Developing Your Church Planting Plan Pt. 2

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All right. Well, welcome everybody. I'm sorry that, one, that we seem to have a rain and windpocalypse when we were meeting earlier this week. And I'm sorry that it's taken this long to be able to get back. It's been a little bit of a crazy one, as they can be sometimes. But I'm glad we finally have the chance to look at the second part of developing your church planting plan.

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Okay. And as I mentioned before, and since we're doing this a little differently, I will go ahead and share my screen with you. You'll see that there are four phases that we're calling them. Conception, prenatal, birth and infancy. And then what we do is we see. And the reason for that is not that everything in between there isn't important. It's rather that what we want to do is kind of say this is kind of where you want to be getting to, right? So it's a good way to kind of block all this stuff out.

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Also, what we're not saying by this is this is the order you have to go through. This is the way, the only way it can be done. What I will say is that this, when I was kind of pulling this list together, and I'm pulling from some stuff that we've done earlier on this, but then I've also kind of added a number of things myself or kind of reordered, rechanged things. The reason that I've ordered them the way that I have is because if you do follow this rough pattern. Cadence, this rough schedule, then what you'll find is you aren't going to be unexpectedly slowed down by the.

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the difficulties of needing to kind of scale back and do something or needing to take a couple of steps back and get this handled or hopefully you'll be able to avoid, oh, my gosh, I've got to do this right now. And so you have to put some stuff on hold because it's now become an eminent thing. So, yeah, so that's really – so this is a – I think it's a really good guide. I just don't think it's necessary that you do it exactly this way. But I think if you're not quite sure how to do it, this is a really – this is a good place to start.

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I was – I'm coaching a church planter, and where a lot of this stuff came from is that he was dealing with – he was dealing with just the sheer amount of things that you need to figure out. That, like, when you're going from the conception of a plant – Into launching it, preparing for launch, building teams. When you're going

from conception to you have something to start with, right, and this particular person was going to be starting it with, you know, kind of a house church model.

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So we're going to meet in small groups, we're going to do this, and then it will slowly build into this other thing. And the thing that was frustrating for him or was confusing for him initially was just how do you know the order? How do you know the things to do? How do you figure out what's good to do, what is not necessary, what can wait, what's imminent, all that kind of stuff. And so I asked him to send me, what are the things that you're curious about? He sent me probably a list of 40 things, and all of them were good.

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So, again, it's going from we need to do everything. It's figuring out what do I need to do now, right? That's the goal of this. This is so. This is practitioner-driven. This isn't theory. This is lab, okay? And so, yeah, we're just going to go through some of these. We'll mention them. Some of them we'll mention quickly. Some of them we might spend a little bit more time on. I want to try to get through everything, and as you can see, there's a bunch of things here.

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So just know that we'll go through this. And then if you do have questions, feel free to jot them down. And then we can talk about them next week, all right? So here we go. So let's talk about the first phase, and that is conception. And we are using this kind of almost this birth imagery because I think it's a really good one to describe both the excitement of it and the difficulty of it. So when we are talking about the conception where you're just imagining what this thing could be,

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one of the things you want to be able to do is, Affirm your calling. I think that probably makes a lot of sense to people. This is a time where a lot of people, they have the idea it would be good to do this. What you're wanting to do is discern, is this something that I think would be kind of fun, or is this something that I feel like the Lord is calling me to? And it doesn't have to be a burning, bullish, massive moment kind of thing, where it's like, I have to do this, I have to.

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When we were called to NLCF, it was clear that we were called specifically here, and there was really only the question of obedience or disobedience to what God is telling us to do. But not everybody's like that. Not everybody has that experience. It's not better to have it or worse not to. It's just a question of how have you discerned, and who have you discerned with your calling? Have you talked to people, and you'll see this come up all the time, do you have people around you that are kind of, discerning partners?

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That are helping you to sort out what you want, what you're trying to understand the Spirit is saying. And are at least some of these people willing to tell you something that they think you might not want to hear? Are they willing to be

honest with you is a big question. So affirmation of your calling. Determine whether this will be an individual or a team plan. This is huge. Some people feel like I need to just start this. Some people feel like I need to start this on my own because that's the model that they've been around and that's what they've grown up with or that's what is most meaningful to them.

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You just need to know that it doesn't just have to be you. There's sometimes that can work and there's sometimes that's not the best idea. But knowing why you're doing it the way that you're doing it. You begin discerning the type of church and launch. Again, this is where it can be easy to even to kind of rock back into the thing that we are accustomed to seeing. Right? To think, okay. Okay, this is where I can. So this is what I have to do. Churches where I came from, they launch large, where there's a big mass mailing blitz.

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You really try to push and push and push to get to where your first service is 200 or 300 people. And then you even have people come in that you know aren't ever going to come back, and it's not the point that they do. Start big. You know you're going to drop by at least 50%, maybe 60%. But you're still going to maintain, you'll have kind of a core, and you start going. Other approaches, the other way, I'm just going to start meeting with people, and I'm going to start connecting with people and just see how it is that the Spirit is directing me to work in this place, whether it's a new place.

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or whether it's a place you've been for a while. Now I would say Ecclesia has a lean that we tend to launch smaller. We tend to value being able to truly understand. We tend to understand the story of the place before we go in and say, Now the church has arrived. And I think that's more of a missional approach. I think that's probably a better approach in our culture today. We're not saying you have to do that. Again, you just have to understand the type of church that you're trying to launch.

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In different cultures, you may have different things that impact you and all of that. Begin developing your support network. Who are the people you're going to go to? Who are the people you're going to pray with and that are going to pray for you? You who are the people that you are going to that are going to be able to speak into that are going to be able to not shoulder the main burden of this, but they're saying, you know what, we value the burden that you have. And so what we want to be able to do is we want to help with that. Who are those people?

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Begin goal setting and prioritizing. This is when you're just kind of, for me, I've got that giant whiteboard back there. I use it all the time. What are the things that, you think are most important? This is kind of where you dream. What would you love to see in this church? What are the things that you would love to have be

super important? What are the things that you're okay with neglecting? One of the toughest decisions I think church planters face is that one right there. What do I focus on, and what do I not? What do I make.

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a key thing, and what do I not? And you may be able to, when you're on a whiteboard, have it all clear, but once you start meeting with people, and once they start sharing their visions, and once it, it can be very, very difficult to understand, or to really feel like you have a grip on, this is what we're going after. These other things are fine if they happen, but we're not going to go after those things, right? So you begin by goal setting and prioritizing, and so a lot of this is helping you to prioritize. Who will be the people?

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Your plant is seeking to serve, and how will you invite and connect with them? Uh, some, some church planting, um, uh, some, some church planning, writing some church planning workshops. They talk about a target group. I understand the thought of that. I just don't love that terminology, but who are the people that you're going there for? Uh, is there a type of person that you're going there for? I was, I was, um, coaching a church planter who, um, was, was, um, trying to, he was working.

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in downtown, uh, Pittsburgh and he was primarily working with, uh, an immigrant community in Pittsburgh. And so these were people that he cared about. Um, these were, he was going there for them and this was a white dude, but he was doing it because he felt like these are the people I'm called to do. And so then what that did is knowing who he was going for, it shaped the approach and the way that we went about going through some of these early steps. So sometimes.

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Sometimes it can be very straightforward and you can just go in and start learning about them and talking to them and seeing it. And sometimes there are other things you need to do before you do that, right? How will you invite and connect with them? How overt are you going to be about inviting them to your church versus simply getting to know them and feeling out whether they're ready for coming to a service or coming to something else? Are you going to have a big front door? Are you going to use side doors? It's the whole thing is just trying to understand how do you feel like, not how is every situation going to play out because we all know, who knows?

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But you have a sense of what are the general things that we are going to do, okay? What leadership structure and values do you have? So one of the questions that you need to ask, that you need to know your answer to, is how is authority going to be handled in this church? Right? Work with people that have... plural structure where there's no one that has, excuse me, all of the authority,

and I work with people that they have a peaked structure where there is like a lead or senior pastor or elder.

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that does things, and then, you know, but knowing how that functions, how is there going to be an outside group that is kind of sharing some of the oversight? What would be the, who would kind of be the people that would be on that? What would be the limits of their oversight? What is the, so, you know, that's just dealing with overall authority, the structure of authority, and I think that's a terribly important one, especially in our culture now. We've unfortunately seen one or two.

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examples of people that haven't navigated that all that well, but then what are the other, how is your church going to be structured? Is it going to be centered around, the gathered community? Right. And and there are there's a church planner I'm working with now that it really feels like that this is it's the gathered community where the, you know, gathering around the table is the place where the spirit really moves. And so are you going to be doing it like that? Are you going to be more decentralized where you are setting up house churches or missional communities around where the bulk of the work of the church is done there and you gather either regularly but not weekly or even if you gather weekly, you know, in your mind, the bulk of the work is done out there.

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So what values will you have? What are the things that. Are most important to you? What are the needs that the place where you're going has? We talked about that last week. How do you know and how do you discern those needs? So what are the things that are going to matter the most? What is your. sustainability model. This is one that just makes everyone excited, I think, because, I mean, who doesn't go into church planting with the hopes of having a long discussion about sustainability modeling, right? But that's an important thing. How are you going to be able to afford to do this?

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The classic, I wouldn't even say evangelical, I would say among mainlines that plant, that have a church planting mentality, the primary structure for the last 75 years has been that you would try to allocate funding for the first three years. It might be through a denominational entity. It might be through, I know people that have done it through the Lilly Foundation. I know people that have done it. In all different kinds of ways, but you find funding for the first three years, and the goal has been that you get a lot of that up front, and then it titrates down over those three years with the goal of that three years you are financing.

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So within three years, what you are bringing in matches what goes out. And I mean, you still do that. You absolutely can. The issue that I think people are facing, and we were already seeing this before COVID, I think it's going to be

even more so after, is that three years is a good timeline when people are, when you going in and kind of starting to, something will be a natural draw for people. I think as we move more and more out of Christendom, then what we're going to find is all of those things are just going to take a little bit longer. And so you may need to have a longer rollout of those funds. You may decide that you want to be bivocational. There's some theologians that would suggest that bivocationality is, it's theologically important. This is the way it should be done.

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There are other people. They're like, it's just the way that I make it happen. It's much more pragmatic. Any of those are fine as long as you know what it is. You can be like us. Everybody that comes on staff raises for it. To me, the model is not important. I kind of think of myself a little bit like Paul, not my influence and impact. I ain't written no scriptures. But I think that what Paul was at his base is Paul was a pragmatist.

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He wanted to get these churches started. He wanted to get them going. And then they would do the work of the kingdom as he moved on to other ones. And so I'm a little bit of a pragmatist with this. There's a lot of ways that can work. You just have to know which one it is, and then you have to be able to gauge how it's going. Some people I know that have planted churches have done it. There's lots of places. You can go to apply for funding. You can do that. But you really have to read the fine print about what is expected.

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Some of those expect you to pay it back within a certain amount of time. It's like a church planting loan. Others are, you know, you can access the money, but there are stipulations. There are stipulations to how you do ministry. There are stipulations to how you live your life. So you just need to know what that is. There's a lot of different ways to do it. You just got to know. And then, you know, you have to, this is another one that I think makes most church planters' hearts sing.

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You need to determine your path to 501c3 status. You need to decide, okay, we're not going to go that route. I don't know why you wouldn't. I mean, I know people that don't. I think it's, you know, that's fine. But if you're going to do it, then you need to realize how long it takes. There are a number. There are a number of groups that help with things like this, and we can help connect you with some of them. If you want, it is somewhat state dependent in terms of what each state is looking for and what you have to have.

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For some, you have to – I think for all of them, you have to have a bank account, which means you have to have some sort of board with minutes on record. I mean, it's not something that you say, I'd like my 501c3, please, and you write a check and you go. It's pretty involved. It takes usually about a year and a half to

get. And once you have – once they've received everything and they've said, okay, yes, you have sent everything, then you have provisional acceptance where you can begin to operate as one before you get your official designation.

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You just have to know what you're going to do. When I started in this gig, I had no idea. I didn't even know what the letters meant and the numbers meant. So just know that's something that you're going to need to do. All right? I would consider all of these things great things to look at. At the conception phase, when you are just kind of sitting back and either with a with a group of people, which I think is preferable or by yourself, if you don't have that and you're just kind of imagining, what would it look like?

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What would it be like? How would we do this? Right. OK, any questions? Can't ask now, but write them down. Please write them down if you that's just straight up speaker humor right there. So let's look at the next phase, which is prenatal. OK, this is the longest one. We're going to fly through a good bit of this. But this is the one where especially between conception and prenatal, really prior to planting, there's just a lot of things that if you can get those things squared away, either because they directly affect your ability to plant or they're just easier to do before you start the things that you're doing, then it's just so much easier.

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So. Once you start something and you say this is going to be the. and operation of our community, then you need to keep that going. And typically early in, you're involved in a whole lot of stuff. When we started another local congregation off of our church, I instantly became in charge of setting out chairs. And, you know, it wasn't part of my degree, but it's just part of what you do. And so you're going to be involved in a whole lot of things.

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So it's good to get these things squared away. So in the prenatal phase, it's good to be able to articulate your values. And this is going to be important because this helps shape what it is that you're doing. This helps shape how you're going to do things when you're describing what you're doing. I think I mentioned last week that a church planner that I work with now is, he's not doing a crazy kind of church plan. It's not some sort of off the wall, insane idea, but he's in the Bible Belt. And so when people hear church,

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they have a, a very clear, Verified understanding of, you know, there's an image that they pull up. This is how we even understand language, and this is how we draw memories. We attach images. And so once people have an image, they're going to draw that up. Well, he's needed to articulate his values and clarify his vision and focus on his mission statement, those first three things, because what he's trying to do is use the word church in a slightly different way. Again, it's not even crazy.

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It's just different. And so knowing your values, your vision, your mission statement, all of that stuff helps you describe what it is that you're doing, okay? Determine ministry outcomes and vital signs. You want to know what is it that we're going for. What are we going to be looking at? What are we going to be measuring? Again, over the last, really, a couple hundred years, it's been butts and bucks. That's probably really the last, certainly the last 125-ish. I mean, it's...

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That's... That's what it's been. How many people are coming and how much money are you bringing in? Well, that's not the best assessment anymore. We're in a different season now. And so what are the things that you are going to measure and gauge? And that's something that if you have questions about that, that's a good place for questions. We can talk about that when we're together next week. Divide an action plan and a budget. You need to know what are we going to spend money on, what do we need to do, how are we going to do it?

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The church plant that our church just sent up to Penn State, they're planting on a college campus that locked itself down. And so that makes getting to know people a lot harder. And you can't be inside. There's so many restrictions. And so one of the things that they researched and bought was a big old tent. And a lot of people have done that. But that's just thinking about it. We need to.

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to be able to have something that can go with us outside. We need to be able to have, heaters because it gets cold in Pennsylvania. We need to have all these things. And so what are the things you're going to do? If you're going to be starting off with a large group, a gathered community, a church, a Sunday morning, Sunday evening, some other night, but a gathered community, where are you going to do it? How are you going to pay for the rent? Are you going to use microphones? You need, you know, are you going to purchase a sick set of drums.

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so that you can lay that stuff out? You know, just what is it, that you want to do, right? So what is your action plan? And again, it goes back to what is our rollout process, but what is our budget? How are we going to be able to pay for this stuff? If working with a team, this is the time that you want to be focusing on team connection. You want to discern the level of agreement and work on conflict. Management and resolution. One of the big.

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If it's a team that's planting or a team that you're bringing into this at an early phase, one of the biggest things that causes church plants to fail consistently is unity on that team. If you can have enough money so that people can survive, and if you're showing any kind of fruit at all so that it's not like, well, we're not

doing anything, let's stop, then the biggest thing that causes a church plant to fail is the team can't get along. And that just seems thoroughly avoidable if we do it.

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But it means that you're working on team connection. You're working on how do they interact. How much do they agree? Again, there's a planter that I'm working with that has a planting partner in a city that's adjacent to the city that he's in. And they each have slightly different versions of the way they think the church ought to work. And so. what I've been really encouraging and kind of pushing them to do is articulate it extremely.

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clearly. This is how these two things, there's one that's kind of the primary planter. So now you write it out in three or four paragraphs, exactly how you see it laying out. And the thing that's most important to your friend, I want you to say, this is when we begin focusing on that. It needs to be clear. Again, so often we can either just avoid things because we don't want to cause conflict or we just want people to come alongside of us, or we can think we're being clear.

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and we're not. So what we need to be able to do is really discern that level of agreement and then work on what are the strategies for when you have conflict, because if you think you're not going to have it, look, it's going to come and conflict isn't bad. It's just conflict a lot of times is handled in a bad way. So, okay. With your team, if you have one, list the different elements in order of importance and begin to work through any disagreements.

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So this plays right off of that. The Sunday gathering, Bible studies, missional communities, social justice engagement. Where are you going to do it? When are you going to start taking an offering? How are you going to take an offering? How is there going to be work? I mean, you could list all kinds of things. I try to pick the things that I think could potentially be an issue and then, okay, let's list them. Let's number them off and let's see. A lot of times people, even if they number things differently, it's not going to be a major source of conflict. I just want to know where those sources could come from so we can begin working on that proactively.

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Okay? If any of the above are not a part of your initial plan, what are the indicators that you are ready to include them? So what I mean by that is with these things, Sunday gathering, Bible studies, missional communities, social justice engagement, whatever it is. If any of those things, any kind of key. Any core functions of the church, let's just say. And these certainly aren't the only ones, please, let's not, we can have that conversation, but it's not necessary. The core functions of the church, all right, if you are not doing those initially, then what are the indicators that you're ready to include them?

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Like, we're going to start with small group missional communities, that's what we're going to do. So, then when would we know that we're ready to begin a Sunday gathering? How would we know? How many would there be? What would they be doing? What questions would we start to be facing? Is it a particular time? For six months or for a year, we're going to do it this way, then we're going to transition. What is it? Just knowing what that is so that you can look at that. Begin working with the team, if one, on how to handle success and struggle.

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I was meeting with an old friend of mine today, and he was talking about one of the things that was really, really difficult, and he eventually kind of... He left ministry because it just wasn't for him, and he would say he failed at it. I think that's a little bit of a weird way to describe it, but he left. And when we were talking today, one of the things he brought up was that he had a lot of success early on, and he thinks it just got to him. So how do you handle success?

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How do you handle struggle? How do you handle those things? Okay? Focus heavily on you and your teams, if one, personal disciplines, communal connection, pursuit of the Lord, conflict management. You're going to hear conflict management come from the people that I work with on their plants. This is one I just beat to death because this is an easily avoidable thing. It just needs to be worked on enough. That's just the way that it is.

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But this is a time to work on your discipline. This is a time to work on communal disciplines. What is your pursuit? One of the reasons for that is when you plant, we just, the reality is we kind of perk up on Satan's radar a little bit. We're not suggesting that it's like, oh my gosh, you know, between Satan and God, he's going to win. We all understand this stuff. We also understand that he'd be foolish to just kind of leave you alone if you're trying to do this big thing for the kingdom. And I think planting a church is a big thing for the kingdom.

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And he's not a fool. So where are the places that you've tended to struggle in the past? Where are the things that you've tended to felt this? Those are things we want to be proactively and just making sure that those are, that we're close to the Lord. It doesn't mean that nothing's going to happen. It doesn't mean you're going to have zero trial. That's not the goal. The goal is walking through our life as it comes. But we can be proactive in making sure that we're walking closely with the Lord. That's the key, right? Develop a plan for how you integrate new people.

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Seems really straightforward, but sometimes it's not. they can be missed. So if new people come, what are we going to do with them? It would seem, I've seen

it. Who will your church plant primarily engage with? Again, this goes back to, we talked about the target, you know, who are you there for? But then who will you primarily, as you're reaching out to these people, who will you primarily connect with along the way, right? Is there a denomination or a network?

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You might say, we want to plant through the Ecclesia network, or we're part of the Free Methodist, or we are this, the Southern Baptists, the Presbyterians, whatever it is. You need to have an interactive partner as you're reaching out to these people. And then what is the level of interdependence? What is the level of flexibility that you have versus this is the way we do it? These are expectations we have, especially if they're a funding source. You just want to... You want to know.

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What you don't... What you don't want to do is go through this by yourself, okay? So you want to be able to understand that. You want to develop good language for leadership, mission, APEST. You want to develop language, shorthand, for what you mean when you say certain words, okay? So you want to have a way of talking about leadership giftings. You don't have to use APEST. You can use Enneagram. You can use Myers-Briggs.

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You can use StrengthsFinders. You can make up something. That's fine. But what you want is you want a consistent language. And then when you have it, you don't want to change it very much. Certain things kind of come in and phase out, and they're kind of interesting, and they're new. And I tend to like new things. But what you want to do is you want to stay fairly consistent. You don't want to be changing this a lot. So that you can really... It can really help shape how people are looking.

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at this issue, okay? Language creates culture. It's just a, it truly is a fact. It's the way that we work. The words that we attribute to certain things shape how we reflect on those certain things and shape how we behave in response to those certain things. So you want to, you want to do some, have some thought on what words are you going to use? What are we going to call these small clusters? What are you going to call these, the large group gatherings? What are you going to call your role? Right? This is a very different vibe. There's a, there's a church, it's not a.

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plant, but a church that I'm working with and they're, they're very cool and they've got a lot of very artistic folks, but they've had a history of, of having something that, you know, they, they've just always referred to as the lead pastor. And so when they are kind of retooling a few things now, I encourage them to think about new language for this. And now they're talking about the catalytic leader. And it's just very, cool. But look at the way that the words you're using, how do they

shape what people's expectations are? What images does it bring up? I'm not saying just change whatever just for the sake of it, but think.

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about the words you're using. This is the time to do it. Okay? That's the long one. You guys, we are way past halfway through. And I know we're just kind of bulleting this. You're not around. It affects the interaction. So let's deal with birth and infancy, and then we'll talk about adolescence. And adolescence will just take a minute or two. Okay, so birth is, you're just now launching in infancy. I think we understand it's been launched, but it's brand new.

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It's just brand new. Okay? So with birth, your plant begins doing what it was planted to do. That's how you can tell it's been planted, because it's starting to do some of those things. Appreciate monthly reflection with the, team, concerning how things are going, team cohesion, spiritual attack, what you want to be doing. This is something that my wife and I were encouraged to do in the first year of our marriage many, many years ago, and that was to every month just almost have a, they called.

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it a state of the union, that's right, you just sit down on a date and talk about how our marriage is going, right? And that's something that we want to do here. Let's just sit down and have everybody be at peace, not after you just have a killer service or not after you just, you're in the pits of despair because something terrible just happened. You want to be able to have time to pray, you may want to have time to worship, you want to be, or even have people do that before they come in. You want to be at peace and feeling a sense of connection with the Lord.

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Then you want to say, now how are we doing? How are things going? Again, it goes back to what are you looking at? What are the outcomes? What are the outcomes and vital signs that you're going to be looking at? How are they? doing? You want to be talking about that at least monthly, at least, so that you can see, okay, these things are going well. Invariably, something isn't going to. If you got into church planning because you wanted something that was smooth and predictable, then you have, you've made a desperately poor decision. You should just probably hop out of the room now and find something else to.

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do, all right? This is, we don't do this for predictability. We do it because there is this, calling that the Spirit has put into our soul. There's this thing, the way we talk about, there's this thing that we have heard that we cannot unhear. There's a belief that there is hope that is to be found in the community, and it is worth all these things. So, you want to see how they're going. You want to see, is there spiritual attack? Are people starting to go down? Are people starting to feel fatigued? You know, if you have one team that's kind of doing everything, then.

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you're going to have to do something. You're going to have to do something. You're going to have to do something. Usually, you can get two to three months. of initial excitement, and then what you're going to see is you're going to see that start to dip. You're going to need to be attending to that. How are people doing with Sabbathing? How are they doing with the difficulty of starting the thing? How are people doing with grieving, the leaving of something else? Usually if you leave to plant a church, you're leaving something that is more clarified for something that's less. Now, not everybody is sent from a church like that, right?

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So that's not always the case. But usually people have some sort of experience of things where it's a little smoother. Now, for some planters, that's why they want to leave. They don't want smooth. They want to forge the path. But you're going to have people that are a part of this team that are going to be grieving that. They might be grieving the new place they're living, especially if you're living in a different area. We found that if people jump time zones, the more time zones they jump, the more difficult it is.

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The more difficult. Difficult it is. Culturally, when we planted in Los Angeles and people were living in North Hollywood in a very, very downtown urban setting and all of them had left Blacksburg, which is this idyllic university town, people struggled with that. So you got to know that. So how is how is your team doing? Likely meet with key team members weekly or twice a month. This has to be something that you're regularly doing. It's just got to be built in to the thing so you can walk alongside them as it's happening.

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So much when you plant a church is going to be coming at people. It's going to be coming at all of you. But so much is going to be coming at them that you want to help them to attribute meaning to it, to help define what is success in this context, what is a good thing, what is not, all of that. It takes time. It takes walking with them. I'm not talking about it an hour. Or where you sit at a coffee shop and then you don't see them again until they're setting up chairs for the next thing. But there needs to be a sense of we're walking through this together, especially with key members.

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Go back to the ordered list of elements and reflect individually with the team on how they're going. Are you hitting your goals? What are the pieces of this thing that are most important? Well, how are they going? I mean, one of the things that happens is you find you're kind of heading down a path, you have a plan, and then it changes. Or it gets complicated by something. Something it's harder than you expect or you find something else opens up. So how are you doing with kind of navigating all those little ins and outs, those little pieces for the plant that we had at Penn State?

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Someone came forward and it was likely that they were going to be offered a building. A church was kind of going. It was closing. They had a building. And we didn't pursue it too far. But. likely it could have worked out, and the reason we didn't pursue it too far was it was too far away from campus, and that's a core part of what they're doing, and so it's like, had to be able to navigate that, I mean, it's very exciting to be offered a building.

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when you literally, at this point when they were offered that, they didn't even have apartments in there, they didn't know where they were going to live, it's very exciting to get that, but then you have to put that through the filter of, okay, well, what will it mean if we have that, so how are you doing at hitting your goals, how are you doing at navigating all those little things, begin weekly or bi-monthly connections with other ministers, justice organizations in the area to listen, meet with people, and don't just explain what you're doing and how it's exciting, listen to them, listen for what the spirit.

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is already doing, and this doesn't, even if you're in the same area, establish yourself as someone that is going to listen, I can tell you, I'm in a university town, it's a very, very, very, It's a popular place to plant churches, very popular. Everybody wants to because they believe they can reach the world, and some can. A lot don't, but some can if they plant at a university campus. So we get flyers all the time that are, you know, in fact, we got one that said it's the most innovative church to ever come to the New River Valley, the kind of area where we're in.

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I was like, how in the world would you know that? And I know the church, and it ain't. But, you know, it's like that kind of they're trying to drum up excitement. They were going to launch large. They wanted to get as many people as possible. But there really wasn't any sense of I recognize that there are things already going on here, and we want to come alongside. We want to see what is happening. We want to learn. There really wasn't any of that. I've been around in our area a long time. And so a lot of people know me.

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He said a lot of times when church plants come, they'll want to meet with me. I'm one of the people. Oh, you need to talk to him. I'm one of the people. I'm certainly not the only one, but I'm one of them. And you can tell a difference in people that are coming in to genuinely hear the story of Virginia Tech. I had one guy that was planting in the area, and he was asking for the key events that happened. And one of the things you just can't not list are the shootings on April 16th.

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And he was just very like, oh, yeah, yeah, I heard about that. Yeah, I guess. Do people still think about that? When you're going into a place, you have to be, and

even if you are presenting yourself in the place that you've already been, you do not want to present yourself as someone that steamrolls over things that matter. I'm not saying that you have to agree. These people that come talk, they don't have to do it the way that we think. It would be a great thing. It's a big kingdom. And there's a lot of people that we aren't reading. And if other people will, that's great.

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I'm pro things coming here. But I can tell you the difference in talking with someone that seems to care about what's already been going on. What is just our take on what works and what doesn't and how it happens and how it doesn't and what our history. You want to be someone that is seen as being a listener. You just, you've got to do that. And then teams are initially set up and understand their role.

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I put initially in italics because that's a super important thing that you want to be doing. In every team that you set up, you want to call it a pre-launch team. And then maybe you can shift it over to a launch team. That's going to, for the first, you know, three to six months, this is the team that's going to be doing things. What you want to do is you want to establish an end point. To these teams, because. There might be people that say, I'm super good at this, and you might have seen them be super good at something.

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But then when they do it in a plant, they don't do it as effectively. They struggle a little bit more, or they don't get along. They break down the chemistry of the team. What you want to do is have nice, easy ways to end a team. Even if all you do is end it and rename it and it's the exact same team that it gets, you want to give yourself away so that you're not having to fire people off of their jobs. It's always awkward if someone's been helping with something, and they say, well, now as we're shifting into this, we'd like maybe to look at some other things that you might do.

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That's never not awkward, but that's very different from we've got a team, and it's just going to work for as long as it does, and you've got to pull people from it individually. You want to have a big back door for how you can kind of shift people into other things, or in some cases, a plant I'm working with now, when it's clear that you kind of have to move. people out of leadership of it. You want to bring people on slowly and you want to speak tentatively.

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about the role that they'll have. And then you want to establish a short timeline to see how it goes. It's a little more work because it's like pre-launch, you know, then there's launch and then there's this and, you know, you can come up with whatever terminology you want. You just need to, it's just a little easier. I'm telling you, this isn't something you have to do, but if you run into a problem, you will

appreciate having something. It's easier to deal with something if you see that someone is difficult, but there's only two more weeks before you hit that early.

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window for when you can make decisions. You don't have to pull them out individually. It just, take it from me, it's easier. Okay. So do that. So teams initially set up. Okay. Finally, we're talking about adolescence. And adolescence is, and this term is used not just because, because it's slightly older than childhood, but it's also used because this is, adolescence is a very unique time in the development of humans.

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We've raised three kids. Our youngest is 20. Our oldest is 24. So we've been through it, and I can tell you, and this is something I've used a lot, and a number of you have heard me say it. The way that I would describe adolescence is it's all clarity, but it's no perspective. All clarity with no perspective. Everything is clear. They are going to be with me forever. We're going to be together forever. Oh, my gosh, they don't want to be with me. I'm going to be alone forever. This is what I want to do. This is the way things ought to be done. This is what you're doing wrong as parents. Everything is clear, but they just haven't had the opportunity to live enough life to see if that plays out,

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you know, in a real-world environment. Well, the adolescence level in your church is you're going to start to see that things are really starting to move, but just to be clear, adolescence is great. For Trace, Grace and I, with each phase of our kids' life, it was more fun. And it's been that way since the start. The infant stage was the hardest for us. And so adolescence was a lot of fun for us. There's a lot of great things. You're starting to see what your child is going to look like when they're an adult. You're starting to notice more and more of what they're going to be like.

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Well, the same with your church. You're starting to see what it's like when it's a fully matured church. Your teams are in place. Yes, multiplication has been happening at all or most levels. The church is independently sustainable. Goals have been articulated, adopted, and are being met. You have language that is used. People are saying things the same way that you are. When we were shifting to missional communities, one of the terms that we used, and we got this from 3DM, was Kairos moment. It's a way of describing, you know, anyway, we don't have to go into all that.

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One of the things we were looking for is when did we start? When did we start hearing people that were? in these missional communities start using the phrase kairos moments on their own. Now, when they're asked, you know, I kind of had a kairos moment. You're looking for adoption of language, which is not just they talk like we do, but they're starting to adopt this approach. That's something to

look at. The language of community is being lived out. Well, there you go. I hopped a little early into that one. So these are the things that you want to be looking at.

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Now, you're going to start to see that people are going to start pressing back, just like in adolescence. This is the best way to do it. You're never going to have a season in the life of your church where you're not, something isn't kind of pressing back against you, either individuals or clusters. Or you're seeing that what we thought would work maybe isn't. We're not quite sure do we continue moving forward versus stop. You're always going to be dealing with that. The thing that you're trying to hone,

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in planting and leading a church is something that you're going to have to do. It's something that we just call, it's not very technical, but a God-guided gut. That's really what it is. There's so much of this that it's just like, what's the feel? What's the sense? What's the vibe? It's not science. It's art. There's not an algorithm. It doesn't mean everything is random and you're just kind of deciding. There are structures. One of the reasons that it's so important to have a cluster of people that are walking through this with you is so that it's not just your gut that things are going through.

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There are people that you can trust that are helping you to assess and pray and just seek the Lord and shape how things are going. You don't want to be in a position where you have to do that by yourself. So adolescence isn't smooth. There ain't smooth. But you're starting to see what this mature church will begin to look like. You're starting to understand what it sounds like. You know what I mean? You kind of have a sense of the way.

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that it's going to function. Some people achieve adolescence in their church in a couple of years. Some, it takes eight to 10. There isn't a standard timeline. There have been timelines, but I think those timelines are just like the financial sustainability modeling. Those timelines, I think we're having to rethink those. And what's good is we're starting to see that that's the case. So it's not that there's a particular amount of time.

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that you get there. It's that you're working towards getting there. So conception, prenatal, birth, infancy, and adolescence. I've been talking for a long time, very quickly. What I'd like to do is have you jot down some notes, that you have on all this stuff. And then when we get together again, let's talk them through and let's really kind of cannonball into the ones that you think are important. The ones you feel like you got. Let's just move right. Okay, I'll see you next week. Thanks. Bye.