

Church Planting Steps for Mission Partners

Texas District LCMS – Board of Mission Administration

This document and the Appendices included are both descriptive and prescriptive of the steps which should be followed by congregations or other entities desiring to enter into a partnership with the Texas District LCMS Board of Mission Administration in planting new churches.

While these steps are not exhaustive, they are helpful in helping a congregation move toward planting.

1. Discipleship and Spiritual Growth Stage

- A. Our Pastor has been spiritually preparing his own heart for mission.
- B. We have worked toward discipling our people for mission.
- C. We have spent time in prayer and conversation to hear and see God's vision.
- D. We have met with our Mission and Ministry Facilitator (MMF) to prepare our leaders and members for missional thinking and action.
- E. Our leadership has a clear sense of God's call for our church to plant a church.
- F. We have a Church Planting Parenting team in place (This is not the Launch Team but it is the team which will help your church prepare for launch) [*Resource: The Ripple Church: Multiplying Your Ministry by Parenting New Churches, by Phil Stevenson, Wesleyan Publishing House*].
- G. We have a Mission Prayer Team in place [*see Appendix A*].

2. Exploration Stage

- A. Our Planting Parenting team has prepared our membership for church planting both spiritually and with adequate information to make a Spirit-led decision.
- B. We have done initial demographic studies of potential church plant locations [these can be ordered from your MMF through MissionInsite].
- C. We have determined the initial target population for this plant (e.g. language group, geographic group, age range demographic group, socio-economic group).
- D. We have a GO from our leadership team (staff and lay leadership).
- E. We have a GO from our decision making body (Church Council; Board of Directors; Voters).
- F. We have determined that we wish to partner with the Texas District through the Board of Mission Administration and begun working with our MMF toward creating partnership agreement.

3. Preparation Stage

- A. We have given an initial verbal request to be included in mission funding with the Texas District.
- B. We have determined what general style must characterize our ministries in order to effectively reach our target group.
- C. We have developed a first draft of our Mission Plan (including right person, right place, right plan) and submitted it to our MMF [*see Appendix B*].
- D. We have communicated with our MMF our readiness to interview approved Church Planter candidates as assessed by Dr. John Hirsch [*see Appendix C*] (both writing first draft of Mission Plan and seeking candidates can happen simultaneously).

4. Implementation Stage

- A. We have interviewed approved Church Planter candidates and have made our recommendations to the appropriate decision making group(s) at our church.
- B. We have issued a call (if on the Ordained or Commissioned roster of LCMS) or contract to the worker to which the Holy Spirit has led us.
- C. We have submitted our formalized Mission Funding Requests to our Texas District MMF [see *Appendix D*].
- D. We have worked with our MMF to secure a Church Planting Coach for the first two years for our Church Planter (Funding from the Texas District to cover 1/2 of the two year coaching process. District covers \$2,500 and planting congregation covers \$2,500) Church Planting Coach will meet face-to-face with Church Planter at least quarterly for two years. Ideally the Coach is a successful planter with coaching gifts/training.

5. Launch Stage

- A. Church Planter works with MMF to determine if Mission Planter "boot camp" training experience would be beneficial (Texas District BMA covers cost).
- B. Church Planter has read "best practices" books on church planting [e.g. *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch* by Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas, Regal Books; *Planting Missional Churches* by Ed Stetzer, Broadman and Holman; *Breaking the Missional Code*, by Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, Broadman and Holman].
- C. Church planting coach is contracted and begins meeting with the Church Planter.
- D. Church Planter explores potential church planting locations as identified by the Church Planting Parenting Team and prayerfully leads to discerning the "right place" for the church plant.
- E. The Church Planting Parenting Team disbands. Some may be part of the Launch Team.
- F. The Church Planter begins formation of a Launch Team (Planter develops Launch Team with the goal that at least 50% come from new contacts in location of new Church Start.) He is trusted to select Launch Team members.
- G. If Church Planter is lay or commissioned, he begins process of moving toward ordination through SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) process at one of our seminaries. Congregation must request this.
- H. Church planter and Launch Team develops appropriate systems preceding first monthly worship (recommended for first 6 months) including Sunday worship team, evangelism/discipleship, record keeping, website, leadership development, basic accounting, corporate/legal structure Church Planter and Launch Team researches and contracts for high visibility location for first worship site.
- I. Church Planter plans first three months of launch team "preview worship."
- J. Church Planter and launch team invite others to monthly "preview worship" services.
- K. Church Planters and launch team design monthly "splash events" in community to serve and get to know community.
- L. First regular every Sunday worship launched within first 6 months.

Prayer Team - Appendix A

Mission Prayer Team Guidelines

No partner is more important than prayer partners.

Planting a church is a big deal. Satan does not want your church to succeed in being missional or in planting a church. Surround your church and your leadership team with a group of mission prayer partners who will pray for discernment, wisdom, boldness and openness to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many churches underestimate the amount of spiritual warfare they will face as they ponder the possibility of planting a church. Satan will work to discourage your church from reaching out with the Gospel or from planting a church. Prayer must be a priority for the process of considering the planting of a church. This team can later transition into being a Prayer Team for the new church plant if God leads your church to participate in planting one. Your congregation should seek a group of 8 – 10 people who are known to be consistent prayer warriors for this effort.

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

- A. Brainstorm at least 10 people who would be committed to praying for church leadership and for the emerging Parenting Team.
- B. Contact them about being on the Mission Prayer Team.
- C. Initiate some form of weekly communication with them with specific prayer requests.
- D. Encourage them to invite others to join them as members of the team.

Suggested initial prayer requests:

- E. Pastor and church leaders – You need God's wisdom, patience and strength.
- F. Your congregation – that they will be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through God's Word to seek to be part of God's mission to the world.
- G. Protection - Satan will attack you, your family, and anyone who wants to join you.
- H. Vision - that God would guide your congregation's planning and give you a clear vision for the new church.
- I. Parenting Team – that they would lead wisely and not lose momentum.
- J. Planter Search Process – that God would direct the congregation to the right person to lead the effort to plant a church.
- K. Launch Team - that God would provide the right people to form the core of the new church.
- L. Finances – that God would provide the resources to make the church planting effort possible.
- M. Inform – the congregation about what issues the Mission Prayer Team is specifically praying.

Prayer partners should pray for the specific needs faced as the congregation moves through the various steps in the planting process. A group email program is usually the most effective way to do this. It is imperative that the prayer team emails clearly communicate the prayer needs of the congregation in this effort.

Guidelines - Appendix B

Guidelines for Writing Your Preliminary Mission Plan

Several significant studies within the LCMS and in other denominations show a strong correlation between a carefully planned mission start and a mission that is thriving 5 years down the road. With that in mind, mission starts that receive financial assistance from the Texas District LCMS begin by working with their assigned Mission and Ministry Facilitator to write a plan. The following will provide a framework for writing your Mission Plan. You may use this document as a template or you may choose a different means of communicating the same information. Some detail is called for in this Preliminary Mission Plan; however the plan will continue to change as you move closer to your church plant.

Location

Describe the likely community/area in which you plan to start this mission. (Final determination will not likely be made until your Church Planter has led exploration of the potential areas for best match of planter with potential growing populations)

Your MMF has provided or will provide you with FullInsite demographic studies from MissionInsite of your potential target areas. Use these studies as well as "demographics by walking around" and other information you may have gathered to answer the following questions:

- A. What is the population of the area?
- B. What are the population projections for the next 5 years?
- C. What is the ethnic/racial make-up of the area?
- D. Which ethnic groups are project to grow rapidly in the next five years?
- E. What is the economic make-up of the area?
- F. What lifestyle groups dominate the area?
- G. What are the greatest perceived needs of this area?
- H. Which of these needs areas can be addressed by a church?
- I. What is the level of faith involvement in your area?
- J. What kinds of worship, church programming and architectural features tend to be favored in the area?
- K. What are the best ways to communicate with people in your target area?

What kinds of people will be your primary target for this mission start?

(e.g. language group, geographic group, age range demographic group, socioeconomic group)
Churches in your target area:

- A. How many existing churches are in your target area? How many of them target the same kinds of people you plan to target?
- B. Contact all other churches in the target area. Which of these churches have started in the last 5 years? How have they fared?
- C. Have these other churches grown in the last 5 years? If so, how much? Is their worship attendance increasing or decreasing? How much?

- D. How long has the present pastor been at each of these churches?
- E. Do these other churches have any specialized ministry areas?

What percentage of the target population is already attending a church?

What is the closest LCMS church to your target area? Are they supportive of the idea of starting a mission here?

In which Texas District circuit is this potential mission start located? Are the circuit pastors and congregations supportive of this start?

Vision

- A. Describe briefly your vision for this church planting effort.
- B. What do you believe can happen in five years?
- C. What do you think is God's desire for this ministry?
- D. What is your congregation willing to do to create the best possibility of success for this new church plant?
- E. What healthy DNA can your church impart to the launch team?
- F. Will some of your members be going with your planter to launch the new church?
- G. How many people will be present and active?
- H. What will be the primary outreach efforts?

The People

- A. List the members of the initial church planting team. What gifts does each one bring to the task? What other benefits are there to having these particular people on this initial planning/planting team?
- B. Will you begin the effort with a church planting pastor? Or will you begin the effort with a key lay leader or another church professional as the key leader?
- C. Will this key leader be full time, part time, volunteer—or bi-vocational?
- D. Have you worked with Dr. John Hirsch to determine the suitability of your key leaders for the mission planting task? What are the particular gifts and personality traits that they bring to benefit the mission start?
- E. Which outside people will be assisting with this mission start—MMF, staff members at other churches, other district personnel, etc.?

The Plan

- A. Will this be free standing church plant from your congregation or a multi-site ministry? If one of the latter two, describe the relationship between the mission plant and the mother congregation.
- B. How will you make initial inroads into this community? How will you get to know the people you desire to serve?
- C. How will you communicate to your members that this plant is designed to reach people "far from God" (*unchurched, dechurched*) and not merely a place to transplant Lutherans who don't want to drive as far?
- D. What might be possible first steps in terms of ministry—home Bible studies, day care, children's ministries, athletic leagues/teams, worship, community service...?
- E. When do you hope to begin worship? How many will you have involved in the ministry before you begin formal worship? (*Almost all studies show that if worship begins when the group is*

small, it usually stays very small. Many churches do "preview" or launch team worship for several months before "launching large" with at least 150–200 in worship depending on the community.)

- F. How will you create and maintain a high visibility in your community?
- G. What will be the evangelism/outreach approaches that you will initially use?
- H. What style of worship, preaching and teaching will you use to reach your target?
- I. What is your timeline for the first five years of this new mission effort? Include checkpoints and specific goals in your timeline description.
- J. When will you plant or partner to plant another church?

Finances

- A. What financial assets do you have as you start this mission endeavor?
- B. What will be your sources of support/income for the first five years of the mission effort?
- C. Assuming that you will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$200,000 over five years in the form of a no-interest loan from the Texas District, attach a preliminary detailed budget for your first year and a less detailed budget for the succeeding four years.

Budgets should include the following items:

Income

- A. From Texas District
- B. From parenting congregation, if applicable
- C. Grants/bequests/endowments from individuals, groups and businesses
- D. From offerings
- E. From other sources (name sources)

Expenditures

Start-up Costs

- A. initial marketing strategy
- B. worship equipment
- C. educational equipment
- D. rental
- E. insurance
- F. signage
- G. letterhead
- H. office supplies

Personnel (salaries, benefits, etc.)

- A. Facilities (rent, mortgage, upkeep, utilities, etc.).
- B. Administration (equipment, supplies, etc.).
- C. Ministry (worship materials and supplies, Bible study supplies, etc.).
- D. Outreach and Public Relations.
- E. Loan repayment (District and other).
- F. Missions (at least 10% of the money received in the offering plate should be earmarked for missions).
- G. Who will be the primary person in charge of finances? This should not be your church planter.

Signatures:

- A. Mission Staff.
- B. Key Lay Leaders.
- C. Mission and Ministry Facilitator.

Application Form for

Church Planter Candidate Assessment Texas District, LCMS



1. You may complete this form on your computer using the spaces provided or by printing the form and either typing or printing your responses.
2. If additional space is needed to adequately respond, please use a separate sheet of paper.
3. When you have completed this form, you may email it to jhirsch@txdistlcms.org; or Mail this form to:

Mission Planter Candidate Assessment
Texas District, LCMS
7900 E. Hwy 290
Austin, TX 78724-2499

A. Personal Information

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____ Mobile Phone _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Date of Birth _____ Place _____

Present Church Membership _____

B. Family Information

Current Marital Status ___ Single ___ Married – Date of marriage _____

Have you ever been divorced? _____ If so, when? _____

Have you ever lost a spouse to death? _____ If so, when? _____

If not married, but engaged, date of wedding _____

(If you are engaged, please list information for your fiancé)

Spouse's name _____ Date of Birth _____

Spouse's e-mail _____

Spouse's Occupation: _____ Currently employed? _____

Has your spouse ever been divorced? _____ If so, when? _____

Has your spouse ever lost a spouse to death? _____ If so, when? _____

Children

Name _____ Age ____ Living at home? _____

Name _____ Age ____ Living at home? _____

Name _____ Age ____ Living at home? _____

Name _____ Age ____ Living at home? _____

Health Review

Your Health Status:

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Your Spouse's Health Status:

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Child's Health Status: Name _____

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Child's Health Status: Name _____

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Child's Health Status: Name _____

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Child's Health Status: Name _____

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Describe any limiting factors

Your Racial/Ethnic Origin

__ African American __ American Indian __Asian __ Caucasian __ Hispanic
Other (please identify) _____
Are you bilingual? _____ If so, which language(s)? _____

Your Spouse's Racial/Ethnic Origin

__ African American __ American Indian __Asian __ Caucasian __ Hispanic
Other (please identify) _____
Are you bilingual? _____ If so, which language(s)? _____

C. Education and Credentials (High school and beyond)

Name of School	City	Date of Leaving	Degree Received

Other credentials or certification(s)

Spouse's Education (High school and beyond)

Name of School	City	Date of Leaving	Degree Received

(Spouse continued)
Other credentials or certification(s)

D. Personal Learning/Experiences

1. Briefly describe any conferences/workshops etc. that you have attended during the past two years (including tapes/CD/s, videos, webinars, etc.)

2. What books of all types have you read during the last 12 months? This is to include books for courses as well as other reading.

3. What magazines, newspapers, etc. do you read on a regular basis?

E. Church Experiences

Complete all information for each church served. Start with current/last church.

Church _____

City _____ State _____ Denomination _____

Position _____ Years Served _____

Location rural small town medium or large city urban suburban

Average worship attendance _____

Number of total baptisms _____ Number of adults baptized/confirmed _____

Church _____

City _____ State _____ Denomination _____

Position _____ Years Served _____

Location rural small town medium or large city urban suburban

Average worship attendance _____

Number of total baptisms _____ Number of adults baptized/confirmed _____

Church _____

City _____ State _____ Denomination _____

Position _____ Years Served _____

Location rural small town medium or large city urban suburban

Average worship attendance _____

Number of total baptisms _____ Number of adults baptized/confirmed _____

F. Other Work Experience

Please begin with your most recent employment and go back from there.

Do not include church experience here.

Dates	Position	Company	City, State

Spouse's Work Experience (*Include church experience*)

Dates	Position	Company	City, State

G. Financial Readiness

How do you plan to support yourself and your family financially during your first 2 years of church planting?

H. Statement of Faith and Denominational Affiliation

Have you been licensed or ordained? yes no

If yes, by whom? _____ Date _____

Denomination or affiliation of ordaining church _____

Please state briefly what your doctrinal position is on:

(Use Scripture passages to support your statements.)

1. The Bible

2. Jesus

3. The Holy Spirit

4. God the Father

5. The nature of man

6. Justification-*(How one is saved)*

7: Sanctification *(Living the Christian life)*

8. The Church

9. The role of the church planter

I. Personal Christian Experiences

1. When and how did you become a Christian?

2. When and how did your spouse become a Christian?

3. Give the names of the teachers, mentors, writers or leaders who have most influenced your walk with God and your thinking about ministry.

J. General Information

1. Describe your hobbies, special interests, and/or favorite forms of recreation

2. Where do you meet non-Christians and how do you normally share your faith?

3. Who have you discipled in the past 2 years and how did you disciple them?

4. What are your strong points (*gifts/talents*) in life/ministry?

5. What are your weaknesses in ministry?

K. Church Planting

1. Do you definitely believe that God has called you to plant a church rather than serve an established one? Yes No Unsure

2. Do you sense a call to a particular place, region, ethnic community, etc.? Explain

3. Is your spouse persuaded of this call? Yes No

4. Is your spouse currently involved in ministry? If so, how?

5. What experience have you had at starting something new (*i.e. new ministries, new businesses, new ventures, new programs, new projects, etc.*)? How did they turn out?

6. What other experiences have you had that you believe have prepared you to start a new church?

7. What specific steps will you take in starting your church?

L. To Be Completed by the Church Planter Candidate's Spouse

1. Are you supportive of your husband in being a church planter? ___ Yes ___ No

Explain.

2. What would you list as your top three spiritual gifts?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. How do you currently use these gifts in your Christian life?

4. What will be your role in the church plant?

5. How do you want to be evaluated during the assessment process?

___ Only in a supportive role

___ As a partner in leadership and ministry, fulfilling a distinctive role in the church

M. References

Provide names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of two references whom we may contact and who could/would attest to your character as well as skills and attributes for mission planting.

Reference Number One

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Mobile Phone _____

Relationship to you _____

Reference Number Two

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Mobile Phone _____

Relationship to you _____

N. Potpourri *(to be completed by the church planter candidate)*

Is there anything else you would like to share with the assessor team prior to the assessment?

Date: _____

Signature: _____