

GUIDELINES FOR A CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP STEERING COMMITTEE

(or Executive Committee)

I. Introduction

People who desire to establish a new Cumberland Presbyterian Church begin as a Fellowship of Cumberland Presbyterians. Such fellowships are started with the approval, and ordinarily at the initiative, of the presbytery. A fellowship may be jointly sponsored by the presbytery and the General Assembly Council Missions Ministry Team (formerly, Board of Missions).

Presbytery's responsible agency for missions and New Church Development (NCD) is typically a Board of Missions or a specially-appointed NCD Task Force. The missions agency is responsible for identifying areas in need of a new church, using professional demographic studies and other resources. The NCD Task Force will specify primary target group(s) in the area, conduct a two-three-day feasibility study, make recommendations to presbytery, develop a Preliminary Mission Design (PMD), and, if presbytery votes to proceed and approves the PMD, the Task Force continues to serve throughout the development of the new work, often in partnership with the G.A. Missions Ministry Team which exercises direct supervision of the project. Among the duties of the Task Force are: serve as pastoral search committee, property search committee, secure temporary meeting place, assist with budgeting and financial matters in keeping with the PMD, offer training, nurture, support and assistance to the pastor (church planter) and the developing congregation.

When the G.A. Missions Ministry Team is a co-sponsor of a new church, it will be the supervising agency in partnership with the presbytery Task Force. If the GA MMT is not a co-sponsor of the project, it may still become the primary supervising agency at the request of presbytery. The church planter and fellowship are responsible directly to the supervising agency for purposes of reporting and decision-making, and to the presbytery through the NCD Task Force. The Task Force will appoint a local Fellowship Steering Committee to work with the church planter and supervising agencies when the fellowship has a sufficient number of committed adult members from which to select 3-5 persons. The responsibilities of the Steering Committee are indicated below.

II. Steering Committee Organization

A. When is the Steering Committee appointed?

Such a committee may be formed as soon as there is sufficient leadership available, perhaps six months are so into the project.

B. Who chooses the Steering Committee?

Initially, the organizing pastor (church planter) will recommend individuals from the Covenant Roll to the Task Force. In addition, the Task Force will assign one of its own members to work with the Steering Committee. After the initial appointments, the fellowship itself will elect members of the Steering Committee as vacancies occur, or as the intended rotation occurs.

C. What is the membership composition and term of service?

The first Steering Committee will have 3-5 members, plus one member from the Task Force. They will serve a term of 6 months, and as indicated here, may be re-elected. No member will serve more than 18 months before being placed on rotation. To establish a rotation system,

one of the original members will serve only one 6 month term before rotating, another will be re-elected once only, a third will be re-elected twice only, etc. Eventually the number on the Steering Committee should be 5, plus the Task Force member.

D. The church planter and Task Force will be responsible for training and orientation of the Steering Committee members. This will be valuable preparation for an eventual church session.

E. For additional Steering Committee members, the church planter and Steering Committee will appoint a nominating committee from the fellowship to present a slate of nominees.

F. Will the Steering Committee members become the first elders for the church session when the congregation is organized?

The fellowship will officially nominate its first slate of elders through a nominating committee. Steering Committee members may or may not be nominated/elected as elders. Elder training will be the responsibility of the church planter and Task Force.

III. Duties of the Steering Committee

A. Participate in a thorough orientation by the church planter and Task Force, reviewing the Preliminary Mission Design and related information..

B. Meet at least monthly with the church planter for conducting fellowship business and development of its life and witness.

C. Meet with the Task Force as requested.

D. Assist the church planter in securing individuals to assume such roles as recording secretary, treasurer (when the Task Force approves), teachers, musicians, and other leaders.

E. Assist the church planter in enlisting new people for the fellowship, regarding outreach and evangelism as a top priority in service and witness to Jesus Christ as Lord.

F. Assist the church planter in the development of ministries of worship, Christian education and nurture, fellowship, stewardship and service to others. When authorized by the Task Force, the committee will assist in the preparation of annual budgets and the development of a consistent stewardship program.

G. Assist, if necessary, in the location of a temporary meeting place; maintain the meeting place in good order; and assist in planning for a permanent church home/facility.

H. Send at least one member of the committee to meetings of presbytery as an observer, and to respond to questions from the presbytery regarding the progress of the fellowship.

I. Assist the church planter and local secretary and treasurer with providing quarterly reports to the GA MMT and the presbytery Task Force.

J. Open each regular committee meeting with prayer and devotional, and otherwise promote the prayer life of the entire fellowship.

K. When a sufficient number of Covenant Roll members is committed to the fellowship to assure a continuing viable ministry for the future (approximately 75 members), petition presbytery for the official organization of the church through the presbytery's Task Force.

L. Note: Supervision by the GA MMT continues even after organization as long as the church is receiving financial program support (subsidy) from any judicatory.