

DISCERNMENT GUIDE FOR NEW CHURCH PLANTERS

Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish his work. Do you not say there are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields for they are already white for harvest. (John 4:34-35)

LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT THE FIELDS

The challenge for developing new churches in North America has never been greater. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) desires to raise up courageous and visionary leaders whose hearts are broken for those who do not know the joy of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. New churches are most effective in reaching new people.

There are many communities in North America without a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) presence. God will need men and women, lay and ordained, willing to serve in this pioneering ministry in order to answer our prayers. The Holy Spirit is already at work, calling people with a passion for the Gospel and compassion for people to be new church planters. Could you be one of them?

The New Church Ministry Team wants to journey with you as you discern your calling to New Church Ministry. We offer discernment, assessment, training, coaching, and support in a variety of ways. Please read through this information carefully and prayerfully.

AN INVITATION TO EXPLORE YOUR CALLING

You have indicated interest in New Church Ministry. You are now invited to enter into a special time of prayer about God's direction for how you will use your time, energy, and gifts in Christ's service.

Through the centuries, Christians have referred to such a seeking for clarity about God's call a time of "spiritual discernment." "Discernment" concerns being able to distinguish what is from God and what is from some other source. "Discernment" is seeing our lives and circumstances through God's eyes, thus being able to see more clearly the path God wants us to follow. Discernment is ultimately what God does, as God's desire and plan are revealed to us through the Holy Spirit. We offer our effort and intention in activities that help us "see" what God is doing and "hear" what God is saying.

How do we position ourselves to be most receptive of God? We ask the Holy Spirit to help

us develop some essential attitudes and approaches and to practice them daily. The approaches include:

- **Faith** - We act on the belief that God loves us more than we can imagine and wants only the best for us. We act on the belief that God will guide those who seek God's leadership in their lives.
- **Detachment** - We ask for the grace to "let go" of all of our desires, so that we can desire God's will above everything else.
- **Faithfulness** - We realize that God's Spirit moves in God's own time, and that we may not receive instant answers. So we remain prayerful, even when direction remains unclear.
- **Attentiveness** - We seek to pay attention to how God may be communicating with us in the events and encounters of our daily lives, not just when we are intentionally praying.
- **Love** - We seek to go deeper in relationship with God because we respond in love to the One who has first loved us. We cannot seek to know God's will, apart from knowing God. God's will is revealed in a growing love relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

This guide walks you through a process of listening for God through scripture, becoming more aware of the special spiritual gifts God has given you, learning from effective church planters, self-evaluation, and praying with the specific question, "God, are you calling me to be a new church planter?" This process could take two months, or it could take longer. Work through it at the pace that seems right for you. This time of discernment is between you and God. Once you sense the direction to which God may be leading you, it is up to you to initiate the next phase of the process.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find, knock, and the door will be opened for you." Matthew 7:7

CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEW CHURCH PLANTER

This brief overview of some of the unique qualities of a new church planter provides you with an initial sketch of what the worker and work is about. It is presented in the hope that God will speak to your heart in answer to our prayers to start 1,000 congregations, 1,000 different ways.

Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, is the one who calls and equips New Church Planters to serve where he ordains. New Church Planting is a process that begins and ends on the wings of prayer. There is a need for humble waiting upon the Lord, listening in solitude and quietness for his direction. Nevertheless, we have Jesus' word about recognition of spiritual leaders by their fruit (Matt 7:20, John 15:8). Paul also instructs us about the diversity of gifts and the importance of matching people's gifts to ministry, so that they can gather people from among the lost, grow them into leaders, and mobilize new communities of faith. It is with that confidence that we share the following characteristics and behaviors for church planting. The ideal New Church Planter is one who possesses the following characteristics:

- Visioning Capacity
- Reaching the unchurch
- Intrinsically motivated
- Creates ownership of ministry
- Spousal cooperation
- Effectively builds relationships
- Committed to church growth
- Responsive to community
- Utilizes the giftedness of others
- Flexible and adaptable
- Builds group cohesiveness
- Resilience
- Exercises faith

We encourage you to prayerfully reflect on these behaviors together with your spouse or significant other, family, and friends and ask the question, "Is this a reflection of who I am?"

NEW CHURCH PLANTER: A JOB DESCRIPTION

- Develop and cast a vision (building ownership among the core group) for mobilizing a reproducing community of faith in a selected target area
- Develop and process with the core group seven core values for the new ministry
- Become an authority in understanding the culture of the community through a study of demographics, interviewing community leaders and members, and through personal contact and exposure
- Develop a mission statement which identifies who the target group is, what the primary needs in their lives are, and how the ministry will be contextualized to bring the gospel to them. This includes developing a clear strategic plan and measurable objectives
- Network into the community, building relationships, farming the networks for gathering people into small groups, and forming a launch team
- Evangelize and disciple new Christians
- Maintain positive relationships with parent/sponsor churches and or regions
- Provide vital communication of progress to coach, region, and or funding partners
- Promote excellence and integrity in the new community of faith, faithfully reflecting and representing Jesus Christ
- Create ownership of ministry by helping people “buy in” and own responsibility for the evangelistic growth and vitality of the ministry
- Identify, train, and mobilize leaders for a variety of ministry positions according to their identified gifts and passions
- Develop reproducing leaders who will serve as ministry partners and leaders of small groups
- Minister pastorally, evangelistically, prophetically and educationally to the people the Lord will gather. Build capacity for serving in all of these areas by equipping leaders through modeling, coaching, mentoring, and mobilizing (prepare God’s people to do the work of ministry).
- Build capacity for a growing ministry through reproducible, multiplying systems of leadership development, evangelism, discipleship and small groups
- Demonstrate financial responsibility and mobilize stewardship training
- Personally practice and model the spiritual disciplines of prayer, bible study, and time alone with God.
- Do all of this with a servant’s heart
- HAVE FUN!!!

FIRST STEP: LISTENING THROUGH SCRIPTURE

These attitudes and approaches are the foundation of spiritual discernment. Then, we engage in a process through which God can make our life's direction apparent to us. Set aside 30 minutes a day for the next 30 days to spend time with God and be attentive to what God may be saying to you through passages about the life and mission of the followers of Jesus Christ.

Use this method:

1. Read the passage several times. Try reading it aloud to yourself.
2. Pray with the question, "What are you saying to me, Lord?" Spend a few minutes "listening" as thoughts, images, memories, related scripture passages may come to mind. (See page 10, "Hearing from God" for some help with discerning whether what we hear is of God or not).
3. Write in a journal what you think God may be saying to you.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Day 1	Isaiah 6:1-8	Day 16	Acts 13:1-3
Day 2	Proverbs 22:17-21	Day 17	Acts 13:44-52
Day 3	Isaiah 55:6-11	Day 18	Acts 14:11-18
Day 4	Exodus 36:1-7	Day 19	II Timothy 1:5-12
Day 5	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Day 20	II Timothy 4:1-5
Day 6	Jeremiah 29:11-13	Day 21	Romans 10:1-16
Day 7	John 10:1-13	Day 22	Philippians 2:1-13
Day 8	John 21:15-22	Day 23	Philippians 3:7-16
Day 9	Matthew 25:31-46	Day 24	Ephesians 3:14-21
Day 10	Matthew 28:16-20	Day 25	Ephesians 4:11-16
Day 11	Acts 1:1-18	Day 26	Romans 8:24-39
Day 12	Acts 2:2-12	Day 27	I Corinthians 9:16-27
Day 13	Acts 2:36-41	Day 28	I Corinthians 12:1-31
Day 14	Acts 2:42-47	Day 29	I Corinthians 13:1-13
Day 15	Acts 6:1-7	Day 30	II Corinthians 4:1-18

At the end of the month, go back through your journal, noting themes or patterns that repeat and messages that particularly stand out. Make a note of these "Big Themes and Important Messages."

SECOND STEP: SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

The Spiritual Gifts Inventory (see page 11) will help you assess what your strongest spiritual gifts might be. Remember that there is no greater or lesser value assigned to any of the gifts. Christians are gifted differently by God to serve God's purpose in different ways. You will answer these questions, based on your experience, and then score your Inventory. The results will not be "the last word" on what your spiritual gifts are, but will give you some important indications as to how God has "uniquely gifted" you. This self-understanding will help with your discernment of whether God is calling you to be a church planter.

Take the Inventory and look at your strongest gifts. Do your gifts indicate that you would be an effective church planter?

THIRD STEP: SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The self-assessment questionnaire (see page 22) gives you the opportunity to provide further critical self-evaluation and reflection in the area of characteristics for a New Church Planter.

FOURTH STEP: DIALOGUE WITH EFFECTIVE CHURCH PLANTERS

Interview people who have been effective church planters. Find those pastors in your area who started a new church within the past five years that have at least 100 people in worship every Sunday. Call and ask for an appointment to visit with them about their experience with church planting. If you cannot find such ministers in your area, it is your responsibility to call the New Church Ministry Team to obtain a list of people you could interview by telephone.

Suggested Interview Questions:

How did you experience a call to the church planting ministry?

How did you get started?

What have been the milestones in the development of this congregation?

What would you do differently, if you had it to do over again?

What do you consider your strongest spiritual gifts to be?

Do you have any suggestions for me as I continue to discern whether I am called to the church planting ministry?

FIFTH STEP: IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Ignatius of Loyola was a devoted Christian who lived in the 16th Century and developed practices for spiritual discernment that many have found helpful ever since. This exercise involves living a few days with one option, then living a few days with another option and noting our feelings. Ignatius gives two main categories of feelings: “consolation” and “desolation”. Feelings of consolation usually indicate the choice that corresponds with God’s will for your life. Feelings of desolation usually indicate that this is not in God’s plan for you.

“Consolation involves feelings of peace, freedom, and joy. There is a sense of lightness and rightness. Desolation is a troubled, ill-at-ease-feeling, heaviness, and the absence of peace and joy, darkness. Instead of freedom, you feel stifled. It does not feel right. In time, either consolation or desolation will prevail.” (From Yearning to Know God’s Will, by Danny Morris, Zondervan, 1991)

Assume that you have decided to become a church planter.

Live with this option for 3 days.
Record your feelings in your journal.

Assume that you have decided not to become a church planter, but to use your gifts in some other form of ministry.

Live with this option for 3 days.
Record your feelings in your journal.

Prayerfully look back over your journal

With which option were there more feelings of consolation?
What might this tell you about God’s direction for your life in ministry?

SIXTH STEP: COMPLETE THE CHURCH PLANTER APPLICATION

Complete the enclosed "Church Planter Application." Return the application, spiritual gifts inventory score sheet, a copy of your journal, and the self-assessment questionnaire. Send the reference forms to the individuals named in the application and have them return the form to us at the following address:

NEW CHURCH MINISTRY
Christian Church Disciples of Christ
P.O. Box 7030
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7030

The New Church Ministry Team is serving the church planting movement among Disciples by developing a group of people who feel called to start a church. The New Church Ministry Team helps assess and train potential church planters. The New Church Ministry Team recommends candidates to regions and congregations that are initiating a new church project and are looking for someone to lead the project. After receiving your application packet, a member of the New Church Ministry Team will contact you to schedule a telephone assessment, to talk further about your gifts and call and suggest next steps.

NEW CHURCH MINISTRY TEAM
800-274-1883 ♦ ncm@churchextension.org

Rick Morse, Lead Minister VP for New Church Ministry & Mission Initiatives	317-713-2520	rmorse@churchextension.org
Gilberto Collazo, Minister VP for Congregational Service	317-713-2534	gcollazo@churchextension.org
Charlie Wallace, Minister Minister for New Church & Congregational Service	317-713-2516	cwallace@churchextension.org
Nadine Burton, Minister New Church Leader Development	317-713-2519	nburton@churchextension.org
Ketty Santos, Minister Minister for Coaching Program	317-713-2511	ksantos@churchextension.org
John Roh, Minister Congregational Service & New Church Consultant (Koreans)	317-679-3261	jroh@churchextension.com
Frantz LeBlanc, Minister New Church Consultant (Hatians)	317-418-4564	fleblanc@churchextension.com
Sharon Merchant, Assistant	317-713-2543	smerchant@churchextension.org
Brenda Rossy, Assistant	317-713-2538	brossy@churchextension.org

HEARING FROM GOD... “HOW DOES GOD SPEAK”?

God speaks through the Bible, Prayer, and circumstances. God communicates through anything that turns our attention to God. This communication can be a gentle reminder of a loving Presence or a confrontation with the Awesome Other that can shake the foundations of our world. God’s communication can cause us to think about the things that really matter, can touch our deepest feelings, can make a life-shaping impression within us, and can cause us to see everything in new ways. Let’s try and describe some of the ways God “speaks.”

God can “speak” through something we read, particularly a passage of scripture. The words capture our attention, and their application to our present circumstances becomes apparent. God “speaks” through knowledge which leads to growing understanding of the purpose of creation, the meaning of history, and our particular place in the Big Picture. As we are able to put together more of the pieces, we are left with an even greater appreciation of how great God is. God “speaks” through other people. Someone says something that points us toward God and is very relevant to our growth in faith. We may have a sudden flash of insight that “just comes.” Perhaps we were not even aware of seeking God, but we know we have been given a divine gift of wisdom or a message.

Sometimes God’s communication is not a “message” so much as a sense of God’s presence. God is letting us know, “I am here.” We may be alone and somehow know that we are not alone. We may experience the reality of God’s love when we are surrounded by Christian friends in times of need. When we have a sense of well being and inner peace, whatever our external circumstances might be, God may be communicating assurance. When we feel drawn into “another realm” while listening to music or seeing a work of art, God may be inviting us into fuller awareness of Presence. The sense of satisfaction that comes as we serve someone else or work for justice is another way God communicates. We may look into the face of someone who is and has nothing in the world’s way of thinking and see the God who is revealed in “the least of these.”

HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S GOD?

There are many sources of our inner impressions. They can come from God, from our human “stuff” (mind, psyche, emotions), or from evil. So, how do we discern the source? There are some helpful questions and scripture passages for individuals and groups to consider.

Is what you are hearing consistent with the life, teachings, and Lordship of Jesus?

Scripture Passages: I Corinthians 12:1-3; I John 3-5

- † What truly is of God leads to increased faith in Jesus as Lord (The ultimate authority) and honors him.
- † God's communication affirms that God is in control and we are not.
- † God's communication assures us of God's love and helps us overcome fears.
- † Jesus came "in the flesh." He was not above suffering and neither are we. (Be cautious of any message that seems like a formula for health, wealth, and success. God is always working for our good, sometimes through suffering.)

Is what you "hear" conveying love and does it manifest itself by the up-building of the church?

Scripture Passage: I Corinthians 13 & 14

- † The "gifts of the Spirit" of God are given for the common good and edification of the Body of Christ.
- † Love, the willingness to give oneself for the good of another, is the greatest demonstration of the Spirit of God at work.
- † Any message from God will help the church grow in love and mission.

What are the results in your life?

Scripture Passage: Galatians 5:22-23

- † What is truly of God manifests our faith, hope and love.
- † What is of God helps us to grow in Christ-like qualities.
- † A feeling of inner peace, rather than inner disturbance, is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

If we are truly seeking God's will, we will be led by God's Spirit. We need to be discerning, but not anxious. Jesus promised, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you... If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." **(Luke 11:9-13)**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This inventory will help you think about what your spiritual gifts may be, based on your experience with gifts mentioned in the Bible.
2. The inventory will help you identify 4 gifts you can further explore, using a process described at the conclusion of the inventory.
3. Statements **61-90** list gifts mentioned in the Bible, but not often experienced in traditional, mainline churches. Use your own judgment about whether you will find it helpful to respond to these statements.
4. At least respond to statements **1-60**.
5. Sometimes you may be asked whether you have certain ability or have had a certain experience. If you expect to acquire this ability or experience you may use your imagination in answering.
6. For each statement, rate your response as follows:

Strongly disagree	0
Mostly disagree	1
Slightly disagree	2
Slightly agree	3
Mostly agree	4
Strongly agree	5
7. When you have responded to all statements you intend to include, turn to the instructions for scoring.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

RATING

- 1. I get satisfaction from helping someone else accomplish his or her goals for the church.
- 2. I enjoy providing for the needs of visitors.
- 3. I naturally see the positive side of things and readily see possibilities which others miss.
- 4. I feel led to visit the sick, lonely, or discouraged people and show kindness to them.
- 5. I am willing to work hard to see that church programs and ministries succeed.
- 6. I enjoy being responsible for the spiritual care of several people and am willing to be with them in their times of need.
- 7. I like to see that things are done in an orderly, efficient, and responsible manner.
- 8. I feel good when I have a part in providing financial support for important programs and ministries.
- 9. I feel good when others share my dreams for the church and work to bring them into reality.
- 10. I quickly see social wrongs and have a passion to see that they are addressed in the name of God and corrected.
- 11. I have a passion for Christian unity and am able to articulate the scriptural basis for it.
- 12. I am passionately concerned for people who do not yet know, love, trust, and serve Jesus Christ.
- 13. I enjoy caring for children or new Christians, offering them acceptance, love, and wisdom.
- 14. I am excited when I can help others learn important Christian truths.

- ___ 15. I enjoy spending time in seeking out truths that are important to the church and in making those truths accessible.
- ___ 16. I like to keep a list of people for whom I pray regularly.
- ___ 17. I find satisfaction in trusting that God makes and keeps His promises today just as in Biblical times.
- ___ 18. I delight in glorifying God through a visual or performing art (writing, painting, singing, acting, etc.)
- ___ 19. I enjoy working with my hands to accomplish tangible results which are useful to the church.
- ___ 20. I like the challenge of communicating the Christian message across barriers of class, race, culture or language.
- ___ 21. I do my best work when I am behind the scenes or in a limited responsibility, rather than when I am in the limelight or leadership.
- ___ 22. I am good at introducing people to each other and in helping visitors find what they need to be comfortable.
- ___ 23. I often find a way to lift someone's spirits by complimenting him or her; or to move people out of inaction by exhorting them.
- ___ 24. I have the ability to work with people who have been scorned or neglected without easily "burning out."
- ___ 25. I am often the one who sees what needs to be done and does it so that a program or ministry will succeed.
- ___ 26. I am usually aware of the needs of my fellow church members and can think of helpful things to do for them.
- ___ 27. I am good at planning, organizing, delegating, following up, and evaluating church programs and ministries.
- ___ 28. I am good at earning, managing, and saving money so that I am able to give generously.
- ___ 29. I have insight into what God may want to accomplish through the church and can successfully communicate that insight.

- ___ 30. I am willing to take a strong public stand on behalf of victims of injustice and to do the work necessary to be effective.
- ___ 31. I am skilled at finding common ground on which Christians of differing beliefs and backgrounds can agree to work together.
- ___ 32. I understand the basics of Christian faith and can tell others of my personal experience of Jesus.
- ___ 33. I am good at nurturing children or new Christians in their faith.
- ___ 34. I readily learn Christian truths and can guide others in their learning through lecture, discussion, or creative teaching methods.
- ___ 35. I am able to devote long hours to sifting through information to find things that are beneficial to the church.
- ___ 36. When someone has a need, I am led to pray about it and have a sense for how God wants me to pray.
- ___ 37. When I believe that God intends to bless a certain person or event, I find that I have an extraordinary faith that the blessing will come.
- ___ 38. I am skilled at glorifying God or expressing the Christian message through an art such as music, literature, visual arts, or stage arts.
- ___ 39. I am good at working with my hands to produce items or results which the church can use (cabinetry, needle work, flower arranging, building repairs, etc.)
- ___ 40. I am able to adjust to other social, cultural, or language groups so as to communicate Christian truths effectively across such barriers.
- ___ 41. Others often call on me to help them accomplish a goal by doing some simple task.
- ___ 42. Strangers and newcomers seem to feel quickly at home after I have tried to help them.
- ___ 43. When I encourage others, they seem to respond positively.
- ___ 44. People who need help appreciate my efforts on their behalf.
- ___ 45. I am often asked to take care of the nuts-and-bolts, nitty-gritty part of a church

program or ministry.

- ___ 46. My fellow church members know that I care about them, and they let me know when they have needs.
- ___ 47. When the church needs someone to oversee a task from start to finish, members often turn to me.
- ___ 48. The church knows that it can count on me to support worthy programs and ministries.
- ___ 49. I have a vision for the future of the church, or of some of its programs and ministries, and I am confident that others will follow my leading.
- ___ 50. My efforts have made a difference in correcting injustices.
- ___ 51. When I bring Christians of differing backgrounds together, they enjoy the rich diversity that results.
- ___ 52. People readily approach me with their problems, doubts and questions, and are not put off when I mention Jesus Christ.
- ___ 53. Children or new Christians know that I love them, and will also accept a word of warning or guidance from me.
- ___ 54. Christians or seekers find my teaching helpful and are motivated to pursue their Christian learning.
- ___ 55. When I do not know the answer to a question or importance to the church, I am driven to find the answer.
- ___ 56. My prayers for others have made a difference in their lives.
- ___ 57. My faith in God's providence has kept others moving forward when circumstances seemed unfavorable to them.
- ___ 58. I am sensitive to the many levels through which people receive Christian truth and believe that I am able to help communicate truth through artistry.
- ___ 59. People appreciate the way what I do with my hands helps the church.
- ___ 60. People of other classes, races, cultures, or languages seem to respond well to my attempts to express Christian truths.

- ___ 61. I find that the Holy Spirit helps me know and communicate God's immediate word by interpreting events of the past, present, or future in ways that help the church.
- ___ 62. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to find solutions to problems which I would not have come up with on my own.
- ___ 63. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to know things about other people which I could not know by natural means.
- ___ 64. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to speak prophetic messages in unlearned languages.
- ___ 65. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to interpret prophetic messages which have been spoken in unlearned languages.
- ___ 66. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to see the good or evil hidden in another person's heart.
- ___ 67. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to see how angels or demons are affecting a person or event.
- ___ 68. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to cast out or bind demonic spirits.
- ___ 69. Sometimes the Holy Spirit anoints me to act as an agent of divine healing.
- ___ 70. Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables me to be an agent of miracles of providence or protection.
- ___ 71. I am willing to "listen" to what God says and to communicate what God reveals without personal additions or subtractions.
- ___ 72. When I share supernatural wisdom, I do so with wisdom and humility.
- ___ 73. I use specially revealed knowledge as God leads me to use it in encouraging, warning, evangelizing, etc.
- ___ 74. I share God's messages in unlearned languages in the expectation that they will be interpreted.
- ___ 75. I explain, without embellishment, the plain and clear meaning of messages which have been delivered in unlearned languages.

- ___ 76. When I discern the real from the phony in other people I am able to use this discernment appropriately without becoming self-righteously judgmental.
- ___ 77. I share my insights about whether things are from good or evil spiritual beings in a calm and humble manner.
- ___ 78. When called to do so, I obediently enter the battlefield where evil spiritual beings contend to control a person or event.
- ___ 79. When God leads me to pray for healing, I am willing to do so even if some people consider me foolish.
- ___ 80. When I am convinced that God wants to work in a miraculous way, I am willing to follow God's leading in order to be part of the work.
- ___ 81. Through my prophetic utterances, some have received God's guidance.
- ___ 82. The church has benefited from my applications of God's specially revealed wisdom.
- ___ 83. Individuals have received help in facing difficult situations or in making important changes through information that has been revealed through me.
- ___ 84. The church has received help when I have spoken messages in unlearned languages.
- ___ 85. Messages spoken in unlearned languages have been made clear to the church through me.
- ___ 86. My insights into the hearts of others have helped people avoid serious mistakes.
- ___ 87. My discernment of spiritual beings has been used to enhance human liberty and dignity.
- ___ 88. My ability to cast out or bind evil spirits has been used to enhance human liberty and dignity.
- ___ 89. Some people have been healed by other than medical or natural means through my prayers.
- ___ 90. God has provided for or protected others through my being willing to act as God's agent.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCORING

1. On the score sheet, record your rating for each statement in the box with the corresponding number: e.g., Your ranking for Statement No. 1 should appear in Box No. 1
2. Add the ratings for the three numbers on each line and record the total in the Total column. For instance, if you rated Statement 1 with a 4, Statement 21 with a 2 and Statement 41 with a 3, you would add 4, 2, and 3 to get 9 and place 9 in the Total column just to the right of the box for Statement 41.
3. Find the line with the highest total. In the ranking column mark that line with a 1. Find the line with the next highest total and rank it 2. In the event of ties, show the extent of the tie. For instance, if 4 lines are tied for 3rd ranking, show each as ranking "3-6" (e.g., tied for 3, 4, 5 and 6 rank).

SCORING CHART

SPIRITUAL GIFT	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	TOTAL	RANK
A. Assisting	1	21	41		
B. Welcoming	2	22	42		
C. Encouraging	3	23	43		
D. Showing Mercy	4	24	44		
E. Serving	5	25	45		
F. Pastoring	6	26	46		
G. Administering	7	27	47		
H. Contributing	8	28	48		
I. Leading	9	29	49		
J. Advocating	10	30	50		
K. Uniting	11	31	51		
L. Evangelizing	12	32	52		
M. Nurturing	13	33	53		
N. Teaching	14	34	54		
O. Researching	15	35	55		
P. Interceding	16	36	56		
Q. Believing	17	37	57		
R. Artistry	18	38	58		
S. Crafts	19	39	59		
T. Missions	20	40	60		
U. Prophesying	61	71	81		
V. Uttering Wisdom	62	72	82		
W. Uttering Knowledge	63	73	83		
X. Speaking in Tongues	64	74	84		
Y. Interpreting Tongues	65	75	85		
Z. Discerning Human Hearts	66	76	86		
AA. Discerning Spirits	67	77	87		
BB. Exorcising/Deliverance	68	78	88		
CC. Healing	69	79	89		
DD. Miracle Working	70	80	90		

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DEFINITIONS

- A. Assisting:** Helping other Christians effectively use their gifts in carrying out their missions.
- B. Welcoming:** Providing Hospitality to new Christians, strangers, traveling church workers, etc.
- C. Encouraging:** Complimenting, comforting, counseling, or challenging others in ways that encourage their Christian endeavors.
- D. Showing mercy:** Empathetically and compassionately helping people who are suffering emotionally, socially, or physically.
- E. Serving:** Seeing and doing detailed work necessary to the success of a church program or ministry.
- F. Pastoring:** Assuming responsibility for the spiritual care of a Christian group, usually a small group.
- G. Administering:** Effectively implementing programs and ministries from start to finish.
- H. Contributing:** Earning, saving, and giving money for the support of Christian programs and ministries.
- I. Leading:** Envisioning, communicating, and enlisting support for Christian goals and plans.
- J. Advocating:** Serving as an advocate for justice or peace in the name of Jesus Christ.
- K. Uniting:** Enabling Christians of differing backgrounds to worship and serve together harmoniously and productively.
- L. Evangelizing:** Effectively communicating the gospel in ways that lead people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and to become faithful members of a church.
- M. Nurturing:** Communicating love, acceptance, or guidance to children or new Christians.
- N. Teaching:** Communicating Christian knowledge or experience in ways that enhance learning by others.

O. Researching:	Seeking, gathering, organizing, and making accessible information that aids the church.
P. Interceding:	Praying regularly for others with great results occurring at a much above average rate.
Q. Believing:	Trusting even against evidence that God will act as promised in a given situation.
R. Artistry:	Glorifying God or communicating the gospel through some branch of the arts.
S. Crafts:	Using manual skills with unusual dedication in providing or maintaining items useful to the church.
T. Missions:	Communicating the Gospel or building Christian fellowship across cultural lines.
U. Prophecy:	Being inspired to declare the immediate word of God.
V. Uttering wisdom:	Sharing supernaturally-given wisdom about solving problems.
W. Uttering knowledge:	Sharing supernaturally-given facts in a way that helps Christians.
X. Speaking in tongues:	Receiving and speaking a message from God in an unlearned language.
Z. Discerning human hearts:	Recognizing good and evil motives.
AA. Discerning spirits:	Recognizing the presence and activity of angels and demons.
BB. Exorcising-delivering:	Casting out or binding evil spirits.
CC. Healing:	Being an agent through whom God brings healing to people suffering emotional or physical affliction.
DD. Miracle-working:	Being an agent through whom God works miracles of providence, protection, or demonstration.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION OF GIFTS

1. Note the four top-ranked gifts from your inventory. Experiment with ministries which require use of those gifts. Consult with your pastor or other leaders of your congregation concerning ministry opportunities which would help you explore your gifts. Making a short-term commitment of 10 weeks to 6 months to a ministry would help you determine whether these are your gifts.
2. After some experience in using your gifts in a particular ministry, evaluate how it "fits". Evaluate on the basis of your own internal response: Did you feel used by God to bless other through that ministry? Do you have a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment using that gift?

Evaluate on the basis of feedback from others. If you're operating in your areas of giftedness, people will usually express genuine appreciation for how they are blessed through your ministry.

**Spiritual Gifts Inventory contributed by Pastor John Turner, Warren Hills Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN*

CHURCH PLANTER SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Rate your level of competence in each of the following thirteen church planter qualities, 5 being the strongest. Under each quality offer one example in support. We understand that no one is a "5" in every area. Your number ratings should reflect your areas of primary giftedness as well as growth areas. It is important that you approach this self-assessment with honesty and integrity always in prayer.

Weakest 1 2 3 4 5 Strongest

A. Has a "Visioning" Capacity

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Project into the future, beyond the present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Develop a theme that highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Persuasively sell the vision to the people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Approach challenges as opportunities instead of obstacles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Cope effectively with non-visioning elements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Erect artificial walls to limit the capacities of God, self, or others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Establish a clear church identity related to theme and vision | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

B. Is Intrinsicly Motivated

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Committed to Excellence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Relentlessly persistent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Aggressively, yet positively, take the initiative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Self-starter and is willing to build from nothing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Willing to work long and hard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

C. Effective Relationship Building

- | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Respond with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Display godly love and compassion to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Make others feel secure and comfortable in your presence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Do not respond in judgmental or prejudicial fashion to new people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Appreciate and accept a variety of persons | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Spend quality time with present parishioners without overlooking them for the sake of newcomers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

D. Committed to Church Growth

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Appreciate steady and consistent growth without looking for "quick success" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Committed to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Establish the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting church within a specific period of time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Do not fall into a ministry of maintenance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | See the church project within the larger context of God's kingdom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

E. Responsiveness to the Community

- | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Understand the culture of the community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Identify and assess community needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Organize internal and external church resources to respond to community needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Efficiently utilize resources on a basis of the needs priority | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Determine effectiveness of other organized | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 6. | attempts to respond to community needs
Do not confuse community needs with what church has to offer | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. | Learn the character and "pulse" of the community | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. | Adapt the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Example:

F. Ability to create ownership of Ministry

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Help others "buy in" and feel responsible for the growth and success of the ministry | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. | Win the commitment of the people to the vision | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. | Establish a congregational identity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. | Avoid imposing unrealistic goals on the congregation | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Example:

G. Ability to Relate to the Unchurched

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Communicate in a style understood by the unchurched | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. | Understand the psychology/mentality of the unchurched | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. | Comfortably move and function in the "personal space" of the unchurched | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. | Quickly get to know the unchurched on a personal level | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. | Break through the barriers erected by the unchurched | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. | Handle crises faced by the unchurched | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Example:

H. Spousal Cooperation

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Have an explicit agreement regarding each partner's role and involvement in ministry | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. | Have explicit rules regarding use of home as an office | 1 2 3 4 5 |

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Evaluate the consequences of ministry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Function as a team with spouse through individual and corporate action | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Agree upon and share ministry vision with my spouse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Models wholesome family life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Deliberately plan and protects family | | | | | |

Example:

I. Utilization of the Giftedness of Others

- | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Release and equip people to do the task of ministry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Discern the spiritual gifts of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Match people with ministry needs and opportunities according to giftedness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Delegate effectively in areas of personal limitation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Avoid assigning ministry opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Do not place unwanted restrictions on the spiritual giftedness of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

J. Flexibility and Adaptability

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Cope effectively with ambiguity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Cope effectively with constant and abrupt change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Adapt the methods to the uniqueness of the respective church planter project | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Readily shift priorities and emphases during various stages of church growth | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Do whatever is necessary whenever is necessary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

K. Building a Cohesive Church Body

- | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Develop a nucleus group(s) as a foundation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Quickly include newcomers into a network of relationships or meaningful church activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Monitor the morale of the people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Use groups effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

L. Resilience

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Experience setbacks without defeat | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Ride the ups and down (e.g. attendance) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Expect the unexpected | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Rebound from loss, disappointments and failure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

M. Exercising Faith

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Possess a conviction regarding the call to church planting ministry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Believe in God's action | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Marked by expectation and hope | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Willing to wait for answers to specific prayer requests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example:

My three Strongest Areas:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

My Three Weakest Areas

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____