

# ECO Church

# Planting Manual

(Version 3.0)



**ECO**

A Covenant Order  
of Evangelical  
Presbyterians

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## SECTION 1: VISION, VALUES, STRATEGY

### I. Vision:

*“To catalyze a movement of gospel-centered, healthy, contextualized, missional churches plants throughout the United States.”*

### II. Values:

1. We desire to see ***gospel-centered*** churches planted where God’s grace saturates, motivates, empowers every believer so that our world would be transformed and restored to the way God intended.
2. We desire to see church plants that are marked by both ***spiritual and emotional health***.
3. We desire to see ***contextualized*** church plants that are flexible, creative, and open to diverse methods, models, and strategies so that they fit the context and culture of their location.
4. We desire to see church plants grow as a result of ***missional*** living and outreach instead of simply by transfer growth.

### III. Strategy:

1. ***Prayer***: Movements can’t be manufactured. It is the work of God’s Spirit through the prayers of God’s people.
2. ***Multiple Models and Methods***: One size doesn’t fit all when it comes to church planting. We need to be flexible and utilize as many models and methods of church planting as possible.
3. ***Involvement of Every ECO Church***: We need every ECO church to pray, give, and participate in church planting.
4. ***Incubator Churches***: We need strategic ECO churches and church plants to create a nurturing environment where potential church planters can be identified, assessed, trained, and supported through long-term residencies. For more information on Incubator Churches, go to **Section 5: Incubator Churches**.

## SECTION 2: PATHWAY FOR PLANTING

### I. For Individuals:

Step	Action
	<b><u>STAGE 1: DISCERN</u></b>
<b>1</b>	Make an appointment for an <b>initial interview</b> with ECO Church Planting Office ( <a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a> ).
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Research and study</b> books, articles, materials on Church Planting</p> <p>» Recommended resources in <b>Section 4: Resource List.</b></p>
<b>3</b>	Recruit 2-3 <b>prayer partners</b> to pray about planting.
<b>4</b>	<p>If recommended by the ECO Church Planting Office, <b>apply</b> to become an official ECO Church Planter.</p> <p>» Request application from the National ECO Office (<a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>)</p> <p>» Fill out application and send back to National Office (scan and email <a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>) along with \$25 for background check.</p> <p>» If application clears, National Office will send application to the Presbytery and ECO Church Planting Office for review and reference checks.</p> <p>» Presbytery will review application and conduct reference checks.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p>If the application clears, you will then go through an official <b>assessment</b>.</p> <p>» List of Recommended Assessment Centers in <b>Section 4: Resource List.</b></p> <p>» Copy of assessment results must be sent to the Presbytery AND ECO Church Planting Office. (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>)</p>
<b>6</b>	<p>After the result of the assessment is received and it is favorable, the Presbytery approves you to become an official ECO Church Planter.</p> <p>» The Presbytery will send an <b>Approval Letter</b> to the planter and ECO National Office (<a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>).</p>

	<b><u>STAGE 2: PREPARE</u></b>
<b>7</b>	<p>Go through <b>Church Planting Training (Boot Camp if Possible)</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recommended Training in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<p>Create a 2-3 Page <b>Church Planting Plan</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Send copy to the Presbytery and Church Planting Office (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>). Samples can be requested from Church Planting Office.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<p>Create a <b>Project Management Plan</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recommended Project Management Planner in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<p>Obtain the following: EIN, Articles of Incorporation, Name, Website, Bank Account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Download "Sequence" from Start Church (<a href="https://www.startchurch.com">https://www.startchurch.com</a>) for help. See <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> <li>» Email Patty Terech (<a href="mailto:Patty@eco-pres.org">Patty@eco-pres.org</a>) in the National Office to get help with this process.</li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	<p>A <b>Church Planting Agreement</b> will then be signed by Church Planter and the Presbytery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A copy of the Agreement will be sent to the Planter and ECO National Office (<a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>).</li> <li>» Once the Approval Letter and Church Planting Agreement is received by the National Office you can request 501C3 coverage (Email <a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>). Patty Terech (<a href="mailto:Patty@eco-pres.org">Patty@eco-pres.org</a>) can assist you with the 501C3.</li> <li>» <u>NOTE</u>: The National Office MUST have copy of Approval Letter and Church Planting Agreement in order to provide 501C3 Coverage.</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<p>The Presbytery will <b>connect planter with local ECO Churches</b> to share about plant, raise prayer, and financial support.</p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Raise financial and prayer support</b> from ECO churches, Presbytery, friends, family, and other local churches. For Fundraising ideas/help, download:  <a href="https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf">https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf</a></p>

14	<p><b>Learn and research</b> your neighborhood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» See Demographic Tools in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
15	<p>Gather a <b>core team</b> and start casting vision, meet weekly to pray and plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Helpful tool is to go through <i>Beyond Church Planting</i> (Bob Logan – CD Training)</li> <li>» Secure location if possible.</li> </ul>
16	<p>Create <b>processes and ministries</b> for evangelism, discipleship, children’s ministry, welcoming team, and small groups, etc.</p>
17	<p><b>Reach out</b> to the local community.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 3: LAUNCH</b></p>	
18	<p>Start <b>Preview services</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Can range from once a month for a few months, or few weeks in a row. Main purpose is to work out kinks and get things ready for public launch.</li> </ul>
19	<p>When ready, <b>launch public services!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» You may want to announce through social media, print ads, or digital ads.</li> <li>» Can invite prayer and financial supporters to launch.</li> <li>» Presbytery and/or local churches can throw “Church Baby Launch” shower (i.e. register needs and have people contribute)</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAGE 4: MULTIPLY</b></p>	
20	<p><b>Identify and recruit future planters</b> and plan for the next plant.</p>
21	<p>Become an <b>incubator church</b> to launch future planters/plants.</p>

❖ **PLEASE NOTE: Each Planter/Plant is different. You may go through steps in different order and different timeframe. For help with any of these steps, please contact the Church Planting Office ([churchplanting@eco-pres.org](mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org)).**

II. **For Groups:**

Step	Action
	<b>STAGE 1: DISCERN</b>
1	Make an appointment for an <b>initial interview</b> the ECO Church Planting Office ( <a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a> ).
2	<p><b>Research and study</b> books, articles, materials on Church Planting</p> <p>» Recommended resources in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</p>
3	Spend significant time in <b>prayer</b> to discern if God is leading your group to become a church plant.
4	<p>If recommended by the ECO Church Planting Office, <b>apply</b> to become an official ECO Church Plant.</p> <p>» Request application from the National ECO Office (<a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>). <b>Make sure to indicate that you are a "group" that is planting.</b></p> <p>» Fill out application and send back to National Office (scan and email <a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>).</p> <p>» If application clears, National Office will send application to the Presbytery and ECO Church Planting Office for review.</p> <p>» The Presbytery will review application and conduct any necessary reference checks.</p>
5	If the Presbytery approves the church plant, an <b>Approval Letter</b> will be emailed to the representative(s) of the new church plant as well as to the ECO National Office ( <a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a> ).
	<b>STAGE 2: PREPARE</b>
6	<p>Find a <b>Lead Planter/Pastor</b> as soon as possible. The lead planter should then go through an official <b>assessment</b>.</p> <p>» List of Recommended Assessment Centers in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</p> <p>» Copy of assessment results must be sent to the Presbytery AND ECO Church Planting Office. (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>)</p>

7	<p>Representatives of the plant as well as the lead planter should go through <b>Church Planting Training (Boot Camp if Possible)</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recommended Training in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
8	<p>Create a 2-3 Page <b>Church Planting Plan</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Send copy to the Presbytery and Church Planting Office (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>). Samples can be requested from Church Planting Office.</li> </ul>
9	<p>Create a <b>Project Management Plan</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recommended Project Management Planner in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
10	<p>Obtain the following: EIN, Articles of Incorporation, Name, Website, Bank Account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Download "Sequence" from Start Church (<a href="https://www.startchurch.com">https://www.startchurch.com</a>) for help. See <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> <li>» Email Patty Terech (<a href="mailto:Patty@eco-pres.org">Patty@eco-pres.org</a>) in the National Office to get help with this process.</li> </ul>
11	<p>A <b>Church Planting Agreement</b> will then be signed by the Church Plant and Presbytery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A copy of the Agreement will be sent to the Plant and ECO National Office (<a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>).</li> <li>» Once the Approval Letter and Church Planting Agreement is received by the National Office you can request 501C3 coverage (Email <a href="mailto:office@eco-pres.org">office@eco-pres.org</a>). Patty Terech (<a href="mailto:Patty@eco-pres.org">Patty@eco-pres.org</a>) can assist you with the 501C3.</li> <li>» <b>NOTE:</b> The National Office <b>MUST</b> have copy of Approval Letter and Church Planting Agreement in order to provide 501C3 Coverage.</li> </ul>
12	<p>The Presbytery will <b>connect plant with local ECO Churches</b> to share about plant, raise prayer, and financial support.</p>
13	<p><b>Raise financial and prayer support</b> from ECO churches, Presbytery, friends, family, and other local churches. For Fundraising ideas/help, download:</p> <p><a href="https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNo v08Rev6.09.pdf">https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNo v08Rev6.09.pdf</a></p>

14	<p><b>Learn and research</b> your neighborhood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» See Demographic Tools in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
15	<p>Gather as a <b>core team</b> and start casting vision, meet weekly to pray and plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Helpful tool is to go through <i>Beyond Church Planting</i> (Bob Logan – CD Training)</li> <li>» Secure location if possible.</li> </ul>
16	<p>Create <b>processes and ministries</b> for evangelism, discipleship, children’s ministry, welcoming team, and small groups, etc.</p>
17	<p><b>Reach out</b> to the local community.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 3: LAUNCH</b></p>	
18	<p>Start <b>Preview services</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Can range from once a month for a few months, or few weeks in a row. Main purpose is to work out kinks and get things ready for public launch.</li> </ul>
19	<p>When ready, <b>launch public services!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» You may want to announce through social media, print ads, or digital ads.</li> <li>» Can invite prayer and financial supporters to launch.</li> <li>» Presbytery and/or local churches can throw “Church Baby Launch” shower (i.e. register needs and have people contribute)</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAGE 4: MULTIPLY</b></p>	
20	<p><b>Identify and recruit future planters</b> and plan for the next plant.</p>
21	<p>Become an <b>incubator church</b> to launch future planters/plants.</p>

❖ **PLEASE NOTE: Each Church Plant is different. You may go through steps in different order and different timeframe. For help with any of these steps, please contact the Church Planting Office ([churchplanting@eco-pres.org](mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org)).**

III. **For Churches:**

Step	Action
	<b>STAGE 1: DISCERN</b>
1	Make an <b>appointment</b> to discuss becoming a church planting church with the ECO Church Planting Office ( <a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a> ).
2	<p><b>Research and study</b> books, articles, materials on Church Planting</p> <p>» Recommended resources in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</p>
3	Spend significant time in <b>prayer</b> to discern if your church is ready to plant.
4	Set up <b>strategy sessions</b> with your session and other leaders of the church. You may consider including the Church Planting Chair in your Presbytery or someone from the ECO Church Planting office.
	<b>STAGE 2: PREPARE</b>
5	Cast <b>vision</b> to the church.
6	<p>Find a <b>Lead Planter/Pastor</b> as soon as possible. The lead planter should then go through an official <b>assessment</b>.</p> <p>» List of Recommended Assessment Centers in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</p> <p>» Copy of assessment results should be sent to the Presbytery AND ECO Church Planting Office. (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>)</p>
7	<p>Lead planter and representatives of sending church should go through <b>Church Planting Training (Boot Camp if Possible)</b>.</p> <p>» Recommended Training in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</p>
8	<p>Lead planter and sending church should draw up a 2-3 Page <b>Church Planting Plan</b>.</p> <p>» Send copy to ECO Church Planting Office (<a href="mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org">churchplanting@eco-pres.org</a>). Samples can be requested from Church Planting Office.</p>

9	<p>Create a <b>Project Management Team</b> to help planter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recommended Project Management Planner in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> <li>» Project Management Team can help planter to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Receive/disperse donations</li> <li>▪ Obtain EIN, Articles of Incorporation, Website, Bank Account, 501C3 (Patty Terech (<a href="mailto:Patty@eco-pres.org">Patty@eco-pres.org</a>) can assist in this process.</li> <li>▪ Download "Sequence" from Start Church (<a href="https://www.startchurch.com">https://www.startchurch.com</a>) for additional help. See <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10	<p><b>Raise financial and prayer support</b> from the congregation, core team, Presbytery, friends, family, and other local churches. For Fundraising ideas/help, download:</p> <p><a href="https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf">https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf</a></p>
11	<p><b>Learn and research</b> the neighborhood of the new plant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» See Demographic Tools in <b>Section 4: Resource List</b>.</li> </ul>
12	<p>Gather a <b>core team</b> and start casting vision, meet weekly to pray and plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Helpful tool is to go through <i>Beyond Church Planting</i> (Bob Logan – CD Training)</li> <li>» Secure location if possible.</li> </ul>
13	<p>Create <b>processes and ministries</b> for evangelism, discipleship, children’s ministry, welcoming team, and small groups, etc.</p>
14	<p><b>Reach out</b> to the local community.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 3: LAUNCH</b></p>	
15	<p>Start <b>Preview services</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Can range from once a month for a few months, or few weeks in a row. Main purpose is to work out kinks and get things ready for public launch.</li> </ul>

16	<p>When ready, <b>launch public services!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» You may want to announce through social media, print ads, or digital ads.</li> <li>» Can invite prayer and financial supporters to launch.</li> <li>» Presbytery and/or local churches can throw “Church Baby Launch” shower (i.e. register needs and have people contribute)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>STAGE 4: MULTIPLY</b></p>
20	<p><b>Identify and recruit future planters</b> and plan for the next plant.</p>
21	<p>Become an <b>incubator church</b> to launch future planters/plants.</p>

❖ **PLEASE NOTE:** *Each Church Plant is different. You may go through steps in different order and different timeframe. For help with any of these steps, please contact the Church Planting Office ([churchplanting@eco-pres.org](mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org)).*

### **SECTION 3: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **I. National Office:**

1. Initial intake interview and initial application processing
2. Referral for assessment, training, and coaching
  - » Provides \$500 grant toward assessment (Lead Planter)
  - » Provides \$750 grant toward coaching (up to 10 Sessions for Lead Planter); Additional coaching grant available after initial grant is used up.
  - » Free registration to ECO National Conference (Lead Planter)
3. Provides list of resources for planters, churches, and Presbyteries (Also on website – [www.ECOplanting.org/resources](http://www.ECOplanting.org/resources)).
4. Connect planter/plant to Church Planting Chair.
5. 501 C3 Covering (Once Agreement and Approval sent to National Office)
6. Consultation and Advice for planters, churches, and Presbyteries
  - » Can provide speakers for gatherings on church planting
7. Organize church planting events (Chairs, Incubator Leaders, and Planter Gatherings)

#### **II. Presbyteries/Chairs:**

1. Review of church planter/plant application and conduct reference checks.
2. Gives final approval of planter/plant and signs Church Planting Agreement.
  - » Notifies and sends copy of Approval Letter and Church Planting Agreement to ECO National Office ([office@eco-pres.org](mailto:office@eco-pres.org)) and the planter/plant.
3. Provide additional grants and money directly to planter/plant for assessment, training, coaching, conferences, and the actual plant.
4. Connect planter/plant to local ECO Churches (so planters can share about church plant, raise prayer and financial support)
5. Exposure to Presbytery through gatherings.
6. If able, receive and handle donations for new plant.

7. Throw "Church Plant Launch Shower" (i.e. Like baby shower, planter registers needs for launch, local ECO churches/individuals can purchase).

**III. Local ECO Churches:**

1. Prayer, financial support, opportunities to preach/share about plant.
2. Send people to help with plant.
3. If able – receive and handle donations for new plant.
4. Throw "Church Launch Shower."
5. Plant a church.

**IV. Incubator Churches:**

1. Will provide everything that National, Presbytery, and Local Churches provide.
2. Will inform Presbytery and Church Planting Office

## **SECTION 4: RESOURCE LIST**

### **I. General Information on Church Planting:**

- » Planting Missional Churches (Ed Stetzer & Daniel Im - Book)
- » Why Plant Churches (Tim Keller - Article)
- » Beyond Church Planting (Bob Logan – CD Training)
- » Newchurches.com (Online Resource)
- » Exponential.org (Online Resource)

### **II. Assessment Centers:**

- » Multiply Group (<http://multiplygroup.org>)
- » Aspen Grove Church Planting Network (<http://agcpn.com>)
- » Converge (<https://www.converge.org>)
- » Mission to North America (<https://pcamna.org/church-planting/>)
- » Global Church Advancement (<http://www.gca.cc/>)
- » Titus Church Planting (<http://www.tituschurchplanting.org>)

### **III. Boot Camps and Training:**

1. Boot Camps (1 Week Intensive Training)
  - » Church Multiplication Network (<https://churchmultiplication.net>)
  - » Ecclesia (<http://ecclesianet.org>)
  - » EFCA (<https://go.efca.org/resources/document/start-boot-camp>)
  - » Converge (<https://www.converge.org>)
  - » Titus Church Planting (<http://www.tituschurchplanting.org>)
2. Missional/Organic:
  - » Forge (<http://www.forgeamerica.com>)
  - » Greenhouse (House Church) (<https://www.cmaresources.org/greenhouse>)
  - » V3 Movement (<http://thev3movement.org>)
3. Urban:
  - » Redeemer City to City (<https://www.redeemercitytocity.com>)
4. Online:
  - » Exponential (<https://exponential.org>)
  - » NewChurches (<https://newchurches.com>)

### **IV. Coaching:**

- » Church Multiplication Ministries (<http://www.cmmnet.org>)

- » ECO Affiliated Coaches (email us for recommended coaches)

**V. Project Management:**

- » Passion 4 Planting: (<http://church-planting.net/planterplan/>)
- » Start Church (Download "Sequence" - (<https://www.startchurch.com>))

**VI. Financial/Legal:**

- » Start Church (<https://www.startchurch.com>)
- » Resurgence Bookkeeping (<https://www.resurgencebookkeeping.com>)
- » Fundraising:  
[https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation\\_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf](https://pcamna.org/churchplanting/orientation_manual/MNACPO200710.3FundraisingManualNov08Rev6.09.pdf)

**VII. Demographics Study:**

- » Mission Insight: (<http://missioninsite.com>) - Email the Church Planting Office for Instructions ([churchplanting@eco-pres.org](mailto:churchplanting@eco-pres.org))
- » Passion 4 Planting: (<http://church-planting.net/free-demographic-report/>)

**VIII. Spousal Support:**

- » Parakaleo (<http://www.parakaleo.us>)

**IX. Websites:**

- » Ministry Design (<https://ministrywebsitedesigns.com>) - There is a discount if you mention you are with ECO

❖ ***Please Note: This is not an exhaustive list of resources for church planters/plants. More will be added in the future.***

## **SECTION 5: INCUBATOR CHURCHES**

### **I. What is an “Incubator” Church?**

- » A Church Plant/Established church that seeks to provide a nurturing environment for future church planters by creating avenues for training, mentorship, connection to potential core team members, prayer, and financial support.

### **II. Why do we want these?**

- » Enables churches and church plants to multiply the number of new church plants vs. planting by addition.

### **III. What are the requirements?**

1. Willingness to provide nurturing environment for future planters.
2. Investment of time, resources, and relationships to care for and support planters.
3. Willingness to allow future planters to recruit potential core team, raise prayer and financial support.
4. Pay for assessment, training, and if possible a stipend.
5. Commitment to support church planter financially (different for each incubator church), relationally, and spiritually before, during, and after the lunch.

### **IV. What could it look like?**

#### Phase 1: Recruitment

- » Hosting lunches/dinners for future church planters (within church, among staff, para-church, seminaries, bible colleges) – e.g. Church Planting “Test Drive”
- » Active recruitment at these organizations (Job Board, Fairs, etc.)

#### Phase 2: Assessment/Training

- » Send potential planter to assessment (See list of recommended assessment centers in our Resource Page – p. )
- » Come up with plan for training (See list of recommended training in our Resource Page – p. )
- » Learn different facets of church life/ministry (Children’s, Youth, Administration, Finances, Preaching) – let them “start” something new.

Phase 3: Connection

- » Mentorship by Staff/Elders
- » Connection to Church Planting Care Group
- » Give freedom to recruit prayer and financial support.
- » Give permission to recruit potential core team.

Phase 4: Launching

- » Throw "Baby Church Shower"
- » Send "Team" to support launch or even 1 year.

Phase 5: Supporting

- » Pay for assessment, training, monthly stipend (if possible)
- » Commitment to ongoing support (3-5 years)
  - Put into plan the requirement for church plant to "pay it forward" to next church plant (e.g. If \$100,000 given, then over next 5 years give \$100,000 towards next church plant).
  - Also in the plan should be the requirement for church plant to become incubator for future church plants.

**V. Important Notes:**

- » The most effective incubator churches probably will be church plants vs. established churches. The reason for this is that the potential planter can be immersed in a church plant setting and have hands on experiencing helping a church plant. As well, the one-on-one mentorship with the planter is extremely helpful for future planter.
- » Established churches that desire to become incubator churches must make sure that the potential planter have exposure to and experience in a church plant setting. At least half of the time spent in the residency should be in a church plant setting.

## **SECTION 6: IMPORTANT ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

### **I. What model does the Planter and/or Sending Church desire to adopt?**

- » Attractional Models (Launch Large/Conventional): This planned launch process is usually a 9-12 month process with a goal of having 20-50 core team members prior to launch. Because of the intensity of this process it requires more money and time therefore the support services for this process will be different.
- » Relationally Based Models (Missional/Incarnational/Organic): Each church should be relational and have a missional and organic aspect to it, however a plant that is primarily relationally based will likely have a longer preparation process and may require the planter to be bi-vocational.

### **II. Will the plant be multi-ethnic or particular ethnic group? Urban, suburban, rural? Starting from scratch or with a planting team?**

### **III. If sent from existing ECO church, what level of freedom does the church planter have compared to level of predetermined outcomes that come from those with the vision for the church?**

### **IV. What amount of "support services" will be needed for the plant? The answers to the above questions will dictate this. For instance...**

- » **Project Management** – It is best to first determine who is overseeing the project. Who is going to oversee the project and to what extent? There are ordinarily 400 actions involved in planting a church, some of these will naturally fall to the planter, however some actions can be done by a project manager in order to free the planter up to focus on other more mission critical actions. A Sponsoring/Sending Church can provide a staff person or steering committee to facilitate those project management aspects, or they can hire an outside company who specializes in project management for church plants. The presence of an active project manager can greatly affect below.
- » **Legal** – There are a variety of legal requirements in order for a church plant to be incorporated and have not-for-profit status. ECO has the ability to grant a 501c3 tax status based upon by-laws and articles of incorporation. But there are still other legal requirements including filing for tax-exempt status in the state where the church is going to be planted. These are things that a project manager or outside company (e.g. StartChurch) can do as well.
- » **Book keeping** – There are best practices when it comes to book keeping, ensuring that expenditures are accounted for directly as well as keeping track of donations. A Sponsoring/Sending church or outside company can do these things, or the planter can do this by himself/herself.

- » **Human Resources** – If a planter is full-time there are some questions that need to be addressed such as health care and retirement. A church plant can use the health insurance of ECO, ***but it also has the freedom to use outside providers.***
  
- » **Equipment** – A church will have various equipment needs based upon the answers to the questions above. There are various companies that provide the basic equipment for churches. A church plant may also get equipment from its supporting churches.
  
- » **Marketing** – There are a variety of marketing services that can be obtained. These range from logo creation, direct mail campaigns, website development and search engine optimization.
  
- » A helpful resource for logistics involved in planting (Download “Sequence” from StartChurch.com)

## SECTION 7: POLICIES

### **I. Approval For Plant/Planter:**

1. For Individuals and Groups who want to plant:
  - » The Presbytery will give approval for a new church plant/planter.
2. For ECO Churches that want to plant:
  - » Official ECO Churches do not need approval from the Presbytery (unless they are ready to be "chartered") to plant a church. However, it is highly encouraged to notify and inform the Presbytery and National Office of any new church planting endeavors so that the church can be on a path of particularization by the Presbytery.
  - » The role of the Presbytery and National Office is to provide advice, referral, and recommendations to the ECO sending church.
  - » The ECO churches that want to plant take primary responsibility to recruit, support, handle the financial/legal/administrative issues and connect the planter/plant to the Presbytery and National Office.

### **II. Financial:**

1. Income: Where do funds for a new church plant come from? Sources include:
  - » From local churches and individuals.
  - » Core Group/Launch Team.
  - » Offering.
2. Administration: Who Holds/Administrates the Funds prior to launch? Options:
  - » Local ECO Church
  - » The Presbytery (If the Presbytery is able)
  - » Third party: E.g. Reliant Mission, Interlink Ministries. (These organizations can take donations for planters and provide tax receipts for donors).

### **III. Legal:**

1. There are several areas of legal concern for church plants. When a church is being planted there are two entities that are being formed. One is an **ecclesiastical body** under ECO and one is an **incorporated church** not for profit.

- » *The church plant as an ecclesiastical body* (i.e. Becoming “**chartered**”) – A church plant as it forms, moves from being a church plant to establish church. This process has often been referred to as “chartering” a church, or “particularizing” a church.
- » A Presbytery (via MPT and Church Planting Chair/Team) will move to charter a church according to the following questions:
  - Is the church relatively **self-supporting**? This doesn’t mean that a church isn’t still receiving some funds from churches and individuals who are donating, but rather that there is a healthy financial base at the church that is meeting the basic needs of the church.
  - Does the church have the ability to lead itself in **governance**, mission and ministry? There needs to be trained leadership in all areas of the church to facilitate and lead the ministry of the church.
  - Both of the previous questions imply that there is **critical mass**. While there is no magic or set number for the number of covenant partners that need to be a part of this church plant, it would likely need to include at least 50-75 people for a conventional church plant. For relationally based church plants, there should be evidence of multiplication (e.g. House church that has multiplied from 1 to 2).
  - A Presbytery (via MPT and Church Planting Chair/Team) may determine that once a church is established then its pastor moves from a validated ministry to a voting member of Presbytery.
  - Alternatively a Presbytery may create other criteria to determine when a planting pastor becomes a voting member of Presbytery. This could have to do with the launching of a public worship or meeting other benchmark criteria.
- » *The church plant as a corporate body* – The church plant can and should become a corporate entity prior to its chartering. There are a few steps that will need to be taken to ensure the legality of the church plant.
  - Obtain an Employment Identification Number (EIN) – This can be done before or after legal incorporation.
  - Get legally incorporated: Articles of Incorporation.
  - Obtain tax exemption (501 C3) – The Synod Operations Office can provide entry into ECO’s group 501c3 OR the plant can file for its own through the IRS.
  - File for State Tax Exemption (if applicable).

- Obtain a bank account.

2. Other important things to note:

- » A church planter is not an employee of ECO or the Presbytery of membership. Even if an ECO Presbytery is handling the finances prior to launch, paying out a salary, expenses, or health care, they are merely doing this as “accounting services” not as the employment agency.
- » Because ECO, nor the Presbytery, is the employer, the church plant and church planter will need to obtain their own liability insurance or go without.
- » An ECO church that wants to plant a church that is within the same state as the plant may elect to put the plant under their administrative wheel and make the planter an employee of the church and provide liability insurance.

## **SECTION 8: BECOMING A CHARTERED CONGREGATION**

***“Chartered” = Self-governing, full congregation that have voice at Presbytery and Synod***

» **Steps:**

1. Elect Elder Board, which includes a clerk of session (Your church bylaws determine minimum number of elders).
2. Fill out “ECO Church Application” (Contact [office@eco-pres.org](mailto:office@eco-pres.org) for application).
  - The ECO Church Application is the same application that all congregations must fill out to become an ECO church
3. MPT of your Presbytery will contact your clerk of session for an interview.
  - In preparation for the interview, the elders are interviewed regarding their adherence to the essential tenets of ECO.
4. If MPT approves, the church plant will be chartered.
5. You will then receive a welcome letter and other essential documents (including a new contract) in the mail.

## **SECTION 9: CONTACT INFORMATION**

**ECO Church Planting Website:** [www.ECOplanting.org](http://www.ECOplanting.org)

### **ECO Church Planting Office**

Phone: 855-326-3268 (ext. 405)

Email: [Churchplanting@eco-pres.org](mailto:Churchplanting@eco-pres.org)

### **ECO National Office**

**Website:** [www.eco-pres.org](http://www.eco-pres.org)

Business Office: ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

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Goleta, CA 93117

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