

CAROLINA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR PLANTING A CHURCH

Last Revision Voted May 23, 2016 by Executive Committee



It is the purpose of the Carolina Conference to foster the growth of Seventh-day Adventist churches in our territory. In order to assist mission groups in becoming successful, healthy, growing churches, the following guidelines have been adopted on the basis of a demonstrated history of church plants.

Church Planting Resources Provided By the Carolina Conference:

- ✓ Conference Church Planting Coordinator
- ✓ Two copies of the manual, *Steps to Planting: From Incubation to Launch*, by Tom L. Evans
- ✓ Reimbursement for your first Natural Church Development (NCD) Survey
- ✓ NCD coaching to assist in results processing of NCD
- ✓ Carolina Evangelism funding for outreach events
- ✓ Conference departmental resources (contact individual departments)

NOTE: The responsibility of hiring employees lies with the Carolina Conference. Mission groups, companies and churches may not hire pastors, Bible workers, teachers, or any employee in any capacity without consultation with the Carolina Conference.

THANK YOU

for your commitment to church planting!

We are praying for God's blessing as we join hands with Jesus in this God-inspired endeavor.

Brad Cauley, Church Planting Coordinator

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CAROLINA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR PLANTING A CHURCH



~Mission Group Status~

1. Weekly meeting for the purpose of spiritual fellowship and strategic church plant planning. This “incubation” period should continue for a minimum of six months before Mission Group begins Sabbath worship service. (Groups desiring to plant shall use the book, *Steps to Planting: From Incubation to Launch* by Tom L. Evans, as a guide). There will need to be a business meeting vote by the mother church to sponsor the church plant and elect its lay leader.
2. Plants will develop 2 year plan for church growth (Include outreach events, stewardship plan, etc.)
3. Plants will be lay-led and should have a vision to continue in that mode even after receiving church status, with *oversight* by a Conference pastor. Prospective Mission Groups must read, accept, and afterwards have the lay leader and pastor sign the “Strategy for Lay-led Churches” document.
4. New plants desiring to progress to “church” status will be planted in communities that have a population of 25,000 within a 25-minute-drive and be demographically viable.
5. Each plant must originate with and maintain a positive relationship with a sponsoring Carolina Conference church from which they take counsel, and whose pastor supports the effort and serves as the conference liaison with the plant, as well as a coach for its leadership. If the sponsoring church is English speaking for a non-English-speaking plant, there should be a bi-lingual leader in the non-English-speaking plant to facilitate communication between the two.
6. The key leaders of the plant should be established Seventh-day Adventist members in good and regular standing. *All Adventist Mission Group members need to hold membership in the sponsoring local church of the Carolina Conference.* The mother church should elect the lay leader of the Mission Group as a board member of the mother church. The lay leader should be elected during each nominating process with guidance from the pastor and the Mission Group.
7. Finances of the Mission Group, both income and expenses, shall flow through the sponsoring church, and its bank account(s), which will account for the tithes and offerings and disburse funds in harmony with the will of the Mission Group, the guidelines of the sponsoring church and the policies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While Mission Groups shall not have separate bank account(s), Mission Groups may maintain a Petty Cash or similar arrangement for limited expenditures when coordinated with the sponsoring church. A treasurer for the Mission Group shall be elected to be accountable for the finances of the Mission Group, convey tithes and offerings to the mother church treasurer, and be the custodian of Petty Cash. The conference auditor or his/her representative will be available for training and support. Records will be available for the Mission Groups from the mother church treasurer. Any requests for exceptions should be submitted to Carolina Conference Treasury.
8. All Mission Groups are asked to designate a minimum of 30% of their budget to outreach (public evangelism, Bible studies, and other events focused on reaching non-Adventists).
9. The plant must meet with the Carolina Conference Church Planting Committee to be recognized as a Mission Group.
10. Buildings and land should *not* be purchased for or by congregations while they are at Mission Group status. Exceptions must be approved by the Carolina Conference.
11. Organized Mission Groups should make it a priority to attend annual a) conference church planting rallies, b) lay-leader/pastor training events, and c) other training events (i.e. elders’ or deacons’ retreat) to enhance their experience.

CAROLINA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR PLANTING A CHURCH

~Company Status~



1. To progress to “company” status a Mission Group must have at least 30 baptized members with an average attendance of at least 30 for previous 3 months.
2. Mission Groups desiring “company” status will be lay-led, and should have a vision to continue in that mode even after receiving church status, with *oversight* by a Conference pastor. Mission Groups must read, accept, and afterwards have the lay leader and pastor sign the “Strategy for Lay-led Churches” document.
3. Mission Group Finances:
 - a. The Mission Group must have at least \$25,000 in projected annual tithe.
 - b. The Mission Group must have a balanced budget.
 - c. The Mission Group must have a record of faithful remittance of tithe and offerings to the Carolina conference, through the sponsoring church.
 - d. Once company status is voted, a bank account is to be set up in the company’s name in consultation with the Conference Treasury department. The Conference auditor should also be contacted about accounting software and financial procedures.
 - e. The company agrees to establish a line item in their budget for a building fund. This will receive a monthly allocation from the combined budget. However, *purchases of land or buildings is not recommended before reaching “church” status*. The Carolina Conference must be consulted with, and authorize such purchases or projects.
 - f. At least 30% of the budget continues to be designated for outreach.
4. The Mission Group must maintain a positive relationship with the sponsoring church and supporting pastor. The supporting pastor will continue to serve as a coach to the lay leader.
5. Upon receiving “company” status, membership will be transferred from the sponsoring church to the Carolina Conference Church, which is governed by the conference Executive Committee.
6. The Mission Group must have committed Seventh-day Adventist lay leadership ready to serve in a minimum of two key offices: lay leader and treasurer. These offices should be filled during each nominating process. While most decisions will be made by local leadership, the Executive Committee of the Conference serves as the board for the company, granting transfer requests and voting on church discipline issues. (See SDA Church Manual, “Organizing a Company” for details).
7. Mission Groups must present a two year plan for church growth. (Include outreach events, stewardship plan, etc.)
8. Approval for “company” status must be voted by the Conference Executive Committee, at the recommendation of the Church Planting Committee.
9. Mission Groups desiring to become companies should make it a priority to attend annual a) conference church planting rallies, b) lay-leader/pastor training events, and c) and other training events (i.e. elders’ or deacons’ retreat) to enhance their experience.

CAROLINA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR PLANTING A CHURCH

~Church Status~



1. For a company to progress to “church” status it needs to have at least 55 baptized members and an average attendance of at least 60 for the previous 3 months.
2. Companies desiring “church” status will be lay-led, and should have a vision to continue in that mode after receiving church status, with oversight by a Conference pastor. Companies must read, accept, and afterwards have the lay leader and pastor sign the “Strategy for Lay-led Churches” document.
3. The company must have maintained a positive relationship with the sponsoring church and supporting pastor. The supporting pastor will serve as a coach to the lay leader.
4. A minimum of 10 individuals shall have joined by baptism or profession of faith since the company was organized.
5. The company shall have held at least one evangelistic series or full message seminar.
6. The company must have an annual tithe of at least \$60,000.
7. At least 30% of the budget continues to be designated to outreach.
8. The company must have a balanced budget and a solid financial plan for retiring any debt.
9. The company must have a record of faithful remittance of tithe and offerings to the Carolina conference.
10. The company must have completed a Natural Church Development survey with a minimum average score of 50. The conference will cover the cost of this first survey once the church health team begins to meet. The company would report what proposed changes it has to address the lowest areas of health.
11. The company must have committed Seventh-day Adventist lay leadership in key offices: lay leader, elder, deacon, treasurer, and clerk. These offices should be filled during each nominating process.
12. The company must provide a three year plan for church growth. (Include outreach events, a stewardship plan, etc.)
13. The company should have voted a commitment to support Adventist education in their annual budget with at least one of the options below:
Option #1 – A monthly subsidy for members’ children to attend an Adventist church school.
Option #2 – A constituent relationship with an Adventist church school. Once the subsidy reaches an acceptable level, voting representation on the school board is to be expected.
Option #3 –To fund to a new SDA school within the area of the congregation.
14. A company shall have plans in place to plant a new church within 5 years.
15. All policies outlined in the Church Manual must be followed.
16. Companies desiring to become churches should continue to make it a priority to attend annual a) conference church planting rallies, b) lay-leader/pastor training events, and c) and other training events (i.e. elders’ or deacons’ retreat) to enhance their experience.

CAROLINA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR PLANTING A CHURCH

~Multi-Campus~



1. Weekly meeting for the purpose of spiritual fellowship and the strategic planting of a new evangelistic/discipling/worshipping/missional campus location using the principles in *Steps to Church Planting: From Incubation to Launch* by Tom L. Evans as a guide. This “incubation” period should continue for a minimum of six months before the new campus begins its Sabbath worship service. There will need to be a business meeting vote by the mother church to sponsor the additional campus and elect its lay leader.
2. The campus will develop a two year plan for growth in terms of evangelism and discipleship in harmony with the overall mission of the mother church that is approved by its pastor and church board.
3. Each new campus will be lay-led and should have a vision to continue in this mode under the accountability of the mother church board and its pastor. The campus must read, accept, and afterwards have the lay leader and pastor sign the “Strategy for Lay-led Churches” document.
4. Each new evangelistic/discipling/worshipping/missional campus should be intentionally planted to target a new area/zip code, or to target a specific people group within the area/zip code of the mother church (such as an outreach to a specific language/ethnicity/race, age, culture, etc.).
5. Each new campus must maintain a positive relationship with the sponsoring Carolina Conference pastor and with the mother church from which they take counsel and remain accountable to. If the mother church is English-speaking for a non-English-speaking campus, there should be a bi-lingual leader in the English-speaking campus to facilitate communication between the two.
6. The key leaders of the campus should be established Seventh-day Adventist members in good and regular standing. All Adventist campus members need to hold membership in the mother church within the Carolina Conference. With guidance from the pastor, each campus shall recommend a name from its core team to serve as its lay leader, and this lay leader should then be elected through the mother church’s ongoing nominating committee process and included as a board member of the mother church.
7. Finances of the campus, both income and expenses, shall flow through the mother church, and its bank account(s), which will account for the tithes and offerings and disburse funds in harmony with the will of the campus, the guidelines of the mother church, and the policies of the SDA Church. While campuses shall not have a separate bank account(s), they may maintain a Petty Cash or similar arrangement for limited expenditures. An “assistant-treasurer” for the campus shall be elected to be accountable for the finances of the group, convey tithes and offerings to the mother church treasurer, and be the custodian of Petty Cash. The conference auditor or his/her representative will be available for training and support as needed. Records will be available for the campus from the mother church treasurer.

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8. Each new campus will ensure that a minimum of 30% of its financial expenditures are specifically directed toward outreach (public evangelism, Bible studies, and other events focused on reaching non-Adventists). Each new campus will also ensure its ministry/budget includes a strong discipleship emphasis in helping its members to be in a growing and maturing spiritual relationship with God and others that is rooted and grounded in Christ and His body, which includes the fundamental beliefs and organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
9. Each new campus must meet with the Carolina Conference Church Planting Committee to be recognized for “multi-campus” status under the umbrella of the mother church.
10. Building and land purchases associated with any new campus must be approved by the mother church in business session. The Carolina Conference must also be consulted with and authorize such purchases or projects.
11. Each new campus should make it a priority to attend annual a) conference church planting rallies, b) lay-leader/pastor training events, and c) and other training events (i.e. elders’ or deacons’ retreat) to enhance their experience.

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FAQ on Multi-campus Status

What is Multi-Campus?

One church that evangelizes, disciples, worships, and carries out its mission via multiple campuses in different locations. A “campus” would be planted by a Carolina-Conference-recognized Church that desires to establish an evangelistic/discipling/worshiping/missional presence, either in a nearby unreached area/zip code in North & South Carolina, or among specific people groups within their own area/zip code (such as an outreach to a specific language/ethnicity/race [Russian or Native American, etc.], age [Young Adults, etc.], culture [Bluegrass], etc.). Just as McDonalds is one corporation with multiple locations around the world, “multi-campus” churches would have one church board overseeing multiple evangelistic/discipling/worshiping/missional locations spread out over a geographic district.

How is this different than the “mission group” status that we presently have?

Our present “mission group” status implies eventual separation from the mother church since mission groups are established with the desire and intention to progress and ultimately move to “company” and “church” statuses. “Multi-campus” allows an evangelistic/discipling/worshiping/missional presence to be multiplied and established in new locations with the desire and intention to stay under the umbrella of the mother church’s structure/organization, finances, church board, etc. If “expanding mission” is our goal, and not just new “churches,” then we are still “planting” and establishing work in new locations to fulfill our mission without multiplying church boards, etc.

What are the benefits to the “multi-campus” status?

“Multi-campus” reduces the need for the multiplication of such things as church boards and finance committees, which reduces the administration workload of the local pastor and frees his/her time to focus more on evangelism, discipleship, and equipping/training. In other words, if a pastor is planting “companies” and “churches,” he/she is automatically multiplying administration demands with boards and business sessions, but if a pastor is planting “campuses,” then he/she is simply multiplying evangelistic/discipling/worshiping/missional entities under the one church board of the mother church, thus streamlining administration and reducing the proliferation of administrative meetings and committees. The accountability and coaching dynamic might also prove to be much stronger between lay leaders and pastors since the multi-campus model always remains under the mother church pastor and church board. For some pastors and churches, who might prefer keeping the “reigns” a little tighter, this also might be a more attractive option. This also provides another option to “planting” that might be more acceptable to those churches not really excited about “losing” members/leaders and finances, which is often a roadblock to church planting in people’s minds. For the Conference Office, this proposal also keeps them in the loop of local churches reaching new zip codes and people groups, thus allowing officers to help oversee and coordinate the activities of local churches in certain regions as churches start overlapping, etc.