

Strategic Launch Plan



The probability of successfully launching of a sustainable healthy church is greatly enhanced by creating a Strategic Launch Plan. Jesus taught:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace (Luke 14:28-32).

God does nothing without intentionality. Neither towers nor churches self-erect. Wishes do not win wars. The world does not self-evangelize. Disciples do not just appear. Churches do not self-propagate. Jesus, the great strategist, knew and followed the will of His father. Our challenge is to apprehend God's **plan** and join Him in actuating it through strategic intentionality. "Churches that prioritize evangelism and outreach in their prayers, in their member deployment, in their budget, in their staffing, and in their leadership-training find that God blesses their endeavors with an abundant harvest."¹ God expects planning that is balanced by trust. Delivering a strategic plan is one of the most important things we can undertake. God will establish it!

¹ Gary L McIntosh and Charles Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 26.

British Columbia church planter, Phil Lemke, recalls:

In my years of starting and growing several businesses, the ones that thrived were the ones that had a clear vision broken down into milestones and steps. The banks would not release funds until a clear pathway to the vision had been presented to them. The pathway had to have quantifiable successes along the way for them to continue to be “on board.” They reviewed the progress regularly and demanded results or a plausible plan B in the event that projected success was not being achieved.

I can tell you, as I look back over a trail of efforts in my church planting-launching experience, that I have greater clarity now on that which I only wish I could go back and do better. The necessity of a clear plan of action from beginning to end is absolutely a church planter’s friend and not an unnecessary burden.

Just as one would think through every detail in creating a *business* plan, one must think through every detail in launching a church by creating a *ministry* plan: A Strategic Launch Plan.

This article will guide you in development of two key plans:

Vision vs. Strategic Plan	
Launch Vision Plan	Strategic Launch Plan
Presentation	Action Plan
Big Picture	Comprehensive and Itemized
Colorful/Compelling	Date Driven: Who, What, When
Quick Multi-Media	Project Management
Graphic/Image Heavy	Text/Data Heavy
Stories	Strategies and Action Items
Vision/Mission Focus	Goal and Task Focus

Launch Vision Plan

A launch Vision Plan is a quick, colorful, compelling, PowerPoint or multi-media presentation that casts your vision and presents your big picture. "Articulating the vision on paper pulls the dream that is in your spirit (that no one can see but you) into the visible world so that others can capture it in their own hearts... Imparting God’s vision to the team around us is the single most important factor in seeing the mission accomplished."² Whether someone is partnering with you as launch team member or agreeing to support you financially, they want to see your

² Ibid.

strategy, your budget and your timeline. People readily commit to a compelling *visible* plan. No one can follow an uncharted course!

Working through the prompt questions in the Launch Vision Plan, below (why, where, who, what, how, and wow), will help you clarify and clearly communicate the passion, vision, strategy, timetable and budget that will move potential partners to action. This presentation becomes your personal passionate appeal! “If you support my God-vision, here are the results (return) you can expect on your investment! If you do not support my God-vision, here are the eternal consequences!”

Launch Vision Plan Instructions

1. Read through ALL the information provided below. Many prompting-type questions are listed to assist your presentation formation. Answer the questions provided. Brainstorm each segment. See the big picture.
2. Gather your thoughts. Creatively, strategically, and passionately diagram your Launch Vision Plan presentation. Less is more.
3. Add supportive pictures, media, and statistics depicting the city/community and church planting team. Do not overload with text. Leave enough white space to make the text easily readable. Make the budget and timeline stand out graphically.
4. Coordinate multimedia and handout information (handout length: 8 to 12 pages).
5. Cull the presentation down to a poignant 5 to 7-minutes.
6. Have others review and provide feedback on your presentation. Refine.

Launch Vision Plan Categories and Prompt Questions.

It all begins with WHY.
WHY precedes WHAT,
WHAT precedes HOW,
and HOW precedes WOW!³

Why?

– The Purpose.

- Demonstrate a clear, passionate calling – your compelling vision:
 - Why you? Why are **you** motivated? How does this endeavor fit within your testimony and life-vision?
 - Why in this city?
 - Why a new church plant? Why Launch?
 - Why the specific demographic target? See **Addendum 1** for church planting demographic resources.
- Why you exist as a church? What is your mission: core purpose? State it briefly and simply.
- Why do you need to raise funds? Why should others *want* to support this cause?

³ Walters, Galen. Adapted from “*WWHW - Galen’s View of Organizational Sanity*,” © 2018.

Where? – The Place.

- Define your community. Highlight its important features, history, and demographics.
- What is this church's unique ministry emphases (demographic/culture)?
- Where will you meet? Describe the venue: storefront, living room, community center/room, theater, etc.
- Why is it the best option for this church?

Who? – The Partners.

- Who are your internal partners?
 - You and your wife (if applicable) – brief bio/resume'.
 - Your Core Team – brief bio and description of their role/position.
 - Launch Team – Where are they coming from? How many?
- Who are your external partners?
 - Sponsor/Mother church partners.
 - Accountability/Oversight partners.
 - Support partners: prayer and financial?

What? – The Plan.

- What are your values: the principles and ethics for which you stand? They become the very filter through which you drive day to day decisions. Your values establish your culture and drive your vision.
- What systems and supports do you *need* to accomplish your mission?
 - Connect: outreach, guest experience, guest follow-up, connected to a disciple, and assimilate.
 - Educate (discipleship pathway): next steps to spiritual maturity, broader relationships, discovery of gifts and ministries, next steps for involvement, and leadership development. Demonstrate how this system will produce disciples who disciple others.
 - Replicate (outline mission strategies): ministries and leadership replication, church multiplication, North American and Global Missions.
 - Worship: Describe the desired environment, experience, and encounter of your worship gathering. Outline a plan for how your team will create, evaluate, and improve this worship environment and experience.
 - Give: Outline a detailed fundraising strategy that includes multiple opportunities for people to give. If you expect members to tithe and give offerings, build a plan for the church to tithe and give offerings.
- What are your goals and evaluations?
 - What are your long-term goals: the three – five achievements towards which you will work over the next one to three or five years.
 - What are your short-term strategies: actions you will take to achieve each goal?
 - What resources or tools will be used to measure progress toward those goals?
- What is your budget. Construct budget categories. Four specific areas to focus on are operating, staffing, equipment and marketing. Construct two budgets.
 - Pre-Launch (start-up) budget

- Post-Launch (operational) budget
- What is your detailed timeline? What are your target dates – key milestones? The best starting point for creating a timeline is to envision your launch day. Work backward and forward from the launch date, detailing the actions that will result in what you envision. Then simply put dates to each action.
- What are your vital growth measurements (baptisms, Bible studies taught, visitations, guests, attendance, etc.)? Clearly articulate.

How? – The Process.

- How will you attain and train your Core and Launch Teams?
- How will you ensure anointing and victory in spiritual warfare?
- How and when will you implement system and supports?
- How will you educate your community?
- How will you afford to do what you came together to do?
- How will you ensure that you are delivering what you decided on from the start?
- How will you ensure you are doing it the most efficient way?
- How will you determine if budgets, plans, and timelines need adjusted throughout?
- How will you monitor people and systems to ensure performances meet expectations?
- How will you ensure future vitality and sustainability or achieve succession/replication?
- How will you measure the team’s health and personal growth: spiritual, physical, social, financial, mental, emotional, rest.

Wow! – The Promotion and Celebration

- How will you get your story out? What is your marketing strategy?
- What is your branding?
- How will you be intentionally relational?
- What does vision-actuation look like and the projected results!
- Why we should support you! What are the consequences of not supporting you!
- How will you celebrate victories along the way? You replicate what you celebrate.

A timeline and budget must accompany and be highlighted in your presentation. Assimilate the above information into the following phases and categories (each phase must address all three categories):

Phases	Categories
Phase 1 – Preparation	Goals and Strategies
Phase 2 – Pre-Launch	Timeline – Key Milestones
Phase 3 – Launch and Post Launch	Budget – Minimum First 18 Months

Strategic Launch Plan

Introduction

Congratulations on your interest in Launching a Church! This high calling fulfills the great Commission and is at the heart of North American Missions. The task of launching a church is daunting. Many questions arise. Although not every question can be answered here, our goal is to provide a *general guide* (not a rule) that will ease intimidation and build confidence in developing and actuating a launch plan. A well-thought-out ministry plan greatly increases the probability of building a *sustainable*, healthy church. Failing to plan is planning to fail!

First, a few words of warning.

1. Comparing your church plant to another's church plant is not wise (See 2 Cor. 10:12). Every church plant differs. Various elements determine numerical, chronological, and developmental milestones: experience, training, skillsets, prayer and financial and moral support, coaching, learning agility/adaptability, spiritual sensitivity and warfare, demographic target, virgin field versus cultivated field, team size and dynamics, mother-daughter or sponsor church relationship, collaborative versus competitive venture, etc. Thankfully, however, to plant a church there are common key phases (preparation, pre-launch, launch, and post launch) with common key action items. Like pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing, one watches for chronological development milestones while remaining fairly adaptable. Milestones indicate normal, natural health and growth progressions. This eighteen-month guide is designed to **assist** you in your unique church-birthing and rearing process.
2. A strategic plan, important as it is, is NOT an end-all! **Apostolic** church planting depends upon adaptability to the Spirit's movement. Be flexible. No plan is perfect! Every church planter must be able adjust and improvise their plan in response to unforeseen circumstances and conditions. No one can know all the variables until they immerse themselves in their unique missional context and begin to act intentionally within it. "Formulating strategies in the context of performing them is one of the most fertile ways to arrive at success. But it requires leadership, flexibility, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to fail. Revising a strategy halfway through is not only a sign of good learning; it is essential to being adaptable, which in apostolic ministry is the short-term means to the ends of long-term effectiveness."⁴

No one can predict the future. But effective leaders aren't sitting around and waiting for it to happen either. They're anticipating what lies ahead. – Erica Olsen⁵

Phases Overview

Effective, sustainable, and vibrant church plants take time. One cannot rush a crop! In church planting, following the agrarian metaphor, **slow is fast!** Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase... According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7, 10-12 NKJV).

⁴ Hirsch. 193.

⁵ Olsen, Erica, "Strategic Planning for Dummies" (Wiley Publishing, Inc: Hoboken, NJ, 2007), p. 9.

Planning for and implementing all phases of church planting takes time: one to two years or more. Timing thresholds may vary depending upon the field preparation, team development and experience, depth of partnerships, and other factors. However, here is a general overview of church planting phases:

1. Preparation Phase. This may entail surveying the field, preparing the field, building and training a team, and creating a strategic plan.
2. Pre-Launch Phase. This phase begins the nine-month countdown to your launch date and is broken down as follows:
 - a. 9-7 months prior to Launch
 - b. 6-4 months prior to Launch
 - c. 3-2 months prior to Launch
 - d. One month prior to Launch
3. Launch.
4. Post Launch. This entails developing or resetting systems to measure and support ongoing growth.

Preparation Phase

Training.

- Register for and attend Launch (www.launchachurch.faith), including completing Pre-Launch and Post-Launch training and assignments
- Develop a personal and team growth plan that includes gaining experience through an internship in an active church plant/daughter work
- Develop a Strategic Launch Plan
- Secure a coach. Coaching and mentoring of church planters are absolutely critical to the life and health of a church planting ministry and family. Coaching is an intentional, ongoing conversation aimed at equipping and resourcing you as you plant and pastor. The Malphurs Group, consultants in church planting for nearly thirty years, cite “church planting without a coach” as the number two most deadly mistake church planters make⁶

Vision

- Write out vision and mission statements
- Take site visits and do prayer walks
- Contact your District NAM Director to begin application/approval for starting a church
- Write a Daughter Work Policy with the Mother Church pastor or secure a sponsoring church, if applicable
- Outline details about your desired target and meeting venue and describe why it is the best option for this church plant
- Select three personal intercessors. Keep them informed of prayer needs throughout the process

⁶ <https://malphursgroup.com/10-deadly-church-planting-mistakes/>

- Select three proven overseers for pastoral accountability and support (these may also become your temporary Board of Directors)
- Create relationships with other UPCI/Apostolic Pastors in your city or nearby
- Cooperate with your District and its policies
- Give presentation and cast vision to partners

Spiritual Check: daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary.

Move into Your Community (If applicable)

- Get settled with a home, job, school, etc. Former North American Missions Director, J.T. Pugh, asked church planter to live in their city for up to 12 months before beginning to actively plant a church. The purpose was so that they could establish their home, work, schooling, etc., in an effort to eliminate distractions that could detract from the work once it has begun. This creates a personal foundation for success
- Complete demographic and historical research on your community. See **Addendum 1** for church planting demographic resources
- Develop relationships with your neighbors and co-workers
- Intentionally engage with your community
- Engage in spiritual warfare

Family and Marriage Health Check: make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

Legal and Corporate Actions

- Set up an office (probably in your home) for church legal, financial, and office administration. Set up files for each
- Establish Name (search name availability with your Secretary of State/Province website)
- Establish Organizational Board of Directors
 - Develop Meeting Minutes – Appoint a Chairperson and Secretary. Appoint officers.
 - Pass a resolution to obtain an EIN from the IRS to open a checking account and to borrow money: www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online
 - Craft, adopt, and file Articles of Incorporation with Secretary of State/Province. See current UPCI Manual, accessible through “Downloadable Resources” at www.upciministers.com
 - Craft and adopt Church Bylaws. See current UPCI Manual, accessible through “Downloadable Resources” at www.upciministers.com
 - Craft and adopt an Accountable Reimbursement Policy. See link for a sample: http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/pdfs/financial_tools/accountable_reimbursement_policy.pdf

- Craft and adopt a Housing Allowance Policy. See link for a sample letter: <https://www.freechurchaccounting.com/how-do-i-write-a-housing-allowance-letter-for-tax-purpose.html>
- Craft and adopt policies like salary, conflict of interest, etc.
- Register with the State/Province Department of Revenue for income tax (for hiring non-clergy employees)
- File Application for Affiliation with UPCI, upon being approved by your District (www.northamericanmissions.faith/s/Church-Affiliation-updated-03-11-2014.pdf). Affiliation is required to receive NAM funds. Affiliated churches do NOT need to obtain a 501(c)3 or Canadian NPO Status
- Apply for State/Province Sales Tax Exemption, where applicable
- Purchase applicable insurances:
 - Counseling Professional Liability
 - Employment Practices Liability
 - Directors, Officers & Trustees Liability
 - Sexual Misconduct & Molestation
 - General Liability

Church Finance and Administration

- Get financial software and computer
- Open bank checking and savings accounts
- Develop a budget and projections
 - Provide columns for 'Raised Funds', 'Support', 'Funds Needed.'
 - Four Budget Categories:
 1. Team Expenses
 2. Capital Expenses (setup, sound, and media equipment)
 3. Outreach/Marketing Expense
 4. Operational Expenses (rent, utilities, site prep, furniture, curriculum)
 - Create margin within the budget (10 – 15%)
- Establish books and procedures or hire an Accountant to do so
- Adopt Charts of Accounts
- Get a Post Office box
- Develop and begin fundraising strategy and relationships. Create multiple ways to give (online, text, mobile app)
- Develop a church structure flow chart
- Make application for Launch Funds (Deadline: November 1)
- Begin developing a Church Manual with policies, procedures, agreements, and position descriptions

Early Marketing

- Create a strategic marketing plan with dates and budget
- Create branding and logo design or hire a marketing firm or graphic designer
- Purchase domain name (website URL) and...

- Begin writing content for and developing your website or hire a website developer
- Create social media accounts
- Business/Church cards
- Begin networking

Core Team

- Be in prayer and seek advice concerning whom may join your core team (ministry) in this church plant. A Core Team (ideally 8-15 people) fully commits to join the church-planting endeavor as long-term (beyond the Launch) pillar leaders. The Core Team generally compliments the Church Planter (evangelist, music, administration, children, youth, small group leader etc.). God builds teams to launch churches. As God prepares you, He is also preparing other people to start the church with you. Trust that God is speaking to others about being part of what he is stirring within you. Your challenge is to find those individuals. Launching out of a mother church makes this process easier. Note: A Core Team differs from a “Launch Team.” A **launch team has one singular purpose: to assist you in launching the church.** A Launch team is built on borrowed talent (signed agreements) from the mother church, nearby churches, or from churches within your Section and District. When the launch service is over, or the agreed upon term (i.e., one year) is complete, the team dissipates. Utilizing both teams is necessary and creates the best scenario for a sustainable launch
- Hold meetings with Core Team monthly to pray, vision cast, train, and brainstorm community involvement and outreach events
- Set expectations for tithes, offerings, attendance, and teaching Home Bible Studies

Nine Months to Birth (Launch)

Core Team

- Continue to develop a Core Team. Utilize the *Launch Church Planter and Team Profile* to assist you
- Fundraising
- Develop Position Descriptions for all Core Team members
- Set dates for your church’s Launch and Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Events
- Hold meetings with Core Team bi-weekly or monthly to pray, vision cast, and brainstorm outreach events
- Organize and conduct prayer walks (Plow Before the Planting Event – WNOP)
- Conduct Core Team leadership training
- Write short-term ministry agreements with specific goals and timetables for each area of ministry for leaders who are developing ministries
- Develop relational and servant evangelism that leads to Home Bible Studies and discipleship
- Review and fine-tune strategy

Launch Team

- Work with pastor(s) to approve an agreement (see below) to recruit, and train an approved Launch Team
- Create position descriptions for your desired Launch Team roles, including beginning and end date of commitment (some ministries commitments may need to continue for months after the Launch date), what events they should attend, and when they should be there. Clarify expectations
 - Kid's Ministry
 - Youth Ministry
 - Worship Team
 - Sound and Media
 - Host team
 - Small group leaders
- Develop logos for ministry areas
- Develop ministry reports: Contact and Follow-up Forms, Expenditure Request, Ministry Report, Event Evaluation, etc. Enter these into your Church Manual.
- Develop short handbooks with policies, procedures, and expectations for each Launch area of ministry (Children, Youth, Worship, Ushers, Greeters, Prayer Team/Counselors)

Spiritual Check: daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

Family and Marriage Health Check: make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

Ongoing Action Items

- Enlist more Prayer Partners
- Send list of prayer needs to your Prayer Partner Team
- Establish a fundraising goal based upon first 6-month operating budget.
- Continue to build fundraising relationships/commitments
- Keep in contact with NAM and District NAM Director
- Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team
- Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
- Intentionally meet people and invite them into your home or meet for coffee
- Narrow down meeting venue options to three and rank them in order of preference

Marketing:

- Complete logo/branding design
- Website goes live
- Set up an online giving portal
- Social Media promotion of church page
- Finalize Launch Marketing Plan
- Develop Invite Cards for community and Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Events

Community Involvement

- Host your first community event
- Plan, market and prepare to host first monthly Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event
- Follow up on community event and Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event contacts (Core Team members teach Home Bible Studies to contacts)
- Join Chamber of Commerce and other community involvement opportunities

6-4 Months to Launch

Finalize Venue

- Sign contract and logistics (communicate expectations with venue owner)
- Walkthrough
- Obtain or review Renter's and Liability Insurance (corporate, event, property, storage)

Core Group

- Begin weekly meetings for fellowship, planning, and leadership development
- Accountability/testimony reporting on contacts made and Bible Studies taught
- Continue strategic prayer walks and fasting
- Continue building relationships with other UPCI/Apostolic Pastors in your city or nearby

Spiritual Check: daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

Family and Marriage Health Check: make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

Marketing

- Finalize designs and gather resources
- Purchase offering envelopes or design and print
- Order promotional/branding items for Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event and Launch (lanyards for workers, coffee mugs, water bottles, magnets, t-shirts, etc.)
- Market blitz for Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Events
- Print Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event invitations/Invite Cards, Information Cards, brochures, prayer cards, etc.
- Print/purchase exterior and interior banners and directional signage

Launch Team Meetings

- Fill remaining key Launch Team roles
- Obtain criminal record checks for volunteers that work with children and teens
- Host bi-weekly team meetings to train, prepare and pray for first Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event
- Teach your church's vision and cultural values to the team
- Develop band and begin worship practices

- Conduct a Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event dress rehearsal
- Conduct first Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event (between 6-5 months) and monthly thereafter
- Conduct Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event evaluation
- Conduct Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event follow up
- Celebrate victories

Equipment and License Purchases

- Purchase or contract (<http://www.portablechurch.com>) for instruments, projection, computers, sound and media systems, video and podcasting, platform, lighting, chairs, furniture, nursery and children’s furniture and equipment, baptismal and robes, storage containers, trailer and vehicle to pull the trailer
- Purchase licenses and software for media (for CCLI license visit <https://us.ccli.com/#>) computers, and church management systems
- Begin developing a song list and downloading sheet music
- Select and purchase all curriculums

Ongoing Action Items

- Send list of prayer needs to your Prayer Partner Team
- Send out support letters and hold fundraising meetings
- Continue community involvement – host second community event or felt-needs ministry opportunity
- Intentionally meet people and invite them into your home or meet for coffee: continue relational and servant evangelism that leads to Home Bible Studies and discipleship
- Follow up on contacts
- Teach Bible Studies
- Maintain personal and family devotions
- Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
- Prepare for first sermon/series and discipleship course
- Obtain license to perform marriages
- Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team

3-2 Months to Launch

Preview Services

- Ramp up outreach
- Continue to hold monthly Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event
- Conduct Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event evaluation
- Conduct Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Event follow up
- Celebrate and share victories

Spiritual Check-Up: daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

Marriage and Family Health Check: make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

Launch Team

- Prepare and train team for Launch service
- Teach your church's vision and cultural values to the team
- Continue worship practices

Ramp Up Community Outreach

- Hold third community outreach event or felt-needs ministry opportunity

Create Systems Checklists (for every area and ministry, from setup to assimilation)

- Adopt an accountable offering processing policy
- Follow-up system. Choose your church management database
- Ongoing discipleship

Marketing

- Inventory and reorder, if necessary, promotional items for Interest-Gathering/Start-Up Events and Launch (lanyards for workers, coffee mugs, water bottles, magnets, t-shirts, etc.)
- Direct mail, social media advertising of Launch (whatever is most effective to reach your target)
- Reformat website to reflect Launch phase
- Prepare and stock welcoming kiosk/center
- Posters (windows of area businesses, community boards, etc.)
- Press releases

Prayer and Fasting

Family and Marriage Health Check (if you need to take a week off, now is the time!)

Ongoing Action Items

- Continue to keep intercessors apprised of your personal and planting needs
- Follow up on contacts
- Teach Bible Studies
- Maintain personal and family devotions and recreation
- Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest
- Continue sermon/series and discipleship course preparation, including PowerPoint
- Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team

One Month to Launch

Assemble All Church Equipment and Signage

Spiritual Check-Up: daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities, if necessary

Run Through Practice Services Weekly or at Least Twice in Venue

- Create Launch Day Run-Sheet from setup to countdown to security
- Debrief after each practice run
 - What went well?
 - What did not go well?
 - What did we learn?
 - What would we do differently next time?

Launch and Core Team

- On the job training
- Celebrate

Review and Revise all Systems Checklists

Make Last-Minute Small Purchases

Marketing in Full Swing

Final Day of Prayer and Fasting

The Launch!

Execute Plan

Debrief

- Did we achieve our objective?
- What did we do right?
- What did we do wrong?
- Was the team sufficiently prepared and worked productively together? Explain.
- What should we do differently next time?

Celebrate

Follow Up

Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team

First Four Months After Launch

- **Spiritual Check-Up:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities, if necessary
- Keep a “pulse” on your marriage and family. Review priorities

- Assess Launch Team departure dates. Celebrate and reward their sacrifice
- Follow up with newcomers each week
- Celebrate baptisms and new births
- Continue to communicate vision, mission, culture, and values
- Incorporate fellowship into your service plan and hold one fellowship event per month
- Begin discipleship growth tracks (second month)
- Encourage and equip attenders to become inviters
- Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
- Create Post-Launch Calendar
 - Hold one big event for children
 - Plan seasonal events
 - Map out sermon series, if applicable
- Develop and maintain strategy for financial stability
- Manage and adjust budget and financial projections to reality
- Keep in contact with NAM and District NAM Director
- Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team
- Continue to communicate at least monthly with your supporters
- Automate your response to new visitors
- Maintain relationships with other pastors and church planters
- Post-Launch marketing
 - Leverage excitement and momentum to promote your church consistently after launch
 - Budget for social media promotions, google ads, etc.
- Manage your location
 - Have a plan B if your location has to change
 - Maintain financial reserves for rent/lease
- Team Building
 - Continue training and developing leaders
- Foundational Families
 - Target and invest (80/20 Rule)
 - Train
- Set up Pastoral Care Systems (weddings, hospital visits, baby dedications, baptisms, prep-marital counselling, other counselling forms), utilizing your Core Team when appropriate/possible
- Determine when your church's age-focused ministries will begin
 - Children's ministry
 - Youth ministry
- **Begin reinvesting Launch funds**
- Continue to meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team. A 2007 study by Leadership Network reports that around 68 percent of church plants still exist four years after having been started, and that the assessment, preparation, and **coaching** processes for the pastoral leader have a dramatic impact on both the well-being of the planter and the vitality and survivability of the new church. Ed Stetzer (2003) compared

the mean attendance of church planters who met regularly with a mentor or supervisor and those who had not. The noticeable gap between those who did and did not meet with mentors began in year one with the gap being 12 percent. By the second year, that gap expanded to 16 percent. Year three saw a decrease of the gap to 13 percent. Finally, year four evidenced the greatest gap at 25 percent. By the fourth year, those who meet with a mentor weekly led churches that were more than twice the size of churches whose planters did not have mentors. One reason for the effectiveness of coaching is the emphasis it places on relationship over programming

Begin with the end in mind: discipleship, leadership, reproducibility, and so on.

Addendum 1.

Church Plant Demographic Resources

A church planter needs to be an expert on the community and the people God calls them to reach. Demographic information becomes a valuable tool in understanding your community and your target people. Ask the Holy Spirit to identify important variables (age, income, single parents, race, etc.) as you read these reports.

Paid Demographic Reports

The paid reports contain both hard demographics (age, income, race) and soft demographics (preferred brands, how tech- savvy or 'green' they are, etc.). These vendors specialize in providing detailed demographics to churches:

Soft Demographics

- <http://www.perceptgroup.com/Products/Products.aspx>. Viewing each sample of *Precept Group's* products will help you determine which product is best for you.
- <https://missioninsite.com/technology/sample-reports>. Viewing each sample of *MissionInsite's* products will help you determine which product is best for you.

Free Demographic Reports

Though sometimes you get what you pay for, these sites still offer a surprising amount of information that will help you understand your community better.

Hard Demographics

- Passion for Planting: <https://church-planting.net/free-demographic-report/>.
- Data USA's Community Profiles: <https://datausa.io/>.
- US Census Bureau: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.
- City-Data: <http://www.city-data.com/>.

- GeoMetrx’s by Zip Code: <http://geometrx.com/free-demos-by-zip/>.
- www.freedemographics.com.

Resources for searching out local history:

- <https://www.thoughtco.com/genealogy-of-a-town-1422042>.
- <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/fall/local-history.html>.

Addendum 2

Am I Called to Church Planting?

Galen J Thompson
 NAM Director of Training

Scott Sistrunk states, “The arduous task of planting a church cannot begin on a whim or an emotional moment, or even after a careful demographic survey. If the effort is to be successful, it will be because God ordained it.”⁷

The best test of a call is that a healthy church agrees with your aspiration and sends you out as a confirmation of your present work and passion. One who is not doing the work of typical a church planter, at home where there is a viable church, will likely not succeed in a lonely church plant! So, ask yourself, “Am I already connecting with people, teaching Bible studies, and discipling? Do my pastor and church support me? Do others affirm this calling?” If your church and friends are hesitant about your calling and gifting to plant a church, then you should also be hesitant. The absence of a clarion call or a strong confirmation does not mean you are a failure; it might mean “wait” or it might be a divine redirection! The “Am I Called to Church Planting?” assessment below will help you determine your preparedness.

“Am I Called to Church Planting?” Assessment

Directions: Read each statement and answer based upon a scale of 1-5 (1 = significant weakness, 2 = rarely effective, 3 = average, 4 = moderately effective, 5 = pronounced strength).

- ___ 1. My spouse and pastor are supportive of my vision (church-planting desires) and have peace that this is the right season to press into my calling.
- ___ 2. I have clearly articulated my personal sense of God’s call to church-planting so that my spouse and those who know me best understand it and can also articulate it.
- ___ 3. I seek out feedback and receive it without becoming defensive or overly emotional.

⁷ Sistrunk, Scott. Church Planter’s Handbook. *Among the Reapers, A Compilation of Writings by Church Planters*, Edited and compiled by Lee E and Judy C Wells (St Louis: United Pentecostal Church International, 2012), p.44.

- ___ 4. I would define my calling as an urgent, pressing, heavy and persistent burden for church planting that demands pursuit.
- ___ 5. I release and provide resources to others to accomplish their goals and ministry.
- ___ 6. I consistently and effectively communicate the gospel in a manner understood by non-Christians.
- ___ 7. I have fruit from my teaching that shows my audience understands and applies what I bring to them from scripture – having influenced and changed their life.
- ___ 8. My leaders would say that I care for people and make sacrifices to serve them.
- ___ 9. I have taught a Home Bible Study and have disciplined someone into maturity.
- ___ 10. I am a team player and demonstrate and encourage collaborative working relationships with peers, and those lower and higher in the organization.
- ___ 11. I have relationships with unbelievers (I can identify 3-4 unbelievers towards whom I am presently reaching with the intent of sharing the gospel) and regularly invite others to my small group or church.
- ___ 12. I have a healthy marriage (loving service, kind, communicative, mutually honoring, cherishing) and do not neglect my family in the pursuit of ministry.
- ___ 13. I resolve conflict in a timely, biblical, and constructive manner.
- ___ 14. I exhibit flexibility and adaptability to changes and needs.
- ___ 15. My leaders would say that I have earned the trust of co-workers, ministry volunteers, and church members.
- ___ 16. I am a self-starter, take initiative without being told, and have a pattern of starting or being involved in starting a ministry.
- ___ 17. I have considered, visited and studied the location God is directing me to.
- ___ 18. I understand the cultural context of the church plant and culturally fit (naturally or adaptively) with the planting context.
- ___ 19. I have taken intentional time away with the Lord (prayer and fasting) to focus on Him and His call in my life.
- ___ 20. I believe God can provide the power and resources necessary if I obey Him.
- ___ 21. I am resilient under opposition and setbacks, being familiar with and frequently engaged in spiritual warfare.
- ___ 22. The practice of spiritual disciplines is a significant and ongoing part of my life.
- ___ 23. Others say I have an accurate perception of self and understanding of my strengths and weaknesses.
- ___ 24. I manage resources prudently, with integrity, and stay within budget.
- ___ 25. I utilize my time effectively and efficiently, meeting timelines and deadlines.
- ___ Total.

Scoring: 105+ = Strength; 85 to 104 = Capable; 84 or less = wait or reconsider.