Congratulations on your interest in Launching a Church! This high calling fulfills the Great Commission and is at the heart of North American Missions. The task of launching a church is daunting. Many questions arise. Although not every question can be answered here, our goal is to provide a *general guide* (not a rule) that will ease intimidation and build confidence in developing and actuating a launch plan. A well-thought-out ministry plan greatly increases the probability of building a *sustainable*, healthy church. Failing to plan is planning to fail:

“Most start-ups fail because they lack one or more of the following aspects:

* A thorough grasp of the key ideas that inform the project [why, what, how, and wow – a launch plan]!
* The right people to lead and operate it. People of the right calling, character, and commitment are to be placed in leadership of the church (for example, Romans 12:1-8; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy). All members of the core team [a must!] must have significant skin in the game in order to participate fully in the decision-making process. People who are not stakeholders should not be allowed to make key decisions because they do not have to live with those decisions.
* Adequate resources (financial or otherwise) to get them over the initial high-investment phase [start-up funding for budgets AND personal resources].”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Every church plant differs. Various elements determine numerical, chronological, and developmental milestones: experience, training, skillsets, prayer and financial and moral support, coaching, learning agility/adaptability, spiritual sensitivity and warfare, demographic target, virgin field versus cultivated field, team size and dynamics, mother-daughter or sponsor church relationship, collaborative versus competitive venture, etc. Thankfully, to plant a church there are common key phases with common key action items. Like pregnancy, child-birth, and child rearing, one watches for chronological development milestones while remaining fairly adaptable. Milestones indicate normal, natural health and growth progressions. Although numerical milestones have their place, it is important to work towards and watch developmental milestones as they *lead* to numerical milestones. Numerical milestones, alone, are a poor indicator of the health of a church. Your goal is to raise a healthy, growing, and sustainable apostolic church that is mature enough to reproduce another healthy, viable growing apostolic church! The process is more important than the outcome. Patient process leads to healthy outcomes. This twelve to eighteen-month guide will *assist* you in this process.

A word of caution! Although a ministry plan becomes a compelling resource to facilitate the actualization of your God-vision, *apostolic* church planting and leading of an *apostolic* movement also, and importantly, depends upon adaptability to the Spirit’s movement. Church planting is a spiritual adventure! Further, one must be able to adjust and improvise plans in response to unforeseen circumstances and conditions. No one can know all the variables until they immerse themselves in their unique missional context and begin to act intentionally within it. This does not mean starting without a plan; it just means those plans need to be somewhat open-ended. “Formulating strategies in the context of performing them is one of the most fertile ways to arrive at success. But it requires leadership, flexibility, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to fail. Revising a strategy halfway through is not only a sign of good learning; it is essential to being adaptable, which in apostolic ministry is the short-term means to the ends of long-term effectiveness.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Launch Master Plan**

The probability of a successful launch of a sustainable healthy church is greatly enhanced by creating a master plan. Jesus taught:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace (Luke 14:28-32).

God does nothing without intentionality. Towers do not self-erect. Wishes do not win wars. The world does not self-evangelize. Disciples do not just appear. Churches do not self-propagate. Wishes do not grow a church or win spiritual warfare. Jesus, the great strategist, knew and followed the will (plan) of His father. Our challenge is to apprehend God’s **plan** and join Him in actuating it through strategic intentionality. “Churches that prioritize evangelism and outreach in their prayers, in their member deployment, in their budget, in their staffing, and in their leadership-training find that God blesses their endeavors with an abundant harvest.”[[3]](#footnote-3) God expects planning that is balanced by trust. Delivering a strategic plan is one of the most important things we can undertake. God will establish it!

British Columbia church planter, Phil Lemke, recalls:

 In my years of starting and growing several businesses, the ones that thrived were the ones that had a clear vision broken down into milestones and steps. The banks would not release funds until a clear pathway to the vision had been presented to them. The pathway had to have quantifiable successes along the way for them to continue to be “on board.” They reviewed the progress regularly and demanded results or a plausible plan B in the event that projected success was not being achieved.

 I can tell you, as I look back over a trail of efforts in my church planting-launching experience, that I have greater clarity now on that which I only wish I could go back and do better. The necessity of a clear plan of action from beginning to end is absolutely a church planter’s friend and not an unnecessary burden.

The Launch Master Plan is a well-written, eye-appealing document that helps:

* Clarify your vision to others
* Enlist partners
* Raise funds
* Recruit a launch team
* Stay on track
* Promote your church plant

"Articulating the vision on paper pulls the dream that is in your spirit (that no one can see but you) into the visible world so that others can capture it in their own hearts… Imparting God’s vision to the team around us is the single most important factor in seeing the mission accomplished.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Whether someone is partnering with you as launch team member or agreeing to support you financially, they want to see your strategy, your budget and your timeline. People readily give their time and/or treasure to a compelling *visible* plan. No one can follow an uncharted course!

A concise and inspiring master plan answers:

* "WHY?” Why you? Why in this city? Why a new church?
* “WHAT?” What is your specific mission, timeline and budget?
* “HOW?” How are you going to dedicate your resources to accomplish the purpose?
* “WOW!” Your personal passionate appeal! “If you support my God-vision, here what return (results) will be on your investment! If you do not support my God-vision, here are the eternal consequences!”

It all begins with WHY. WHY precedes WHAT, WHAT precedes HOW, and HOW precedes WOW![[5]](#footnote-5)

Each prospect applying for Launch funding is required to be prepared to present their Launch Master Plan live before the Launch Executive Committee and Launch peers. The presentation will be scored on the following six points:

* Why? – The Purpose
* Where? – The Place
* Who? – The Partners
* What? – The Plan
* How? – The Process
* Wow! – The Promotion

The Launch Master Plan must clearly communicate the passion, vision, strategy, timetable and budget that will move the Launch Executive Team and potential partners to action.

**Instructions.**

1. Read through ALL the information provided below. Many prompting-type questions are listed to assist your presentation formation. Brainstorm each segment. Answer the questions provided. See the big picture.
2. Gather your thoughts. Creatively, strategically, and passionately diagram your presentation “master plan.” Less is more.
3. Add supportive pictures, graphics, media, and statistics depicting the city, community, team and etc. Don't overload with text. Leave enough white space to make the text easily readable. Make the budget and timeline stand out graphically.
4. Coordinate multimedia and handout information (length: 8 to 12 pages).
5. Cull the presentation down to a poignant 5 to7-minutes.
6. Have others review and provide feedback on your presentation. Refine.

**Master Plan Categories and Prompt Questions.**

**Why? – The Purpose.**

* Demonstrate a clear calling: Why you? Why are **you** motivated? How does this endeavor fit within your testimony and life-vision?
* Why in this city?
* Why a new church plant? Why Launch?
* Why the specific demographic target?
* Why do you need to raise funds? Why should others *want* to support this cause?

**Where? – The Place.**

* What city, community, State, Province, Parish, etc.?
* Define your city. Highlight the city’s important features, its history, and demographics.
* What neighborhood or target group? Why?
* Where will you meet? What is your target location? Why?
* Describe the facility, if you can: ‘storefront’, ‘living room’, or wherever you plan to start.

**Who? – The Partners.**

* Who are your internal partners?
	+ You and your wife (if applicable) – brief bio/resume’.
	+ Your Core Team – brief bio and description of their role/position.
	+ Launch Team – Where are they coming from? How many?
* Who are your external partners?
	+ Sponsor/Mother church partners.
	+ Accountability/Oversight partners.
	+ Support partners: Prayer? Financial?

**What? – The Plan.**

* What is your compelling vision? What is your personal passionate calling?
* What are your values? Values must be reflected in the vision.
* What is your purpose? Your purpose rises out of your vision and core values. Include a purpose statement.
* What your demographic target? ([www.freedemographics.com](http://www.freedemographics.com)).
* What are you going to do to determine and search out your location?
* What is your plan or strategies? Priorities? Short-term and long-term goals?
* What do you *need* (systems and supports) to accomplish your mission?
* What is your detailed first 18-month timeline? Your target dates – key milestones? The best starting point for creating a timeline is to envision your launch day. Work backward and forward from the launch date, detailing the actions that will result in what you envision. Then simply put dates to each action.
* What will your vital measurements be? (baptisms, Bible studies taught, visitations, guests, attendance, etc.)

**How? – The Process.**

* How will you organize and process your plan?
* How do you turn purpose into performance? Who will do what (action items) when?
* How will you implement system and supports? When?
* How will you assure anointing and victory in spiritual warfare?
* How will you budget for the plan? Four specific areas to focus on are operating, staffing, equipment and marketing. Remember, your prelaunch budget won’t necessarily mirror your operating budget, and you’ll want to consider all startup costs.
* How will you educate your Core Team?
* How will you attain and train your Launch Team?
* How will you educate your community?
* How will you delegate responsibility?
* How do you plan to raise your funds?
* How will you be held accountable?

**Wow! – The Promotion**

* Personal passionate appeal!
* Brief powerful testimony! Your short story (very short!). Less is more!
* What vision-actuation looks like and the projected results!
* Why we should support you! The consequences of not supporting you!
* What you need from us!

A timeline and budget must accompany and be highlighted in your presentation. Assimilate the above information into the following phases and categories (each phase must address all three categories):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Phases** | **Categories** |
| Preparation Phase | Goals and Strategies |
| Pre-Launch Phase | Timeline – Key Milestones |
| Launch Phase | Budget – Minimum First 18 Months |
| Post Launch Coaching |  |

The following Church-Launching Guide is also provided to assist your Master Plan development. The Guide is neither all-inclusive nor intended to be representative of every Launch.

A strong master plan will draw potential partners and will help you remain focused on God’s unique purpose for your new church as it introduces itself to the community. *You only get one chance to make a first impression.*

**A Church-Launching Guide**

Congratulations on your interest in Launching a Church! This high-calling fulfills the great Commission and is at the heart of North American Missions. The task of launching a church is daunting. Many questions arise. Although not every question can be answered here, our goal is to provide a *general guide* (not a rule) that will ease intimidation and build confidence in developing and actuating a launch plan. A well-thought-out ministry plan greatly increases the probability of building a *sustainable*, healthy church. Failing to plan is planning to fail:

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* Adequate resources (financial or otherwise) to get them over the initial high-investment phase [start-up funding for budgets AND personal resources].”[[6]](#footnote-6)

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**Possibility Phase**

**Vision**. Vision is foundational. All is built upon it. It is foundational to Kingdom work, whether church planting or pursuit of any ministry. Vision proceeds calling; calling ushers out of vision. Vision is synonymous with purpose!

Before you were born, God saw you and all the days ordained or planned for you were pre-recorded on His scroll (Psalm 139). God threaded a chain of nucleotides carrying the genetic instructions for your physical and spiritual growth, development, and function. Your spiritual DNA carries an enormous unique divine purpose that no one else can do! God desires and delights to use each person from His great personal perspective, regardless of how others see him or her. All He asks is that we trust and obey His transcendent purpose and timing. Oh, the glory of discovering and walking in God’s design!

Timing is as important purpose. Although Jesus could articulate his divine purpose at age twelve, He did not enter His mission until age thirty. Jesus, in the meantime, remained obedient to His parents and “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:51-52).

At the time of Paul’s conversion, Ananias receives the purpose or vision for Paul’s life: “he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). After his conversion, Paul increases in strength and teaching (9:22) and joins with the disciples in Jerusalem. There, the Jews seek to kill Paul, who then retreats to his home town of Tarsus. Later, Barnabas seeks him out and brings him to Antioch where Paul spends the next year in fellowship with the assembly (Acts 11:25-26). Paul does not apprehend the specific mission-call that was foreseen at his conversion until after years of preparation and service.

**Calling:** You must have a personal, pressing calling to church-planting. Do not attempt to plant without it! The best test of a call is that a healthy church agrees with your aspiration and sends you out as a confirmation of your present work and passion. One who is not doing the work of typical a church planter at home, where there is a viable church, will likely not succeed in a lonely church plant! So, ask yourself, “Am I already connecting with people, discipling, and teaching Bible studies? Do my pastor and church support me? Do others affirm this calling?” If your spouse (if applicable), church, and friends are hesitant about your calling and gifting to plant a church, then you should also be hesitant. The absence of a clarion call or a strong confirmation does not mean you are a failure; it might mean “wait” or it might be a divine redirection! Move forward only with blessing and support.

Upon confirmation of your calling, prayerfully make plans that will actuate your call; seek God on where to plant the church (city, suburb or neighborhood), when, and to what demographic target/people group. A God-inspired vision to a specific location and/or people group is vital. Write out a clear and compelling vision statement that can be consistently communicated. A vivid vision-call description cast forward creates the pathway to a tangible reality!

**Build a Plan.**

*No one can predict the future. But effective leaders aren’t sitting around and waiting for it to happen either. They’re anticipating what lies ahead.* − Erica Olsen[[8]](#footnote-8)

Solomon instructs: “The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue [the outward expression of what the mind has conceived] is from the Lord.” When we prayerfully seek the will of God for our city, state and nation, “understand the times” (1 Chron. 12:32), and put into action what we have gained through prayer and understanding, God will direct our steps and establish our plans! So, set strategic goals. Goals are simply a vision broken down into smaller pieces that are measurable in time and space. These smaller pieces become our plan’s action items. God breathes upon such faith!

**Preparation Phase: Preparing to Birth a Church**

**Prior to Nine Months**

(Timing thresholds may vary)

**Training.**

* Register for Launch ([www.launchachurch.faith](http://www.launchachurch.faith)).
* Complete Launch Assignments.
* Based upon your Church Planter and Team Profile (Pre-Launch Assignment), develop a growth plan and gain experience through an internship in an active church plant.
* Develop a Launch Master Plan
* Attend Launch
* Secure a coach. One of the reasons that many church plants fail is because church planters often feel alone and isolated. They don’t have input: someone from outside who can come alongside to listen, provide counsel, give insight and offer wisdom. Coaching is an intentional, ongoing conversation aimed at equipping and resourcing you as you plant and pastor. A coach must be willing to make a one to three-year commitment to the church planter. Coaching and mentoring of church planters are absolutely critical to the life and health of a church planting ministry and family. The Malphurs Group, who have been consulting with church planter for nearly thirty years, cite “church planting without a coach” as the number two most deadly mistake church planters make.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Vision**

* Write out vision and mission statements
* Site visits and prayer walks
* Contact your District NAM Director to begin application/approval for starting a church
* Write a Daughter Work Policy with the Mother Church pastor or secure a sponsoring church, if applicable
* Outline details about your desired target and meeting venue and describe why it is the best option for this church plant
* Select three personal intercessors. Keep them informed of prayer needs throughout the process
* Select three proven overseers for pastoral accountability and support (these may also become your temporary Board of Directors)
* Create relationships with other UPCI/Apostolic Pastors in your city or nearby
* Cooperate with your District and its policies
* Give presentation and cast vision to partners

**Spiritual Check:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Move into Your Community** (If applicable)

* Get settled with a home, job, school, etc. J.T. Pugh was  a proponent of a church planter living in their city for up to 12 months before beginning to actively plant a church. The purpose was so that they could establish their home, work, schooling, etc. in an effort to eliminate distractions that could detract from the work once it was begun. This creates a personal foundation for success.
* Complete demographic and historical research on your community.
* Develop relationships with your neighbors and co-workers.
* Intentionally engage with your community

**Family and Marriage Health Check:** make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Legal and Corporate Actions**

* Set up an office (probably in your home) for church legal, financial, and office administration. Set up files for each
* Establish Name (search name availability with your Secretary of State/Province website).
* Establish Organizational Board of Directors
	+ Develop Meeting Minutes – Appoint a Chairperson and Secretary. Appoint officers.
	+ Pass a resolution to obtain an EIN from the IRS to open a checking account and to borrow money: [www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-idetification-number-ein-online](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-idetification-number-ein-online)
	+ Craft, adopt, and file Articles of Incorporation with Secretary of State/Province. See current UPCI Manual, accessible through “Downloadable Resources” at [www.upciministers.com](http://www.upciministers.com)
	+ Craft and adopt Church Bylaws. See current UPCI Manual, accessible through “Downloadable Resources” at [www.upciministers.com](http://www.upciministers.com)
	+ Craft and adopt an Accountable Reimbursement Policy. See link for a sample: <http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/pdfs/financial_tools/accountable_reimbursement_policy.pdf>
	+ Craft and adopt a Housing Allowance Policy. See link for a sample letter: <https://www.freechurchaccounting.com/how-do-i-write-a-housing-allowance-letter-for-tax-purpose.html>
	+ Craft and adopt policies like salary, conflict of interest, etc.
* Register with the State/Province Department of Revenue for income tax (for hiring non-clergy employees)
* File Application for Affiliation with UPCI, upon being approved by your District ([www.northamericanmissions.faith/s/Church-Affiliation-updated-03-11-2014.pdf](http://www.northamericanmissions.faith/s/Church-Affiliation-updated-03-11-2014.pdf)). Affiliation is required to receive NAM funds. Affiliated churches do NOT need to obtain a 501(c)3 or Canadian NPO Status
* Apply for State/Province Sales Tax Exemption, where applicable
* Purchase applicable insurances:
	+ Counseling Professional Liability
	+ Employment Practices Liability
	+ Directors, Officers & Trustees Liability
	+ Sexual Misconduct & Molestation
	+ General Liability

**Church Finance and Administration**

* Get financial software and computer
* Open bank checking and savings accounts
* Develop a budget and projections.
	+ Provide columns for 'Raised Funds', 'Support', 'Funds Needed.' Build a margin into your budget (10 – 15%).
	+ Four Budget Categories:
		1. Team Expenses
		2. Capital Expenses (setup, sound, and media equipment)
		3. Outreach/Marketing Expense
		4. Operational Expenses (rent, utilities, site prep, chairs/furniture, curriculum
	+ Create margin within the budget
* Establish books and procedures or hire an Accountant
* Adopt Charts of Accounts
* Get a Post Office box
* Develop and begin Fundraising strategy and relationships. Create multiple ways to give (online, text, mobile app)
* Develop a church structure flow chart
* Make application for Launch Funds (Deadline: November 1)
* Begin developing a Church Manual with policies, procedures, agreements, and position descriptions

**Early Marketing**

* Create a strategic marketing plan with dates and budget
* Create branding and logo design or hire Marketing Firm/Graphic Designer
* Purchase domain name (website URL) and…
* Begin writing content for and developing your website or hire a Website Developer
* Create social media accounts
* Business/Church cards
* Begin networking

**Core Team**

* Be in prayer and seek advice concerning whom may join your core team (ministry) in this church plant. A Core Team (ideally 8-15 people) fully commits to join the church-planting endeavor as long-term (beyond the Launch) pillar leaders. The Core Team generally compliments the Church Planter (evangelist, music, administration, children, youth, small group leader etc.). God builds teams to launch churches. As God prepares you, He is also preparing other people to start the church with you. Trust that God is speaking to others about being part of what he is stirring within you. Your challenge is to findthose individuals. Launching out of a mother church makes this process easier.

Note: A Core Team differs from a “Launch Team.” A **launch team has one singular purpose: to assist you in launching the church**. A Launch team is built on borrowed talent (signed agreements) from the mother church, nearby churches or from churches within your Section and District. When the launch service is over, or the agreed upon term (i.e., one year) is complete, the team dissipates. Utilizing both teams is necessary and creates the best scenario for a sustainable launch.

* Hold meetings with Core Team monthly to pray, vision cast, train, and brainstorm community involvement and outreach events
* Set expectations for tithes, offerings, attendance, and teaching Home Bible Studies

**Nine Months to Birth (Launch)**

**Core Team**

* Continue to develop a Core Team. Utilize the *Launch Church Planter and Team Profile* to assist you
* Fundraising
* Develop Position Descriptions for all Core Team members
* Set dates for your church’s Launch and interest-gathering and preview services
* Hold meetings with Core Team bi-weekly or monthly to pray, vision cast, and brainstorm outreach events
* Organize and conduct prayer walks (Plow Before the Planting Event – WNOP)
* Conduct Core Team leadership training
* Write short-term ministry agreements with specific goals and timetables for each area of ministry for leaders who are developing ministries
* Fine-tune strategy
* Develop relational and servant evangelism that leads to Home Bible Studies and discipleship

**Launch Team**

* Work with pastor(s) to approve an agreement (see below) to recruit, and train an approved Launch Team
* Create a blueprint and position descriptions for your desired Launch Team roles, including beginning and end date of commitment (some ministries commitments may need to continue for months after the Launch date), what events they should attend, and when they should be there. Clarify expectations
	+ Kid’s Ministry
	+ Youth Ministry
	+ Worship Team
	+ Sound and Media
	+ Host team
	+ Small group leaders
* Develop logos for ministry areas
* Develop ministry reports: Contact and Follow-up Forms, Expenditure Request, Ministry Report, Event Evaluation, etc. Enter these into your Church Manual.
* Develop short handbooks with policies, procedures, and expectations for each Launch area of ministry (Children, Youth, Worship, Ushers, Greeters, Prayer Team/Counselors)

**Spiritual Check:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Family and Marriage Health Check:** make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Ongoing Action Items**

* Enlist more Prayer Partners
* Send list of prayer needs to Prayer Partner Team
* Establish a fundraising goal based upon first 6-month operating budget.
* Continue to build fundraising relationships/commitments
* Keep in contact with NAM and District NAM Director
* Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team: continue relationship, transparency, accountability, feedback and guidance
* Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
* Intentionally meet people and invite them into your home or meet for coffee
* Narrow down meeting venue options to three and rank them in order of preference

**Marketing:**

* Complete logo design
* Website goes live
* Set up an online giving portal
* Social Media promotion of church page
* Finalize Launch Marketing Plan
* Develop Invite Cards for Community event and Interest Meetings

**Community Involvement**

* Host your first community event
* Plan, market and prepare to host first monthly Interest Gathering or Preview Service
* Follow up on community event and interest meetings contacts (Core Team members teach Home Bible Studies to contacts)
* Join Chamber of Commerce and other community involvement opportunities

**6-4 Months to Launch**

**Finalize Venue**

* Sign Contract and logistics (communicate expectations with venue owner)
* Walkthrough
* Obtain or review Renter’s and Liability Insurance (corporate, event, property, storage)

**Core Group**

* Begin weekly meetings for fellowship, planning, and leadership development
* Accountability/testimony reporting on contacts made and Bible Studies taught
* Continue strategic prayer walks and fasting
* Continue building relationships with other UPCI/Apostolic Pastors in your city or nearby

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**Family and Marriage Health Check:** make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Marketing**

* Finalize designs and gather resources
* Get offering envelope or design and print
* Order promotional items for Interest Gathering/Preview Services and Launch (lanyards for workers, coffee mugs, water bottles, magnets, t-shirts, etc.)
* Market blitz for Preview (Interest Gathering) Services
* Print Preview Invitations/Invite Card, Information Cards, brochures, prayer cards, etc.
* Print/purchase exterior and interior banners and directional signage

**Launch Team Meetings**

* Fill remaining key Launch Team roles
* Obtain criminal record checks for volunteers that work with children and teens
* Host bi-weekly team meetings to train, prepare and pray for first Preview (Interest Gathering) Service
* Teach your church’s vision and cultural values to the team
* Develop band and begin worship practices
* Conduct a Preview (Interest Gathering) dress rehearsal
* Conduct first Preview (Interest Gathering) Service (between 6-5 months) and monthly thereafter
* Conduct Preview (Interest Gathering) Service evaluation
* Conduct Preview (Interest Gathering) Service follow up
* Celebrate victories

**Equipment and License Purchases**

* Purchase or contract (<http://www.portablechurch.com>) for instruments, projection, computers, sound and media systems, video and podcasting, platform, lighting, chairs, furniture, nursery and children’s furniture and equipment, baptismal and robes, storage containers, trailer and vehicle to pull the trailer
* Purchase licenses and software for media (for CCLI license visit [https://us.ccli.com/#](https://us.ccli.com/)) computers, and church management systems
* Begin developing a song list and downloading sheet music
* Select and purchase all curriculums

**Ongoing Action Items**

* Send list of prayer needs to Prayer Partner Team
* Send out support letters and hold Fundraising Meetings
* Continue community involvement – host second community event or felt-needs ministry opportunity
* Intentionally meet people and invite them into your home or meet for coffee: continue relational and servant evangelism that leads to Home Bible Studies and discipleship
* Follow up on contacts
* Teach Bible Studies
* Maintain personal and family devotions
* Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
* Prepare for first sermon/series and discipleship course
* Obtain license to perform marriages
* Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team: continue relationship, transparency, accountability, feedback and guidance

**3-2 Months to Launch**

**Preview Services**

* Continue to hold monthly Preview (Interest Gathering) Service
* Conduct Preview (Interest Gathering) Service evaluation
* Conduct Preview (Interest Gathering) Service follow up
* Celebrate and share victories

**Spiritual Check-Up:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Marriage and Family Health Check:** make sure you spend time daily with spouse and children and have a date with your wife monthly (if applicable). Review and realign priorities as necessary

**Launch Team**

* Prepare and train team for Launch service
* Teach your church’s vision and cultural values to the team
* Continue worship practices

**Ramp Up Community Outreach**

* Hold third community outreach event or felt-needs ministry opportunity

**Create Systems Checklists** (for every area and ministry, from setup to assimilation)

* Adopt an accountable offering processing policy
* Follow-up system (church management database)
* Discipleship Growth Tracks

**Marketing**

* Inventory and reorder, if necessary, promotional Items for Interest Gathering/Preview Meetings and Launch (lanyards for workers, coffee mugs, water bottles, magnets, t-shirts, etc.)
* Direct mail, social media advertising of Launch (whatever is most effective to reach your target)
* Reformat website to reflect Launch phase
* Prepare and stock welcoming kiosk/center.
* Posters (windows of area businesses, community boards, etc.)
* Press releases

**Prayer and Fasting**

**Family and Marriage Health Check** (if you need to take a week off, now is the time!)

**Ongoing Action Items**

* Continue to keep intercessors apprised of your personal and planting needs
* Follow up on contacts
* Teach Bible Studies
* Maintain personal and family devotions and recreation
* Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest
* Continue sermon/series and discipleship course preparation, including PowerPoint
* Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team: continue relationship, transparency, accountability, feedback and guidance

**One Month to Launch**

**Assemble All Church Equipment and Signage**

**Spiritual Check-Up:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities, if necessary

**Run Through Practice Services Weekly or at Least Twice in Venue**

* Create Launch Day Run-Sheet from setup to countdown to security
* Debrief after each practice run
	+ What went well?
	+ What did not go well?
	+ What did we learn?
	+ What would we do differently next time?

**Launch and Core Team**

* On the job training
* Celebrate

**Review and Revise all Systems Checklists**

**Make Last-Minute Small Purchases**

**Marketing in Full Swing**

**Final Day of Prayer and Fasting**

**The Launch!**

**Execute Plan**

**Debrief**

**Celebrate**

**Follow Up**

**Meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team: continue relationship, transparency, accountability, feedback and guidance**

**Do It Again!**

**First Four Months to Four Years After Launch**

* **Spiritual Check-Up:** daily prayer, Word and devotion with family (if applicable), and weekly fasting. Review and realign priorities, if necessary
* Keep a “pulse” on your marriage and family. Review priorities!
* Assess Launch Team departure dates. Celebrate and reward their sacrifice
* Follow up with newcomers each week
* Celebrate baptisms and new births
* Continue to communicate vision, mission, culture, and values
* Incorporate fellowship into your service plan and hold one fellowship event per month
* Begin discipleship growth tracks (second month)
* Encourage and equip attenders to become inviters
* Manage your emotional energy – make time for rest and recreation
* Create Post-Launch Calendar
	+ Hold one big event for children
	+ Plan seasonal events
	+ Map out sermon series, if applicable
* Develop and maintain strategy for financial stability.
* Manage and adjust budget and financial projections to reality
* Keep in contact with NAM and District NAM Director
* Continue to communicate at least monthly with your supporters
* Automate your response to new visitors
* Maintain relationships with other pastors and church planters
* Post-Launch marketing
	+ Leverage excitement and momentum to promote your church consistently after launch
	+ Budget for social media promotions, google ads, etc.
* Manage your location
	+ Have a plan B if your location has to change
	+ Maintain financial reserves for rent/lease
* Team Building
	+ Continue training and developing leaders
* Foundational Families
	+ Target and invest (80/20 Rule)
	+ Train
* Set up Pastoral Care Systems (weddings, hospital visits, baby dedications, baptisms, prep-marital counselling, other counselling forms), utilizing your Core Team when appropriate/possible
* Determine when your church’s age-focused ministries will begin
	+ Children’s ministry
	+ Youth ministry
* **Begin reinvesting Launch funds**
* Continue to meet with mentor/coach and Overseer/Advisory Team. A 2007 study by Leadership Network reports that around 68 percent of church plants still exist four years after having been started, and that the assessment, preparation, and **coaching** processes for the pastoral leader have a dramatic impact on both the well-being of the planter and the vitality and survivability of the new church. Ed Stetzer (2003) compared the mean attendance of church planters who met regularly with a mentor or supervisor and those who had not. The noticeable gap between those who did and did not meet with mentors began in year one with the gap being 12 percent. By the second year, that gap expanded to 16 percent. Year three saw a decrease of the gap to 13 percent. Finally, year four evidenced the greatest gap at 25 percent. By the fourth year, those who meet with a mentor weekly led churches that were more than twice the size of churches whose planters did not have mentors. One reason for the effectiveness of coaching is the emphasis it places on relationship over programming.

**Begin with the end in mind: discipleship, leadership, reproducibility, and so on.**

1. Hirsch, Alan and Catchim, Tim, *The Permanent Revolution* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Leadership Network Publication, 2012), p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gary L McIntosh and Charles Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Walters, Galen. Adapted from “*WWHW - Galen’s View of Organizational Sanity,* © 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hirsch, Alan and Catchim, Tim, *The Permanent Revolution* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Leadership Network Publication, 2012), p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Olsen, Erica, “Strategic Planning for Dummies” (Wiley Publishing, Inc: Hoboken, NJ, 2007), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://malphursgroup.com/10-deadly-church-planting-mistakes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)