

CHURCH ADOPTION

Alignment Process



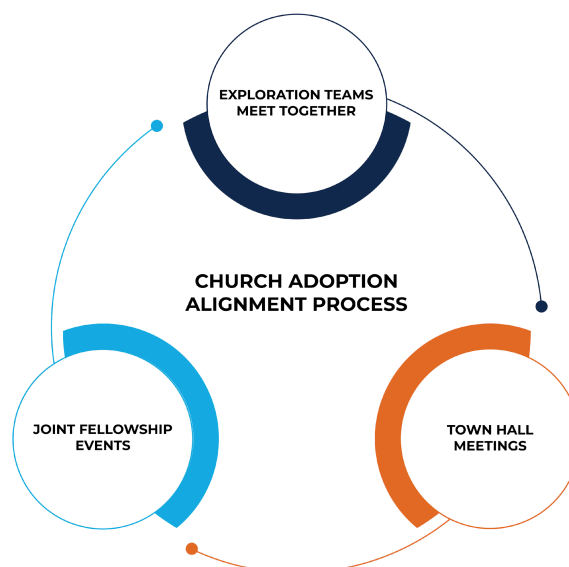
INTRODUCTION

THE PROCESS: The purpose of this process is to prayerfully explore God's direction regarding one church adopting another church. This is a significant and sacred undertaking that requires careful thought, prayer, humility, and open communication. This document is designed to guide both churches through a structured process with a facilitator, ensuring that each aspect of the potential adoption is thoughtfully considered.

EXPLORATION TEAMS: Each church should establish an Exploration Team. This team can be formed from existing leadership groups (e.g., deacons, leadership teams, pastor search teams) or created specifically for this process. The role of the Exploration Team is to engage in discussions, facilitate communication with their congregation, and guide the church through each stage of the adoption process.

MEETING STRUCTURE

The Exploration Team Meetings are where the representatives from both churches come together to discuss and explore the key topics of each stage, aiming to understand each other's perspectives and identify potential barriers. Following these discussions, Town Hall Meetings are held within each church to report and engage the congregation in discussion. If both churches are then ready to move forward, a Joint Fellowship Event is organized to build relationships and foster unity among the members of both congregations.



THE STAGES OF THE PROCESS

The process is divided into six stages representing different levels of exploration and discussion, beginning with prayerful preparation and culminating in the grassroots details of daily operations and the final decision.

Prayerful Preparation	Aligning our hearts with God's will and determining the facilitator and exploration teams.
50,000-Foot View	Theological Alignment
30,000-Foot View	Church Structure and Governance
15,000-Foot View	Financial and Facility Realities
5,000-Foot View	Ministry Philosophy and Processes
Grassroots Level	Day-to-Day Operations

PRAYERFUL PREPARATION

Objective: To seek the Lord's guidance before beginning the formal discussions.

Action Steps:

- Prayerfully pursue God's direction and will for everyone involved
- Consider establishing prayer teams and including prayer over this process into the regular rhythms of your church life
- Decide on who will be on your exploration teams
- Identify who will facilitate this process. Ask your local association and/or state convention for a suggestion on who would be best.

50,000-FOOT VIEW

Objective: To explore theological distinctives and ensure alignment.

Discussion Topics:

- Scripture (authority, inerrancy, historicity, etc.)
- Salvation
- Church Ordinances
- Denominational Beliefs (e.g., Baptist Faith and Message)
- Biblical Views on Marriage and Gender
- Additional Items (The facilitator will determine if additional items suggested belong to this level or should be put in another level)
- Set a date for the town hall meetings.
- Set a date for the joint fellowship event

30,000-FOOT VIEW

Objective: To explore alignment on church structure and governance.

Discussion Topics:

- Denominational Affiliation and Involvement
- Pastoral Staff Roles
- The role of deacons and elders
- Church Membership
- Church Governance
- Additional Items Set a date for the town hall meetings.
- Set a date for the joint fellowship event

15,000-FOOT VIEW

Objective: To explore alignment on church finance and facility realities.

Discussion Topics:

- Budget structure
- Assets
- Debts
- Financial Plans and Processes
- Additional Items
- Set a date for the town hall meetings.
- Set a date for the joint fellowship event

5,000-FOOT VIEW

Objective: To explore alignment on ministry philosophies and processes.

Discussion Topics:

- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Discipleship
- Small Groups and Sunday School
- Worship Times
- Worship Music
- Church Committees
- Building Use Policies
- Additional Items
- Set a date for the town hall meetings.
- Set a date for the joint fellowship event

GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Objective: To explore and determine the practical details and implications of adoption at the operational level.

Discussion Topics:

- Staffing Structures
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Church Name
- Additional Operational Details

For a more in-depth discussion, scan the QR code to listen to Mark Clifton and JimBo discuss *Navigating Alignment in Church Adoptions* in an episode of The Replant Bootcamp Podcast.

