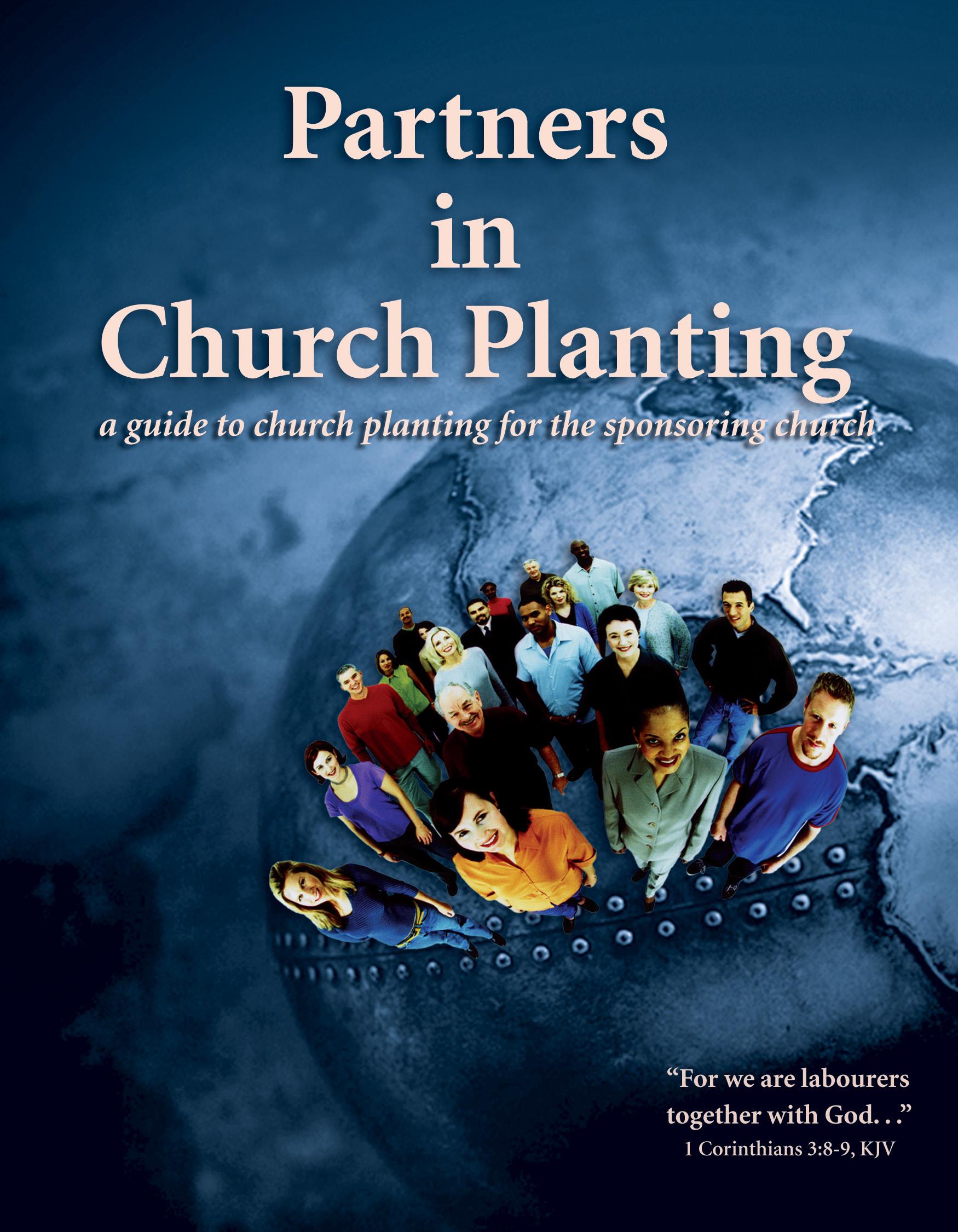
**Partners in** 

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# Marion Baptist Association

# Partners in Church Planting:

***a guide to church planting for sending and partner churches***

Marion Baptist Association

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Adapted from

Partners in Church Planting

Developed by Mentoring Team,

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**Introduction: Partners in Church Planting Needed!**

Church planting is a relational activity that is process-driven. As Southern Baptists, we are faithful at doing good things very well. It is easy to forget, however, that all the activities, programs, and ministries carried out in church life have only two missions: to make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20) and bring God's people into a growing, personal relationship with Him and a right relationship with one another (Matthew 22:37-39).

When we lose sight of this dual missionary mandate, our focus turns inward. If our focus remains on God and others, however, we will better understand our missionary mandate and why we must partner together to plant new churches. Jesus said, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18, NKJV). Jesus intended His people - the church - to be prevailers against Satan's strongholds. His plan is that the Great Commission is accomplished through disciple-making communities.

That is why you are reading this guide. You have begun the church planting journey and are now taking your next steps in becoming an effective partnering church. This guide and the supporting Partnering Church Resource is designed to help you find and take those next steps. It will help you define your church's role as a Primary Sponsor, Clustering Church, or Supporting Church. It will help you develop the knowledge and skills needed to plant or partner with a church plant that will become a healthy, cooperative, reproducing church. And it provides a step-by-step partnering process that is adaptable to any partnering church environment, no matter how large or how small the church.

**You may be asking…**

“Do I have to read everything in this notebook?” The answer is no. The guide is divided into three sections. Section One (Units 1-3) provides a basic understanding of why the church's place is church planting; the church planting process; what type of church planting partner you will become; the steps to a partner planting process; and how to reach diverse cultures. Section Two deals with the three types of partnering churches: Unit 4, the Primary Sponsor; Units 5-6, the Clustering Churches; and Unit 7, the Supporting Church. In this section, you will utilize only the unit(s) that relates to your partnering type. Section Three, the Appendices, provides Crucial and Supporting Mileposts for Units 4-7, and the resources and tools needed to complete them. Again, you will use only the appendices that fit your partnering type.

There are significant differences between planter-led, and sponsor church-led planting. In the planter-led plant, the planter and perhaps his planting team identify the ministry focus group, the core group, the church model, and the strategy used to plant the church. He or they usually raise the needed funds, and identify and enlist any planting partners that may be needed.

As a Primary Sponsor or Clustering Church, you will take the responsibility of carrying out these tasks. You may even begin planting the church before a planting pastor is called from within the church or enlisted elsewhere. In some cases, the planting pastor may be identified earlier in the process and becomes part of your Church Leadership Team. Openness and vision are critical for the partnering church, just as it is with the planting pastor.

You may become involved in church planting without serving as a Primary Sponsor or Clustering Church. Instead, you may choose to become a Supporting Church that provides prayer, resources, and/or people to help planting pastors to be more effective in their church planting endeavors.

“What's in it for me?” is a universal question asked by many people. As a partnering church, this probably will not be an issue because you value others before yourself. There are, however, very real benefits to being a partnering church. Among these are: development of new leaders and ministers, the fostering of new vision or greater clarity of God's desire for His church and church members, greater commitment of giftedness and abilities, a healthier and more vibrant membership, new reliance and faith in God's provision, the joy of seeing God's kingdom coming in power, and the excitement of experiencing what we thought was impossible.

Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NIV). That is what being a partner in church planting is all about, abiding in Christ and walking with Him among His lost creation.

As you take the next step and begin Unit 1, may you see more clearly God's vision of His kingdom multiplying with power through your community and the world because you have joined together with Him and others as partners in church planting!

**NOTE:**

Through the years, terms such as “sending,” “lead,” “primary,” “sponsoring,” “mother,” and “partnering” have been used to describe churches that have been directly involved in planting a new church.

In an effort to unify terminology, *Partners in Church Planting: A Guide to Church Planting for the Sponsoring Church* will use the words **Sponsoring** and **Partnering** interchangeably to describe any church involved in any way with church planting as a Primary Sponsor, Clustering, or Supporting Church.

As a partner, we recognize your need to use terminology consistent with your field of service. Feel free to customize this document in any way needed.

**Partners in Church Planting:**

**A Guide to Church Planting for the Sponsoring Church**

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# UNIT 1:

**WHY BE A CHURCH PLANTING PARTNER?**

**New Churches Are Needed**

Why do churches need to be involved in church planting? There are a number of reasons, and all of them are pressing reasons. First, our churches must acknowledge the lostness of North Central Florida, North America and the world. The Ocala / Marion metro area is home to nearly 390,000 people and is in the top 10 of the fastest growing metro areas in the United States.

North America in the Twenty-First century represents a great mission challenge. More than 220 million people in North America have not professed faith in Jesus Christ. This means North America is the third-largest mission field on Earth, after China and India. More than 50 percent of the children and youth in North America receive no biblical instruction of any kind. They are growing up to be biblically illiterate. They do not know the Bible truths and stories, and they do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

**The Biblical Basis for Partnering**

**Church Planting in the New Testament**

Church planting in the New Testament represents a fulfillment of Jesus' command/ prophecy in Acts 1:8. Jesus commanded His disciples to witness for Him in the power of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the whole world. In the book of Acts we read how the early church went about obeying Jesus' command. Basically, they spread the gospel through the Roman Empire by means of church planting. Jesus' words provided them with the plan, and the Holy Spirit provided them with the power necessary to complete the plan.

The planting of the Jerusalem church began with a small group of disciples with leadership modeled by Jesus himself. The apostles planted the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 2). The apostles and followers of Jesus prayed for 10 days in the upper room. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the apostles with great power, and they proclaimed the gospel with amazing boldness. When Peter invited the people to respond, more than 3,000 professed faith in Christ and followed Him in baptism. These 3,000 formed the early churches. This experience shows that all church planting efforts must be bathed in prayer.

The passage in Acts 2:42-47 helps us understand the nature and functions of the first church. Verses 42-47 tell us the believers devoted themselves to doctrinal teaching, fellowship, worship, group prayer, benevolence, and evangelism. The Lord blessed their efforts, and new people came to Christ daily (v.47). These verses lay out the seven basic functions of a New Testament church: prayer, worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and mission. The church in Jerusalem grew rapidly: 5,000 men were saved on Solomon's Portico in the Temple (Acts 4:4); multitudes believed (5:14); and even priests came to faith in Christ (6:7).

When Saul began to persecute the church, the believers were scattered throughout the Middle East (Acts 8:1). These ordinary believers proved to be effective witnesses and evangelists (8:4). Philip, a deacon, preached with great effectiveness in Samaria and planted a church there. Later, Philip made a preaching trip through Judea, establishing churches in the villages. Peter's understanding of God's grace was stretched when the Lord sent him to teach Cornelius and his household. Peter planted the first Gentile church in Cornelius' home. The scattered members from Jerusalem started Jewish churches in many places (11:19). In Antioch of Syria, the refugees from Jerusalem planted the first multi-ethnic church: a church that included both Jewish and Gentile converts (11:20-21). These passages teach us that regular followers of Christ can successfully plant new churches!

The church in Antioch became the great missionary church of the New Testament. Acts 13:1-3 tells how that came about. The leaders of the church were sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who instructed them to commission Barnabas and Saul as missionary church planters. The church leaders demonstrated their submission to the Lord by obeying Him and sending out two of their best workers. Church history recounts that the Antioch church grew to become one of the pillars of early Christianity. This passage teaches us that God blesses churches that send out their members to plant churches!

Saul (Paul) became one of the greatest itinerant church planters in Christian history. He and his missionary teams traveled through Asia Minor and Greece, planting churches. Normally, Paul began by preaching in the synagogue. There he had opportunities to speak to Jews, proselytes (Gentile converts to Judaism), and God-fearers (Gentile inquirers). Paul found his greatest response among the God-fearers. Although Paul started with synagogues, churches were planted in homes, schools and the marketplace.

Paul and his mission team concentrated their efforts on the great cities of the eastern Roman Empire. He understood that these urban churches would become seedbed churches, multiplying themselves throughout the surrounding provinces (Acts 19:10). This proved true, and Paul appointed pastor/elders from among the new believers to lead the new congregations (Acts 14:23). Paul's urban emphasis reminds us that we must not neglect the cities of North America and the world.

It is hard for many Christians to understand the nature of these New Testament churches. These were churches that met in private homes (Philemon 2). When Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus or Corinth, he was writing to a cluster of house churches in that city. Churches did not possess buildings until about 250 A.D., and there were not many church buildings until the time of Emperor Constantine (after 313 A.D.).

Paul set a good example for 21st Century church planters. Notice the characteristics of his ministry:

* He employed a team ministry (Acts 15:40).
* He returned to visit the new churches (Acts 15:41).
* He was guided by the Holy Spirit to church planting sites (Acts 16:9-10).
* He evangelized whole households (Acts 16:15,33).
* He taught in the marketplace (Acts 17:17).
* He adapted his message to his audiences (Acts 17:22-23).
* He ministered among responsive people (Acts 18:6).
* He started churches which began in homes (Acts 20:20).
* He encouraged his new churches in stewardship (1 Cor. 16:1-3).
* He preferred to do pioneer work (Rom. 15:20).
* He planted reproducing churches (Acts 19:10).
* He understood his calling (Rom. 1:1-5).
* He trained multiplying leaders (2 Tim. 2:2).
* He maintained contact with Antioch, his sending church (Acts 14:27).

Even a superficial study of these characteristics shows their applicability for church planters today. We should all pray that God would raise up Pauline church planters for North America and the whole world and churches to partner with them as they did with Paul (Ephesians 6:20, Philippians 4:14-19).

**Church Planting Partners in the New Testament**

At least four churches in the New Testament exemplify partnering in church planting. The first is the church at Antioch of Syria. That church demonstrated a great concern for the Greeks in their community. The congregation also showed their concern for the lost in Cyprus and Asia Minor when they commissioned Barnabas and Saul to be church planting missionaries. Their efforts in cross-cultural church planting made them the premier church planting church in the New Testament. They clearly believed God had called them to become a missionary-sending church, and they responded enthusiastically. They sent Paul out on three missionary journeys to plant churches.

A second church that deserves attention is the church at Thessalonica. First Thessalonians 1:8 (NKJV) reads: “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything”. The young church at Thessalonica took responsibility for evangelizing the people in their own province, Macedonia, and they also had begun work in Achaia, their neighboring province. Churches like the one in Thessalonica are needed today in North America.

The third commendable church is the church at Philippi. In Philippians 4:15-16 (NKJV), Paul praised them for their support of his church planting efforts: “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.” These verses show how much the Philippian Christians loved Paul and how committed they were to his church planting ministry. The next verse in the passage reveals the blessing that church planting partners receive: “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (Phil. 4:17, NKJV). In verse 18, Paul speaks of their financial support of his ministry as “a sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.” These verses help us understand two important truths: (1) churches that partner with church planting efforts get credit from God for the fruit of the church planting; and (2) their support of church planting is “well pleasing” to God. Clearly, churches can win God's favor by supporting and participating in church planting projects.

Fourth, the church at Ephesus is commended for fanning into flame a church planting movement that reached all of Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). After a failed start in the synagogue, the Ephesian church moved to a school. For two years, Paul trained disciples of Jesus in Ephesus who planted churches all over Asia Minor. The church at Colossae was planted by Epaphras, who was sent out from Ephesus, the Colossian church started the church at Laodicea, and so on. An explosion of church multiplication occurred in Asia Minor resulting in an entire province hearing the gospel. Jesus later commended the church at Ephesus for their hard work, but rebuked them for losing their missionary zeal. He even threatened to permanently remove the church from existence if they did not return to the first things (Revelation 2:5).

**The Great Commission and Partnership Planting**

There are actually four commissions given by Jesus and recorded in the gospels: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; and John 20:21. Still, when someone mentions The Great Commission, our thoughts go immediately to Matthew 28:18-20. This passage has great implications for church planting. In verse 18 Jesus gave His followers the authority to plant churches. Jesus spoke with the authority of the risen Lord. In effect, He deputized his disciples to act on his behalf to bring the world to faith. Thus, church planters go out in the authority of Jesus Christ.

Second, verse 19 clarifies the *assignment* that Jesus has given the church. Christ commanded the church to make disciples of all the ethnic groups of the world. Those who read the text in English would naturally think the imperative in the verse is “go,” but in the Greek text “make disciples” is the imperative. Jesus instructed his disciples to make disciples of the *panta ta ethne*. Most English translations render this Greek phrase as “nations,” but the word *ethne* is the word from which we get our English word, “ethnic.” So, Jesus really told them to make disciples of every ethnic group in the world.

Dr. Donald McGavran helped missionaries understand that nations are not cultural monoliths; rather, nations are made up of many ethic groups. This is especially true in North America. North America is like a mosaic made up of many different cultures. It is important to identify these ethno-linguistic groups and devise a strategy to evangelize each one. When Jesus mentioned baptizing and teaching, He emphasized the need to gather the new believers into congregations and teach them to become reproducing Christians. Clearly, Jesus had in mind establishing new congregations that would multiply.

Finally, Jesus gave his disciples a wonderful *assurance*–“I will be with you always.” Those who go out to plant churches, whether in North America or overseas, can be confident that Jesus accompanies them and empowers them.

The Great Commission challenges us to see our continent and our communities through the eyes of Jesus. He taught his disciples to minister to Samaritans, and that was a big step outside of their comfort zone. Jesus taught his disciples to minister to lepers, and that challenged their long-held prejudices. Jesus' encounter with the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5-13) demonstrated his concern for all people. As the nations of the world flow into the cities of North America, Southern Baptists are presented with an unprecedented opportunity to make disciples of many different ethnic groups, not to mention other population segments such as the deaf, migrant workers, and marginalized persons. Jesus challenged his disciples to look up and see the “fields white unto harvest.” Would that Southern Baptists could learn to see North America through the eyes of Christ.

**Partnership Church Planting in Baptist History**

In 1707, five small Baptist churches in the Philadelphia area joined together to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association. That association gave itself to establishing Baptist churches throughout the Middle Colonies. Usually, church planting was done by the church extension method; that is, an existing church would begin to hold services in a nearby town or hamlet. These extensions not only brought the gospel to new communities, they also provided fine training for novice preachers and church planters. In 1752, the Philadelphia Association sent John Gano, Benjamin Miller, Isaac Sutton, and John Thomas to Virginia to plant Baptist churches there. By 1766, the number of churches in Virginia had grown to the point that they organized their own association, the Ketockton Association.

Another colonial era association exemplifies the passion Baptists have for church planting. The First Great Awakening provided the spiritual impetus for evangelism and church planting throughout the colonies. Baptists supported the Awakening enthusiastically. Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall, and a congregation of Baptists settled at Sandy Creek, N.C., in 1755. This little church had a big impact on the South. Stearns and Marshall traveled all over North Carolina preaching the gospel. Within 17 years, the Sandy Creek Baptists had established churches as far west as the Mississippi River, as far south as Georgia, as far east as the Atlantic Ocean, and as north as the Potomac River. All in all, the Sandy Creek Baptists established 42 churches and ordained 125 ministers.

Many similar stories could be recounted. The point of this is that church planting is both biblical and baptistic. Church planting is in our Book and in our blood. It is integral to our nature.

**Planting Churches Cooperatively**

Cooperation is near and dear to the hearts of Southern Baptists. In fact, voluntary cooperation is the key to understanding Southern Baptist polity. Each Southern Baptist church is autonomous—self-governing under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Southern Baptist churches may decide to cooperate with other like-minded churches to engage in church planting. Churches working together can accomplish more than churches working individually. This is called synergy. Symbiosis, relationships of mutual benefit and/or dependence, adds a second dimension to cooperation. Synergy and symbiosis were two reasons for the adoption of the Cooperative Program in 1925. Through the Cooperative Program, churches are able to voluntarily pool their resources in order to do missions, education, and benevolent ministries.

Before the Cooperative Program was approved, Baptist institutions and agencies supported themselves by deploying agents to solicit money from the churches. This approach did not work very well, and many pastors called for a better system. Under the Cooperative Program each church decides to send a certain percentage of its undesignated income (or a fixed amount) to the Cooperative Program. Churches remit these funds to the state Baptist convention where an approved percentage is retained for the state convention's use, and the remainder is sent to the treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tenn. The convention treasurer then disburses the money among the convention's agencies, according to a formula approved by the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Much of the money sent to NAMB is budgeted for church planting projects. These projects are almost always partnerships. A local church, the local association, the state convention, and NAMB work together to fund and plant the new church. NAMB, the state conventions, and local associations are eager to enlist more churches as church planting partners. Such partnerships are in line with Southern Baptists' emphasis on cooperation, and they provide for synergy in church planting. Working together, we can accomplish much more than we could working separately.

One might ask the questions, “Is this system of cooperation biblical? Does it work?” In 2 Corinthians 8-9, the Apostle Paul discusses the offering he was gathering to help the Christians in Jerusalem, who were suffering because of a famine. Paul encouraged all the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to join together in giving to meet this pressing need. This is an excellent example of New Testament cooperation to meet a need. North America needs thousands of new churches. Will Southern Baptists cooperate to meet this contemporary need?

# UNIT 2: PREPARATION FOR THE PARTNERING PROCESS

**Setting Your Focus**

Now that you have understood and responded to God's invitation to join Him in the expansion of His kingdom through church planting, the following questions become critical:

* Among which people group or segment of the population is God inviting you to plant?
* Is God's call for your church to plant one church somewhere in the middle of that people group or population segment?
* Is it possible that the Father may be calling you to do whatever it takes for every lost person within that group or segment to be confronted with the gospel in a manner unique to their culture?
* Is it also possible that the results of such gospel saturation would lead to multiple churches being planted in that environment and beyond?

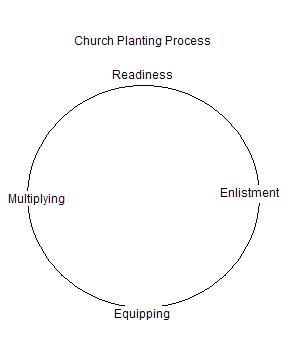
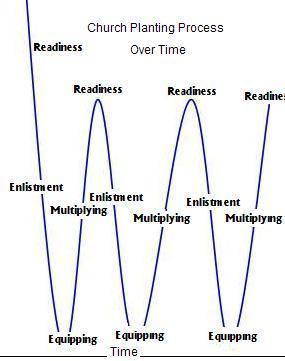
Because the lostness of North America and the world is so vast, the possibilities and opportunities for church planting are almost endless! In the Gospels, Jesus spoke of the harvest fields being ripe and ready for harvest. Some wheat fields are so vast and broad that you hardly know where to begin when it comes time to bring in the harvest. Furthermore, Jesus spoke of planting the gospel simultaneously in your own context and abroad (Acts 1:8). In short, the opportunities for church planting are so vast that it is overwhelming - sometimes to the point of frustration for some who then do not engage in church planting at all.

This reality points to the need to have a process that will assist you in planting the gospel and new churches in a manner which leads to multiplication. Was this not true in the Apostle Paul's ministry? As noted in the previous unit, Paul was very intentional in how he and his church planting team planted the gospel and new churches among multiple people groups in a multiplying fashion. Keep in mind Paul's missionary journeys as we discuss a guiding process for church planting.

**The Church Planting Process**

The process that we would like to recommend has four major components. These components are 1) Readiness; 2) Enlistment; 3) Equipping; and 4) Multiplication. The apostle Peter wrote about God that He is not willing that anyone perish, but that everyone would come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). If that is indeed true, can we be satisfied with anything less than reaching every person within every environment with the gospel of Jesus Christ? It is unlikely that planting one church will accomplish such a large task; but utilizing a process of church planting that intentionally includes multiplication in its very core could be used by God to bring spiritual awakening and a church planting movement to entire segments of the harvest.

The four components of the church planting process create an ongoing cycle of church planting reproduction. When carried out over time in partnership with the Father, the advancement of His kingdom can grow exponentially in the vast segments of lostness in North America and the world.



**Readiness**

What is involved in the preparation for planting a church? Is it even necessary to have a plan for sponsoring a new church? As Jesus interacted with large crowds that often followed Him, He taught them that they must first consider the cost of being a Christ-follower before they committed to doing so. Considering the cost calls for advance planning; and as Jesus taught, failure to plan could lead to disastrous results (Luke 14).

First, it is critical that you receive your call and plan for church planting directly from the Father. Jesus modeled such divine dependence for us (John 5). Hearing from and observing the activity of the Father first requires an abiding and intimate walk with Christ. Engaging in any church planting activities without such a divine dependence will result in temporal futility. However, Jesus taught that while abiding in Him, much eternal fruit would be yielded - all to the glory of the Father (John 15).

Other critical tasks that are included in the component of readiness include:

* Gaining and understanding key principles and values that will under gird and guide you in all of your church planting approaches and activities.
* Developing a comprehensive prayer strategy that will:
  + Express continual dependence upon the Father
  + Seek His guidance and empowerment prior to and in the midst of church planting activities
  + Intercede for the lost to receive God's salvation
  + Provide a spiritual covering for the church planting team and its partners as they engage in the spiritual warfare of piercing the darkness and reducing the lostness among the people to whom God will call you
* Gaining a thorough understanding of the people with whom God has called you to make disciples and plant churches. This understanding needs to be gathered through people group-focused methods of research that will assist you in understanding how your selected people group experiences and interprets the world in their own environment. Such knowledge will assist you in knowing how to best plant the gospel and new churches in a manner that will result in healthy reproducing churches.
* Drafting a strategy plan that describes the vision, values, means, and methods that God has revealed to you for planting the gospel and new churches among the people group to whom God has called you.
* Evaluating the health and readiness of your church through Natural Church Development.

**Enlistment**

To enlist literally means to secure the support and aid of another. The single most important partnership is that with the Father. Furthermore, King Solomon instructed us that two are better than one, for they receive a better return for their labor (Ecclesiastes 4:9). The apostle Paul modeled this principle in his ministry by employing church planting teams, thus multiplying their kingdom impact and activities. As stated in the previous unit, Southern Baptists have a solid history of voluntary cooperation in the task of the Great Commission. As you are faithful to pray to the Lord of the harvest for fellow laborers as Jesus instructed, you will be amazed at how God begins to raise up His children - called to carry the gospel and plant churches among the pockets of lostness in the land.

A comprehensive enlistment strategy should be made up of many components. Who are your potential partners to assist your church in sponsoring one or more church plants?

Here are just a few types of people and organizations that you may want to consider:

* Great Commission believers from within your own congregation
* Other Southern Baptist and evangelical churches where you are and/or where you will be planting new churches
* Marion Baptist Association
* Florida Baptist Convention
* North American Mission Board
* Lifeway
* Friends and family of those on the planting team in particular
* New believers from out of the harvest
* Others . . .

Some portions of your strategy to which people and organizations will need to be enlisted will include:

* Prayer
* Evangelism
* Church planting team (church planters)
* Worship
* Logistics and planning
* Support (financial)
* Others . . .

The utilization of non-clergy church planters and planting team members insures the largest potential pool of planters available to resource your church plant(s). Furthermore, utilizing “lay” church planters and planting team members from your own congregation is consistent with the principle that God will place believers with divinely appointed giftedness within a church to resource their ability to carry out His purpose for that specific church. If God is calling your church to be a partnering church in church planting, it is entirely probable that God has already gifted and placed believers within your own church to carry out the tasks necessary for planting. This is certainly the first place that every partnering church should look for planting team members.

The most obvious pool from which to enlist assistance is existing believers. However, do not miss the pattern modeled by Jesus to immediately involve new believers from out of the harvest in evangelistic outreach. The gospel accounts of the woman at the well (John 4) and the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5) reveal how God used the testimony of a changed life and relationships with lost people to bring many to Himself. Utilizing new believers in evangelistic church planting activities can be an impetus to exponential multiplication of the gospel and church planting.

When enlisting key personnel in your church planting strategy, assessment tools can be used to determine a person's spiritual giftedness, experience, and skill sets related to church planting. This has proven to be very beneficial to the overall success and effectiveness in the implementation of church planting strategies.

**Equipping**

Equipping relates to the nurturing and training of people to become on-mission doers of the word. Partnering churches, planters, and planting team members must be equipped to be effective in church planting. Church plants with which intentional training and mentoring have been utilized have proven to be healthier, more effective, and have higher survival rates.

This Partners in Church Planting Guide provides individual and clustered churches the resources and skills needed to become partners together in the planting of new churches. It is designed as a self-directed guide to partnership planting, with consultants available to work with churches needing that next level of support.

As you work through this guide, you will find that your association and state convention leaders have multiple resources and training processes that have been developed to support the equipping needs portion of the church planting process. Each of these resources has been developed to assist the partnering church, the church planter, and those that work with them in the task of early-stage church planting from pre-launch to 24 months. Some of the training items covered in these resources are:

* Training church planter coaches
* Skill development for church planters
* Spiritual preparation for church planting • Strategy development for specific church plants
* Partnering for churches clustering together for church planting
* Strategy development to help a church plant move forward

**Multiplication**

Multiplication in the church planting process describes the ongoing effect of existing and new churches which have the DNA of continual reproduction of new believers and new churches. In recent decades, the church-to-population ratio in North America has continued to widen farther and farther even with the multiple thousands of new churches planted each year. If the church is to fulfill the commission given her by the Lord Jesus, it must come to the point where every believer is involved in some part of the church planting process and every local church is a planting church.

**Types of Partnership Planting**

After considering all that is involved in the church planting process, you may have a better understanding of the role to which God has called your church in church planting. Partnership in church planting happens in at least at three ways as described in this guide.

If your church is new to church planting, and you are somewhat overwhelmed by the actions laid out in the church planting process above, you may want to consider leading your church to act as a Supporting Church. A church with a commitment to be a Supporting Church can have a positive and very important impact in a church planting partnership. No matter what the level of activity, the impact can encourage the Primary Sponsor or Clustering partners, the planter and the new church plant. It also can provide valuable ministry on the church planting field and can model ways for other churches to invest in the church planting process.

If your church has previous experience in church planting and/or if you feel that your church could co-lead in the development, implementation, and support of a church planting strategy along with one or more other committed partners, then you may want to consider leading your church to act as a Clustering Church. Clustering Churches are churches that choose to join with other churches to plant a new church. Clustering Churches fall into three types. These variations describe the church's involvement in a cluster partnership.

1. A church that works alongside a Primary Sponsor to support the new work through financial, physical, and/or personnel resources
2. A church that works equally with other Clustering Churches to develop the strategy and plant a new church through a Cluster Leadership Team (CLT)
3. A church that works alongside a church planter to support the new work through financial, physical, and/or personnel resources

It may be that your church is confident that God is calling you to take the lead in planting the gospel and new churches among a particular people group in a specific environment. If this is true, then you may want to lead you church to act as a Primary Sponsor.

For further assistance in determining your level of partnership, consider the questions below:

1. **Can we support through an activity or project another church that is planting a new church?** • If yes, answer question 2. • If no, answer question 4.
2. **Can we work with other churches to plant a new church?** • If yes, answer question 3. • If no, you may desire to serve as a Supporting Church. After completing Unit 3, you may go directly to Unit 7.
3. **Can we lead in the planting of a new church?** • If yes, your church may desire to serve as a Primary Church. After completing Unit 3, you will want to read Unit 4. • If no, your church may desire to serve as a Clustering Church. After completing Unit 3, you may go directly to Unit 5.
4. **Can we design and implement an ongoing prayer strategy and provide one-time support for a specific new church plant?** • If yes, you are a Supporting Church. After completing Unit 3, you may move directly to Unit 7.

Welcome to the world of church planting and seeing your world changed by the power of God!

**The Role of Leadership in Partnership Church Planting**

The Merriam Webster dictionary describes the primary definition of the verb to lead as: to guide on a way especially by going in advance; to direct on a course or in a direction; to serve as a channel for. The task of partnering in church planting is one which requires sound leadership within the partnering church. In most cases, this role is personified, at least in part, by the pastor of the partnering church. However, successful partnership in church planting will require shared leadership in the church plant by way of a church planting team.

The above definition alludes to several roles of leadership. The first is the role of leading by example. The role of the pastor of a partnering church in church planting is critical. While the pastor may not be have the ability to participate in much of the implementation of the church planting strategy, there ought to be no one in the partnering church that is more passionate about the vision that God has given for kingdom building through church planting. The exemplary passion of the pastor is often caught and reproduced in the church planting leadership team and the church body.

The second role of leadership identified is that of giving direction. As indicated above, shared leadership in the process of planting a church is critical. In their book *Spiritual Leadership*, Henry and Richard Blackaby describe the role of a spiritual leader in part as the responsibility to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be. It is entirely possible that anywhere from a dozen to several hundred believers will be involved in some manner in your church plant. Broad participation necessitates wise coordination.

The third role of leadership identified is that of serving as a channel within which activities can occur. Effective leadership sets and defines appropriate boundaries in which team members can operate. It will rest on the sponsor church pastor and the church planting leadership team to determine and communicate such boundaries with all who are enlisted to participate in any manner in the implementation of the church planting strategy. Such clarity will create an atmosphere in which called and gifted on-mission believers and entities can serve the Lord in a positive and rewarding manner.

There is a principle illustrated throughout Scripture: God will always provide all of the resources necessary for obeying His call and His commands. As previously stated in this unit, it is entirely probable that God has already placed within your church the leaders needed for the church planting leadership team. These may be on-mission believers that serve in key roles in your current ministry structure or potential leaders who are being developed. Whichever is the case, the leadership base of your existing church will be expanded as you begin to implement your church planting partnership.

The ultimate leader is Jesus. He always watched the activities of the Father in order to know what He was to do and where He was to do it. His mission was to seek and to save the lost and to serve others. In so many ways, including leadership, He left us an example that we should follow in His steps. Let's pray that the Father will enable us to lead like Jesus.

# UNIT 3: PLANNING FOR THE PARTNERING PROCESS

**The Need for Planning**

It is not uncommon for questions to be raised about planning in church life. Why should you plan and prepare for church planting? If reproducing is natural, doesn't it just happen? Our theology moves us to walk by faith and trust God for our every need. So why should we bring what some consider secular methods into spiritual work? There are two reasons: First, planning is both a biblical and spiritual activity; and second, history has proven that good planning and implementation are critical to success.

In Luke 14:28-33, Jesus gives an example of planning. In His example, we are building a tower and we plan well its design, engineering, and fabrication. This is done so that the cost can be fully known.

Jesus also talks about a king who must go to war. He goes through the planning process so that he knows for sure he has enough men and supplies to win the battle. Both stories talk about the importance of planning to make sure we reach the desired future, the vision God has given us.

Another question often raised is, “If we are going to rely on planning to plant churches, where does God fit into the process? Do we rely on ourselves rather than Him?”

The answer is an unequivocal “No, we do not rely on ourselves!” The vision, resources, and manpower used to plant churches all belong to God and we are to be good stewards of them, using them appropriately to fulfill His desires. As stewards, therefore, we have the responsibility to use the gifts God has given us for planning, preparing and planting new churches. Therefore, not planning and preparing after praying is not exercising genuine faith. (James 2:17)

Proverbs 13:16 says, “A wise man thinks ahead; a fool doesn't and even brags about it!”(TLB) It seems fairly obvious that Solomon believed planning was important to God and should be to us. He also said in Proverbs 21:31, “Go ahead and prepare for the conflict, but victory comes from God.” (TLB)

Planning and faith go hand in hand. Everything of value and worth comes from God. He gives it because of the orderliness and value He has placed in His world and in us. We are to use God's resources to plan and prepare for church planting.

Planning for partnership planting may begin with only the pastor and/or key lay leader as the vocal advocate for church planting. This Partners in Church Planting Guide encourages the leader or leaders to design their planting strategy around teams (the Prayer Team, Church Leadership Team, Cluster Leadership Team, and Church Planting Team), each with one or more team members.

The milepost process presented next is a tool for planning and implementing a church planting strategy through a simple, highly effective process. As you proceed remember that, as Wayne Gretzsky said, “100% of the shots you don't take don't go in.” If we are not willing to expend the energy and time it takes to develop effective plans, healthy churches will not be planted and those who would have been reached by them may never know the Savior who died for them.

**Planning for the “Planting Process”**

As you continue your journey into church planting, an inevitable question will be raised: “How will we accomplish what God has called us to do?” As the saying goes, “This is where the rubber meets the road.”

To help answer the question, “How will we accomplish what God has called us to do?” think in terms of a vacation trip. List on a sheet of paper the things you need or must do in order to arrive at your vacation destination.

As you look at your list, you may see things like: get the car checked out, get gas, get travelers checks, get someone to take care of the dog, get someone to watch the house, stop mail delivery, pack bags, pack car, and so on. Below is another way to show this list.



When we analyze the list, we begin to see common elements and recognize that some activities are more important than others. If we arrange by common elements and emphasize the very important elements, it takes on a different appearance.











It becomes obvious that not only are there other things that must be decided or done, but these decisions have an impact on other activities.

When I fill in the missing pieces, a more complete and easier to use plan takes shape. There are more activities but because the exercise shows everything that is necessary for a fun and anxiety-free trip, it is simpler and easier to accomplish.











Look at this example; notice that the top green notes describe major (crucial) activities. If we don't do these, we will not have a good trip and maybe not even be able to go. The other notes are all important but probably will not affect the trip as dramatically if not fully completed.

As we analyze both examples, it becomes obvious that planning the trip was very important and doing it graphically creates a highly usable tool. Identifying England as our destination eliminated the need to get the car checkup, but it did create an urgent need to check our passports for their validity. Dates of travel were needed to enlist sitters for the house and dog, and to stop mail delivery. Packing the car became unnecessary, but transportation to the airport had to be found.

Although there is one more crucial (green) note and three more supporting (yellow) notes in the final example, this tool makes planning and implementing the trip much easier and less prone to error and forgetfulness.

This type of planning process is referred to as the milepost process. It describes the church planting journey and the mileposts you will pass as you fulfill the vision of planting a new, healthy, cooperative, reproducing church. During the journey, there will be crucial mileposts. If you miss these, chances are the new church will struggle or not survive.

This prospect should not hinder you from pursuing the goal of church planting. It just highlights the necessity of good planning. By understanding the crucial and supporting mileposts needed to reach the desired planting outcome, the task becomes significantly easier to manage and far more likely to successfully accomplish that outcome.

In the following section, you will be introduced to the milepost process and how to implement your church planting process using this tool.

**Planning Using the Milepost Process**

**Mileposts** are the result of actions. They identify completed actions of projects, activities, or tasks. As such, they are written in past tense. Some examples are: prayer strategy implemented, demographics obtained, or Church Leadership Team enlisted and trained. (Notice in our example we use past tense. To check it off as done, it should be written in past tense.)

Using this motif, when all actions connected with a milepost are completed, the milepost can be checked off as having been accomplished. This helps the Church Leadership Team and Planting Team measure progress made over time. A review of completed mileposts provides an affirmation of progress and the completion of crucial (green in the examples) mileposts becomes an occasion for celebration.

**Crucial Mileposts** are those mileposts that must be achieved or a healthy church probably will not be planted, or at best struggle to survive. There may be 100 mileposts to accomplish before the new church is launched, but only a few will be crucial mileposts.

**Supporting Mileposts** are mileposts that support the completion of crucial mileposts. They specify a process, project, or specific task that needs to be done. Unlike crucial mileposts which must be completed for effective planting to be achieved, supporting mileposts are more flexible and adaptive. Failure to completely achieve a supporting milepost seldom derails the planting process.

After all crucial mileposts and supporting mileposts are identified:

* Arrange crucial mileposts in logical sequence.
* Place supporting mileposts under or beside their crucial milepost in a relational sequence.
* Identify, calendar, budget, and assign detailed actions to complete each milepost.

The appendices of this guide provide basic supporting mileposts for each crucial milepost found in Units 4 through 7. These are presented in table form (see example). When an action, calendar, budget, and person or team responsible for each milepost has been identified, a strategic plan is produced that guides the Leadership Team or Cluster Leader Team, and the Planting Team through every phase of the planting process.

Appendix X**: Crucial Milepost Posted Here**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supporting Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
| **Supporting Milepost 1 posted here** |  |  |  |  |
| **Supporting Milepost 2 posted here** |  |  |  |  |

Effective mileposts will exhibit the following characteristics:

* They will be consistent with the church's vision, values, mission statement, and church system design.
* They will be realistic in terms of time projections and sequence.
* They will show a steady flow of relationship between mileposts (no gaps).

This milepost process is not fixed in concrete but can be adapted to any size church or church planting need.

Feel free to mold and adapt the milepost process to fit your church planting needs. Although the identified crucial mileposts designated for your church planting type will be needed by almost every church, the supporting mileposts may be customized for each individual partner church.

If you have not already done so, it is important for you or the church to decide the type of partnering church (Primary, Clustering, or Supporting) it will become. Units 1 through 3 were designed to help you make this determination. The church then utilizes only those portions of this guide that pertains to that partnering type (Primary, Clustering, or Supporting).

Here are three preliminary steps and eight milepost steps that will help you begin your church planting journey.

**First Steps for the Partnering Church**

* Contact your MBA Associational Mission Strategist and share your decision
* Develop and implement a prayer strategy for partnership planting (Appendix 1).

**Steps in the Milepost Process**

1. Identify crucial mileposts that are needed to effectively partner with other partners and the new church plant. Write those that are listed in the guide and others you may identify on larger Post-it™ Notes.
2. Arrange the crucial mileposts in a process-oriented sequence. Place them in this logical sequence on large easel pad paper. 3.
3. Identify the supporting mileposts that are needed to accomplish each crucial milepost. Write each of these on small Post-it™ Notes.
4. Arrange each of your supporting mileposts under or alongside its related crucial milepost in logical sequence on the easel pad paper. NOTE: Continue adding supporting mileposts until all gaps and/or missing tasks are included.
5. For each supporting milepost, identify the tasks that must be completed.
6. By placement, and by using lines and dotted lines, identify actions that are dependent on other actions.
7. Project a realistic time line to accomplish the crucial mileposts. NOTE: Remember these are time projections subject to change. You are not driven by the calendar.
8. Identify needed personnel, budget, and other resources to accomplish each task.

**Being Fluid and Adaptive but Focused**

A Note of Caution: You, as a partnering church, may provide a core group for the new church. This is appropriate when the planting team is able to understand cross-cultural issues or it is made up of members from the same ethnic group. Otherwise, cultural conflict will be a real liability. The need is to be sensitive to the possibility of conflict and to contextualize efforts as fully as possible.

The greatest obstacle to this process is paternalism. Paternalism is when a partnering church intentionally or unintentionally clones itself within the new plant, regardless of the differences between the congregations. The new church is molded into a form that is culturally inappropriate for the community. Such churches usually do not grow and are ineffective in reaching the unchurched group.

What will the new church look like? What will they do? How will they be organized? How will they reach the lost community with the message of Christ? These and many other questions must be answered by Primary Sponsor Churches or Clustering Churches. The answers must be shared with others who partner with them in the planting process. As a partnering church, you must be fluid and adaptable while being focused on God's truth and the culture He has called you to reach.

**Harvest Church - Ocala, Florida**

Planting Church Milepost Exercise Examples

# UNIT 4: CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR THE PRIMARY SPONSOR CHURCH

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appendix 1  Appendix 2  Appendix 3  Appendix 4  Appendix 5  Appendix 6  Appendix 7  Appendix 8  Appendix 9  Appendix 10  Appendix 11 | As we explore the crucial mileposts for the Primary Sponsor Church, remember if crucial mileposts are not achieved, the church plant will probably not be successful. If it does survive the beginning stages, it will normally be stunted in its growth far into the future.  As you read through the crucial milepost descriptions, remember there are several supporting mileposts that should be completed in order to accomplish each crucial milepost. These are identified in the left-hand column of this unit and can be found in the appendix of this guide.  As you work with the crucial and supporting mileposts, notice how they fit into the Church Planting Process. For example, Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partner Church fits under enlistment (signed up). However, in order to accomplish this, there are supporting mileposts that fit into readiness or enlistment. As you work through each milepost, determine where it fits in the Church Planting Process.  **Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partnering Church**  Congratulations on your commitment to partner with a new church in the process of evangelizing and congregationalizing a people group or a community. Your commitment as a partner is not only to those you seek to reach but as a partner with God. As Paul writes, “For we are laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). At this point, the church, or some authorized body, has taken action to officially commit to the process of church planting, but the commitment milepost may not be achieved.  While building a climate for church planting, some specific actions may need to be taken to:   1. Contact MBA to request church planting and church health (NCD)consultations. 2. Strengthen awareness for the need for church planting 3. Get all church staff and ministry leadership on board 4. Achieve total church buy-in to the task of planting the new church.   Normally for this to happen, a point person must be identified to lead the process. If this is someone other than the pastor, the pastor must give full and unqualified support to the planting process. During this time, the church might benefit from a church health assessment. An NCD church health assessment can be requested through Marion Baptist Association.  **Crucial Milepost 2: Prayer Strategy Implemented**  As the church is building the climate for and commitment to church planting, they must realize they are entering a new level of spiritual warfare. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV), “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”  Because of this fact, the church needs to develop and implement a prayer strategy that will guard and guide them through the planting process. This strategy will focus on calling out the laborers to be involved in the church planting activity, and will seek the Spirit's leadership in cultivating the new field as well as convicting and converting new believers.  The church must consider who needs to be involved in the prayer ministry of the church, which prayer activities can be planned and conducted, and what resources could be brought to bear on the planting process.  **Crucial Milepost 3: Church Leadership Team Trained and Deployed**  The Primary Sponsor Church's leadership should consider expanding now from a point person to a church Leadership Team (LT). It may be that a survey needs to be taken of the members to identify those with giftedness and passion for church planting. Those selected to serve on the Leadership Team need to understand that their role at this point in time is to lead the church through the process of identifying the ministry focus group and preparing the church's strategy to plant a church. **CR U A L M I L E P O S T S F O R T H**  Enlist a Leadership Team to nurture and relate to the church planting effort. A church should select its Leadership Team members based on:   1. Prayerful seeking of God's guidance 2. Specific church planting needs the church will address 3. Commitment and giftedness of team members 4. Matching time frame of need and availability of team members 5. Procedure of selection and affirmation used within the church   Prayer should be the foundation by which the Leadership Team is selected. The specific church planting needs and needed capabilities addressed by the church provides the framework for prayer. God's plan for the church, the church plant, and the lives of His people direct these efforts.  In enlisting the Leadership Team, giftedness should be recognized. This may be an opportunity to utilize individuals in new ways. The commitment a potential worker is willing to give to the church planting effort is a key early indicator if they will fulfill their responsibility.  Since church planting requires a high time commitment for an extended period, some workers may have to step down from a current responsibility to do the work well. This opens places for new workers to step up and fill the newly vacated positions, thus providing an opportunity to expand the leadership base of the church.  The church should follow its normal procedures for selecting and affirming workers. It may be necessary to add other team members as the strategy for the church plant progresses and unanticipated needs are recognized.  To be effective, the team members need training in the church planting process. The Leadership Team also needs to develop a communication plan within the church family and with their association and state partners.  **Crucial Milepost 4: Ministry Focus Group and Place Identified** Sometimes when a church commits to plant a church, the commitment is to see a church planted in a specific location or among a targeted people group. But this is not always true-some churches make a commitment and then seek God's direction on who or where. In either case, the church needs to do some study to understand more clearly who and where.  The Leadership Team needs to develop a household profile for the ministry focus group. In addition to this household profile, they need to understand the world view of the ministry focus group. This information will be used in three ways. First, the Primary Sponsor needs to consider issues surfaced in the previous chapter on cultural diversity and how that will impact the relationship between the Primary Sponsor and the new plant.  Second, the Leadership Team may need to be reconfigured or expanded to give greater sensitivity and include persons from the ministry focus group background.  Third, the Leadership Team needs to process all this information in the development of a church planting strategy.  Some of this will be done by studying demographic, lifestyle, and church/religious background information. Other parts of this can only be done by interviewing people in the community. Demographic and psychographic data is available from Greater Marion Baptist Association. Your church Associational Mission Strategist will be available to assist you in interpreting the data.  At this point, the Primary Sponsor Church needs to do some pointed evaluation. One question that needs to be answered is, “Can we proceed in this planting project without additional long-term assistance?” If the answer is yes, the church proceeds to Crucial Milepost 5.  If the answer is no, the church needs to enlist other churches to form a cluster of partnering churches. This may take one of two tracks. On the first track, the partnering cluster churches are enlisted to become part of a cluster to assist the Primary Church in carrying out its planting strategy. The Leadership Team will continue with Crucial Milepost 5 for the Primary Church while connecting with the Clustering Churches (see page 5, Critical Milepost 8, and Appendix 10).  On the second track, the church moves from a Primary Sponsor to a Clustering Church. Other equal Clustering Churches are enlisted and the planting strategy is laid on the table for the cluster members to evaluate. Turn to Unit 5: Crucial Mileposts for the Clustering Church and continue developing the Church Planting Cluster. Notice that the work done previously is still valuable and many of the crucial and supportive mileposts will have already been achieved.  **Crucial Milepost 5: Planting Team Enlisted and Equipped**  Armed with the household profile, the foundational strategic documents, and the church and leadership profiles, the Leadership Team decides what type of Church Planting Team would be the best for this church plant: a volunteer planting team, a vocational planter and volunteer team, or a team organized as a church staff.  Many times the church planting church will begin with a volunteer team made up of members from within the church who will begin the new church by a variety of small group ministries (maybe an extension Sunday School), or community ministry evangelism projects. Some Primary Sponsors commission a staff member to become the church planter for the new church, fund his salary for a specific period of time, and allow him to enlist members from within the church to go out with him as planting team or core group members. Occasionally, some or all of the Leadership Team becomes part of the Church Planting Team (CPT).  **Bear in mind that effective lead church planters typically share common characteristics. Before seriously considering a church planter candidate, request that a church planter assessment be completed by NAMB and Florida Baptist Convention.**  **Crucial Milepost 6: Planting Strategy Developed by Planting Team**  The Planting Team begins developing the planting strategy by reviewing the household profile and world view study. From these, the Planting Team develops the foundational strategic planning components that include a vision, core values, and a mission statement for the new church.  From the household profile and the foundational planning document, the Planting Team develops the profile, a system design for the new church, and a growth projection. The final component of the planting strategy is the development of mileposts by the completion of a milepost exercise (much like the steps you are following here) for the first year of the church plant.  **Crucial Milepost 7: Planting Resources Secured**  Not every church plant is the same. Based on the strategy, what resources will be needed? Resources include such things as teaching, ministry, evangelism, and worship resources. Regardless of initial launch location, what type of furnishing or office equipment might be needed? What media equipment will be needed such as sound, video presentation, lights and aesthetics? Will any additional financial resources be needed for the new church? If the ministry focus group has another language, what materials are available in that language?  Again, answer the question, “Do we need one-time or short-term help to provide these resources?” If the answer is yes, then complete Crucial Milepost 8. If the answer is no, then turn to Crucial Milepost 10: Planting Strategy Implemented.  **Crucial Milepost 8: Supporting Churches Enlisted**  As the Leadership Team begins securing the needed resources, it may become evident that not all of them will be available from within the church or planting cluster. At this point, the Leadership Team may decide it will be necessary to enlist other churches to help support the new work.  Here are the basic steps. It is important to identify specific needs or resources that the church or cluster churches cannot provide. From these, the Leadership Team can develop a prospectus describing the vision for the church plant and the needs related to planting the new church. This prospectus provides the tool for presenting the vision and needs to perspective Clustering and Supporting Church partners.  As the partnerships develop, the Leadership Team must clarify the expectations of becoming a partner and how the partnership will work together. Unproductive conflict is usually caused by miscommunication or no communication of expectations. Good communication provides a solid foundation for a covenant that defines the working relationship between the Leadership Team and the planting partner.  **Crucial Milepost 9: Coordination Strategy Implemented**  For the partnership to grow strong and healthy, it is imperative for the Leadership Team to provide open and timely communication about plans, activities, and needs. This is best done through a coordination strategy developed by the Leadership Team and a point person from each of the partners. This plan provides the means for communicating the planting needs and for identifying which partners will meet those needs.  The strategy also should provide a means for calendaring when each resource will be provided and which partner will be responsible for completing each action. Complete and timely communication between the Leadership Team and each partner is very important. This facilitates the best and most effective partnerships, and outcome for the new church.  **Crucial Milepost 10: Planting Strategy Implemented**  From the church planting strategy, the Leadership Team (on behalf of the church) hands off implementation to the Church Planting Team. The Leadership Team then relates to the Church Planting Team in behalf of the church. The Leadership Team may enlist mentors for Church Planting Team members, provide training, maintain communication, and lead in evaluation of implementation of the church planting mileposts.  **From this point on, the role of the Primary Sponsor diminishes as the new church begins to mature. The role of the Sponsor Church is “mothering without smothering.” Your church can provide some much needed assistance in the early stages of the new work such as:**   * **Opening a bank account and training the finance team** * **Obtaining liability insurance** * **Incorporation and 501©3** * **Use of office space and equipment**   **Crucial Milepost 11: Strategy Evaluated and Adjusted**  Through this relation, the Leadership Team and Church Planting Team evaluate and adjust the strategy to index their learning and prepare the church for the next planting opportunity. |

# UNIT 5:

**CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR THE CLUSTERING CHURCH**

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| --- | --- |
| Appendix 1  Appendix 2  Appendix 3  Appendix 12  Appendix 14  Appendix 18  Appendix 19 | **Clustering Churches are**… churches that choose to join with other Great Commission churches to more effectively make disciples.  **A clustering church is…** a church that works equally with other Great Commission churches to develop disciple making strategy and plant new churches.  **Cluster Leadership Team (CLT) is...** composed of representatives of clustering churches. The CLT’s responsibility is to:   * Develop and carry out the church planting strategy * Enlist, train and deploy the Church Planting Team * Support the CPT as it develops and implements the specific church planting strategy for its context.   **Introduction**  The strength of a partnership comes from each partner doing their part and contributing from their own abilities for the benefit of a common purpose. There is a healthy interdependence among the member churches in the cluster. The pathways of churches joining the cluster vary. Some may be enlisted by another church. Some may be enlisted by an associational or state convention leader, or through a Multiplying Church Network (MCN) experience. Others may be enlisted by a strategic missionary or church planter. Regardless of the path taken into the cluster, the partners focus on planting a specific church once they are committed to the cluster.  As we explore the crucial mileposts for a Clustering Church, remember, if crucial mileposts are not achieved, the church plant will probably not be completed so it will be stunted in its beginning and initial growth.  As you read through the crucial milepost descriptions, remember there are several supporting mileposts that should be completed in order to accomplish each crucial milepost. Crucial mileposts are listed in the left-hand column of this unit and in the appendices of this guide.  As you work with the crucial and supporting mileposts, notice how they fit into the Church Planting Process. For example, Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partner Church fits under enlistment (signed up). However, in order to accomplish this, there are supporting mileposts that fit into readiness or enlistment. As you work through each milepost, determine where it fits in the Church Planting Process.  **Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partnering Church** Congratulations on your commitment to partner with a new church in the process of evangelizing and congregationalizing a people group or a community. Your commitment as a partner is not only to those you seek to reach but as a partner with God. As Paul writes, “For we are laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). At this point, the church, or some authorized body, has taken action to officially commit to the process of church planting, but the commitment milepost may not be achieved.  While building a climate for church planting, some specific actions may need to be taken to:   1. Strengthen awareness of the need for church planting 2. Get all church staff and ministry leadership on board 3. Achieve total church buy-in to the task of planting the new church   Normally for this to happen, a point person must be identified to lead the process. If this is someone other than the pastor, the pastor must give full and unqualified support to the planting process.  **Crucial Milepost 2: Prayer Strategy Implemented**  As the church is building the climate for and commitment to church planting, it must realize it is entering a new level of spiritual warfare. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV), “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”  Because of this fact, the church needs to develop and implement a prayer strategy that will guard and guide them through the planting process. This strategy will focus on calling out the laborers to be involved in the church planting activity, and will seek the Spirit's leadership in cultivating the new field, and convicting and converting new believers.  The church needs to think about who needs to be involved in the prayer ministry of the church, what are the prayer activities that can be planned and conducted, and what resources could be brought to bear on the planting process.  **Crucial Milepost 3: Church Leadership Team Trained and Deployed**  The church's planting leadership needs to expand now from a point person to a Church Leadership Team (LT). It may be that a survey needs to be taken of the members to identify those with giftedness and passion for church planting.  Each church participating in a cluster will have its own leadership team to nurture and relate to the church planting effort. Each of the local churches will select their leadership team members based on:   1. Prayerful seeking of God's guidance 2. Specific church planting needs the church will address 3. Commitment and giftedness of team members 4. Matching time frame of need and availability of team members 5. Procedure of selection and affirmation used within the church   Prayer should be the foundation from which the church leadership team is selected. The specific church planting needs and needed capabilities addressed by each cluster church provide the framework for prayer. God's plan for the church, the church plant, and the lives of His people direct these efforts.  In enlisting workers, giftedness should be recognized. This may be an opportunity to utilize individuals in new ways. The commitment a potential worker is willing to give to the church planting effort is a key early indicator if they will fulfill their responsibility.  Since church planting requires a high commitment of time for an extended period, some workers may have to step down from a current responsibility to do the work well. This opens places for new workers to step up and fill the newly vacated positions, thus providing an opportunity to expand the leadership base of the church.  The church should follow its normal procedures for selecting workers. It may be necessary to add other team members as the strategy for the church plant progresses and unanticipated needs are recognized.  The Leadership Team of a Clustering Church works under the coordination of the Cluster Leadership Team (CLT) or the church planter. The Leadership Teams engage with the church plant as the overall church planting strategy is implemented on the field. It is important to clarify each team's role and order of activities or projects. Each team will have a specific task or series of tasks, but no team works in isolation from the other teams. The church planting strategy guides the functioning of the teams.  To be effective, the Leadership Team members need training in the church planting process. The Leadership Team also needs to develop a communication plan within the church family and the association and state partners.  **Crucial Milepost 4: Cluster Leadership Team Members Identified** Churches participating in a planting cluster will determine the number of persons needed in the Cluster Leadership Team. Each church involved as an equal clustering partner will elect one or more persons (depending on the number needed) to the Cluster Leadership Team. These members represent their individual church on the Cluster Leadership Team and act as a line of communication in their respective church.  **Crucial Milepost 5: Planting Resources Committed**  Not every church plant is the same. Based on the planting strategy, the Cluster Leadership Team will determine what resources will be needed and communicate that need to each clustering or supporting partner through their team members. These may include such things as teaching, ministry, evangelism, and worship resources.  The Cluster Leadership Team will also choose an initial launch location, the type of furnishings or office equipment, and the type of media equipment that will be needed such as sound, video presentation, lights, and aesthetics. They will also determine if any additional financial resources are needed for the new church. If the ministry focus group has another language, the Cluster Leadership Team will identify what materials are available in that language. The crucial mileposts of the Cluster Leadership Team will be developed in Unit 6.  Clustering Churches, working through their Cluster Leadership Team member and their individual Leadership Team, will negotiate the division of the needed resources and commit to providing them at the time and place they are needed.  **Crucial Milepost 6: Partnership Planting Activities Begun**  Each Clustering Church should prepare through their Leadership Team to provide their resource efforts at the proper time and in the proper sequence. The church planting strategy will serve as their guide. However, always remember that flexibility in church planting is essential.  Those who will take part in the activities will need to be informed of when, where, and how to contribute. Prior equipping and orientation for the workers may be needed to acquire or review needed skills.  The coordination of activities should be done by the Cluster Leadership Team, church planter, or designated leader. As activities are completed, the results should be communicated to the Cluster Leadership Team for evaluation, follow-up, and any adjustments to the strategy.  **Crucial Milepost 7: Partnership Planting Activities Evaluated** During the implementation phase of the planting strategy, the Cluster Leadership Team will evaluate the progress being made by the new church. Each Leadership Team should evaluate the results of programs, activities, and projects in which they participate and communicate those evaluations to the Cluster Leadership Team through their representative(s). |

# UNIT 6:

**CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR THE CLUSTER LEADERSHIP TEAM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appendix 13  Appendix 4  Appendix 6  Appendix 5  Appendix 7  Appendix 10  Appendix 11  Appendix 8  Appendix 9 | **Introduction**  There is a healthy interdependence among the member churches in the cluster. This interdependence is developed and enhanced by the work of the Cluster Leadership Team (CLT). This team is responsible to develop and carry out the church planting strategy, and enlist, train, deploy, and support the Church Planting Team's (CPT) activities. Good, two-way communication between the Cluster Leadership Team and the Clustering Churches is critical.  As you read through the crucial milepost descriptions, remember there are several supporting mileposts that should be completed in order to accomplish each crucial milepost. The crucial mileposts are listed in the left-hand column of this unit and can be found in the appendices of this guide.  As you work with the crucial and supporting mileposts, notice how they fit into the Church Planting Process. For example, Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partner Church fits under enlistment (signed up). However, in order to accomplish this, there are supporting mileposts that fit into readiness or enlistment. As you work through each milepost, determine where it fits in the Church Planting Process.  **Crucial Milepost 1: Cluster Leadership Team Trained and Deployed** Churches should follow their normal procedures for selecting and affirming their Cluster Leadership Team (CLT) member(s). It may be necessary to add other Cluster Leadership Team members as the strategy for the church plant progresses and unanticipated needs are recognized.  To be effective, the Cluster Leadership Team members need training in the church planting process. They also need to develop a plan for communicating with member churches and with MBA. All partners in the cluster should be given regular updates on the progress and needs related to the church plant.  The Cluster Leadership Team should meet regularly. The frequency of meetings would be as often as needed. Once a month would be a minimum level for meeting, with more frequent meetings occurring on a flexible and adjustable basis. The Cluster Leadership Team will select one of its members to moderate and/or serve as a point person for the Cluster Leadership Team meetings.  **Crucial Milepost 2: Ministry Focus Group and Place Identified** Sometimes when churches join together as a cluster and commit to plant a church, the commitment is to see a church planted in a specific location or among a targeted people group. But this is not always true; some churches make a commitment and then seek God's direction on who and/or where. In either case, the church needs to do a study to understand more clearly who and where to plant the church.  The Cluster Leadership Team needs to develop a household profile for the ministry focus group. In addition to this household profile, the Cluster Leadership Team needs to understand the world view of the ministry focus group. This information will be used in three ways. First, the Cluster Leadership Team needs to consider issues surfaced in the previous chapter on cultural diversity and how these issues will impact the relationship between the partners and the plant.  Second, the Cluster Leadership Team may need to be reconfigured or expanded to give greater sensitivity and include persons from the ministry focus group's background.  Third, the Cluster Leadership Team needs to process all this information in the development of a church planting strategy.  Some of this will be done by studying demographic, lifestyle, and church/religious background information. Other parts of this can only be done by interviewing people in the community.  **Crucial Milepost 4: Planting Team Enlisted and Equipped**  Armed with the household profile, the foundational strategic documents, and the church and leadership profiles, the Cluster Leadership Team must decide what type of Church Planting Team (CPT) would be the best suited for this church plant: a volunteer planting team, a vocational planter and volunteer team, or a team organized as a church staff.  Many times the Primary Church will begin with a volunteer team made up of members from within a church(es) who will begin the new church by a variety of small group ministries (maybe an extension Sunday School), or community ministry evangelism projects. Some Primary and Clustering Churches commission a staff member to become the church planter for the new church, fund his salary for a specific period of time, and allow him to enlist members from within the churches to go out with him as a planting team or core group members. Occasionally, some or all of the Cluster Leadership Team becomes part of the Church Planting Team.  At this point the Cluster Leadership Team needs to do some pointed evaluation. One question that needs to be answered is, “Do we need additional short or long-term assistance?” If the answer is yes to long-term assistance, then the Cluster Leadership Team needs to enlist other churches into the cluster. If the answer is yes to short-term support, the Cluster Leadership Team needs to enlist Supporting Cluster partners. See Crucial Mileposts, appendices 10 and 11, for help in enlisting Supporting Churches.  If the answer is no, the Cluster Leadership Team should communicate with partnering cluster churches and other field partners about specific prayer and resource needs related to the church planting strategy and the focus group.  **Crucial Milepost 4: Planting Strategy Developed byPlanting Team**  The Planting Team begins by reviewing the household profile and world view study. From this, the Cluster Leadership Team begins to develop the foundational strategic planning components that include vision, core values, and a mission statement for the new church. From the household profile and the foundational planning components, the Cluster Leadership Team develops the profile for the new church and a growth projection. The final component of the planting strategy is the completion of a milepost exercise for the first year of the church plant.  **Crucial Milepost 5: Planting Resources Secured**  Not every church plant is the same. Based on the church planting strategy, what resources will be needed? These include such things as teaching, ministry, evangelism, and worship resources. Regardless of initial launch location, what type of furnishings or office equipment might be needed? What media equipment will be needed such as sound, video presentation, lights and aesthetics? Will any additional financial resources be needed for the new church? If the ministry focus group has another language, what materials are available in that language?  The Cluster Leadership Team must decide what resources are needed and then communicate and coordinate with clustering partners, supporting partners, and their field partners the procurement of these resources. It is important that all critical resources be committed before the church planting strategy is initiated.  Again, the Cluster Leadership Team must ask the question, “Do we need one-time or short-term help to provide some of these resources?” If the answer is yes, then complete the supporting partner Crucial Milepost 10. If the answer is no, the Cluster Leadership Team verifies that all needed resources are available and moves to Crucial Milepost 6 to implement the planting strategy.  **Crucial Milepost 6: Supporting Churches Enlisted**  As the Cluster Leadership Team begins securing the needed resources, it may become evident that not all of them will be available from within the church or planting cluster. At this point, the Cluster Leadership Team may decide it will be necessary to enlist other churches to help support the new work.  Here are the basic steps in this process. It is important to identify specific needs or resources that the church or cluster churches cannot provide. From these, the Cluster Leadership Team can develop a prospectus describing the vision for the church plant and the needs related to planting the new church. This prospectus provides the tool for presenting the vision and needs to prospective clustering and supporting churches.  As the partnerships develop, the Cluster Leadership Team must clarify the expectations of becoming a partner and how the partnership will work together. Unproductive conflict is usually caused by miscommunication or no communication of expectations. Good communication provides a solid foundation for a covenant that defines the working relationship between the Cluster Leadership Team and the planting partner.  **Crucial Milepost 7: Coordination Strategy Implemented**  For the partnership to grow strong and healthy, it is imperative for the Leadership Team to provide open and timely communication about plans, activities and needs. This is best done through a coordination strategy developed by the Leadership Team and a point person from each of the planting partners. This plan provides the means for communicating the planting needs and for identifying which partners will meet those needs.  The strategy also should provide a means for calendaring when each resource will be provided and which partner will be responsible for completing each action. Complete and timely communication between the Leadership Team and each partner is very important. This facilitates the best and most effective partnerships and outcome for the new church.  **Crucial Milepost 8: Planting Strategy Implemented**  The Cluster Leadership Team (on behalf of the churches) hands off the planting strategy to the Church Planting Team. The Cluster Leadership Team then relates to the Church Planting Team on behalf of the cluster and partnering churches. The Cluster Leadership Team may enlist mentors for Church Planting Team members, provide training, maintain communication, and lead in evaluation of implementation of the church planting mileposts.  **Crucial Milepost 9: Planting Strategy Evaluated and Adjusted**  Through this relation, the Cluster Leadership Team and Church Planting Team evaluate and adjust the strategy to index their learning and prepare the church for the next planting opportunity. **CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR** |

# UNIT 7:

**CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR THE SUPPORTING CHURCH**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appendix 1  Appendix 2  Appendix 3  Appendix 17  Appendix 11  Appendix 18  Appendix 19 | **Introduction**  A church with a commitment to be a Supporting Church can have a positive and very important impact in a church planting partnership. No matter what the level of activity, the impact can encourage the Primary or Clustering partners, the planter and the new church plant. It also can provide valuable ministry on the church planting field, and can model ways for other churches to invest in the church planting process. It is important to recognize the crucial mileposts that must be achieved by the supporting partner church.  As you read through the crucial milepost descriptions, remember there are several supporting mileposts that should be completed in order to accomplish each crucial milepost. The crucial mileposts are listed in the left-hand column of this unit and can be found in the appendices of this guide.  As you work with the crucial and supporting mileposts, notice how they fit into the Church Planting Process. For example, Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partner Church fits under enlistment (signed up). However, in order to accomplish this there are supporting mileposts that fit into readiness or enlistment. As you work through each milepost, determine where it fits in the Church Planting Process.  **Crucial Milepost 1: Committed as a Partnering Church**  Your commitment to partner with other churches and a new church in the process of evangelizing and congregationalizing a people group or a community is greatly needed and appreciated. You have committed to partner not only with the partnering church(es), the new church plant, and to those they are seeking to reach, but also with God. As Paul writes, “For we are laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). At this point, the church, or some authorized body, has taken action to officially commit to the process of church planting, but the commitment milepost may not be achieved.  While building a climate for church planting, some specific actions may need to be taken to:   1. Strengthen awareness for the need for church planting 2. Get all church staff and ministry leadership on board 3. Achieve total church buy-in to the task of planting the new church   Normally for this to happen, a point person must be identified to lead the process. If this is someone other than the pastor, the pastor must give full and unqualified support to the planting process. During this time, the church might benefit from a Natural Church Development health assessment.  **Crucial Milepost 2: Prayer Strategy Implemented**  As the church is building the climate for and commitment to church planting, they must realize they are entering a new level of spiritual warfare. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12, NKJV, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”  Because of this fact, the church needs to develop and implement a prayer strategy that will guard and guide them through the planting process. This strategy will focus on calling out the laborers to be involved in church planting activities, and will seek the Spirit's leadership in cultivating the new field as well as convicting and converting new believers.  The church needs to consider the following questions:   * Who needs to be involved in the prayer ministry of the church? * What are the prayer activities that should be planned and conducted? * What resources could be brought to bear on the planting process?   **Crucial Milepost 3: Church Leadership Team Trained and Deployed**  As a Supporting Church, planting leadership needs to expand from a point person to a Church Leadership Team (LT). It may be that a survey needs to be taken of the members to identify those with giftedness and passion for church planting. Those selected to serve on the Leadership Team need to understand that their role is now to lead the church through the process of identifying how they can partner with a Primary or Clustering Church(es), or with a church planter.  Each Supporting Church will have a Leadership Team to nurture and relate to the church planting effort. A church should select its leadership team members based on:   1. Prayerful seeking of God's guidance 2. Specific church planting needs the church will address 3. Commitment and giftedness of team members 4. Matching timeframe of need and availability of team members 5. Procedure of selection and affirmation used within the church   Prayer should be the foundation from which the church Leadership Team is selected. The specific church planting needs and needed capabilities addressed by the Primary Church or Clustering Churches provide the framework for prayer. God's plan for the church, the new church plant they are supporting, and the lives of His people direct these efforts.  In enlisting the Leadership Team, giftedness should be recognized. This may be an opportunity to utilize individuals in new ways. The commitment a potential worker is willing to give to the support effort is a key early indicator if they will fulfill their responsibility.  Since church planting requires a high commitment of time for an extended period, some workers may have to step down from a current responsibility to do the work well. This opens places for new workers to step up and fill the newly vacated positions, thus providing an opportunity to expand the leadership base of the church.  The church should follow its normal procedures for selecting and affirming workers. It may be necessary to add other team members as the strategy for supporting the church plant progresses and unanticipated needs are recognized.  To be highly effective, the team members should be trained in the church planting process. The Leadership Team also needs to develop a communication plan within the church family and the association and state partners.  **Crucial Milepost 4: Supporting Resources Secured**  Not every church plant is the same. Based on the strategy, the Primary Church or Clustering Church will determine what resources will be needed. Resources include such things as teaching, ministry, evangelism, and worship resources. Regardless of initial launch location, what type of furnishings or office equipment might be needed? What media equipment will be needed such as sound, video presentation, lights and aesthetics? Will any additional financial resources be needed for the new church? If the ministry focus group has another language, what materials are available in that language? What ministries, activities, and/or projects need to be done to ensure success?  As the Supporting Church's Leadership Team communicates with the Primary Church's Leadership Team or Cluster Leadership Team (CLT), they will identify and commit to the particular support efforts and resources that can be provided. The Supporting Church will commit to providing these efforts and/or resources by what ever means their church polity designates.  **Crucial Milepost 5: Coordination Strategy Implemented**  Since the Church Planting Team will be implementing most of the strategy for the church planting partnership, it is essential that the partner churches have a coordination strategy. The Supporting Church's Leadership Team assumes a role of relating to the Primary Church's Leadership Team, the Clustering Churches' Cluster Leadership Team, or the Church Planting Team on behalf of the Supporting Church. The Supporting Church and the church plant need to provide regular feedback for the Supporting Church to maintain a positive and healthy relationship.  **Crucial Milepost 6: Partnership Planting Activities Carried Out**  “Sooner or later, every great plan degenerates into a bunch of hard work,” remarks Veryl Henderson, Executive Director of the Pacific Baptist Convention of Hawaii. No partnership will be complete until the partnership activities are carried out. Whatever your church has set out to do - to conduct a mission trip, to pray, to collect an offering - do it as unto the Lord. Trust God to take your careful preparation and efforts and turn them into a constructive labor for the kingdom.  **Crucial Milepost 7: Partnership Planting Activities Evaluated**  Upon completing of the activity, the Leadership Team should evaluate the partnership activities and plan future activities to build upon past accomplishments and lessons. **CRUCIAL MILEPOSTS FOR THE SUPPORTING CHURCH** |

# UNIT 8:

**APPENDICES OF CRUCIAL AND SUPPORTING MILEPOSTS**

**Overview of Milepost Process**

**Mileposts** are the result of actions. They identify completed actions of projects, activities, or tasks. As such, they are written in past tense. Some examples are: prayer strategy implemented, demographics obtained, or Leadership Team enlisted and trained.

Using this motif, when all actions under the milepost are completed the milepost can be checked off as having been accomplished. This helps the Leadership Team and planting team measure progress made over time. A review of completed mileposts provides an affirmation of progress and the completion of crucial mileposts becomes an occasion for celebration.

**Crucial Mileposts** are those mileposts that must be achieved or a healthy church probably will not be planted, or at best struggle to survive. There may be 100 mileposts to accomplish before the new church is launched, but only a few will be crucial mileposts.

**Supporting Mileposts** are mileposts that support the completion of crucial mileposts. They specify a process, project, or specific task that needs to be done. Unlike crucial mileposts which must be completed for effective planting to be achieved, supporting mileposts are more flexible and adaptive. Failure to completely achieve a supporting milepost seldom derails the planting process.

After all crucial mileposts and supporting mileposts are identified, the crucial mileposts are arranged in logical sequence. Supporting mileposts are then placed under or beside their crucial milepost in a relational sequence. After crucial and supporting mileposts have been arranged, detailed actions to complete each milepost must be identified, calendared, budgeted, and assigned. The appendices of this guide provide basic supporting mileposts for each crucial milepost found in Units 4 through 7. These are presented in table form (see example below). When an action, calendar, budget, and person or team responsible for each milepost has been identified, a strategic plan is produced that guides the Leadership Team or Cluster Leadership Team and the planting team through every phase of the planting process.

Appendix X**: Crucial Milepost Posted Here**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supporting Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
| **Supporting Milepost 1 posted here** |  |  |  |  |
| **Supporting Milepost 2 posted here** |  |  |  |  |

Effective mileposts will exhibit the following characteristics:

* They will be consistent with the church's vision, values, mission statement, and church system design.
* They will be realistic in terms of time projections and sequence.
* They will show a steady flow of relationship between mileposts (no gaps).

This milepost process is not fixed in concrete but can be adapted to any size church or church planting need. Feel free to mold and adapt the milepost process to fit your church planting needs.

For small and mid-sized churches, a church planting consultant may prove very valuable. This consultant will walk through the Church Planting Process with church leadership and provide guidance as needed. Consultants are normally provided free of charge, but you should consider providing travel and/or a stipend for their services. To engage a church planting consultant, contact your associational office or your state convention's mission or church planting group.

As your church proceeds, it will decide the type (Primary, Clustering, or Supporting) of partnering church it will become. Units 1 through 3 are designed to help you make this determination. The church then utilizes only those portions of this guide that pertain to that partnering type (Unit 4 for Primary, Units 5 and 6 for Clustering, or Unit 7 for Supporting).

To use the crucial and supporting mileposts listed below, utilize the following steps in the Partnering Church Milepost Process:

1. Contact your associational or state convention office.
2. Enlist a church planting consultant if needed.
3. Identify crucial mileposts that are needed to effectively partner with other partners and the new church plant. Write those that are listed in the guide and others you may identify on larger Post-it™ Notes.
4. Arrange the crucial mileposts in a process-oriented sequence. Place them in this logical sequence on large easel pad paper.
5. Identify the supporting mileposts that are needed to accomplish each crucial milepost. Write each of these on small Post-it™ Notes.
6. Arrange each of your supporting mileposts under or alongside its related crucial milepost in logical sequence on the easel pad paper. NOTE: Continue adding supporting mileposts until all gaps and/or missing tasks are included.
7. Under the supporting mileposts, identify the tasks that must be completed. NOTE: By placement, and by using lines and dotted lines, identify actions that are dependent on other actions.
8. Project a realistic time line to accomplish the crucial mileposts. NOTE: Remember, these are time projections and are subject to change. You are not driven by the calendar. Identify needed personnel, budget, and other resources to accomplish each task. **APPENDICES OF CRUCIAL AND SUPPORTING MILEPOSTS**

**Appendix 1: Committed as Partnering Church**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Leadership covenant signed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Awareness of need for church planting strengthened |  |  |  |  |
|  | Total church buy-in procured |  |  |  |  |
|  | Official church action taken |  |  |  |  |
|  | Finances and ministry resources for preparation committed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Vision for church planting embraced |  |  |  |  |
|  | Participation by all church ministries and staff committed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Contacted state and associational leadership |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication with community and churches of intention established |  |  |  |  |
|  | Leadership group agreement to plant articulated |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church health assessed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Planting consultant identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Point person identified |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2: Prayer Strategy Implemented**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Prayer leadership identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Role of prayer in developing new work understood |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer needs identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Regular prayer time established |  |  |  |  |
|  | Resources for prayer discovered |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer strategy developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Plan for involving others in praying process developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer activities identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer strategy initiated |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication process determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Answered prayers tracked and communicated |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 3: Church Leadership Team (LT) Trained and Deployed**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Church members survey on interests in church planting completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church Leadership Team enlisted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church LT leader selected |  |  |  |  |
|  | Roles and responsibilities for team determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needed training determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Basic Training attended |  |  |  |  |
|  | Training completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communicate plan with church and partners determined |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 4: Ministry Focus Group and Place Identified**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Activity communicated to state and association |  |  |  |  |
|  | Community profile data gathered |  |  |  |  |
|  | Geographic area defined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ministry focus group identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Focus group profile developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Focus group worldview study completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Person(s) of peace identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication with church partners of results established |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 5: Planting Team Enlisted and Equipped**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Ministry focus profile reviewed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church planter profile reviewed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Core values, vision, strategy, and covenants reviewed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church planter recruited and equipped |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church Planting Team members identified, recruited, and equipped |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church Planting Team covenanted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Enlistment piece developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Elements needed for training determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needed basic training elements completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Mentors enlisted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Weekend retreat/Straight Street Study completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Basic Training completed |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 6: Planting Strategy Developed by Planting Team**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Community profile and world view study reviewed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Core values and vision developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Mission Statement developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | New church profile developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Leadership profile developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church planter profile developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Growth and budget projected |  |  |  |  |
|  | Partnership covenants updated |  |  |  |  |
|  | Mileposts for church planting team developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication with association and state established |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 7: Planting Resources Secured**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Available internal resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needed external resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Volunteer needs determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Partner churches identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Association partners contacted |  |  |  |  |
|  | State partners contacted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Core group enlisted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Volunteers enlisted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Financial resources secured |  |  |  |  |
|  | Location secured |  |  |  |  |
|  | Equipment secured |  |  |  |  |
|  | NAMB resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Availability of language resources determined |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 8: Planting Strategy Implemented**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Church planting mileposts established and begun |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needed ministry leaders identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ministry leaders enlisted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ministry leaders equipped |  |  |  |  |
|  | Regular planting Leadership Team meetings begun |  |  |  |  |
|  | Regular Church LT and Planting LT evaluations begun |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evangelism strategy implemented |  |  |  |  |
|  | Workers identified, enlisted, and equipped |  |  |  |  |
|  | Updated internal communication plan in place |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 9: Planting Strategy Evaluated and Adjusted**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Evaluation of resources supplied by Supporting Churches completed by point person |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evaluation of resources supplied by Cluster partners completed by point person |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evaluation of actions taken by CPT completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evaluation of current new church statistics completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evaluation compared to Vision, Values and Mission statement completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Recommendation completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Recommendations implemented |  |  |  |  |
|  | Date for next evaluation calendared |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 10: Supporting Churches Enlisted**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Church planting needs identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Characteristics of potential partner churches identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Vision and partnering prospectus completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Vision and proposal presented to potential partner |  |  |  |  |
|  | Expectations clarified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Partnership covenant agreement signed with evaluations scheduled |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication plan for partners implemented |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 11: Coordination Strategy Implemented**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Point persons identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needed resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Resources to be provided by Supporting church established |  |  |  |  |
|  | Calendar coordination completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Supporting actions and calendar communicated with LT/CLT |  |  |  |  |
|  | Actions or resource support evaluated |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 12: Cluster Leadership Team Members Identified**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Number of team member needed for CLT determined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer for CLT members given |  |  |  |  |
|  | Clustering Churches CLT members selected |  |  |  |  |
|  | Names of selected CLT member communicated |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 13: Cluster Leadership Team Trained and Deployed**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Vision and core values developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Roles and responsibilities defined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Relationships clarified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Decision making process defined |  |  |  |  |
|  | Covenant developed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer strategy developed |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 14: Planting Resources Committed**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | LT or CLT needed resources communication received |  |  |  |  |
|  | Available resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Resources for CPT communicated |  |  |  |  |
|  | Resources implemented |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 15: Committed as a Supporting Church**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Church leadership’s support for church planting established |  |  |  |  |
|  | Leadership covenant signed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Awareness of need for church planting strengthened |  |  |  |  |
|  | Official action by the church taken |  |  |  |  |
|  | Point person identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | State and associational leadership contacted |  |  |  |  |
|  | Communication plan implemented |  |  |  |  |
|  | Covenant with Primary Church or Cluster Churches completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Announced intention to community and other churches |  |  |  |  |
|  | Coordination implemented |  |  |  |  |
|  | Finances and ministry resources committed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church planting activities begun |  |  |  |  |
|  | Church planting activities evaluated |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 16: Church Planting Taskforce Deployed**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Church members surveyed for interests related to church planting |  |  |  |  |
|  | Task force selected |  |  |  |  |
|  | Task force trained |  |  |  |  |
|  | Task force roles clarified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Goals and timeline set |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 17: Supporting Resources Secured**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Needed resources identified |  |  |  |  |
|  | Needs communicated to clustering and supporting churches |  |  |  |  |
|  | Commitment of resources received |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 18: Partnership Planting Activities Carried Out**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Activity coordinated with Primary or Clustering Church(es) |  |  |  |  |
|  | Personnel secured |  |  |  |  |
|  | Activity with CPT implemented |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 19: Church Planting Activities Evaluated**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **** | Milepost | Responsible Person | Date Assigned | Date Due | Cost |
|  | Evaluation of activity with CPT completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Evaluation of activity by LT completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Report to church by LT completed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Recommendations completed |  |  |  |  |