

MINISTRY BEST PRACTICE: CLASSIS CHURCH MULTIPLICATION TEAM

The Reformed Church in America is committed to church planting according to best practice means that come to us through field experience and the Book of Church Order. The BCO gives the local church the prerogatives to plant congregations. The BCO wording states that a *“congregation is a body of baptized Christians meeting regularly in a particular place of worship.”* “A local church,” states the BCO, *“is a congregation properly organized and it is served and governed by a regularly constituted consistory.”* Churches plant congregations which, in time, are organized into churches under oversight of classes.

The bias of this document is that churches planting congregations are the most effective and efficient means for new church development. The Classis role is to support and resource that effort. To that end, the following are recommendations for the formation and function of an effective classis church multiplication team. (see the attached diagram)

I. CMT FORMATION

a. Receive the affirmation of the Classis executive team for the formation of a Classis Multiplication team. Gain clarity as to the responsibility and authority that will be given to the team to lead in church planting through empowering churches.

b. Seek out a team of ministry leaders and lay people who have a preexisting passion for lost people, Kingdom partnerships and gospel preaching churches. Look for evidence in ministry of these qualities as confirmation of a persons suitability for the team. The CMT is also well advised to welcome church planters into the meetings until their plants are organized for the sake of communication and field wisdom.

c. Give the group time, up to a year, to incubate around core values and best practice in church multiplication before anything is expected of them in a report. Encourage them to use this time for prayer, seeking God’s direction and alignment of vision.

d. Insure that a member of the classis executive team and regional leader (non voting) are ex officio to the team meetings.

e. Insure that the group does not have “term limits” to ensure continuity of wisdom and passion for church planting.

f. The CMT should meet no less than quarterly.

II. CMT FUNCTION

a. The first responsibility of the CMT is to pray. (see Prayer and Spiritual Empowerment in attached diagram). Planting is a spiritual exercise that creates push

back and adversity. It requires new leadership and conversion growth. This is a spiritual challenge that requires a spiritual response.

- b. The Classis CMT, working with Region and National resources and personnel, is to carry the vision for multiplication into the classis through whatever means. This would include setting the vision (in qualitative and quantitative forms) and communicating that to the classis through any means.
- c. EXPANDING the number of classis parent congregations through
 - 1. Sponsoring events that stimulate parenting
 - 2. Holding up classis parent churches as leaders and examples
 - 3. Coming alongside congregations to encourage parenting
 - 4. Encouraging the development of “parenting networks”
- d. EVALUATING planters and places
 - 1. Working with a parent church to discern the “rightness of match” between a parent and planter candidate.
 - 2. Coming alongside a parent congregation to discern a target or specific planting opportunity.
 - 3. Partnering with Regional or National sources for planter core evaluation.
 - 4. Working with all partners, provide for the annual evaluation of each plant with appropriate follow up.
- e. EQUIPPING planters and parents with tools, skills and resources
 - 1. Partnering with Regional and National sources to provide best practice wisdom for parents and church planters
 - 2. Working alongside the planter to raise funds from within classis
 - 3. Seek out a parent congregation for an emerging planter.
- f. EMPOWERING planters and parents with coaching, networks and advocacy.
 - 1. Advocacy for the planter and parent before the wider classis for the sake of fund development and prayer support.
 - 2. Encouraging planters and emerging parents to be in networks to receive support, learning and accountability.
 - 3. Supporting planters and parents that venture “outside the box”
 - 4. Supporting the emergence of new planters from the classis.
- g. Provide for a representative on the Governance Team of each new start in the Classis.

h. Assist in the documentation development and recording to support the planting movement including the New Church Plan, Case Statements, Grant Requests, annual evaluations etc.

III. MOVING OUT.

a. Over time the Classis that moves from 1 new start a year to 2 or more starts a year may want to develop sub teams. While these teams must work together they could be divided in labor as:

1. Administrative Team: Responsible for the record keeping and documenting work as well as communication with the wider classis
2. Research and Development Team: Responsible for the direct development of planters and parent churches.

b. The RCA is rich in resources at the national, regional and classis levels. Moving out in planting involves using those resources to accelerate and advance the multiplication of churches.