

Texas District, LCMS

Church Planter Assessment Process

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Church Planting is a significant piece of the life and focus of the staff, boards, committees and commissions of the Texas District. There is a strong desire to reach the un-churched and de-churched with the saving message of the Gospel. As such, a variety of mission endeavors are being affirmed and supported. To help assist in this Great Commission driven process, the district Board of Directors, Board of Mission Administration and Church Extension Board are all affirming movement in this direction.

To help find and affirm those who seem to be most gifted for this specialized ministry, a process for assessing mission planters has been created. It models a process used by the LCMS for national mission planter assessment and is affirmed by them. If a person would like to consider himself or someone else, to be a mission planter, these are the steps to follow.

1. Contact John Hirsch at one of the contact points listed above. If it is you, give much thought and consideration before going this direction. Talk to your area Mission and Ministry Facilitator for insights into the opportunities and models of church planting in the TX Dist. If the nominated person is someone other than you, talk to that person first to see if he has any interest in and passion for reaching the lost. There are many dedicated and committed laity and clergy who are healthy servants of the Lord, but that does not mean they would be good mission planters. This is a very rigorous and risk taking calling that is not in the stomachs of all Christians. If the person would like to experience the assessment process the following steps are taken.
2. At the request of Pr. Hirsch, the person will be sent the Gallup University Mission Planter Survey from the LCMS. Once completed on line, and the results are sent to Pr. Hirsch, he will contact the candidate with the results of the survey which measures five major attributes of a "successful" mission planter. The results will generate one of three options: a) not recommended, b) carefully recommended, and c) recommended. If the outcome is either "b" or "c", the assessment process continues. If not, this does not mean that the person cannot be involved in the mission planting process, but that he would not be considered for the lead position.
3. If recommended or carefully recommended, the candidate will be sent a rather extensive application form that will help clarify many of the responsibilities of the church planting process. This is to be completed and returned to Pr. Hirsch.

4. If recommended or carefully recommended, the candidate will be sent the Birkman Method survey electronically. This is a general assessment tool that reveals much about the giftedness of the candidate. It is completed on line. The results will be shared with the candidate.
5. If recommended or carefully recommended, the candidate will be asked to purchase the book Strengthfinders 2.0 and complete the online survey available through a code included in each book. Since the code can be used only once, the book has to be purchased new. The candidate will receive the results immediately upon completing the instrument. He is asked to send those to Pr. Hirsch electronically.
6. If recommended or carefully recommended, and other indicators look favorable, the candidate will be asked to make himself, and his wife if married, available for an extensive behavioral interview conducted by Pr. Hirsch. This interview will be conducted at a time, date and place convenient for the candidate and spouse.
7. Upon completion of all of the above and if the candidate is being recommended by a congregation or other mission endeavor, a report will be written and forwarded to this entity as well as the candidate.
8. General Information:
 - The District will cover all costs in this assessment process.
 - Mission planters do not have to be clergy. They may be other church workers or laity who are willing to be trained and educated.
 - All mission planters are to be open to being coached in the mission development process.