

COUNT DOWN TO LAUNCH

Establishing a New Reproducing Church



new thing

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We've all heard the stats about 80% of all church plants "failing" (which usually means closing their doors within 3-5 years). That numbers scares a lot of us, I know it scares me. There are a number of books and resources out there that are working to change the tone of church planting, particularly in the United States. NewThing is working to be a catalyst to a movement of reproducing churches because we believe that the reproducing church is our greatest opportunity to transform this world for Jesus Christ. The goal for this countdown is to help church planters launch an effective, spirit-led reproducing church. Sound lofty? Sure, but these practices will help the church planter understand the preparation and due diligence that opens the door for the reproducing vision to take place.

STRATEGIC VISION

PRAYER

- Spend time in prayer to hear and see God's vision for this new church
- Develop a clear sense of God's call for this new church
- Conduct a community prayer walk
- Encourage friends and family to begin praying for the church planting process

DETERMINE THE TARGET GROUP

- Identify the area/geographical scope we hope to connect to this new church
- Determine the initial target group for this new church (ex. young families, millennials, Hispanics, etc.)
- Complete a thorough demographic study of the target community, thinking through the ministry implications of our research.
- Spend time in various places within the target area. Talk to people about life in the area. Talk to them about needs that exist and churches that currently exist. Have the launch team participate in this, not as a group but as individuals, then gather together and share.
- Self-evaluation: Do I fit as a leader, pastor, missionary to this group in this place? Why do I want to serve here? Are there any selfish motives for planting in this area?

CONFIRMATION

- We have received confirmation from mentors, elders, pastors and friends to pursue the vision.
- The future management team agrees that we should continue to pursue this vision at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN

CONFIRMING THE NEW CHURCH'S PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

- Develop a clear; specific and measurable mission statement that captures the essence of our vision for this church.
- Referring both to our mission and the target group summary, write a list of ministry priorities to keep our efforts focused
- Determine what general style must characterize our ministry in order to effectively reach our target group.

DEVELOP THE NEW CHURCH'S ACTION PLAN

- Prayerfully develop a general 2-year plan, which includes goals and objectives that help us fulfill our purpose.
 - ◆ Each goal and objective is specific, measurable and faith-stretching
 - ◆ The necessary resources for each objective have been defined
 - ◆ Responsibilities have been appropriately delegated for implementing the plan.

STRATEGIC TEAMS

ORGANIZE YOUR PRAYER TEAM

- Develop a substantial prayer team (1 person per desired attendee on launch day—or something like that) who will pray regularly for this new church.
- Establish plans to communicate with the prayer team on a regular basis.

ARRANGING THE FINANCIAL TEAM

- Determine the best way to raise support while starting this church and have begun to implement this strategy.
- We have a long-term financial plan for this church to be self-supporting.
- If we are supported by individuals, another church, or church planting organization, the exact amount of support and its duration have been clearly spelled out in writing.

ASSEMBLING ADDITIONAL LEADERS FOR THE STAFF TEAM

- Determine the needed staff positions and the preferred spiritual gift mix and passions.
- Create a time-line that shows when each additional staff member will be hired.
- Begin to aggressively pursue the needed staff positions.

NEW CAMPUS LAUNCH TEAM DEVELOPMENT

ENROLL SENDING CHURCH(ES) FOR LAUNCH OF NEW CHURCH

- Communicate the vision for the new Church to the sending congregations

ENROLL COMMUNITY FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW CHURCH

- Meet with community groups
- Join the local chamber of commerce
- Meet with local city officials
- Meet with other local pastors

ENROLL LAUNCH TEAM FOR LAUNCH OF NEW CHURCH

- Communicate the vision of the new church to the sending church(es) and explain how people can be a part of the new church.
- Assemble the growing launch team for regular meetings to communicate vision and update progress.

MAKE CONTACTS WITH THE UNCHURCHED

- Develop a contact management system
- Develop and are implement an effective outreach strategy tailored to the target population
- Make contact with every home in our target population
- Create high quality brochures/business cards to give people we meet in the community
- Follow up with the open and responsive contacts and helping them find their way back to God.
- All members of the launch team are engaged in connecting with people who are far from God
- People are becoming followers of Christ
- Newcomers to the launch team are encouraged to share the vision with their friends and family.

FUNDRAISING

- Create an initial budget of salaries, facility rental, administration, marketing and equipment
- Communicate the plan for self-sufficiency to supporters and sponsoring churches

- Develop a comprehensive fund-raising strategy to reach our proposed goals of budget and self-sufficiency
 - ◆ Use the “fund-raising pyramid” to clarify strategy
- Develop marketing pieces to communicate vision, mission and strategy to potential donors
- Schedule one on ones with individuals to seek lead gifts
- Plan multiple meals/desserts to cast vision and ask for support
- Preparing a letter to be sent out to friends, family and network contacts to cast vision and ask for support
- Seek support from church planting organizations and sponsoring churches/networks
- Plan fundraisers (silent auctions, concerts, etc.) to share our vision with the community and ask for support
- Establish a follow-up system for pledges providing them with an easy way to give regularly (envelopes, labels, etc.)

Fundraising is something that church planters tend to be afraid of, but should be viewed as one of the greatest single opportunities

PERSONAL NETWORKING / ACCOUNTABILITY

- Establish relationships with other church planters
- Establish mentoring relationships with coaches, pastors, church planters
- Join online communities for church planters
- Establish the beginnings of a management team for personal accountability

MINISTRY TEAMS DEVELOPMENT

FORMULATE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE FIRST YEAR

- Formulate a preliminary 1-year plan for every ministry team in line with our objectives.
- Establish the number of ministry teams needed to start this new church.
- The ministries are designed in light of the felt-needs of our community

MOBILIZE THE SENDING CHURCH(S) IN PREPARATION FOR THE LAUNCH

- Communicate the ministry team needs to the sending church(es)
- Ask leaders and team members for commitments to serve at the new church.

CREATIVE ARTS TEAM DEVELOPMENT

FORMULATE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE FIRST YEAR

- Formulate a preliminary 1-year plan for our creative teams in line with our objectives
- Establish the number of creative teams and team members needed to launch this new church.
- Make contacts with artists who are not connected to church within the target group.

MOBILIZE THE SENDING CHURCH(ES) IN PREPARATION FOR THE LAUNCH (WITH PERMISSION)

- Communicate the creative arts needs through all available means to the sending church(es).
- Encourage flexibility among existing artists while determining who will be able to serve at the new church.
- Ask artistic leaders and artists for commitments to serve at the new church.
- Look for potential leaders from within the existing creative teams.
- Develop new leaders to lead additional creative teams.

ADULT SMALL GROUP DEVELOPMENT

FORMULATE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR FIRST YEAR

- Formulate a 1-year strategy for adult small groups that includes launching a new church.
- Set a goal for the number of adult groups desired to launch this new church.

MOBILIZE THE SENDING CHURCH(ES) IN PREPARATION FOR THE LAUNCH

- Communicate the vision and needs of small groups to the sending church(es)
- Challenge existing leaders to expand their vision for leadership development and outreach.
- Adult small groups are meeting and reaching unchurched people in our target.
- Existing leaders are developing new leaders to multiply adult small groups in our area.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

FORMULATE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR FIRST YEAR

- Formulate a preliminary 1-year plan for our children's ministry in line with our objectives.
- Establish the number of children's groups needed to start this new church.

MOBILIZE THE SENDING CHURCH(ES) IN PREPARATION FOR THE LAUNCH

- Communicate the children's ministry needs to the sending church(es).
- Look for potential leaders from within existing children's ministries.
- Develop new leaders to lead additional children's groups.

LOGISTICS

- Obtain a PO Box or other official church address
- Obtain office space or other suitable location for operations
- Establish church phone number
- Establish church email address
- Establish church management software (3CMS, CMS, etc.)
- Seek out administrative solutions
 - ◆ Buy/Rent/Use copier
 - ◆ Printer
 - ◆ Computers
 - ◆ Folding machines
 - ◆ Postage machine
 - ◆ Paper cutter
 - ◆ Build relationship with print shop for marketing pieces, postcards, business cards, etc

SMALL GROUPS GO PUBLIC

ADULT SMALL GROUPS

- Establish target dates for multiplying existing groups
- Establish a strategy for launching new groups
- Each new leader has identified the focus of his/her group (affinity, topic of discussion, etc.)
- Developed a strategy for promoting new and existing groups long term
- Every small group leader has identified an apprentice to develop
- Establish a strategy for training and equipping new hosts

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PREPARATION

Facility

- Identify and strategize unique characteristics of the facility (via floor plans, visits, etc.)
- The facility is clean and safe for all children
- The "look" of the children's area is excellent, welcoming, and attractive to children and parents.
- Signs have been made directing newcomers from the front entrance to the children's programming area.
- The facility is adequately equipped with appropriate child-friendly furniture
- Setup/tear down procedures have been planned with ministry teams.



In our churches, most of us have several people we know who have the potential to grow God's Kingdom beyond what we ask or imagine. What would happen if we met with those people for 6-12 weeks, where we equipped them, challenged them and nurtured them into new leaders of small groups, ministries, and/or initiatives? If you're considering launching a new church, and you would like biblical community to be at the DNA of your new site, I would argue that starting a turbo group might be the most important thing you do. So scan the horizon, look for the emerging leaders around you, and invite them to explore leadership in the context of a small group.

--Eric Metcalf

Children's Ministry Equipment & Supplies

- Large group equipment (i.e. stage, video, sound, etc.) has been secured
- We have secured equipment to fill the needs of each age level (i.e. nursery changing table, number monitor for the stage, toys, craft supplies, etc.)

- We have secured the needed curricula for all age levels.
- An excellent brochure is available to introduce children's ministry to newcomers
- A first-time visitor gift has been secured for all children attending on launch day.

Children's Ministry Leadership Development

- Secure coaches/leaders for each area of need
- Secure temporary helpers for the first month or so to ensure proper adult-child ratios.
- Train each leader to do ministry with excellence in each area
- Plan events to empower leaders and keep them in the loop of communication
- Intentionally celebrate the people and work of children's ministry volunteers
- Plan and implement a setup/trial run day just prior to the first preview service.
- Make provisions for the spiritual development of Sunday morning leaders (i.e. rotation for attending celebration service, recorded messages available, communion in prayer meetings, 2nd service or contributor service)

Children's Ministry Procedures

- Utilize an attendance system that allows for swift movement of newcomers, and enables us to follow up with them.
- Implement a security system for all children under school age that allows us to identify the adult/caregiver to whom we can release them
- Procedures for contacting parents/caregivers via the stage monitor are in place
- Create a system to greet parents and children at each point of progress from the entrance to the classroom door to inspire confidence in the parents and children.
- Leaders of children are easily identified by all visitors (badges, t-shirts, etc.)

PUBLIC CELEBRATION SERVICES

LOGISTICS OF TIME AND LOCATION

- This church has a critical mass of at least 100 people in celebration services to establish enough momentum for an effective service to occur
- Secure an easy to find location with adequate space for celebration services, parking and children/student ministry space.

- The facility is accessible to all who might attend. Physical barriers that might affect the disabled have been remedied.
- The facility has adequate restrooms, drinking fountains, etc.
- The structure is clean and safe in all areas.
- The facility accommodates our celebration services well in terms of acoustical quality and available electrical outlets
- The city (including the fire marshal) has permitted us to operate in these facilities
- The facility is large enough to accommodate vigorous growth for at least one year
- Adequate storage is available
- The needed transportation has been acquired
- A positive working relationship has been established with the landlord (if necessary)

CLASSIC MARKETING

- Design a marketing strategy to reach the maximum number of unchurched people.
- Determine our target area and are using the best available marketing strategy to invite people to our first public service.
- Press releases have been sent to announce the beginning of a new church in the community.
- Place ads in the newspaper and other pertinent local media to invite the community to our first public celebration service
- Institute a follow-up strategy to generate public awareness of our presence and identity
- Produce a supply of high quality brochures to make available at the first public service.

DIGITAL MARKETING

- Make connections to networks of people on Facebook, casting vision and asking people to join the mission
- Have the launch team use Facebook to cultivate existing relationships
 - ◆ Create an "event" on Facebook, Google Calendar, Myspace, etc. to communicate the launch of the new church.

As we are fully engulfed in a world of online presence I think its important for church planters to use what is available to them to build and maintain relationships with people who are far from God. If nothing else, it gives your sphere of influence unparalleled access to you. This isn't about being an eloquent blogger, or having the most friends on Facebook... Meet people. Follow up with them. Create events. Poke them. Fortunately more and more church planters are well-educated in the online world, but if its foreign to you, don't underestimate the influence that can be gained by an online presence.

–Matt Larson

- ◆ People are invited to join the new church on launch day
- Other digital means have been fully explored (Twitter, podcasting, blogging, etc.) to put forth the mission of the new church with clarity and excellence
- Photos of the launch team and the story of the new church are readily available
- A church website has been built and a strategy to maintain and add content has been implemented
- Alternative websites/blogs have been established to further the mission of the new church (ex. www.serveplainfield.org, www.community412.org, www.answersforwomen.net)
- Staff members blog regularly
 - ◆ Launch team too if possible
- Video messages inviting people to join the mission are recorded and passed around via youtube and Facebook

CREATIVE ARTS TEAM

- Ensure the creative arts team understands the vision for the new church
- Secure enough people on the creative arts team to launch this new campus
- Assemble a sound and multi-media system to meet our needs for the celebration service.
- Establish rehearsal times and places
- Create an evaluation system for the new church

MINISTRY TEAMS

- Design a strategy for facility usage
- Design a strategy for setup and tear down
- Design a hospitality area to be excellent in function and feel
- Purchase necessary equipment i.e. coffee pots, signs, digital recorder, etc.
- Our felt needs ministries are active in the community

RECOMMENDED READING

- ◆ Launch—Nelson Searcy, Kerrick Thomas
- ◆ Survival Tips for Church Planters—Jim Tune
- ◆ Church Planting from the Ground Up—Tom Jones
- ◆ Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century—Aubrey Malphurs
- ◆ Church Planting for a Greater Harvest—Peter Wagner
- ◆ 44 Questions for Church Planters—Lyle Schaller
- ◆ The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future—Carl George
- ◆ Prepare Your Church for the Future: Carl George
- ◆ Starting High Definition Churches—Ron Sylvia
- ◆ The 10 Most Common Mistakes by Church Plants—Jim Griffith
- ◆ Church Planting—Bill Easum
- ◆ Coaching Guidebook—Tammy Melchien and Janet McMahon
- ◆ People Raising: A Practical Guide to Raising Support—Bill Dillon
- ◆ Funding Your Ministry Whether You're Gifted or Not—Scott Morton
- ◆ Simply Strategic Stuff—Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan
- ◆ Planting Missional Churches—Ed Stetzer

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- ◆ www.newthing.org
- ◆ www.coachnet.org
- ◆ www.church-coaching.com
- ◆ www.churchplanters.com
- ◆ www.churchplantmedia.com
- ◆ www.cloversites.com
- ◆ www.showitfast.com
- ◆ www.facebook.com
- ◆ www.twitter.com
- ◆ www.apple.com/iphone (ok, that's just an opinion, but it is a church planter's assistant!)
- ◆ www.perceptnet.com (demographics)