

## NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WHEN USING CORE GROUP AND RESOURCES FROM A FORMER CONGREGATION

### 1. Primary Challenge

The primary challenge when starting a new congregation using resources and people from a formerly existing church is the necessary break with the past to embrace a brand new future. If this break is incomplete, the process will have the “feel” of a relocation, or at best a redevelopment project. This will result in re-creating what may have been a less than effective ministry outpost. In essence, this NCD model requires that all resources from the previous work (human, spiritual, financial, property, facilities, funds, history) now must serve the new effort. The best scenario is to ask presbytery to dissolve the existing church, assign members to a mission roll of another church, sell or otherwise dispose of all properties with the view toward using the proceeds for the new church effort. Members of the former church who desire to be a part of the initial core group for a new church development effort will need specific orientation about their new role, goals of the project, etc. There will be even more of a tendency in this setting (as distinct from a typical NCD) to rush forward toward purchasing property, constructing a building, replicating/continuing programs (e.g. Sunday School classes, women’s ministry), maintaining previous staff relationships, officers and the like. The shift to a new way of “being church” is extremely difficult, and cannot be assumed to have been already made just because the former congregation and/or session has made the request to presbytery. It is likely that this conscious decision of ‘newness’ will have to be re-visited at several key junctures of the early process. For this reason alone, it is important for the new group to have the experience of meeting for worship in temporary facilities, of having others (e.g., a supervisory task force) make decisions about essential program (rather than just doing it because we’ve always done it), of working hard to identify (and identify with) a new target community and constituency. Often it is hard for long-established congregations to give up this level of self-direction. If this is regarded as insurmountable, a relocation rather than NCD is advised.

### 2. Process

Apart from the considerations noted above, an NCD following this model in our CPC system follows the same procedures as any other new church project. It requires approval of presbytery, and often the appointment of a task force to give guidance throughout the process. It usually entails requesting supervision by the G.A. Board of Missions, which includes making recommendations about a target community, ministry philosophy and style, pastoral leadership, and budgets for a three-four year period. Board of Missions staff will prepare a Preliminary Mission Design with these factors in mind, proposing an Action Plan for approval to presbytery. Depending on funds available from the sale of property and other resources, determination will be made about the need for outside financial support from presbytery and the G.A. Board of Missions.

When an existing congregation is considering this approach, it is advisable to request a meeting with G.A. Board of Missions staff for the purpose of fully explaining the process to the congregation and responding to questions and concerns. It is also valuable to have a pastor or lay leader from a new church that has taken this approach to address the group.

When the decision is made to follow this approach, all funds and property devolve to presbytery, but can be earmarked for the new church effort.