

# **Harvest Victoria Church Planting Operating Manual**

**March 25, 2022**

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# INTRODUCTION

*This document has been adopted from the Global Mission Church Planting Operating Manual, February, 2011 edition. Produced by Adventist Mission ([www.adventistmission.org](http://www.adventistmission.org))*

Harvest Victoria (HV) is a five year discipleship strategy of the Victorian Conference. On the 28th of June 2019, the Evangelism Committee voted that a strategy should be drafted for creating a coaching support network for church planting for the Harvest Victoria timeframe.

The role of the church planting coordinator was established as a result of that decision along with funding to support church plants throughout Victoria.

The HV church planting operating manual is designed to help church planters to negotiate policies and procedures for funding their church planting projects.

This initiative seeks to support and empower the members of the Victorian Conference as they go out into the community to start new congregations.

The HV church planting program operates a wholistic approach reflecting what Ellen White refers to as Christ's method:

- "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" (Ministry of healing pg 143).

Note the steps in Christ's method:

- Mingling with people.
- Showing sympathy.
- Ministering to needs.
- Winning confidence.

Then and only then:

- Inviting to follow Jesus.

## **Section 1**

# **HARVEST VICTORIA CHURCH PLANTING MISSION PHILOSOPHY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**The Harvest Victoria initiative was established to find ways, under God's guidance, to plant and disciple new groups of believers throughout Victoria.**

### **1. 1 THE MISSION**

To preach the Everlasting Gospel throughout Victoria

To follow Christ's method

To cultivate a disciple making movement throughout Victoria

### **1.2 THE OBJECTIVE**

To establish local Adventist congregations in Victoria in population growth areas where presently there are none.

### **1.3 THE STRATEGY**

#### **1.3.1 Priorities**

Normally, priority for funding will be given to new church plants in growth areas throughout Victoria.

#### **1.3.2 Coordination**

Church planters who receive funding will join a church planting network that is led out by the Victorian Conference Church Planting Coordinator (CPC).

#### **1.3.3 Training and support**

The Victorian Conference will offer training and support.

#### **1.3.4 Participative Funding**

Church plant projects that receive approval for funding are expected to become financially independent by the end of the third year of the project.

Local church plant projects that receive funding will be expected to co-contribute to the seed fund provided by the Victorian Conference.

## Section 2

# CHURCH PLANT STRUCTURE

### 2.1 Leadership team

Each church plant should have a basic leadership structure put in place. It is expected that a leadership team is formed for each project. This team is responsible for planning and executing church planting initiatives.

### 2.2 Roles that need to be filled

#### 2.2.1 Church planter (The leader of the group)

This individual is to provide vision, direction, and leadership for the church plant project.

This individual should see effective mission as a way of life, rather than just a series of evangelistic events. Rather than just trying to attract established Adventist people from existing churches, church planters' work consists of going into the community, engaging people where they work, study, eat, and live. They work for long-term, wholistic, on-the-ground initiatives—following Christ's example of mingling, showing compassion, winning confidence, and leading people to Jesus.

The church planter is in charge of preparing a Direct Action Plan (DAP)

- The church planter is to submit a DAP to the Victorian Conference Church planting coordinator for review.
- This individual is to liaise with the Victorian Conference church planting coordinator, utilising the resources offered for their field to:
  - Increase church members' knowledge of the Harvest Victoria program of the church.
  - Provide resources to support the church members in their ministry work.

#### 2.2.2 Treasurer

This individual is to manage the financial aspects of the church planting project. The Treasurer is to keep accurate and up-to-date records of the tithe, offering, and income of the church.

This individual is also to send financial records to the Victorian Conference finance department and the CPC in a timely manner.

#### 2.2.3 Secretary

This individual is in charge of managing records of leadership meetings.

The Secretary is in charge of maintaining the contact information of members and contacts in the community.

The Secretary is also in charge of managing attendance records for the church.

## Section 3

# PREPARING AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING AND WRITING A DIRECT ACTION PLAN

### 3.1 Preparing an application

Applications for funding should be made up of the following documents:

- Direction Action Plan (DAP)
- Funding request form/Finance report (same document)
- Commitment Contract

Each form needs to be filled out in its entirety in order for applications to be considered for HV funding.

### 3.2 Elements in planning

#### 3.2.1 Methodology

When planning projects prayerful consideration should be given to the methodology to be used, remembering Ellen White's counsel to follow Christ's method of mingling with the people, desiring their good, showing sympathy for them and ministering to their needs.

#### 3.2.2 Demographic Study

Culture, socio-economic status, and religious background, all play a crucial role in how receptive people are to Christianity. In some areas, people and conditions make it easy to share Adventist beliefs while in others it's much more difficult. Openness to new and creative ideas is needed in new and difficult areas, as well as sensitivity to local conditions.

#### 3.2.3 Involvement in the Community

Involvement in the community and "mingling" with people in their day-to-day activities are crucial for establishing relationships. Once contacts and confidence are established, people often seek help with their spiritual needs. Jesus is the model for wholistic mission ministry.

#### 3.2.4 Sensitivity

Ellen White calls for tact and kindness in the way we deal with people with different beliefs. "Be guarded. In bearing the message make no personal thrusts at other churches," she wrote. She advises us to "be careful of our words," and that often "silence is eloquence" when dealing with controversial themes. "Speak the truth in tones and words of love," she adds. "Let Christ be exalted. Keep to the affirmative of truth."

### **3.2.5 Follow-up Discipleship Program**

Whatever methods are used to reach people for Jesus, it is vital to have a proper follow-up discipleship program built into the plan. New believers need to be nurtured and established in their faith. Any discipleship program must include some type of lay training course to teach new believers how to share their newfound faith with their friends and neighbours.

### **3.2.6 Lay Volunteer Involvement**

The action plan should be simple, having as much lay volunteer involvement as possible and keeping expenses down.

### **3.2.7 Timeline**

When planning the length of the project, don't underestimate how long the process of establishing a new group of disciples can take. Realistic estimates are important to ensure that new groups are not left hanging as spiritual orphans, with no pastoral care to firmly establish them.

### **3.2.8 Self Sustaining**

Each church plant that is supported by HV funding is expected to become financially independent by the end of the third year of its operation. Funding will cease by the end of the third year of its inception.

### **3.2.9 Plans for Multiplication**

Each church plant that is supported by HV funding should have plans for continual growth after it becomes an established church. A church plant becomes effective as it keeps a missional approach to ministry. The DAP should reflect plans to plant and nurture other new groups.

Each church plant that receives funding will set aside funds to start another church plant once the church plant is financially stable and has become an official church. The HVIT suggests the amount of 6,000 AUD to be remitted to the Victorian Conference Church planting budget. This commitment should be reflected in church board meeting minutes.

## Section 4

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

#### 4.1 Funding Projects

Since HV church plant funding is participative, an organisation initiating a project should contribute to the project before the application is sent to the next higher organisation. The higher organisation should not accept any application without the lower organisation's contribution except for extraordinary reasons.

#### 4.2 Sources of funding

The majority of the church planting projects will be funded by the Victorian Conference.

10% of funding for each project is expected to be funded by the local church plant project. The local church contributions should be reflected in the Budget Request form/Finance Report. Each time the Conference releases funds, proof of local church contributions will be requested.

#### 4.3 Application process

Church plant funding requests will be submitted to the CPC for initial assessment.

Upon initial assessment, the CPC will submit the funding request to the Harvest Victoria Implementation Team (HVIT) for review.

After the funding request has been reviewed and accepted by the HVIT, a set amount of funding will be allocated for the first year of ministry for the church plant based on the needs of the church plant.

Feedback may be given to the applicants by the CPC or the HVIT if necessary. This is to ensure that the plans of the church plant are coherent and the project has the best chance of success.

#### 4.4 Releasing HV funds

Once the funding request has been approved, the CPC will notify the church planter of the amount of funds available. HV church planting funds will be available to the church plant projects within 30 days of its approval by the HVIT.

After the first year of funds have been released to the church plant, the remaining funds allocated to the church plant will be released on substantiation of expenditure till the end of the third year of the project.

Proof of substantiation of expenditure is to be given through finance reports which will be submitted every six months. More about this in section 6.

#### 4.5 Recalling and Withholding of HV funds

HV funds will be recalled if projects have not been started within six months after funds have been released.

HV funds will be recalled if no reports have been received by the HVIT in a 6 month period.

HV funds will be withheld if no local church contributions are made at each time of funding release.

## Section 5

### Harvest Victoria Church Plant Program

#### 5.1 The philosophy behind the HV church plant program

The HV church plant program is a collaborative conference and lay-driven initiative to plant an Adventist presence among all people groups throughout Victoria. This initiative, patterned after Christ's ministry, seeks to involve lay people in witnessing in every neighbourhood, preaching the good news, serving people, developing disciples, and bringing people into meaningful church fellowship. "Until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of minister and church officers," writes Ellen White, "the work of God on this earth can never be finished" (Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 117).

#### 5.2 Values

##### 5.2.1 Goal ownership

Participants choose their own goals, such as the target area for the church plant, the demographic the group is reaching, the rate of growth, etc

##### 5.2.2 Volunteer-driven

Pioneer teams will be made up of lay people who may be led by Pastoral staff.

##### 5.2.3 New believers

A sequence of events is planned, the last of which establishes a new body of believers.

##### 5.2.4 Long-term contact

Church planters will establish long-term contact with people to win their confidence and trust.

##### 5.2.5 Lasting results

Church planters will develop outreach methods in the context of the local culture so these contextualised programs and activities will have a lasting effect.

#### 5.3 Strategy and Support

The success of the HV church planting program depends on the collaborative efforts of the church plant project and the Victorian Conference. Training, moral support and financial support are vital for maintaining the program.

##### 5.3.1 Organising

Any Seventh-day Adventist member of the Victorian Conference in good standing can organise a church plant. The project organiser should engage in heartfelt prayer and thoughtful planning.

### **5.3.2 Mentor**

Once the funding proposal has been accepted by the Evangelism Committee, a pastoral mentor will be assigned to the church plant project if a pastor is not yet already involved with the church plant.

### **5.3.3. Materials**

The church planting coordinator will provide relevant resources for church planters to help aid in their projects.

### **5.3.4 Training**

Church planters will be expected to join the Victorian Conference church planting network for ongoing training and support for the duration of the funding schedule.

Each year a training conference will be organised for church planters to help develop necessary skills.

### **5.3.5 Written Agreement**

There will be a contractual agreement between the initiating organisation (Evangelism Committee) and the leadership of the church plant project. The agreement will cover the following areas:

- Periodic reports
- Financial commitments to the local church and the Victorian Conference
- Attendance to the local church and training programs organised by the Victorian Conference.

## Section 6

### REPORTING

Reporting is a vital part of the HV church plant initiative. The local organisation is obligated to submit reports to the Evangelism Committee.

#### 6.1 Types of Reports

There are different types of reports that need to be submitted to the Evangelisms committee. The following reports are to be submitted to the Evangelism Committee through the CPC:

##### 6.1.1 Ministry Report

The required report can be accessed via the Ministry Development portal ([md.adventist.org.au](http://md.adventist.org.au)). Church planters will fill out the form entitled, 'Ministry Report.' This is a progress report of the church plant project which should be completed by the Person Responsible for the church plant. It should be submitted through to the CPC. The CPC will submit a summary of the report to the Evangelism Committee. If the church planter is a lay person, they can gain access to the Ministry Development portal through the designated mentoring pastor who can set up an account for the church planter.

##### 6.1.2 Finance Report

A report on the use of funds along with receipts from ministry activity must be submitted through to the CPC every 6 months. The CPC will submit the finance report along with receipts from ministry activity to the HVIT and the Victorian Conference CFO.

##### 6.1.3 Changes to the Budget/Finance Report

Any significant change (excess of 500 AUD) to the budget must be approved by the HVIT **prior** to the expenditure of funds. Changes to the budget that are less than \$500 will be discussed with the CPC.

#### 6.2 Frequency of Reporting

Ministry Reports should be submitted every 3 months in order to receive funding from the conference.

Finance reports should be submitted every 6 months in order to receive funding from the conference.

#### 6.3 Failure to submit reports

Failure to submit reports will result in funds being recalled and/or future grants being suspended. If there are any unforeseen problems with projects, the CPC will submit a progress report and explanation.

## Section 7

# IDENTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING CHURCH PLANTS

### 7.1 Models for church plant

The Evangelism Committee acknowledges the following as church plant models:

- A mother church starting a new group
- A church plant that is formed through small group multiplication
- House church
- Other methods will be recognised upon an initial assessment from the CPC.

### 7.2 Funding amount and schedule for each church plant model

- **Important note: Each application will be reviewed and given an amount determined by need with a maximum amount of \$60,000 per application.**
- **Not every application will receive the maximum amount.**
- **The figures stated below each church model are for example only and are listed as potential scenarios.**

#### 7.2.1 A mother church starting a new group that is ready to run as an autonomous entity.

- A maximum of \$60,000 or what is available in the church planting budget, will be provided to the church plant.
- This funding is the maximum amount allotted to an individual church plant project. Church plants that apply for this funding will be thoroughly reviewed. Ministry strategy and implementation will need to be developed in order to qualify for funding.
  - Questions asked to assess church plant application:
    - How committed are the leadership to this project?
    - Is the local church plant financially invested in the project? Does the local congregation have the 10 percent (\$6,000) of requested funds set aside for the project?
    - Does the church plant have a developed discipleship plan?
    - Is there a clear three year strategy for the church?
    - Are the ministries of the church plant project well supported? Do the ministries have a clear focus?
    - Will the church plant be financially independent in three years?
    - Does the church plant have an active CRM (customer relations management)?
    - Does the church plant have a sense of community and connectedness?

- Is the core group of the church plant ready to support ministries and a church service effectively and sustainably?

### **7.2.2 A church plant that is formed through small group multiplication**

- \$5,000 per small group per year over a three year period.
- When the small groups are ready to launch a church service, more funds will be released within the available budget from church planting.
- For example:
  - A maximum of \$60,000 or what is available in the church planting budget, will be given to a church plant project even if the number of small groups exceeds the amount of funding available.
  - Scenario 1- Four small groups that have multiplied over a two year period would have received \$20,000 in funding and are eligible to receive \$20,000 more to start a church service.
  - Scenario 2- Four small groups run for three years and receive \$60,000 in funding and start church service. No additional funding will be given.
- Questions asked to assess small groups:
  - How committed are the leadership to this project?
  - Is the local church plant financially invested in the project? Does the local congregation have the 10 percent (\$500 per small group each year) of requested funds set aside for the project?
  - Does each small group have a discipleship plan?
  - Are the small groups missional?
  - Is there a genuine intent to plant a church from the network of small groups?
  - Do the small groups have an active CRM (customer relations management)?
  - Do the small groups have a sense of community and connectedness?
  - What are the plans for multiplication for the small group?

### **7.2.3. A house church**

- \$10,000 per house church per year over a three year period.
- A network of house churches will receive a maximum of \$60,000 or what is available in the church planting budget, over a three year period.
  - When the house church has multiplied into two house churches. The funding for house church 2 will kick in.
  - This will repeat till a network of 6 house churches are established or till the three year funding deadline concludes.
- Questions asked to assess house churches.
  - How committed are the leadership to this project?
  - Is the local church plant financially invested in the project? Does the local congregation have the 10 percent (\$1000 per house church) of requested funds set aside for the project?
  - Does each house church have a discipleship plan?
  - Are the house churches missional?
  - Is there a genuine intent to multiply house churches?
  - What are the plans for multiplication of the house church?
  - Do the small groups have an active CRM (customer relations management)?
  - Do the house churches have a sense of community and connectedness?

## Section 8

### Additional sources of funding

#### 8.1 Evangelism grants

Each year the Victorian Conference provides evangelism grants for outreach activities. Applications for evangelism grants are due by September of each year. Proposals can be submitted to Craig Gillis. For more questions contact Craig at [craiggillis@adventist.org.au](mailto:craiggillis@adventist.org.au)

#### 8.2 Tithe Reversion

Each year the conference allocates a tithe reversion budget for local churches. This Tithe reversion is calculated as 3% of tithe from two years prior. For example in 2020 the 3% allocation is based on 2018 Tithe income for that church group. Tithe reversion may not be available to a new church plant for at least 2 years. If you have been advised that tithe reversion is available you can complete and submit an application to Graeme Moffitt at [Graememoffitt@adventist.org.au](mailto:Graememoffitt@adventist.org.au). If the church wants to inquire about how much tithe reversion is available, the church can contact Janelle Cameron with the enquiry at [janellecameron@adventist.org.au](mailto:janellecameron@adventist.org.au)

#### 8.3 South Pacific Division Funding

Each year the South Pacific Division select missional projects and fund Church Plants and Centre of Influence projects. For more information contact Roy Kim at [roykim@adventist.org.au](mailto:roykim@adventist.org.au)