

# **Gulf Coast Baptist Association**

## **New Work Guidelines**

**July 22, 2002**

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>NAMB</b>	<b>North American Mission Board</b>
<b>MBCB</b>	<b>Mississippi Baptist Convention Board</b>
<b>GCBA</b>	<b>Gulf Coast Baptist Association</b>
<b>MCN</b>	<b>Multiplying Church Network</b>
<b>CPM</b>	<b>Church Planting Movement</b>

Note: These guidelines represent the spirit of evangelization that the Gulf Coast Baptist Association desires to foster in reaching our association for Christ. While these guidelines are sufficient enough to provide structure to begin the ministry of church planting, they will be modified in the future to reflect the dynamic changes that exist in the world of church planting. Please accept these as a good point of beginning, not the end of providing guidance to planting churches.

# **Gulf Coast Baptist Association Church Planting Guidelines**

## **Introduction**

In keeping with the spirit of the New Testament Church, the Gulf Coast Baptist Association (GCBA) is committed to sowing the seeds of the gospel through an aggressive movement of church planting. The need for church planting in the GCBA can be seen through the following facts.

1. We have a growing population in our three counties - over 250,000 strong.
2. We have a plateaued to declining Sunday School in the GCBA - approximately 5800 average attendance in 2002.
3. New church plants characteristically reach the lost at a faster rate than existing churches.
4. New church plants grow in all areas faster than an existing church.
5. New people are involved in leadership and participation at a faster rate in new work.
6. With 65 churches we are reaching 6,000 in Sunday School out of a growing population of 250,000 people. Assume we doubled the number of churches in 10 - 20 years. We could hopefully be touching between 15,000 to 25,000 or more.
7. Church planting is a very Biblical model for spreading the gospel.

## **Strategy for New Work**

### **OUR MOTIVATION**

- **The great commandment - passionate love for God**
- **The great commission - priority labor for God**
- **The great communities - pointed locations for God**

### **OUR METHODOLOGY**

- **Identify target areas through available planting probes and demographics.**
- **Determine types of churches needed.**
- **Establish priorities for new plants.**
  - Specify geographic areas in our three counties for church planting**
    1. **List all target areas**
    2. **Investigate available resources (finances, materials, equipment, mentoring, etc.)**
    3. **Design an action plan to begin the church with written agreements between partner churches and new congregations.**
    4. **Insure balance in all types of churches placed on the priority list.**
- **Coordinate partnerships**
- **Adopt church planting process to be implemented with cultural sensitivity and contextualization. Use various models depending on need.**

## **OUR MOVEMENT**

- **Before the association will move on beginning a new church plant, the following elements must be in place:**
  - 1. Agreement on the specific target area.**
  - 2. Development of a preliminary prospectus (includes the following: demographics, unique characteristics of area, and a plan of action.)**
  - 3. Identification of type of church and church planter needed.**
  - 4. Enlistment of church planter who fits target area.**
    - Sources of church planters:**
      - a. NAMB interns**
      - b. Nehemiah project New Orleans Seminary**
      - c. Referrals from local churches.**
      - d. Inquiries from various sources.**
  - 5. Church planter assessment or discovery tools to determine readiness and giftedness of planter.**
  - 6. Written church planting proposal to include but not be limited to:**
    - a. Development of an Intercessory prayer network.**
    - b. Purpose, Core Values, Vision Statements**
    - c. First year's proposed church budget**
    - d. Funding proposal**
    - e. First Year's strategy plan**
    - f. Core Group / Bible Study development plan**
    - g. Partner / Sponsor church and new congregation covenant (clearly list expectations, responsibilities, and support / accountability process.)**

## **GUIDELINES FOR NEW WORK**

### **GENERAL**

The GCBA will expect all mother churches and missions to comply with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Church Planting Policies. Compliance will insure maximum participation, accountability, and resources for the mission church and planter.

(MBCB planting strategy / policies are attached as Appendix I)

## THE MOTHER CHURCH OR MCN

### The Mother Church or Multiplying Church Network (MCN)

1. The GCBA will generally require all new work to have a sponsoring or “Mother” church or a be supported by Multiplying Church Network (MCN) which is a cluster of two or more churches. **FEW IF ANY EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.**
2. The Mother church or MCN will be expected to provide real and tangible support for the mission. People, materials, and finance are just some of the areas of support.
3. The Mother church or MCN can enter into a Partnership Covenant with the GCBA and MBCB to maximize support.
4. The Mother church or MCN will supply all required reports on a monthly basis to the MBCB and GCBA for the support received.

## THE MISSION

1. While every mission will have its own personality, they should generally resemble the following characteristics:
  - A. They should be **theologically sound.**
  - B. They should be **Biblically grounded.**
  - C. They should be **evangelistic** in focus.
  - D. They should be **somewhat contemporary.**
  - E. They should be **creative in methodology.**
  - F. They should be slanted more toward **expository preaching** in message content.
  - G. They should **NOT** be **issue oriented, or reactionary driven churches.** This is especially important when people desire to start a church from a split. In other words, the primary reason for a church start must always ultimately be “Kingdom Growth.”
2. The mission church will provide all reports as required by the Mother Church or MCN, the GCBA and MBCB.
3. The mission church will be expected to support the MBCB and GCBA financially.
4. The mission church will strive to start a new church in the first five years of its existence.

## The Gulf Coast Baptist Association

1. The GCBA will generally try to do four things in church planting.
  - A. Enlist - churches and planters to begin new work.
  - B. Equip - churches and planters to resource the new work.
  - C. Empower - churches and planters to carry out the new work.
  - D. Encourage - churches and planters as they go forward with new work.
2. Working closely with the Mississippi Convention Board Guidelines for Church Planting, the GCBA will on a case by case basis give consideration to associational support for and endorsement of new work. The GCBA new work team or strategy committee will not be under obligation to provide such support.
3. The GCBA will not endorse a mission or planter without participation in some combination of the Discovery Tool, Basic Training, or the North American Mission Board Assessment tool.
4. The GCBA will provide the necessary forms for application for assistance and endorsement. The association will enter into a Partnership Covenant with the following features:
  - A. A specified time for the Partnership - Generally 2 - 5 years.
  - B. The level of financial support over the period of the partnership.
  - C. Specified assistance other than financial over the life of the partnership.
  - D. Regular accountability and encouragement.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although no problems would be anticipated in a partnership, the GCBA reserves the right to terminate a partnership if a church, MCN or mission become non-compliant with basic requirements.

5. The GCBA will carry out ongoing education and awareness building ministries for new work. These include necessary support areas such as enlisting churches to prayer walk areas where new plants are anticipated.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Dollars for new work are limited and will most likely remain somewhat limited. The GCBA will only fund work that meets the requirements of the guidelines in this document and is a cooperative part of the associational strategy. Financial assistance from the association is limited and therefore we will not fund work that is not also MBCB endorsed.

Guidelines for state assistance are in the state guidelines - see **Appendix 1**

Our main partners in financing new work are:

**The Mississippi Baptist Convention  
The Gulf Coast Baptist Association  
The Mother church or MCN**

Other partners under development are:

Foundations  
Other Mississippi Baptist Partner / sponsor churches  
Friends and family of church planters

Financial amounts available will be equitable, but not necessarily equal for all mission starts.

Duration of financial assistance will be determined on a case by case basis. ie. One church might receive assistance for 2 years, another for 4 years.

The association cannot establish a dollar amount available for each new work at this time (July 2002). The monies will be distributed based upon need, the number of anticipated new starts, the amount required to fulfill a partnership's time commitment, and the rate at which money for planting can be replaced.

## **ORIGINS**

We understand that a church plant can be started in differing ways. Our desire is that all church plants be intentional and well supported. Some plants will begin with a core group from a mother church or MCN and will have a certain amount of structure at the beginning. Others may begin intentionally from a core Bible Study that was formed in a strategic geographical area. The GCBA will be supportive of a variety of methodologies as long as they fall within the broad guidelines of this document, particularly the areas of strategy and accountability.

## **OTHER SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

Church planting involves every organization of the GCBA. We will have need for churches to provide financially to the association for new work. We will need teams of prayer walkers to prayer walk various locations for new work. Special mission outreaches may be needed in a location before a church can be established. Church planting involves a significant emphasis on evangelism and soul winning. Church planting is a grand opportunity to involve every church in the GCBA in meaningful ministry.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The GCBA has two special circumstances that need to be addressed.

1. Reverting to Mission Status - on occasion the GCBA has received requests by churches to revert to mission status because of declining membership, financial needs, etc. Because of the emphasis on properly supporting new work, all future requests would have to fall under the New Work guidelines stated in this document. Since the MBCB does not consider any work “new” that is more than two years old, any church wanting to revert to mission status would be required to be “rebirthed” as a mission. This would mean turning over funds and property to the GCBA and being rebirthed with Mother church or MCN with full support of the GCBA and MBCB.
  
2. Existing Missions - The GCBA has two missions already in existence as of July 23, 2002.
  - a. The Templo Bautista Emanuel, a mission of FBC Bay St. Louis, was formed under the new guidelines of the MBCB and of these anticipated guidelines for the GCBA. We already have a covenant agreement between the GCBA, MBCB, FBC Bay St. Louis, and the mission. No further action will be required.
  
  - b. The Vietnamese Baptist Mission in Biloxi, MS, founded in 1981 is presently a mission of First Baptist Church, Biloxi. The New Work Team will work with the Vietnamese Mission and the mother church to bring them under these guidelines.
  
  - c. After approval of these guidelines by the Executive Board of the GCBA, and after the New Work Team formulates a new partnership with the Vietnamese mission, Items 2 - a., b, and c, of this section will cease to be a part of these guidelines.

Appendix I

# Mississippi Baptist Church Planting Strategy

In the year 1900, Mississippi's population was 1,551,270. That year, Southern Baptists impacted the state through the ministries of 1,562 churches and 55 associations in partnership with the Mississippi Baptist Convention. In the year 2000, Mississippi's population was 2,844,658 and the Mississippi Baptist Convention was composed of 2,077 churches and 68 associations. In a 100-year period the state of Mississippi has experienced an 83% increase in population, but only a 33% increase in the number of Southern Baptist churches. In 1900, there was one Southern Baptist church for every 993 persons living in the state. In the year 2000, there was one Southern Baptist church for every 1,370 persons in the state. Mississippi's population continues to grow, while more than half our residents are unchurched. Mississippi Baptists need to strengthen and revitalize existing churches, but also plant new churches in strategic locations that can reach all Mississippians with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **WHY PLANT A CHURCH IN MISSISSIPPI?**

It is easy to assume that Mississippi is over-churched, but in proper perspective Mississippi is a mission field so populous that it can't be won to Christ without starting new churches. God is bringing people to Mississippi from literally all over the world! It is our opportunity to plant an authentic, culturally relevant Southern Baptist church in strategic locations to reach the more than two million residents of the state who do not attend any church. We are constantly challenged to present the never changing message of Jesus Christ to an ever-changing society and culture. In response to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, a church planting strategy challenges "'On Mission Christians'" to evangelize globally and make disciples of all people groups.

Experience demonstrates that churches that plant other churches tend to experience more rapid growth than those not involved in reproducing. God seems to bless these churches in miraculous ways.

Someone has said:

"To grow something that lasts a season, plant flowers,  
To grow something that lasts a lifetime, plant trees,  
To grow something that lasts through eternity, plant churches."

In a recent publication, *Seven Steps to Planting a Church*, the North American Mission Board, S.B.C. presents a compelling argument for planting new churches.

1. More than 170 million people in America do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Planting churches can accelerate the rate of leading people to Christ.
2. Planting churches is the most effective way to reach unchurched people. One estimate indicated that 60 percent of adults who join new congregations were previously not active in church.

3. New congregations grow faster than established congregations. They reach about two-and-one-half times more people per member than older churches.
4. Additional church units are necessary to reach the growing population. At the current yearly rate of one baptism for every 27 resident members, Southern Baptist churches would need 441 years to reach today's lost population (254,105,000 or 68.9% of U.S. total).
5. Sometimes, people perceive traditions of older churches to be barriers to participation. Some people are more likely to attend and participate in a new church.
6. Mission congregations are needed in places where spiritual vacuums result from churches moving away.
7. Racial and ethnic groups need churches that recognize and celebrate their background, language, and cultural needs.
8. Pockets of people may be missed by churches. Some people groups, because of lifestyle, socioeconomic status, or other reasons, may not respond to existing churches. A new church can use approaches related to the immediate needs of these groups.
9. Communities with large numbers of unchurched people need evangelical congregations.
10. Housing patterns may be a hindrance to reaching people. A new congregation may be needed within a housing development, multi-housing unit, or high-rise.
11. New communities and newly developed areas need new congregations.
12. New congregations enlist additional people to work in kingdom business, providing opportunities for expanded Christian service and growth.
13. Multiplying congregations means multiplying Christian workers, missionaries, baptisms, witnessing church members, Bible study groups, mission support, and spiritual growth.
14. Planting congregations opens new doors for people to enter the church.

### **HOW IS THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION INVOLVED IN CHURCH PLANTING?**

The M.B.C.B. through its **Strategic Missions Department** partners with the North American Mission Board, local churches and associations to plant new churches throughout Mississippi. Cooperation is a Baptist distinctive and is of significant importance to Southern Baptists. God can give the vision for church planting to any individual or group; however, transitioning from vision to plan, place and process is best done through cooperative effort and teamwork. The Strategic Missions Department will endeavor to organize a support network of partners to enhance the success possibilities for every new church planted.

### **WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN CHURCH PLANTING?**

There are numerous resources available when the state convention, association, local churches,

and caring individuals offer what God has entrusted to their care. The first avenue of resourcing focuses on **DISCOVERY** of a location, need, and the resources available to start a new church. Some Discovery tools include: demographic analysis and field assessments, associational probes, sponsorship covenants, consultations, key churches, financial assistance through limited congregational grants, the Nehemiah Project and a prayer ministry for church planting.

The second avenue of resourcing focuses on **DEVELOPMENT** of the church planter and mission. This includes orientation, assessment, basic training, mentoring, networking and implementation of human resources and support services.

The third avenue of resources focuses on **DEPLOYMENT** of a core group of volunteers, trained specialists, skilled leaders and sponsoring churches committed to being labor intensive in building Acts 1:8 congregations, comprised of ““On Mission Christians,”” who will ultimately become involved in a Church Planting Multiplication movement.

## **HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN CHURCH PLANTING?**

Mississippi Baptists have many opportunities to become involved in a church planting movement by praying, giving, going, and serving.

**PRAYER** is the vital key for successful church planting. The need is obvious for hundreds of Baptists to earnestly pray for the locations, church planting team and unreached people groups in Mississippi, who can be reached for Christ through a new church.

**GIVING** is absolutely essential. We rejoice in the faithful financial support of Mississippi Baptists through the Cooperative Program, Associational Missions, the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering and the Mississippi Baptist Foundation to resource new church starts.

**GOING** to be on mission with God is what Mississippi Baptists are all about. A church planting movement mobilizes mission volunteers to go to work in the mission fields within our own state, with an eye toward the harvest.

**SERVING** as a church planter, mission pastor, core group member, or ministering through volunteerism can be of great value in Kingdom building. God continues to call, empower and equip people to be involved in planting new churches. He calls His people to join Him in the selection, planting, cultivation and harvesting process. Out of the harvest our future church planters will be born.

The assigned task of the Strategic Missions Department is to encourage churches and associations to carry out the Great Commission, beginning at home in Mississippi. As a key strategy for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, church planting will improve the church to population ratio and membership to population ratio in every county of the state and bring multitudes to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

## **WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

The local Southern Baptist association is the best place for initial contact about church planting. Most associations have developed a missions committee (council/team) for the purpose of

addressing the need for new churches within the association. Many local churches have great interest, leadership and resources to invest in beginning new churches. The Strategic Missions Department of the M.B.C.B. is always available to partner with others in church planting possibilities.

## **CHURCH PLANTING IN MISSISSIPPI**

Strategic Missions Department

### **MBCB**

**I. Vision Statement** The Strategic Missions Department, in partnership with associations and churches, will lead Mississippi Baptists to plant as many new culturally relevant, reproducing churches as needed to reach the non-Christian and unchurched population of Mississippi.

### **II. Mission Statement:**

The Strategic Missions Department will strategically and catalytically partner with every viable unit of Mississippi Baptist Life to discover, develop, and deploy the best possible resources and support systems for starting healthy, reproducing, evangelistic, Baptist congregations, wherever needed in Mississippi.

### **III. Objectives of the Strategic Missions Department: In Partnership**

- a. Discover the best places or people groups to target for church planting.
- b. Develop the best possible church planting plan for each target area or unreached people group.
- c. Deploy resources and persons to implement the church planting strategy.

### **IV. Core Values:**

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. Kingdom of God    | f. People         |
| b. Christ            | g. Culture        |
| c. Church            | h. Integrity      |
| d. Great Commandment | i. Innovation     |
| e. Great Commission  | j. Accountability |

### **V. Key Principles:**

The following key principles are critical to making important and discerning decisions related to both established and new churches. The following are the most important of our core beliefs:

- a. All of God's churches are important.
- b. A new church is usually more evangelistically effective than is an older church.

- c. The potential of churches, associations, and the convention in partnering to make a significant contribution to the Kingdom of God is worthy of recognition and enhancement.
- d. The role of the church to participate in local and global missions is encouraged, recognized, and honored.
- e. The role of the local church in evangelism, discipleship, and ministry deserves validation in the church planting process.
- f. The leadership ability of the church planter is extremely important to the success of a new church plant.

**VI. Implementation:**

Research and experience have led most church planters to function within the boundaries of the following:

- a. It is usually easier to start churches where there are more people and where people are new to the locale.
- b. Adequate resources contribute significantly, but do not guarantee, the success of a church plant.
- c. The more skilled the leadership of a new church effort, the greater the possibility of a successful and healthy church start.
- d. A new church is needed in every place that the number of un-churched and/or non-Christians is growing faster than the church membership.
- e. The sooner a new church start can take responsibility for providing the major amount of needed resources lessens the likelihood of dependency on outside sources.

**VII. Strategic Missions Department Task Priorities**

**a. Climate Priorities**

Create a positive climate for a church planting multiplication movement.

Develop and implement a concerted effort of prayer for church planting.

Create an atmosphere conducive to accelerating the process of planting churches in each association.

Effectively communicate the need, possibilities and methods for establishing new churches.

Develop a clear understanding of the people and environment of the association.

**b. Personnel Priorities**

Personnel is included as a priority because church planting is labor intensive. Achieving the church-planting mission cannot be done without personnel.

Enlist, affirm, train, and deploy equipping ministers

to plant churches.

Discover, involve, and develop persons called to be involved in church planting.

### **c. Resource Priorities**

Identify and deploy God's resources -- spiritual, human, material, financial -- for planting churches.

### **d. Implementation Priorities**

Partner with God, churches, associations and individuals in planting churches.

Provide churches, associations and individuals a process for planting churches.

Establish a network of church-planting systems that will be reproducing.

## **VIII. COOPERATIVE FUNDING ISSUES**

### **a. General Issues**

#### **1. Priority**

It is important to recognize that the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and the Strategic Missions Department must practice good stewardship with funds entrusted to their care. Because the need is great and funds are limited, this necessitates a concerted effort on all parties involved to invest funds as prayerfully, frugally, carefully and strategically as possible.

Funds must be allocated according to priority needs. The intent of the Strategic Missions Department is to prioritize funding where the following can be assured:

- a. The target group is the best defined and/or the target area is the best available.
- b. The best church planting leadership available is committed to and trained for the task.
- c. The best support system available is adequate to successfully implement a church planting plan, customized for the target locale or group.

#### **2. Amounts**

Some church planting projects will cost more than others. Not every church plant needs enormous amounts of money. Some can be done without help from outside sources, and such should be encouraged. This allows M.B.C.B. funding to be directed to the areas and persons of greater needs. The Strategic Missions Department utilizes various funding formulas (stated below). These options seek to provide financial support in keeping with the need of the target location or people group while affirming the leadership plans and contributions of the local church and/or association that may serve as a sponsoring entity.

### 3. Dependency

It is generally recognized that at some point a new church can take responsibility for its own financial future, becoming self-sustaining and/or self-supporting, and capable of dealing responsibly with its own future. Some studies have indicated that a plurality of support from sources other than those that will determine the future of the new church will often result in unhealthy dependence on the outside sources of funding. The goal for a new church is to be self-sustaining and self-supporting within two to three years. Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

#### b. Funding: Grant Assistance for New Churches

##### Purpose:

To assist new churches by providing financial help to aid them in becoming self-supporting, multiplying churches, committed to prioritizing the Great Commission. All grant assistance is based upon priority considerations and is subject to availability of funds.

##### Guidelines

1. A church that requests Grant Assistance must be in friendly cooperation with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and a Baptist association. Cooperation will be evidenced by contributing to world missions through the Cooperative Program, associational missions, and the state mission offering.
2. The application must be received in the Strategic Missions Department, M.B.C.B., at least 120 days, three (3) months prior to the beginning of approved assistance. Allocations are made (prorated) for the calendar year. The proper sequence of securing financial support should be:
  1. The New Church
  2. The Association(s)
  3. The Sponsoring Church(es)
  4. The State Convention
3. The Strategic Missions Department will negotiate a Cooperative Funding Agreement between partnering entities (church, association, state convention, etc.).

Grant Assistance for new churches is approved annually with a three-year phase out. Congregations will be evaluated for further contributions on a case by case basis, should support be deemed necessary for years four and five. Renewal of a grant is not automatic. Applications for renewal must be submitted on an annual basis with approval based upon performance review.

Upon approval of the Grant Assistance Application, a start-up gift will be given to the new church. An additional gift will be given upon successful completion of the state sponsored Assessment and Basic Training offered to the Church Planting Team. The North American Mission Board offers additional resource incentives for churches, who choose to participate in the training program, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board will be responsible for expenses related to Assessment and Basic Training.

4. Each new church will be expected to participate in some key training events as offered by the state convention and local association that will enhance church growth and development. Funds to attend key training events will often be supplemented by the association, sponsor or M.B.C.B. Departments.

#### c. Funding Limitations

1. The new church is expected to file a monthly report to the Strategic Missions Department, association(s), and sponsoring church(es). Failure to submit a report for three consecutive months, without previous permission of the Strategic Missions Department Director, will result in forfeiture of funds for that three month period and termination of the grant for the balance of the year.

2. The new church will operate under the authority, policies and guidance of the sponsoring church or entities.

3. Grant Assistance will be limited to new church starts. New is understood to mean 24 months or less.

4. Churches older than 24 months, transferring to a Southern Baptist association from another denomination, can not be considered as a new church start. Such congregations, in cases of ““extreme need,”” may apply for assistance from the Pastoral-Church Building Aid Committee.

5. Churches receiving Grant Assistance for New Churches can not receive additional funding from the Pastoral-Church Building Aid account, nor from the New Work account of the Strategic Missions Department.

6. An adversarial relationship with sponsoring entities or failure to remain in friendly cooperation with the association and Mississippi Baptist Convention will terminate funding considerations.

7. Priority allocations will be granted to intentional church starts, less than 24 months old, that are not the result of a church split. On a case by case basis, exceptions will be made, when the association can endorse the new congregation, assuring that sufficient time has passed to seek reconciliation and that grant assistance from the state convention would not further intensify conflict. In such cases a one-year waiting period is advisable before requesting financial assistance from the state convention.

8. Each new church planter must meet the U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Natural Services Employment eligibility verification guidelines, and agree to a criminal background check, to receive Mississippi Baptist Convention Board assistance.

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