

TORONTO UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL

Connecting Resources with Ministry

Church Development Discussion Papers

TITLE: A New Church Development Plan for Presbytery

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Approach

A Presbytery's vision for new church development (ncd) is embodied best in a comprehensive and holistic 5 to 10 year New Church Development (NCD) Plan which enables it to be intentional and proactive in its development of particular ncd's. Such a plan needs to be reworked and affirmed every five years or so in order to keep the passion for ncd fresh and focused in the life of the Presbytery.

Holistic

In the governing body structure, it is the Presbytery that is responsible for organizing new churches, and it is critical that the Presbytery approach this task holistically.

The first dimension of holistic is biblical/theological, that is embracing the whole gospel and sharing that Good News with the whole person. This results in people being able to hear and experience the Good News in the context of their community and culture. Embracing a holistic approach avoids the false bifurcation of the Gospel into personal and social spheres. Both spheres come together naturally as the focus is maintained on people God loves in Christ, whom we would serve with love, justice and mercy through the ministry of the church.

The second dimension of holistic has to do with the development of all the churches of the Presbytery. Such inclusive – or holistic – church development creates an atmosphere of empowerment for all types of churches with a Presbytery, and engenders encouragement and understanding, rather than jealousy and competition, among them. For example, holistic church development addresses concerns such as: "How can we continue to fund ncd in such large amounts when some of our existing churches can't even pay for a pastor?" The needs of a small and sometimes isolated rural parish claim the attention and programmatic support of the Presbytery, as do ncd's.

Thus, a holistic 5-year NCD Plan is ideally one part of a holistic Presbytery plan for the development of all its churches. Holistic church development within a Presbytery may include the following components:

- a plan for redevelopment;
- a small church development plan;

- a plan for urban and/or rural development;
- a plan for the development of ethnic churches; and
- a plan for ncd.

Proactive

A 5-year NCD Plan also enables the Presbytery to be proactive, rather than reactive, in establishing new churches. Without it, the Presbytery simply reacts to whatever circumstances present themselves, and often finds its ncd efforts:

- Too Late - the major wave of growth has already taken place, and land prices are sky high.
- Too Slow - other denominations have already started churches in the growth area.
- Too Expensive - how can we spend so much money on ncd when other areas of the Presbytery's life need funding too?

The centerpieces of this holistic and proactive 5-year NCD Plan are:

- a Biblical/Theological Statement, which includes a comprehensive definition of evangelism, explaining why Presbyteries should start new churches.
- a Geo-Demographic Presbytery-wide Report, which projects new church development sites 5 to 10 years in advance, including the strategic development of new ethnic churches.

In summary, a maximally effective proactive and holistic 5-year NCD Plan requires it be an integral part of a Presbytery's broader Church Development Plan. As such, the 5-year NCD Plan will participate as one focus of mission in the church development priority and budget processes of the Presbytery.

Funding

The ability to fund efforts in ncd is directly linked to the clarity of a Presbytery's vision and the commitment of a Presbytery to resource existing congregations and the track record of ncd starts. A motivating vision, driving a ncd plan, is of prior importance to funding considerations, for a willingness to give always follows one's vision.

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