

Are You Called to Plant a Vineyard Church?

A Conversational Approach to Discernment in Church Planting

multiply**vineyard**[™]

www.multiplyvineyard.org

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Introduction: Why We Use the Four- Conversation Process

The Vineyard is a church-planting movement, and we have always emphasized that it is the local church that plants churches, not our national or international organization. As the national church planting task force, the role of Multiply Vineyard is to provide resources, guidance, support, and encouragement to local churches, to empower them to reproduce well (and frequently!).

Over the years, various leaders around the nation have quite naturally developed their own styles and methods of discerning calling for church planters. The processes varied from region to region, making it difficult to plant cross-regionally. Since there wasn't a standard process, it was possible for some potential planters (especially cross-regional ones) to fall through the cracks.

To facilitate more church planters being approved and released, Multiply Vineyard has developed a recommended process for helping pastors and potential church planters work together to discern each candidate's calling. Our goal in creating this system is to provide excellent guidance and support for both planters and sending pastors in the process of multiplying.

We recognize that each person who comes through our discernment process is incredibly precious.

We recognize that each person who comes through our discernment process, in order to discover God's calling in their lives, is incredibly precious. We want to properly honor what God is doing in their lives by guiding them through the whole process without rushing or skipping anything. It can be tempting to want to hurry when you are excited about the vision and call God has given you. But that can mean missing valuable opportunities for training and growth that come from really pressing into an unhurried period of discernment about that calling and vision. The discernment process may confirm a candidate's call to church planting. Or, it may reveal that God is actually calling them to another type or area of ministry. The process can also assess and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a church planting candidate, and point to opportunities for further training, education, or healing so they can be better equipped for the challenges of planting a church.

Ultimately, we want to help each person who comes to us to find God's perfect fit for their lives and gifts. Therefore, consider the discernment process an extended act of pastoral care between an overseeing pastor, a church planting candidate, and regional and national representatives of the Multiply Vineyard team.

How We Arrived at This Process

Because the Vineyard is unique in so many ways, we knew we couldn't simply superimpose another organization's process on our movement. So instead, Michael Gatlin and the Multiply Vineyard team researched what systems other church planting movements use, and tried to glean the best of those processes. Michael also joined the Church Planting Leadership Fellowship (CPLF) headed by Ed Stetzer¹, respected author, church planter, and Christian researcher. They convene twice a year to learn from each other and share what church planting methods work well.

Multiply Vineyard has taken the very best from those CPLF sessions and the rest of our research, and worked to make it fit the Vineyard values and distinctives. Through trial and error, we have arrived at the four-conversation system laid out in the rest of this paper.

Overview: The Conversations

Our goal here is always to help people find the best ministry for their gifts and personality.

Our discernment process is adaptable and highly relational. We want to empower local churches to work directly with potential church planters to discern God's calling in their lives; the process doesn't really work in isolation. That's why we call our steps "conversations." Each conversation includes specific tasks to accomplish, but they are all meant to be done in the context of relationship. Senior pastors and planters seek the Holy Spirit together as they go over the results of the planter's questionnaire, online church-planting assessment, pastoral assessment, and psychological profile.

The conversations are designed to be flexible. There isn't a specific timeline for when each conversation must be completed or how long they should each take. Each conversation is increasingly thorough. Planters eventually go through an in-depth evaluation from a Multiply Vineyard assessor and deep psychological testing. But they begin with something much simpler—a questionnaire.

¹ Ed Stetzer Bio <http://mycplf.com>

Conversation 1: Am I Called to Be a Church Planter Questionnaire

In this first conversation, the potential planter answers 10 questions to help determine if they are called to be a church planter:

- Do you like trying new things?
- Are you flexible and adaptable?
- Do you like being with those that don't normally go to church?
- Have you been recognized as a leader by those who know you best?
- Do you attend and serve in a church?
- Do you daydream about ways the church could be relevant to the culture?
- Are you a risk-taker?
- Do you have a desire to teach the Bible?
- If you are married, is your spouse supportive of your ministry dreams?
- Do you manage your finances well?

See Appendix A for the full questionnaire.

All a church planting candidate has to do is read the questions and thoughtfully answer them. But the simplicity of this exercise is no reason to skip it. The questions in Conversation 1 help to set the course for the rest of the discernment process. A potential planter doesn't have to get every question "right" in order to qualify as a planter. Neither do the "right" answers guarantee a person's calling or future success as a church planter. The questions are simply intended to provide a basis for conversation—to start the discussion around a few important things for a church planter to consider about him or herself. At the end of this conversation, a planter and pastor will have identified some strengths of the planter, as well as opportunities for the planter to grow.

There is plenty of room for growth in this process.

Potential planters can take this list of questions to think over, and after they have had a chance to consider their answers, sit down with their pastor to talk honestly about each question. During this conversation, the planter and the pastor can be looking specifically for ways the planter can grow. The pastor may develop a sense of the potential planter's self-awareness, desire to grow, and maturity level based on the answers s/he gives. Where is God calling them to deeper and truer discipleship?

At the end of the conversation, whether or not the planter has a sense of his or her calling to church planting, this conversation provides a starting point for spiritual and personal growth. Therefore, during this conversation, both the planting candidate and pastor should also be asking God what he has for the life and ministry of the candidate. This is a really good time to

start identifying if God has perhaps created the person for some kind of ministry other than church planting. Our goal here is always to help people find the best ministry for their gifts and personality.

They may indeed be called to plant a church, locally or abroad. But some may actually be better suited to be senior pastors, staff people, or campus pastors. Maybe they need more training or healing, or even just time to mature before they can assume the positions and responsibilities to which they are called.

Things to Remember for Planters:

- Don't skip or discount any questions—prayerfully give each of them your thoughtful attention.
- Be honest. Your pastor is not looking for “right” or “wrong” answers. The two of you are working together to discern God's calling in your life.
- Don't get discouraged—most of us have not arrived yet. There is plenty of room for growth in this process.
- Pray over this conversation—the Holy Spirit provides wisdom and insight that we don't have.

Things to Remember for Pastors:

- Pray before, during, and after this conversation.
- Listen both to what the planter says, as well as how he/she says it—what is God showing you in their attitudes and demeanor?
- Think about growth—what opportunities are there for this person to grow as he or she pursues church planting?
- People who come to you wanting to discover God's calling in their lives are a gift! Conversation 1 is the start of your pastoral care for them in this phase of their lives.

Conversation 2: Online Church Planter Candidate Assessment

In conversation two, the potential planter takes the Church Planter Candidate Assessment, or CPCA², an assessment tool offered online by Lifeway Ministries. Lifeway researchers have studied successful church planters, and have identified a set of characteristics that seem to contribute to their success. Based on how healthy, successful church planters function, they have developed the CPCA assessments as a tool to help potential planters discern if they are ready for and suited to planting a church. It costs \$29 to take the assessments.

After the planter has completed the assessments, the Multiply Vineyard team will first get in touch with the planting candidate and then the overseeing pastor to share the results and help point to the next steps to take.

After both the planter and the sending pastor have had a chance to look at the CPCA results, they will meet to go over the results together. In that meeting, they will look at where the potential planter is already strong, and where they have opportunities to grow or pursue healing.

Pastors will probably want to take time to familiarize themselves with the CPCA itself, as well as read carefully through the planter's individual results, before meeting with the planting candidate. Without this preparation, Conversation 2 does not tend to be very productive, and can be frustrating or discouraging for both planter and pastor!

Our website hosts some helpful tools for using and interpreting the CPCA results³, and we encourage pastors to take the time to read through the sample results and recommendations for the sample planter.

You can see how different characteristics are scored and prioritized, and read through the recommended follow-up questions that an overseeing pastor would want to talk through with the sample planter. Multiply Vineyard also has a recording of an hour-long webinar training on how to interpret and use the CPCA results.

² Link to Lifeway for assessment - <http://churchplanter.lifeway.com/organization/131/>

³ Link to sample tiered results: http://vineyard-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads//2013/07/Church_Planter_Tiered_Report_for_Shane_Planter1.pdf

Webinar recording: <http://multiplyvineyard.org/resources/senior-pastor-trainings/> (There is an echo at the beginning of the recording, but it is resolved after a few seconds).

In the meeting, the planter and sending pastor will talk through the implications of the spiritual gifts and risk factors identified by the assessments. The pastor can also see what kinds of spiritual formation the planter has gone through, and what church planting skills they already have, as well as which skills still need to be developed and a more detailed look into strengths and opportunities for the planter than the first conversation. Conversation 2 is intended to provide sufficient insight and direction to help guide the next several weeks or months of coaching and training for the planter.

After the planter and pastor have met, Multiply Vineyard will also ask for a completed church planting application from the planter, and a recommendation from the sending pastor. We generally don't schedule Conversation 3 until the application and recommendation have been received.

The sending pastor guides this process. If they do not communicate with Multiply Vineyard or submit the sending pastor recommendation form, we will not know whether or not you endorse the potential planter to move forward in the conversations of discernment. The local church is vital to the training and development of church planters.

Steps for Conversation 2:

- Potential church planter takes the online CPCA assessment.
- Multiply Vineyard is notified that someone has taken the assessments, and we contact the potential planter.
- Planter communicates with Arleta at arleta@multiplyvineyard.org who their sending pastor is.
- Potential planter and sending pastor meet to discuss the results.
- Planter completes church planting application (Example in Appendix B) and emails it to arleta@multiplyvineyard.org.
- Sending pastor completes church planter recommendation (Example in Appendix C) and emails it to arleta@multiplyvineyard.org.
- Multiply Vineyard confirms with the sending pastor that the church planter is ready before initiating Conversation 3.

Conversation 3: Pastoral Assessment Interview

Next, the church planter meets with a representative from Multiply Vineyard; someone who both has personal church-planting experience, and is skilled at helping others assess their readiness to plant a church.

Like all the conversations, this one is also highly relational. The assessor will devote ample time to conduct an informal pastoral review of the church planter. This may be done over the course of a leisurely meal. They will discuss the twelve characteristics necessary for a church planter (see Appendix D⁴), and our assessor will allow time for prayer ministry over the planting candidate.

Like all the conversations, this one is also highly relational.

During this time, the assessor is trying to get a sense of what the best next steps for the candidate would be. He or she is prayerfully evaluating whether the potential planter seems ready and suited for church planting. The goal, as always, is to come alongside the planter and the sending or overseeing pastor, to help find the very best fit for the church planter.

After the interview, the assessor completes a brief report⁵ and carefully and prayerfully shares a few recommended next steps. These could be a full endorsement to release the church planter right away, or be a direction toward more training, or even a suggestion that the candidate is better suited to pursue another ministry role or vocation.

Once the overseeing pastor has had time to review the report, the Multiply Vineyard team will come alongside the pastor and the planting candidate to help decide precisely what course of action to pursue. Multiply Vineyard sends the report to the sending pastor and potential planter. If there are recommendations for further training or development, the sending pastor can create a plan with the potential planter to do so. Typically, the potential planter is ready to participate now in Conversation 4, even if there are some areas that the potential planter needs to work on, this can all happen within these conversations.

⁴ <http://multiplyvineyard.org/resources/what-a-church-planter-looks-like/>

⁵ <https://multiplyvineyard.org/3rd-conversation-write-up/>

Conversation 4: In-Depth Church Planting Evaluation

This conversation is a complete psychological assessment. It was put together specifically for the Vineyard by Tom Campion of Campion Barrow and Associates. They specialize in psychological assessments and evaluations for many high-authority, high-stress, and high-accountability positions, including police officers, S.W.A.T. team members, foreign missionaries, and families who wish to adopt overseas.

Church planting brings with it some incredible pressures and stresses, and a professional evaluation provides incredible insight into what the planter candidate can withstand and what conditions they might need to thrive. It also helps identify what further preparation and development church planters need, greatly increasing their chances of success.

The assessments investigate the whole person, but specifically emphasize themes that are critical to lasting in ministry, like fiscal integrity, self-awareness, leadership competency, conflict management, and risk-taking.

The answers are sent back and then they have an oral interview with someone from Campion. The written assessment and oral interview answers are then processed and put into a detailed report that is sent to both the sending pastor and Multiply Vineyard. Then a video conference call is set up between a representative from the firm, the sending pastor, and the planting candidate(s) to debrief the results.

Debrief sessions tend to be extremely insightful and helpful to potential planters and their overseeing pastors. The assessments cost is \$415 per person, or \$770 per couple, but we invite people who are serious about church planting to view this as an investment. The cost of the assessment is fairly small when you compare it to the cost of investing your entire life in planting a church!

Because of the financial investment, this is often the last conversation in the discernment process. It can be done earlier in the discernment process if the sending pastor wants to do that, to incorporate the insights gained in the assessments as the potential planter continues to grow and train in their development as a planter and pastor.

For more information about these assessments, including a conversation with Steve Nicholson about his experiences with this discernment tool, see Appendix E and F. If you have questions or want to schedule an assessment, email Arleta at the Multiply Vineyard office: arleta@multiplyvineyard.org.

Conclusion

Our goal as Multiply Vineyard is always to be of service to churches that want to multiply. The four-conversation discernment process is designed to bring churches, church planters, and the Multiply Vineyard team into a fruitful collaboration in order to best extend the Kingdom of God throughout the world. If you have any questions about the process that we have not addressed here, please feel free to contact us at office@multiplyvineyard.org. Or if you would like to discuss the process with other pastors and church planters, try the Multiply Vineyard forum at www.multiplyvineyard.com/forums.

Appendix A: Am I Called to Be a Church Planter?

If you feel that you may be called to church planting, or simply wondering what's next for you, take a second to answer these questions.

1. Do you like trying new things?

Church planting is essentially an entrepreneurial enterprise. You may at times have to do things that are not your favorite, but if trying new things in itself isn't fun to you, this could be a problem. At the same time, if you like a different challenge twice a week, this could be the place for you! Planting a church means that you will be doing something different almost every single day. You have to be willing to learn and change and grow. At the same time, there are many things that need to be accomplished every single week, the weekends just keep on coming.

2. Are you flexible and adaptable?

Working unexpected jobs, filling unexpected roles, navigating financial challenges, and dealing with difficult people are all parts of this job. If you can roll with that, taking each day for what it's worth, you probably have the best chance of enjoying this challenge. On the other hand, if you're easily stressed when your things don't go according to plan, this might not be a very good fit.

When church planting, almost nothing goes according to plan. That's why it's so frustrating and why it's so fun! You have to be ready to adapt in almost every single moment. You might plan for 50 people and have only 5, or vice versa. It is vitally important to be able and willing to change and adjust plans when necessary, all while never letting go of the goals you are trying to accomplish.

3. Do you like being with those that don't normally go to church?

The trick is, all the people who go to church in the town you're planting in already have a church. So, your best shot is going to be with people who aren't already churchgoers. If that sounds like a good time to you, planting could go very well. There aren't a lot of churches for people that don't want to be a part of a church. Church planting isn't about "shuffling the deck" of churches in a city. It should be about introducing people to God, helping those who

want to become followers of Christ, and welcoming them into the family of God.

4. Have you been recognized as a leader by those that you know best?

The best indicator of future leadership is past leadership. Leaders don't suddenly learn how to lead because they have a title or vision. The best way to find out if you're a leader is to look behind you. If people are following you, you're a leader. Now take a closer look. Who's behind you? Do the people that trust you know the real you? This is the kind of leadership it takes to launch a healthy church plant.

Also, those who can best exercise authority are those who have learned to operate under authority in a healthy way. Do those who you currently serve under recognize you leadership gifts and abilities? And are you learning how to serve under their leadership in a healthy way?

5. Do you attend and serve in a church?

Church is a lot more complicated than it looks like on the surface. Just having some good ideas isn't enough. You need to have your fingers in deep to the day to day realities of ministering to real people and their needs.

We plant Vineyard churches from existing Vineyard churches. The best way to learn how to pastor is to be a part of a local church that you help to grow and thrive. If you can't serve in a church, why would you want to plant a church?

6. Do you daydream about ways that the church could be relevant to culture?

This question really is at the heart of the endeavor of starting new congregations. We want to walk with our Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other—tuning in to the Holy Spirit and the local news. If this conversation doesn't really interest you in some way, vision for a new church might be hard to find.

Every successful church planter that we've ever known dreams about the kind of church that would connect with those that don't go to church. They can see it, hear it, smell it, and talk about it in a way that others want to be a part of.

7. Are you a risk taker?

Lots of church plants don't make it. And even in the ones that do, launching a congregation involves trying lots and lots of things that don't work. "Throwing spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks" is a reality for people on the front end of this task.

Failure is not a possibility it is a certainty. You have to be willing to fail in order to grow. Church planters take risks that others have only thought about. But these are not meant to be uncalculated risks. A church plant is not just a philosophical idea, real people's lives are at stake. This is risk taking with a perspective towards the glory of God, and aimed at helping others find the life of Christ.

8. Do you have a desire to teach the Bible?

Teaching the bible is one of the essential job requirements of a church planter. You aren't creating a new story, you are joining an ancient one. If you can't tell the story of God, it's hard to show where you and your church fit in.

Preaching and teaching can take on a myriad of forms and styles—and this is all for the good. You will learn over the years how this works best for you. But if you don't find any passion at all in communicating the Bible, it will be hard to gather people to a community in which you find yourself preaching regularly.

9. If you are married, is your spouse supportive of your ministry dreams?

It is impossible for a task of this magnitude not to have an enormous influence on your family—and probably at some point, it will cost each of you something. If they aren't in full agreement and support, this sacrifice will cause enormous problems in your relationships. They have to believe in your call, and their own.

God doesn't call just one person in a marriage to this kind of ministry. Even though you might be the primary leader, your spouse will have to sacrifice for a church to be planted. When God calls a person, we believe that he calls our whole family. You will need to agree together that this is what God is calling you to.

10. Do you manage your finances well?

It's not sexy, but number crunching is a big part of leading a church. If you can't manage your own finances, how will you manage the finances of a church? Church planters receive offerings—money that people have given in order to honor and worship God. We must be able to manage it in a way that glorifies God. Step one is learning how to manage and be generous with our own personal finances.

Appendix B: Church Planter Application

This is a sample of the church planter application. To complete the actual form, use the link <https://multiplyvineyard.org/church-planter-application/>. For more information, please contact Arleta Aureli at arleta@multiplyvineyard.org)

Contact Information

First Name	Last Name	
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip
E-mail Address	Phone	

Personal Information

Date of Birth	Marital Status
Spouse's First Name	Spouse's Last Name
Spouse's Email Address	Spouse's Date of Birth

Describe the role your spouse intends to take (supportive, co-pastor)?

Would your spouse like to be included in correspondence from Multiply Vineyard?

Church Plant Information

Briefly describe the type of church you envision planting.

Have you thought about where or when you would potentially plant? If so, please include the location, dates, etc.

Sending Pastor Contact Information

First Name	Last Name
E-mail Address	
Name of Sending Church	
City	State

Is this a Vineyard Church?

How are you currently serving at this church?

What leadership experience have you had in a church (or otherwise)?

Are you currently involved in training to be a church planter at your local church (internship, Residency+, etc)? If so, please explain.

Education & Job History

List the High School, College and Graduate school you attended (include majors, degrees and any courses pertinent to ministry).

List all employment in the past 10 years (include companies, position, and why you left employment).

More Information

Describe your relationship with Jesus.

What Vineyard conferences and trainings have you attended?

What books by Vineyard authors have you read? What Vineyard sermon series have you listened to that are related to church planting or leadership? Please include title and author.

What other books have you read and/or series have you listened to that are related to church planting or leadership? Please include title and author.

This application is part of the process required to plant a Vineyard church. It will be reviewed by local, regional, and national leadership.

A copy will be sent to your sending Vineyard church and they will have the opportunity to submit a recommendation form. If you have questions throughout this process, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for completing the Multiply Vineyard church planting application.

For information contact:

Arleta Aureli

arleta@multiplyvineyard.org

Appendix C: Sending Pastor Recommendation

(This is a sample of the sending pastor recommendation. To complete the actual form, contact Arleta Aureli at arleta@multiplyvineyard.org)

Sending Pastor Information

First Name	Last Name	
Name of Sending Church	E-mail Address	
City	State	Zip
Potential Planter Information		
First Name	Last Name	

12 Characteristics of a Church Planter

Use the following descriptors to evaluate the potential planter's experience and development in the areas being assessed:

Minimal (no personal hands-on experience or development)

Emerging (emerging potential that needs more attention)

Good (comparable to most other church planters)

Above Average (above average development and experience)

High (highly developed and mature in this area)

Exercises A Clear Sense Of Call - Clear Sense of Calling and Confirmation from Overseers

Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. What has led them to feel a call to pursue church planting? How have others confirmed their interest in church planting?
2. What city, location, and/or type of target group do they anticipate ministering among? How does this fit with their upbringing, church experience, etc.?
3. What makes them want to be a Vineyard church?
4. What are some examples of times when they have taken initiative to begin and follow through with a project or ministry?
5. What is their gut feeling or emotional response when they think about the risks involved in planting a church (i.e., finances, family, emotional stress, etc.)?

Possesses A Faith Driven Vision - Has A Vision & Clear Philosophy Of Ministry
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. What kind of church do they envision? How does this compare with their current/ past church experiences?
2. Describe any experience they have had in organizing and leading teams of people?
3. How have they inspired or excited people about an area of ministry or project in which they were involved (i.e., business or school project, small group, prayer team, mission trip, youth group, etc.)?
4. How would they answer to someone who is asking them “why plant a new church”?
5. Describe the role that prayer, fasting, Bible study, etc have played in their life in overcoming individual or corporate challenges.

Disciple Making Skills - Creates Opportunities To Develop Leaders & Give Ministry Away
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. What are the characteristics of a disciple and how would they build these characteristics into the life of a new believer?
2. Give an example of the type of small groups they have led? How did they train and release other to serve in the group?
3. How would they decide which areas of ministry individuals in a new church plant should participate in?
4. Explain a time when they have had to correct or confront someone about an area in his or her life? What was it like for them?

People Gathering Skills - Has The Ability To Gather People & Call Them Into Action
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. In what ways have they gathered people to groups or projects in the past?
2. What plans would they have for gathering new people in a church plant?
3. What ideas do they have about how they would assimilate newcomers into relationship with them and then get them involved in the church?
4. To what degree does spending time with people give them energy or tire them? If married, are there differences between them and their spouse? How have they dealt with this in the past?
5. How have they been vulnerable or transparent to help others feel free to do the same?

Healthy Communication Skills - Applies Scripture In A Genuine & Effective Manner
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. Explain what training or experience they have had in teaching or preaching? At what point is their progress in understanding and teaching the Bible?
2. How would they describe their style of teaching? What are areas that they would like to improve?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching?
4. How would they combine careful planning and listening to God to decide their topics and approach to weekly teaching?
5. How well are they able to talk about their thoughts and feelings with others?
6. What would they like a visitor to experience from the time they drive up until the time they leave their worship gathering? What values does each part of the gathering communicate?

Creative Evangelistic Skills - Showing Significant Evidence Of Gathering The Unchurched
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. Tell me about the last time that they participated in leading someone to Jesus?
2. Describe any experience they have had in training other to lead their friends to Jesus? What approach would they take in a church plant?
3. What kinds of activities or strategies would they use to reach their target group?

Intentional Planning Skills - Demonstrating The Self-Confidence To Be A Lead Pastor
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. How do they currently manage your own time? What have they found to be the best process for them in planning?
2. How would they make decisions in church planting? How do they respond to opposition to their plans?
3. Based on their needs, personality, and gifts what kinds of leaders do they need to place around them to be more effective?
4. What would be their top priorities for the first two years of church planting?
5. How good are they at seeking God for answers, asking for advice, and getting more training?

Financial Management Skills - Debt Free & Self Disciplined Use Of Money
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. How do they approach budgeting and spending? What kind of budgeting or financial planning experience have they had?
2. Has personal debt or controlling credit card spending ever been a problem for them? Please explain.
3. How faithful and consistent would they say they are in tithing and giving generous offerings? How long have they been tithing?
4. How comfortable would they say they are with teaching Biblical principles of giving and asking others to financially support the work to which God has called them?

Vineyard Values & Methods - Understanding & Familiarity With Our Values & Methods
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. What exposure have they had to Vineyard values, styles, and methods?
2. What values of the Vineyard are most important to them?
3. Are they familiar with the Vineyard's Theological and Philosophical Statements? To what extent do they agree with them?
4. Describe their first experiences with the Vineyard. How well do they feel the Vineyard fits with who they are?
5. What extent of experience have they had ministering in the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit? How comfortable are they in leading or training other to function in kingdom ministry?

Solid Marriage & Family Or Healthy Singleness - Family Involvement & Agreement In Ministry Roles
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. If married, how do they and their spouse use their gifts and talents to complement each other? (If single: How well developed are their friendships? Whom do they look to as a main sources of emotional support?)
2. Rate themselves on their ability to make personal friends together. (If single: How well do they maintain healthy boundaries between themselves and persons of the opposite sex? Are there any unresolved sexual temptations that might lead them into moral failure?)
3. To what degree does their spouse feel a call to church planting? Are there any issues with children that would make it difficult? (If single: How do their parents or other family members feel about the possibility of them planting a Vineyard church?)
4. How would they assess their ability to pray together as a couple? (If single: How do they feel about planting a church as a single person?).

Emotional Maturity - Adjusts To Changes, Challenges & Correction
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. Have they ever had their integrity challenged or their motives questioned? If so, how did they handle it?
2. How do they deal with people they feel are difficult? How have they handled someone quitting or not following through on a commitment?
3. Explain a time when they received correction from one of their leaders. How did they respond?
4. How do they handle crisis situations? To what degree are they able to maintain a positive attitude?
5. What is one of the most painful experiences they have had? How has this affected their life?

Vital Spiritual Life - Has A Personal Lifestyle Of Worship & Intimacy With God
Minimal / Emerging / Good / Above Average / High

Please explain your selection.

Here are sample questions we ask to determine this:

1. How have they responded to emotionally, physically, or spiritual difficult seasons in their life?
2. What spiritual disciplines have they practiced? As a general rule, how much time a day do they set aside for prayer, worship, and Bible study?
3. How have they or will they balance ministry and their own spiritual growth?
4. Is there any area of their life or character in which they are currently struggling with sin?

This recommendation is part of the process required to plant a Vineyard church. It will be reviewed by the national church planting team.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. For information contact: Arleta Aureli arleta@multiplyvineyard.org

Appendix D: 12 Characteristics of a Church Planter

The following information is designed to help potential planters and pastors develop a better understanding about what characteristics potential church planters need to have in order to be healthy. There are the twelve characteristics in our co-discernment process. In the same way that we use this resource as a discernment tool before releasing a church planter, this resource can be applied to the pre-assessing of potential planters. Use this tool to help identify strengths, weaknesses, and other areas where growth is needed.

1. Exercises a Sense of Call: Clear Sense Of Calling & Confirmation From Overseers

Church planting can be incredibly difficult. The decision to plant will often be deeply and sometimes painfully tested and often in the midst of hard times when growth is slow, leaders you've developed decide to leave and the next steps forward seem very unclear. It is during these times that the planter will only endure if they have the sure, unshakeable conviction that, "despite what I'm experiencing now, God has called me to this!" Such a calling runs deeper than thinking church planting is just a "neat idea" or something you "try out" like you would a diet. In contrary, church planting is such an enormous venture that it requires a clarity of calling that, while not immune to doubt, provides the foundation for tenacity in the midst of adversity and disappointment. Wise pastors will do well to discern the depth and conviction of call in those they are considering sending out into the wilderness adventure of church planting.

2. Possessing A Faith Driven Vision: Has A Vision & Clear Philosophy Of Ministry

As the God-given ability to "see" what could be, vision is an essential part of the spiritual gift of leadership. It is the necessary component needed to cast a compelling vision for a church that inspires others to want to join. It not only draws people to what lies ahead, however. Vision also communicates and clearly articulates the path to that destination. In that light, simply wanting to "plant a church" is not a "faith-driven, inspiring vision." You must ask the questions: "What kind of church? What will it look like? What kind of people will it reach? How will I gather people to get on board with that vision?" A church planter must not only be able to describe what kind of church they desire to plant, but they must be able to articulate it in a way that engenders faith, honors God, sell it to and inspire other to get on board. True faith-driven, inspiring vision will accomplish that.

3. Disciple Making Skills: Creates Opportunities To Develop Leaders & Give Ministry Away

The undeniable truth is, it takes a person with a certain mix of gifts and catalytic abilities to pull off planting a church. Among the most important qualities that they must possess is the ability to attract and lead other leaders. This entails not only the internal spiritual authority, but also the basic, pragmatic competence it takes to grow a church and attract, motivate and train others around them to lead, as well. If a church planter can lead people to Christ and nurture them, but at the same time cannot develop and lead leaders, he will not be able to build much more than a large home group. The church will never grow beyond what the church planter himself can directly oversee and lead.

4. People Gathering Skills: The Ability To Gather People & Call Them Into Action

The process of gathering people happens in different ways in different people. Some accomplish that well through one-on-one conversations where their gifts and attractive qualities are best revealed. Others find that large groups where they can communicate, teach and cast vision is their natural arena for gathering people. Regardless of what facet is used to express this ability, having the skills to gather people is one of the most fundamental abilities required of a church planter. If the potential church planter experiences difficulties in being able to attract and gather people before planting a church, it is unlikely that they will be able to do it well once they've started.

5. Healthy Communication Skills: Applies Scripture In A Genuine & Effective Manner

A church planter needs to show the ability to communicate and apply Scripture in a compelling way. Keeping in mind that people have varying levels of skill and style in this area, requiring healthy communication skills does not mean requiring the planter to deliver “sermonic pyrotechnics” or have the verbal affluence of those leading America’s largest churches. Yet, it is clearly evident that church leadership is a communication-intensive enterprise and that healthy church culture is created through effective communication. Having this ability does not mean they are great and does not mean that they will improve significantly or even dramatically during their first few years of ministry. But it does mean that, as a pastor, they are first and foremost one who preaches the Word. And as Scripture unyieldingly recognizes, a pastor must be “able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2).

6. Creative Evangelistic Skills: Showing Significant Evidence Of Gathering The Unchurched

The church planter must show evidence of being able to reach the unchurched, the prime people with whom we hope to build churches. As the Vineyard continues to “up the ante” in this area and intentionally wave the flag of evangelism, we want to identify those potential

planters who have a lot of heart and at least some skills for growing churches by way of evangelism. While core gifting and skill in evangelism vary from pastor to pastor, good news has been discovered by a study conducted by George Barna and included in his book, *Evangelism That Works* (Gospel Light Books, 1995). He found that churches growing by way of evangelism were led by senior pastors who do not have the spiritual gift of evangelism. This fascinating and liberating statistic revealed that to have effective evangelism, one must only be passionate about it, which overpowers any natural giftedness and is enough to motivate their churches to be evangelistically focused. They consistently find ways to make heroes out of the natural evangelists and gatherers who are part of their congregations and have worked hard to learn to communicate the gospel in relevant and compelling ways to unbelievers who are coming to their Sunday services.

7. Intentional Planning Skills: Demonstrating The Self-Confidence To Be A Lead Pastor

As church planting itself is a very large, long-term project, the church planter must show capabilities of being able to plan out such large, long-term projects in a prayerful and intentional way. Too often people begin a church plant only being able to envision and have clarity to pursue the first few steps without a big-picture idea of exactly what it is they're trying to build. It might also be that, while they have a big-picture vision, they may lack the abilities to strategically and measurably plan out concrete steps necessary to carry out that vision. Similarly, some people have mistaken notions regarding the role of planning. Rather than recognizing the Biblical mandate for human plans done under the leading of the Holy Spirit, the counsel of others, in submission to the sovereignty of God, they take a more "mystical" or "spiritualist" approach which suggests that "planning" is somehow contrary to faith or walking in the Spirit. Our understanding, however, is that such an approach is neither wise nor Biblical and that the best planters are those who pray for God's direction ahead of time, plan prayerfully and then execute the plans.

8. Financial Management Skills: Debt Free & Self-Disciplined Use Of Money

Church planting doesn't require you to be a financial genius, but it does require that one knows how to handle money wisely, is out of debt and has a realistic understanding of the financial needs of a church plant in the beginning years. Debt or irresponsibility with money are prime "plant killers," as there are typically financial pressures that accompany the first few years of a church plant. Additionally, financial planning and management skills are a must. Many church planters overlook elements that require additional capital in the first year or two of the plant (i.e., buying a sound system, renting space, purchasing children's ministry

supplies, paying for printing and advertising, obtaining necessary office and computer equipment, etc).

9. Vineyard Values and Methods: Understanding & Familiarity With Our Values & Methods

As the church planter desires to reproduce a Vineyard church, they must understand firsthand the essential values of the Vineyard church life. Vineyard values and methods include our theological commitments to be “empowered evangelicals” who are committed to conservative, evangelical theology, expository preaching and an emphasis on Scripture, evangelism, thoughtful discipleship as well as ministering the power of the Spirit and spiritual gifts. A grasping of our style is also necessary, meaning an approach that avoids hype, believes that you can’t manufacture the work of the Holy Spirit who, with the church, is able, willing and free to break in and carry on his work in a non-spectacular, non-manipulative and surprising way. We follow hard after God and believe that his grace and mercy change people’s hearts more powerfully than human or religious “regulations.” We value contemporary worship that connects people to God in ways that change us and reorient us. We value taking risks. We value ministry to the poor. We value leadership in the church as a result of functional reality, not a position or reward.

10. Solid Marriage and Family or Healthy Singleness: Family Involvement & Agreement In Ministry Roles

A married church planter must be in a solid marriage and with a spouse who supports and agrees to be involved some way in the church plant. The husband and wife need to be on the same page in regards to God’s calling for them and God’s timing for the things of their call. Waiting until there is solid and agreed footing for the couple is better than undertaking the church planting process and paying the consequences in the marriage and the church.

11. Emotional Maturity: Adjusts To Changes, Challenges & Correction

The church planter must have the tenacity and desire to adjust to changes, challenges and corrections. This means they have a track record of teachability, learning from their mistakes and attempting at it again. Do they have it in them to overcome failure and return? As changes, challenges, mistakes and failures are all one piece of the experience of church planting, these characteristics must be present for the planter to survive.

12. Vital Spiritual Life: Has A Personal Lifestyle Of Worship & Intimacy With God

The planter has to have evidence of a strong lifestyle of worship and prayer, starting the plant with a depth of spiritual strength and at a spiritual “high point.” We should be cautious when

someone deeply questions their faith, are in spiritual deserts or has not genuinely grasped the whole idea of intimacy with God. The heart habits in which one learns to walk in God's presence and hear God for themselves have to be developed to be sent out to plant. A vital spiritual life is, in fact, fundamental to all other components and the "well" out of which ministry must flow for years to come. If that well is dry or has never been dug properly, the spiritual resources so desperately needed in church planting will be inadequate to the task that will be required in the days ahead.

Appendix E: *Campion Barrow & Associates Psychological Assessment Information*

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CBA Introduction:

Our staff consists of licensed clinical psychologists, a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed social worker. CBA is located in Urbana, Illinois and has provided psychological assessments and intensive counseling services for ministry and missionary organizations for over 30 years. Our relationship with the Vineyard began about 15 years ago. As a Christian psychological practice, we value the opportunity to serve other leaders involved in Kingdom work.

Church Planting Assessment Purpose & Value:

CBA has developed this process to maximize the practical usefulness of psychological testing for church planting candidates and sending churches. The assessment is used to provide specific recommendations regarding each candidate's readiness. The content of the report highlights training recommendations for each candidate in language that is easily understood. It is our desire that this assessment is used as a growth template to zero in on areas for development/preparation, and thus increase likelihood of personal and ministry goals being realized. Themes vital to ministry such as fiscal integrity, self-awareness of ministry challenges, decision-making, leadership competencies, tolerance, approachability, conflict management, and risk-taking are emphasized.

Each candidate is compared to a database of other ministry leaders, a large percentage of which are Vineyard Pastors, who have completed this specific battery. Thus, candidates are not being compared to the general population. We find that these specific psychological instruments (MMPI, IPI, MLCI & WPT), in combination with the database, provide a clear snapshot and depth of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses that other instruments tend to miss or misidentify. Ultimately, the assessment gives a three-dimensional perspective on ministry themes/qualities that will be stretched during a church plant assignment. Most candidates have recommendations as the testing will highlight areas of growth that lie under the surface until one is involved in this type of ministry. The assessment will identify pathology if it exists, but the recommendations are geared toward training to increase the likelihood of success for the candidate. The testing is also available in Spanish and is culturally modified for candidates in the UK.

Sincerely,

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Appendix F: Conversation with Steve Nicholson about CBA Assessments

This article was originally published in the MV Newsletter and blog.

Today we got to sit down with Michael Gatlin and Steve Nicholson for a conversation about part of our church planting discernment process. Steve has been involved with pastoring, assessing, encouraging, and assisting church planters both inside and outside the Vineyard movement for over 40 years. He is the senior pastor of the Evanston Vineyard, which has sent out 23 church plants over the years. Michael and Steve have worked together for years, training, equipping, and encouraging church planters.

Church planting is such a challenging and often stressful endeavor that when we undertake it, all our weaknesses get exposed. We want to help church planters and those sending them out understand their weaknesses before they begin so that they can really get some help and healing beforehand, and the people coaching them will be better-equipped to help them avoid burnout and failures. So a couple of years ago, we began to engage Champion Barrow and Associates to help us out. They offer professional psychological services and assessments, and are able to provide a really good outside view of what each specific church planter's strengths and weaknesses are before they enter the maze of actually planting a church.

The Champion assessments have become part of the fourth conversation in our discernment process. Since the assessments are not free, and many people aren't familiar with what they do, we've had a lot of questions about what purpose they serve and whether they are worthwhile. Here's what Michael and Steve had to say:

MG: Hey Steve, when I first had the idea of introducing these Champion assessments, I remember you weren't such a big fan, partly because of how much it costs, right?

SN: Yes, I think at the beginning it was a little bit of a surprise, because we were already paying some money for the planting application and the CPCA assessment, and then all of a sudden there's this extra amount of money—a considerable amount—for the Champion Assessment. So my first question was whether this was really going to be worth it, or whether

it would just be going over the same stuff that we already knew for free. So I wanted to find out how it worked, and I wanted to be a team player, so I went along with it. [laughs]

MG: [laughing] And I appreciate that so incredibly much. And you're right, it's \$415 for the Champion.

SN: And it's a real shock that it's \$415 per person, but if you've got a married couple, it's \$770. So by the time you do that with everything else, you're basically putting down a thousand dollars.

MG: And it's the kind of test where you have to set aside a half a day to sit and just fill out bubbles. So what in those bubbles is worth \$415 per person?

SN: Right. I recently did a very similar version of these tests myself, along with my wife, so we've been on both sides of it. It's really three tests that are measuring three different things. A lot of them are not tough questions, necessarily. As you are taking the tests, it doesn't seem like there's anything complicated or strange about it. For instance, you don't get the feeling that they're assuming you're crazy before you've even started and you have to prove you're sane. It's very straightforward. But what you get on the other end is just astounding. I can think of two church planting couples in particular where the feedback session was just jaw-dropping. They were able to hone in on key issues in the people and in their relationship in an astonishing way. The only thing like it that I can think of is sitting in on a session with one of the most gifted prophetic people that you've ever seen. How they get all that out of the bubbles is a mystery to me, but it is truly amazing. And as the sending pastor, they do send me a summary of the results, but it's hard to make sense of it until the feedback session.

MG: Yeah, you almost have to be a psychiatrist or a psychologist to understand what you get. So the feedback session is about an hour long, and typically it's you as the sending pastor in the same room as the person or couple being assessed.

SN: Yeah, you do a Skype call with someone from Champion Barrow and Associates, and they always insist that you do it with the couple and their sending pastor all in the room together. They've got a team of people on staff, and one of them turns all the results into narrative form and talks you through it. They are very personal and pastoral in the way they present the feedback. It's very gentle, but very clear and precise. At each point they double-check—"does that seem right?" They make sure the people are tracking with them so that somebody isn't

saying “well that’s not me at all.” And the results have been so tremendously insightful that, next time we do it (and there will be a next time), I’m looking forward to the feedback session, because it’s such an amazing experience.

MG: So Steve, I think you’ve done this with two church planters now, right? And both times you felt like “gosh, that was worth it”?

SN: Oh it’s more than worth it. Honestly, in retrospect, I’d say that it was a bargain. In one case, they were able to discern, just from the bubbles, that the wife was for the church plant, but she didn’t think they were ready to do it yet. It didn’t even ask that question in the test!

MG: And probably if they had, she wouldn’t have been able to say so.

SN: Exactly. She had not said it to her husband. She had not said it out loud to anyone. But they were able to figure that out, and when they checked it with her, she said “yeah, that’s exactly how I feel.” So it opened up a whole conversation that needed to happen, and it was just amazing to me that they were able to pick up so accurately the subtle dynamics between two people.

And in the other case they just completely nailed the strengths and weaknesses of the two people in a way that was just amazing. For instance, the the wife in that case easily gets overwhelmed, and when she does, she just dissolves into tears. We had all seen this happen. But the assessor was able to say, not knowing her at all, “You’re probably a person who in these situations feels overwhelmed, and when you feel overwhelmed, you start crying and you can’t speak and it’s hard to explain why.” And they were able to not only point that out, but then to say, “This is how you can handle that in the process of planting a church.” So they don’t just tell you, “Here’s the thing.” They also give you really helpful advice about what to do with the information you’re getting. It is just amazing.

MG: We used the Champion assessments in the hiring process for a pastor to oversee one of the ministries here at the church, and in that feedback session, they pointed out that this person has a low-line level of stress all the time, so that whenever you added something to it that’s normally stressful like, say, preaching on a Sunday morning, it pushes him over the edge because he’s already living with this degree of stress. And they were able to explain exactly why that stress was there. And as they checked it out in the feedback session, he confirmed

that that's exactly what's going on. And now that he is on staff, knowing that has been very helpful in overseeing him as his pastor.

SN: Because you know what to do with it. You know what's happening.

MG: Exactly. So I can say, "There's a situation coming up in your life that I know is going to be extra stressful, so how are you doing right now?" And now he's really pressed into spiritual formation and regularly connecting with Jesus multiple times a day to deal with that stress.

So in what way has this helped you in overseeing and coaching these church planters that you've sent out—like give me some specifics how it's helped you coach them.

SN: Well it means that you know what you have to watch out for, and in the first case I described, we actually delayed the plant for about a year. But now that plant is out there and it's going, and it's going well, and the extra year was well-worth it. And in the other case we were able to launch, but we knew there were certain things we had to watch out for and we were able to do that and to catch them early when they started happening.

What I would say is what you are going to get out of the Campion Assessment is this sort of inside information about what makes each person tick. And that is a huge head start in dealing with things as they begin to play out. And sometimes the things that come up are things that the people themselves could never have gotten into words on their own, even though, when they hear it they'll say, "That's exactly me." So it becomes helpful for everyone all the way around.

MG: So overall, what do you think the value is?

SN: Well, all I would say is that I had such a good experience with it, probably in the future I will do exactly what you are doing, Michael, which is not just using it for church planting, but also using it in my own church for any significant hires. Because it is just so helpful. And the thing I want to hasten to add is, it's important for people to know that part of what makes it work so well is that CBA has developed this and tested it, or the technical phrase I think is "normed it," specifically for pastors and church planters in the Vineyard. So, you know, they won't say that hearing God speak makes you crazy. But really, it's made for us. It's custom made for exactly what we're doing, and so it's going to be way better than anything you could get off the shelf anywhere else.

Church planters or sending pastors who think they may be ready to try the assessment from
Campion Barrow & Associates can start the process by contacting Arleta Aureli at
arleta@multiplyvineyard.org

We're here to help your church be healthy and multiply.

Multiply Vineyard's vision is to extend the kingdom of God by helping our local churches fulfill their God-given call to multiply the church. We work alongside existing churches to help facilitate multiplication of new Vineyard churches who will in turn transform their local communities.

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