

RCA Funding Specifics

This is usually a big concern for parenting churches. However, it is important to note right away, since the C2M2 material doesn't really give any dollar figures, that some RCA churches are planted for no money in start up costs: they are self-sufficient from day one. Others are only \$20,000-30,000 a year for three years, with bi-vocational leaders. House church networks and some re-starts can be accomplished with limited outside funds needed again. We planted our second church in Tulare with the visionary gift of one businessman tithing off his vineyard trellising construction income that year, giving \$50,000 to start a church. We added \$10,000 with a strong "hive off" model of sending a leadership core of fifty adults with the planter...and Sunrise Community with Pastor Russ Siders was self-supporting in six months, not needing more than that initial \$60K to get established. They organized as a new church within one year: self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating (reproducing).

The average in outside support is probably \$200,000 over three years for all types of plants. Resources coming from the harvest (new growth) and the core team can supply much of the resourcing and on an increasing level every year. The Church Multiplication Team agrees that a parent church can typically commit to \$50,000 over three years to a new plant; some do much more and carry all the funding needed. Depending on classis, region, and other sister church relationships and the RCA start-up grant, most new congregations can build a balanced budget from year one.

Each church planter in the RCA is urged to become effective at sharing their vision for the plant and be able to generate \$25,000 in funding personally over the first three years. Vision has to be able to draw provision. Planters need to be comfortable with stewarding the resources given from the beginning. Each church plant is also committing in the New Congregation Plan to give back 10% of its offerings to a supporting planting agency (could be the parent church, classis planting fund, region or an RCA mission share for planting) from the first months and years. This may seem counter-intuitive when they are receiving so much outside help. But there are benefits built in to this action:

- the new congregation learns to trust God and tithe beyond itself from the beginning. Better to learn it early with small offerings first.
- the new congregation shows gratefulness and relational connection to supporting RCA partners
- the gifts fuel more planting and gain favor with other existing churches, taking away a criticism often levied at new plants that they suck up resources instead of give back. Instead, an example of maturity in mission thinking and action is a good example.
- the new congregation will be in a good position to "organize" as an RCA church in due time, since the assessments on a membership basis will actually be less than the 10% of every offering practice. This gives incentive toward maturity, not dodging responsibility.

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