



Church Planting Playbook

Mercy Road Family of Churches

LIVE BOLDLY. LOVE DEEPLY.

www.mercyroad.church

WE EXIST
to see people
FAR from God
disciplined into
a PASSIONATE
relationship
with JESUS.

Playbook Content.

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The Overview.

Thank you for taking time to utilize Mercy Road Church's Church Planting Playbook. This playbook was created to accomplish two crucial initiatives:

- 1) Communicate Mercy Road's core DNA
- 2) Provide a framework for the process of planting a Mercy Road church.

This strategic resource is designed to be a hub for all things Mercy Road DNA and Mercy Road church planting. The primary goal is that each Mercy Road church will deeply reflect and model our core DNA for decades to come.

The playbook will be used by Mercy Road Church planters and lead pastors. Anyone who desires clarification on how a Mercy Road Church runs should refer to this playbook. However, this can never be a solo resource. This playbook should work in conjunction with gaining hands-on experience in a Mercy Road Church.

Mercy Road's Church Planting Playbook consists of an introduction and a structured guide for three different phases of the location to plant process. The introduction includes the mission, vision, and core values that represent the DNA of all Mercy Road churches, along with the model for how we implement this core DNA. Following the introduction, the playbook is divided into three phases of the church planting process. This playbook addresses the logistics of how we successfully launch all Mercy Road churches.



Josh Husmann
President
Mercy Road
Family of Churches

02. Introduction.

Introduction: Who we are and what is core to our DNA

Mercy Road's vision includes four Movement Maker statements (our Motto, Model, Mission, and Movement). All four statements are critical to our direction for each Mercy Road church. Also crucial to Mercy Road's DNA is the implementation of our Five Core Values and our Theological Beliefs that influence everything we do.

1. The "WHY":

Mercy Road Church's 4 Movement Maker Statements:

Motto: Live boldly, love deeply

Model: Follow Jesus Up, In, and Out

Mission: We exist to see people far from God disciplined into a passionate relationship with Jesus

Movement: To reach a million people for Christ in the state of Indiana through multiplication

Five Core Values: (ADDENDUM)

Passionate Worship – We believe we must diverge from the complacent Christian life and worship of God. We believe the whole person must fully unashamedly worship God both corporately on the weekends and in our daily lives.

Intentional Mission – We believe Christians are called to live a two-fold mission: to help those in need and share our faith. The two are always better together than apart.

Spiritual Apprenticeship – We believe discipleship is the key to seeing people far from God transform into passionate followers of Jesus. We believe discipleship is best done life-on-life in closed groups like Jesus did. (Not one-on-one)

Unified Community – We believe no one should ever be alone. We are called to community; unified on major issues and agreeing to disagree on minor issues.

Strategic Generosity – We believe in radical generosity of our time, talents, and treasures. All Mercy Road churches work toward giving 50% of the total giving outside the walls of the church by year ten.

These core values are the specific pursuits of Mercy Road. We believe they define true life fulfillment for everyone. They are our contextualized summary of the Biblical purposes of the Church. We hire staff, spend money, and develop programs based solely on these 5 core values.

Theological Values:

Our basic beliefs about God aren't just theoretical... they shape our actions.

Bible > God wrote a book.

Trinity > God: Three in One

Father > God is great and good

Son > God became human

Holy Spirit > God is always present

Eternity > Somewhere forever

Humanity > God's image bearers

Salvation > God's only way

Church > The physical Body of Jesus Christ

The Bible – God wrote a book – The Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired Word of God, the final and trustworthy authority for faith and practice. The Bible is a direct connection with God in which He reveals who He is and what His expectations are for our lives. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it was inspired by God, the Bible is truth without error and is found today exactly as God intended it to be. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the

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community of faith. The Bible clearly reveals the essentials necessary for salvation and the basics of how to conduct our lives. It is the supreme standard by which human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

(Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Trinity – God: Three in One – God has existed in relationship with Himself for all eternity. He exists as one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although each member of the Trinity serves different functions, they each possess equal power and authority. *(Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 4:24; 14; Galatians 4:6; 2 Peter 1:17; Psalm 2:7ff; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:8; Psalm 51:11; 1 John 4:13; Acts 5:3-4)*

The Father – God is great, God is good – God is great: He is all powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, unchanging, completely worthy of our trust, and above all, holy. Because He is righteous, we can trust Him as the ultimate judge of moral authority, and He deserves our reverence. It is in Him that we live, move and exist. God is good: He is our Father. He is loving, compassionate, and faithful to His people and His promises. He genuinely cares and is concerned with each of His creations. *(Exodus 3:14; Numbers 23:19; Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; Psalm 11:4-6; Malachi 3:6; John 3:16; 4:24; 5:25; 14:1; Acts 17:28; Romans 3:3-4)*

The Son – God became human – Jesus Christ is the Son of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, fully divine and fully human, the eternal and pre-existent Word. By His death, Christ made full atonement for our sins, and by His resurrection, He showed Himself to be the Lord and giver of life to all who believe. He is the only plan for bringing people who are enemies of God back into a right relationship with God. He lived a perfect life so that He could be a substitution for us in reconciling us with God, who is perfect. He received punishment for our sins when He died on the cross to satisfy God's wrath. He defeated death in His resurrection so that we could have eternal life. He overcame sin, death,

and evil to set the world right. He ushered in the Kingdom of God here and now and for eternity. *(Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 28:5-6; Luke 1:34-35; 22:70; 24:46- 47; John 1:1-3, 14; 10:30; 11:25-27; 14:6; 17:1-5; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23- 26; 8; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 5:19- 21; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 12:2; 13:8; 1 John 4:14-15)*

The Holy Spirit – God is always present – His presence assures us of our relationship with Christ. He guides believers into all truth, and exalts Christ. He convicts people of their sin, God's righteousness, and the coming judgment. He comforts us, gives us spiritual gifts, and makes us more like Christ. *(Genesis 1:2; Psalms 51:11; 139:7 ff; Isaiah 6:1- 3; Joel 2:28-32; Mark 1:10; Luke 1:35; 4:1; 11:13; 12:12; John 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 13:2; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:17)*

Eternity – Somewhere forever – Humans were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God and given over to Satan for eternity is Hell. To be eternally in union with God is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are places of eternal existence. Jesus Christ will return visibly, at which time He will raise the dead and judge all people. Believers will enjoy eternal fellowship with God as they participate in the fullness of His eternal reign, while unbelievers will suffer eternal separation from God in Hell. *(Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; John 3:16, 36; Romans 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-15)*

Humanity – God's image bearers – Humans are made in the image of God and are the supreme object of God's creation. Humanity was created to have fellowship with God, but became separated in that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, human beings cannot attain a right relationship with God through our own effort. Every human

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personality is uniquely created, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect and Godly love.

(Genesis 1:26-30; 2:7, 18-19; 3; Psalms 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12-21; 6:6; 7:14-25; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Ephesians 2; Colossians 1:21; 3:9-11)

Salvation – God’s only way – The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the only way of salvation through the forgiveness of sin. Salvation occurs when people place their faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus as sufficient payment for their sin and as a redeeming of the created order of God. Salvation is a gift from God and it cannot be earned through our own efforts. Through Christ, the believer becomes a new creation whose mind and will are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit from loving sin, to loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, and loving all people as we love ourselves.

(Isaiah 1:18; 53:5-6; 55:7; Matthew 1:21; 22:37-38; 27:22-28:6; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2:21; 4:12; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; Romans 1:16-18; 3:23-25; 5:8-10; 6; 8; 10:9-10; 13; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; Ephesians 2:8-22; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 9:24-28; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20)

The Church – God’s design for community – The church is a local community of regenerated believers unified through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. It is committed to the teachings of Christ, to obeying all of His commands, and it seeks to bring the gospel to the world. The Church works together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ. Such believers claim a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, follow the Lord in believer’s baptism by immersion, share in the Lord’s Supper, gather regularly for worship, and covenant for mutual edification and care-giving. That the Church is called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and God’s reconciling grace in the power of the Holy Spirit, inviting persons to receive salvation and follow Christ as His disciples. As

disciples, we seek justice for all persons and the reform of society.

(Matthew 16:15-19; 28:18-20 Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 1:8; 16:30-33; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:26-28; Eph. 1:22-23; Hebrews 10:23-25; James 1:27; 2:8)

2. The “HOW”

Following Jesus: Up, In, Out

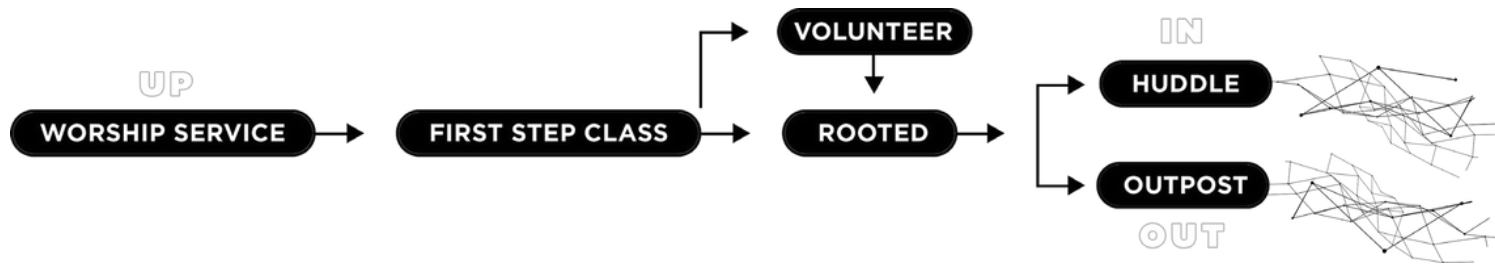
UP - (Core Values: Wholehearted Worship, Unified Community)

Worship Experience - We value a relevant and passionate worship model that connects with all people right where they are. Younger generations want to know that if they’re going to give an hour or two of their time on a Sunday morning that we really believe the things we say. So we are unashamed to worship God passionately at our gatherings! We believe in worship evangelism that as we truly worship those in the room know we genuinely want to connect with God.

Bible Teaching - We value teaching God’s Word in a relevant way. We want to connect people to God through His Word and respond to His message in practical ways. We want to encourage practical obedience to what He tells us through Scripture in our context today. We gather for a high impact message and passionate ultra contemporary worship designed to meet with the Father, grow closer to Him, and to empower each person to live out our two-fold mission: to help those in need and proclaim the Kingdom of God (the Gospel of Jesus).

Presence Evangelism - We have found when we truly connect with God in our (UP) vertical relationship with the Father through worship and Scripture that it often leads to evangelistic outcomes. We value depth in teaching and worship during our upward expression but not at the expense of making the Gospel irrelevant to people far from God. We WANT people to surrender their lives to Jesus as Lord in our worship gatherings!

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Engagement Pathway - Our Engagement Pathway is the primary way we are attempting to make fully devoted followers of Jesus. It is the discipleship plan for our church and all components of the pathway should be seen as “church”, not just the worship gathering. Our model is not entirely linear, but for the sake of clarity for most American Christians, we’ve designed the pathway as if a person’s first experience is the larger worship service (this is not always the case). You can see the engagement pathway above. We hope to help future autonomous Mercy Road churches not become weekend centric churches, like most American congregations. The heart of our church has historically been in a decentralized approach to empowering apostolic and evangelistic leaders. We must make disciples and multiply at all levels (conversions, disciples, missionaries, worship gatherings, churches, etc...). The goal of ROOTED is to produce people who understand the Gospel, have given their lives to Christ, and have been baptized. We are trying to produce Christians/Christ followers. The goal of discipleship huddles is to produce spiritual leaders who know who they are in Christ and have found victory in their struggles and strongholds. The goal of outposts is to produce missionaries for Jesus in our modern context.

Our metrics for discerning “success” in our engagement pathway is:

- Baptisms
- Volunteers
- People who finish ROOTED
- Number of people in outposts and huddles

- Spiritual growth of people over time
- Attendance and giving matter, but these should not be the only metrics utilized

Volunteer Engagement - We lower the bar for belonging and raise the bar for leadership. To serve in any leadership role that has spiritual authority, a person must agree with our leadership covenants. (ADDENDUM)

Key volunteers needed to run a weekend worship service:

1. Teaching/Communication Team: Pastors, Speakers, and MC’s
2. Tech team: Sound tech, A/V tech, Lighting tech, Volunteer Coordinator
3. Worship team: Worship leader, Vocalists, Instrumentalists, Volunteer Coordinator
4. Set up team for portable campuses

Mercy Kids - offered during all services. A place where kids form their opinions about “people of faith” and “places of faith”. It is with this in mind that we selflessly pour our time, talents and treasures into every weekend experience so that nothing will be in the way of kids seeing, feeling and hearing Jesus. (ADDENDUM)

Next Gen - Mercy Students exists to see students far from God disciplined into a passionate relationship with Jesus.

1. Student Worship Gatherings - Mercy Students gather together on weekends to worship God and celebrate what he has done,

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is doing, and will continue to do.

2. Student Outposts - Mercy Students scatter midweek to student outposts designed to uniquely impact their community to glorify God's Kingdom.

3. Student Camps - Mercy Students scatter bi-annually for offsite camp experiences designed to remove students from the regular rhythm of life and disciple them into a passionate relationship with Jesus.

Child Dedication - There is no Biblical precedent for child dedication being an institution of the local church. We choose to dedicate children before they're able to make the decision for themselves. Jesus said, "Let all the little children come to me." We will dedicate any child to God. We ask that all locations pray for the child before the ceremony and write their prayers for the child on a card to give to the family. We dedicate children during weekend services by praying over the child. We ask the congregation to stand and agree in prayer, but we do not ask the family or congregation questions during dedications. The prayer is for the child and is about the child.

Baptism - We believe baptism is a first step for every believer of Jesus. It represents we have died and will rise again with Him. A person must believe in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to be baptized. We do not assume that every new believer understands or is even aware of all of his or her sin. We do believe a true believer repents and is baptized. So we ask two questions during baptism:

1. Is Jesus Christ your personal Lord and savior?
2. Is it your desire to make Him the primary identity of your life?

See addendum for additional baptism information.

Communion - Communion is for all believers. Anyone is welcome to participate, so long as they have a relationship with Jesus. The bread

and juice represent that Christ's body and blood were given as a sacrifice for our sin. All locations must offer communion at least once a month. They are welcome to offer it more than that, if they desire. Communion can also be shared in huddles and outposts.

IN - (Core Values: Spiritual Apprenticeship, Unified Community)

Rooted - a community experience available to anyone that desires to deepen their relationship with Jesus. It is a 10-week initial discipleship experience that fosters building new relationships and spiritual growth.

Huddles - Closed discipleship groups that meet for 12-18 months to learn to live like Jesus. The goal is to produce disciples that make disciples. You must go through a huddle before leading a huddle. Huddles are the vehicle in which we pass on everything we know about Jesus to another. Jesus said go therefore and make "disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:18-20 - the Great Commission).

Disciples in Koine Greek is "*mathetes*", which means learner. We are teaching people to learn the ways of Jesus (their rabbi, which means teacher). The goal is to teach wisdom (how to hear from God), not content. However, we do want all disciples to have a robust understanding of how God practically works in their lives in the areas of important issues: racism, sexuality, money, trauma, etc... A Biblical overview and a practical theological understanding on these issues should all be a part of the discipling relationship and address in those 12-18 months. Examples of this are provided in the Huddle Guide.

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OUT - (Core Values: Wholehearted Worship, Intentional Mission, Spiritual Apprenticeship, Unified Community, Strategic Generosity)

Outposts - Outposts are communities on mission that gather together regularly for worship, community, and discipleship.

MISSION: Work toward partnering with or developing a mission that serves our community.

IMPACT: Our vision is to unleash an underground network of Christian communities and/or micro churches into our neighborhoods, cities, and state. So that the community would miss our church if we no longer existed.

3 types of Outposts:

- **Micro Churches:** Micro churches grow spiritually together, share a meal, study the Bible, pray together, and as they grow look to reach their neighborhoods for Christ.
- **Ministries:** Ministry Outposts are groups of people who come together to grow spiritually and their mission is to lead ministries within our church family.
- **Outreaches:** We have Mission Outposts that bring people together to grow spiritually and partner with a very specific mission, non-profit or end up launching a new non-profit or social enterprise to impact the community.

Strategic Giving

- 20% outside the walls (OTW) at launch
- 3% of the OTW giving will go to Multiply IN, 3% to the Mercy Road Family of Churches, and any agreed % to Transformation Ministries (T.M.)
- 50% OTW after 10 years.

Mission: All local mission starts in an outpost. The staff does not lead or run outreach events. We do partner with existing non-profits for local, national, and global mission work.

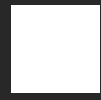
MERCY ROAD LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

The leadership and governance structure of a Mercy Road Church is as follows:

- 1. Operations Team** - This team has final decision-making power for the local church and is comprised of both men and women.
- 2. Vision Team** - This team prays, fasts, and hears from God to develop the large-scale vision for the church. Major decisions are made by the Operations Team, but the Vision Team casts the vision for the Operations Team to approve or disapprove.
- 3. Directional Leaders** - These are leaders who oversee teams of people. They lead an outpost, huddle, weekend team, or leadership team. We are not a congregational church that votes on decisions, but the directional leadership team should be regularly consulted at least four times a year and polled for major decisions.
- 4. Leaders** - This is any leader who has spiritual authority in our church, but may or may not oversee a team. Both directional leaders and leaders must sign our leadership covenants. Leadership is when we've earned the right to speak into someone's life on issues of spiritual discipline.
- 5. Volunteers** - Anyone can volunteer in our church, even if they're not a Christian. It is up to Operations Team and Staff of each church to determine which roles are considered leadership roles and which are not.

**NO ONE is too
far from God
to experience
LIFE CHANGE
through Jesus.**

03



**Phase
One.**

Phase One: Pre-Launch - Steps To Launch

Triggers

Unique God opportunities, such as:

- Pastor - desires to launch a Mercy Road Church
- Large community of attendees in a specific area
- Existing Outpost(s) in that area
- Vision team feels called to move in a specific direction
- Passion for a certain area
- Financially-sound building offered

Steps

- Feasibility study
- Approval by the Operations Team
- Announce to church and begin 40 days of prayer and fasting
- Campaign Dinners or Vision Experience

Staffing:

Working Toward Necessary Positions Staffed: Start with a Lead Pastor (full-time), Worship Pastor (part-time), Mercy Kids Director/Pastor (part-time), and administrative assistant (part-time).

Job descriptions - must include the following within a year:

- Tithe
- Go through a discipleship huddle
- Get involved in an outpost
- Must abide by employee manual

Leadership Development:

Lead Pastor Candidate Requirements:

- Desire to church plant “the Mercy Road way”
- Must complete Huddle and Rooted, and develop Mercy Road’s DNA
- Take/go to an assessment
- Character qualities: Apostolically gifted, self-starter, takes initiative and builds relationships with potential future leaders and staff, always reporting back to Lead Pastor, adaptability/flexibility

- Voted on by Operations Team
- There is no guarantee the church will become autonomous in 3-5 years, if the church is not moving forward with excellence (signs of growth: depth and breadth)

Pre-launch timeline: There is a suggested 6-month runway with well-defined SMART goals for each of the following:

- Vision call-out meetings - These are meant to inspire potential launch team members with the vision for the new church. Each vision meeting should end with a call to commit to the launch team.
- Build a launch team (aka the masses, anyone who plans to show up for the new location).
- Build a core team (aka: directional leaders, team leads, specific jobs). Must be highly relational. You will need to find volunteer team leaders for these areas: Guest Experience (First Impressions and Hospitality), Facilities, Usher, Production, Online Campus, Mercy Kids, and Mercy Students. Meet regularly with those team leads.
- Build an advisory team that will transition into the future operations team in that location.
- Develop requirements for members of the launch team and core team. Core Team requirements: self-starter, church planting mentality, fully committed (shown through: signed leadership covenant, tithing 10% somewhere, involved in the life of the church, proven leadership and vision already established). For Launch Team requirements, see bullet point 2.
- Agreed upon goals (between the Lead Pastor and the Operations Team) following the Up, In, and Out model: The Lead Pastor has specific goals related to the worship service, to location-specific outposts, and to Rooted and Huddles.

Phase One

- Additional SMART goals communicated: launch team, launch timelines, and numbers reached by certain dates
- Pray about and define expectations and goals for student ministry, children's ministry, volunteer structure, etc.
- Get into the community ahead of moving there. What is going on in the community, what are the hubs of the community, what are the needs? Pray for the keys to the city or county in which your planting. Take time to listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- The Lead Pastor will work closely with the Operations Team to regularly discuss and update the church budget, especially as it pertains to new facility, new staff, etc., keeping our "strategic generosity" at the forefront of every decision.
- If there will be construction on a new facility: Assemble a project management team, to which you regularly communicate (weekly, if not more frequently), identify the right people for the right roles (contractors, sub-contractors, team leads, volunteer leads, etc.). Develop/implement safety plan and training (through someone who is qualified).

Launch Team Commitments:

1. Attend all key gatherings
2. Pray for the ministry
3. Give of their time, talents, and treasures
4. Invite those in your oikos (8-15 in your sphere of influence)

Core Team Commitments:

1. Sign our leadership covenants
2. Oversee an area of spiritual leadership
3. Tithe (Give the first 10% of his or her resources)
4. Commit to praying and fasting for the new church!
5. Commit to being disciplined and making disciples

Staff Members needed to launch:

1. Lead Pastor (full-time)
2. Worship Pastor (Part-time)
3. Production Director (Part-time)
4. Mercy Kids Director (Part-time)
5. Administrative Assistant (Part-time)
6. Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Mission (Full-time...to start after launch)

**WE BELIEVE the church today
should be a HOSPITAL for sinners,
not a MUSEUM for saints.**

04. Phase Two.

Phase Two: Launch To Transition

Each church will undergo a 1-5 year period of transition before becoming its own legal entity. The goal is health and self-sufficiency in order to become autonomous. We are planting new churches, not campuses, so at the end of year five if the church is not viable on its own we will close the church. This means we hire lead pastors, not campus pastors. We are looking for apostolic leaders who understand they're going to have to listen to the Spirit of God and become a viable church.

Commitments for the Lead Pastor during this transition period:

1. The Lead Pastor will individually raise \$100,000 outside of Mercy Road Church parishioners before the church legally separates. This gives leadership equity and investment by the lead pastor (like a normal church planter) and helps create financial cushion for the new church.
2. The Lead Pastor will do a weekly check-in with a coach from the Mercy Road Family of Churches.
3. The Lead Pastor will set up the organization systems for the new church by listening to the direction of the Mercy Road Family of Churches staff.
4. The Lead Pastor will seek to listen and learn from the Mercy Road Family of Churches staff first in order to quickly overcome obstacles we've learned from previous experiences.
5. The Lead Pastor will be a self-starter who takes this advice, but blazes the trail themselves, not waiting for others to do this.
6. The Lead Pastor will create healthy systems of care for the staff, leadership, and volunteers of the new church.

Commitments from the Mercy Road Family of Churches:

1. We will offer coaching for the lead pastor during this time.
2. We offer Communities of Practice - both digitally and in person for staff members to learn from other Mercy Road Church staff members.
3. We offer coaching for the administrative team to set up financial and HR systems. We set up third party vendors for payroll and accounting.
4. We help with early budgeting and staff decisions

Areas of focus of the new church staff during this period of transition:

1. Start an Advisory Team - Start an Advisory Team of congregants that will one day be the Operations Team for the new church. Meet monthly with this team for decisions.
2. Build out the Engagement Pathway - We are starting more than just a worship gathering. Focus on developing the First Step class once a month, operating ROOTED at least twice a year, starting discipleship huddles, and creating an outpost network. All of these are key indicators of health that need to be developed before legal separation.
3. Focus on reaching those far from God, baptizing, and discipling. As the church grows numerically in all areas, this is another indicator of spiritual health and vitality.
4. Each church needs to be financially self-sufficient before becoming its own legal entity. Financial health and viability is an important indicator for legal separation.
5. Focus on impacting the community - We desire to plant churches that if they no longer existed the non-Christian community would miss them because of the good work the church was doing in the community.

Phase Two

Areas of focus for the Mercy Road Family of Churches during this period of transition:

1. Training and equipping the future Operations Team of each new church Offering communities of practice that facilitate the build out of the engagement pathway at each new church.
2. Offer guest preaching and worship leading as needed to help each new church take a “team” approach to these. Limit the lead pastor to preaching no more than three times per month to demonstrate the team concept to the church.
3. Prayer and fasting - Be praying for each new church, its leadership, and the people they are attempting to reach and help in the community.
4. Financial Support - The sending church should cover financial losses of this new church, until it's financially self-sufficient.

**Follow Jesus
UP, IN, & OUT.**

05



**Phase
Three.**

Phase Three: RELEASE PHASE - Transition to Separate Legal Entity

The end goal is to create autonomous churches with a decentralized approach to empowering local church leaders in their context. We must make disciples and multiply at all levels (conversions, disciples, missionaries, worship gatherings, churches, etc...). Our goal is to “spin-off” each church when it’s mutually agreed by the church and the Mercy Road Family of Churches that the local church is healthy and ready.

Key Governance Principles to Remember:

1. Operations Team provides directional guidance and oversight to the Staff Leadership.
2. The Church staff leads and executes the ministry of each Local Church.
3. Governance structure is designed to provide clarity of duties and avoid conflicts of interest.
4. Encourage open dialogue and accountability between all Church Leadership.
5. Focus Operations Team meetings and discussion on Vision, Mission and high level approvals.

Governance Process during the Final Transition:

Originating Operations Team = The legal governing board for all entities until separation.

Advisory Board = Team providing oversight for the new Mercy Road Church composed of members from only that location. Advisory board becomes the Operations Team upon independence.

New Church” Operations Team = Legal governing board of a Mercy Road Church with full legal responsibility and control upon separation/independence.

Mercy Road Family of Churches: Church planting and enabling organization with an independent board of directors that will be established in the near future. The Mercy Road Family of Churches is a separate non-profit for coaching and equipping for church planting and the Mercy Road DNA. The Mercy Road Family of Churches does not take liability or ownership of any local church. This responsibility is on the sending church until full legal separation of the new church from the sending church.

Governance Structure of a Mercy Road Church before the “Spin-off”

1. Originating Operations Teams
 - a. Approve expectations for meeting Spin requirements: operational, legal and Mercy Road Church DNA indicators.
 - c. Approve overall budget (Total income and Expenses) for the combined Church pre-spin.
 - c. Approve Legal Separation, bylaws etc.
 - d. Approve ongoing funding model for any other in progress church plants. Aka...if a church spins off how will they help any other churches previously agreed to be planted by the sending church.
2. Advisory Boards for new churches. (Prespin)
 - a. Mirrors the design of the Originating Church Operations team prior to creating the combined team 2020.
 - i. Use Operations Team expectations as a guide.
 - b. Becomes legal Operations Team for that church once legal separation occurs.
 - c. Approves the detailed budgets prespin within the affordability guidelines set by the Operations Team.
 - d. Ensures full functionality of their local church. Staff, ministry, property, Etc.

Phase Three

- e. Empowers the staff to raise funds and invest in the new church's mission.
3. Mercy Road Family of Churches.
- a. Church planting organization:
 - i. Focus: Planting, developing and enabling Mercy Road Named Churches.
 - b. The legal board is comprised of lead pastors and congregants from the Mercy Road Family of Churches

Ultimately, it is of the utmost importance that the sending church, the new church, and the Mercy Road Family of Churches are all seeking wisdom from the Lord and discerning where the Spirit is leading. This is best done in community and harmony with one another. Seek the best in each other during this period and remember the enemy comes to "steal, kill, and destroy," and he is prowling like a roaring lion that hopes to devour our churches. Do not let the enemy bring division during this time period, instead seek unity in the Spirit so that the Body of Christ may be built up!

Spin-off Financial Commitments

1. Give 3% of the general tithe to the Mercy Road Family of Churches annually
2. Give 3% of the general tithe to Multiply Indiana annually
3. Give agreed upon percentage of the general tithe to Transformation Ministries
4. The sending church agrees to send at least two months of expenses with the new church upon spin-off. If the new church lead pastor has not individually met their goal of raising \$100,000 outside the Mercy Road community, the amount left outstanding can be subtracted from the funds sent.
5. The new church may also be asked to commit to an agreed upon financial spinoff gift to help cover the start- up losses of any additional Mercy Road churches being planted. This can be done over time, in a one-time lump gift, or through additional lending.

This playbook is meant to be a guide to help enable greater Kingdom impact. Always seek the Lord's wisdom during this process!

**The Church
should be a
HOSPITAL for
SINNERS, not
a MUSEUM for
SAINTS.**

LIVE

BOLDLY.

LOVE
DEEPLY.



MERCY ROAD
FAMILY OF CHURCHES

