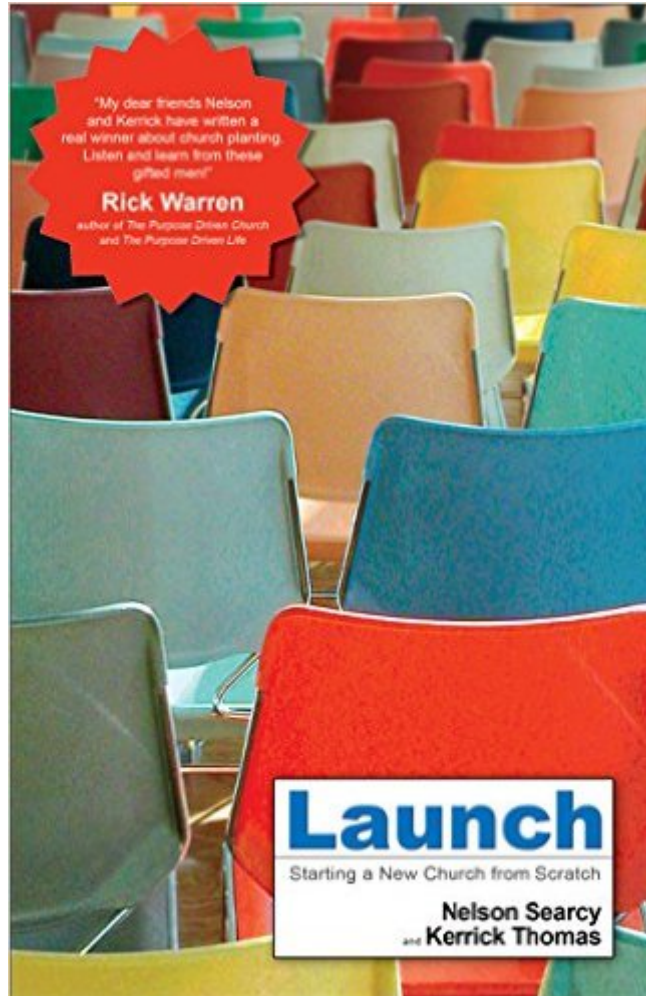


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# Launch: Starting A New Church From Scratch



## Synopsis

Starting a church from scratch? Start here! This is no typical church planting or church growth book. The authors, both pastors at The Journey Church of the City in Manhattan, offer specific strategies for beginning a church from scratch, based on their own experiences in launching a church with no members, no money, and no staff and watched membership skyrocket to more than a thousand people in three years! They offer clear, practical how-to strategies for quickly raising funds, creating a team, planning services, effective evangelism, and rapidly developing a growing membership. Specific advice is included for reaching that often difficult-to-target demographic, the 20 to 40 year old. You will also get an insider's look at The Journey Church of the City as a model for church planting. The helpful strategies here will help you remove many of the barriers, questions, and doubts encountered in starting a church from scratch. If these principles work in NYC, they will work for you!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I honestly felt like I got ripped off because of how highly rated it came. That says more about the person who referred it than the book. My favorite thing about the book is that it really helps bring information that needs to be focused when trying to start a church. That information will be used as we plant our church. My biggest disagreement with the book is the premise that launching is better than planting. I understand where the authors are coming from, and I believe that they probably were doing more than what the book went into, but the book is what I had to read. I really do believe

that God is more interested in growing through a plant like model than burst like model. My least favorite thing about the book was the lists that were meant to be funny, but made me wonder why I spent the money. Before certain sections, there would be a list such as "Rejected Titles for Launch." One in particular really turned me off: "Starting Churches by Dummies," or something along those words. I do not want authors to be over-arrogant, but at the same time, I believe they should not put so much ink in putting down their own book. It wasn't funny.\*\*\*\*\*I originally wrote this review about 2 1/4 years ago. Since that time, I have found the book to be very superficial. Everything is based on the event model - stage an event for people to come to. Make worship that event and people will come. The problem is that most unchurched people I have talked to would rather be a part of a church that cares for them than one that stages events to get minimal information from them and use it to propagate their churches. I know of several who have followed this model and have done well. As we attempted to do this it felt so against what it meant to be church that we started over. Finally, looking back, I think what I appreciated the most about the book was the authors' unwavering enthusiasm.

I like this book, but I have issues with it as well. I like the fact that they are more practical than theoretical. That said, I find it a bit too broad brushing. They imply that if someone plants a church and doesn't follow their advice, then that person is going down the wrong path or cannot succeed. I think they have great ideas, but I have no doubt that God can use different methods in different cultural settings. One church planted in NY doesn't make one an expert on church planting nationwide. I have read other books from men who have planted multiple churches on multiple occasions in multiple areas of the nation who come to different conclusions on methodology than do Searcy and Thomas. I tend to lean toward the guys who have done it several times. Time will tell whether or not this book and the methods promoted within it are timeless or trendy. Finally, I don't like the emphasis on numbers as being the barometer for health. We have been meeting with our core group for 4 months now and I have seen phenomenal growth with few numbers added. Perhaps their background with Saddleback has influenced them to be numbers driven. It's Christ who grows the church anyway, and He is sovereign and will build according to his free will.

Sorry to use a quote from the movie "Wall Street," but that basically sums up how I feel about this book. Having attended and served at the Journey, the church where Nelson and Kerrick (the authors) pastor, I see how they have valid points in building a church. However, I am concerned because of how "success" is defined. The Journey, their church, has an average attendance over

four services of approximately 1100-1300 people, depending on the Sunday. However, most people attend the church for a year or just slightly more, before they leave to go to another church or drop out of church entirely. How "successful" is a church if the attendance keeps changing? Also, did the Journey really start from scratch? I would argue that it didn't. It had a great deal of support from large megachurches such as Saddleback and other Southern Baptist organizations. The Journey has been meeting at the Manhattan Center at 34th and 8th for over two years at a cost of approximately \$7000 to \$10000 per week just for the rental of the space. Only in the last year did the church become self-sustaining. If you want a Madison Avenue/Purpose Driven Church formula for how to start a megachurch that recycles messages every single year (every year they do a series on relationships/sex/love, every year they do a series on finances/money/tithing, every year they do a watered-down Christian self-help book everyone in the church is required to read) and church that defines success by quantity (attendance numbers) as opposed to changed lives/discipleship/devotion/commitment...well, this is right up your alley. As for me, I'd rather read the Bible. Everything you need to know about the CHURCH is in that book.

I have been very blessed by reading the principles in this book. I have planted a church in New York, and it is not easy. However, Nelson has done it, and is doing it as he writes. Although I don't personally agree with all of their philosophy of ministry, I do think that the benefits of this book far outweigh the loss of not reading it. After reading this book and meeting Nelson and Tomas at a recent roundtable conference, I have adapted many ideas from them and am convinced they are building a ministry as a model in which we can all benefit. If you have issues with Saddleback, or contemporary churches, you should not let that mentality keep you from benefitting from the wealth of insight and ideas this book has. Worthwhile read.

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