

Church Multiplication Team Conviction¹

(October 2007: CMT unanimous approval; GSC acceptance in monitoring report)

The classis of the parenting church (directive partner) determines the classis of accountability and support for a new church start the first ten years. This founding relationship will be reevaluated for continued viability and best fit in the tenth anniversary year of when the New Congregation Plan was approved. It is strongly recommended that a member of the management team (or steering committee) of the new congregation be a member of the local Classis, when possible, in order to encourage the development of relationships and partnerships in the geographical area and to bring added value and wisdom to the new congregation.

This accountable and supportive relationship will remain with the classis of the parent church for the initial ten years, or longer, based on the discernment at that time of:

- a) the church plant itself (now organized as an RCA church)*
- b) the parent church consistory*
- c) the parent church's affiliated classis*
- d) the potential new classis relationship by transfer*
- e) the regional synod(s) involved*

The Book of Church Order places the responsibility with the regional synod(s) to transfer an RCA congregation or church from one classis to another classis.

Exceptions to this policy or timeframe should be agreed upon as well by the same parties, in writing.

Reasons:

1) The directive partner relationship with a parent church is so crucial for the success of a church multiplication movement that reasonable time to establish the new work must be honored through empowering relationships more than geographical proximity. Since all new congregations are birthed with an

¹ The General Synod Council (GSC) and the Church Multiplication Team (CMT), in stating this Conviction, note that it remains the practice of GSC and the CMT to ensure that classes, parenting churches, and other partners who may become engaged in the support of a new ministry are in consultation with other regional synods, classes, and congregations prior to the establishment of a new ministry. In addition to the intent to provide an accountable and supportive relationship for a new church start, the Conviction encourages partnerships across the traditional boundaries of the church out of a deep conviction that these boundaries were never intended to prevent or inhibit mission and ministry.

expectation to reproduce other congregations, the ten-year time frame provides sufficient support through this "third generation" of reproduction.

2) Parent churches and classes have a wide diversity of ability in the birthing and blessing of new congregations until they are able to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-reproducing. Maximizing the relationship networks and opportunities of all our diverse churches across any geographic boundaries for planting will accelerate bringing Christ's salvation to the lost people groups in North America.

3) Clear lines of accountability and expectations benefit each classis and church. This protects the new plant from having to depend materially and spiritually on a classis of churches not eager or able to provide that leadership and sending role. It protects a classis from having to assume responsibility for a plant they know little about or have limited capacity to support.

Examples:

- A Korean church in Atlanta may affiliate with similar Korean churches of the Classis of New York if they will be the active parenting church connection.
- A Hispanic plant in Los Angeles with leaders sent out and supported by another parenting church in Central California Classis will affiliate for its first ten years of life directly with Central California Classis.
- Center City urban planting churches that start new congregations in similar cosmopolitan cities will remain the sending and supporting agency, with affiliation to the parent church's classis for accountability, until reviewed at the end of the first decade.
- A strong reproducing church in western Michigan can send and support a new church start team into Detroit or Cincinnati or Chicago, and the accountability relationally and spiritually for that plant will remain with Zeeland, Holland, or North or South Grand Rapids Classis for the founding years until the official review ten years in.