



**A process and
conversation guide
for sending pastors,
church planters, and
teams**

THOUGHTS FOR SENDING PASTORS



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If you are a sending church or pastor and desire to commission church planters or church planting teams to start new works in a city or target area, consider the following points:

CAST VISION EARLY

Long before a sending church is ready to launch a new location, the senior pastor can lay the groundwork by casting a vision. Vision casting is not complicated, but it is intentional. Casting a vision is merely helping the congregation see the possibilities of starting a new church in an unchurched area.

A church must be aware of its obligation to fulfill the Great Commission to take the whole gospel to the whole world. And while we support missions abroad, our most accessible opportunity is the one next door. Having a church accept this responsibility is the first step in launching a new work. A general vision can be cast in simple ways:

- Preaching and teaching that focuses on the church's responsibility to reach the lost is the foundation. Beyond inspirational sermons or calls to commitment, there must be practical encouragement and how-to guidance on reaching the lost.
- Sharing testimonies and opportunities as they arise prioritizes soul winning. You will get what you celebrate.
- Praying for God to open doors in surrounding communities is a great way to expose a congregation to the need. As a congregation owns the responsibility and accepts the burden, doors tend to open naturally.

Preaching points and daughter works are intended to reach the unchurched in languages or locations other than those of the mother church.

Unlike typical church outreaches, these endeavors are not primarily intended to increase the membership of the mother church or carry the gospel to those confined in an institution. These endeavors are aimed at establishing a new location from which ministry can be carried out, and where, possibly, an autonomous church can be established.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

The next step is moving beyond a general awareness and burden for the lost to the specific need at hand. Targeting a specific location or language group allows for focus and planning. Analyzing the opportunities in the vicinity and making these specific matters of prayer can move a church closer to planting a new work. Sometimes opportunities unfold naturally from a contact or Bible study. Many times these opportunities open unexpectedly.

- These are opportunities God places in our paths, and we simply need to take advantage of them.

Look on a map and see where the gospel is not being preached between the mother church and the nearest church in all directions. Are there unreached communities? When considering metropolitan areas, don't limit the need to city limits. Think in terms of neighborhoods and subdivisions. Particularly in metropolitan areas, the distance between churches is more appropriately measured in the number of people between churches rather than the number of miles between churches.

What language groups do not have an Apostolic witness in your region? Are there significant numbers of non-English speaking immigrants in the community? Are there bilingual people in the mother church who have connections to these larger communities?

Are there significant immigrant populations, regardless of language, who would find meaning in worshiping in their tradition with their people?

DEVELOP A PLAN

The success of the preaching point or daughter work will hinge on having an effective plan which includes competent leadership. If the effort is seen primarily as a ministry training opportunity, the bulk of the responsibility will likely fall back on the senior pastor, and the work will likely struggle. This being said, perfection is not required. There is risk involved, you likely will never have all the desired resources, and there never will be a perfect opportunity. If you wait for the perfect scenario, you likely will never plant a church. Have as robust a plan as possible, but be willing to take some risks. Don't wait for perfection.

It also is important to know that every preaching point and daughter work is unique. And while you may glean principles from various sources, ultimately the work must be shaped around the local field, vision, and available resources. Take the liberty to think creatively and to innovate! Explore possibilities beyond whatever templates are presented here or elsewhere.

The best plan is not what might work—or even what *has* worked—elsewhere. The best plan is what fits the need, church culture, and available resources on location. After a plan has been developed, it is important to remain flexible. It may be necessary to modify the plan. In some cases, the original plan may be abandoned altogether as the work unfolds. Embrace the challenge, and embrace the change!

- As the sending pastor, identify an audience.

This is the reason for the work. Targeting a geographic area or language group is the first step. Knowing who the audience is will in great part determine the rest of the plan. The team and strategy will need to be suitable for the target audience.

- As the sending pastor, select a team.

The success of the work will be determined by the competency of the team more so than any other factor. A new work cannot be launched without a team—designated people who will be responsible for the day-to-day responsibilities of starting a work. The primary team member, of course, is the pastor of the work. Although the mother church pastor is considered to be the senior pastor over these works, someone needs the primary responsibility of shepherding the new work. In most cases, it is generally not sustainable for the mother church pastor to also pastor the preaching point or daughter work.

There are various arrangements that can work, but someone needs to bear the primary responsibility of shepherding the work and implementing the vision.

- As the sending pastor, establish a strategy.

A strategy must be adapted to the target audience as well as to the team that will be working in the ministry. A template ministry model will not work. It must take into consideration both the strengths and weaknesses of the team on location, and it must be a strategy that will effectively appeal to the people in the target location.

The strategy is the all-encompassing plan that includes a funding, a budget, outreach methods, service schedule, service format, visitor follow-up, discipleship and assimilation systems, and all other facets of operating the work.

ALLOCATE RESOURCES

Visions must be resourced or they remain dreams. A budget should be determined in advance that will empower the ministry to function as intended. Furthermore, human resources are required. There must be musicians, singers, children's ministry workers, and others available to assist. As the sending pastor, you should help facilitate the building of a budget and an initial launch team for the new work.

Preaching points and daughter works are a lot of work, and they require significant investment. Not all of them succeed. However, many of them do succeed! No matter how challenging, we do not have an alternative to planting churches. We must plant churches, and preaching points and daughter works are one of the ways we can do so.

A MOTHER CHURCH AND SENDING PASTOR MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS AND BE WILLING TO FAIL.

Although planning and strategy are critical, flexibility is more important. Have the courage to experiment, alter plans, and change approaches. You will learn as you go.

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As the sending pastor, take time to think through the following reflection prompts:

How can I begin to cast vision now (early) in preparation of launching a new location or campus in the future?

What opportunities do I see for new churches in my community, metro area, or in nearby target cities?

Are there current leaders in my church that seem to be ideal church planting candidates (either as team leaders or team participants)?

How can I as the sending pastor begin to cultivate the leadership capacities of church members to prepare them to step into church planting contexts in the future?

How can I allocate resources now in preparation of launching a new location or campus in the future?