

GUIDELINES FOR A PRESBYTERIAL NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Presbytery's agency responsible for missions (usually a Board of Missions) will work within the presbytery to create a climate conducive to growth and evangelism. An important aspect of this work is new church development, as well as congregational re-development in churches where there is potential for new growth through a re-start. The Constitution makes it clear that "a particular church can be organized only by authority of the presbytery." [2.41] Presbytery may appoint a special New Church Development Task Force to work with church planting efforts, relieving the Board of Missions of this responsibility. These guidelines are intended to assist such a task force or the Board of Missions in developing a new church.

Identification of Need and Intended Focus of the New Church

The presbytery agency committed to new church development (NCD) will identify geographical areas and/or populations (e.g., linguistic/cross-culture, or other demographic segments) where there is possible need for a new congregation. The denomination's Missions Ministry Team can assist with this identification process and is available to consult with the presbytery agency in the beginning stages of its considerations. When a particular area or target community is identified, the presbytery agency will order a professional demographic study of the community through the Missions Ministry Team (MMT).

Task Force Responsibilities

1. Identify, from the demographic study, primary target group(s).
2. Conduct an on-site feasibility study of the target community, with assistance of MMT.
3. If justified by the study, recommend that presbytery proceed with the project, submitting for approval a Preliminary Mission Design in consultation with MMT.
4. Partner with MMT in the supervision of all aspects of the new church project.
5. Serve as a search committee for the church planter(s), with MMT guidance.
6. If property purchase is part of the design, serve as an initial property search committee.
7. Investigate potential temporary meeting places for the new core group and assist the church planter in making a decision for such a place.
8. Provide nurture, support and assistance to the church planter and new congregation in such ways as:
 - a. Receive/disburse all funds for the project for its duration, or until the task force appoints a local treasurer.
 - b. Plan strategies to gather and grow the initial fellowship.
 - c. Serve as the church planter's sounding board on a day-to-day basis.
 - d. Meet regularly with the church planter to hear updates, plan, pray.
 - e. Provide regular written reports to presbytery focusing on the progress of the new church in terms of membership and financial growth, and related matters. In turn, see that presbytery honors all PMD-approved commitments to the new church.
 - f. Appoint, when the fellowship reaches an appropriate strength, a local fellowship steering committee to work with the church planter and be accountable to the task force.
 - g. With the appointment of a steering committee, function with decreased involvement in day-to-day operations of the new church effort.
 - h. Maintain a working relationship with MMT in the supervision of the project.