



FRESH START

• Alliance Ministries •



INVEST
YOUR
LEGACY

REINVENT
the MINISTRY

REACH
A NEW
HARVEST

Fresh Start is the process of restarting and strengthening churches by investing the people and assets of a dying church in forging new congregations with the help of a strong and healthy partner or parent church under an effective coaching structure for both the Fresh Start church and the Partner church

- All across America hundreds of struggling, declining and dying churches are seeking to stay alive but needing to die and be born again. They need a *Fresh Start*.
- All across America there is a need for effective new beginnings and new churches but precious few financial resources for new churches and facilities.
- All across America there are **healthy congregations** who would love or at least be open to help with church planting and revitalization but don't know where to begin.

Fresh Start brings the declining church, the local district and existing healthy churches together to create fresh and effective churches characterized by strong vision, passion, leadership and the resources to once again take on God's mission. What are the results?

- The dying congregation creates a legacy and is born again.
- A new congregation begins a new and effective ministry of disciple making.
- The partner congregation gets to experience the thrill of mission and church planting *without the full burden or risk*.
- Churches are planted, people are reached and the Kingdom of God is expanded.
- Local districts do what they are positioned best to do—pull all the players together under a common God-given vision.

Fresh start is a consultant driven process. Do not attempt this on your own without the guidance and support of a church planting partner.

- Do not pick and choose the steps you would like to try, hoping to create change. In order to be effective you must engage the complete 12 step process with the help of a partner church.

Note: Although you'll find the 12 steps introduced in a logical sequence, the reality is you will work on several steps at once.



1

HOLY DESPERATION & CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT ACCEPTED.

Holy desperation” begins when congregations humble themselves before God and realize they can no longer keep doing ministry the same way. The church recognizes it is on the downside of the lifecycle and is in desperate need of fresh vision and strategy. Redevelopment is the C&MA process for releasing ownership and authority over to the district and a newly formed team for a new beginning

2

THE DYING EXPERIENCE EXPECTED & A NEW DREAM ANTICIPATED.

“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single seed. But, if it dies, it produces many seeds.” John 12:24

A new beginning requires one or more dying experiences for the remnant congregation. Jesus stated that the seed must fall into the ground and die before new life can begin. He said this in reference to his physical body and also his church. This dying often includes one or more of the following:

- Releasing staff and/or pastors.
- Redirecting assets and possibly stopping public ministry for a season.
- Dreaming a new dream.
- Imagining what kind of new things God might want to do in this community or city.

The foundational question is, *“If we would release this ministry and allow God to move freely with this church, what would He accomplish?”*



7

FACILITY RELOCATION OR RENOVATION.

In some cases, the facility is simply inadequate for growth, in desperate need of repair, or in just the wrong location to consider keeping. In such cases, the sale of the facility and assigning those capital funds to multiple projects is the best plan of action.

Most refresh projects require some kind of facility preparation or renovation. It's good to begin this process early as it will always take longer and cost more than you anticipate.

Even the simple task of ordering new chairs will take 90 days and permits with the city can tie you up for months. When making facility decisions, make them based on the needs and preferences of the *next hundred people* you haven't reached yet rather than the last hundred people and their strong opinions. Keep renovations to the minimum, as it is more important to focus on people and missional activity.

8

DETAILED MINISTRY PLAN DEVELOPED.

It is never too early to develop a detailed ministry plan that describes what the ministry will look like, who it will reach and how it will function. A good ministry plan will clearly describe a ministry focus group and their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The plan should include:

- Statements of vision (*where we are going*)
- Values (*what drives our behavior*)
- Mission (*how we will get there*)
- Model of ministry (*how we will do it*)

When developing a ministry plan be sure to include a realistic timeline for:

- Old ministry and ministry patterns to end
- New vision to form
- New people and resources to be gathered
- Missional activity and presence building in the community
- Facility renovation/repair.

A minimum timeline is probably six months.

Develop a realistic budget with a clear understanding of what assets and resources are available and leave room for faith in God's provision. Put all financial commitments in writing to protect relationships and reputations. Don't assume anything.



9

LAUNCH TEAM AND CORE GROUP FORMED

The Alliance Church Multiplication BootCamp is a must for the Fresh Start planter and recommended for the whole launch team.

The selection of a *launch team* and the formation of a *core group* are essential to the success of the project.

THE LAUNCH TEAM

:: Made of those people who will launch and lead the various ministry activities of the church. This team includes both paid and volunteer members.

THE CORE GROUP

:: *all the people committed to attend and serve* the new church in the beginning. This includes those from the remnant who have chosen to continue, those from the partner church and those you've gathered from the community including pre-Christians. It's good to have pre Christians in the mix as they represent the population you are trying to reach and are their voice in the process.

Training of the launch team and core group should include *vision, values, mission, model, spiritual gifts, serving and stewardship*. Most importantly this training must focus on missional living and evangelism or we will not reach anyone new after all this work. It is good to have the *core group* begin worshipping together before public ministry starts.

10

MISSIONAL PRESENCE ESTABLISHED.

As soon as the core group can be mobilized, it's important to establish missional presence in the community. This simply means *visibly* doing good in Jesus name. It's essential to completion of the Great Commission and also lets the community know something new and different is going on. In terms of priorities, intentional missional activity is more important to the new ministry than establishing the "regular" programs those who are already Christian will want. Develop externally focused ministry for people *who do not go to your church* and some of them will! **External ministries should make a difference, make a relationship and make a disciple.**

11

LAUNCH ACTIVITIES PLANNED.

Plan a variety of activities to draw attention to the new start. Don't settle for a grand opening day. Consider a grand opening month with different activities all month long including special worship gatherings, prayer meetings, picnics, barbeques, car washes, community outreach, children's fare and anything else that fits your community context. Be sure all activities reflect the values and future behavior of the church.



12

RELEASE, RECOVERY AND RENEWAL ANTICIPATED.

Once the new ministry is launched there are still three important facets to come:

1. **FORMAL RELEASE OF NEW MINISTRY.** This begins with a blessing and a send-off from the partner/parent church and ends with the establishment of a new board of elders and independence about a year later. As a reminder, do not “lay on hands” for leadership too quickly.
2. **RECOVERY.** Don’t be surprised if everyone is tired at the new church AND the partner church. The new church team has invested countless hours and energy leading up to the launch and it’s natural to want to “kick back” but this is just the beginning of new ministry. Plan core team events to celebrate efforts leading up to the launch while still casting vision for the future.
3. The partner church has given a lot of time, people and money and will want to celebrate and regroup. If they sent out part of their leadership team, they may want to do a leadership retreat to bring together and coalesce their newly structured leadership team. Many healthy parent churches recover people and giving in about 6 months.
4. **RENEWAL.** The partner church should also look for renewal as a result of their participation. Renewal comes in the form of new vision, new leaders who step up to fill the gaps and a renewed commitment to reaching lost people as well as God’s very real blessings resulting from your faithfulness.



CHAPTER 1

1

HOLY DESPERATION AND CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT.

The first step towards a Fresh Start is “*holy desperation.*” Desperation begins with the reality that we cannot keep doing business as usual and a recognition that we are not going to make it. Desperation becomes holy when we humble ourselves, release control and desperately seek God for a *new future* (not a restoration of the past).

HOLY DESPERATION TRIGGERED BY

- Lack of vision
- Lack of effectiveness
- Lack of mission
- Lack of converts
- Shrinking body
- Aging body
- Lack of funds
- Leadership crisis
- Changing community
- Cultural distance

DESPERATION

- Fighting
- Territorialism
- Depression
- Defensiveness
- Control

HOLY DESPERATION

- Humility
- Faith
- Prayer
- Letting go
- Seeking help

Sometimes it can take years for a failing church to reach the place of HOLY desperation and some never do.



FRESH START

HOLY DESPERATION EVALUATION

What is the age of our church? _____

How many years has it been in decline? _____

What is our vision? _____

How effective are we at reaching that vision? _____

What is our mission beyond ourselves? _____

How do we achieve that mission? _____

What is the fruit of our ministry? _____

How many conversions and baptisms?

have we seen in the last 3 years? _____

What is the attendance trend of the last 3 years? Three weeks? _____

What is the age majority of the congregation by 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s? _____

How many tithing units are there? _____

What are the cash assets? _____

What is the value of real assets? _____

What are our liabilities/debts? _____

Describe the pastoral leadership. _____

Describe the lay leadership. _____

Has there been a significant change in the community or culture? _____

How has the church adapted to that change? _____

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOUR CONGREGATION.

Fighting

Territorialism

Humility

Faith

Depression

Defensiveness

Control

Letting Go

Prayer

Seeking Help



FROM DESPERATION TO HOLY DESPERATION

Moving a remnant group from desperation to “holy” desperation is almost always a long process. Even when a church believes it has arrived at the place where it is open to “whatever it takes” to turn things around, it is most likely not there yet. People will have widely divergent perspectives on the preferred future and the plans/sacrifices they’re willing to endure to get there. Generally, we have found that it takes 12-18 months with repeated meetings and lots of prayer to move forward in the redevelopment process. It’s rare to get unanimous consent but you need to arrive at a strong consensus.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE TOOLS YOU’LL NEED TO MOVE FORWARD:

1. An understanding of the lifecycle of a church
2. A conversion to “legacy” thinking
3. Teaching the church to fish
4. Identifying the chief influencer
5. Identifying the blockers
6. Discovering the partner church
7. Painting a picture of the desired future in accordance with the mission of God

1. *An understanding of the lifecycle of the local church.* An excellent treatment of the Lifecycle of the church is presented in the writing and training of Dr. Ken Priddy. An overview of this training will be presented in the appendix. This is a tool to become familiar with in order to effectively present the principles to the existing but declining church body. It includes tools effective for creating the “Ah Ha” and “Oh No” moments critical to help the body clearly see its’ own condition. Ken’s simple and clear illustrations and survey of the body have proven to be effective in moving churches to consider Fresh Start. Some of the primary contributing principles to the decline of the church include these realities;

- a. In the early stages of the life of the young church there is a certain vibrancy and sense of expectation
- b. During the times of growth for the church much of the attention is externally focused
- c. As the church moves along the backside of the lifecycle the initial vision has long diminished. Strategies have devolved into routine programs and all that remains is structure. The surviving structure that was established in a different day for a different purpose with a different target group in mind.

2. *A conversion leading to legacy thinking.* This takes us back to the principle of the dying seed going back into the ground and then producing a tremendous crop. The seed is the resource and activity of faithful men and women from years past as well as the prayerful hopes of the faithful people still on board. People naturally want to know that their life has counted and can continue counting for something of significance.



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FROM DESPERATION TO HOLY DESPERATION (CONT'D)

3. Teaching the church to fish. Dr. Ken Priddy organized his thinking on the Lifecycle of The Church in this publication. Access to the publication will be linked in the appendix of this manual. Pass it on to the leadership of the remaining body as early in the process of considering the Fresh Start option as you possibly can.
4. Identifying the chief influencer. This person always exists! You need the ear of this person. Spend time with this person outside of the leadership group meetings. You must determine whether this person can be used for the good of The Kingdom in the process of Fresh Start OR, if this person has stood in the way of the progress of the church. If they have stood in the way in the past they will most assuredly continue to do so. Unfortunately, this is very common. To ignore this reality it is to promise failure.
5. Identifying the blockers. This may not be one person...it may be a group of people. It can be unintentional, out of ignorance and the lack of understanding of the biblical directives for the church. This is another reason why you will want to create the “Ah ha” and “Oh no” moments. Again, Lifecycle understanding is invaluable.
6. Discovering the partner church. What church is healthy enough and willing to help? What church do you want to emulate? What church is interested in reproducing and is looking for a way to do it? What church do you see in your leadership position that is a bit stuck and with an effective push and opportunity would excel in such a ministry?
7. Painting a picture of the desired future in accordance with the mission of God. Teach or reintroduce the remaining group the mission of God and the purpose of expanding His Kingdom. Let God’s Word speak. Highlight the words that birthed the movement that we call The Christian and Missionary Alliance such as those listed on the following page;



FRESH START

SCRIPTURES FOUNDATIONAL TO THE MISSION OF GOD AND THE ALLIANCE.

MATTHEW 24:14

“And this Gospel of The Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.”

ACTS 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

LUKE 19:10

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

NOTE: The work of these seven steps will take several months and perhaps more than a year through a series of meetings. There is nothing quite like experiencing the breakthrough moment that comes out of the deliberate process.

CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT

Church Redevelopment status creates the perfect environment for a Fresh Start because it provides leadership for the church, safety for the assets and care for the people. In addition it will provide freedom, flexibility and guidance for new ministry. “Church Redevelopment” is a formal status, or “posture,” in the Alliance church. It means the church board or elders release control of the church to the district Superintendent who, for a season, becomes the soul officer of the church and makes decisions regarding the future of the church and its assets. The District Superintendent will appoint new pastoral leadership and an advisory team of individuals from outside the church until a new ministry is constituted. The full guidelines for redevelopment are found in the Policy and Procedural Manual for Districts and Churches under Guidelines for Governance of a Developing Church. It normally takes a series of three to six meetings with the leaders or the congregation over a period of months to create readiness for releasing the church to redevelopment and to gain ownership for a Fresh Start.



3

PARTNER CONGREGATION IDENTIFIED.

Partner congregations are important catalysts that ensure change and bring all or some of the following:

- New vision
- New leadership
- New people
- New funding
- New accountability
- New ministry life

Partner congregations generously come along side to help, to resource (people and money) and *guide* the fresh start.

4

NEW LEADERSHIP AND ADVISORY TEAM APPOINTED.

New leadership is essential to creating new ministry. Primary leadership is often found in a new pastor or church planting couple as well as team members who have *fresh eyes* and a *fresh heart* for the region. This pastor/planter couple should ALWAYS be assessed at the Church Planting Assessment Center, BEFORE committing them to the project. The assessment process helps the planting pastor/couple explore whether the intense demands of this unique ministry are the best fit for his gifting and pastoral care skills. A ministry advisory team should also be empowered with authority over the project. This team should include the pastor/planter, key leaders from the parent/partner church and a representative of the district or denomination. Another critical piece is assigning an experienced coach to the new lead Fresh Start pastor and partner church pastor. The coach is accountable back to the local district. This team might also include additional staff members and representatives of the remnant congregation.



5

VISION CAST & PRAYER MOBILIZED.

“Prayer is not preparation for the battle, it is the battle.” // E.M. Bounds

When new leadership is in place, the most important activities become *prayer* and *vision*. Prayer is essential to identifying God’s preferred future for this church and to overcome the sins of the past, which are present at some level in every church. Individual and collective prayer of every kind must be mobilized. Prayers should focus on repentance for past sin and intentional prayer for lost people by name. New leadership must also create a clear and specific vision for the future and *repeat it continually* because those inside and outside the church will only remember what the church “used to be.” They’ll need a lot of guidance to see a new and different future. This season of vision and prayer must continue until there is broad-based ownership from the leadership, the partner church and the willing members of the remnant congregation.

6

OWNERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE INCREASED.

*“People will indicate and even vote for cooperation.
However, this is no guarantee of cooperation after the process starts.”*

Gaining ownership from the remnant congregation requires individual visits with each past and potential member to insure their understanding of the vision, answer their concerns, grieve their loss and demonstrate pastoral care. It is better to meet with them now than later. Unlike other forms of church planting, a Fresh Start project comes with an instant congregation that the pastor/planter *did not recruit*. Not everyone will be immediately supportive of the vision or the leader. In fact, a number of people who initially indicated cooperation may waiver when once the new process begins and the loss sets in. This reality requires an extensive amount of pastoral care and relationship building on the part of pastors, planters and leaders in the project.



CHAPTER 2

2

THE DYING EXPERIENCE EXPECTED AND A NEW DREAM ANTICIPATED.

In every Fresh Start project there is a **remnant congregation**. The remnant congregation is made up of all the people left from the church now in redevelopment. The new leader/planter has a responsibility to shepherd the remnant for a season. This will be a unique leader with catalytic and shepherding skills. He must shepherd individuals forward into the new vision or outward into other congregations where their needs and expectations can be met. *Be sure you know the churches available in your community.*

This shepherding will require many individual and family visits and you must plan time for this. While you are visiting you must allow time for anger, grief, memories, prayer and celebration while continually casting vision for the new church.

Remember that the financial legacy from the declining church was created from the sacrifices of the church's people and that is what is funding the new ministry. Be real, be honest, be grateful and be grace filled. Most people in the remnant will require at least three contacts before they will trust you.

The people in the remnant will need to die to the old church before they can embrace the new. **This dying begins when they recognize that the church as they knew it, is failing and they agree to Church Redevelopment.** But there will be many more dying experiences such as:

- *Saying good bye to the last pastor*
- *Realizing they no longer control the decisions*
- *Giving up their favorite ministry activity*
- *When some of their friends leave*
- *When the church name changes*
- *For some, redevelopment means giving up their facility for a new location*
- *And, when they realize there is no turning back*

Individual people will experience one or all of these dying experiences but that is a good thing. Jesus parable in John 12 says that the seed must fall into the ground and die before there is new life. **Often we want to minimize or compromise the dying experience for the sake of people's feelings. When we do it will extend their pain, come back to bite us and compromise the new church.**

**FRESH START STORIES OF DECLINING, DYING AND DARING TO DREAM AGAIN.**

The Woodland Hills, California church and the Redlands, California church were declining congregations and it hadn't gone unnoticed. As their numbers and kingdom impact continued to dwindle, church members were saddened and concerned. They began praying and recognized "something" significant needed to happen or their churches would die. These are their stories.

THE WOODLAND HILLS STORY

Joe Toledo was an elder at Woodland Hills Church, a church with an 80 year history and he'd been there for 38 of those. Burdened for the church and their loss of community impact, he called Bill Malick, the District Superintendent (DS) for help saying, "We've been through difficult times and turned inward. We've lost our focus for going outside the church and reaching our community. We're going nowhere and just don't know how to turn the church around." That call was a call of holy desperation and eventually, an answer to their prayers. Peter O'Neil, associate pastor on staff, said, "I knew something dramatic had to be done to turn this church around. If we continued with the status quo, this church would be dead and gone. I wrestled with God and asked, "Why aren't you doing something?" I'd hear of miracles happening everywhere else and wondered why not here?"

The DS met with the church leadership and introduced the idea of Fresh Start—a redevelopment and re-plant of their church and a partnership with a nearby healthy congregation. "At first, we were skeptical, it sounded like shutting the church and everyone going away but after it was explained, I caught the vision," said Pastor O'Neil. They closed the church for four months while necessary renovations were completed.

A Time of Loss

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives." John 12:24.

In a sense, the Fresh Start process ushers in a time of dying. For the remnant congregation, it's the death of the church as they knew it to make room for the fresh start of new and vibrant ministry. Some will sense loss from the lack of control or the giving up of decision making. For others, it's the loss of their church name, their positions or in some cases, even the building (if it's decided a new location would enhance ministry). For many, it's the loss of their senior pastor so a new shepherd with catalytic skills can gather people to a new vision.



THE DYING EXPERIENCE EXPECTED AND A NEW DREAM ANTICIPATED.

For Woodland Hills, their new shepherd was Tom Sugimura. He recognized that although the church had voted to go through Fresh Start, the loss and grief still surprised them. *“Many had to go through a process of grieving or even anger at what felt like the loss of their church. Some were even hostile. **I could see that I was pastoring a people who had just lost a loved one.**”*

During the four month closure for remodeling, the remnant congregation worshipped with their partner church, Community Christian Alliance Church (CCAC). *“We started to come together as church during this time and began to see a lot of healing take place. We made it a point of praying with each person we were caring for. The anger disappeared as we met with people, prayed for each one of them, visited all the small groups and worshipped together. It required a lot of pastoral care but you have to get them through the anger and despair,”* observed Pastor Tom Sugimura.

A New Dream

The core team from the mother church and the remnant congregation met together for prayer, training meetings and dreaming a new dream for their church that focused on the great commission calling. Excitement built as they planned outreach into their community:

- *“It’s fresh and it’s new and there’s all this possibility and potential for whatever God would do. I think it taught me that all things are possible.” **Lauren Sue***
- *“I’m excited for the future of New Life Church because it’s an opportunity for me to stretch and grow outside my comfort zone.” **Naki Nakano***
- *“It’s an opportunity for all us to be part of something brand new.” **Joanne Burnside***

God is moving in the new church (New Life Church). They welcomed more people through their doors on launch day than they’d seen in years. *“We’re growing numerically but also in great depth. People come here week after week because they can see the Spirit moving in this place. We’re growing in fellowship and we’re much more committed. What was primarily an Anglo church now has 10-15 different ethnic backgrounds represented. We’ve caught the vision for church planting and are partnering in some way in 4 different church plants,”* said Pastor Tom. His people agree, *“We’re seeing God work and sense His presence. We’re bringing people into the church who’ve never been in church before. We’re expanding the Kingdom of God.”*

This church that once thought its future held only the prospect of closing its doors forever is now vibrant and alive again.



THE REDLANDS STORY

Alliance Bible Church of Redlands was in significant decline and came to a crisis point when their pastor announced his upcoming retirement. Recognizing they were predominantly an aging congregation with an inward focus, they knew something had to be done or this downtown church would soon close its doors. Located in a trendy downtown area of an arts-focused community with a University nearby, they had potential to reach younger populations but lacked any concerted effort to connect with them. With the size and age of their congregation, they knew they couldn't afford to support a pastor with a young family but felt that's what their community needed. Don Crawford, an elder at the church, said, *"We were desperate. We didn't know if the church was going to make it. We were praying not to go back to the "past" but for what seemed impossible...a church with a heart for outreach and a vision for the future."*

The retiring pastor and Don Crawford went to meet with the DS for counsel. They discussed *Fresh Start* and the possibility of a partnership with the District, another church and the remnant congregation. The idea seemed right but closing the church for remodel didn't fit the context. The partner church was too far away for an aging congregation. In addition, redevelopment meant hard choices to consider. Were they willing to surrender authority and decision making over to the district for a time? What if that meant not having a say in who the new pastor would be? And then, there was the concern that they'd undoubtedly lose some of their current members. The board put it to a vote and the congregation took a leap of faith and decided in favor of a *Fresh Start*.

A Time of Loss

Although the congregation was excited by the prospect of *Fresh Start* and voted for it by a large majority (over 80%), there was still a pervasive feeling of loss once they entered the process. Since they were staying open and holding services while undergoing all the renovations, change was happening daily before their eyes and pushing against 50 or 60 years of tradition. They wondered, *"Could we do communion differently? Could we handle different music? Do we really need to change out the pews?"* A small group found the changes too much and migrated to other churches. For most, it was a daily faith step of letting go and trusting God for a future they couldn't yet see.

God brought them a new young pastor, Aaron Foor. He has the heart of an evangelist, the gifting of a musical artist and the teach-ability necessary to learn from and lead an older congregation while reaching out to younger ones as well. He has a vision for outreach and shares it everywhere. He doesn't do change for change's sake but always to advance the vision of reaching the community for Christ.



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The elder and new pastor went out and visited with members of the remnant congregation. *“I shared the vision, my heart and let people know me,”* says Pastor Aaron *“and gradually, people were catching the vision. I’ve been surprised by how supportive and wonderful the people are.”*

A New Dream

As they caught the vision and got involved, the excitement grew. *“They’re really willing to step out of their comfort zone and get involved,”* says Pastor Foor, *“our older congregation is amazing.”* At preview Sunday, they had more people in church than they ever imagined and they joyfully celebrated four baptisms and a young couple who came to faith. Elder Don Crawford tearfully shared, *“It has turned us around. We’re already reaching new people and it takes little effort. We’ve even have two ethnic congregations wanting to join us.”* A church member came up to Pastor Foor on Preview Sunday and said, *“I can’t believe this is happening. This is worth all the tears and the stress.”*

The atmosphere around this once dying church is alive with excitement. People are being reached and a passion for outreach and missional living is being reignited. God is writing the new Redlands story and it’s just on the opening chapter.



FRESH START

FACILITATING THE END OF A CHURCH SEASON

There are some effective ways to facilitate the end of a church or a season. One is to cease ministry for a period of 3 to 9 months. This creates a formal end to the old ministry identity and creates space to birth the new ministry without having to produce “church” every week. This also facilitates facility renovation. It is usually necessary to facilitate worship for the remnant at the partner church or another church in the area. A second effective way to bring closure is to have a final service, a celebration service, a memorial to celebrate all that God has done through the past ministry of the church. It is best if this be led by long-standing members and may feature a previous pastor. A third way to facilitate the mark the end of a season is to create a monument or plaque honoring the previous years of ministry and the church’s name. Finally, it is helpful to make heroes out of those members who make the transition to the new ministry, possibly identifying them as legacy members of the new church. Meeting and processing grief with the remnant occurs simultaneously with dreaming a new dream. As the remnant comes to terms with their loss they will be able to dream a new dream and see a new day for the church. This new dream is cast by new leaders and shared by members joining from the partner church.

A NEW DREAM

The new dream must be centered in mission that is focused on lost people. New forms and new facilities are not enough. We must reach new souls. Likely the new vision will focus on missional activities to GO OUT to bless, serve and reach lost people where they are in the community. Missional activities designed to attract people to the church for stuff will probably bring Christians from other churches. Dreaming a new dream means painting a colorful picture of a preferred future and a clear invitation to be part of it. This is covered more fully in the section on vision casting and planning beginning on page 36.



DREAM WORKSHEET

Write 10 statements that describe what this church will look like 5 years from now. *Only one statement can be about size or building.* For example, a statement might be “Families and children will be all over the campus” or “People will be baptized every month.”

1. Families and children will be everywhere (ex.)
2. New people will be baptized every month (ex.)
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



CHAPTER 3

3

PARTNER CONGREGATION IDENTIFIED

Over the last two decades there have been a variety of attempts to restart dying churches. Some attempted to restart through revisioning, others through relocation and still others through reorganization. Very few have been successful while most continue to struggle or return to their old ways. So what makes this approach Fresh Start so effective?

The answer is the partner church. The partner church is a healthy congregation, usually nearby, from the same denomination who agrees to provide vision and resources that while they may vary will range from leaders, people, money and expertise to the Fresh Start project.

Paid and volunteer leaders for the Fresh Start project will leave the partner church to make the new thing happen. Often the planting pastor comes from the staff of the partner church. Usually people are commissioned from the parent church to provide short or long term help with the project. Financial support is provided from the partner church through special offerings and the tithes of those who go. Most partner churches provide a ministry model, ministry philosophy or unique expertise that helps shape the new ministry.

Good partner churches must be reasonably healthy as described by these qualities:

- *They have a vision for church multiplication*
- *They are financially viable and generous*
- *They have emotionally healthy and non-controlling leadership*
- *They have growing effective ministries*
- *They have a track record for evangelism and discipleship*
- *They are loyal to the denomination or movement*

It's important that a senior staff member, usually the pastor, be committed to champion the project and mentor the planting pastor. One or two members of the partner church leadership team will be invited to serve on the advisory board of the new church.

Partner churches come alongside to help resource and guide the Fresh Start. In return, they benefit from increased vision for ministry and church planting, increased missional effectiveness and harvest and the chance to be part of something bigger than themselves.



PARTNER CHURCH STORY

An Interview with Dave Clotfelter

In 2011, Pastor Clotfelter of Community Christian Alliance Church (CCAC) in Northridge, California led his congregation, in partnership with the district, on a Fresh Start church planting project. The result is a healthy and growing New Life Church in the neighboring community of Woodland Hills. We sat down with him and asked him to share his experiences, insights gleaned and advice to others considering partnering in church planting on a Fresh Start project.

What Moved You Towards Church Planting?

Planting another church had been on my heart for over a decade. As a church, we talked about it for many years but never got very far. It seemed we just didn't know how to get started. So, we asked God to send us someone to help and I peppered our District Superintendent (D.S.) with church planting questions. When he approached us about partnering with the district on planting in a nearby declining church, it felt like a God-send. We unanimously decided, "Yes."

How Did Coaching Help You Move From Desiring to Plant to Actually Planting?

Coaching was critical to our planting. We had talked about it for ten years but we needed the impetus and guidance. I really don't think we would have succeeded without coaching. God gave us a church planting coach [Steve Ogne] who knew what he was doing and he presented us with a plan and a calendar. I just don't believe we could have done it without him.

What are Some of the Sacrifices and Struggles of Being A Parent Church?

We have three different congregations in our church; English speaking, Mandarin and Cantonese. A large majority of those who went out to plant the new church were from the English speaking leadership team. Since nearly 1/3 of our leadership team headed out, it had significant impact. For the new church, sending our strong leaders was a great blessing, for us, it created a struggle and changed the nature of leadership and collaboration in our church. It required time to rebuild team camaraderie.

The giving of people, ministry leaders and money is a sacrifice of church planting but our attendance and giving basically recovered within six months.

**What Are The Blessings?**

It is very gratifying to see a healthy new church born and to see an associate pastor from our congregation doing a great job leading this new church. It also exciting to see so many elders and leaders want to go out and tackle big things for God. They went out with a lot of enthusiasm.

We also saw some of those in our own congregation turn the corner on becoming more missional. In fact, two of our elders who went out with the church plant, saw their sons come to faith through the process. As a pastor, it was such a pleasant surprise to see how eager people are to take faith challenges. Going through this process gave us the belief that we could plant and a greater openness to doing it again. Most of all, there's the joy in knowing we did something totally unselfish that contributes to expanding the Kingdom of God.

Would You Do It Again?

Yes, absolutely! This is the way the church grows. It was a beneficial experience for our church and we'll probably plant again in the next five years.



PARTNER CHURCH EVALUATION.

Do we have a vision for church multiplication?

Are we financially viable and generous?

Are we emotionally healthy and non-controlling?

Do we have growing and effective ministries?

Do we have a track record for evangelism and discipleship?

Are we loyal to the denomination or movement?

Do we have a senior staff member who is able and willing to champion this project?

Are we willing to make this commitment and sacrifice for the Kingdom?

Who will be our representatives to the advisory board of the new church?

Are we willing to take faith-filled risks?

PARTNER CHURCH COVENANT.

We the leaders of _____ (church name) extend our vision for church multiplication by committing ourselves to participate in the Fresh Start of _____ (church name).

We will work, pray and give to see this ministry reestablished for the glory of God.

As God makes us able we will participate by providing leaders, people, finances and expertise to this project.

_____ is the primary person who will champion this project in our congregation and we further agree to provide as many as 2 persons to participate on the advisory board of the project.



PARTNER CHURCH VISION WORKSHEET.

How does this project expand our vision for church planting?

How does this project expand our mission for lost souls?

How does this project energize our people in mission?

What resistance can we expect from our leaders/people? List them below.

Identify appropriate scripture and write a short response to each point of resistance.

• _____

Scripture: _____ Response: _____

• _____

Scripture: _____ Response: _____

• _____

Scripture: _____ Response: _____

• _____

Scripture: _____ Response: _____



CHAPTER 4

4

NEW LEADERSHIP AND ADVISORY TEAM APPOINTED.

New Leadership is essential to creating new ministry. The existing pastor is rarely, if ever, the primary leader of a Fresh Start. Primary leadership is often found in a pastoral or church planting couple, and team members who have fresh eyes and fresh heart for the region. This pastoral/planter couple should ALWAYS be assessed at the Church Planter Assessment Center BEFORE committing them to the project. A good church planter assessment will do much more than determine if someone is a planter. It will identify strengths and weaknesses that may be essential to a Fresh Start project. A good assessment will evaluate 13 or more essential behaviors (see worksheet). The assessment will also create an initial roadmap for the project coach.

A good Fresh Start pastor is a planter PLUS. That is to say he has all the qualities of a planter *plus* the patience and pastoral care required to shepherd the remnant congregation through the process. The Fresh Start pastor must also demonstrate loyalty and partnership with the denomination that has a very long term investment in the past and future church.

Faithful associate staff that has been part of the remnant can be very helpful in shepherding members of the remnant toward the new vision. They provide both history and safety for the process. *It is essential that they have no desire for senior leadership* and that they demonstrate complete loyalty. Additional part or full time staff may be appointed by the *District Superintendent (DS)* in consultation with the planter/pastor as funds are approved.

Since the church board was dissolved at the moment the church accepted redevelopment status, the DS is the sole legal authority over the church. This being the case, it is wise for the DS to appoint an advisory team to give oversight to the Fresh Start project until such time as a new legal board is established as the church again enters into Accredited Status. You will find the steps to Accredited Status in the Appendix of this manual.

It is recommended that this team include the planter/pastor and representatives from the newly forming body, the district leadership and the partner church. At the request of the planter/pastor, it may include one or two members of the remnant congregation. The specific duties as well as the nature and frequency of meeting shall be agreed upon by the planter/pastor and the DS.



THE ADVISORY TEAM

In the Fresh Start process, the District Superintendent and the pastor/planter assigned to the project have ultimate authority over the developing church. However, it's critical for the pastor/planter to work with an advisory team. Since the elder board of the old church will have been disbanded and many decisions will need to be made rapidly, an advisory team is a God send. It enables the pastor to share the workload, to gain advice on the multitude of decisions to be made and it conveys to the congregation that their new pastor is accountable to others.

Who is on an advisory team? The team is made up of people who clearly understand and *support* the mission. Members of the team can be drawn from the remnant body, the partner church body and representatives from the district. It's also advisable to include the Fresh Start coach, someone who works well with the financial requirements for the developing church and the person directing the building renovations. The chemistry of the team is very important as well. Be sure to allow the new pastor/planter select the team in consultation with the superintendent and the coach.

Fresh Start Advisory Team Example:

When Aaron Foor, pastor of Redlands Fresh Start project, put his advisory team together, he wanted people from the past (Godly people from the remnant congregation), people from the present (Godly people from the new church) and future people (Godly people from outside the congregation who have a big picture view of where they were going).

On assembling a team, Aaron offered this advice, "It's like building an elder board you need to choose very wisely. *Everybody's team will be different but you need people who support you and PRAY for you. I sat down with each one individually and shared the vision. These are older Christians I value and they really care for me. I also have a great coach in Steve Ogne.*"

Aaron turns to them individually for advice in their areas of giftedness and collectively in a gathering once a quarter. They talk over the big decisions collectively whether by phone, email or at quarterly meetings. One of the unexpected blessings of his team was seeing the congregations response, "*The remnant congregation is used to church governance and wants to know there is accountability for decisions. The advisory team provides that accountability factor for them and takes the edge off the loss of power and voice many feel.*"



FRESH START ADVISORY TEAM

It is the purpose of the advisory team to provide encouragement, insight and oversight to the Fresh Start planter/pastor until such time that the church is reorganized and a new board appointed. Members shall include:

District Superintendent – Ex Officio _____

Planter/Pastor _____

District Rep. as appointed by D.S. _____

Partner Church Representatives _____

Remnant Congregation Representative (optional) _____

Final legal authority remains with the District Superintendent and the District Board or in the case of another denomination, their governing board.



CHAPTER 5

5

VISION CAST AND PRAYER MOBILIZED

VISION

When new leadership is in place the most important activities become vision and prayer. New leadership must create a clear and specific vision for the new future and repeat it continually because people inside and outside the church can only remember what the church used to be. They'll need a lot of help to see a new and different future.

It is the responsibility of the pastor/planter to work with others in developing a new vision and mission for the new church. *Vision is a written and mental image* that describes the preferred future of the church and its ministry. This should be a fairly developed picture of what the future will look like. It should include a description of the need for a new church as well as a description of size or style and the kind of people who will be reached.

Mission should be at the center of the new vision. *Mission is the process* by which the church will connect with lost people, make disciples of lost people and raise up leaders to reach more lost people. Vision without mission isn't workable. Both vision and mission should be rooted in scripture. Choose passages that promise a blessing and declare a mission.

The Importance of Context

Both vision and mission should be developed in light of the *context*, the history and the passions of current leadership. Context is the community where a church is located. *What type of vision and mission will be most effective there?* This will be influenced by community needs and cultural influences. The history of the closed church may provide a hint to its future mission. What's the best legacy of the closed church? The gifts and passions of current leaders will likely have the greatest impact on vision and mission **so it's important to choose leaders whose passions match the context of the community.**

Vision casting must be strong and frequent (until you are sick of it and then some). Remember, the remnant congregation only knows church the way it used to be. It will take a repeated message for a long while to reprogram them. New attenders have no awareness of the vision no matter how long you have been saying it. So say it again. Keep the vision simple and memorable.

Consider a short vision or mission statement connected to a simple visual or illustration. **Integrate the mission into everything you do: every ministry, every communication, every sermon, every program, every decision, every staff position and budget.**



PRAYER

Along with vision we must mobilize prayer for the new church. The scripture tells us to pray for leaders. Circumstances require that we pray for the remnant congregation as they wrestle with loss and a new vision. We must pray for a new harvest. We must pray for lost people by name.

Prayer is also essential to identifying God's preferred future for this ministry and to overcome the sins of the past which are present at some level in every church. Individual and collective prayer of every kind must be mobilized. Prayers should focus on repentance for past sin and intentional prayer for new Christians by name. This season of vision and prayer must continue until there is broad-based ownership from the leadership, the partner church and the willing members of the remnant congregation.

A Time of Cleansing Prayer

Cleansing prayer is a necessary and effective tool for a Fresh Start. The remnant and the old facility carry with them a history of sin and failure. Study the history of the dying church and identify any seasons of conflict, spiritual warfare, known sin and moral failure. Identify if any of the persons involved or affected are still around. Create a special prayer gathering and use these items as a prayer agenda asking God to cleanse his body. Consider going from room to room in the churches building asking God to cleanse His place and bind any spirits from the past that reside there. Also, give opportunity for people to forgive one another as needed. This meeting must be characterized by honesty and sensitivity. When possible identify an intercessor from the remnant and ask them to help lead this process. Expect spiritual resistance to this, the devil does not give up territory easily.

Finally, remember the activities of vision casting and prayer are never done.

A Fresh Start Prayer Story

When Pastor Tom Sugimura became leader of New Life Church and took on the role of pastoral care for the remnant congregation, it began with prayer. Pastor Tom and an associate pastor made it a point to go out and pray for each person's needs and their concerns. And there were a lot of concerns and complaints. At one point, he received a list of nearly 100 of them.

While they were gathering a launch team, many meetings were simply prayer meetings. They prayed for their community, their families, the process, the transition and the courage and strength they would need to leave their congregation to plant a new one.

The first gathering as a core group began with prayer for God's forgiveness and confession of the past sins of the church, the history of moral failure and the conflict that had happened here. *"We took a full day to bring it to the Lord. We needed to start clean and fresh and not bring that into our new church,"* said Pastor Sugimura.

God answered their prayers. *"By the time we started our first worship service here, all the complaints, anger and hard feelings had disappeared,"* said Pastor Tom.



MOBILIZING VISION AND PRAYER

DISCERNING THE VISION

- When and how will you **get away** for 24-48 hours just to pray and listen to God?
- How and when will you **observe** and discern the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the community?
- Who will you **dream** with about the future possibilities?

DESCRIBING THE VISION

- Describe a **preferred future**.
- Provide a **Biblical foundation**.
- Create **mental images** or pictures.

DECLARING THE VISION

- **Large Groups** - In what ways (other than sermons) can you cast vision in large groups?
- **Small Groups** - How can you cast vision in existing groups and classes?
How can you gather other people into informal groups to catch the vision?
- **Where in the community can you go to share the vision?**
- **Individual Appointments** - Make a list of significant congregational leaders who you will meet individually to impart the vision. Make a list of town or community leaders who need to hear the vision. Make a list of resisters then identify and address their resistance individually.

DEPLOYING PRAYER FOR THE VISION

- Pray for **leaders**. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, the leaders are few.”
- Pray for **lost** people by name. Specific prayer gets specific answers!
- Pray for the **vision**. He is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or imagine.

BRAINSTORM 10 WAYS TO INVOLVE PEOPLE IN PRAYER FOR THE MINISTRY.

- Be creative
- Involve the kids
- Make it a priority in every gathering.



CHAPTER 6

6

OWNERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE INCREASED

Gaining ownership from the congregation requires individual visits with each member of the remnant congregation and each person participating from the partner church. The purpose of these visits is to insure their understanding of the vision, answer their concerns, grieve their loss and demonstrate pastoral care.

The pastor/planter must personally visit *each* family in the remnant congregation to discern their willingness to be part of the new vision. It may take as many as three visits to work through their issues. Your goal is to allow every family to *choose* the new future. **Your success is not based on how many follow you.** It is based on the fact that everyone had not only the opportunity but also pastoral care in the process.

Unlike other forms of church planting, a Fresh Start project comes with an instant congregation that the pastor planter did not recruit. Not everyone will be immediately supportive of the vision *or the leader*. This reality requires an extensive amount of pastoral care and relationship building from the new pastor and leaders.

Those who do not wish to be part of the new vision should be honored, blessed and helped to find another church that meets their needs. When you sign up to pastor a Fresh Start project you sign up to shepherd the remnant until they choose a new church. Remember it is the legacy (assets) of these people that is funding the new dream.

Those who choose to be part of the new church will continue to need care and guidance as they grieve the loss of the church they knew and find their way in the new one. *These folks have given everything for the sake of the new church. Make them heroes and help them find simple and productive ways to be involved.* Participants from the partner church should also be visited one family at a time to be sure they understand the vision and strategy of the new church. It is most likely that the new vision and/or strategy will be significantly different than the partner church. People need clear and repeated communication to understand and accept this. They will also need clear direction on how to become involved through serving, leading and giving. **Do Not ASSUME anything.**

If you organize membership, consider using the term “Founding Members” to describe all that are part of the first membership of the new church. Use “Legacy Members” to describe those who were part of the dying church and make the journey to the new one.



PASTORAL CARE TRACKING SHEET

Name	Age	In/Out/?
_____	_____	_____
Concerns	Benefits	
_____	_____	

Name	Age	In/Out/?
_____	_____	_____
Concerns	Benefits	
_____	_____	

Name	Age	In/Out/?
_____	_____	_____
Concerns	Benefits	
_____	_____	

Name	Age	In/Out/?
_____	_____	_____
Concerns	Benefits	
_____	_____	

Name	Age	In/Out/?
_____	_____	_____
Concerns	Benefits	
_____	_____	

(Reproduce this worksheet for remnant, members of a partner church, and for visitors/new people.)



CHAPTER 7

7

FACILITY RELOCATION OR RENOVATION

Most Fresh Start projects require some kind of facility preparation or significant renovation. It's good to begin this process early as it will always take longer and cost more than you anticipate. Even the simple task of ordering furniture takes ninety days or more. City permits can tie you up for many months. Involve one or more professionals in the assessment of the facility. Use the Facility renovation worksheet included in this workbook as a preliminary evaluation tool. When making facility decisions, make them based on the needs and preferences of the next 100 you intend to reach not the strong opinions of the remnant.

There are several important questions in this process including...

- Who do you want to reach?
- Will they find this *location* desirable and convenient?
- Will they find this *facility* desirable, comfortable and safe?
- Are the necessary renovations economically feasible?

When evaluating the facility be sure to consider...

- Hidden repairs such as plumbing or electrical
- Hazards such as termites, asbestos and mold
- Code violations including fire or handicap access (codes change frequently even in newer areas and construction)

Get proper estimates for...

- Demolition
- Reconstruction
- New construction
- Redecoration

Don't forget the cost of...

- Chairs and Furniture
- Sound and Lighting
- Maintenance and Utilities

Remember, often the partner church can rally volunteers with expertise and skills that will make the undertaking feasible and more affordable. This will also provide ministry opportunities for skilled and sometimes some not so skilled workers. People want to rally to a cause and they derive much benefit from answering the call. However, whenever possible keep renovations to a minimum. It is more important to stay focused on people and missional activities. **Remember...the facility is not the mission!**



FACILITY RELOCATION

Not every Fresh Start project will have a facility to renovate so here are some suggestions to help you in a search for suitable space to restart a church when you don't have a building:

1. Consider starting in a "Sunday only" rented space to get started.
2. Consider a leased retail or commercial space as needs rise and funding is available.
3. Your final space is built out to suit your needs but may be a lease or purchase depending on the economy.

Important considerations when choosing a space...

- It must be clean and desirable. Find some moms with new babies and see if they are attracted or repelled. This will require clean and generous bathrooms and nursery.
- It must have reasonable visibility and access, including adequate parking. Preferably close to a major identifiable landmark or intersection so people can easily identify the location.
- It must be large enough for growth in multiple services and it must offer a balance of appropriate space for adults and children. It's helpful if adjacent partnerships can be developed for shared space and parking.
- Schools and churches including 7th Day Adventist may be available depending on their service times.
- Hotels with meeting rooms that do not have kitchens or catering often have nice useable and affordable conference areas for reasonable prices. Those with kitchens and banquet facilities can be much more expensive.
- Community centers and country clubs can be considered.
- Don't get fixated on the first space that you see or like.

Try to research 10 or more possibilities, narrow it to 3, and then negotiate the best one.



FACILITY RENOVATION PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

Location - Address and Description

Cost?

Who will want to come here?

Demographics - Socio economic make up

Who Already Lives Here?

Condition/Age -Is it worth repairing? (Rate each on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being best)

Roof _____

Plumbing _____

Electrical _____

Structure _____

Pavement _____

Landscaping _____

Hazards

Termites

Dampness

Asbestos

Mold

Code Violations - List possible violations

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Rooms for Demolition - List

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Rooms for Reconstruction - List

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Rooms for New Construction - List

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Rooms for Redecoration - List

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Drawings & Permits Required - List

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Flooring in Square Feet _____

Chairs and Furniture – List usable number

Chairs _____ Tables _____

Other: _____

Sound and Lighting Investment – Describe

What is a realistic timeline for renovations?



CHAPTER 8

8

FACILITY RELOCATION OR RENOVATION

It's never too early to create a detailed ministry plan for the new project. Here's an outline of things to be included.

1. NEED

A good ministry plan should be built on a good needs assessment. Needs assessment begins with an understanding of the area's demographics based on research and validated by observation and experience. A good needs assessment includes an assessment of the spiritual climate of the area including identified known places of sin, evil and the occult. Of course, it will also include an assessment of the churches and church population of the area, become aware of dominant belief systems such as Catholics, Mormons and Jehovah's Witness etc. Identify the resulting cultural influences such as legalism, liberalism, pluralism and even materialism.

2. FOCUS GROUP

Identify a number of *possible* focus groups for the new ministry. Focus groups may be identified by ethnicity, culture, socio-economic level, politics, geography, hobbies, interests or careers. Which possible focus groups are not being reached by the existing church?

Then identify which focus groups your new team best equipped to reach. Who is God giving you opportunity and passion for? While the gospel IS for everyone, it is best for Fresh Start churches to pursue a specific focus group. It could even be the multi-ethnic population in your area. **Who is God uniquely calling and equipping you and your church to reach?**

3. VISION

Develop a short description of a preferred future. That is what the church will look like in 3 or 5 years. Use mental pictures that can begin with the word imagine. **Imagine** a church where many hurting people find faith and hope. **Imagine** a church where three congregations of different ethnicities partner together. **Imagine** a regional church where 100s of believers both gather and scatter across the county. **Imagine** a family church where people of all ages and stages are encouraged to both be disciples and make disciples. Develop 5-7 statements that describe your church in the future. Be sure that no more than one of them is focused on size or building.

The process of moving from The Mission of God to your vision and values and mission takes center stage at The Alliance BootCamp making it a must for the Fresh Start pastor and Team.



4. VALUES

These are the principles or priorities that guide us. They affect our decisions and our behavior. Sometimes they look like a list of important things such as the Bible, prayer and worship. But deeper thinking reveals behavioral values such as generosity and grace etc. Sometimes values reveal priorities such as lost people or justice. *The best values are those that describe the uniqueness of your church and its God given assignment.* Values that are the same as every church in town don't do much to define you. Make a list of the 3-7 values that most uniquely describe your church and write a single sentence to define each one.

5. MISSION

This is the specific statement of how you will engage lost people and make disciples. We do not have to spend a long time deciding what the mission is. Jesus made it pretty clear. We are to “**go and make disciples**, baptizing them and teaching them to obey.” We must decide *how* we will go. *How* we will connect with lost people. *How* we will make disciples of LOST people and *how* we will raise up leaders to do more of it. What will be the disciple MAKING engine of your church? What is the specific mission of your Fresh Start church?

6. MODEL OF MINISTRY

This is a simple description of how we will be and “do” church. The seeker driven church presents a model of ministry. The organic church practices a way of doing church. Mission driven churches are experimenting with various models.

I'd suggest reading the book Simple Church. The author suggests focusing on just three ministry activities or programs where:

- 1.) the primary focus is connecting people to God and each other,
- 2.) the primary focus is spiritual growth and maturity and
- 3.) the primary focus is mission to the lost.

The great commission suggests a slightly different order, starting with mission then connecting people to God and each other and following through with maturity. One great benefit of this approach is it keeps you from investing resources in fruitless ministries.

If your Fresh Start church could only do three things what would they be? Can you draw a picture of these three ministries and how they relate to each other?

7. LEADERS AND TEAM

This is a description of the planting pastor, the advisory team and or key launch team members or positions that will lead the project. You should also describe the desired leadership structure for the new church.



8. TIMELINE

Can you create a timeline for the refreshing of your church? A timeline includes all the major events and mile stones for the refreshing of your church beginning with redevelopment and ending with the opening month of the new ministry. Use a calendar and post it notes to create a time line that includes the following:

- Redevelopment Decision
- Public Communication
- Time to visit and care for the remnant
- Vision and ministry plan development
- Prayer strategy
- Facility renovation/selection
- Launch team formation and training events
- Missional activities and community presence
- Gathering activities
- Etc.

It generally takes 3 to 9 months between the redevelopment decision and the new opening. Be sure to leave adequate time to process the decision and transition the remnant congregation or their passive/aggressive behavior will cause trouble later. Remember completing the transition may require stopping public ministry for a season of 1-6 months. Start facility renovations early as they may take the most time. Don't start the new ministry with just Christians. Leave plenty of time to develop a missional presence and practice evangelism before launch of the new ministry. If you don't do it now, you won't do it later.

9. BUDGET

Develop a detailed and realistic budget for the FRESH START process. Be sure you have a clear understanding of what assets and resources are available. But leave room for faith in God's provision. Big budget items will include a realistic salary for the Fresh Start pastor, costs and over runs for renovations and money to fund missional activities. You may need a marketing budget as well. It is best to budget in 3 to 6 month time frame as you don't know what is coming and need some flexibility. Many Fresh Start churches have financial resources from savings that were maintained in the old church before the new beginning. Be sure to exercise discretion and accountability with these funds.



DETAILED MINISTRY PLAN - WORKSHEET

Need – What kind of church is needed in this community?

Focus Group – What people or population are we called and/or gifted to reach?

Vision - What five statements best describe our preferred ministry future?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Values - What three to five values will guide our behavior and decisions?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Mission - What is God's unique assignment for this new congregation?

Model of Ministry - What three ministry areas will become the priority focus of ministry?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Timeline - Use post-it notes to develop a detailed timeline of ministry activities.

Budget - Create a realistic budget including, assets, income, liabilities and expenses.

Launch Team - Define your expectations for ministry team leaders.

Core Group - Describe your expectations for core group members.



CHAPTER 9

9

LAUNCH TEAM AND CORE GROUP FORMED.

***Launch Team and Core Group* are common terms used to describe the groups of people who help you start the new church.**

For clarity, the *launch team* is made up of the leaders who will help you start or launch various aspects of the ministry. Remember they're leaders. This means they have people following them. The launch team will include both paid and volunteer members.

The *core group* includes *all the people committed to attend and serve* the new church in the beginning. This includes those from the remnant who have chosen to continue, those from the partner church who choose to participate and those you've gathered from the community including pre-Christians. It's good to have pre Christians in the mix as they represent the population you are trying to reach.

When selecting leaders for the launch team, look for the following characteristics:

- People who are loyal to the vision and loyal to the pastor planter
- People who will not derail the vision or hijack the church
- Leaders who are faithful in attendance and service.
(If they aren't they'll continually disappoint)
- Leaders of good character even if they are not exactly spiritually mature yet
- Leaders who have the ability and passion to mobilize people and start the specific ministry activity.

About Hiring in the Early Stages

Don't pay people to do volunteer level ministry. Only pay people who have the ability to multiply or mobilize others to do what they do.

You will generally identify or recruit the initial *launch team* within the first 90 days of the project but expansion or turnover will be constant. Begin meeting weekly with individuals and groups of *launch team* members ASAP.



FORMING THE CORE GROUP.

The *core group* includes all who want to be part of the new church. As described earlier, members of the remnant congregation should be allowed to grieve the loss of the old church and be vetted as to their support of the new vision and leadership *before* being invited into the core group. Take time to identify old baggage or agendas they may be bringing with them before inviting them into the core. Members of the partner church should be fully vetted regarding the vision and direction of the new church. **The most important people to invite into the core group are pre Christians or early converts from the community because they best represent the people you are trying to reach. Don't just accommodate them, listen to them.**

Core group meetings should begin as soon as you have critical mass (20-50). It's your goal to have 100 people in the core group *before* beginning new ministry. In some rural settings this number may be lower but the principle remains. Core group meetings are not mini worship services. They should be times of vision, training, work and prayer. Consider twice monthly core group meetings. Meeting twice a month should allow for about 8-12 core team gatherings.

CORE GROUP TRAINING

Training at core group meetings should include:

- Discovery and understanding of the new ministry's vision, values, mission and model.
- Discovery of gifts, passion and ministry team formation.
- Most importantly, equipping and practice with evangelism, service and missional living.

Consider having a baptism service for members of the *core group* who have never been baptized and for the new Christians. Doing this before the beginning of public worship or at a preview service will make a statement of your priority on making disciples. **MAKE MUCH OF BAPTISM** and God will fill your tank. Celebrate these special times always and God will supply a very special energy.



LAUNCH TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Planter/Pastor – provides vision, leadership and spiritual direction for the church

Name: _____

Missional Team Leader – Provides leadership and direction for intentional missional engagement outside the church.

Name: _____

Teaching Team Leader – Provides leadership to a team of people who lead and teach adult classes or groups.

Name: _____

Worship Team Leader – Mobilizes and leads one or more worship teams that facilitate worship in a variety of settings.

Name: _____

Connecting Team Leader – Mobilizes a team to attract, identify and assimilate new people into the ministry.

Name: _____

Mobilizing Team Leader – Leads a team focused on mobilizing people to serve on both ministry and mission teams.

Name: _____

Children's Team Leader – Mobilizes a team of adults and youth focused on the evangelism and discipleship of children.

Name: _____

Youth Team Leader – Mobilizes a team of adults focused on the evangelism and discipleship of youth.

Financial Team Leader – Mobilizes a team focused on finances including education, collection and disbursement.

Name: _____

Facilities Team Leader – Gives leadership to facility selection, negotiation set up and clean up.

Name: _____

Note - Most roles will be filled by volunteers. They must be loyal, capable and able to recruit others.

*WARNING - ANY POSITION NOT FILLED WILL END UP BEING DONE BY YOU
OR YOUR WIFE!*



CHAPTER 10

10

MISSIONAL PRESENCE ESTABLISHED.

The best way to insure the missional presence and evangelistic effectiveness of the new church is to begin with **mission and evangelism** long before worship and teaching. After all, the great commission begins with *Go* and ends with *Teach*.

Mission or missional living is the process of connecting with secular people on their turf *not ours*. It involves going to them with the gospel and God's love, not expecting them to come to church to get it. Practicing missional living and evangelism *before* beginning new ministry will change the DNA of your church faster than anything else. In turn, it will change the identity of your church in the community from a secret place that Christians "go to" to a group of people who really care for the community and express God's love.

MISSIONAL ACTIVITY CAN BE ENGAGED AT THREE LEVELS.

1. **First** is the collective or corporate level where the whole core group or congregation engages in a community service project such as feeding the homeless, doing community clean up or other volunteer service. The goal is to get people out of the church box and in touch with real lost people. The lost people may be the people you serve or the people who serve with you. The risk of the collective event is that it makes people feel good while really making a difference and or a relationship.
2. **Second** is the group or team level where smaller numbers of people (teams) from 6-30 engage in regular service projects more than once a month so that redemptive relationships can be formed. Repeated contact with same group of people creates opportunities for relationship and evangelism. Over time you can really make a difference.
3. **Third**, and the ultimate goal, is personal and individual missional living where each member identifies one or more mission fields where they live daily and makes a commitment to be Jesus in that place. Most people have not yet prayerfully and intentionally adopted a personal mission field.

Remember, engaging people in mission *before* the beginning of the new ministry will change the DNA of the church, it will change the focus of leaders from reaching believers to reaching lost people and it will turn believers into missionaries. **Finally, missional activity will give the new church a cause beyond itself!**



EVALUATING MISSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Here's a simple way to evaluate the best missional activities. Ask these questions:

- Does it make a difference?
- Does it make a relationship?
- Will it make a disciple?

EVANGELISM MUST BE A PRIORITY

Evangelism involves the direct communication of the gospel with an opportunity to respond. Personal evangelism usually includes some aspect of your personal faith story. Personal evangelism must be practiced by leaders and others before the new ministry begins. Even those who do not have the gift of evangelism should start using whatever gifts they have with lost people. If it is hospitality, do it with lost people not just Christians. If it is teaching, do it with lost people not just Christians. If it is coaching a sport, do it with lost people not just Christians. This intentional outreach is the first venture into evangelism.

4 STEP PROCESS FOR ENGAGING IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

1. **Identify** your various circles of relationships and name the lost people within them. These are your potential mission fields. If you don't have any/many, then join a new recreational or hobby related group to meet lost people who have interests in common with you.
2. **Pray** by name out loud for lost people in your circles or mission field. Pray for their needs, pray for their hearts and pray for the opportunity to share life and faith with them.
3. **Care** for them. Take time to be with them. Find a way to share life with them. Find a way to help or serve them. Practicing hospitality with someone is the best way to build your relationships with them. Doing a challenging project together creates relational bonds.
4. **Share** with them. Always be prepared to share your simple faith story with them emphasizing how Jesus made a difference. Include some scripture and an invitation for them to come to faith.

COLLECTIVE OR CORPORATE EVANGELISM IS ALSO IMPORTANT

When creating your calendar or timeline include many large and small group missional activities as well as frequent opportunities to clearly present the gospel for lost people. Make much of baptism and communion as opportunities for evangelism. In your planning, identify:

- Where and how do people come to faith in your church
- How can you present the gospel more frequently
- How can you create more opportunities for people to come to faith

**MISSIONAL INITIATIVES IDENTIFIED.**

BRAINSTORM 25 ways your church can serve and bless lost people in the community on their turf without having to come to the church first. For help in this process, identify the following:

- What are the significant community needs you can help with?
- What unique gifts abilities and passions has God already placed in your team?
- What secular entities are already doing good work? How can you partner?

EVALUATE the best possible initiatives with the following questions:

- Will it make a difference?
- Will it make a relationship?
- Will it make a disciple?

EXPERIMENT with a variety of missional activities and ask:

- What is God blessing?
- What are your people excited about?
- Where is there fruit?

PLAN to do more of those things identified above under experiment and remember to:

- Equip leaders
- Mobilize teams
- Celebrate results!



MISSIONAL ACTIVITIES BY GROUP SIZE.

- **Large Group** missional activities are useful for visibility and easy involvement. What initiatives are best done in a large group?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- **Small Group** missional activities are better for frequency and repetition leading to relationships. What initiatives are best done with a small group?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- **Individual** mission or 2 by 2 is most effective for personal witness and disciple making. What initiatives are best approached individually or with a friend?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.



CHAPTER 11

11

LAUNCH ACTIVITIES PLANNED.

You will want to plan a variety of activities to draw attention to a new start. The whole neighborhood or city needs to know that something different is going on. Don't settle for a grand opening day. Go for a month or a quarter or a year. One church I know announced everything they did for a year as the "first annual" or "first ever."

Most of your launch activities will fall into one of five categories:

1. **Missional activities** are those that exist to serve and be a blessing. Find a project or projects where the church can be known for serving and loving the community or others. This might include feeding the homeless, community clean up, joining a cause such as a cancer walk or adopting a needy or immigrant.
2. **Attraction activities** are events such as holiday parties, social gatherings, picnics and barbecues etc. Consider planning a monthly social event to which anyone could be invited to meet people and be briefly introduced to the church. Invite people you have met through your missional activities.
3. **Visibility events** are things like free car washes, barbecues, carnivals and open house at the Fresh Start church location to meet the neighbors and be seen. Free food or free balloons at the soccer field, little league field or other community event will make the church known to a new population. One church hosted the In & Out burger truck at a community event. Another put their hot worship band on a float for the 4th of July. The purpose of all of these is more visibility than missional.
4. **Information gatherings** include informal info and Q &A nights at a local coffee house or theological discussions and debates at a local pub. More conservative congregations may prefer to offer marriage or parenting seminars to the community. All of these are information based events designed to introduce people to the new ministry.
5. **Ministry events** exist to demonstrate a part of the churches ministry such as a night of worship or a night of prayer or special holiday services at Easter, Thanksgiving or Christmas. They may also include concerts and youth or children's rallies as well as discovery Bible studies etc.

Be creative and be highly visible as you develop a calendar of events leading up to and surrounding your new ministry launch. One new church planter executed a rhythm of one social activity followed by a service project, followed by an information gathering each month. *During this season these kind of events are more important than doing church.*



REDLANDS AND MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Walking into “The Mission” (a Fresh Start church) in downtown Redlands you begin to see their heart for their community. When they started the interior remodel of this tired 1970’s style building, they took care to add elements reflecting their community. Things like arches and high ceilings mimic the community architecture. Even their name, The Mission, reflects the Spanish Mission style found in the eclectic mix of architectural styles around town. The outside remodel is still to come but the heart is found inside. *“The city has been really cool with us because they see we’re helping this neighborhood improve,” said Pastor Aaron Foor.*

Pastor Foor loves engaging with the community and is modeling missional ministry for his congregation. *“The mission field for us is downtown. It’s the downtown people we want to reach. People move to this area for the school and the walk-around downtown lifestyle. People are always out in the streets, we’re going to take advantage of it. There are churches thriving on the outskirts of town, but not downtown. We want to change that.”*

His wife, Emily, spends a lot of time helping out in the schools where their children attend. He’s a musician and plays in an Irish rock band doing gigs in coffee shops and bars...anywhere people are. He loves being out in the community engaging with people. When the city shuts the streets for Halloween and families are out in mass, Aaron’s church is out there too. They had bounce houses, a band and invited people *inside* the church for food. They handed over 500 hot dogs and nachos. When their kids made friends in the neighborhood, Aaron and Emily made friends with the parents...and led them to Christ.

Having discovered doctors and nurses in their congregation, they’re making plans for doing an event in the park with music and a medical clinic for the underprivileged. They’re also planning movie nights and the launch of a food pantry in their church.

Even though the launch day was a few weeks away, they were already gathering people and their team began to increase. On a preview Sunday, they had four baptisms and a couple who just came to faith. The remnant congregation is engaged, excited and catching a vision for mission.



TIME LINE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET.

Month 1: _____	Month 2: _____	Month 3: _____
Month 4: _____	Month 5: _____	Month 6: _____
Month 7: _____	Month 8: _____	Month 9: _____
Month 10: _____	Month 11: _____	Month 12: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

1. List 12 months of the year beginning with this month.
2. Identify and list major holidays, vacations and other special events such as the super bowl or your baby's due date in the appropriate month.
3. Consider the impact of seasons and weather and make appropriate notes.
4. Estimate a realistic timeline for facility location or renovation.
5. Identify the launch month for the new ministry.
6. Identify dates for preview services.
7. Reserve dates for missional activities and community service.
8. Add visibility or attraction events.
9. Add launch team /core group meetings.
10. Add information gatherings.



CHAPTER 12

12

RELEASE, RECOVERY AND RENEWAL ANTICIPATED.

Once the new ministry is launched there are still three important things to do.

1. RELEASE

Release is the process of empowering the new ministry to become a fully recognized church again according to the constitution. The three primary criteria are: 1) the church is self-funding 2) the church is self-governing and 3) it's growing. Formal *release begins* with the send-off of people from the partner church who will now identify with the new church. It continues with the transfer of funds and funds authority and culminates with the appointment of new elders or board. At this time, the church may request to be released from the direct control and supervision of the district. The release process should take about a year. Remember to steward the financial and people resources well and don't appoint elders too quickly.

Create multiple occasions to celebrate the launch of the new ministry beginning with the send-off of members. Consider the following possibilities:

- Pre Grand Opening celebration for both churches
- Video link to the service on the second or third Sunday
- Periodic video testimony
- Shared first baptism Sunday with picnic
- Joint elder meeting or retreat
- Shared outreach and service events
- Pulpit swapping

2. RECOVERY

Both the Fresh Start church and the partner church should plan for a season of recovery after the launch of the new ministry. The launch of a new church involves a lot of time, physical energy, emotional energy and spiritual warfare.

Pastors and key staff involved in the project may need a retreat or a rest and most likely a month or two of reduced ministry activities. The partner church pastor may experience a sense of loss and grief right at the moment you expect celebration. This is normal, they have given up a lot including staff, people, money and control.

Lay leaders and members will also need a season of rest and an opportunity to settle into a new normal with time to establish or *re-establish relationships*. However, don't let the season of rest last too long or the churches could lose momentum. Leaders of both churches can use this time to develop a vision for the next big outreach, expansion or event in the life of the church. A visionary leader must always stay ahead of the vision.



Healthy partner churches often recover their people and their giving in about six months. Occasionally, they don't and it can reflect an unrecognized weakness that existed before participating in the Fresh Start project. For example, one partner church gave several elders to lead the new church plant and then realized, in the process, they had no plan to raise up new elders.

Key areas to make sure are strengthened in your partner congregation:

- Attracting and assimilating new people—If this is already happening, regaining attendance will be easier.
- Strong stewardship emphasis—If your stewardship emphasis is strong before the project, replacing giving won't take long.
- Empowering new leaders—If you are empowering new leaders before the project you won't have trouble regaining leaders after the project.

3. RENEWAL

Look for renewal and celebrate it in both churches. In the new work, you can celebrate renewed vision, new identity, new ministry, new members, new mission, new converts and new leaders.

In the partner church, you can celebrate the new ministry as well as renewed mission in the partner church. You will celebrate the influence of new leaders who step up and serve because some left for the new church. You will almost always have new missional opportunities or new ministry expressions that pop up in the process of partnering with the new church. Partnering with a Fresh Start project is generally good for the self-esteem of the partner church which brings new life and energy.

You can be confident that God is going to bless you and your church both directly and indirectly because of your sacrifice and investment to expand the kingdom.

Watch and see what God will do to bring renewal to the communities through these two churches. Take time to look and see what God has done. We've included a reflection and evaluation page at the end of this workbook.



REFLECTION AND EVALUATION.

What were our three greatest successes in this process?

What were our three greatest challenges in the process?

Where did we see God work in a specific or supernatural way?

What did we learn in the process?

What are the greatest strengths of the new ministry?

What are the ongoing needs of the new ministry?

What new people or families are being reached?

What people have become leaders in each of the churches?

How is the new ministry different from the previous or the partner church?

How well is the remnant assimilating into the new church?

How has the new church engaged in mission outside the church?

How has the partner church engaged in mission?

How has the partner church different as a result of this experience?

What is the combined increase in attendance in both churches?

What is the combined increase in giving in both churches?

What is the combined increase in conversions and baptisms in both churches?

What signs of community transformation have resulted from renewed ministry?