

Creating Your Ministry Action Plan

Charting a M.A.P. for Missional Ministry



**NEW CHURCH
EVANGELISM**

**Church of the Nazarene
Global Ministry Center
Lenexa, Kansas**

Creating Your Ministry Action Plan by Jim Dorsey

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Dedicated to

Rhonda, Rachel and Lydia,

who left everything secure and familiar
for the sake of the gospel
and the promise of a dream
in starting a new church.

Thank you, ladies, for believing.

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The Anonymous Donor - The visionary layman who invested the first \$20,000 for a new church from his estate as a meaningful testimony to leave his children about his faith in and love for the Church of the Nazarene.

Introduction

Probably the most frequent question I hear about starting new churches is “Where do you start when you start a new church?” It’s really a great question.

When anyone begins to think seriously about all the various aspects of a healthy church, the volunteers needed to operate a self-sustaining ministry, the dollars for sustaining a full service kind of church, the prayer needed to support a life transforming congregation, it can be overwhelming. And that’s just the start of a long list of details in any functional ministry action plan.

On a scale of difficulty, starting a new church probably ranks near the very top in ministry challenges. That’s not to say being a staff member isn’t challenging in any ministry, or taking on the role of lead pastor doesn’t carry a heavy weight of responsibility. But starting a healthy new church carries all those duties of leadership, in addition to the added challenge of trying to create something out of nothing. It takes a special team of people and leaders, gifted and graced for this kind of work, to achieve this high calling.

Among the key factors for the birth of a healthy church are the steps made during the stage of prenatal care. As Bob Logan illustrated starting a new church, in many ways it resembles the health of a newborn child. Healthy babies depend upon adequate prenatal care given *before* the baby is born. Think about all the life systems needed to sustain a child after the birth experience. In addition to the respiratory system and nervous system, there’s a skeletal, digestive and muscular system and much more - that all need to be fully developed before the birth experience so life can be maintained by a healthy child.

In the same way, a new church has to develop multiple life sustaining systems if it to be healthy at its birth experience – the first public worship service. If these critical areas are not completely functional, the baby may not survive at birth and require external life support systems, perhaps indefinitely.

The most common mistake new church pastors and launch teams make is starting too soon, before all the prenatal development has occurred for the birth of a healthy congregation. This manual attempts to guide new church pastors, staff and launch teams through the various phases of development. By working through these various stages together, the critical areas for a healthy new baby church can be addressed.

Just like every child is different in the same family, we understand churches have their own personalities and preferences. New church evangelism strategies and Ministry Action Plans are not cloning new churches to be identical. But a baseline of prenatal care and proper development will assure each new church reaches its full potential in life and mission. And, there’s one more thing.

Most understand this should go without saying: the Spirit of God gives life to our ministry. When we have cared for all the details we know to cover, and careful attention has been given to the hundreds of details for a new church, the birth of a new church is still a life-giving God moment. As Prayer Partners and leaders pray for the new church efforts, we remember the Spirit of God is the Life Giver. We’ll never have enough understanding to attempt a new church without His breathing life into our organizational skeletons. And when He does, we all celebrate again the miracle of new God-given life.

- Jim Dorsey
May, 2009

Phase One: The Purpose for Starting New Churches Answering the “Why” Question

While leading a new church in the making, the Chamber of Commerce offered us a unique opening to meet with the civic and business leaders of the area. During one of those meetings, a board member asked an unexpected question that surprised me, partly because of the setting and partly because he directed to me. He knew I was starting a new church and asked, "Jim, do you really think we need more churches?"

Having heard and answered that question many times with pastors and church board members, it wasn't difficult to come up with several answers. But as I began to explain to him and the other Chamber members why new churches were so needed all across the USA, it dawned on me I had to word smith the answers - since most of this group didn't go to church at all. This was a definite first.

Why start more churches?

It was so surprising to hear that question asked by someone unconnected to church work. I realized even the unchurched have questions about the need for starting new churches. The truth is we could literally double the number of all the churches in the USA today, of all denominations, and we would still be an under churching nation. Too many still remain unchurched in every community across North America.

My hope is this manual will provide you with some practical guidance in starting a healthy church. For too long, the challenge of starting new churches has been misrepresented as beginning smaller, unhealthy congregations with 20 members who struggle for years to keep their church doors open.

But a new day has dawned for starting churches. Now new congregations are neither struggling nor unhealthy. We have learned enough about the work of starting healthy churches that this challenge can be accepted with renewed confidence. More tools are available today for starting new churches, more communities are ready for new congregations, more entrepreneurial type pastors are looking for new church opportunities and more sponsoring churches are prepared to assist in the challenge. These factors all converge to make these the greatest days we've known in the Church of the Nazarene for starting all kinds of healthy churches all across the USA and Canada.

With this workbook, hopefully two things will happen: first, you and your launch team will partner together in accepting this challenge as a great adventure in faith. Your ministry can become another example of New Church Evangelism in a significant way, joining hundreds of others in building Christ's Kingdom through new churches. Some of our greatest new churches have yet to be started!

Secondly, a new day of evangelism can begin for both the new and sponsoring churches. We believe that hundreds—even thousands—of conversions will result from a renewed emphasis upon starting missional congregations. We are praying this whole emphasis will become another catalyst for a revival across our denomination, leading to genuine spiritual renewal in our existing churches who dare to risk sponsoring a new church. Evangelism causes genuine renewal; authentic renewal brings effective evangelism.

The process outlined in these pages for designing a Ministry Action Plan (M.A.P.) could also be an exercise in faith for existing church boards and key leaders to review their own ministry. By creating a new vision and mission like a new church does, they can renew their own church's ministries for greater evangelism and outreach. GROW Magazine illustrates in every issue how it's already happening in many places.

With God's help, no church, family or person is ever beyond resurrection. Dry bones can live again.

The Greatest Method for Mission

Research from the Global Ministry Center of the Church of the Nazarene continues to affirm new church evangelism remains our most effective method for evangelism. New churches bring more unchurched people to faith in Jesus Christ, as well as a host of other Kingdom-building activities. They are so effective that the multiplication of local churches is widely recognized as our denomination's most effective method for fulfilling the Great Commission.

A number of objections have been raised over the years to this assertion for starting new churches. Although this methodology is agreed to be the greatest single tool for winning new people, it may also be one of the most difficult and demanding. The line of least resistance too many times is maintaining existing churches and neglect even trying to start new ones. Human nature can find a way to avoid what we don't want to do.

A number of issues are raised for sponsoring new churches. They may reflect unrealistic expectations on local church leaders facing continual financial and organizational pressures. For some, these objections confuse theological beliefs with evangelistic methodologies. For many others it portrays total confusion about statistical reporting as the only motivation for missional growth.

The Misnomers about New Churches

New church leaders face some common objections to starting a church that are unique to new church evangelism. At least four are:

1. "New churches negatively impact existing churches."
2. "New churches should only be started in new or under-churched communities."
3. "New churches should all start and grow in the same way."
4. "New churches won't grow any better than existing ones."

Continued research is challenging these assumptions. These negative perceptions of starting churches are actually misnomers. These commonly held ideas reflect misunderstandings of both Biblical mandates and actual missional patterns.

Misnomer #1:

"New Churches Negatively Impact Existing Churches"

This misunderstanding of starting new churches may be the most commonly held misconception. A number of reasons may exist for this view to be so widely held, not the least of which is a most basic motivation for starting and growing new churches.

Many existing churches view starting a new church only as providing an additional place for displaced Christians to worship. One of their basic presuppositions is churches are started for believers who are looking for a church home. Little or no thought is given to reaching the lost or unchurched of their area and discipling them to an active and productive role into their local fellowship.

As existing churches have a focus for *only* reaching and attracting other church attenders, the growth potential for new members and attenders is dramatically limited. People resources for both leaders and workers are restricted for any given community if no strategy exists for winning and training the unchurched. Funding from those same “transfer members” is equally limited and many times actively recruited by every other existing ministry in town.

Plateauing and declining churches are usually into maintenance ministry rather than an outreach focus for enfolded the under-churched and unchurched in their community. The growth strategies for many congregations have become reactionary and protective rather than proactive and strategic. The truth is most are struggling to try to survive and keep their church alive.

At any given moment, the potential for growth in most existing churches is greatly reduced since they are *only* looking for existing believers, with their limited time, talents and treasure. Many times they are only looking for other displaced members from the same denomination!

Research from our The Global Ministry Center shows an exact opposite result of new churches toward existing congregations. Their statistical findings reveal that starting multiple churches in one town strengthens the overall work of the other churches. In communities where multiple Nazarene churches exist, they average having a larger constituency than communities of similar size with only one Nazarene church.

Misnomer #2:

“New Churches Should Be Started Only in New or Unreached Communities”

Another study of the placement of congregations across the United States showed dramatically that to grow a church of 400 or more in attendance, a cluster of smaller sister congregations exist within a network of the larger congregation. (There was only one exception in all the USA in that study.) And, few communities are not under-churched.

So not only were the smaller churches larger on the average, as the previous study revealed, but also the cluster enabled at least one congregation to break through growth barriers and reach 400 or more in average attendance. The evidence is clear: new churches are a benefit - not a detriment - to existing churches.

Churches grow best in groups and clusters

All churches grow best in clusters. A study from our Research Center shows: “Average church size is larger in towns where there are multiple Nazarene Churches than where there is only one church. Note: it is not merely the combined attendance of all the churches but the average attendance of each church which is actually larger in towns where there are multiple Nazarene Churches. So starting new churches in towns where there is already an existing church does not hinder, instead, it appears to help.”

The church sizes, philosophies of ministry and ministry styles may vary a great deal even in sister congregations of the same denomination, but the growth patterns clearly reveal that increasing the number of churches is mutually beneficial to all congregations of a community. The conclusion of the report is: “Starting multiple churches in one town strengthens the overall work of the church.”

Misnomer #3:

“All New Churches Should Start and Grow the Same Way”

A sense of discomfort may develop when a congregation is considering mothering a new church that will approach ministry in a different way. For too long, a mistaken concept of denominational affiliation has been the conformity to the styles of ministry rather than actual core values and beliefs.

Ministry styles, programs, staff positions and organizational structures are important to the life of any congregation, but they are not *the* determining factors to denominational loyalty or affiliation.

In a society that is becoming increasingly diverse, rigid conformity to traditional styles in starting new churches would be disastrous. While the corporate world talks of niche marketing, the church recognizes the basic need of all humanity for the good news of the gospel, yet adapts their approach based on the unchurched group's preferences.

Social diversities continue to be accentuated as the American business world addresses the differences in the age brackets of Builders, Boomers, Busters and Generation X. Demographic categories are increasing with single and married, commuters that rent or homeowners working in a given community, homes with the presence of children as opposed to empty nesters and senior adult communities.

The day of “one style church fits all” is no longer a reality in reaching the unchurched. Local church ministries must be contextualized and adjusted to meet felt needs outside the church's four walls, to attract and win the unconvinced.

New churches can provide one of the best ways to touch unreached people groups in a given area. As each local congregation clearly defines its target to include a growing segment of that community, it is not for the purpose of exclusion of all other people groups who may wish to attend that church. The purpose is the inclusion of segments of the population who are not being reached by any existing church in any significant way.

The new church's purpose and philosophy for ministry are dependent upon several contributing factors, according to multiple researchers in new church evangelism. These factors include, but are not limited to, the pastor's spiritual calling and gifts, the target audience to be reached, the various assets of the new church, the church's philosophy of ministry, relationships with other sponsoring churches and the leadings of God.

Misnomer #4:

“New Churches Don't Grow Any Better Than Existing Churches”

This concern may be one of the most sensitive to address. To suggest that a new church could ever replace the influence and legacy of an existing church is like suggesting a new infant could take the place of a beloved grandparent. Each is unique and treasured as God's expression of life. And yet, time marches on in God's cycles of life, even without our consent or agreement.

Research at the Global Ministry Center explains the average life span of a congregation in the Church of the Nazarene to be approximately 80 years. A common misnomer in church life is every church started must survive until Jesus returns. But the truth is most churches have life spans like people do. Some may live longer than others for various reasons. But eventually the life span for most local churches has a beginning and an end. Other new

churches need to be born, to grow up in their place and carry on their spiritual heritage for reaching each new generation.

There is a certain dignity in living out our God given purpose with conviction and passion and then being allowed to pass on with appreciation and affection. Acts 13:36 describes King David as living out his purpose for his generation. In the same way local churches serve their purpose for their lifetime. Part of their legacy is to leave to their spiritual descendants a heritage of faith and a pioneering spirit that will encourage them to reach their world and their generation with the Good News of the gospel.

Several indicators show the naturally decreasing vital signs in an aging church. The following statistics reveal how growth, evangelism and ministry impact decrease with the increasing age of a congregation:

- *In churches less than fifteen years old, it takes only 11 members to win one new person to Christ, whereas in churches 50 years and older it takes 779 members to win one new person.*
- *The overall number of new churches started has dropped from a quadrennial high of 510 in 1951 to 1955 to less than 250 in the early 1990's. In 1993, less than a dozen new Anglo congregations were organized in the USA.*
- *Over 5,000 Churches of the Nazarene have been closed in our history. If those churches had survived, we would have doubled the number of Nazarene churches than currently exist to over 10,000 in the USA and Canada alone.*
- *Statistically, since Nazarene churches have a life expectancy of approximately 80 years, new churches must be consistently started or fewer and fewer Nazarene congregations will survive to carry on our mission.*

While some trends can be reversed in declining or plateaued congregations with new leadership or a shift in ministry focus, the most predictable way for churches to extend their ministry influence comes by mothering a new church. Their ministry can be dramatically extended through sponsoring a new church to reach a people group or community that the existing mother church would never reach. At that point, the real motivation is to advance the Kingdom rather than just maintain an existing ministry.

That sentiment is expressed clearly throughout the New Church Strategy and our denominational mission. The Church of the Nazarene is one fellowship and structure for working in the Church of our Lord. Our objective must always be to build His Church, not our organization. Yet we build His Church through building our organization.

The Sense of Mission in New Churches

To fully understand a strategy for starting and growing new churches, at least five missional influences should be recognized in new churches. These five influences help to create an authentic sense of mission within a new church.

1. New Churches Reach New People

George Gallop discovered that 54% of the unchurched population is open to attending a church. In a culture where the average family is moving nearly every three years, people are looking for a sense of community, love and acceptance. New churches provide a non-threatening opportunity for people who are looking for a place to connect to get in on the ground floor and be a part of a church.

Of the three billion people in our world who do not know Christ, approximately 70% do not have a viable, evangelical church in their culture, which accounts for nearly two billion people. Unless a church is started within their culture to express the love of Christ, they will probably never be reached with the gospel.

2. New Churches Reach More Young People

Studies are showing that individuals born after 1940 are showing up in larger numbers in newer churches. They seem to want to be in on the action in the work of building the Kingdom and newer churches are reaching them.

As a better understanding has developed for reaching the different groups of unchurched, various generations of our population require a more focused ministry. Unless we intentionally target and reach these groups with new churches, and others coming into prominence, we will miss not only a generation, but some of the greatest opportunities for mission in our time.

3. New Churches Reach Displaced People

Newer congregations are more able to attract those who have dropped out of the established, more mainline churches. The newer church allows them a fresh challenge and the opportunity to be needed. These new congregations provide a second chance for many underchurched and uninvolved to reconnect into a fellowship of believers and find their place of ministry.

Barna Research reports in the next twelve months, on the average, nearly 50 million adults will be in a situation in which they will be looking for a church to attend. Over 30 million will be looking for a church home because of a change in residence. Another 15 million will decide they just need a change of venue and will begin looking for a new church home.

Gallop polling reveals that 30% of all adults have already changed denominations and/or local churches at least once in their lifetime. Another 10% have changed churches or denominations two or more times, and the number is climbing.

New churches provide an excellent opportunity for displaced or disenchanting members to get reconnected in a local church fellowship.

4. New Churches Develop New Leaders

The most reliable source for new leaders will come from those won to Christ in these new churches. For many who have no frame of reference in church life, a new church will be the only congregation they have known. Hundreds of new churches become a new farming system for raising up new leaders for the church and the Kingdom of Christ.

Many existing churches are also loaded with gifted and available leadership but they are on the sidelines and not really involved. These potential leaders are ready for a new challenge and eager for meaningful involvement. New churches can effectively unleash new launch team leadership from a sponsoring church, as well as cultivate new leaders from new believers.

5. New Churches Bring New Life

Just as the arrival of a new child can activate the life of a family in new ways, so a new church can bring spiritual renewal to a sponsoring congregation. In most cases, the sponsoring church also experiences dynamic benefits in the birth of a daughter congregation. One sponsoring pastor said it so well: "Healthy new churches birth stronger mother churches."

While the particular mission or purpose of a new church may be expressed in a unique way, the most basic motivation is getting more people to heaven through fulfilling the Great Commission. One new church leader summarized his new church's purpose by stating: "We are making more and better disciples." Another said they were "a church for people who had given up on church, and their church had given up on them." Another new church leader described their mission as to "turn spiritual strangers into devoted members of God's family."

Whatever the language or descriptions selected to communicate purpose, a new church's mission statement focuses on the aspect of winning men and women, boys and girls to Jesus Christ. That purpose can bring revival to the sponsoring church as well as focus to the new congregation.

One trend has become increasingly clear to researchers and denominational leaders. With a wide range of variables in growing churches in different communities in the US, nothing is more predictable than new churches for producing new growth. With Nazarene churches averaging around 75 in weekly worship, it can be said with relative certainty that increasing the number of churches will increase membership. As the number of churches increases, so do the number of conversions, members, workers, Sunday School attenders, youth, future ministers, missions giving, college students, etc.

The strategy of starting and growing new churches will be a predictable cause and effect for missional growth, not only for the Kingdom of Christ, but also for our denomination.

Our missional strategy and focus must be starting and growing new local churches.

Finding a Sense of Mission

Once you have established the mission and purpose of this new church you are starting, the next question is "What **kind** of church will you start?"

List the reasons why you are starting this new church. Discuss them with your family, staff and launch team. Your entire launch team needs to see this new church ministry as a team effort, with each of them as important players on your team.

Claim particular verses of scripture for your work and seal God's call on your life for this faith challenge. You want to know going into this demanding task that God is leading you and with you for this undertaking.

Many scriptures could be used to guide a discussion on the subject of mission. The most effective new churches have learned to align three key factors to discover their mission and bring meaningful transformation in their ministry. While we acknowledge we are under orders for the Great Commission, and we all affirm the mission of our denomination to "make Christlike disciples in the nations," how these mandates are carried out is unique with each local church.

First, what are the gifts and graces of the founding pastor? This is another reason the New Church Assessment Centers are so vitally important. By objectively reviewing each leader's strengths and passions, the assessments help provide direction for these leaders not only in their new church, but for the rest of their ministry. Begin where the leader is to understand God's mission for this new church.

Second, each launch team needs to do a spiritual inventory of their ministry assets, abilities and strengths. Many times the effectiveness of a new church is directly tied to the ministry tools available through the launch team and laity's ministry efforts. The new church can progress no farther than the founding pastor and launch team will allow it to go.

Last, the target area can provide clues to the particular mission for this new church. What are the felt needs in this area? What are people looking for in a church if they were to start attending? Of all the ministries being done in this area by other churches, what is being missed that this new church could provide? The ministry context can help effectively mold the future focus and mission of each new church.

Ministry Philosophy and Vision Casting

Begin writing out your philosophy of ministry and how you view the future ministry of the new church. One of the most asked questions you will face in starting a new church is "What kind of church is this going to be?" In some ways it's like asking, "What will your children be like when they grow up?" Only God really knows for sure. But just as each parent has high hopes and aspirations for their children, a founding pastor can cast a vision with the launch team for what this new church could become.

Several factors contribute to the ministry style and core values a pastor and congregation will want to establish and develop. These values and philosophy of ministry need to be established early on, so prospective attenders and members can decide if this is the church for them.

An easy mistake for a pastor of a new church to make is to try to attract and keep everyone who inquires about the church. Most "church shoppers" will cycle on to other churches, like they have come to yours. But your new church will reach unchurched people who have no frame of reference for church life – and they will think this new church is the greatest church in the world!

Target Audience

If you do not decide who your church is to reach and what your common values are, someone else will decide for you. If you try to reach everyone, you will either: (1) attract and reach fewer than you could or (2) attract some who are not ready to follow your church's mission and calling. The mission and purpose statements reflect the core values of the calling of the pastor and the launch team. While casting a vision and clarifying the calling of a new church are tasks of leadership, the pastor must also model out the values reflected in those purposes.

As a new church determines the purpose is "to turn strangers into family," everything they do is for the purpose of attracting and winning the spiritual stranger, and discipling them into devoted and responsible members of God's family.

New Church Vocabulary

The following terms will be a part of the new church strategy and a part of the vocabulary of those involved in starting new churches.

New Church Evangelism - A bold plan for starting hundreds of new churches for the Church of the Nazarene across the USA and Canada and around the globe. The plan describes the priority of mothering new Nazarene congregations and their effectiveness in winning new people to Christ.

New Church Leader - This term is used to describe the pastor who will lead in starting a new church. In “New Church Evangelism”, these leaders are the key to the effectiveness of these new ministries.

Launch Team – This is the name of the starting group of volunteers and attenders who join with a pastor to start a new church. The primary concept is winning people to Christ by starting healthy churches through local church sponsorship.

First Wave Sunday - This is the group that initially attends the new church's first public worship service. This wave of first time guests increases the church's potential to attract and keep new attenders who are seriously looking for a church home.

Second Wave Sunday - This is the group that attends the second Sunday of the new church's public worship services. This wave is usually about half of the “First Wave Sunday” and helps better identify potential members.

NewStart District Coordinators - These district leaders oversee the “New Church Evangelism” on each district. Across the USA and Canada, each district can conduct training events and Assessment Centers for new church leaders.

New Church Leadership Network - This informal network provides a place for new church leaders and sponsors to interact and exchange ideas.

New Church Assessment Centers - These Assessment Centers are held regularly across the nation. The District New Church Coordinator for each district helps schedule and promote the Assessment Center to qualify prospective new church leaders.

Accelerate Conferences – These training events for new church leaders, staff and launch teams cover the basics in starting a church, or turning around an existing congregation in decline, by offering practical insights from teaching congregations.

Sponsoring Pastor - This leader is a vital key to the effectiveness of New Church Evangelism. This pastor and congregation become the mothering church to assist and encourage the new church pastor. A network exists for sponsoring pastors to network them in the challenge of mothering a healthy new church.

A Checklist of Ideas for Sponsorship

Starting new churches continues to be one of the greatest ways for advancing the Kingdom and reaching new people with the gospel. The most effective model for starting new churches continues to be existing churches sponsoring new churches.

The following is a checklist for a sponsoring church to consider in starting a new church. Starting a new church can be as demanding as it is rewarding for a sponsoring

congregation. Much prayer, planning and discussion needs to go into this important step of faith. The following list can assist your church in working through the initial preparation steps. Prayerfully work through the following questions and discuss them among your church leaders:

Step One:

Why do we want to help sponsor a new church?

1. Is there a sense that God is leading us to sponsor a new church?
2. Are there people our church is not presently reaching that a new church could impact?
3. Do we have agreement from the church's spiritual leaders to consider sponsorship?
4. Are there resources in workers, property or support we could invest into sponsorship?
5. Has our congregation prayed about this ministry opportunity?

Step Two:

Who would be helped by this new church?

1. What community or group of people do we want to reach with this new church?
2. Is our pastor willing to be a sponsoring pastor to this new pastor and church?
3. Are there individuals in our church who may be interested in helping this new church?
4. Are there other available and capable lay leaders for the sponsoring church?
5. Do we have contacts for a launch team from the target group for the new church?

Step Three:

How would we begin in sponsoring this new church?

1. Will we allow this new church to grow into its own ministry role?
2. Will we be teachable in equipping ourselves and these new church leaders?
3. Can we trust God to provide for the needs of both our churches?
4. Are we willing to release the new leaders and the new congregation into ministry?
5. Can we start into this adventure of faith without having all the answers?

Step Four:

What are the essentials for starting this new church?

1. Will we be willing to pray in and work with the right pastor for starting this new church?
2. Are we able to pray for and release local lay leaders for starting this new church?
3. What are we able to do to assist in locating a place for Sunday worship services?
4. How can we enable the starting church to begin their children's ministries?
5. How can we best recruit new attenders for this new church?

Step Five:

When will this new church be started?

1. Will we develop a Ministry Action Plan for sponsoring from the training materials?
2. Are we willing to follow the strategies needed for sponsoring this new church?
3. Can we celebrate the victories of this new church as much as our own victories?
4. Do we see this ministry opportunity as sowing seed for a greater spiritual harvest?
5. Will we pray for this new church's success as fervently as for our own church?

Sponsor pastor and church leaders will want to agree on the Lord's leading to sponsor a new church after going through this checklist together. As leaders and the congregation have a growing sense of God's will in this adventure of faith, additional resources are available to you through Evangelism Ministries at The Global Ministry Center in Lenexa, Kansas.

Assessment Centers and Accelerate Conferences are also available across the denomination for new church leaders.

For Discussion and Reflection

Checklists for Sponsoring a New Church:

Stage One:

- We have an increasing awareness that God is leading us in this work.
- A growing number of believers are regularly praying about this opportunity.
- Confirmation is growing from our church's lay leadership and pastor.
- Our primary motivation is reaching new people for Christ.
- In building Christ's Kingdom, we believe the resources needed will be provided.

Stage Two:

- A free demographic study of the target area has been ordered from the Research Department at the Global Ministry Center.
- A profile has been designed of the people we hope the new church will reach.
- A study of existing churches of the area shows the potential of a new church. (existing church attendance compared to community population).
- We have contacts in the target area to help begin a launch team.
- Our congregation has interested workers to assist a church getting started.

Stage Three:

- We recognize this new church may be different from our church in its style, philosophy and ministry methods, while still holding to the doctrines and teachings of The Church of the Nazarene.
- We will be willing to release control of this new church and allow its leaders to follow God's calling for their ministry.
- We will regularly conduct a "faith check" to determine our willingness to move ahead without always having all the details of our questions answered.
- We will celebrate the significant milestones for this new church and rejoice in their victories, to encourage and enable their future development.
- A budget is prepared that clearly outlines our financial support for this new church.
- A copy of the budget is on file both with the sponsor pastor and new church pastor.

Stage Four:

- We have processed the new church sponsorship agreement with the district superintendent.

_____ We are in full agreement for the choice of pastor for this new church and have the approval of our district superintendent for the pastor and targeted area.

_____ Our church leaders are willing to establish an interim taskforce for sponsoring this church until the new church can recruit its own leadership.

_____ Preliminary work is being done to locate potential meeting places for the new church to begin worship services.

_____ Possible methods and tools for announcing the opening of this new church are being discussed and evaluated.

_____ The pastor of this new church is able to clearly describe his vision for starting this congregation.

Stage Five:

_____ An overall timeline is completed that places these checklist items on a two year calendar for planning and budgeting purposes.

_____ The timeline allows for the new church's funding to follow at least two years behind their growth in attendance.

_____ The timeline permits nine to twelve months of preparation time before actually launching the new church into public worship services.

_____ The timeline reflects the high attendance times of spring and fall, by planning for the launch and regular outreach efforts in those seasons.

_____ Regular meetings of the Pastor's Advisory Team with the starting pastor are scheduled for encouragement and accountability.

Sponsorship Survey Tool

For a complete guide for preparing for sponsoring a new church, be sure to refer to the survey entitled "Sponsoring Church Checklist" available from the New Church Evangelism Office at the Global Ministry Center by calling toll free (800) 306-8294 or ordering on their website at www.NewNazareneChurches.org.

Please spend some time considering these discussion questions:

1. Is God leading us to start a new church?
2. Who are the people that a new church could impact?
3. Do we have agreement from other leaders about starting this new church, including our district superintendent, a sponsoring pastor and congregational leaders?
4. Are there resources in workers, property or support we could invest into sponsorship?
5. Has the pastor's family prayed about and agreed on this new ministry opportunity?

New Church Checklist

In preparation for starting this new church, the following items should be completed by the new church leader and launch team for this first stage:

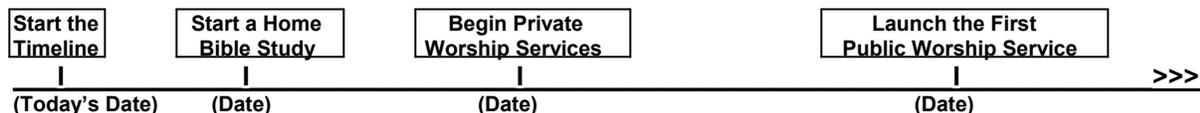
- _____ I have a clear sense of God's call to start this new church.
- _____ My spouse confirms this ministry call as well.
- _____ I agree the primary reason for starting a new church is to win people for Jesus.
- _____ I am studying more than one reference in starting this new church.
- _____ Other spiritual leaders agree with my calling in starting this new work.
- _____ A sponsoring congregation and pastor have agreed to assist in this effort.
- _____ My district superintendent approves starting this new church.
- _____ I am scheduled to attend one of our denomination's Assessment Centers.
- _____ As I share our ministry purpose with prospective launch team members of this new church, they share my enthusiasm for this challenge.
- _____ I know a community where I believe this new church could have an impact in building the Kingdom.
- _____ I have all the free resource materials that are listed in the appendix and will be using them.
- _____ I have begun a process of listing the distinctive core values for this new church.
- _____ I have written a philosophy of ministry and shared it with other key leaders for feedback.
- _____ I have started a timeline for the Ministry Action Plan in a wall diagram.

Starting a New Church Timeline

As you go through this process, start your own timeline for the checklists in each of these stages for a new church. Find a wall somewhere that will hold a large piece of shelf paper or butcher paper. Draw a horizontal timeline through the middle of the page. Starting with today's date, mark items to do through at least six months after launching the church. Decide key dates across your timeline by the crucial steps you will want to complete on schedule. The checklists at the end of each section of this manual offer some suggestions for items on your timeline. You'll also have a work space to add your own items.

Your timeline could resemble the following illustration. These four work items are just checklist samples.

HINT: Use Post-It Notes for checklist tasks, to move around as needed during your planning process.



Phase Two: The People for Starting New Churches Answering the “Who” Question

Throughout the gospels, Jesus gave repeated instructions to His disciples on reaching others for the Kingdom. From compelling them from “the highways and hedges”, to praying for laborers in the harvest, Jesus made it clear there were different strategies for effectively reaching different groups of people. These passages and many others help us understand the value of effective strategies for incorporating the various categories of people needed to make this new church a great success.

In this section, we will deal with at least five people groups who will directly impact the effectiveness of the new church being started. Each group requires unique training and recruitment strategies.

Five Key Groups

At least five of the teams or groups you need to consider include:

1. An Advisory Team - *The initial accountability group*
2. The Ministry Team Leaders - *The local ministry staff and/or lay leadership*
3. The Launch Team - *The initial volunteers and attenders*
4. The Target Audience - *The future congregation*
5. The Prayer Partner Team - *The high impact intercessors*

Pastor’s Advisory Team

While accountability seems at first to be threatening to many pastors starting new churches, this vital team can in fact a source for great encouragement. By having a group a new church pastor can report to and discuss various ministry’s challenges, a new church leader will find new strength and support, rather than feeling isolated and out on their own in this task.

One new church consultant observed to a group of new church pastors that one of the most discouraging things in ministry is to have no system of accountability. He observed each of us needs to have someone to review decisions, project future plans and process problem areas in ministry. As leaders, we need someone else to talk to about our ministry options and receive helpful feedback and direction.

The leaders on this initial ad hoc committee can provide advice, networking for resources and problem solving during the beginning stages of a new church, prior to any formal organization. The Advisory Team assists in many of the management decisions and serves as a sounding board for possible ideas for ministry opportunities. Financial reports and budgets can be approved by this Advisory Team of ministry partners as well.

The key to recruiting this important team is finding spiritually mature leaders who: share an interest in reaching new people for Christ, agree with the new church’s mission and can celebrate the victories of this new church. Individuals to consider inviting onto a

Pastor’s Advisory Team for the new pastor and new church could include:

1. Another new church leader on the district
2. A district advisory board member
3. The sponsoring church pastor or staff member
4. A board member from the sponsoring church
5. The launch team's most promising leader
6. A key pastor from the district

You may have other ideas of people to invite to serve on this temporary committee. These are only suggestions, and it would probably be best to limit the group to not more than four plus yourself.

Someone has said "Thoughts disentangled themselves when they pass through our lips and fingertips." A group like this will allow you to rehearse and discuss your thoughts for future ministry plans and provide you with a much needed source for personal reflection.

Loyalty to Sponsors

Communication and loyalty to the sponsoring church and pastor should be given high priority. Both the sponsoring pastor and the starting pastor need a clear understanding of the ministry model and purpose of this new church.

No members or attenders should be recruited from the existing church without prior discussion and agreement between the two pastors. The sponsoring pastor must provide a freedom to the starting pastor, much like a parent allows a maturing child to strike out on their own

Ministry Team Leaders

The leadership of the launch team of the new church is another key group of people to consider when starting a new church. One of the great benefits of starting a new church is helping the group to establish who the key leaders might be. In some ways, the group will decide who the leaders are but you will also be able to test the most promising workers for future positions of leadership.

Of course, the key leader for the new church is the founding pastor. Charles Ridley did some of the first research to outline qualities needed for an effective pastor in starting a new church. While no new church leader is a "10" in all of these areas, both the pastor and launch team need to either embody or encourage these qualities in their attitudes and actions.

1. Visionizing capacity
2. Intrinsically motivated
3. Creates ownership of ministry
4. Relates to the unchurched
5. Spouse cooperation
6. Effectively builds relationships

7. Committed to church growth
8. Responsive to community
9. Utilizes giftedness of others
10. Flexible and adaptable
11. Builds group cohesiveness
12. Demonstrates resilience
13. Exercises faith

The launch team that eventually assists the pastor in starting this new church can complement some of these qualities and values in their lifestyles. By providing short term assignments and testing potential leaders, you can determine in your launch team who may be rising to the top from your available attenders to a future leadership role.

The Launch Team

Launching a new church is like making a first impression - you only get one chance at it. So it is necessary to do it right the first time. There's an amazing attraction to unchurched people to the opening of a new church. You will want to leverage every opportunity to invite as many as you can to this opening Sunday.

You can have practice worship services with your launch team, and coach them on the ways you hope to invite and include new people into your fellowship. In many ways, the launch team becomes the representative of the pastor in contacting new guests each Sunday. To a first time guest in your services, each launch team member becomes the personification of this new church.

Target Audience

You want to discover everything you can about your community, the potential church attenders and future members you hope to reach. Immerse yourself in the life of this community. Read all you can about the area. Become familiar with the research on their demographics. Talk with unchurched people every day and listen to their perspectives.

Demographic studies are available at no charge through the Research Department at our Global Ministry Center in Lenexa, Kansas. The toll free number for the new church ministries is (800) 306-8294, or you can E-mail your questions and requests to NewStart@nazarene.org.

You will want to be an expert on the people in your community - especially the unchurched. Any number of tools can assist you with this important assignment.

A number of surveys are available from other pastors who have started churches. One of the most popular is from Rick Warren's book *Purpose Driven Church*, which he used in starting Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, California. He suggests conducting this survey with at least 500 people personally to get a feel for the people in your target area. This also becomes a great training tool for ministry leaders to use to get a better understanding of the unchurched in their ministry area.

Rick Warren's questions were:

1. **“Do you attend a church regularly?”**
(If the answer was “yes”, he politely left for the next home since he was interested in the opinions of the unchurched.)
2. **“What do you think is the greatest need in our community?”**
(Helps start discussion and gets them talking to you, and understand their felt needs.)
3. **“Why do you think most people do not attend church?”**
(Notice the question is not - why don't *you* go to church? This takes people off the defensive. They will usually answer the reasons why they don't attend.)
4. **“If you were looking for a church, what would you look for?”**
(Look for the *felt needs* of unchurched, and their expectations of a good church.)
5. **“What advice do you have for me as a person starting a new church in our community?”**
(Be interested in their responses...take good notes and then tally up your results.)

The pastor and launch team need to understand who they are attempting to reach in this new church. A profile of the type of individual would be helpful for everyone to understand your ministry mission and values.

You may want to get a photo of the typical unchurched or underchurched person in your area and give him a name and profile for your leaders and core group to understand.

Prayer Partners

In starting a new church, the spiritual impact of prayer partners must be imported from outside your launch team, since most will be new to faith and not fully grasp the challenge of prayer.

Build a list of all the prayer warriors you know. Then, invite them to be a part of your ministry in starting this new church by praying for you and the church. You can keep them informed with a prayer letter or email each quarter outlining your five greatest prayer needs and five greatest answers to prayer. You'll discover a great source for prayer support for the small amount of effort in recruiting prayer partners and keeping them informed.

We have included a sample prayer partner letter in the Appendix, along with tools and suggestions later in “Phase Six” of this manual.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. What community or group of people do we want to reach with this new church?
2. Is the pastor called to be the starting pastor to this new church?
3. Are members in the sponsor church interested in helping this new church?
4. Are there other available and capable lay leaders from the target community?
5. Do we have contacts for the core group from the target community for the new church?

New Church Checklist

- _____ I have a location in mind for this new church.
- _____ I have a goal for the size of our launch team before we start.
- _____ I have started building the five lists of key people.
- _____ My first prayer letter has been written in a first draft form.
- _____ I know when the first prayer letter will be in the mail.
- _____ The sponsor pastor and I have discussed potential workers.
- _____ Key leaders lists are being made for each ministry team.
- _____ I have a profile of our target group for ministry.
- _____ I have set up a non-profit bulk rate permit.
- _____ I am gathering email addresses for each of the five groups.
- _____ I am reviewing acceptable ministry strategies.
- _____ I've projected some three, six and nine month goals
- _____ Outline a driving radius of 15 minutes from your meeting location.
- _____ Determine the population in that 15 minutes radius.
- _____ Prioritize four to five crucial ministry efforts for your launch date.
- _____ Begin a list of possible prospects for the new church
- _____ Develop a logo that communicates your mission and purpose.
- _____ Profile your target audience.
- _____ List your best leaders for your priority ministries.
- _____ I am planning ways to recruit new launch team members.
- _____ I have added checklist items from this stage to the master timeline diagram.
- _____ I have added my own checklist items to the master timeline diagram.

Phase Three: The Plan for Starting New Churches Answering the “How” Questions

Various models for starting new churches exist, each as unique as the expression of spiritual gifts in the lives of each believer. Although this list is not exhaustive, these are ten basic ministry styles that are being used in starting new churches today. Free new church materials provide excellent descriptions of these new church ministry models listed in the resource section at the end of this manual.

Ministry Models for New Churches

1. A Sponsoring Mother Church – The new church is similar to the mother church.
2. Church Starting Team – A launch team moves together to an area for a new church.
3. Catalytic Church Starter – One leader goes to a new area to launch a new church.
4. A Sponsoring Partnership of Churches – Several churches partner for sponsorship.
5. Multi-Cultural Congregations – New churches that reflect their multicultural community.
6. A Hive-Off Team – A sponsor church sends a large group to start a new church.
7. Compassion Ministry Center – Assisting the marginalized while starting a new church.
8. Multi-Congregational Churches- Sharing church property for a new congregation.
9. Emerging New Congregations – A style for reaching unchurched Generation X.
10. Multi-Site New Churches – One church in multiple locations.

Selecting a Preferred Ministry Model

Selecting your preferred ministry model is based upon several key factors. Our denominational history shows in the past, our best model for starting new churches has been the “A Sponsoring Mother Church Model.”

This kind of model, like all the church starting models, has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. The important step for each new church effort is to look at the contributing factors for starting a new work and responding with the most appropriate model.

Among those factors are:

1. The starting pastor's giftedness and style
2. The targeted group's needs
3. The community's felt needs (from your survey work)
4. The feedback from key launch team leaders of the project
5. What other churches are not doing in the area
6. Available resources in funding, property and leaders

The most successful new churches and pastors have learned to find a new church ministry model that they would like to implement. Then they imitate the example of their ministry models as closely as possible for at least the first twelve to eighteen months. After the first twelve months, the church's leadership can review the congregation's strengths and weaknesses, available resources in people, property and ministry potentials, and adjust the focus to accommodate their best opportunities.

Projecting a Ministry Action Timeline

Projecting a timeline is another vital planning tool for starting any new church. Your calendar should at least outline the major events for the first eighteen months of the new church. The list could include the twelve following items, as well as many more.

1. Recruiting and moving the pastor
2. Enlisting a sponsoring church and pastor
3. Multiple strategies for gathering a launch team
4. Training sessions for volunteer leaders
5. Pre-launch events (like picnics and potlucks)
6. Starting private worship services and finding a location
7. Bible study and discussion group meetings
8. Meetings for the key planning teams of the launch team
9. Advertising and marketing strategies for launching
10. Planning the date for the first public worship service
11. Assimilation strategies after your launch
12. Orientation classes for potential members

Locating the Best Worship Site

Locating and securing a place to meet may be one of the most important tasks for you in starting a new church. With some awareness and creativity, you may be able to secure a very attractive property for your worship gatherings without having to compromise on the commitment to excellence.

Property opportunities you could consider include:

- School Districts for available schools
- Seventh day Adventist Churches
- Community Centers
- Available Commercial Properties
- Restaurants
- College Campus Centers

- Other Church Properties (at different times)
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Hotels with Conference Rooms
- Park and Recreation Buildings
- Libraries

Several factors need to be considered as you make your final choice from the available options for your meeting facility. Multiple researchers suggest this list of items:

1. What is the seating capacity for the adults?
(100, 150 or 200)
2. How many classrooms for the children's ministry?
(They need to accommodate the number and ages of children.)
3. How much parking will you need?
(One parking space for every 1.5 worship attenders)
4. What kind of visibility do you have?
(How can you improve on the existing visibility?)
5. How accessible is the property?
(Can directional signs assist from a major street?)
6. Is the property attractive?
(Ask the unchurched guests what they noticed in your church.)
7. What can the new church afford to spend in rent?
(You cannot let property costs inhibit the new church's growth.)

Handling Finances from Day One

The credibility of your new church will be greatly enhanced with the proper planning in the managing of the new church's finances. From day one of starting the new church, be sure to give attention to the following areas.

Responsible Financial Policies

1. Keep donor records for income tax purposes (for every donor to receive annually)
2. Require dual signatures on all the church checks (preferably not using the pastor)
3. Send monthly financial reports to your donors (use broad categories in a simple form)
4. Enlist two tellers for counting the offerings (they sign weekly report forms)
5. Conduct annual audits on the church books (an outside source)
6. Set up two church accounts for designated and undesignated giving. A savings account may prove helpful for holding designated gifts until they are disbursed. (Keeping all funds in the same account can risk financial mismanagement)

7. Designated gifts must be used for the purpose given (building fund, missions, etc.)
8. A monthly letter to update all donors (share insider news always thank them)

Budget Building

Nothing can be more difficult than trying to project the income for a new church that has no record of previous giving. You will want to be very conservative on the income column projections for starting the church, while being generous in projecting expenses. Usually new church pastors unintentionally reverse that order, and end up with budget shortfalls.

Some plan needs to be in place to cover your expenses in the months of starting the church before the income begins from committed members. The income may come from several sources like a sponsor church or a group of churches, ministry partners who pledge financial support during your start up phase, weekly offerings in the private - and later - public worship services and/or the income for a bi-vocational pastor.

By creating multiple income streams, you help secure the beginning months of ministry of the new church. Usually the funding follows many months behind the new attenders, and you have to plan for ways to subsidize the offerings until the new church members also catch the vision and passion of this new church.

The expenses on the other hand can be quite precise, and probably need to be. In planning your budget for starting the new church, understand your income will follow far behind the attendance growth, sometimes up to two years. It has been said "The last thing to come is the money, and the first thing to go is the money!"

In planning for the Grand Opening Sunday, carefully plan your ministry expenses. Give attention to the following areas, as well as any others you may create.

Pastoral Support (Salary, housing, car, insurance, etc.).

Opening Sunday (Printing, ads, building rental, mailing costs, ads, postage, children's supplies, music expenses)

Property Costs – Either rental or mortgage, upkeep, custodial care, improvements, etc.

Ongoing Ministry Costs (Church office set up, postage, copies, phone, answering machine, Bible Study materials, church literature, children's supplies, Bibles for worship, storage costs and supplies.)

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Will we allow this new church to grow into its own ministry role?
2. Will we be teachable in equipping ourselves and these new church leaders?
3. Can we trust God to provide for the needs of both the sponsoring and starting churches?
4. Are we willing to release the new leaders and the new congregation into ministry?
5. Can we start in this adventure in faith without having all the answers?

New Church Checklist

- _____ I am spending regular time in prayer.
- _____ I have a list of reasons for our ministry model.
- _____ I have a list of six possible meeting locations.
- _____ A church checking account has been set up with dual signatures.
- _____ We have two signers for all church checks.
- _____ A timeline has been started for our first 18 months.
- _____ The launch team has discussed and agreed with the church's mission.
- _____ We are developing a set of core values.
- _____ I have of several contacts of leaders with our ministry style.
- _____ I have met with or discussed this new church with one or more of these pastors of similar new church ministries.
- _____ The launch team is recruiting new team members from their family and friends.
- _____ Our launch team income can cover private worship service expenses.
- _____ We have prepared a preliminary budget.
- _____ The Pastor's Advisory Team has approved the budget.
- _____ I have added checklist items from this stage to the master timeline diagram.
- _____ I have added my own checklist items to the master timeline diagram.

Phase Four: Programs for Starting New Churches Answering the “When” Question

The first public worship service is the birth experience for a new church. Since a new church only has one chance to launch first public worship service, the very best efforts, volunteers and preparations need to go into this important event. One of the ways many new churches have learned to prepare for the first public worship service is by having several weeks of private worship services. Private worship services help the launch team to practice worshipping together, find the best ministry assignments for everyone on the launch team and continue to build their base of participants until the formal opening Sunday.

Practicing in Private Worship Services

These Sunday services are conducted each week for those who express interest in being a part of the new church in the months before the official launch. The general public has no word about this new church meeting – it’s a secret! No signs are displayed; no newspaper ads or mailings announce the weekly meetings. The only way anyone knows to attend is by personal invitation of a launch team member who is already attending. These services encourage working relational networks of the existing launch team. Each week, as new guests worship with the launch team in private worship, the group learns to welcome and enfold new people.

These private worship services allow weeks of worship and recruitment for the launch team as they prepare for their opening Sunday. You can have volunteers try different assignments to see who works best in which areas of ministry.

Several benefits come from private worship services:

1. A weekly meeting keeps the launch team from scattering before the official launch and permits more people meeting together than in just a Bible study group in a house.
2. This event becomes a tool for recruiting and connecting with more volunteers for a launch team before the start of the new church.
3. Expectations can be communicated to the group, like the goal for an official launch. For instance, one goal could be enlisting a minimum of forty attenders before the public worship services begin. Research shows that a launch team of forty is necessary to reach the critical mass for an effective launch of a new church.
4. These weeks or several months of private worship services allow the pastor and the launch team to get used to meeting together and practicing doing church each week.
5. These private services also allow for the worship of giving and begin producing some income for a new church. (Taking an offering in a Bible study in your home isn’t the best way to begin the practice of the worship of giving.)
6. The immediate care and training of children and youth can begin in this setting, as well as training children’s staff

7. The cultivation of workers and leaders can begin as soon as the private worship services begin. It is good early on to establish a rotation system for the children's teams so that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy the Sunday worship services.

Planning an Evangelism Process

When reaching the unchurched through a new congregation, the process for evangelism must allow time and space for them to process their questions of faith. If unchurched people can worship with you and be accepted as they are, a sense of belonging to this new fellowship can develop.

Research shows most unchurched people must feel this sense of belonging, before they can ever come to the step of believing. Each new church must be aware of this process of them coming to faith in Jesus Christ, and allow them the freedom to progress at their own pace. As we pray, share the Good News with them and allow God's Spirit to work in their lives, they will eventually come to faith.

One of the helpful ways for new churches to help unchurched people move closer to faith is finding ways to chart their spiritual formation. Multiple plans exist for this tracking in evangelism, and each pastor and new church needs to find one that works best for them in their ministry context.

When church leaders from across our denominational family gathered to discuss missional practices in evangelism and discipleship, a number of common topics began to surface. While these leaders had refined their own unique set of ministry priorities and processes, all agreed effective evangelism and discipleship strategies help open the front door to new attendees and close the back door for new believers in a local church.

The presentations these leaders gave have been edited into several free books to help all Nazarene churches. You'll want to read and discuss their observations. Limited space here doesn't allow an adequate treatment of all their insights. But hopefully, this summary sampling may encourage you in enlisting a team of leaders to read these books and study their insights for practical applications. They all agreed the process of discipleship has some predictable milestones. Here are several guidelines the group discussed in their best practices for effective evangelism ministry:

Connect with first time guests - Encouraging your congregation to invite and enfold new families begins the whole missional process for discipleship. How can your church work with your members to invite first, second and third-time guests to a worship service? Healthy growing churches regularly invite and enfold new guests into their fellowship.

Create a spiritual home – After three visits, how are relational connections cultivated? As new people feel at home in your church, they begin to connect with their new spiritual family. Do people feel “right at home” when worshipping with you?

Help them say the big “I do” – At some point in their spiritual journey, the challenges of the gospel are shared. As each individual makes the step of faith toward accepting Christ, affirmations really do matter. Find ways to celebrate those important steps of faith. After those big decisions, guide them in the next step in the process for making disciples.

Coach them in the daily “I do’s” – After an initial commitment to Christ, the daily steps in their journey begin: learning to pray, studying the scripture, regular worship and finding their personal mission are all part of their discipleship process. Anticipate what they will need to take their next step of faith. Be ready to invite them to the next level in their spiritual journey. Coach your members to help them in their first steps of faith.

Enlist them in their own mission – Most of these evangelism and discipleship plans led new believers into their own place of self-discovery, training and partnership in a ministry team. As new members of God's family, they bring greater diversity and depth to the fellowship and mission. Our mission becomes discipling them into their mission.

Church ministries can be as unique as family members. But the care and cultivation of new believers remains crucial to the health of every missional church. As you learn from other churches and leaders, find what may work best in your ministry context. Hundreds of unchurched people in your community are dying for you to show them how.

Increasing Visitors - While Retaining New Believers

The private worship phase is a great place to practice your skills as a leader to motivate your launch team to invite their family, friends and acquaintances to worship services. In a very real way, you are practicing your skills as a leader while they are practicing their own ministry assignments each week.

New churches cannot grow without attracting new attenders into their fellowship. The more a church can increase the number of their first time guests, the more likely they are to increase in ministry impact and influence.

How will you increase the visibility of your new church from the private worship services to a more public invitation and awareness? The following principles make help you in improving the visibility for and access to your new church.

Principle #1: The unchurched have many choices.

Part of your task in starting a new church is to distinguish your ministry from all the other options that are available, churches and otherwise. For many new churches, the first goal for increased visibility involves just becoming one of the options people will consider. Will people know who you are and where the church meets?

Principle #2: Awareness builds visitor traffic.

We know in hundreds of communities every week, families are trying to decide where they will go to church on Sunday. One of the ways you know your church has developed a presence in your area is tracking the number of first time guests who worship with you.

How many different ways can your new church connect with the unchurched? Why would they want to attend your new church? The point is people in your community are looking for a church – many would love your church. How can you help them find your church?

Principle #3: Visitors determine missional growth.

Missional churches take a healthy flow of visitors very seriously. Of course, we know that large numbers of visitors will not be the *only* factor to healthy missional growth in the local church. A church could have many visitors walking in the front door and leaving through the back door. The point is growth is dependent on attracting first time visitors to your church. By increasing awareness of your church, the visitor traffic will increase.

Principle #4: All visitors will not stay.

Too many times church leaders put themselves under unrealistic expectations. No pastor enjoys it when visitors move on after checking out a church. But understand that no church can be a perfect match for everyone. As you begin to attract new people, don't live under a cloud of condemnation that only a portion of those you attract actually stick with

your church. Give them and yourself the freedom to follow their hearts and the Lord's leading in their lives. This principle will liberate you for new levels of ministry. Most highly visible new churches retain only 10% to 20% of their first time guests into the life and fellowship of the church. Keep your expectations real while you keep reaching out.

Principle #5: Some new people will really love your church.

One of the visibility principles affirms scores of people will love your church when they come to check it out. Also, really believe that many will agree with your philosophy of ministry. Be true to your calling in being who God made you to be and doing what God called your church to do. You will connect with others who identify with your church. Discover who you are and the ministries and strengths of your church. Come to really believe people will respond to the work that God is raising you up to do as a new church in your community. That kind of passion is contagious, and others will catch your vision.

Principle #6: Visibility and image are twin assets.

This concept is one of the most exciting in increasing your church's visibility. With some strategic planning, you can help craft a positive image of your church to the very people you would like to reach. Since your new church has no negative image to overcome, you can begin shaping the image you want this new church to have in the community.

A word of caution: The image you create needs to match the reality of who you are. People don't want to be surprised that your church isn't what you described it to be - that's the old "bait and switch routine". But you can present the positives of your congregation without creating false expectations.

Principle #7: New churches must prioritize visibility.

Visibility has the potential for continual development as long as other people within your community need Christ. To accurately measure a church's visibility in its ministry area is a difficult task. Every new church has to continue to increase its community presence. And it can be done many different ways, with some effort and without huge financial costs.

Among the visibility options to consider are websites, emails, door hangers, handbills, coupon inserts, blogs, telemarketing, cable TV ads, text messaging, newspaper ads, canvassing and direct mail. Perhaps the most effective tool for reaching new people is word of mouth – the references of your congregation to the relational networks they already have. Find ways to merge your efforts to encourage those conversations.

It might be wise to see what other churches are using effectively in your target community. What is your budget for announcing your first service? Are there tools that are more effective in reaching your target audience? What are the marketing strategies used by your ministry models in communicating to their communities? These and other questions may help you decide your approach to creating and improving your sense of presence as a new church. Learn to lower your risks by doing your homework.

Principle #8: Good visibility keeps a clear target.

To illustrate the process of evangelism in a new church, compare it to sport fishing. (Didn't Jesus teach we were to become "fishers of men"?) When the charter boats go out for ocean fishing, some of them chum to attract fish. Chumming is pouring a mixture of fish parts and oils into the ocean to attract the larger game fish. It excites their appetite into a feeding mode. The chumming does not catch the fish – but it does attract them.

In the same way, try to view your efforts for increasing visibility as an awareness factor of drawing seekers to your ministries, but not as the actual evangelism strategies for winning

them to Christ. Focus your efforts for visibility to reflect your purpose in ministry. Then find ways to measure their spiritual progress as they move closer to believing.

One new church developed six steps as a discipleship process for attracting and assimilating new people into their new congregation. Their six steps formed an acrostic for the word "FAMILY." Each step contained a different set of ministries to guide people to the next level in their spiritual development.

- F** Stands for the "First three visits" a guest makes to the church.
- A** Represents when they become a regular "Attender" to worship.
- M** "Membership" is accomplished by attending an orientation time to become more familiar with the church, discover their spiritual gifts and place of ministry in this new church.
- I** "Investors" are those who have connected with this ministry and are investing of their time, treasure and talents.
- L** The "Lay ministries" of the church represent the gifts and calling of God on this fellowship. Each member of the family has an important ministry to perform: every member is a minister.
- Y** The spiritual "Yields" of new church family members have an impact not only on the life of the church but also on their own spiritual formation. As they yield fruit in other new believers, the discipleship process is repeated all over again.

This ministry cycle guides each department and ministry effort in the overall process of transforming spiritual strangers into devoted family. Each ministry team is helping move people through this cycle from a spiritual stranger to a devoted family member. The discipleship process flows from these measurable and intentional steps to the next one.

Principle #9: Improved visibility builds morale.

Focusing on the strategies for building the visibility of your church will breathe a new inspiration into your launch team. A spirit of expectation will develop. Morale will grow as you plan how to make a real difference and work to make it happen. Few things bring more joy to a fellowship than guiding others to faith - or more joy in heaven.

Nothing more reflects the heart, character and mission of God the Father than a group of people who want to reach out to the unchurched. Trying to increase visibility is a selfless and holy ambition that displays the attitude and mission of Christ.

Any measure of success can also motivate to further develop evangelism strategies. One group of volunteers met to refine plans after their new church's first full year of ministry. They brainstormed on how to make a greater impact on their area than they had in their first year, and came up with the following "Top Ten Visibility Tools." You may want to come up with your own "Top Ten List" after discussing these among your church leaders.

What is your church doing very well to expand? What do you need to reduce?

Top 10 Visibility Tools

1. Two contacts to all the community each year.
2. Directional maps, website and phone numbers on all the church's advertising.
3. Church directional road signs on Sunday for main traffic flows.
4. Track responses for each marketing method as possible.
5. Create opportunities (reasons) for attenders to bring guests.
6. Keep news and press releases in the local papers.
7. Interact with the community's movers and shakers.
8. Spread out the church budget in multiple marketing options.
9. Maintain a qualified team of leaders focusing on the visibility strategies.
10. Refine different steps for follow-up on 1st, 2nd and 3rd time guests.

A number of other visibility and communication tools can be helpful for new churches. You might consider some of the following as potential ministry tools.

Other Visibility Options

At first a quarterly – later a monthly – newsletter can increase visibility to prospects and existing enrollment. Remember communication strategies need to be developed for all your targeted groups: prospects, new guests, attenders, members and donors.

Use limited funds for the highest possible impact. One church tracked visitor responses to discover newspaper ads, while very expensive, had little response in their area. They used the same money for multiple yellow page ads, direct mail, directional signs and special Sunday events. They also discovered in their area some responses from door hangers and church flyer inserts in business coupon books.

Sermon Series Mailers

These mailers can go out a week or two before starting a new series of messages to everyone who has ever attended the church. As an ongoing informational piece, it keeps in contact with those who have worshipped in the past. They also encourage their return to Sunday services for a new message series that may interest them.

Direct Mailers

Direct mail pieces from the church to the community can go out twice a year. Many churches are highly committed to direct mail as a way to penetrate the unchurched segments of their ministry target area. They cite several reasons for this method:

1. Direct mailers are cost effective.

2. They are user friendly.
3. They help project a positive image.
4. They reach into gated communities and closed high density housing areas.
5. They are passive rather than a hard sell approach like telemarketing.
6. They are not labor intensive.

Our Nazarene Publishing House has prepared a numbered of mailing cards to assist new churches with this outreach strategy. You can visit their website and review those options at www.NPH.com.

Data Base Companies

Mailing labels are available in zip code order from a number of data base sources for a few cents per label. You can order labels by demographic preferences, economic or geographic boundaries –even by the presence of children in the home. Each preference adds a nominal fee for the computer sorts that are required.

Yellow page directories in most major cities have listings for data base companies or mailing houses where you can purchase updated mailing labels for direct mailings. The lists for similar email addresses are much more expensive presently, but should decrease over time with better competition.

Principle #10: One final visibility dynamic involves synergism.

Webster defines synergism as *“The simultaneous action of separate agencies which together have a greater total effect than the sum of their individual parts.”*

The story has been told of a team horse pulling contest at a county fair. The owners announced that one team had a horse that could pull 9,000 pounds by itself. The other horse in the team could pull 8,000 pounds all alone. Together you would expect they could pull 17,000 pounds - but not so.

When they teamed up these two champions together, they pulled 30,000 pounds! That's the dynamic of synergism, and an illustration how it can strengthen churches.

The Apostle Paul described this potential in Ephesians 4:16: *“From Christ the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

If you want to increase your church's visibility, one of the things you can do is get more than one ministry hook in the water. I discovered as a teenager in south Georgia that different fish liked different baits. My fishing buddies taught how me to fish all night long for catfish on trotlines in their farm lakes and ponds.

I also learned if there were more hooks with bait, we were more likely to catch more fish - fishing synergistically!

If we only have one or two ways to generate visibility, we are severely limiting our growth results. Anything you can do to encourage your congregation to invite their unchurched family or friends will greatly increase your church's visibility.

Plan one Sunday a quarter as a special day to invite a first time guest to worship. Options include a special musician in concert, “Friend Day”, “Family Day” or a “Reunion Sunday”.

These days are designed to help partner with your congregation to work their relational networks. Every Sunday the services are designed to welcome first time guests, but there are special days to plan for bringing and including new people.

The principle is to move people through the discipleship process “on the arm of a close and trusted friend.” They first attend your church usually because a friend or relative invited them. They move from **F**irst time guest to an **A**tender on the arm of a close and trusted friend. They move from **A**tender to **M**ember relationally with a close and trusted friend. They graduate from **M**ember to **I**nvestor through the example of a close friend. Investors become **L**ay ministers as they watch their church family every week in ministry, and join them in a short-term ministry assignment. The fully devoted family members continue to develop their spiritual **Y**ields under the care and cultivation of a spiritual mentor who is concerned for their spiritual growth and ministry impact

All of this discipling process is happening simultaneously each week as the church worships and works together, through the influences of the truth of scripture, work of the Holy Spirit and fellowship combined with a community of faith.

Retaining Believers

Just as all these efforts for attracting new attenders can increase the first time guests to your worship services, you have to balance ministry efforts with caring for the new believers who come to faith through your new church. Strategic plans need to be in place for the discipleship process of every new believer, and closing the back door of your church’s fellowship.

In your list of activities on your timeline, begin to think about the ministry efforts which could encourage people in their spiritual formation. What kinds of ministry efforts could you include in the following list of ideas to disciple new believers?

1. Attending worship services
2. Enroll them in a weekly Bible study
3. Finding their place of ministry and helping others
4. Teaching them the value of prayer and personal quiet times
5. Plan a special baptism service regularly
6. Train them in sharing their faith with others
7. Involve them in teams for short term ministry projects
8. Teach them the practice of tithing
9. Guide them in their first communion service
10. What other activities would you add to this list?

Planning the First Public Worship Service

All of these private worship services lead up to the Grand Opening Sunday, when the new church first opens its doors to the whole community and welcomes them to worship together. Most effective Launch Sundays are scheduled in the spring or fall, the times when worship attendance is usually higher than winter or summer months. Of course,

there are some exceptions. But the point is to pick the very best time to launch a new church, when the most people are more likely to attend.

During the practice weeks of private worship services, the pastor is testing volunteers to see who is dependable, who works well with other people, who makes a good first impressions, etc. All the while, the pastor is planning for building the teams for the Launch Sunday, complete with leader, co-leader and the ministry team volunteers.

Some of the key volunteer teams you might consider for the public grand opening should include:

1. Sunday School Teachers Team – lead the children’s ministries
2. Greeters Team – welcome attenders, distribute worship folders, offer directions, etc.
3. Ushers Team – launch team members who already give to the new church
4. Worship Leader and Music Team – vocalists and musicians
5. Parking Team – helpful on a larger school campus for directions
6. Hospitality Table Team – some coffee and snacks help people linger after the service
7. Marketing Team – key attenders who know how to get the word out
8. Youth Team – two trusted couples to lead youth ministry
9. Social Activities Team – planning fellowship events soon after the Launch Sunday
10. Nursery Team – able to ease parents concerns for the safety and care of little ones

Perhaps you can think of a few more areas where you would want to involve some of your launch team. Fill them into your listing and timeline as you wish.

Try to give everyone in your launch team some kind of ministry assignment in preparation for your first public worship service. And, be sure to direct your most promising leaders into the areas of highest impact and greatest visibility.

If needed, create a position if it is not on the above list so someone of your launch team attenders can handle it effectively (like an official photographer for your opening day.)

Additional ideas for gathering the initial launch team could include:

- Personal invitations from the existing launch team
- Unchurched contacts in the area from the sponsoring church members
- District wide referrals from district newsletters
- Pre-launch events (potlucks and picnics)
- Network with the target group in multiple ways – community groups, events, etc.
- Need oriented seminars – parenting classes, marriage enrichment, etc.
- Activities for the launch team to invite others – family events, ball games, etc.

Of course, this launch team is made up of several important people groups for your church's future ministry, since they become your congregation. On any given Sunday after you have your first public worship service, your launch team can include first time attenders, regular attenders, church members, donors and volunteer staff. We will discuss these specific groups later and how to relate to them.

Learn to be aware of the various people segments in your church and how they are changing each week as people move up in their commitments to the Lord and this new church.

Relevance in Worship

You will want to determine sensitivity in each service to new guests:

1. Will it connect with the unchurched?
2. Will it be inviting the under-churched?
3. Will it be seeker targeted or more spectator oriented?
4. Will it be a blend of the above?

Sermon Preparation

The Sunday sermons become another vital means for encouraging this process of spiritual growth and assimilation to the local church.

The teaching and preaching becomes one of the greatest influences in guiding a new church. The weekly messages are one of the rare occasions when a pastor can bring influence to the whole process of spiritual formation and discipleship, and do it with in a relevant and consistent way.

Sermon Series

Relevant sermons for the unchurched and their felt needs can be quite a change in preaching style. Fortunately, several resources are available to assist a new church leader in this task, in multiple styles and topics. You'll want to build your own set of references for the style that works best for you and your new congregation.

New church research reveals for the first two years, 50% of a new church pastor's time should be invested in making contacts with new people in the community who have never attended the church. That means time for sermon preparation is extremely limited.

Using existing resources can reduce the time needed to create a sermon series completely from scratch. Of course, as you use these resources, it does not dismiss your own study, prayer and input for the messages each week.

Helpful hints to remember in using sermon resources:

1. Carefully screen sermons through you own doctrinal and theological belief systems.
2. Inject your own illustrations and examples from your local church to make these messages your own. Make sure the sermon is from your heart.
3. Protect your own ministry focus and purpose while using resource sermons. "Don't try to wear Saul's armor".

4. Update any stale examples in other messages or illustrations with topics from this week's news and national events.
5. Follow your own sense of the needs in your congregation - no one will know them better than you do. But resist ever using specific people in your group as negative illustrations.

Hold to this priority of relevancy without ever compromising Biblical truth, core values and our theology as a denomination. Relevancy does not mean watering down the truth. Rather it means we begin in this journey for truth *with* the seeker. Relevancy is starting from the seeker's point of view. Start with their felt needs, and move together into the eternal values that are life changing. As a church, build relevant bridges to the unchurched, and remove all unnecessary barriers.

Try to balance ministry for the seeker and the believer - with this distinction. The most convenience goes to the seeker. Give them the best service time - on Sunday mornings. They get the most convenient parking spaces - closest to the buildings. They get the most preferred seats - on the end of the row and in the back of the auditorium. Believers will know when they bring an unchurched friend, they will be treated very well. It is a safe place to process their questions and search for faith in Christ.

Deciding to Organize a New Church

Since new churches are started in a variety of ministry contexts in an assortment of styles, knowing when to formally organize new church is somewhat different today. When there was only one way to start new churches in the past, they simply counted the number of adult members as the signal to charter a new Church of the Nazarene.

Today, there are three indicators used to determine when it is time for a new church to formally organize. They are as follows:

1. The new church has become ***self-governing*** – This means they have raised enough volunteers in members and leaders to oversee their congregational responsibilities without depending upon the assistance of volunteers from an outside source, like a Pastor's Advisory Team, sponsoring church members or their district fellowship.
2. The new church has become ***self-propagating*** – This means the church is able to fulfill their missional ministry, by reaching out to their community and "making Christlike disciples in the nations" in full partnership with the sister congregations of the Church of the Nazarene around the world.
3. The new church has become ***self-funding*** – This means the church is able to pay its own ministry overhead and accept their apportionments for full denominational support, without regular monthly financial subsidies from their sponsoring church or district.

As these three key areas of responsibility are met, a new church is ready to become an indigenous, fully-organized congregation in the Church of the Nazarene. See the notes in the appendix for suggestions for a sample organizational service.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Will we be willing to pray and work for the right strategies for starting this new church?
2. Are we able to pray for local lay leaders for starting this new church?
3. What are we able to do to assist in marketing for our Sunday public worship services?
4. How will we recruit new attenders for this new church?

New Church Checklist:

- _____ We have a date for our first public worship service.
- _____ We agree on our public service's focus.
- _____ Several visibility tools have been chosen.
- _____ Opening day costs are budgeted.
- _____ An initial assimilation plan is set.
- _____ Greeters are strategically placed on our property.
- _____ Church signs have been prepared.
- _____ Newspaper articles and press releases have been prepared.
- _____ A record keeping system is ready for tracking people as they enroll in the church.
- _____ Guest letters are prepared for first, second and third time visitors.
- _____ Three data base company quotes are on file for obtaining mailing labels.
- _____ Three printing quotes are on file for larger orders of printed materials.
- _____ Several follow-up events have been scheduled to announce on opening day.
- _____ Key areas of involvement are ready for new attenders who want to get involved.
- _____ A member's orientation class is scheduled to announce in the first service.
- _____ I have added checklist items from this stage to the master timeline diagram.
- _____ I have added my own checklist items to the master timeline diagram.

Phase Five: Principles for Starting New Churches ***Answering the “What” Question***

The old axiom says “Work smarter not harder.” At times a new church leader can feel like the guy in the circus who is trying to keep all the plates spinning on top of the dozen poles. Just about the time you work down the line to speed up momentum in ten areas, the first two need some attention again.

The challenge in time management is really the challenge of priority management. Let's look at five ways you can begin to work “SMART” and focus on the priorities for building a healthy new church.

Starting Small Groups

While starting a new church requires planning and prayer, the process needs the ability to flex with opportunities and resources surfacing during the process. This can be a challenge for a pastor who is a careful planner and organizer. The development of new ministry teams and programs may depend upon the felt needs of the new people who begin worshipping with your church after your official opening. The availability of key leaders becomes a major consideration in the implementation of new ministries.

As pastor and leader of this new fellowship, you have an obligation to be the keeper of the vision while adjusting as much as you can for the new opportunities that develop. Learn to see your role as a leader as the enabler and equipper of other leaders as well. An article by Larry Osborne described at least three areas a pastor needs to serve as the gate keeper. You will need to watch over these three entrances into your church's ministry:

- 1) ***The membership gate*** - Interview personally every new member to determine his or her church background, philosophy of the church's ministry and commitment to the Lord and this new church.
- 2) ***The leadership gate*** - The individuals to play a key role in the early stages of the church will shape the attitudes and values of the entire congregation. Short term assignments will enable screening volunteers to find the best possible leaders.
- 3) ***The staff gate*** – Hiring the wrong staff can be more harmful than no staff. Great care needs to be taken that the people hired to work for the church reflect all the priorities and values of the church. Postpone hiring any staff, even part-time employees, until you have opportunity to observe your worker base, and uncover character strengths and weaknesses.

The strongest new church leaders have discovered the value of hiring from within your church's ministries. Allow time after the initial launch to find the best possible staff from within your congregation.

Mobilize Lay Ministers

Use the gifts and callings of lay members to guide you in the implementation of potential ministry teams. By planning an orientation class for new attendees, you are able to meet and interview each prospective new member of the church, as well as introduce the existing leaders of the ministry teams to new members.

A follow-up session for training all team members is in order for new churches that are committed to lay ministry. Excellent sessions are available for your adaptation and use in your new church from a number of resources.

A regular meeting of your ministry team leaders is also in order during the establishment of the new church. Monthly leadership meetings allow opportunity for vision casting, goal setting, problem solving and celebration of the church's progress.

Affirm Others in Ministry

The key for reaching and transforming new attenders in a high impact way simply involves really loving and caring for them. Try to communicate your new church's concern in as many ways as possible. Let your church become known as a place that really cares about people.

Win Arn in his classic study entitled "Who Cares About Love" has documented repeatedly the profound impact that genuine love and concern have on people as they come to worship with any new congregation.

Test every way you can to determine your church's "Love and Care Quotient". Listen to your guests. Talk to the regular attenders. Share with your church the importance of expressing our concern for one another. Reinforce those positive exchanges by telling those stories in your messages.

We can do all the right planning and strategy, but without love it is empty and lifeless. We can miss key marketing techniques, but if we love the people entrusted to our ministry, they'll connect with this community of faith.

Remember the Missional Priority

Of course, there are unnecessary activities in most of our calendars. But the driving purpose for this new church must be connected with reaching new people for Christ. New values come into play as the church begins to minister and fulfill its calling. The values of the church need to be clearly defined so that new attenders know the direction and future focus of the church's ministry.

The days of one size fits all churches are gone, never to return. The effective approaches in one ministry context are not a prescription for every other congregation. Each pastor and congregational leader has to filter through the options, based on what works best in their particular assignment. You must become the resident expert in what works best for evangelism for your ministry context. Not what you prefer, but what works best for reaching the unchurched.

Sometimes the best methods in evangelism recycle back to ministry approaches of previous generations. Almost like the swing of a giant pendulum, methods can move back and forth, tracking the receptivity of the unreached. Some churches and leaders lock into one methodology that worked for them in the past, while waiting for the world to change back to their preferences. Unfortunately, that's not really an option. Thousands may go unreached while some churches wait for their agenda to work again. Methods shift and change; methods are not sacred. Only the gospel message is changeless.

Some overriding principles for effective evangelism seem to transcend time and culture. These guiding truths help connect the timeless message with the most fruitful methods. When we can find these guiding principles in another ministry, others are able to apply it

for the benefit of the Kingdom. They match the examples found in the scriptures, they connect with basic human need and they seem to remain relevant for each generation. The wise leaders watch for them.

One such principle in growing churches in the USA and Canada is “the outside-in principle.” You can clearly see this concept throughout scripture, and find it at work in the most effective evangelism ministries today. Basically, “outside-in evangelism” reaches out beyond an existing community of faith to connect and guide people into the Kingdom, welcoming them into the new community of faith.

For too long, many congregations have completely reversed this concept. They have assumed that by teaching, feeding and strengthening “the already convinced,” the work of evangelism would naturally overflow from their lifestyle and influence to those who might need it.

They seem more preoccupied with the content of their message. They can go for weeks without considering how they might better connect with others that desperately need to hear that message. Their perspective for evangelism is from “the inside-out.” While it may sound good, and many of “the already convinced” like the concept, there is one glaring problem. It just doesn’t work.

Unfortunately, “the unconvinced” around us need more than just a polite and proper invitation to come and see what we do at church on Sunday. They need someone, like the lame man said to Jesus, “Carry me to the place of healing.” Or, like the parable of the wedding feast, when the Master urged the servants back out to find people for the wedding feast another time. He urged the servants to bring people back, wherever they could find them, from the roadways and off the beaten paths. He commanded them to go to find those who were more receptive and hungry. Who might be waiting in your area for someone to find them where they are?

Missional congregations are unwilling to keep the Good News contained within their four walls. For these pastors and churches, the hurting and needy in their community are the first to be found and welcomed into their fellowship, to experience the gospel up close and personal. These churches have illustrated the Kingdom principle of “the outside-in” evangelism. It feels a lot like the story Jesus told of the prodigal coming home, doesn’t it?

Until we take them into our hearts and fellowship, the spiritually disconnected may never listen to anything we have to say.

Target for Your Core Values

Be sure to give attention to the commitment to quality in ministry. Total commitment to excellence needs to shine through in everything you do. Your leadership, your church’s credibility and your future impact upon the first time guests who worship with you may well depend upon the neatness of your church bulletin, the quality of your special music and the cleanliness of the children’s classrooms. Commitment to excellence never costs - it always pays.

Establishing your own core values as a church is a great exercise in planning and vision casting. Meet with your key leaders to discuss what really is important to this new church. The following list reflects the discussions of one new church leadership team. You will want to develop your own values, but these might help start the discussion.

Sample Core Values for a New Church

1. Seekers are the number one customer.

Since lost people matter to God, they matter to us. In expressing their value to our church, they are given first priority. We will protect their anonymity, encourage their sense of community and shield their areas of vulnerability.

2. Seekers pick their pace.

We recognize that evangelism is a process, so we will cultivate and nurture the development of faith. We are committed to a “greenhouse model” for evangelism – allowing God’s Spirit to work over time in their lives through the ministries of this new church. Our responses will follow the seeker’s signals of interest.

3. Paradigm shifts follow relevant Biblical truth.

Biblical truth must be communicated in a culturally relevant manner. We believe that life transformations will occur with consistent exposure to God’s truth, the ministry of His Spirit and the nurture of a loving Christian fellowship.

4. Genuine disciples are both teachers and learners.

Spiritual growth and commitment to Christian maturity is the norm and practice for every believer. Discipleship is also a never ending process, which requires a balance of both mentoring others and being mentored.

5. We are accountable in a small group, to district leaders and Christ's Lordship.

Discipleship and spiritual development depends upon mutual accountability and levels of personal transparency. No one is a law unto themselves but all are under the authority of Christ as Head of the church, applicable scriptural truth, the loving direction of a small fellowship and spiritual leaders. This new church is a part of a larger denominational family of churches. We are partners in that mission and message of The Church of the Nazarene.

6. Leadership starts ministry, priorities sustain ministry.

Ministry does not just flow from need but also from gifted and proven leadership as God raises them up for the task. Leaders earn the right to lead from proven and effective ministry experience. When ministry has fulfilled its purpose or no longer meets a need, resources are reallocated for other more effective ministries.

7. Ministry is accomplished best in teams.

Ministry teams yield the win/win situation for both the team members and those being served by ministry. As ministry sharpens the skills of the staff, the team builds a sense of camaraderie and encouragement.

8. Giving our best to God.

We commit ourselves to excellence in ministry with an openness to continual evaluation and willingness to change. Our best is a choice to make and a commitment to keep.

9. Gift mixes mold ministry.

Every believer is a “10” in some area of ministry. Leadership is responsible for the discovery, cultivation and utilization of spiritual gifts. Pastors are the administrators and members are the ministers.

10. Small groups nurture life change.

Pastoral care and life change naturally occurs in the context of a small group. Connecting people in a small group is not an optional sub-ministry of the church - it is the church in its smallest unit.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Who has responded the most enthusiastically to this project?
2. Are there gifted leaders who have an interest in seeing this work succeed?
3. When will the leaders of this new church meet for prayer and planning together?
4. Are your leaders in teams for training and fellowship?
5. Is there an assistant for each leader to train and mentor?

New Church Checklist

- _____ Basic requirements for membership are understood by our launch team.
- _____ An Welcome Session has been prepared for new Attenders.
- _____ Multiple small groups invite new attenders to participate.
- _____ Member orientations are regularly scheduled in the church calendar.
- _____ A process to interview each member by the pastor has been established.
- _____ Teach on spiritual gifts and graces to guide new members into ministry.
- _____ Requirements for lay leaders and their assistants are clearly stated.
- _____ Any paid positions have been approved by the Pastor's Advisory Team.
- _____ We are building a list of potential attenders, members and future church leaders.
- _____ Our church leaders are discussing the core values that help guide this ministry.
- _____ Feedback tools have been developed for new attenders and new members.
- _____ I have added checklist items from this stage to the master timeline diagram.
- _____ I have added my own checklist items to the master timeline diagram.

Phase Six: Power for Starting New Churches **Answering the Greatest Question**

When a new church is making plans to start ministry in a spiritually needy community, the best strategies and plans must have the anointing of God from fervent and consistent prayer support. This dynamic of prayer is not last in this series as least important, but kept for last for sake of emphasis. The prayer support for this new church needs to begin as soon as the new church is a possibility, and grow as it becomes a reality. Recruiting new prayer partners should be one of your first tasks in starting a church.

Spiritual Dynamics for New Churches

We are reminded repeatedly in the scriptures that our challenge is not about physical issues, but of a spiritual nature. *“We wrestle against spiritual powers and against rulers of darkness...”* Since starting new churches is the greatest way to reach more people for Christ, the enemy will be resisting every effort we make to start and grow an effective local church.

The following seven ideas are offered as guidelines for you in establishing a prayer ministry team. Our suggestion is to begin in this work as soon as you can and continue to expand this Prayer Partner network throughout your months of preparation to launch your new church.

Guidelines for Prayer Partners

1. Build a list of prospective prayer partners.

Start with all the people you know who really know how to pray - those people you would call in an emergency - because they really knowhow to intercede. God has gifted some believers with extraordinary faith and they can touch heaven in our behalf. When we are on the front lines of ministry those are the people we want backing us up in prayer.

Since most new churches are made up of a high percentage of seekers and new believers, this kind of spiritual reinforcement must be imported from outside that local church's fellowship. Many of the believers who may begin attending this new church are looking for a safe place to heal from a previous painful church experience. Some may be difficult to recruit to any involvement for a while, especially to energetic and fervent prayer support. Most new church leaders go outside their local church to recruit prayer partners, according to Bob Logan.

2. The principle is to import needed prayer support from outside the new church.

Many valuable prayer programs already exist today and most are quite adaptable for raising prayer support for starting a new church. The emphasis is not about the program used, but on the value and emphasis on prayer. Find these prayer partners outside your launch team or the contacts you have for the new church.

Potential Partners

1. Start with the people you know.

Your prayer partner team may consist of any or all of the following suggestions:

- Your Christian family members
- Christian friends

- Prayer warriors in other churches
- Mentors in your past
- Pastoral peers
- Missionaries you support
- Sponsoring church members
- District church leaders
- Other new church pastors
- College classmates

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it begins to point out the potential prayer partners you could contact. The mothering congregation can provide their membership mailing list as potential prayer partners. Other Nazarene churches on your district will want to be praying for this new congregation.

2. *Ask these contacts to become prayer partners.*

Prepare an initial form letter to send bulk rate or by e-mails to all these contacts and introduce this new ministry challenge. Share with these potential partners as much as you can about the community where you are and the kind of church you are trying to start. Explain you are in need of prayer support and hoping to enlist them as prayer partners. Be careful to explain there are no time requirements involved with this partnership. They will pray for you and this new church as the Lord reminds them in their regular quiet times.

Let potential partners know they will receive a prayer partner letter with prayer requests and answers to prayer and any ministry updates. Then offer them some kind of response form or card to decline the invitation if they do not want to participate. We found many partners wanted to pray for us but they didn't want to fill out response forms and get them back to us in the mail. If they really didn't want to be involved, they were able to return the card.

3. *Plan your prayer partner letters.*

Schedule in your work lists a letter that describes your five greatest prayer concerns - or "Prayer Challenges". By carefully choosing the most important prayer requests, your prayer partners will be equipped to pray more accurately for the new church. It allows focus on the ministry's greatest needs in the coming quarter. As partners pray about the greatest needs, you are focusing on the same areas of need in your efforts.

Also include with each letter the five greatest "Prayer Celebrations." Be sure to pass on any answers to prayer from your previous faith challenges so your partners can celebrate the Lord's faithfulness with you. You will be reminded regularly that as your prayer partners are praying for this new church, God is doing some exciting things. One of the greatest motivators for your Prayer Partners to pray is answered prayer.

4. *Pray in your workers.*

One of the greatest challenges in starting a new church involves finding capable and willing workers. The list at times seems endless - musicians, Sunday School teachers,

children's workers, ushers, greeters, set up personnel, small group leaders and youth workers. Many times we are asked, "How can you move to an area with no launch team and start a new church? Where do you find your workers?" The answer may sound trite and simple, but it is really true - pray them in. When a deadline develops for any ministry and needs new volunteers, a prayer partner letter can go out describing that need.

As Prayer Partners begin praying and you can begin working in that area, recruiting, calling and tracking down all possible leads. Over and over again you will find if you will do your best, God would do all the rest.

As our Lord instructed the best worker recruitment comes by talking to Him - not them. *"Pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers."* (Matt. 9:38).

Over and over, this principle has been proven to those starting new churches. There is no substitute for faith filled prayer.

5. *Avoid making financial prayer requests.*

Be as earnest on raising prayer support as you are on raising financial support. But never confuse the two by making prayer requests for financial needs. There will be the temptation to write financial appeals into your prayer letters, but you must resist that opportunity and remained focused on generating the needed spiritual impetus for this new ministry. As your partners know they will not be receiving financial appeal letters from you, or made to feel uncomfortable about your sacrifices for starting this new church, they will be able to adequately focus on the spiritual challenges facing you and the church.

Of course, there is a place to plan and raise the necessary funding for starting this new church, but your prayer partner ministry is not the place. Other churches and pastors will also feel more comfortable providing a membership list for prospective prayer partners as you can assure them no financial appeals are made to their members - only prayer appeals.

6. *Encourage and train your prayer partners.*

Be ready to offer an insight on the topic of faith or prayer that will be an encouragement to your prayer partners. From your reading or maybe from a recent sermon you have prepared, pull an illustration or prayer principle that will enrich their prayer life. As you better equip them for prayer, you will have a better team of partners. Of course, no story is better than ones from your new church, but don't feel limited to them.

By offering this kind of extra to your regular prayer partner correspondence, you not only make your letters more enjoyable to read, but also a tool for discipling and training.

In the End Notes of this manual are sample prayer partner letters that were used for our prayer partners. Additional sample copies are available at the website at www.NewNazareneChurches.org.

7. *Prepare the prayer challenges carefully.*

While this may seem confusing at first, the more you write your prayer partners you will understand this concept. Your prayer challenges need to be well defined and measurable, so your partners can pray effectively. But they also need to be described in a way that when you write them the next prayer letter, you can update them on their prayer lists. Prayer challenges need to be like well defined and measurable goals, so partners can celebrate when they have been answered.

A prayer challenge for a meeting place is well defined and measurable. You will know when that prayer request is answered and your prayer partners can celebrate with you as you locate a worship location.

Asking your prayer partners to pray that your church will grow in the next twelve weeks maybe too vague. How will you know the church is growing? Instead, you may want to pray for 35 new first time guests or an increase of 15 new members in your next membership classes. Those are clear targets to reach and celebrate when they are accomplished.

Some Final Suggestions for Prayer Partners

You really don't need to ever end your Prayer Partner ministry. However healthy and strong your church grows, you will always want a group of people praying for you and this congregation. We discovered Prayer Partner letters were a wonderful way to keep in touch with members who move out of state or our congregation's extended family members who come to visit during the holidays or vacations.

We also learned to ask our Prayer Partners for any prayer concerns they may have. Since this is a partnership in faith, we want to share with them in the faith challenges they are also experiencing. By enclosing a reply envelope for their prayer requests, we encourage them to send us prayer challenges that we can lift with them. With each mailing, we receive a number of prayer requests from our partners who are encouraged to know there is a way they can have other believers join with them in prayer.

The spiritual resources available through this increasing number of committed prayer partners is a valuable asset to any growing church for years to come. As you begin this great adventure in faith, you and your new church are in our prayers. Only heaven will reveal the full impact of your efforts in starting a growing church.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. How will we find prayer support for this new church?
2. What are the five greatest challenges we face today?
3. Is God able to answer with these challenges?
4. How will we report our prayer celebrations?
5. What will be our initial goal for Prayer Partners?

New Church Checklist:

- _____ Begin writing out a list prayer concerns.
- _____ List out your best possible Prayer Partners.
- _____ Budget your costs for copying a prayer letter.
- _____ Budget your costs for postage on a mailing.
- _____ Keep a constant list of answers to prayer.
- _____ Spend time weekly praying for Prayer Partners' needs.
- _____ Watch for a church leader for a local prayer team.
- _____ Draft a letter to recruit Prayer Partners.
- _____ Keep a separate mailing list for partners.
- _____ Develop a way to receive prayer concerns from your Prayer Partners.
- _____ Pray in the key ministry team leaders and volunteer workers.
- _____ Set a numerical goal for Prayer Partners.
- _____ Set your mailing schedule to Prayer Partners.
- _____ Recruit and coach public prayer leaders.
- _____ Set up an emergency prayer email system with key Prayer Partners.
- _____ Plan a message series on prayer.
- _____ Communicate answers to prayer to your church and your Prayer Partners.
- _____ I have added checklist items from this stage to the master timeline diagram.
- _____ I have added my own checklist items to the master timeline diagram.

New Church Strategy

Sending Service

Feel free to use this guide and adapt as needed

Preparation for this Sending Service:

- ◆ The church leaders have registered this new church staff with their district leadership
- ◆ The planning steps for this new church have been reviewed, including the “New Church checklist”, “Starting A Strong Church” (by Dr. Bill Sullivan) and “The Starter Kit for New Churches” (by Jim Dorsey)
- ◆ The congregation and leaders agree to this new church sponsorship from the survey found in “The New Church Checklist”
- ◆ Prayer partners have been recruited and praying from the sponsoring church

Service Suggestions

<u>Possible Hymns:</u>	Great is Thy Faithfulness	Faith of Our Fathers
	Lead on O King Eternal	How Firm a Foundation
	Called Unto Holiness	The Church's One Foundation

Congregational Prayer Time: Leaders of the sponsoring church could be called on to lead in prayer for the pastor and family of the new church, their leaders, care group and future contacts. The prayer should reflect a spirit of celebration and praise for God's calling and guidance in starting this new church.

<u>Possible Prayer Requests:</u>	Pastor	Potential new church members
	Pastor's Family	New Church Meeting Location
	New Church Leaders	God's blessing on this new church
	New Church Ministries	Conversions from this new congregation

Possible Scriptures: Matthew 28:16-20; Matt. 16:13-19; Acts 1:6-8 or Acts 13:1-5

Special Music: Plan all the music to reflect a focus on reaching our world for Christ, with a Great Commission emphasis.

Testimonies: If there are already new core group members from the new community, recognize them in the service or have them share a testimony about finding this new church. Answers to prayer, initial conversions, new families that will be attending and key leaders in the new church all provide encouraging affirmations in this service.

Message: Either the sponsoring pastor or the new church pastor might preach for this sending service - but both want to make the evangelistic purpose of this new church a key focal point. This is an excellent time to commend the faith of the sponsoring church and leaders, enlist new prayer partners and cast the vision for this new church.

Offering: While regular tithes and offerings must be received for the week in the sponsoring church, a predetermined project or special offering may be appropriate for the new church. By permitting the sponsoring church to contribute toward starting this new church, their hearts will follow their support.

Commissioning Prayer: At the close of the service, the pastor and spouse of the new church might be brought before the sponsoring congregation for a commissioning prayer. Leaders of the new church could join them along with other core members who may be present. Prayer could be offered by the sponsoring pastor asking for God's protection and provisions for this new congregation. If appropriate, other church leaders from the sponsoring church could surround the new church pastor and leaders and lay hands on them in a supportive prayer of commissioning, like we find in Acts 13:1 – 3.

New Church Reception: Following the sending service, a fellowship meal and reception could provide time for personal encouragement. A new church “Needs List” could provide an opportunity for individuals to bring a gift to this reception and take care of the dozens of items needed in setting up a new church ministry, like office supplies and for Sunday School necessities. Be sure the list provides a number of low-budget items so that everyone can participate in the new church reception.

Possible Order of Service:

Opening Song
Welcome and Greetings
Opening Prayer
Congregational Singing
Congregational Prayer Time
Scriptural Reading
Special Music
Message
Commissioning Prayer
Offering Benediction

New Church Reception following the service

Appendix

Sample Prayer Partner Letter

Dear Prayer Partner,

Have you ever had a time when you didn't know what to ask God in prayer?

In Romans 8, the Apostle Paulo teaches us an insightful lesson on the topic of prayer. This verse is a great encouragement for anyone troubled about praying for the right request in any situation. It teaches us God's Spirit will pray in our behalf when we don't know what to ask.

What a comforting thought for all of us in the challenges to faith we face each day! Our effectiveness in prayer is not dependent upon our ability or wisdom to diagnose what God needs to do for us or our various ministries. We just need to call on His Spirit to be with us and allow Him to test, diagnose, repair and ask for us in our behalf from heaven.

I guess this illustration spoke particularly to me since the responsibility of writing our prayer partners with the most pressing prayer needs has become somewhat of a burden. How do you determine what the five greatest prayer challenges are at any point in time in any ministry? The comfort is in knowing God knows what we need better than we do.

As you pray, join with me in these **five faith challenges** - and we'll trust God's Spirit to endorse or amend these areas as He wills:

- 1. Fall Campaign** - As summer ends, we hope to see an increase in ministry impact with the fall mailings and special events.
- 2. Assimilation Team** - This new team is reviewing our strengths and weaknesses in enfolding and bringing suggestions to our leadership.
- 3. Employment Needs** - Several of our key families are facing job changes
- 4. Ministry Teams** - A new training session for enrolling workers into our ministry teams is being introduced this month. Pray for these important classes and new workers on our teams.
- 5. Heavenly wisdom** - The epistle of James promises if we lack wisdom, we can ask from God. As pastor and spiritual leader, I'm in need of your prayers for God's heavenly wisdom for leadership.

Let's close in thanking God for these **five areas of celebration**. To try to summarize all that God is doing may be as difficult as the challenge list, but we can't overlook these points:

1. Continued Growth - I'm still trying to get used to the summers here in California. In the mid-west, things slowed for summer, but there's been no summer slump - more like summer jumps!

2. Summer Camps - We were thrilled to see nearly thirty children and youth go to the District Camp this summer. They came home enthusiastic about their faith.

3. Children's Ministries - From the successful Vacation Bible School to the regular Sunday School classes each week for our children, this area continues to experience dynamic growth. Thank the Lord for our sixty-four workers and staff.

4. Formal Organization - Many have prayed since April when the church started paying its own expenses for ministry. Thank you for your prayers! God is honoring your prayers and rewarding the faith of faithful partners in ministry...and all the bills are paid to date!

5. CARE Team - The various fellowship and enfolding ministries are making great progress in recent weeks. A family camping trip up to the mountains in August had over eighty in attendance.

Continue to pray with us that the work we are doing has eternal impact on the development of faith in the lives of these unchurched families around us. A new member told me recently in their interview, "If it weren't for this church, I wouldn't know God today!"

Your partnership in prayer is helping to make this possible!

Expectantly,

Jim Dorsey

PS - If you have pressing prayer concerns call us or email us. We'll pray for you!

Other New Church Evangelism Resources

Individual copies of *Starting Strong New Churches* by Bill M. Sullivan are available on a complimentary basis by calling the toll-free product number 1-800-306-8294.

Bulk quantities of *Starting Strong New Churches* are available by emailing the administrative office with the quantity requested and the purpose of the request. The E-mail address is NewStart@Nazarene.org.

ALSO AVAILABLE through the toll-free product number is the ***Writing Your Ministry Action Plan*** Jim Dorsey.

FOR INFORMATION on attending a training event or the next Assessment Center or training events, call the New Church Evangelism office at 1-800-306-8294.

Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Best Practices in Discipleship: Renewing Our Missional Passion -- This book is a must read for every Nazarene pastor and lay leader wanting their church to be more of a missional influence. Beyond just a simple program, these presenters and authors have proven principles for the encouraging the ongoing process of evangelism and discipleship in your local church, by closing the back door and more effectively enfoldng new believers.

New Church Evangelism Accelerate Conferences and Workshops -- New Church Evangelism offers ongoing training on a wide variety of subjects from proven church leaders at General Church gatherings and Teaching Church locations. These seminars are designed to equip you with practical tools for starting and growing new churches, including Assessment Centers, Preparing for a New Church Launch, Funding Your Vision, Sponsorship Orientations and many more.

District Office's Guide for Registering New Churches -- Here's a resource for every district office to assist in the steps to officially register each new church on their district, including how to register, organize, and report for new and fully organized churches.

Missional Hearts: Best Practices in Evangelism -- The authors of this book agreed these chapters gave them new insights and ideas to use in their own evangelism ministries. Learn from more than a dozen other church leaders what they are using most effectively to attract, win and disciple new people into their congregation.

New Church Evangelism Introduction Brochure -- Here's a helpful introduction for your congregation to discover the strategies for starting strong new Nazarene churches the right way. This brochure outlines why starting new churches is so important and how your members can be a part of this endeavor.

Five Steps in a New Church Strategy -- This communication piece allows your church to respond to new church evangelism in various ways for every member. The tear off reply card allows for members to sign up in a variety of five different categories for partnering in a new church ministry.

New Church Assessment Center -- The first key strategy for strong new churches involves finding the right leader. New Church Assessment Centers are conducted regularly across the USA to assist leaders in understanding their spiritual gifts and graces for starting a new church. For details, call New Church Evangelism toll free at 1-800-306-8294.

Starting Strong New Churches -- Bill Sullivan acknowledged the full range of questions and challenges associated with starting a new church today. This volume describes the motivation and mission for starting strong new churches. Here is an excellent book to introduce leaders and members to the concept of new church evangelism

Writing Your Ministry Action Plan -- This is a workbook for pastors in building their own missional action plan. Each stage of the church's strategy is followed with ideas and checklists of items to complete before moving on to the next stage. This is a helpful guide for every pastor and leaders of a new church launch team.