

# **CHURCH PLANT APPLICATION & GUIDELINES**

**INITIATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
TOWARD COMPANY  
AND CHURCH STATUS**

*REVISED 09-13-06*

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## GETTING STARTED

New work, like a newborn child, is not expected to be an adult from its inception. Each situation is unique, but it is always necessary to use good judgment and meet certain objective criteria before proceeding. The following guidelines will be used by the Conference Church Growth Committee to evaluate and authorize the establishment of new Church Plant, Company and Church Status requests.

### **Potential for Growth in Membership**

The charter membership of a new Church Plant must be large enough to demonstrate the viability of the growth for this new work. If the proposed Church Plant will meet near an established church, there must be given specific reasons why it is needed, such as:

- Territory for evangelism is not effectively being reached by existing churches.
- Ministry to a significant people group in the area needs to be undertaken.

### **Vision and Verifiable Ministry**

A newly formed Church Plant must have the vision of eventually becoming a Company and an Organized Church. Steps in this direction need to be carefully planned and include:

- A Place to Meet. The Church Plant leaders, in cooperation with the Sponsoring Church, should locate an adequate site for the worship meetings.
- Growth in Ministry. The Church Plant must demonstrate the ability to operate a successful church program that includes and ultimately supports local church, local school, Conference and Adventist world-wide ministry and demonstrates a peaceful coexistence with the Sponsoring Church.

### **An Important Note About Church Planting and Pastoral Care**

Research and experience demonstrate that church planting is the fastest and most effective way for churches to grow. The Central California Conference strongly supports the "Priesthood of all Believers," and as such, many of the Church Plants will be lay-led.

Therefore, in order to obtain authorization for the formation of a Church Plant, the Sponsoring Church must have solid and verifiable evidence of the feasibility of the project. **Starting a Church Plant because of a church's internal difficulties, or because some individual is looking for a way to receive possible future employment as a pastor are not valid reasons.**

## How to Fill Out This Request Workbook

This workbook contains the basic criteria, policies, guidelines, and step-by-step procedures for requesting the establishment of a Church Plant, Company and Church Status within the Central California Conference.

### What is a Church Plant?

Church Plant status means that an organized church sees the need to develop a ministry for a particular target audience, or to plant new work in an un-entered area, so that the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church can be fulfilled. Authorization to obtain Church Plant status is by vote of the Central California Conference Church Growth Committee.

## How to Proceed

- Step 1**     Read this workbook.
- Step 2**     Fill-out pages 7-13 and submit the Request to the Church Growth Committee.
- Step 3**     The Church Growth Committee will study and evaluate the request to ascertain its viability for approval.

## Basic Policies and Guidelines Governing the Organization of Church Plants

### Overview

All Church Plants should come under the sponsorship of an organized church. The important reasons for a Sponsor are listed below. The primary formation of a Church Plant should be to develop a ministry for a particular target audience, or to plant new work in an unentered area, and by so doing to fulfill the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### The Sponsoring Church

- **Status**: Must be an organized church within the Central California Conference.
- **Relationship**: Must agree to provide adequate and real guidance in the administration, nurture and evangelism plans for the Church Plant and oversee/share in all financial responsibilities.

## The Sponsoring Church *(continued)*

- **Process**: First, it must secure approval from the church body at a duly called Business meeting. Secondly, it must fill out pages 7-13 of this booklet and submit the request to the Conference Church Growth Committee.
- **Stewardship**: Must be current in all its financial obligations including church expenses, accounts payable, loans, conference remittances and school subsidies.

## The Church Plant

- **Formation**: A Church Plant will be permitted to begin, even if they are primarily made up of members from already existing churches, when they can show there are valid and verifiable reasons for establishing the new work.
- **Sponsorship**: Until advanced to Company status, a Church Plant will remain an integral part of the Sponsoring Church. Tithe and offerings will be processed, membership will be kept, insurance coverage will be granted at/by the policy of the Sponsoring Church.
- **Name**: The choosing of the name to identify the proposed Church Plant should be given careful consideration. The identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church should not be obscured from its name.
- **Culture**: Although the ethnic makeup of the membership may vary and thus be reflective in church life, the DNA needs to be Adventist. A strong study time, worship service on Sabbath morning and mid-week services/small groups should be maintained. An evangelistic posture should be sought in all plans and programs.
- **Statement of Beliefs**: The charter members of the proposed Church Plant will be asked to sign the Statement of Beliefs document on page 9 expressing their desire to faithfully adhere to the beliefs, teachings, and practice as found in the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- **Church Organization and Authority**: The Church Plant will operate with the guidance of the Sponsoring Church under the delegated authority of the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- **Finances**: The finances of the Church Plant will be handled through the treasury of the Sponsoring Church. However, a copy of the Church Plant monthly remittance form will be filed with the Conference Treasury office to oversee the financial performance (Appendix A).
- **Review**: The Church Plant's viability will be reviewed periodically by the Sponsoring Church and the Conference's Church Growth Committee to ascertain if they should continue to function as a Church Plant toward the Company status or if they should be disbanded and rejoin the Sponsoring Church.

## Church Plant Authorization

- Central California Conference Church Growth Committee

## CRITERIA FOR CHURCH PLANTS

- A. There should be a minimum of 20 baptized members and must be working together in harmony with a Sponsoring Church.
- B. The organization should include the following functions:
  - 1. Leader
  - 2. Outreach Coordinator
  - 3. Adult Sabbath School Superintendent
  - 4. Children's Sabbath School Leader
  - 5. TreasuryTithe and offerings are to be collected, counted, recorded weekly on the remittance form and remitted to the Sponsoring Church for processing with a monthly summary to the Conference office/Treasury.
- C. The Sponsoring Church Board will be the Board on record for the Church Plant. However, the Church Plant will organize a sub-committee which will function as a local Board and give periodic reports to the Sponsoring Church Board.
- D. Financial Base:
  - 1. There must be at least 8 giving units, which would account for 40% of the group membership.
  - 2. There must be offerings sufficient to support local needs.
  - 3. Sponsoring Church Treasurer will remit all funds due to the Conference Treasury.
  - 4. The Church Plant Treasurer will be responsible to submit the monthly summary, which includes, membership, attendance, tithe, and offerings.
- E. Evangelism
  - 1. There must be specific plans for evangelistic events each year.
  - 2. It should have a goal of becoming a Company within **two years**. If the group does not reach this goal within two years, the group will be reviewed by the Church Growth Committee and may be disbanded.

The Sponsoring Church and the Central California Conference Church Growth Committee must approve the Church Plant status.

Any association of members that does not meet the above criteria will be considered a **small group/cell group** of the Sponsoring Church.

While in Church Plant status, it is recommended that a church building or property not be purchased. However, provisions and plans should be made for starting a building fund as soon as possible.

## PROFILE OF THE PROPOSED CHURCH PLANT

1) State the compelling reason why this Church Plant should exist: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Name of the Proposed Church Plant: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: The chosen name of the Church Plant should not obscure our Adventist identity.*

To be filled out and signed by the Designated Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Date

**Policy States:** "The Sponsoring Church must agree to provide adequate and real guidance in the administration, nurture and evangelism plans for the new Church Plant and oversee/share in all financial responsibilities."

3) Briefly describe how your Church Plant is going to interface with the Sponsoring Church:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) What is the address where the Church Plant is going to meet and what kind of facility is it?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5) How long has the group been meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) What Sabbath Schools, Worship Services and Ministries are being held? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) What are the proposed evangelism plans? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PROFILE OF THE PROPOSED CHURCH PLANT, CONTINUED

8) Describe your current financial base: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9) What is the average weekly attendance of:

Adult, Adventist members: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult, non-Adventist: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out the table regarding where most of the adults and children who attend live:

<b>Name of City Where People Live</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<i>Fresno (Example)</i>	<i>93720</i>	<i>4 miles</i>	<i>12 people</i>



## STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We, the charter members of the proposed Church Plant do hereby attest that we believe, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to live by and teach:

- 1) The 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Which include:
  - a. the Biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church;
  - b. the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary as it relates to the 1844 message;
  - c. the sanctity of the seventh-day Sabbath;
  - d. the last-day proclamation of the Three Angels' message.
- 2) Belief in church organization. This includes:
  - a. to support the church by our tithes and offerings and personal influence;
  - b. to follow Church Manual principles and guidelines;
  - c. to follow the Conference annual tithe/offering calendar;
  - d. to support the world-wide mission of the church.

Names/Signatures of charter members of the proposed Church Plant:  
(USE ADDITIONAL PAPER AS NEEDED)

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**Policy states:** “The primary mission of a Church Plant should be to develop a ministry for a particular target audience, or to plant new work in an un-entered area, and by so doing can fulfill the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Develop a brief Mission Statement which describes the reasons your Church Plant is being formed and the people you wish to reach:

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## PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY

### FACTS AND FIGURES

You can get the basic demographic information you will need to fill-out this page from these places:

- PlusLine (1-800-732-7587 or 1-800-SDA-PLUS). This is a free service from our Pacific Union Conference Office.
- City Planning Departments. Call/Visit the City Planning Department where you are located.
- The Local Library. The library should have information from the census available.

Ethnic Group	2000 Totals	2000 Percent	2004 Totals	2004 Percent
<b>Example</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>28%</b>
African-American				
Asian				
Caucasian/Anglo				
Hispanic				

*If possible find out what totals and percent of your particular ethnic group was represented in the above figures. (For instance, if a Filipino group was doing this research, then they should try to discover what percent of the Asian group above are Filipinos).*

Ethnic Group	2000 Totals	2000 Percent	2004 Totals	2004 Percent
<b>Example -Filipino</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>25%</b>

What is the primary language your Church Plant will be using? \_\_\_\_\_

## THE SISTERHOOD OF CHURCHES

Name the other Adventist Church Plants, Companies or Churches within a ten (10) mile radius of your proposed Church Plant. If none within radius, then list the two closest:

Church Plant/Company/Church	How Far Away?

Given the existence of the other churches/groups listed above, state why your Church Plant can have a unique mission in this area: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PROFILE OF THE SPONSORING CHURCH

Name of the Sponsoring Church: \_\_\_\_\_

To be filled out and signed by the Senior Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature/Date*

**Policy States:** "The Sponsoring Church must agree to provide adequate and real guidance in the administration, nurture and evangelism plans for the new Church Plant and oversee/share in all financial responsibilities."

Briefly describe how your church is going to interface with the Church Plant you wish to sponsor:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To be filled out and signed by the Conference Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature/Date*

How many Pastors/Bible Workers does the sponsoring church have? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Sponsoring Church currently sponsoring other groups? If so, which ones: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## FINANCES OF THE SPONSORING CHURCH

To be filled out and signed by the Conference Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Is the Sponsoring Church current in the remittance of tithe and offerings?

If not, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Sponsoring Church current with its Conference billings? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## SCHOOL SUBSIDIES OF THE SPONSORING CHURCH

To be filled out and signed by the Conference Vice President of Schools \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

What school is the Sponsoring Church a constituent of? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the Sponsoring Church been faithful in paying its school subsidies? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**An Important Note:** The church wishing to sponsor a Church Plant must complete each section on this page.

## FORMAL REQUEST & SIGNATURES

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We the members of the Sponsoring Church: \_\_\_\_\_

hereby request permission to initiate and nurture a new Church Plant in the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists which will be called \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in the city of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. We agree to follow all the specific policies and guidelines as outlined in this booklet and any working policies of the Central California Conference which governs Church Plants, Companies and Churches.

\*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader, New Church Plant

\*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

First Elder, Sponsoring Church

\*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor, Sponsoring Church

Sponsoring Church Business Meeting Date of Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Church Clerk

***\* This relationship is binding until the Church Plant becomes a Company or by action of the Church Growth Committee.***

## AUTHORIZATION

The Church Growth Committee of the Central California Conference is authorizing the formation of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church Plant which has met all the conditions set forth by voted Conference policy.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Executive Secretary

## CRITERIA FOR COMPANY STATUS

The following criteria are **guidelines** voted by the Church Growth Committee of the Central California Conference for the formation of a Company:

- A. Should be a Church Plant for at least one year and have demonstrated a positive trend with financial remittances and soul winning.
- B. There must be a minimum of 40 baptized members
- C. Must become a constituent of the nearest school (see item H. 5 below).
- D. A fully functional Church Board must be elected. However, it will function as a committee under the direction of the Conference Executive Committee.
- E. Membership and church discipline will be administered by the Conference Executive Committee (Church Manual, pg 39, 40).
- F. All members of the Church Plant will be transferred from the Sponsoring Church to the Conference Church. A Company cannot hold membership.
- G. The organization of a Company should include all leadership positions as it moves towards becoming a Church. These include: elders, deacons, clerk, treasurer, Sabbath School superintendents, Outreach Coordinator, etc.
- H. Financial Base:
  - 1. There should be at least 16 giving units, which would account for 40% of the Company membership.
  - 2. There must be offerings sufficient to support local needs.
  - 3. There must be a tithe base of at least 16 times the previous year's per-capita.

4. The Company Treasurer will remit all Conference funds. He/she shall have undergone training with the “Jewel” software program and obtain certification from the Conference Auditing department.\* An interview will be conducted between the Conference administration and the applicant leadership to confirm that the above criteria are fully complied with.

Implementation of the Executive Committee’s approval is subject to securing of TIN (Tax Identification Number) and opening a bank account. (This will insure uninterrupted processing of funds of the new Company).

\*Attach a copy of Treasurer’s training certificate to the Company application package.

5. The school constituency subsidy will be assessed on a graduated five-year plan starting at 20% and increasing by 20% per year until the 100% subsidy is reached.
6. Since a Company is independent from the Sponsoring Church, the required liability/property insurance policy costs will now be levied as applicable.

#### I. Evangelism

1. There must be specific plans for evangelistic events each year.
2. Should develop plans for becoming a Church within **two years**. If the Company does not reach the two-year goal, the Church Growth Committee will begin a review process.

- J. A plan for purchasing or building a church should be in place.



The Church Growth Committee must approve and recommend the formation of a Company to the Central California Conference Executive Committee.

## CRITERIA FOR CHURCH STATUS

The following criteria are **guidelines** voted by the Conference Executive Committee of the Central California Conference for the formation of a Church:

- A. Must be a Company for a minimum of one year and have demonstrated a positive trend with financial remittances and soul winning.
- B. Financial books must have been audited by the Central California Conference.
- C. There should be a minimum of 60 baptized members, of which a third (1/3) must be of membership as a result of evangelistic efforts.
- D. Must already be a school constituent and moving forward with the five-year 20% per year subsidy increase plan (see item F. 5 below).
- E. All members will be transferred from the Conference Church to the local church which now can administer and execute all rights of an organized church.
- F. Financial Base:
  - 1. There should be at least 24 giving units, which would account for 40% of the Church membership.
  - 2. There must be offerings sufficient to support local needs.
  - 3. There must be a tithe base of at least 24 times the previous year's per-capita.
  - 4. There should be a well established church building fund/program.
  - 5. The school constituency subsidy will be assessed on a graduated five-year (beginning at Company status) plan starting at 20% and increasing by 20% until the 100% subsidy is reached.
  - 6. Must be up to date with all remittances and debt payments.



G. There must be specific plans for evangelistic events each year.

H. Property

1. A plan for purchasing or building a church should be in place.
2. Ideally, a church building should already be purchased or building under way.



The Church Growth Committee must approve and recommend the formation of a Church to the Central California Conference Executive Committee.

Even though a Company is organized into a Church, by a vote of the Conference Executive Committee, it will not be official until a Conference Session (every three years) votes it into the sisterhood of churches.