



Developing a Church Development Process

Rev. Doug Huntington

IFCA Church Extension - July 2007

Independent Bible Mission is the IFCA International church planting agency in the state of Michigan. It has been a blessing to see our Lord use IBM to plant, bring to maturity and graduate 53 churches since Wright VanPlew had the initial burden and vision in 1952 to concentrate on planting IFCA churches throughout Michigan.

Every church is unique and it is always of great interest to hear how our Lord starts a new church, moves it along to maturity and then graduates that church as an independent self-governing church. We are often asked, "How long does it take to bring a church to the place of graduation?" It does vary but I believe a church can develop to this stage in 5-7 years. Sadly, however, a mission church can also continue to operate under a church extension mission indefinitely. **The key is the church leadership's willingness to use a "Church Development Process."**

At IBM we give our pastors a recommended church development process and then urge them to take systematic steps to implement each item, check it off and move on the next step. We do not insist they use exactly what the home office has written and presented but to take the concepts and write their own "Church Development Process." There are four stages we want to see each mission church move through.

1. Implementing the basics.
2. Moving toward maturity.
3. Members committing to serve in this church and community
4. Graduate from Independent Bible Mission and become a self-governing church.

There are 37 suggested checkpoints to move through the entire process. Some of our IBM pastors were somewhat overwhelmed when this was first introduced because previously we simply had nine items that needed to be completed to graduate:

1. Incorporate with the state of Michigan.
2. Become self-governing and self-supporting.
3. Establish church membership.
4. Adopt a constitution and doctrinal statement approved by the IBM, including a dissolution clause.
5. Pay in full any loans of financial help from IBM.
6. Become a regular member of IFCA International.
7. Support the Independent Bible Mission as a missionary organization of the Church.
8. Obtain your own employee identification number (EIN) from the IRS.

9. Hold a debriefing session with the Church Board and/or congregation and the Director of the IBM.

These nine items are still required but we believe the addition of a development process is extremely helpful in systematically moving each church through the practical steps they need to take to mature and become self-governing.

Implementing the Basics

1. IBM establishes a Steering Committee
2. Hand out and familiarize yourself and your leadership with the IBM Mission Church Constitution.
3. Secure a meeting place and set times for your services.
4. Choose and implement a discipleship program. (We give some suggestions) Recruit one man to lead the next class.
5. Chose and implement an evangelism program. (We give some suggestions) Select one man and one woman to go out with you each week OJT.
6. Establish a "Welcome Class." (We give them suggested materials already written and ready to personalize for their church).
7. As a church memorize basic Scripture: *Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23; Rom 10:13; Eph 2:8-9; Isa. 53:6; Rev. 3:20; 1 Jn. 5:10-13*

Moving Toward Maturity

1. Take the Church through a SHAPE class. (Choose one man to lead the next class)
2. Train men as LIT's - Leaders in Training for greeting\announcements, Scripture readers, song leaders.
3. Teach the importance of being committed to giving a weekly tithe to God in this local church (*Gen 28:22; Mal. 3:10; 1 Cor. 16:2*).
4. Establish Church membership.
5. Write your own "Leadership Training Manual" using the IBM suggested manual.
6. Choose and commission one or more DIT's - Deacons in training.
7. Choose and commission one or more EIT's - Elders in training.
8. Choose a name and establish a men's accountability group. Meet at least once a month.
9. Choose a name and establish a women's accountability group. Meet at least once a month.
10. Write your own policy book using IBM's suggested policy book manual.
11. Write your own "Life Development Process" for your church people.
12. As a Church memorize basic Scripture: *Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:15-16*
13. Establish a mission's budget by giving at least \$50 monthly to IBM to establish more churches.
14. Become committed to a small group ministry in this church. SS class - Men's accountability - Women's accountability - Etc.

Members Committing to Serve in this Church and Community

1. Take the church through the "Leadership Training Manual." Recruit and

train a man to teach the next class.

2. Select a couple and start a marriage ministry class. (We give curriculum suggestions)
3. Select a couple and start a parenting class. (We give curriculum suggestions)
4. Select leaders and start a recovery class.
5. As a church memorize basic Scripture: *Deut 6:6-9; Psalm 1; Rom. 6:1-11; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7*
6. Members become committed to a ministry team. Evangelism - Discipleship - Marriage - Parenting - Recovery or other ministry.
7. Encourage individual members to disciple a new believer. Men discipling men, women discipling women and teens discipling teens. (Use your established "Disciple Material.")

Graduating from IBM and Becoming an Autonomous Church

1. Write and have approved your own constitution using the IBM "Recommended Church Constitution."
2. Pay off your IBM loan, if you have one.
3. Be in your own church building.
4. Have in place your own church board with 1 Tim 3, Titus 1 qualified elder(s) and deacon(s) and if possible EIT's and DIT's being trained.
5. Have an ongoing evangelism/OJT program in place and presently functioning.
6. Have an ongoing discipleship program in place and presently functioning.
7. Have done a survey and have recommended to IBM another location for another IBM\IFCA Bible Church to be planted (usually within a 25 mile radius of your present church).
8. Recruit and commission at least one family to give one year serving in this IBM church plant.
9. As a church memorize basic Scripture: *Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Phil. 1:3-6*

Doug Huntington is the Executive Director of [Independent Bible Mission](#), the IFCA church planting agency in the Michigan and Northwoods Regionals

Copyright © 2007 IFCA International - All Rights Reserved