

From Root to Fruit: Step-by-Step Process for Churches Planting Churches

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago – The next best time is now!"

Phil Stevenson, The Ripple Church



(Not all steps will need to be addressed in every congregation. Time frames for each phase are suggested and may vary)

Soil Preparation (4 months)

(Cultivating the heart of pastor and church for parenting one or more missions)

1. Cultivating the pastor's heart for Great Commission ministry
2. Do initial assessment of congregation's readiness (Pastor and leaders)
3. Based on assessment results begin teaching and preaching on factors where growth is needed. (Worship, Adult Bible Study, Small Groups)
4. Church leadership meets with MMF for presentation and discussion on "The Case for Church Planting" (You may wish to invite all members)
5. Mission and Outreach intercessory prayer team recruited and praying
6. Decision # 1 – May we form a Parenting Team to investigate possibility of a church plant? (through whatever decision making groups are needed to sign off on such a decision)

Resources

Book: The Ripple Church
The Book of Acts

"Church Planting Readiness Profile
Questionnaire for a Partner Congregation"
(from your MMF – Zoomerang)

Book of Acts and other Old and New
Testament mission texts

PowerPoint Presentation – "The Case for
Church Planting" – TX District

"Mission Prayer Team Guidelines" – TX
District

Root Development (5 months)

(Finding and developing the Parenting Team)

1. Church leadership prayerfully recruits Parenting Team discerned on basis of these characteristics: teamwork, commitment to church planting, evangelistic zeal, optimism and faith. Specific gifts needed in at least one of the team members: strategic thinking, institutional memory, ministry involvement, creative thinking. Pastor is member of Parenting Team

2. Parenting Team reads, discusses and understands planting process as identified in The Ripple Church
3. Parenting Team meets with a church planter and/or church which has already planted a church for encouragement, support, and to respond to questions.
4. Parenting Team and Pastor meets with MMF to move toward right plan
5. Second assessment of congregation's readiness if needed. (Pastor and Leaders)
6. Plan second round of teaching, preaching communicating to address gaps in readiness for planting and missional values if needed.
7. Parenting Team prepares first draft of Mission Plan (right plan)
[Partnership with district, General location (using MissionInsite demographics), Financial Plan]

The Ripple Church (copies for team)

Church planter and planting congregation through your MMF.

"So You Want to Plant a Church in the Texas District" (revised edition)

"Church Planting Readiness Profile Questionnaire for a Partner Congregation" (from your MMF - Zoomerang)

MMF, MissionInsite Demographics and revised "Guidelines for writing Your Mission Plan revised "Guidelines for Writing Your Mission Plan"

Trunk Strengthening (3 months)

(Moving the congregation to the intentional decision to launch a new mission, with presentation of the first draft of Mission Plan [right plan] and General location[right place])

1. Present first draft of Mission Plan with congregational leaders securing their support for presentation to congregation.
2. Make necessary revisions and clarifications made evident through meetings with leaders
3. Decision # 2 – Do we have support of congregation to proceed with church plant?
4. Celebrate decision to move forward...or regroup for second vote of congregation when unresolved issues are addressed and clarified. Recycle back to Decision # 2

Revised Mission Plan. MMF can be present to clarify any financial partnership questions if appropriate

Branch Development (3 months)

(Accelerate Parenting Team development and seek right person for mission planting)

1. Mission Prayer team moves into intensive prayer for right person to serve as church planter.
2. Seek candidates from many sources (candidates can be pastors, commissioned workers, laity) Finding the Right Person is vital to the health and growth of your church plant. Stay in contact with your MMF.
3. Request Church Planter Assessment Process for all finalists you are considering. (includes Gallup Pre-assessment, Behavioral Interview of potential planter and spouse, Birkman Method Assessment and other processes)
4. Decision # 3 - Congregation selects planter from candidates who successfully completed Church Planter Assessment Process
5. Church Planting Coach is located and assigned to the Planter (having a coach greatly enhances survivability and growth rate of mission)

Texas District President, Dr, John Hirsch
MMF, members, Church Planters

Dr. John Hirsch, Director of
Congregational and Worker Care
Texas District

Assessment Reports on each candidate
from Dr. John Hirsch

Funding from Texas District to cover ½ of
two year coaching process (\$2,500)
Planting congregation and New Mission
cover the other ½ (\$2,500)

Leaf Development (6 – 12 months)

(Planter develops Launch Team and leads in determining right place)

1. Planter is on the scene: Researching area Demographics for specific location for new Church Start.
2. Planter develops Launch Team with 50% being from new contacts in location of new Church Start. (Gets to know community leaders and people)
3. Planter may serve in ministry of Planting congregation, learning their DNA, systems etc. If lay or commissioned, begins application to SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) vicarage through Concordia Seminary or Concordia Theological Seminary.

Launch: Starting a New Church From Scratch – Nelson Searcy & Kerrick
Thomas; Regal Books, 2006

MissionInsite Demographics and
Demographics by "walking around"

4. Planter participates in an appropriate Church Planter week-long boot camp.
5. Planter develops appropriate initial systems preceding monthly worship.
(Sunday worship team, evangelism/discipleship, record keeping, website, leadership development, basic accounting, corporate/legal structure)
6. Researches and contracts for high visibility location for first worship site.
7. Plans first three months of **monthly** "preview" services.
8. Planter and launch team invite others to monthly preview services,

MMF can connect Planter to appropriate experience.

Launch

Fruit Bearing

(New Mission begins with outreach; monthly worship and regular Bible Study and fellowship)