

NOT ALONE

Next Step Ministry Training



WHAT HAPPENS when someone in your church senses the Lord leading them to serve out of their giftedness, talents, and passion?

WHAT IF that calling leads to church planting, the mission field, or to serve more faithfully in the local church?

HOW would you train them, and what first steps would you take to equip them well?

George Siler, Missions Pastor at **Parkway Baptist Church**, set out to answer the above questions. As Siler prayed and reflected, one clear conviction emerged: this work need not rest on a single church. Instead, it can be strengthened through cooperation and partnership among local churches. From that vision, the first Central Region Sending Pipeline was launched.

Today, the following churches have participants in the pipeline or are involved in the training:

Gwathmey Baptist Church in Ashland;
Parkway Baptist Church in Moseley;
Transformation Church in Chesterfield;
The Fix Chapel in Tappahannock;
Hillcrest Baptist Church in Hanover;
New Life Church in Powhatan; and
The Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights.

How the Sending Pipeline Works

The Sending Pipeline is designed to help move a person from sensing a call to ministry to being trained, mentored, assessed (as appropriate), and ultimately to being sent to serve. While each participant's pathway may differ, the process includes several key elements that work together to support healthy ministry development.

Discernment of Calling

The process usually begins when someone feels called to church planting, missions, pastoral leadership, or vocational Gospel work. The pipeline helps participants clarify that calling through monthly cohort gatherings, mentoring relationships, guided reflection, spiritual formation, and accountability.



"I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now."

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-5, CSB

Cohort Training

Each month, participants join a cohort to receive training in various ministry areas. Recent sessions have covered Emotional and Spiritual Health, Story Line Bible Study Discipleship, Church Multiplication, Reaching Neighbors and Nations, and Team Building.

Residency/Apprenticeship

Some participants, particularly those pursuing church planting or vocational ministry, enter a church-based residency or apprenticeship. In this setting, they receive hands-on ministry training in a healthy church while serving under pastors and ministry leaders who offer intentional coaching and evaluation.

Assessment

As participants move toward specific ministry roles, assessment may become part of their pathway. The nature of assessment varies by calling.

Those pursuing church planting may work with Send Network, while those exploring missionary service may engage with the International Mission Board.

These assessment processes typically include interviews, doctrinal evaluation,

leadership assessment, conversations about emotional and relational health, and an overall review of ministry readiness.

Sending

As participants are equipped and affirmed, churches play a central role in commissioning and deploying leaders. These next steps may lead to church planting, church revitalization, campus ministry, missions, pastoral ministry, or expanded leadership within the local church.

When asked about the impact of the Sending Pipeline, Carl Peyton, pastor of Transformation Church in Chesterfield, shared:

"The Sending Pipeline provides equipping in a way that our church could not have offered alone to those answering the call into ministry. Participating in the cohort is the first step after saying yes and aspiring to be obedient to God's call. In some ways it seems like formal education, but at the same time it is informal in that it allows participants to process what is on their mind and heart as they glean from practitioners. It affords a rich experience with a mentor, networking, coaching and peer-to-peer learning. I am so thankful that our church is not alone when it comes to first steps in ministry training." ●