

Greater Sydney Conference Church Planting Process

Have you been inspired by the mission that Jesus has given us to go and make disciples? Have you been thrilled by the Spirit-led missionary journeys of Paul as he travelled around the Mediterranean planting new churches in key cities? Have you been motivated by the growth of the early Seventh-day Adventist church, as our pioneers travelled across America, Europe and the Pacific sharing the eternal gospel and launching a church planting movement that grew rapidly into a worldwide movement?

You are in good company! The Greater Sydney Conference is committed to taking the good news of Jesus' salvation and soon return to everyone here in Sydney, particularly suburbs and people groups where there are no Seventh-day Adventist churches. Within the Greater Sydney Conference vision of **Growing in Discipleship**, the Department of Personal Ministries and Discipleship has developed the vision:

**Growing the Seventh-day Adventist discipleship movement in Greater Sydney
by multiplying disciples, leaders and healthy churches**

This process document is to enable you to effectively and efficiently join the Seventh-day Adventist church planting movement in the Greater Sydney Conference. This process is based on principles that allow you the flexibility and creatively to effectively reach the community that the Holy Spirit is calling you to establish a new, multiplying church.

Getting Started

Like any project, it is worthwhile to understand the bigger picture of what church planting involves. To get started, take the following steps:

1. Talk to the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship and your local church pastor. Share with them the vision that God has placed on your heart and confirm that you are committed to following the Conference's church planting process.
2. Get a copy of the book [Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement](#) by Russell Burrill from the Department of Personal Ministries and Discipleship or the Adventist Book Centre. Read through the book and write a one-page summary of the ideas that inspired or challenged you and that are relevant to your mission situation.
3. Spend time studying how the Holy Spirit grew the early Christian movement in the book of [Acts](#). Use a spiritual journey to note the key ways in which the movement grew. Also, compare how the principles that Jesus taught in [Matthew 28](#), [Mark 4](#), [Luke 10](#) and [2 Timothy 2](#) were effectively applied in Acts.
4. Read through the Chapter 9 "[Teaching and Healing](#)" in [The Ministry of Healing](#) and write a one-page summary of the ideas that inspired or challenged you and that are relevant to your mission situation.
5. Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead you to the people group or community that He is planning for you to plant a new, multiplying church in.
6. Start connecting with the people the people group or community that the Holy Spirit is leading you to. This can include prayer walking around the area, having community meals and BBQs, joining local community interest groups, letterboxing, doorknocking and placing advertisements in the local community newspaper.

7. Prayerfully consider what your motives for church planting are. The only motivation that is truly healthy is if you feel called to fulfil Jesus' mission of making disciples within a new area or amongst a particular people group. If some of the real reasons why you are attracted to church planting is because you disagree with the worship style at your current church or you are experiencing personality or leadership conflict within your current church, these are inappropriate and unhealthy reasons to plant a new church. You will find that these problems will simply follow you and may even become more accentuated in a small church plant.

Being Assessed

One of the key factors in successful church plants is whether the church planter is assessed. This process involves completing a written assessment followed by interview with a small assessment team. The assessment process is very valuable because it allows you to identify both your strengths as well as key growth areas. You can complement your strengths by building a team of people who have the spiritual giftedness to create a balanced and well-rounded church planting team.

1. Complete your 1-page review of the book [Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement](#) by Russell Burrill and submit it to the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship.
2. Complete your 1-page review of Chapter 9 "[Teaching and Healing](#)" in [The Ministry of Healing](#) and submit it to the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship.
3. Complete the written church planting assessment and submit it to the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship.
4. Attend a church planting assessment interview at the Conference.

Note that the church planting assessment will focus on your past journey in mission and ministry and not just your future plans for church planting. Any leadership or personality conflict that may exist within your current local church will also need to be openly discussed.

Vision-casting

Jesus sent His disciples out two-by-two and Paul always worked in mission teams. Church planting requires a team, and to do this you need to start casting the vision to people around you.

1. Pray that Jesus would connect you with people who can catch the vision of church planting.
2. Talk to people you know and share with them the vision and passion that the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart.
3. Share key church planting books and videos that you have found are inspirational.
4. Use opportunities in sermons that you are preaching or Sabbath School discussions to share the vision and need for church planting.
5. Share your vision using email and social media, if you use these communication means.
6. Raise the concept and opportunity of church planting in church board meetings and business meetings.

Team-building

The key to your effectiveness will be building a team that has a shared vision and focus. You can do this by:

1. Providing a key church planting book to all potential members that will unite them on the type of vision and methodology that the Holy Spirit is calling you to.
2. Gather the potential together for a meal and initial brain-storming meeting.
3. Plan a regular series of team meetings as you work on your vision, mission and discipleship strategy.
4. Spend time in conversational prayer for the outpouring and leading of the Holy Spirit.
5. Actively get involved in community outreach and service as a team.

Training

Church planting can be a thrilling prospect and people can quite excited by the possibility. However, it is easy to make beginners mistakes that could easily be avoided. The effectiveness and ultimate success of a church plant depends on the training that you and your team are committed to undertake. These are some of the really important training opportunities:

1. Read key books on church planting. These books can be ordered through the Adventist Book Centre and include:
 - Russell Burrill. [Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement](#). Hart Research Centre, 1999.
 - Steve Addison. [Movements That Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel](#). IVP, 2011.
 - Ed Stetzer. [Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church That's Biblically Sound and Reaching People in Culture](#). B&H Academic, 2006.
 - Craig Ott & Gene Wilson. [Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication](#). Baker Academic, 2011.
 - Timothy Keller. [Center Church: Doing Balance, Gospel-centred Ministry in Your City](#). Zondervan, 2012.
2. Attend an upcoming Conference or South Pacific Division church planting conference. For the most effective results, attend the conference as a team so that you can be inspired and trained together and have a shared experience to reflect on.
3. Attend an intensive church planting training program organised by the Greater Sydney Conference. Let the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship know that your team is interested and ready to attend this training.
4. Join the regular DXC church planting team meetings for networking, accountability and support.
5. Attend the Growing the Movement networking meetings that are organised by the Conference.

Coaching

The second key factor of successful church plants is that the church plant leader has regular coaching from a qualified missional coach. Discuss with the Director of Personal

Ministries and Discipleship who you would like to select as your church planting coaching. You will need to meet regularly with your coach throughout the church planting process. This will continue as your church plant begins to multiply and plant other new church plants.

Developing Your Church Plant Project Plan

Establishing a new, multiplying church plant is exciting because you get to start from scratch. However, it is very important to develop a project plan where you clearly define your vision, mission, values and discipleship strategy. It is essential that you develop this as a team and submit this to the Greater Sydney Conference Executive Committee for approval. The template for the project plan is included in Appendix A. Discuss the project plan template with the Director of Personal Ministries and Discipleship first to avoid any misunderstanding of what is required for each section.

Qualifying as a Church Plant

In order for your missional group to be recognised as a bona fide Seventh-day Adventist church plant within the Greater Sydney Conference network of churches, you will need to fulfil the following requirements:

- Submit a 1-page review of the book [Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement](#) by Russell Burrill.
- Submit a 1-page review of Chapter 9 “[Teaching and Healing](#)” in [The Ministry of Healing](#)
- Undertake a church planting assessment for the key church planting leader.
- Attend an intensive church planting training program organised by the Greater Sydney Conference.
- Submit a church plant project plan which needs to be approved by the Greater Sydney Conference Executive Committee.
- Select a qualified church planting coach for the key church planting leader and document regular monthly meetings with the coach.
- Provide monthly financial reports and quarterly evangelistic reports to the Greater Sydney Conference Executive Committee.

It is important to note that you will first be approved as a group. The process of becoming a company will take about 12-18 months once the Conference is confident that your church plant is a sustainable and viable as a local congregation.

Transition

It will be important to carefully plan your transition from your current local church to the church plant. Important steps in this transition include:

1. Share with your local church that you are being called by the Holy Spirit to be involved in a church plant and are working with the Conference through this recognised process.
2. Be transparent about any people who are interested in joining your church planting team from the local church.
3. Work together with your local church to develop leaders within the church to replace your leadership role and any of the local church leadership roles of the other church planting team members.

4. Once you have developed leaders within your local church, begin meeting for Sabbath worship as a house church with your church planting team on a monthly basis. This is a valuable team building opportunity and allows new leaders in your current local church to discover that they carry on effectively even if you are not present at church for the Sabbaths that you are meeting as a house church with your church planting team.

Launching Out

Once you have established your team and have built a network of new disciples, it will be important to launch public Sabbath worship services. This will be a valuable way of building community and providing opportunities for people to worship God together. One of the most common mistakes that church planters make, though, is to launch public Sabbath worship services too early. This can easily become draining on the church planting team and can absorb time and resources that should be focused on reaching out to the community. You can plan to launch public worship services when you have met the following missional milestones:

1. You have about 30 people who are actively committed to the church plant. This number may vary, but it is important to develop a worship structure that is appropriate for the number of people that you have in your team and will not overload them.
2. You have developed a discipleship strategy and leadership structure that includes:
 - A network of small groups
 - A network of Sabbath School leaders
 - A worship team
 - A sacrificial financial giving strategy
3. You have identified a suitable worship venue that is strategic and financially achievable for your team.
4. You have worked out a suitable transitional strategy to launch public worship services.

This may vary for different church planting strategies. For example, a house church network may only have a six-weekly or monthly gathering. However, the same principles apply for planning public worship services.

Financial Giving and Accountability

It is important that Seventh-day Adventist church plants maintain strong financial accountability within the network of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference. This includes:

1. Returning all tithes to the Conference.
2. Returning all Sabbath School mission offerings to the Conference.
3. The church plant can retain all offerings that are collected during Sabbath worship meetings. However, the church plant must provide the Greater Sydney Conference with written accounting records for all funds received by the church plant.
4. Providing monthly financial reports to the Greater Sydney Conference.

Once your church plant project plan has been approved by the Greater Sydney Conference Executive Committee, you can open a bank account. We recommend opening a Westpac Community Solutions Cheque Account, since Westpac is familiar with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia. You need to provide the bank with an official letter from the General Secretary of the Greater Sydney Conference confirming that the Executive Committee has approved your team and project plan to be recognised as a church plant, approved your opening a bank account and approved your nominated leadership team.

Reporting

The Greater Sydney Conference is committed to growing the Seventh-day Adventist movement in our city and we will fully support mission-focussed church planting projects. However, for the effectiveness and success of church planting initiatives, it is essential that transparent communication occurs between your church planting team and the Conference. This allows us to share the stories of how God is working to encourage other people to get involved in church planting as well as provide support for your team when you face difficulties and challenges. The reporting that the Greater Sydney Conference requires is:

1. Regular monthly coaching meetings.
2. Monthly financial reports for all funding that is received and spent by the church plant.
3. Quarterly evangelistic and discipleship reports addressing how the church plant is progressing with respect to its vision and discipleship strategy.

Remember that we all want successful and viable church plants to multiply across Greater Sydney. Reporting provides the necessary communication to ensure that we can work together to ensure that your church plant has the best opportunity to thrive and multiply.

Church Board

It is important to note that, as a church plant, your church board is the Greater Sydney Conference Executive Committee or the Church Board of the local church which is supporting your church plant. While your leadership team is responsible for the development and operation of the church plant, all formal decisions need to be approved and voted by the Executive Committee or the Church Board of the supporting local church, as specified by the 2010 Church Manual, Page 39.