

**Plant NC**  
***Church Planting Internships and  
Residencies***



## Church Planting Internships and Residencies

There is an immense need for new, healthy churches. Recent research states that there are now 195 million non-churched people in America, making America the largest English-speaking mission field in the world. Aubrey Malphurs writes, “Essentially, what was a churched, supposedly Christian culture has become an un-churched, post-Christian culture. People in our culture are not antichurch; they simply view the church as irrelevant to their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the rise of mega-churches, no county in America has a greater church population than it did ten years ago.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps most telling is the fact that from 2000 to 2004, a net gain of 13,024 churches was necessary to keep up with the U.S. population growth. In reality, that means rather than growing with the population, the Church incurred a deficit of almost 10,000 churches.<sup>3</sup> There are now nearly 60 percent fewer churches per 10,000 people than in 1920. We need to plant more healthy churches to impact our communities in North America with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Church Planting Internships are effective ways to develop healthy church planters and church planting teams who will plant healthy churches. Those who participate in an internship program say they were more confident and equipped to plant a church. A recent analysis of church planters supports the existence of a strong relationship between a planter who has gone through an internship, as well as higher baptisms and attendance rates in their first years of planting.

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<sup>1</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Sylvia, *High Definition Church Planting* (Ocala, Fla.: High Definition Resources, 2004), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Barnes and Lindy Lowry (2006, May/June) Special Report: The American Church in Crisis. Outreach Magazine [Online]. Available: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/outreach/articles/americanchurchcrisis.html> [June 25, 2007]. Document adapted from NAMB – Steve Canter



In John 14:15 Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” and in the Great Commission He told us to make disciples of all nations by “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20a). With this loving obedience, disciples and churches reproduce in a normal way. It was the model of multiplication Jesus used.

The Bible tells us that Jesus chose twelve and “He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). Then, He sculpted the lives of His team by sharing the whole of His life with them. In that mentoring journey was accountability, sharing of wisdom and life, and empowerment. All of this was done within a relational context. As church planting leaders we need to be pillars of His kingdom in nurturing church planters and church planting teams through relationships and sharing ministry and life together.

Church Planting Internships (CPI) involve intentionally sharing the whole of your life and the church’s life with people so that they can one day plant healthy, reproducing churches with evangelistic passion for people not reached by the Good News of Jesus Christ. More simply, it is using Jesus’ model to plant new, healthy churches.

This resource is a simple guide to aid you in developing a CPI program in your church. A CPI can take many forms and should be adapted to your context. Please use this resource to help you start new churches through the use of church planting interns.

### **What is the purpose of Church Planting Internships?**

The purpose of a CPI is to first evaluate and guide the character, competence, and chemistry of a potential church planter. The basic premise is that spiritual practices, missional practices, and practical church planting skills are intimately grasped from a mentoring relationship better than they are from a book or conference.

### **What are the benefits of Church Planting Internships?**

A well-planned CPI will provide benefits for everyone involved, including the mentoring church, intern, and the future church plant. For the mentoring church, internships offer a way to expand its kingdom influence into new areas and people groups through church planting, while further accomplishing the ministry of the local church. These



internships allow local churches to assess an individual for future church planting endeavors, allowing the church to provide freedom for existing staff to pursue other ministry opportunities. In addition, interns may bring fresh perspective and thought to the local church.

For the interns, a CPI affords them the chance to prepare for planting by experiencing relevant ministry in the local church, as they are mentored and empowered to serve and lead. The intern is able to develop a network of potential supporters, and discover if vocational ministry is indeed God's call on his or her life

For the future church plant, a CPI provides a trained spiritual leader—one who is equipped to be a church planter, has the support of a sending church, has a network around them, and a core group.

### **What does a successful Church Planting Internship look like?**

A successful CPI is one that will be used by God to expand His kingdom by:

- developing future church planting Elders;
- developing church planting teams;
- multiplying churches; and ultimately
- spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to unreached people in a contextual way.

## Church Planting Internship Components

Just as interns will commit serious work and valuable time to their own development and to the ministries of the local church, so must the local church invest in the spiritual growth of the intern, and help them develop church planting skills. There are measurable objectives that differentiate an internship from a short-term job or volunteer position. Interns will not be wielded to simply 'get ministry done', but to use ministry to develop them to be part of God's ministry of reconciling people to Christ through church planting.

### **Component #1 – Candidate Qualifications**

What characteristics and experiences should the candidate exhibit to be considered for a position? This is important because it will help determine the amount of supervision required, length of the internship, and potential future success. When developing candidate qualifications consider the following:

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 character
- Spousal cooperation
- Past ministry experience / Education
- Visionary
- Team player
- Self discovery process/ Calling
- Church planter assessment (Church Planter Profile)

### **Component #2 – A Training Covenant & Learning Objective**

What are the learning objectives and by when should they be accomplished? A timetable for accomplishing learning objectives should be presented and agreed upon prior to starting the internship. A training covenant can help keep both parties accountable for seeing the objectives accomplished. When developing the training covenant and learning objectives consider the following:

- Continuing education: Is there an expectation that the intern be versed in theology, apologetics, languages, missional living, spiritual disciplines, et cetera?
- Community exegesis and demographics
- Disciple making

- Vision casting
- Evangelism
- Listening skills
- Team leadership
- Gathering and developing a core group
- Creating, developing, and multiplying community
- Preaching/teaching development
- Pastoral Care

### **Component #3 – The Length of the Internship**

How long will the internship last? The exact beginning and ending dates of the internship should be clearly stated and agreed upon by everyone before it begins. When determining the length of the internship consider the following:

- How long will covering the learning objectives take?
- What are the time and resource commitments the local church and staff can invest in the church-planting intern?
- Is there a transition period from the internship to the launching of the new church?
- Will the intern be able to devote time to the new church?

### **Component #4 – Expectations**

What is expected from the intern and the mentoring church? For both the benefit of the local church and the intern, a prior understanding of what is expected during the internship is imperative. When outlining expectations consider the following:

- Who will mentor the intern? Who will he report to?
- How much time with staff should the intern expect, particularly with the lead Elder?
- What type of support can the intern expect in the church plant after the internship? Can he recruit a core group from the local church?
- Is the intern expected at times to work outside the area of interest in the local church?
- What are the intern's ministry responsibilities?
- Is the intern expected to attend staff and church meetings? If so, is he a participant or observer?

- Is the intern expected to complete and submit monthly reports or a journal of the internship journey?
- Is the intern expected to hold a job outside the church for the purpose of building relationships with the community?
- How many hours a week is the intern expected to devote to the church?

### **Component #5 – Compensation/Fundraising**

Will the local church compensate the intern for his service? Some CPI programs provide a stipend to the intern to assist financially and to add legitimacy to the position. Other programs require interns to raise their own support, believing it demonstrates the ability to lead others and help others buy into the intern's vision (vital characteristics for church planters). Both are viable options and are not exclusive, but to help ensure a successful CPI both the intern and the local church must agree upon any compensation and benefits. When determining compensation and fundraising consider the following:

- What is the minimum monthly support the intern must raise? How much will the local church provide?
- Does the position and intern qualify for funding through the North American Mission Board Semester or Summer Missionary program?
- Who provides housing expenses?
- Will the mentoring church provide office space and administrative supplies?