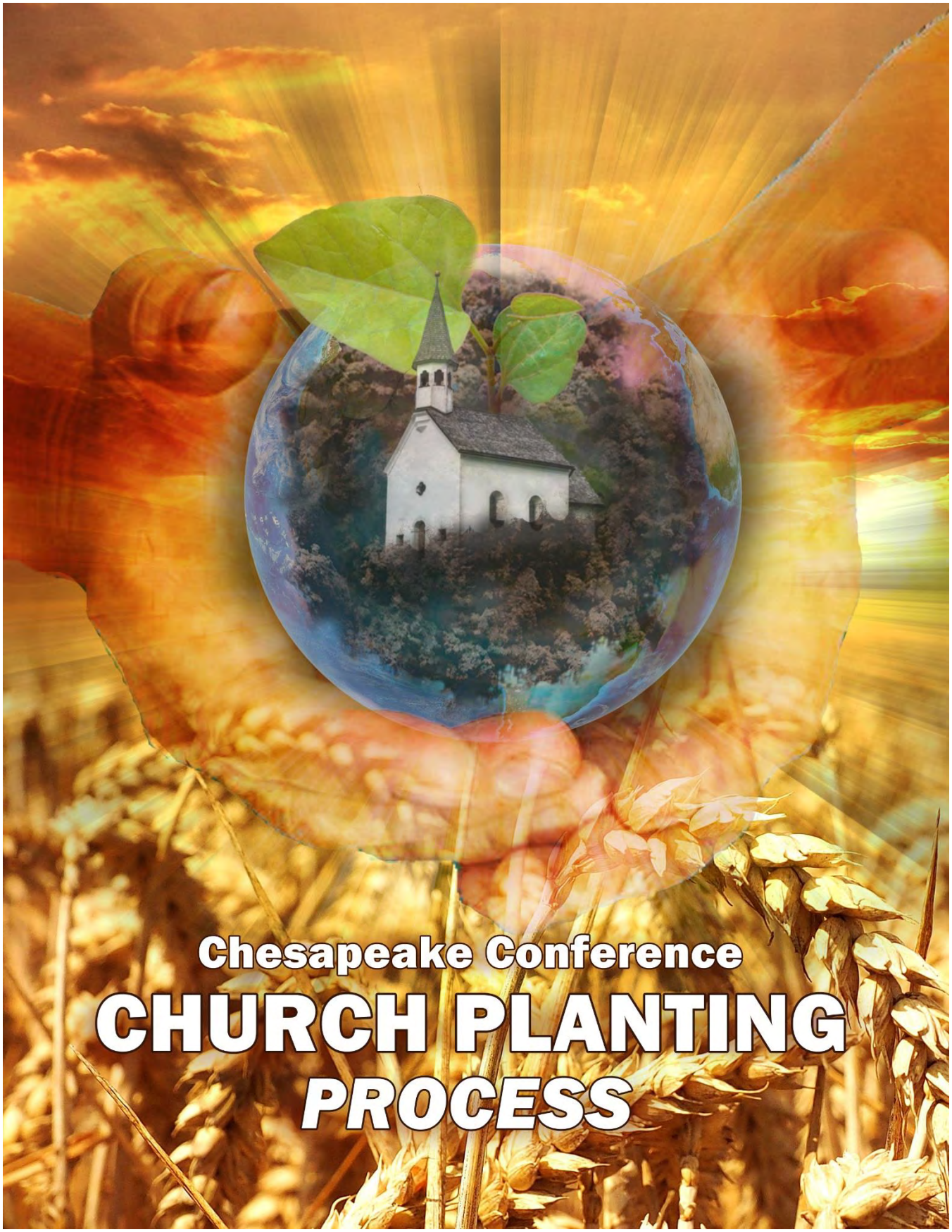
Chesapeake Conference
CHURCH PLANTING
PROCESS

CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department

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CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE CHURCH PLANTING PROCESS

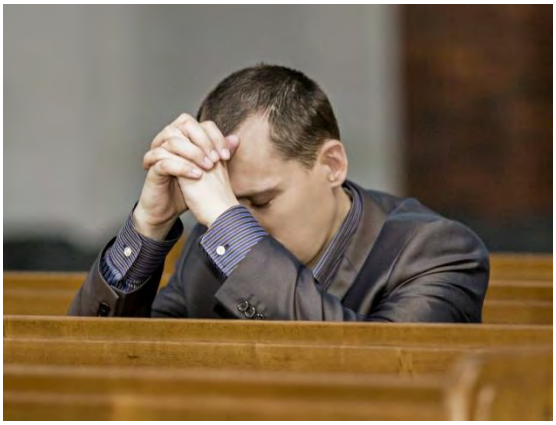
1. A lay person or pastor has the conviction to plant a church. If it is a lay person, he or she should express that desire to their local pastor. The pastor should then meet with the lay person to listen to them share their vision.

a. If a commitment card has been turned in from the SEEDS Conference or some other church planting event, the name should be brought to the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department who will share this document with the lay person and invite them to begin by sharing their desire with their pastor.

b. If the person wanting to plant a church is a Chesapeake Conference pastor, he or she may skip to step 2 and share his or her vision with the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Director. If the pastor is pastoring a Hispanic church, he or she should also share their vision with the Hispanic Ministries Director, who will communicate with the Evangelism Director.

2. The lay person, along with his or her pastor, should contact the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department and set up a time to meet with the evangelism director to share their vision. (If this involves a potential Hispanic church plant, they should meet with the Hispanic Ministries Director first, who will then share the vision with the Evangelism Director).

3. The lay person or pastor will then be assigned a coach and given the booklet Steps to Church Planting by Tom Evans. The coach will start meeting with the person to help them clarify their vision (for example, where to plant, what people group, why they want to plant, etc). The coach should be committed to meeting with the person on a monthly face to face basis as outlined in the Chesapeake Conference Strategy for Coaching Church Plant Leaders. If after a few meetings, the lay person decides they

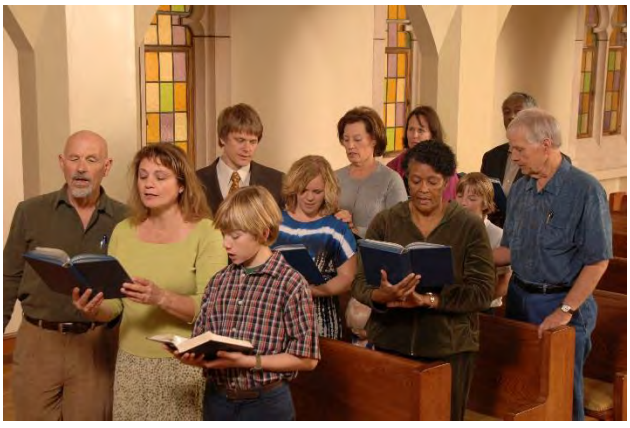


do not want to lead a church plant, the coaching appointments will cease.

a. In the Hispanic context, the local pastor will be the coach for the lay church plant leader. The Hispanic Ministries Department will provide training for the pastor to serve as a coach.

4. Once the vision has been clarified, the lay person should talk with their pastor about sharing the vision with their local church board. The purpose of sharing with the local church board is to give them the opportunity to take on the project and become the mother church. *(You may want to meet with the elders first and get them on board).* The lay person and pastor should present the PowerPoint on what it means to be a mother church. The church board will probably need 2-3 meetings to discuss and pray about this. The church board should then take a vote on sponsoring the church planting project and becoming the mother church. If they feel it is necessary to bring this to a church business session, that is fine.

a. If the local church does not wish to sponsor the church planting project or become the mother church, process this with your coach. The lay person may want to ask another area church if they wish to sponsor the project and become the mother church. Though it is preferable for a church plant to have a mother church, there may be some cases where a church plant is not connected to a mother church, but rather the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department will function as its support.

b. If the church planter is a Chesapeake Conference pastor and his/her church is not interested in sponsoring or supporting a church plant, he/she should discuss this with the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department.

5. Once the mother church has voted to sponsor the project, the lay person and pastor should complete the church planting request form and submit it to the Chesapeake Conference Evangelism Department for approval of the project from ADCOM.

a. If the request is for a Hispanic church plant, the church planting request form

should be submitted to the Hispanic Ministries director, who will share it with the Evangelism Director. The Hispanic Ministries Director will also join the discussion with ADCOM.

6. Once the church planting request has been approved by ADCOM, the church plant leader should begin the task of forming a core team/leadership team. Members of the core team should have the same or similar vision as the church plant leader or be willing to buy into it. Core team members can be chosen from the mother church in consultation with the pastor and/or church board. However, there may be members from other area churches who share the same vision who could be potential core team members. Out of courtesy, the church plant leader should first talk with the pastor of that church before recruiting any of his/her members. Gain the pastor's support and let him know what you are doing.

The church plant leader should review the chapter entitled *"Step 2: Church Plant Leadership Team Formed"* in the manual *"Steps to Church Planting: From Inception to Launch"* by Tom Evans. It will give essential principles on choosing and forming a core team/leadership team for a church plant.

7. Once a core team is formed, they should plan to meet together once a week for 6-12 months, preferably in someone's home. During these meetings they should read together the book of *Acts* in the **Bible** and *"Steps to Church Planting: From Inception to Launch"* by Tom Evans, and begin formulating plans and a strategy. During this time, the core team members will continue to attend Sabbath services at their home church. Sabbath services for the church plant should not be launched until after the 6-12 month incubation period. This ensures a core team that is well prepared, connected, and on the same page. Do not rush this.

During the incubation period, the group should begin ministries and outreach to the target area or target group their church plant is trying to reach.

8. When the time is right, begin Sabbath services. Plan regular outreach activities and conduct evangelistic meetings every year. At this point, the church plant should choose a treasurer who will be responsible for collecting tithes and offerings and giving it to the treasurer of the mother church. Tithes and offerings will still run through the mother church until the church plant becomes an established company *(which requires 25 baptized members).* However, the church plant should have access to their offerings through the mother church. If the church plant prefers to have their own bank account, they can work this out in consultation with the mother church.

9. When the church plant starts meeting for Sabbath services, they apply for *"group"* status with the Chesapeake Conference. At this point, the conference may designate pastoral support for the group. This could be in the form of a volunteer lay pastor, the current church plant leader, or a conference pastor. When the church plant reaches the mark of 25 baptized members, they should apply for *"company"* status. When the church plant reaches the mark of 50 baptized members, they should apply for *"church"* status within the conference. Please see Chesapeake Conference Guidelines for Church Establishment for additional requirements for group, company, or church status.