

FROM ONE CHURCH PLANTER TO ANOTHER



Helps for the Pioneer Church Planter

By James Rasbeary

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DEDICATION

This book is affectionately dedicated to

Dr. Jerald Chadwick

Pastor of the Central Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas.
Pastor and Church Planter for over four decades, and a true
friend to young preachers.

WITH SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING PASTORS AND CHURCHES THAT SUPPORTED US FINANCIALLY:

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(Mat 16:18) "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(2 Cor 10:15-16) "Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, {16} To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand."

PREFACE

We *must* get back to church planting in America.

The early American Baptists understood the need for new churches in the new lands west of the original colonies. Churches multiplied across the South and into the frontier. Many churches hired “district missionaries” to start new churches in the surrounding regions. Back then, it was understood that America was a mission field.

In the twentieth century, there was a great push in church planting. Men like J. Frank Norris started churches all over Texas in tent meetings. Many other churches were started in storefronts, schools, and old army barracks. They did not have padded pews, but they were on fire for God. The pastors were not usually doctors of divinity, but they knew God and they were filled with enthusiasm for the Great Commission. Against all odds, new churches were started, souls were saved, missionaries were called out, and cities were changed for the glory of God!

Unfortunately, church planting seems to be out of style today. It is easier to find a vacant pulpit than to go to a vacant lot. All over America, there are cities, towns, villages, and entire counties without an independent, fundamental, soul-winning, Baptist church. We seem to have forgotten that America is *still* a mission field. The need is great, but the willing laborers are few. Many of the churches that were started forty years ago are growing old, complacent, and liberal. We *need* a fresh crop of new churches.

In this book, we do not examine the philosophy behind Church Planting, nor do we discuss the many different ways to successfully plant a church (and there are many good ways). This book will give some helpful ideas and practical tips for a “Pioneer Church Planter” – a man and his family who are sent out of a local church to start a new church from scratch. However, I believe that

certain parts of this book will be helpful to any man starting a church, no matter what method he uses.

Before starting our church, I was in a Saturday morning prayer meeting. I was praying with a teenager named Zack. Bro. Zack prayed, “Lord, help Bro. Rasbeary. He is going to start a church from *scrap*.” He meant to say “from scratch,” but he turned out to be right. We have a God that can take some *scraps* and build something beautiful for His glory.

In my toolbox, I have many different tools. I do not use every tool for every job, but each tool is helpful in some way, sooner or later. I hope that this book will be a helpful addition to your “toolbox” as a church planter.

James Rasbeary

Chapter One

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR
PLANTING A CHURCH

(1 Tim 4:12-16) "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. {13} Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. {14} Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. {15} Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. {16} Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Starting a new church is one of the greatest things that a man can do. Think about the influence that a Spirit-filled, soul-winning, Bible-believing, missions-hearted church can have over years and generations! Any man choosing to take part in this holy enterprise must dedicate himself wholly to the task. Church planting is a tremendous task and requires tremendous dedication.

This chapter is written for those who are preparing themselves for church planting – those in Bible college, or faithfully serving in their church while waiting for God’s timing. Each point may not be applicable for each person, but I hope that some points will be helpful to all.

1. Be faithful in everything that you do for the Lord.

(Luke 16:10-12) "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. {11} If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust

the true riches? {12} And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

You cannot fool the Lord. Don't think that you can be unfaithful in the "little" tasks, ministries, and responsibilities now, and then flip a character switch when you become the pastor. The Lord watches carefully and takes detailed notes about how you serve in another man's ministry – how faithful you are to soul-winning, how carefully you teach and visit that 1st grade boys class, how seriously you take ushering or singing in the choir, and how faithful you are to attend all the services of the church you are in now.

Be faithful! (*Prov 28:20*) **"A faithful man shall abound with blessings,"** and trust me, a church planter needs to abound with blessings!

2. Remember that you will reap in the future what you are sowing in the present.

(*Gal 6:7-9*) **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. {8} For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. {9} And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."**

You are, right now, sowing the seeds of your future ministry. You are building a church now by what you are sowing in another man's ministry. Don't think that you can sow laziness where you are now, and reap hard working laymen in your church. Don't think you can sow worldliness and reap spiritual people. Don't think you can sow compromise and reap people with rock-solid conviction. You will one day reap from the seeds that you are sowing!

3. Learn to pray and get answers from God.

It has been our great joy to see God answer so many great needs in our church. We prayed in our support, prayed in our facilities, prayed in the rent, and prayed in a van and a bus. When

our facilities became available to purchase, we prayed in the \$42,000 needed for a down payment to get the loan.

We have a God in heaven that wants to answer our prayers! Recently, my 8-year-old daughter, Becky, said to me, “I wish I had some money to buy Christmas presents.” I told her, “Why don’t you pray for it?” At the time, I was outside putting up some fencing. She went inside and within ten minutes came running out again to me. She had just talked to her grandmother on the phone and found out that she was getting \$50! Apparently, Grandma had bought her a toy that had been recalled, and she had just decided to give Becky the refunded money. I told her, “See, Becky! God answers prayer!” Yet, how often we have not because we ask not!

4. Earn a good, solid reputation among pastors.

Meet Pastors and try to earn a good reputation among them. Start with the teachers in your college, and the visiting preachers that come to your church. Most importantly, earn your pastor’s respect, so that he will be able to recommend you whole-heartedly. Why? Because a church planter will need financial support, like a missionary, if he is going to be able to start full-time. I would not have raised half of my support without the recommendations my Pastor made on my behalf. Not only that, but you will need things that Pastors might help you with if you have a good testimony. Songbooks, pianos, and other equipment, can be supplied for your church through churches that have these things stored in closets.

5. Learn to preach and do it as often as possible!

Of course, this should almost go without saying. But, perhaps more than anything, a church planter really needs to make his preaching as fine-tuned and fired-up as possible. A new church does not have many “frills” to offer visitors and new members. The music ministry for most brand new churches leaves much to be desired. More than anything, the church planter needs to be able to draw people back by his red-hot, Bible-based preaching.

Preach every chance you get. Study preaching as an art. Learn to preach loudly and enthusiastically. *People will endure lackluster facilities and programs if they are fed good spiritual meals.*

6. Start a sermon recipe box or file for sermon ideas.

Since preaching is so important for the church planter, his sermon preparation is equally important. Do not slack off on Bible study and sermon preparation. You will spend a lot of time out on the streets, but even church planters do not go soul-winning at 6 AM or after 10 PM. Spend time preparing good sermons.

Why is this important? Because people do not frequent restaurants where the meals are just warmed over in a microwave. They go where the food is served up hot right off the grill or out of the oven. Preach fresh messages.

That said, the best way I have found to keep ahead is to keep two sermon seed boxes. As I read and study my Bible, outlines and ideas come to mind. I jot these down on a 3x5 card and then place them in either the Sunday morning recipe box, or the Sunday night/Wednesday night box. Later, I simply look through my recipes to find the sermon that I believe the Lord would have me “fix up and serve” His people for that service. I simply take the recipe and prepare the message from it.

Many people do not understand the work that goes into preparing three sermons and a Sunday School lesson week after week, month after month, year after year. If you sit down every week with no sermon ideas, and just wait for them to pop out of your head, you will soon be surfing the internet for sermon outlines, or digging through Spurgeon’s sermons. Neither is necessary if you read and study your Bible! You will soon have more trouble deciding which one to preach!

7. Prepare or purchase a year’s worth of Sunday School lessons for your new Sunday School.

You can either write them yourself or buy lessons and then copy them for your classes. I started our Adult Sunday School with “The ABC’s of Christian Growth” by Robert J. Sargent. A copy can be purchased through:

Bible Baptist Church Publications

1701 Harns Rd

Oak Harbor, Washington 98277

(360) 675-8311 Email: baptist@whidbey.net

I taught through these lessons for 18 months, and they were a tremendous blessing to our young church. For the children's classes, we are using the "Bring Them In" lessons prepared by Larry Hipps. This system includes 2 years worth of lessons that go from Genesis through the Life of Christ.

To order these lessons, write to:

Bring Them In, Inc.

PO Box 16678

Memphis, Tennessee 38186-0678

Our children's class teachers are still teaching these lessons. By the time a child comes through the sixth grade, they should be familiar with all the major Bible stories of both Testaments. Having these lessons in binders for the teachers is a great help to them as well.

Studying a prepared lesson takes much less time than writing one and then studying it!

8. Learn to work with adults in your church as much as possible.

In Bible College, most preachers work with children or teenagers, usually through the bus ministry. This is certainly valuable training. However, a church planter cannot build a church on children – he must know how to reach, teach, and lead adults. Perhaps you could offer to substitute teach an adult class, or start one on Sunday evening if your Pastor will allow you to.

The important thing to remember (especially for young men) is that you lead adults by example and suggestion. You can rule children, but you must lead adults – and do so with respect, humility, and maturity. Do not treat your members like you were treated in Bible College.

9. Learn to lead singing.

Unless you have a song-leader going with you to start the church, you will very likely be the song leader and the preacher. I was for the first 18 months, and continued to lead singing on Wednesdays for much longer.

Learn to wave your hand and keep time. Learn to read music. Ask your Sunday School teacher (if you are in an adult class) if you can lead singing for the class. This is extremely important.

Relax and let yourself go. Have fun. In song leading, leadership is more important than singing ability. Some of the best song leaders I have known had average voices but tremendous ability to get others to sing along.

10. If possible, someone in your family should learn to play a musical instrument that will be useful in a church service.

If your wife or one of your children can play the piano or at least a keyboard if there is no piano, this will be a blessing of immeasurable value to your new church. Or perhaps someone can learn to play a guitar. Any kind of appropriate musical instrument that can be used to accompany the song leading is better than nothing.

If your wife has a good work ethic, she can learn to play the piano in less than one month playing chords. My wife learned how to play chords, and within one month she knew enough to play in the services, and after two months you would have thought that she had been playing all of her life. She cannot read music, and cannot do everything that a trained piano player can do, but it transformed our church services. She learned how through a video called “Let’s Play Music” by Betty Hughes. The video, which costs about \$50, can be ordered from:

*Betty Hughes
3118 Woodlawn Drive
San Angelo, TX 76901-1812
(915) 949-2592*

Musical ability is not required – just a willingness to do something for God and some hard work.

11. Learn as much about every aspect of your church as possible.

A church planter cannot afford to be a specialist, but as the bishop (overseer) he needs to understand as much as possible about every area of his church ministry. Learn from the church you are in now. Learn how the nursery is organized (bet you never thought about that, did you? You do need one where you are going). Learn how the Sunday School is organized. Learn how the paperwork is kept up. Why learn the hard way when you can learn from those men that are successful already?

12. Learn to handle money properly. Become a good businessman.

As a church planter, you will also be the treasurer and financial secretary. It will be your responsibility to draw up the church's budget and keep the church in the black. If you are irresponsible with your own money, get your house in order before you try to handle the money of the House of God. If possible, take a class on finances and accounting.

13. Learn some handyman skills that will help you in starting a church.

If your church has a work night, try to be there and learn how to build a classroom wall. You will need to know this eventually!

14. Begin to gather the things that you will need when you start your church.

Why wait until a month before you leave to think about these things? Set aside some money each month and begin buying the things that you will need, such as:

a) Tithe envelopes.

Don't spend extra to get your name on them yet. Everyone knows where they are, anyway. 1000 envelopes can be ordered for approximately \$25 through:

*Baptist Offering Envelope Service
PO Box 269
Chester, WV 26034*

1-800-627-9900

b) Tracts.

Buy some from a publisher or design your own. They need to be affordable but nice. Tracts will be your primary advertising when you get started. I recommend that you spend some money on nice tracts and/or brochures in the beginning.

God's Simple Plan of Salvation, by Ford Porter, is a widely-used tract, can be customized with your church information, and ordered relatively inexpensively. They can be ordered from Lifegate, Inc, from their website at: www.Godssimpleplan.org.

Calvary Publishing can also produce custom tracts (as well as many other useful printing projects, including brochures, prayer cards, letterhead, envelopes, business cards, banners, etc). Check out their website at www.calvarypublishing.org.

c) Visitor Cards.

d) Decision Cards.

e) Statements of Faith.

f) A Good Computer.

This will be a tremendous time-saver and a great tool for the church. With all of the great Publishing programs, you can use your computer to make almost everything the church needs such as brochures, flyers, bulletins, lessons, etc. Learn to use spreadsheets for keeping track of attendance, offerings, the finances, etc. My computer is the most useful tool I have.

g) Nursery Equipment.

You will need cribs, a changing table, swings, playpens, etc. Do not buy junk! Nursery equipment must be the best you can get a hold of. The “pack-n-play” collapsible playpens make great cribs when getting

started. They are smaller, therefore taking up less space, and they are easy to disassemble and move if needed. Make your nursery as nice as possible if you want young families to return.

h) A Sound System.

Some nice, simple set-ups can be purchased for a few hundred dollars. This may sound like a lot of money, but the most important equipment in a church is the sound system that carries the gospel message. A sermon that cannot be heard cannot be responded to. An amplifier, speakers, and microphone will get you started nicely.

i) Offering Plates.

If you can afford real offering plates, buy some. But they are not cheap. We started out with wicker baskets I bought at a dollar store. They got the job done.

j) A Pulpit and Teaching Stands.

A simple podium or wooden stand will work fine for a pulpit. The metal stands used for holding music work great for Sunday School teaching stands and can be purchased for \$20-40 each at any music store.

k) A Communion Set.

Perhaps a church buys a new set and you can get their old set. Write churches or ask around. You might find someone that will donate a nice set. A new set of one communion tray with lid and a bread plate with lid will cost approximately \$160.

l) A Good Electric Keyboard or Piano.

A piano is great if you can get one, and if you are going to be in a set location (as opposed to a mobile church meeting in 2 or 3 places). You will not want to lug a piano around every week. If you will watch the Classifieds in your local paper, you might find pianos and organs that are either free or very inexpensive. In a small or medium-sized building, an upright piano is just fine.

Save the baby grand for when you build your new auditorium.

A good Yamaha or Casio keyboard will be a tremendous asset, even if no one can play it immediately. It can be played as either a piano or an organ, and they are certainly less expensive than either. Since most keyboards are not loud enough for a service, buy a small 10-amp guitar amplifier for it. That will provide all the sound that you are likely to need. Our church used such a set-up for the organ, and it sounded just fine. Build a modesty rail or partition around it and you are set.

m) Sunday School Materials.

Flannel sets for the children's classes are great. Of course, you will need Sunday School records sheets and binders.

n) A Filing System.

This could be a nice filing cabinet or a small accordion style folder. But you need something to keep track of papers, records, receipts, decision cards, etc. Since you will most likely be your own secretary, learn how to file properly. Perhaps your wife can help with this.

o) A Lord's Supper Table.

You will want your meeting place to look as much like a Baptist church auditorium as possible. Perhaps you know someone that could make one for you. A fancy wooden table could cost a thousand dollars or more!

We improvised (you will do that a lot in church planting). We used a small, rectangular folding table with a nice white linen tablecloth that went all the way to the floor. A nice flower arrangement on top made a nice appearance. Later, a man donated a beautiful communion table to our church.

p) A Van.

This may be a stretch, but if it is possible for you to have one, you can use it to pick up converts for church. Our church bought one after six months, for \$5000. That van has been a tremendous asset to the church for a van route, for soul-winning, for traveling to meetings with men or ladies, and many other things.

q) Letterhead.

Make a nice letterhead on your computer and have some printed on nice paper. You can buy very nice parchment paper in bulk and print them yourself to save money. If you cannot afford this, plain white paper is fine.

r) Baptism Certificates. I have always preferred to make my own instead of buying them ready-made.

s) Record Sheets.

t) A Baptistery.

Hold off on this until you know what your facilities will be, or rather what will be available. A horse trough is cheap and effective. If you have the right facilities and some help, you could probably build one in your building. At least, you can make a glorified horse trough with a wooden false front and some steps.

u) Baptistery Robes.

These are not absolutely essential, but they are a good investment and will last a long time. You could get an assortment of sizes that will be sufficient for around \$200. Or, you might check around to see if a church would give or sell you their old ones. You will baptize more converts if you are ready to baptize them when they get saved at church (as opposed to making them come back later with a change of clothes).

v) Song books.

Someone might donate some used ones that are still functional. Or, you can save up and buy 20 or 30 brand new ones for two or three hundred dollars. They will be worth the investment.

w) Visitor packs.

Put together a little packet for visitors. Perhaps include a color brochure describing your new church, your mission statement and goals, and some information about yourself. Perhaps you can have some magnets or pens made with the church's name and information to include as a small gift.

15. Learn to be an effective soul-winner.

You cannot start a church without learning to be an effective personal soul-winner. You will not just hang a shingle out on a storefront and sit back and wait for people to show up. You have to go and get them. If you are starting from scratch, you will not even have the advantage of prospects. You will have to find them, too.

Study good books on soul-winning. Get lots and lots of experience. Go every week. Go several times a week.

Let me go a step further and say that you need to learn to knock doors in housing areas. Many young preachers in Bible College are bus workers who spend all their time in apartments and poor neighborhoods, where the highest percentage of bus kids come from. A church planter needs to learn to go to houses, too. When I was in Arlington, Texas, I spent almost all of my time in apartments with a high turnover ratio. When I moved to Wylie, I found that most of the city was middle-class to upper middle-class housing areas. It was quite a difference.

By the way, if you want God's blessings, go to EVERY house and apartment and trailer in town – rich and poor and in-between. Many will say that you should go just to the middle class, which is where they say that most church members come from. However, Jesus said to (*Mark 16:15*) **"Go ye into all the world, and**

preach the gospel to every creature." Let us avoid selective, demographic evangelism and do what Jesus said.

16. Learn all that you can from experienced church planters.

There are no two church planting experiences (or two church planters) that are exactly alike, but you can learn something from anyone that has successfully started a New Testament Church – if you will have enough humility to listen.

17. Do you have a trade?

In the next chapter, we will discuss some points on raising support for your new church. However, you may not be able to raise enough money to finance a church and support your family. It might be necessary to do some work on the side in the beginning.

Do you have a trade that could be used to help support your family as you start your church? Paul supported himself and his associates as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). You might look into starting a landscaping or lawn-maintenance business, or something of that nature that will help out in providing for your work. Perhaps you can do plumbing or electrical work or some sort of contract work that would give you flexibility.

Many church planters have to be bi-vocational in the beginning. Sometimes, this causes them to be looked-down upon by those who pastor churches that other men built. However, someone must pay the price to pioneer new churches.

18. Start a website as soon as you know where you are going.

People are using the Internet more and more to find churches in their area. Also, people moving to an area are using it to find prospective churches before they move. Use the Internet to your advantage. Design a simple website describing your goal in starting a church. Include information about yourself and your statement of faith. Encourage interested individuals to email you for further information. You never know, it might give you some prospects before you even get started.

19. Consider starting the church with a partner and his family.

The Saviour sent His disciples out two by two. There are many tremendous and obvious advantages to starting a church as a team. Of course, there are also obstacles to this approach. You will have to decide who is going to be the pastor, for one. Then, are you both going to be able to raise money? Who will go full-time first?

I did not use this approach but there were many, many times that I wished that I had. I believe that a partnership is the best way. However, churches can be started by pioneer church planters – just a man and his family starting from nothing and building up to something for the glory of God.

20. Remember that you will probably have to “make do” with whatever you have and wherever you end up.

However, we should be as prepared as possible. If you start a year ahead of time, you will have plenty of time to get ready for a great start.

CHECKLIST OF ITEMS NEEDED

Necessities:

- Tracts.
- A simple sound system.
- A piano, organ, or keyboard.
- Hymn books.
- Nursery equipment.
- At least one pulpit or teaching stand.
- Sunday School lessons.
- Offering plates or baskets.
- Offering Envelopes.
- A church website.
- A good computer.
- A communion set.
- Visitor Cards.
- Decision Cards.
- Statements of faith.
- Letterhead.
- A filing system.
- Visitor packs.

Wish List:

- A passenger van.
- A Lord's Supper table.
- A baptistery.
- Baptistery robes.

Chapter Two

RAISING SUPPORT

Many church planters skip this part altogether. They do not even attempt to raise any support. However, we should look at church planting as Home Missions, and allow other churches to invest in it, just as they do with foreign missions. ***It is a fact that starting a church is very expensive.*** Even if you can only raise \$1000 a month in support, it will be helpful. Why try to do it all alone when there might be help available?

However, this is without a doubt the most difficult part of being a church planter. We live in an unfortunate day when the cause of worldwide missions is being neglected by churches, and, sad to say, missionaries are often despised and usually just tolerated. A missionary trying to raise support to get to a foreign field may take two to four years to do so! ***If world missions is neglected, home missions is all but forgotten.*** Many pastors give no thought to the fact that there are scores of great cities in our own country with no strong gospel witness. Therefore, raising support as a church planting Home Missionary can be a very difficult task.

Part of the problem is that many Independent Baptists have taken a Convention-like approach to Home Missions. These pastors send their home missions money to a fellowship or board, and allow the fellowship to decide which men to support. I personally believe that the local church should choose each missionary that they support, both home and foreign. The problem is that fellowships tend to be more concerned with building their fellowships than in starting independent churches.

I called a famous Texas fellowship requesting support to start our church. I was told plainly, “We only support men who are going to start churches in our Fellowship.”

Fortunately, not all fellowships are like the one I mentioned. In fact, quite a bit of my personal support came from two Baptist fellowships that were more concerned about the cause of Christ than in their own personal interests. I am just bringing it up as a problem that church planters have to deal with if they try to raise support.

I would encourage you, as a pastor or future pastor, to consider how church planters SHOULD be supported. Where in the Bible is there any difference made between *foreign* and *home* missions? Church planting is church planting, whether it is in Texas or Thailand, China or Cleveland, California or Columbia. Home missions should be a part of our missions budget, and we should choose our own church planters for support, just as we choose our own foreign missionaries.

The cause of foreign missions would be helped greatly in the long run if we would get back to home missions. New churches mean new members, and new offerings, and new opportunities. Think of all the missions money being wasted in cities that do not have soul-winning churches! For example, in the first few years, our small church gave over \$100,000 to world missions. An investment in a new church is a long-term investment in missions giving.

I believe that home missions is just as much a part of the Great Commission as foreign missions, and it is the churches' responsibility to start new churches in their country (Acts 1:8). I want to at least try to help some churches carry out the Commission.

I started our church with about \$1000 a month coming in. I worked full-time on a freight dock when we started, working about 50 hours a week and 10 hours a week driving time. One day, I was unloading a trailer full of boxes and I thought, "I could be out soul-winning or visiting instead of doing this." I prayed for God to allow me to go full-time. That week, a pastor called and invited me to a fellowship meeting. Through that meeting and the support that was raised, I was able to quit my job five months after starting the church. That support made a huge difference!

I have known some church planters who were able to support themselves with their own businesses or with side-jobs. However, not everyone has this opportunity. In any case, let us try to help churches to carry out the Great Commission by seeking their support for our ministries.

1. Figure out how much support that you will need in your target area.

Of course, if you have children to feed, your support need is higher. Also, factor in the standard of living for the area in which you will be starting your church. There is a great difference between prices and costs in California and Arkansas. You will need enough support to take care of your family's needs, and to rent a meeting place, pay utility bills, advertise, print, etc. You may or may not be able to get health insurance. At this writing, our family still has none.

2. Give yourself enough time to raise this support.

We set a date and worked towards that as our goal. No matter what, we were going to start at the end of 2000. I was never able to do any sort of full-time deputation. What you can do will depend upon your financial situation and the number of people you know. For example, the son or grandson of a well-respected pastor is going to have a much easier time raising support than someone who is unknown. Your pastor's reputation may also be a great help if he is a well-known or respected man.

One problem that you will face is that almost all pastors are very reluctant to support a church planter two years from his start date. They will support foreign missionaries during their deputation, but not home missionaries. Many will not send a dime until the start date (after you somehow get there and are ready to go). Whether this is fair or not is not the issue. It is just something to deal with.

May I say a word to pastors and future pastors? Church planters need support *before* they reach their fields. Let us treat home missionaries as we do foreign missionaries. A church planter

trying to raise support will need that support, or he will not even be able to raise the support he needs. How can he travel to meetings if he is held down to a full-time secular job? At the least, we can help him to raise money that he will need for supplies, rent, and necessary things.

I suppose that some pastors worry that the church planter will never make it to the field, and therefore the support might be wasted. Well, I suppose that is a risk we take with all missionaries. Again, let us treat home missionaries for what they are: missionaries. If I have not convinced you to send the support, perhaps you will consider setting the money aside in an account to be given to them when they get started.

3. Send a mail-out to pastors asking for support as a church planting home missionary.

Send this mail-out to three groups in particular:

- 1) Pastors that you know, or that you feel might support you because of a personal association. Most Pastors are much more likely to support someone that they already know and trust, or which they are somehow associated to (such as through a Pastor friend or a Bible College).
- 2) Pastors that would be personally interested in the area to which you are going. For example, I would personally be much more interested in someone who is starting a church twenty miles from me in a city that I know is needy, than in someone who is going to an area I am ignorant of and may never even see. The honest truth is that I am more concerned about the Dallas area than the suburbs of Los Angeles, simply because I live here in the Dallas area. So, find churches within a general area or in the state to which you are going, and contact them.
- 3) Pastors that are known to love home missions.

This mailing would include a letter of recommendation from your pastor, and a brief statement of your purpose. I recently received a letter of this kind from a man starting a church in Arkansas. In it, he told of his plans, his background, his previous

church work, the amount of support he needed, and included a “wish list” of things he needed. Many churches helped out filling this wish list, and he got a good head-start.

Ask to be supported for two years. Many pastors will only support a church planter for six months. I do not agree with this and wish that pastors would be more realistic. It is almost impossible to start a church from scratch in six months. But make a specific request for two years. If they only promise one, take it and run with it, and perhaps they will change their mind after the first year.

4. Call pastors that you know.

That is why I stated earlier that you need to make friends of Pastors and gain a good reputation and testimony with them. Call the men that know you first.

If possible, try to raise support without traveling for meetings. Most churches (at least, in my experience) will not support you until you actually start the church. Therefore, it is difficult to get away and travel on deputation. How can you quit your job if no one will support you until you go?

Perhaps the hardest thing I have ever had to do is call pastors to ask for meetings or support. It can be extremely discouraging, especially when the secretary promises the pastor will call you later, but he never does. However, remember the work that you are trying to accomplish and get this important part done!

5. Keep your ears open for pastors that have a heart for church planting.

There are some of these dear pastors out there. If you hear of them, perhaps from missionaries, call them immediately. Almost half of my original support came from one pastor and his church. I heard about him through a missionary friend that had been at his missions conference.

6. Apply for help from fellowships.

Many pastors send their church planting money to fellowships, which then support church planters. Usually, one man or a

committee is responsible for choosing the home missionaries that the fellowship will support. Though I do not agree with this personally, my opinion would not stop me from applying to some of them.

Other fellowships are loose-knit, and will give church planters an opportunity to present themselves to the pastors at a fellowship meeting. Interested pastors then pledge support from their churches. I raised quite a bit of support from one such fellowship.

7. Prepare for a simple deputation if possible.

You may not need slides (though it would not hurt if you can put together a nice presentation), but a nice display board is in order. An inexpensive one can be made. Have some prayer cards made. Nice business cards will work fine, or you can make some simple prayer cards on your computer.

8. Save all of your love offerings and support.

On my little deputation, I took all of my love offerings, and all the support that came in, and saved it until we started the church. I had to work full-time throughout my deputation, so all of the money was saved. To start our church, with our particular situation, cost me several thousand dollars up front. I was glad I had saved that money!

9. Consider seeking out a partnership or help from a church in the general area.

If you know of a good church in the general area in which you are going, contact their pastor and see if he would be interested in helping to plant your new church. He might be able to help with volunteers, equipment, or even prospects. They also might be a tremendous financial help. Most pastors are going to be more concerned with their own regions than those that they never see.

10. Send prayer letters every month to your supporting churches.

This is very important. Send one every month, reporting on the work and most importantly including prayer requests. Include numbers and results, no matter how small they may seem to you.

Do not try to hide anything, and certainly do not exaggerate. Exaggeration is a lie-ability.

Some churches doubled my support because of my consistent prayer letters. I often had pastors comment on them. Others were able to help us with needs. Those letters are important!

Chapter Three

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST SERVICES

This lesson presupposes that you have already decided where God wants you to start a church. No man can tell you this – God must direct your heart into His will.

I do not believe that you should blindfold yourself and place your finger on a map. I believe you should pray and seek God's perfect guidance in this extremely important matter. I believe that God does not just have a work for us to do, but a place and a people to do this work in and for. Somewhere out there, God is preparing a people for a pastor, just as He has been preparing you for a people. Trust God to guide you as you move forward and seek His will.

I would challenge you to consider reaching the big cities through the suburbs or surrounding towns. Most of the time, starting a church in a large city is very, very difficult because of costs, crowding, and codes. Check the area to see where growth is occurring. The small town just outside of the city might be tripling in size over the next five years.

For example, I recently learned of a small town just south of us named Fate, Texas. Fate sits on I-30 in Rockwall county, which is among the fastest growing counties in America. The town sign boasts a population of 497. That does not sound like much – until you discover that the city has recently approved a new housing development of *5000 homes*. This little town on the interstate is about to explode into a bedroom community of 20,000 people, and will have easy access to hundreds of thousands of others. What an opportunity to get in early and get a church established before the new people arrive (and the costs skyrocket)!

When is the best time to start a church? We started in the Fall, but if I had it to do over again I would start in the Spring. The Fall has too many holidays, and this is a difficult time to start from

scratch. I would start in the Spring, gather prospects all Summer, and then have a big Fall campaign.

1. Get moved.

This may sound simple, but of course, it is not. Find a decent home for your family. If you cannot afford a house, get a nice apartment. This is important. Your family will work hard, especially your wife, and go without many things. Do whatever it takes to provide them a decent home in a decent part of town.

2. Find a meeting place.

If you are going someplace reasonably close to your sending church, it would be wise to find the meeting place first, secure it, and then move. Wylie is only 55 miles from our sending church in Arlington. This made it much easier for us. If you are moving long distance, you will have to make more difficult arrangements.

In my opinion, the first thing you should do is try to find an existing church property for sale. God might have the perfect place already built for you. We leased and then mortgaged the Wylie Church of God's property, including an auditorium, 2-story Sunday School building, and gymnasium, sitting on 2.5 acres of land. The property was in really bad shape but it looked like the New Jerusalem to us. We never were in a storefront. It was a miracle, but we serve a God that is able!

I recently heard of a new church west of us that was able to buy a Southern Baptist church property, including an auditorium, Sunday School building, and parsonage, for less than \$40,000.

If you do not find a church property, try the following places: storefronts, schools, childcare facilities, hotel banquet rooms, rented buildings, or community meeting halls. Perhaps a tent could be used if all else fails. Give yourself time to find a good location.

If at all possible, get a place that is all your own. This will save you the trouble of a "mobile church" – carrying your things around in a truck or trailer and setting up for each service.

If you rent a place, make sure first that it will pass code for a church meeting place! What may work for you may not work for the city! Then you will be stuck with a lease and still have no place to meet.

Of course, you may not get a good situation. One church planter I know was meeting in three different places during the week – at a school on Sunday morning, another school on Sunday night, and a rented church facility for Wednesday nights. Everything was carried around in trailers and set up for each service. Others have started in tents, and stayed in tents for quite some time.

3. Get insurance for the church.

You will need Liability Insurance and Counseling Insurance, and perhaps property insurance. Ask your sending Pastor for advice on who to get insurance from and what kind to get.

4. Advertise as much as possible. Make yourself known.

If you are in a small town, advertisement can be bought very inexpensively in the local paper. In a large city, even a small ad would be extremely expensive. Send in an announcement for the “Community” section of the paper announcing your first services. Usually, a paper will announce this for free.

The Phone Book is probably the best way to advertise. If possible, get listed under “Independent Baptist” or even “Independent – Fundamental.” In our town, they had to start a new listing – we are the only Independent Baptists in town! But should a good, solid, independent Baptist family move to Wylie, one of the first things they will do is open the phone book to “Churches.”

The Internet is an incredible tool these days. A nice website is tremendous advertising, especially for people who are considering moving into your area. A lady in our church designed ours (www.lbcwylie.com). We have had visitors from California to Virginia because of our website. People moving from out of state will usually use the Internet to find a church. A nice website can be made for free through ForMinistry.com, and a domain name

can be purchased inexpensively through their site. I encourage you to start one right away.

Mail outs are very effective in some areas. We have never had much success with them here in Texas, but I know of men in the western states that have had a great deal of success from them.

Of course, nothing beats the personal visit. Print some flyers, grab some tracts, and get out and knock doors. Talk to everyone you meet. If you have a group of people that you are starting with, enlist them to invite the people they know. Everybody that you know knows somebody that you do not know!

5. Plan the Grand Opening Service.

Some have “Get Acquainted Meetings” before their Grand Opening Service. This is fine, especially if you have a group of folks that want to start a church. However, in my opinion, the best place to get acquainted is in the actual church services! So, in my opinion, I believe it is best just to go soul-winning and visit and work, and set a date to start your church on.

We began leasing the property of the Wylie Church of God. To give them time to move out, we shared the property for the first month. We had a Sunday afternoon service and the Wednesday service, and they had Sunday morning and Sunday night. Then we had our big Grand Opening Service the next month, in November, when we started our Sunday School. So I guess that first month would count as “Get Acquainted Meetings.”

We had 30 for our Grand Opening Service on November 12, 2000. Several of those families are still with us.

6. Start full-speed ahead!

By this, I mean start with Sunday School and all three services if at all possible. Have soul-winning times. We have had Wednesday night services since the first week we started. What else are you going to do – sit home and watch TV on Wednesday? If no one shows up, preach to your family. They need preaching too, and you are their Pastor. If your family does not show up, you are in more trouble than I can help you with!

Start the Sunday School right away. Why not? If you can do nothing else, have one big class for everyone. Or, do as we did, and split all the children off into one class to be taught by your wife.

Have a set church-wide Soul-winning time or two. We started with Thursday night and Tuesday night. On Tuesday night, my wife would go soul-winning with her partner, and I would stay home and watch our kids. On Thursday, I would go, at first by myself. Later, we added Saturday morning soul-winning, and then a soul-winning nursery so more could go. We started with 3 people going soul-winning a week. Within two years, we had over 30 a week out. But you have to start somewhere, and you cannot wait until you have a church full of soul-winners begging to go.

7. Perhaps start with a week-long revival.

I know of many churches that have been started in this way. If your Pastor would assist in this, and some folks from your home church if it is not too far away, you could get off to a good start.

8. Open a Checking and Savings Account.

You will need to deposit the money somewhere. Have the account in the church's name. Because I was the only man when we started the church, I was the only one that could sign checks. Now, our trustees can also sign checks if needed.

Chapter Four

THE FIRST YEAR

I believe that a church's first year is extremely important. In that first year, and perhaps really in the first five years, the foundation of the church is laid. However, do not get discouraged if the first year is somewhat unproductive. Churches are not easy to start these days.

The fact is that you may start two churches in the first three or four years. At least, it will seem that way because of the turnover. Some believe that starting a church is as easy as getting that first group together and organizing. Well, that first group may not last as long as you think! It is a fact that many churches start with one group, but there is a turnover after the first couple of years, and it takes another group to build the church. My pastor told me that this would happen and he was right! Except for a handful of families, the early group that we started with have "gone the way of all the earth."

Having said that, make the first year count. Consider yourself in a race to get as much done and as many in as possible. Here are some suggestions:

1. Knock every door in town immediately, and then do it again.

The importance of house-to-house visitation cannot be overemphasized. It will do you no good to have the greatest sermon ever preached on Sunday morning, if no one is there to hear it! You must get out and knock hundreds and hundreds of doors to get folks to come. Set a goal to knock every door in town. Leave tracts everywhere.

Do not get discouraged. Most of the time, people that you meet will not come to church that week. Sometimes it may be

months before they come. I knocked a neighborhood of several hundred doors in October of 2000, and did not see one person saved. Two months later, on Christmas Eve, a family walked in from that neighborhood. I had left a tract on their door and they finally came. They became one of our most faithful families.

It has been well said: IF YOU GO AFTER THOSE YOU DO NOT GET, GOD WILL GIVE YOU THOSE YOU DO NOT GO AFTER.

When we started, I had to continue working full-time on the dock of SAIA Motor Freight. I drove 45 minutes each way, unless I hit traffic. I worked from 6 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Saturday. I would get home around 5 PM, clean up, and go knock on doors. I did this every night. If you can start full-time, spend at least 8 hours a day knocking doors. If you start at 10 AM, you can have the mornings for studying and business. Perhaps you can go from 10 AM to 2 PM, and then 4 PM to 8 PM. Eat lunch with your family, and then be home in time for family altar and bedtime.

By knocking doors, I mean house-to-house **soul-winning**. (*Acts 5:42*) **“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”** The fact is that your best prospects are your new converts. So, go soul-winning as you knock doors! If it worked in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts, it will work anywhere.

2. Lay the groundwork of teaching.

Build a foundation for you preaching through your teaching ministry. In the Bible, teaching and preaching go together:

- (*Mat 11:1*) **“And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.”**
- (*Acts 5:42*) **“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”**
- (*Acts 15:35*) **“Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”**

- (Col 1:28) **“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:”**

You will have new Christians, and perhaps some that have been saved for a long time, but have never encountered our brand of sold-out, Bible Christianity. Teach them WHY you believe what you believe. Take your Bible and show them WHY.

Teach “here a little, there a little.” You cannot shove all the knowledge you have accumulated over years down someone’s throat in three months. Teach PRINCIPLES and have patience with people as they learn. Saturate your sermons and lessons with Bible. Constantly let your people hear, “The Bible says...” as you preach.

Of course, teaching is not as exciting as preaching. But preaching loses its effectiveness unless the groundwork is laid through proper teaching of the word of God.

3. Preach!

Preaching and teaching go together. Teaching gives knowledge, but preaching demands action based on the knowledge. A main problem with these “Bible” churches is it is all teaching, no action. So preach, Preacher, preach!

Preach Christ! Preach the gospel! Preach the great themes of the Bible! Preach about prayer, and victory, and service, and judgment, and service, and the home, and marriage, and child-rearing, and the Second Coming, and the promises of God.

Preach for results. Teach your people to use the altar. It is not just for people to get saved at, and for old backsliders to repent at. It is for all Christians, even those who are right with God.

4. Start your missions program immediately.

Missions is not a program of the church, it is the purpose of the church. Missions is the lifeblood of a church, and a church without missions is dead. We took on six missionaries the very first Sunday – four foreign missionaries and two home missions projects. This came out of our own pocket. I believe with all my

soul that God will abundantly bless a missions-hearted church. Give God a church that is sacrificially seeking to fulfill the Great Commission, and He will bless it.

Have missionaries in once a month. Take up a love offering at the end of the service. Read missionary prayer letters in Sunday School and the services. Keep missions before your people.

5. Be patient with your new people. Remember that you are pastoring a spiritual nursery.

Pray that God will give you a Pastor's heart:

- (1 Th 2:7-12) **“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: {8} So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. {9} For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. {10} Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: {11} As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, {12} That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”**

Give people time to grow. God does not expect us to go from a baby Christian to an apostle Paul overnight. But He does expect growth.

6. Train soul-winners, and then choose leaders from among the faithful soul-winners.

You are defeating yourself if you preach that everyone should win souls, and then promote people to leadership that do not win souls. How will these people lead their followers? Do you think that non-soul winners will lead people to become soul-winners? Of course not. Now you have leaders and followers who do not

practice what you preach. Eventually, you will have to change your message, or they will change their pastor!

Not only that, but soul-winners make the best Christians, and you want the best Christians in leadership. You have no chance of building a soul-winning church with a non-soul-winning leadership in your church. Take a strong stand. Do not sacrifice the future on the altar of the temporary! Do you need a new teacher? Pick one from your soul-winners.

Those who do not go soul-winning can serve in other areas as helpers, but never leaders. They can help in the nursery, but not be the superintendent. They can usher, but not be the head usher. They can help with repairs and maintenance. You will have folks that will not go, but they can do something. I hope that they start going, but I am not going to run them off if they do not. I want them to be able to earn some rewards at the Judgment Seat.

7. Begin using commitment forms for your leaders in the church.

This is vital to have a cohesive leadership and workforce for your church. Working in a ministry of the Lord's church is a privilege, and all privileges come with responsibilities.

Why have a Commitment Form? (*Amos 3:3*) **“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”** This form accomplishes several important things:

- a) It declares dedication and loyalty to the leadership of the church and its stand.
- b) It requires a denial of the flesh. Obviously, those who are not willing to commit themselves to the work are not fit for service.
- c) It produces a leadership in harmony and agreement, and keeps out those who are not in harmony or agreement.
- d) It produces consistency in every area and aspect of the church.

- e) It provides a statement of minimum standards and requirements so that every worker will know what is expected of him by his church.
- f) It provides a tool of accountability.

Every great business or organization requires an oath or pledge to support the goals and standards of that organization. The Lord's business is the greatest in the world.

8. Screen all workers and do a criminal background check to protect your church and yourself.

9. Keep the church to a budget.

There will be a chapter later with ideas for setting up an Initiatory Budget for a new church. However, it cannot be stated enough – stay out of debt! Keep the church financially sound! I am not a financial wizard by any stretch of the imagination, but I know this truth: *“If your outgo exceeds your income, the upkeep will be your downfall.”* I was able to get financing of \$186,900 for a 10 month old church at least partly because I was able to show the bankers that we had been wise with our money.

10. Use other churches for helpful programs when possible.

For example, twice a year my home church has a program called the Men of the Word. It is a fine ministry dedicated to helping men be great Christian laymen, husbands, and fathers. Since we started LBC, we have been to every one of them, and it has been a blessing. We send our ladies to Ladies' Spectaculars once a year. When we go to Camp, we go with our sending church.

In other words, the other church funds a program, and you get to take advantage of it. They do not mind because they want a crowd. In the end, both churches are blessed, but especially yours!

11. Keep in touch with your home church and pastor.

12. Watch out for “buzzards” and the “mixed multitude” that are often attracted to new churches.

Beware of folks that want to come to church but not join. Beware of older “ex-preachers.” They could possibly destroy your church if you are not careful. Beware of flatterers. They usually have a hidden agenda.

One of the toughest lessons a church planter must learn is this: ***not everyone is a good prospect for your church.*** It is the Lord’s job to build His church (Matthew 16:18) – it is our job to win souls and carry out the Commission. If some folks do not stay, it may be a blessing in disguise.

13. “Keep thyself pure.”

Never be alone with any woman at any time for any reason in your office or at the church house!!! This, of course, excludes family. DO NOT HUG WOMEN IN YOUR CHURCH! I do not want men hugging on my wife – and most likely, neither does any other normal red-blooded man. You do not need to hug any women. I was surprised by how many times I had to stop an attempted hug after I became a pastor. If they need a hug, let them hug their own husbands, or if they are single or divorced, they can hug your wife. Let your rules be well know. I did – and it has been a long time since I had to stop an attempted hug!

14. Emphasize the Sunday School and the evening services.

Do whatever you can to build up your evening services. This is where people grow. The best discipleship program in the world is Sunday School and faithfulness to the preaching services.

15. Teach a soul-winning class as soon as possible.

You will not have a soul-winning church without trained soul-winners. It is true that soul-winning is more caught than taught, but teaching helps. Training removes the fear many Christians have about soul-winning.

16. Utilize campaigns for growth.

Sunday School Campaigns and Church-wide campaigns are a must for a new church. You have new members that know a lot of people that you do not know. A Campaign is a great motivation for getting your people to go after their friends and family.

The first campaigns should be simple, and should not require a captain or leader (you may not have any). Our first Spring Campaign involved four Super Sundays – one a month during the Spring. The last Super Sunday was Friend Day. The person that had the most visitors for each particular Sunday won a prize.

Our first Fall Campaign was the Adam and Eve Campaign. Again, this did not require a team coach. It was just the men versus the ladies.

Here are some pointers for a campaign in a new church:

- a) Have the nicest prizes that you can afford. **It takes money to get folks to church.** You cannot save until they come, you must spend and get them to come.
- b) Allow visitors for both Sunday School and the morning service. Of course, those that come to both count twice.
- c) Utilize campaigns that involve every service.
- d) Include Revivals and Bible Conferences in the Campaign. This will help ensure good attendance, and provide more motivation to bring visitors.
- e) Announce it ahead of time and motivate people.
- f) When you have team captains, always reward both the winner and the loser. In a church campaign, the only real loser should be the devil!
- g) Have prizes for the different age groups represented, such as children, teens, and adults.
- h) If one team is really beating the other team, double the point scale to let them get back into the race. Otherwise, if the other team realizes they cannot win, they will give up, and an 8-week campaign becomes a 5-week campaign.

17. Here a little, there a little.

Wherever you end up starting your church, odds are it may not look like a church at first. Even though we were actually in a church building, it was pretty run-down by its previous owners. We did not have to money or ability to fix everything at once. But

we could fix things “here a little, there a little.” A little paint here, a silk plant there, etc, and before you know it, you will be in good shape. Be patient.

18. Have a church dress code.

What is wrong with showing up to a church basketball game in shorts and a tank top? How should ladies dress when they work in the nursery? Having a written dress code, and making it available, will keep people from being embarrassed. Ours is printed annually in our church almanac/calendar and given to members and new members as they join.

In your dress code, make allowance for those who may not have a closet full of modest clothing. One of the finest ladies in our church, when she got saved, did not own a dress. She wore pants for months as they struggled financially. Another lady won a prize (money for church clothes) for a campaign and gave it to this lady. Since then, she is a model of modesty and an outstanding worker in our church. What if I had run her off?

19. Raise walls of defense for your church

As Pastor, it is your job to protect your church and keep it pure for the Lord. The devil loves to get a church off course when it is brand new. That dooms it to an early grave. He would love to write his initials in the wet cement that forms the foundation of your church. Therefore, raise a Five-Fold Wall Of Defense from day one:

- a) **Strong Preaching.** *The best defense a church has is a strong pulpit and an educated pew.* Preach hard and preach the whole counsel of God. Let ‘er rip and the buzzards and mixed multitude will leave for the closest non-denominational church. Preach on the blood, on the King James, on being Baptist, on living “whole hog” for God. Preach against sin and name it. Do not be a crowd pleaser. Please the Lord.
- b) **Standards for Leadership.** Find a great soul-winning church and you will not just find a great pastor, but a great army of leaders who follow the pastor and get the work

done. If you have low standards for the leaders, you can be sure that the followers will not do more!

c) Choose Leaders from Soul-winners.

d) Control the Music Program.

e) Stand for Proper Baptism. Do not accept Catholic or Protestant baptism. To do so is to recognize them as being true churches with the authority to baptize, which they are not. You are starting a Baptist church, not an interdenominational church. Baptism is the door to church membership and must be carefully guarded. Do not let anyone join that has a questionable salvation testimony or baptism. The historic Baptist position is that it takes Baptist baptism to become a Baptist. If you compromise with this early, you will regret it later – and so will any pastor that follows you.

20. Teach your folks to respond during the service.

Encourage them to sing, and teach them to Whom they are singing. Encourage the men to say “Amen.” That takes more training than you might think. Do not let them get in the worldly habit of clapping as though they are at a ballgame or a performance.

Teach them to use the altar at the invitation, and heavily discourage leaving during the invitation. Teach the ladies to nod their head or wave a hanky during the preaching. We made little “Amen signs” for the ladies to hold up during the service. Teach them how to keep their children under control during the service. Teach the men to pray publicly. These things are not common knowledge. It is up to you to train them!

A note on this: never embarrass a man about praying publicly. I made that mistake once, and the service was all but ruined. I asked him from the pulpit, “Bro. _____, would you lead us in prayer?” He looked me square in the eye and said, “I don’t know how to do that.” As smoothly as possible (which was not very smooth at all), I transitioned into a prayer of my own.

I apologized to him after the service. Now, I always ask a man *before* the service if he would mind praying publicly during the service. If he says no, then I do not call on him.

21. Lead the church to begin paying you a salary.

It is the church's God-given responsibility to support its pastor. (*1 Cor 9:14*) **“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”** As the church grows, and the offerings increase, your salary should increase. You will need it as your support drops off after the first year!

When you draw up your church budget, always make your salary bigger than you can afford. For example, we started at \$400 a month, or \$100 a week. Sometimes we only had enough for me to take \$350, but when the money was there I could get the full \$400.

22. Work harder than you have ever worked in your life!

Earn the support that you receive. You are the pastor now. You will not have someone checking up on you or kicking you out of bed in the morning. There are no time clocks to punch, and no one to plan your work for you. This is what you went to school for. This is what you dreamed of. Now get out there and make it happen!

Live by a schedule. Work seven days a week for at least the first year. After that, if the church has grown, you will have to adjust your schedule, and maybe you can schedule a day off. But the first year you are in a race. Many churches will only support a church planter for one year (a ridiculous practice in my opinion), so after the first year your support will drop. If you spend that year on vacation, you will starve the next year!

Here is a simple schedule for a church planter in his first year:

SUNDAY

Morning – Prepare for services, get everything ready.
Sunday School, Church. Lunch.

Afternoon – Soul winning.

Evening – Church.

MONDAY

Administrative Work: Make church deposit; pay bills; send out visitor letters; file records; make phone calls; plan this week's schedule; odds & ends. Monday should be spent taking care of the “boring” business so that it does not interfere with the rest of the week.

Go home early and spend time with the family.

TUESDAY

Morning – Study. Write your Wednesday night sermon.

Afternoon / Evening – Soul-winning.

Night – Watch the kids while your wife has Ladies' Soul-winning.

WEDNESDAY

Morning – Study Wednesday night sermon and Sunday School lesson.

Afternoon – Soul-winning.

Evening – Church.

THURSDAY

Morning – Study. Write your Sunday night sermon.

Afternoon – Soul-winning.

Evening – Dinner at home. Soul-winning.

FRIDAY

Morning – Study. Write your Sunday morning sermon.

Afternoon – Friday is a good day to dress in work clothes and take care of work around the church such as repairs, lawn work, remodeling, painting, etc. It also gives a little break going into the weekend.

Evening – Family night at home.

SATURDAY

Morning – Soul-winning.

Afternoon – Visit Prospects / prepare for Sunday services.

Evening – Dinner at home.

Night – Season of Prayer and Study.

If you get worn out, take a day off. No one is a machine. If you notice that your family needs some extra time, give it to them. But for the most part, keep to your schedule.

23. Love the people that God gives you.

Be their Pastor. Do not get so busy that you forget that you have people that need you! Visit them, pray for them daily by name, go to the hospital with them, preach the funerals of their loved ones, marry their children, and soothe their hurts. Make friends with the men in your church. Let your wife make friends with the ladies, especially the single women or divorcees.

Do not hide in your office until right before church starts, and then run back to the office when church is over. Do not be lofty and aloof from your people. Get out there and mingle and talk and laugh. Tell some jokes. Eat in their homes when they invite you. This is so important! Give your people your time.

Not everyone in your church will agree with everything you believe. Try to remember a rule: “Teach the teachable, but love them all.” If you touch their hearts, they will come back.

24. Don't preach too much on controversial issues in the first year.

Do not go to seed on your favorite hobbyhorse issue. Preach to meet the daily, practical needs of your people. Someone has said that the average man in the church is more interested in paying his bills and raising his kids than he is in dispensational theology or the Protestant Reformation. Keep that in mind when you preach.

25. Don't proselyte from other fundamental churches. In fact, if there are other fundamental churches close by, plan on going somewhere else. Why put another church in a town when there are thousands of towns and cities that do not even have one?

26. Take your kids to Junior or Youth Camps.

If God gives you even one teenager, take that teenager to Youth Camp. If God gives you even one Junior Age kid, take him to Junior Camp. Do not wait until you have 20 to take. Invest in the ones God gives you. God is watching to see if you will take care of that which is least.

At the same time, take *your* kids to camp. Even if the only children are your own, they deserve to go to camp. Take them! They deserve to have a Pastor that cares about them, too!

27. Expect steady, not spectacular growth.

Churches that launch like rockets often explode in the same manner. A sound church, like most any living organism, will grow steadily. There will be growth spurts, to be sure, but mostly constant growth. You may gain 10 new members, and have 8 move or backslide. You have grown by 2. Most churches grow through peaks and valleys. As long as the peaks grow higher, you are growing.

Some churches have had extraordinary growth. The key word there was "*extraordinary.*" That means that it is *not ordinary.* There is no need to compare your church with others. Thank God for extraordinary churches (there is no sense in being jealous or critical of them), but do not be discouraged if yours does not experience stellar growth.

Look for Growth in Areas other than Sunday Morning Church:

- Sunday School – this is where growth really occurs. Are the classes filling? Are you adding new classes to existing ones?
- Evening Services –Steady growth in the evening services is a sign of a church that is becoming mature and strong.
- Soul-winning Attendance – Are any new soul-winners being trained? Since all leaders are coming from the soul-winners,

growth in this area is a great sign of a leadership forming in your church.

- Personal Growth – when new converts get established and begin working in ministry, this is wonderful growth. When someone adopts Biblical standards, or begins soul-winning, this is cause for celebration.

Do not compare your church to others. Some men have had different advantages. Who should I compare myself to? No one else has started an Independent, Fundamental, soul-winning, King James Bible exclusive, separated Baptist church in Wylie, Texas. It is unwise to start comparing yourself with others. No one but you has started *your church in your town with your resources.*

It is also foolish and arrogant to look down upon others that have not seen as much growth as your church has. The conceit among many preachers is distressing. The failure of many churches can be traced back to the point that the church realized that it was a great church. Then, it stopped doing what had made it great. Pride always leads downhill.

28. Follow up on your prospects.

Of course, this includes those who visit your services. It may include a New Move-In List for your town. It is a fact that “Prospects equal Potential.”

29. Maintain a close walk with God.

This is so important, yet it is so easy to get busy and neglect our devotional life and walk with God. You must spend time in your Bible everyday. You must spend time in prayer everyday. You must live a Spirit-filled life. Otherwise, you will get weary, discouraged, and defeated. Give God the first hour of every day for Bible reading and prayer.

Spend time studying your Bible. Make time to do so. (2 Tim 2:6) **"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits."** The farmer that feeds others first of all feeds himself.

30. Defeat discouragement.

I heard a preacher say once that he never gets discouraged. I guess that all of his discouragement got mailed to me by mistake! Later, I saw this preacher get discouraged and realized that he was just flesh and blood like the rest of us. Discouragement comes to us all. It is a temptation that is common to all men.

Discouragement cannot always be avoided, but it can be defeated. A church planter must learn to handle discouragement, because it is an ever-present enemy. It can cripple or ruin or ministry.

The best way to defeat discouragement is to outrun it. Just keep on running. Keep running your race and discouragement will fade away. Get through the quitting place.

31. Have fellowship times in the church.

Plan “get-togethers” throughout the year. These events are not superfluous. They help to pull the church together, to create bonds and friendships. They are relationship-builders.

Some ideas would include:

- Coffee and doughnuts before or after Sunday School.
- Sunday night “afterglows” or S.N.A.C. times (S.N.A.C. stands for Sunday Night After Church). This could be at the church meeting place, at a pizza restaurant, or at a nearby park.
- Mother’s Day banquets and Father’s Day cookouts.
- Memorial or Labor Day picnics.
- Basketball, football, or softball games.
- Men’s fishing trips.
- Trips to special meetings.
- Valentine’s Day banquets.
- Christmas parties.

Chapter Five

**BUILDING A SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM IN A
NEW CHURCH**

Soul-winning is the primary purpose of the church (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8, etc). Therefore, the pastor must make sure that soul-winning is the primary ministry of the church. You must build an environment that is conducive to a soul-winning church.

Within three years, our church was averaging half its Sunday School attendance out soul-winning. If you count the babies in the nursery, it was closer to 60%. This did not just happen by accident, and we are still maintaining that level of activity. In the last five years, our church members have visited more than 60,000 homes – an average of 12,000 a year.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Teach a soul-winning course regularly.

Training takes the fear out of soul-winning. Most people are afraid to start. Giving them a “plan of action” helps them to overcome this nervousness. Do not teach this on Wednesday nights. Teach it during a special time, such as before the Sunday night service. You CANNOT force people to be soul-winners. Work with those who want to learn. Love and feed those who do not, and perhaps one day they will.

2. Be a faithful, aggressive soul-winner yourself.

If no one else shows up, you should still go. Inspire and lead by example. Tell others what a great time you had out soul-winning. Never talk negatively about soul-winning.

3. Encourage your wife to be a faithful soul-winner.

4. Have as many set times as possible during the week.

This gives people options on when to go. Thursday, Tuesday, and Saturday are standard times for most soul-winning. Make these times known.

5. Have a nursery for at least one of the scheduled times.

Saturday is typically the best.

6. Include the children.

Pair them up with adults. They make great silent partners. And people are nicer to you when you have a child with you!

We start taking our kids out as soon as they have been saved and baptized. That is the order of the Great Commission, isn't it? Therefore it is not unusual for us to have four-year-olds out soul-winning with their parents.

7. Find new people to be your silent partners, and train them.

Encourage your other soul-winners to do the same.

8. Do all of the planning for them.

Have an area picked out before hand. Your soul-winners should just have to show up and be ready to go. Again, this takes some of the fear and frustration out of soul-winning. It also keeps you from knocking the same street three times in one week.

Pair up the soul-winners yourself. All your people should have to do is show up and get their assignment.

9. Keep accurate records of attendance, the number of visits made, and professions of faith. This will encourage you and your folks.

10. Keep track of where your soul-winners go so that you do not overwork the same area while ignoring others. I keep track by highlighting streets on a map as we visit them each year.

11. Perhaps have an annual Soul-winning banquet and honor your soul-winners.

12. Have an annual Workers' Appreciation service and honor your soul-winners as workers, just like the nursery workers or teachers.

It is a ministry just like Sunday School and should be honored as such.

13. Preach on soul-winning, but not all the time.

14. It is not necessary to have an elaborate meeting beforehand.

You can just meet together, fellowship a little, get paired up, pray and go.

15. Require that all leaders be weekly soul-winners.

This promotes a consistent atmosphere, and keeps soul-winning in the proper place of preeminence.

16. Realize that not everyone will be a soul-winner, but everyone can help build a soul-winning church.

I have a man in my church that has never gone soul-winning, but he recently repaired our steeple, painted the front of the church, and laid tile in our nursery. I have some ladies that do not go soul-winning but are helpers in the nursery. These people do not go, and I wish they would, and they cannot be leaders - but they help to build up the church. I have people that never go, but they give to finance the work of those who do. Remember – teach the teachable, but love everyone.

17. Utilize “Tract Attacks” to help get people involved.

A “Tract Attack” is simply taking a handful of tracts and covering a neighborhood. This usually doesn't involve talking to anyone; it is just putting tracts on doors. While this should *never* replace soul-winning, it can be useful at times. For example, suppose that five men showed up and you are the only one that knows how to “talk?” Are you going to go door-to-door with four silent partners? That might be a little intimidating at the door! Instead, take one of the men as your silent partner and send the other four on a “tract attack.” Then, teach a soulwinning course

right away so that they can get involved in door-to-door soulwinning.

Tract Attacks may also be useful for those who want to do something but are simply too afraid to confront people in their homes. A tract on the door is worth two people sitting at home.

My first partner was a man I had won to Christ and baptized. He started going with me on Thursday nights. It was a long time before he wore a tie while out with me. All winter we knocked doors together, just he and I. Now, he is in Bible College.

A man told me when they joined, “I’ll go soul-winning with you, but I don’t think my wife ever will.” Now, she wins more souls than he does!

A lady wrote me a while ago, “Thank you for everything you have taught us – especially how to win souls!”

Build an environment conducive to a soul-winning church!

Chapter Six

CHURCH MINISTRIES

I came from a church which ran over one thousand in Sunday School and had numerous productive ministries – ranging from nursing home ministries to a Spanish department, to Junior churches and children’s soul-winning. However, what I failed to mention is that this church is over thirty-years-old!

As Church Planters, we can get so busy that we go out of business.

As the church grows and develops, make sure that the church’s *Two Primary Ministries* stay the priority – *the Sunday School and Soul-winning*. Everything should be built upon this dual-foundation.

How much you can do at the beginning will depend on your circumstances. Obviously, if you start a church with another couple or a team, you will be able to do much more than my wife and I could do by ourselves. Here are some principles that were helpful to us:

1. Start with a simple Sunday School.

Some church planters do not advise starting a Sunday School until you have enough workers to have a full class arrangement. In other words, they will only have services until the church grows and teachers become available. This has worked for some, but I personally believe in having a Sunday School right from the beginning.

We started with an adult/teenage class and a child’s class. I taught the adults and my wife taught the children. About six months later, we added a Junior Age class of boys and girls from 3rd-6th grade. Then we added a Nursery class for 3 and under (we did not have any babies until then; you may need to start this class

right away if there are babies in the church). Other classes were added as needed.

A simple Sunday School format would include:

- Nursery (birth – 2 years).
- Beginners (3 years – Kindergarten).
- Primaries (1st – 3rd grades).
- Juniors (4th – 6th grades).
- Teenagers (7th – 12th grades).
- Adults.

As you grow, you can divide the children's classes between boys and girls. Then, you can further separate the groups. For example, the Primaries and Juniors can be separated by an Intermediate class (3rd – 4th grade).

2. Make the soul-winning ministry the primary ministry.

Have Definite Soul-winning Times. We had Tuesday night soul-winning for ladies, Thursday night for everyone, and Saturday morning for everyone.

The most important thing is that you lead the soul-winners. Do not send them out – lead them out! Your people will draw courage from your presence. Not only that, but we are to lead by example.

I believe in house-to-house soul-winning. New move-in lists are NOT the best resource for a new church – a street full of houses is. You will spend a whole night contacting 3 or 4 families that may or may not be home, when you could have knocked 30-50 houses in that amount of time. Get a map of your city and begin working through the areas closest to your meeting place, and working your way out. Go to the rich and poor neighborhoods. Many of my best folks live in very nice housing areas.

Include Soul-winning results in your church bulletin. Brag on soul-winners. Make it known that soul-winning is THE priority ministry of the church.

Soul-winning is *the* ministry that *anyone* can get involved in right away! Encourage them to!

If you have more silent partners than soul-winners to pair them with, give them gospel tracts and tell them to put them on doors. Then teach a soulwinning class quickly! Do what you have to in order to get people involved in soulwinning.

3. What about the music ministry?

What you are able to do with the church music is going to depend on your circumstances and abilities, but, needless to say, you are going to have to do something. You simply cannot have church services without music. The simplest song service will require a song leader, hymnbooks, and, if at all possible, some sort of accompaniment.

I suggest that you buy some new hymnbooks before you start your church. If at all possible, please do *not* use screens and a projector. I know that this is popular these days, and I do not condemn those that use them in the beginning, but let us hold on to the old hymnbooks before we have a generation that does not know what they are.

Twenty hymnbooks may cost \$200, but they are a great investment. Twenty hymnbooks should be sufficient for 40-50 people. If this is not possible, try to get some used hymnbooks that are in good shape. No matter what, make sure that you use only **one** kind of hymnbook. Do NOT have several different kinds, so that you have to announce: “Open your *American Hymns* to page #400, your *Soul-Stirring Hymns* to #321, or your *Great Hymns of the Faith* to #12 so that we can sing ‘Victory in Jesus.’”

At the very least, you can make some songbooks with just the words. Print and bind them and use them for as long as you can. Most people cannot read the music anyway, and you will at least have the words.

Unless you have a partner, you will be the song leader in the beginning. If you have not already, learn the basics of song leading. Try to get some experience.

Then, some sort of accompaniment will add a lot to the music service. Ideally, this would be a piano or an organ. But a nice electric keyboard is excellent for a new church. The different settings can be used for either a piano or organ sound. A small amplifier (such as are used with electric guitars) can be attached to the keyboard to get the needed volume. The entire set-up should cost less than \$200.

If you do not have a pianist or organist, the keyboard could still be used for accompaniment. Most of the nicer keyboards will allow songs to be recorded and played back. The number of songs allowed depends on the keyboard, but some will also allow for Flash drives which can hold many more. If nothing else is possible, you could have a pianist record twenty hymns into the keyboard and have your wife simply push the “play” button. You will not have much room for errors and certainly not for improvising, but it is better than nothing – especially at invitation time. And when you finally get a real pianist, you will already have the instrument.

Our church music was originally supplied by an old man with a guitar. It was okay – but we were very thankful to finally be able to use our piano. A guitar, when played properly, is a great instrument and is certainly not unscriptural (Ps. 150:4). Later, we added a keyboard to serve as an organ.

Three or four songs will be sufficient for those early services. Perhaps add a chorus in as well. Forget having a choir until you have grown to a sufficient number. You do not want to have more in the choir than you have in the congregation. If possible, have specials.

Unless you are a musically gifted person or have such in your family, the music program will be fairly simple and without many “frills” when you get started. But do the best that you can and then preach your heart out for the rest of the service.

4. Make the nursery a priority, and make it as nice as possible.

Since you will most likely not be an expert in this area, appoint a faithful lady in your church to be the Superintendent as soon as possible. Make sure that she is tough as dealing with

mothers can be a tough ministry – but at the same time, she needs to be tactful, kind, and diplomatic, with a true servant’s heart.

It may not be best to have your wife in charge of this ministry. I have never allowed my wife to hold this position, though she has always served in the nursery. I realize that in many places, pastor’s wives are not expected to work in the nursery. You can forget that attitude if you are starting a church.

Provide the best nursery facilities possible. Put out a wish list for needed items, and do not accept junk.

Of course, mothers make the best nursery workers. Encourage any member who has a baby in the nursery to help out with the nursery.

Emphasize that nursery duty is not babysitting, but is a ministry to the Lord! Ideally, regular nursery workers should be chosen to work one service a week. This is their weekly ministry, just like teaching a class is a weekly ministry. Do not lock them away in the nursery every service. They need preaching too.

You will also need a soul-winning Nursery for at least one of the set soul-winning times. A Saturday nursery with a rotating schedule will be very effective.

5. Start an usher ministry.

This is a great blessing for the services. Choose a faithful, soul-winning, upbeat, cheerful person to be the Head Usher. Lay out the guidelines for the ushers, and then let the new Head Usher take care of this ministry.

The Usher ministry is a great beginning place for men in the church. It does not take any special skill to help take the offerings or greet people at the door. Of course, they should be faithful men.

Ushers should not just take the offerings. They are the greeters at the door. They escort visitors to their classes. They pass out Bulletins and lessons. They make the vital first impression. They are the policemen of the church – the security force. Give a lot of emphasis to this ministry.

6. What about a bus ministry?

Some men are very emphatic that a bus ministry should not be started until the church is a certain age or has a certain number of people driving in. Some of these have good reasons; others are just covering up their unwillingness to pay the price the bus ministry demands. I am afraid that our bus ministries are going to “go out of style” in the next twenty years because of preachers who would rather reach the “yuppies” than the kids in the poor sections of town.

Do not let others make this decision for you. Follow the leadership of the Lord.

We started with property and buildings, so we had different circumstances than many new churches will have. A church in a storefront with limited space would probably not be wise in starting a bus ministry. We had space, and God gave us quality adults in the beginning with a love for souls.

We started our bus ministry approximately six months after we started our church. I began praying for a van, and shared my burden with our church. Soon, someone gave me \$5000 for the express purpose of buying a van. I bought a passenger van and our bus ministry was started. Our church took a special offering and paid one year’s worth of insurance to get us going. Later, a church gave us a wonderful 59-passenger diesel bus.

The bus ministry has been a tremendous blessing to our church. It has provided opportunities for service for our adults, and helped to fill our Sunday School classes. It has been the reason for many souls being saved. Our church loves the bus kids. I cannot imagine our church without this ministry because of its impact throughout our church.

However, I must admit that some have ruined their churches with their bus ministries. Some new churches are basically bus churches or children’s churches. ***You cannot build a church on the bus ministry.*** You can reach many souls, but the bus kids will not financially support nor strengthen your church. Do not let the tail wag the dog.

Here are some principles to keep in mind if you want a bus ministry in a new or young church:

- Wait until you have a solid drive-in crowd that will provide the **finances** and **faculty** for a bus ministry. I am not putting a number on this drive-in crowd. I have heard minimum numbers from 200 to 500. I cannot imagine having a church of 100 and not having a bus! But you do need a solid, faithful group of drive-in people.

- Consider capping the attendance.

If you have 50 people driving in, I do not think that you should pick up 100 kids through the bus ministry. I am sure that your attendance of 150 will impress your preacher brethren, but you may wear your church out and run off the drive-in crowd. Do not bring in more than your Sunday School structure can properly handle (8-10 students per class). Let wisdom guide your zeal.

By capping the attendance, I do not mean turning kids away from the bus. I mean that you should organize the route to pick up a certain **range** of attendance. With our first bus route, we organized it so that we would pick up anywhere from 15-30 kids a week. Sometimes it was less, and sometimes it jumped up into the forties for big days. But we did not try to max it out to 60-70 riders because we did not have the manpower or space to handle that many on a consistent basis.

- Count the cost. Vehicle payments, insurance, fuel, registration, inspections, tires and maintenance add up fast. From the beginning, our bus ministry has been under our missions budget (as part of reaching our Jerusalem – Acts 1:8), though we have encouraged separate giving to the bus ministry.
- Consider the workers needed. Do you have the workers needed to do the job? What about a CDL-licensed driver? Who will be the Captain? Who will do the visiting? Who will make the flyers? Who will fuel and maintain the bus?

- Do not allow the bus ministry to replace soul-winning. Do not allow everyone to get so involved in bus visiting that you no longer have soul-winners out knocking on doors.
- I do not believe that it is best to overwork your people through the bus ministry, especially in the beginning. In other words, it is not usually the best to have your Sunday School teachers working the bus route. Do not spread your folks too thin. Churches start wearing people out when they allow them to take too much of a load. Also, it is usually best to keep anyone from having too many responsibilities, for *your* sake. If they quit or drop out of church, you will be left with big, gaping holes to fill.

My wife was a bus kid, and the church that picked her up was small. I am glad that some people paid the price so that she could be reached for Christ. I have never regretted our bus ministry, but I believe that one should be started with caution and wisdom.

7. Add ministries based on need and opportunity.

Needs will arise, and you will have to meet the need. Opportunities will also arise. People with different gifts, talents, abilities, and desires can use those abilities to diversify your church's ministry. Let the ministry grow as the church workforce grows.

8. Do not spread your people too thin.

There is already enough work for everyone to do in a new church. At our church, I encourage everyone to go soul-winning, go to church every service, and have one ministry. When folks start to have 4 or 5 ministries, usually soul-winning stops and people start "burning out." I would rather grow a church a little slower, yet have people that are happy and being productive in their ministry. Good managers know that happy workers are productive workers.

Zeal tends to fade over time. A zealous new member may jump at the opportunity to teach Sunday School, drive the bus, go soul-winning, usher, lead singing, clean the church, print the bulletin, and sing in the choir, in addition to his family and full

time job – but do we really think that he can handle all of that for any length of time? Sometimes, pastors have to tell people “no” for their own good and for the long-term good of their families and the church.

I think we pastors sometimes are guilty of using people to reach personal goals. We can run people into the ground, or keep them so busy that they are forced to sacrifice their soul-winning or their family time. Then, when the member “burns out,” he is ridiculed for his lack of spirituality. Maybe the problem is higher up in the church leadership.

9. Use a worker’s survey form to find prospective workers in the church.

10. Remember that you are the Etc. Man.

You wanted to be a Pastor, so do not complain about the load. In a new church without a staff, you will be the Preacher, song-leader, Sunday School superintendent, secretary, grounds-keeper, baptistery-filler, toilet-repairer, soul-winning director, treasurer, money-counter, etc, etc, etc. As God gives you faithful people, some of these responsibilities can be delegated. Until then, you are it!

Chapter Seven

ORGANIZING INTO A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

There is no set time at which to organize into an autonomous church. Some church planters organize when they start the church, with themselves and their family as the charter members. There is nothing wrong with this, but I think it is better to grow the church for a short period of time and then have an official organizing service with charter members. I believe that this is the best way because:

1. It allows your first members to have the privilege of being the charter members of the church. This is a great privilege and honor! Without these first members, who stand with you and help to lay the foundation of the church, the job could not be done. This is a wonderful way to honor the people that had the courage and faith to stand with a brand new church!
2. It allows the church to decide upon its own constitution and by-laws.
3. It gives the church the privilege of hiring the Pastor.
4. It is Biblical. Jesus had the first disciples already before He started the first church.

How do we go about organizing a mission church into an Independent, Fundamental, Autonomous, Baptist Church?

1. Announce the Organizational Service at least one month in advance.

2. Write the church Constitution.

It would be wise to have this written before you start. I suggest that you study your home church's Constitution as a guide. In addition, contact the Christian Law Association and request

information on Church Constitutions. They will send you a helpful booklet as well as a sample constitution.

A word to the wise: write a Constitution that protects the Pastor's position and authority. Some Constitutions all but hog-tie the preacher. Make sure that it reflects the Biblical authority, leadership, and position of the Pastor. Also, make the Constitution very difficult to change.

Also, understand that the Constitution is not the Bible. The Bible is the final authority, not the Constitution. However, everyone does not recognize the authority of the Bible – not even church members. Protect yourself and your ministry.

3. Have a “Constitutional Convention” two weeks prior to the Organizational Service.

Meet with either the men or the entire church and go over the Constitution. This will save you the trouble of having to do it during the Organizational Service. Allow the men to give suggestions. You are not all wise. My men asked good questions and made good suggestions that made for a better Constitution.

If this is done early, then at the Organizational Service, all that will be required is a vote to accept the Constitution as is. Have a copy (perhaps abridged, without the Statement of Faith) to give each family.

4. Arrange for your home church pastor or a representative to be there.

If at all possible, he should be there. If he cannot, an associate pastor or at least the head deacon should come to represent the authority of the sending church. If distances are great, this may cause a problem. At the very least, ask your sending church Pastor to send an official letter and/or a recording to be read or played at the Organizational meeting.

The Pastor will take part in the service, leading the church to vote on you as Pastor. It would be inappropriate for you to do this. Of course, the Pastor can preach a charge to the newly organized church.

5. Consider using a charter certificate.

Make a nice certificate stating “Charter Membership” with the date and pertinent information, and let all the charter members sign it. Put it up somewhere in the church.

6. Or, make charter membership certificates for each charter family.

I opted to do this instead of making one Charter Certificate. I made each member a nice certificate, framed it, and presented it to them at the end of the Organizational Service. Have their picture taken as they receive their Certificate.

7. Prepare To Elect Officers.

We elected two trustees when we organized, with the pastor serving as the third, permanent trustee. Feel free to nominate two or three men and let the church vote, or let them add to the nominees.

Chapter Eight

INCORPORATION

Many preachers are hesitant to incorporate, and others believe it is downright heretical to do so. If you are questionable on this subject, I suggest that you contact the Christian Law Association. They have some very good material on the subject and are infinitely more qualified than I am on the subject. Following their advice, we decided to incorporate.

How can a church become incorporated?

1. Do not go to a lawyer.

A lawyer will be happy to charge you any where from \$600 - \$1500. This is ridiculous. You can do it yourself over the Internet for \$25, and it extremely easy to do so.

2. Contact the Secretary of State for your State.

This can also be done over the Internet. For Texas, the web site is <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/>. There, you can print out the Articles of Incorporation. Fill out this form and mail it back to the Secretary of State office with the necessary fee (\$25 in Texas).

You do not have to name include “Inc” in your church name. The official name of our “corporation” is “The Lighthouse Baptist Church of Wylie, Texas.” As Pastor, you are the “Registered Agent” and the “Incorporator.” You will also serve as the President of the new corporation.

Under purpose, write “For religious, charitable, and educational purposes.”

3. The Secretary of State will mail you the Certificate of Incorporation.

Once this paper is stamped “Filed” in the Secretary of State’s office, your church is a legal corporation.

Chapter Nine

TAX-EXEMPTION

Immediately after Organizing, you must file for Tax-exemption for your church. This must be done in three areas:

1. County exemption.
2. State exemption.
3. Federal exemption.

1. To obtain county exemption, go to the County Tax Assessor and fill out the necessary paperwork.

This will exempt your church from local property taxes.

2. To obtain state exemption, contact the Comptroller of Public Accounts.

This will be in the State capital. Contact the person in charge for your state, tell them you are pastor of a new church, and desire to apply for tax-exemption. They will provide you with whatever paperwork you need.

Once your application is accepted, they will mail you a confirmation along with some "Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificates."

3. To obtain federal tax exemption, you need to apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN).

You will need to fill out form SS-4 for the IRS. You can apply either by mail or by telephone. By filing over the phone, you can receive an EIN immediately. Call 1-800-829-1040 to get the Tele-TIN number for your area. If you mail it in, it will take 4 to 5 weeks.

Chapter Ten

**HANDLING THE FINANCES OF A NEW
CHURCH**

Starting a church takes money – *a lot of money*. Since you are not likely to have a lot of money, you need to be very wise with what you have.

Handling the finances is not as much fun as preaching, teaching, or winning souls, but it is an absolutely essential aspect of church planting. One church planter I know hired a Certified Public Accountant right away to handle their finances. This is great, if you can afford it. If not, it is up to you.

Your financial situation may be far different from ours. We started our church with a little bit of personal savings, some financial support, and a few odds and ends. We also personally went into debt in the process. Perhaps you will have more to work with, or better support, or even a monetary grant from a church or an individual. This section of the book will come from our own experience – starting with almost nothing, and trying to build up to something.

- 1. Make sure that YOU tithe and give faithfully.**
- 2. Start with a simple, initial budget.**

This is a no-frills budget. Our initial budget was similar to this:

I. General Expenses:

1. Lease -	\$1950
2. Utilities -	\$250
3. Insurance -	\$220
4. Miscellaneous -	\$75

TOTAL - \$2495.00

II. Missions

1. Support - \$280.00
 2. Surplus - \$Over Budget
- TOTAL - \$280.00

III. General Surplus

Amount over General Expenses

TOTAL BUDGET NEEDS - \$2775.00

You will notice at first that I received no salary. After we got some money in the bank, and the offerings increased, we raised my salary to \$400 a month. To meet the budget above, the offerings would have to be \$652.94 a week. If the offerings are under-budget, you will have to draw from your surplus account.

3. Have a flexible budget that can grow and expand with the church.

As the church grew, the offerings increased, and the needs increased. I was able to add to the budget as needed. For example, we purchased a van. That meant we needed to budget insurance and gasoline. This was added to the budget. In other words, make your budget flexible. A flexible monthly budget is best for a new church.

I have found it best to avoid “projected income.” With a new church, it is hard to project any sort of income six months or one year down the road. Work with what you know that you have, and avoid overextending yourself financially.

4. Try to get one month ahead financially.

This will not be easy at first. We were able to do so because a new family joined and gave several thousand dollars in tithes that they had been saving up while looking for a new church home. This allowed us to get ahead, and we have stayed ahead ever since. Instead of working on projected income, we can budget from the offerings of the previous month. In this way, we know exactly what we have and what we can do.

5. Keep accurate giving records for each church family or individual.

Every family in your church needs to have a giving record sheet. This records each offering they turn in with a tithe envelope. At the end of the year, simply print out this record and give it to them for their tax returns.

6. Keep accurate offering records for the entire church.

Have a spreadsheet that shows the total offerings, general budget offerings, missions, etc, for the year.

7. Use a computer program to keep track of your spending and income.

There are many good financial programs that can be a great blessing. We use *Quicken*.

8. Keep all of your receipts.

9. Be 100% honest and above-board in all of your financial dealings.

This is the Lord's money, not yours. Do not take one dime that is not budgeted to you. You are a steward. Nothing causes more trouble than money, so be wise. Abstain from all appearance of financial dishonesty.

10. Pay your bills on time and earn good credit, as well as a good testimony in your community.

11. Encourage your people to give to special accounts, above their tithes.

Missions, building funds, etc.

12. Take special offerings for special needs.

On the Sunday before Christmas, we take a "Birthday Present For Jesus Offering." When we bought our van, we took up a special offering and paid a full year's insurance to get it running. When we needed to do repairs, we took a special offering to get it done.

Now, do not go to the well too many times. But a special offering here and there will help a new church acquire much needed capital.

13. Be frugal.

Do not waste money trying to be a super-church on a Minnie-church budget. Do not burden your budget with items you could probably do without.

14. Keep the church out of debt.

Except for our mortgage, we have refused to go into debt to get anything. Our philosophy is “Pay for it or pray for it.” If I cannot pay for it, I will not buy it.

If you get a church credit card, do not carry a balance. Do not pay interest. Credit cards are convenient, but they are also dangerous if you are not disciplined. If you use it to buy things for the church, pay it off every month.

15. As soon as possible, get other people involved in the management of the church finances.

For appearance’s sake, it is always best to have more than one person handling the finances of a church. Our church, as it has grown, adopted a very simple but effective three-fold financial program:

- The Trustees (or deacons) count the offerings each week and prepare it for deposit.
- The Pastor prepares the budgets and oversees all expenses and financial allocations.
- The Financial Secretary (an unpaid volunteer) handles the accounts, pays the bills, and keeps track of receipts. This person might also keep track of the giving records for the church.

Thus, three people handle the income of the church, while the outgo is handled by two. Having the Trustees count the money protects the Pastor from any allegations of dishonesty, while the presence of the Financial Secretary provides accountability for

expenses. We do not need this format because we expect Pastors to be dishonest, but to **“abstain from all appearance of evil.”**

Chapter Eleven

KEEPING GOOD CHURCH RECORDS

This is very, very important. It is your responsibility to keep track of this vital information. If your wife has secretarial skills, request her help.

1. Financial Records.

2. Attendance Records

Use a Spreadsheet to keep track of attendance to Sunday School and the services. This will allow you to track averages and growth.

3. Sunday School Records.

Provide your Sunday School teachers with record books. It is very important to have good records and keep them up to date at all times. On a Spreadsheet, keep track of each class' attendance. Keep records of any incidents or problems that occur in the Sunday School.

Our teachers are also required to turn in a Weekly Report including their attendance, number of visitors, and number of members present. This report also asks if the teacher went soul-winning that week, and if they visited their absentees.

4. Head Usher Reports.

Our Head Usher turns in a weekly report of attendances. He also checks the hallways and bathrooms between Sunday School and church to make sure that no one is out of place. This is recorded on his report. These reports are filed.

5. Nursery Reports.

Everyone that brings a baby to the nursery must sign his or her child in and out. The nursery workers also sign this sheet and record an incidents. These are filed.

6. Soul-Winning Reports.

Our soul-winners fill out a report sheet when they return from soul-winning. This records their attendance, the number of houses they knocked, the number of people they talked to, the number of gospel plans presented, the number of people won to Christ, and the number of converts baptized the previous week. These reports are then compiled and the results are recorded on a spreadsheet. The reports are filed.

7. Decision Cards And Records.

When a person makes a decision such as getting saved or baptized, this is recorded on a decision card. This card is filed. The results are kept on a spreadsheet.

8. Weekly Report Sheets.

I keep a weekly report sheet in a binder. It has the same information as on the spreadsheets. It includes attendances, offerings, decisions, and number of visitors for the week.

Chapter Twelve

THE CHURCH PLANTER & HIS FAMILY

God-given responsibilities do not conflict. God has called you to be a father and husband as well as a church planter and pastor. Your family is your calling just like your church is your calling. Some preachers have lost their families trying to salvage everyone else's. Noah built the Ark but he also managed to get his whole family inside of it. You can build a church and keep your family in it at the same time. Here are some thoughts:

1. Involve your family in starting the church.

Hopefully, your family is excited and eager about the work God has called you – and them – to do. I thank God that my wife was behind me 100%. Without her, I am confident that Lighthouse Baptist Church would have ended in failure.

Involve your family. Your wife will need to teach a class. If your children are old enough, involve them in cleaning, preparing, soul-winning, visiting, etc. Make church work fun. Make the time. Get up early and stay up late, but do not neglect your family!

2. Do not whine or complain to your family about the church or the ministry.

This is much more difficult than it sounds. But do not expect your children to grow up and surrender to the ministry if you are always talking negatively about it. I am grateful for a wife that never complains, never speaks badly of people in the church, and has taught my children to love the Lord and His work.

3. Include family time each week.

This could be a Monday evening and night, or Friday, or Saturday evening. Spend time together on Sunday afternoon

between services. Eat together as much as possible. You have as much time as everyone else in the world – budget it wisely.

4. Have a family altar every day.

You will have much to pray together for!

5. Feel free to defend your wife or family if necessary.

I get paid to take some abuse – my wife and children do not. It is a shame how many pastors' wives are driven to nervous breakdowns because their husbands do not protect and defend them. Church members will not usually stay longer than 3-5 years; your marriage to your wife is for life. She is your priority.

6. Let your children be children.

I expect my children to be obedient, respectful, and polite. I do not expect them to be perfect. My children play and have fun like the rest of the children in our church. Do not try to place them on pedestals and make role models out of them.

7. Take a day off occasionally and spend it with the family.

The whole world will not go to the devil if you take a Monday or Friday off and take the family to the zoo or the park for a day of fun. I work hard and take very few days off – so I do not feel bad at all if I sense that the family needs some time away.

8. Be your family's pastor.

If you come to church on Wednesday, and no one is there but you and your family, preach to them. They deserve to be preached to! They need a preacher, and you took them away from theirs. You're it! Preach to them!

9. Take your kids to Camps and other activities.

If you have teenagers, see if there is a fundamental church youth group nearby that you can let your teens be involved in. The hardest group of people to get into a new church is the teenagers. It may be a long time before your teen has any quality friends in his own church, so let him be involved in the activities of another church. Take your teen to Youth Camp and a good Youth Conference.

If you have junior-age kids, make sure you go to Junior Camp with them. Junior Camp became the highlight of the year for my girls.

10. Remember that your wife is NOT your associate pastor.

A new church does not need an Associate, anyway. Do your own work and let her do hers.

11. Never embarrass your children in front of the church.

Do not use your children as illustrations too much. It is embarrassing to have the spotlight of the church suddenly dropped on you from out of nowhere. It is even worse if the story is about an embarrassing incident.

Do not make your wife the butt of jokes. Kid around sometimes, but your church will not respect her if you do not.

12. Be consistent at home.

13. Do not use excessive discipline to “impress” your church.

Sometimes a preacher will be overly hard on a child to try to “look tough” in front of church members and “set the right example.” This does more harm than good. Discipline the same all the time, and do not make examples out of your children.

14. Honor your wife in the church.

Sometimes, we thank everyone for the little jobs they do, and forget to honor our wives. This is sin. Thank her publicly and teach your church to honor the great work that she does for Christ.

Chapter Thirteen

THE CHURCH PLANTER'S WIFE

By Mrs. Amanda Rasbeary

The greatest asset a man of God can have is his family. How much easier it will be for him to accomplish the work God has called him to when his wife has prepared herself to be the “help-meet” for him!

1. Have realistic expectations:

a) Of the position that you will hold in the church.

It takes time and training before a church will show the respect that is due to a Pastor and his wife. But that is okay. **Do not think of yourself as the “queen of the church” or the “first lady.” You are a member of the church like everyone else.** You have responsibilities and ministry like others should have. You just work hard and take care of your husband, and have a realistic expectation of your position in the church. *(Rom 12:3-5)* **“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. {4} For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: {5} So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”**

b) Of the church's growth.

The church will have its ups and downs. Missing a goal of 50 by 10 is far more devastating than missing a goal of 1500 by 50. Remember that God grows the church. You just be busy about His business.

c) *Of your husband.*

Sometimes, we can expect more from our husbands than they can deliver at the time. Perhaps you are in a church now where the pastor is one of the great preachers in our country. Odds are, he is also two or three times as old as your husband. Do not expect your husband to be another Jack Hyles or Billy Sunday. Treat him like he is better than Jack Hyles or Billy Sunday – maybe he will become so one day!

He will make mistakes. You must remember that he is the Pastor. Be careful that you do not allow yourself to be too opinionated concerning his work or decisions. Let God work on him. Would you go to your Pastor now and nag him about something in the church you don't like? Of course not. Treat your husband with the same respect. Just maybe if he trusts you he will ask for your opinion next time. But do not expect it.

He will get discouraged! Expect it. Be prepared. Know him well enough to help him. He will not have a staff to encourage him or help him, so, "Tag – you're it!"

2. You must be fully committed and dedicated to this work.

(Rom 12:1-2) **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."**

Have a daily walk with God. That is where the rubber meets the road! Be a good Christian first!

Let your husband know that you will follow him as he follows God. That is just being a good wife, anyway. My husband says that God's call to the husband is the call to his wife as well. Consider yourself called of God, just like your husband is!

Your children will need a full-time mother. They will need just as much care as anyone else's children. Try to make these first

years of starting a church memorable for your children. Have fun, and make the ministry look fun. Never complain in front of your children!

See your service as unto the Lord. Make it important no matter how “small” the job may seem. Never forget that ultimately you are doing it for Jesus.

3. Develop skills that will help you to be a good church planter’s wife.

Make yourself useful where you are now – before you go to start a church. Volunteer to work in the nurseries and Sunday School classes. Learn how to teach small children. Be a good soul-winner! If possible, learn to play the piano.

Learn to be friendly! Shyness may be mistaken for rudeness in a pastor’s wife. Learn to work with and lead ladies. Learn how to organize a nursery. If you can, learn some secretary skills. Make people feel comfortable around you.

The most important skill to learn is how NOT to be offended! (*Psa 119:165*) **"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."** I decided several years ago, that no matter how mean or ugly someone is to me, that I will still be nice to them. (*Prov 25:21-22*) **"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: {22} For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee."** Forgive, forget, and move on. Do not let things discourage you. There will plenty of people that will try to bring you down.

4. Be strong in the Lord.

It is hard work being a preacher’s wife – maybe harder to be a church planter’s wife! It does mean long hours, and sometimes rolling your sleeves up and getting your hands dirty. It means loneliness, with no other preacher’s wives in the church to fellowship with. It takes courage and stamina and yes, even some sweat.

Do not allow yourself the privilege of a pity party. That is selfish. Never whine, especially to your husband.

There is no greater privilege than to serve the God of our salvation. By faithfully serving God as the pastor's wife, you will earn rewards in heaven, and praise in this life. And you will have the joy and satisfaction of knowing that YOU helped start a new church, and YOU helped to impact eternity!

Chapter Fourteen

**TWELVE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT &
PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY**

1. Every Sunday is important, but no Sunday is all-important.

Some Sundays are going to be great – others will be disappointing. But there is always next week. Just keep going and do not allow disappointment to become discouragement.

2. Go after those you don't get and God will give you those that you did not go after.

I believe this principle is true. You may talk to hundreds of people in a week, and not one of them shows up. But someone drops in that no one invited. That is God's blessings on those who faithfully go.

3. "Major on the majors, minor on the minors." J. Frank Norris.

Do not get carried away on your hobbyhorse. Preach the Basics – go to church, tithe, go soul-winning, live right, pray, read your Bible, etc.

4. Champion Your Church.

Be the leader. Be out in front in everything. Lead in soul-winning and tract distribution. Give your church a Champion worth following.

5. "Consistency, Thou Art A Jewel."

Be faithful and consistent. Do not skip out on soul-winning just because no one shows. That is easy to do – who will know? God will. Be consistent in everything you do. Let your people see that you are dependable.

6. Do not sacrifice the future on the altar of the temporary.

A church planter must remember that he is building towards the future.

7. Future usefulness depends on present training.

New Christians do not know how to serve God. It is your job to teach and train them for service. Use the pulpit and Sunday School for teaching principles. Have special classes to train nursery workers, ushers, altar workers, soul-winners, bus workers, etc.

8. When you compromise, you will always lose quality.

Many pastors have decided to sacrifice a quality church to compromise and keep a certain part of the church happy. They sacrifice the quality people to satisfy the lukewarm crowd.

If you compromise to get a crowd, you will have to compromise to keep the crowd. And the crowd you have will not be worth keeping.

9. Preach the Book as it is to men as they are.

Do not be afraid to preach God's Word. Sometimes, in a new church, with a tight budget, and few prospects, the devil can persuade us to "hold back" lest we run off the people we have! Don't listen to him! It is your job to preach God's word fearlessly.

10. Do not despise the little ones!

D.L. Moody returned from a preaching trip, and a man asked him if he had had any conversions. "Yes," Moody replied, "Two and a half." "Oh, you mean you had two adults and one child?" "No," Moody said, "Two children and one adult. The children have their whole lives to live for Christ. The adult has only half of his to give." Moody later said that if he could live his life over again, he would give it to win children to Christ.

11. "I'm looking for the people that are looking for me." Eric Capaci.

When we go soul-winning, we are looking for people that want to be saved. I may have to knock fifty houses to find that

one, but if I do not knock the fifty houses, I will not find the one! You must believe that there are people there that God wants to be saved or wants to be in your church. Why else would God send you there?

12. "Failure Cannot Cope With Persistence." Dr. Bob W. Smith.

(Gal 6:9) **"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."** The devil can hinder us, but we can only defeat ourselves by quitting or compromising. Keep going, keep fighting, keep praying, keep working, keep sowing – and you will gain the victory. This is as sure as the promises of God!

Chapter Fifteen

THE CHURCH PLANTER AND LEADERSHIP

The great Lee Roberson said, “*Everything rises and falls on leadership.*” I cannot think of any area where this is as clearly seen as in a church planter and a new church.

Most of the time, a pastor is hired by an established church. Sometimes, this pastor has a *position* but no leadership. This is not clearly seen because someone else built the church before he came. He merely *maintains* what someone else built.

In a brand-new church, everything is on the church planter’s shoulders. He does the visiting. He is often the only leader. He is the preacher and often the song leader. Everything begins with his vision. A new church will rise or fall based on the leadership ability of the church planter.

A strong church is not built by a man with a strong personality or great talent – but by a man with strong character and leadership skills. Churches built on talent or personality often fall apart when the leader is no longer there.

Here are some thoughts on leadership:

1. Leadership rises and falls on personal character.

Character is a person’s inclination to do right. Character is doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, with the right attitude. Character is doing right by reflex. Character is the backbone of the soul. A person of character lives by principles, not circumstances. If you cannot control yourself, you cannot yield yourself to the Holy Spirit. If you cannot control yourself, you cannot lead others.

The qualifications for the Pastor listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 deal with **character qualifications**. There is not one word about his personality, his preaching ability, his sense of humor, his singing voice, his age, or his talents.

2. Servants are leaders – leaders are servants.

(Mark 9:35) **"And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*"** The key to spiritual leadership is not to try to be a leader, but to try to be a servant and an example. I know men that are always trying to be the leader. They never are. Leadership is not taking control – leadership is others willingly placing themselves under your control.

It was A.W. Tozier's conviction that, "A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of the external situation."

3. "Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence." Lord Montgomery

Leadership is rallying and inspiring. You rally people to a common purpose. You inspire by your character. What is your leadership capacity?

4. A Leader must have vision.

Where do you see your church in five years, or ten years? You must get your people to catch your vision for the church. Help them to see what can be and what will be if they will stick with you!

5. A Leader learns to accomplish his task using tact and diplomacy.

(1 Tim 3:3) **"...not a brawler..."** Do not fight your way out of every situation. Use tact and diplomacy to end disagreements and problems if possible. Tact is saying the nastiest thing in the nicest way. After all, you cannot help someone if you run him or her off! If they leave because of principle – shame on them. If they

leave because you were rude, crude, or in a bad mood – shame on you!

6. A Leader knows that he cannot inspire or lead through whining or complaining.

Do not teach your church to whine and complain by your example. If you are disappointed or discouraged, try to hide it. Do not allow your frustration to frustrate your people.

7. A Leader is ambitious, but not for vainglory.

“You can’t be too ambitious for the cause of Christ,” J. Frank Norris. Dare to be an over-achiever. The mediocre and the under-achievers will try to shoot you down to their level – but aim far above the norm. God’s work thrives when it is led by leaders who are ambitious for the glory of God and the souls of men.

8. A Leader leads in prayer.

“In nothing should the leader be ahead of his followers more than in the realm of prayer,” J. Oswald Sanders. It is impossible to be an effective spiritual leader unless you are an effective prayer warrior.

9. A Leader puts the needs of his people ahead of his own.

“Do not use your people to build your ministry. Use your ministry to build your people,” Dr. Jack Hyles. Lose yourself in helping others and meeting their needs.

10. A Leader accepts responsibility and takes it very seriously.

Leadership must begin with the willingness to accept responsibility. President Truman had a sign on his desk that read, “The buck stops here.” A leader understands that if things go wrong, the responsibility and fault is ultimately his. A good leader looks inward for a reason, rather than outward for an excuse. If the church is failing, ultimately it is the Pastor’s failure.

11. A Leader produces more leaders.

Napoleon said, “Every French soldier carries a marshal’s baton in his knapsack.” In other words, Napoleon believed that he had an army where every man had the potential for leadership.

David's leadership produced mighty men. (1 Sam 22:2) **"And every one *that was* in distress, and every one *that was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."** This was the beginning of David's army. Under the leadership of David, this rag-tag group of exiles became the "mighty men" of King David. Good leadership will produce leaders.

12. A Leader does whatever it takes to get the job done.

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to get a church started for the glory of God?

Chapter Sixteen

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Most people go to church because of the relationships they have with the people in that church. As a teenager, I went to church only because a friend brought me. The relationship brought me to church and kept me there long enough to gain some convictions.

People need to be loved, and they need to be needed. They will go where they are accepted and appreciated. They will not love you because of your doctrinal statement. They will love you for the same reason that we love God - *(1 John 4:19)* **"We love him, because he first loved us."** You must win their hearts.

Little things matter:

1. Greet people with a warm hello and a smile. Do not ignore people. Pay attention to those around you. Be friendly, and stay friendly.
2. Learn people's names. Say them properly. Learn what they like to be called. Write it down until you have memorized it. Nothing impresses people like having their name remembered.
3. Learn their children's names.
4. Remember birthdays and give them a card. Sign it yourself – do not have a secretary do it for you.
5. Write little notes of appreciation. Mail them. Everyone loves to get mail but most people never get anything personal.
6. Send an occasional email.
7. Visit and call your senior citizens. They need more attention, and they expect it. Your young couples and middle-aged families may not always like having you "drop in," but the senior citizens will always welcome you.

8. When they have surgeries, go with them and pray with them before the surgery. If possible, stay with the family during the surgery. Visit them while in recovery. Take flowers and a card.
9. Ask people about their loved ones, especially if they mention them for prayer.
10. Show interest in their work.
11. Drive by at night and pray for them. Leave a note on their windshield. When they find it the next morning it will make their day.
12. Give their children candy.
13. Visit their homes.
14. Show interest in what interests them.
15. Invite them over for dinner.
16. Be available.

The only thing holding us together is our relationship. Before we can get anyone to believe our doctrines, we must convince them that we love them as Christ loves them.

Chapter Seventeen

FIVE GROUPS WITHIN THE CHURCH

(1 Sam 30:24) **"For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."**

As the church grows and develops, five basic groups of Christians will begin to develop as well. A wise church planter will understand these groups and learn to work with them.

These groups are:

1. **The Leadership.** These are the members who become faithful, dependable, and spiritual. They develop convictions. These become your Sunday School Teachers and church leaders.
2. **Slipped Leaders.** These are still leaders, but they are not quite as zealous or faithful as they once were. I do not mean that they are in sin. They just are not where they once were.
3. **Developing Leaders.** These are "getting there," but are not yet in positions of leadership.
4. **Followers.** These may never become leaders, but leaders need someone to lead. This group will probably not do anything for God without someone leading them, but with leadership they can be productive. They could be nursery workers, helpers, bus drivers, ushers, givers, etc.
5. **Backslidden Followers.** These followers are not consistent enough to be used in any ministry but they are still coming to church at least some of the time.

When I first began my ministry, I did not understand the importance of the five groups. I was too much "all or nothing."

And, therefore, I either had “all” or “nothing.” People were either in church every service or out of church altogether.

Now, I want people to have to fall a long way before they are out of church. If a leader slips in some areas, I do not throw him away. A leader can even slip back to being a follower and still stay in church. The follower that may never be a leader might drive a bus for a leader. And even a backslidden follower will sit in a pew from time to time and may even drop some money in the offering. And who knows? They might get right with God or grow to a place of service.

The Sunday-only couple that comes might one day bring visitors that eventually teach Sunday School. Or their children might become active members of your youth group.

Leaders cannot do everything. We need some Indians to go along with our Chiefs. We need some soldiers to go along with the Captains.

God does not get any glory from an empty pew. Nor does the pew listen to anything I preach. I have never yet had an empty pew walk the aisle, get right with God, or give an offering.

Have realistic expectations for people. Give people the chance to grow. Let them fall five layers before they fall completely out of church.

Lesson Eighteen

TWENTY CAUSES OF FAILURE IN
CHURCH PLANTING

(1 Th 2:1-2) **"For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: {2} But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."**

Paul planted the church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4). Later, he wrote two Epistles to this church. He said, **"Our entrance in unto you...was not in vain."** Paul's ministry in Thessalonica was a success.

I would never stand in judgment on any church planter that had to "shut the doors" of his church. **It is easy for a man who has never started a church from scratch to be judgmental.** Those of us who have gone out with our Bibles under our arms to start something from scratch know how hard it can be. ***Church planting is easy in theory; in performance, it is much more difficult.*** Theories in a classroom are fine. Reality is something else altogether.

There are many reasons that churches fail. And new churches do. Older churches die, too – and some of them are still holding meetings.

The purpose of this chapter is to point the church planter inward to make sure that the problem is not internal, and therefore correctable. First and Second Thessalonians reveal the tender heart of a church planter for his people. From 1 Thessalonians 2, allow me to show you twenty causes of failure in the ministry. I will just give the reason and the Scripture and trust the Holy Spirit to work in your heart:

1. Lack of boldness in preaching the Gospel. (*1 Th 2:2*) **"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."**
2. Unwillingness to tough out the tough times to get the work established. (*1 Th 2:2*) **"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."**
3. Failure to live honestly. (*1 Th 2:3-5*) **"For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: {4} But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. {5} For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:"**
4. Being a man-pleaser instead of pleasing God. (*1 Th 2:4*) **"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."**
5. Greed and covetousness. (*1 Th 2:5*) **"For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:" (1 Th 2:9) **"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."****
6. Seeking glory, approval, and praise from men. (*1 Th 2:6*) **"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."**
7. Lack of tenderness, patience, kindness, and love for people. (*1 Th 2:7*) **"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:"**

8. Lack of affection. (*1 Th 2:8*) **"So being affectionately desirous of you..."**
9. Unwillingness to sacrifice for others. (*1 Th 2:8*) **"So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."**
10. Desiring to get instead of to give. (*1 Th 2:8*) **"So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."**
11. Laziness. (*1 Th 2:9*) **"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."**
12. Unholy, unjust, or improper behavior. (*1 Th 2:10*) **"Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:"**
13. Failure to properly teach the people. (*1 Th 2:11-12*) **"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, {12} That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."**
14. Lack of relationship-building skills. (*1 Th 2:11*) **"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children..." (*1 Th 2:7*) **"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children..."****
15. Failure to uplift the Word of God as the final authority. (*1 Th 2:13*) **"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."**

16. Failure to recognize the hardships that people are enduring. (*1 Th 2:14*) **"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:"**
17. Failure to spend time with people. Paul wanted to be with his people. (*1 Th 2:17*) **"But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire."**
18. Failure to express love and appreciation. (*1 Th 2:17*) **"But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire."**
19. Allowing Satan to stop our forward progress. (*1 Th 2:18*) **"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."**
20. Failure to praise people. (*1 Th 2:19-20*) **"For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? {20} For ye are our glory and joy."**

Chapter Nineteen

STARTING THE CHURCH, AGAIN

(Gal 4:19) "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,"

A prominent church planting pastor in the Northwest said, "I have started seven churches in the last twenty years – all in the same location."

Before we started Lighthouse Baptist Church, my pastor told me that we would build with a different group than we started with. I did not want to believe that this was true, but I knew better than to question my pastor's wisdom. Sure enough, on our church's fifth anniversary there were only four original charter families remaining. The first group got us started, but they did not stay.

Starting the church was easy; pastoring the church I started proved more difficult.

Some men of unusual character, personality, and gifts have started churches and seen a steady (sometimes spectacular) growth every year. These men are incredible and I look up to them. But it does not always work out so – no matter how many "How to be a Success" sermons or books you have read.

New churches can split. New churches do face huge setbacks. In a small church, one out-of-line member can cause serious damage. A church planter I know watched half his church walk out one Sunday (fifty people) due to one member. These things happen.

It usually takes about two or three years for the honeymoon to be over. By our third anniversary, we were running in the 80's and 90's and over 100 on big days. We had Sunday School Classes, a bus route, nursery, Home School Fellowship, Harvest Hands

Children's Club, Ladies' Fellowship, Children's Church, Children's Choir, and over 30 out soul-winning every week. We were "flying high." However, in the fourth year, we lost over 30 people for various reasons – including four prominent families that we lost mainly due to one disgruntled troublemaker. When the troublemaker finally left, she tried to get others to follow her to her new church. This was a "year-long split" that hurt our church (and me) very deeply. Thus began two very difficult years of struggle.

Was part of it my fault? Absolutely! I was still in my 20's, naive, and inexperienced. Was it all my fault? No. Did that matter? No.

But the church had to be started again. You cannot just quit when things get rough. God did not send you there to quit.

Here are twenty-five thoughts on starting your church, again:

1. Do not attack troublemakers or defend yourself against them.

Always take the high road. Always try to look like the good guy – without trying to make anyone look like the bad guy.

Remember that those people still have friends in your church. Do not make your people choose between you and their friends. You would be surprised how often you will come out on the losing end.

Attacking others or defending yourself will also diminish your standing in the eyes of your people. Dr. Jack Hyles, who probably was attacked more than anyone in modern times, had a simple rule: "No attack – no defense." He would not personally attack any Baptist preacher; he would not waste his time defending himself against his attackers.

2. Do not allow yourself to become so close or so dependent on anyone that losing them devastates you or your ministry.

- 3. Do not fail to strengthen your relationships with those that remain.**
- 4. Remember that there is no buffer between you and the workers in your church.**

Unless you started your church as a team with another man serving as an associate, you are the only pastor in the church. You are the leadership. Everyone else is a layman-volunteer. You are the Sunday School Superintendent, the Bus Director, the Youth Director, etc, and every ministry leader answers directly to you.

Use as much tact and diplomacy as possible. Be sensitive of people's feelings and remember that you were their pastor before you became their "boss" in their ministry.

- 5. When prominent families leave a church, there will always be those who are on the borderline wondering "why?"**

Usually, if one family leaves, another follows. They do not know why. It is just the thing to do, I guess. Try to strengthen your relationship with the families that may be in the outer circles.

- 6. Reorganize and reshuffle your ministry to cover the losses.**

In those first five years, I often wondered how much more ministry we could have had if people had stayed. After the third year, it seemed I was constantly reshuffling nursery workers, Sunday School teachers, ushers, etc. But do not quit. Find someone to fill the gaps or consolidate ministries under the leaders you have.

- 7. Try to find some way to recapture any lost motivation. Plan a great campaign or a big day.**
- 8. Get new people in. Nothing encourages a church more than new faces.**
- 9. Keep on preaching and teaching.**
- 10. Keep on loving.**

Do not allow yourself to become calloused or bitter because of the hurt others have caused. Keep on putting your heart out there. Refuse to become cynical.

11. Encourage your wife and children.

The hardest thing I have personally experienced is watching my children cry because their teachers quit and would not be coming back. It has also been very difficult to see them lose their childhood friends because the parents left the church.

We do not want our families to become disillusioned about the ministry or people, or to become infected with bitterness.

12. Do what you have to in order to keep the church financially above water.

Trust me, a new church does not usually have a great financial reserve to fall back on if half the drive-ins quit coming. Can you stretch a buck?

If necessary, do some odd jobs or take a part-time job. I would rather take a part-time secular job now than quit the ministry and look for a full-time secular job later. And I did so. I mowed grass and did landscaping to get my family through a very ugly stretch. Paul made tents to help support himself and his associates.

13. Build hope for the future. Leave the past in the past. Look ahead.

14. Do not let your frustration frustrate your people.

Do not allow your frustration to cause the people to become discouraged or wonder, “What is wrong with my church?”

15. Do not compromise your convictions, but do honestly evaluate your methods.

16. Evaluate yourself and your ministry for areas that need improvement.

Take a good, long look in the mirror. Look over your property. Look over the organizational structure of the church. There is always room for improvement.

17. Do not talk about those that leave, even if they leave in a hurtful way.

18. Do not seek vengeance against those who are hurtful, or allow a spirit of vengeance in your heart.

This will produce bitterness and unforgiveness and ruin you and your ministry. Forgive them for your sake.

19. Resist the incredible urge to go somewhere else and start over.

It is an incredible temptation to go somewhere where no one knows of your past mistakes. But you have no right to go anywhere unless God sends you. No preacher should “abandon ship” when things are tough. If you are going to leave, get the church back on its feet first. Then, you probably will not want to leave!

20. Do not become paranoid about people leaving the church.

Just because some were disgruntled does not mean that others are. What are you going to do, wiretap their homes? You will have to trust God and trust your leaders.

21. Do not develop a cult mentality.

The church is not a cult; people can leave if they want. They may not be right with God, but do not anathemize them for it. Leave the door open to return later. In some small towns, people switch churches every few years just on general principles. I guess they like variety.

22. Keep on soul-winning and visiting.

After you have knocked every door in town for a few years, soul-winning can become discouraging. If you go through a spell without any visible results, this can kill your motivation. But it is still a command. It is still the best chance your church has for new growth. So go!

23. Keep on praying.

24. Keep on supporting the missionaries.

Do not abandon them when tough times come. They are depending on you! When our church went through a tough stretch, I repeatedly had to cut my salary, to a total of several thousand dollars in one year. However, we have never cut a missionary's support by even a dime.

25. Learn your lessons.

If you make mistakes, learn from them. Benjamin Franklin defined insanity as repeating the same behavior and expecting different results. Learn from your mistakes without become too discouraged by them.

The point of this chapter is to encourage you to stick with it when times get tough. You might have to start seven different churches in the same location.

Chapter Twenty

THE CHAPTER THAT I HOPE
YOU NEVER NEED,
(But You Might)

As mentioned in another chapter, we should never stand in judgment on men that have had to shut the doors of their churches. Church planting is easy *in theory*, and it is easy for men to judge and criticize from the comfort of churches that were established by other men.

No church planter goes out expecting to *close* a church. We go out with the expectation of starting a church and seeing it grow into a strong, established church. We have a vision of a church family, property, buildings, and programs. We go in faith, and faith never considers failure. ***You can be sure that when a church planter finally admits defeat, he does not need to be criticized, judged, or ridiculed. He does not need to become a sermon illustration or the topic of idle gossip. He will be hurting way down deep inside. He needs help.***

By the time a man closes the doors on a church, he will probably be deep in debt. In order to keep things going, he will push his financial limits, digging a deep hole for himself. Many men then have to spend years and years trying to get out of that hole. I would advise you to keep from getting into this hole. Do not sacrifice your future on the altar of the temporary.

Let me say that if your church has to be shut down, that does not mean that God is done with your life. It is a shame that preachers will treat their wounded as they do. If a man goes to an established church and simply maintains an average attendance in buildings that other men built, many would not consider his ministry a failure. But if a young man goes out and tries to start a church from scratch and fails, he might be treated like a failure for

the rest of his life. **Many young men that fail in their first church start never get back into the ministry full-time. This should not be so. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29).**

Paul preached in Athens, but he was not able to start a church there (Acts 17). He won some souls, but could not establish a church. But Paul did not throw away his ministry. He went down the road and started the great church of Corinth, and then went on to an even greater work at Ephesus.

If you should come to a place where you have to shut down, do not give up on God's calling. Do the right thing with the church and any assets it might have, and then find a way back into the ministry. Take some time if you need it. Circle the wagons in your family. Learn from any mistakes. Take a church, or work in a church that can help your family through the transition time. There are lots of churches across America that need pastors. Stay in the ministry.

(Rom 11:29) "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."