



Tell me more about the Reflective Essay and the Ministry Plan idea.

If you are graduating from NCLI at this retreat,
(if you have completed both the February & October NCLI retreats)
begin writing your *“Reflective Essay”* or a *“New Church Ministry Plan.”*

Consult with your Conference Director of New Church Starts, and ask about:

- 1) Preferred format of the Reflective Essay or Ministry Plan;
- 2) Your Consultation with your District Superintendent for this Winter;
- 3) The New Church Pastor Assessment Process in your Annual Conference;
- 4) The New Church Appointment Process in your Annual Conference; and
- 5) The Pre-moving day Strategic Plan Setting Session.



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

REFLECTIVE ESSAY

In the New Church Leadership Institute, all participants will write their own "Reflective Essay." This one page reflective essay should include these topics:

1. Pastor's Vision
2. Pastor's Mission
3. Pastor's Core Beliefs
4. Pastor's Core Values
5. What questions were answered for you in the New Church Institute? What questions remain?
6. A one paragraph summary of the pastor's affinity group
-include DiSC Profile summary and TEAM Profile summary
7. What new church planting strategy suits your profile? Why?
8. What would be your optimal new church planting scenario? Why?
9. Concerning your possible appointment to plant a new church:
 - what other conclusions have you made?
 - what questions remain for you?



In the appointment making process for a new church, it would be appropriate for this Reflective Essay to be reviewed by:

- a. The New Church Assessment Team and the receiving District Superintendent
- b. The Conference staff person who relates to New Church Starts or Congregational Advancement
- c. The Bishop and Cabinet of your Conference
- d. If this is a mother-daughter model:
 - the Senior Pastor of the Mother Church and perhaps the SPPR of Mother Church
- e. It may also be appropriate for the Ministry Plan to be reviewed by:
 - The Conference Minister for Minister for Ethnic/Multicultural Ministries



The "Boot Camp" for church planters can build on this Preliminary Reflective Essay, and help the church planter to enter the appointment with a clearer focus on priorities, adding responses to subjects such as:

10. Describe the worship style & ministries most likely to appeal to the targeted audience.
11. Describe the critical benchmarks & priorities that need to be reached during the first 24 months
12. Describe in detail, the networking process to be used by the pastor during the first 6 months.
13. Describe in brief form, the process to be used by the pastor in months 7 to 24.
14. Prepare a tentative budget for the first 24 months, including possible sources of income.
15. Describe the leadership characteristics needed to serve the targeted audience.
16. *(if married)* List two measurable steps you are going to take to safeguard your relationship with your spouse and *(if applicable)* with your children.
17. Any other information relevant to this particular situation.

As soon as the new appointment is determined, before moving to their new appointment, the new pastor will work with the Conference Minister of New Church Starts and the District Superintendent (and Parent Church) to revise their Ministry Plan. The new pastor will be held accountable to that plan, with the agreed on benchmarks written in it.



**New Church Leadership Institute
Self Reflective Essay**

- 1. When you began the NCLI, what questions did you bring? Which of these questions have been answered? Which, if any, remain unanswered?**

Many who started training at the NCLI last January began with great hesitancy, wondering if they were called to start a new church. Some discovered they were and some discovered they were not. I went to the first training with many questions, but I have known all along that starting a new church was what I wanted to do.

The questions I came with were logistical in nature. Most of the questions have been answered through my time at the NCLI. Presently, I look forward to an opportunity to attend the

‘Nuts and Bolts’ seminar of starting a new congregation. My desire is to be a part of both the challenge and excitement of a new church. I want to minister in an environment where the congregation is excited about seeing lives transformed by Jesus Christ.

- 2. Provide a paragraph summary of your DiSC profile. What are the implications of your profile results in the realm of church planting?**

My DiSC profile shows that I have what is termed a “creative pattern.” I have a high D and a high C with a lower I and S. The results show that I have opposing forces in my behavior. I have a drive for tangible results counterbalanced by an equally strong drive for perfection, and my aggressiveness is tempered by sensitivity. I wish to explore all possible solutions before making a decision. My pattern generally exhibits foresight when focusing on projects and I am a change agent. The profile of my pattern says that in my drive for perfection and results that I may not be concerned about social poise. As a result, I may be cool, aloof, or blunt.

- 3. In the assessment of prospective church planters, we often speak of the “Four C’s: Call, Character, Chemistry and Competencies.” Please provide a one to two sentence description for each “C” as it relates to your self-assessment.**

In assessing my Call, Character, Chemistry and Competencies I would say the following.

Call: I have felt called to a new church for about four years. I can imagine doing little else than this.

Character: I hold myself to a high standard in word and deed. I want to be called one thing by God on my last day – faithful. I want it to be said of me that I was faithful to the church, faithful to my family and faithful to my Lord. Chemistry: refer to my Disc and affinity group.

Competence: I am organized, thorough, persistent, and have a heart for evangelism.

- 4. Based on what you have learned, please describe the church planting environment that best matches your gifts and your personal and household affinities.**

My affinity group is white, upper-middle class, suburbanite minded folk. My father was a successful business owner and my mother was a homemaker. My wife’s parents were both educators. Both my parents and my wife’s parents currently live in St. Paul, Minnesota. Our friends generally come from similar backgrounds and look very similar to us: young, educated, white collar, with children. I do not come from a church background, my wife does. We both, however, relate to people both within and outside of the church.

- 5. What church planting “role(s)” do you see yourself fulfilling in the Florida Conference in the coming years?**

I can see myself in a parachute drop, Mother-Daughter plant, or as a second pastor (if the church is less than 7 years old). In years to come I will definitely help sponsor/mother new churches. I cannot, however, see myself working in a ‘church within a church’ model.

- 6. Please provide a paragraph summarizing your conclusions.**

I have always been ‘gifted’ at starting new ventures. My father started and ran several successful corporations while I was growing up. I worked with him and learned from him for a number of years. I also started my own company which I intended to run full-time before being called into ministry. The company was a financial blessing to me as it paid for seminary and allowed my wife and me to live without worry while I was a student pastor.

Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, discernment, prayer and confirmation through the NCLI I feel called and ready to begin a “new community of faith” as is discerned by the Conference.

SAMPLE

Self Reflective Essay - New Church Leadership Institute

I don't remember having any "spoken" questions at our initial introductory meeting, but I know that the internal question that rolled through my mind was something like, "Is there a place for someone with my gifts and graces, and with my personality type in the life of the Baltimore Conference?" Being a driven person, and having experienced times of disappointment in my ministry journey, I have found a growing level of dissatisfaction with ministry in established churches that restrict creativity and leadership in its pastor, and seek only a maintenance engineer to keep what makes them comfortable afloat. I think this process has only intensified my understanding of my own discontent with "status quo ministry" while my personality type pushes me to be an innovator.

And speaking of personality types, my DiSC profile was that of a **Result-Oriented Pattern**. According to the classical profile, this means I am a person who is a quick thinker with self-confidence. I am determined, persistent and find my tolerance with the status quo to be very low. I am extremely competitive, and crave opportunities to in first place, or to be the champion of the day, which is aided by the fact that I am not usually intimidated easily. Because I speak my mind clearly and directly, I have no trouble asserting my authority or ego strength. I know this also has some potential drawbacks, such as being impulsive at times, or acting too quickly before plans are thoroughly vetted. Because I am confident, this can sometimes come across as impatient or haughty. And I have experienced times when I have come across as blunt and uncaring, even though that wasn't my intended purpose. Fortunately, my ministry situations that have turned into "opportunities to grow" have been greatly instructional in my character development, and by God's grace I have been working toward overcoming those flaws, or minimizing them as best as I am able.

As I assessed my strengths for church planting, I considered the four C's of Call, Character, Chemistry and Competencies. In relation to my sense of Call, I am called to be a Pastor / Leader who leads the Church into the world to make disciples where others are afraid to go, and with those who have rejected the church. My calling is very focused in the direction of evangelism and disciple making, something I have excelled at in each of my appointments.

My Character attributes that fit me for church planting have been described above, but in addition, I would say that any character issues that might be a hindrance in this work I am seeking to engage, I have learned to compensate for. I have learned the importance of good team building, and my need to have people of other strengths work with me to overcome any areas I lack proficiency in.

In relation to my Chemistry (DNA): my core values are 1) to model Christian witness and discipleship in my personal and family life, 2) be relevant, 3) lead the Church as a servant, 4) model good financial stewardship, as well as stewardship of my time and talents, 5) give fully of myself to Christ. My personal vision for my future in ministry is to grow a church deeper into Christ, and wider in expansive ministry that reaches an ever broader part of the population, especially those who have been "de-churched;" all the while remaining relevant in communicating the truth of the Gospel and guiding the Church in living a missional and growth oriented life. My personal mission can be summarized, therefore, in this way: *Through my connection with God and the world, I will be relevant and real in my relationship with all God's people as I lead in faithful witness and life as disciples.*

My Competencies for doing the work of planting a new church include my driven, confident, competitive and task-oriented personality that is enhanced by my leadership style. It focuses on team building, discernment and system organization while constantly keeping the vision in front of everyone. I would consider my "world-view" to be that of a Post-Modern Christian who believes that God has given us abundant life through Christ – and we ought to be living out of that abundance, instead of living out of what we lack.

I think I would function best in an environment of middle to upper-middle class people with advanced educational degrees, who are eclectic in the spiritual dimension of their life. I like to lead God's people in experiencing a variety of traditions within the context of a single service of worship. I think a suburban setting is where my gifts are best utilized, but I am not opposed to exploring options in urban areas. My optimal new church start scenario is in a fast growing suburb where rapid growth and spiritual formation are valued instead of feared. I consider myself, as stated previously, to be a Post-Modern. As such, I don't believe the church is best served by a single style of worship or faith expression. This means I function best in a blended or "edgy-blended" environment (defined as one where the music and format of worship are more cutting edge, and the facility and dress more formal).

The church planting role, that I would fit in best, would be either as a modified "parachute drop" (give me some kind of team to start with please, even if it is from multiple churches), or a modified "mother-daughter" plant. Really these two could be seen as nearly the same, but the modified mother-daughter plant would mean all of my launch team comes from a single church. I think I could also work within a large local church that is wanting to start a "new kind" of worship service with a plan to birth that church after an extended period of growth.

I would say the key word for me is "flexible." This is because I think I could plant a church in a multitude of circumstances, among a variety of different population groups, in varying manners; all depending on the needs of the mission field. My preferences would be to have a wide degree of leadership authority (modified "mother-daughter" or modified "parachute drop"), with the goal of creating a blended or edgy-blended community of believers with a vision for solid growth in numbers and relationship with Jesus Christ. I think my optimal church plant will use my gift for visionary leadership to start a church among a population of people who are proven to be unafraid of change, desiring unique spiritual expressions of the Christian faith to be practiced, and long to be engaged with the world in mission as we reach those who have been "de-churched," as well as those who have never been reached before.

In addition, I will add that my wife is very supportive of my ministry, as she has been for the past 8 years. We have served as a true partnership in each of my ministry settings, and she is one of my greatest assets in planning and discovering new ministry ideas that will flourish. In fact, some of the ministries we started together in each of the places we have served still flourish to this day. Even more importantly, I think the idea of planting a church has been something God has been calling me to do since experiencing my initial call to ministry at age 11. I wasn't able to give voice to, or discern it well enough to understand that, but through time, discernment and experience I can see now how God has led me to a place where I am as prepared as I can be walk this next journey.

SAMPLE

Self – Reflective Essay

1. Describe Your Affinity Group

- I feel the greatest affinity for the middle to upper middle class professional and blue-collar person(s) who live within corporate city limits.”
- I feel the greatest affinity for Northwest part of the state or the River Valley ; however, the Southwest would be a possibility as well.”
- I do not relate well to rural, farming or factory only groups.”
- I desire to reach people within all groups with the gospel of Christ.”
- I also desire an ethnically diverse group where each group brings their heritage into the worship environment.”

2. What Questions Have Been Answered For You?

- I discovered what models the conference is going to endorse in starting a new church.
- I am interested in the mother-daughter model of church planting but wish to have multiple mothers.” I would like to pull resources from more than one church in a given area to start a new church.
- The conversation with the whole district is important so each church feels some ownership or connection with the new church, which will help keep down an attitude of competition or surprise that could cause negative conversations or hostile attitudes from impacting a new start before it can begin to take off.”
- I have determined that starting a new church is more of a marathon than a sprint; however, I believe the first eighteen to twenty-four months are critical for determining the success or failure of a new church.
- The person who is starting the new church must be focused and determined to accomplish the mission set before him/her. This means the person must have a great passion for all people whom God created, and must have an equal passion for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The new church start pastor must also have a strong spiritual life to consist of prayer, devotion, and bible study. This person must also surround him/herself with people who will encourage as well as keep him/her accountable.”

3. What Questions Has This Process Raised For You?

- The major questions that I still have are: What is the financial commitment being made by the churches or the annual conference? How are those finances being distributed? How is the salary level determined for each pastor and positions as the need arises? Who determines who is hired and at what pace or level?
- What impact can I expect a new church start to have on my family? I realize each family situation is different; however, I would like to meet or have testimonials from pastors who have done new church starts with similar family situations (two working professionals) and who have a successful track record, so Sara and I can have some idea of what to expect for our family.”
- I presume I would be assigned a mentor or coach to work through some of these areas. I also presume we have an accountability method setup for financial accounting for new church start pastors.
- I would need to see a proposed budget to insure I could hire someone like a music minister, as well as purchase the proper equipment necessary to begin a worship service, regardless of where that service might be held.”

4. What Conclusions Have You Drawn?

- I believe I have the gifts and graces for a new church start; however, there are some challenges and concerns, all of which can be addressed and overcome with careful attention.”
- I realize that I do not have to do a new church start and may not be the type of person the conference is looking for at this time.”
- Before I would be willing to do a new church start, I would have to see a budget and work with a group and coach to see what the conference vision for a particular area is.”
- I am aware I have weaknesses in some administrative areas, and for a while I can compensate by giving great attention to those areas; however, there are some gifts I do not possess, (i.e. music), which will require that I surround myself with persons who are strong in those areas.”
- Also, I have a family that I am not willing to sacrifice to start a new church, so I will need some idea on the time commitments during evening and weekend hours, which I know will be different than with an existing church.”

5. Describe your Best Case Church Planting Scenario

- Being able to work with an existing church (or multiple churches) in identifying individuals who have an entrepreneurial spirit, who have a passion for trying something new and who will invest their life into seeing an idea become a reality.”
- I also, would want in this mix those who have been strong Methodist and committed to the tradition it brings to the community.”
- Furthermore, I would want to identify a few people to serve on the focus design team who have not been churched.”
- That community can meet in a school, home, storefront, in a park, or etc. The meeting place is not of great significance, it is the bringing of individuals together as a community to grow in faith and to be in a faithful journey that is critical.”
- Providing a mixture of churched and un-churched alike will provide the eyes and ears needed to reach a diverse people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

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

SAMPLE

Self – Reflective Essay

1. Describe Your Affinity Group

- I believe my affinity group or mission field should be high school and college graduates in the middle class to upper middle class range.
- In my former jobs and in working within the church, I find that I am able to get along with most people and have worked with people from different economic backgrounds. I also have worked well with people of color.
- My best new start scenario would probably be somewhere between a daughter church and a parachute drop.
- My steps would probably be: 1) start meeting the people in the target area, 2) establish a real presence in the target area, 3) start small groups meeting in the target area, 4) from the first day, be working with the launch team in planning for all of this, and 5) aim for worship beginning after 6 months.

2. What Questions Have Been Answered For You?

- Through the New Church Leadership Institute I have learned about the different methods of starting new churches and how these succeed or fail in different settings.
- I have also learned that success depends on the new start pastor being spiritually sound, having a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- I know this is a lot of work.
- I am one who thrives on challenges.
- I have prayed about this and have turned it over to God. Either way, I will still be serving my Lord and Savior.
- There are different methods of starting new churches, each good in the right place with the right person.
- I have seen what others have done and had success at.

3. What Questions Has This Process Raised For You?

- One thing I am still not sure of is exactly what role the conference will play, that is beyond the financial part.

4. What Conclusions Have You Drawn?

- I believe this is exciting and I have the gifts and graces to do it.
- Although there will be lots of work and long days, the new start pastor is not out there all alone. There will be support through a coach and the conference office.

5. Describe your Best Case Church Planting Scenario

- My best new start scenario would probably be somewhere between a daughter church and a parachute drop.
- The mission field would consist of people mainly from blue collar working families with high school and college educations.

SAMPLE

Self – Reflective Essay

1. Describe Your Affinity Group

- The **affinity group** I relate to best is comprised of professionals and educators, young people, middle adult and retired people in _____, Wisconsin
- My mission field is to churched non-Christians. Those persons who have had some exposure to Christianity and organized church and have yet to have made a genuine profession of faith upon true regeneration are ripe for the harvest of the Kingdom!
- I prefer a partnership model of church planting. The launch team could be comprised of a few folks from each the strong churches in the area. The common vision that God wants to start a new church should empower those local churches to come together and say We started a new church. Of course the number of committed launch team members would be proportional to the current strength of each church.'

2. What Questions Have Been Answered For You?

- Geographic placement is very important.
- The timeline for beginning and implementation of new church start
- I assume that something has to be in place for regular accountability.

3. What Questions Has This Process Raised For You?

- What interactions will there be with the other churches in the area?

4. What Conclusions Have You Drawn?

- I have determined that starting a new church is more of a marathon than a sprint; however, I believe the first eighteen to twenty-four months are critical for determining the success or failure of a new church.
- I have a passion for reaching people for Jesus Christ but I don't know that I am being called to start a new church. I do have the gifts and graces to start a new church. I want to be open to the possibility.

5. Describe your Best Case Church Planting Scenario

- My best case church planting scenario is utilizing a partnership model of church planting among the other established United Methodist Churches in _____, Wisconsin.
- The launch team would consist of some members from these churches as well as some people we already have relationships with from the time we lived in that community before entering the ministry.

SAMPLE

Self – Reflective Essay

VISION: To be a fully devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

MISSION: To start a new church filled with disciples, who are also committed to grow more new disciples of the Lord.

CORE BELIEFS:

The Bible	Albert Outler said, <i>“The Bible is the story of what God has been doing, and will always be doing on earth for his people. It is the story of what He has designed us for, and what He rightfully expects from us. It is the story of what we can count on from God: covenant making and covenant keeping on God’s part, and covenant making and covenant breaking on our side. It is a book that helps us become truly human.”</i> {Interview with Bishop Wilkie, Disciple I Video}
Genesis 1-2	We are not here on earth by accident, we are here by the very hand and word of God.
Exodus 20	God cares about how we live, and commands us to live by these ten basic Commandments.
Matthew 18:10-14	God is not willing for any one to stay lost, and calls us to search for that one lost sheep.
Luke 15: 11-31	God stands on the porch and waits for us to come to our senses, and return to His home.
Acts 9:1-19	No matter how far we have wandered, by God we can receive new life, a second chance.
Galatians 5:16-26	As we grow toward faithful discipleship, the fruits of the spirit grow as evidence.
James 1:27	True religion is caring for fatherless children and widows in their need.
Matthew 25:31-46	God calls and expects us to relieve suffering in Jesus’ name.
Revelation 21:1-8	Our eternal hope is a heavenly home, in the presence of God.

CORE VALUES:

Grace -	No matter how far we stray, God’s prevenient love reaches out to invite us to turn back home.
Transformation -	By God, the sinner can turn to the light, the weak can be come strong, those who doubt can discover faith, and broken marriages can be healed. By God, we can be transformed, even born again.
Missions -	Relieving suffering in Jesus’ name is not an option for the faithful disciple (Matthew 25)
Diversity -	The Church, as the body of Christ, is made of many parts, with each function vital to the whole.

AFFINITY GROUP

I can probably best relate to people from backgrounds similar to my own.

Geographic affinity: I would relate best in a small city (population of 30,000 +) or suburban community.

Economic affinity: middle-upper middle class, although I also have experience living in government housing/ food stamps.

Religious affinity: I would relate best to persons with a modest church background, but perhaps have not yet had an adult conversion experience. I’ve worked with people who have a passive view of the church, but have never related to people who seem to hate the church or have a very negative view of the church. Also, I’ve never worked well with the ‘super religious’ or ‘holier than thou’ or ‘pray without ceasing’ church folks.

Recreational affinity: family, children, and history. No background in football, basketball, country clubs, or golf.

Social affinity: small business environment, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, married with young children

Ethnic affinity: anglo

DISC INVENTORY:

My highest area(s) on this DiSC is(are): C,D.

This means my strengths are attention to details and entrepreneurial type ventures.

I am more task oriented and so I may need to pay attention to relationship issues more.

My lowest are(s) on the DiSC is(are): I,S

This means my opportunities for growth or where I may need to utilize the strengths of others are in people-gathering, particularly in social settings, and networking.

CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY THAT SUITS MY PROFILE

I work well with my colleagues in ministry, and have always sought out relationships with fellow pastors. Based on that experience, I believe I would thrive in a “mother-daughter” strategy.

I have started a successful small downtown business from scratch that is still in operation. Based on that experience, I believe I would be successful in a parachute drop setting.

OPTIMAL CHURCH PLANTING SCENARIO:

Mother-daughter start in the suburbs of a large city, or in mid-size town, designed to reach middle income new residents and young families that have not yet found a church home.

CONCERNING MY POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT TO START A NEW CHURCH, CONCLUSIONS I HAVE MADE:

I believe that God has called me to start a new church. My wife said (and I agree), “God has been preparing you for new start church ministry for a long time.”

CONCERNING MY POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT TO START A NEW CHURCH, QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN:

I need to visit a few more of our newest churches. I am still not clear on exactly how to gather the first 40 people - I need to see and experience the “networking” model to feel more comfortable with it. I would like to put some of those network strategies to the test in my current appointment so that I would better understand how that works.

I heard several of our speakers say, “You must have a discipleship system in place.” I am still not clear on exactly what that might look like in a new church setting.

Also, I am not clear on the structure, if any, in a new church. Do I have a Church Council or Finance Committee? How are decisions made or approved?