

Church Planter Recruiting Guide

Mission to North America



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This Guide is a Work in Progress

Your Reflections, Questions and Additional Resources are most Welcome

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Think of this Guide as a collection of resources and ideas.

What, then, should you expect to happen as a result of using this Guide?

Using the resources in this Guide, you should be able to begin to tackle the heart of the church planter recruiting process. In the church planter recruiting process, there are three key tracks that run separately and somewhat parallel, which then merge together in a fourth step:

1. Site selection, which is identifying and understanding the communities that are ready for church plants, and summarizing the potential styles of the churches and church planters who might effectively minister there.
2. Understanding and determining the key values and resources the mother church or church planting network will provide.
3. Identifying, recruiting and assessing the church planters who match with those communities.
4. The church planter placement process brings these three separate processes together.

Steps of the Church Planter Recruiting Process in More Detail

The processes of the left and right columns below are parallel chronologically.

This is only a sample; there can be significant variations in both timing and sequence of steps. **This chart is included in the Appendix to this Guide, and may be used as a handout.**

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Cast church planting vision in church and presbytery.

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Begin to identify potential church planter candidates.

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Throughout the process, work with both husband and wife.

Training of potential candidates, through LAMP, other mentoring program, or seminary.

Appendix: LAMP GLEE courses

Throughout the process, offer mentoring, church planter training materials and training events.

If potential candidate is a seminary student, participate in Church Planter Readiness Seminar, if available.

Participate in MNA Church Planter Assessment at the time the potential candidate couple is approaching the necessary level of skills and experience. Appendix: What is Church Planter Assessment?

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1. Following the steps of Sections A and B above, formulate your Site Selection criteria.

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For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. – Mark 10:45

I. Introduction

A. How to use this Guide

Think of this Guide as a collection of resources and ideas. The calling of an individual to a particular ministry of the Gospel, including church planting, is an individual work of the Holy Spirit in each case. But there are some basic principles in the church planter recruiting process that are universal. We seek to address some of those key principles here.

A few disclaimers as we begin the church planter recruiting venture together:

- **This Guide is not a roadmap or a set of instructions** to be rigidly followed. Churches and church planters cannot be mass produced, and the recruiting process therefore cannot be standardized. In fact, it's safe to say that if you can map out a neat and precise process after reading this Guide, then you don't understand the nature and complexity of church planting. Do we expect to plant churches that are straight out of the box, some assembly required, but pretty much prefabricated, and pretty much looking like any other church? Or do we wait upon God with expectation for the work of His Spirit, to extend His Kingdom through churches planted who are uniquely committed and equipped for ministry among the people of the communities in which God has placed them? As we read the Bible, we see that God reveals the next steps to us one step at a time, and any endeavor that will advance His Kingdom comes only as a result of the work of His Spirit in ways that uniquely fit the people of a given community, in their unique time and circumstance in which God's Spirit is at work.
- **This Guide is not a missiological treatise.** We believe that the content builds on solid missiological foundations and reflects biblical direction. But the primary purpose of this Guide is that of guiding good planning and practical implementation.
- And one more – **this Guide is a very incomplete and imperfect work; it is a work in progress.** Please join us in the joy of furthering that progress by giving us your suggestions, corrections, observations; in doing so, you will help all those who follow to be better equipped.

What, then, should you expect to happen as a result of using this Guide?

The magnitude of the church planter recruiting process – which is only a portion of the total church planting process – will seem overwhelming at first. You may be thinking that it would take at least a large staff or maybe an entire army to tackle all of this. You are quite right, but don't let that stop you from taking further steps as you are able, by faith:

- **Begin where you can.** There is an old saying, *Beginning is half done.* **Read the Guide through carefully, and begin wherever you can get a hold of something specific to do.** As you begin to take action, more and more steps will come naturally to you, and you will begin to discern how to best enlist others to work with you.
- **Using the resources in this Guide, you should be able to begin to tackle the heart of the church planter recruiting process.** In the church planter

recruiting process, there are three key tracks that run separately and somewhat parallel, which then merge together in a fourth step:

1. Site selection, which is identifying and understanding the communities that are ready for church plants, and summarizing the potential styles of the churches and church planters who might effectively minister there.
 2. Understanding and determining the key values and resources the mother church or church planting network will provide.
 3. Identifying, recruiting and assessing the church planters who match with those communities.
 4. The church planter placement process brings these three separate processes together.
- **This entire process must be managed at the church, presbytery or (if a larger church planting network is involved) regional level.** You will be able to use resources created by others, but the final outworking is completed locally. As you read on, you will come to a section that discusses Essential Functions of church planting. You can contract with other parties, even parties outside of your region, for many of these essential functions. For example, church planter assessment is provided by MNA; similarly, for church planter coaching services, various experienced coaches are available, who offer these services on a contract basis. *But church planter recruiting has to be owned locally and the initiative taken at the local level. Contrary to Presbyterian intuition, you cannot hire someone from outside to do it. That said, you can call local staff to assist in the work on a paid basis if you can afford that, as long as the leadership and staff oversight is local. Pour your heart into understanding and implementing effective church planter recruiting, because **humanly speaking, the entire church planting endeavor stands or falls on the right church planter being in the right place at the right time.** Thus the church planter recruiting process, prayerfully and carefully carried out, supersedes all other key action elements in the church planting process.*
 - **This Guide contains most of the basic principles that are foundational to church planter recruiting in the context of the PCA.** After reading it initially, return to it often for reference. The material does not come from theory, but from practical observations about the church planting process, gathered by many people throughout the young history of the PCA. *While this material will not provide a neat road map, it should give you the beginnings of an intuitive feel as to how you will tackle the process of church planter recruiting, and where to go for help as you encounter the various challenges that are inevitable along the way.*

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B. The Role of General Assembly MNA (referred to as MNA in this document) in Church Planter Recruiting.

MNA believes that a PCA church planting movement will result only as churches and presbyteries commit to church planting at the grass roots level. It is not MNA's design to wrap up everything in a neat system, especially a centralized system run by MNA. Quite the contrary, a neat system will stifle and slow down the process. At the same time, in addition to providing an overall vision for church planting, **MNA provides specific services which we encourage churches and presbyteries to use in church planter recruiting to the extent the services are helpful.**

Even though everyone would like to be able to order up just the right church planter at the right time, the denominational culture of the PCA does not really want a centralized and controlled system for church planter placement, any more than it wants a centralized and controlled system for assigning pastors to churches or any other calls. At one time MNA maintained a completely self contained system for church planter recruiting, assessment, placement and funding. As a result, a good number of churches were planted. But there was also a lot of conflict and misunderstanding between MNA and the presbyteries, and there was a limit on the number of church planters who could be placed in this way. Since 1999, MNA has steadily implemented a grass roots orientation, with all aspects of church planting owned by churches and presbyteries. As a result, more church plants have been initiated, a higher percentage have survived and thrived, and churches and presbyteries have been much more satisfied with the process.

MNA offers church planter recruiting assistance through the services of MNA Staff. Go to the MNA web site at pca-mna.org for staff names and contact information. Take some time to surf the site, since there may be services listed under a variety of topics that may be helpful to your needs.

MNA Church Planter Assessments are conducted throughout the year, according to the schedule posted on the web site. Except for those who have already planted a church successfully, MNA strongly recommends that every potential church planter be assessed and placed on the field if recommended by MNA's Assessment. For the purpose of approving use of MNA's project cash management services, candidates who have planted previously are approved by the MNA Committee rather than recommended by the Assessment process. Each time MNA conducts the Assessment process, some candidates who are already committed to a particular call are included, as well as others who are open and seeking a call.

MNA offers services to address the needs of church planting wives: *the role of the church planting wife is just as critical as the role of the church planter in all of the church planting process.* **MNA offers a Church Planting Wives Ministry, Parakaleo, to address the unique needs of the church planting wife.** As you review MNA resources on the web site and as listed here, keep in mind constantly the necessity of a quality ministry to church planting wives. Relate to church planter candidates as couples, rather than as men by themselves.

In addition to the above, here are some **further ways in which MNA can serve you directly:**

- **The MNA web site – pca-mna.org – contains of wealth of additional resources.** Before contacting our Staff, please read this Guide carefully and review our web site material. Our purpose is to answer many of your questions through the material presented here and on the web site, so that we can give better attention to your individual needs.
- **Staff consultation and help in particular with church plant Site Selection,** developing Site Profiles, and discerning the kind of church planter you are seeking, as well as any other issues touched on in this Guide or on the MNA web site.
- **Church planting Hot Spots on the MNA web site:** look here for the sites who have Site Profiles prepared and listed with MNA. **As you prepare Site Profiles and begin recruiting, you are welcome to post you Site Profile here.** If you are beginning the process of Site Selection and compiling Site Profiles, review those that are posted to get an additional feel for what kind of information should be included. Once your Site Profiles are posted, church planters who go to the Hot Spots list will contact you directly rather than going through MNA Staff. We encourage this kind of direct interaction.
- **MNA Staff keep formal rosters of church planters who are MNA Assessment recommended,** as well as informal rosters of those who are interested in seeking a call to a church plant but have not yet been assessed. To find out if MNA Staff members know of candidates to recommend, email your Site Profiles to the MNA Church Planting Coordinators for specific ethnic groups, as well as the Church Planting Coordinator and Church Planter Development Director. Contact regional and church planting network directors also.
- **Localized Church Planter Assessments** will be increasingly a way of life in the future. MNA has developed the resources that will make it possible for an MNA credentialed assessment to be conducted at the local level, with training and if the local group will commit the resources needed for the process. Implementation will begin phasing in on a limited basis during 2009.
- MNA will conduct **Church Planter Readiness Seminars on seminary campuses** for churches or church planting networks who are willing to assist in organizing them. The purpose of these seminars is to provide an evaluation of the seminary student's (and his wife's) skills and experience relatively early in his seminary study, so that he can make the most of church planter training courses and ministry opportunities during seminary. The full MNA Assessment is generally not recommended for seminary students until the student's final year of seminary; therefore, it is good for students to have the opportunity for evaluation and direction early in their seminary experience. Check the MNA web site or contact the Church Planter Development Director for more information and the schedules of future Readiness Seminars.
- The MNA **web site offers resources which may not at first seem directly related to the church planter recruiting process.** Become as familiar as you can with the various resources and information on the web site. Even that which at first seems unrelated may come to have relevance, and ideas may be suggested even as you review the content. For example, someone who has not thought about the mission church needing to reach out across ethnic lines might have that brought to mind through the ESL resources, or through the booklet, *Ministering among the Changing Cultures of North*

America. Or, someone who has not thought in terms of a mission church being committed to serving people with disabilities might be encouraged to do so through the MNA Special Needs resources. Church planting is multidimensional and complex, and therefore the process of recruiting church planters is complex. The more background you can assimilate about all aspects of church planting and other outreach ministries, the more effective your search efforts will be.

- **Church planting promotional and vision casting material.** Use any of the publications or papers that are posted on the MNA web site in whatever way they may be helpful. You are welcome to duplicate and distribute any and all materials that are posted on the web site.
- In addition to the training offered at denomination wide MNA Church Planter Conferences, MNA provides **periodic training events on specific topics** such as Church Planter Network Development, Church Planter Recruiting, Mercy Ministries. Check the web site periodically for listings of these events.

C. Establishing church planting leadership at the local level.

Church planter recruiting efforts will require ownership and action at the local level, with a relatively small level of group decision required, in proportion to the action required. Be sure those who are involved in the recruiting and training process are oriented to taking action. Team leadership is essential to the church planting process:

- Beginning at the broadest level of leadership, the General Assembly church planting leadership in North America is provided through MNA. **MNA serves you, as you establish leadership to carry out the vision at the local level.**
- **Presbytery MNA Committees and/or Church Planting Networks** then take responsibility for a particular region within North America.
- From there, groups of leaders should be formed to guide church planting at the local level, so that **each community has leaders to guide and provide resources for church planting** at the point of implementation.
- MNA recommends establishing **leadership at the closest local level.** For example, if your presbytery has three key population centers, establish leadership in each of those centers, with some kind of structure to periodically bring them together. Do not try to oversee several population s using only one leadership group.

Who is going to make this happen, humanly speaking? Some of the functions that must be covered:

- **Presbytery MNA Committee** takes overall leadership for the development of church planting within the presbytery. If you form a **Church Planting Network**, define the relationship of the network with the presbytery MNA Committee when the network is initially formed.
- Establish **leadership task forces for particular tasks or regions** within your region. There are a multitude and wide variety of tasks included in the church planting process. People of all types of skills can be involved.
- **Church planter recruiting** is a specialized and intentional commitment in and of itself. **There should be leadership devoted to this task alone.** What finally matters is the quality of the man called to plant and how well he

matches the call. If the man has the right qualities and is in the right place, he will find the answers for the other supporting and logistical issues.

- **Establish a system by which continuity of church planting leadership will be constantly expanding.** The history of the PCA is full of examples of men who were catalytic leaders in planting many churches, but who left no successors to provide leadership after they were gone.

Who is responsible for the recruiting, training and mentoring of church planters and potential church planters? **Everyone is, but key leadership is necessary to encourage and coordinate the process:** church planting leadership at all levels; pastors of established churches; laymen who have a gift for discerning leadership character and skills; Church Planting Network leaders and staff; MNA staff – all have a part in providing leadership for recruiting and training men. The recruiting and training itself should be led by as many people in as many places as possible.

Find individuals with a passion for the necessary leadership roles, and then empower to enjoy God's calling to them. Individuals who have the passion need the freedom to pursue that passion. Figure out how to simplify the leadership process. It is about people who own a movement within their sphere of influence, so they can move ahead with a little freedom and a little money. Concentrate on the who, not the what. Who are the men who are discipling men right now? How can you empower them more? Concentrate – and depend – on people rather than structures. One leads because he or she is a leader, not because appointed a particular role in a structure.

Target key leaders to carry the vision for church planting, even if they will not take a direct role themselves. For example, think of the many pastors who have instilled in church members the vision for missions service overseas, even if those pastors have not actually served overseas themselves. All pastors and other key leaders can do the same for church planting.

II. Defining the Foundational Church Planting Vision.

Church planter recruiting begins with defining the vision. MNA's Vision Statement captures the heart of what we trust God to bring about in the PCA, expressing a vision which guides MNA as we serve churches and presbyteries in advancing God's Kingdom. **See the full MNA Vision Statement, contained in the Appendix to this Guide; you may duplicate and use this document as a handout.** In defining the vision, some key issues should be addressed.

A. The Vision should address the question, Why plant churches?

1. Church planting is our calling; the record of the New Testament has served as an example and a plan for the growth of the church since the time of Christ. Each rising generation of God's people is called to embrace and further the

vision, being faithful to God's calling. Many Scripture texts inform the process; we present Acts 11:19-30 as a summary text. Key themes:

- The church has an outward face that includes intentional evangelism. V.19, it is *those who had been scattered by the persecution who were telling the message*. This reflects the outworking of Christ's command of Matthew 28:19-20, *as you are going into all the world, make disciples of all nations*.
- The Gospel is for all ethnic groups, v. 19-20 telling of the transition from Jews exclusively, to Jews and Greeks as the recipients of the message.
- As the Gospel is proclaimed and people respond, a church is planted in Antioch (v. 21-23).
- Beginning with Acts 13, we learn that the Antioch church served as a sending church, commissioning Barnabas and Saul to go as missionaries and plant additional churches throughout the region.
- God works through individuals to fulfill different purposes and to advance his work through different roles at different stages in their lives. The text speaks of those who proclaimed the Gospel initially, and then of Barnabas and Saul being sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem, to offer further teaching. We learn later through the Acts narrative that Barnabas' role varied according to the need of the time.
- The church at Antioch ministers in deed as well as in word, responding to the needs created by the famine in Judea (v. 27-30).
- In summary, the culture of the group of people who – for the first time in history – were called Christians (v. 26) was: Gospel proclaiming, church planting, missionary sending, expressive of God's mercy in word and deed.

Two other keynote texts surely come to bear so strongly on church planting that we cannot go further without reflecting on them:

- Mark 10:45, *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*, reminds us of the core of the Gospel – that Christ died for our sins. As the heart of the Gospel, this message is the foundation for all of our endeavors. Empowered by Christ's Spirit, applying His atoning work in our own lives and proclaiming it to others, we are called to humble and self sacrificing service after Christ's example.
- 2 Timothy 2:2, *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others*, reminds us of our calling to pass the teaching on to future generations, rather than just being faithful to that which we have been given, or even to be faithful as evangelists in only this one generation. The church is to be a growing, ongoing, multiplying movement.

2. More people come to faith in Christ in new churches than in established churches. The practical result of obedience to God's direction in evangelism and church planting and multiplication is demonstrated in the fruit that His Spirit brings. Surveys show this to be true in the evangelical world at large. It is true also in the PCA. A recent survey of the first five years of more than 100 church plants in the PCA shows these results:

- Over 100 PCA mission churches, through their first 5 years of ministry, saw 1 adult profession of faith per 25 people attending Sunday worship. In comparison, the PCA as a whole sees 1 adult profession of faith per 40 people attending Sunday worship.
- New churches serve as missionary sending churches. One survey of 14 PCA churches planted in the years 1977 - 1986 showed a total of more

than \$1 million in benevolent giving from those 14 churches just in the one year that was reviewed 20 years after the initial planting, the year 2006.

3. North America has always been a mission field, but the challenge and opportunity of our homeland mission field grows steadily. The number of unchurched people in North America grows constantly, as a result of church people drifting away from their practice of faith, and as a result of the immigration of people who bring with them no active religion or religions other than the Christian faith. It can be said with no hesitation that the fields of North America are ready for a greater harvest than ever before. God's call is for His people to pray, and to go forth as harvest laborers by the power of His Spirit.

B. The vision should address the question, Why recruit church planters?

A biblically healthy church will be planted only if God is at work. But **humanly speaking, church planters are the fuel that drives a church planting enterprise. As the saying goes, Men are God's method.** From the human perspective on the church planting endeavor, if the right church planter can be recruited and placed, he will discover or develop everything else that is essential in getting a church planted. As such, finding laborers for the harvest is the key church planting movement priority, because everything depends on men of character who are called to the task and competent in critical skills. As a background for recruiting, a compelling vision for church planting must be cast on an ongoing basis in every church and every presbytery, with every church catching the vision that we are born to reproduce.

While this Guide will focus primarily on the human actions and resources necessary to the church planter recruiting process, **it is critical that the Holy Spirit provide our motivation, power and direction in all things;** also, that we understand ourselves to be God's servants following God's direction, and seeking to be the instruments of God's calling in the lives of others. John 4:35 – God calls us today, just as in His day, to pray for laborers for the harvest. *Church planter recruiting is nothing less than seeking to be God's people to get God's man – and his wife and children – in God's place in God's time.*

C. The overall vision should include a vision for each of the Essential Functions in church planting.

Even though church planter recruiting is at the heart of the entire church planting process, that is not all there is to the process. There are other essential functions in an effective church planting and church multiplying movement. **What are the key functions that have to be in place in order for an ongoing church planting movement to develop? It is good to define a vision and strategy for each of the essential functions.**

MNA addresses this question with a list and description of 12 Essential Functions in the church planting process. This list is indeed far broader than just Church Planter Recruiting, which is the subject of this Guide. **See MNA**

Essential Functions in Church Planting, contained in the Appendix to this guide; you may duplicate and use this document as a handout.

The Essential Functions list should be read from two perspectives:

(1) These are the functions that MNA recommends that every church, presbytery and church planting network define and supply as fully as possible on a local basis, either through establishing them locally or using outside resources to assist in providing them.

(2) MNA provides direct resources or consultation in identifying resources for each of these functions that may not be available to a church, presbytery or church planting network. Local parties are welcome to look to MNA or to others outside their region to supply these functions or give direction as to how the functions may be made available locally. The key is that all of these are essential to an effective ongoing church planting process, and therefore must be provided in some way wherever church planting is undertaken.

D. The vision should focus on building a church planting movement.

Our goal is not simply to plant churches – even many churches – but to initiate a church planting movement that will continue to build momentum into the future. Our goal is to plant churches who will be committed to church planting. Churches are planted in order to reproduce themselves. Historically, church planting movements have included these key elements:

- Prayer
- Lay Leadership
- Abundant gospel proclamation
- Cell or house churches
- Intentional church planting
- Churches planting churches
- Scriptural authority
- Rapid reproduction
- Local leadership
- Healthy churches

For an expansion of these themes, see *Church Planting Movements in the Appendix to this Guide*. Obtain the permission of the publisher before distributing.

An article by Sam Metcalf, *Under the Iceberg*, provides an interesting perspective on *How to Kill a Movement*, included in the Appendix to this Guide. This article should not be reproduced without the permission of the web site publisher. While not necessarily agreeing with all the points, MNA references this article for discussion, because several of the negative characteristics apply to the PCA.

If the PCA is to become a church planting movement, the vision should address these leadership and funding issues:

- **Church planting leadership succession:** it happens frequently that a presbytery MNA chairman or other key leader leads his presbytery into major church planting initiatives. He then moves on to another call, or yields the

leadership role to concentrate on something else, and presbytery momentum is lost. How can we more effectively keep the presbytery momentum building, even through a succession of different individual leaders?

- **Lay ownership and leadership:** PCA church planting is led almost exclusively by clergy. Historically, a church planting movement never becomes strong or remains strong if it is exclusively clergy led. God has given to PCA lay people great resources in time, talent and treasure that could be used with far greater effectiveness in advancing the Kingdom. PCA international missions is strong because it is led and supported by lay people. For North America, lay people also offer skills for many functions in the church planting process. For example, site selection and profile development can be led by lay men and lay women just as effectively as by clergy. How can lay people – men and women – be brought into church planting ownership and leadership more effectively and in greater numbers?
- **Key funding issues for church planters:**
 - **Raising funds without a strong personal network:** the ability of a church planter to raise funds readily for his church planting project is directly proportional to the strength of his personal network of PCA friends and relatives. Regardless of ethnicity or cultural background, those who lack such a personal network face fund raising as a much greater challenge. The challenge often becomes burdensome if the nature of the work is such that longer term funding is required. The formation of church planting networks has helped, but has provided only a partial remedy, because most networks require the church planter to raise significant funding in addition to the network's commitment from its own funds.
 - **Funding for church planters placed in regions where the PCA is not yet well established:** as presbyteries become more active and as more church planting networks are formed, they create a growing demand for resources (including both funding and leadership) within their own boundaries. In light of this trend, how will funding be provided to the church planters who are going to areas in North America where presbytery and network resources are very limited?
 - **The long term effect of high startup costs:** church planters are raising ever higher upfront capital to fund the years required to reach self support. This increased funding has *not* resulted in commensurate congregational growth. The result is that new churches are unable to support the level of spending to which they are accustomed, once the outside funding runs out. In the long run, the ability of the new church to give benevolent support to others will also be very limited.

E. The vision for a church planting movement must be spiritually driven.

A vision owned by God's people at the grass roots level: MNA serves as a vision casting, coordinating and resourcing service for the PCA as church planting is owned and led by churches, presbyteries and church planting networks. This reflects an essential spiritual principle – that God's people take direct responsibility for the advancement of God's work, rather than hiring it out or leaving it to a handful of professionals. This applies especially to church planter recruiting. **Rather than expect church planters and church planting leadership to be supplied from somewhere else, they should pray for God**

to call church planters and other key leaders from within, and work toward that end.

A Sending vision: in church planter recruiting, we have to ask ourselves the hard question: Are we recruiting, training and mentoring to keep all church planters and other key leaders for ourselves, or to send out? **Our calling is to present a larger Kingdom vision for the entire mission field of North America and for the world.** Presbyteries and networks with abundance should consider adopting presbyteries and networks who labor in the regions of North America where those who follow Christ are few in number.

Prayer Mobilization is essential to a church planting movement: *...for apart from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5). The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:37-38).* Prayer is foundational and needs to be integrated throughout the church planter recruiting process. Throughout the process, define recruiting as exploring an opportunity with a man and letting God's Spirit bring a true sense of calling instead of trying to talk someone into something. You want God's man in God's place in God's time. Prayer is essential to this process.

Think of the opportunities for prayer in their broadest terms, and in terms of involving the entire church in praying for church planting. Examples:

- Regular worship services and other gatherings of the church: include prayer for church planting in Sunday worship services; ask small groups to commit to prayer for specific church planters.
- Offer prayer training for the congregation; church planting is one application.
- For church planters in a region or network, meet as couples monthly for sharing and prayer; pastors meet with church planters monthly for prayer.
- Consider setting aside special times of prayer, such as committing every fifth Sunday of the month to prayer focused on church planters.
- Prayer walks in the community; stations of prayer in the church building.
- Hold prayer vigils at special times, such as Easter.

Provide prayer Guides for individuals and congregations.

- Use the Lord's Prayer, Psalms and other Scriptures for the biblical framework.
- Pray for more laborers for the harvest. Ask that God will provide church planters for our denomination.
- Ask God to provide bold, visionary leadership within our denomination to meet the task at hand, and that there will be a unity of purpose at the denominational, regional and local levels of leadership.
- Pray for spiritual protection for church planters around the denomination. At its core, church planting is a spiritual endeavor, and spiritual warfare is a reality where new ground is broken for the Gospel.
- Likewise, pray for the marriages of church planting families and for their children. Ask God to give the couples wisdom in planning work and rest.
- Pray for the MNA church planting staff as they work to address church planting needs in the PCA.
- Pray for the men who serve as MNA Presbytery Chairmen. Often pastors themselves, they volunteer their time to coordinate regional efforts in church planting. Ask God to give them wisdom, clarity of purpose, an ability to think

strategically about their region, and a smoothly functioning team of committee members to come alongside them in this task.

- Pray for donors to support the church planting vision and church planters.
- Pray that PCA churches will be faithful in supporting and interceding for church planters and for all church planter recruiting efforts.

III. Site Selection and Site Profiles.

From the Introduction: **In the church planter recruiting process, there are three key tracks that run separately and somewhat parallel, which then merge together in a fourth step:**

1. **Site selection**, which is identifying and understanding the communities that are ready for church plants, and summarizing the potential styles of the churches and church planters who might effectively minister there;
2. **Understanding and determining the key values and resources the mother church or church planting network will provide.**
3. **Identifying, recruiting and assessing the church planters** who match with those communities.
4. The **church planter placement process** brings these three separate processes together.

Site selection is the result of steps 1 and 2 above blended together. That is, the kind of church that you will plan to plant is determined by considering the needs and opportunities of the community, combined with the resources and values of the mother church, presbytery or network. While each of these two themes have a somewhat separate identity, when it comes to the actual planning process they become inseparable. Therefore, we discussed them together here, rather than attempting to separate them.

A. Site Selection background factors.

1. **Site selection begins by identifying the core commitments of a biblically healthy church.** Basic biblical commitments cannot be assumed but should be explicitly affirmed by everyone involved in the church planting process. MNA provides an example of a statement of core commitments in **the document, *What Kinds of Churches are We Looking to Plant?* This document is contained in the Appendix to this Guide; you may duplicate and use it as a handout.**

2. **Site selection begins with a commitment of the church to an evangelistic lifestyle.** Do not assume that a sponsoring church, presbytery or church planting network is committed to evangelism. Do not assume that a church planter is committed to evangelism. The new church and the church planter must be committed to evangelism if they are to be used by God in advancing His Kingdom. The evangelism commitment of the sponsoring body will be a major

influence in their commitment. **The document, *Becoming an Evangelistic Church*, is contained in the Appendix to this Guide; you may duplicate and use it as a handout.**

3. Site selection begins with a commitment to ministering among all the people groups of our North American communities.

Today's North American culture is rapidly changing. Middle and higher income neighborhoods, including the suburbs, are rapidly becoming more and more mixed in ethnicity. As urban residential areas that were lower income in the past are gentrifying to accommodate middle and upper income people who are drawn to the urban lifestyle, the lower income populations formerly concentrated in the cities are being displaced to the suburbs. Persons with disabilities, approximately 25% of the total population, live an often hidden life among all of our North American populations.

Most PCA churches were established in racially and socioeconomically segregated communities, creating a denomination that is predominantly middle and upper income, and majority Anglo. With the demographic changes taking place in our communities, the concept that a church should serve only one specific ethnic or socioeconomic group cannot be justified. **In our booklet and DVD, *Ministering among the Changing Cultures of North America*, MNA discusses these issues, with corresponding recommendations for ministry development. Go to the MNA web site to order this booklet and DVD.**

We raise this issue here to underscore that **it will increasingly be the calling of every church planter to lead a church plant in ministering across cultural or ethnic lines.** Churches will always be planted who have one dominant ethnic group represented, but even these congregations are called to be God's ambassadors of reconciliation and to bring the Gospel to all of the people groups within their reach. Therefore, we include here an extended discussion of some of the unique aspects of crossing cultural and ethnic lines. **See the article by Pastor Reddit Andrews in the Appendix to this Guide, *Love and Happiness: A Word on Racial Harmony*, for biblical perspectives on this issue.**

See also the power point presentation included in the Appendix to this Guide, *Primer on Church planting*. This presentation presents some of the characteristics of a church and church planter who will minister effectively in communities that include a wide variety of socioeconomic and cultural groups.

The challenges of crossing cultural, ethnic and socio economic lines in ministry should be addressed realistically. The New Testament speaks often of the struggles of the early church. Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are good examples of the discussion and resolution of those issues. Today, we do not have the same religious issues intertwined with the cultural, but the cultural barriers are still very strong. We become judgmental, making pronouncements about right and wrong in matters that are simply driven by custom or personal preference. We find varying cultural practices to be confusing. We easily resort to confrontation when we are faced with culturally different situations. In all of this, we need biblical correction and direction.

The PCA has weaknesses in addressing cultural issues:

- While we are committed to a biblical resolution of issues, we do not regularly engage in any formal way in the study and application of biblical and theological content to cultural issues, except to the extent this is done at the local church level.
- Our credentialing process for teaching elders is primarily one of maintaining a high academic bar, rather than reflecting a desire to invite, train, mentor and enlist new pastors. We speak of our presbyteries and sessions as courts and we speak of the trials of ordination. Reflected in the language is the tendency to measure the one who comes, rather than to seek out, mentor and invite.
- We speak of the parity of elders. However, church planting in particular is almost exclusively clergy led and financed by church and presbytery treasuries, instead of laymen having ownership and providing the primary leadership and funding. Bivocational church planters or pastors, common in many traditions, serve in this role only as a matter of last resort in the PCA.
- The PCA has an aging leadership. Historically, new movements – especially church and Christian faith revivals – are led by young adults, as they bring new vitality to institutions who are aging and who need revitalization.
- The philosophy of ministry fragmentation of the PCA works against developing church planting movements, especially movements that are effective across cultural and ethnic lines. As each group plants churches in its own tradition, the result is that church planting efforts are fragmented. This especially impacts development across ethnic and socioeconomic lines because greater resources are required for these initiatives.

The PCA also offers strengths in addressing cultural issues:

- We are committed to being driven by the Scriptures as interpreted in our reformed tradition, rather than by cultural preference.
- More than 15% of today's PCA membership is comprised of ethnic groups other than Anglo. Most congregations are homogeneous in ethnic makeup, but a steadily growing number reflect ethnic variety.
- We are strong in disciple making and seeking biblical direction for ministry.
- We believe in the parity of the elders; thus, elders of the various ethnic groups all have the same standing in the church.
- LAMP and other similar mentoring programs offer training for ordination for people in the context of their culture, which facilitates and encourages them to be true to the Gospel within their cultural context.
- The philosophical fragmentation of the PCA can work to advantage in leaving congregations and presbyteries free to plant churches in their own traditions without fear of control and a required conformity to a particular PCA mold.
- Especially given its affluence, the PCA abounds with opportunity to train and mentor young people in ministry in various cultural contexts, both in North America and around the world.
- The PCA has abundant resources for equipping her people to cross cultural and ethnic lines; example are ESL resources, international ministry experience in other cultures, crosscultural church planting and other ministry already underway in North America, the educational institutions affiliated with the PCA, and financial resources to provide training for students.

B. Site selection planning steps. Now it's time to begin to narrow down to the actual planning steps in site selection. Once you have settled on the above core commitments, have clearly established that the potential church plant will include an intentional commitment to evangelism, and have addressed the issues of ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity, narrow the focus even further. Our first inclination is to start putting pins on the map. Prior to putting pins on the map, however, you need to formulate your criteria for Site Selection. How do you do that?

Review the documents from the Metro Philadelphia Church Planting Partnership, including: Criteria for the Evaluation of Site Selection; Philadelphia Edge Cities Analysis (in both PPT and PDF formats); and Philadelphia Next Best Places to Plant (in both PPT and PDF formats), contained in the Appendix to this Guide. You may also use these documents as handouts. The document presents Site Selection criteria developed by Metro Philadelphia Church Planting Partnership. For more information, contact Bruce Finn: 87 Holyoke Road, Richboro, PA 18954; (267) 983-1133; metro Philly@verizon.net; www.cpphilly.net.

The Philadelphia Partnership highlights these key issues and steps:

- We exegete Scripture far more than we exegete communities. In the Site Selection process, we need to do both.
- Churches need real connection to place.
- Churches and church members need an incarnational connection to the people who live in a place.
- Cities are changing faster than ever. For example, if a church in the city of Philadelphia was established 50 years ago, it is an old church.
- The challenge is to identify where we are not, and where we should go next; some lessons can be learned by observing how businesses plan for growth:
 - Determining where we are not. For example, Target goes into population areas of 100,000+.
 - Where can we be one [church] in a million [people]? Pick out a single site in the middle of a metro area where a church is needed.
 - Bull's eye. Stores like to be near Target, Best Buy, etc. There are certain stores whose goal is to be within site of a particular brand store that will draw customers. For example, a thrift store near Glenside Presbyterian in Philadelphia has a 900+ gross and 300+ net. Nearby are other several smaller thrift stores. The cluster of thrift stores attracts people who shop several thrift stores on one trip. Churches should look to cluster similarly in areas to which people are drawn.
- Identify Edge Cities, per the criteria below. Edge cities are redefining America's metropolitan areas. They:
 1. are found at the intersections of two or more major highways. For example, King of Prussia, in the Philadelphia metro area.
 2. are organized around a 20 minute commute rule. Today's average commute is 20 minutes. As the number of cars grows, the 20 minute commute is a shorter distance. This influences how far people are accustomed to driving to a worship service; churches should be reachable within a 15 minute drive.
 3. include at least 250,000 people.

4. include at least 5 million square feet office space; 600,000 square feet of retail space.
 5. contain more jobs than bedrooms.
 6. are perceived by the population as one place where people live, work, shop and play.
- Focus on a geographic area and pray for church planters who will have a heart for ministry in that area.
 - Generational, ethnic and crosscultural communities: where are they emerging? For example, Philadelphia zip codes with 40% age 18-24.
 - Survey the existing PCA churches: if money were no object, where would you plant the next church?
 - Develop overall site map: where we are; where we are not; where we want to go next.

Do not simply copy the Philadelphia Partnership Site Selection document, or any other. Instead, taking the background factors of the previous Section A above into account, and drawing from the input provided by the Philadelphia document and any other helpful resources, define your own site selection criteria by addressing the four key points below. *If you are working with existing core groups or individuals interested in participating in the church plant, include them in this process.*

1. Where will the church be planted geographically? In posing that question, we are also asking: What are your expectations as to how the church will minister in the diversity discussed in the previous section?

We strongly encourage that new churches have a vision to minister among all the people groups of their community to the greatest possible extent, since the Gospel is for all peoples. Even if the congregation does not or will not reflect the community demographics, the Scriptures surely call us to establish relationships and seek to bring the Gospel into every sector of the community. **Evaluate the psychographics (the use of demographics to determine the attitudes and tastes of a particular segment of a population, as in marketing studies) of your community. Visit and form relationships with people in the community. *Don't undertake to develop a church in a given community if you have never formed any relationships with the people of that community.*** Look for the signs of moving and growth in the community. For example, where are new schools planned? What are the planning and zoning commissions reviewing and projecting for the future? Obtain demographic information on the community. Two leading sources for this information:

- Claritas: <http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=20>
- Percept: <http://www.perceptnet.com/>

2. What are your expectations as to the style or personality of the congregation? Each church has a distinct personality. See the document by Phil Douglass, *What Is Your Church's Personality?* contained in the Appendix to this Guide; you may duplicate and use it as a handout. This process is twofold: (1) what is the personality of the sponsoring church, presbytery or church planting network? The personality of the sponsoring body will have a significant impact on the new church. (2) what is the expected personality of the new church? The expectations for the personality of the new

church will be a key factor in evaluating potential church planters.

3. What is your launching method – that is, what people and financial resources will be given to launch the new church? The launching method will determine the number of people available for the core group, as well as the funding projected to come from the core group or other local resources. Both of these will substantially determine the leadership style of the church planter. A church launch can happen in any one of the following ways:

- Training and mentoring lay leaders in the congregation to launch a daughter church from an established church.
- MultiSite as a church planting method (note that the goal of many multisite congregations is to permanently continue as one congregation meeting in multiple sites): an established congregation uses her current pastoral staff to serve a large group from the church meeting in an additional new location. Eventually, the congregation meeting in the new site calls its own pastor and organizes as a particular church.
- Mother daughter: a core group (either large or small) is sent out from an established church. When this method is used, the church planter often joins the staff of the mother church sometime prior to launch, so that he forms a relationship with the core group prior to the actual launch.
- A church planter is called to begin the mission church in a community, with no core group established prior to his call.
- A pastor or regional church planting leader recruits families to form a core group prior to calling the church planter.
- Replant of an established church that has declined.

This is not an exhaustive list. Always keep in mind that God's work is unique in each situation. There are many ways to plant a church. Phil Douglass, Professor of Church Planting, Growth and Renewal at Covenant Theological Seminary, identified 20 ways that he either led or observed firsthand in his experience in the Washington DC area. **See his article in the Appendix to this Guide entitled, 20 Ways to Plant Churches. This document may be used as a handout.**

What impact do these methods have on the selection of a church planter?

The method by which the mission church is launched has major impact for recruiting in at least two ways:

- The style of the church planter you are seeking will vary widely according to which launching method you plan to use.
- Levels of financial support required in addition to core group giving will also vary widely with each of these methods.

4. How much personal and logistical support will be available to the church planter? Be specific and honest about what resources you can offer the church planter and his wife, once he begins the work. Don't oversell. One of the primary reasons church planting networks have formed is to provide personal and logistical support for the church planter on the field. Southwest Church Planting Network Director Brad Bradley explains what their network offers: *(1) a group the church planter can call on – 59 churches he can call on for help; (2) a coaching process; (3) greater support for wives of church planters than those who work in isolation; and (4) key financial support (though not the total support*

needed for the project), along with a plan to help the church planter raise the additional money required.

As another example, Doug Swagerty at Harbor Presbyterian in San Diego describes their situation: *At Harbor we're not recruiting for presbytery or even for a network but for our multicongregational church. So it brings a different set of issues to the table. We're not interested in the guys who score off the charts in assessment. They won't benefit as much from our team based approach. We need people who are above average but have value for team ministry and understand and want that ministry. Another category for us is associate category of folks who've been in ministry for 10-15 years and want to try planting but know they can't do it the normal way.*

C. Site Selection: now let's bring it all together.

1. **Following the steps of Sections A and B above, formulate your Site Selection criteria.** Deciding the criteria is the biggest part of the challenge.
2. **Once you have formulated your Site Selection criteria, the actual selection of sites readily follows.** There is still a lot of work to do in visiting communities, meeting people, and gathering demographic data and other information from the communities in which you will potentially plant, but guided by the Site Selection criteria you have formulated, the process will begin to flow naturally and even become intuitive. As you continue the process, priority sites for church planting will begin to emerge naturally.
3. **As sites begin to come together, commit to writing in detail the information that you have gathered.**

D. Preparing community and church Site Profiles. Once you have completed the Site Selection process, including the written reports for each site, the next step is to develop a Site Profile for each of the potential church planting sites. Site Profiles are one of the most effective means of recruiting and selecting potential church planters. If you have done your Site Selection using the process presented above, then your sites are not merely pins on a map, but you have detailed descriptions of the communities you wish to serve and the styles of the churches you envision serving those communities. ***A Site Profile is a brief description of the sites for which you seek church planters, put in terms that will help the church planter and you determine whether or not that particular church planter might serve well in that community.***

The Site Profile, which is a summary of Site Selection information, is the primary church planter recruiting instrument. A good Site Profile is a mix of equal parts factual information and exciting vision. The Site Profile is a 1-2 page document that touches on the following topics or themes, using highlights of the information gained in your Site Selection process. You are not bound by the topics listed here; adjust as you need to in order to make sure everything is included, but **we recommend limiting the profile to a 2 page maximum.** **As you explore possibilities with a particular church planter, you can then supply as much further detail as your Site Selection process has produced.**

1. **Introduction:** In one paragraph, describe the area briefly, including proximity to major cities and which presbytery it is in.
2. **Need:** Answer the question “Why does xyz city or community need a new church?” Introduce the reader to your target city or community. Describe it in terms of geography, demographics, culture, and spiritual condition. Include information about population projections, income and age statistics, main religious influences in the area, nearby learning institutions, if any, and anything else that sets this city/community apart. Is there already a core group present or interested contacts or will this be a scratch start?
3. **Project Description:** What do you see God accomplishing through the new church? Who is initiating the work? (i.e. Presbytery or mother church or network?) Will it have any special relationship to other churches (i.e. daughter church?) What kind of timeline are you proposing for beginning the work? What is the support proposal or determined salary package? Where will funding come from? Are there funds currently available? Who are you looking for? What kind of qualities or characteristics are you looking for in a church planter in this target community?
4. **Conclusion: Summarize why you are interested in planting a church in this location,** and how this work ties in with the vision for your presbytery, network, or church and the Kingdom of God. Include special challenges to the church planter considering this site, and a profile of the successful church planter for this site.
5. **Contact information for you or any others who can respond to inquiries from potential church planter candidates.**

How do you use the Site Profile?

1. Submit it to **MNA for posting on the Hot Spots list.** Potential church planters will contact you directly for more information. MNA will not post any sites that do not have a profile available. MNA will post as many different Site Profiles as you wish to post.
2. As you hear of **potential church planter candidates** – or hear from them – send the Site Profile to them as a beginning point for interaction with them.
3. **Disseminate the Site Profile any other way you can,** through mailings and emailings to potential candidates and to any others who are a part of the recruiting process. Be sure every leader in your region has the information and your encouragement to spread the word and search for candidates. Remember that the recruiting effort is a very informal process of personal networking. The wider the information is distributed, the greater the chance that someone will hear about it who may have an interest in the call. **Use the same methods in your search for a church planter as you would use in seeking to fill any other pastoral position.**
4. Put the **greater details developed out of the Site Selection** process (i.e., substantial details beyond what is contained in the Site Profile) into an attractive and orderly format so that you can send this information as a next step to potential candidates who have a serious interest.

From the Introduction once more: **In the church planter recruiting process, there are three key tracks that run separately and somewhat parallel, which then merge together in a fourth step:**

1. **Site selection, which is identifying and understanding the communities that are ready for church plants, and summarizing the**

potential styles of the churches and church planters who might effectively minister there;

2. **Understanding and determining the key values and resources the mother church or church planting network will provide.**
3. **Identifying, recruiting and assessing the church planters who match with those communities.**
4. The **church planter placement process** brings these three separate processes together.

With sites selected and Site Profiles in hand, let's move on to the process of identifying, recruiting and assessing church planters.

IV. Identifying potential church planter candidates, including those who may need additional training

MNA offers Church Planter Assessment – through both a centralized system and through MNA credentialed Localized Assessments – to assist churches and presbyteries in selecting church planter candidates. MNA recommends participation in this assessment process – which includes both the church planter candidate and his wife – as a mandatory step in the recruiting and placement process. The timing of assessment will vary with each individual. In some cases, assessment is very near the beginning of the church planter's consideration of church planting, and he searches for God's call to a specific work only after assessment. Others are already close to a call to a particular new work, and assessment is one of the final qualifying steps. Whatever the sequence and timing, moving toward assessment includes these steps:

1. **Preliminary screening of those who may be called to church planting.** Before discussing the MNA Church Planter Assessment in more detail, use the **document, *Twenty One Questions You Should Ask Yourself Before Considering Starting a Church*, which is contained in the Appendix of this Guide; you may duplicate it and use it as a handout.** If review of the above document with a potential church planter candidate affirms further interest, presenting the potential church planter candidate with the another document will be helpful in giving both the church planter and his wife a good overview of what is included in the MNA Church Planter Assessment process: ***What is Church Planter Assessment?* is contained in the Appendix of this Guide; you may duplicate it and use it as a handout.** Note that the document includes a major section addressed to the potential church planting wife.
2. For complete information on MNA Church Planter Assessments, including schedules and application forms, go to the MNA web site: pca-mna.org.

V. Training and mentoring potential church planters

A. Training and mentoring for church planting is a long term process.

For those seeking to recruit church planters, the universal question is, ***Where can I find a church planter?*** For the PCA to become a church planting movement, however, the question must be revised to, ***Who can I train as a church planter?*** In other words, as long as we are relying primarily on finding men who are ready to plant, we will never see the church planting momentum we desire. We should of course do all we can to seek out the men who are ready; the next section of this Guide addresses that. But let's consider first how we can train more men to serve as church planters. Where might you look for prospects? How will you train them?

Gaining momentum in church planting will require having bivocational church planters as well as elders who contribute to church planting initiatives with their volunteer time. Lay leadership potential, greatly underutilized in the PCA, should be maximized. Licensed elders and other lay leaders are critical to church planting momentum:

1. In serving as church planters themselves; and/or...
2. In carrying major portions of the workload in established churches, or staff roles in mission churches, thus freeing pastors to invest time in church planting.

What qualities – in very general terms – should you look for? Later we'll discuss recruiting men who are seminary students. **What qualities do we look for in the lives of those who might become church planters, or what qualities do we look for among lay people who might either lead in church plants as lay people, or who might consider a call to vocational ministry later in life?** Church planting pastor Martin Ban suggests that we look for people who:

- **Go regularly to the turf of nonbelievers**, in order to engage nonbelievers, as the Apostle Paul went to the synagogue and the marketplace.
- **Have a Gospel love for others**, engaging others in starting point questions; who love to talk with nonbelievers about their lives and what they believe; who look for opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Engage in foot washing, who **ask how they can serve the nonbeliever**; who ask how God's people can engage together in corporate, visible, humbling service; who ask, what we will – as God's people – be known by in our communities; who ask how our presence makes a difference in the lives of individuals around us and the life of our community; who love to be equipped and equip others in a biblical world view in which, through the Gospel, they seek to be salt and light in their relationships.
- **Love to get children and young people serving**, especially serving nonbelievers and the people of the community.

Take the long term view:

- **Establish a mindset** that your church and others within your circle of influence will be committed to growing your own church planters instead of

looking – as your only source for church planters – across North America for those who are already trained and ready to plant.

- **Share your church planter recruiting and training vision throughout your entire circle of influence.** To identify and encourage those who might be called of God to full time ministry, begin before the beginning. The PCA has a long tradition of impressing upon young men, beginning even in elementary school, the possible call of God to serve as a pastor or missionary. The call to church planting should be presented in the same way. **Every pastor and every church should be praying for, identifying, and investing in young leaders who will emerge in the future as church planters and lay church planting leaders.**
- **Stories are powerful,** and they will be your primary means of church planter recruiting, from building vision at the broadest and most public level, to addressing the smallest details of the personalized recruiting process with each husband and wife. Stories build excitement; stories present the realities; stories encourage others that God can overcome their obstacles and fears. The Bible is one long story, containing in it a collection of many stories – all from God. If God reveals Himself to us through this means, it makes sense that stories of God's work will be one of your most effective means of calling people to consider His call to church planting.
- **Emphasize that pastors and other key church leaders should be identifying their own Timothys to train.** Look for key leaders in the congregation who love evangelism and are interested in where the church is going. As your church offers internships and apprenticeships for potential church planters, look for those in the church who are drawn to work with these men.
- **Train local church leaders to look for potential church planters.** Emphasize that teaching elders and churches should be developing leadership for roles, in addition to the lead church planter role, that also contribute to church planting through lay leadership.
- Plan for the **development of young people for church planting**, through discipleship; ministry opportunities in short term missions; and spending time with young people for relationship building and teaching.
- Develop **opportunities to serve through college and seminary ministry internships and church planting apprenticeships.**
- **Be practical and realistic in your recruiting.** What are the perceived barriers? What are the myths – those myths that make church planting sound too easy and those that make church planting sound too hard? Get accurate information on all of the processes such as Church Planter Assessment, the placement process, fundraising, etc. It is critical that potential church planters not be either undersold or oversold on each practical step of the process.

How are potential church planters trained?

- a. **Start with the early years**, providing opportunities to learn what church planting is all about through youth missions teams and college students, including summer internships.
- b. **LAMP and similar mentoring programs** can provide training and credentialing for ministry without attending a resident seminary.
- c. **For those who attend resident seminaries, utilize these means for training in church planting:**
 - (1) Summer internships in church planting.

- (2) Church Planter Readiness Seminars provide periodic evaluation and a basis for planning the specific emphases of the candidate's future training.
- (3) Church Planting Apprenticeships.

How do we recruit among Anglos for crosscultural church planting and other ministry development?

- Pray for discernment to know how the **Holy Spirit** is at work, and join Him there rather than asking God to join us. Where is God moving in the world: how, why, with whom, and how is the PCA called to be a part of that?
- Pray to the **Lord of the Harvest** to call laborers into His harvest.
- Start building interest while **young people** are in middle and high school.
- Create **churches who are Kingdom and missions oriented**, realizing that the mission field begins with our neighbors.
- Help the older leadership learn the language and culture of the younger generations. **Encourage and mentor young leaders**, and turn the leadership over to them.
- As you work with potential church planters and church planting lay leaders, **look for signals in people's stories that God may be leading them** into crosscultural work.

How do we recruit and develop more church planters and lay leaders from among ethnic groups, other than Anglo, who can plant ethnically and crossculturally?

- Pray to discern how the **Holy Spirit** is at work and join Him there, rather than asking God to join us in what we think needs to be done.
- Pray to the **Lord of the Harvest** to call laborers for His harvest.
- Do not assume that a non Anglo, especially one who has immigrated recently to North America, can necessarily **work across cultural or ethnic lines**. Many who have been called to plant PCA churches in North America have failed at this very point: they were effective pastors or church planters in their country of origin, but in North America – even in a community in which people from their country of origin are the dominant population – they inevitably have to work across cultural lines. Since immigrants begin assimilating into North American culture from the time they arrive, all ministry among them inherently has to be crosscultural.
- **Use training and mentoring for ordination**, such as LAMP, that provides training in their own cultural context.
- **Incorporate non Anglos into staff and leadership of existing churches**. A growing number of non Anglos are serving effectively in PCA churches in roles that have no specific connection with their ethnicity.
- Focus recruiting efforts on the **second and succeeding generations of ethnic groups living in North America**, rather than concentrating exclusively on the first generation.
- Resonate with and appeal to the global culture (internet, music genre, multi-lingual, global communications) of the **younger generation**.

The document in the Appendix to this Guide, *Issues in Recruiting Hispanic American Church Planters*, will be helpful if you are recruiting among Hispanic American church planter candidates or seeking to plant in a community that includes major Hispanic populations. This document may also be helpful in recruiting leaders from other ethnic groups.

B. Training for church planting without attending a resident seminary.

Credentialing: the PCA Book of Church Order (BCO) allows for ordination with a college degree and the equivalent of a seminary degree, per uniform curriculum requirements. Ordination does not require a seminary degree per se, and it does not require any resident seminary experience. Thus church planters and other pastors may be trained in the context of the local church and ministry without attending a resident seminary, as long as the requirements of the BCO uniform curriculum are met. *If you are using this method to train church planters, be sure that the plan you are pursuing will be acceptable to your presbytery.*

Church planting pastor Dony St. Germain describes the process of training and mentoring without a resident seminary: *First, we pass along the vision by word, over time, looking for the right kind of character qualities as we do this. Second, we look for commitment. Third, we begin to equip, a process that continues over four years. **Once in training, everything we do pushes them to start something new in all aspects of church planting.** So they're ready to go. It's always someone we've invested a lot of time in. Part of their training is to disciple others by training men along the way. They are responsible for different ministries, to start a ministry and then train someone to take their place. As a result, they go out with that same mind set.*

Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP) is a program developed by church planting pastor Brian Kelso and offered by MNA for training and mentoring men for ministry without attending a resident seminary, while meeting the requirements of the BCO. In order to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in the rapidly changing demographic environment of North America, a more effective approach is needed for training future ministers of the PCA from new populations who would not ordinarily be able to navigate the traditional system. LAMP addresses this need. **For full details on LAMP go to: lampseminary.org. For a list of the courses current as of the year 2008, see [LAMP GLEE Courses 2008, in the Appendix to this Guide.](#)**

LAMP's Vision is to develop and implement a reproducible, mentor/apprentice-based, competency-oriented, affordable without debt, biblical and theological study program that will prepare men for the ordained gospel ministry in the PCA throughout all segments of society in North America. Focusing on Calling, Character, Competency, Content and Credentialing, LAMP meets training needs that will not be addressed any other way, specifically to equip:

- Bivocational pastors and church planters.
- Ruling elders who lead worshipping bodies.
- Others who for a variety of reasons require non traditional programs if they are to be trained for ministry.
- Any whose cultural context is radically different from the dominant culture represented by the resident seminaries. In particular, leaders among people who are not highly educated or who serve in lower income communities are kept more in tune with their cultural context when trained in that context through mentoring.

With so many advantages to LAMP or similar mentoring approaches, why isn't all training for ministry, or at least for church planting, done this way? **What are some of the barriers** that hinder churches, networks, and presbyteries from training church planters in this way?

- **Credentialing issues.** Many presbyters do not realize that a seminary degree is not a BCO requirement. Traditional seminary education is so much a way of life in the PCA that many are skeptical that the academic requirements can be met through such a program.
- **Counting the cost:** a local mentoring program requires a significant long term commitment. Those who launch LAMP must see students through a 6 year program, or must make provision for succession. While financial costs are significantly lower than seminary tuition, some of the cost must be carried by the local church or presbytery.
- **The PCA is lacking in a mentoring tradition.** Localized and pastor led training is often viewed as a lower level of quality than that offered by leading academic institutions. We are accustomed to academic training as the sole or primary means of equipping and qualifying for ministry.

For the PCA to become a church planting movement, the above perceptions will need to change over time. Change can come through:

- A constant emphasis on the necessity of this training as a way to grow our own effective church planters for **all people groups in North America.**
- **Celebrating and telling the stories** of how God is at work, focusing on ministry results and changed lives.
- Working with key presbytery leaders in **taking ownership of training and credentialing** through a mentoring approach.
- Involving those who are skilled academically in presenting the **academic portion of LAMP.**

C. Providing church planter training and mentoring to college and seminary students, or those who have a seminary degree but lack sufficient experience to plant.

Summer and longer **internships during college and seminary, which require only a minimum of direction and funding by the host church:**

- **A Church planter has to be a self starter;** internships provide a great opportunity to test this qualification. In this kind of internship, the host church provides minimum direction and supervision, which means that many opportunities for training at this level can be opened up in local churches. Let them define their ministry themselves. It is a great proving ground for church planting; if you have to give an intern direction in what to do, it is unlikely he will be a strong church planter.
- **Funding:** similar dynamics apply. If a potential church planter candidate cannot develop the funding needed for his internship, he may be unable to develop funding for the church plant.

Church Planting Apprenticeships: *for the seminary graduate who has been MNA Assessment recommended but who needs further experience before planting, MNA recommends a Church Planting Apprenticeship.* This

apprenticeship is usually a completely different and separate experience from the internship required for ordination in the BCO. The BCO internship requires experience on the many different dimensions of pastoral experience. The Apprenticeship is oriented toward church planting only. Most of those for whom a church plant is their first call after seminary graduation will need both an internship and an apprenticeship. **For a very detailed description, see *The Church Planting Apprenticeship and Learning Contract in the Appendix of this Guide; you may use this as a handout.*** The Church Planting

Apprenticeship is usually 1-2 years in duration and includes these key elements:

1. A job or ministry description that will most help him prepare to plant a church.
2. A learning contract that specifies the plan for addressing the concerns and recommendations received from the Assessment .
3. The plan for planting a church.
4. Assignment of mentor(s) and plan for the mentoring relationship.
5. A budget, including salary for the apprenticeship and sources of income.
6. A transition plan that specifies, even in general terms, how the apprentice will increasingly divide his time between ministry at the mother church and the proposed church plant up until the time he is working 100% on the plant.

VI. Recruiting church planter candidates who are ready to plant

Church planting is a strong tradition in the PCA. At least one fourth of all PCA pastors have served as a church planter, if one includes those pastors who have organized churches who were essentially whole churches at their inception, i.e., brought about through splits from mainline denominations and existing PCA churches. This means that there is a large number of potential church planters in the PCA who already have demonstrated church planting skills and experience. This section of the Guide will focus on methods of identifying and recruiting these potential church planters.

The long term and short term view: undertake your work in both timeframes. Most often, someone begins to recruit potential church planters because of a desire to call a church planter for an immediate opportunity. *The PCA will become a church planting movement as we take the long term view, investing our efforts in potential candidates very early in their experience.* Hence, many of the suggestions included in this section will not necessarily surface a candidate quickly, but these initiatives will be fruitful in the long run.

In the PCA, **the search for a church planter is not greatly different in method than the search for any other pastor**, except that the pool of qualified and called individuals is smaller. Flexibility and creativity in recruiting is required. For example, MNA strongly recommends calling only those candidate who have been recommended for church planting by MNA Church Planter Assessment (including those recommended by MNA Credentialed Localized Assessments), but the timing of the assessment in the recruiting experiences will vary: in some cases, a potential church planter is recruited and then goes through assessment as a part of the final decision and placement process; on the other hand, a good number of couples go through assessment believing that God may be calling them to plant a church, but not knowing where or in some cases even what kind

of community they will go to. Therefore, *as you look for church planter candidates, you are looking among both those who have been assessment recommended and those who have not.*

Other than seeking resumes from the General Assembly Stated Clerk's office of those who are seeking a new call, **the PCA has no system for the placement of pastors.** It is the same with church planters. The MNA Church Planting Coordinator maintains a formal list of those who are MNA Assessment recommended but are not yet called to a specific mission church, as well as an informal roster of those who are not yet assessed but who have made known that they are open to considering a call to church planting. Thus, MNA is one potential source for leads to potential church planters:

1. Contact the MNA Church Planting Coordinator, Church Planting Development Director and other MNA Church Planting Coordinators to let him know of your desire to call a church planter; contact regional and church planting network directors also.
2. Send your Site Profiles to MNA for posting on the Church Plant Hot Spots list. As potential church planter candidates (whether assessed or not yet assessed) check that list, they will then contact you directly for more information and consideration.

Consider these listings with MNA to be only the beginning and minimum first step of your search. Beyond that, **branch out through your formal and informal networks of relationships**, to spread the message as far and wide as possible of your desire to call a church planter. As with other pastoral and staff searches, your connection with the candidate you finally call may well begin with a contact or referral that is a complete fluke humanly speaking. Thus, **personal networking is the key.**

Effective networking is not very systematic, requires untiring persistence and followup, and should include:

- Contact with anyone you know who might have even a minimal feel for what to look for in a church planter, asking them if they know of anyone who might be a good candidate for your Sites.
- Getting the word out as broadly as possible.
- Seeking referrals from other pastors and key lay leaders in your presbytery.
- Enlisting everyone within your sphere of influence to be church planting ambassadors to individuals or churches, telling the stories of how God is advancing His Kingdom through church planting.

Go to the people and places who are likely to identify potential candidates or who might include potential candidates within their group:

- Seminaries who supply significant numbers of PCA pastors; keep in mind that almost all new seminary graduates will need to serve in a church planting apprenticeship prior to being ready to lead a church plant on their own.
- Seminary professors who teach church planting courses; keep in mind that professors keep in touch with many graduates and may know of potential candidates who are already serving in churches or other ministries.
- Seminary professors who do not teach church planting courses but who have a heart for recruiting church planters; the above note applies here also – they may know of good candidates who have graduated in the past.

- Most seminaries who serve the PCA offer church planter training as a part of their curriculum, and some include the student in actual church planting experience during seminary.
- Encourage pastors who serve in cities in which seminary campuses are located to be active on the campuses, training, mentoring and encouraging students to prepare for church planting as a calling. Many pastors take this kind of interest in students, but not all who do so necessarily think of church planting as a priority calling to consider. Keep the vision for church planting constantly before them.
- Visit seminary campuses often for the purpose of meeting with students one to one; for chapel and class presentations; and for lunch and dinner gatherings with students. The seminaries who serve the PCA encourage pastors and key lay leaders to visit and spend time with students, either for broader presentations on potential callings, or to present specific opportunities to students. The seminaries will work with you to facilitate visits. *If you do not already have a relationship established with professors or staff on a particular seminary campus, contact MNA Staff and they will be glad to work with you in getting started.*
- In your church and other churches within your personal network, encourage churches to create college and seminary student internships, Church Planting Apprenticeships and other opportunities to sharpen ministry skills; out of these, candidates for church planting often will emerge.
- Churches in college and university communities are especially fruitful ground for encouraging God's call to church planting. If your church is not located in such a community, network personally with key church leaders who are in a position to minister among college students.
- Reformed University Fellowship and other campus ministries: keep the church planting vision constantly before the leaders of these ministries, and seek every opportunity to meet with students directly. The campus minister usually needs skills very similar to those of a church planter; therefore, the campus minister himself may be a good candidate.
- Retired ministers may be in a good potential position to recognize and encourage potential church planters, or they may be potential church planters themselves. Throughout the history of the PCA, many churches have been planted as a result of both roles by retired ministers.
- Recruit from among pastors in other denominations whose convictions may be drawing them to the PCA.
- Recruit from parachurch ministries. Parachurch leaders may recognize good potential church planting candidates from those with whom they work. Since the leadership dynamics of beginning or sustaining a parachurch ministry are often similar to a church startup, parachurch ministry leaders themselves are good candidates in many cases.

VII. Keeping and placing your potential church planter candidates where they can most effectively work.

Through your networking, as described in the previous sections, **build a pool of prospective church planters; from that pool, select a short list of**

candidates for the mission churches you seek to launch. You might need only a very short list, if seeking to fill only one call at a time, or your short list will need to be much longer if you are seeking church planters on a continuous basis.

Address barriers to recruiting and placement realistically:

- **Funding:** this is sometimes only a fear. If a church planting candidate has a strong personal network but fears fundraising, the fear can usually be overcome by training and by stories of God's supply for others. In cases in which church planter candidate may have a limited personal network, however, funding may be a genuine obstacle. In the latter case, do not give false assurance of funding potential that is not based on reality. Find ways to plant the church at lower outside fund levels, or work with the potential candidate to obtain a call to a context in which funding will not be as dependent on the church planter's personal network. It is important for potential church planters to understand that leadership in any growing organization includes fundraising. Church planting is not unique in requiring the key leader to take the lead in development of financial resources, just as he takes the lead in all other aspects of the ministry.
- We live in a culture in which certain pastors, usually those who serve the largest and most affluent congregations, are viewed as super stars, while everyone else is second or even lower class. **The biblical calling of leadership is a call to a culture of humility and sacrifice.** Church planters need to understand that God uses all kinds of giftedness and experience, and that all sizes and styles of congregations are essential to His Kingdom work. In fact, many communities will be far better served with 10 churches of 150 than 1 church of 1500. Many potential candidates do not realize how great the opportunities are for those who can start healthy, reproducing churches of 150 people. **There are no stars and super stars in God's Kingdom work.**
- **The church planting endeavor is inherently creative.** As we plant churches, we are not making boxes in which to collect people; we are establishing homes for God's people. **A church planter is able to establish goals and objectives, yet he must embrace what he cannot predict.**

Identifying, working with potential church planter candidates, and keeping them interested in the opportunities of interest to you – all of this is done through personal relationships. **The recruiting and placement process is highly personal, tailor made to the potential candidate, and it is labor intensive.**

- Start with a **personal or phone conversation**; get to know them as much as possible; share the opportunity and need, why you think that the potential candidate could be a good fit.
- As early in the process as possible, begin reviewing **Site Profiles** with the potential church planter candidate. If the candidate has the basic qualities required for church planting, processing Site Profiles with him is one of the most effective ways for you and him to get to know him and consider where he might most effectively serve.
- Keep the entire process supported **constantly in prayer.** You would like very much to find someone who can lead one or more church plants. You know that church planters are in relatively short supply, that is, that there are many more groups actively seeking church planters than there are candidates who are readily available. Do not let the pressure of this supply and demand reality – even though it is a reality – lead you into making poor decisions.

Understand that God is at work, that He will supply, and that the work will not prosper unless the decision process is led by Him. Only God can bring about the perfect match of church planter and Site. Give any prospective candidates plenty of time to pray and discuss God's leading with others.

- Obtain from prospective candidates **any and all information you will need form them** in order to come to a decision, such as their resume, Ministerial Data Form, sermon tapes, Church Planter Assessment Summary, etc.
- Understand that many potential candidates still serve in calls in which they may not want their church planting interest or change of call to be known. **Exercise discretion and practice the strictest confidentiality** where that is in the best interest of the potential candidate. Church Planter Assessment results are confidential. The permission of the church planter candidate is required for release of that information.
- **Be open with the candidate about the process**, and communicate your expectation that he will do the same. Any potential candidate may be talking with several different groups, and you also will likely be talking with a number of different potential candidates. To avoid misunderstandings, be sure to keep an open agenda as to where you are in the process with each potential candidate.
- Recruiting is a **relationally intensive process**, and time must be spent with individuals to make an initial assessment and investment in helping them develop their calling, character, and competencies for church planting.
- **Work with the potential church planter candidate and his wife as a couple.** *The wife's call and her participation in roles appropriate to her giftedness are essential to the success of the church planter.* Do not go down the recruiting road beyond the initial contact before establishing that husband and wife are seeking and processing God's direction together.
- **Be willing to invest your time and effort wholeheartedly in a candidate**, realizing that your efforts may ultimately appear to be in vain for that particular candidate. If not yet assessed, the candidate may not be recommended for planting. Another call may end up being perceived by the candidate as God's call to him, sometimes even without a clearly understandable explanation. A particular man may tentatively sense God's call, but that particular work is not a fit for his wife and children. There are many reasons that a candidate may withdraw from considering a call to a particular situation, even when it seems the decision process is well down the road. When this occurs, take the broader Kingdom perspective: your loss is someone else's gain, as the candidate then can more effectively judge the next opportunity. Also, candidates will come your way after others have invested in them and are experiencing the same sense of loss. If we are constantly planting churches, the give and take in these situations will usually even itself out in the long run.
- There are opportunities in which your efforts may constantly be more in the direction of **sending candidates, without receiving other candidates on a reciprocal basis.** Examples might be churches in seminary cities, or churches who focus in a major way on church planter training in the local church. Some are called to train and send out church planters in greater measure than they have opportunities for planting churches locally; this vision is strongly encouraged across the more concentrated regions of the PCA, since it is the only way in which churches will be planted at a greater rate in the regions of North America that have less PCA presence and are lesser reached by the Gospel.

- **Stories:** early in this Guide we emphasized the value of stories. As you work with potential candidates, bring to them as many stories from the field as possible. Send them to visit church planters to see how God is at work firsthand, and to hear their stories first hand. The experience of others – with all of its extreme lows as well as highs – will be your most effective means of calling men and women to consider God’s call to church planting.

VIII. Conclusion: The Perspective of Two Church Planting Lay Leaders

Anthony Thomas, a PCA ruling elder works full time as director of Mission Utah, a church planting network concentrating their efforts primarily in the Salt Lake City area. Anthony came across this Chinese proverb: ***If your vision is for a year, plant wheat. If your vision is for a decade, plant trees. If your vision is for a lifetime, plant people.***

Jack Ewing, another PCA ruling elder who has been active in church planting leadership and describes his calling as that of being a Barnabas to church planters, adapted the proverb to church planting: ***If your vision is for a year, plan more programs. If your vision is for a decade, build more buildings. But if your vision is for a lifetime, plant more churches.***

Thank God for the wisdom He gives to His Church through the wide variety of gifts and calling He gives to his people. Elders and other lay men and women are called and gifted for roles of leadership that are crucial to the growth of a church planting movement, just as pastors are called to church planting. With lay leadership fully engaged, the momentum will build according to God’s plan. Without them, the PCA will never become a church planting movement – only a church here or there, or a series of several church plants undertaken in a given region, followed by lapses into inactivity.

Above all other actions that you take as a result of reading this Guide, **most of all pray for:**

- **God’s calling to be heard by men and their families** gifted to be church planters, and equally for lay men and women who will serve with them and who themselves will take the initiative in church planting.
- **The PCA to take the long term view and make long term commitments.** Quick fixes will not result in the PCA becoming a church planting movement. A church planting movement will grow as God’s people commit to church planting as an ongoing and ever growing lifestyle.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. – Mark 10:45