

# Church Planting Strategy: One Example

By Jerry and Melanie Stone

The most important thing we can do when starting a church is to seek the Lord in dependency for His grace to take us over and beyond our own ability. It is paramount that we recognize that the church belongs to God, and we are stewards of His work. God is a spirit, we are spirits, and the ministry is a very spiritual thing. There is a spiritual side to church planting that no natural strategy can replace or outdo. At the same time, there is a benefit to attaining and applying natural knowledge for the plan of God to be implemented in this natural world. Below is an example of a church planting strategy that we believe is a good practical guide for many church planters. We encourage you to take it, glean from it, and adapt it for your situation.

- 1. Secure an organization to be accountable to**  
*(Begin at least 6 months in advance)*
  - Get licensed and ordained with a reputable organization
  - Choose at least three spiritual overseers for personal accountability
  
- 2. Prepare your vision**  
*(Begin at least 6 months in advance)*
  - Choose a launch date
  - Type up mission statement, vision statement, and core values
  - Type up Statement of Faith
  - Type up a budget
  - Type up a project management plan
  
- 3. Begin legal process and system for accounting**  
*(Begin at least six months in advance)*
  - Check with the state you are in for the rights to your church name
  - Determine a Board of Directors
  - Choose your by-laws and articles of incorporation
  - Begin the application for 501(c)3. If you choose not to use an attorney, you will need Form 8718, 8821, and 1023. [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)
  - Set up a church bank account
  - Purchase church management software
  - File with the state for income tax withholdings
  - Check with your state for sales tax exemption laws
  
- 4. Begin gathering a team of leaders**  
*(Begin at least six months in advance)*
  - You must have a worship leader, children's pastor and an administrator before you start (paid or volunteer in the beginning)
  - Type up a flow chart and ministry descriptions
  - Assign ministry development goals and oversee their progress development

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- Meet consistently with leaders individually and as a team
- Assure that your worship leader secures a license for music, has access to worship songs, is building a team of musicians, and preparing and purchasing incredible production with media, video, sound and lighting.
- Assure that your children's pastor has an application process, registration system, and curriculum and resources are purchased.
- Assure that your administrator is setting up a bookkeeping system, people management system, and filing systems

### **5. Build your church identity and prepare for promotion**

*(Begin at least 6 months in advance)*

- Determine your target audience and know your community demographics
- Purchase a domain name for your website
- Get a post office box
- Develop a corporate identity, a look to reach your target audience
- Get a logo, letterhead, and business cards designed and printed
- Have an invite card designed and printed
- Get the website designed and programmed
- Secure non-profit bulk mail status and permit number

### **6. Secure location**

*(Begin at least 6 months in advance)*

- Secure location at least three months in advance
- Get liability insurance on the building and equipment
- You may need a secured storage unit or a leased parking space
- Purchase a truck/trailer for storing and moving equipment

### **7. Start fundraising**

*(Begin at least six months in advance)*

- Prepare a professional launch presentation to share with potential supporters
- Write letters to personal friends, ministers, pastors, etc. asking for contributions and a commitment to help you through your first year
- Personal and team investment
- Start taking offerings at launch team meetings

### **8. Set up financial and office administration**

*(Begin at least four months in advance)*

- Set up church management software on a computer
- Get systems in place
- Set up a monthly budget and track expenses

### **9. Begin developing your Launch Team**

*(Begin at least three months in advance)*

Your launch team is anyone who is part of your church prior to Launch Sunday.

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- You need to have at least 30 adults for a successful launch team.
- Have at least three Pre-launch services to invite people to attend to hear more about the church.
- Have your leaders and launch group spread the news to invite people to attend Pre-launch meetings (word of mouth, use invite cards, etc)
- Have people assigned to positions for ushers, greeters, Welcome Center, café, children's ministry, parking attendants, etc.
- Invite friends, family, interns, other church planters, etc. to serve on launch Sunday. Plan a meal for them the night before and give instruction.

### 10. Prepare printed materials

*(Begin at least three months in advance)*

- Connection cards
- Offering envelopes
- Information flyer, card or bulletin
- Interior and exterior directional signs
- Welcome Center banner, children's ministry banners
- Visitor brochure

### 11. Plan Advertisement

*(Begin at least three months in advance)*

- Have a direct mail postcard designed and printed for at least a three mile radius of your location (2-3 months from launch date)
- T-shirts
- Static stickers
- Signs
- Posters, flyers
- Invite cards
- Press release to local news stations
- Secular radio
- Newspaper ad
- Internet ads
- Cable television
- Community outreach

### 12. Prepare messages and growth track

*(Begin at least one month in advance)*

- Have the first few weeks of messages prepared
- Prepare slide presentations, video to go with series
- Prepare communication on newcomers reception and a class introducing the church
- Promote ministry opportunities so those who are ready to jump in to help can do so

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- Have information on your growth track (discipleship classes) so that people know from the start how they can get connected