

**EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH GUIDELINES
FOR THE FUNDING OF NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENTS
AND CHURCH REDEVELOPMENTS**

Adopted 5/11/2004

INTRODUCTION: The Presbytery of San Fernando has invested a lot of prayer, time and energy to develop a Long Range Plan. The Evangelism and Church Growth Committee (ECG) commends the faithful work of the Long Range Planning Task Force. As we seek to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ, New Church Developments (NCDs) and Church Redevelopments (CRs) are essential. ECG submits these NCD and CR guidelines for the Presbytery's long-term vision.

BACKGROUND: ECG believes we need a fresh vision for NCDs and CRs. We are finding that traditional PC(USA) models are often inadequate to our context. This is especially true for planting strong and autonomous NCDs amidst our growing ethnic populations. The following guidelines, forged in hours of dialogue, adhere to two overarching principles:

- **Sensitivity to the Spirit's Movement:** When the Holy Spirit is quickening an NCD or CR, spiritual energy surrounds and radiates from such a ministry. Instead of setting our own plans and then asking for God's blessing, *we challenge our Presbytery to discern where God is already moving in our midst.*
- **Accountable Stewardship:** The money Presbyterians place in the plates of their congregations represents an act of faith. Our members expect us to spend these dollars with efficiency, and strong accountability.

GUIDELINES FOR NCDS: Our denomination's model for NCDs is well-known. Designate a site, form a steering committee, call an ordained NCD pastor, and then fund this fledgling project for 5-7 years. This seed money is a sizeable combination of grants from the GA, Synod, and Presbytery, and giving by the NCD. Within the 5-7 year period, the goals for the NCD are: 1) growth in attendance and giving; 2) reaching a membership suitable for chartering; 3) developing logistical and financial plans for the establishment of its own facility.

ECG recognizes that this model is viable in some cultural and demographic areas in our Presbytery. For the most part, it isn't. The reasons are many: increased cultural diversity, the "competition" of non-denominational churches, and the astronomical price of real estate.

For example, consider some of our Hispanic NCDs. These Spanish-speaking congregations attract newer immigrants who are struggling financially. Many of these folks come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, with little knowledge of lay leadership or tithing. The result is that many Hispanic NCDs cannot meet the goals of self-sufficiency by the end of a typical grant cycle. This should not deter us from mission work; just make us realistic.

It is important at every juncture that we do not foster dependency. Our goal is to establish congregations that are strong and autonomous.

Given these realities, we offer the following guidelines for NCDs:

- If we plant an NCD using the traditional model, we should do so with a full accounting of the long-range costs. This includes forecasts of future real estate and building needs. We also recommend stricter accountability at the end of each year in a grant cycle. The Presbytery and the NCD need to ask key questions: Is the Spirit moving in this ministry project? Do the growth of both attendance and giving warrant another year in the grant cycle? Are the people being challenged to make this "their congregation" with all that entails for monetary and volunteer support?
- In the planting of ethnic congregations, where there will be difficulty in developing a funding base, we suggest these alternatives to the traditional model:
 - 1) Consider mission explorations using a bi-vocational minister, a tent-making minister, or a Commissioned Lay Pastor. The Presbytery could provide nominal support for the renting of a storefront or other space to see if the NCD takes hold.
 - 2) Encourage "mother churches" to host ethnic fellowships using CLPs as leaders. The sponsoring congregation provides support (worship space, salary, etc.) as the

Spirit leads. This may or may not lead to a chartered church, but maximizes usage of existing facilities.

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT: Competent leadership is perhaps the most critical factor in church redevelopment. The Committee on Ministry will help develop this leadership in the following ways:

- Use COM's congregational liaisons to hold pastors accountable to redevelopment tasks.
- Encourage the placement of Interim Ministers who are trained not only in the tasks of interim ministry, but also in the tasks of redevelopment.
- Press for long-term commitments from pastors being called to redevelopment churches. It takes at least five years of hard work for this process to take hold.

Once the Presbytery establishes a reservoir of funds for redevelopment, ECG suggests granting funds to congregations that meet these conditions.

- Members of the congregation attend a redevelopment conference with follow-up by ECG representatives. The purpose is to clearly understand the five tasks of redevelopment:
 - *Creating Spiritual Energy*
 - *Congregational Identity*
 - *Congregational Leadership*
 - *Reentering the Larger Community*
 - *Developing a Ministry Plan*
- The church's Session, pastor, and congregation commit to the rigorous honesty and change required for redevelopment.
- The congregation embarks on one or more of the five tasks for 3-6 months prior to any funding. This will show its willingness to act.
- ECG will assess the results of this first phase of activity.

The thought behind these guidelines is simple. Money is not the central issue in redevelopment. Rather, it is a process of "communal conversion." It brings about changes that often threaten

“tradition” or the “status quo.” It also requires enormous energy on the part of the pastor and other leaders.

CONCLUSION: It is necessary for ECG to go far beyond diagnosis. It needs to be a powerhouse committee that backs up these guidelines with solid support. ECG will organize itself so as to provide the following:

- A sub-committee to help oversee NCD development, including the annual evaluation of progress before further disbursement of funds.
- A sub-committee to oversee and assess the steps of redevelopment.
- A library of information regarding NCD and redevelopment issues.
- A cadre of consultants who can work with local congregations.
- A support network for NCD and redevelopment pastors to help them sustain their hope and energy in this demanding form of ministry.