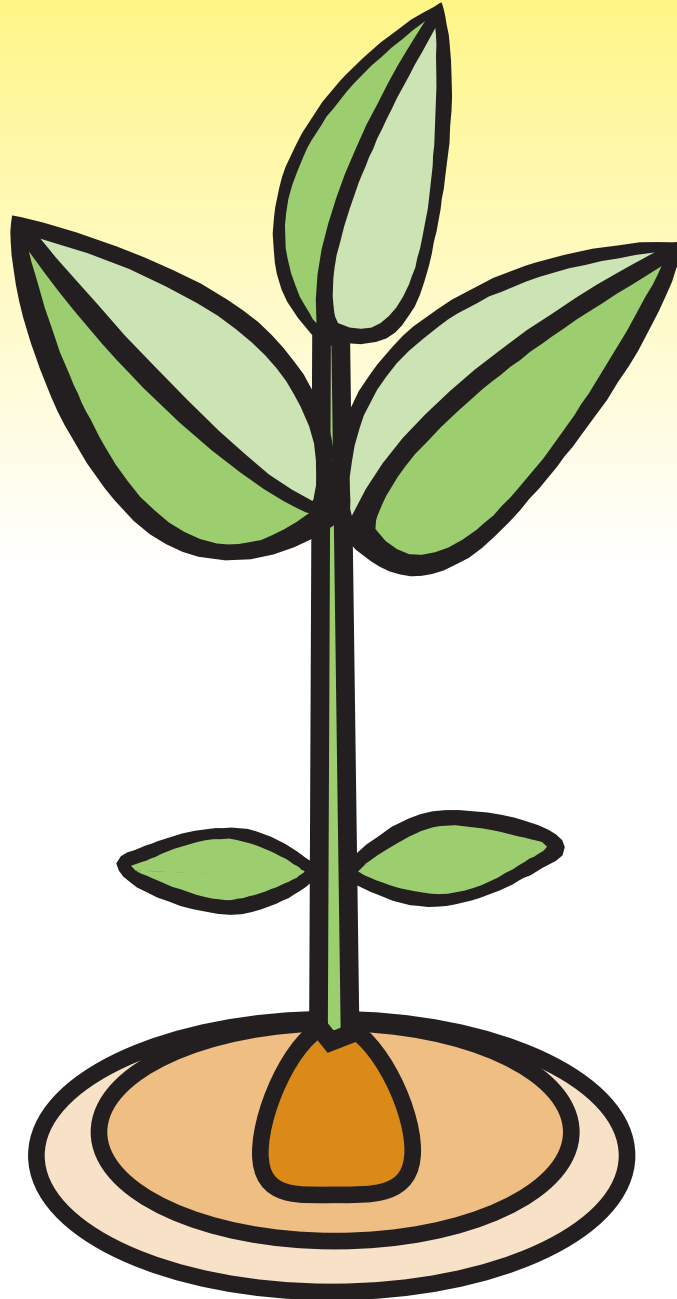


**STARTING**



**NEW CHURCHES**

**BEGINNING NEW CHURCHES:  
A PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT**

**(Version 2.0)**

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## Introduction

Starting a new church is not rocket science – it is much more complicated! A new church is the work of the Holy Spirit, which immediately puts this task way beyond our ability to understand. The following guide is linear, a series of 16 gatherings with assignments and steps a team could complete that take you from zero to a new church. Unfortunately, starting a new church is not linear; it is organic, contextual, and based on relationships between God and people. It is reformed and always reforming.

Our prayer is that you will let the Holy Spirit lead you. Our goal is to lay out a process that encourages you to address key aspects of starting a new church, while leading you to listen to the sometimes still voice of God, rather than ours or anyone else's. This process of discernment does not guarantee success, but we do believe it will help keep you focused on the one who starts new churches.

That said, we urge you not to fear failure, because God might be leading you to fail. Many of the Martyrs would be considered failures by our standard, yet their witness changed the world. Jesus gathered a mere 120 people who were considered his followers according to the first chapter of the book of Acts. That's hardly a great new church; in fact, most of us would have had Jesus attend a seminar led by Peter, who, in his first sermon, gathered 3,000 believers. Only God knows what God wants to accomplish through you and the new churches the Holy Spirit is placing on your heart. Trust God. Strive to be faithful rather than successful. Faithfulness brings a success beyond our imagination and wildest dreams.

Each of the 16 gatherings suggests a Bible study and an extended time of prayer. We encourage you to engage this process *slowly*. Resist the temptation to rush through the Bible studies and prayerful reflection. New church development is not the implementation of successful models and techniques; it is the faithful discernment of God's leading and the faithful implementation of God's mission. Wrestle with the scriptures, listen, and fall on your knees in humility.

Church planters and those who are attracted to beginning new churches are often “doers.” We can't wait to get started, bring in the kingdom, make it happen and happen now. Remember Jesus told his “doers” to go back to Jerusalem, pray and wait until God's right time. We hope that all of you fellow “doers” will resist the temptation to start doing and will take the time to discuss, listen, discern, and wait for God's right time. We have countless stories of teams who were delayed in their plans and the finding of the right leadership took longer than expected, yet in hindsight those delays led the team to the “perfect timing.”

This document is version 2.0 of a work in progress. We hope you will share your experiences and feedback for incorporation in subsequent editions.

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## **How to Use This Resource**

When this resource was being developed, it was done so with the idea that it could be used by different groups who were passionate about starting a new church. To that end, you will find moments when, depending on who you are, you will be prodded to seek counsel from coaches, approval from your Session or Presbytery, and input from those who may have oversight of the project. We encourage you to include as many “feedback loops” as possible because the more input and collaboration you have, the broader your support becomes and the better it will be for the new church.

With 173 Presbyteries in the PC(USA), there are approximately 173 ways that Presbyteries organize the work that they do. Much of how you use this process depends on how your structure works. We intentionally did not include too many specifics (who, what, and when) about the approval of particular items, but made some suggestions at certain points for you to consider seeking advice and/or approval, if needed.

**If you are a Church Development Committee (or the main group that directly oversees New Church Development)** this can be an effective process for you in two ways:

- If you are only contemplating doing one New Church Development (NCD), this process will help you refine and define some specifics about the who and where of the NCD you want to start. If you are the group that will be walking with the NCD throughout its life, then you will want to work through all 16 gatherings as a group. If you plan to hand off the work to a task force (commission, subcommittee, etc) you should consider identifying these people ahead of time and inviting them to be a part of your process. Otherwise, once the area/people for whom this new church will be started and the task group is identified, they will need to review and agree with the first three sessions before starting their work together in Gathering Four.
- If you plan on starting multiple NCDs, you would follow the process outlined above. Once the areas are defined and task groups identified, you can hand off the work in Gathering 10. It is important that the group you hand off to review and agree with the foundational work done in Gatherings 1-3.

NOTE: Do not skip this critical step of reviewing and obtaining agreement with the Foundational Statement you create in the first few gatherings. Everything we do flows from our Christology- what we believe about Jesus. If we do not make sure that we are clear on who Jesus is, we run the risk of starting a church without him or with two different Jesus'. That's not only risky, it's confusing. If there are differences between the Church Development Committee and the Task Group, make sure to resolve them before moving forward.

## **If you are a Church:**

The process is much the same as it would be if you were a Presbytery committee. Our assumption is that you, too, will have a committee of some sort that will work through all 16 gatherings. If you are a large church that seeks to do more than one NCD, you would follow the same procedures as the Presbytery committee doing more than one as well.

The one thing you will need to make sure you do is communicate with your Presbytery. They should be one of your biggest allies in church planting. If you decide to apply for a Mission Development Resource Grant, you will need their input and approval. (For more information on grants, call the Office of Church Growth at 888-728-7228- ext 5247.)

## **If you are an energetic visionary who wants to start a church:**

What are you thinking? Just kidding....

You could use this as well. You may already have a group of people you feel called to reach and the temptation would be to skip some steps. In order to help you be faithful in your call to start a new church, gather a group of people with a deep love for Jesus to be your team as you think about planting this church. Work through the sessions, even the one on calling the missionary, as you will need to discern the same issues of call to be a new church pastor. Consider the same process for you as for the church- make sure you communicate with your Presbytery. Don't do it alone.

*Our prayer for you is that God would make you faithful in centering yourself on Jesus, getting to know the culture in which this church would be planted and developing a structure that would make the new church everything God wants it to be.*

## Some Definitions

### *Foundational Statement:*

The team will develop a one-page statement that answers the question, “Who is Jesus?” and defines “church,” “salvation,” “evangelism,” and “service.” The responses will determine what is started. The first three gatherings will be working toward creating this statement.

### *Vision Statement:*

This is a one-page description of “who” this new church is being started for and “why” this new church needs to be started. This statement will be developed after several site visits, much prayer, and significant time to reflect. It is really the discerning of the heart of God at this time. This statement will be developed by the 9<sup>th</sup> gathering.

### *Mission Plan:*

This is a one- or two-page description of the core values, ministry plan, outreach plan, and leadership plan for the new church. It will be based on the Foundational Statement and the Vision Statement and will include the costs—human, financial, time, and other. This plan will be developed in the 12<sup>th</sup> gathering.

### *Missionary Plan:*

This is a one- or two-page description of the people needed to fulfill the Mission Plan to begin a new church for those identified in the Vision Statement. The missionaries may or may not be ordained.

### *New Church:*

This is what results from the implementation of the Mission Plan by those identified in the Missionary Plan when they reach the people of the Vision Statement while being faithful to the Foundational Statement.

### *Discernment Team:*

This is the group who will discern God’s will for the beginning of a new church among a particular people or community. This group will covenant together to work through the gatherings of “Starting New Churches” once they have completed their third gathering. Check out “How to Choose a New Church Development Discernment Team” in the appendix.

# Overview:

## Task I

### **Gathering One: The Big Picture**

During this session you will begin the process of discernment and the venture of starting a new church. This gathering will give you an overview of the rest of the process.

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Two: Who Do You Say That I Am?**

Who is Jesus and what is the church? These are not small questions but a key discussion that must happen within the team if a new church is going to emerge from this process.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Three: Are We On The Same Page?**

During this session you will write your “foundational statement” that will allow you to determine whether or not the team is headed in the same direction. By the end of this session you will have a written piece that will be the foundation of your future work together.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

## Task II

### **Gathering Four: People and Places on Our Heart**

This session will be devoted scripture and prayer about those whom God seeks through you and where they are.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Five: What are the Possibilities?**

In this session you will begin to define and identify who God may be calling you to reach and where the places are that a new church might be started.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Six: Site Visits**

This gathering will sharpen your observation skills and help you begin to discern the context in which, where, why, and how the new church might gather. You will visit one potential site where God might do something new.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Seven: What's Our Vision?**

The purpose of this gathering is to discern where your passions (those of the Presbytery, church, people) align with where you believe the Spirit of God is asking you to go.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Eight: Are We the Ones?**

The purpose of this gathering will be to determine if you are the best ones to pursue the ministry in the areas you've identified.

**\*\* Possible Presbytery Action required \*\***

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Nine: The Who and the Why**

In this gathering you will develop your Vision Statement of "Who and Why."

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Task III**

#### **Gathering Ten: Beginning a Mission Plan**

In this gathering you will begin to develop your Mission Plan.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Gathering Eleven: What are the Models?**

In this gathering you will determine the possible different models to begin a new church to reach those you identified in your Vision Statement.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Gathering Twelve: The Mission Plan**

In this gathering you will develop the Mission Plan.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Gathering Thirteen: Define Success & When to Shake off the Dust**

During this gathering you will clarify how you will assess and measure success.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Task IV**

### **Gathering Fourteen: Who Will Go For Us?**

During this gathering you will define both the kind(s) of missionaries needed to begin your new church as well as the gifts, skills, and characteristics needed in them.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Fifteen: Writing the CIF**

At this gathering you will write your Church Information Form (CIF). This will describe the ministry opportunity that you are inviting people to consider leading. Complete it even if you do not see yourselves hiring ordained persons to lead the New Church Development.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gathering Sixteen: Support and Implementation Plan**

This gathering will name the human, financial, spiritual, coaching, and oversight resources available and necessary for this new church.

Bible Study/Prayer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Content/Homework Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The First Task: Develop a Foundational Statement

### *Gatherings 1-3*

The first task of the team is to develop a one-page statement that answers the question, “Who is Jesus?” and then defines “church,” “salvation,” “evangelism” and “service.” We realize that when it comes to answering the question, “Who is Jesus?” the writer of the Gospel of John is right by saying, “the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25) The key to this first task is that when a team discusses, debates, and writes down their absolutes about Jesus, church, salvation, evangelism and service, they find out if they can move forward together to start a new church. This also determines what the team will start.

**Coaching observation:** This task will set the tone, direction, and mission of the new church God is forming through the team. Take your time and don’t worry if gatherings two and three each take more than one meeting of the team to complete. A team that is diverse is going to need more time to discuss these key issues. The New Church Coaches have seen teams of strangers become true brothers and sisters in Christ by taking their time with this task. Don’t rush it. Enjoy the journey!

## Gathering One: The Big Picture

*During this session, you will begin the process of discernment and receive an overview of the process.*

### Opening: 30 minutes

*Introduction:* Have everyone introduce themselves by sharing:

- His/her name.
- The person(s) instrumental in your being a Christian.

*Read:* Matthew 9:35-38

*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (NRSV)*

- Read it again, only this time, have everyone close their eyes.
- Ask: What images, pictures, word(s), or phrases stood out for you?

*Pray:* Have each person thank God for the person who was instrumental in their being a Christian.

### Content: 1 hour

Read the following story told by Brian Clark about a summer afternoon when he was the pastor of a small rural congregation in Western Pennsylvania:

"A number of years ago I was sitting on my back porch watching my then elementary age children playing with a young boy who lived down the street from us. Everyone got thirsty, so I got some lemonade and my three children, the little neighborhood boy, and I sat down and enjoyed a small town summer afternoon and lemonade. While we sat around and discussed bugs, birds, and clouds in the sky, our young guest said to me, 'My dad says that sinners go to your church!' I thought about that statement for a moment and then I said, 'That's right, every Sunday our church is filled with sinners and I, as a sinner, tell them God loves us anyway.' Our young neighbor quickly finished his lemonade and hurried home to where it was safe and sin free."

Ask the group:

- How do you think Brian's and the little boy's dad view of Jesus differed?
- How did Brian's understanding of Jesus impact his understanding of church?
- If you primarily viewed Jesus as "Savior of the Lost," how would that impact the church you started? What would a new church look like if your primary view of Jesus was "judge?" What would a new church look like if your primary view of Jesus was "serving the least?"

Beginning the foundational statement:

- Finish this statement: "People need Jesus because \_\_\_\_\_."
- Finish this statement: "People need the church of Jesus Christ because \_\_\_\_\_."

*Read:* Matthew 9:35-38

<sup>35</sup>*Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

- What do you hear Jesus saying to you now?

*Review the Big Picture:*

Review the Overview at the front of this document and make assignments for at least the next two gatherings. Ask everyone to commit to the next two gatherings. During the third gathering everyone will be asked to continue or step out at that point. The rest of the assignments can be made at that time.

**Homework:**

Have each team member ask one person active in a church and one person not currently attending a church, “What comes to mind when you hear the word, ‘Jesus?’”

## Gathering Two: Who Do You Say that I Am?

*Who is Jesus and what is the church? These are not small questions but a key discussion that must happen within the team if a new church is going to emerge from this process.*

### Bible Study and Content: 90 minutes

Have a volunteer pray for God's Spirit to guide this time.

#### *Gathering One homework:*

- Ask everyone to share what they heard when they asked "What comes to mind when you hear the word 'Jesus?'"
- Ask everyone in the group to share, "When was the first time God's love for you in Christ Jesus became real?"

#### *Read: Matthew 16:13-25*

*<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"<sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"<sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."<sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."<sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.<sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."<sup>20</sup>Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.<sup>21</sup>From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.<sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."<sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."<sup>24</sup>Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.<sup>25</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. (NRSV)*

- Have two or three people share, "What phrases and ideas jumped out at you in this passage?"
- Have two or three people share, "What were some of the differences between Peter 'getting it' and Peter being a 'stumbling block?'" (Read Matthew 16:22-23)
- Key question: Have each person share, "Who is Jesus to you?"

#### *Play the video clip: "Jesus versus Christians"*

- Go to [www.highwayvideo.com](http://www.highwayvideo.com) and search for "Jesus versus Christians" (cost to download is \$20)
- Ask, "What are some different ways people who are in the church see Jesus today?"
- Ask, "What are some different ways people who are not in the church see Jesus?"
- Ask everyone, "How do you react or respond to G.1.10001 of the Book of Order, the historic collective wisdom of the church?"

*The Head of the Church: All power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ by Almighty God, who raised Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, all power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

- a. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.*
- b. Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. It belongs to Christ alone to rule, to teach, to call, and to use the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of his Kingdom.*
- c. Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. Insofar as Christ's will for the Church is set forth in Scripture, it is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by season and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*
- d. In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God. (G.1.10001 Book of Order)*

*Key questions:*

- Have everyone share, “How does your understanding of Jesus impact what your church does, how it worships, how it interacts with those outside your church?”
- Have everyone share, “What is salvation?” and “How does your definition of salvation impact your definition of church?”
- Have everyone share, “What is service?” and “How does your definition of service impact your definition of church?”
- Have each person share, “What is church? In other words, if by the power of the Holy Spirit we were absolutely successful at starting a church, what would that look like? What would we observe in the lives of those who belonged to that church? What would we observe when the members got together? What would they do together, on their own?”
- Have each person share, “What is evangelism?”

*Pray:* Explain that first there will be a five-minute or more time of silence when each of us should:

- Confess the ways we have been stumbling blocks to the Jesus’ work.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to lead us to see Jesus a little more clearly each day.

Following this silence, spend some time praying for the person on your right. Thank God for the person and ask God to give him or her the vision for the church or churches God wants to start through the work of this team.

**Homework:**

Prior to the next gathering, each team member should write down in a few sentences the answer to each of the following questions and have them available to share:

- Who is Jesus?
- What is the church?
- What is salvation?
- What is service?
- What is evangelism?

### **Gathering Three: Are We on the Same Page?**

*During this session you will write your “foundational statement” that will allow you to determine whether or not the team is headed in the same direction. By the end of this session you will have a written piece that will be the foundation of your future work together.*

#### **Bible Study: 30 minutes**

*Pray:* Have everyone close their eyes and ask them to imagine that their burdens, worries, and the tasks they have yet to do are all in their hands. Now challenge them that before praying for this gathering and one another that each person put aside all that tries to steal their focus from God.

*Read:* Acts 15:36-41

*<sup>36</sup>After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.”<sup>37</sup>Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup>But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. <sup>39</sup>The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. <sup>40</sup>But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. <sup>41</sup>He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (NSRV)*

- Have three or four share, “Tell about a time when a disagreement was helpful? What was gained by the disagreement in Acts 15?”
- Have three or four share, “Give an example of a time when a disagreement was hurtful? What was lost because of the disagreement in Acts 15?”
- Ask, “What would our options be as we share ‘Who is Jesus and what is the church?’ if we reach an absolute we cannot agree upon?”

#### **Content: 1 hour**

- Have everyone share their homework sentences on “Who is Jesus?”
- What did you hear from someone else’s statement that made you think, “That’s great! Amen!”
- List those statements on a white board or for all to see.

Once everyone has shared the “amen” statements, ask:

- Is there anything missing that must be included to answer the question “Who is Jesus?” Why? (Add those statements)
- Is there anything written there that you would like to see removed? Why? (Remove those statements.)
- Is there a better way to say something you want removed or is it already listed in a better way? (Revise statements that could be said in a better way)
- Have everyone pair up. Have each pair take what is on the white board and write a statement answering the question, “Who is Jesus?”

As a group share your responses and come up with your group answer to “Who is Jesus?”

Repeat the process above for the questions:

- What is the church?
- What is salvation?
- What is service?
- What is evangelism?

*Outcome:* Combine the group’s statements for each of the four questions into a single statement. This is your Foundational Statement and your “Absolutes.” You will refer to it throughout the rest of the process.

- Read the Foundational Statement for this team that articulates who the team understands Jesus to be; what the team understands the church to be; what the team understands salvation to be; and how the team defines service.

- Ask everyone “Is there anything in this statement that goes against your personal absolutes? Is there anything in this statement that would prevent you from going forward with this team?”
- If there are those who do not feel comfortable with the foundational statement of the group, they may choose at this time not to continue with this particular group. There may also be an opportunity for another group to look at other possibilities around a different theological perspective. There are plenty of opportunities to start a new church.

Ask the group that is willing to go forward to covenant together. Develop a covenant that fits your group. Here are some suggested elements of the covenant:

- To pray daily for this venture
- To pray for the others on this team
- To be open to starting the church that the team discerns Jesus to be leading them to start, even if it is very different from what they expect
- To attend the rest of the gatherings
- To continue the work and homework needed to move forward

This would be a good time to share your foundational statement with others, depending on your situation. If you are a church starting a church, you might choose to share it with the staff or Session of the church or the appropriate Presbytery committee. You might also share it with a NCD coach. In all of these cases you’re not looking for approval but creating a feedback loop to help keep those involved in the process aware of your progress and to create a sense of journey with them.

### **Homework:**

- Bring a map, newspaper clippings, and pictures of some communities or people groups God is placing on your heart as possible fertile ground for a new church.
- Before the next meeting, recruit people in your church or Presbytery to commit to pray with you during your next gathering. They don’t have to be in the same room with you but should be committed to praying at the same time you are praying. These people also may become a prayer team of sorts as you continue your work.

## The Second Task: Develop a Vision Statement

### *Gatherings 4-9*

The second task of the team is to develop a one page description of “who” this new church is being started for and “why” it needs to be started. The temptation is to try and start a church for everyone, which usually leads to communicating clearly the love of God to no one. The vision statement will be developed after several site visits, much prayer, and significant time to reflect. **Remember, gatherings might take more than one meeting to complete, especially if more than one site visit is needed.** The key to this task is discerning of the heart of God at this time.

**Coaching observation:** “This is going to be a waste of time!” “We have the demographic study, why do we need to do this?” “What could we possibly learn from this?” These are just a few of the statements we have heard before teams have done the site visit in Gathering Six. Amazingly, we have not led a site visit yet in which the team has not found the experience profound and the key to the whole discernment process. We even took 30 of our New Church Coaches on a series of site visits; most of them went kicking and screaming. All 30 returned anxious to lead their own church teams through this process in their neighborhoods. May God give you eyes to see real people in the midst of real life, needing the real God.

## Gathering Four: People and Places on our Hearts

*This session will be devoted to scripture and prayer about those whom God seeks through you and where they are.*

### Bible Study: 30 minutes

You are moving from the foundational questions of new church development to more specific issues of vision: Who is God calling you to reach? Who has God placed on your hearts?

*Read: Acts 16: 9-10*

*That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans. (MSG)*

The passage falls at a time after Paul and Barnabas had separated and gone different ways. Paul has joined with Timothy and they continue to travel while preaching and teaching. It says that they had a travel plan. They tried to go to Asia. They were blocked. They tried to go Bithynia. The Spirit blocked them again. That night Paul had a dream.....Macedonia!

Form groups of two or three and discuss the following:

- Why did God block Paul from going where he wanted to go?
- What new churches in your area, if any, have failed to be what they thought they would be?
- Who are the "Macedonians" in your Presbytery, church, city, or county?
- What dream has God given you about your "plans"?

Share briefly in the large group what you discovered.

### Prayer/Content: 1 hour

Prayer is central to the process of starting new churches. While it may seem easy to dismiss this session as routine or tangential, it is not. If we desire to discern where God is calling and sending us, it must be done in conversation with God.

We have included one session completely devoted to prayer because of how vital it is to your ability to be faithful and successful in what you are doing on God's behalf.

On Palm Sunday, as Jesus saw Jerusalem, he wept for the people. His heart was breaking due to their lack of faith and "lostness." God places on our hearts a desire to reach certain people. This is different for different people, churches and Presbyteries. Who is God placing on your hearts? Who is Jesus weeping for in your area? These are the questions that will guide your prayer time this session.

#### *Key Issue:*

At this point you should not be praying alone. Every effort should be made to include a wide circle of people who are praying with and for you as you discern which people God has placed on your heart. As a part of the homework from the last gathering, you should have called/recruited a group of people in the church or Presbytery who have committed to praying with you during this gathering. They do not have to be with you physically but they have to be committed to prayer. It would be good if these same people would become a prayer team for your group over the course of the remaining gatherings.

#### *Prayer Time:*

##### *First...*

Start your time of prayer by spending time in silence.

Have the one in charge of the prayer/content time guide the time of silence with the following thoughts. (Provide enough time to allow each person to move through each one.)

- Share with God the most pressing issue on your heart at this moment.
- Ask God to reveal the plans for you...your family, your faith, your church.

As a group share: “What did you hear God saying?”

*Next...*

Place the map of the area in which you are considering starting a church in a place where all can see or touch it. Spread out pictures, news articles, flyers from local areas, or any other material that might represent a people group.

- Which areas stand out? Which people stand out?
- Share what God is saying to you as you look at the map and pictures.
- Is one area or person calling to you “from across the ocean?”
- Who are these people and places? List on newsprint or whiteboard. Don’t over think or justify; simply allow God to reveal different areas and people.
- Spend time praying for the areas and people identified. Ask each person to lift up in prayer one or more of those locations or one of those people groups.

*Then pray out loud...*

Following the time of prayer:

- What do you hear God saying?
- Where is God’s voice resonating with your own sense of call?
- Who has God placed on your heart?

Conclude this time by reflecting on the next stage and where the journey seems to be going.

### **Homework:**

Have each member answer the following questions for the next gathering:

- Who are the people groups within your Presbytery (community) that have yet to hear the good news in their own context?
- Who are the people and areas that God has placed on your heart?
- Where are the distressed (not just economically distressed) communities?
- Where are the communities in transition (age, race, income, racial ethnic)?
- Where are the communities of growth and change?

Have one person review the Presbytery’s annual statistics asking, “Who is not here?”

Ask people whom you believe have “God’s eyes” who they think needs to experience the presence and love of Christ. Who currently does not have a readily available witness to God’s love in Jesus?

Have two people gather the demographic information for the Geographic Presbytery. Who are the people who live there? What are the churches and the ministries already in the area?

Consider asking local law enforcement officials to give one of you a tour of “trouble spots.” Know that where there is a lot of manure there is also fertile soil!

If you are looking at a people group, use the demographics to help discern if they are located in a particular area or if a regional approach will be more likely.

*Sources of demographic information:*

- [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com) - Your Presbytery might have a contract with this group. Contact your Presbytery executive to determine if you have access. If you do not have access, call the Office of Church Growth, 888-728-7228, ext. 5266 or 5247.
- There are also a few places you might find this information at no cost. Realtors are very good at tracking demographic information. Your local School District will also have done a significant study on where the population is moving and the ages of the shift. Make an appointment with your local city planners; they are usually up on the latest trends. The Association of Religious Data can also be helpful. [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com).
- The PCUSA Research Services has a site that will also allow you to access neighborhood information. <http://www.pcusa.org/research/help2.htm>
- You can also do a Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) or Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) search on specific groups and demographic data and explore that way.

## Gathering Five: What are the Possibilities?

*In this session you will begin to define and identify who God may be calling you to reach and where the places are that a new church might be started.*

### Prayer and Bible Study: 20 minutes

*Read out loud: Mark 6:30-44*

*<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; <sup>36</sup>send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” <sup>39</sup>Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. <sup>41</sup>Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And all ate and were filled; <sup>43</sup>and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men. (NSRV)*

#### *Reflection:*

- What motivations, other than the compassion of Jesus, could be behind your desire to start a new church, reach a new crowd?
- When you begin to see some of the possibilities of this new church, how are you going to know when it is for you to take care of the crowd or when they should be sent somewhere else?

Read out loud as a group Mark 6:31.

- What were the motivations behind these words?

Read out loud as a group Mark 6:34.

- What was Jesus’ motivation for teaching the crowd?
- How do you imagine the disciples felt about the crowd?

Read out loud as a group Mark 6:36-37.

- How did Jesus’ motivations impact the disciples’ actions?
- How do you know when God is asking you to step out and do something, even without all the resources in place, and when the lack of resources is a sign from God that you are not the ones to go forward with this crowd?

#### *Pray:*

As a group, pray for the people sitting next to you for the Spirit to guide them in this process and in their lives.

### Content: 75 minutes

Share the Foundational Statement you developed in Gathering Three.

Share the answers to your homework questions and either project them on a screen or have someone write them on a white board or butcher paper.

- Who are the people groups within your Presbytery (community) that have yet to hear the good news in their own context?
- Who are the people and areas that God has placed on your heart?
- Where are the distressed (not just economically distressed) communities?
- Where are the communities in transition (age, race, income, racial ethnic)?
- Where are the communities of growth and change?

Have the person who looked at the Presbytery's statistics share who was missing from them. Display the list on a screen, a white board or butcher paper.

Have the two people assigned to do the demographics share the key insights they gained from that information. Display the insights also.

What patterns do you see? Discuss the patterns, people and groups on many of the lists; people not on anyone's list, but revealed in the demographics or Presbytery statistics; and those whom God has placed on your heart.

Make a list of the people who are on multiple lists. Are there any people not on multiple lists that the group believes needs to be considered a possible "urgent" group?

*Outcome:*

Form a list of 3 to 10 groups of people God seems to be revealing to you as possible high priority for starting a new church that is contextual to them. Make a second list of possible people to be considered at a future time.

**Homework:**

Have someone prepare and plan the logistics of the site visit for the next gathering, choosing one of the sites from your possible priority list. Consider contacting and inviting a coach to join you at your next gathering, the site visit. Consider having each member work through "Neighborhood Exegesis" found in the appendix for their own neighborhoods. This is one way to prepare for the site visit in the next gathering. Read through "Site Visit Report" in the appendix to prepare for your next gathering.

## Gathering Six: Site Visits

*This gathering will sharpen your observation skills and help you begin to discern the context in which, where, why, and how the new church might gather. You will visit one potential site where God might do something new.*

### Note:

In Gathering Five, you should have identified 3-10 potential sites and/or people groups. You cannot proceed without having identified them. If you do not have them stay with Gathering Five until you do.

### Bible Study and Prayer: 20 minutes

This visit will provide a model for future site visits. If you are able to meet in a sanctuary, a park, or meeting room near the site, do Bible Study option #1. If you are meeting in a public place, do Bible study option #2.

*Bible Study Option #1: (20 min. for guided meditation and prayer)*

In preparation for visiting and observing potential sites, join together for this guided meditation:

*Leader:* Close your eyes. Sit in a comfortable position. Become conscious of your breathing. Take in God's words, in a rhythm that flows with your breathing.

*Leader:* Breathe in. (hold breath) Breathe out. (pause)

*Leader:* Breathe in. (hold breath) Breathe out. (pause)

*Leader (Read Isaiah 43:19.)* Listen to the Word of God. *<sup>19</sup>I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.* (pause)

*Leader:* Repeat Isaiah 43:19 two more times

*Leader (Pause after each sentence.):* You are in search of the place where God will do a new thing. Imagine a place of wilderness.

Is it light or dark? Is it quiet or loud? Is it solitary or crowded? Who is there? Who needs a spring of living water? And how is the water flowing to that person or to that group of people? Hear the water flowing. How does it sound? Feel the water flowing into the wilderness. It refreshes. It satisfies. It turns the wilderness into something fresh...and alive...and safe...and full of life. Now, continue breathing slowly. Open your eyes when you are ready.

Briefly share what you envisioned in terms of both wilderness and the waters of life.

*Bible Study Option #2 (20 minutes for Bible study and prayer)*

*Read:* Mark 6:7

*He (Jesus) called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. (NSRV)*

Jesus sometimes sent his disciples to handle special assignments in twos:

- Jesus sent two disciples to fetch the donkey on which he'd ride into Jerusalem -- Mt. 21:1
- Jesus sent two disciples to prepare for Passover -- Mark 14:13

What ministry have you done/do you do with a partner and why?

What are the advantages of serving with another person?

*Pray:*

- Share with the group a person with whom you've recently done ministry in partnership. After everyone has shared, take turns thanking God for and praying for that person in spoken prayer.
- Each member, in a circle, pray one line for their hopes for these site visits, as informed by the Isaiah verse (Bible Study Option #1). Leader closes.

### Content: 90 minutes

Divide your committee into groups that travel easily (i.e. fit into the available cars). All committee members will be visiting the same site together on this day/night. But you will visit all the remaining potential sites with a partner at a later time.

Preferably a coach will join you to guide the whole committee through this first site visit. If you do not have a coach, call the Office of Church Growth at 888-728-7228, ext 5266 or 5247.

- Gather at a location at the site (coffee house, restaurant, park).
- Divide up. Stand/sit apart from each other to make observations. Sit on benches/stand on corners/place yourselves in separate spaces to observe from different directions and points of view.
- Take a moment to breathe in deeply and ask God to reveal insights to you. Absorb the atmosphere and surroundings. Notice activities, faces, sounds, smells.
- Complete the Site Visit report in the appendix under Gathering Six in a reflective manner. (This is not a race). And notice as Jesus might notice. Ask for your eyes to become like Jesus' eyes. Offer your comments and try to avoid stereotypes. Really look for clues.

- Who is there?
- What are they doing?
- What are they talking about?
- What are their ages, genders, races?
- What language are they speaking?
- How are they dressed? Notice details: jewelry, shoes, hair styles, name tags, tech toys.
- Can you imagine what they might do for work?
- Do they live in the area? Work in the area? Do they seem in transient?
- Do they come and go as if they are on a tight schedule? Is their manner leisurely?
- What sounds do you hear in the distance?
- What levels of car/bus/foot traffic do you observe?
- Are there sidewalks? Street lights? Signage?
- What do the people you're observing already have?
- What do they need?
- What else do you notice?
- What is your visceral response to this site?

- Pray silently for the people you see, for the neighborhood, for the businesses, the people who live in the homes, etc. Ask God to reveal if this might be where we are called to "do a new thing" in Jesus' name.
- Come together and share your reflections together. How were your observations similar? How were they different? What very specific details did you notice? How did you see the people and the space through God's eyes?

### **Homework:**

Divide into pairs before breaking up for the night. Before the next meeting, each pair should visit one or more of the sites that were selected in Gathering Five. All of those selected sites need to be visited prior to the next Gathering, with your partner, replicating your experience at the first site visit. Prepare to share your observations about the other sites with the rest of the committee at the next meeting.

## Gathering Seven: What's Our Vision?

*The purpose of this gathering is to discern where your passions (those of the Presbytery, church, people) align with where you believe the Spirit of God is asking you to go.*

### Prayer and Reflection: 30 minutes.

*Pray:* Have everyone in the group pray silently for five minutes.

*Reflection on the Day:* Give each person a copy of the following questions adapted from Ignatius' Awareness Examen and ask everyone to spend the next 10 minutes in prayerful reflection on the questions. Encourage people to feel free to close their eyes or move around the room as they feel necessary.

- What has been happening to me?
- How has God been working in me?
- What has God been asking of me?
- Let your mind quietly go over the different phases of your day. What feelings did you experience? What thoughts or reflections moved you (positively or negatively)? Do these movements tell you anything about how God was working in you and what God has been asking of you? How have you responded?
- Is there any specific area of your life that you know should be focused on? Reflect on the day from that perspective and discuss it with God.

Take 10 to 15 minutes to share any observations members wish to share.

*Read:* Romans 15:14-29

*<sup>14-16</sup>Personally, I've been completely satisfied with who you are and what you are doing. You seem to me to be well-motivated and well-instructed, quite capable of guiding and advising one another. So, my dear friends, don't take my rather bold and blunt language as criticism. It's not criticism. I'm simply underlining how very much I need your help in carrying out this highly focused assignment God gave me, this priestly and gospel work of serving the spiritual needs of the non-Jewish outsiders so they can be presented as an acceptable offering to God, made whole and holy by God's Holy Spirit. <sup>17-21</sup>Looking back over what has been accomplished and what I have observed, I must say I am most pleased—in the context of Jesus, I'd even say proud, but only in that context. I have no interest in giving you a chatty account of my adventures, only the wondrously powerful and transformingly present words and deeds of Christ in me that triggered a believing response among the outsiders. In such ways I have trailblazed a preaching of the Message of Jesus all the way from Jerusalem far into northwestern Greece. This has all been pioneer work, bringing the Message only into those places where Jesus was not yet known and worshiped. My text has been,*

*Those who were never told of him—they'll see him!*

*Those who've never heard of him—they'll get the message!*

*<sup>22-24</sup>And that's why it has taken me so long to finally get around to coming to you. But now that there is no more pioneering work to be done in these parts, and since I have looked forward to seeing you for many years, I'm planning my visit. I'm headed for Spain, and expect to stop off on the way to enjoy a good visit with you, and eventually have you send me off with God's blessing.*

*<sup>25-29</sup>First, though, I'm going to Jerusalem to deliver a relief offering to the followers of Jesus there. The Greeks—all the way from the Macedonians in the north to the Achaians in the south—decided they wanted to take up a collection for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. They were happy to do this, but it was also their duty. Seeing that they got in on all the spiritual gifts that flowed out of the Jerusalem community so generously, it is only right that they do what they can to relieve their poverty. As soon as I have done this—personally handed over this "fruit basket"—I'm off to Spain, with a stopover with you in Rome. My hope is that my visit with you is going to be one of Christ's more extravagant blessings. (MSG)*

*Scripture Reflection:*

- What are Paul's missionary motivations?
- What were his travel plans?
- Did his plans work out?
- Was his desire fulfilled?

**Content:** 90 minutes

*Homework Reflection:*

Report on site visits. What did you learn? (Try to remain open in this process and not promote a particular project at this time.) This section may take over an hour. You have time. Listen to one another carefully. Do any words or phrases repeat, grab you or persist?

*Group Reflection:*

- What has been happening during the visits?
- How has God been working in the members of the team?
- Let your mind quietly go over the different phases of the visits and descriptions. What feelings did you experience? What thoughts or reflections moved you (positively or negatively)? Do these movements tell you anything about how God was working in you and what God has been telling you? How have you responded?
- Based on the reports, which areas of ministry rise to the top? That is, how are the passions of the group aligning with where the Spirit of God is telling you to go? Pay particular attention not only to data, but to feelings, recurring ideas and thoughts, how you're being moved and why? What needs in the communities motivate you? What potentials excite you?

As a group, write down your top three to five potential ministries that could become new churches. Write them in order of urgency, beginning with the most urgent. If you are ambitious, you can list more for future projects. These are your vision areas.

*Prayer:* (In unison)

Provident God, thank you for all the ways you have blessed us this day. You know us better than we know ourselves. Please help us to become more aware of how you have been working in us and around us during the past hours. We wish to respond to your call with love and faithfulness. We can do this only to the degree we recognize your guidance. Help us then to become more sensitive to your Spirit's direction and more conscious of the ways we fail to respond. We place this time in your hands.

**Homework:**

Look at your three to five potential new churches and assign members to discover the following.

- Who is already there doing the ministry?
- How is a particular people group being served?
- Identify the players and the ministries that are already there, Include churches and non-profit organizations that might become partners or impact your ministry.

## Gathering Eight: Are We the Ones?

*The purpose of this gathering will be to determine if you are the best ones to pursue the ministry in the areas you've identified.*

### Prayer Time: 20 minutes

Spend time today praying as a group for the three to five potential ministries. Pray as specifically as possible. Pray for the people who you saw on your site visits. Pray for the ministries that are already there. Pray for those who gather at the coffee shops, bars, strip clubs, schools, markets, and corners of the three to five ministry possibilities.

### Bible Study and Reflection: 20 minutes

*Read: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31*

<sup>1-3</sup>*What I want to talk about now is the various ways God's Spirit gets worked into our lives. This is complex and often misunderstood, but I want you to be informed and knowledgeable. Remember how you were when you didn't know God, led from one phony god to another, never knowing what you were doing, just doing it because everybody else did it? It's different in this life. God wants us to use our intelligence, to seek to understand as well as we can. For instance, by using your heads, you know perfectly well that the Spirit of God would never prompt anyone to say "Jesus be damned!" Nor would anyone be inclined to say "Jesus is Master!" without the insight of the Holy Spirit.*

<sup>4-11</sup>*God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues. All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.*

<sup>12-13</sup>*You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.*

<sup>14-18</sup>*I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so? If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, limpid and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.*

<sup>19-24</sup>*But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?*

<sup>25-26</sup>*The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.*

<sup>27-31</sup>*You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body": apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, helpers, organizers those who pray in tongues. But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church*

*is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts. But now I want to lay out a far better way for you. (MSG)*

*Reflections:*

Everyone has gifts. What spiritual gift(s) do you believe God has equipped you with? (Help each other out in naming them. Keep track of the gifts in the room.)

- Why are the gifts distributed so widely?
- What is the purpose of God distributing gifts?
- How do we keep from becoming "unidimensional" as a church?

**Content: 1 hour**

Name the gifts we bring as individuals, a church, a Presbytery, a community to our designated vision areas.

Brainstorm existing gifts and resources in our vision areas. Give each vision area at least one piece of butcher paper. Use the categories of "people," "places," "money" and whatever else you consider a resource/gift. Brainstorm each category with this question:

- "What people gifts/resources do we have for this particular vision area?"

Do this for each category. Perhaps you have a group of people meeting and praying in the vision area. Maybe there is an existing church. You may have money reserves from a defunct congregation. Be exhaustive. God gives you what you need at present for the ministry you've been given.

*Homework Reflection:*

Consider the three to five sites/people groups you selected:

- Who is already doing ministry in the communities we've identified? List for each.
- What are the specific concerns of the community that are being met by these ministries? List for each.
- Are there needs, concerns, challenges unmet by the current ministries? List for each.

Once you have a grasp of who is already doing (or not doing) work in the areas you have selected, you need to ask the hard question, "Are we the ones to reach the target group/site?" In order to discern the answer, you need to compare what your gifts and resources are as an individual/church/Presbytery to what's already happening in the selected area. Ask the question(s):

- In what vision areas are we uniquely gifted/resourced to do the ministry?
- Are there vision areas that we don't have the resources or where others are better suited/situated?
- Are there vision areas where we have passion and need to find the resources to do the ministry?

Re-order your priorities according to the distribution of gifts and resources.

Our vision area priorities are: (Add as many as you believe are discovered.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is there agreement in the groups around pursuing these specific priorities? At this point are you planning to choose one area to pursue or all three? If all three, how will you expand the committee to accomplish this? If one, what is your plan or timeline for the other two?

*Prayer: (In Unison)*

*Looking to the Future:*

Faithful God, with hope we look to the future. You accept us the way that we are and call us to grow. You give us time and opportunity and grace. We place the time between now and our next gathering in your hands. We ask you to help us be more sensitive to the Spirit's presence and guidance. We ask your special help in discerning the mission we should undertake. God, with the Spirit within our hearts, we go forward with joy and trust. Amen.

**Homework :**

Each member of the team is to write one-paragraph on the "who" we are trying to reach, and then one paragraph on the "why" we need to reach the "who" for each vision area your team is feeling led by God to move forward to reach. The group's consensus on the "who" and "why" will become your Vision Statement that you will develop at the next gathering.

## Gathering Nine: The Who and the Why

*In this gathering you will develop your Vision Statement of "Who and Why."*

*Pray: 20 minutes*

*Pray together out loud:*

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. — Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*

Spend five minutes in silence.

Lead the group in prayer for this meeting time. Ask God for specific guidance as you explore your vision area possibilities.

*Sharing:* Name a surprise or new insight that you believe God has given you during this process.

## Bible Study: 20 minutes

*Read: Luke 4:14-30*

<sup>14-15</sup> *Jesus returned to Galilee powerful in the Spirit. News that he was back spread through the countryside. He taught in their meeting places to everyone's acclaim and pleasure.*

<sup>16-21</sup> *He came to Nazareth where he had been reared. As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place. When he stood up to read, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written,*

*God's Spirit is on me;*

*He's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor,*

*Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind,*

*To set the burdened and battered free,*

*To announce, "This is God's year to act!"*

*He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the place was on him, intent. Then he started in, "You've just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place."*

<sup>22</sup> *All who were there, watching and listening, were surprised at how well he spoke. But they also said, "Isn't this Joseph's son, the one we've known since he was a youngster?"*

<sup>23-27</sup> *He answered, "I suppose you're going to quote the proverb, 'Doctor, go heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we heard you did in Capernaum.' Well, let me tell you something: No prophet is ever welcomed in his hometown. Isn't it a fact that there were many widows in Israel at the time of Elijah during that three and a half years of drought when famine devastated the land, but the only widow to whom Elijah was sent was in Sarepta in Sidon? And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha but the only one cleansed was Naaman the Syrian."*

<sup>28-30</sup> *That set everyone in the meeting place seething with anger. They threw him out, banishing him from the village, then took him to a mountain cliff at the edge of the village to throw him to his doom, but he gave them the slip and was on his way. (MSG)*

*Scripture Reflection:*

- What are the "who" and "why" of Jesus' mission?
- How was Jesus' message received?
- Where will there be opposition to your announcement?

## Content: 1 hour

- In the remainder of your time have everyone put their paragraphs from the homework on a piece of butcher paper. Put the "Who" paragraphs together in one area and the "Why" paragraphs in another. Divide the team in half and have one group work to synthesize the "Who" statements into one paragraph they can agree on. The second group does the same with the

“Why” paragraphs. When you are finished have each group present their work to the other.

- Develop a clear concise statement of who you are being called to reach and why we need to reach the who. This is your Vision Statement.
- If the group is working on multiple simultaneous new churches you will need multiple Vision Statements.

*Pray:*

Thank God for the vision and for help in making it a reality.

### **Homework:**

Each member of the team is to make a list of “how” you would go about starting a new church with those in your vision statement.

This is also a good opportunity to share where you are with your Church staff/Session, Presbytery Staff and Church Development Committee for conversation and feedback. It also may be a point where you will need Presbytery approval to move forward. Each Presbytery is different. You want to make sure that once you have selected an area in which you will start a new church, that you make other Presbyterian churches in that area (if any) aware of your interest in planting a church there. This should be done as diplomatically as possible yet in a way that doesn't seek their approval as much as their partnership. If you are working as a Presbytery New Church Development Committee, this may be the point where you begin to hand off the potential sites to task Groups for continued development in which they would begin this process with one site in mind. Much of this depends of the size and resources of the Presbytery. For some, one NCD at a time is plenty of work. For other, there is capacity to do multiple NCD's at once. How you proceed from here also depends on your Presbytery structure. Is there a racial/ethnic or immigrant area that the NCD committee would partner with to reach a potential site? What other areas of the Presbytery need to be involved at this point? If a Presbytery New Church Committee “hands off” at this point or at some point in the next few gatherings, some care should be taken to review the first three gathering to ensure agreement with your Foundational Statement and “absolutes” concerning this process.

### **The Third Task: Develop a Mission Plan** *Gatherings 10-13*

The third task is to develop a one- or two-page statement that lists the core values, the ministry plan, the outreach plan, and the leadership plan for the new church. This is when the team discerns together how this new church will look, act, and fulfill her God-given mission. This is the team's best thoughts of what it will take to start a church that will impact the people in the vision statement. This is when the team counts the human, financial, and other costs for this new church to start and continue.

**Coaching observation:** For almost 9 gatherings one team had been complaining to their coach that they still hadn't found the perfect model for this new church. They started to demand that the coach reveal to them the model, the hidden truth of how to start a church that will lead to "success." They were sure this New Church Coach was holding back from them. Finally they completed Gathering Nine and while they were reviewing their final Vision Statement the team started to reflect, saying things like, "there is no way we can start this church without a recovery program" and "the students here need to have some alternatives." They were allowing the Holy Spirit to work through them to identify what needed to be done in this community. They were discerning the unique ministry, not the model, God wanted for this new church. Use the many exciting new churches that exist in the world to help you dream, but develop your mission plan with your eyes on God and the unique people God has placed on your heart.

## Gathering Ten: Beginning a Mission Plan

*In this gathering you will begin to develop your Mission Plan.*

### Bible Study and Prayer: 30 minutes

Read Acts 17:16-34 once out loud and then give everyone a chance to read it quietly on their own. Have the group circle key words and phrases that “jump out” to them in either the quiet reading or when it was read out loud.

*<sup>16</sup>While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup>So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup>Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this babbling man want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) <sup>19</sup>So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?” <sup>20</sup>It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” <sup>21</sup>Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.*

*<sup>22</sup>Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. <sup>23</sup>For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup>nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup>From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup>so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup>For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’*

*<sup>29</sup>Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup>While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup>because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”*

*<sup>32</sup>When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” <sup>33</sup>At that point Paul left them. <sup>34</sup>But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. (NRSV)*

- How would you describe Paul’s mission plan to the Athenians? What were some of the key values and concepts that you should consider in your mission plan?
- How did Paul develop his vision for who lived in Athens? How did his approach change according to who he was trying to reach?
- How well did he know the people? How was that evident in this passage?

*Play the DVD: “Bull horn Evangelism,” from [www.Nooma.com](http://www.Nooma.com) or view it on [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com).*

- Describe a time when you experienced a Mission Plan like the bull horn man’s?
- How did Paul’s Mission Plan use context and culture?
- How was Paul’s Mission Plan successful? How was his mission plan unsuccessful?

### Content: 1 hour

*Brainstorm:* How can we reach the “who” of the Vision Statement?

This is the beginning of the Mission Plan. Read as a group your Foundational Statement from Gathering Three. Write on a whiteboard or newsprint your brainstorm ideas around the question “What are some possible plans for establishing a new church with those identified in the Vision Statement?” Consider:

- How could those in the vision statement be introduced to Jesus?
- What could be the outreach strategy of this new church?
- What needs to happen to “keep it real”?
- What would be some of the core values and actions of this church?
- When would worship begin and what happens in worship? What does worship look like, feel like? Who leads worship?
- How would people in this church care for one another?
- Who would lead this church?
- What key leaders would be needed to begin this church?
- How would the decisions be made in this church?

**Brainstorm Reflection:** 30 minutes

John Nevius in the 1850s suggested a model for world missions, the work of starting new churches with new people groups, that said all new mission plans should:

“Trust the Holy Spirit and the converts the Spirit presents to quickly lead the church;  
Trust the Holy Spirit and the converts the Spirit presents to quickly plan the evangelism of the church; and  
Trust the Holy Spirit and the converts the Spirit presents to quickly to own their own finances.”

The Moffetts adopted his criteria for their early work in beginning new churches in Korea. This was a radical departure from the missionary- and mission organization-centered approach of many others looking to begin new churches.

What we can glean from this is that a Mission Plan for starting a new church must take seriously local leadership and local evangelism, as well as the self-sustainability of the new churches. Considering Nevius’s three points, reflect on our Mission Plan brainstorm and ask:

- What elements of John Nevius’s vision for starting new churches should be a part of this Mission Plan?
- Which of the three elements Nevius suggests would be the hardest for us to let go of quickly?
- What would be the risks if the Mission Plan brainstorm worked?
- What would be the risks if you did not try one of the brainstorm ideas?

**Homework:**

Have one person record all of the responses and brainstorm ideas and email that information to the entire group by the end of the week. Have each member research a way to start a new church. You can go to [www.presbygrow.net](http://www.presbygrow.net) or call 1.888.728.7228, ext. 5246 and ask the GA for some contacts. You can also search “new church models” on Google or Yahoo and find some interesting resources there. Realize that a true model does not exist because churches are organic—planted in different soils, responding to unique conditions.

## Gathering Eleven: What are the Models?

*In this gathering you will determine the possible ways to begin a new church to reach those you identified in your Vision Statement.*

### Bible Study: 30 minutes

*Read: 1 Corinthians 9:22:*

*To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. (NRSV).*

- How many ways can we do this?
- In what ways do you think Paul became all things?
- What was Paul's motivation?
- How might you become all things without compromising Jesus?
- How many churches have you belonged to?
- How were they alike?
- How were they different?
- In what ways did they match their communities well?
- In what ways were they mismatched in their communities?

*Pray:*

Pray for those churches you have been involved in: for their pastors, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, elders, deacons, and members. Remember them by name. Thank God for the gifts given to you through them. Ask God to use those gifts now to create a new church.

### Content: 90 minutes

Have each person share their particular way to start a new church from their homework assignment. Feel free to expand, ask questions and explore each way until the group is comfortable with the definitions. Write your descriptions up on butcher paper and put on the wall for all to see.

Review your brainstorm ideas from the last gathering.

Next, read together your Foundational Statement and your Vision Statement. Begin to discuss the pros and cons of each way to start a church as it relates to your foundational and vision statements. Consider the context of each vision area, who you are reaching and why. Review again the resources you have identified in each area. After discussing each one thoroughly write down as many models as you believe apply to a particular vision area and why.

*Outcome:*

As a group, discuss:

- What plans rise to the top for you?
- What ways to start a church resonate with you?
- What ways to start a church would you not attempt, given your Vision Statement?

You may also want to keep a list of other ways you found to share with other churches going through this process or with the Presbytery. You might also think of sharing your research at [www.presbygrow.net](http://www.presbygrow.net). This would also be another opportune time to share your direction with Session/church staff, Presbytery staff and/or Church Development Committee.

*Pray:* That the Lord to send laborers into the harvest.

### Homework:

Write a page that describes a way for starting a new church that will introduce Jesus to the "Who" you identified in your Vision Statement. Keep in mind your Foundational Statement from Gathering Three as you write.

Break your mission plan down into:

- What are the specifics of how Jesus will be introduced to the community?
- Who will be needed to lead this plan?
- What resources will be needed to implement this plan?

## Gathering Twelve: The Mission Plan

*In this gathering you will develop the Mission Plan.*

### Bible Study: 20 minutes

*Read: Acts 6:1-7*

*<sup>1</sup>Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, <sup>4</sup>while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.' <sup>5</sup>What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. <sup>6</sup>They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup>The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (NRSV)*

Pentecost has happened. The church is growing. Miracles, dangers, all kinds of exciting and scary things are happening fast. And now, they've reached a situation where some organization is needed.

Examine what's going on in Acts 6:1-7:

- Look at where the church is at this point.
- Who is staffing it?
- What are the needs? Where are the holes?
- How will new servants be chosen? What kinds of people are these new servants?
- What will they be doing?
- How did their actions match their faith in Jesus?
- What were the results?
- What was their Mission Plan?

### Content: 90 minutes

How do you combine the “who” and the “why” with the “what”?

Share again the Foundational Statement from Gathering Three.

Share again the Vision Statement (Who and Why) from Gathering Nine.

Take each of the homework pages (describing a plan for introducing Jesus to the “who” you identified in the 9<sup>th</sup> gathering that will lead to the establishment of a new church) and either project them on a screen/wall or have someone write them on butcher paper. Have each team member read and describe their page.

- What patterns do you see? Can any pages be combined? Can duplications be removed to become one page?

Spend time discussing what you see. Is there a pattern? A common idea? Can you agree on a unified plan that comes from the ideas of each team member?

Name the particulars in your plan:

- What are the specific ideas for taking Jesus out to the community?
- What kinds of leaders are needed?
- Who else is needed on the team to start this church?
- What ministry gifts will be required of the leaders?
- What ministry gifts will be required of the rest of the team?
- What are the responsibilities of the leaders? The team?
- What tangibles will be required in terms of communication tools, space, hospitality resources, worship resources?
- What financial resources it take?

- Does this communicate your Foundational Statements or “absolutes”?
- What are the absolutes about this plan? What are the possibilities?

Separate the absolutes and the possibilities. Take a step back and review which is which. Example: Is X an absolute or a possibility?

Agree upon and write a one-page Mission Plan based on this exercise.

At this point you should have a:

- Foundational Statement (Gathering Three)
- Vision Statement of “who and why” (Gathering Nine)
- Mission Plan (Gathering Twelve)

Invite a NCD coach to review your materials up to this point for feedback. You should share this information with your church staff and session, your Presbytery committee, or Presbytery leadership.

### **Homework:**

Before the next Gathering, write five things that you believe would define success for this new church. Also, write five things that would illustrate that this new church was not working.

Bring these pieces to your next meeting.

## Gathering Thirteen: Define “Success” and When to Shake Off the Dust...

*During this gathering you will clarify how you will assess and measure success.*

### Bible Study: 10 minutes

Give everyone a smooth river stone to hold as the scripture is read and discussed.

*Read: Acts 11:19*

*Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, people from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. (NIV)*

We find here circumstances of discomfort and comfort:

There is persecution of Christians but there is also the sharing of faith because of that persecution.

Some Jews do not want to hear/receive the good news but there are also Greeks who are receptive.

*Pray:*

As team members hold their river stones, share names/groups of people who are persecuted today because of their faith.

Then pray for them by name, placing the river stones in the center of the table/space as their names are mentioned.

### Content: 90 minutes

- Share your homework by contributing it to this discussion especially during the brainstorm on success and the discussion of benchmarks for “shaking off the dust.”

*Writing on butcher paper*, brainstorm the ways that “success” is measured in the world.

*On a second piece of butcher paper*, brainstorm the ways that “success” is measured in the church.

- Compare the two lists and spend a little time reflecting on the similarities and differences.
- Provide scriptural examples to support your measures of church success.
- What are the “absolute measures” that we need to have? List.
  - Are these numbers in worship?
  - Participation?
  - Bible studies?
  - Membership?
  - Number of people who can recite the mission statement?
  - Disciples made?
  - Adult baptisms?
  - Service?
  - Use your imagination of what needs to be measured.
- How would you measure that which is not easy to measure..energy, spiritual growth, etc?
- What are our benchmarks for the NCD?

*On a third piece of butcher paper*,

- What would be happening in a “successful” new church after the first year?
- The second year?
- The fifth year?

How do these “markers” compare to your absolutes in your Foundational Statement?

*“Shaking off the Dust”*

Determine what “measures” and “benchmarks” will be used to determine success for the new church. List them for each year. Include:

- Attendance growth
- Leadership growth
- Participation in non-worship activities
- Financial Support
- Spiritual development
- Service to the world
- Other

It is not an accident that Jesus talked about “shaking off the dust” before sending the disciples into a new town. It is much easier to determine how much time, energy and money should be invested into a new work when it is still theoretical and before the leaders become personally involved. Based on your measures and benchmarks, write a paragraph describing how you would intervene or end the project if benchmarks are not being reached for each year after the first three years. Add both your measures and benchmarks and your plan of action if they are not met to your mission plan.

Share your final mission plan with your session, Presbytery team, and other appropriate people for feedback. If your mission plan is going to require financial support, now is the time to present that to the appropriate funding sources.

### **Homework:**

- Do some research on what makes a good NCD Pastor/Church Planter. If you do a Google/Yahoo search make sure to enter terms such as church planter characteristics, ncd pastor, etc.
- Go to [www.presbygrow.net](http://www.presbygrow.net) and find the NCD coach profiles. Take a moment and call one and ask them what their specific gifts are and why they feel they have been successful in NCD work. There may also be those in your own or a neighboring Presbytery with whom you might meet face to face to discuss this.
- Go to [www.presbygrow.net](http://www.presbygrow.net) and look at the resources page for NCD. There is a list of books and resources to help identify whether or not you are called to be a NCD Pastor.
- Interview new church development leaders (lay and clergy) in your Presbytery or nearby Presbytery.

## The Fourth Task: Develop a Missionary Plan

### *Gatherings 14-16*

The fourth task is to develop a one- or two-page description of the people needed to start and lead this new church. The key to this task is to identify the skills and attributes needed to reach those in the Vision Statement, not the skills and attributes the team would like if the missionary team was sent to them. The missionaries may or may not be ordained.

**Coaching observation:** Occasionally the missionary team comes together quickly but that seems to be the exception rather than the rule. We have seen teams become weary at this point and “settle” for the leadership available rather than wait for the right team. One church delayed their hire three times because they had not found the person who matched the missionary plan. After a three-year delay the team finally found a person who truly matched the missionary plan as the leader. The amazing thing the team discovered a few years after this church was up and running was the delayed start was actually perfect timing! God was in the delay. Trust God, trust God’s timing of when all the pieces come together.

## Gathering Fourteen: Who Will Go For Us?

*During this gathering you will define both the kind(s) of missionaries needed to begin your new church as well as the gifts, skills, and characteristics needed in them.*

### Bible Study: 30 minutes

*Read: Ephesians 4:11-16*

<sup>11</sup>Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

<sup>12</sup>Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup>This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup>Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup>He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (NLT)

#### *Biblical Reflection:*

- What kinds of leaders does Paul list here? What kinds of gifts do they represent?
- What kinds of leaders would you add to Paul's list to make it more complete?
- What is the task of leadership?
- What is the desired result of this kind of shared leadership?

### Content: 90 minutes

#### *Homework Reflection:*

- Share the results of your interviews. What were the characteristics/types of effective leaders you questioned? What else did you find in your research?
- Record these on a whiteboard so you can all see them. Look for common traits as well as unique characteristics and skills.

#### *Mission Plan Reflection:*

Looking at your potential new church, brainstorm the questions below. Put your answers up so all can see.

• The missionaries – Are they: Lay people? Pastors? Certified Lay Ministers? Educators? Musicians? Media people? Paid? Volunteer? Foreign missionaries? List as many kinds of leaders you think would apply to each new church project. The point of this is to think beyond merely hiring a pastor. That may not be the only or best place to begin. You may also need to think of a team concept more often than not.

- When you have this list, mark the kinds of missionaries best suited to your ministry context.
- What are the skills/gifts needed in your missionary leaders? Pay particular attention to Ephesians 4 – the purpose of leadership is to equip the church for ministry. You can use the skill/gift inventory from the Church Information Form (CIF) of the PC(USA) as a place to start but don't allow this to restrict your list.
- What are the personal qualities/characteristics needed in your missionary leaders?

These should result in you having three lists.

- The type of missionary leaders you need, both lay and clergy.
- The skills needed in your leaders, perhaps shared among a team.
- The personal characteristics you need in your missionaries that will fit your ministry context.

You will use these in writing your Church Information Form, or CIF. (A note on the CIF – you will be limited in the number of qualifications you can list online. Don't allow this to keep you from have an expanded CIF that is available directly from you. The more information others have about your vision, the better to find the right fit.)

*Prayer:* Take time to pray that God would be preparing the hearts and minds of those needed to lead your new church(es).

### Homework:

Commit to a regular time of prayer each day between now and your next gathering. Pray that God will provide the leadership needed for your new church development. Pray that God will call to mind those within your midst who would be qualified to be part of your core leadership.

## Gathering Fifteen: Writing the CIF

*At this gathering you will write your Church Information Form (CIF). This will describe the ministry opportunity that you are inviting people to consider leading. Complete it even if you do not see yourselves hiring ordained persons to lead the New Church Development (NCD).*

*Pray:*

Enter a time of thanksgiving in your prayer: for each other, for your context, for the work, for the future, for doing a new work in your midst.

## Bible Study: 20 minutes

*Read again:* Ephesians 4:11-16 (from Gathering Fourteen). Have this in mind as you write your CIF.

<sup>11</sup>*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

<sup>12</sup>*Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup>This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

<sup>14</sup>*Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup>Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup>He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (NLT)*

## Content: 60 minutes

*Homework Reflection:*

Before we begin naming those we believe to be qualified and called to lead our NCD(s), we need to reflect on how the Spirit of God is leading. You were asked to pray daily that God would provide the leadership needed. Let's check our spiritual barometer. First, are you hopeful of finding the leadership you need? Why or why not? Do you believe the scope of the project is still what God is asking you to do? Are the projects in the right order? How are you sensing the work of God in you personally and as a group? What do you believe God's Spirit wants to say to the group?

For this gathering, you will need all the writing pieces you have completed—the who, what, when, where, and why of the future NCD. You will need your Foundational Statement, your Mission Statement, and your Vision Plan. You will also need to download a copy of the CIF form from the PC(USA) website: <http://www.pcusa.org> and have enough copies for everyone. Don't try to do this online until you've completed a hard copy of it.

With these things in hand, we want you to do the following:

1. Fill in the CIF. You will have a CIF for each leadership position. Even if the staff position is volunteer or non-ordained, still go through the CIF (job description and interview process). Though the description of the project will be the same, each position will have its own title and skills/gifts/character section. Have a person assigned to do the final copy. Complete as much as you can together. You may need and/or ask for a member of Committee on Ministry (COM) to assist you in this.
  - a. Insert the work you did on the Mission Plan budgeting process.
  - b. You will also develop accountability relationships for each position, i.e. who reports to whom.
  - c. Before you are done, you will have decided who will be responsible for interviewing and calling forward the leadership needed. Again, you may not be looking for an ordained individual. You might have multiple processes.
2. Review the work you did on assessing human resources and raise up those you believe to be appropriately gifted to apply to be part of the leadership core. You may simply want to write their names down at this time and the positions you see them filling.
3. Find out all approvals needed from the Presbytery and obtain them.
4. Recruitment Plan: With the help of Committee on Ministry (COM), you need to devise a plan to recruit leaders:
  - Will you advertise the position(s) you've identified?

- Will you receive resumes?
  - Will PIFs (Personal Information Forms) be the norm or a different kind of application that asks the questions you want answered?
  - Do you want to find a primary leader and then have that leader become part of the recruitment team?
  - The tasks will be:
    - a. How to get the word out: PC(USA) website? Advertising? Word of mouth? Internet? All of the above?
    - b. What kind of application will be necessary?
    - c. What will the makeup of the interview team be? Who's in charge?
    - d. Are we recruiting one person, or a team, or one person to recruit a team?
    - e. Define compensation
    - f. Define accountability
    - g. Define job performance benchmarks
    - h. Other
5. Once the CIF and Recruitment plans are finished, make assignments for the next steps of soliciting applicants.
  6. What kind of assessment tool will you use once PIFs/resumes start coming in? Gallup has developed a Church Planter Assessment tool that is designed to help sift through candidates who are applying for a NCD position. It would be strongly advisable that you run all those who pass a first reading of their PIF/resume through this assessment PRIOR to talking to them. This will save your team time and money by saving you from interviewing someone who does not assess as a good NCD Pastor. The cost is \$75 per assessment. This is money well spent. To use Gallup call Sherry Britton at the Office of Church Growth (888) 728-7228 ext. 5247.
  7. It also strongly advised that once you have narrowed your list down to a couple of candidates, you send them through a more extensive assessment of their church planting skills. There are many groups that provide this service. Check [www.Presbygrow.net](http://www.Presbygrow.net) for these groups. Assessment, outside your team, is critical to the success of the new church. This is not a place to be cheap.

**Homework:**

Have each member write out a paragraph on what kind of training you would like the leadership to have as they begin this new church. Review “10 Interview Questions” in the appendix.

## Gathering Sixteen: Support

*This gathering will name the human, financial, spiritual, coaching, and oversight resources available and necessary for this new church.*

### Bible Study: 10 minutes

*Read: Acts 14:21-23*

*After (Paul and Barnabas) had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, 'It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.' And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. (NRSV)*

- What characteristics did the missionaries in this passage have?
- What were the circumstances for those in the new church?
- How were the new churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch coached for ministry?

*Pray:*

Remember that God gives us all we need to serve. And pray for the missionaries already “out there” whom God is preparing to serve in this new church development.

### Content: 60 minutes

Using your homework reflections about the leadership/specific missionaries required to start this new church, list together:

#### *Human Resources*

Positions needed for leadership:

- When does each position start?
- Are there any ordained positions that require a PNC?
- How many of the leadership positions already have people identified for them?
- What is the order in which leadership positions are filled?

Characteristics & skills of those leaders:

- Review the CIFs for each position
- Review the accountability relationships

Approvals:

- Has Presbytery approved the Mission Plan for the starting of a new church?
- Has Presbytery approved a process for hiring ordained positions?

#### *Financial Resources*

Review the budget from the Mission Plan

- What financial resources are already in place?
- What financial resources are yet to be raised?
  - Who is responsible for raising the remaining funds?
  - How will the remaining funds be raised?

#### *Spiritual Resources*

What intentional prayer support do you have?

Are your key leaders engaged in spiritual direction, prayer groups, or other spiritual support?

#### *Coaching Resources*

Who else will be needed to help resource the new church team?

Mentor? Expert? Counselor? Consultant? Community organizer? Professional coach? PC(USA) coach?

*Oversight Resources*

Who will encourage and support the team once it gets started?

Who will hold the team accountable, helping to discern and celebrate when “success” has taken place and when “it is time to shake off the dust?”

**Homework:**

Begin the leadership recruitment in your planned order

Start the ministry

Praise Jesus

## Appendix

### How to Choose a New Church Development (NCD) Discernment Team

It is the task of the group to discern God's leading among a particular people and/or place as the group considers beginning a new church in a new area. This is a process by which the team will not make a right or wrong decision but will discern the moving presence of God's Spirit. We believe that God goes before the team and the team, through the Spirit, moves to where God is moving.

#### How many members on the Discernment Team?

We would like to see a mix. People for the most part need to be either part of the community where we are seeking to plant a church or from one of the congregations nearby who are engaged in supporting the work. Hopefully, both. There needs to be a mixture of both lay and clergy participants. They may or may not become part of the new church. Pastors and staff from the supportive congregations can provide one or two names each for the Discernment Team.

#### Along with the commitment to discernment, what other qualities are needed to be part of the Discernment Team?

Experts say that in non-profit organizations, board members have to have two of the following three qualities: Work, Wisdom, and Wealth. We're not creating a board of directors, so instead of wealth, we suggest spiritual gifts and talents. Some of the specific gifts/talents will be things like writing, research, group organization, ability to engage others, time, language skills, communication skills, vision, faith. People need to bring two of the three: Work, Wisdom, and Gifts.

#### Who calls the Discernment Team together?

There needs to be a point person, one who convenes the team. If you are a church doing this, then it should be someone who is called by the pastor or the session or the mission committee. If you are a presbytery, then whoever is responsible for new church development should nominate the aforementioned.

#### Making the Invitation

We are not looking for people to simply "fill out" a committee. We are looking for highly skilled and highly motivated people. We are looking for Christian people. We are engaged in a spiritual task. This will take time, sacrifice, and faith. The invitation by the convener is to a 16 gathering process called "Starting a New Church." The guidelines for these gatherings are available at [www.PresbyGrow.net](http://www.PresbyGrow.net). The guidelines give a suggested process and schedule. We strongly suggest that the conveners familiarize themselves with the process before they extend an invitation to others to join in. We recommend the process include all 16 gatherings. When done, if we decide a new church is what God is asking of us, the team will have completed all the work needed for mission grants and to call the appropriate leadership for the new church.

#### Things to remember as the Discernment Team forms

- 1. Clear Expectations**-- Do team members know what is expected of their performance? Do they know the expected potential outcomes of their work together?
- 2. Clear Content**-- Do team members know why they have been included on the team? Does the team understand where its work fits in the total context of the presbytery's goals, principles, vision, and values?
- 3. Commitment**-- Again, make sure that people know the expectations of their participation up front. This is work. Joyful and creative work, but work nonetheless. Teams are supported when all involved make the time to be with each other.
- 4. Communication**-- Make sure all team members and the appropriate decision making bodies are clearly kept in the loop. There are junctures in "Starting a New Church" where you will be asked to communicate your accumulated work to all who need to know.
- 5. Questions**-- Ask for help along the way. The team doesn't have to go-it-alone!

(From the *12 C's of Team Building* by Susan M. Heathfield, <http://humanresources.about.com>)

## Appendix

### Essential Attitudes for the Journey

NCD Discernment Team members will need to share the following attitudes:

#### 1. An Expectation that God desires to guide us.

*The church's practice of discernment rests on God's identity as a self-revealing God, One who wants to be made known. Not elusive or capricious, the God who created us has not abandoned us but desires to be in an ongoing relationship with us. God loves us passionately and promises over and over again, "I will be your God; you will be my people." In the incarnation of Jesus Christ, we see how God feels and thinks and how God acts. In the Holy Spirit, who is the presence of the Risen Christ among us, we are promised a guide and companion who will show us the truth (John 16:13). Thus our practice of discernment is rooted in a belief in the Triune God who is present with us and will reveal what is needed for the church to be faithful.*

#### 2. A Willingness to Listen

*Recognizing that we are created in God's image and for fellowship with God, we believe we have an ability to hear and respond to God. Thus a basic capacity required for discernment is a willingness to listen, a readiness to be open to the inner and outer prompting of God's Spirit. Though we also have a capacity to deceive ourselves, we can trust the Spirit dwelling within us and within our sisters and brothers to help us remain honest, open, and alert.*

#### 3. A Commitment to Spiritual Practices

*Christians through the centuries have nurtured their capacity to listen to God by a variety of spiritual practices. Personal prayer, scripture meditation, silence, journal-keeping, spiritual direction, fasting, and corporate worship have all proven helpful. Beyond these individual practices, leadership groups who desire to find and follow God's current must also engage in communal spiritual practices as a way of nurturing the entire group's capacity to listen to God.*

#### 4. A Response of Obedience

*Because discernment is where prayer and action meet, it is necessary for those who listen to God to respond with obedience. After a group has done its best to discern God's way and has received a shared sense of God's leading, it can move forward with confidence. Even though the entire way may not be clear, the group can move toward the future, trusting that God will make further revelations or corrections as needed.*

(Information in italics is taken from "Discernment: A River Runs Through It" by Marlene Kropf, Congregational and Ministerial Leadership, Mennonite Church USA)

## Appendix

### Exploring Your Neighborhood: An Exegetical Walk

An exercise from Simon Carey Holt, *God Next Door: Spirituality and Mission in the Neighbourhood*. Brunswick: Acorn Press, 2007, 103-104.

The word *exegesis* literally means a *critical interpretation* and is commonly applied to the study of literature. As readers of the Bible, we exegete the text with a view to discerning its truth for our lives. In this exercise you're invited to undertake an exegesis—a critical interpretation—of your neighborhood. Through careful, sensitive, and critical observation, your task is to discern the truth of God's presence where you live. Quite simply, it's about reading your neighborhood as one of the primary texts of daily life—one through which God speaks.

To do this properly, you need to set aside two hours of uninterrupted time. Before you head out, think about how you define your neighborhood and how it's physically laid out. Draw yourself a map, including your own home, the basic street patterns, and any landmarks, shops, commercial or community buildings, schools, or parks. Be sure to include those boundary markers or natural borders that give your neighborhood definition. For some, the neighborhood will be larger than others. It's a very personal thing; no one else can define it for you. The only criteria are that it includes where you live and is walkable. Once you've got a rough idea in mind of what area to include, grab a notebook and pen and head off.

Be sure to include time along the way to stop, buy a drink somewhere, sit in a park or at a bus stop, linger outside public buildings or places of interest. There's no hurry.

Here's a list of questions to help you as you go:

1. As you stand just outside your house or apartment—by the front gate or on the sidewalk—what do you see as you look in each direction? What do you hear or sense? What activity do you notice?
2. As you walk the neighborhood, what do you notice about the architecture of the houses or apartment complexes? On average, how old do you think the houses or apartments are in this area? How much renovation or rebuilding is going on?
3. What do you notice about the front gardens or entrance ways to each of the houses or apartments? Does your neighborhood feel like a cared-for place?
4. How many houses or apartments for sale do you see? What indicators of transience do you observe? Does the neighborhood have a feeling of permanence or change?
5. Is there a freeway or major highway close by? If so, try and imagine this area before it existed. Who has gained or lost by its introduction?
6. Stop—sit if you can—in a tree-lined street or quieter spot and also at a busy intersection. What are the smells and sounds of the neighborhood? How quiet or noisy is it?
7. How many community or civic buildings do you see? What are their purposes? Do they look inviting? Well used? Deserted?
8. What public spaces are provided for children, teenagers, or adults? Are they being used? If so, in what ways?
9. If there is a local park, what do you notice about it? Does it feel like an inviting place? Who is there? How is it used?
10. Do you pass any churches or religious buildings? What does their design or appearance communicate to you?
11. What kinds of commercial buildings are there? Walk around a supermarket or local store and identify who makes up the clientele.
12. If your neighborhood includes a shopping area, is there provision made for people to sit, relax, relate?
13. Excluding the areas of business, how many people did you pass walking? What age, race, and gender are they? How pedestrian-friendly is the neighborhood?
14. Imagine yourself as an old, infirm person with no car, or as a young child living in the middle of this neighborhood. How disadvantaged or advantaged would you be with respect to shops, churches, parks, or schools?
15. What evidence is there of public transportation? Who uses it?
16. Are there places in your neighborhood that you wouldn't go? Why?
17. Where are the place of life, hope, beauty, or community in this neighborhood?
18. What evidence of struggle, despair, neglect, and alienation do you see?
19. What sense of connection do you feel to your neighborhood as you walk through it?
20. In what ways do you sense God's presence where you live?

## Appendix

### Site Visit Report

Complete this report in a reflective manner for each potential NCD site you visit. Notice as Jesus might notice. Ask for your eyes to become like Jesus' eyes. Offer your comments and try to avoid stereotypes. Really look for clues.

Who is there?

What are they doing?

What are they talking about?

What are their ages, genders, races?

What language are they speaking?

How are they dressed? Notice details: jewelry, shoes, hair styles, name tags, tech toys.

Can you imagine what they might do for work?

Do they live in the area? Work in the area?

Do they seem in transient?

Do they come and go as if they are on a tight schedule?

Is their manner leisurely?

What sounds do you hear in the distance?

What levels of car/bus/foot traffic do you observe?

Are there sidewalks? Street lights? Signage?

What do the people you're observing already have?

What do they need?

What else do you notice?

What is your visceral response to this site?

## Appendix

### **10 Interview Questions + 4 (to ask of potential new church leaders)**

1. What is your faith story?
2. Share an example of something you've started from dream to reality that went well.
3. Share an example of something you've started that did not succeed. What was the result? What did you learn?
4. Tell of a time when you were recruited to a team. What was your part?
5. Tell of a time when you've recruited a team. How did you utilize the members?
6. Tell of a time when you shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with someone outside the church. How did you tell them who Jesus is?
7. Give an example of how you organize your week and prioritize your time.
8. Tell us how you nurture your own spiritual life.
9. What aspects of ministry energize you?
10. Tell us of a disappointment in your personal life and how you handled it.
11. Tell of a relationship where you have been discipled. What was passed on to you?
12. Tell of a relationship where you discipled someone.
13. What would a missional lifestyle look like for you and those who would follow you?
14. If you could start any church, with unlimited financial and people resources, what would be your core values? What would a person see and experience when they visited?

## **Appendix**

### **Bibles Used**

- **MSG:** The Message, copyright ©1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved.
- **NSRV:** New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.
- **NIV:** Holy Bible, New International Version Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. All rights reserved.
- **NLT:** Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

**N**ew church development is not the implementation of successful models and techniques; it is the faithful discernment of God's leading and the faithful implementation of God's mission.

Starting a new church is not rocket science; it is much more complicated! A new church is the work of the Holy Spirit, which immediately puts this task way beyond our understanding.

“Starting New Churches” is linear, a series of 16 gatherings with assignments and steps that can take you from zero to a new church. Each of the 16 gatherings suggests a Bible study and an extended time of prayer. Unfortunately, starting a new church is not linear; it is organic, contextual, and based on relationships between God and people. It is reformed and always reforming.

We provide you with a process that addresses the key aspects of starting a new church and encourages you to listen to the sometimes still voice of God, rather than ours or anyone else's. While discernment does not guarantee success, we do believe it will help keep you focused on the one who starts new churches.

Only God knows what God wants to accomplish through you and the new church the Holy Spirit is placing on your heart. Trust God. Strive to be faithful rather than successful. Faithfulness brings a success beyond our imagination and wildest dreams.

As you proceed through these 16 gatherings, wrestle with the scriptures, listen and discern, fall on your knees in humility and wait for God's right time.

**Starting New Churches: A Process of Discernment is for:**

- Church Development Committees
- An existing church desiring to start a new church(es)
- An individual led to start a new church



This process includes a DVD and a Guidebook that outlines sixteen 90-minute gatherings that will take you and your committee from “The Big Picture” to “Support and Implementation.”

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