



*How do you start
a new church?*

*What strategies
are there for this?*

Strategies for Starting New Churches

The strategies for starting new churches are many and varied.

Across the United Methodist Conferences the New Church strategies/models used are as varied as the spirit leads and imagination will allow.

Any of these strategies can result in a new church that will be

- committed to growth and risk taking mission and ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.
- committed to giving birth to a daughter new congregation.

NEW CHURCH STRATEGIES:

- The Birthing or Parent Church
- The Connectional New Church Start (Parachute Drop)
- The Two-point / Three-point Charge
- The Mission Strategy

NEW FAITH COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

- The Extension Campus or Second Campus
- Partnership
- Satellite
- Enlarge
- Multi Cultural
- Resurrection
- New Venture
- Digital
- Third Place
- Relocation
- The Satellite
- The Partnership
- The Cell or House Church
- The Merger
- The Restart or Lazarus

APPLICATION TO START A NEW CHURCH

APPLICATION TO START A NEW MISSION CHURCH



*Churches growing new churches..
who grow new churches...*

THE BIRTHING STRATEGY

PARENTING LAUNCH OF A SINGLE-SITE (Birthing / Mother/Daughter) STRATEGY

This strategy involves an existing healthy, growing, strong church “giving birth” to a new congregation. Recent experience across the nation is proving that this model is very effective in establishing strong, vibrant new congregations.

A new church pastor is appointed to a parent church with the clear intention of beginning a new congregation between the sixth and fifteen month mark. It is important that this intention is communicated clearly from the beginning.

- Parent church gives people, money and it’s DNA to the new church
- Parent church nurtures and supports the birthing pastor
- a Launch Team of the parent church members are ‘birthed’ to the new church
- Birth occurs after a six to fifteen month ‘gestation’ period
- The Parent Church is most successful if it has a heart for making new disciples, a heart for the unchurched in their community, is a tithing church, and active in missions beyond their local community
- Senior Pastor needs to have the trust of the congregation
- Senior Pastor should continue at the mother church for at least a year or two after the birth to strengthen the parent, and to ensure positive support continues for the daughter church in its early tender years.
- The new church pastor must have respect for the Senior Pastor.

Advantages:

- Very cost effective
- Before tremendous finances have been invested in rent, equipment, new land and construction, it will be quickly evident if the right new pastor has been appointed, and the right Launch Team has been formed.
- Able to launch with a Launch Team that has been together for months within the mother church
- Parent church helps the new church gain credibility, respectability, and trust from the community at large
- Parental support and encouragement
- The new church pastor is not isolated
- Brings excitement and new life to the parent church
- Energizes the parent to a renewed emphasis in evangelism within the parent church

Disadvantages:

- Parent loses a group of people at birth time
- Somewhat of a financial drain as the people leave, taking a year for the parent church to recover
- Jealousy could develop through the years as the child grows larger than the parent

SEE TIME LINE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

TIME LINE***Preparatory Year:***

The Senior Pastor and lay leadership carefully consider this model.

The Conference Minister of New Church Starts meets with the Senior Pastor of the prospective “parent church.”

The District Superintendent and Conference Minister of New Church Starts meet with the key leadership of the potential “parent church.”

The District Superintendent obtains approvals to continue from the Bishop, Cabinet, and the District Board of Church Location and Building.

The birthing model comes before the local church Staff Parish Relations, Finance, and Church Council.

The “parent church” begins the research and study to complete the “Application for Launching a New UMC.”

Charge/church conference makes a decision.

The “parent church” completes the “Application for Launching a New United Methodist Church” and gives a copy to the District Superintendent and the Conference Minister for New Church Starts.

A financial commitment toward salary support is made by the Parent Church.

The District Superintendent and the Conference Minister for New Church Starts make their formal recommendation to the Bishop and Cabinet for their decision.

A financial commitment toward salary support is made by the Cabinet and other Conference Agencies. The financial commitment will vary depending on the financial resources of the “parent church” and the district.

In an open letter to the congregation, the Senior Pastor shares the decision of the SPR and Council, and invites those who have a

‘missionary heart’ to be part of this new congregation to contact the Senior Pastor. This is the beginning of a Launch team for the new church.

The amount and sources of funding for new churches will be different for each new church depending on several factors including: 1) financial ability of the Parent church; 2) the compensation package for the pastor and the cost of housing; and, 3) the local cost of renting initial worship space. In some cases the Parent Church will decide to cover all the financial needs without any Conference funds used at all. In some cases the District will have adequate resources to cover all the financial needs. Some new church starts will be financial self-supporting in twenty-four months because of the generosity of the new members, while others will need support for the full three or four years. In most cases the financial resources will be shared - perhaps the Parent church provides a housing allowance, the District provides Health Insurance, and the Conference provides salary and start up funds.

A mission new church (§260) typically requires less initial financial support because it often begins with part-time pastoral leadership. However long-term financial support is normally required for a mission congregation because of sparse population or lower economic means of the congregation.

The appointment of a “New Church Pastor” (not “associate pastor”) is made to the Parent Church at the Annual Conference Session.

PROPOSED TYPICAL “Mother-Daughter” TIME LINE

by Tammy Garrison

The time line from appointment to launch of weekly worship may vary from 6 to 16 months based on the natural affinity the New Church pastor has in the community, and how soon a healthy Launch Team can be gathered, and there is confidence that a “critical mass” of people will attend the launch of weekly worship. Typically, launch worship would be in month six, or possibly as late as month fifteen. Jim Griffith has found that starting public worship too soon to be a factor in almost all church plants that fail.

6 month model from appointment to launch of a mother-daughter model.

In the time from receiving the appointment until moving day:

- Begin working on vision, mission, and core values.
- Begin assessing demographics
- Set public launch date

Month one:

- Begin networking in community through Rotary, Fire & Police Dept. City Council, etc.
- Network through mother church, preaching and teaching Sunday school classes.
- Begin informational meetings about new church. Follow up with those who attend.

Month two:

- Continue networking.
- Continue to preach and teach in the mother church.
- Seek other opportunities to speak in the community
- In consultation with mother church pastor, seek members from the mother church to become a part of the launch team.
- Begin meeting with launch team members weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Use this time for Bible study and vision casting.
- Put musicians in place.
- Begin search for place to meet for weekly worship.
- Plan elbow/outreach events for the community. These are determined by the mission field. They include such things as concerts, carnivals, special worship experiences, and other events that are important to the mission field. Encourage the launch team to bring friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to these events.

Month three:

- Continue networking.
- Continue seeking opportunities to speak to various community groups/churches about the new church.
- Continue launch team meetings/Bible study.
- Begin small groups/discipleship system.
- Begin visiting other new churches with launch team.
- Hold first preview service. This may or may not be in the place you will be meeting at weekly. Launch team sign up for places of service - set up, break down, hospitality, etc.
- Hold first elbow/outreach event. Launch team invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events.

Month four:

- Continue networking.
- Continue seeking opportunities to speak to various community groups/churches about the new church.
- Continue launch team meetings/Bible study.
- Visit other new churches with launch team.
- Hold second preview service. This may or may not be in the place you will be meeting at weekly.
- Hold second elbow/outreach event. Launch team continue to invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events.

Month five:

- Continue networking.
- Continue seeking opportunities to speak to various community groups/churches about

the new church.

- Continue launch team meetings/Bible study.
- Visit other new churches with launch team.
- Hold third preview service. This may or may not be in the place you will be meeting at weekly. In a six-month launch that begins July 1, this preview service/elbow event may be Christmas Candlelight Services.
- Hold third elbow/outreach event. Launch team continue to invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events.
- At the end of this month, move to exhibition services. Preview services are held at other times than the time planned for weekly services. Exhibition services are weekly service 4 to 6 weeks prior to launch at the time weekly services will be held.
- If doing mass mailing/advertising, do so at this time.

Month six:

- Continue networking.
- Hold fourth elbow/outreach event.
- Continue to hold exhibition services. Launch team continue to invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events.
- LAUNCH every Sunday worship! If the appointment begins July 1, the launch date for worship will be in January.

Post-launch:

- Continue networking.
- Continue to hold elbow/outreach events at regular intervals.
- Make sure discipleship system is in place.
- Continue to follow up with worship guests.



In settings where for a variety of reasons, the launch team is harder to gather, a 15 month model would typically look like this:

In the time from receiving the appointment until moving day:

- Begin working on vision, mission, and core values.
- Begin assessing demographics.
- Set public launch date.

Month one:

- Begin networking in community through Rotary, Fire & Police Dept. City Council, public school, etc.
- Network through mother church, preaching

and teaching Sunday school classes.

- Begin informational meetings about new church. Follow up with those who attend.

Month two:

- Continue networking.
- Continue to preach and teach in the mother church.
- Seek other opportunities to speak in the community.
- In consultation with mother church pastor, seek members from the mother church to become a part of the launch team.
- Begin meeting with launch team members weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Use this time for Bible study and vision casting.
- Begin search for musicians.
- Begin search for place to meet for weekly worship.
- Plan elbow/outreach events for the community. These are determined by the mission field. They include such things as concerts, carnivals, Vacation Bible School, special worship experiences, and other events that are important to the mission field. Encourage the launch team to bring friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to these events.

Month three to fourteen:

- **Repeat this monthly pattern until there is evidence that the Launch Team is large enough to insure that critical mass will be present at the Launch of weekly worship.**
- Continue networking.
- Continue to preach and teach in the mother church.
- Continue seeking opportunities to speak to various community groups/churches about the new church.
- Continue launch team meetings/Bible study. This may now shift to reading a book together about planting a new church. There are several that are good. "Ten Common Mistakes New Churches Make" by Jim Griffith is a good example.
- Begin visiting other new churches with launch team.
- In month two, begin organizing teams to hold the "elbow events".
- In month three, hold first elbow/outreach event. Launch team invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events. Repeat similar "elbow event" every month.
- In month four, form ministry teams for next month's preview worship experience (set-up, break down, hospitality, child care, music, tear-down, etc.).
- In month five, hold first preview service. This may or may not be in the place you will be

meeting at weekly. In an appointment that begins July 1, this may be a Christmas Candlelight Service. Mass mailing may be appropriate at this time.

- In month six, begin monthly prayer walks through the mission field to help your team begin to pray for those with no church home.
- In month nine, hold second preview service. In an appointment that begins July 1, this may be an Easter or sunrise service. Mass mailing may be appropriate at this time.
- In months ten, begin monthly preview services. These are not typically at the time designated as your weekly worship time.
- In month fourteen, begin holding weekly exhibition services. These are typically at the time your weekly services will be held. Exhibition services are typically 4 - 6 weeks prior to launch Sunday. Mass mailing/advertising is appropriate at this time.
- Through the above, develop list of contacts and make as many face-to-face appointments as possible in homes, over a cup of coffee, or over dinner. Tell your story and share the vision for the new church. Invite the people you meet to help with future elbow/outreach events.

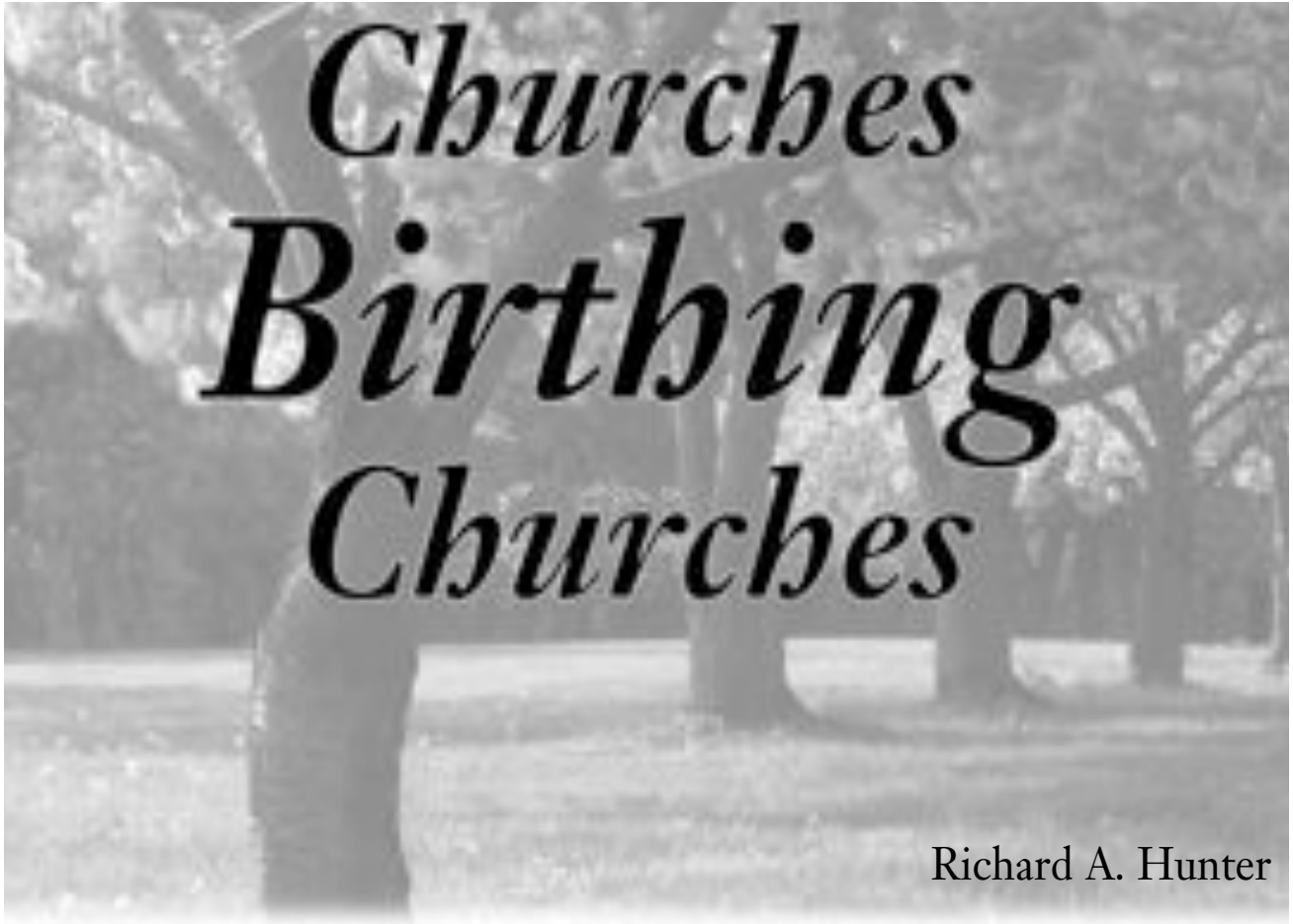
Month fifteen:

- Continue networking.
- Hold thirteenth elbow/outreach event.
- Continue to hold exhibition services. Launch team continue to invite friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to services and elbow events.
- LAUNCH weekly Sunday worship! If the appointment begins July 1, the launch date will be in September or October.

Post-launch:

- Continue networking.
- Continue to hold elbow/outreach events at regular intervals.
- Make sure discipleship system is in place.
- Continue to follow up with worship guests.





Churches Birthing Churches

Richard A. Hunter

In August 1999, Hillside United Methodist Church had come to a critical juncture. Located in the rapidly expanding suburbs northwest of Atlanta, we had outgrown even our newly expanded facility. A vision committee debated building another large building or relocation; but there was little joy or consensus of purpose with these proposals. There was, instead, a sense that the Lord wanted us to do something unique and “out of the box.”

After considering the possibilities of sponsoring an existing church or working with our district to start a new church, the chair of our visioning team boldly pronounced, “We need to start a church right out of Hillside!” The whole meeting turned on a dime and a new vision emerged. We would maintain a strong, growing mother church that sends out a large core of members every two years to start new churches.

“No Fear” became our motto as the congregation unanimously approved this new vision. Instead of focusing on our land and space limitations, fear of the unknown, and resistance to change, we embraced a dynamic and visionary sense of God’s call. We saw

this plan as a creative and faithful way to fulfill our purpose of making disciples without having to relocate or face zoning battles to build on our crowded site. We also saw it as a way to promote new church development in our denomination and practice cooperation in starting churches.

Since then, Hillside UMC has come to see birthing churches as her primary identity and mission. In September 2002, Liberty Hill UMC was born and in August 2006, we launched a second daughter, City on a Hill UMC. The church has set an ambitious goal of birthing five churches in ten years and twelve by 2020. And, we see this church becoming a teaching church for the

The daughter churches derive their own values and vision from the core values of Hillside; however, they are encouraged and expected to be unique places of ministry with their own individual visions and footprints in the community.

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7

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• for pastors starting new churches • for churches starting new churches • for resourcing our newest churches •

model of birthing churches from within existing, healthy churches.

Shared DNA

From the beginning of this process, Hillside determined to birth daughter churches that are not clones, but churches that reflect our DNA. The purpose and mission of our daughter churches will be compatible and complementary with Hillside's purpose and mission. The daughter churches derive their own values and vision from the core values of Hillside; however, they are encouraged and expected to be unique places of ministry with their own individual visions and footprints in the community. As a symbolic reminder of shared identity, each church that Hillside births will have "hill" in its name.

Selecting and Coaching a Founding Pastor

The key bridge between the mother and daughter church is a "founding pastor" who is selected to lead the new congregation and prepares by serving first as part of the staff team in the mother church. While serving here, the mission pastor gains experience in leading a dynamic, healthy congregation and gains credibility in the mother church. Our bishop supported this arrangement, and we outlined an agreement whereby the senior pastor of the mother church would interview and recommend a founding pastor and then supervise and coach this person through the stage of chartering the new church. From launch to chartering, the daughter church is still a ministry of the mother church, similar to a Sunday school class meeting off-site. Once the daughter grows to maturity and is self-sustaining, the mission church is chartered as a new appointment and charge in the UMC.

Sending Missionaries

Most senior pastors would not be excited to see more than one hundred

people walk out the door to start another church. Yet this is exactly how Liberty Hill was born. We empowered our new mission pastor to "fish" within the congregation—to share the vision of the daughter church and recruit laypersons to go as missionaries to start the new congregation. This missionary group included 7 of our top 10 giving

The vision of birthing churches requires 100 per cent commitment from the senior pastor of the mother church. In our structure, the bishop, district superintendent, and office of congregational development must be proponents of the model. And in the congregation, staff and members must be willing to let people go and send them forth with their blessings, prayers, and best wishes. The size of the church is not the issue, it is the vision. Small, medium, and large-sized churches can birth new churches.

households and 31 of our top 100 giving households. Yet by God's grace, the year leading up to the charter of the daughter church was our best financial year ever. Following the charter, we had a net gain of 27 members, even after transferring 141 adults and youth to Liberty Hill.

A Different Approach to Congregational Development

Most new churches are started as "parachute drops." A denomination or sponsoring church sends a mission pastor into a community where there is population growth or a large unchurched population. Then, the pastor is expected to find a core group, locate a meeting space, assemble resources, and build credibility in an area where he or she is an outsider. This model has some success stories, but often the mission pastor is overwhelmed and alone. And the tragedy is that many church starts fail in the first ten years.

On the other hand, virtually all mission churches succeed when the church planter is nurtured by a strong parent church.

The model of birthing new churches from healthy, visionary mother churches has a number of advantages. It builds on the wisdom of experienced pastors. It capitalizes on the mother church's reputation. It allows the new church to begin with a strong core of committed laity. It supports the daughter church with financial, staff, and program resources, as well as a legacy of healthy operating systems.

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Not every church is called to the birthing process. God can multiply the kingdom through you and your church in many ways. But my experience has convinced me that churches birthing churches is an effective, biblically grounded way of reaching people we are not currently reaching.

Lessons Learned

We learned some important lessons in this first birth that influenced the way we birthed the second church.

First, staffing has to be fluid and team oriented. We thought we would need a youth pastor from the beginning and hired a part-time person. Thankfully, he was multitalented and able to switch his role to children's ministry and administrative duties when we realized that few families with older children and teens were willing to come to the new church and build a youth program.

Instead, we attracted primarily young couples who wanted to build a children's ministry, young singles who were attracted to a cutting-edge church, and empty nesters excited about serving in a new church.

Second, supervision of the founding pastor by the mother church's senior pastor had to change and be very intentional. Once the launch occurred, the founding pastor easily fell out of the loop back at the mother church. Communications, encouragement, and supervision were more challenging. So, we covenanted to meet monthly for "checkups."

Third, space needs were even larger than we imagined. The mother and daughter churches need to work from the point of conception (pulling the vision and core group together) on funding and choosing meeting sites. Liberty Hill outgrew their 180-seat auditorium at a local theatre in six months, even with having two services! Their attendance slowed until they moved to the local high

school. Then, their attendance increased to over 500 in the next six months!

City on a Hill UMC launched August 13, 2006, meeting in an elementary school about six miles from Hillside. They have forty-five people from the mother church plus children in their core group. We anticipate about 150–200 worshippers for weekly services in the first three months. A key part of the vision at daughter church no. 2 is that every member of the core and everyone who desires to join the new church must attend a small group and take the course, "A Follower's Life," taught by leaders in the core group.

In June 2006, Bishop Lindsey Davis assigned me to a new appointment, the Snellville UMC, which is located east of Atlanta in a growing suburban area. This church of 4,300 members is a regional church that could also birth numerous daughter churches in our area. So, now I am praying with the lay leadership for the Lord's discernment and guidance. I am convinced that this model will work here and possibly in your church as well. I would welcome your questions and am

available to resource you in leading your church into the birthing model. I pray that The United Methodist Church decides to birth many daughters through our existing churches in response to the Great Commission! □

Richard A. Hunter is the Senior Pastor of Snellville UMC, a 4,300-member church in Atlanta, Georgia. For information on this model of birthing churches, contact Dr.



Hunter at rhunter@snellvilleumc.org.

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Visual Media Can Transform Your Worship

Design Matters: Creating Powerful Imagery for Worship, by Jason Moore and Len Wilson. Many churches use visual technology in worship. Yet simply adding a screen and projector doesn't automatically translate into growth and revitalization. This book helps worship-screen producers learn to "speak" a visual language. These time-tested design principles provide a basic framework for developing a visual literacy. The accompanying DVD includes graphic tutorials for creating art in Adobe® Photoshop®/Elements, time-saving techniques for achieving special effects, and a list of helpful websites. UZ6-068749446X. Book with DVD, \$22.00

Awesome Altars: How to Transform Worship Space, by Mary Dark and Judy Pace Christie. This illustrated tool kit—a book and how-to DVD—explains new ways to use altar design to help people worship God. This inspirational package with photo examples shows how innovative altars can speak to the seeker and believer alike. UZ6-0687331811. Book with DVD, \$35.00



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Churches Birthing Churches by Richard A. Hunter

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After considering the possibilities of sponsoring an existing church or working with our district to start a new church, the chair of our visioning team boldly pronounced, “We need to start a church right out of Hillside!” The whole meeting turned on a dime and a new vision emerged. We would maintain a strong, growing mother church that sends out a large core of members every two years to start new churches.

The biblical mantra “No Fear” became our motto as the congregation unanimously approved this new vision. Instead of focusing on our land and space limitations, fear of the unknown, and resistance to change, we embraced a dynamic and visionary sense of God’s call. We saw this plan as a creative and faithful way to fulfill our purpose of making disciples without having to relocate or face zoning battles to build on our crowded site. We also saw it as a way to promote church development in our denomination and practice cooperation in starting churches.

Since then, Hillside UMC has come to see birthing churches as our primary identity and mission. In 2002, Liberty Hill UMC was born and the launch of a second daughter, City on a Hill UMC, is planned for August 2006. We have set an ambitious goal of birthing five churches in ten years and twelve in twenty-five years. And we see ourselves becoming a teaching church for the model of birthing churches from within existing, healthy churches.

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Most new churches are started as “parachute drops.” A denomination or sponsoring church sends a mission pastor into a community where there is population growth or a large unchurched population. Then, the pastor is expected to find a core group, locate a meeting space, assemble resources, and build credibility in an area where he or she is an outsider. This model has some success stories; but often the mission pastor is overwhelmed and alone. And the tragedy is that many church starts fail in the first ten years.

On the other hand, virtually all mission churches succeed when the church planter is nurtured by a strong parent church. The model of birthing new churches from healthy, visionary mother churches has a number of advantages. It builds on the wisdom of experienced pastors. It capitalizes on the mother church’s reputation. It allows the new church to begin with a strong core of committed laity. It supports the daughter church with financial, staff, and programmatic resources, as well as a legacy of healthy operating systems.

The vision of birthing churches requires 100% commitment from the senior pastor of the mother church. In my denominational structure, the bishop, district superintendent, and office of congregational development must be proponents of the system. And in the congregation, staff and members must be willing to let people go and send them forth with their blessings, prayers, and best wishes. The size of the church is not the issue, it is the vision. Small, medium, and large-sized churches can birth new churches.

Not every church is called to the birthing process. God can multiply the kingdom through you and your church in many ways. But my experience has convinced me that churches birthing churches is an effective, biblically grounded way of reaching people we are not currently reaching.

Dr. Richard Hunter is senior pastor of Hillside United Methodist Church in Woodstock, Georgia, a 2,700 member church located north of Atlanta. For information on their model of birthing churches, contact Dr. Hunter at rhunter@hillsideumc.org.

http://www.churchleadership.com/leadingideas/leaddocs/2005/051123_article.html



*Churches growing new churches..
who grow new churches...*

THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH START (PARACHUTE DROP)

THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH START (PARACHUTE DROP)

The pastor is appointed to an area where no one knows the pastor and the pastor knows no one.

The pastor begins by integrating into the community

- learning its culture and customs
- making friends
- making contacts through visits to City Hall, Police, Fire, Civic Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, Realtors, Bankers
- gaining growing respect and trust of community leaders
- having introductory get-togethers
- developing a Launch Team

Advantages:

A new church can move into an area where the United Methodist Church has no current presence.

Disadvantages:

It is very expensive for the Annual Conference, because by definition there is no 'Mother Church' providing financial support.

The pastor feels isolated.

The failure rate is typically quoted as being "extremely high - 85%." That percentage applies to independent or non-denominational parachute drops, where the pastor is truly alone, without a financial support network. When a non-denominational pastor decides to move to a new town to start a new church, knowing no one in town, and providing all the financial resources out of the pastor's own pocket - in 85% of these settings, the pastor typically works for months trying to gain credibility in the community, and exhausts their personal financial resources long before the new congregation is large enough to be viable.

Actually, the United Methodist Church does not use the pure "parachute drop" strategy - our United Methodist church planting pastors are not alone. Our new church pastors are provided financial support in the early years (*salary, health insurance, housing allowance, and travel allowance*) and we have a built in support system at the District and Conference level. United Methodist "parachute drops" are far more effective because of this connectional system of support. Many of our Annual Conferences use this strategy exclusively.

Often, in the United Methodist adaptation of the "parachute drop," there are sister United Methodist Churches in the community, or near by, who are providing positive prayer support and encouragement for the new church. Having a sister congregation helps the planting pastor to gain credibility more quickly in the community, and to build on the good reputation the sister church has already gained in the mission field. A sister church may be supporting the birth of the new church with their prayers; with 'baby showers' to help provide some of the physical items the new church may need in preparation for her first worship services: (*portable nursery equipment, coffee pots, chairs, sound/video components, signage, Bible study materials, etc.*); and supporting the new church with volunteers in the early months (*to make phone calls, distribute door hangers, worship greeters, nursery helpers, providing refreshments, etc.*).



*Churches growing new churches..
who grow new churches...*

THE TWO-POINT or THREE-POINT CHARGE

THE TWO-POINT CHARGE

A pastor contacts the District Superintendent about starting a second church in a neighboring mission field.
{For example, asking to turn their two point circuit into a three point circuit.}

The pastor begins making contacts in the neighboring community, gaining a growing respect in the community.

- having introductory get-togethers
- developing a Launch Team

Advantages

A new church is built on the respect of an existing congregation can reach a new mission field, without major financial obligations.

Disadvantages

The new church often gets off to a slow start because the pastor has other duties in the larger congregation.

Jealousy could develop through the years as the child grows larger than the parent.

SAMPLE: The Joplin UMC Story

YEAR ONE:

- A young pastor appointed to a three point charge. Mt Ida UMC (80 attendance at 11am); Oden UMC (29 attendance at 9:45); and Norman UMC (3 attendance with lay speaker).
- Mt Ida is a community of 1,000 people, County Seat, surrounded by National Forest. Large lake with growing retirement population moving in.

YEAR TWO:

- Mt Ida UMC, grew to capacity of 100 on Sunday, four rows of pews added, but still had Sundays with people standing along the wall on Sunday morning
- Mt Ida UMC parking lot beyond capacity

YEAR THREE:

- Mt Ida forms a children choir, youth group, and hired a part-time secretary & choir director.
- Mt Ida Charge Conference votes to either relocate three blocks away on the highway, OR to start a new church.
- A study of demographics in the county revealed a decent population center in the nearby community of Joplin.

YEAR FOUR:

- Mt Ida pastor held Easter Sunrise in Joplin, and was surprised that 250 people attended. This indicated to the pastor that there was potential for a new church in that community.
- Mt Ida pastor started a Sunday School in Joplin, in a home in May. By December, outgrowing that home, they were invited to moved to a larger home in Joplin. Of course the Mt Ida pastor received no salary or travel for this ministry.

YEAR FIVE:

- Sunday School outgrew second home, invited to move to a third, then to a fourth larger home with 30 in attendance.
- Rented a vacant gas station/bait shop. Cleaned up and painted the building. Met there for two years.
- Pastor intentionally began a relationship with a land owner - 7 acres on prime intersection. That Baptist gentleman turned down an offer of \$250,000 and gave the land to the Methodist Church!
- The Conference gave \$75,000 for down payment on construction.

YEAR SIX:

- New pastor appointed who led them through initial construction.

• for pastors starting new churches • for churches starting new churches • for resourcing our newest churches •



*Churches growing new churches..
who grow new churches...*

THE MISSION CONGREGATION

THE MISSION CONGREGATION

The 2004 Book of Discipline allows a new church start to be designated as a “Mission Congregation” when any of the following conditions exist:

- Membership opportunities and resources are limited and not likely to result in a chartered congregation for an extended period of time.
- A strategic demographic, cultural or language opportunity for serving a limited population is present.
- It is expected that long-term sustaining funding from sources outside the Congregation will be necessary to enable the congregation to exist, and the assumption of full connectional support items by the congregation is unlikely.
- It is probable that the Annual Conference will need to provide long-term administrative guidance, including attention to the distinctive property needs of the Congregation. When any of these conditions exist, the Cabinet, in consultation with the Congregational Development area of the Annual Conference, may designate an entity a Mission Congregation. The Mission Congregation may be organized in the same manner and have the same rights and powers as any local church.

THE MISSION CONGREGATION

Advantages

- designed to reach an area with sparse population
- requires less initial financial support because it often begins with **part-time** pastoral leadership (lay missionary or part-time local pastor).
- because the financial resources of the congregation is limited, the rent of initial worship spaces is lower.

Disadvantages

- long-term financial support is normally required because of sparse population or lower economic means of the congregation.
- because the financial resources and size of the congregation are limited, they often share facilities with a stronger UMC. Through the years conflicts can arise over sharing limited space.

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT STARTING MISSION CONGREGATIONS:

- 1) Start them. Start all of them you can afford. Start them today in every place you can to reach every person you can.
- 2) When you are starting a mission congregation (and any new church start for that matter), be very clear what financial resources are available, for what period of time, and what measurable benchmarks must be met for funding to continue for that full time period.
- 3) When you are starting mission congregations and making 5, 10, or 15 year declining financial commitments to them, be sure and run your “new church” conference budget out for that many years to be sure that you will have the funds to meet all the combined obligations.
For example, if you start 2 new mission congregations each year, for ten years - will you have the funds to support all of that combined financial obligation?

- 4) In many mission settings, the people you are reaching are not completely devoid of financial resources. In many mission settings, because of the small number of people you are trying to reach in that mission field (*like the new church pastor we just appointed to reach a Vietnamese population of only 2,400 in Fort Smith*), or because of their limited financial resources (*like an Anglo new church appointment we made two years ago in a very financially depressed part of Fort Smith*) - you are not expecting them to meet the same financial benchmarks you would set for a new ministry reaching a financially wealthy segment of the population. So... in a mission setting, (and any new church start for that matter), be careful about loading them up with financial obligations (building or salary) they can never meet. For example, use the same financial common sense you use with your existing congregations. In hundreds of our old existing small Anglo congregations in Arkansas - we appoint pastoral leadership they can afford - whether it's a layspeaker (TBS) or a part-time local pastor - and we only approve building/remodeling expenses they can afford. The cabinet does not appoint a full-time pastor with a heavy salary & benefits package to a setting that can only afford \$50 a week for a part-time local pastor.
- 5) In some of your new church starts in mission settings, perhaps it is appropriate for them to be supported on a clearly defined 5, 10, or 15 year declining basis, instead of a 3 or 4 year declining basis as you may do in other settings.

Bob Crossman
 Arkansas Conference, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Advancement
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What Does the Discipline Say About Starting Mission Congregations?

The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2004, ¶ 260

1. A new local church or **mission congregation** shall be established only with the consent of the bishop in charge and the cabinet and with due consideration of the conference entity assigned the responsibility for congregational development. The bishop shall designate the district within whose bounds the church or mission congregation shall be organized. The district superintendent of that district, or his or her designee, shall be the agent in charge of the project and shall recommend to the district board of church location and building (¶ 2518) the method of organization, and whether a specific site shall be selected or an area of organization be designated. The district superintendent shall avail him/herself of existing demographic, lifestyle and ethnographic information in the process of establishing a new congregation and its location, or shall recommend to the board of trustees of a selected local church that they share their facility with the proposed congregation. If there is a city or district missionary organization, or if funds for the project are anticipated from a conference organization, those bodies shall also be asked to approve the method of organization and location for a new congregation.
 - a) A Mission Congregation may be designated when any of the following conditions exist:
 - 1.) Membership opportunities and resources are limited and not likely to result in a chartered congregation for an extended period of time.
 - 2.) A strategic demographic, cultural or language opportunity for serving a limited population is present.
 - 3.) It is expected that long-term sustaining funding from sources outside the Congregation will be necessary to enable the congregation to exist, and the assumption of full connectional support items by the congregation is unlikely.
 - 4.) It is probable that the Annual Conference will need to provide long-term administrative guidance, including attention to the distinctive property needs of the Congregation. When any of these conditions exist, the Cabinet, in consultation with the Congregational Development area of the Annual Conference, may designate an entity a Mission Congregation. The Mission Congregation may be organized in the same manner and have the same rights and powers as any local church.
2. see ¶260 (or page 8 of this notebook) to find ¶260.2 through ¶206.10 for additional details on starting any new church.

Suggested Process For Seeking Approval to Start A Mission Church

1. A District Superintendent, a strong healthy United Methodist congregation, District Board of Missions, Conference Board of Global Ministries, or District Board of Church Location and Building can file an “*Application for Approval of a New Mission Congregation*” (a sample is found about page 71 in this notebook) to the District Superintendent and to the Conference Minister of New Church Starts.
2. Typically, the launch of a mission congregation will also have the support of other conference agencies. *{such as Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns, Conference Committee on Hispanic Ministries, Committee on Native American Ministries, Commission on Small Membership Church, Commission on Equitable Compensation, and/or The Conference Board of Global Missions.}*
3. With the written recommendation of the District Superintendent and Conference Minister of New Church Starts, the Bishop and the Cabinet determines **when** a new congregation is to be launched to serve an unchurched population that may not have the potential of becoming chartered within the first 3-5 years of being launched.
4. The District Board of Church Location and Building and the District Superintendent determines **who** the sponsoring agency will be and secures a covenant agreement between the sponsoring agency, District Board, and mission group as to meeting site, accountability and funding.
5. The District Superintendent will prepare and submit an application for pastoral compensation, if eligible, to the Commission on Equitable Compensation for action.
6. The Bishop will appoint pastoral leadership. In most cases the mission will be served by a part-time local pastor, a Hispanic Lay Missioner, or pastor staff on the staff of the sponsoring congregation. By definition, a mission church will **not** be able to financially support a full-time local pastor or full-time elder.

The Population To Be Served

1. A survey needs to be conducted of the targeted population to determine the number of potential members, and the needs of the targeted community (actually physically walking the neighborhood, door to door contact with residents, and using all available information from county / city planning departments, chamber of commerce, civic organizations, the Research Office of the General Board of Global Ministries and /or Percept).
2. If the targeted population is a language / cultural group, the Conference Commission on Ethnic Local Church Concerns or the Conference Committee on Hispanic Ministries and the leaders of that population need to be consulted and assistance sought in planning the new mission congregation.

The Sponsoring Agency

1. The District may place a mission congregation under its direct sponsorship or it may authorize a strong healthy neighboring UM church to be the sponsoring entity.
2. A mission congregation may then receive its legitimacy through its sponsoring agency. *{Note: In most states you will find that State Tax exemption, U.S. Postal bulk rate permit, federal income tax 501 (C) (3) exemption, Federal I.D. number required by banks to open an account may not be awarded directly to a mission congregation, but through its sponsoring agency.}*
3. The sponsoring agency will be responsible for providing adequate liability insurance coverage, and for receiving an inventory of the mission congregations materials and property.
4. The sponsoring agency will be responsible for keeping record of (and reporting) all baptisms, professions of faith, and membership in the United Methodist Church.

Suggested MINIMUM Standards For An Approved Mission

1. Although service / social action / outreach may be one of the primary purposes for the mission, most Annual Conferences require that **regular weekly worship and the sacraments** be a key component for all missions. *{John Wesley carried blankets and Bibles to the prisons so that the early Methodist might care for the prisoners physical/safety and spiritual needs.}*
2. In most Annual Conferences, before a mission congregation is given approval and receives an appointed pastor, the mission should have the potential of **at least** twenty-five (25) to fifty (50) **adults** worshipping weekly.

Suggested Transition of a Mission Congregation To a Charter Congregation

When a mission congregation is able to meet the criteria for a chartered church (in most Annual Conferences, it involves 125 adult members and financial self-sufficiency) the Mission Congregation will qualify to be chartered (see ¶260 Discipline, 2004 for the process).

A Few Thoughts about Starting Mission Congregations

by Bob Crossman

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- 2) When you are starting a mission congregation (and any new church start for that matter), be very clear what financial resources are available, for what period of time, and what measurable benchmarks must be met for funding to continue for that full time period.
- 3) When you are starting mission congregations and making 5, 10, or 15 year declining financial commitments to them, be sure and run your "new church" conference budget out for that many years to be sure that you will have the funds to meet all the combined obligations.
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Just a thought,
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