

## **From Rehab to Reconciliation: The Story of an Urban Church Planter**

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*“Surround yourself with wise counsel and plan on the church taking twice as long as anticipated to get on its feet, three times as much money as you thought, and being ten times harder than you imagined.”*  
Church Planter from Oklahoma

The purpose of this workshop is to examine the church planting process in an urban context utilizing Grace Baptist Church of Hamtramck as a case study. In their primer on church planting, *The Y-B-H Handbook of Church Planting (Yes, But How?)* [Xulon Press, 2005], McNamara and Davis compare the process of church planting to the life cycle of a human: conception, prenatal, birth and infancy, adolescence and growth, and finally, adulthood and reproduction. These five cycles will be discussed generally to guide the discussion with direct application to how they have been and are being realized in the culturally diverse, impoverished, inner-city community of Hamtramck, Michigan.

### ***The Conception Stage***

This stage includes the preparation of the church planter including his increasing desire to see a church planted, his vision for the community to be targeted, the gathering of a core group, and the determination of which church planting model will be utilized. McNamara and Davis suggest that the prospective church planter must ask the following questions:

1. “Why should a new church be planted?” (Motivation)
2. “Where should a new church be planted?” (Location)
3. “Whom will we be reaching with our new church?” (Target Audience)
4. “How will we uniquely reach these people?” (Strategy)
5. “With whom will we plant this church?” (Team Development)
6. “What church planting model will we follow?” (Methodology)
7. “How much will it cost to plant a church? How will the church planter be supported?” (Finances)

Notes:

### ***The Prenatal Stage***

The growth that occurs during the prenatal period is crucial to the normal, productive development of the child after the birthing process. Likewise, there are many tasks that must be accomplished prior to the official launch of the church to ensure success. The Y-B-H Handbook identifies seven crucial components that should be in place prior to the official launch:

1. pre-evangelism activities in the target area should be implemented to identify receptive people;
2. an evangelistic strategy should be planned out and initialized;
3. **a core group must be gathered and mobilized (trained);**
  - Mission Statement
  - Vision Statement
  - Core Values
  - Statement of Faith
  - Covenant Statement
  - Goals with a timeline
4. leaders for small group ministry need to be trained;
5. a multiplying small group ministry should be in place;
6. essential ministry systems should be in place;
7. final preparations for public worship should be completed.

Notes:

### ***The Birth and Infancy Stage***

This life stage begins with the first official *public* worship service and the period immediately following. According to McNamara and Davis the primary concern at this point is one of readiness. The primary question is this: has the core group been trained thoroughly and is it large enough to carry out the immediate ministry needs? The success of this stage is largely dependent upon what has happened in the prenatal stage. Some immediate concerns which will arise after the first public launch are:

1. **How will you handle discipleship?**
2. How will you handle issues that require discipline?
3. How will you handle financial/material needs?
4. Who can serve?
5. When will you formally charter as a local church?

Notes:

### ***The Adolescence Stage***

The adolescence stage is marked by growth and independence. While growth is healthy and expected it does not come without some discomfort and stress at times. During this stage the evangelism outreach should increase as the body grows numerically and spiritually. The church at this stage should be giving attention to authentic worship, discipleship, evangelism, outreach, newcomer care, and assimilation.

### ***Adulthood and Reproduction***

Just as healthy adults are able to function on their own and are capable of responsible reproduction, the same holds true for the mature local assembly. At this stage the body should be sending out church planters locally and around the world to see the Great Commission fulfilled.

*Jay has been serving the Lord in Hamtramck, Michigan (a city within the city of Detroit) since 2006. What began as a Bible study at dining room table has slowly grown into what is now Grace Baptist Church of Hamtramck. Jay is burdened to see the African-American community of Hamtramck and the surrounding city of Detroit glorify God as people hear the Gospel and respond to its radical, life-changing call.*