follow the on-screen instructions. A huge number of data tables and maps are available. Maps can be zoomed to obtain closer views.
- [US Census Bureau \(2000 Census Homepage\)](#) - Gateway to US census info.
- [Church Marketing Solutions](#) – CMS provides free reports for church planters.
- [ESRI Business Information](#) - Great free summary
- [Melissa Data](#) - Great overall information
- [FreeDemographics.com](#)
- [Claritas \(Free Info\)](#) - Several great free things
- [Link2Lead \(Percept\)](#) - Link2Lead.com is a new web site for local church pastors and lay **leaders**. Here you can download **FREE** demographic reports by **Percept**, the leading information provider to religious organizations for the past 18 years, and our growing client family of over 300 denominational regional bodies and national offices from all across the United States. You must be affiliated with a participating denomination to download the free reports.
- [The Right Site](#) - Good site for free and paid reports. To enter the site and obtain free reports, you must sign up for a free membership.
- [Citibay Data](#) - Basic information, but its FREE.
- [MapStats](#)
- [Percept](#) - Premier "for fee" demographic data for churches. Select "products" from the main menu.

Legal Issues

New churches should consider the following steps in establishing the proper legal structure (this is not professional legal advice. Consult an attorney for professional legal advice...the following is a guide to follow in consultation with a professional):

Step 1 - Select a Church Name - Start with a great name. Before an organization can incorporate and become tax exempt, it must first select a name.

Step 2 - Establish a PO Box or Address - If you do not have a permanent church facility, consider getting a PO Box. In most areas, a PO Box is less than \$25 per year. A church name is all that is needed for obtaining a PO Box. Some local mail shops are now offering PO Boxes with an actual address rather than a PO Box address. If you start in temporary rented facilities, consider getting a PO Box for your official mail. After moving to a new facility, you will continue getting your mail to the PO Box.

Step 3 - Incorporate the Church - Incorporation is required before completing the remaining steps below. It is accomplished through your state's Corporation Commission. Consider consulting a non-profit attorney who can provide you with professional advice regarding unique laws or requirements in your state. Additionally, there is specific wording that must be included in your Articles of Incorporation to satisfy the IRS 501c3 requirements. Include this wording now to avoid problems later when filing your 501c3 application. In most states, an application form can be downloaded online and the template already includes the required non-profit wording (but not necessarily in all states). For example, in the State of Virginia, a simple one page form is filled out, signed and mailed into the State Corporation Commission. The application fee is \$75. In Virginia, the approval is typically returned within two weeks of application receipt. Upon approval, most states provide you a Certificate of Incorporation. To get started, simply do a Google search for your state's State Corporation Commission. Download the forms and send them in. [Click here](#) to visit the IRS state link web site.

Three key things to keep in mind/consider:

- a. Board of Directors: In many states you will be required to identify the initial Board of Directors (Elders for many churches). In step 6 (Bylaws), you provide further clarification of how Directors are selected and what their responsibilities are. Consider your plan for Directors before submitting your Articles of Incorporation.
- b. Non-Profit Wording: As noted above, there is specific non-profit wording required for non-profits. This wording covers specific items such as instructions on how assets will be disbursed if the organization shuts down. Get this wording correct.
- c. Membership: The IRS (501c3 application) and many states ask whether you will be a "membership" organization. Make sure you understand their definition. In some cases, "membership" means something different to tax people than it does to churches.

Step 4 - Get a Federal Identification (Tax ID) Number - An Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, is a nine-digit number that the IRS assigns to business entities. The IRS uses this number to identify taxpayers that are required to file various business tax returns. EINs are used by employers, sole proprietors, corporations, partnerships, non-profit organizations, trusts and estates, government agencies, certain individuals and other business entities. The process of obtaining a Federal Tax Number is very simple and it's FREE (one of the few steps in the process that is free). [Click here](#) to apply online via the IRS web site. It's painless and required for your 501c3 submission.

Step 5 - Establish a Church Checking Account - Armed with the products from steps 1-4 above, you can open a business checking account. Many banks offer a free (no fees) checking account to non-profit organizations. The bank may want to see either your 501c3 application or your tax exempt approval letter from the IRS to set the account up as a non-profit. You can initially set the account up as a regular account and then change it to non-profit at a later time (if required while waiting on your 501c3 submission). Opening an account will usually take two trips to the bank. One visit to obtain the application form and a second to submit the form. In most cases, your designated Board will need a signed resolution to establish the account.

Step 6 - Develop Bylaws - Bylaws define the operating procedures and guidelines for the administration of your church. They cover positions, responsibilities, how decisions are made, and requirements for official meetings and record keeping. Solid Bylaws are a key factor in preventing disunity and confusion in the future. In some states, Bylaws are optional. In others, they are required. Bylaws are a great way for expectations and standards to be clearly defined and documented. How are new staff hired? Who has to approve the budget? How does the church enter into contracts? Is there a congregational vote on decisions or does the Board (elders) make operational decisions? These are just a taste of the types of issues that can cause confusion later. A simple set of Bylaws helps define how a church will administratively handle decision making (i.e. who needs to agree with what). A simple online search for "Church Bylaws" will yield several examples. Also, review the Bylaws being used by other churches.

Step 7 Obtain 501(c)(3) Status - Although churches are not actually required to file for 501c3 status, there are several advantages. Most significant is the credibility afforded to the new church by receiving official 501c3 status. Contributors to your church will have no questions about your validity. The 501c3 application is by far the most tedious and time demanding step in the organizational process. The IRS has streamlined their online application process but it is still time consuming and relatively costly (\$500). [Click here](#) for the IRS 1023 application form. The IRS site also has separate detailed [instructions](#) for completing the form.

Step 8 - Minister Ordination and Pay Issues - Each new church should establish a written policy on commissioning and ordaining staff. The policy should cover roles, responsibilities, qualifications and expectations for ordained/commissioned staff members, including a clear definition of what ordination is. Minister pay is a complicated

issue (e.g. housing allowances, medical allowances, SEPA vs. FICA social security system, exemption from Social Security, etc.). There are several good books published yearly that cover minister pay issues in detail. (e.g. Zondervan's Ministers Tax and Financial Guide, [Accounting for Churches](#), etc-- simply do a Google search for more references).

Step 9 - Obtain State Sales Tax Exemption - After receiving 501c3 status, don't miss this great perk. Apply for an exemption from state sales tax. Not all states allow the tax exemption. For states that do allow the exemption, a separate application form must be completed and submit.

Don't reinvent the wheel in creating your submission documents above. Get completed and successfully submitted forms from other churches. Use these as templates, but seek professional advice where necessary. The steps above are fully within the capability of the average church planter. Don't be intimidated. Most of the state and federal organizations will answer your questions and help you. Be patient. If you do desire additional help/guidance, consider either paying an attorney or professional, or purchasing StartChurch's simple program. [StartChurch](#) offers an inexpensive program (under \$300) to guide new churches through the steps listed above.

In addition to the fees for any professional services, there are also application fees paid to the Government. For example, most states charge approximately \$100 for Incorporation and the IRS charges \$500 for 501c3 submission.

Finances

Where does all the money go? The question every church planter must ask.

Money follows vision...so the type of church you plan to start significantly influences the money required to start. In a previous tutorial page, we discussed church planting models. As you might expect, house and cell churches require far less funding than a parachute plant.

Budgeting and fundraising are often two of the most daunting things that church planters face. This doesn't have to be the case. In simple terms the overall goal of the Church Planter is to determine what God is calling them to do (budgeting) and to discover how God will provide for it (fundraising). After initial planning most church planters discover they need more money to accomplish what they would like to do than they currently have commitments in donations. The Church Planter has three options; raise more money, spend less money, or some combination of the two.

In general, expenses through launch (pre-launch phase) can be grouped into the following categories:

1. **Staffing** – How much will you spend on staffing? Depends on how many staff will be hired, how much they will be paid, when they will be hired, and whether they are expected to raise any outside support. In a house church, staffing expenses may be zero. In a multi-staff, sponsorship plant, staffing expenses could be well over \$100,000. Staffing is often a major expenditure for the new church and will include at least the lead planter's salary.
2. **Equipment** – Most new churches have a number of one-time expenses for equipment purchases. These include but are not limited to a sound system, lighting, multi-media projector, storage cabinets, children's supplies, Bibles, and a trailer. Depending on the quality and size, total equipment costs can range from zero (house church) to \$80,000 or more. Unlike staffing expenses which are ongoing, most equipment purchases are one-time expenses in support of opening day. Most churches will spend at least \$10,000 to \$15,000 in getting started.
3. **Marketing and Outreach** - Marketing and outreach are all about starting conversations with seekers in the community. Too many church planters rely on one big marketing campaign just prior to launch to establish name recognition rather than a more balanced approach of outreach and marketing activities. A new church is ready for a big direct mail campaign only AFTER establishing broad name recognition in the community. Like equipment expenditures, total marketing and outreach costs can range from zero (house church) to \$80,000 or more. Most churches will spend at least \$10,000 to \$15,000 in getting started.
4. **Facilities** - Many new churches can not afford to purchase worship facilities. Instead, they rent either schools, movie theatres, or community centers. Sunday rental typically

ranges from \$12,000 to \$50,000 per year for Sunday rentals. Additional facility costs may include rented office space. During the pre-launch phase when the new church has not yet started weekly services, facility costs will be much lower. Costs will be driven by the timing of starting weekly worship services.

5. **Operations** - Ongoing operations including printing, copying, office supplies, insurance, phones, pagers, etc.

Church planters are encouraged to develop a budget through opening day and a second budget for the first year of the church after opening day. In developing a pre-launch budget, we recommend the following approach:

1. Work through the development of a philosophy of ministry and picture of opening day (see applicable tutorial pages).
2. Develop a detailed action plan (launch plan) that will help turn your vision into reality.
3. Assign cost figures and completion dates to each of the actions in your launch plan.
4. Sum up the total expenditures and compare them to available income. If expenses exceed income, you will need to raise more money, spend less money, or some combination of the two.

Passion for Planting / Church Planting Solutions developed Converge, an online new church management system, to help church planters develop and manage their launch plans. [Click here](#) for more information.

NOTE: Budgeting requires that you look at two different aspects of expenses vs. income. First, you need to verify that your total expenses over a given period of time are less than or equal to your total income over the same time period. Second (and often completely neglected), you need to verify that your “cash flow” stays positive as a function of time and that your bank account does not go negative.

Marketing and Outreach - An excerpt from [Church Planting from the Ground Up](#)

This is a long, but important tutorial. The marketing tutorial is an excerpt written by Brett Andrews (a church planter and founding Director of [Church Marketing Solutions](#)) and Tim Stephens (a church planter). The outreach materials are taken from Church Planting Solutions online launch plan management system ([Converge](#)).

Marketing

Introduction

How would Jesus market the church? Does it work? Is it necessary? Is it biblical, or is it fighting the battle with weapons of the world? Is it worth my time? Is it worth the expense? Is it too high risk? What if we spend \$10,000 and no one responds? What kind of person comes to church because of a card in the mail?

Marketing the church demands time, thought, planning, and coordination. It's expensive and risky. Wouldn't it be more spiritual—and easier—to kneel and pray three hours a day and accept the people God sends?

Journey Christian Church (located in Tampa, Florida) had been meeting for several weeks when we had our first "Discover Journey" class in the fall of 1999. Thirty adults had showed up for our first class. They were each asked, "How did you hear about Journey?" Over twenty of the thirty people there responded that they had received a card in the mail. Of those thirty people, twenty-six had not been to church for at least two years, over twenty had not been to church regularly for at least ten years, and many had never attended church.

Could a series of four mass mailings of cards really have sparked hundreds of people with no church affiliation to show up one Sunday? In the first three months of Journey Christian Church's existence, over forty people were baptized. Almost all of them came to Journey because they received a card in the mail.

What is Marketing?

Mention marketing of the church to a group of Christians and you're likely to stir up a lively, if not, heated debate. Read the following email received by Church Marketing Solutions:

"I'm a Christian, and I'm offended by your business. First, can you see Jesus "marketing the church"? Second, you do it to make yourself money. You are the Hophni and Phineas of the 21st century. Shame on you."

For some, marketing the church is associated with shady practices involving selling, exchanging money, and making profits. Consider the following definition²:

Marketing *n.* The exchange of goods for an agreed sum of money. The commercial functions involved in transferring goods from producer to consumer.

To add fuel to the fire, consider John 2:14-15 where we see Jesus' response to businessmen who turned the temple courts into a profit making market (business)³:

"In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!""

What is at the heart of Jesus' strong response? Is it the fact that these men were opportunistic? Being opportunistic is not the problem; their motivation behind the opportunity is the problem. Unfortunately, their motive was making money and had little to do with God's agenda.

Church marketing is all about building bridges to lost people so they can hear the gospel message. This is why, among the Christian community, church planters and new churches have been the most willing to accept church marketing. Without a doubt, marketing is one of the most important steps a new church plant can take in communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ with the culture in which it lives.

Setting the Stage

According to research by Thom Rainer, "most Americans have never been invited to church—never. Yet, 82% indicate that they would be at least 'somewhat likely' to attend if invited."⁴

Most experts on reaching people for Christ agree that the most effective form of evangelism is friendship evangelism. The purpose of new church marketing isn't to stick a card in someone's hand and expect they will want a relationship with Christ and then to be baptized a week later. Effective marketing opens the door to a possible relationship. It connects a church with people who need to be pastored before they realize they need pastoring.

Everyone is spiritually restless until they connect with God. When crisis or life-transition exposes the restlessness, where will the unchurched person turn? They will probably reach out to the church that's been pastoring them from a safe distance.

If the most effective means of reaching lost people is through personal invitation, how do marketing techniques such as mass mailings continue to make such an impact? Simply this: the purpose of every marketing touch is to make it easier for Christians to start a

spiritual conversation with their neighbors. Church events that address children, marriage, or finances, for example, attract individuals to church who might otherwise not attend a Sunday service. When postcards go out, ask your launch team to pray as well as to ask their friends or co-workers if they saw the cards in the mail. Often, people with no other connection with the church will receive a series of cards, and later will begin a conversation with someone connected with the church. The bridge for a spiritual conversation has already been constructed, making it less intimidating for the newcomer to take the next step.

A shortsighted philosophy that focuses on getting people in the door on Sunday morning is doomed from the start. The goal is to help people cooperate with the Great Commission. Make it easier for your members to share their faith. Effective marketing allows believers more opportunities to start conversations with spiritual seekers God puts in their path.

Marketing is not Optional

Every church markets. In his letter to Titus, Paul instructs Christians to conduct themselves "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."⁵ Everything the church does makes the teachings of Jesus either more or less attractive. Some market intentionally, while others market unwittingly. Some market a message they want people to hear. Some market a message that pushes people away. Do you have a church sign? If yes, then you are marketing. What about a logo, newsletter, meeting space, or even a worship service? Each is a marketing tool. Marketing may not be the primary motivation or objective of all you do, but everything you do markets the church.

For instance, what images do these church names conjure—Adventure Church, Journey, The Meeting Place, The Well, ForeFront? Or maybe Boring Christian Church, Holy Spirit Church, Apostolic Church, Covenant Church, The Chosen Church? Get the point? At New Life Christian Church (located in Centreville, Virginia), people sometimes say, "I saw your name, and that's what I need—new life." From the moment the church selects a name, everything the church does either helps people take a step closer to Jesus or creates a barrier for the gospel.

For most church planters lying awake nights thinking of ways to reach their community, pragmatism trumps theoretical hair-splitting. When planting a new church, the pressing question almost always is, "How can we reach more people as fast and as effectively as possible?"

How does it work?

When we asked the question, "How did you first hear about Journey," we expected a slew of different responses. We found as we asked questions, people admitted they had heard about Journey multiple times over the previous few months through various and multiple mediums.

Charlie and Edie Gonzalez, for example, were two individuals at our first Discover Journey class. Both were divorced, but had remarried each other 18 years earlier. Charlie was a manager at a local bread distributor, while Edie helped run a daycare. Together, they had two kids in high school, and each had children from their previous marriages. Charlie was a Cuban American and rode motorcycles on weekends. Edie liked to spend time with the kids and rode with Charlie on occasions. They were both raised Catholic, but had not been to church since getting married.

When asked how they heard about Journey, each credited the cards they received in the mail. But as we asked further questions, they quickly admitted they had heard about Journey many times over the last few months. Their daughter danced at the high school where we had sponsored a show. Their son played football, and we had bought an advertisement on the back page of his program. They had each seen several of our television ads in the weeks prior to the launch of the church. In addition, they had received at least one flier and had seen our slides in a local movie theater. Overall, we had "touched" the Gonzalez family ten times.

Many marketing experts propose that it takes, "Six to stick." A consumer needs to be touched at least six times before he or she considers buying a product. At Journey, we believe it takes even more "touches" for unchurched and irreligious people to consider giving church a chance.

The strategy included a several month detailed plan as we tried to establish identity in north Tampa. We studied and researched our context intensely in order to understand how our target group thought, shopped, and what their felt-needs were. Before you spend money on advertising or brainstorming, hire a graphic artist, or start designing logos on napkins, please do the hard, but rewarding work of developing a new church marketing plan.

Jay Conrad Levinson, the author of the Guerilla Marketing series of books⁶, suggests you begin with a simple marketing plan. "The plan has only seven sentences. It should be that brief because you'll be forced to focus on your objectives and tactics and because brief marketing plans should be easy to understand when read by your employees or partners." I suggest that churches state marketing intentions in 5 sentences, especially since competition is not a factor.

At Journey, we followed five steps designed to help us "touch" our target group as many times as possible.

***1. Define who you are and who you want to be (branding).** Church marketing isn't business marketing. If a margarine maker over-promises and under-delivers, your trust in that company won't be significantly impacted. You may even buy their product if it's on sale next week. However, if a church makes promises and then doesn't deliver, its integrity is at stake in the eye of the newcomer, and he or she may never return. Obviously, integrity expectations for those selling butter and toasters differs dramatically from expectations for churches—and justifiably so.*

Integrity in church marketing means honestly representing who you are. If your children's ministry stinks, don't quote parents saying it's the nation's best. If your worship team is just this side of senior citizenship, then don't produce radio spots proclaiming Britney Spears-style worship. When who you proclaim to be matches who you really are, it builds credibility and honors God. Misleading expectations, however, leave the first-timer disappointed, with little chance of a return visit.

Who has God called and gifted you to be? No church reaches everybody. No other church can reach the people you are created to reach as effectively as you. Each church has a unique personality. Some churches are great at creative communication. Some have more than their share of rock musicians. Some set the pace with children or students' ministries. Others model fine arts ministry. But no church does everything great. In fact, great churches discover what they do well and celebrate these strengths in the way they market their church, trusting God will connect them with His people.

As a church discovers who God has called and equipped them to be, three basic marketing questions emerge:

- 1. Who are we?*
- 2. Who are we best at reaching?*
- 3. How do we connect who we are with the felt needs of those we are reaching?*

2. Make an exhaustive list of methods you think can "touch" your target group over the three months prior to the launch of the new church. Our list for Journey Church included:

- Adopting a litter free road and getting our name on a street sign.*
- Sponsoring a parenting seminar at the local high school.*
- Hiring a graphic artist to design a logo and stationary.*
- Buying pre and post movie slides at the two local theaters.*
- Buying an ad in the high school football program.*
- Inviting the community to a local park special event sponsored by our church.*
- Sponsoring a Habitat home.*
- Partnering with local media in donating time and supplies to the needy.*
- Having a user-friendly, informational website.*
- Buying banners to hang at our office and other available sites.*
- Sponsoring a high school drama presentation.*
- Getting Chick-fil-A to hand out Journey fliers to all customers.*
- Giving away thousands of Journey pens.*
- Providing t-shirts to friends and acquaintances that work at Borders, Starbucks, and other public places.*
- Paying teens to put "Discover Journey Church" bumper stickers on their cars.*
- Sending a mass mailing to everyone in our 5-mile radius.*

- *Passing out business cards at bars, restaurants, and other public places.*
- *Placing small ads in homeowners associations' newsletters.*
- *Giving out water and squirt bottles at parades, parties, and other public events.*
- *Renting a billboard for three months.*
- *Having Papa John's give out fliers to all customers.*
- *Advertising via cable television.*
- *Putting door hangers on every home and car in our target area.*
- *Setting out A-frame signs each weekend at key intersections.*
- *Passing out fliers at Home Depot, Target, Wal-Mart, and other frequented retail stores.*
- *Writing personal letters to all homes within a one-mile radius of our meeting place.*
- *Placing classified ads in non-traditional newspapers.*
- *Securing newspapers ads in traditional papers.*
- *Renting exhibit or booth space at fairs or carnivals.*
- *Hand out fliers at Tampa Bay Bucs games.*

This list is not exhaustive, but it was a starting point for us.

3. Contextualize your idea. *Not every idea at Journey Christian Church was valid for our demographic and target group. And some great ideas will not work in your context. We cut our list from hundreds of ideas to fifty that we thought would be effective in our area.*

4. Prioritize your ideas. *Most church planters today do a mass mailing. In recent years, it has proven to be the most efficient method to repeatedly touch your target group. In our experience a four-card mailing to 30,000 homes will likely result in at least 150 first-time guests to your new church. So, for most church planters, mass mailing is the most important idea. After that, the effectiveness of other marketing techniques varies greatly depending on your context, style, purpose, and budget.*

Don't just try some ideas. Try lots of ideas. Church planting veteran John Wasem says, "Don't put all your marketing eggs in one basket." Remember, the marketing rule of thumb—"It takes six to stick." A consumer needs at least six touches before he or she considers a product. For irreligious people, it may demand more than that. So, give it time. Years may pass before the new church fully realizes the harvest of its first outreach events and cards. But, with God's involvement, the harvest is sure. God is the Hound of Heaven, pursuing people on the run. He is a sending God, and He expects to be reconciled with lost people. When God prepares a heart, and the church's marketing touches reach that person repeatedly over a period of time, it creates an opening for potential relationship. One attendee later commented on his decision to attend Journey, "I kept hearing about this church in all these different ways, and I knew I just had to check it out."

5. Weigh the financial costs. *Until this point, every idea should be valid without regard to cost. But at some point, you must do a cost benefit analysis. It is important to know*

your budget. Contact a financial specialist for guidance. I recommend Church Marketing Solutions. You can spend dozens of hours getting quotes and trying to contract all the vendors yourself, or you can let a specialist do the work and deliver a great product at an unbelievable cost.

Church planters realize quickly that advertising can be very expensive. But hopefully, you also realize effective and efficient marketing can be done using few traditional means of advertising. With literally billions of dollars being spent each year by American industries, customers have become desensitized to most advertising. For example, although Budweiser is rewarded prestigious awards year after year by advertising agencies, their market share is decreasing annually. Comical advertising does not always correlate to effective marketing. Even memorable advertising does not often yield increased profits for companies. Interestingly enough, one of America's fastest growing and most recognizable companies, Krispy Kreme, does not advertise.

The best form of marketing is saturation marketing. "Six to stick" is not just a catchy slogan. Touching people as many times as possible in as many ways as possible eventually brings people to church, many for the first time. Saturation marketing is an inexpensive way to reach people.

A front-page article in a major newspaper costs nothing. On the other hand, a back page ad on a weekend in that same major newspaper costs thousands of dollars. Spending time creating press releases, cold calling media outlets, and handing out flyers at concerts and sporting events will cost your new or established church almost little or nothing, but if you are able to create a buzz among influential people, your marketing plan has produced its desired results with little cost.

Your marketing plan will probably include some traditional advertising. Those ads may fit well into your plan and might help create the synergy you desire when starting a new church. Your ads may have a primary purpose of drawing attention among influential people. When we started the church in Tampa, we used cable television advertising. I thought the ads were great. They brought a few folks to the church, but more importantly, the local newspapers, including the Tampa Tribune, noticed the ads. They were looking for a human-interest story, and they called us. Because of networking like this, more people came to Journey Church because of newspaper articles than did people who came as a direct result of our advertising.

Most church planters I know budget between \$15,000 and \$50,000 on marketing. To some of you, these numbers seem outrageous. To those of you who have worked in the corporate world, these numbers may seem ridiculously low. Regardless of your perspective, most church planters in America spend approximately 10%-20% of their first year budgets on marketing. The percentage will almost certainly decline after the first year, but should not be drastically reduced.

A word of caution—the more money you budget for a new church marketing plan, the more research will be required to spend it efficiently. For example, in Tampa radio

advertising on a couple popular radio stations seemed to be the most effective means of reaching our target group. Yet, the average spot on a radio station costs \$80 per thirty second commercial if you buy a bundle of slots. To run a similar spot on VH1, MTV, CNBC, Lifetime, Discovery, and other channels often costs less than \$10 per spot when buying in volume. Therefore, we had to determine if the radio ads were worth at least eight times as much as the cable television ads. If you are going to spend thousands of dollars on radio advertising, first consider if you can achieve better saturation of your context for fewer dollars in a different medium.

Some Final Essentials

- *Do a contextualization study using demographics and surveys to fully understand the people you are trying to reach. Based on this study, develop a new church marketing plan that will serve as a guide to all outreach activities.*
- *Establish a fully functional web site as soon as possible. List it on all advertising materials. An initial web presence can be established quickly and inexpensively. Your web site will help people feel comfortable visiting your church.*
- *Design a logo that communicates an image of who you seek to be.*
- *Design a high quality, "first touch" color brochure that communicates who you are to the unchurched people in your community.*
- *Design high-quality, color business cards for the primary purpose of drawing people to your web site. Give them to everyone you meet.*
- *Seek to have name recognition within your target area before sending out your final direct marketing campaign (The effectiveness of your startup mailing campaign will be better if you already have a positive image in the community.).*
- *Proactively determine what image you are seeking to establish in the community, and use outreach events and marketing to build this identity and image.*
- *Use multiple touches. The "Six to Stick" philosophy is solid and not as difficult to achieve as it first appears.*
- *Brainstorm a list of every possible marketing touch that you can think of (i.e. direct mail cards, posters, web site links, flyers, newspaper ads, newsletters, A-frame signs, invitation letters mailed to the community, yellow pages, giveaways, banners, etc.). Identify at least 50 possibilities.*
- *Determine which types of marketing touches are already being used effectively in your target area.*
- *Grab the low hanging fruit (cheap and easy touches—there are more than you think).*
- *Prioritize the list of possible marketing touches in light of your budget and your understanding of effectiveness.*
- *Avoid whiplash. Maintain consistency of message by using the same branding on your different touches.*
- *Get a non-profit, bulk mail permit early. If you wait too long, it will cost you additional money.*
- *Find people in your church (or in your launch group) with marketing experience, and get their help.*

- *Negotiate the lowest possible prices, recalling that there is considerable margin in areas such as yellow page ads.*
- *Candidly consider whether you are ready to deliver what you promise.*
- *Your marketing and outreach strategies are inseparable. Use every outreach event as an opportunity to get multiple marketing touches into the community.*
- *Stick with it. The harvest takes time. Marketing is a long-term investment. Repetition is essential. Be persistent.*

Conclusion

Steve and Laura were living life to the fullest. Each had a great job that paid well. They had a four thousand square foot house, a dog, and two happy children. They were members of various country clubs and fitness centers and vacationed regularly at ski resorts throughout the country. Life was unfolding nicely, but Steve and Laura had little use for church.

Then during one doctor's appointment Steve was diagnosed, after a series of tests, with a brain tumor. God got Steve and Laura's attention. They became interested in spiritual things and remembered receiving post cards from a new church. Laura remembered seeing banners outside a school on Sunday morning identifying the church's location. Steve and Laura showed up for church one Sunday morning, found Jesus, were baptized into Christ, and experienced the love of that community of faith.

Six months later Steve died. His funeral was a celebration of Steve's graduation into a Christ-filled eternity. Where would Steve and Laura have been without the church marketing of one new church that cared enough to reach their community through a marketing plan? Marketing is all about reaching people like Steve and Laura. There are millions of individuals and families in all walks of life still out there waiting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Don't they deserve to be reached through a well thought out, creative marketing plan or whatever else it takes to communicate Christ? We believe they do.

Endnotes for Marketing

[1] For more information on Church Marketing Solutions and a closer look at what people are saying about church marketing, visit Church Marketing Solution's website at www.church-marketing.com.

[2] Definition found at www.dictionary.com, 2002.

[3] All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version of the Holy Bible unless otherwise noted.

*[4] Thom Rainer quote available in an article by Albert Mohler, *The Unchurched Next Door: A New Look at the Challenge*, found on crosswalk.com, 2003.*

[5] Titus 2:10.

[6] Jay Conrad Levinson, *Guerilla Marketing for Free* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 12-13.

[7] *Church Marketing Solutions is easily the best source for information today from trends to demographics to cost analyses available to all churches. Church Marketing Solutions helps churches deliver high quality marketing at the lowest possible costs. So, before you spend a penny on marketing, contact them at www.church-marketing.com. For example, with their help, you can produce a series of postcards designed, printed, delivered, and mailed for less than most other organizations. They use only the best printers in the country and have relationships with some of the best mail houses. Also, Church Marketing Solutions was started by church planters to help other church planters be more effective. Let them help you.*

Outreach

Outreach events are great opportunities for establishing name recognition in the community and starting conversations with people in the community.

Outreach events take on many shapes and sizes. The list of possible events is far larger than the actual number that can be conducted. It is important to prioritize the events and identify a strategy that will provide the greatest impact for the limited resources available. It starts with identifying possible events and setting an expectation for how many events you will do (e.g. 2 events per month on the 3 months prior to launch). Also, some events target specific neighborhoods while others target entire towns. Consider at least 3 different type of events (a) Local neighborhood - a specific neighborhood - cookouts, etc., (b) Community - a community or entire development - concerts, small carnivals, seminars, (c) Regional - entire town - large scale events that draw from an entire region. Local neighborhood events are less expensive and take less time to plan. Regional are more expensive with more planning. Regional reach far more people and get more free publicity. Consider a mix of different types.

An outreach strategy and a marketing strategy are closely linked. Each outreach event is an opportunity for marketing. In most cases, a new church can get at least 3-5 positive name touches to the local community where the event is being conducted (e.g. flyers, signs, newsletters, invitations, etc.). An outreach strategy should be closely coordinated with the new church's marketing strategy.

One of the biggest mistakes that new churches make is not aggressively using outreach events to establish name recognition in the community. Too many church planters rely on marketing to establish name recognition. Outreach events are far more effective at branding when used in conjunction with marketing. Ask this simply question 'how will we establish broad name recognition in the community BEFORE our pre-launch direct mail campaign?' DO NOT RELY ON MARKETING FOR NAME RECOGNITION.

A new church will do far more outreach events by setting an expectation for a specific number of events and then scheduling them 3-6 months in advance of when they will happen. Churches that do not set specific expectations for the number of events rarely do more than 2 or 3 events. Churches that proactively plan events often do 5-10 (or more) events. Positive name recognition will be directly linked to the number and type of events that you do.

Outreach events provide great venues for 'booking' your worship band in the community. People love music. Get people out to events and then get them asking 'what kind of church does an event like this and has a band like this? My parents church did not have music like this!'

Outreach events provide great opportunities for partnering with other community organizations. In some cases, churches can co-sponsor an event or take on a specific responsibility at an already established and known event. For example, some churches have taken the lead responsibility for children's games and programming at large annual community events. In other cases, churches have volunteered their worship band to play for free at community events. There are many possibilities if you simply think innovatively and look for opportunities. Developing a written plan forces the discipline of looking for innovative ways to get into the community.

The list of possible outreach/service events is far larger than a new church can actually accomplish. It is relatively easy to make a list of over 200 different outreach/service opportunities. You will need a filter through which you decide what events to actually accomplish. Here are a few considerations in developing your filter:

- 1. Understanding of your target demographic and their felt needs - For example, if your target is young families with children, Bingo nights is probably not the right answer.*
- 2. Understanding of what other churches and organizations are already doing (establishing a Niche) - Don't try to duplicate what is already being done well*
- 3. Understanding of the Brand/Reputation you are trying to establish - You will become known to your community as the [FILL IN THE BLANK] church. Outreach events will shape how people brand you. You may be known as a fun church, a legalistic church, a service oriented church, or something else; but you will have a reputation. Use outreach events to build that reputation.*
- 4. Size or reach of event - There are at least 3 different categories of events:
 - o Local Neighborhood Events - These events are very simple and can be done with minimal planning and cost (less than \$200 each). They will usually impact 50 or less people at a time. For example, a backyard BBQ is a very easy event that every staff member and launch team member should be willing to plan and host. These events provide the opportunity for very personal invitations to friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. In summary, these are small, more intimate events that are easy to plan and can/should be done locally by each staff member and launch team member.**

- *Community Events* - These events require more planning or cost (up to \$1000) and will likely impact 25-250 people. For example, a community concert hosted at a local park should attract over 100 people with minimal planning and cost (especially if the church band plays). Another example is a parenting seminar on a Saturday morning featuring a special speaker and hosted in a local day care facility. Marketing/promotion for these events is more extensive than for neighborhood events and includes flyers, signs, newsletter ads, invitations sent home with kids, etc.
- *Regional Events* - These events are very large events which have the ability to impact hundreds or thousands of people. These events require a great deal of planning and/or cost (in excess of \$1000). For example, a city wide carnival featuring free games, food, pony rides, clowns/mascots, face-painting, and multiple inflatable rides/amusements. These events receive maximum publicity and marketing including flyers, signs, newspaper ads, newsletter ads, direct mail, radio or other mass means (free public service announcements), etc. The best regional events involve partnering with local civic and community organizations including elected politicians.

These are examples only intended to help the Church Planter understand that some events are quickly and easily held with little effort and others take a great deal of time and/or effort. Obviously there is a trade off: you can do 10 neighborhood events for each regional event. However, you will get 10x as many people and name recognition with a regional event as you will with a local neighborhood event. Church Planters are encouraged to plan a balanced mix of these different size events. For example, a Church Planter may plan one large regional event the weekend before the grand opening Sunday. In the three months prior to launch Sunday, the planter may do one community event each month. In addition to these community and regional events, the planter may challenge his launch team to each take ownership for local neighborhood events.

The outcome of 1-4 above is a filter through which a Church Planter decides what events to accomplish during the pre-natal phase.

Most church planters get to opening day and wish they had done more outreach events. There are two approaches that can be taken to scheduling outreach events:

1. *6-12 months before opening day, the church planter establishes an expectation for accomplishing a specific number and type of outreach events (e.g. planter decides 7 months before launch to do 2 Regional Events and 1 Community Event per month in each of the 4 months leading up to launch, and at least 15 local neighborhood events. The planter then puts the events on the calendar 6-12 months before opening day. Most of the events will end up happening (or some kind of event in their place --- in many cases, the scheduled event becomes a placeholder for an event, not necessarily the specific event envisioned 6-12 months before launch)*

2. *The Church planter does not schedule specific events until days or weeks before they are accomplished. This approach, taken by over 99% of church planters, will result in very few events being accomplished. The church planter will become consumed in all the other details of getting a church started and will keep putting off outreach events.*

The solution: 6-12 months before opening day the planter should establish specific and measurable expectations for the type and number of events to be scheduled. Setting the expectation is more important than selecting exactly the right events at this time (i.e. determine the number and type, but then be flexible to allow the specific events to change with time--simply hold yourself accountable to the number you set as an expectation).

Things that get measured get done. A church planter who schedules 10 events is more likely to actually conduct 7 events than a church planter who doesn't schedule any events. Church name recognition in the community at launch is strongly dependent on the number of outreach and service events conducted in the 6 months prior to launch. Church planters who fail to set demanding expectations for the number of events often end up not doing many events. The Church Planter should determine his expectations for the number of events to conduct. Church Planting Solutions strongly recommends that one to two major events be conducted per month in the four months prior to launch (1.5 major events per month over 4 months = 6 major events -- this is consistent with the marketing philosophy of 'six to stick'). The Church Planter may also set an expectation for every staff person or every family on the launch team to host at least one level 3 event. At a minimum, the Church Planter should determine the total number of events to be conducted in the six months prior to launch.

Contact [Church Marketing Solutions](#) for help with your marketing and outreach plans.

Equipment

Equipment represents a significant percentage of total expenses for a new church. Simply managing the list of required equipment can be a daunting task. Consider taking the following actions:

1. Equipment List - Obtain [Mobile Church Solutions](#) free comprehensive equipment list for new churches. [Click here](#) to download a copy.

2. Gift Registry - Establish a "gift registry" for the new church at a local department store (e.g. Target, Walmart, etc.). Make it a goal to receive as much of your equipment as possible through contributions.

3. Publish Your Equipment List - Put your equipment list on your web site. Let people know what you need.

4. Prayer Emails - Include a link to your equipment list and highlight equipment needs in your ongoing prayer emails.

5. Corporate or Foundation Donations - Many corporations and foundations donate their old or excess equipment to charities. Send a letter to as many local corporations as you can find asking them for a donation of equipment. Include a list of what you need.

6. Corporate Promotions and Non-Profit Prices - Most corporations have special pricing for non-profit. Never assume you should pay full price. Ask anyone you get equipment from if they have special pricing for non-profits. Often, stores will sell floor models at significantly reduced prices to non-profits. Some organizations give non-profits equipment if they will use the corporations consumables. For example, Xerox will give non-profits a free color laser printer in exchange for agreeing to buy ink from Xerox.

7. Corporate Gift Cards - Many stores (especially franchise chains) are given an allotment of money that can be given to non-profits in the form of gift cards. You will not get what you do not ask for. Don't be afraid to ask.

8. Buy in Quantity/Volume - Find at least one (ideally many) other church planters who also needs to purchase equipment. Most vendors will give discounts for purchasing in volume. For example, the cost of a sound system will be lower if two or more systems are purchased at the same time. It is surprisingly easy to find other church planters to partner with in buying in volume.

9. Used Equipment - Don't overlook [Ebay](#), [Overstock.com](#), and garage sales. You can find some like new equipment at substantial savings.

10. Specialists - Check out [Mobile Church Solutions](#) (one of [Passion for Planting's](#) ministries) and [Portable Church Industries](#) (a [Leading Edge Ministries](#) partner).

Facilities

Introduction - Finding a meeting place is a major issue for most new churches.

Options include but are not limited to:

1. Purchasing a Facility - Few new churches can afford this option
2. Renting/Leasing a Facility - Again, many new churches can not afford this option
3. Schools (Public, Private, College, Day Care) - Many counties / cities allow schools to be rented by outside organizations. This is a great solution for a new church
4. Movie Theatres - Another great option. Children's ministry is more difficult to do than in a school, but the increased value of a theatre in terms of community name recognition (i.e. there is great marketing value in a theatre as everyone within miles knows where it is) makes this a good option to pursue. See [Regal CineMeetings](#) for more information
5. Community Centers - A good option. Sometimes small and often very local (without broader name recognition outside a specific community)
6. Hotels - Another good option. Many hotels have ballrooms and conference rooms available on Sunday mornings
7. Private Businesses /Companies - Many local businesses have auditoriums and/or large meeting rooms. Get creative
8. Other Churches - Possibility for a Saturday or Sunday night service

Visit your local county or city planning office and get a list of every organization with an occupancy permit of over 200. This list will help you identify facilities in your area where large groups are allowed to meet.

Resources - Checkout the following free facility related resources from Passion for Planting:

[Facility Selection Guidelines](#)

[Facility Selection Checklist](#)

Staffing

Introduction - Staffing is one of the most important things you will do. Spend the necessary time doing your homework. Don't cut corners. Check out this Top 5 List of Staffing Mistakes made by church planters:

1. **Waiting too long to hire** (i.e. until you think you can afford it) - growing churches step out on faith and hire before the growth and before they can afford it.
2. **Hiring too quickly** (i.e. without due diligence in understanding strengths and weaknesses) - The hiring process is hard work. Unfortunately it's easy to hire based on optimism and hope that things will work out. Don't hire until you know what a candidate's strengths and weaknesses are.
3. **Hoping a candidate's past shortcomings will improve under your leadership** - The candidate is the best you've looked at so far...and you really need that position filled. The candidate has a weakness in a key area vital to success in your ministry, but he is so strong in other areas. Don't be fooled that things will be better in this new ministry assignment. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance until proven otherwise.
4. **Hiring a friend** (and not applying the same rigid hiring standards that you would with others) - A huge trap. Sometimes it's the right thing, but it's also the easiest scenario to be blinded to. Be prepared in advance to answer the question: "Am I willing to suffer the relational consequences of this not working out?"
5. **Hiring with only 1, 2 or 3 of the 4 Cs** (Calling, Competency, Character, and Compatibility) - Don't compromise on the Cs of hiring. In assessing a potential candidate, understand their strengths and weaknesses in each of these four areas. If possible, put staff candidates through a pre-assessment and formal assessment ([click here](#) for more on assessments).

Resources - Checkout the following free staffing resources from Passion for Planting:

- [Overview of Hiring Process](#)
- [Developing a Staffing Plan](#)
- [Staff Questionnaire for Potential Hires](#)
- [Reference Check Phone Interview Sheets](#)
- [Leadership Values - Self Assessment for Potential Staff](#)
- [Leadership Expectations - Sample List of Expectations for Staff/Leaders](#)
- [Staff Handbook - Sample](#)

Online Staffing Site - Check out www.churchstaffing.com for a great online source of potential staff members.

Launch Plan Development and Management



Welcome to Converge...a tool designed by church planters for church planters.

Converge is a revolutionary step forward in church planting support. It's an entire church planting management system that delivers the best church planting resources in an easy to use system. You will get more of the right things accomplished and in less time. The result: you will spend more time with people and less on administration...and it's priced for any church planter to afford.

So what is Converge and how can it help you?

Consider this analogy. Microsoft Windows is the standard operating system on most personal computers. Windows enables different applications written by different people for many different purposes to be run on the same computer. Regardless of the author, each of these programs delivers some unique content for the user to use as he or she sees fit...and at the convenience of the user.

Converge functions much like an operating system...but with added functionality. A nearly unlimited number of different authors each with unique church planting resources will use Converge to deliver their content electronically to church planters. Converge is quickly becoming the benchmark application for supporting church planters.

Converge is Three Powerful Applications in one...a training module, a launch plan creation module, and a launch plan management module.

LEARN - Through the learn module, you can read training materials, listen to audio, and even watch training videos...all at your own pace. Church planters have access to a growing library of church planting resources. Many workshops, conferences and seminars will be available through Converge saving you time and travel expenses. Converge is the premiere online tool for delivering training and support materials to church planters.

CREATE – You are called to plant a church. You've been praying and God has given you a vision that is growing more exciting each day. You are eager to turn this vision into action. One of your first steps is to develop a plan. Converge helps you create a custom launch plan that reflects your vision for the new church. Through the create module, you simply choose from a list of predefined actions, each with a detailed description helping you know just what steps to take. You decide the length and level of

detail in your plan. Each action can be assigned a date and a cost...allowing you to develop relatively precise schedules and budgets.

MANAGE – Through the manage module, you will set priorities, and work your plan to completion. Converge delivers the benefits of project management for church planters without any special qualifications or training. Converge's management, reporting, and graphing features help the church planter know just what to do and when to do it.

Converge really is as easy as 1, 2, 3. A church planter starts by selecting one of ten basic areas that are applicable to any church planting models. The planter completes training on the selected area through the LEARN module at his own pace.

Next the planter creates an action plan via the CREATE module for the selected area. After entering the create module, the planter selects an action strategy to complete. Examples include prayer team strategy, launch team formation and growth, and small group plan. Upon selecting an action strategy, the planter is given a comprehensive list of predefined actions to choose from. Simply select the radio button next to the action and move on to the next action. Don't see an action you want to include...no problem...simply add it. You can even come back at any time and edit the action plan. After finishing the list, simply select save.

Now simply repeat this process for each of the ten basic areas. Training and action plan creation can be completed in less than 1 hour for each of the 10 basic areas.

Finally, you use the MANAGE module to keep track of your launch plan including developing to do lists, seeing overdue actions, and planning for upcoming actions. Project management for church planters with the ease of using any windows based computer application.

Why is a launch plan so important?

1. **Focusing Your Vision** – It's been said that you don't really understand something unless you can write it down. The process of writing a launch plan will help you refine your vision and learn to communicate it more effectively.
2. **Feedback** - Your launch plan can be reviewed by other experienced planters and leaders. They will give you feedback that will improve your plan and save you countless hours of heartache by avoiding problems.
3. **Fundraising Tool** - Your launch plan will help you raise funds with potential donors and partners. Simply having a written plan communicates that you have your act together and MAY be worthy of a donor's trust. Ultimately, your vision and passion will sell your plan. The written launch plan is a tool for opening the door to further discussions with donors.
4. **Sharing Your Vision with Potential Launch Team Members** - Your launch plan is a great tool for recruiting potential launch team members.
5. **Priority Setting and Time Management** - Developing an action checklist will help

you prioritize your time. You will get more finished in less time which results in a more time with people and a healthier launch.

Converge is the premiere tool for creating and managing new church launch plans. Call us toll-free at 866-342-5264 or check us out online at www.churchplanting4me.com.

Free Resources

There are an expanding number of free church planting resources available online. Here are the top sites we've found for free resources:

- Passion for Planting / Church Planting Solutions - www.churchplanting4me.com
- Church Planting Village (NAMB) - www.churchplantingvillage.net
- NewChurches.com - www.newchurches.com
- Evangelical Free Church of America - www.efca.org/planting

New Church Planning Workshop

So you are called to plant a church, but now you are trying to figure out where to start! How much money will I need? What staff should I look for? How do I develop a launch plan? What will opening day look like? What kind of outreach and marketing should I do? What type of facility should I look for? So many question...you just want a little help getting pointed in the right direction.

Our goal is to empower church planters (and their teams, if applicable) to develop customized launch plans while helping to answer these and many other questions. We also hope to share some lessons learned and encourage you in your ministry. If you are like most planters, you are feeling a bit overwhelmed. This workshop is aimed at helping you move forward in developing your vision and putting it into action.

The workshop is sponsored by Passion for Planting / Church Planting Solutions (authors of this tutorial). The conference price of \$30 includes lunch and materials (we've kept the price intentionally low so that anyone can participate). [Click here](#) to register online or call us toll-free at 866-342-5264.

WARNING: This workshop packs 2-3 days worth of material into one day and is not for the faint of heart!

Workshop Agenda:

8:30 – 9:00	Welcome
9:00 – 9:45	Planning Exercise
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 12:00	Developing the Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening Day• Philosophy of Ministry• Key Strategies• Launch Plan / Checklist
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 3:30	Adding the Details – Strategy Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Church Planting Approach• Partnerships• Demographics• Outreach/Marketing• Finance/Budget

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment• Staffing• Facility
3:30 – 4:30	Question and Answer Session

What are Others Saying About the Workshop?

- Since I have some experience and have read a lot of the current literature I almost talked myself out of attending. Boy, would that have been a mistake! The material was cogent, well presented and intensely practical. Your experience in church planting is impressive, but I was even more impressed by your heart for the kingdom.
 - It is evident that you do have a passion for planting, and a passion for people, planters and His kingdom. Thanks for being so giving of yourselves. I appreciate your prep and planning time, the investment of \$\$\$ and the time for presenting..... You gave (Even to a brother who doesn't wear the same theological label) deeply of what you are and have received. Thank You!
 - What you have taught us should really help- both us and others who have hopes of "planting" or who are in the process. We feel you folks did an excellent job- it is obvious that extensive work has gone into planning! You need to charge more for your seminar!
 - Your whole team is so enthusiastic and experience. I felt like everything that was said was helpful. I feel very encouraged! Thank you.
 - An awesome seminar. Keep doing it.
-

Books

[Click here](#) to see a comprehensive list of books for church planters. The list is long. Longer than you have time for. The following is a list of books that we suggest you start with:

- The Purpose Driven Church. Rick Warren. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Church Planting From the Ground Up. Tom Jones (and all). Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing.
- Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age. Ed Stetzer. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003.
- Courageous Leadership. Bill Hybels. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002.
- Seven Practices of Effective Ministry by Andy Stanley
- Built to Last. James Collins & Jerry Porras. New York, NY: Harper Business, 1994.
- From Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't. Jim Collins. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2001.
- Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century. Aubrey Malphurs. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Starting High Definition Churches by Ron Sylvia
- Prepare Your Church for the Future. Carl George. Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1991
- Surprising Insights From the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them. Thom Rainer. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future. Carl George & Warren Bird. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1994.
- The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It. Michael Gerber. New York, NY: Harper Business, 1995.
- The New Apostolic Churches. Peter Wagner. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1998.
- The Unchurched Next Door. Thom Rainer. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2003.
- When God Builds a Church: 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church. Bob and Rusty Russell. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 2000.
- Church Planting for a Greater Harvest. Peter Wagner. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990.

Chat Forum / Blog

Online Chat and Blog forums are a great way for church planters to learn from each other. Chat forums and Blog forums have a common purpose: sharing of information among a group of like minded people. A Chat/Blog allows groups of people to collaborate in information sharing so that each person learns from the others in the group.

BLOG = weB + LOG; A Blog is basically an online journal or log that is available to anyone on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the Blog. Postings on a Blog are almost always arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently. A Blog is an easy-to-use web site, where you can quickly post thoughts, interact with people, and more. All for FREE. [Click here](#) to view church planting Blogs.

Chat Forum - A Chat Forum allows members to search for categorized topics or threads, read what others have said about that topic, and then post questions, observations and experiences. A Chat Forum is a bit more organized and focused than a Blog forum. [Click here](#) to view church planting forums.

Church Planting Search Directory

The Church Planting Search Directory is a collaborative initiative of Passion for Planting, Church Planting Solutions and Leading Edge Ministries. The purpose of the directory is to provide new churches the best possible online resources. This unique directory functions like other leading search engines, but the content is targeted specifically to new churches. Our goal is to provide the most comprehensive and relevant links of interest to leaders involved in new church work. The directory includes over 1000 organizations.

Use the directory here: <http://www.churchplanting4me.com/churchplantingresources.htm>

Church Planting Networks

- [Network Alliance](#)
- [Church Planting Network](#)
- [Acts 29 Network](#)
- [New Thing Network](#)
- [GlocalNet](#)
- [Stadia New Church Strategies](#)
- [Emerging Leadership Initiative](#)
- [Orchard Group](#)
- [Emerging Church Network](#)
- [Redeemer Presbyterian](#)
- [Southwest Church Planting Network](#)
- [Northeast Church Planters Network](#)
- [Association of Related Churches](#)
- [Mission Catalyst Network](#)
- [Church Multiplication Associates](#)
- [Global Church Advancement](#)
- [Campus Church Networks](#)
- [Church Planting Movements - International Missions Board](#)
- [Northwest Christian Evangelistic Association](#)
- [Northwest Church Planting](#)
- [Greater Orlando Baptist Association Church Planting Network](#)
- [Power of Connecting](#)

Leading Edge Ministries

Church planters are all about value and good stewardship.



Leading Edge Ministries (www.leadingedgeministries.org) is an alliance of leading service providers that are committed to new church work. This new alliance provides a single web site where church planters can go and get all the startup services they need in one site (of high quality vendors with a demonstrated commitment to new church work). In working with church planters, we found that most church planters spend considerable time finding trusted vendors who are committed to new church work and offer great value (i.e. vendor who provide quantity, quality, low cost, and great customer service). Now...a large number of proven, high-quality vendors are just a click away.

Coordinated by Passion for Planting (www.church-planting.net).

Church Legacy / Restart / Turnaround

Very little has been written on the subject of restarts / relaunching. Slightly more literature has been written on turnaround churches, but the pool of resources are very limited. This tutorial provides some basics and explains the differences between relaunching / restarting and renewing / turnaround.

Why do churches face these tough decisions in the first place?

Everything under the sun has a season, including the local church. As we read in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8,

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

We live at a time when more churches are either stagnant or dying than are being started or growing. Such a time as this for change. The church is called to be the light of the world and to live out the Great Commandment (love God, love people) and the Great Commission (reach the lost, grow disciples). God does not intend for His church to be powerless in the community.

When a church's leadership team becomes convicted that things must change, the first step is most often to consider questions like "how do we turn things around...how do we revitalize...how do we change our culture...how do we get our members taking ownership...how do we become more relevant...how do we become more outreach focused...how do we grow?" In some cases, churches decide the best thing for the Kingdom is to shutdown and use the church's assets to start a brand new work (a new church plant).

Options to Consider

The church leaders are faced with at least four options:

(1) **Legacy Approach** - Allow the church to die gracefully and gift the assets to another organization (a great way to leave a legacy is to gift the assets to a church planting organization for the purpose of starting one or more new churches -- [see Legacy Solutions at www.churchlegacy.com](http://www.churchlegacy.com) for more information on this option). This "Legacy Approach" requires the death of a dream and hence, the biggest sacrifice by the decision makers. It is through the death of one dream, that the birth of a new dream is made

possible. This option has the highest success rate but is the most difficult decisions to make.

(2) **Complete Restart Approach** - Shut down for a period of time and "relaunch" as a new church with a new name, new leadership, new vision, and new location (at a minimum, this option will require coaching from a person or organization who was not involved in the old church). This "Complete Restart Approach" requires "outside" help (difficult for more churches to accept) for success. In this approach, there is a break with the past to start the new thing. Often this results in the old church closing for some period of time before restarting the new work.

(3) **Hybrid / Partial Restart Approach** - Church leadership attempts to address underlying weaknesses / cultural problems by changing some of the things listed in option 2, but not all. Option 3 is a much "softer" approach than option 2 and often does not result in a change in leadership or a full death of the old before starting the new.

(4) **Turnaround Approach** - Has a lower success rate than options 1 through 3, as the leadership team has a difficult time letting go of all that is unhealthy. The same leadership team (i.e. Elders, Staff, etc) that has been unable to turn things around in the past is responsible for turning things around in the future. With past performance being the best indicator of future performance, this option typically proves challenging.

Leveraging Your Strengths

In discerning the best path for your church, start with an inventory of your strengths. What do you do really well? What are your best assets (e.g. facilities, location, equipment, leaders, key community influencers attending, etc)? Make a list. Be candid. This assessment should identify your strengths as the average church leader in your community, state or nation would see them...not as you see them relative to yourself. For example, you may feel that your leadership team is one of your relative strengths when in fact it is weak compared with the average healthy growing church. On the other hand, you may own a facility is one of the best locations in town...by anyone's standards including many businesses that would pay top dollars for your property. Call this a strength if it would be broadly recognized by the average person as a strength.

Facing up to Your Weaknesses

Do the same inventory with your weaknesses as you did with your strengths.

Making a Decision

Isaiah 43:18-19 Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

No matter what path of change you take (option 1 through 4 above), trust that God wants to do a new thing in you. The question becomes "how does God want to use us to do a new thing?" Look hard at your strengths and weaknesses. Pray. Check your motives. What is driving your decision making? What is the likelihood of success? Is there broad and compelling ownership / buy-in by your key decision makers for the path being chosen? What will the different options cost to do them effectively? Are you willing to make the investment? Do you have the right leadership (the toughest question you will face)? Are you relying on your leadership to perform at a level markedly above where they've been in the past?

Some Resources

- [Church Legacy Solutions](#) - Great resource for churches choosing option 1 above.
- [Leading Turnaround Churches](#) - Great resource for churches choosing option 4 above.
- [Missionary Church Florida District](#)
- [New Church Specialties](#)
- [Article on "Restarting a Dead Church"](#) - Good resource for churches choosing options 2 and 3.
- [North American Missions Board Presentation](#) - Good resource for churches choosing options 2 and 3.

Multi-site / Multi-Venue

Some Definitions

Venue – A gathering of “like-minded” people with similar worship style preferences. A venue can have any number of people. The general thumb rule used by North Coast Church is that the room should be limited in size such that anyone can find someone they are looking for in less than 2 minutes.

Video Venue – A venue that incorporates the use of video for sermons. A live sermon is taped in one venue (or simulcast from) and then played in another venue. Typically, the sermon (message) is the same in all venues while the worship and use of multimedia is tailored to the style preferred by people at the venue.

Multi-site/Campus – One church offering services in more than one location (e.g. two different cities). Each site is considered a separate venue (e.g. two campuses are considered two different venues). Programming at the different sites may or may not be the same.

Multiple Venues – Offering people several different service venues to choose from for their weekend worship experience. Typically, venues target different worship style preferences. It is also possible to offer several of the same venues based on space issues. Multiple venues are similar to a multiplex movie theatre offering numerous different choices to the attendee. Venues can be live, simulcast, videotaped, or a combination of the above (i.e. the message may or may not be the same in each of the venues). Also, venues do not have to be collocated in one place (i.e. several campuses are multiple venues).

The following resources are from the pioneers of the multi-site / multi-venue movement.

- [Leadership Network](#)
- [New Thing Network](#)
- [The Multi-Site Church: Some of the strengths of this new life form by Dave Ferguson](#)
- [Multi-Site FAQs by New Life Christian Church](#)
- [Video Venue Overview by new Life Christian Church](#)
- [North Coast Training Networks](#)
- [Church Video Venues](#)
- [Multi-site Blog](#)
- [Church Planting Village Resources](#)
- [Multi-Site Conference](#)
- [Articles on Multi-site - from Church Video Venues](#)
- [Multi-site Myths by Greg Surratt](#)

Passion for Planting

Passion for Planting's support ministries are an outgrowth of our local church experience at New Life Christian Church (www.newlife4me.com) in Centreville, VA. New Life is a multi-site church with a big heart and passion for church planting. New Life is an independent Christian church associated with the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.

In 2002, New Life's leadership became convicted that improved support services for church planters were needed. A survey of church planters in the field found that 100% were consumed in the administrative details (e.g. equipment, marketing, facilities, etc.) to the exclusion of focusing on people and building relationships (e.g. core group development, vision casting and communications, and community networking). Armed with the gift of leadership and teaching, most of these church planters lack the administrative and project management skills necessary to coordinate large initiatives. As a result, these planters become consumed in the seemingly endless details of starting a church and struggle to find enough time for relationships.

The result: difficulty establishing momentum, underdeveloped launch teams, disheartened church planters, and less healthy new churches.

Passion for Planting

In 2002, New Life founded a church planting support ministry called Passion for Planting (www.church-planting.net) to help church planters stay focused on primary matters. Our philosophy is to offer high-quality, low-cost support services in the areas that traditionally consume a church planter's time. As a non-profit, our only motivation is providing the best possible support to church planters. We give away a number of free resources (e.g. launch checklists, equipment lists, etc.) via our web site. Through our full-service marketing ministry we've helped churches in nearly every state with over 20,000,000 direct mail cards. Our project management services have been praised by many national church planting leaders as a valuable and truly unique tool. In our short history, we've been blessed to help over 100 new churches and we are growing rapidly as more churches and organizations learn about our unique services.

Service Ministries

Church planters spend their time, energy and money on five primary areas. These include people/relationships, staffing, marketing/outreach, equipment, and administration/operations. Our strategy is simple: to provide support on marketing/outreach, equipment, and administration/operations to free planters up to spend more time on people, relationships and staffing. Our support goes well beyond coaching and consultation to actually helping church planters complete their launch actions. Our template launch plan (which we help each church planter customize to fit their unique model and context) includes over 400 actions. We help church planters manage these launch plans and complete the individual actions.

Our specific service ministries include:



Church Marketing Solutions (www.church-marketing.com) functions as a non-profit, full-service marketing organization for churches. We offer demographic, design, printing, and mail shop services at a fraction of the price of most commercial organizations.

Church Planting Solutions (www.church-planting-solutions.com) offers project management services to new churches. Our online system has a template launch plan with over 400 actions. We help manage the plan and complete many of the actions for church planters. This service is unique (we are not aware of any other organizations offering it).



Mobile Church Solutions (www.church-equipment.com) - helps new churches identify and procure their equipment. This ministry is currently in the startup phase. Services are being offered to churches using our Church Planting Solutions services. The service will be available to other churches in the near future.

Leading Edge Ministries



In early 2005, we founded Leading Edge Ministries (www.leadingedgeministries.org) as an alliance of leading service providers that are committed to new church work. This new organization will be a single web site where church planters can go and get all the startup services they need in one site (of high quality vendors with a demonstrated commitment to new church work). In working with church planters, we found that most church planters spend considerable time finding trusted vendors who are committed to new church work and offer great value (i.e. vendor who provide quantity, quality, low cost, and great customer service).

Church Planting Networks

Our Director co-authored a point paper on collaborative church planting networks in early 2005. The paper was enthusiastically embraced within the Christian Churches. In response, we are providing leadership in the following areas:

- **Emerging Leadership Initiative (ELI)** – www.elichurchplanting.com – ELI is a collaborative network of church planting churches founded by John Burke of Gateway Church in Austin TX. ELI is currently planting its first church. We are a partner in this plant. The vision is for this network to expand with each of the participating churches forming a new network. We are currently in this second generation of multiplication.
- **Reengineering of Stadia New Church Strategies** – Stadia is the largest church planting organization in the Christian Churches. They are committed to transitioning from a traditional “organization centric” approach to a decentralized collaborative network approach. Our Director is leading the complete reengineering of Stadia to participate in a national collaborative network.
- **Church Planting Network** – We are founding members (along with Orchard Group) in a new non-profit organization called the Church Planting Network (CPN). This national network will serve to bring Restoration Movement Christian Churches together in planting churches. A number of networks have already formed with plans for relatively rapid expansion.
- **Church Planting Alliance (CPA)** – We are forming an organization that will function similar to Leading Edge Ministry. CPA will be an online directory of church planting networks. It will be one web site where you can find information about church planting networks. We intend to add as many networks as possible to the site. CPA will also highlight service providers that meet quality standards defined by the Church Planting Network (see above).

Other Ministry Partners

We have a close relationship with a growing number of other church planting service providers including CoachNet, Church Coaching Solutions, Church Planting Assessment Center, People Driven Software, Group Imaging, National Church Purchasing Group, Percept, New Thing Network, etc. Our plan is to become a “one-stop-shop” for church planters to get as many of their services as possible through a collaborative network of service providers committed to church planting. We are positioning this collaborative network to service church planting networks across the country. Many networks are looking decentralized, low-cost, high-quality services for their plants. We are seeking to fulfill that need.

Converge – New Church Launch Plan Development and Management



Converge is a revolutionary step forward in church planting support. It's an entire church planting management system that delivers the best church planting resources in an easy to use system. You will get more of the right things accomplished and in less time. The result: you will spend more time with people and less on administration...and it's priced for any church planter to afford. Converge is Three Powerful Applications in one...a training module, a launch plan creation module, and a launch plan management module. Version 1 was released in September 2005. Version 2 is a joint partnership with Bob Logan of CoachNet and is being endorsed by many church planting leaders. Version 2 will be released in early 2006 with significantly expanded functionality.

Contact us toll-free at 866-342-5264.

Next Steps

Here are some suggested next steps after completing this tutorial:

- [Free Resources](#) - This is a comprehensive list of free church planting resources including our template new church launch plan with over 400 actions and our new church equipment list.
- [Church Planting Planning Workshop](#) - You feel the call, but where do you start. This one day new church planning workshop is packed with information all for about the cost of the meals that are provided (\$30). [Click here](#) for more information.
- [Philosophy of Ministry](#) - Complete the tutorial and work through the development of your church's unique philosophy of ministry.
- [Church Planting Search Directory](#) - this unique search directory includes over 1000 church planting links, conveniently organized into categories.
- [Online Launch Plan Development and Management \(Converge\)](#) - Our unique online church planting management system includes a learn module (online church planting training), a create module (to lead you through the process of developing a custom launch plan unique to your context), and a manage module (to help you manage the seemingly endless details associated with starting a new church). [Click here](#) to learn more.
- [Leading Edge Ministries](#) - An alliance of high-quality service organizations committed to new church work.
- [Contact Passion for Planting](#) for [free advice and consultation](#) - 866-342-5264 (toll-free)