

New Church Specialties

How Church Planter Assessment Was Developed

Back in the mid-1980's, 13 different denominations came together with the common problem of church planter misplacement. The problem in their past was that good and godly persons had been placed by them in church planting assignments for which these people were neither gifted nor suited. The result of those misplacements over the years had cost these denominations in the United States and Canada literally millions of dollars. In some places districts had bought land, built a building and fully supported the church planter financially. But the church planter themselves, the most important key in new church development, was not assessed correctly for this unique calling and role.

Out of their discussions, these 13 different denominations hired a psychologist from Fuller Theological Seminary, Dr. Charles Ridley. He was charged with the responsibility of studying 100 church planters from these denominations to determine the common characteristics that effective church planting leaders have. Out of Dr. Ridley's work came the 13 characteristics that became "the standard" for what numerous denominations began looking for in church planters. After concluding his study, Dr. Ridley made the observation, "The job you are asking these people to do, the job of a church planter, is awesome!"

These 13 characteristics were communicated to numerous people through "The Church Planter's Toolkit" and "How To Select Church Planters," a guide to behavioral interviewing that Dr. Ridley wrote. They were also used by the Center for Organizational Development and the Presbyterian Church as they developed 3-day Assessment Centers. Today all NCS Assessment activities for church planters also use these same 13 characteristics.

Planting a new church is a very specialized calling and requires a unique gift mix. Before you embark on the path to become a church planter, we at New Church Specialties strongly recommend that you be assessed! In fact, we do not enter into formal coaching agreements with planters who have not passed a formal or informal assessment process.

Lonnie Bullock, the COO of NCS has been trained by Dr. Ridley in behavioral interviewing and has conducted over 100 church planter assessments over the past 8 years. He now leads our one day assessments and our assessment centers serving our partner judicatories, districts and denominations.