



SEQUENCE

Sequence offers a step-by-step guide to successfully launching your church.

ebook by Raul Rivera

Sequence

A step-by-step guide to the first 20 weeks of starting a church

Copyright

Sequence

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About Us

StartCHURCH is a company dedicated to meeting the needs of organizations that have a vision to make a difference in their communities through establishing new churches and ministries.

We believe in helping those who feel called to leadership within the Body of Christ, and have designed our programs to aid ministers in fulfilling the call of God on their life.

StartCHURCH founders, Raul and Genel Rivera, want to share their knowledge and experiences as ones who have been where you may find yourself today. In 1993 they dared to go beyond dreaming and agreed to venture out to establish a new church in Florida. Like most church startups, finances to hire an attorney and CPA were deficient. A ministry like StartCHURCH did not exist, and they did not know where to turn. With encouragement from their home church pastors, Raul and Genel began researching the laws pertaining to churches and nonprofit ministries in their state. They did not know it at the time, but this would mark the beginning of StartCHURCH; a ministry whose arms now extend into all 50 states to provide comprehensive information, support, and experience needed to successfully start a new nonprofit. Today, StartCHURCH serves thousands of pastors and community leaders each year, and greatly anticipates the opportunity to serve you.

With the resources provided by StartCHURCH, nonprofit organizations will have an easier time establishing themselves without having to deplete their precious resources on lawyers and CPA's. While our products are not designed to replace the counsel of a reputable lawyer or CPA, organizations can save thousands by simply following the steps that StartCHURCH has laid out for them. No minister should have to feel alone in his or her efforts to raise up a ministry. At StartCHURCH, we are here to help you with the legal processes involved so you can focus more of your time on effectively reaching out to those around you, and less of your time on confusing legal paperwork.

Introduction

Introduction - The Journey Begins

There are few things as exciting as stepping out in faith to follow the call of God on your life. Few people know what it is like to take such steps, but the stories we all long to re-tell are the ones made by men and women who believe God has called them for such an hour.

This sense of adventure is rarely found as concentrated as it is in those stepping out to plant a church. Church planters often represent the leading edge of what God is doing in our nation. As these brave men and women say "Yes!" to their calling, they do so for something and someone greater than themselves. With a bold determination and a sense of destiny, each year hundreds of church planters successfully launch new churches.

From our research and experience, having helped over 14,000 churches begin, StartCHURCH has found that most church planters have the vision and anointing element down. However, few have the administrative element down. Often, the first and only step church planters take is to say "Yes!" to the call. Taking the next step to see the vision come to pass is where many lack knowledge and direction. As a result, numerous dreams and visions lay dormant inside of folks, just waiting for the path to become clear.

It is for you that this resource was created. Having garnered the wisdom of thousands of church plants, and having spent the last 15 years helping church planters' visions come to pass, StartCHURCH has developed an easy-to-follow 23-week plan. This plan can be used by any church, regardless of denomination or background, to launch successfully.

This resource is best used as a guide for the 6 months leading up to your first service. Those critical 23 weeks often become the bedrock upon which the church is built. It is our desire to see you have the strongest legal foundation possible on which to build. You will not find this resource to be filled with confusing information. Rather, you will discover real, practical steps that will help you bring your vision to pass.

It is our passion at StartCHURCH to see you succeed--to see what burns in your heart be built before your eyes. It is to you, the dreamers of what could and should be, that we offer this resource.

Blessings,

StartCHURCH

Assumptions

What an amazing time in your life! You are sensing God's call to plant a church and now you are stepping out in faith to make that happen. We are so excited for you. This resource is the culmination of helping over 14,000 churches get started over the last 15 years. We hope that these steps help you reach the goal of seeing your vision come to pass.

We believe this resource can help any church planter. However, there are two assumptions we have made when developing this resource. They are as follows:

1. You know that you are called.

This church planting guide assumes that you are absolutely sure that God has called you to plant a church. Over the next 23 weeks, you will be directed to take some pretty dramatic steps as you press toward the launch of your church. These should only be taken by someone who is completely convinced that planting a church is what God has called him/her to do.

2. You know your launch date.

In order to get the most out of this resource, you will want to choose a launch date. This specific resource is designed to be of best service to you if you begin to implement it 6 months prior to your launch.

Other Scenarios

In the event that you have already conducted your first service, then by all means, use it as a guide to help you through the next 20 weeks. You will find it invaluable, as it will help to to better establish your ministry.

Gender Use Disclaimer

At [StartCHURCH](#), we understand that God is powerfully using both men and women to build His church. It is our desire to validate the call on both gender's lives. Please note that for the sake of readability, all references to either gender are intended to signify both male and female.

Will You Launch Legally?

Throughout much of this resource you will see our passion for helping you take the steps to make your church plant legally sound. The truth is, launching a ministry takes both a faith step and a legal step.

The faith step occurs the moment when you say "Yes!" to God's call on your life. For many of us, that comes after a season of restlessness where we get the vision and decide to step out in faith and pursue the dream in our heart. This is a step that only you can take. It is a moment that only you can control. This is the most important step, and one that you have to make before God.

There is a next step though, that many church planters never consider, and that is the legal step. Starting a ministry is more than just something spiritual, it is also something legal. In our country, there are laws that govern a church organization. These laws do not govern what can or can't be preached. Rather, they are laws about how the organization is operated and laws that govern the [fiduciary responsibilities](#) of the organization with its finances. This too is an important step.

Why Is The Legal Side Important?

When discussing the legal side with church planters, we often hear the response: "I just want to preach, why should I take care of the legal side?"

The answer is quite simple. You are "*called*" into the ministry! No one enters the ministry or sets out to pursue the call to plant a church in order to get wealth or fame. They do it because of a call, an unrelenting burden placed on their heart by the Lord. They do it because they feel the thumbprint of God branding them with a mission. It's that call they are answering.

What is important to understand is that God didn't just call you by accident. He called you at this time in history. Think about this - God did not call you to plant a church in the 1500's, the 1700's or even the 1900's. No, He called you NOW. He had a work in mind that you were uniquely fashioned for and He wanted that work brought forth now.

God has called you to plant a church in the most litigious time, in the most litigious country in the history of man! God has called you now, here, in the United States of America - to grow His kingdom. And part of the context of that calling is to plant a church within the [legal context](#) of the land. To "*obey every ordinance of man*" in the planting of your church.

That's what we have helped church planters do for years now. At [StartCHURCH](#), we have provided church planters with the resources and partnership they need to plant life-giving, legally founded churches. It is our goal that through the use of this tool that your ministry would also be launched legally.

You can find out more information about StartCHURCH by clicking [HERE](#).

Week One

Solidify a Name

Most often, church planters have a name in mind that they feel encapsulates who they are and communicates their vision to their community. They quickly begin to refer to their fledgling dream by the name they hold for it in their heart. When they pray about their ministry, they use the name they hold for it in their heart. However, all too often, when they go to establish their name legally, they find out that another church has already chosen that name. Naturally, that is discouraging! If only they would have reserved that name the moment they had a vision for it, they would have had it.

The first step during week one is to solidify the name that you hold in your heart.

Do you have a name in mind? If so, this week you are going to take the important step of reserving that name.

4 Steps to Solidifying Your Church Name

There are 4 steps to legally solidifying the name of your ministry:

1. Search name availability.

For many states, the Secretary of State website has a feature which enables you to view the list of names currently in use. This is great for finding out if your name is still available. However, the name is not yours until you file to temporarily reserve that name (this requires paying a fee to the state), or until you move forward with step 2 below (Recommended).

2. File [Articles of Incorporation](#) with the Secretary of State.

Filing Articles of Incorporation makes the name permanently yours. You will receive documentation from your state confirming your Articles of Incorporation with that name.

3. Obtain an [EIN](#) (this step will be taken in week 3).

4. Open a checking account in your business name.

For right now, begin to brainstorm about what name you want, and begin to do research on the Secretary of State website to see what names are available.

Logo Development

There are two things most people in your community will immediately connect with your church- your name and your logo.

The goal of any logo is to easily and immediately give recognition to an organization. If you see the "golden arches", you automatically know it is McDonald's. You do not have to read the word "McDonald's", because the logo allows for instant recognition.

The reality about the community in which you are going to be launching your church is that it is inundated with all sorts of organizations vying for the community's attention. A well-created, clear and creative logo can help grab the instant attention of the surrounding community. Essentially, a well-crafted logo is an important part in the process of helping let your community know you are there.

Why is it that most church plants do not have good logos? Many church plants believe one of two myths.

Myth 1:"A Good Logo Will Be Expensive." In years gone by, such beliefs were probably true. However, today, with thanks to the help of websites like www.crowdsourcing.com, even the least funded church plant can afford a professional logo. And at a fraction of the cost that people used to pay.

Myth 2:"My Logo Must Pictorially Represent My Entire Vision". You have seen it, and so have we...the logo that has a sword, a lamb, a proclaimed word, a trumpet, a missionary, a scroll and a few words in Greek, all aiming toward trying to communicate every aspect of the church's vision in a single logo. This creates an ineffective logo. It is a logo that says too much, so it ends up saying nothing at all.

3 Important Questions

This week, as you work on creating your logo, ask yourself 3 questions.

1. What is the "feel" I want to give off? This will help give guidance to color and text usage.
2. What are my favorite logos that I have seen in the past? It can be frustrating to attempt to develop a creative element starting with an entirely blank page. Take a look at the logos you personally like. What is it about them that you like? What would you change?
3. What colors should I use for my logo? For starters, try creating a logo in black and white. If it looks good in black and white, then it should look good in almost any color. Next think about what the logo would look like on different mediums- not just on a church sign or business card. Think about how it would look on a coffee cup, a baseball cap, or an offering envelope.

Find some great logos here:

[SAMPLE CHURCH LOGOS](#)

Final Thoughts On Logos

Be Patient

This process often takes much longer than we originally think. Creating a good logo will require several revisions and renditions before arriving at the final product. Be prepared to take the time to work through this process. Often times people try to rush the creative process, and go from concept to creation in one week. In doing so, they can fail to notice significant flaws or errors. Step away from this project from time to time, so that when you come back to it, you will be seeing this project with fresh eyes. Be prepared to give 2-4 weeks to hone in on a perfect logo.

Select the Right Graphic Designer

Every graphic designer has a unique style to their work. Review the portfolios of each graphic artist that you are considering using. Look at their previous logo creations. Do they reflect the style that you are looking for? Consider the "look and feel" of the logo. Is the logo too corporate? Too youthful? Too edgy? Not edgy enough? Too old?

Importance of the Right Board Members

Developing the right Board of Directors is one of the most important elements in creating a strong foundation for your church. It will be this team that will help "hold up your hands" in the hard times and help you make decisions that will lead to the good times. Often, having the right Board of Directors is a matter of life and death for the church.

Here is something to remember-it is always easier to give power than to take it away. Don't rush to put people on the Board of Directors. Consider each person carefully, both his/her skills and temperament, as well as his/her relationship with you. In many churches the pattern of board members is that they enter with joy and leave with anger. This usually complicates things down the road, especially if the church does not have a clear entry and exit procedure. Therefore, consider carefully who you put on the board. Remember John Maxwell's "Law of the Inner Circle", which states that success is most often defined by those who surround us.

Additionally, make sure that board members clearly understand to what they are committing when they sign up. Often, potential board members differ in their view of what you are asking of them and what they are agreeing to. At [StartCHURCH](#), we suggest that you give each potential board member a "Letter of Invitation to Serve on the Board".

For a sample [CLICK HERE](#)

Begin now to write down and pray about who God has put in your life that would make a great board member. During this week, once you have that list, you will provide them with a "Letter of Invitation to Serve on the Board". This will help to give them a clear understanding of the requirements, as well as bring unity of [vision](#) to all of those invited to serve. Remember, the place of agreement is the place of power. The more clear you can be in your expectations moving forward, the better off you will be.

Lastly, have each member sign a "Statement of Incoming Board Members", which provides you with a written record of the commitments to which each member has agreed.

For a sample [CLICK HERE](#)

Additional Resources:

Here are some articles written by Raul Rivera, CEO and Founder of StartCHURCH, that will help you keep a strong Board of Directors

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[Indemnification; How to Protect Your Board Members](#)

[A Board Meeting Without The Pastor Present; Costly Dilema](#)

[How to Remove a Board Member](#)

Clearly Define the Spouse's Role

In most church planting households, the spouse of the church planter will hold a powerful role in seeing that church plant come to pass. Whether it is as an out-in-front co-pastor/leader, or a behind-the-scenes person, there is no one as important in the church plant as your spouse.

One important step to take early on in this process is to develop a clear definition of what you both expect your spouse's role to look like. The key is to deal with the right expectations now, before you have launched, instead of trying to conquer this topic in the midst of an active service. As Amos 3:3 wisely asks us: "Do two walk together unless they have **agreed** to do so?" And again, in Mark 3:25 we are told, "If a house is divided against itself, that house

cannot stand." With those critical insights in mind, discuss with your spouse now what you both feel and expect concerning the questions in the following paragraph.

Do you expect her to be at every meeting, or not? Do you expect her to watch the kids, lead worship, fold the bulletins, count the money, or handle any other responsibilities that you foresee as a vital part of the success of the church plant? Do you expect her to let you go to every meeting you need to, without question?

Thoughts to Consider

Often the church members think they can get direction from a pastor's spouse, and that the direction is just as "right" as getting it from the pastor. Clarify who is giving directions and give the other spouse the permission to tell the member, "Please go ask Pastor."

Clarify time expectations. While you cannot foresee all that will be required of your time in the coming year, you do know ahead of time that planting a church is never easy. Be open and honest with your spouse about what her expectations are in the area of time.

Pre-plan date nights now. Trust us on this; this is VERY important. If you build a 10,000 member church, but lose your family, what will you have gained? Nothing! So, continue to date your spouse. Pre-plan date nights, with unbreakable nights pre-scheduled, to force yourself in the midst of church planting not to miss this valuable marital time. Remember, there will always be more to do than you have time to complete; therefore, implement a process by which your spouse can put the brakes on your schedule when needed, before any real damage is done.

Additional Related Articles:

[Protect the Pastors Spouse](#)

[Pastor and Wife Arrested; No One Had Their Blindside](#)

[What God Said Through The Pastor's Wife](#)

[How Church Can Stress Out The Pastor's Wife](#)

The Power of Vision

Much has been said about the power of a [vision and mission statement](#). We will not regurgitate here what has been said, but during this week it is time to begin to get your vision on paper.

Most vision statements start with what looks like random ideas on a page. And that is fine. Take some time this week to do the following two things: begin to verbalize the vision and the mission of your church, and commit to create a folder that has "Vision" written on it, into which you write down ideas. Each day do an exercise where you set a timer for 10 minutes and write down everything you want said about your church 10 years from now. Do not worry about the flow, the logic, or even the wording, just write. Start to get used to hearing yourself talk about the vision. Talk it through with those who love you and know you. This is the start of a journey, not the beginning of a project. As you take the thoughts you have written on paper with you into your place of prayer, ask God to show you which of the ideas are "good ideas" and which are "God ideas". God will speak to you through these times and reveal clarity to you concerning your vision. In a few days, weeks, or months you will feel a defined sense of direction, with which you and others can run!

Finally, begin to read every vision and mission statement you can. When you go to the grocery store, look for its vision statement on the wall. Consider the churches you like, and look for their vision and mission statements. Become a student of the subject of vision creation. This is an art, not a science.

For more information, we suggest you read Andy Stanley's "Vioneering" or George Barna's "The Power of Vision". These two resources will help you create a solid vision statement.

Common Mistakes

1. Saying too MUCH
2. Saying too LITTLE
3. Copying someone else's vision

The Lord has branded your heart with a vision; putting it down on paper where the "reader can run" with it is a key step in this journey. Do the hard work this week of getting what is in your heart on paper. Think through the church you want to attend and the one that God has put in your heart. There is something unique and special God wants to do through you, so write the vision this week, make it plain, and let many run with it!

Skill Training

As you move toward launching your own church, it is time to start looking inward, because what is in YOU will be reproduced in others. Like the old saying goes, "We reproduce who we are, not what we want." Therefore, an important step for any church planter to take early on is to conduct a personal inventory of the areas in

which he needs to grow, as well as the areas of his life that need pruning.

Ask yourself this question:

1. What traits do I want to see in the members of my future Church Planting Team?
 1. Loyal
 2. Spiritual
 3. Evangelistic
 4. Generous
 5. Outgoing
 6. Hardworking
 7. Servant's Heart
 8. Punctual
 9. People Person
 10. _____
 11. _____
 12. _____

Have you sat down and thought about who you WANT and NEED around you on your Church Planting Team ("CPT")? This is important. As you begin to gather your team and equip them over the next several weeks, you will need to preach to what you want, not to what you have! You may have to constantly put a "cultural bullseye" on the wall for how your CPT needs to interact with the people of the church. Keep that vision before their eyes every chance you can. Highlight it in prayer, and reward it publicly when you see it. Defining the skills you need to see in your team is very, very important!

And defining the skills you need to see in your team also begs the question:

Are these traits in you? You cannot take people where you have never been...and you cannot teach what you do not have. Do you want a team that is always on time? Then you are going to have to be on time! Do you want a team with a good attitude? Then you are going to have to have a good attitude! Whatever you want to see in your team, begin to develop now in yourself!

Therefore, before your CPT is has even been gathered together, today's exercise starts in you...so, what do you want to see in others? Begin today to create a list of traits you want to see, and then create a plan for how to see those things begin to grow in you, even this week.

Week Two

Church Plant Team (CPT)

In today's world of church planting, the days of the "MAN OF GOD!" riding into town, alone on his horse, to lead the city to Jesus all by himself...are over. To make it today, it is going to take a team. When people look at doing evaluations on the "probable success" of a would-be church planter, many times they are looking at the wrong things.

Often, people look at preaching abilities and the "up front stuff", but they forget that the skill which frequently trips up most church planters is the skill of TEAM BUILDING.

Team building is the ability to take a group of strangers and make them into a cohesive unit that moves and works together toward the same goal.

Have you ever spoken with a church planter who holds the lofty idea that he will "grow a mega church", when he has not even been able to successfully grow a small group? Like it or not, the fact is that your ability to grow a team is a "make or break" skill in the area of church planting.

This is the week your leadership rubber meets the road. This is the week for you to begin gathering together your Church Planting Team. This will be the team of people that you will enter into this battle with, that will see you strong and weak, that will hold up your hands when you are weary, and upon whose shoulders this ministry will go forward.

Important Questions

Who are you going to ask?

Have you made a list of possible team members?

If not, start today. Few things determine the initial success of the church plant more than the quality of its CPT. Therefore, begin bringing this list of potential team members before the Lord in prayer, asking who God has called to be a part. As you sense direction concerning who will be a good fit for the team, call for a gathering together at your house. This can take the form of a prayer meeting, a barbeque, or whatever fits your context, but its ultimate purpose is as a time for casting vision to those around you, whom you believe could form the core of your church.

The Skill Training Process

Develop a plan for how you are going to train and impart into your team the key traits and skills you feel are necessary. Church planting is an exercise in the intentional. Nothing comes easy, and nothing comes naturally. You have to intentionally lead your CPT where you want them, and that may start more basic than you think! People often need the very basics of life taught to them, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the CPT! Have you ever met an usher...that couldn't USH? How about a greeter that never smiled or made people feel welcome? These are two of the most common undervalued areas of training in church plants. As a pastor, you will learn very quickly that you cannot take any skills, even the most basic, for granted. You have to literally train people how to engage the visitor, how to smile, how to roll up extension cords, how to invite, how to pray for someone, how respond to children...how to be nice!

Start now to take a personality inventory of those around you. What are the skills and talents that your CPT members do have? What are the skills and talents they lack? What are the areas that are most important to the health of your church that you can begin to develop in your CPT, and what is your plan and process for making those skills prevalent? Remember, your job as a leader is not to do the ministry, but to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry". Your job is to be an equipper. This week, begin to look at the tools, gifts, skills, and weaknesses in those around you, and begin today to lead them to growth.

As you jump into developing a process for skill training, consider implementing the following suggestions. Meet once per month to discuss skills you want to see. Have them read books that emphasize the skills you want to see. Bring in guest educators who are experts in the skills you want to see.

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is to the church, what the heart is to the body! Without it, you will die. The truth is, as the church planter, your world is overwhelmed with "sure fire" plans and programs to launch your church large. But, it is important that early on you take Jesus at His Word when He says, "I will build my church...". Jesus paid more for this church plant to be a reality than anyone. Yes, you have to work. Yes, you have to do the right things. But, the most successful church plants live FROM the place of prayer. They are rooted and

grounded in crying out to God to do a miracle in the city to which they are called. And upon that place of prayer, the church finds its most solid foundation.

It is critical that early on in the church planting process your CPT develops a rhythm of gathering for corporate prayer. This time is more than a time for fellowship, it is a time to stand together and pray out the vision for the church.

Pray the Vision

When it comes to the vision, it is almost always caught more than taught. Many church planters think only about preaching the vision, but the real rooting of the vision into the heart of those following, lies in the church planter's ability to PRAY THE VISION!

Do you ever remember learning what was on your pastor's heart through hearing him pray? When a pastor cries out to the Lord, it enables those around to catch the burden of what is burdening him and to join their faith and prayers to his. Pretty soon, those around begin to pray, even on their own time, like their pastor.

Do you want your vision to be more than a series of messages for your team? Then pray together!

Get your team together for regular prayer meetings and during those prayer times, pour out your heart over every point of the vision. Allow them to hear the weight of it on your spirit, and soon those that are called alongside you will feel the weight of it, too. The vision is caught, not just taught! It is prayed, not just proclaimed!

The Rhythm of Prayer

It is important that you gather for prayer on a weekly basis with your team. It is here, now, that prayer becomes rooted as a value. Folks do what they value. Make prayer, in the infancy days, the axis upon which your church spins. This weekly prayer meeting with your CPT is the vehicle for developing in them the rhythm of meeting together weekly, and that rhythm will eventually evolve into your weekly worship service. When it does, continue to designate a specific prayer time each week, aside from the service times, whereby you and your CPT gather together to carry on the value of prayer.

Week Three

Finalize Board

During week 1 of this guide, you gave out "Letters of Invitation to the Board" to individuals you were inviting to be on the board of directors. This week, be sure to follow up on those letters to see who is ready to move forward with that commitment. Be prepared to answer questions from them when you speak; remember, the more questions the better, as that shows some forward thinking on their part.

Questions to Ask New Board Members

1. Do you have any questions?
2. Given what you know about me, what do you think is the vision of this church?
3. What do you understand the role of the board of directors to be?
4. What is your greatest concern about being on the board of this church?

As your potential board members ask you questions, answer each question with honor and grace. Remember, these people are volunteering to help you shoulder the vision in your heart. Often, there can be a sense of frustration in the heart of the church planter as he casts vision, if others do not seem to pick it up right away. Remember that you have held the vision and wrestled with the vision for months, perhaps years. They are just hearing it now. Give space and time for the vision to become clear in their heart.

Once you have your board finalized, you will begin to plan for your Organizational Board Meeting.

Additional Resources:

[Indemnification; How to Protect Your Board Members](#)

[A Board Meeting Without The Pastor Present; Costly Dilemma](#)

[How to Remove a Board Member](#)

Church Planting Team Meetings Begin

Can you believe it, you are now 1/4th of the way toward seeing your vision launched? This is a wonderful and important time. A vital part of a successful church launch is to have clearly defined roles and an equipped team to bring that day to pass.

This week, you need to begin getting a vision for each aspect of your Sunday service. To infuse your church with excellence, it is important that you delegate the leadership of your most important environments to a skilled, well-equipped team that can execute the vision you have in your heart for that environment.

Review these environments and ask yourself what the needed skills are to make each environment run with excellence:

1. Lobby/Foyer - Pre-Service
2. Sanctuary and Worship
3. Children's Ministry
4. Lobby/Foyer - Post Service
5. Small Groups
6. Youth

One of the best ways to find the right leaders is to begin to draw up a "job description" for each environment leader. This will help you "know it when you see it" as well as give you a prayer list to work through for your team.

The Birth of Your Church - Legally

The legal side of the ministry, though often overlooked, can be a very validating time for you as a church planter. To that end, launching a church is both a spiritual step and a legal step. The spiritual side involves saying yes to the call of God and stepping out in faith. Most pastors are prepared for this, and no church can really be planted without it. However, the legal steps are often bypassed. Because you want to start a church that is both spiritual and legal, this week we are going to take the first steps in launching the legal side of your ministry.

The first legal step most churches need to take is filing [articles of incorporation](#) with their state.

A corporation is an artificial entity (person) completely separate and distinct from its founders and members. Through incorporation the Body of Christ is not being subjected to the state; rather, the church has formed an entity that it uses to manage its assets and international policies and procedures. The church is free at any time to dissolve the corporate entity and recreate a new one as it wishes.

Because church lawsuits have increased by over 1600% since 1992, creating a corporation for your church is an absolute must. As a corporation, the main benefit will be limited legal liability. This is often called having a corporate veil. In simple terms, it means that the personal assets of the founders, directors, officers, trustees, and others in leadership positions would be protected if anyone ever tried to sue the church.

In order to form a corporation, you must file articles of incorporation. Most states require that the articles of incorporation declare the following information: the name of the entity, the purpose for which it is to exist, the name and address of the incorporator, the name of its board of directors, and the name of the registered agent.

The IRS requires that certain language be included in your articles of incorporation. This language is referred to as the organizational test requirements. The IRS requires it because it proves that the church meets the exemption requirements of [Section 501\(c\)\(3\)](#). Without this language, the state may recognize you, but the IRS will reject your application for tax exempt status.

At a minimum, the following language should be included in your articles of incorporation:

1. A purpose consistent with [Section 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) and
2. A dissolution clause stating that the remaining assets will be used exclusively for exempt purposes, such as a charitable, religious, educational, or scientific organization.

As you begin to draft your articles of incorporation, please keep the above in mind. This important step must be done, and must be done correctly. This is the beginning of something special and should be celebrated.

Additional Resource:

If you are having trouble drafting the articles of incorporation on your own, do not worry; help is available!

At [StartCHURCH](#), our team of trained professionals is ready to help you establish the legal side of your ministry by doing the work for you. When it comes to articles of incorporation, it is important to get it right...the first time! Our staff will listen to your vision and craft documents that are both compliant with the law, and conformed to the vision God has given you.

If you would like to hear more about how we can help you create your articles of incorporation, please [Click Here](#) or feel free to call us at 770-638-3444.

Additional Articles:

[All Members Of One Church Sued At The Same Time](#)

[Facts and Myths about Churches and Ministry Incorporating](#)

Obtaining the F.E.I.N.

Another important step in the legal foundation of your church plant is obtaining the F.E.I.N. The F.E.I.N. stands for the Federal Employer Identification Number and it involves filling out form SS-4 and submitting it to the IRS. The F.E.I.N is simply an identification number for tax, banking, and credit purposes. This number can be compared to a person receiving his social security number, since the church will primarily use this number in much the same way that a social security number is used by an individual.

3 Reasons You Need an F.E.I.N.

1. To open a checking account

To open up a business account, most banks will require that you provide them with an F.E.I.N. that is attached to your business name.

2. To establish credit

3. To file all pertinent tax and informational returns

To clarify, obtaining an F.E.I.N does not mean that your church is now tax exempt. It is simply an identification number for tax, banking, and credit building purposes. After the church receives this number, it must then apply to the respective government agencies for the proper exemptions to be extended.

To obtain an F.E.I.N you must file Form SS-4 and submit it to the IRS.

Should you need help obtaining your F.E.I.N., you can get step-by-step assistance with our [How to Incorporate](#) Software or we can obtain it for you through our [StartRIGHT Program](#).

Creating an Archive

Another skill needed to begin a successful church plant is the ability to track and save important documents. Just because God sees your heart in the right place as you launch your church does not mean that your important papers will always be in the right place...unless you can learn now to develop the disciplines needed in that area and can utilize the resources available to help you. Are you concerned about how to correctly take minutes at the board meetings you will hold with your board of directors? You do not have to wonder any more about how to do it correctly. The [Corporate Ministry Records Kit](#) has everything you need to know about taking minutes at board meetings, and it contains everything you need to keep accurate and reliable corporate records. Now, at the onset of your church plant, it is imperative that you have the valuable resources mentioned herein; they play a vital role in keeping you and your church protected against lawsuits.

Get the Corporate Seal for Your Ministry

Did you know that the church is the second most sued entity type in America? Since the early 1990's, church lawsuits have risen dramatically. Litigators are successfully piercing the corporate veil at an alarming rate and going after its pastors and directors on a personal level. After extensive research and hours of consultation with attorneys, [StartCHURCH](#) felt it was imperative to provide churches and ministries with something that could assist them in this area. That is why the [Ministry Corporate Records Kit](#) was specifically designed, for churches and ministries. Your new church plant has to have its records in order, from the get-go, if you want to do things right. The reason why so many litigating attorneys have been successful in suing pastors and directors is because

churches are unable to produce records that prove they are operating as a corporation. Being incorporated is simply not enough. Courts demand that you operate as a corporation on a daily basis.

By following the steps in that resource, and by using the custom made [Ministry Corporate Records Notebook](#) and seal that [StartCHURCH](#) provides, your church or ministry will have all of its records in order, and can prove that it operates as a corporation. The binder, made of a high quality 1 and 1/2 inch steel ring, is designed to hold five years' worth of minutes. The corporate seal is made of stainless steel and will last a lifetime. Additionally, you will be able to keep all of your corporate records sorted by heavy duty tabs designed to keep church and ministry records in place. This is not a general nonprofit corporate kit; it is specifically designed for churches and ministries. When you order this and it arrives in the mail, be sure to fill out the form on the last page of your binder to receive your corporate seal.

IRS Auditing Church Minutes

Unfortunately, the IRS is able to ask any church, at any time, for complete copies of their minutes and all other documents the IRS needs to determine if the church is operating in compliance. The IRS will review the minutes of the church, and all decisions made by the leadership, to ensure that they comply with the church's bylaws. The IRS wants to see that all salaries, pastoral love gifts, stipends, reimbursements and purchases (including benevolence distributions) were all documented in the church's minutes and approved in a board meeting. The IRS also wants to know if the minutes are properly implemented and stored in a safe place.

For this reason, the above-recommended [Ministry Corporate Records Kit](#) is your next step forward in the church planting process, since it is useful for storing your minutes by keeping a working copy at the church or ministry office at all times. Order one, and when it arrives take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents. The information contained therein is going to greatly educate you with what you need to archive and some of the resolutions your board will need to approve in the upcoming years as a church.

Additional Resources:

[Six Essentials to Taking Board Meeting Minutes](#)

Week Four

Writing Bylaws to Protect Your Organization

As a church planter, it is important to understand that on any given day, within the 50 states, thousands of churches are in court because of disputes between members and leaders. These disputes usually begin with personality differences, but often times end up with both parties having to look at the details of the church's [bylaws](#). Such was the case with a church in Ohio whose pastor chose to change the time of the church's annual business meeting. When some disgruntled members disagreed with his decision and noticed it was inconsistent with their bylaws, they sued the pastor. The court, in keeping with the church's bylaws, invalidated the meeting because the pastor did not follow the procedures stated therein. Because of cases like this, you as a church planter must take time to create and maintain good bylaws for your new church plant...and you must always be very well-versed in the content of YOUR bylaws.

The constitution and bylaws establishes a structured government, ensuring that control of the organization stays out of the state's hands.

Bulletproof Your Bylaws

Division and disagreement are a reality, and the possibility of lawsuits exists because of this. You must bulletproof your organization by establishing a strong government structure. In addition, having solid bylaws that address important governing issues reduces arguments over interpretation of the document.

Can the State Control Your Church?

Many states have adopted the Model Nonprofit Corporation Act. This act gives the state the ability to govern certain functions of a church corporation if those functions are not already specified in the church's constitution and bylaws. This means that by not having bylaws, or by having insufficient bylaws, you run the risk of placing certain aspects of your church under the government's control.

Because of these state regulations, a church must use caution to ensure the bylaws contain the latest provisions, and that they are in accordance with the latest changes of the law.

The Eight "Must Haves" of Your Bylaws

Through extensive research, [StartCHURCH](#) has identified eight articles that must be included in your bylaws to protect your new church plant from the state's control and from potential litigators. By adding these eight "must haves", you close many loopholes that could create issues in the future. You can see our [How to Write the Constitution and Bylaws](#) software for a more step-by-step approach to writing these important documents.

Accountability Without IRS Intrusion

Balancing the need to protect the organization while creating proper accountability, all the while remaining compliant with federal regulations, requires very technical wording. It is time to create a complete document that will meet that challenge without compromising your biblical convictions on how your new church plant should be managed.

Case Law Affects Your Organization

As you begin to write the constitution and bylaws of your new church plant, it is critical to know that numerous case law studies illustrate that having Scripture-lined bylaws is imperative. Courts are more likely to hear lawsuits against your organization, using neutral principles of law, if the bylaws do not have Scripture references. When ecclesiastical principles and doctrine are the foundation of your bylaws, the courts will stay away. Therefore, keep this in the forefront of your mind as you take time to create this vital document.

Additional Resources:

Don't leave this vital document to chance. We can help you craft these very important documents either through our [How to Write the Constitution and Bylaws](#) software or by doing it for you through the [StartRIGHT Program](#). The help you need is here for your to guarantee your ministry has strong constitution and bylaws.

Social Media and the Church

When planting a church, it is important to recognize that the glue that often holds together the work God is doing among you is relationships, both with those in the church and those yet to come to your church.

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and the like, is a good place to help continue the relational connections in between services. And, if done properly, can yield you greater connections with those in your community who do not yet know the Lord.

There has been much read about the power of social media in the church, and our point is not to make the case for using social media, but simply to act as a reminder to take the necessary steps now to ensure your social media presence.

Suggested Social Media Channels:

Facebook: [See Our Example](#)

It almost goes without saying, but 70 % of your church and local community are on Facebook. This is a great place to start a page for your church and start creating some virtual connections which allow your church to connect online, between Sundays. Many churches find the interaction on their church Facebook page to be helpful in hearing praise reports, prayer requests, and feedback from what is going on in their lives. As a church planter, this may help you to have a great glimpse into that with which your people are dealing on a daily basis.

Twitter: [See Our Example](#)

Twitter is a great social media outlet for many things, not the least of which is the dissemination of important reminders (such as "Church Closed Due to Inclement Weather", or "Church Location Changed...", etc.) to a bunch of people at once.

LinkedIn

The truth is, pastors need the encouragement of other pastors. Even though this is a professional work site, LinkedIn is a great way to meet other pastors in your local area.

Blog: [See Our Example](#)

People are not just following a logo or a plan, they are following a person. And when it comes to selecting a church, often the most noted reason for someone staying or leaving a church is the pastor. Starting a personal blog is a great way for people to hear your heart and what your passions and beliefs are, and to even give the surrounding community a chance to interact with you online. A good blog can create a following that translates into visits on Sunday!

Tips:

Do Not Mix Business With Church

The reality of today's church planting world is that most church planters are "bi-vocational", meaning that they work jobs in addition to being a church planter. From a legal standpoint, it is important to understand the legal boundaries here. Raul Rivera wrote a great blog about this point; [Click Here](#) to read that blog.

Put Together a Social Media Policy

Someone once said, "The place of agreement is the place of power!" Having you and your church on the same page about how to use social media in the right way is important. Remember, anyone can post anything to the Internet and anyone can see it. How about pictures of your church service? Pictures of children in your children's ministry? How about detailed descriptions of your service? How about bashing another member in your church? What about defamation? All these areas should be thought through, discussed with your team, and then put into a policy book that establishes a common vision for how the church will use social media as a benefit to the church, not a detriment.

There are many good articles out there on how/why to write such a policy; [Click Here](#) for a sample.

Action Steps:

This week, begin to secure your social media presence by starting a [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) account for your church. Then consider starting a pastoral [blog](#) to reach out into the community.

Week Five

Purchase Website URL

It is time to start thinking about one of the most important ways of telling the world what God is doing in your church...by creating a church website. Consider your website your official business card. Many times, before your visitors have ever met or spoken with anyone from your church, they have seen your website. Your URL (web address) is an important piece of virtual real estate that you must have. This week, go through the steps of researching and solidifying the URL for your church's website.

The first step is checking to see if the website address that you want for your church is available. For example, if the name of your church is "The Best Church In Town", you might want to see if www.thebestchurchintown.com is available. You can go to sites like register.com and networksolutions.com and easily see what is available. Many such sites will help you find alternatives, by suggesting available domain names. You can also look for a shorter version, such as, if your church is called "The Best Church In Town", you can try www.tbcit.com or www.thebestcit.com - this is a great chance to get creative.

After you have purchased your URL, you now need to find a place to host your URL. Do not worry too much about this technical step, because whomever you choose to use to build your website can also help determine where to host it.

Additional Resources:

[How Your Church Website Is Breaking the Law](#)

The Organizational Board Meeting

As a church planter, each "first" will be special. The first time you see your legal name on your paperwork, the first time you see your logo, the first service, etc. The organizational board meeting is another first that should be special. It is your first real board meeting.

The very first board meeting of your organization is a critical step that ensures your ministry is starting out on the right legal foot. It is called the organizational board meeting, and the minutes of such meeting are different from regular board meeting minutes because they are for the purpose of forming the structure of the corporation.

All states require every church or ministry that incorporates to conduct an organizational board meeting. This meeting is required because it finalizes the legalization of your organization. At the board meeting you must ratify the following items:

- Appointment of chairperson and secretary.
- Directors elect themselves to serve. Under the laws of most states, when the articles of incorporation are filed, the directors listed are the initial set of directors and they need to be replaced, reinstated or altered at the organizational meeting.
- Appointment of officers.
- The [articles of incorporation](#).
- The [constitution and bylaws](#).
- Resolution to open a checking account.
- Resolution concerning the borrowing of money.
- Reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in establishing the corporation.
- Set the date of the next meeting of the directors.
- Adopt policies such as conflict of interest, reimbursement, salary compensation, etc.

Many churches never conduct this board meeting and are unaware of the dangers the church faces without it. A church may not officially have a board of directors, articles of incorporation, or bylaws without this organizational board meeting. Our [Ministry Corporate Records Kit](#) will walk you through the entire process of creating your organizational board meeting minutes, including obtaining the corporate seal and other various important policies and procedures.

Serious problems can arise as a result of not conducting an official organizational board meeting. In 2003, a Washington court determined that a pastor and his entire board of directors were not legally elected to their positions because they had not properly followed state nonprofit corporation law. This meant that the board the church thought it had in place was ruled invalid. In turn, the church's bylaws were trumped by state law. Finally, the court ordered a court-supervised election of new board members.

It is imperative that the church, upon incorporating, write bylaws and have them ratified in the organizational board meeting.

This week, schedule your organizational board meeting. Begin to pray over this time. Perhaps spend some time with your board members before this meeting, getting them familiar with the "why" behind the "what" of this meeting. Make this time special and commemorate it with some small kind of a celebration.

Additional Resources:

[Six Essentials to Taking Board Meeting Minutes](#)

[No Minutes? Then No Meeting!](#)

Opening a Church Bank Account

A non-negotiable in planting your church will be the need for finances. These finances usually initially come from the church planter and his CPT, but as the church launches and grows, tithes, offerings, and donations should be coming in from others. This week, we are going to get our bank account set up.

Items you will need:

1. State approved [articles of incorporation](#)

Often, a bank will require you to bring in your state approved articles of incorporation when you plan on opening a bank account.

2. Your [F.E.I.N](#)

In order to find the right bank and account for your church, you should do some research on your local banks. Ask which ones charge what fees. Ask about their involvement with other churches. Once you have found the bank that you want to engage, have a board meeting that shows a vote to resolve to open a checking account for the church. This is usually accomplished in the organizational board meeting. During this board meeting, decide who will have rights to sign checks and handle official business. Make an initial deposit and order checks.

Growing Your CPT

If you want your CPT to help you lead the church, then you need to treat them like leaders, and the best way to do that is to begin to supply them with the tools and ideas that will help grow their leadership. As suggested earlier, having them read specific books of your choosing is an excellent way to start that process. Remember, leaders are readers. That said, get books into their hands that will give them fresh ideas, skills, and insights into launching the church.

A Few Recommendations:

1. Developing the Leader Within You - John Maxwell
2. Becoming a Contagious Christian - Bill Hybels
3. The Five Dysfunctions of a Team - Patrick Lencioni
4. Up The Middle Church - Matt Keller

Week Six

Training CPT

By now, you are starting to see your team begin to gel and rally around the vision. As a church planter, you are sure to start seeing the strengths and the weaknesses in this fledgling church planting team. As the pastor and leader of this group, you must continue to train and lead this team for growing *themselves*, even before they grow the church. This week, we are going to talk about training your CPT to be able to do more, reach more, and help more people come to know Jesus.

To succeed in this, you must be intentional about the skills in which you want to see your church planting team grow. During week 6, what are the skills that are most important to the success of your church planting team in the coming days?

Here Are a Few Suggestions:

Evangelism

Many church planting teams get so wrapped up in the set up and tear down of being a portable church, or in the marketing of the church, that they forget that growing a church is about evangelism. It is about leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Head pastors understand this and have a great desire to see their teams lead people to Jesus, but there is often a gap between the vision of the pastor for evangelism and the actual evangelism done by the church planting team. However, that gap is best closed by training your team on how to effectively share their faith. This gets as simple as making sure they understand the basic tenets of their faith, equipping them with a plan for how to share their faith (think "4 Spiritual Laws" or the like), and making souls a priority in prayer (let them hear you pouring out your prayers for lost people).

Also, this is a great week to begin clarifying your expectations for your church planting team as it relates to getting outside the four walls of the church and reaching out to the community. Time and time again, experienced church planters talk about how paralyzed their church planting teams were when it came to actually reaching out into their community. If you expect them to bring new people to your gatherings, it is here that you begin to put that bullseye clearly on the wall.

Ask yourself the question, *"Where is my team weak in the area of evangelism?"*

Hospitality

Over the new few weeks, your church planting team should be growing as you and your team begin to connect with the community around you. It is important that your team understands how to make new people feel welcomed. We call that "hospitality"...the art of making people feel welcomed. Again, this is taking the simple steps of teaching people (who introduce themselves to new people) how to talk to folks, and how to serve them.

Ask yourself what exactly you want new people to experience when they join you at a gathering.

Show that answer to your team in a lesson. Demonstrate it and reward it when you see it.

Prayer

For all the efforts you make in the flesh to see a church become a reality, you must remember that at the end of the day, you need a breakthrough that can come from God alone. Remember the old saying, "*God does nothing except by prayer.*" This is a great time to begin to teach your team to pray like church planters...to begin to pray for souls, for favor, for finances, etc.

What are you dealing with now, as a church planter, that you are having a tough time getting done, that you can use as an opportunity to teach your team to pray through?

Team Success = Clearly Defined Expectations

As we have already stated, one of the most defining aspects of a successful church plant is the quality and cohesiveness of the CPT. Because of the vitality of their role in this church plant, it is wise to consider the spiritual warfare that this team will incur. This week, we are going to address one of the most dangerous attacks the enemy will use against your team:

Unrealistic Expectations

The greatest enemy of your church plant is unrealistic expectations!

Time

Clearly define what kind of time commitment you are expecting. Many church planters expect their teams to give as much time and energy as they are, only to be let down when they do not live up to that. Ask God to show you what the proper expectation should be, and then share that with them clearly. Remember to keep the priorities right: God - Family - Work - Ministry.

Evangelism

Many experienced church planters can recall the frustration they felt when their CPT members failed to bring people to church or lead people to Christ. This is likely to happen when the CPT views themselves as mere "helpers", and the church planter as the one doing the ministry. It occurs when there has not been a clear enough vision of what is expected from them in the area of evangelism. Does your team know exactly what you expect from them when it comes to unbelievers and inviting people to church? If not, get it clear asap! Tell them and expect them to INVEST and INVITE lost people to the church. Ask them if they have been doing that and

who you can pray for that they are going to invite to church the next week. This will let them know how serious you are about it!

Generosity

Do you expect your CPT to tithe? Then let them know. Do you expect them to be giving sacrificially? Then let them know. Better to know now if you can financially count on this team, before the overhead creeps up.

Attitude

You must be very clear early on with your CPT, that you can handle mistakes and you can handle accidents...but you cannot and will not handle a bad attitude. The successful CPT has the following attitude; "We don't 'have' to be a part of this church plant, we 'get' to be a part of it." A bad attitude, a lazy attitude, a selfish attitude, has no place on a CPT. Deal with it now, so that if and when it pops up in the process...and it will...you can address it without having the person feel like they were never told. Whatever you will feel comfortable with correcting in the future, be comfortable enough to talk about now.

Week Seven

Select Accounting Method

Often, when it comes to finances, most church planters only think about raising money. This week, we want to begin building a foundation of managing money the right way. Below are a few areas most church planters never give much thought or leadership to in the early days of their church plant, so they often develop weaknesses in their money management. However, if you develop skills, principles, and practices now that reflect a heart for sound money management, you will be surprised by how much ahead of other organizations you will be.

Skills, Principles, and Practices

Procedures for collecting offerings -

It is critically important for every church plant to establish a strong and compliant accounting system from its inception. Commonly, a major mistake that young churches make is to downplay the role of accounting in the early days because not much money is coming in. Accounting is an area to get right from day one and then to carry on with consistency, day in and day out during the life of your church. Most church plants start with the pastor making promises that the church's books will always be in order, that every penny will be accounted for, and that all the accounting will be concise and clear. But when the reality sets in of the effort it takes to keep good accounting practices, many church plants forfeit clarity and compliance in their books.

This week is about taking the time to get the foundation right in the area of accounting.

The following is a chart that will reveal the different aspects of a good accounting system. Take a look at each one and determine whether you can perform each one on a consistent basis.

For a sample Responsibilities Involved with Accounting worksheet, [Click Here](#)

Now that you have an idea of all that goes into managing an accounting system, you might look at that and draw the conclusion that knowing WHERE to begin is the most difficult part of starting. Do not make the mistake of aimlessly beginning your system without giving thought to what type of accounting method you will use. There are many churches that begin with a method only to find out later that a conversion needs to happen, which takes a lot of work.

2 Types of Accounting

Cash Accounting

This bases your recordings on the financial transactions based on actual exchange of cash. The strengths of this system are that it is easy to set up and it has a simple accounting for income and expenses. The weaknesses for this method of accounting are that it does not meet generally accepted accounting principles, it does not recognize a sale or a pledge as income, it does not account for the cost of goods sold, and it cannot account for a balance sheet to determine a net worth.

Accrual Accounting

Accrual accounting records income and expenses when the transaction takes place, even if there is no exchange of funds. This report creates a very useful sheet called the balance sheet, or statement of financial position.

Action Steps:

This week, we begin the journey of developing a strong financial foundation for your church. To do that you must take the following two action steps: research and choose your accounting method, and develop a chart of accounts.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Just like the roots of a tree hold the tree firmly to the ground, so the policies and procedures of a church plant create stability and strength for it. Part of our mission this week is to begin to create policies and procedures that reflect the type of financial accountability and stability that every successful church plant should have.

By way of explanation, here are two important definitions:

Policy - A policy is a written vision statement about the "why behind the what" of some aspect of your church. The policy should be able to be read and understood. It needs to be clear and detailed, and to represent the heart of the leadership of that church.

Procedure - A procedure is a written action plan that will help enforce a policy. This should be easy to read and understand, and should speak about the detailed actions it will take to ensure the policy is lived out.

Counting Policies and Procedures

The giving of tithes and offerings truly is an act of worship for most believers. The finances that come in during that part of our services represent life and a passion to serve God. Many church planters only think up to the point of taking up the offering. Meaning, they think about what will be said about the offering and how it will be taken up. Many church planters pray fervently during this time, asking God for more finances to come in.

But, after the bucks or plates are passed, what then?

Have you thought through what happens to the money once you start preaching? Where is it? Who has it? Who has access to it? Is it safe? Does the way you are handling those finances reflect a healthy respect and honor for both the people that gave and the law?

The first policy and procedure is for your counting of the offering. Begin to write down what is important for you when it comes to collecting and counting the offering. Here are a few questions to help you formulate the policy and procedure:

How many people should count the money?

Should any relatives of the pastor count the money?

What are the steps for checks and balances in the collection and counting of the offering?

How do you want the deposit handled?

What happens with the money during the remainder of the service?

Will you use a lock box or some kind of safe place to store the tithes and offerings?

How will you do offering reconciliation?

Take Action

This week, we are hammering out the details on how we are going to give leadership to the counting of the tithes and offerings of our church. Move through this week with sobriety and wisdom. Consider the spiritual nature of what people are giving and impart that reverence into your procedures.

[Click Here](#) for a Sample Counting Procedure

[Click Here](#) for a Sample In Service Money Trail

Purchase Offering Envelopes

One of the best tools for helping to develop systematic giving in your church is through the use of offering envelopes. Offering envelopes raise stewardship funds by giving an immediate "call to action" in the church service. Often times, people in our services would like to give funds to the ministry; however, they are not sure

what to do. A key part of helping your church plant to become financially self-sustaining is to make giving as "easy and obvious" as it can be. Offering envelopes help make that process clear and easy to use.

Your offering envelopes can come mass printed from a church supply store or you can have them professionally printed with your logo and specific giving terms.

Creating Your Offering Envelopes:

1. To what areas do you want people to give?

Offering envelopes can act as a reminder for different giving funds to which your donors can give. Most often, offering envelopes list: Tithes, Offerings, Building Projects, Missions, Benevolence, and Other. Having these areas on the offering envelope helps folks to remember the areas of activity in your church.

2. Does this offering envelope help the church stay IRS compliant?

We always suggest that the offering envelope establish the tax exempt status of the gift at the point of giving. The following statement is good to have printed on your envelope: "Upon use of this offering envelope, the giver releases any and all control over these funds and thus makes this gift tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS tax code. No goods or services were exchanged for these funds, only intangible religious services." This language helps keep the vision clear on the tax deductibility of each donor's gift.

3. Can this gift be mailed in?

Often times, donors miss the offering plate, either because it went by too fast when the offering was being taken up or the donor got distracted and missed the bucket himself. In fact, when they get home many donors later find checks that are sealed in offering envelopes in their Bibles...offerings they forgot to give. To make it easy and obvious what the next step is for this giver, preprint the mailing address on the offering envelope and provide an area for a stamp. You can increase the faithfulness and regularity of your giving by giving a mail-in option directly on your offering envelope.

Additional Articles:

IRS Tells Couple Tithes to Church are Not Tax Deductible

Lost Tithes, The Must Know Plan for Recovery

Can The Church Get Into Trouble for Not Properly Handling Designated Offerings?

Create Financial Assistance Plan

As you begin to reach out into the community, many needy people may begin to approach your fledgling church for help. Having policies in place that will aid you in knowing who to help, when to help, and how to help, will greatly advance you in maximizing your effectiveness in reaching your city. Remember, there will always be more need than you have resources to fill. The great need is to have policies in place that can help you discern the right places in which to invest the limited resources your church plant has.

Tips:

1. Create a Screening Process

Many times it is hard to know where and to whom you should sow your limited financial assistance resources. Given the usual emotional weight of the moment, often the best way to handle this is to already have made decisions ahead of time which will aid you in managing those moments when you have a financial request. Consider drafting a process through which you will screen candidates for financial assistance from the church.

2. Find Alternatives to Giving Out Cash

When a church gives cash to those requesting financial assistance, more often than not the money does not get used the way in which the church intended. Many churches have adopted a "No Cash" financial assistance policy. This is often managed through developing relationships with your local merchants such as local grocery stores, local gas stations, and local hotels. This will allow you, usually via a gift card program, to help those that are truly needy, while not risking giving cash to the wrong efforts.

This week's activity is about establishing the right principles and practices to answer the dual calling of the Bible to the Church--to be good stewards of the money God has given you while also remembering the poor.

[Click Here](#)

for a sample Financial Assistance Request Form

Week Eight

Start Fundraising

Someone wisely once said, *"The gospel is free, but the road it travels on is very expensive!"* Every church planter knows that this is true! To successfully launch your ministry, it will require a large financial commitment. Most church planters do not have the funds to fully support the church plant on their own, and so the need to do fundraising arises.

How and when and with whom you try to partner to do the fundraising all plays a big role in your success. This week, we begin our fundraising strategies.

Tips and Questions to Answer When Starting Fundraising:

1. Settle the Fundraising Issue

Quite frankly, more often than not it takes large sums of money to really plant a church. And unless you are independently wealthy, you will have to raise those funds from people other than yourself. And that means you are going to have to ask for it. This often determines whether your church ever launches or not. You must be ok with asking people to fund your dream.

Tips:

Practice, practice, practice - if it is worth an eternal commitment, then it is worth your time to prepare what you are going to say. A clear, succinct vision with a clear path for partner involvement is critical to fundraising success.

Have your bank account open - do not ask people to write you a check personally; ask them to give to the church.

2. Start Developing a Launch Cost

Do you know how much money it is going to take to make your church a reality? Many church planters have a number in their head, but are totally blown away when they complete a Church Launch Cost Sheet. Most find that the costs are about 40% higher than they initially thought. The first step this week is to begin working on your Church Launch Cost Sheet.

3. Start to Create a Donor List

Most often, one great determining factor we see in church plants who are able to raise all the money they need to launch successfully is their ability to carve out a large group of people from which they can try to raise funds. Sit down with your team and write down on a list everyone you can think of with which you have any kind of good relationship. Think not only of friends and family, but co-workers from past positions, friends from high school, friends from out of state, customers from your business (if appropriate), etc.

Another truth in today's world of church planting is that, beyond the start-up costs involved in church planting, there is an ongoing cost involved in maintaining a thriving and growing church. And that cost may mean more money than you realize. That said, it is great to have folks that believe in the vision God has given you and that will be willing to back that vision financially even after the church plant has successfully made it through its first year.

4. Walk in Faith

Again, remember the words of Jesus *"...I will build My church...."*. You are not left alone to build this church, you are a co-laborer with Christ. When God gives the vision, we can be assured that He will also give the provision. Paramount focus should, therefore, be on God's ability to provide and your necessity to partner with Him. First and foremost, talk to God about your needs. They are not meant to be a burden you carry, but an invitation into deeper trust, and a journey of discovery whereby He reveals His face as Provider and Father. Keep your faith high. Read the Word and look for verses that speak of God's provision. Additionally, read books about God's provision for others, and keep your words in faith, not in fear. Recognize, too, that because God loves to invite you into partnership with Him, He may use fundraising as a clear example of your partnership with Him. Partnering first in prayer, by asking Him to supply for His work and to build His church, and secondly, partnering with Him by doing what He directs you to do in regards

to the finances, whether that means sharing the needs with other people, or putting into action strategies that He reveals for fundraising, etc.

Additional Articles:

[How We Raised \\$40,000 in Three Months](#)

Decide if the Vision is from God

Settle in your heart that investing into your church plant is the wisest thing someone can do with his money. Remember what Jesus said, "...store up treasures in heaven..." And investment into your church is an investment into eternity. You need to believe that. If you do not, wait to ask until you do.

If you are going to plant a church, you are going to have to ask for money...there is no way around it. And many people get real sheepish about this. Because of that, they do not ask well. They ask with an apologetic tone. They ask with their "hat in their hand" tone.

But often the determining factor of whether or not you will be able to raise the funds to see your church really launched successfully lies in answering this one question:

Is this a good idea or a God idea?

If it is a good idea, if it is something born out of your mind and personal thoughts, then you will talk about it in the realm of it "might" be good ground into which someone could sow.

But...if you are convinced in your heart of hearts that God the Father birthed into you a vision that is a glimpse of what He is going to do to change the city in which you live...if you are convinced that souls will be saved for eternity through your ministry...if you know that this is God...then YOU KNOW that this is good ground to sow into and you will invite, with boldness, people to get on board with the adventure of a lifetime--being investors in something that God is about to do on the earth! THAT is the major difference between fundraising for a GOOD IDEA and fundraising for a GOD IDEA.

The truth is that they are not just investing in you, they are sowing seeds into the very ground from which God has promised a harvest.

When you know it is the Lord, you will ask for resources with the tone of, "Why wouldn't you want to give into what God is about to do?"

You need to decide now, before we go any further, "Is this a GOOD IDEA or a GOD IDEA?" Settling that will greatly effect your long-term success in raising finances for your new church.

So the Question You Must Answer This Week:

Is this a good idea or a God idea?

Develop a Possible Donor's Spreadsheet

The finances to launch your church might not be in your pocket, but they are in the pockets of people you know.

Step 1: Develop a List of EVERYONE You Know!

Try to develop a list of 1,000 people you know...or as many as come to your mind, with which you have (or in times past had) a good acquaintance or rapport. This list can be comprised of folks from your former church, or parents' church, your family and friends, people you went to high school with, the waiters/waitresses you know at the local eatery you frequent, or other community members with whom you feel a connection, etc. You need to clearly define your potential pool of givers.

Step 2: Send a Letter (or Evite, or Email)

Write a short letter about what God has put in your heart...just explain enough detail to give the colors of what your vision is, but do not fully paint the sunset yet. In the letter, ask if you can have 30 minutes of their time to let them know the whole vision and to see if God might want them to be a part of it, prayerfully and/or financially.

Step 3: Meet and Cast

Meet with each person/couple and cast a clear, compelling vision, and then do the "big ask". Ask them to support you. If you have followed this Sequence plan, then you are already set up to take tax-deductible offerings.

Create an Atmosphere for Blessing

I have never seen a stingy pastor plant a successful church!

If we turn our ear from the poor, God turns His ear from us. If we give, it shall be given back to us. The church you plant will only thrive in an atmosphere of generosity. If the people you lead are always tight-fisted with the resources God is bringing into their hands, you will struggle to be able to fund your vision. There will always be a gap between the size of your vision and the provision available for it.

The first key to unlock the windows of blessing is the tithe. Again, much has been written about the subject of the tithe, so we are not going to try to re-establish this fact here. But suffice it to say that the pastor who wants to see the "windows of Heaven" open over his church needs to make a decision on whether or not HE is going to be a tither.

The truth is, no one can create a culture of generosity like you can. Someone once said, *"The character of the kingdom emanates from the character of the king!"* I believe with all of my heart that, financially, "as the pastor goes, so goes the church."

This week, you will make 3 determinations that will help to create a culture of generosity:

Determine to Give - Become a Tither

Begin a personal study this week on the tithe and its role in your life and the life of your church. Wrestle to the ground the meaning of Mal. 3:8-12, Gen.14:20, Matt. 23:23, and others. Ask the Lord about the tithe and how you are to live that out.

Determine to Sow - Become Generous

The tithe is just a start. It is the least we should give. There is a joy in giving that is contagious. Determine this week to live opened-handed with the resources God is putting into your hand. Perhaps this week you might give a donation to a local church planter. Generosity starts with the pastor. What can you do today to make that culture real for your church?

Determine to Be a Good Steward - Become Wise

Once people become tithers, they often neglect the Lord's influence on the other 90%. This week, begin to see the connection between the condition of your personal finances and that of your ability to handle the finances of the church. The Scriptures talk about a man being prepared for ministry once he is able to keep his household under control (1 Tim. 3:4). How can a pastor, who cannot pay his bills and budget his own household resources, be trusted with the resources of God?

Week Nine

Nonprofit Mailing

As a church planter, you will use many different ways to tell the community that you are there and what God is doing in your church. While most churches will use social media alone, many have found mailing flyers and invitations through the US Post Office to be a very effective method of advertising. It is important to understand that as a church, you have certain privileges that can help reduce the rates you might spend on postage. The United States Postal Service® gives certain 501(c)(3) organizations the ability to send mail at reduced rates. Small nonprofits, specifically churches and ministries, often have small budgets, and taking advantage of these [reduced mailing rates](#) is one little way to save big over time. To take advantage of these privileges, you must apply directly to the Postmaster for a special postage account, bulk mailing permit, and reduced nonprofit rates, which will save you time and money - over 50% off of regular postage costs! As rising rates continue, your savings could be in the thousands.

Using Mail in the Electronic Age

Statistics show that postage mailings of special events and services are convincingly more effective than emails. With a nonprofit mailing permit, you will be able to afford targeted marketing campaigns that reach deeper into the heart of your community than ever before.

You can follow these three steps to getting your bulk mailing permit:

Create your Nonprofit Postage Statement ([PS Form 3602-NZ](#))

Apply to mail at nonprofit prices ([PS Form 3624](#))

Create a request for confirmation of authorization ([PS Form 3623](#))

Because the United States Postal Service® requires several steps to apply for a [nonprofit mailing permit](#), while the savings are huge, the application process can be difficult. Whether it is with form 3615, form 3623, the Nonprofit Postage Statement or a financial statement, often church planters need some help with this process.

Additional Resources:

[StartCHURCH](#) has created an easy to use, step-by-step guide to help you secure the benefits of a Bulk Mailing Permit. With this software tool, no legal firms or their fees are necessary.

To find out more about this tool, please [CLICK HERE](#) .

Begin Launch Budget

Many church planters struggle with raising enough of the resources they need to launch their church. Many successful churches can trace at least some portion of the success of their church plant to being able to raise the funds needed. Creating a launch budget will help you make the shift from a resource scarce to a resource rich environment. Below are some steps and skills that have helped churches raise the money they need to launch successfully.

Common Mistakes:

1. Spending Too Much on the Wrong Things

Many a church planter has raised more than enough money to launch his church successfully, only to come up short in the long run because he spent too much of his launch money on the wrong things. It is not that people usually do not raise any money, it is that they spend the money they raise in the wrong places. It is important, early on in the budgeting process, that you discern what is a need and what is a want for your church launch. Moving lights, coffee mugs with your logo, and four-color graphic bulletins do not fall in the "need" column. Be careful not to spend money on something because "Mr.-Super-Church-Planter" down the road spent money on something.

2. Spending Too Little on the Right Things

Some things will require you to spend money. Having a cheap sound system that keeps breaking down does no one a favor. Save where you can, but spend where you have to. Discerning the difference is the key.

3. Spending It All!

It is not a lack of faith to not spend it all, it is wisdom. Often times, church planters will try to spend everything they have - money, time, resources, sermon prep time, etc. - all on their first service, with little thought given to the fact that they have to do it all again in 7 days! Make sure to have a reserve of finances to help you make it through the first few months, not just through the first service.

4. Not Spending for Growth

You can have the greatest church service in the world, but if no one knows who you are, where you are, or how to get there, success will elude you. Remember, for all the expenditures on the niceties for the first service, do not forget the marketing and outreach. Those two prongs help get your name into the community.

5. Not Having Someone Else Look at the Budget

For most church planters, the amount of money they raise for their church plant is more money than they have ever personally handled before. It would be wisdom to remember the saying that "there is safety in a multitude of counselors." In no other place is that as true as in the area of your budget. Take the time to pray through it and get the budget you believe is right, but then let someone else see it. Invite them into the conversation to make sure you are investing the

money entrusted to you in the best possible places.

6. Not Praying First

Planting a church, and using the finances that God gives you, is a great responsibility. Never forget what Jesus said...that He "would build His church". When it comes to the budget, starting on your knees, rather than with planning sheets and budget forms, is a clear sign that you believe Jesus knows best what to do with the resources to prepare your church plant for what He wants to do. Church planters who do not pray are often humbled when things do not work out the way they intended. Many a church planter has said, "I did everything right. It should have worked." - and yet the church he planted didn't make it. Usually, the error is not in the lack of wisdom, but in the lack of submission to guidance from the Lord.

As you begin this process of developing a launch budget, start on your knees. Start from the place of saying to God, "Without You, I will do it wrong. Please lead me and guide me. Please let me know Your plan for every cent that comes into our hands. This is Your church, not mine."

Take Action

This week is another important week in the life of your church plant. This is the week you begin to lead the business side of the church. You are not just a pastor, you are also the president of a corporation. Leadership in the area of finances is very important.

Make sure to give yourself "breaks" in the process. A budget is not formed in a day. Get some exercise and have some fun this week, as often the budget can produce stress. Know that God is with you and will provide all the wisdom you need.

Here are a few places to see some sample Church Planting Budgets:

For a free sample Church Planting Budget,

[CLICK HERE](#)

Nelson Searcy's - [FREE RESOURCE](#)

Week Ten

Begin the Search for a Building

This week we begin the exciting step of starting to look for your building. The hardest thing about launching your church will be finding your building. Most church planters do not believe that statement when they first hear it, but later find it to be true as they look for a home for their services.

Things to look for in a building:

1. Adequate Parking

Remember, often when leasing a space, even on Sunday, you are only supposed to legally get access to a certain amount of parking spaces. Generally speaking, you can count the total size of your growth potential by multiplying 2.3 times your total amount of parking spaces. Quite often, with too little parking, new visitors drive through the parking lot and then go elsewhere, thinking there is no room for them.

2. Adequate Children's Ministry Space

First, define what "adequate" space looks like. Often times, when a room looks overly full or cramped, parents will opt out of leaving their children in the children's ministry. This typically leads to them looking for another church where the children's ministry has enough space to safely attend to their children. Adequate is enough space for safety and enjoyment. Also, take into account future growth, Vacation Bible Schools, and larger special services like Easter or Christmas.

3. Sanctuary Space

Remember the 80% rule, which says that when the seats in your sanctuary are 80% full, then you feel full, and people will not feel comfortable bringing friends. Very easily a church can settle for a space that is too small, and they find it hard to grow. Rick Warren used to say, "Never let the shoe tell the foot how big it can grow." Always get a space that leaves room for growth.

4. Zoning Classification

You want to make sure that the spaces you are looking at are "C" class zoning, which should allow you to have a religious gathering in that space. Find that out up front so you are not going down the road on a space that is not going to work for you in the long run.

5. How Can You Use the Building as a For Profit Arm?

For most church plants, their building is the biggest financial drain on their budget. They are always struggling to try to find the money to pay for their rent or mortgage. But, what if there was a better way? What if the building could create finances instead of being a drain on your finances? A new wave of church planters are considering starting a [for profit arm](#).

Under Section 502 of the Internal Revenue Code, a ministry can establish a for profit arm to help earn tax-free income by way of donations and dividends. Do you think this is too good to be true? When done correctly, a [for profit arm](#) can give you options that will empower your church or ministry to grow. (We will talk more about this in later weeks)

Tips:

Think outside of the box. Today's most successful church planters launch in some of the most untraditional spaces like movie theatres, restaurants, libraries, and even funeral homes. Use the 5 criteria above at each location. More than not, you will find a location that has 3 of the 5, but without at least the first four, the space is doomed to fail.

Week Eleven

Rest and Celebrate!

This week is a great week, because the goal this week is to REST! You have been pushing strong for weeks and months now. If you are following this Sequence, you have begun much of the work that it will take to launch this ministry.

This week we refocus on staying healthy, because often times when church planters are pressing toward their launch, it is really easy to push beyond the health zone. They can push their bodies, their relationships, their finances, and their friends too far, too fast. Therefore, at this point we want to downshift and reengage the sacred rhythm of rest.

There are no new tasks for this week, except rest-related tasks.

Three Critical Rests For This Week:

1. Physically Rest

This is a great week to go to bed early, to enjoy a weekend of napping, to be slow about life. Remember, launching a church is not a sprint, it is a marathon; and in a race this long, you must have periods of rest.

2. Mentally/Spiritually Rest

It is common for church planters to say with their mouths, "God will build this church!", but then to live like THEY will build the church. It is a sign of great faith to take a season of rest. It thrusts the care for your fledgling church plant into the hands of the Lord and helps you to "be still and know that He is God."

3. Relationally Rest

This is a great week to check on your relationships. How is your marriage? How are your children? Is there joy in their eyes? Do they feel cared for? How about your friends on the church planting team? Are they still excited? This week, you are to rest in what God is doing, celebrate what God has done over the past few weeks, and rejoice in the ones that He has gathered around you...both family and friends...for the journey.

Perhaps you have never considered that another way to show rest is to celebrate. But a heart of thanksgiving fills you with the joy of the Lord, which renews your strength. Have you celebrated what God has already done over the last few weeks? Have you celebrated the favor, wisdom, and insight you have gained so far through this process? Someone once said, "I'll rest when I'm dead!" That is exactly what happens when we do not take the necessary time to stop and celebrate what God is doing in and through us; we die.

Take Action:

This week, find a way to celebrate with your spouse, your team, your friends, and your God!

Your Spouse - Go on a date! You have been pushing pretty hard for quite a while now. It is very possible that you have become myopic in your pursuit of planting the church, and your spouse has had to come to grips with your attention being elsewhere. Tonight, make it all about your wife. Take your spouse out for a night on the town. Remind her that she is more important than the church and that you are still in love with her. Recast the vision that you want this process

to draw you closer, and remind her of how important she is to seeing the vision come to pass, whether she is behind the scenes or on the stage.

Your Team - Have a party! That is right, get your team together, and show them some appreciation. Remind them how blessed you are to have them on this journey. This could be over pizza or grilled food or at a nice restaurant. What is most important is that everyone leaves knowing they are celebrated and loved by you.

Your Friends - Send some handwritten notes! Remember those friends that a few weeks ago you were asking to help you financially get this church off the ground? Now is the time to drop them a line and let them know how grateful you are that they were people of vision. Let them know that what they have done matters to this work of God. Do not email it; write it, in your own handwriting. This may take a little while, but it says volumes.

Your God - Worship! It has been perhaps weeks or months or even years since God put the seed of this vision into your heart. This week, take a moment to thank God for calling you into the ministry. Spend some time taking your eyes off of the work of God, and put them back on the God of this work. Recommit your heart and this vision to Jesus, reminding yourself that is has been and always will be about Him.

Week Twelve

Create Ordination Program

As a church planter, there are few things as invigorating in the life of your church plant as recognizing the call of God on someone's life who is called to the ministry. Seeing the story of God unfold in their life and then watching your church be the place where that call becomes clear is a time of great joy and honor.

As we move forward in establishing the foundation for your church, we need to take a good look at your ordination program. Ordaining someone into the ministry is exciting, but it also needs to be legal.

Becoming a licensed or ordained minister is not a trivial matter; it represents the setting apart of an individual for ministry. How does one become legally licensed or ordained within the laws that govern our society? You must properly establish a licensing and ordination program within your church before you ordain any ministers, if you

want to be ordaining folks legally and not just spiritually.

Licensing and the IRS

As a pastor, it is important to understand that the IRS has set forth regulations that define a minister for tax purposes. You must create a licensing program that meets state and federal regulations, ensuring that you can maximize tax benefits such as the housing allowance and the self-employment tax exemption.

The Church Should Ordain Its Own Ministers

Every state recognizes that the power to license and ordain ministers of the gospel belongs to the church. With that authority, your church can create a program to license and ordain its own ministers, including the founder(s), as well as those outside the church.

Breaking Through the Burdensome Requirements

For many, the process of becoming legally ordained is one that comes with a lot of relational baggage. Though called and qualified in the eyes of the Lord, many potential ministers are denied a ministerial covering by their denomination because they fail to meet the standards that have been set forth. Sometimes it may seem like a mountain of obstacles restricts their ability to become ordained ministers.

One such case involved a man who dearly loved the Lord and felt called to the mission field. Unfortunately, though, he was denied the required minister's license necessary in his denomination if he wanted to become a missionary. In order to qualify he would have had to go back to school and obtain a four-year college degree. This was a huge obstacle for him, as he had never even completed the third grade! In 1994, however, he was finally ordained as a minister through a non-denominational church that he was attending. Upon receiving status as an ordained minister, he went out into the mission field. He became a full-time missionary to the poor, and rescued numerous orphans in both Venezuela and Honduras. Since his ordination, he has been constructing or aiding orphanages where the rescued children can find refuge and healing, and where visiting missionaries receive on-site training regarding how to minister to children. Had it not been for the restrictive and burdensome requirements of his former denomination, he would probably have had these opportunities to serve a lot earlier. To this day he

continues to give his life on behalf of orphaned children in foreign countries.

We need to remember that it is God who calls and ordains; we just recognize what God is doing.

Be Legal in All 50 States

As you contemplate this important step of setting up a licensing and ordination program, consider the fact that many ministers now do ministry and weddings in other states. The question you need to ask yourself is, *"Are our ministers going to be prepared for the legal steps to perform weddings in all 50 states?"*

The ministers you license through your program should take into consideration the state requirements needed.

To establish a legal ordination in your ministry, you need:

1. Make sure that all of your corporate documents, such as the articles of incorporation, constitution and bylaws, and board meeting minutes, contain specific language stating that you intend on having a licensing and ordination program.
2. Require a certain set of criteria from your candidates.
3. Require an exam to be taken.
4. Require an application with a fee.
5. If the application is approved, assign an expiration date.
6. Keep good records of all ministers.
7. Require a renewal process.
8. Require that a meaningful relationship be maintained between your organization and the ministers licensed/ordained through your program.

If you do these 8 steps right, you will confidently send out into the world legally licensed and ordained ministers of the gospel!

Additional Resources:

If sending out ordained ministers is a key part of your vision and you would like some help in developing this program, please see our software tool titled Ordain. This tool will give you easy rails to run on to bring this aspect of your vision to pass. To see Ordain, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Additional Articles:

[Are You Ordained Legally?](#)

[Truths and Myths About Ordination](#)

[Become Ordained Before the Year Ends](#)

Week Thirteen

Begin 501(c)(3) Application

This week we move into a very important legal step, which is filling out the application for obtaining the [501\(c\)\(3\) status](#). Section 501(c)(3) is the section of the IRS tax code that allows a church/ministry to be a tax exempt organization. There is often much confusion around the 501(c)(3) and because of that confusion, many do not file for this status. However, when these churches can see the clear benefits of having the 501(c)(3), and can dispell the common myths concerning the 501(c)(3), they are usually eager to get the status.

Benefits of Applying for 501(c)(3) Status

First, having 501(c)(3) status allows your church the ability to guarantee that all tithes, offerings, and donations are tax deductible because you have written proof from the IRS that your church is a registered charity.

Second, many states do not automatically guarantee sales tax exemption without a 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS. Additionally, bulk mailing rates and most grants will not be extended to your church or ministry without 501(c)(3) status.

Third, IRS section 508(c) states that all churches are automatically recognized as exempt under 501(c)(3) and are therefore required to comply with all 501(c)(3) requirements. In a federal court case, a judge ruled that just because a church does not apply for 501(c)(3) status, it does not mean that the church is exempt from meeting all

of the requirements of sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c). In other words, the court said that the church's contributors must prove the church's right to an exemption under section 501(c)(3) in order to be entitled to a deduction for their contributions (Jack Lane Taylor v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 1996).

In fact, if your church does not apply for 501(c)(3) status, you pass the burden of proof on to your members and donors. If any donor of your church gets audited, he or she will have to prove to the IRS that your church is operating in compliance with all of the requirements of sections 501(c)(3), 4958, 107, and many more. This may discourage many (particularly large donors) from giving to your church.

Will the Government Control My Church?

One of the common myths we hear about the 501(c)(3) is that it will give the government control over the church. That is absolutely not true! The claim that incorporation or 501(c)(3) status makes a church "non-biblical by bringing the church under the authority of the government" has no theological or legal validity. The church is the Body of Christ. It is made up of people, not entities, corporations or associations. Additionally, the Word of God clearly teaches us as individual members of the Body of Christ to live in peace and subject to the authorities that God has established (Romans 13; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

How to Apply for the 501(c)(3)

Form 1023 is the form you can use to apply for your 501(c)(3) status. This application is 27 pages when it is blank, and is usually up to 100 pages when StartCHURCH is done creating it for clients.

If you attempt to fill this form out on your own, here are a few suggestions:

1. Make sure the activities match with the budget.
2. Make sure that you have recorded board meeting minutes from the inception of your organization to the current date, as the IRS might ask for them.
3. The answers on Schedule A are what the IRS uses to establish whether or not you qualify as a church.

Additional Resources:

We Can Help!

Obtaining 501(c)(3) status is important to the success of your church or ministry; it brings with it a host of benefits, but it does take work. The IRS statistics reveal that the application form takes more than 100 hours to complete, making it a very difficult task. We suggest that you give yourself 4 weeks to complete this particular task.

Because of this, many church planters shy away from this important step. However, StartCHURCH has a program whereby we do all of the work for you, which eliminates the need to hire a CPA. To find out more information, please [CLICK HERE](#)

***** If you already have your 501(c)(3) done, this becomes an additional rest week for you!! *****

Additional Articles:

[Church Exempt Status Under Attack](#)

[What Is Your Church's Public Record?](#)

[Is One 501\(c\)\(3\) Better than Another?](#)

Week Fourteen

Service Development - "Paint the Sunset"

Remember back when you first got the vision to start this church? For most church planters, the first thing you saw was the service. You saw in an instant what it would look like, feel like, and sound like. You had a clear vision of what it would be like to be a member of that church. This week, we get to start bringing that service to pass.

Target

Who are you trying to reach? Are you trying to reach young families with kids? How about urban hip hoppers? What about single rodeo men? No matter who you choose to reach, while everyone is invited and welcome, you cannot reach everyone in one service; that is why there are so many churches!

Ask God to help you narrow your target. Then plan the best service to reach them.

Culture

Pick 5 key words to describe your service and plan your service to match that.

Here are some suggestions:

Fun, Exciting, Uplifting, Short, Friendly, Powerful, Deep, Engaging, Touching

Quality/Excellence

We live in a world that reflects excellence. Excellence is defined as surpassing ordinary expectations. Many churches do not reflect true excellence. This week, determine if you are going to be a church of the ordinary or the extra ordinary. Unfortunately, the house of God is often treated more poorly than people's own houses. When it comes to shaping your services, how and where can you inject a sense of excellence into the process? Consider the different aspects of the church, are they excellent? How can you be more excellent in your presentation? In your worship? In your love and care for the visitor? In your building or space in which you meet?

Children

What is your vision for your children? Do you have a space for them? How are you going to check them in or check them out of each children's service? What safety precautions and policies will you have in place to ensure their well-being?

Sequence will have more for this step later on this week.

Pre-Service

- Look and Feel - Clean/Friendly/Excellent
- Music - do not leave it to chance. Pre-burn a pre-service CD to

capture the mood.

[Click Here](#)

for a sample Determining Success Sheet.

Service Flow

A few weeks from now, there will be neighbors and visitors who will be visiting your church. For some, this will be their first time in a long time stepping back into a church setting. For others, it may be a new step of faith altogether to try your church and see what it is like. Your first service will represent 1000's of hours of time, prayer, and energy from you and your CPT. The question most church planters forget to ask is:

What am I going to do with them once they get there?

This week you are going to start to develop a service flow plan for that Sunday. This is the overall plan for what your visitors will experience from the time they walk through the door till the time they drive out of the parking lot. It is important to think through the flow of that day and make a plan of how to craft a great experience for them.

Here are some questions to help you develop your plan:

- What will they see and hear when they get out of their cars?
- How will they know where to go?
- What will the lobby / foyer experience be like? Will there be music? If so, what kind? Will there be coffee and / or a light breakfast? If so, what kind? What is the "mood" of the lobby / foyer going to be? Will people be able to sit, or do they have to stand?
- When they enter the sanctuary, what will they see? What will they hear?
- When it is time to start, what will be said to get everyone in from the lobby / foyer to the worship space?
- Will there be any introductions of who is who? In other words, since everyone is a new visitor, they do not know who the pastor, the deacon, the usher, or the worship leader is. How will they be introduced?

- How will you take up the offering? Who will do it? What will happen with the band while the offering is being taken up? Tip: Practice the offering - many churches leave “money on the table” because they conduct their offering time too quickly and do not allow enough time for people to write out their checks. Practice filling out an offering envelope. Are you going to give them enough time?
- What type of praise and worship will there be?
- Lighting - High? Low? Moving? None?
- Stage - Clean or Cluttered?
- What will be the duration of the praise and worship? What is the expected duration of the entire service?
- How will you close? What will the "ministry" time look like?
- What will be your opening? Prayer? Video?
- How will you do “meet and greet”?
- How will you address new visitors?
- What about altar ministry time?
- Do you have a tear down/set up plan?
- How will the money be handled?
- Where will the money be stored during service?

This day needs leadership, and Pastor, you are the one to give it! This week, you will spend the time helping the church have a service plan for your first service.

[Click Here](#) for a Sample Service Rundown Sheet

[Click Here](#) for a Sample Sanctuary Team Rundown

[Click Here](#) for a Sample Service Position Roster

Tips:

Think through how you are going to capture the data of your new visitors. One useful way to capture this data and get new people involved is the use of a Connect Card. Often this card is referenced right before the offering with a few simple words such as, "If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we are so grateful you're here today! We do this with you in mind! We'd love to get a record of your visit; if you could take a moment to fill out the Connect Card and place it in the offering bucket, we would really appreciate it!"

Many churches have seen a significant increase in starting conversations with their visitors and seeing returns through the use of a Connect Card.

[Click Here](#) for a Sample Connect Card

Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate

Take a minute to consider this: You have made it to week 15! Let that sink in for a moment. You have been pushing hard on bringing to pass the vision God has put in your heart. And little by little, it is happening! Stopping and recognizing this is an important way to defeat the most common attack at this stage: Discouragement!

At this point in the process, a huge attack on you and your CPT will probably be the spirit of discouragement. Because church planting is hard, and because of the landscape of America that is dotted with a multitude of mega churches, it will be very easy for you and your team to become disheartened. This can be manifested in bad attitudes, a lack of passion and energy, and even a lack of prayer.

The best way to combat discouragement is CELEBRATION!

At this point in your church planting journey, your CPT is giving time, talent, and energy to helping this church get off the ground. This week, make sure you celebrate that!

Foster a culture that celebrates every step of the journey. To do this you must always be looking for things to celebrate! Become an expert at finding the silver lining of any service, outreach, or project you do.

You have given your team a vision, now learn to give your team a WIN!

Once you launch, each Sunday your CPT should go home feeling like winners! They should feel like they are doing a great job and are a part of something special! They should feel that you are proud of them and what the Lord is doing through them. Make your team feel like they are winning, and here is what will happen: They will carry themselves like winners!

So, celebrate them! Celebrate what God is doing! Celebrate what happened! Celebrate anything and everything!

Too many church planters get wrapped up in the minute details that “didn’t” go right in a particular service or event and they let their sense of failure infect the team. And, if you treat them like failures, they will act like failures!

Question:

This week, how can you develop a culture of celebration?

Develop a Children's Ministry Plan

Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto Me...". Your church is sure to have children as a part of its congregation. This week, we want to take some time to think about how we are going to minister to these little ones. Churches have varying ideas about what to do with the children during a church service. For many, the children are brought into the adult service for the duration of the service, while for others the children are left in for worship but then are directed to age-appropriate activities afterward; still others have the children in dedicated worship spaces during the entire service.

How you minister to the children is between you and the Lord. However, no matter what plan you adopt, the key is to have a plan that plants the seeds of the gospel into these little hearts.

As you begin to work through developing a plan for how your church will minister to the kids, use the questions and tips below as conversations starters. We suggest you gather your CPT together, as well as some of the families (moms and dads) from your budding team and involve them in this conversation. Ask the Lord to lead you to the right strategy for ministering to the children He gives you to serve.

Defining Questions:

What's the value of the children in this church?

How will the church show that value?

What kind of children are we most likely to attract?

As we develop our children's ministry plan, what Scriptures should guide us?

What is the vision? WRITE IT DOWN.

What kind of team members are we going to need to bring this vision to pass?

How can we make and train volunteers for this ministry?

What benefits or obstacles does our current space provide to offering this type of children's ministry?

Side Note:

From a legal standpoint, hundreds of thousands of dollars are collected each year from churches because of children getting hurt at a church service or through a church volunteer. As you begin to develop your ministry plan, begin from the start having a plan for safety. Include things like background checks on all volunteers, plans for emergencies, and so forth.

Week Fifteen

Purchase Insurance

Things happen in church planting that we do not foresee and cannot control. Things like the lightning storm that blows your sound board, the child who gets injured in your children's ministry, or the passing of a key member of your staff. These things seem unimaginable when we first start out, but the reality is, things like these do happen. It is here that making the decision on the front end to get the right kind of insurance policy is very important.

This week, we are going to start the process of obtaining insurance for your church plant. There are many organizations out there that have plans just for churches. You will need to do some research to find out who is best for your church.

Here are three types of policies we suggest that you have:

General Liability -

General liability insurance protects the church from the risk of liabilities imposed by lawsuits and similar claims. Usually, the church's liability insurance will have three major duties: 1) the duty to defend the church, 2) the duty to indemnify the church and 3) the duty to settle reasonably clear claims against the church. Many church plants do not secure any liability insurance because of the high costs of premiums. However, in the event that a claim is filed against the church, often the costs of legal defense or settlement are much more than the cost of the insurance. We highly suggest all church plants have general liability insurance.

Event Insurance -

Event insurance is a special section of your insurance rider that deals with specific events. Things like youth group missions trips, harvest festivals, Easter egg hunts, and more, fall into areas that might need specific event insurance. This is important because accidents do happen and not everyone who attends your event has medical insurance. Even insurance can help cover a specific event and reduce the liability your church incurs by doing a specific event. Ask your insurance provider about the events you plan on hosting as a church, and see what the insurance company might have available to you.

Property -

By now you have invested the fundraising support into different assets for your church plant. It might be sound systems, lights, chairs, children's materials...who knows. What you want to do now is to protect what you have invested. Part of any good insurance policy is property insurance. This will help you quickly replace things and keep going as a church, should there be damage or theft of your physical assets.

Key Man -

In the life of a new church plant, few people have as much personal impact on the church as the lead pastor. Often times, people will cite the pastor as the #1 reason why they have chosen to join a certain church. When the lead pastor is a good communicator and leader, most likely the church will start to grow, and the pastor's role plays a big part in that. The question is, what would happen if the pastor left the church? What if the pastor suddenly passed away? We often first think about the spiritual and relational side of the church in that instance, but what about the financial side? What would happen to the size of the church? What would happen to the amount of tithes and offerings received weekly? What would happen to the staff that is dependant on those funds? It is for these reasons that church planters need to consider having a "Key Man" portion added to their insurance requirements.

We Can Help!

Obtaining insurance is an important step. Be sure to look around for and find the right insurance provider. If you need help, StartCHURCH has a program dedicated to helping you understand and find the perfect church insurance. To find out more information, please [Click Here](#).

Additional Resources:

[Can Your Church Get a \\$2500.00 for Providing Health Insurance](#)

[When Church Insurance Company Sues One of Your Members](#)

Purchase Mailing List

Things are now progressing with your church plant. You are honing your vision, putting structures in place, and equipping your team. Now is a key time to ponder an additional way to let the community know you are there. The fact is, you could have the best church ever, but if people do not know your church exists, then they cannot really reap the benefits of what God is doing in your church.

There are many creative ways to make the community aware of your presence. Some of those ways have been previously mentioned in earlier weeks, such as social media marketing, developing a well-crafted logo for a variety of uses, and building one-on-one relationships within the community. In week 9 you took

the step of applying for a bulk mailing permit, and now you can reap the benefits of that action by utilizing another valuable tool: a direct mail piece. While there are many wonderful ways to alert the community of your presence, a tried and true practice is often a good direct mail piece.

This week, we want to start formulating a list of addresses of folks within your community to which you can send your direct mail piece...and an invitation to your launch service. The first thing you can do is to sit down and formulate a list of family and friends in the area. However, in order to see a return, you need to broaden the scope of your list. Statistics suggest that you will get a 1-3% return on your mailing list. Meaning, if you send out a 10,000 piece mailer, you possibly get 100-300 people that might visit. Of course that varies from city to city, and also depends on the quality of your mail piece.

In order to broaden the impact of the piece, we suggest you purchase a mailing list targeting the people you want to reach. There are plenty of mail houses who can compile this list for you. Some are cheap, some are not. The greatest importance is the quality of the names and addresses on your list. Here are a few questions to ask your potential mail house:

What is your "bounce rate"?

In other words, if I send out 10,000 pieces of mail, how many pieces will I get back that say that the address or person does not exist? There is a portion of every list, no matter where you get it, that is not good data. The key is to pick a quality list that has a very low bounce rate.

When was your list last purged?

Any mail house worth its salt should be purging their old, bad data out of their list, on a regular basis. Getting the last date of purging will help to assure you are getting the most recent data.

Ask if you are renting the list or purchasing the list.

Often times, a mail house will only allow you to rent the list. Meaning, you send the mail piece to them, and they will send it to their list. They retain the names. Other times, you can purchase the list and own it in house. The nice thing about that option is that you can then send follow up mailings. Whichever you choose, remember

you would rather rent a quality list, than to own a garbage list.

On a similar note, do not forgot about email. There are lists of email addresses that you might be able to get from a local chamber of commerce, restaurant, civic body, gym, or other. Think outside the box concerning who in your city is already collecting email addresses, and see if you can get their list for your mailing.

Design 1st Service Direct Mailer

Truth: Not all mail pieces were created equal. Some pieces look inviting and make a compelling case for why to visit the launch service of a church plant. These pieces look professional and excellent. Other mail pieces look confusing and amateur and never make it past the "3-second-sort" from the mailbox to the garbage. As you work on your strategy this week to let the community know that you are there, this is a great time to get a vision for the type of quality that you want to have on your initial mailing piece.

Starting Principles to Consider

It Might Be Worth Outsourcing

For many in your community, this will be the first time they ever hear of your church. In other words, this mailing piece is your "first impression". There is nothing worse, when it comes to church marketing, than accepting a low-level-of-excellence piece as your means of communicating with the community. Often times, church pieces look outdated, confusing and sloppy. Most often, this is tied to the church having limited resources and trying to use someone in-house, who, while cheap, does not have the skills to produce a quality piece. The question you must answer is: What are you willing to pay for a good first impression? If you desire to communicate that your church is based in excellence and is a modern church, we suggest you look outside of your current team for designing this mail piece, and get a professional graphic artist.

Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

Many times church plants will spend resources on a mailing piece, having it created and printed by the 1000's, only to realize that there was a huge spelling error or the date for the event was wrong. Few things can steal the momentum of your team like a small, careless error on your mailing piece. Make it a habit of having 2 to 4 people proofread the piece. Check the spelling. Check the dates. Check the

website URLs. Check the numbers and email addresses. This time is invaluable in avoiding common grammatical mistakes.

Obey Copyright Laws

The Lord has called us to obey "every ordinance of man", and one of those areas is the area of copyright. All too commonly, churches and ministries will cut and paste pictures from the Internet and use them in their mail pieces. However, if you have not paid for a copy of that piece or do not have a written copyright agreement, you may be breaking the law from the first step you take as a church. Take the time to get your copyright laws in place.

Keep It Simple

One of the greatest mistakes church plants frequently make in the production of a mailing piece is trying to say too much on the piece. They want to mention their music, their pastor, their buildings, their vision, their small groups, their missions projects, their picnics, and on, and on, and on. However, from a mailing piece standpoint, if you try to say everything, you end up saying nothing. A good principle to follow is: Say less, to say more. Think about what is the one thing you want them to do when they get this mail piece in their hands, and then craft a piece that makes taking that step easy and obvious. Keep it simple...you will see greater results that way.

3 Keys to a Successful Mail Piece

Attractional - This piece is often the first thing these people receive from you. It needs to be upbeat and attractive. When they see the piece for the first time, what do you want them to think? To feel? It is important that it makes them think, "This is a place I want to be!"

Invitational - Do not forget the goal of this piece. Many unbelievers will receive this piece and might think that it is only for Christians. Make sure the piece sends the message to them: "This is for YOU!" It needs to say on it "YOU ARE INVITED..."

Incarnational - Since this is the first piece that many will receive from you, make sure you brand it with your "look and feel". Make sure your logo and vision are represented on the piece. You do not want to go overboard with it by showing a cross, a sword, a Bible, a dove, a lion, etc., etc. It just needs to show the type of culture you are and enable you to reach your demographic.

Do Not Forget

Map - An often overlooked piece for many churches' mailings is the lack of a map. The key is to make it as "easy and obvious" on how to get there as possible. Adding a map is a good way to go the extra mile and not make them use a GPS or alternate map to find your service.

Insert Your Nonprofit Mailing Indicia - As a nonprofit, you can take advantage of significant discounts on your bulk mailing. Remember to leave room in your mailing to add the mailing indicia. If you have not obtained a bulk mail permit yet, consider purchasing StartCHURCH's [Nonprofit Mailing](#) software to start saving money on these mailings.

Timing - A great question people ask about the mailer is, "How long before my first service should I mail my marketing piece?" That is a great question. This is more of an art than a science, but given that most people are planning their weekends 1-2 weeks out, a good rule of thumb is to have your mail piece arrive into their hands 3 weeks before your first service. This is far enough in advance that they probably do not already have plans which interfere, but not so early that the invitation loses urgency.

Also, remember that it is a good rule of thumb to only send the mailing to those within a 20 minute (or less) driving time radius from your church. Anything more than 20 minutes away is going to have a drastic decrease in effectiveness and cost efficiency. Give the printer about two week's time to print your items. This means you should be sending your mailing to the printer five to six weeks before your first service, so that it can be printed, mailed, and in the hands of your community three weeks before your service.

One thing to also consider in getting your piece printed is the time of year in which your church plant is taking place. Are you planting at Easter? Consider that your printer might already be overwhelmed with print requests from other churches. The time of year might slow down your mail from reaching the community within your desired time frame.

Pray! - Ask the Lord to get the right piece into the hands of the right people. There are so many stories of people who have prayed, "God, if You are real, send me a sign," and then the next day they went to the mailbox and got an invitation to a church! This is more than a mailing piece, it is a declaration that God is up to something in your city and that everyone now has a place to come hear about Jesus, and the things that God has put in your heart all those weeks and months ago are finally coming to pass!

Start Your For Profit Arm

When many church planters first read about the for profit arm, something goes off in their spirit. Their heart starts to beat fast when they think about having a church-owned business. Their vision is not just to survive on the tithes and offerings of the church, but to see the church financed through alternative funding measures, like a for profit arm.

What is a For Profit Arm?

Leading a ministry is a very challenging task. It is highly probable that the vision in your heart is greater than what the ministry's finances can provide. StartCHURCH has come to understand that part of the process of growing your ministry is the development of a business mindset to finance the gospel. If there is one area where most churches are weak, it is in keeping up with business responsibilities. Most church business plans consist of depending solely on tithes and offerings. The hope of most pastors and leaders rests in the possibility of adding new financially strong members who can boost weekly giving. Unfortunately, that rarely happens as hoped. **What if the church developed a plan to generate real income through legitimate for profit businesses owned by the church?** What if the church created a plan to save cash over a period of time and invested it into a real income producing business? What if the profits were enough to pay for excellent facilities for the church, which in turn produced income, too?

Ecclesiastical Entrepreneurism

When you survey churches across America, less than 3% of churches earn income outside of tithes, offerings and pledges. That is and continues to be the traditional method of income generation for churches and ministries, but the time has come to no longer depend on the traditional. **We advocate the concept of ecclesiastical entrepreneurism as a necessary component of church life and its impact on the community.** Just imagine what your ministry will look like if it has the ability to generate sizable amounts of income outside of tithes and offerings. That is an opportunity worth seizing. Life is too short to live satisfied with the traditional, especially when there are "new wineskins" for this time and season. To start and run a ministry owned business is to break out of the traditional methods used in times past and to begin carving a new way of doing church business. The days of churches

depending solely on giving are over.

Imagine the Possibilities

Here is a quick scenario! Pastor Tom loves to preach every Sunday using illustrations that involve a multimedia experience, whether music and video, PowerPoint, Bible verses on screen, or sermon notes being distributed. He is able to do that because his church uses the services of a video/multimedia company. Every week Pastor Tom gets the invoice for the services rendered by the multimedia company and the invoice is \$0.00. Why is it FREE? Well, that is because his church owns 100% of the issued shares of the business. Wow! Amazing! It is a real for profit business that the church owns. In addition, the business pays the church a quarterly dividend of around \$12,000.00. Those dividends are tax free to the church.

Steps to Starting Your For Profit Arm

- Search state records to check name availability, and then secure it so that no other organization can take it;
- Prepare ministry minutes to approve action;
- Create a stockholder agreement which limits the power of the for profit business board of directors and passes it to your ministry, which is the chief shareholder;
- Incorporate your organization according to state law and federal regulation so that you have a solid foundation on which to conduct your for profit business;
- Secure your Tax-ID number which is needed to open up a checking account to do business.
- Create your organizational board meeting minutes as required by state law. These initial board meeting minutes are necessary to establish and ratify your corporate paperwork;
- Create customized corporate bylaws to establish the roles and responsibilities of shareholders, directors, and officers.

This week we get started on our freedom from being trapped in waiting on tithes and offerings to fund your vision. The first step in that freedom journey is to begin setting up the for profit arm today.

How Can StartCHURCH Help You?

A driving force of the culture of *StartCHURCH* comes from our founder and president, who believes that our greatest honor comes from serving YOU. We have big dreams here! With a vision to see churches and ministries all across America grow and prosper in all that God has for them, we constantly strive to challenge and expand your thinking in order to help you fulfill the vision planted deep within you. Then, we provide you with the tools or services to make that a reality.

We will focus on listening to you and creating a strategy for the proper formation of a ministry owned business. We begin by drafting the proper documents for your ministry and the new business. Some of those documents include church/ministry minutes to approve action, the stockholder agreement between business and ministry, the incorporation, Tax ID Number, bylaws, and more. During the process as we do the work for you, you get a detailed book and resource on how to manage the ministry owned business. This guide teaches you everything you need to know about the ownership of the shares and how to issue them, how to use them to attract investors and to raise capital for the business, the seven considerations of a business plan, how to dream, and much more.

Most people that are called to start a For Profit Arm, no it when they hear about it. It goes off in their hearts. The For Profit Arm gives language to what they've known was possible. At StartCHURCH, it's been our privilege to start many For Profit Arms for entrepreneurial Pastors. We have an easy program where we can get your For Profit Arm up and running right away, with StartCHURCH doing all the work for you. For more information

[CLICK HERE](#) or call us at 770-638-3444.

Week Sixteen

Solidify the Building

Ask any would-be church planter what he predicts would be the greatest challenge to having his first service, and he will say things like - finding a worship team or getting visitors. Ask this same question to a church planter who has already launched, and without a doubt he will say: Finding a building!

Time and again, the hardest step to launching your service is finding the right location. Often you will find a building that is big enough for a service, but has really small children's rooms. Or, you will find a building that is perfect for a church, but is not zoned for one. Or it looks great, but has no parking. The search for the right building is important and often frustrating.

Because in week 10 we directed you to begin your search for a building (and to keep in mind the five recommended criteria to use in your considerations), you have hopefully already been alerted to possible locations. This week, we want to make huge strides in your search for your church building. Keep at it with patience, remembering that it is very rare to immediately find the right location. You might still have to look at dozens of buildings to find it, even though you may feel you have already looked at too many to count. But, know that God has a home for you; your job is to find it.

Below is a brief description of some guidelines to help you find the right space.

Building Guidelines: Things to Consider

Size and People Flow

The most common mistake church planters make, when it comes to the building, is getting a space too small. In our zeal to see this church come alive, we think we can have service anywhere. An important exercise is to ask yourself what the "people flow" would be like in the space you are considering. If your children's ministry is at the end of a long hallway, what is that hallway going to be like when you have parents dropping off and picking up kids? What about when people are trying to get out of their chair during service? How about the bathroom, will it have enough room for a mother to change her child? Is there space for ministry time at the altar? Think about a service happening, and picture people flowing in and out of the building in natural ways - how would that "feel" to a new visitor?

Next Generation Ministry

Often, the we find buildings that are large enough to hold a worship space, but offer no place for our children's ministry. Make sure each location has bright, clean, and spacious rooms in which the children would be able to run and play and learn about Jesus. Remember, a new family might love the worship and preaching at your church, but if they are not sure their children are safe, they will not come back. A great exercise here is to have some mothers view the prospective space before you sign a lease.

Parking

Stats vary between saying you need 1.7 and 2.5 people per space. Look at your parking potential...is there space? How about for the unusually large services like Christmas and Easter? With whom will you be "sharing" the space? Is it well lit? Is it well marked?

Sounds and Smells

Is there a crazy, loud air conditioner or a rock band rehearsal space next door? Does it smell like popcorn or any other food...or worse?

Easy to Find

Is it easy to find? If your directions include "turn off the paved road" or "go down the alley to the back of the building", that might not be very inviting to a new visitor.

Zoning

Often times the perfect space is simply not zoned for a church meeting. Now would be a good time to make acquaintances with your city zoning board. Get to know them. Ask what kind of experiences they have had in the past with churches. Ask what their concerns are. Ultimately you will need their approval to use the space, so make the relationship now - before you need it.

- A side note: If you are having trouble finding a space because of zoning, think about current spaces already used for large groups--places like movie theatres, high school gymnasiums, etc. The modern church planter thinks outside of the box.

Review the Terms of the Lease

Just because you are a church, does not mean that every building owner will treat you morally and fairly. Remember, for most building owners, this is business and they are looking out for themselves. Read each document very carefully. Do not sign anything until you fully understand each agreement.

Be Prepared to Retrofit

Most buildings will need to be retrofitted to make it work for a service. This is normal. Do not just see what is, see what could be in a space.

Cleaning and Decorating Party

Prepare to have "all hands on deck" cleaning and painting parties. This is a great time to let everyone take some ownership of the space.

- A side note: Have one decorator, and everyone else follows his/her lead. Do not underestimate how ugly the tension can be over decorating your space.

Insurance

Make sure that all of your insurance documents list your new address. Be sure to look at the "use" features of your insurance program to make sure it covers a church service!

Signage

Early in the process, ask what kind of signs can and cannot be used at that location.

Again, God has a space for you. Believe that He will lead you to the right location. Do not jump at the first one. Have faith that the right one is more important than just any one.

And finally, as was mentioned back in week 10, keep in mind the for profit arm possibilities when looking for your building this week, especially if you have been working on setting up your for profit arm, as was directed in week 15. Look at each building with an eye for how it can be used to bring in income. Perhaps it is as simple as purchasing more space than you currently need, and renting out some of the extra space to businesses. If your building can bring in

income, so that you are not solely depending on tithes and offerings, your church plant stands a far greater chance of accomplishing the purpose for which it is being established.

Additional Resources:

[Local Government and the Church: The Next Battleground](#)

[Five Things to Know Before Signing a Lease](#)

Site Planning

Once you have located and signed a lease on your new building space, you must take the time to look through every scenario for how to best use the building. Remember, the best idea is often not the obvious one. The important part here is asking out of the box questions with out of the box thinkers. Matt Keller, of Next Level Church in Fort Myers, Florida, says, *"Being a church plant forced us to realize we were creating something from nothing...the greatness of a church plant is found in the lack of pre-conceived ways of doing things."* As a church plant, every arena you step into is a blank canvas that allows you to dream outside of the box of what **IS** to develop what **COULD BE**.

When you are looking at your new space, the important thing to do is not to just see what is there, but to see what could be done there.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself and your team as you start to plan your church's use of your building:

If we did not have the space we were planning to use for children, what would we do with them?

If we had a service with twice as many people as we are expecting, what would we do with them?

Thinking through this will show you new opportunities your space can afford you that you have not seen yet. Rick Warren speaks of the power of "adding a zero". Think about your launch, and the number of children and adults, now add a zero to that number. What would you do to minister to all of those people? Thinking like that helps you to break out of the box.

How can we grow our worship space twice as large?

If we went to two services in this building, what would be our obstacles?

Usually, upon reaching 80% full in a space, the church will start looking for a new location. But, what about running a 2nd service in the same space? If you decide to do that, what would be the challenges you would face as one service ends and another begins?

Do we have enough power to run everything?

(Please test your circuits BEFORE your first service!) You do not want to learn during your first service that when all your lights and amps and such are on it blows the circuits!

What is the flow of the people going to be before and after service?

It is often surprising that church planting teams do not consider the pre and post people flow of their church. How easy is it to get the children checked into their rooms and then get back to the sanctuary to get a seat? How easy is it to get to the restroom?

Do you have enough signs?

Plan for a ton of signs...and then double your number.

You cannot have too many directional signs. The number one emotion people feel when they are attending a church for the first time is "fear", and the reason for this emotion is that often times *where to go* is not made easy and obvious. Having good, clear, bold, directional signs helps bring peace to your new visitor as he tries to navigate his way through your location. Think of your building full of people; are the signs easy to see?

Do you have storage?

There are huge amounts of consumables that will need storage during the life of a church. From communion elements and offering envelopes to baby wipes and cleaning supplies, you will need to have more storage space than you think you need. Begin to plan now for your storage issues.

Have you considered the fire code?

Every city in America has certain fire code and building code laws of which you need to be aware. Check to make sure that your people flow and attendance expectations can safely be done within the context of your local code system.

Have you owned the space?

Churches now meet in movie theatres, yoga facilities, high schools, and even bars. More and more, what the building is during the week is having less and less impact on how it is used by the church. However, an important point to this church planting process is owning the space. Meaning, brand the building with your look and feel. Cover other business signs with your church signs. Put your logo and look and feel everywhere. Make sure that when people walk into your church, they forget whatever else that space has been used for previously. From the moment you set foot into your building, make it yours.

Week Seventeen

Purchase Equipment

Most new churches launch their church more than plant it. The most critical difference in the two approaches is the size expectations at your first service. A church plant most often starts in a home, while a church launch most often starts in a larger space. If you are one that is launching your church, one thing you will immediately notice about the difference from someone who is planting their church is that yours requires much more equipment than theirs.

Often times, new churches today start with multi-media equipment, sound equipment, lighting, and more. During this week, we are going to start to work on an equipment plan for your church.

Step 1: Define Your Environments

Andy Stanley, pastor of the wildly successful North Point Community Church, talks about his church as a series of environments. The lobby and foyer are environments, the sanctuary is an environment, the children's ministry is an environment. The first thing we need to do, as we progress toward developing an equipment list, is to define all of our environments.

Step 2: What Kind of Equipment is Needed to Make Each Space Run?

For example, in the lobby, perhaps you need chairs, tables, couches, lamps, etc. In the sanctuary environment, will you want lighting? Sound? Projection? Canisters for offering envelopes? etc. Walk through each of your environments and begin to develop a list of the general equipment you might need.

Now, let us stop here and discuss the subject of excellence and quality again. We always want to lean toward the side of excellence. Better to do less with excellence than to try to do too much and lack it.

Step 3: Enlist the Help of Knowledgeable People

When it comes to developing sound systems and the like, unless you have some training in that area, ask for help from those that do. This is a great place for using your faith as a team, in prayer, asking God to provide the right people to help get your sound and lighting equipment right.

Step 4: Do Not Pay Retail

In the world of eBay and Craigslist, often you can find good quality used items at a fraction of the cost.

Additional Articles:

[Protecting Church Assets From Lawsuits](#)

Send Artwork to Printer and Mailhouse

By now, you should really be seeing your vision taking shape. Your CPT should be active in living and reflecting the vision and values of the church, and now it is time to invite the community to join you for the first service. This is where all the hard work on your invitational mailer is going to pay off.

This week, we are going to take two very important steps toward our marketing for that service.

1. Send Artwork to Printer

It is important that you use a professional printer to create your mail piece. Ensure that this printer can do four color process and that they can do glossy card stock as well. When talking to your printer, ask what turn around time you can expect, and then add a day or two to it. Give yourself some cushion so that you are not under a lot of pressure trying to get it out in time.

2. Send Printed Mailing to Mailhouse

Many a church planter has visions of saving money by hand stamping and addressing his mailing. With all due respect, unless you live in a very rural area, this is a terrible idea. Most places will have a mailing list, representing a 20 minute's driving radius from your church, which has 10,000 homes on it. For that reason, using a mailhouse makes the most sense. They have special software and computer tools that can label and stamp your mailing in a very short amount of time. This service should not cost a ton of money either.

Action Steps

This week, solidify which printer and mailhouse you will be using and then call and schedule your drop off times with them. This is a great week. Also, begin to pray that your mailers will get into the hands of the right people.

Week Eighteen

First Service Sermon

In what will feel like the blink of an eye, you will be standing in front of your new church on your Launch Sunday, preaching your first message to this new congregation. One thing many church plants do is wait too long before writing the sermon for their first service. Often what happens is that attention is given to every other detail, but then they "wing" the sermon.

We suggest something different.

This week, you are going to begin to develop a "First Sermon Folder". This folder is going to be your idea landing page for everything the Lord speaks to your heart over the next few weeks as we prepare for your launch service.

Steps to Follow:

1. Get a folder, and write "First Service Sermon" on it.
2. Take 30 minutes and do a "Mind Dump" on the topic the Lord has given you.

This is a great exercise. Take a piece of paper, and just start writing. Every verse, every story, every illustration, every song, idea, or poem. Just begin to write. Do not worry about the flow or the spelling, just put it all on paper. The important part here is to give yourself some space to begin to dream about what that sermon should be about.

*** We are assuming the Lord has already given you the topic. If you do not yet have that, please seek the Lord and proceed through this step once you have the topic ready.*

3. Carry that folder with you as much as possible and whenever you have an idea, write it in the folder.
4. Dedicate 10-15 minutes per day to look over your notes and to jot down new things the Lord is giving you.

The key part of this exercise is your growing your knowledgebase on the subject and growing in your sensitivity to what the Lord is speaking concerning this subject.

Additional Articles:

[Pastors Do Not Own Their Sermons](#)

[Can a Pastor be Guilty of Fraud for Selling His Own Sermons to a Publisher?](#)

[When Someone Sells Your Sermon](#)

Hire Babysitters

If your church is going to offer childcare at your launch service, one option may be to hire babysitters. Let me explain. Many times, a church planting team will end up having everyone (but the pastors) working with the children at their first service. The problem with that is that the pastors can only meet and greet so many people. The real need from the church planting team on Launch Sunday is to personally connect with as many people as possible. What that often can translate into is the need for outsourced babysitters for that first service. You can find these through professional nanny

organizations or the like. Make sure you do proper background checks and reference checks. But consider the high value of having your whole church planting team worshipping with you and greeting every new visitor on Launch Sunday.

Keys to making the babysitter plan work:

1. Go with the Pros

Call a local nanny agency and see what the cost would be to have a few professional nannies serve at your first service. Try never to go over a 5-to-1 ratio of children to teacher. Remember, on Launch Sunday, the goal for the children is not about a lot of ministry, as much as it is providing a safe, fun environment. The most important thing that weekend is to honor what God is doing and to connect with those God has sent.

2. Print Matching Shirts

If you are going to have people who are not on your launch team serving there that Sunday, make a team out of a group of strangers by giving them all the same shirt. Typically, it is pretty inexpensive to print shirts with your church's logo on them that your nannies can wear at that first service. Just be sure to think far enough in advance to allow plenty of time for the shirts to be created and delivered to you before the weekend of Launch Sunday.

Additional Articles:

[Three Myths About the 1099](#)

[The Latest on Churches Filing 1099-MISC](#)

Choose Worship Team

Worship is an integral part of any church. Gathering together to sing songs to the Lord not only sets an atmosphere for the presence of the Lord but also provides a sense of community as men and women of common faith sing aloud.

A great key to making this time in your service a success is the quality of your praise and worship team. Most churches will have very little, if any, financial resources for this aspect of their worship service. That means this will be a volunteer-driven team that will take some serious leadership to achieve quality.

This week we are going to begin to form a worship team.

Here are some principles to put in place as you develop your worship team.

Aim High - Ask the people with talent.

Cast Vision for Excellence - Never settle for less than excellence for the Lord.

Less is More - If you do not have a good drummer, do without it. If you do not have a band, do without. Use CD's. Prioritize quality over quantity. Choose a few musicians with talent rather than a bunch without it.

Get Their W-9's Now - If you plan on giving any money to your worship team over the next calendar year, then you should get a W-9 from each one of them in the very beginning.

Reminder:

Just remember that if you pay any musician over \$600 per year, they will need a 1099. To make producing that easy, we have created the [W-2 and 1099 Tax Kit](#).

Week Nineteen

Usher and Greeter Training

Time and time again, the first impression most visitors will have with your church comes from your ushers and/or greeters. These vital team members have the critical task of making new people feel at ease and welcomed as they visit your church.

Unfortunately, many greeters cannot greet and many ushers do not know how to ush! Developing excellence in these front-of-house positions helps break down the barriers that the visitor has when coming into church.

Keys:

1. Pick the right people. Almost anyone can work the parking lot or stack chairs, but you need a certain personality to be a good usher or greeter. Look around at your team; who is the most friendly person in the room? Who is the person that is always talking with everyone and making everyone feel at ease? That is what you are looking for in the usher and greeter team.
2. Train for exactly what you are looking for. When you say, "He is a good greeter/usher", that means something different to everyone. Your job as a leader is to make sure everyone is on the same page. Ushering and greeting is a great place to role-play. Let them see exactly how to create a welcoming experience for the new person.
3. Think about appearance and odors. - Mention the need for excellent, but not revealing, clothing and the need for breath mints.
4. Help the ushers and greeters to stand out. Whether it is through a name tag or a dress uniformity, help new people to easily identify who is there to help them get settled. Often times, we make the mistake of having the visitors put on a name tag, so THEY stick out. The better plan is to put the name tag on those who are already there, the ushers and greeters, so as not to embarrass the visitors and yet still have them know who is who.
5. Develop an usher and greeter schedule and position chart. Walk through your worship space; where do you need ushers and greeters? Draw a diagram of the worship space and assign a letter and number to each space where you want an usher and greeter. As an example, for the "Lead Usher Space", you might put "U1" at a certain point, so on and so forth.
6. Have pre-service prayer. The truth is, we do not always get to church in the best mood, and neither do our ushers and greeters. A great way to get everyone out of the "pre-service funk" is to spend a few minutes praying together.

Week Twenty

The Need

You as the church planter can set the tone for legal compliance within your church by publicly acknowledging copyright laws. There are a lot of myths and gray areas out there concerning different compliance issues with the church, but when it comes to copyright law, there is very little gray area.

When a church does not have express written permission from the owner of a song, and they still use and display it, they are breaking copyright laws. This is one of the most common areas of violation for churches. There have been all kinds of rationalizations about the subject, from "It's too hard to get permission" to "It's the Lord's music, so no one owns it."

The truth is, both are incorrect. As pastors and ministry leaders, we need to follow the Scriptures that say *"obey every ordinance of man"*, and follow all the copyright laws of our state and nation.

The key is to have a vision for compliance and then be willing to do the hard work of making that vision come to pass.

The good news is that in our generation, there are many companies that can help make the process of copyright compliance easy. Companies like [CCLI](#) can help you establish the legal right to use and perform the songs we all love on Sunday.

This Week's Work:

1. Contact a few copyright providers, and see which one fits your style and budget.
2. Download their lyrics and songs for your first service.
3. Commit to listing the license agreement verbatim on your powerpoint slides and/or in your bulletin.

First Service Band Plan

One lesson every church planter will learn very quickly is that getting a group of creative people to flow together as a team is more of an art than a science. Different personalities and visions can quickly clash and the worship experience for all can suffer. However, putting into place a few key principles can help your team make the leap from a group of musicians to a worship team.

1. Designate a leader.

Someone once said, "Anything with two heads is a freak!" While all the voices on the team are important, someone at some point is going to have to decide the song list. It is important that there is someone on the team who is the decision maker. Now, be careful with this choice. Often we want to put the person who is "up front" on Sunday as the leader, but many times, while they possess performance skills, often times they lack the skills needed to lead the team off the stage. When it comes to your team, ask yourself, "Who has the leadership qualities to lead this team?"

2. Give the practice time and dates ahead of time.

A key way to help your creative types get things done as a team is to give them dates and times ahead of time, and then give them reminders.

3. Pray against division.

Commonly, the enemy brings division in the worship team through either pride or strife. Pride is easy to see...if on Sunday, the eyes are drawn to someone other than Jesus, you might need to address something. However, strife is less obvious, yet more insidious. Have you ever been to a church where a worship team was singing and playing, but you just "felt something was off"? Often times that worship team has sin and strife that can be felt beyond their musicianship skills.

Rehearsal Space

Transforming your praise and worship team from a group of individuals into a unified team happens during the times they spend worshipping and practicing together. These will often be done on week nights, after work, when the team can practice the set that they plan on doing that weekend. To get the most out of your team, you need a space in which to practice. This will need to be a place where your worship team will be able to gather and grow as a worship team.

This will most likely cost something, but it is important to invest into what is valuable. Many people will make a decision about your church, and whether they will come back or not, before they have even heard your sermon. Investing into the right worship space will help you get the most excellence out of your team.

Keys to Making Rehearsal Productive

1. Rent a space by the hour.

In today's world, you do not need to own your own church building to grow. Many, many churches will grow while never owning their own space.

2. Practice instrumentally "stripped down", but if you use drums, have drums.

Many churches wear out their praise and worship team by taking too much time setting up too much equipment when they rehearse. Think about what a "stripped down" set might look like. However, if you plan to use drums on Sunday, practice with the drums at rehearsal, as they are a critical element to the success of your worship.

3. Go cheap - think outside the box.

It never ceases to amaze how resourceful church planters are. Give church planters little money and ask them to have a great practice session, and most will come up with something amazing. The key to securing a worship practice space is to think outside the box. Think about places like music stores, other churches during off hours, children's rooms at the gym, hotel ballrooms, someone's garage, etc.

4. Be prepared!

Have the list put together at least a week ahead of time so that they can practice on their own before they even see each other. This will help lead to a culture of preparedness. No one on the worship team should be hearing the songs for the first time during the group practice. Give them the list and a sample CD at least 1 week before rehearsal.

[Click Here](#) for a sample Band Schedule Form.

5. Open in prayer.

Remember, this is about Jesus. Often, when you get a bunch of singers and musicians together, they can jump right into their talents. But, it is important to teach your team that it is more important to PRAY together than to PRACTICE together. They need to have agreement in the Spirit, not just in the music sheet. We suggest that the pastor attend the first part of the first practice and pray over the team. Give them a vision for being holy vessels who are overflowing in worship during the week, instead of trying to stir

up worship on Sundays.

Select First Service Songs

By now, you have a clear picture of your first service. You have "painted the sunset" and have equipped your team for what that first service will look like. Now it is time to decide what that service will feel like, and that is most profoundly determined by what your congregation experiences in the worship.

Many, many books have been written on the subject of worship, so there is no need to go over that here. But, there are a few principles to consider when picking the first songs for your worship service.

1. How long will your praise and worship time be?

Different cultures have different expectations for what a good worship service is. For some, 3 songs feels like it took forever, while for others, they are just getting warmed up on the fifth song! Think about your audience; what would communicate to them? Also, think about the unbelievers in your midst. How long will they be willing to stand up?

2. What tone do you want to send?

Think about that service. What do you want people to feel? Is coming before the Lord a joyous thing or a somber thing? The tone of a church is often felt mostly through its worship. Therefore, craft a series of songs that helps people experience the Lord in a way that most reflects the church's view on God. Worship is a sermon that is sung. It tells everyone listening what you believe about God.

3. What is the skill level of your team?

We live in a day when praise and worship music has gone to another level. Many times the musicianship of the church can rival secular musicians. Be it Fred Hammond, Kirk Franklin or Steve Curtis Chapman, the level of skill that it takes to create today's modern worship is on par with the world. However, this creates an issue for most church plants when they try to reproduce Kirk's songs with their small team. A key skill to crafting an excellent worship experience for your church is your ability to discern what the real talent level of your team is. Overvaluing their talent can be disastrous for both you and the team. Find out what skills you do have, and play to your strengths.

Take some time this week to write down the vision of what you want that service to feel like and then think about the message that will be preached at that opening service, and begin to make a list of songs that speak to that tone and topic. Then, ask the Lord to help you select the right songs for that day.

Tips For Having a Great Worship Experience

Have a back-up plan. If that team cannot nail a song pretty quickly at rehearsal, ditch it and go to a plan B song.

Once you have got your CCLI in place, you can create CD's of the songs you are going to perform on Sunday, for each of your team members, and not be breaking the law.

Cast vision that "less is more." Doing less songs, that your team can perform well and to which they can remember all of the words, is a much better experience than doing a bunch of songs that they keep getting wrong.

Launch Service!

Launch!

It is here! The day you have prayed about, worked toward, and celebrated is here! We want to encourage you to walk with confidence today knowing that God is with you and for you. The dream that He put in your heart is going to be sowed like a seed today. No matter what happens, rejoice in the fact that yours is a life given to God and that the kingdom of God is expanding through your local church.

Successful Launch Day Principles

Count stories, not people! Many a church planter has forfeited the joy of their Launch Sunday by allowing a false expectation of incredible numbers to steal the miracle that is right before them. No matter how many people walk through the door, know that each one of them represents a story of God's redemption plan for human lives, and your church is now woven into that plan.

Trust your plan. Do not second-guess yourself in heading to your service. Resist the urge to pick apart your logo, your team, your sanctuary, or anything else. Trust the plan you have worked out to get to this point.

Eat a good breakfast! You will most likely be meeting and greeting people before and after service. You are going to need every ounce of energy you can receive. Take the time to put some "fuel in the tank" before taking on the day. Remember, "church planters do not live by coffee alone!"

Thoughts Regarding After Service:

The truth is, your journey does not end when you say, "Amen!" and dismiss everyone. There will be things to do that you have perhaps not considered. Below is a quick list of things to think through to make this day more memorable for all involved.

1. Plan to celebrate "after" the first service. Most church planters have a plan right up to the point where they close the service. A wise church planter will look at the moments right after the service and have a plan to maximize this time. Perhaps give a note or a gift to each one of your CPT. Perhaps a call or a cake for your team. Either way, let them see the joy in your eyes! Let them know that you think you won! CELEBRATE!
2. Consider having friends or family watch your children after your first service. You are going to be exhausted! After the emotional toll of launching, and when the adrenaline dies down, you are going to be tired.
3. As simple as this sounds, it is important to pre-cook a dinner so you can chill at the house after service.
4. Journal every little detail after the service...drink in and savor the moment. Consider hiring a photographer, or at least designating one in the church to capture the moments of the service.

Post Launch

Follow Up

As ironic as this sounds, now the hard work begins! Starting a church and keeping a church going are two different things. This last week, the Lord put people into your life for the first time. These are people the Lord wants you to value and love and show the Kingdom.

A very common mistake for church planters is to plan only up to the first service but then have no plan for after that first service. Below are a few steps to help you connect with those who visited your church.

Action Steps

1. First Time Visitor Email (Adult)

In today's computer-based world, we can connect with people much faster than ever before. We suggest you send a "Thank you for visiting!" email to your new visitors within 24-hours of their visit. This will help them keep you in mind and will reflect your gratitude for their attendance.

2. First Time Visitor Letter (Adult)

Plan to have a "Thank You!" card in the hands of your first time visitors within 72-hours of your first service. Thank them for being there, and equally important is to invite them back! Let them know that your church is a place to believe AND belong. Let them know that you want them there and that you are hoping they will come back. This one little step can make a world of difference.

3. Plan a Second Mailing

There will be many people that have your first mailing attached to their refrigerator via a magnet but missed your first service. Within 2 weeks of your first service, plan to send a second mailing to your same mailing list. This will help to reinvite people that did not come the first time, and will remind them that they are welcomed at your church!

You Did It!

You did it! You pursued the dream God put in your heart and saw it come to pass. No matter if there was 10, 1,000 or 10,000, know that God is proud of you! He loves when His children step out in faith to follow what they believe is the Lord.

Church planting is not easy. If you got to this step, you have set yourself apart from the pack of people merely talking about starting a church, but never taking the leap of faith. You pulled up anchor and set sail toward God's vision in your heart. The truth is, you will never be the same! There is nothing like being on an adventure with God!

The journey is just beginning. Launching a public service is just the tip of the iceberg. Turning this group of strangers into the family of God is going to take the power of God, and a lot of hard work. There will be days you will want to quit and to leave it all behind. But remember today, this moment. As you stand basking in the glow of having launched your church, remember what having childlike faith really is. Remember the last 20 plus weeks of setting your heart on pursuing the dream. Remember the Lord's protection and provision through this season. Remember that this is His church, and that He is taking you along for the ride.

From us here at [StartCHURCH](#), we hope that this resource helped you, empowered you, and encouraged you to launch a church that has as strong a foundation as possible. We are so humbled to be able to do what we do.

If we can help you as you move into the next phase of your ministry, please feel free to call us at 770-638-3444.

Blessings,

StartCHURCH