

In any healthy church multiplication system, certain “best practices” seem to produce more fruit, as we find leaders, equip for effectiveness, plant and multiply. We offer some key recommendations here.

## Find

1. Invite and challenge a broader base of people to hear a personal call to plant new congregations—including clergy, **laity, young people and more diverse people**.
2. Develop a **reliable planter assessment and discernment process** to determine gifts and calling for church planting.
3. **Create a pool of prospective planters, both clergy and lay**, who have participated in an assessment and discernment process and received some basic training in new church development and multiplication.
4. **Support and challenge local churches** to lead in planting new churches and multiplying their healthy congregations. Utilize resources to assess readiness for planting.

## Equip

5. Where possible, **enable these high-potential leaders to serve on a successful planting team** or within a vibrant, growing congregation before beginning their work as lead planter for a new church.
6. Develop **training for prospective planters in new church development** and multiplication or make use of regional United Methodist planter “basic training” as needed.
7. Assign a **qualified new church development coach** to the project for at least three years to work with the planter, the local partners and the district superintendent (Consider working with a Path 1 recommended coach for this critical role).
8. **Develop appropriate benchmarks** in conversation with the new church start coach, planter(s), connectional partners, district superintendent and conference staff person for new church starts.

## Plant

9. In planning, **think first in terms of the people we seek to reach with the Good News of Jesus Christ**, taking into consideration the generational, cultural and theological contexts. This is much more important than putting a point on the map.
10. Always seek to plant with a well-developed **connectional partnership plan** – a partnering church, a partnering group of churches or some other dependable resources (people and seed funding) to help begin an effective launch team quickly (If you need to delay a year until appropriate local partners become ready, please wait).
11. When planting **racial/ethnic and multi ethnic faith communities** there are a series of recommendations for effective partnering (contact New Church Strategists for Path1 resources for specific racial/ethnic planting).
12. Only appoint planters to projects after they have **completed an assessment and discernment process**.

13. Develop a plan tailored to each community context, with these considerations: **financial streams, stewardship development, connectional giving and sustainability**. Financial streams include funds from launch team *and* planter tithing and may also include individuals, connectional partners, district and annual conference. Build into the budget the congregation's giving back to the conference.
14. Establish **benchmarks that support an exit strategy**. Allow benchmarks to guide decisions related to continuing funding, ministry strategy, fruitfulness and leadership effectiveness. (Occasionally, you may adjust benchmarks but please don't ignore or discard them.)
15. Be sure the **planter appropriately matches** the needs and challenges of the community. If the planter is new to the area, **look for ways s/he might live and serve in the community** before the planting appointment formally begins.
16. **Resist the temptation to launch weekly worship prematurely** or to wait too long. Right timing depends on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, critical mass, momentum and cultural context.
17. Build a **system of small groups** within the planting team before launching weekly worship. Small group multiplication and discipleship systems lay the foundation for success and sustainability of a new church.
18. When, eventually, a **succeeding pastoral appointment** occurs, the cabinet pays extremely close attention to gifts and calling of the second pastor, as well as the unique local church culture, and **works collaboratively with the church and planter** in the appointive process.

## Multiply

19. **Think "multiplication" from the start**. Create a culture for multiplication of leaders, ministries and congregations in existing churches and new church starts.
20. **Protect the planter's time** by releasing her/him from committee work and other connectional leadership demands that steal focus from the church plant. (For example, planters serving in their first three years at a new church should not serve on conference board overseeing church planting.)
21. **Leave the planter long enough** in the new church appointment to stabilize the new church. If the new church has good potential to grow into a high-attendance congregation and to multiply, plan for the planter to remain long-term with the church.
22. In reaching new people for Christ, **keep existing congregations from blocking or undermining** the efforts to plant a new church.
23. When existing churches close, **designate a significant portion of the assets** toward new church development in the annual conference.

*For additional information or support exploring or implementing these best practice recommendations, please contact any of the New Church Strategists on the Path1 staff.*