

Church Development

Process Phases

ENCOUNTER MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL



D-4: EXECUTING THE FIVE PHASES OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

As a ministry the goal of EMI is to provide Christian spaces where all are welcome to explore, experience and express God's love. To that end, we will continue to plant new churches in new places. The strategic plan below outlines the 5 phases for new church development: Team formation and training, Outreach, Mastering the Art of Ministry, Grand Opening, and Church Growth.

Step 1: Team Formation and Training

The Mission Director holds the responsibility for selecting, interviewing, and assembling the church planting team. Team members should be members in good standing and of good character.

[*Appendix D4—1b: Team Member Job Descriptions*](#)

Step 2: The Outreach Phase

In this phase of church planting, the team initiates visit to the selected city to gather individuals interested in establishing a new church space in their area. The recommended steps are as follows:

- **Intercession:** The team regularly comes together for prayer sessions aimed at influencing the city spiritually before taking physical action.
- **City Research:** Prior to launching outreach efforts, the team comprehensively studies the city, including existing Christian and LGBT initiatives and identifying influential figures. A contact list should be created, encompassing friends, families, acquaintances, community leaders, Gay Pride advocates, and social justice leaders in the city. Reach out to any known contacts living in the city.
- **Host Events:** The team may rent a facility monthly for 9-12 months to attract 20+ regular attendees who desire a local church. Each event should align with our mission and have clear, measurable objectives.

[*Resource: List of event ideas.*](#)

- **Gather Contact Information:** Every event should collect contact details (names, emails, addresses, and phone numbers) from attendees. The database must be maintained securely and exclusively used for church planting purposes.

- **Training Local Volunteers:** Identify potential church ministry heads among attendees and commence their training and mentoring across various church ministry areas outlined in the 8 Growth Structure.
- **Locate a Facility:** Research a suitable facility for church. It should be affordable, comfortable, convenient to local transportation, and in need of limited upgrades.

Once these aspects have been adequately addressed, it's time to begin training in the art of church ministry.

Step 3: Mastering the Art of Ministry

In this phase our goal is to prepare a church service that says, “We have prepared a place for you”. This involves practice, evaluation, and improvement. The aim is to optimize service quality, the environment, hospitality, and overall welcome prior to the Grand Opening. This phase enables us to implement our ministry training through simulated church services. Each service is evaluated to identify successes, shortcomings, and areas for enhancement all prior to our Grand Opening. Soft services typically commence when around 15-25 consistent attendees are gathered. When we believe we've fully readied ourselves, it's then the moment for the Grand Opening event.

Step 4: The Grand Opening Celebration.

The Grand Opening is an outreach opportunity, it is a pivotal moment, to attract new members, make a lasting impression, and establish a positive reputation. It represents the culmination of the prior phases. This is no ordinary event!

The Goal: To attract approximately 100+ attendees and to use the opportunity to introduce the new church, its benefits to the community, and invite the attendees to attend the church. The aim is from the 100+ to attract 30+ new attenders to the new church. To achieve this, meticulous attention must be given to the following aspects:

- **Venue Choice:** Decide where to hold the Grand Opening at new church location or opt for a venue such as hotel meeting room. Go nice, don't skimp on location.
- **Timing:** Choose best evening to hold the venue, a Saturday is recommended and how long the event should be. No more than 2 hours including social time.
- **Menu:** Cater the food and beverages (no potlucks).
- **The Invitations:** Use all marketing avenues available and affordable and make sure the invitation is clear, concise, and correct.
- **Program Content:** Design a captivating program. Important to end with a “call to action” where attenders are invited to the new church. Provide a sign-up sheet, filling out a card. It is very important to collect as much contact information as is possible. If we don't ask, we won't receive.
- **Post-Service Social Time:** This is your one chance to build a personal rapport. So, provide exceptional food, drinks (no potlucks) and equip all leaders with engaging conversation tips. Encourage people to fill out a card.

- **Swag Bag:** Present a Gift-Bag to all attendees which include a nice gift(s), information about the church, and an invitation to the next service.
- **Follow-up:** With the gathered contact information send a personal invitation to the church service or an upcoming event. Include a coffee gift card.
- **Pray, Prepare and Review:** Pray and prepare for new guests to attend your new services. Review on a regular basis the 8 Growth Systems to ensure you are doing all you can to introduce people to Christ, disciple them, and engage them in the mission.

Crucial Note: Underestimating the importance of this event would nullify all previous efforts. Hence, it's imperative to closely follow the recommendations outlined above. Here is a suggested program template:
Grand Opening Template.