

Starting Strong – Finishing Well: A Start-Up Checklist for New Churches

CLARIFY YOUR PERSONAL CALLING:

- Spend time in personal prayer and scripture study
- Prayerfully consult with your spouse / family
- Prayerfully consult with a trusted mentor, friends, and others to verify God's calling and timing

ESTABLISH SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

- Enlist a church planting mentor to meet with regularly
 - The Church Planting Department, MBCB, offers free training for those who wish to invest their lives in a church planter as their mentor. Contact Church Planting at (800) 748-1651 or email at churchplanting@mbcb.org
- Enlist one or more Partner/Sponsor congregations to support the new church start
 - See 5-3-1 strategy on church planting website at www.mbcb.org
- Develop a written covenant with partner congregations to define relationships
 - Covenant Suggestions available online in new church starts resources
- If desiring to partner with Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB)
 - Contact MBCB and meet with a Church Planting Consultant to identify resources and networks available to you
 - If you are seeking financial aid, please complete a New Work Grant Assistance Application. Sent to you upon request.

BEGIN CHURCH PLANTING PREPARATION:

- Many helpful books are available to help you understand the basics about church planting, the challenges, and creativity involved in the many models of churches that are needed to reach the vast unchurched people groups. (texts may vary depending on the model of church you pursue) [Amazon Books Online](#) / [Barnes and Noble Online](#) / [Lifeway Bookstores](#)
 - *Building a Contagious Church* by Mark Mittelberg
 - *Church Planting Movements* (IMB publication, [Online copy](#) available at imb.org)
 - *City Reaching* by Jack Dennison
 - *Growing True Disciples* by George Barna
 - *Houses that Change the World* by Wolfgang Simson
 - *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* by Aubrey Malphurs
 - *Postmodern Pilgrims* by Leonard Sweet
 - *Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren
 - *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* by Ed Stoetzer
- Complete *Basic Training for Church Planters* offered by the Church Planting Department, MBCB More info available at www.mbcb.org (click on new church starts)

DO YOUR BACKGROUND STUDIES

- Identify a potential location (your mission field)
- Learn everything you can about the people, the community, and how your personal gifts and passions connect to them
 - Basic demographic/psychographic information, available from church planting, mbcb
 - Know Your Mission Field Worksheet, [worksheet](#)
- Identify and pursue any legal/business/financial steps you need to take to start the church (It is essential that new churches be aware of the most current statutes in their state. **Neither** this document nor the church planting department serve as counsel on legal or financial issues. The following references are provided for general information only and are not intended as legal advice and must not be substituted for competent legal counsel.)

- Keep Your Church Out of Court available from Pastoral Leadership Department, MBCB
 - More information available from Pastoral Leadership Department, MBCB
- Evaluate your personal readiness by participating in an approved Church Planter Assessment process.
 - Pre-Assessment tool, *Discovery Tools*, can be used before getting the full assessment.
 - Available online at www.mbc.org or by calling the Church Planting Department, MBCB (800) 748-1651

ESTABLISH A BASIC, HEALTHY FOUNDATION

- **Mission / Vision / Values:** Prayerfully and in dialogue with your mentor and others, begin to articulate the mission, vision, and values to which you believe God is calling you
- **Core Group / Launch Team / Start-Up Team:** Prayerfully enlist a group of believers committed to join you in the start of the new church. Continue to develop and refine Mission/Vision/Values in prayerful dialogue with this group.
- **Model of Ministry/VisionPath:** Prayerfully with your core group and your church planting mentor, determine the best model for reaching unchurched people in your chosen mission field. Answer basic questions about the shape your ministry will take -- the strategic actions you must take to achieve the vision.
 - How will you worship?
 - How will you develop relationships with unbelievers?
 - How will you develop new believers into mature, reproducing disciples?
 - How will you multiply leaders who can multiply leaders?
 - How will you develop community and accountability?
 - How will you serve the community?
 - How will you reproduce and start more new churches?
- **Financial Support:** Secure needed financial support from core group, personal resources, partner congregations, and denominational agencies.
- **Implementation:** Prayerfully with your core group and church planting mentor, identify a time line for establishing the church. Prepare for launch. Do not launch too soon. It is okay, and quite probable that 5 to 6 cell groups will be meeting during the week and also having a corporate worship time once a week before the public launch of the church.

LAUNCH THE CHURCH!