

SEND NETWORK PATHWAY



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INTRODUCTION

WHY DOES SEND NETWORK EXIST?

Send Network is a family of churches seeking to plant healthy, Multiplying Churches in every community across North America. We believe that healthy, Multiplying Churches discover, develop and deploy church planting teams from within, and we believe every Send Network church is a Multiplying Church in the making.

Our values drive how we steward our resources and focus as a network. Family, multiplication and restoration are more than words for us. We believe family is central to the health of the network, multiplication is the fruit of the network and restoration is what happens when God gets His way through the Church.

The pathways in this short book are intended to provide guidance along the way to multiplication. Whether you are a pastor who wants to lead your church to multiply or a future planter, the pathways help you know where you are and what may be next for you.

Whether you are an insider to the work of our network or just checking it out for the first time, we trust this tool will provide you with an overview of the great work God is doing through Send Network. By God's grace, we will be a part of a church planting movement in our day. We labor in the hope that Send Network will play a role in that mighty work of God.

CHURCH PATHWAY



CHURCH PLANT

Launching and growing a new church brings a number of challenges — both common to church planting and unique to your context. Send Network is here to help you find solutions and encourage you, your family and your team along the way. This is the beginning of a journey toward multiplication.



SUPPORTING CHURCH

A Supporting Church partners in church planting by praying, participating and providing for a church planter, his family and the new church. Building a strong partnership is a key step toward multiplication for Supporting Churches and their planting partners.



SENDING CHURCH

The health of a church planter often depends on a strong sending partnership. A Sending Church leads as the primary partner of a church plant, taking responsibility for the plant until it strong enough to stand on its own. Providing guidance and accountability for the church planter are key roles for a Sending Church.



MULTIPLYING CHURCH

Churches that discover, develop, and deploy church planting teams from within their own context are rare. But this must be the focus of more churches if we are to see churches everywhere for everyone across North America. The Send Network is here to help every church take their next step toward multiplication!

RESIDENCIES

Residencies help churches multiply through intentionally developing and deploying missional leaders and church planting teams. They help aspiring leaders identify a ministry call. They help mature leaders pursue God's leading in their lives. And, they prepare leaders and teams for new missional opportunities. The Multiplication Pipeline and Send Network Training are two key resources to help churches develop future planters.

CHURCH PLANTER PATHWAY

Though every church plant is unique, there are fundamental steps along the way. From developing a contextual strategy to staying connected for encouragement and support, we are here to walk with you.



ASSESSMENT

Our pre-assessment tools and the assessment retreat are valuable in helping a church planter and his family as well as the Sending Church know the best next steps on their church planting journey.



ORIENTATION

This event is an encouraging and culture-building time of networking, inspiration and fun where you will learn more about the Send Network kingdom values of family, multiplication and restoration.



TRAINING

Learn alongside other new planters in your area in interactive sessions facilitated by an experienced trainer. This training gives you the tools you will need to develop and implement a contextual strategy for making disciples and planting.



COACHING

With extensive ministry experience and wisdom, a coach serves as a personal sounding board in your first years as a church planter. He will walk alongside you to help you determine your next steps in planting a healthy church that multiplies.



CARE

Church planting should not be pursued alone. It takes compassion and support to help a planter and his wife establish a healthy church while nurturing family relationships. We come alongside you with resources, events and gifts to encourage you and your family.

PART 1

CHURCHES PLANTING CHURCHES

Every Send Network church helps plant healthy, multiplying churches across North America. That's what draws us together and moves us forward. But every Send Network church has a next step in multiplication. The Send Network Church Pathway described here will help you understand your church's current role in church planting, where you can set your sights for future growth and how we all work together to plant churches everywhere for everyone.

Send Network has developed several resources to help churches take their next step. The Multiplication Pipeline is a free online resource to help you move people from church consumers to missional leaders to church planters with up to three years of material, covering 20 areas of missional leadership. The training is sequenced but flexible, so your church can supplement for focus or depth.

Many churches also develop residencies for leader development and church planting. Send Network is ready to help your church build intentional pathways to discover, develop and deploy church planting teams.

Every church can help plant churches. Let's do this together.

CHAPTER 1

CHURCH PLANTS

Martín Vargas came to know Christ at the age of 18 in the Dominican Republic. By the time he was 19, he knew God was leading him to help plant a church. His passion for reaching his neighbors overcame his lack of experience, and he started a church with his older brother.

A few years later, Martín moved to Hollywood, Florida, a growing and diverse community in Broward County (between Miami and Ft. Lauderdale). His entrepreneurial spirit helped him to quickly find success in food services, and before long he prospered as the owner of a steakhouse. But he could not shake the passion God gave him for reaching the lost through church planting.

In 2004, Vargas was challenged to see Broward with new eyes. For the first time, he saw that the county he called home was full of Spanish-speaking people without a solid Spanish-speaking church working to reach them. God began to burden him with a vision to plant a church in all 30 of Broward's cities.

So he gave up his business to fully commit to starting a church — Iglesia Real — that would reach Broward County. The church grew slowly at first, reaching only 30 people the first year and 80 the second. Then, a local English-speaking congregation gave them a home and resources to help them reach more than 300 people by the end of year four. When they moved to their own building in 2012, Vargas turned his attention to the broader vision of reaching the county.

Since 2012, Iglesia Real has planted nine congregations across Broward County — three of which have multiplied and planted other

churches. More significantly, their disciple-making and leadership development pipelines are beginning to produce planters from *within* their congregation. In 2016, Vargas' sent his own son, Omar, to plant a church, and in 2018, Iglesia Real sent out two more planters.

Vargas and Iglesia Real clearly demonstrate three things all church planters must do to start a church that multiplies.

1. See a community's challenges and potential

Church planters often make it sound as if the community they're planting in is the most lost or most strategic in the country, if not the world. That's not because they are trying to exaggerate or mislead, but through their preparation, the burden God has placed on their heart has changed how they see both the challenges and potential of their community.

Planting begins with clearly seeing what God can do in and through a community. If a planting team wants to start a church that's welcoming to the people they are trying to reach, then they must work to understand them. They should research the demographics, survey the geographic barriers, understand the community history, and more. They must search and read and listen. As they do so, God works into their heart a deep love for the people and the place they're being sent to plant.

Planting teams come to see the uniqueness of the community to which God has called them, and they grow in their desire to see God make an incredible kingdom impact in and through that place. They often see the kingdom possibility of more than just one new church in the community and long for God to use the new plant to launch a movement of new churches reaching people throughout the city.

2. Start making disciples and gathering them

This burden moves the planter to action, and he works to start something new there. Where there was no church, planters engage people with the gospel, lead them to follow Jesus,

gather them into a new faith community, and disciple them to become disciple-makers. He plants a new church with a new vision for the community and the city.

But starting something new is never easy — especially starting a new church. Satan will not easily lay down his weapons and concede territorial loss. Church planters, their families and their teams will be challenged at every turn. A planter's success depends completely on the work of the Spirit, and the Spirit often works through other churches surrounding the planter with care and support.

That's why no planter should plant alone. Sending Churches should help guide a planter's call and preparation, then care for him with ongoing contact and accountability until his church can stand healthy on its own. Supporting Churches partner with the Sending Church and the church plant to provide additional resources and personnel. Send Network helps connect the planter to this family of churches and strives to help everyone work together to plant a healthy multiplying church.

3. Set the culture for multiplication

Planting a singular church is rarely the only goal of a kingdom-minded church planter. Most want to see gospel transformation in the community they have come to care about. So they start a church with the culture, processes and systems necessary to multiply disciples groups, and churches — from within their congregations — into the community and beyond. The burden that drove them to plant also drives them to multiply.

Churches that plant churches have a structure for multiplication that clarifies pathways for disciples to grow as spiritual and missional leaders. A planter who has a vision to multiply sees the people in his congregation as potential planters and church planting team members, and he works

to challenge them to take their next step in that direction. Furthermore, he structures his church with reproducibility in mind. He is aware of the leaders in the congregation watching him, and he wants them to think, “With God’s help, I can do that, too.”

A culture that multiplies begins with prayer and a submitted, selfless heart. The vision the planter is called to is bigger than he can accomplish on his own. God must move, as only He can truly transform lives and plant a church. Building on this culture of prayer, planters must sacrifice by giving up people and resources their own church may need to see a church started in another community.

Vargas has seen his community’s challenges and potential and has started multiple church plants with prayer, a submissive spirit and a structure for multiplication. After multiple church plants, he has not lost his passion for planting. He still sees the challenges and potential of Hollywood, and he and Iglesia Real are working to start new churches that can make a difference. Their hope is that the culture they set will multiply disciples and leaders that plant churches across Broward County and the world.

Learn more about how Send Network helps church planters plant churches at SendNetwork.com.

CHAPTER 2

SUPPORTING CHURCHES

Every church has a role to play in planting churches, but many pastors don't know where to start.

It only took a phone call to challenge Paul Middleton's thinking on his church's role. He has led Calvary Baptist Church in Batesville, Mississippi, for over 20 years, but he didn't see a role for his congregation in North American missions. That one call challenged him to consider what he could lead his church to do, and he began praying and looking at the demographics of America's key cities.

The lostness in Minneapolis–Saint Paul quickly captured his heart, and visiting some of the planters solidified his desire to get involved. He soon began leading a few Calvary families to pray for planters there, and before long, Calvary members were meeting some of their needs personally. Today, Twin City planters know they can turn to Calvary whenever there's a need, and a couple of Calvary's families have moved to Saint Paul help plant a new church. Paul could not be more thrilled his “small church in small town Mississippi has fingerprints in Saint Paul.”

Every church has a role to play in church planting. While leading an established church is different than planting one from scratch, we often miss the similarities.

Both pastors are dependent on the Spirit to move, other believers to join the effort and the provision of resources to make it happen. Within Send Network, Supporting Churches help plant churches

by partnering to meet these key needs through prayer, participation and provision.

1. Prayer

Church planting is first and foremost a kingdom endeavor. Flashy concerts and eloquent speakers may draw a crowd, but a church exists primarily to make disciples. Disciple-making is spiritual work that is meaningless without the transformative work of the Spirit in individual hearts and lives.

Every church can join the work of church planting by praying for church planters. This can be as simple as choosing a community of focus, identifying a plant or planters in that area, praying intentionally for them and leading others to pray with you.

As you pray, you join the planter in his pioneering work of advancing God's kingdom — and you grow in your understanding of church planting. When you tell a planter's story to lead your church in prayer, you also give church planting a face and name, and you help move it from a category to a personal mission.

2. Participation

It takes a team to plant a church. In addition to prayer, Supporting Churches partner with a specific church planter(s) to participate in his ministry. Formalize the partnership by identifying strategic ways your church can help the ongoing work of the plant.

Partnering well begins with getting to know the planter you're partnering with. Don't assume you know what his life and work are like. Don't assume what worked at your church will solve all his outreach needs. Sit with him, ask lots of questions and learn how you may serve him best. Seek to understand his walk with Jesus, his family, his ministry and his vision. When you're comfortable, commit to help him, then work

together to develop a strategic plan that benefits both his church and yours.

When you partner with a planter, you join his planting team. Church planters are sent by a Sending Church. The Sending Church takes primary responsibility for the planter and plant, while Supporting Churches join the effort to make sure this plant and planter have everything they need to succeed.

3. **Providing**

Church planting takes resources. There's just no getting around it. From a meeting space, to childcare, to sound equipment and personnel, the costs add up quickly. Financial needs are one practical reason a church plant needs other churches to thrive.

Supporting Churches partner with a planter by providing for these needs. If your church has good sound equipment you no longer need, consider passing it on. If a church member has an unused box trailer, challenge them to give it. If the planter needs a worship leader, pray God leads one of your best to support (or join!) his team.

There are many ways to help meet the needs of the new plant, but don't neglect giving financially. Start by supporting church planting missionaries together — along with other Southern Baptist churches — through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering¹. Consider adding one-time gifts or ongoing support to your budget, so you can join with the Sending Church in meeting the many financial needs of the plant.

Your church — yes, *your* church — can multiply kingdom influence through church planting. Start by leading your church to pray for church planting, then dive in deep with an individual planter. Join his Sending Church as part of their support team — and watch what God does to start something new! These are simple steps, but they can be

¹ Learn more about how to give through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering at anniearmstrong.com.

significant milestones for your church's participation in the mission of God.

Learn more about how Send Network can help your church plant churches at namb.net/Send-Network/Mobilize-My-Church.

CHAPTER 3

SENDING CHURCHES

Back in the day, everyone wanted to “be like Mike.” Michael Jordan was (and still is) the best. Sure, he played with some great teams, but he was the difference-maker. Game after game, Jordan led his teams to victory.

Many athletes wanted to be *that* player for their high school basketball team, but they didn’t have Mike’s skills. While they could certainly cause the team to lose, there was no way they could carry the team to victory alone. Team members had to work together because each one had abilities others didn’t. Each one had to play to his strengths and help his teammates do the same. When any one player tried to be the star, the team inevitably lost. But when everyone worked together, the team won.

Good church planting partnerships work similarly because it takes a team to plant a church. Sending Churches assume their primary role of helping a church planter and his team succeed. Supporting Churches assist with critical prayer, participation, and resources. Church planters do the daily work of starting the new church. With everyone playing to their strengths, a healthy gospel witness might soon blossom where once there was none.

Sending Churches lead out by taking primary responsibility for seeing a planter deployed to plant the gospel in a new community. God uniquely created and equips local churches to fulfill his mission on

earth. Missions agencies partner with local churches, but they do not take the primary responsibility. Biblically, churches plant churches.

When Sending Churches take this responsibility seriously, they coach their planter in clarifying his calling and preparing to serve as a church planter, acknowledge the weight of their responsibility by commissioning the planter and his team and caring intentionally for the team and new church until they are able to stand solidly on their own.

1. Coach

Coaches help people get from where they are to where they need to be. Sending Churches take responsibility for coaching their planter's calling and preparation.

This often begins by getting to know the potential planter deeply, by listening and looking for how God is working in his life. They ask good — sometimes hard — questions about his past and his plans. They watch his ministry and his leadership of his family. Their goal is not necessarily to tell him what to do but to help him clarify what God is doing in his life, family and ministry.

Exploring this call is often done in conjunction with preparation. Sending Churches help make sure the planter is ready for the task at hand. If theological development is needed, they help. If ministry experience is lacking, they work to find opportunities. If he needs help with a planting or support team, they advocate on his behalf.

The most effective planters have a clear sense of call and are well prepared for the work. In fact, sending an unprepared planter can cause long-term harm to his life, family and ministry. Send Network is designed to help Sending Churches and planters clarify their calling and prepare for planting through the

Planter Pathway.² In fact, the Planter Pathway can supplement — even foster — an intimate relationship between a Sending Church and a planter.

2. **Commission**

In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit moved the church at Antioch to “set apart” Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel where it was not already known. The church prayed and fasted, then laid hands on them and sent them. By the end of Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas had completed their work and returned to Antioch to report what God had done and to celebrate with their Sending Church.

It’s not hard to see that this first sending activity was Spirit-led, weighty and mutually edifying — as it should be with all Sending Churches and their partnerships. As God leads, the Church should formally set apart those who God calls. They should acknowledge the opportunity they have to partner in God’s kingdom work and the responsibilities they are assuming as they do so.

Today, a meaningful commissioning and a formalized partnership are a couple of the practical implications of this biblical example. Sending Churches help the congregation and planter feel the joy and significance of sending when they commission a church planter (and his team). This can be done through a worship service dedicated to the task or as a portion of another service. But, sending them well often includes laying hands on the planting team, praying for them and publicly acknowledging God’s call.

Additionally, let’s not miss the ongoing responsibilities of this partnership. Sending Churches are primarily responsible for holding the planter accountable morally, theologically and administratively. They should regularly check on the health

² For more information about Planter Pathway, visit namb.net/planter-pathway.

a planter's character and doctrinal fidelity, even as they help the new congregation develop appropriate accountability structures administratively.

3. Care

Sending is spiritually significant work. The forces of evil will not simply concede territorial loss to a well-intentioned planter. They will fight any extension of the kingdom, and they will not fight fairly. They will not restrict their attacks to more obvious struggles of funding or numerical growth. No, Satan will work to make him feel alone and incapable. He will attack his family and marriage. He will do whatever he can to prevent the planting of a healthy, reproducing congregation.

Sending Churches must take responsibility for the care of their planters, and they should make plans to care for him by checking in on his physical, emotional and spiritual health. Is he keeping his walk with Jesus his priority? Is he caring for himself physically? Does he have an appropriate outlet for processing emotional struggles?

Sending Churches also should care for a planter's wife and family. They also will be challenged on the front lines. Make sure his wife knows she's known and appreciated. Find ways to help the couple love on their children. A planter will not make it long if his wife or children do not thrive in the work, too. Do everything you can to help your planters shepherd their family well.

Church plants are healthiest when they're planted by healthy church planters. The healthiest church planters are partnered with a strong Sending Church — one that takes responsibility for the plant by coaching the planter, commissioning him and his team and caring for them as they seek to be faithful to their work. When the planter and his Sending Church play to their strengths, both win.

Learn more about how Send Network can help your church plant churches at namb.net/Send-Network/Mobilize-My-Church.

CHAPTER 4

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

In the kingdom of God, multiplication is a mark of health. God commanded Adam and Eve in the garden “to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28). In the early days of the Church, the Spirit moved by multiplying disciples (Acts 6:7). The Bible leads us to conclude that healthy believers and churches multiply.

Michael Crawford has made multiplication central to Freedom Church in Baltimore, Maryland. From its earliest days, Crawford worked to inject multiplication into every aspect of the new church. Through intentional discipleship and leadership development, Freedom Church regularly and systematically identifies potential leaders within the congregation and helps them grow for ministry and mission.

In urban Baltimore, this can be a significant challenge, as most of Crawford’s guys need years of development before they’re ready to lead or plant. The work is messy, but his investment is producing fruit. In 2018, Freedom Church sent one of their own members to plant on the other side of the city, and two more are currently preparing to be sent to plant in the next couple years.

The drive to multiply at Freedom Church is unique, but it shouldn’t be. Not many churches have identified a pathway to find leaders within their congregations and help them grow toward church planting. But

if churches want to honor God's desire for multiplication, then every church should strive to be a Multiplying church.

In Send Network, Multiplying Churches discover, develop and deploy church planting teams from within their congregations. These churches mobilize men and teams within their congregations — who may not have otherwise considered being a part of a church plant — to start a church together. To fully understand what's involved, let's look closely at the three elements of multiplication: discovering, developing and deploying.

1. Discover

Multiplying Churches have a culture and processes that help discover potential church planters and church planting team members within their congregation. Compelled by a vision too big for any one church, leaders look to those within their congregation as a critical piece of the solution. They ask God to provide, and they prepare — in faith — the raw leaders He sends their way.

This kingdom-centered vision for multiplication creates an open-handed culture that affects everything the church does. From preaching and staffing to budgeting and kids' ministry, a Multiplying church analyzes how everything can be done in reproducible ways. For example, ministry leaders simplify what they do so it can be done in multiple contexts. Pastors actively look for those who may be called and help them gain experience leading. Many will consider the scalability of infrastructures for serving future locations or plants.

The result is a church where it's normal for church members to take steps toward becoming church planting missionaries. Ministry and training are seen as two sides of the same coin, and there is confidence in God's provision when people and resources are sent for the sake of the mission.

2. Develop

A culture that discovers may lead to planting one or two churches, but multiplication will not be sustained without intentional systems and processes. The best Multiplying churches embed intentional disciple-making and leader-development processes deep within the structure of the church. At some level, everyone within the congregation is being prepared to multiply.

Multiplying Churches have identified a clear pathway for the development of potential church planters and church planting team members. They assess a potential team member's strengths and weaknesses, then faithfully help them with their next growth step by providing opportunities to grow in biblical knowledge, ministry experience, and missional leadership.

Creating a development pipeline from scratch is a labor-intensive project. To help you, Send Network developed the Multiplication Pipeline. This is an online learning tool for guiding people from being church consumers to becoming missional leaders with up to three years of material, covering 20 areas of missional leadership. The training is sequenced but flexible, so your church can supplement for focus or depth. The first year will help a disciple grow as a disciple-maker. The second year will prepare disciple-makers to lead others on mission, and the third year of training is designed specifically to help potential church planters prepare to plant.³

3. Deploy

Culture and systems within a Multiplying Church are constantly refined so church planting teams are regularly deployed from within. When a bottleneck is identified,

Multiplying Churches adjust to reopen a consistent flow of

³ Learn more and preview the Multiplication Pipeline at namb.net/pipeline.

church planting teams to the field.

Many Multiplying Churches recognize the value of sending church planting teams. It can be difficult to find a planter who is both a stellar communicator and administrator. But church planting teams can be assembled to meet the varied needs of a new congregation together. Multiplying Churches are proactive in assembling and sending these teams to keep reaching new populations.

Multiplying Churches also recognize that planting in different contexts and with different leaders will result in different kinds of churches. Some may be large, but many will be smaller. Some may need a full-time pastor, but others will find it more strategic to have a pastor who continues to work another full-time profession. Culture, economics, strategy and more play a role in these decisions, but Multiplying Churches embrace these differences as right and good for reaching different populations in the various communities they engage.

Just imagine if every community in North America had a healthy, Multiplying church. Yes, the brokenness of our communities can be overwhelming, and sin has deeply fractured every aspect of our lives. But the church is uniquely called and equipped to help heal these broken areas, make disciples and multiply churches. God will be glorified and communities restored as we call out, equip and empower new church planting teams to testify to the good news of His grace.

Learn more about how Send Network can help your church plant churches at namb.net/Pastor.

PART 2

**CHURCH PLANTER
PATHWAY**

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENT

Church planting can be an exciting adventure, but it also can be very risky. That's why assessment is a critical step in the church planting journey. Our assessment is designed not only to help potential planters gain further confirmation of the call to church planting, but it also will help identify strengths and growth areas for the planting candidate to develop both personally and as a leader. Church planting is not easy. In fact, it may be one of the hardest things a pastor will ever do. Vance Pitman, Pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, has said, "In church planting, there are days where *all you have* is the call of God." We believe a person must be fully confident they've been called to plant a church, which is why we've made it the primary objective of Send Network Assessment to help identify and confirm that passionate sense of calling.

Once a clear calling is identified, the other key objective of assessment is to determine the planter's readiness to move forward. There may be areas of development that will take them some time to work through before we recommend they begin the planting process. This is a crucial part of the Planter Pathway because, of course, we want to see more churches planted, but even more than that, we want to see more *healthy* churches planted. Church planting has been called the "extreme sport" of the ministry world, and our assessments are designed to help ensure planters are ready to jump into the rigorous journey ahead.

Send Network Assessment begins with a thorough online pre-assessment that covers three key areas: church planting capacity,

personal character and marriage health (if married). If the pre-assessment scores indicate the planting candidate should proceed with the assessment, the next step is for the candidate and his spouse to attend an in-person, two-day Assessment Retreat. At the retreat, candidates are given the opportunity to meet with a team of assessors who are specialists in the nine essential areas we assess for: calling, emotional and spiritual health, family dynamics, vision, leadership, communication, missional engagement, disciple-making and social skills. We believe this team approach encourages a much more wholistic and complete view of the candidates' aptitude and readiness than some of the more traditional forms of assessments you may have seen.

As you have probably guessed by now, these aren't your typical retreats. They're a fairly intense two days for the planting candidates and their spouses, but the idea is for them to be able to withdraw (i.e. "retreat") from their everyday lives to spend focused time reflecting on if and when the Lord is calling them to plant a church. Each Assessment Team is committed to providing a highly relational, life-giving environment in which candidates feel safe and free to explore their calling and readiness for this challenging, unique and ultimately highly rewarding pathway for expanding the kingdom across North America.

CHAPTER 6

ORIENTATION

Church planting can be isolating. As outlined in chapter 5, it is a hard calling — one in which pastors and their families face great stress and personal pressure to start something from scratch.

These realities are compounded by the financial challenges that come with moving to a new city and the family challenges that come from loving and leading amid these changes. Then you have the reality that planters are working to bring the gospel to bear on many who are content in their sin and see no need for the local church. All of the forces of hell seem to battle against the calling of a church planter. It is no doubt that planters serve on the front lines of ministry in an all-out war. This war certainly isn't a fight against flesh and blood, but it is a war nonetheless.

Send Network recognizes these challenges and strives to come alongside planters in their work. It's unhealthy for planters to go at it alone, even when they are embracing their entrepreneurial spirit. Scripture warns against the dangers of isolation in Proverbs 18:1, "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment." Simply put, there's no place for the lone-ranger planter, or any other Christian for that matter. That's one of the main reasons we instituted our Send Network Orientation.

But, be honest, when you think of orientation, what comes to mind? Chances are, you envision a never-ending meeting in a stale conference room with a monotone speaker shuffling through a 100+ page binder of information you will likely forget before leaving the

meeting. Orientation is when the company backs up the truck and dumps information. These meetings are often terrible, and we get that.

For that reason, the Send Network Orientation is an altogether different sort of orientation. It's about casting vision, not simply downloading information. During this event we host newly endorsed church planters to celebrate what God is doing throughout North America. Along the way, we seek to cast vision for where we're going as a network and equip our planters to embrace our network's shared values: family, multiplication and restoration.

There is no limit to what God can do through a group of planters who relate to one another as brothers and give themselves away to invest in God's kingdom work, not simply to grow their churches. We cast this vision, but the planters are the only ones who can make it reality.

For that reason, the entire orientation is led by church planting practitioners. We select the very best to discuss the theology and practice behind the values of family, multiplication and restoration. Planters need collaborative learning experiences — especially in the beginning stages — and the orientation provides just that.

Planters also need to relax and have some fun. So we carve out time and space for our planters to experience fun activities each night. The Send Network Orientation offers planters what they need and want — someone to be in the trenches with them. Our hope is that a church planter who arrives feeling alone will leave knowing they have a network of brothers who are right there with them. Some may even be right down the street!

We pray this event is catalytic for our planters — prompting each to return to their city and support other planters through prayer, accountability, friendship and encouragement. We pray our planters refuse to believe they're the final link in the Great Commission chain, but actively and enthusiastically discover, develop and deploy missionaries from within their churches to continue the work. And finally, we desire that our planters would want more than to be the

“coolest” church on the street, but to plant a church that makes a real and lasting difference in their community. All for the glory of God!

This isn't just another trendy church planter gathering, but an experience of what could be and should be through the shared brotherhood of our church planters. We hope this event becomes a milestone in the life of every Send Network planter, as they enter into a family that is “for them.”

CHAPTER 7

TRAINING

The greatest church planter who ever lived wrote, “I laid a foundation like a wise and master builder...” Ever-ready to confess his inadequacy, Paul changes tack in the letter to the Corinthians and asserts he had planted with competency. In other words, Paul tells them that, when it came to church planting, he was good at it. Who could deny it?

False humility is of no value when you’re in a mentorship role to church planters who daily put their security, families and reputation on the line by risking it all for kingdom expansion. When you’re looking for a mentor, you want to know that he’s planted successfully and lived to tell the tale. Paul had his share of failures, too, as evidenced by the mess in Galatia after his first missionary journey.

It’s at this very point that Paul’s genius truly shines through. Paul learns from his mistakes. Sometimes, competency is gained from the failures we’ve endured, as well as the successes. All golf coaches, boxing trainers and teachers know that competency can be built in those who are willing to learn from the wisdom of those who have gone before them.

Everyone needs a Paul, and Send Network Training doesn’t merely teach methods; it also provides mentorship. The curriculum itself is laid out over several months, where planters meet with other planters in cohorts. Whereas much training is rigidly set on teaching methods, the Send Network Training is planter-centric, focusing on the competencies all planters need developed within them, across all cultural contexts, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds and

models. These competencies are rooted in reality — grounded in the trenches of everyday church planting.

We can offer this kind of training because we have talked to planters in the trenches. We walked beside and interviewed church planters who were successful at reaching their communities with the gospel and seeing transformation occur through their church plants. Listen to story after story, and certain patterns begin to emerge. The training was forged out of those conversations with church planters on the ground, and the team was able to crystalize the core characteristics of successful church planting.

The focus of the Send Network Training isn't on your church. It's on you as a church planter. We train you to be the kind of planter who can assess the makeup of your community and develop a missional engagement strategy. We also train you to develop bold faith that takes prayerful risks. You'll learn how to cast a clear and compelling vision. Above all, all of our training traces back to qualities exhibited by leaders in the Bible — traits they developed in themselves that you can develop before you hit the field.

We can't wait to see these traits developed in you because you're so much more than just a number or a means to plant more churches. You're somebody for whom Christ died and in whom He deposited Himself when He indwelt you with His Holy Spirit. Send Network Training seeks to see you poured into the lives of others. The entire time you train, you'll be interacting with your trainer, cohort of fellow planters and a coach or sending pastor. In the end, the Send Network Training is relational because church planting itself is relational—just as God Himself is a relational being.

We expect our training to be some of the best on the planet. Church planters deserve it. We are always improving and re-examining ourselves in order to deliver the best we possibly can — and to make sure we are always on the cutting edge. Our trainers make the training what it is, and we train them rigorously before allowing them to lead a cohort.

When you walk into a cohort, you know you've kissed traditional planter training goodbye. Everything from start to finish is meant to communicate something, and in every session there is non-stop interaction, relational depth and gospel centrality. You will build lasting and strategic relationships during these six months and, most of all, you'll develop the necessary competency to plant by learning from experienced church planters as they share their own failures and successes.

CHAPTER 8

COACHING

Heather Bond, whose husband, Matthew, is a church planter, once said, “Coaching is like noise-canceling headphones; it takes all those voices, internal and external, in Matthew’s life and helps him discern which one is the Holy Spirit’s.”

A coach is a gift from God to help church planters pursue their unique kingdom assignment. We care about planters and their families as much as we care about their churches.

A coach provides an “asking voice” in the sea of important “telling voices” to help planters hear God and act. This intentional, one-on-one relationship helps by:

- Providing space to reflect, plan and set goals.
- Encouraging through wins and challenges.
- Shepherding a planter’s soul and keeping him accountable to care for himself and his family.

Here are three stories that show the value of a great coach:

PROVIDING SPACE TO REFLECT, PLAN AND SET GOALS

Buff and Cissy McNickle moved from Florida to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to plant Great Falls Church in 2013. Buff described an immediate return on his time being coached:

“I quickly realized this wasn’t another task or burden, but truly a blessing, if done well and consistently for a season. My

coach helped me truly know what it means to walk in step with the Spirit. Our coaching sessions helped me think about, track and take the necessary steps to live out the mission of God in my church plant and everyday life. The ability to draw out my thoughts and move them forward to action has helped me tremendously.”

Planters are understandably reluctant to add to their daunting to-do list. But once they experience the value of great coaching, they want more.

ENCOURAGING THROUGH WINS AND CHALLENGES

JD and Natalie Mangrum recently moved to Boston to plant their second church. During his first church plant, JD worked with Ed Cerny, a professional coach, former marketing professor and leader in two church plants. Here is JD’s perspective on how Ed helped him:

“Ed Cerny was a great coach because he spoke wisdom and pointed me to books or habits. But even more, he showed me what a life of faith looks like. He cared for me repeatedly. At the birth of my children, the death of my father, every birthday and anniversary, long after the formal coaching process concluded, Ed would write, call or email to encourage. In a season of wanting answers, Ed provided questions. Rather than challenging me to get answers from someone else’s victories, he asked the right questions, so I would chart my own course. He helped me learn that what God called me to do, He would equip me to do.”

JD received more than a planting coach. He received a prayer warrior and cheerleader for life.

SHEPHERDING A PLANTER’S SOUL

Matthew and Heather Bond moved from Fort Worth, Texas, to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, four years ago to plant Ekklesia Community Church. Heather learned how God could use coaching and soon experienced it as well. Heather wrote, “Coaching is a lifeline

for my husband as a church planter — and it's a lifeline for our marriage, too. Coaching draws my husband back to God's plan, power and ability to accomplish His will. It helps him fight the spiritual battle of low self-esteem and low productivity by focusing his attention on what God wants him to do next."

Everything we do in Send Network is built on the belief that no planter should plant alone. Coaches help church planters pursue their unique kingdom assignment. Affirmation and celebration is offered when things go well; grace and comfort are offered during seasons of disappointment.

Jesus said in John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you." The way we send is as important as the sending. We have a team of people waiting prepared to assess, train, coach, and care so we can partner with the Father to send and send well.

CHAPTER 9

CARE

As a network, our mission is to develop planting couples to plant healthy, multiplying churches. We know that the long-term health of the church is predicated on the health of the pastor and his family. The five aspects of the Send Network Pathway outlined in this book — assessment, orientation, training, coaching and care — are designed to foster a culture of health in our planting couples, their families and the churches they plant.

Church planting is often a thankless, isolating and discouraging assignment. The Send Network Care Team wants to help address these struggles by surrounding planting couples with a culture of

C.A.R.E. First, we work to **connect** church planting couples to one another by empowering city teams and state conventions to host local events. And through our Send Network Gatherings, we provide a regional and even a North American-wide sense of family. Next, we work to ensure that every planting couple is appreciated. Through phone calls, hand-written cards and even event getaways, we work to **appreciate** planting couples and their families for the sacrificial work they do for the kingdom. Thirdly, our team exists to **respond** to planting couples as they walk through personal emergencies. Finally, we want to **encourage** every planting couple in their calling through ongoing prayer support, notes, resources and other surprises throughout the year.

This investment will foster health as these men and women do the hard work of impacting their cities with the gospel of Jesus.

Some of the care a planter can expect includes:

- Ongoing prayer support
- Phone calls and handwritten notes of encouragement
- Gifts on their birthdays and anniversaries
- Free books, blogs and e-books to equip them as they serve
- Invitations to events in their city and region
- Other surprises throughout the year

Our desire is that planting couples would receive things they actually want — gifts that are life-giving for them and their families. We also want them to feel a sense of belonging or, better yet, a true experience of family.

Send Network is dedicated to building a true sense of family among our planting couples — not just their names and church names, but really knowing one another. That means the Send Network Care Team wants to cultivate a relationship with our planting couples. We want to be there in the peaks and valleys — to pray with and walk through the tough situations and celebrate the wins and successes. We want them to feel we are part of their journey, and that they are not alone. While we are thankful for the number of people who come to Christ through our church plants, we are first and foremost thankful for the leaders who give their time and energy to make these churches a reality. Part of the beauty of Send Network is that we have a Care Team that can respond immediately when something happens to one of our planting couples.

We genuinely want them to know they are a part of a network that cares for them, whether that means last-minute plane tickets to a funeral of a close family member, extra support through a family illness, help with other unexpected expenses or counseling during difficult times.

The health of a planting couple is paramount in church planting. For that reason, we see this ministry as being absolutely critical to Send Network.



SEND Network

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