



Church Planting Steps for Mission Partners Texas District LCMS – Board of Mission Administration

This document and the Appendices included are both descriptive and prescriptive of the steps which should be followed by congregations or other entities desiring to enter into a partnership with the Texas District LCMS Board of Mission Administration in planting new churches. While these steps are not exhaustive, they are helpful in helping a congregation move toward planting.

1. Discipleship and Spiritual Growth Stage

- Our Pastor has been spiritually preparing his own heart for mission
- We have worked toward discipling our people for mission
- We have spent time in prayer and conversation to hear and see God's vision
- We have met with our Mission and Ministry Facilitator (MMF) to prepare our leaders and members for missional thinking and action
- Our leadership has a clear sense of God's call for our church to plant a church
- We have a Church Planting Parenting team in place (This is not the Launch Team but it is the team which will help your church prepare for launch)
[Resource: *The Ripple Church : Multiplying Your Ministry by Parenting New Churches*, by Phil Stevenson, Wesleyan Publishing House]
- We have a Mission Prayer Team in place [see Appendix A]

2. Exploration Stage

- Our Planting Parenting team has prepared our membership for church planting both spiritually and with adequate information to make a Spirit-led decision
- We have done initial demographic studies of potential church plant locations [these can be ordered from your MMF through MissionInsite]
- We have determined the initial target population for this plant (e.g. language group, geographic group, age range demographic group, socio-economic group)
- We have a GO from our leadership team (staff and lay leadership)

- We have a GO from our decision making body (Church Council; Board of Directors; Voters)
- We have determined that we wish to partner with the Texas District through the Board of Mission Administration and begun working with our MMF toward creating partnership agreement

3. ***Preparation Stage***

- We have given an initial verbal request to be included in mission funding with the Texas District
- We have determined what general style must characterize our ministries in order to effectively reach our target group
- We have developed a first draft of our Mission Plan (including right person, right place, right plan) and submitted it to our MMF [*see Appendix B*]
- We have communicated with our MMF our readiness to interview approved Church Planter candidates as assessed by Dr. John Hirsch [*see Appendix C*] (both writing first draft of Mission Plan and seeking candidates can happen simultaneously)

4. ***Implementation Stage***

- We have interviewed approved Church Planter candidates and have made our recommendations to the appropriate decision making group(s) at our church
- We have issued a call (if on the Ordained or Commissioned roster of LCMS) or contract to the worker the Holy Spirit has led us to
- We have submitted our formalized Mission Funding Requests to our Texas District MMF [*see Appendix D*]
- We have worked with our MMF to secure a Church Planting Coach for the first two years for our Church Planter (Funding from the Texas District to cover ½ of the two year coaching process. District covers \$2,500 and planting congregation covers \$2,500) Church Planting Coach will meet face-to-face with Church Planter at least quarterly for two years. Ideally the Coach is a successful planter with coaching gifts/training

5. ***Launch Stage***

- Church Planter works with MMF to determine if Mission Planter "boot camp" training experience would be beneficial (Texas District BMA covers cost)
- Church Planter has read "best practices" books on church planting [e.g. Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch by Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas, Regal Books; Planting Missional Churches by Ed Stetzer, Broadman and Holman; Breaking the Missional Code, by Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, Broadman and Holman]
- Church planting coach is contracted and begins meeting with the Church Planter.

- Church Planter explores potential church planting locations as identified by the Church Planting Parenting Team and prayerfully leads to discerning the "right place" for the church plant
- The Church Planting Parenting Team disbands. Some may be part of the Launch Team
- The Church Planter begins formation of a Launch Team (Planter develops Launch Team with the goal that at least 50% come from new contacts in location of new Church Start.) He is trusted to select Launch Team members.
- If Church Planter is lay or commissioned, he begins process of moving toward ordination through SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) process at one of our seminaries. Congregation must request this.
- Church planter and Launch Team develops appropriate systems preceding first monthly worship (recommended for first 6 months) including Sunday worship team, evangelism/discipleship, record keeping, website, leadership development, basic accounting, corporate/legal structure
- Church Planter and Launch Team researches and contracts for high visibility location for first worship site.
- Church Planter plans first three months of launch team "preview worship"
- Church Planter and launch team invite others to monthly "preview worship" services
- Church Planters and launch team design monthly "splash events" in community to serve and get to know community
- First regular every Sunday worship launched within first 6 months

Appendix A



Mission Prayer Team Guidelines

No partner is more important than prayer partners. Planting a church is a big deal. Satan does not want your church to succeed in being missional or in planting a church. Surround your church and your leadership team with a group of mission prayer partners who will pray for discernment, wisdom, boldness and openness to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit

Many churches underestimate the amount of spiritual warfare they will face as they ponder the possibility of planting a church. Satan will work to discourage your church from reaching out with the Gospel or from planting a church. Prayer must be a priority for the process of considering the planting of a church. This team can later transition into being a Prayer Team for the new church plant if God leads your church to participate in planting one.

Your congregation should seek a group of 8 – 10 people who are known to be consistent prayer warriors for this effort

To recruit the 10 prayer team members, consider the following:

- Brainstorm at least 10 people who would be committed to praying for church leadership and for the emerging Parenting Team
- Contact them about being on the Mission Prayer Team
- Initiate some form of weekly communication with them with specific prayer requests.
- Encourage them to invite others to join them as members of the team.

Suggested initial prayer requests:

- Pastor and church leaders – You need God's wisdom, patience and strength
- Your congregation – that they will be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through God's Word to seek to be part of God's mission to the world
- Protection - Satan will attack you, your family, and anyone who wants to join you
- Vision - that God would guide your congregation's planning and give you a clear vision for the new church
- Parenting Team – that they would lead wisely and not lose momentum
- Planter Search Process – that God would direct the congregation to the right person to lead the effort to plant a church
- Launch Team - that God would provide the right people to form the core of the new church
- Finances – that God would provide the resources to make the church planting effort possible.
- Inform – the congregation about what issues the Mission Prayer Team is specifically praying

Prayer partners should pray for the specific needs faced as the congregation moves through the various steps in the planting process. A group email program is usually the most effective way to do this. It is imperative that the prayer team emails clearly communicate the prayer needs of the congregation in this effort.

Appendix B

Guidelines for Writing Your Preliminary Mission Plan

Several significant studies within the LCMS and in other denominations show a strong correlation between a carefully planned mission start and a mission that is thriving 5 years down the road. With that in mind, mission starts that receive financial assistance from the Texas District LCMS begin by working with their assigned Mission and Ministry Facilitator to write a plan. The following will provide a framework for writing your Mission Plan. You may use this document as a template or you may choose a different means of communicating the same information. Some detail is called for in this Preliminary Mission Plan; however the plan will continue to change as you move closer to your church plant.

Location

- Describe the likely community/area in which you plan to start this mission. (Final determination will not likely be made until your Church Planter has led exploration of the potential areas for best match of planter with potential growing populations)

- Your MMF has provided or will provide you with FullInsite demographic studies from MissionInsite of your potential target areas. Use these studies as well as "demographics by walking around" and other information you may have gathered to answer the following questions:
 - What is the population of the area?
 - What are the population projections for the next 5 years?
 - What is the ethnic/racial make-up of the area?
 - Which ethnic groups are project to grow rapidly in the next five years?
 - What is the economic make-up of the area?
 - What lifestyle groups dominate the area?
 - What are the greatest perceived needs of this area?
 - Which of these needs areas can be addressed by a church?
 - What is the level of faith involvement in your area?
 - What kinds of worship, church programming and architectural features tend to be favored in the area?
 - What are the best ways to communicate with people in your target area?

Appendix B

- What kinds of people will be your primary target for this mission start?
(*e.g. language group, geographic group, age range demographic group, socio-economic group*)
- Churches in your target area:
 - How many existing churches are in your target area? How many of them target the same kinds of people you plan to target?
 - Contact all other churches in the target area. Which of these churches have started in the last 5 years? How have they fared?
 - Have these other churches grown in the last 5 years? If so, how much? Is their worship attendance increasing or decreasing? How much?
 - How long has the present pastor been at each of these churches?
 - Do these other churches have any specialized ministry areas?
- What percentage of the target population is already attending a church?
- What is the closest LCMS church to your target area? Are they supportive of the idea of starting a mission here?
- In which Texas District circuit is this potential mission start located? Are the circuit pastors and congregations supportive of this start?

Vision

- Describe briefly your vision for this church planting effort.
- What do you believe can happen in five years?
- What do you think is God's desire for this ministry?
- What is your congregation willing to do to create the best possibility of success for this new church plant?
- What healthy DNA can your church impart to the launch team?
- Will some of your members be going with your planter to launch the new church?
- How many people will be present and active?
- What will be the primary outreach efforts?

The People

- List the members of the initial church planting team. What gifts does each one bring to the task? What other benefits are there to having these particular people on this initial planning/planting team?

Appendix B

- Will you begin the effort with a church planting pastor? Or will you begin the effort with a key lay leader or another church professional as the key leader? Will this key leader be full time, part time, volunteer—or bi-vocational?
- Have you worked with Dr. John Hirsch to determine the suitability of your key leaders for the mission planting task? What are the particular gifts and personality traits that they bring to benefit the mission start?
- Which outside people will be assisting with this mission start—MMF, staff members at other churches, other district personnel, etc.?

The Plan

- Will this be free standing church plant from your congregation or a multi-site ministry? If one of the latter two, describe the relationship between the mission plant and the mother congregation.
- How will you make initial inroads into this community? How will you get to know the people you desire to serve?
- How will you communicate to your members that this plant is designed to reach people "far from God" (*unchurched, dechurched*) and not merely a place to transplant Lutherans who don't want to drive as far?
- What might be possible first steps in terms of ministry—home Bible studies, day care, children's ministries, athletic leagues/teams, worship, community service...?
- When do you hope to begin worship? How many will you have involved in the ministry before you begin formal worship? (*Almost all studies show that if worship begins when the group is small, it usually stays very small. Many churches do "preview" or launch team worship for several months before "launching large" with at least 150 – 200 in worship depending on the community*)
- How will you create and maintain a high visibility in your community?
- What will be the evangelism/outreach approaches that you will initially use?
- What style of worship, preaching and teaching will you use to reach your target?
- What is your timeline for the first five years of this new mission effort? Include checkpoints and specific goals in your timeline description.
- When will you plant or partner to plant another church?

Appendix B

Finances

- What financial assets do you have as you start this mission endeavor?
- What will be your sources of support/income for the first five years of the mission effort?
- Assuming that you will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$200,000 over five years in the form of a no-interest loan from the Texas District, attach a preliminary detailed budget for your first year and a less detailed budget for the succeeding four years. Budgets should include the following items:
 - - Income
 - From Texas District
 - From parenting congregation, if applicable
 - Grants/bequests/endowments from individuals, groups and businesses
 - From offerings
 - From other sources (name sources)
 - Expenditures
 - Start-up Costs
 - initial marketing strategy
 - worship equipment
 - educational equipment
 - rental
 - insurance
 - signage
 - letterhead
 - office supplies
 - Personnel (salaries, benefits, etc.)
 - Facilities (rent, mortgage, upkeep, utilities, etc.)
 - Administration (equipment, supplies, etc.)
 - Ministry (worship materials and supplies, Bible study supplies, etc.)
 - Outreach and Public Relations
 - Loan repayment (District and other)
 - Missions (at least 10% of the money received in the offering plate should be earmarked for missions)
- Who will be the primary person in charge of finances? This should not be your church planter.

Appendix B

Signatures:

Mission Staff

Key Lay Leaders

Mission and Ministry Facilitator

Appendix C

Texas District, LCMS Church Planter Assessment Process

Rev. John Hirsch, D. Min.

jhirsch@txdistlcms.org

O-1-800-951-3478

C-512-769-6736

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 online, 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 discuss with Pr. Hirsch the next steps.

Appendix C

- A. One route is for the candidate and his wife, if married, to participate in an intensive assessment process through one of Synod's Center for US Missions CPAC (Church Planter Assessment Center) events. These are usually three days in length and conducted four times a year in various locations. This is a group assessment process of which there are at least six being assessed by a group of mission planters or others trained and equipped for such assessment.

If this route is chosen, all further aspects of the assessment process will be conducted through the Center for US Missions with a report of its outcome given to the candidate at the end of the process and a copy forwarded to the Texas District.

- B. Another route is for the candidate to enter into an assessment process conducted by Pr. Hirsch. The steps for this process are as follows.
- 1) 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.
 - 2) 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 online. The results will be shared with the candidate.
 - 3) The candidate will be asked to purchase the book *StrenghtFinders 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 to send these results to Pr. Hirsch online.
 - 4) The candidate will be asked to submit two samples (CD, DVD, online, etc) of his preaching/teaching/public speaking.
 - 5) The candidate may be asked to complete other assessment inventories if other input into the assessment process is helpful.
 - 6) If the above indicators look favorable, the candidate, and his wife if married, will participate in an in person extensive behavioral interview process. The interview will be conducted by Pr. Hirsch and another assessor. As with Synod's CPAC, this person may be another mission planter or one equipped and trained in personal and interpersonal assessment. This interview will be

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conducted at a time, date and location that is convenient to the candidate and his spouse.

- 7) Upon completion of all of the above, a report will be written by Pr. Hirsch describing the outcome of the process. A copy of the report will be provided the candidate and the entity (congregation, mission society, district, etc.), if any, that requested the assessment process.

4. 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.

Appendix D

Mission Funding Step 1: Application for Returnable Mission Funding

Texas District LC-MS

7900 E. Hwy. 290
Austin, Texas 78724

Date:

Part A: Ministry Information

Working Name for New Church Plant (Do not finalize as planter should determine with Launch Team based on community, emphasis, etc. Name should be Biblical, relevant, web friendly, transcendent and related to locale)

Locale (communities under consideration):

Will this be a Word and Sacrament Ministry? Yes No

Will this be a satellite or multi-site location? Yes No

Will this be a daughter church start? Yes No

Is this a LINC ministry? Yes No

If a LINC ministry, indicate LINC city:

New Church Plant Description:

- Describe language spoken/ethnic makeup of ministry:

- Describe current ministry activity if not a Word and Sacrament ministry:

Is it the intent of this ministry to become a member LC-MS Congregation? Yes No

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Part B: Ministry Sponsor Information

Is an existing congregation sponsoring your church plant? Yes No

If yes, please detail sponsor information below:

Name of Congregation:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Mailing Address (if different):

Phone:

E-mail:

Website address:

Will the sponsoring congregation, the Church Plant, or a combination of the two be responsible for repaying the returnable funding?

Sponsoring Congregation Church Plant Combination of the two

Part C: Funding Request Details

Funding Amount Applied For:

\$200,000 "maximum" for a non-ethnic ministry at 100% repayment over 20 years
(\$200,000 maximum can be negotiated if the case can be made for ability to return \$\$)

Requested Disbursement schedule:

Year 1: \$

Year 2: \$

Year 3: \$

Year 4: \$

Year 5: \$

\$100,000 "maximum" for an ethnic ministry at 50% repayment over 20 years

Requested Disbursement schedule:

Year 1: \$

Year 2: \$

Year 3: \$

Year 4: \$

Year 5: \$

Appendix D

Part D: Mission Proposal

The Person:

Who will be the church planter? Describe qualifications and attach a resume.

If a team of people is involved, please describe the team members along with their qualifications and commitment.

Has the ministry leader completed Church Planter assessment? ____Yes ____No

Please summarize the assessment results:

The Place:

Where will this ministry be launched? Include/attach demographic data and observations that reinforce the viability of this ministry start-up.

The Plan:

Provide latest draft of your Preliminary Mission Plan that includes:

- A timeline of ministry development,
- a financial plan,
- how this ministry will become self-supporting, and
- how this ministry will reach out and reproduce itself.

Application Form for Church Planter Assessment

Texas District, LCMS

1. Please type or print. This document is in Word and can be downloaded, completed and returned electronically as an attachment to Dr. John Hirsch at jhirsch@txdistlcms.org.
2. If additional space is needed to adequately respond, please use a separate sheet of paper.
3. Mail hard copies of this completed form to: Mission Planter Assessment, TX, Dist., LCMS, 7900 E. Hwy 290, Austin, TX 78724-2499.

A. Personal Information

Name _____ Date _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
E-mail _____
Daytime Phone (____) _____ Evening Phone (____) _____
Date of Birth _____ Place _____
Present Church Membership _____

B. Family Information

Current Marital Status: ____ Single ____ Married – Date of marriage _____
Have you ever been divorced? _____ If so, when? _____
Have you ever lost a spouse to death? _____ If so, when? _____
If not married, but engaged, date of wedding: _____

(If you are engaged, please list information for your fiancé)

Spouse's name: _____ Date of Birth _____
Spouse's e-mail _____
Spouse's Occupation: _____ Currently employed? _____
Has your spouse ever been divorced? _____ If so, when? _____
Has your spouse ever lost a spouse to death? _____ If so, when? _____

Children

Name _____ Age _____ Living at home? _____
 Name _____ Age _____ Living at home? _____
 Name _____ Age _____ Living at home? _____
 Name _____ Age _____ Living at home? _____

Health Review

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Describe any limiting factors:
Your health status	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spouse's health	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Children's health					
Name _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

• Your racial/ethnic origin: ___ African American ___ American Indian
 ___ Asian ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___ Other _____
 Are you bilingual? _____ If so, which language(s)? _____

• Your spouse's racial/ethnic origin: ___ African American ___ American Indian
 ___ Asian ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___ Other _____
 Is your spouse bilingual? _____ If so, which language(s)? _____

C. Education and Credentials (High school and beyond)

Name of School	City	Date of Leaving	Degree Received
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Other credentials or certification(s)

Spouse's Education (High school and beyond)

Name of School	City	Date of Leaving	Degree Received
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

(Spouse continued)

Other credentials or certification(s)

D. Personal Learning/Experiences

1. Briefly describe any conferences/workshops etc. that you have attended during the past two years (including tapes/CD/s, videos, webinars, etc)

2. What books of all types have you read during the last 12 months? This is to include books for courses as well as other reading.

3. What magazines, newspapers, etc. do you read on a regular basis?

E. Church Experiences

Complete all information for each church served. Start with current/last church.

Church: _____

City _____ State _____ Denomination: _____

Position: _____ Years Served _____

Location: ___ rural ___ small town ___ medium or large city ___ urban ___ suburban

Avg. worship attendance _____.

No. of total baptisms _____. No. of adults baptized/confirmed _____.

Church: _____

City _____ State _____ Denomination: _____

Position: _____ Years Served _____

Location: ___ rural ___ small town ___ medium or large city ___ urban ___ suburban

Avg. worship attendance _____.

No. of total baptisms _____. No. of adults baptized/confirmed _____.

Church: _____
 City _____ State _____ Denomination: _____
 Position: _____ Years Served _____
 Location: ___ rural ___ small town ___ medium or large city ___ urban ___ suburban
 Avg. worship attendance _____.
 No. of total baptisms _____. No. of adults baptized/confirmed _____.

F. Other Work Experience

Please begin with your most recent employment and go back from there. **Do not include church experience here.**

Dates	Position	Company	City, State

Spouse's Work Experience (**Include** church experience)

Dates	Position	Company	City, State

G. Financial Readiness

How do you plan to support yourself and your family financially during your first 2 years of church planting?

H. Statement of Faith and Denominational Affiliation

Have you been licensed or ordained? ___ yes ___ no ___
 If yes, by whom? _____ Date _____
 Denomination or affiliation of ordaining church _____

Please state briefly what your doctrinal position is on: (Use Scripture passages to support)

1. The Bible: _____

2. Jesus: _____

3. The Holy Spirit: _____

4. God the Father: _____

5. The nature of man: _____

6. Justification-(How one is saved): _____

7: Sanctification (Living the Christian life): _____

8. The Church: _____

9. The role of the church planter: _____

I. Personal Christian Experiences

1. When and how did you become a Christian? _____

2. When and how did your spouse become a Christian? _____

3. Give the names of the teachers, mentors, writers or leaders who have most influenced your walk with God and your thinking about ministry.

I. General Information

1. Describe your hobbies, special interests, and/or favorite forms of recreation.

2. Where do you meet non-Christians and how do you normally share your faith?

3. Who have you discipled in the past 2 years and how did you disciple them?

4. What are your strong points (gifts/talents) in life/ministry? _____

5. What are your weaknesses in ministry? _____

I. Church Planting

1. Do you definitely believe that God has called you to plant a church rather than serve an established one? ___Yes ___No ___Unsure

2. Do you sense a call to a particular place, region, ethnic community, etc.?

Explain _____

3. Is your spouse persuaded of this call? _____

4. Is your spouse involved in ministry? If so, how? _____

5. What experience have you had at starting something new (i.e. new ministries, new businesses, new ventures, new programs, new projects, etc.)? How did they turn out?

6. What other experiences have you had that you believe have prepared you to start a new church?

7. What specific steps will you take in starting your church? _____

J. To Be Completed By The Church Planter's Spouse

1. Are you supportive of your husband in being a church planter? Explain.

2. What would list as your top three spiritual gifts?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3. How do you currently use these gifts in your Christian life?

4. What will be your role in the church plant?

5. How do you want to be evaluated during the assessment process:

- Only in a supportive role
- As a partner in leadership and ministry, fulfilling a distinctive role in the church

K. References

Provide names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of two references who could and would attest to your character as well as skills and attributes for mission planting.

L. Potpourri (to be completed by the church planter)

Is there anything else you would like to share with the assessor team prior to the assessment? _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____