

## **Alternative Ministry Founder/Leader guide**

### **For use in ESR Lilly Grant projects**

#### **Introduction**

My name is XXX and this is xxx. We are conducting a research project into different types of ministry for Earlham School of Religion which is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. The topic of this interview is to the ministry which you are leading. The purpose of this project is to inform future educational programs to prepare new ministers and congregational leaders. This interview is confidential, and the contents will not be reported widely. Your name will not be associated with any of the findings unless we contact you and ask for your permission to make a specific statement.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape our conversation so that we don't have to take extensive notes. This should take about an hour, depending on what is happening with your group.

We will also want to speak with some of the participants in your congregation and also want to continue this conversation later to see how things are changing, if that is ok with you. Is this ok?

Are you ready to start?

#### **The beginning**

1. How did this ministry/group start? (probe) Why did it start? What prompted the beginnings?
2. Was creating this ministry/group intentional or did it arise out of something else?
3. Did forming this ministry/group arise out of any school or class work?
4. At the very beginning, was it just one person, or were other people involved?
5. Where did the founder know those other people from?
6. Which of the following best describes those people? (probe: co-founders, co-workers, participants, inspiration, mentors or something else)
7. Have other people gotten involved after the start?
8. Where did the founder know those other people from?
9. Which of the following best describes those people? (Probe) co-founders, co-workers, participants, inspiration, mentors or something else?

#### **Purpose**

1. What is the purpose of this organization? (probe) What is it trying to accomplish?
2. Is this ministry/group intended to provide a supplemental experience to those currently involved in a faith tradition, or is it intended to be a replacement for those involved in a faith tradition and who are unsatisfied? Or is it for the unchurched?
3. What are the short and long term goals of this ministry/group?

#### **Leadership**

1. How many people are involved in leadership roles in this ministry/group?
2. How many people are being paid for their role in this organization?
3. How many of the paid people are working full time on this ministry/group? (probe) How many are working part time? (Please include the founder)
4. How many hours do the full time people work on this ministry/group in an average week?
5. How many hours a week on average do the part time people work on this ministry/group?

### **Congregation composition**

1. Have there been any services/sessions/meetings yet?
2. From where are the participants drawn? (Probe) The community or directly from other churches or somewhere else?
3. Do the participants mostly come from one faith tradition or from multiple ones?
4. From which faith tradition are the participants mostly drawn?

### **Marketing**

1. Which of these ways have you used spread the word about the formation of this ministry/group? (Probe) Advertising (paid placement of ads), Publicity (not paid for), Local Churches/Faith groups, Word of mouth, Internet, Other
2. Where have you gotten free publicity? (Probe) Local newspapers, Local radio, Local TV station, Specialized print publication, Community organizations, Other.
3. In which of the following places or ways have you used to spread that word that cost money? (Probe) Local newspapers, On line (facebook, twitter, google ad words), Flyers distributed, Community bulletin boards, Street signs, Sign outside church location, Other
4. Do you have a way to contact people who have come so you can share news about future events and to follow up with them?
5. (If yes) What ways have you used to contact those who have expressed interest in your ministry/group? If you haven't contacted anyone yet, what ways do you have the ability to contact people. (Probe) Telephone number, Mailing address, Email address, Facebook, Twitter, Other

### **Space**

1. Where do the participants meet? Please describe the location and type of space. (Probe: size, seating capacity and arrangement, flexibility of space, etc.)
2. Does the space where the participants meet in require a payment of any kind?
3. Is the arrangement for the place where the meetings occur formal or informal?
4. For how long does the ministry/group intend to stay in this location?
5. Do the participants meet on a regular schedule?
6. Which of the following types of gatherings are part of the life of your group? (Probe for each of the following, but only use those that respondent resonates with) Worship service, Bible

study/discussion, Discipleship session, Discernment session, Meeting for business, Fellowship with food, Fellowship without food, Other

**Scheduling**- Repeat this section for each activity above

1. Usually, how many times a week or month does the group (or a portion of the group) meet for this activity?
2. Approximately, for how long does the group meet for this activity?
3. When does the group meet for activity? (capture day of the week, and day part)
4. (Ask only for worship service) For your worship service, do you follow a liturgy from a denomination or do you create your own?

**Financials**

1. What is the source of funds for this ministry/group? (Probe: seed money from outside/umbrella organizations, grants, contributions from congregants of money, contributions from congregants of in kind goods, leader "tentmaking", Other)
2. What is the money spent on? (probe: Rent/other building costs, Salaries/Stipends for leaders. Materials, Food, Advertising, Programs to support congregants)

**Satisfaction**

1. How satisfied is the founder with what has happened so far?
2. In what ways has it met the founder's expectations?
3. In what ways has it not met the founder's expectations?
4. What needs does it meet for the participants? What needs has it not met? (Probe: Need for community, Need to probe deeper than can do in a normal church service, Need to be with people who have similar beliefs as they have, Need for exploration of spirituality, Provide meaning to life, Contribute to the common good, Other)
5. In what ways has it met the founder's needs? In what ways has it not met the founder's personal needs?
6. What is next for this organization?
7. What is the long term vision for this organization/ministry?

**Closing**

Thank you very much for your time, we really appreciate it. The things we learn are planned to be incorporated into the curriculum at ESR. As we stated earlier, we would like to get the perspective of those who are involved in this ministry as participants. How would you suggest we do this?

We would also like to reconnect with you later to see how things are changing. Can we set a date and time for this now?

And before we finish for today, are there any other things that we didn't ask about this ministry (use appropriate word) that we should know?