

# Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

## CHURCH PLANTING GUIDELINES

### Group Status

The factors considered when group status is requested are the following:

1. Membership. A projection of attendance for the first year.
2. Financial. If using the "Mother-Daughter" or the evangelistic model, a copy of the last month's treasurer's report, along with a schedule for the previous 12 months listing the parenting church's:
  - a. Tithe income;
  - b. Church budget income;
  - c. Conference offerings income.
3. Budget. A proposed budget for the first year of the new group.
4. Support. Adequate statement drafted by parenting organization indicating proof of ability to provide adequate financial support for the new group.
5. Physical Facilities.
  - a. A sketch of the physical plant to be used by the group;
  - b. A statement indicating the proposed facility has been inspected and meets local fire, health, and safety codes for church operation.
  - c. Payment of insurance

### Company Status

After a number of months, generally about one year, the strength of the new "group" will be evaluated on the basis of the six qualifications listed below. A vote of the group members to request the Washington Conference Executive Committee to authorize church organization should be communicated to conference administration through the assigned pastor of the group. It is the Washington Conference Executive Committee that authorizes the organization of the new company. This event is a time of celebration and is to be conducted by an ordained minister and usually one or more of the conference officers.

The factors considered when company status is requested are the following:

1. Membership. There are no firm guidelines for membership number, but it would seem prudent that a group have at least 25-35 members. It would be well that the membership of the intended new company have representatives from all age groups.
2. Leadership. Good solid lay leadership is an important factor in a growing company. We would like to see how your company will be organized. Also,

please show how you intent to structure and organize for growth...what is your evangelistic strategy? It should be demonstrated that the major offices in the typical nominating committee list could be filled from the skills and gifts found among the members of the intended new company.

3. *Tithe.* Since tithing is a Biblical and Spiritual responsibility of every member, the amount of annual tithe should be considered. One way to gauge the spiritual health of a congregation is by observing their giving patterns. A general guideline in this Conference for a growing company should have an annual tithe in the range of \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year. Offerings should also be considered since the group needs operating funds. Such expenses as rent, utilities, Sabbath School materials, evangelistic meetings, etc. are paid from local church offerings. We will consider that the group is current on all accounts payable.
4. *Potential Growth.* The application for a new company should be accompanied by a report of growth since the new "group" was established and a projection of the potential growth of the "company" membership.
5. *Mission Area.* An important consideration is the size of the population to be reached by the newly established company. A demographic study or update should be prepared.
6. *Good Fellowship.* It is vital the members of the intended new "company" have good fellowship, are in support of each other and have a positive and growthful worship experience together. It is also important to have a good working relationship with the Washington Conference.

## Church Status

After a number of months, generally about one year, the strength of the new "company" will be evaluated on the basis of the six qualifications listed below. A vote of the company members to request the Washington Conference Executive Committee to authorize church organization should be communicated to conference administration through the assigned pastor of the company. It is the Washington Conference Executive Committee that authorizes the organization of the new church. This event is a time of celebration and is to be conducted by an ordained minister and usually one or more of the conference officers.

The factors considered when church status is requested are the following:

1. *Membership.* There are no firm guidelines for membership number, but it would seem prudent that a church have at least 50 members. It would be well that the membership of the intended new church have representatives from all age groups.
2. *Leadership.* It should be demonstrated that the major offices in the typical nominating committee list could be filled from the skills and gifts found among the members of the intended new church.

3. *Tithe.* Because a new church will need to be put under the responsibility of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, the amount of annual tithe should be considered. A general guideline in this conference is that if an annual tithe is in the range of \$100,000 to \$135,000 a year, a full-time pastor could be considered. This is because of the large percentage of the tithe dollar that is used in other dynamics of the work of the Adventist church both within the Washington Conference and outside the Washington Conference (see Staffing Formula). Offerings should also be considered since the group needs operating funds. Such expenses as rent, utilities, Sabbath School materials, evangelistic meetings, etc. are paid from local church offerings.
4. *Potential Growth.* The application for a new church should be accompanied by a report of growth since the new “company” was established and a projection of the potential growth of the “church” membership.
5. *Mission Area.* An important consideration is the size of the population to be reached by the newly established church. A demographic study or update should be prepared.
6. *Good Fellowship.* It is vital the members of the intended new “church” have good fellowship, are in support of each other and have a positive and growthful worship experience together. It is also important to have a good working relationship with the Washington Conference.