

African-American Church Planting QUALITATIVE REPORT

African American Church Planting Qualitative Report

In 2012, LifeWay Research set out to discover how African-American churches are being planted. Specific objectives were to quantitatively measure characteristics of African-American church plants and to identify characteristics that are related to higher attendance or higher numbers of new commitments to Jesus Christ, to measure the health of African-American church plants, and to measure characteristics that are distinctive to the African-American context. Although the primary focus of the study was quantitative in nature (see **African-American Church Planting: Research Report**), qualitative interviews were included to expand upon these findings. The objectives of the qualitative interviews were to provide examples of principles identified in the quantitative research and to discover additional insights on the dynamics of African-American church planting.

The African-American Church Planting Study was sponsored by Mission to North America (PCA), Assemblies of God (AG), Path 1 (United Methodist Church), International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), Southern Baptists of Texas, the Foursquare Church, and North American Mission Board (SBC).

The 290 churches that participated the quantitative study were ranked based on increase in worship attendance, average worship attendance, increase in new commitments to Jesus Christ, and average new commitments. The most successful African American church planters were asked to participate in follow up, in-depth telephone interviews. Each of the fifteen participating church planters ranked among the most successful from either their own denomination or the overall scores based on the quantitative data. The church planters interviewed represented seven different denominations (Assemblies of God, Converge Worldwide, The Foursquare Church, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Presbyterian Church in America, Southern Baptist Convention, and United Methodist Church) and one non-denominational church.

The following church planters were interviewed between September 2012 and January 2013:

- **George Ashford Jr.** – Journey United Methodist Church in Columbia, SC
Middle class, suburban community. United Methodist Church. Initially 93% African-American.
- **Olu Brown** – Impact Church in Atlanta, GA
Inner city, lower income community but attendees from across Metro Atlanta. United Methodist Church. Initially 99% African-American.
- **David Brunson** – Trinity Life Church in Lawrenceville, GA
Inner city, lower income community. Southern Baptist church. Multi-ethnic church; initially 45% African-American, 30% African/Caribbean decent.
- **Anthony Collins** – The House of Worship in Oak Ridge, TN
Middle class, suburban city. Non-denominational church. Multi-cultural church; initially 60% African-American.

- **Edward Cross** – Miracle Life Church in Harrisburg, PA
Less dense, middle-upper income suburb. International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Multi-cultural church; initially 60% African-American.
- **Joseph Fields** – New Beginnings Church in Lewisville, TX
Middle class suburb/second city. Southern Baptist church. Church for “whosoever;” initially 99% African-American.
- **D. A. Horton** – Koinonia Bible Church in Kansas City, MO
Inner city, lower income, multi-ethnic community. Southern Baptist church. Initially 55% African-American.
- **James Hutchins** – New Life Community Church in Frisco, TX
Upper middle class suburb. Southern Baptist church. Initially 98% African-American.
- **Mercidieu Phillips** – Agape Christian Fellowship in Lehigh Acres, FL
Upper middle class suburb. Converge Worldwide church. Multi-cultural church; initially 10% African-American, 83% African/Caribbean decent.
- **Reginald Roberts** – Genesis II Assembly of God Church in Mesquite, TX
Middle class dense suburb, but attendees from across city. Assemblies of God church. Church “reflects community;” initially 60% African-American, 30% Hispanic.
- **Antoine Scruggs** – Promiseland Church in Little Rock, AR
Lower middle class, inner city community. Southern Baptist church. Initially 92% African-American.
- **Alex Shipman** – The Village Church in Huntsville, AL
Inner city, lower income community. Presbyterian Church in America. Multi-ethnic church; initially 5% African-American, 95% Hispanic.
- **Antonio Sims** – True Worship Church in Ferndale, MI
Middle class, urban community. Foursquare church. Initially 65% African-American, 20% Asian.
- **Kevin Smith** – Mt. Zion Covenant Church in Bowie, MD
Upper middle class suburb. Presbyterian Church in America. Initially 95% African-American.
- **Joseph Sutton** – Minneapolis Believers Foursquare Church in Minneapolis, MN
Urban, lower income community. Foursquare church. Initially 47% African-American.

Introduction

As each church planter told the story of how their church came to be, their descriptions mirrored much of what was measured in the quantitative survey. However, several key considerations emerged among these successful African-American church planters. The emphasis on these topics was much higher than the quantitative survey revealed. These **Distinctive Considerations** are revealed in the first part of the report.

As key principles from the quantitative research were addressed, some churches included these practices in a very matter-of-fact manner. For example, “most of our outreach was word of mouth” (Smith). Other churches shared the same fact, but actually reveal a different approach. Phillips said, “we challenged the people that were there to invite friends. I mean, friends invite friends.” The second part of the report will share a variety of **Examples of Key Practices** identified in the quantitative findings.

Many topics in the quantitative survey could only address the presence or absence of a type of support. The third part of the report will add context to the types of **Outside Support** that are needed for church plants.

Distinctive Considerations

Clear Calling to Plant the Church

Over half of the church planters in the quantitative study selected “the vision or call to begin the church plant” as the best descriptor to describe the beginning of their church plant. However, this attribute was not directly related to either worship attendance growth or more new commitments to Jesus Christ. Yet many church planters were passionate about the importance of this vision and calling.

When discussing the birth of church plants, church planters describe the need for a clear calling.

- a. “I had an unmistakable call from God to plant this church. I had an unmistakable vision about what the church was going to look like, an unmistakable mission about what it is this church is going to accomplish.” (Collins)
- b. “You’ve got to determine to do it God’s way, which means you’ve got to find out what it is He’s calling you to do.” For Brunson that meant five years of prayer, fleshing out the vision with trusted men of God, writing it down, and having pastors and seminary professors pour into him. “I think the biggest failure I see with new plants is there is not a compelling vision. Coupled with that is the determination to follow it.” (Brunson)
- c. “I use a team member formula. I believe in getting a core group together and meeting together between six to eight months just in prayer, Bible study, focusing around the vision, our goals and objectives.” (Cross)
- d. “I don’t get what I call formulas....There is nothing wrong with that per se, but the thing I would want is to make sure that whoever is planting the church have a bonafide, undeniable call from Jesus Christ to plant a church.” (Collins)

Churches are often birthed out of a calling by the planter for a distinct location and/or specific demographic.

- a. “Knowing that you’re called. Where are you supposed to minister? What area? What part of the city? And don’t vary because there’s a certain anointing on that person in that particular area. That’s what I believe.” (Scruggs)
- b. “You have the right man, the right plan, and the right land – and that could be even a building, then, and that man could be woman. Those three components are essential.” (Ashford)

- c. “But I just have a call for urban people...always say we’re called the least, the last, and the lost.” (Sutton)
- d. “I am a second generation Haitian...So I wanted to reach the second generation immigrant” (Phillips)
- e. “That core group of 25, we were very passionate about being specifically unique in west end in Atlanta, Georgia. And so we were very direct on where we were being led to plant the new church.” (Brown)
- f. “I saw a need of expanding from the three other churches that I started in this area, another one. So this is my fourth church in the Harrisburg community.” (Cross)

Preaching

A commitment to sound Biblical preaching is a common theme among many of the churches interviewed. However, the styles of sermons differed across churches. Some seek to engage the people cognitively and others seek to engage them with more sensory methods.

Among Methodist and Pentecostal pastors interviewed, there was much emphasis on engaging the senses and relating to people where they are. Holistic approaches to preaching that utilize technology, humor, motivation, and application are important to these churches.

- a. “We’ve been consistent with being a basically contemporary style worship...Our theme is doing church differently. So we use a lot of videos via PowerPoint and illustrative sermons, visual sermons appealing to the senses --- to the eyes, to the touch to the smell – to try to make worship as holistic as possible.” (Ashford - UMC)
- b. “I use a teaching style method in terms of communicating the Gospel, but it’s very motivational and inspirational at the same time. So, I’m not monotone, and I’m not going through points in a very lectured kind of style. It’s infused with humor. It’s infused with parables. It’s infused with technology.” (Cross - IPHC)
- c. “My style of preaching: I’m not a teacher, I’m a preacher. I’m excitable. I get excited, passionate when I preach the word. My burden in regards to preaching is about application and not so much information. I mean beyond that its history, context, but really what I want you to walk away with is application – you know how to apply this to my life and live a life that glorifies and honors God.” (Collins – non-denominational)

Among PCA and Baptist pastors interviewed, much was mentioned regarding the attractational nature of expository or Bible based preaching. Several pastors mentioned how people were drawn to preaching that had depth and meaning. Others, however, noted that for them expository preaching actually caught people by surprise and proved to be a deterrent at first.

- a. “We put a lot of emphasis on worship, I do a lot of expository preaching” (Phillips - Converge)
- b. “The reason they failed to commit is number one, from what we found out when I would speak with them, they just were completely in shock when they would hear expository preaching...And they liked it, but they were not used to getting actual substance from the text when a gathering was together.” (Horton - SBC)
- c. “And in my preaching. I’m an expositor and so the church has more or less adopted my spirit in that.” (Hutchins - SBC)
- d. “They don’t want entertainment. They want to encounter God somewhere in a church that will walk them through (expository) the Word of God.” (Brunson - SBC)
- e. “It was expository at times, verse-by-verse at times, but expository preaching, and hopefully it was thoughtful. People had to think through what the scriptures were saying and apply it their lives. They enjoyed that kind of preaching.” (Smith - PCA)

Clear Kingdom Agenda

African-American church planters described a long list of activities and ministries in which their church is involved. Yet when considering what should be included in training for future church planters some emphasized having a clear plan for discipling people.

- a. “An unmistakable vision about what the church is going to look like, and unmistakable mission about what this church is going to accomplish. Obviously we have the Great Commission, but this church ought to have a mission. I need to see that clearly. If you don’t have that, then I’m questioning whether or not you’re called to plant a church....[There should be] movement away from a church agenda to a kingdom agenda and saying how can I partner, how can I work with other churches, no matter what their denomination is as long as they are advancing the kingdom, how can I work with them to advance the kingdom of God?” (Collins)
- b. “I think most of the time we start out [with] absolutely no idea how we are going to reach people. We don’t even have an intentional discipleship process....How do people get involved in [discipleship]? How do they find ways through to maturity?” (Brunson)

The Lower Income Urban Context

Clearly it is a mistake to speak of “urban” and “African-American” church planting as if they are interchangeable. In fact, this study includes many examples of African-American church plants in suburban contexts. As Roberts noted, “There’s a stigma there that if you’re planting an African American church it’s an inner city church, and that’s not necessarily true because there are many African Americans now in suburbs.”

Similarly, it is a mistake to assume “urban” or “inner city” specifically refer to areas of poverty. Urban is a term that specifically refers to population density. In fact, phone interviews included African-American church plants in middle class urban areas. However, terms often overlap as is seen in comments from pastors serving in low income urban areas who repeatedly referred to the area they served as urban or inner-city to connote both location and condition. Those church planters who are in a lower income urban context raised a number of distinct needs that must be considered when planting a church in this setting.

Among church planters who chose to minister in a lower income urban context, most did so out of a calling within themselves and their church to minister to those classified as the “the lost- the left out- and the left over” or “the least, the last and the lost.”

- a. “But I just have a call for urban people...always say we’re called for the least, the last, and the lost.” (Sutton)
- b. “That’s who I set out to reach and that’s who we primarily tend to go after are people involved in drugs, gangs, people in prison, coming out trying to deal with felonies.” (Sutton)
- c. “The lost, the left-out, and the left-over... Those are the ones we would minister to...Normally they were broken families” (Scruggs)
- d. “The reason for planting in the impoverished and urban community was three fold: I was indigenous to the neighborhood already, had a desire to reflect the diversity in the community, and a need to reach those impacted by gangs, drug and crime.” (Horton)
- e. “It was really to reach those souls that had no identity to Christ and then raise those individuals up. And many of them now are leaders in our church. We felt like it was a clear mandate to reach the lost and the broken.” (Brunson)
- f. “There’s the multi-cultural route....Then there’s, there’s the African-American church which, I think, is the hardest route.... Because I think it would probably take me at least 10 years to do it...the one I’m doing which is inner city.” (Shipman)

In order for urban church plants in lower income areas to become financially independent, there is often the need for the church to attract tithing members from more affluent churches outside the community where the church is located. Some churches are learning that they must seek to reach some families in more middle class areas in order to help support the mission of the church. However, others intentionally avoid outside help to avoid reinforcing dependence.

- a. “And so we’ve got to have growth from the neighborhood and I need growth from those outside the neighborhood. Because I rely on those families to help us....You’re going to need those families whether they’re African American or Caucasian, you’ll need those families to help support the church.” (Shipman)
- b. “If I’m planting a church over in South Huntsville where it is middle-class people then in four years I’ll probably be self-supported. Because now in The Village where folks are working poor, who struggle to pay their bills, they’re not going to have sustainability without our help.” (Shipman)
- c. “If that’s constantly reinforced to you, even by people of God, that you can’t do nothing unless somebody of affluence helps you then, how will they ever turn around and break that cycle in their lives? So, if we have to do something, we go at it.” (Sutton)

Ministering to broken families, schools, and children as a primary outreach focus is not uncommon for church plants during the first two years, especially in a lower income urban context.

- a. “We’ve done a lot of urban ministry for the past 15 years dealing with at-risk youth, starting after school programming, home ownership training (helping people purchase homes), food and clothing ministry, and just a plethora of other good outreaches.” (Scruggs)
- b. “Always noticing, especially in the urban context, that the kids usually get left out of the mix.” (Sutton)

Overall “urban and inner-city church planters [in low income areas] often feel that there is a lack of support and understanding from others within their denomination with regard to the work they are doing.” (Scruggs)

- a. “One of the problems we’ve had as being an urban church is that the state convention always doesn’t recognize or even understand what we’re doing.” (Scruggs)
- b. “We left because the Southern Baptists up there weren’t that strong... they just didn’t really understand the urban framework....And I planted through the Foursquare Church because in the midst of trying to restart in the Church of God, it just didn’t have any urban emphasis.” (Sutton)

- c. “So that’s one of the hardships in the African American community because our economic base is not as great as others and a lot of times people don’t understand that, even the people over me don’t understand that.” (Roberts)

Intentionally Multiethnic

On average, the churches participating in the quantitative study describe the ethnic makeup of their congregations during the first two years of their church as 75% African-American. When these churches were asked which ethnic group they targeted when they planted the church, 68% indicated African-American but 19% selected “other.” When asked to specify, the largest number of these “other” responses indicated that they did not have an ethnic target of any kind. They were seeking to reach all people.

In the quantitative study, when asked if they intentionally sought to reach a cross-cultural or multi-ethnic group of people only 15% of church planters disagreed. However, seeking to reach multiple ethnicities and intentionally becoming a multi-ethnic church are not always synonymous. For example, James Hutchins, pastor of New Life Community Church in Frisco, TX has sought to communicate to his church that they are not an African-American church. They are “a church.” Despite this clear positioning, Hutchins admits they are predominantly a Black church.

A few of the planters interviewed stated that they were intentional about becoming a multi-ethnic/cultural congregation. More common in the interviews was a response similar to the 60% of African American church planters who intentionally encouraged an African-American culture within the church. Of the churches interviewed that were multi- ethnic/cultural, however, strong efforts were made to develop a welcoming culture within their church. Additionally, churches that were intentional about being multi-ethnic/cultural, were often located in a diverse community.

Becoming s multi-cultural/ ethnic church begins with a strong calling by the church planter.

- a. “We’re called not to reach just one group of people. We’re called to reach anyone within our community. So we’d better choose to be a mult-cultural ministry in order to do this.” (Phillips)

- b. “We have people of the same ethnicities. You have people from the Bahamas, people from Martinique, people from Jamaica, people from Haiti. We have African Americans. And now we’re beginning to attract Anglo and Latino families” (Phillips)
- c. “Racially we were committed to being racially integrated so there was a strong value there to commit to that church to reach all kinds of people in our community. That was very important.” (Smith)
- d. “trying to reach out to everybody. Now I know we have a black flavor and we’re exuberant and everything, but I purposefully set out to try to reach everybody. And that’s what we’ve done.” (Roberts)
- e. “I really believe that the church has to evolve to become more like what heaven is going to look like. And so we have a multi-ethnic multi-cultural church.” (Brunson)
- f. “And so you’ve got to make sure that the differences are not divisive but they’re compelling and they’re inviting. But the center has got to be around Christ Jesus and that what brings us to this table is that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and we have a home that’s going to be together with each other to live forever.” (Brunson)

In order to become a multi-ethnic/cultural congregation, it takes intentionality by the church members, involvement in leadership, and must become a part of the church’s identity.

- a. “Taught it from the pulpit that the church is an expression of the Kingdom. And so just creating the culture from the mindset and get our people to understand that we try to be a kingdom-minded church.... part of that, don’t just invite people that look like you”(Phillips)
- b. “The church has to reflect the community...not just in attendance but also in leadership....Don’t just get me to come to your church and I’m supporting you financially and then I have no say in leadership. Or don’t get me to come to your church and there’s not a real plan to reach me where I am.” (Brunson)
- c. “So our worship must reflect our people, and our people have to embrace the worship of others, and so we do a balance of that.” (Cross)
- d. “You have to sacrifice some things. For instance, it’s well known that in the African American church praise is incredible. It may be a little bit different in other ethnicity type churches. I say if you guys are willing to sacrifice some things in order to reach the folks that are in the community, they’ve got to be a part in the whole worship experience.” (Brunson)

SPOTLIGHT:

Pastor Anthony Collins of The House of Worship, a non-denominational church in the suburban city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee discussed in detail the intentional steps they took to transition from almost all African American congregation to a church that is now 50% Anglo and 50% African American.

- a. “we were basically an African American church. An all black church, well pretty much an all black church, all black in leadership... on the platform and the music was basically the music from an African American church”
- b. “And so obviously if you’re going to be cross cultural you’ve got to embrace that culture and you have to be intentional about it. So we had to become more intentional about the music that we sang and just be more intentional about trying to find people that were qualified to be in leadership”
- c. “The worship and praise team is more African American than Anglo, probably 75/25. The music that we play is a mix of, probably all contemporary, but it’s a mix of African American and traditional”
- d. “So when we became intentional about [including Anglos in leadership] there was tension with that and actually there were several African American families that left the church as a result of it”

Key Practices

Outreach

Specific outreach activities impact growth in worship attendance and higher new commitments to Jesus Christ. One of the most striking characteristics of each of the successful African-American church plants we interviewed was their full engagement with their local community from the beginning of the plant.

Churches' being birthed out of initial outreach ministries to the community is a commonality among many church plants in both urban and suburban settings.

- a. "We initially started out by doing certain community events. Journey hosts each year a yard sale give-away which is just a catchy way to get people to come in terms of a yard sale, but it's actually based on the Acts 2 model of believers coming, sharing their resources . . . It was a way of us sowing seeds within the community." (Ashford – Middle class, suburban community)
- b. "(The) church was birthed out of ministry called Lincoln Village Ministries which is a Mercy Ministry. . . . So that Mercy Ministry was started in 2002 and several years later they actually planted a church here for this community." (Shipman – Lower income, inner city community)
- c. "When I started in '97, I just started receiving young people around in attendance and just started ministering" (Scruggs – Lower middle class, inner city community)
- d. "for the most part if you can reach children you can reach the parents. And so we wanted to start off with a children's crusade." (Roberts – Middle class, dense suburb)
- e. "We set up in neighborhoods where some of the initial members were and we'd do a cookout, just to get to know the folks in the community." (Brunson – Inner city, lower income community)

Relationships ranked the highest (79%) among answers that best described the driving forces for personal decisions among the residents surrounding a church plant. In the church planter interviews there was continued a theme of the importance of the intentionality of building relationships and trust in the community as a key first step.

When planting a church there is benefit to the planter living in the community, especially with regards to building trust and relationships with those you are serving.

- a. "Being indigenous to that environment I knew what to say to make them aware that I wasn't trying to rob them or sell them something." (Horton)

- b. “It was called Blood Park and we would go up there and spend time in the park and just go and talk with people just to see what’s going on with life” (Horton)
- c. “My wife and I we called that house the church annex. So everybody who came to Mt. Zion came to our home. “ (Smith)

A church planter needs to be an active and engaging presence in the community. The church planter and the church have to know and care for those in the area where the church is ministering.

- a. “Do they just want to preach or do they want to really meet the needs of people? ... Realize that there’s a difference between a pastor and a preacher.” (Sutton – Urban, lower income community)
- b. “So we’re trying to be a community church and not just people come to us. We try to go to people” (Phillips – Upper middle class suburb)
- c. “Part of our goal wherever we went, was to be a part of the community and to see ourselves as being a part of, not only what the community loves, but what they hope to be again.” (Brown – Inner city, lower income community)
- d. “People are not coming in the church buildings. We’re in a culture right now that immediately has a disdain when they see the stained glass windows and hear the hymn and organ or the classical choir... But people have general needs, and they need them met right where they are” (Cross – Less dense, middle-upper income suburb)
- e. “Mostly it was just a way of giving to our neighbors and letting them know that our church was community. We wanted to build community.” (Smith – Upper middle class suburb)
- f. “We sustain a church with leaders that are bivocational...but can maintain credibility and identity with the people we’re supposed to serve....—perfectly identify with what they’re going through.” (Brunson – Inner city, lower income community)

The quantitative study showed that word of mouth is the most widely used and successful form of publicity used to communicate news of a new church in the community (92%). While several outreach activities were used and proved to be successful, the interviews were filled with claims that most people attended their church because they were invited by a friend.

- a. “We challenged the people that were there to invite friends. I mean, friends invite friends.” (Phillips)
- b. “So a lot of it was building relationships, inviting people to the church.” (Shipman)
- c. “Outside of all of our expenditures, word of mouth is always highest on the list.” (Brown)
- d. “We’re not doing anything. We don’t have a budget to be all over the radio and in the newspapers and all of that. . . . you’ll find out that people will come to church if they’re asked by somebody that they know.” (Fields)
- e. “So most of our outreach was word of mouth” (Smith)
- f. “People that were coming to our church, they were telling other people about it. It was basically word of mouth. (Collins)

Two of the most common outreach activities used by church plants are children’s special events (68% continued to use after launching) and block parties (42% continued to use after launching) according to the quantitative data. Of the churches interviewed, both of these outreach activities, along with various other children and neighborhood oriented activities emerged as points of emphasis for several of the churches. It was common for the church planters interviewed to describe their outreach efforts still as essential to their ministry today as they were during the beginning years of the ministry.

Ministering to broken families and children is often a primary outreach focus for church plants during the first two years.

- a. “We also provide resources for the school where we worship – Longleaf Middle School – for underprivileged children that are there that may not have the basic pencils and paper and those kinds of things.” (Ashford)
- b. “We went out into apartments and the church did some skits, did some singing of songs, and gave out some toys and trinkets and gifts and talked about Jesus.” (Roberts)
- c. “Typical community with challenges of jobs, also with growing issues as it relates to school and over-crowding. There are issues related to parenting. There’s a high rate of divorce and single families in the community that comprise it.” (Ashford)

Partnering with schools provides a church plant with tremendous opportunities to serve both the local community and individual families. Church plants are partnering with schools in various means from serving in the lunch rooms, to providing school supplies, to running after-school and tutorial programs.

- a. “So as we began to serve there, even helping facilitate the lunch room, we would get the feedback about local needs from different families that the school personnel would share with us” (Horton)
- b. “Where monthly we’re in it (School), even though it’s in a poor community, we’re providing clothes, new clothes, new shoes, new, you know, plates for the teachers, cups, that kind of thing .” (Hutchins)
- c. “Childcare, after-school programming. We would actually go into the schools and we would become, literally, a second parent in a lot of cases.” (Scruggs)
- d. “Even through the school, we’re in a Middle School. That is part of the design as well is that we don’t just have a presence there on Sundays. That we have a presence there throughout the week as well.” (Brown)
- e. “We also provide resources for the school where we worship – Longleaf Middle School – for underprivileged children that are there that may not have the basic pencils and paper and those kinds of things.” (Ashford)
- f. “Every year for the elementary school that’s right beside us- everybody that’s on that elementary school list of poor and needy and buy them presents and gifts for Christmas and we also provide food for them over Christmas holidays.” (Collins)
- g. “And so we reach out to those schools to provide school supplies, school clothes, backpacks, at the beginning of the school year. But then we take them through a carnival type thing and we use that time to represent the Gospel message.” (Brunson)

SPOTLIGHT:

In order to help educate and instill vision in the lives of lower income, urban youth, the Minneapolis Believers Foursquare Church has instituted an 8 week summer program for children which they call the 3D Leadership Institute. “They’re with me 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM every day in the summer for 8 weeks,” said Pastor Joseph Sutton. It is for those old enough to read through 12 years old. “We spend one week tent camping and the rest of the time they do two hours of education, hour and a half of chapel, and two hours of sports.”

Following the 3d Institute, the church takes 12-14 years old who are willing to participate through a more in depth leadership, decision making and life skill training. “If you do the two years of junior high, I’ll guarantee you a job and jobs are not that plentiful in an urban community. So they do the two years of junior high and then they become my high school support staff.”

For high school students, MN Foursquare church offers college prep courses which involve ACT prep, writing skills, leadership training and college visits. “We go through an intense leadership training thing. I mean they learn what I learned in business school.”

As a result of the intentional efforts, Minneapolis Believers Foursquare church has helped over 70 kids in the last 10 years get into and graduate college paying no money. As an added benefit, many return to help Pastor Sutton.

Ministry-based Model

Forty seven percent of the church planters in the quantitative study say their church was influenced by the “ministry based model.” No other model influenced more African-American planters. This was almost seven times as many church planters that selected “ministry based” in a similar study in 2007 in which only 5% of the respondents were African-American. It is unknown if it has grown in popularity among church plants among other ethnic groups during this period, but it is clearly well established among African-American church plants. Churches that were influenced by this model had more new commitments to Jesus Christ.

Many outreach and ministry opportunities are birthed through simply having an open doors policy at the church and being available as a resource and refuge for the community.

- a. “And here’s the thing that we always talk about here at the church, that every time somebody knocks on the door we have two choices: answer or don’t answer it. And in the last 15 years we’ve answered the door. And so that’s where most of our ministries have started” (Scruggs)
- b. “The first thing we do is our door is always open. As a matter of fact, people get a little mad when the door ain’t open so they can’t really see or talk to anybody.” (Sutton)
- c. “And they look to the church to be the answer. My door gets knocked on all the time, They know you have some knowledge. You’ve been around a while. You work here. You’ve been to college. Okay, I know my pastor knows the answer” (Sutton)
- d. “We serve meals 3 times a week. And we serve that meal as a bridge to earn the right to share Christ...I trained our staff to be there, to eat with them, to assist them, to talk

with them to have that conversation....We use that as our bridge to ask deeper questions.” (Brunson)

- e. “So ministries are born out of need. We don’t do ministries because we go to church together. It’s a community thing.” (Collins)

Block parties and other community events are a common outreach activity that many churches, especially those in an urban context, have used to successfully serve the community.

- a. “So we did a lot of outreach into the community – doing back to school block parties.” (Scruggs)
- b. “One formal event that we did is we put together a block party of sorts where one of our family members has a stage, a generator, and sound equipment and different tents. So it’s set up like a block party.... And we had over 900 people come out.” (Horton)
- c. “We started (block parties) in 2011. That’s when we started. So we have them in the summertime. And it’s a way for us to really connect with our neighbors in a non-threatening way.” (Shipman)
- d. “We do a back to school youth blast where this past year we had over 200 people come and we gave out backpacks” (Simms)
- e. “So we did sidewalk Sunday schools, we did vacation bible schools, we did community affairs that reached in the thousands.” (Cross)
- f. “We did crab feasts. The house I was renting had a huge backyard and one of our members also had a nice backyard so we did crab feasts in our communities.” (Smith)

Most churches interviewed had ongoing or annual outreach ministries which have become a vital element of the church. These ministries varied widely, but all were birthed out of a desire to reach the unique community around them.

- a. “Called Reaching One Family At A Time.... So we went and we got toilet paper. We got, deodorizers and air fresheners and garbage bags and just put these big bags together with a gift card... And in each package we had an information letter about the church, why we were out in the neighborhood, and then basically we wanted to give them something that they could use.” (Simms)
- b. “Journey hosts each year a yard sale give-away which is just a catchy way to get people to come in terms of a yard sale, but it’s actually based on the Acts 2 model of

believers coming, sharing their resources . . . it is for anyone who has need. It was a way of us sowing seeds within the community.” (Ashford)

- c. “One (outreach) is a power lunch, where I came into the city initially and I set up a midday meal in a setting of success. And what we did was, because Harrisburg is the capital city, we reserved the facility across the street right from the Capitol.

Downtown workers during their lunchtime hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays would come to hear a principle-centered message that dealt with personal and professional development. “ (Cross)

Facilities

The quantitative study revealed that African-American churches are started in a variety of facilities. In fact, no one type of facility was used by more than 22% of churches surveyed and only 14% of African-American church plants have a church building of their own in the first year. It is not surprising that the qualitative interviews included frequent accounts of struggling to find a permanent location. It was common for the pastors interviewed to describe moving every 6 to 18 months during the first four to five years. As the initial research highlighted, meeting in schools (24%) and a church building shared with another congregation (34%) were among the most common meeting locations during the first five years. The frequency of location change and the difficulty that came with finding adequate space were highlighted during the interviews.

Many church plants began with home Bible studies with a core group of people.

- a. “About eight to ten people. We met in a home. And that’s pretty much the genesis of the church.” (Phillips)
- b. “And we started in a Bible study, back in the Fall of ‘08, as the church planter, and 13 families from several churches here in Huntsville. And that’s pretty much how it started.” (Shipman)
- c. “Initially started in my home in a small group Bible study that met on Sunday evenings” (Cross)
- d. “Started with seven people who were basically five of my family members and two friends.” (Roberts)
- e. “Well we started in my home, in my basement.” (Brunson)

Often times, the first location a church plant meets at is selected more by default and is not seen as a long term solution.

- a. “We were in a store front at first. And we were really outgrowing that location.” (Scruggs)
- b. “We started meeting in a gymnasium in the community that we were planting in.... We stayed there for about seven months.” (Horton)
- c. “We’re meeting in school, for one thing. It was a 100 year old school so it wasn’t the best location, but that’s all we could find.” (Cross)
- d. “The hotel was just kind of the holding spot until we got there. People came and people joined at the hotel, but there’s a sense of non-permanency in a hotel. People were a little reluctant – that’s my take on it anyway – to go in a hotel and wondered how long it’s actually going to be around.” (Collins)

SPOTLIGHTS:

Inner city Koinonia Bible Church has met in 6 different locations during its first four years- staying in none of them for longer than eight months. (Horton)

- “We started meeting in a gymnasium in the community that we were planting in”
- “We moved to a church. so that worked out for about five months”
- “In contact with a real estate agent, another believer, who owned an old Messianic Temple that was given to him in his ministry”
- “And then we moved to our mother church, Wornall Road Baptist”
- “And then we moved to the building that we outright owned so, and that’s where we have been since February 2011”(Horton)

Suburban New Life Community Church has met in four different location during the church’s first five years. (Hutchins)

- “We’re stayed in a hotel two months”
- “Found us a permanent place in a day care”
- “And we moved into a warehouse that was converted into a sanctuary”

- “We bought 11 acres of land in Frisco with a desire to build”
- “So we now currently have 22 acres of land”
- “And we moved into the current building, which is about 22,000 square feet.”

In five years, suburban Journey United Methodist Church has met in four different locations, with a new permanent location being currently built. (Ashford)

- “We started out with our first meeting actually at the Methodist Center”
- “From there we relocated to a very raw space in a warehouse... We stayed in the warehouse close to 12 months.”
- “And from that point we found a abandoned, a vacant, existing church facility building which was within the area where we were planting here in the northeast community and we rented that facility for two years”
- “And we outgrew that facility and our third move, we relocated to a middle school gymnasium, Longleaf Middle School.”
- “Which is where we’re currently worshipping (middle school), which is directly across the street from the office and the future church site is being built.”

As is to be expected, relocating multiple times in a few year span proves to be difficult for the church primarily when it comes to communication and advertising.

- a. “The challenge for us has been keeping people connected as we move, making sure our databases and our membership accountability system is strong” (Ashford)
- b. “And so we kept gearing up and when we would set a date for the public launch, we wanted to get all our ducks in a row as far as advertising and things like that, but then something would happen to prohibit us from having that same meeting location.” (Horton)

Many of the locations churches met in during the first five years were rented facilities with limited or no access during the week (such as gymnasiums or school) - which presents several unique difficulties primarily related to set up and space issues.

- a. “Intensiveness of setting up the gymnasium and breaking down all the equipment for 500 plus people on a week in/week-end out basis, we have to pay laborers to come in for set up and break down along with our volunteers.” (Ashford)
- b. “We went through four musicians, just the difficulty of being in a temporary place” (Hutchins)
- c. “The challenges are that we don’t own. And so sometimes, one of the challenges is logistics room changes, , technology breakdown, a whole assortment of issues.” (Brown)

While difficulty was involved with constant movement for many churches, a few churches found some added benefits: such as it strengthens their core group and caused their congregants to have fellowship with the broader community.

- a. “The second is that it actually strengthened our core group.” (Horton)
- b. “Now we have a school. That has been exciting. It teaches us to not being closed in to a church building, of having to fellowship with the broader community outside. [That’s] helpful.” (Brown)

Being located within a residential community provides many outreach and relationship building opportunities that do not exist in other temporary and business type locations.

- a. “But now that we’re in a community, the Cub Scouts are from the community.... And so we’re seeing people from the community coming to use regarding the church and we’re not charging them anything to use the building because they’re from the community.” (Ashford)
- b. “It’s right there, right on the busy street in the neighborhood, It’s right on the north/south . . .” (Sutton)
- c. I mean we’re basically surrounded by houses. We’re beside an elementary school. I mean we’re actually in a community- community.” (Collins)

As a general rule, the African American community prefers to go to church in a traditional building. The quantitative research showed that two of the six variables that impact both worship attendance and new commitments to Jesus Christ relate to a church building: meeting in a church

building of their own during the first 5 years or meeting in the sponsoring church building. During the phone interviews, some planters shared that meeting in a non-traditional location was a hindrance for them.

- a. “In our culture, people like to go to a church building. They don’t like to go to a strip mall or a place that doesn’t look like a church. So there are people we couldn’t [reach]. Even if they would come, our building turned them [off]” (Phillips)
- b. “You know a building with a sanctuary, there’s a baptistery, the fellowship hall, there’s some things that that has some permanency. That was a good move.” (Collins)
- c. “But the reality of the situation is it’s hard to get people because people do look at your facilities and what you have and unfortunately everybody is not as spiritual as we think they ought to be, or hope they would be. So that’s one of the big, the big disadvantage is not having their own stand-alone building” (Roberts)

Worship Style

Adopting a more contemporary style of worship is a common practice among the successful church planters interviewed. The quantitative research shows that contemporary worship is one of six variables that impact both worship attendance growth and the number of new commitments to Jesus Christ.

- a. “Our music is conservative and our worship style is conservative...as opposed to traditional Black gospel.” (Hutchins)
- b. “But the main ingredient is contemporary worship. Our theme is doing church differently.” (Ashford)
- c. “We purposefully try to avoid any style of music that would be drawn to just one ethnicity primarily. I mean there may be from time to time, but we try to be focused on Christ so the kind of worship music that we use is probably closer to contemporary than. It follows that line very closely and is not defined by any one ethnicity.” (Brunson)
- d. “The music we play is probably all contemporary, but it’s a mix of African American...and contemporary Anglo music.” (Collins)

A blended (traditional, gospel, and/or contemporary) worship style is used by 45% of the church plants making it the most commonly used worship style according to the survey results. The choice of music style along with the method of preaching are two important factors facing an

African American church plant as they struggle with reaching diverse communities and battling cultural standards and expectations.

Among churches that described their worship style as “blended,” for them it meant a blend of both contemporary style music and black gospel.

- a. “It’s a blended worship service which means we have hymns. We have contemporary. We have black gospel.” (Shipman)
- b. “The elements of gospel and traditional church songs that we do. But the main ingredient is contemporary worship.” (Ashford)
- c. “Our worship team in terms of people who play the instruments are all white. I’m a black pastor. So our songs range from every genre of Christian music today. We do the praise and worship. We do hymns. We do a cappella. We do songs that are what we consider to be gospel.” (Cross)
- d. “So we had this gospel mix of music that was contemporary gospel music, black gospel.” (Smith)

While many aspects of worship were discussed, it was common to have a major focus on creating a welcoming, friendly and inviting worship environment in the church plants.

- a. “I think we love people good. And we try not to get so deep and super spiritual with people. But we really try to love people to Christ” (Simms)
- b. “I always have everybody hug. Before I preach, at some point during the service I have everybody hug when I finally make it to the pulpit.” (Simms)
- c. “We have about another five, seven minutes of meeting and greeting one another. . . Because I share with the people that how can we say we love God when we have not shown love to the one that’s next beside us? So, we try and love and encourage one another.” (Fields)
- d. “One of the things I did from the very first day is I stop and have everybody hug each other. We have a part in our service right after praise and worship where I say everybody do me a favor, hug somebody and tell them I’m glad you’re here” (Roberts)

Leadership Training for Congregation

A key program for most church plants is some manner of leadership development training. In the survey responses, 71% of the pastors stated that leadership training for new members was used as a strengthening activity. Churches that had this training also had higher worship attendance. Many church planters shared that leadership training is a primary ongoing initiative for members.

- a. “I put them through a ten-week, hold their hands so to speak....10 weeks, laying the foundation of how to understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.” (Hutchins)
- b. “We’ve not been able to develop a family ministry yet because that’s waiting on leaders...And I’ve had to literally develop them.” (Hutchins)
- c. “And this summer I started what I call Lead Circle Training. That’s where all my lay-leaders and all my officers come to that. And so we’ll be doing that once a year during that time....So it’s basically five weeks of training in those areas.” (Shipman)
- d. “And to get their leadership development stuff, we tried to invest a lot in people so we could have people who can help us carry the load.” (Sutton)
- e. “A great deal of time helping to train the core team leaders on what it meant to be a part of a core launch team for a new church.” (Ashford)
- f. “We do leadership development in the facet of helping people to be better managers of their money, their time and their manner with God. And so we do a lot of personal leadership development. So it’s corporate, it’s personal and interactive” (Cross)
- g. “It’s a two-year leadership academy we have in the church.... We talk about servant leadership, transformational leadership, a biblical model of leadership” (Phillips)

Church Planter Experience and Training in Church Planting

Eight out of 10 church planters in the quantitative study had some specific theological education. Similarly, 80% of the lead church planters surveyed had previous ministry experience as a pastor or church staff. In the interviews most planters stated that their previous ministry experience as senior pastors, youth ministers, or evangelism ministers was what equipped them the most for being a church planter. However, many of the planters began their church plant with little to no formal training or experience that specifically addressed church planting.

- a. “I had no church planting experience.” (Hutchins)

- b. “We didn’t have any training. There was no training.... It was after we were probably five years old that the Southern Baptists here in Arkansas actually had a church planting boot camp.” (Scruggs)
- c. “No formal church planting training, other than looking at different models and, kind of seeing what it was, I wanted to look like” (Phillips)
- d. “Well to be honest with you, I didn’t get any training. I got training after the fact.” (Simms)
- e. “But we never, I mean other than formal seminary training- we didn’t go to a church planting workshop or anything like that.” (Brunson)

Among those who received church planter training, the most common form was a boot camp. Typically the boot camp was a positive experience. However, a couple mentioned specific contexts that were overlooked in the training.

- a. “We also had a coach during that time....Just Jim Griffith Coaching Network.” (Ashford)
- b. “So, I think looking back, the church planting [training] didn’t prepare me for my [low income] context, to actually start here. Church planter [training] prepared me to start a middle-class church.” (Shipman)
- c. “We have a summit called Church Planter Group here and they put you through this long, it’s like eight or nine hour days and it’s good, but to be quite honest it wasn’t long enough because I’ve been doing this, since 2003 and I’m just now getting to where I’m really learning to pastor.” (Roberts)

SPOTLIGHT:

Olu Brown, a church planter with the United Methodist Church in inner city Atlanta, participated in a one-year church planting course in which an entire year was spent learning from and being mentored by other successful church planters.

“We did a 12-month exercising course, [including] some classroom type work. But the classroom work was done at a site visit.”

“Every month you get to another church plant. And you tour, hear from the person who planted the church and then you have a classroom exercise kind of work”

The concept was to “partner church planters with success models.” The churches that are visited are with pastors who have “lived with those success models for a year or two.”

Then the church planter is mentored on these visits. “It actually helped get a lot of the nuts and bolts and expectations around what to look for when church planting.”

Such expectations should not be underestimated. Having accurate expectations of the church planting experience predict higher worship attendance.

Church Planter Compensation

Pastors receiving outside financial support, whether from a denomination or sponsor church, are more able to plant as a full time pastor without an outside job, while those planting without the aid of outside support tend to be bi-vocational. While the vast majority of pastors (69%) may have outside jobs in addition to pastoring, bi-vocational is still generally viewed as a temporary solution. Most pastors have the goal of becoming full time at some point.

- a. “It was by default because we didn’t have any sponsorship...So by default I was bi-vocational.” (Hutchins)
- b. “There was a decision that was made by the Financial Committee for me to go part-time in my salary and I had to go look for another job to become bi-vocational again” (Horton)
- c. “I was bi-vocational. Probably the first four years.” (Scruggs)
- d. “I was a full-time church planter but I also worked as an itinerate preacher and evangelist” (Phillips)
- e. “Initially, I was a full time church planter. The grants helped me to do that, and of course the tithes that came in. As we got away from the grants and moved more to our own assistance, I went back to doing my Paul model, and that is I am a consultant.” (Cross)

A church planter needs to have a financial plan in place both for the church and their family prior to planting the church.

- a. “Get the amount of funding to support you through the years because it’s going to take longer than three years. I’m talking at least ten years of funding.” (Shipman)
- b. “No one teaches you about fundraising and about encouraging people to give and managing those funds and resources.” (Cross)
- c. “Make sure they rate their support, their financial partners because financial debt can take a major toll on your family and your church planting.” (Phillips)

SPOTLIGHT:

Pastor David Brunson of Trinity Life Church was an exception. His inner city church in a lower income community intentionally planned for their church staff to all be non-paid staff of the church and to have outside employment to meet their needs. “We’re all lay led. None of us are paid [by the church]... But the beauty is I think if you have a compelling vision, a salary is not a reason why people want to serve.”

This direction has both necessities and benefits. “It requires every single person in our church to participate and when they join that’s what I tell them. I tell them you have a place to serve here and my goal is by the time you get through with the initial process and new members’ class and such is that you find out, we’ll help you find out what your gifts are and you’re serving.”

Church Planter – Time Spent in Church Planting

The quantitative research showed that over 60% of the church planters worked 40 hours a week or more on the church plant with 39% working 60 hours a week or more at the church plant. In the interviews, pastors described the focus of their hours worked in church planting during the first two years of the plant. For many of the planters, being a presence in the community and building relationships was the primary focus for them as the church was beginning.

- a. “Going out, being visible as best I could in local community areas, groups” (Ashford)
- b. “Great deal of time helping to train the core team leaders on what it meant to be a part of a core launch team for a new church.” (Ashford)
- c. “Spent a lot of my time just trying to serve people, network with people” (Sutton)
- d. “And just standing outside of WalMart and watching the people come in and going out.” (Phillips)
- e. “So a lot of it was having presence, going to schools, or tutoring in the schools. And it’s just having a ministry presence so folks will know who you are and that you are in the neighborhood.” (Shipman)

Church Planter's Spouse

The quantitative survey indicated that most church planter spouses (79%) are heavily involved in the life of the church. It is important for a planter and a spouse to be prepared for high expectations of the planter's spouse.

- a. "She wore a difficult role that she's in even today. She started with children's church. ...Not that we wanted to, but we started our very first Sunday in the hotel offering that because up here, that's the way people are. And so she's been with toddlers for five and a half years." (Hutchins)
- b. "My spouse was very involved, my wife, in planting the church and helping to do some of the early leg work in reaching out to friends and helping to invite guests." (Ashford)

Church planting can prove to be difficult on a marriage, thus it is important for the strength of a marriage to be a part of the planter assessment.

- a. "Make sure the marriage is strong. That's very, very important because if it's tough in your marriage, church planting will be impossible"(Phillips)
- b. "If she's not 100% 'I'm your partner in this,' that man should not be in the field. It's truly dangerous work." (Smith)

Outside Support

Denominational Support and Training

Denominational support was a major area of dissatisfaction among those interviewed. The survey results showed that the resources most often cited as being received by church planters are church planter mentoring, coaching, supervision (60%) and training for church planter and/or team (60%). A majority of the church planters interviewed expressed that while support in areas such as church planter coaching and training may have been available, the content often did not relate well to an African American context.

African American church planters state that they would have benefited from training within their denomination which focused specifically on African-American church planting.

- a. “So, I needed to hear more from African American church planters who have done it before who are where I am” (Shipman - PCA)
- b. “We didn’t have any training. There was no training. There was no understanding of what it took to be SBC.” (Scruggs - SBC)
- c. “Then there’s the African American church which is, I think, the hardest route. And I think that there has to be some specialized training just for that, for the challenge that comes with that, particularly when you plant an all African American church.” (Shipman - PCA)
- d. “Most all the information is written on a Caucasian level” (Roberts - AG)

Active involvement, supervision and fellowship are three common needs a church planter seeks to find through their denomination.

- a. “But the main thing you want is supervision and you want fellowship because to be lonely in this context is real bad because everybody comes to you for everything” (Sutton - Foursquare)
- b. “But Foursquare has been real good about responding to when I have a need. They have not been good in providing fellowship.” (Sutton - Foursquare)
- c. “Our church is affiliated with the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. And I do that for relationship, and I do that for fellowship... in terms of going to regional and national, even international meetings” (Cross - IPHC)

By being available and providing counsel for every stage of the church plant, denominations and associations can maintain healthy and functional relationships with their church plants.

- a. “Missouri Baptist Convention and our local associations, Blue River and Kansas City...And they loved on me and they supported me and they gave me excellent counsel.” (Horton - SBC)
- b. “The United Methodist Church through the Office of Congregational Development and the district superintendent was very involved from day one.” (Ashford - UMC)
- c. “[They] made resources available to me whether it was online sermons, or Guidestone Financial. We needed help putting together our budget, and how to work through the State nuances to become an actual non-profit...The State Convention came in and they took the lead on that and they just walked us through step-by-step.” (Horton - SBC)

Financial Support

For those church plants that did receive financial support from their denomination, it was common for the amount of support to decrease each year. By and large, however, pastors found the length of these agreements to be too short and unrealistic. This coincides with the quantitative statistics that only 60% of the surveyed church planters stated their church achieved financial self-sufficiency by the tenth year. Outside financial supporters should plan on church plants needing support beyond the often used three year model.

Church planters sound grateful for the financial support they received, but frequently expressed the desire for the support to continue longer or to cover additional needs.

- a. “We had a seven-year timeline. And we were hoping to have an annual budget of \$500,000 within seven years. We never reached that point.” (Horton – Inner city, lower income community)
- b. “We rotated off of conference support within a four year period. With which we had to, the understanding would be that we would be self-sustaining by that point” (Ashford – Middle class, suburban community)
- c. “It was essentially a contractual agreement where my salary was paid over a four-year period, full amount for 18 months. After an 18-month period it decreased.” (Brown – Inner city, lower income community)

- d. “There was land that we could have purchased. There was even an office park we could have built out a space for ourselves. But without further help from the presbytery we just didn’t have the money.” (Cross – Less dense, middle-upper income suburb)
- e. “This is a 20-year process. This is not a three-year church plant. It’s going to take 20 years for us to really have a true impact in this [low income] community.” (Shipman – Inner city, lower income community)
- f. “I was [paid] for 12 months, but to be quite honest it would probably take somebody about 3 years. In the Assembly they don’t want you to work either, but they want you to put all your production in the ministry – which is good, because it takes a lot of time to start a church. But, it’s also going to take finances because you have to understand if a man or woman is putting all their energies into this they’ve also got to take care of their home and their family and things of this nature.” (Roberts – Middle class dense suburb)
- g. “I know you’ve got other churches that started who are thriving financially, but most African American churches, when they start from nothing, they run a shoestring budget while you try to give to missions and all the other organizations that you have in your group. The reality of the situation is that most of the finances have to go to just keeping your building open.” (Roberts – Middle class dense suburb)

The quantitative survey shows that 62% of African-American church plants receive denominational financial support. Among those church plants that did not receive any initial financial support, they were completely dependent upon tithes and offerings from the beginning.

- a. “And so we started off in a hotel without any sponsorship or support. I just felt this was what God wanted us to do.” (Hutchins)
- b. “Got the very minimal work from our church partner which is Converge Worldwide. But it was pretty much a parachute drop, just a work of faith.”(Phillips)
- c. “We never needed any funding quite honestly. I didn’t know it existed and we prayed and God provided.” (Brunson)

Sponsor or Mother Church

There is tremendous advantage to a church plant having a sponsor church. The healthiest sponsor church relationships described stemmed from an already existing relationship

between the sponsoring church and the planter. Many church planters, however, stated that finding a sponsor church was a struggle for them.

- a. “They (host church) would contribute to us and then they would allow us to host anything, fund raisers....then he was also our distributor for all of our State funding and Association funding.” (Horton)
- b. “Wornall Road Baptist [is] our mother church. He was the one that stepped up and said hey, when you begin to go through a church planting process, you’re going to need a mother church. We will do it.” (Horton)
- c. “We couldn’t get a sponsor initially....And then finally a church called Indian Head Baptist Church, they gave us a hundred dollars a month and an old van. And that’s pretty much how we got started.” (Scruggs)