

**New Church Development Handbook
Church of the Brethren**

David K. Shumate

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Preface

New church development is an integral part of God's mission. In fulfilling God's mission, church planting deserves its share of time, leadership and resources of the church. Though we do not have the amount of resources or the number of leaders we had fifty years ago, this does not mean that we cannot plant new churches. It does mean that we plant new churches differently in the future than we did in the past. Again, the two places such changes will be seen in the future are in how we use the available resources and the type, style and role of ordained leaders.

This handbook outlines a way forward for church planting in the Church of the Brethren. Written by David K. Shumate, District Executive/ Minister of the Virginia District, the handbook reflects Dave's 11 years in church planting in that district. The handbook's shape also reflects the best research, assessment and thinking of the New Church Development Advisory Committee of the General Board. In late 1998, this committee was appointed to reframe and reposition church planting in the denomination. With fewer denominational resources, it was clear the future could not replicate the past. While this handbook does not settle all the denominational issues, it does address issues of formation and identity, training, guidelines, development of core beliefs, values and a full ministry plan, district accountability and denominational polity. Outside of denominational training, the District New Church Development Advisory Committees have become the primary locus where much of this mission is carried out.

As the General Board staff person who has worked with the New Church Development Advisory Committee, I want to express my deep appreciation to David K. Shumate, who wrote this handbook. His tireless, persistent effort in mid-2003, his commitment to church planting in Virginia, his insights and learnings over his 11 years in the Virginia District is now made available to the larger church. Likewise, I want to express appreciation to the Virginia District who gave Dave time in order to write this manuscript.

Also, I want to express appreciation to the members of the New Church Development Advisory Committee: Ron Faus, Jay Steele, Anna Lee Hisey Pierce, Marianne R. Pittman, David K. Shumate, and former members, Jim Rhen and Eric Anspaugh. Their commitment, passion for, and experience in church planting has helped to reframe church planting in the Church of the Brethren.

Lastly, I want to thank Anna Speicher, who edited the manuscript, giving helpful comments and suggestions. I want to thank Jeanne Davies, who formatted the handbook for publishing. And since this project overlapped into 2004, I want to thank Del Keeney, who provided final edits, and oversaw the completion of the handbook.

Through this resource, these people invite you into the new day of church planting. To this I add my prayer for this part of God's mission on earth.

Glenn Timmons

Former Executive Director

Congregational Life Ministries

Though the preparation and publication of this handbook has taken longer than anticipated, we are eager to place this resource in the hands of those who will utilize it to serve Christ, their districts, and the persons among whom God is calling them to plant churches.

You will find that we have selected a format for the manual that makes it easily adaptable for future additions. Each chapter is numbered separately so that additional pages can be added, or a chapter modified with new information. David mentioned this being a "work in progress". I would add that it has the potential to become a document that both teaches and learns from its students. The work of church planting continues to be informed by its practitioners; by those 'sent out by God' and undergirded by the wider church for this precious and vital work. It is our hope that you will not only use this handbook as a resource, but that you will continue to contribute your best learnings to the task to which Christ has called all of us: to both become and make disciples of His will and way. God's courage to you as you move out to serve in the name of Jesus Christ!

Del Keeney

Executive Director

Congregational Life Ministries

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Introduction

The Church of the Brethren has historically proclaimed that it is a New Testament Church. More recently we have described our understanding of discipleship as "another way of living." However we describe our tradition and ideals, if we are to continue serving the church of Jesus Christ, we must invest in the development and nurture of emerging churches.

In 1983 the Parish Ministries Commission of the Church of the Brethren General Board published *Developing New Congregations In The Church Of The Brethren: A Manual for Church Planters*. It is a 31-page manual written by Merle Crouse which served, along with applicable polity and guidelines, as a foundational document for our church planters since its publication. Most of the material, particularly the rationale and strategy for starting new churches, the models, and the guidelines continue to be fresh and relevant. Since that time, however, a paradigm shift has occurred in the partnership configurations by which churches are planted in the Church of the Brethren.

The New Church Development Advisory Committee of the Congregational Life Ministries Office of the Church of the Brethren was created following the redesign of the General Board in 1997. Since its inception the committee has sought to encourage the development of new churches within the Church of the Brethren by providing training and resources to equip individuals, projects, and districts. This manual is part of this effort. It supplements and amplifies, while not replacing, the previous manual. It is our hope that it will inspire districts, congregations, and individuals to even greater efforts to plant churches that extend our witness of the core values of Christianity as understood and practiced by the Church of the Brethren.

Some of the language used in this manual may be unfamiliar to the reader. The term, "emerging church" has been intentionally chosen to describe congregations being established through the planting process. Since congregational planting is a process, a fellowship may find itself no longer new, but not yet a church. "Emerging church" captures something of the evolving nature of this process. You will find the phrase used interchangeably with the terms "new church," "new church development" or "church plant."

The New Testament word "apostle" is used as a synonym for "church planter" or "new church development pastor". In this handbook "apostle" is used in various ways, however the dominant interpretation should reference the church planter in his or her role.

In the earliest days of Christianity, an "apostle" was an individual sent out at the behest of Jesus Christ to share the gospel in the world. In our context, an apostle/church planter is a man or woman, either a layperson or set-apart minister, who is commissioned, trained, and spiritually supported by the church to bring emerging churches into being. The term "project proposal" is used to describe what some might call a "ministry plan" or "business plan." In response to the changing configurations by which districts organize and staff themselves to develop and support emerging churches, this manual uses "appropriate district agency" in place of or interchangeably with "district" or "district board" and the term District Executive is used to signify the position that is also sometimes referred to as District Minister.

I am grateful for the encouragement, enthusiasm, and contributions of Glenn Timmons, Executive Director of Congregational Life Ministries for the Church of the Brethren General Board, and the New Church Development Advisory Committee in the development of this new resource. My work was facilitated by a six-week leave from my ministry as District Executive of the Virginia District in May and June of 2003. Special thanks are due Emma Jean Woodard, Owen G. Stultz, and L. Clyde Carter, all of whom filled various extra roles in my absence and also to the Virginia District Board and its chair, Francis S. Beam who so graciously provided the time away and the space necessary to complete this task. Particularly appreciated were the comments of several persons who reviewed the manuscript as it was developed. Among these readers were Merle Crouse, Hazel M. Peters, Dorothy L. Shumate, and Randall L. Yoder.

The material contained within this volume represents not only the understanding and experience of the writer, but also the input and wisdom of ecumenical, denominational, and district leaders, and various individuals involved in church planting. It is not meant to be a finished work, but rather a work in progress. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcome. These may be addressed to the Executive Director of Congregational Life Ministries, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

Chapter One:

Why Plant New Congregations?

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age!'" Matthew 28:18-20 (This and all subsequent scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.)

Sharing the Good News

We are compelled to share the Gospel. Church planting is an expression of faithfulness to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. New church development has been identified as one of the most effective ways to invite people to experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is not an option but a part of some churches' core identity. One denomination, the Reformed Church in America, has done research indicating that 60% of the people who attend their new churches have either never been active in a congregation or have not been active for the previous five years.

Wherever Jesus went, men and women were changed by his presence. He sought out those who were ignored by the religious of their day. (See, for example, Luke 5:27-32; Luke 15: 1-10; and Luke 19: 1-10.) Jesus' life changed the world and continues to do so today. Following are some of the reasons we seek to share the good news in developing new churches.

Church Planting is Part of our Brethren Heritage

From its beginning in 1708, the Church of the Brethren has considered the planting of new churches to be part of our faithful response to God and Jesus Christ. In Germany, the gathering of eight original Brethren, living in conditions of harassment and persecution, grew to as many as five hundred in little more than a decade. In colonial America, though its members were few and widely dispersed, the community sent forth persons charged with the responsibility of planting new churches. By 1850, Brethren could be found as far west as Oregon. The peak years of new church development in the Church of the Brethren extended from 1871 until 1930. Almost all of our urban congregations emerged during this period. In fact, of the current 1055 congregations, fellowships, and projects within the Church of the Brethren, approximately 533 were planted during that sixty-year period. Since 1930, an additional 291 surviving congregations and fellowships have been formed.

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In 1966 the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Board articulated the most comprehensive and in-depth statement of the denomination's church planting theology:

We believe God loves every member of the human family and that it is the divine will for every person to respond to the forgiving, healing, and strengthening qualities of God's love. We believe it is God's intention for every person to experience identity, dignity, freedom, justice, community, wholeness, and love. We believe these values ought to be available to all persons without regard to class, race, nationality, or any other distinction. We believe the Church of the Brethren can and should contribute significantly in helping others to achieve these objectives. We believe our own denomination should assume the full measure of its responsibility for extending the ministry of Christ through the church, avoiding, if possible, the extremes of sectarianism on the one hand, and "the least common denominator" approach to religion on the other. We believe the gospel as we understand it should be enunciated clearly, forthrightly, and enthusiastically.

Church extension is the community of faith responding to the lordship of Christ as His servants in the world, being motivated by loving concern, being sensitive to human need, and finding appropriate ways of expressing this witness in the world. It is initiating witness in the place and in the form that fulfills our servant role as Christians. (Ministry and Home Missions Commission, General Brotherhood Board of the Church of the Brethren, *Church Extension Policies and Procedures*, 1966. Language has been updated to reflect current usage.)

Emerging Churches Involve New Individuals and Nurture New Leadership

New church developments enable newcomers to be integrated more quickly into the life and mission of the church. Existing churches, founded as they are upon long-term relationships and lengthy traditions, often take longer to absorb new members. It is far easier to become a vital part of a new church in a new community. It is difficult to be a stranger when everyone is a stranger.

Furthermore, developing congregations often produce leadership out of proportion to their numbers. Since these fellowships often start with smaller numbers, they cannot afford to pass over the talents and skills of any individual. Emerging churches tend to provide greater opportunities for utilizing the gifts of all the members. This contrasts with the tendency of established congregations to allow the giftedness of some members to remain undeveloped.

The expanded opportunities to grow in leadership may offer the added benefit of increasing the health and vitality of the wider church, particularly of the district involved. In one district that has planted four new fellowships in less than a decade, this phenomenon has been illustrated in the composition of the district board and related positions. Three new churches, representing about

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1% of the total membership of this district, supplied at one point four members (13.33%) of the thirty-member district board. In addition, these emerging churches supplied the district with three district board chairs, two commission chairs, one district conference moderator, one standing committee delegate, and one member of the Bethany Theological Seminary board.

Emerging Churches Minister to New Needs

Emerging churches recognize the diverse and complex nature of the spiritual needs of different persons and populations. One reason new congregations become necessary is because current congregations cannot meet or do not take seriously the spiritual aspirations of every segment of the population. Newly planted congregations that survive are, by their very nature, inclusive of new persons and underserved spiritual needs.

Emerging Churches Reach New Populations

Since 1970 the United States has experienced a major demographic change in terms of the numbers of residents who are non-English speaking; often these are persons of color. Whereas we once sent persons out to the "mission field," we now have the "mission field" present with us. One anecdotal example is of a community in 1973, in which only two or three Hispanic families lived. Now a full third of the town's population is Hispanic. There are four or five congregations ministering to Hispanics. Of the 40,633 public school students, 9,486 need special assistance because English is not their first language. If the Church of the Brethren does not minister to this growing population and others like it, we will inhibit our numerical, ethnic, and spiritual growth. In addition, we must encourage the leadership capabilities of persons who are of other ethnic groups.

Another opportunity is presented by the migration of persons from areas of traditional Brethren presence to the cities and suburbs, particularly in what is often called the Sunbelt. We are primarily a regional denomination, with about 51 % of our reported attendance and membership in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Historically, we tend to be found in the greatest concentrations where German immigration was most pronounced and where the agricultural economy once dominated. In recent decades population and economic growth has shifted to states that have had few or no Brethren at all. Our young adults are finding careers and building futures in these places-the church needs to follow up on the opportunities that such migration and economic growth provide.

Emerging Churches Spread and Transform Denominational Culture

Emerging churches are a great catalyst for change in our denominational structure. The emergence of urban congregations in the Church of the Brethren in the late 19th century and the early 20th century was a major factor in the transformation of the sectarian German Baptist Brethren into the modern Church of the Brethren. This phenomenon continues in our contemporary situation. The

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creation of new fellowships in areas where the Brethren have heretofore been unknown is vital if we are to share our beliefs and practices concerning peace, community, and reconciliation. While none of these are unique to the Church of the Brethren, our particular combination provides a framework for dialogue in the wider Christian community and within secular society that is not otherwise available.

Emerging Churches Demonstrate Extraordinary Financial Stewardship

The financial stewardship demonstrated by emerging churches often exceeds that of established congregations on a per capita basis by multiples ranging from two to six. This happens because the financial needs of the emerging church are clearly seen by its constituency. Unless the congregation is highly subsidized, there is no one else with the ownership and commitment to address these needs. The individual members of emerging congregations thus have a keen sense of the significance of their contribution to the life of the congregation.

Emerging Churches Continue the Community of Jesus

Followers of Jesus are not called to live and serve alone. Members of the early church worshiped together, enjoyed fellowship together, learned together, and served together. Disciples of Christ serve best when they serve together. The fellowship of other believers provides support, nurture, and accountability. Without it the growth of the individual disciple is minimized and stunted.

The congregation is the church's most effective avenue for ministry. We desire to plant congregations not as a means of denominational survival, but as a response of faithfulness to God. We engage in new church development not as a means of increasing numbers and financial resources, but as a way of sharing the transformational power of the Holy Spirit with others. We seek the emerging churches of the future not as a strategy to enhance our visibility within Christianity or to enlarge our borders, but rather as a way of enlarging the whole family of God. We aim to plant Anabaptist churches where Jesus is the center of faith, where the community is the center of life, and where reconciliation is the center of work.

Chapter Two:

Core Values of the Church of the Brethren for Church Planters

What are the characteristic emphases of the Church of the Brethren? What are our core values as a body? It is crucial that any new church plant of the Church of the Brethren model the core values of our form of Christianity. This can be difficult since we are neither a creedal or confessional church nor one that possesses a distinctive liturgy or worship style. No one individual) congregation or particular group of people can define our core values. However, there are aspects of our experience together which point to a shared sense of identity and common understanding. The following core values are presented, not as an all-inclusive list or comprehensive definition, but as a short list of concepts and practices important to the Brethren. They represent an understanding of scripture characteristic of historic Anabaptist and Pietistic viewpoints. When these elements are integrated into the church planter's proclamation and practice they both reinforce the commonality that identifies Brethren) and also provide integrity for the body.

Not the steeple, but the people

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

"I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together!" This chorus reminds us that the church is about our relationships with God) with each other and with others. There is no ministry without relationships. The church's most important priority is the health of these relationships, with building) finances and organization being of lesser importance.

A distinguishing mark of the Church of the Brethren is our emphasis on the faith community; the fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ. It has been quipped that while some Christians gather to hear the Word of God proclaimed in all its purity) and other Christians gather to celebrate the sacraments ordained by the New Testament, the Brethren gather to see one another. While there may be a grain of truth in this humorous statement, the Brethren focus on fellowship has deeper theological and practical roots. We claim the New Testament as our rule for faith and practice. Even a cursory reading of the New Testament reveals the importance to the early Christians of

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togetherness. The community was called from its beginnings to share life and faith together. The Book of Acts reveals that the believers in Jerusalem lived in a communal fashion for a time. Today, we continue to be challenged to consider how to follow Christ as a community of believers, and not just individuals.

Togetherness for the church stems from a shared commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This commitment and fellowship transcends the dividing walls of race, clan, nation and language (Eph. 4: 11-22, Rev, 7:9ff). It is in oneness with our Creator, our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit that our diversity blossoms to the glory of God and the benefit of those whose lives we touch (1 Cor. 12:4-7). As we draw nearer to God we come closer to one another.

Worship is the greatest celebration of our togetherness and oneness in Christ. In the practice of worship, more than at any other time, the church becomes a visible witness to the surrounding world. Moreover, worship changes the community. Adoration and praise of God provide us with a unifying focus and common experience. In worship, the substance of our relationship with God is far more important than the particular form or rite which we practice.

As a non-liturgical denomination, worship within the Church of the Brethren displays an astonishing breadth of style and variety. There is no one form or style of worship practice that characterizes our denomination. Congregations are free to develop worship forms and styles which demonstrate their own thought and practice. Whatever worship style is adopted or adapted, however, must be authentic and holistic. Authentic worship in the Christian tradition is that which places God at the center. Worshipping God together prepares us to face the challenges of life, enables us to share a common vision, empowers us for the service of God and others in everyday life and lifts us to a higher plane of spirituality. The value of corporate worship to Christian community is crucial. The scriptures remind us that prolonged absence from the worshipping community weakens an individual spiritually (Heb. 10:23-25) and emotionally.

As with the experience of worship, working together enables us to bear heavier burdens and make a larger contribution to the mission and ministry shared by all Christians. When our aim is one, we can do great things for God and benefit all of God's people. One example of this is our denomination's response to natural and other disasters which continues to be out of proportion to our size. While productive, such cooperation takes effort and commitment. Working together requires continual conversation about the general mission of the church and the particular opportunities before us. Without such dialogue and understanding we tend to stray in a bewildering range of directions which weaken our efforts for Christ and His church. Togetherness in aim is an ideal toward which we must continually strive.

Nurturing our relationships as followers of Christ provides a source of strength to hold the body together when we face the inevitable tensions and issues which arise along the way. For that

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reason, we need to tend our relationships, to both broaden and strengthen them. We are healthiest when we feed our relationships through the variety of worship, study, service and fellowship opportunities that the community of faith offers. Frequent opportunities for being present with one another with no heavy agenda make our congregations strong. Time spent together enjoying fellowship with one another and building relationship is time well spent. While it may be easier to invite someone to a social activity than to worship, we should see all of these circumstances as opportunities to open doors to a relationship with Christ and his community of followers. Thus, our relationships are not just self-serving, but open the way for others to experience the gospel in a supportive fellowship.

Scripture, particularly the New Testament, is our guide for life

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments:' (John 14:15).

Our Brethren predecessors were "people of the book". They approached the Bible, particularly the New Testament) seeking truth to live by and live out. Their concern was to model an appropriate lifestyle befitting disciples of Jesus. Along with them, we claim no creed but the New Testament. Early Brethren interpretation of scripture was centered on the concept articulated by Jesus in John 14:15. We affirm that scripture, particularly the New Testament, is our guide for personal and corporate lifestyle. One outcome of this view, is that in contrast with other Christians who may focus more directly on statements of faith and creedal concepts) we tend to approach scripture less systematically and more practically. Nonetheless, we take the scripture very seriously. We understand that we are called to be hearers and doers of the Word. New Testament images and norms are critical to our life together.

The 1998 Annual Conference answer to the query entitled "The New Testament as our Rule of Faith and Practice" reaffirms this core value. A portion of the statement reads as follows:

"The affirmation that the 'New Testament is our rule of faith and practice' is basic to who we are as Church of the Brethren members of the Body of Christ₁ and we recommend that Annual Conference ask for a renewed commitment to it. Such a commitment will bind the faith community, but it also leaves each of us personally with the same decision that our forebears had to make: Will I submit myself to the authority of the New Testament as a rule of faith and practice in all areas of my life? To answer "yes," is to seek the meaning and importance of such a commitment for our lives today. We suggest the following:

- 1. It calls us to base our conversations) moral reasoning, and actions in Christ's new covenant as revealed in the New Testament. Other sources and influences are secondary at best. To the extent that self-examination and conversation suggest a moral grounding other than the New Testament, we must question our motives and examine the consistency of such thinking with**

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our proclaimed rule of faith and practice.

2. It continues to call us to a life of study and conversation that places collective understanding and spiritual insight—the voice of the Brethren—above individual interpretation. This process of collective discernment accepts the Bible as God's Word, while focusing upon Christ as the center of our faith, and praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance of our study and conversation.
3. It requires us to give attention to and hold in equal importance faith and practice—what we believe and how we live it—and continues to hold scripture as the authoritative basis for both.
4. It is also a positive confession about how those of us who are Brethren wish to combine belief and practice in a manner that allows us to live in keeping with the spirit and teachings of Jesus.
5. While requiring faithful Bible study for old and new generations to continue to affirm historic understandings and to receive further leadings of the Spirit as we grow and mature, it also holds us to a fuller understanding of biblical interpretation than that found in any single book or passage in the New Testament.
6. It lifts us beyond the temptation to selectively avoid painful or stretching passages of scripture.
7. It steers us away from the searching of scripture to support a predetermined opinion or position. It recognizes that practical wisdom, formal education, traditional understandings, continued illumination by the Holy Spirit, personal devotion, and biblical scholarship each make a vital contribution to our interpretation of scripture. Together they afford multiple windows into the biblical text which, while sometimes difficult to reconcile, encourage us to sort through the layers of meaning that are present.
8. It moves us as a faith community towards a respectful manner of conversation that recognizes there will be differences, but points us toward a higher expectation that there will be agreed-upon understandings and practices that reflect our unity in Jesus Christ.
9. It is an affirmation which, at any time in history, makes us a prisoner to the responsibility of continuing a lively examination of our life in Christ and at the same time frees us from the prison of unquestioned or stagnant understandings. It is a singularly appropriate affirmation for those who desire another way of living; who desire to continue the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, and together."

Not Conformed, But Transformed

**"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what *is* the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
(Romans 12:1-2)**

Continuing the work of Jesus requires engaging in a life of discipleship. We must follow Him regardless of where the path might lead. Doing so involves a life of non-conformity both in thought and in deed, both inwardly and outwardly (Romans 12: 1-2). It calls us to be different from our culture and society, not because we desire attention, but because we have been changed by the power of God. In a world concerned with appearance, fashion and unquestioning compliance to cultural values, there is a price to pay in continuing the work of Jesus.

In our day, we quickly discover the challenges that come to us to live differently as followers of Jesus "way". Consider these: How can those who preach and live a gospel of peace fit easily into a society that celebrates death and settles problems by violent means? How can those whose aim is to live more with less seem any less than odd to a world that is focused upon conspicuous consumption and misplaced materialism? How can those who invite and welcome the least, the last and the lost to the banquet table of a God whose love has no "ifs" be but square pegs in the round holes of a planet whose people are fixated upon elevating ethnic, racial, gender and cultural differences above our common humanity? How can those who believe that the presence of Jesus makes a difference in the lives of individuals, nations and the entire universe not seem strange to those for whom religion is a drug that lulls the spirit of men and women to sleep? The teachings and example of the One whose work we seek to continue remind us that we are called to be different. How much more difference could one want?

Together with all Christians, we proclaim God's salvation through Christ. But for us, it is clear that salvation involves a change in the behavior of those who are saved. Paul's admonition noted above, makes dear that this behavioral change produces non-conformity with our society. We are called to be set-apart, different from our society's norms when they conflict with Jesus' way. But this call does not involve withdrawal from society nor from the lives of those who encompass our social universe. As the experience of Jesus demonstrates (Matthew 4), withdrawal from others never removes us from the source of temptation and evil. Our Christian experience is to be in the world and yet not of the world. We are called to be "salt of the earth" and "light to the world."

Transformation in Christ is marked by a radical change in the focus and orientation of our minds and wills. This change can be instantaneous and dramatic, but it does not end there! It is a continuing, lifelong process toward spiritual maturity and understanding. Some call this lifelong process, "sanctification" while others describe it as "growing in grace." Among Brethren this process would be styled as "following in the footsteps of Jesus," "the walk of discipleship" or "seeking the mind of Christ." This latter description affirms that we understand that our minds are capable of transformation and renewal. As a precious gift from a loving Creator, our minds provide us the capacity to evaluate and assess the reasonableness of our emotions and feelings. When we choose to follow Christ, we open our minds to the possibility of thinking as Jesus would; of using

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our best thinking to honor God and follow in Jesus' way. Thus our minds, transformed by Christ, enable us to see and own responsibility for our actions and our obedience.

But the difference in our minds is not simply something we are supposed to mow. We believe that the transformation is also supposed to "show." The personal seal of Alexander Mack, Jr., son of one of the prominent early Brethren, pictured grapes and their life giving vines intertwined within the arms of the cross. This symbolized the understanding of the early Brethren that the church and its members were to be distinguished in their discipleship by "fruit-bearing." Fruit-bearing means that the lives of Jesus' followers will be transformed in such a way that our inner spiritual journey and outer conduct will manifest the "fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)". Today, the Church of the Brethren continues to seek to be characterized by the compassion of Jesus Christ in its proclamation, both in word and in deed. We demonstrate this liturgically in the love feast. Love is known best in its outward expression through caring presence and compassionate act. In the pursuit of such loving behavior, there is no room for conceit, competitiveness, envy, pride and other selfish attitudes.

Our Lord said that those who know and follow him are the salt of the earth. Salt at its best serves both as seasoning and preservative. If our lifestyles make these words true our presence in the world changes the flavor of all society for the better. But we cannot be salt apart from the mind-changing and will-altering presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. His work in us is then strengthened and made complete by our association together as God's people in worship, study, service and fellowship.

Reconciled and Reconciling

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us." (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

Brethren affirm the ministry of reconciliation as a central element of Christian faithfulness and an appropriate response to God's graciousness in Christ Jesus. We understand that we are not only called to be good, but also to make things right; reconciling in the pattern of Jesus. Thus, we place a high value upon our transformational relationship with God and how that impacts every other relationship. The quality of our human relationships is considered a reflection of our relationship with God (Matthew 25:31-46, James 2:14-17, I John 1:9-11). For that reason, we seek to live in peace with all persons and to promote peaceful relationships between individuals, groups and even nations. We recognize that all humans have dignity and worth, even in the midst of our diversity, because of the creative act of God. Therefore, we seek to live in ways that affirm the divine image of all men and women that remove barriers which divide humanity and that avoid concepts and conduct which would dehumanize and demean others. This is the basis

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of our peacemaking and justice ministries as they have developed during the past century.

We understand that peace has always been an essential dimension of following Christ for the Church of the Brethren. Peace comes from an unshakable trust in the justice and mercy of God. It is the fruit of faith in divine power rather than human control. But it is not simply "inner peace." Faith in God's ability to deliver and deal justly is the foundation of the inner peace and must naturally grow outward into acts of reconciliation and peacemaking. If we are to "continue the work of Jesus...peacefully" our behavior will increasingly reveal the serenity taught by our Lord and made visible by the early New Testament church.

The Church of the Brethren, along with the Mennonites and the Religious Society of Friends, is described as one of the "historic peace churches". Our history is truly one of taking the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles literally and endeavoring to live them daily in our relationships with others. At its core, that means working at making peace. The early Brethren and our Anabaptist forbearers knew first-hand the sufferings of both war and religious persecution. They sought to be true to the teachings of the Prince of Peace regardless of the cost. From our vantage point within a tolerant and sometimes apathetic society, it is hard for us to imagine the challenges they faced on a daily basis. Allegiance to Jesus, his example and precepts, was their paramount concern. In a day when we may be more a "historic peace church" than a "living peace church," the implication is clear. We must plant congregations who learn and model basic Christian peacemaking attitudes, knowledge and skill. This will only be possible when the church planter makes this core value a priority.

The touchstone of such a "living peace church" must be our relationship with the Lord whose work we seek to continue. The change of human character which comes through a maturing relationship with Christ is essential to the outgrowth of peaceful living. Peace, for followers of Christ, is not just a matter of outward restraint, but inward conversion as well. It is not merely a matter of societal witness, but also one of persons changed in outlook and behavior. Reconciliation cannot just concern itself with worldly politics, but must also address the myriad of seemingly insignificant daily interactions in the home, the workplace and wherever humans congregate. When we manifest the attitude and example of Jesus, who valued and accepted everyone as children of God, we begin to dent the shell of hatred and war in our world.

When, we see the image of God in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned and all of those who are the last and least, we begin to see like Jesus. That is, simply put, finding the mind of Christ we seek. It opens the way for us to see as Jesus sees, and thus to engage in the work that Jesus would do. Amidst a world and society that would tug us in other directions, we are called to follow in the path of peace and reconciliation. Faithful church planters are those who call into being Christians and congregations that take seriously the admonition to be "ministers of reconciliation."

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Including and Involving Others

"Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him!'"
(Acts 10:34-35).

The Gospel proclaims that following Christ is an opportunity open to anyone who will choose it. Coupling that truth with our understanding that vital growth and discipleship happens in community means that we have to make room! No one should be disqualified from participation in the body of Christ solely on the basis of cultural differences. Since God's family includes people of every stripe, the fellowship of the church should do the same. There needs to be room for those exploring the faith, as well as for those who have made a firm commitment to Jesus Christ, or who have been called to lead the community. The fellowship of the church includes all of those in the relationship circle, the church consists of those who have made commitment and the leadership of the church consists of those called to special ministries in the life of and on behalf of God's people.

It is a challenge to include and involve persons of different cultural backgrounds in the life, the mission and ministry of the Church. When confronted by the needs of our neighbors, whose skin color, language, cultural practices and general lifestyle are different from ours, we struggle to accept and receive them into our midst. Some get excited about sending missionaries to foreign cultures in exotic places. Yet, when these foreign cultures come to us in our own places of worship and fellowship, the same people seem not to have the same enthusiasm.

We must be careful lest we place hindrances and stumbling blocks in the way which prevent others from becoming full partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, this happens when we confuse our familiar methods with the message of the Gospel! Our methods are our way of worship, of serving, and ordering the life of the Church. We sometimes act as if they possess a validity that is greater than the love of God for all peoples as expressed in Jesus Christ. It becomes inconceivable to us that others would not want to worship the way we do or do things the way we do them, even though they do not share our history, traditions and culture. But consider what we are really asking. In our incredulity we may be asking them to reject everything that makes them who they are in order to become a Christian. That seems to be far more than Jesus would ask or expect. We need to recognize the need they have to bring their own identity to Jesus. After all, becoming a Christian does not mean giving up our identity in order to meet Jesus. It means that we bring who we are "to Jesus", and allow Him to transform who we are for His purposes. It means that we submit all that we are and have to the service and worship of God.

Sometimes we forget that God is able to work through our humanness, as well as that of those with whom we share this planet. We need to be reminded that Jesus did not die so that we could have a prelude, a postlude, three hymns, four prayers, an offering, a choir anthem, various readings and a

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sermon all packaged in a never changing order at a given hour of a given day of the week. Moreover, he did not die in order that our worship attire might be determined by the whims of fashion or the tastes of a given community. In a worship service or any other aspect of church life, what is important is that the person is there, not that they are dressed this way or that. He died and rose again that we and our world might be transformed and renewed in the image of God our Creator.

No matter what our identity or background, what holds us together is our testimony that the one true and living God is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all humankind. This is central to the Christian faith. Yet, like Peter, we struggle to live out the words we speak and the message that we claim to share. Nonetheless, men and women of other cultures, other colors and other ways are standing at our doors. Their presence will change and enrich us. Our acceptance of them will change and enrich their lives. As church planters, we need to see as God sees, and open ourselves to the richness God can create when we are gathered together from many backgrounds, but in discipleship to the same Lord,

Stewardship as Christian lifestyle

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do-not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)

"Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Stewardship is central to the lifestyle of the Christian. A steward is one who uses and is responsible for the possessions of another. As followers of Christ, we understand that everything we are and have belongs to God. Our management of life, whether together or as individuals, is our ministry of stewardship.

God has entrusted each of us with life. How we live out this life reveals our level of trust in God. We are accountable for our use of life, even if the accounting is long delayed. When our fears block us from grasping the opportunities and meeting the challenges which God has given, our trust is weak. Our unwillingness to envision and to act on vision exposes our struggle to trust in the One who graciously gives us everything. When we trust in the grace and mercy of God, we can risk living. As we do, we are freed to live in the full assurance that even our worst failures can be forgiven.

No matter how insignificant we may feel, each of us is gifted by God, and has an important role in God's purposes. The world of literature values authors most highly and without writers there would

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be no books. Nevertheless, their creativity and skill is undergirded and enabled by the work of the lumberman whose pulpwood is made into paper, by the tool and die maker whose labor crafts the parts of the printing press, by the printer whose skill brings the author's words into salable form, by the dock man and truck driver whose efforts transport the work to the retail seller, by the clerk in the bookstore who aids the reader in her purchase and by many others. In the same way, even those of us whose gifts may appear more modest are vital to the life of the church. What you are and what you contribute is important!

As followers of Christ, we are responsible for our use of both the tangible and intangible blessings of life. We must use our talents in the full assurance and trust of God's ability to forgive and support us when we fail. The scriptures remind us that God trusts us! Our daily challenge is to trust God by using our gifts boldly and faithfully. As theologian Paul Tillich reminds us, "He who risks and fails can be forgiven. He who never risks and never fails is a failure in his whole being."

Nonetheless, risk can be difficult, especially when we are led to worry about having "enough." This is clearly evident at times in our congregations. When resources are tight, we tend to economize by cutting back. Both as individuals and as congregations we give in to the temptation to reduce our investment of time, talent, and treasure in the work of God's Kingdom.

In such times, Jesus' words remind us that none of our material resources really last. Just as rust destroys a car body or a moth wreaks havoc upon a valued garment, all that we possess is the victim of time and decay. Wealth can disappear quickly as the result of crime, depression, or poor decisions. Even the most enduring resource is of no use to the dead.

With that in mind, our Lord calls us to invest ourselves and what we have in that which is eternal. While we are called to manage our resources well, Jesus challenges us not to be deceived by the value of what we can touch and hold. Though they seem more real to us than that which is spiritually accessible, we are called to value what will endure in God's eternity. The Apostle Paul reminds us that "what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 18). When we are tempted to put our faith and identity in a particular building or resource, Paul's words point us back to Jesus and his reminder of what finally endures.

But our stewardship is not simply related to what we can touch and hold. Time is among our greatest resources, and clearly a trust from God. We are called to use time wisely and with discernment. Human life has a beginning and an end; therefore we must seek to live "carefully". Living carefully means recognizing the sacredness of each moment. In work or in rest, in quiet reflection or quick conversation, in the midst of the crowd or apart from others, our moments are special. Every moment provides an opportunity to experience God's presence. Even our times of deep distress and difficulty are made sacred when we sense our Lord's nearness. When we fail to recognize God's presence, life itself is profaned.

Living carefully also means using time wisely. Every day offers us opportunities to demonstrate

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God's love and compassion to others. When we submit our time to the Lord of time, even the most mundane tasks are infused with life and meaning. Nonetheless, we still must choose how to best use those opportunities. Using time wisely means that we recognize that our work is central to our ministry. Whether we spend our time in the factory or the farm, in the mine or the mill, at home or in the halls of government, in retirement or in disability, God provides us opportunities to share God's love and thus to fulfill our call to ministry ...

Living carefully also requires that we recognize that rest and recreation are crucial to life lived well. Living in a society that values persons according to their productivity can blind us to the restorative power of being playful, or even of doing nothing. Relaxation, as well as productive labor, is necessary for health and wholeness. The account of the Creation in Genesis 1 reminds us that God rested on the seventh-day. The gospel accounts note that Jesus often retreated to the wilderness. Our spirituality is weakened when we lose the natural tension between work and play.

Making the most of our time also involves recognizing our limitations. Confessing that we cannot accomplish everything that we want to do is an act of humility before our Creator, for God alone is not bound by time. As followers of Christ, we must identify our priorities and work toward them. As disciples, we also need to seek patience and flexibility as we face our limitations, our decision-making and life-planning, done in recognition of God's rule in our lives, is an essential part of our stewardship of time.

Wholistic stewardship should be taught and modeled by every member of the congregation and by the congregation. Even as we have affirmed wise and faithful use of time and talents, we affirm the legitimate place of financial generosity within our congregations. This includes the encouragement of regular and proportional giving with the tithe being a benchmark. Because it is inconsistent to teach tithing unless it is practiced corporately, all outreach ministries should be supported by at least a tithe of every offering the congregation receives.

Simple Living, Not Anxious living

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well!" (Matthew 6:25, 32-33 RSV).

The simple life is the life described by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). It is a life which finds its focus in the worship and service of God and the welfare of all. It is centered in obedience to God's word, not as a mere system of belief, but as a way of living (Ps. 119: 105). It is an ideal that we seek to live out} not an attainment that we, reach.

Brethren have expressed the simple life in a variety of ways. While the expression has included for

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some a modest and "plain" dress, for many the focus has shifted from outward appearance to the inward and spiritual attributes of simplicity. Nonetheless, we understand the importance of a life that expresses simplicity in Jesus' way.

As his ministry is described in the New Testament, Jesus looked upon the poor and impoverished with love and compassion. His life was lived in solidarity with them and in simplicity before all. By his example we understand that our life together as disciples is to express the values of shared commonwealth and servanthood rather than individual enrichment and power. This is our focus as we seek to live simply in obedience to Christ's call.

A helpful way to think about the character of simple living is this: **Simple living involves living more with less for a purpose** (Luke 3:11). Thus, it addresses how we use our time, our energy, our things and all of our resources. It requires that we prioritize, allocate and manage all that we are and have. It often requires that we make tough decisions and have the discipline to live with them. Simple living accepts that we cannot do everything we might want to do. It understands the importance of action rather than words when confronted by need (James 2: 15-16), and the need to be prepared to act. Thus, we seek to live with less in order that we might do more for others with the bounty of God.

It is important to note that simple living is has a purpose beyond itself. There are many in our society who would espouse simple living. What makes simple living different for the follower of Christ is that it has the underlying purpose of keeping our focus on God and God's ministry in the world. Jesus not only provided us the example. He also reminded us that purposeful Simple living could become a religion rather than being an outgrowth of our obedience to God (Matt. 6:1-4). For followers of Jesus, we seek to living simply so that we can focus on God's purpose. We do so because we are being changed from within, not out of a desire to be holier than another nor to justify ourselves.

There is another reason for living simply as Christians. By doing so, we seek to avoid becoming entangled with material concerns lest we lose our freedom to serve God (2 Tim. 2:4). We understand too well the temptation to forget that God is the ground of our being and to misplace our focus upon things which pass away rather than investing ourselves in the eternal (Matthew 6:19-21). Living the simple life is a statement of trust in our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sustained Freedom from care and concern is freedom for mission and ministry!

In this way, we have the opportunity to witness to Christ's peace as well. Much of the strife and conflict in our world comes from the desire for more Games 4: 1-4). From such desire springs the fruits of covetousness, jealousy and the desire for "success." The simple lifestyle and its spiritual underpinnings are deeply intertwined with the peace teachings of the church. This is not a coincidence. Freedom from idolatry to things is freedom from the root causes of war!

Our congregations and church plants face a unique challenge for simple living in our day. When our people were primarily rural, somewhat impoverished and isolated from urban centers it was easier to make simple life choices. Today our lives are often much more dependent on the complexity of

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our society. Some might even question if our lives have become indistinguishable from American society at large. Still, there is an important place for us to strive to live more with less for the purpose of following Christ and continuing his work. New church planters who value what it means to be Brethren understand the importance of emphasizing the call to simplicity and servanthood.

Sharing the Journey Together

“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weight what is said.” (I Corinthians 14:29)

“And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.’” (Acts 6:2-4)

“...making every effort to maintain the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Inspiration is best tested, according to the Brethren, by the body of believers. While we have “prophets” among us, we believe that the body must identify and affirm its beliefs through a process of dialogue and discernment. As a community of faith, we seek to be a body which discerns “the mind of Christ.” That discernment process can demand much effort on the part of the participants. It certainly requires the patience and forbearance of all concerned. Yet, we understand that vision, in order to move toward fulfillment, must be owned not only by the individual, but affirmed by the body as well.

Brethren believe that there is “wisdom in the counsel of many,” not only in matters requiring discernment, but also in the decision-making process of the church. The governing structure of the Church of the Brethren, whether at denominational, district, or congregational level, is designed to give every member a role in decision-making. Therefore, while those in leadership certainly influence direction, important decisions of the church are made by the faith community with the widest possible consultation. As Brethren, we are a church that seeks to decide what Jesus would have us to do together. This means that voices of diversity or of dissent should not be silenced, ridiculed or ignored, but we rather respected as a valid contribution to the discernment of the whole body. At times, such voices can enrich our understanding, contribute to our self-awareness and inspire us to greater expressions of compassion.

Our value of togetherness affects our style of doing the work and business of the church. Brethren value and respect the authority of their leaders. Ultimately, however, the power is bestowed on the church. We believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through the body. We seek to model a style of working together that is founded upon forthright sharing, empathetic listening, mutual submission and consultation in matters which affect us all (Acts 15). Our practice emphasizes the importance of decision making that takes the time necessary for the body to come to consensus. While this can frustrate those whose prefer to follow the model of majority vote current in our society, it

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encourages decisions that preserve the ownership and investment of the body. For Brethren, the business of the church is not about winning, but of learning to share resources for our faith journey together.

Beyond the decision-making process, sharing the journey also means maintaining a connection with our heritage. It is one way that a congregation is recognizable as the Church of the Brethren. It is important in our church plants for the leadership and participants to acknowledge and respect the heritage and traditions of the Brethren. It is expected that our pastors and congregations will engaging in anointing, trine immersion, the full love feast and communion, the practice of Matthew 18; and support the in word and deed the outreach mission and ministries-of our denomination. Since we value the wisdom of the whole body and seek to work together toward the same ideals, this means that each congregation will expect to be represented at the Annual and District Conferences of the denomination.

At the same time, we value relationship with other Christians who may not share all the same distinctive expressions of following Jesus as we do. The Church of the Brethren embraced ecumenism or "cooperative Christianity" in the twentieth century as a means of sharing our giftedness in coordination with other Christian denominations in local, state, national and international circles. It is important that we seek to understand and work with other Christians while retaining our identity and peculiarities. Our small size, willingness to serve and lack of pretense often results in Brethren being chosen for leadership in ministerial associations and councils of churches.

Leadership must focus on Teamwork

**"Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many."
(I Corinthians 12:14)**

**" ... I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock."
(I Peter 5:1b-3)**

**"What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."
(I Corinthians 3:5-7)**

As Brethren, we seek to embody the New Testament ideal of the "priesthood of all believers." From the beginning we have resisted conceptions of ministry that elevate clergy over laity in unhealthy ways. In the pattern of Jesus' own call, we believe that every believer is called to ministry at their baptism. The New Testament makes clear that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which equip the church for ministry, are given to all according to the will and design of God. The progress and prosperity of the church is the shared responsibility of every member, individual or collective

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responsibility to continue the work of Jesus cannot be given away or hired out. Thus, our congregations need to call and encourage every member to serve Christ and the church in some capacity. Healthy congregations also endeavor to enlist their membership in ministry and mission to those beyond the congregation's walls and membership.

Recognizing that all Christians are called to ministry, Brethren also affirm that God calls out leadership which is set apart to serve the church. The Church of the Brethren once had a paradigm of plural leadership for the set-apart ministry. No one individual was "the pastor." Instead, congregations had "ministers." This was a reminder that ministry is a shared task, not an authoritative or dominating position. We view those in the "set-apart" ministry and those called to special leadership roles as "called out for a purpose" but not "set above" others within the Body of Christ. Our leaders attain the trust and respect necessary to lead as they demonstrate faithful and responsible service to the church over time.

When a pastor is chosen, this individual should be amenable and adaptable to working with and for others. No one should be "hired" to do ministry "for" the congregation. Instead, a pastor is "called" to "lead" the ministry of the congregation and to "serve" in a collegial manner with the whole body. Pastors and other church leaders who facilitate the unity and ministry of the whole church and who can articulate the vision, challenges, opportunities and mission of the congregation are highly valued in the Church of the Brethren. By contrast, pastors who seek to be the sole voice of God, whose interpretation has more force than the church at large, who seek a personal following and who engage in divisive and manipulative behavior often find ministry with the Brethren to be unfulfilling and unrewarding.

Brethren work best with leadership that models the ethos and practices of our faith tradition while holding it in tension with contemporary reality. Adequate, time, prayer-and discernment needs to be given to the development, calling and training of leadership. The criteria for leadership should center on giftedness, spirituality and faithfulness to the core values of the denomination. No one should be chosen solely because there is a position on an organizational chart which needs to be filled, for economy or because they are available. All leadership, including pastoral positions, should be open without gender restriction. Among lay leaders, it is expected that leaders will be in training to take over roles, and that position rotation will periodically occur. In this way, church plants can develop and sustain healthy leadership that strengthens the faith community.

Chapter Three

Models of Church Planting

There is no single authoritative model for new church development. Effective methods may vary from time to time and place to place. One model may work in one situation and not in another, even though the two contexts appeared to be similar. Those involved in the development of emerging churches must have open minds as God's Spirit inspires new thinking and new models.

In this chapter, a variety of models of church planting are discussed. Not all of these are recommended, but they are included in order to provide a comprehensive overview. Every model profiled below will, however, have a greater chance of success if all the following key elements are in place simultaneously:

- The church planter is an individual who has a clear vision given by God of what the church will look like, and who has the personality and skills necessary to implement that vision.
- District and congregational structures share and support the vision of the church planter.
- A community that is receptive to the vision of the planter.

Following are profiles of some of the key models for the development of emerging churches.

Calling Out: The New Population Model

"But you will receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)

Inspired by missionary goals, the "calling out" model is characterized by the vision of involving new populations in the ongoing work of Christ. The phrase "calling out" comes from the New Testament Greek word, *ecclesia*, which is translated as "church" in English. This model can include:

- Traditional, blended, or contemporary worship styles
- The "cells and celebration" concept or the "twelve by twelve" variation
- A focus on ethnic, linguistic, class, or other "demographic" groupings
- Emphasis on different theological interests and practices

This model demands "apostolic" leadership. An apostolic leader possesses the following qualities:

- God-given vision to reach out to the unchurched
- Strong faith in the power of God to transform individual lives
- Priority centered upon personal relationships with Christ and the unchurched
- Willingness to move from location to location
- A definite expression of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23)

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In the "calling out" model, apostles are sent to the places of greatest need. Often a planter may be sent to a new location and given the responsibility to start with varying amounts of resources and sometimes with little or no preparation. This new ministry context may be far removed geographically from a neighboring church or it may be close in terms of physical distance, but far removed in terms of culture and style.

Without proper coaching and support from the sponsoring district or congregation, the apostle(s) may become burned out and disconnected. And because this model is absolutely leadership dependent, it can result in "lone ranger" ministry style. For these reasons great care needs to be taken in selecting the leadership or planting team. Among the absolute prerequisites are:

- An accurate assessment of the apostle(s) by an objective group that indicates the individual is suited for the job
- A well-designed infrastructure for coaching and support
- A much higher level of involvement from the District Executive/Minister or other judicatory staff than he or she has in relationship to pastors who serve existing churches

Districts or congregations may pursue the "calling out" model in a number of ways. The apostle may be sent out on a part-time or full-time basis. His or her ministry may or may not be preceded by the purchase of land. The most important element is the willingness of districts to invest in development of visionary leadership. This investment in apostolic leadership today for the emerging churches of tomorrow should result in increased church development with fewer investment resources than in the past. Expenditure of resources rarely, if ever, creates vision. Vision that is nurtured and supported, however, often brings out hidden or withheld resources and creates new resources.

Of all of the models of emerging church development, "calling out" has the highest potential for creating and nurturing new Christians. This model seems to have the greatest potential for creating a healthy and vital congregation. When an apostle goes forth to a new context for ministry, he or she is driven by the passion that comes from a single-minded vision and is unencumbered by the need to engage in organizational or administrative maintenance. There is a total exposure of the apostle to the community and to the mission at hand.

Gathering In: The Brethren Core Group Model

"During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (Acts 16:9)

Inspired by denominational loyalty as well as missionary motivation, the "gathering in" model seeks to bring together persons of similar background (generally Brethren and Mennonite) who have relocated to areas where there is no organized Anabaptist presence. The first meeting of this type of group is generally in the living room of someone who misses their former congregation.

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Sometimes these groups never develop further than house churches. Often times these fellowships are found in metropolitan areas experiencing economic and population growth. These groups have the potential to become regional congregations for the denomination) particularly in the growing population centers of the Sunbelt. They are very resilient because they place a high value on lay leadership from the very beginning. For this reason, they can be started with little or no financial outlay. The greatest expenditure in the beginning is the staff time required to provide them with training and support.

The drawback to this model is the tendency for such groups to plateau with a worship attendance of about thirty to forty persons. Often the energy and vision of such groups is focused on being "the Brethren" in a particular area. Avoidance of these tendencies requires that those who are gathered make a conscious decision to reach out to persons whose backgrounds are not Anabaptist.

This model can present authority problems for districts that maintain a strategic plan for fostering emerging churches. It is also often difficult to find and integrate ordained leadership into an existing lay group. Leadership for a "gathering in" congregation needs to have:

- A deep understanding of, appreciation for, and articulate expression of the Anabaptist theology, lifestyle, and practice
- A desire and ability to form and involve persons whose background are not Anabaptist or even Christian
- The skill to facilitate relationships and fellowship within a diverse faith community
- The ability to challenge the comfort level of the founding core group in a thoughtful, non-confrontational manner

Whereas the apostolic leadership of the "calling out" model is characterized by a strong vision, the leadership of the "gathering in" model must often begin with a core group that has an established vision. The "gathering in" model leader exemplifies a style of facilitation which is balanced by critical thinking.

Multiplying Out: The Many-fold Model

"Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundred fold" (Luke 8:8)

Inspired by a vision of congregational ministries that are not tied to one location or one methodology the "multiplying out" model has a rich heritage in the Church of the Brethren. It has great potential for those congregations willing to consider themselves "source" or "mother" congregations. Until the 1930's many congregations in the Church of the Brethren began as meeting points. Some congregations had multiple preaching points, as the local church was defined by geography and boundaries rather than a particular location or building, Since 1932 official geographical boundaries between congregations have been eliminated and congregational life has become centered around houses of worship.

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Contemporary expressions of the multiplying congregation could include existing churches that:

- Use their current building to foster an ethnic church or create an additional worship experience to target a group not reached by their traditional methods
- Develop, train, send out, and support apostolic church planters as an outreach ministry
- Begin new churches by using experimental methods not always applicable to existing congregations, such as cell groups (or the "12 x 12" development described in Chapter Seven).

Pastoral leadership in this setting needs to possess:

- Great skill in envisioning ministries which may seem "out of the box" to traditional church leadership with a focus on one location
- A well-developed ability to articulate this ministry vision in the least threatening and most exciting way
- A capacity to adapt to change as the vision is pursued
- A management technique that can develop the necessary resources to sustain the effort
- The ability to accommodate colleagues whose focus, ministry, and gifts are radically different

Points of mission created by "multiplying out~) must be seen, from their origin as potential stand-alone ministries. This requires those involved in creation to develop and empower leadership in the new setting that can take such points of mission to an identity independent of the originating body.

Colonizing: The Sending Out Model

"Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (John 13:20)

The "colonizing" model is inspired by a desire of several Brethren congregations in one area to begin a new church development. Those congregations often encourage core groups of leaders and/or followers relocate to a nearby area where there is no organized Church of the Brethren. A nucleus of two to thirty church families provides the resources to start the new church with the support of their congregations of origin and the host district. This model, with its many variations, was one of the most successful models of suburban church extension for the Church of the Brethren in the 1945-65 era. Its usage declined as large urban churches declined in their numbers and financial strength.

This model has the advantage of creating a new church that knows its community, has sufficient base of membership to engage in strong ministry programs, can underwrite a significant budget, and call excellent leadership from the beginning. It can, however, mask a church's underlying motive of escape from areas of economic decline or from racial or cultural transition. As with all emerging churches which arise from local initiative, this approach may conflict with the new church development strategy of the host district.

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Another variation of the “colonizing” model arises from the desire to plant congregations in new areas that have a particular Anabaptist understanding of the Gospel message as it relates to dress and other peculiar practices. These colonies, sponsored by sub-groups within the denomination, tend not to be in metropolitan areas, but in rural areas, small towns, or medium-sized cities.

Adopting In: The Inclusive Model

"Whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40)

The “adopting in” model is inspired by the need and request of small or medium-sized independent congregations to affiliate with a denomination for support and fellowship. Such a congregation initiates conversation and dialogue with a district of the Church of the Brethren. This can lead to acceptance and membership in the denomination. Often the initiating congregation is composed primarily of people of non-Euro American background.

Congregations may seek adoption in order to be a part of the wider church in a tangible way, and/or to gain access to denominational resources, such as leadership development and educational materials, funding, retirement and insurance benefits for the pastor or pastoral team, and access to the placement process for pastoral leadership. Because the motives may not be clearly understood, it is important for the district structure to move in a careful and deliberate manner. If “adopting” is done without thought or planning, it can lead to frustration and disappointment both for the new congregation and for the denomination. The polity and guidelines for the “adopting” model are found in Chapter Ten under the heading, “Receiving Unrelated Congregations.”

When done in a prayerful and unhurried manner, this method of receiving congregations can be rewarding both to the Church of the Brethren and to the congregation. The denomination and district benefit by a change in the demographic and theological mix of identity, by broadening their ministry to a larger, often more ethnically diverse population, and by becoming able to minister in situations which might not be otherwise imagined.

Dividing Out: The Separation Model

“Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse” (1 Cor. 11:17)

The “dividing out” model grows out of an inability of persons to work together in one congregation. In some situations it may be appropriate to create two congregations out of one. This method, although not encouraged, is sometimes an unfortunate necessity.

The district needs to provide careful guidance for a group created in such a manner. Prior to recognition as a fellowship, anger issues need to be addressed and the group needs to define a vision that is more than merely the opposite image of the unwilling “mother” church. “Dividing out” fellowships tend to plateau fairly quickly, usually around the time that the energy created by anger diminishes. Those that survive over the long term may be good candidates for redevelopment after the passing of the initial generation.

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Leadership for a church emerging out of conflict and brokenness needs to have the following qualities:

- Lengthy pastoral experience
- Excellent listening skills
- A proven ability in grief counseling
- The ability to provide a “non-anxious” presence
- A strong focus upon personal presence with members
- The ability to point persons away from the past events and toward the future

Placement personnel should avoid candidates who are comfortable with a “chaplaincy” or “preaching” ministry. Retired pastors with health, energy and vision can be particularly effective part-time pastors for such a group.

Joining Together: The Ecumenical Model

“And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A three-fold cord is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

The “joining” model is inspired by the vision that ministry and mission are strong when done in cooperation with other Christian groups. It represents a coalition of denominational groups who pool resources and plant a single congregation that represents all of the participants in the given community. This model was strongly recommended by the 1958 Annual Conference *Statement on Church Extension*:

“Co-operative church planting involves the survey of the areas needing churches, agreement upon allocations to be made in any given area and to any denomination, and the willingness to serve the whole community in order that the testimony of the gospel may be more complete. Co-operative church planning involves praying together, planning together, investigating together, working together, and coming to mutual decisions in the faith that the whole is greater than any part, or even the sum of the parts.

Spelled out in specific terms, co-operative church planning means that the church keeps central our oneness in Christ. All who commit their lives to Christ have a first loyalty to him. Our church seeks to incorporate into full fellowship all who wishes to enter this primary relationship with Christ. The church fosters and enriches this fellowship, always serving under the Lordship of Christ, which service gives a unity of purpose to all efforts witnessing to His truth.”

This model resembles what was once termed the “union church.” Union churches were congregations of two or more denominations which joined together to construct church buildings and hold Sunday Schools together, but which kept denominational identities separate. Each denomination was responsible to supply speakers on a rotating basis.

An advantage to this system, then as now, is that it models the unity of the ecumenical church by

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bringing Christians of various backgrounds together in one congregation. It works well in rural, resort and vacation areas. Joining together enables the planting of churches in locations which otherwise would not have been able to have a functional congregation. Financial and administrative resources are shared for the benefit of everyone. This model may attract persons who are generic or non-denominational Christians.

There are, however, a number of disadvantages to this model. Property ownership often is not clear. The lack of single denominational identity or the presence of multiple identities requires high expenditure of energy and strong focus on communication to keep the group together and moving in one direction. There may be faith and order concerns related to baptism and communion, particularly between those who baptize adults and those who baptize infants. Multiple judicatories may have different expectations concerning oversight and accountability.

Leaders for this model need to be able to value and respect the traditions of all the faith communities involved while maintaining the integrity of their own faith backgrounds. Individuals who are extroverted, good listeners, and enjoy variety serve well in such situations. The danger for leadership here is a sense of spiritual disconnection with his/her denominational heritage and development of an attitude of unwillingness to take seriously issues of faith and order. This model should not be pursued without considerable discussion and clear agreement by the respective denominational judicatories about accountability, theological and ecclesiological concerns.

Resurrecting: The Reconstruction Model

"They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations" Isa. 61:4.

Inspired by the congregation that dies unnecessarily (although no church must absolutely die), the "resurrecting" model involves the establishment of a new church in an old context. This model occasionally appears when a district becomes heir to a church building in an area with potential where a former congregation has expired or where new life stirs within a group of interested persons after a congregation has been disorganized. In both cases it is important to disassociate the emerging church from the former congregation. This involves a requirement on the part of the appropriate district agency that the project proposal clearly disavows all decisions made by the former congregation and that a new and fitting name is chosen. No old wineskins can be tolerated in this model.

Leadership for the "resurrecting" church must be clear about enforcing the boundaries with those who might seek to reinstate rather than resurrect. Strong support for the planter(s) in this regard from the district agency and staff are necessary and crucial. The ecclesiology of the planter will affirm the church as a community of persons that God has gathered through Christ, not as an edifice filled with memories.

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As urban congregations wither and die from lack of relevance to changed neighborhoods, the “resurrecting” model could become a major tool for the Church of the Brethren. This model, to be successful, requires any district strategy to recognize the importance of:

- The development of a vision for urban ministry
- The courage to reach out to persons of varied national, racial and linguistic backgrounds
- The desire to learn about and to accept cultural differences
- The development of leadership that is culturally appropriate

Churches within a Church: The Multiplex Model

"And how is it that we hear each of us, in our own native language?" (Acts 2:8)

The multiplex model is a new concept in urban mission church development. Multiplexing envisions the use of an existing church facility as the launch pad for multiple mission church developments over a period of years. The term “multiplex” in the secular world is used to describe one theater with multiple screens. In this usage a “multiplex church” would be one facility housing multiple congregations. These congregations would have marked differences from one another in ethnicity, language, worship style, leadership or other aspects of church life. They would share a common denominational identity, use portions of the same facility and have some commonality in educational and fellowship activities.

What type of facility is necessary for such a church? The optimum facility for multiplexing is an urban church located in a changing neighborhood which possesses a church plant overbuilt for the current needs of the existing congregation. The following attributes are particularly advantageous for employing the multiplexing concept:

- A sanctuary on the main level (with or without a balcony and choir loft), capable of seating at least 200 persons.
- A chapel or fellowship room on the main level, adaptable for worship, fellowship and educational activities, and capable of accommodating at least 100 persons. (These worship facilities should have enough physical separation to allow for two simultaneous worship services to be held at least twice on any given Sunday morning.)
- An elevator which makes the entire building accessible.
- A surplus of classroom, fellowship and other space.

Such an approach obviously requires a significant commitment from the host congregation to support the use of its facility in new ways. The greatest practical need is for the host congregation to allow usage of portions of the building, particularly the chapel and other space, for the development of each phase of this project. All use of space and other issues would be negotiated between the oversight group for the new congregation and the host congregation. Lease agreements would clarify respective expectations and responsibilities. These would be modified from time to time as circumstances make necessary. The district would be guarantor of these agreements until such time as each new congregation would fulfill the obligations of the project

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and fellowship stages of development.

The most crucial spiritual need for the leadership and constituency of the host congregation to manifest is an open, flexible and hospitable spirit toward the concept and the reality which would issue from it. Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you took me in." Taking in the stranger requires spiritual, emotional, financial and physical adjustment on the part of all of us. It combines both the certainty of hard work and the hope of a great blessing.

Among the lesser adjustments required would be learning to share the building, negotiating cultural and linguistic differences, absorbing new learners and leaders into Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, including strangers in our fellowship activities and unanticipated challenges. Some of the blessings would include a greater usage of the building, more resources to address facility concerns, a fuller Sunday School, greater fellowship opportunities, a different rhythm of congregational life and the living out of our highest ideals.

How would the decision-making process change for church business? The host congregation would continue to follow its current procedure for making decisions. The new congregations will follow whatever process is developed under district guidance that is appropriate to specific cultural norms.

Clearly, the transitions required to become a multiplex church would require intentional oversight. It is recommended that, just as in any new church development project, each phase would be overseen by a Steering Committee. This Steering Committee would act as the church board for the new congregation during its project and fellowship stages. The committee would likely be composed of seven individuals. The chairperson would be appointed by and from among the members of the Church Extension Committee (or its counterpart) within the sponsoring district. The other six members would be appointed for staggered terms (three, two or one year) with members serving up to two terms. Initially, the host congregation and the Church Extension Committee would each appoint three representatives. In time, the congregation being developed would be invited to replace and/or augment the appointed members as membership and leadership development allow, gradually, all outside members (both host congregation and sponsoring district) would be replaced until only the chairperson is from the outside. Outside involvement in the new congregation's administration would cease when it would attain full congregational status.

The Steering Committee would, like any church board) attend to the administration of the new congregation's business. They would propose, call and evaluate both volunteer and paid leadership, develop budget, create structure) relate to the mission partners (Le.) the district and host congregation), and seek the general up building and edification of the new congregation.

The process would begin in the following manner. After the congregation agrees to partner with the district, the first action would be to appoint the Steering Committee. They would spend the

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next year to eighteen months working out a concrete proposal for the first phase. This would include developing a time line, a multi-year budget projection and other important details. The Steering Committee would be charged with the preparation of the proposal. Implementing the proposal would require the approval of the appropriate district authority.

One of the primary needs for any new fellowship is the need for pastoral leadership. The pastoral leadership for any new congregations created as a part of the multiplex project would be called from within the Church of the Brethren. For instance, Hispanic leadership from other parts of the United States, Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic could be secured if the first phase was targeting that cultural group. This person or team would be called by, accountable to and supported by the new congregation. Staff persons for the host congregation would merely be expected to develop a collegial and congenial relationship with the leadership of the new congregation. No special skill set should be necessary for the pastor of the host congregation beyond those which are currently expected by the existing congregation.

In the multiplex model, the overwhelming majority of worship services would be conducted separately. However, there would be occasional combined services. At these times there would be portions explaining and emphasizing the symbolism associated with the particular cultures involved. Most interrelationships would be expected to take place within the educational and fellowship programs.

Experimental: Room for Emerging Models

**"From this time forward I make you hear new things,
hidden things that you have not known" (Isa. 48:6b.)**

This new church development model is not really a model at all, but provides a place to collect all the emerging approaches to church planting that just doesn't fit one of the familiar categories. One example of an experimental model is the development of a congregation within a retirement home. New models are being revealed, as persons are inspired to go forth and plant the church in new ways. The continuing trend of social and technological change will have an unforeseen impact on how and by what method new churches are planted. Creativity and adaptability are of high value in responding to these changes. As history has shown those most willing to change and to do so more quickly are the pacesetters in every area of human endeavor. District structures must encourage individuals to develop, refine and pursue hitherto unknown or hybrid models that have the possibility of reaching and transforming new population groups. This requires leadership that is open to new methodology and which is not fearful of risk or change.

NOTES

Some material in this chapter was adapted from the following internet resources. These sites are excellent resources for New Church Development enthusiasts who enjoy observing the work of other faith traditions within Christianity.

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New Church Development Manual: An Introduction (Reformed Church in America)

<http://www.rca.org/multiply/manual.html>

Models for Starting New Churches

<http://www.holstonconference.com/builders/models.html>

New Church Planting Models

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/newchurch_4327_ENG_HTM.htm?menu=rmenu3136

Models of Church Starts

<http://www.newchurchministry.org/models/modelsofchurchstart.asp?nav=70>

Chapter Four

The Importance of Vision in New Church Development

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18a) (KJV)

What Is Vision?

Vision is the ability to see beyond what *is* to what *can be*. Vision "is the ability to imagine with spiritual insight; and cast with inspired words, a vision of the future that may not be obvious or discernible by linear projections" (George Bullard, *Congregational Passages: The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development*, page 6). To be meaningful, vision needs to guide the outcome of events. It needs to be owned by others, who direct their efforts toward implementing and fulfilling it.

The Bible is filled with examples of vision. Nehemiah was enabled to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem because he could see beyond their brokenness. Paul was empowered to reach out to the Gentiles because he could see their inclusion in the realm of God.

Vision, as Bullard describes it, is one of the four organizing principles of the life cycle and stages of organizational development. In terms of congregations, he defines it as "the current understanding of God's spiritual strategic direction for a congregation that is cast by leadership and owned by membership" (Bullard, *Congregational Passages: The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development*, pp. 9-11). In other words, it is "a clear mental image of a preferable future, imparted by God to his chosen servants, based upon an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances" (George Barna, quoted by Bullard, *Congregational Passages: The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development*, page 6).

Why Have a Vision?

Almost three decades ago a business school maxim was: "If you decide not to decide, you have decided." One of the reasons that businesses, even long-established firms, fail is because they begin to drift and lose focus. This loss of focus results from a failure of or lack of clarity about organizational vision on the part of the leadership.

Many congregations have come to exist to serve the religious needs or wants of a small population. In smaller congregations this may mean one, two, or three extended families. These congregations may envision only carrying out the same program and procedures that they have inherited from a preceding generation. Their leadership is most often found in that segment of the clergy that is willing to comfort the membership without providing any real challenge to grow. Other, larger congregations, often in urban areas, may invest large amounts of resources engaging consultants. These persons can outline how a congregation can change but cannot provide the spark of life that

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is needed. What is needed is someone who can clearly cast vision and who has the patience to follow through.

Vision is particularly essential to the future of an emerging church because it drives the long-term outcome of the endeavor. It is important that visions be neither too small nor too big. Say, for example, that a group wants to plant a Brethren church in their community. Nothing about that choice appears problematic. The difficulty lies in the small boundaries of their vision and the ease with which their goal can be accomplished. All they have to do is gather enough people willing to move memberships to a fellowship, complete a project proposal, and proceed through the district recognition process. Very soon their mission is accomplished and their vision fulfilled.

Unfortunately, the small size of their vision has determined that they will be a small, struggling group for the mid-term and, perhaps, for the long-term future. Another group envisions an emerging church that will reach everyone in their area. They have a broad and inclusive vision. They are thinking "big"! To their distress, however, they discover that being all things to all people can consume all of their available resources and give nothing back. Their vision needed more precision.

The effect of vision in the emerging church is far-reaching. Vision or lack of vision will affect everything and everyone who engages in new church development. Every subsequent decision of the emerging church hinges on the clarity and precision of the vision. When it is properly cast and received, vision:

- Provides direction
- Encourages unity
- Enables change
- Provides motivation
- Inspires giving
- Provides a basis for evaluation

Provides direction—because it provides clarity. When the vision is stated clearly, no one will question the population segments that are targeted; why they must be reached; or the model and methods by which they are to be reached. In other words, vision describes where we are going, why we are going and how we will get there. Groups work more efficiently when the direction is clear and the group members own that direction.

Encourages unity—because it calls the emerging church into being. Only individuals who are attracted to the vision are part of the initiating group. Only individuals whose goals fit the ethos of the group join the group. Vision, well-communicated, draws persons appropriate to the community it creates.

Enables change—as it becomes reality by adding new elements to old systems. The Brethren who envisioned an energetic mission effort in the mid-1800s were agents of change. Their vision brought forth home and foreign mission work that changed the demographic mix of the

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denomination, and gave birth to a new perspective regarding the work of the church as it sought to fulfill human needs. Envisioning emerging churches within the Church of the Brethren requires imagining a change in whom and what we are. Everyone who engages in a visionary mission endeavor is profoundly changed by the experience.

Provides motivation—as it forms new opportunities for mission and ministry. Diversity of visions gives individuals a choice as to how they might invest their lives and resources while providing a divine unity in the midst of contrast.

Inspires giving—because it provides a compelling reason to share resources. Just as new product lines create and draw new business, a new vision draws out resources that may otherwise go untapped and unused.

Provides a basis for evaluation—since it defines the aim of an individual or a group. Archers can see when they have missed the mark because of the bull's eye and the rings on the target. If the vision is clear, those seeking to implement it can assess their progress toward the ultimate aim.

Where Does Vision Come From?

Vision originates with God. In church planting, it is important not to confuse vision with human objectives. Such goals—shaped by organizational priorities such as management objectives, numbers, preferences, or money—may or may not be connected to the vision God gives. Sometimes, in their focus on corporate or personal concerns, those goals may be disconnected from, or even counter to God's vision for the work.

Faithful vision seeks to see as God sees. It is rooted in the experience of persons who envision the unmet spiritual needs of other individuals or groups, who seek to allow God to work through their personal ministry to address these needs, and who wait upon God to empower their ministry.

Vision is discerned as one becomes aware of the spiritual circumstances of others and prays for clarity and power. Vision and prayer are inextricably connected. Prayer is central to the envisioning process because it aids in interpreting observations. Prayer changes the heart in relation to circumstances and relationships. Prayer helps to bring clarity to particular issues. Prayer inspires and empowers the human spirit; it binds the human with the divine.

How is Vision Implemented?

Imagine a baseball game. On the mound is the pitcher. As the game begins, the pitcher receives the ball from the umpire, with the shout "play ball". The pitcher throws the ball into play. The pitch starts things moving. Members of both teams advance the game in reaction to the pitcher. Everyone on the field plays.

Imagine now a visionary leader. Like the pitcher, this person receives a vision from God. This visionary then casts or "pitches" the vision into the larger population. Those who feel the intrinsic

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worth of that vision "catch" or "own" it. The people that catch that vision join in "the game" and move to advance the vision God has provided.

A vision is implemented as people begin to live toward that vision. In an emerging church, vision is always intertwined with proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Proclamation of the Good News, which transforms lives, must be the central focus of every activity of the emerging church. It must be taken seriously and pursued diligently. This requires us to adopt forms of evangelism that are both biblical and culturally relevant. Such evangelism incorporates the following elements:

- It is centered in authentic relationship with individuals
- It recognizes, understands and adapts its methods to the surrounding culture
- It uses methods that address the wholistic needs of people
- It presents theology to "beginners" in a simple, straightforward way

Evangelism is Centered in Authentic Relationship with Individuals

Emerging churches are characteristically more inclusive than are existing churches. They provide an opportunity for persons to enter a group that is not as yet fully formed. This is often attractive to individuals new to a community, particularly in areas where the population is growing. It also appeals to those whose experiences with organized religion have not been positive, to those with no experience in the Christian faith, and to those who have been stigmatized because of behavior, disability, or lifestyle.

No emerging church can implement its vision if it does not place high value on authentic relationships with individuals. The apostle and every participant need to focus on the development of personal relationships that express compassion, and are real, enduring, and concerned with the needs of those in the target population. The emerging church needs to share in the joys and sorrows of its community, not only as a whole, but also with one soul at a time.

Evangelism Understands and Adapts Its Methods to the Surrounding Culture

The United States is, indeed, a nation of many nations and peoples. For the emerging church to arise, those who lead must recognize the tremendous diversity that exists, even in very limited geographic areas. Vision must be focused in light of the culture of those with whom relationship and ministry is desired. It should avoid trying to be all things to all people (a "one size fits all" mentality). An apostle from a mountain background recognizes that the emerging church in an urban area will require methods and ministry that are different from those which characterize the mountain church. An apostle from the suburbs will find that a new church development in a resort community will also demand methods contrast to those of his/her formation.

It is crucial to learn about the particular culture of the community or population that is the focus of outreach. This study should be approached in a sympathetic and appreciative manner. An apostle learns what is needed primarily through cultural immersion, the intentional process of living as the locals do. ("When in Rome, do as the Romans do.") This provides a tremendous experiential

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education that equips one to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in appropriate and understandable ways.

Cultural analysis will sometimes reveal aspects of a given societal lifestyle that are contrary to the faith and practice of the Christian church. On the one hand, the truths of the gospel must be presented with clarity. On the other hand, these divergences need to be approached with humility, compassion, and good humor. The right to be an advocate for social change is earned over time as one becomes accepted within the ministry context. Most cultures quickly identify and cease to hear persons identified as outsiders, particularly those who are outspoken in their criticism and comments. Patience, long suffering, and forbearance are still the fruits of the Spirit. It is not appropriate for those engaged in mission to seek to supplant a culture. It is appropriate, when the proper appreciation for a given culture is present, to engage in personal relationships which allow for the sharing of the good news of Christ. Christ changes culture one heart at a time.

Evangelism Uses Methods that Address the Wholistic Needs of People

In order to implement vision, it is necessary to use methods that address the wholistic needs of people. That is to say, the apostle and the emerging church must recognize that the spiritual openness of persons is predicated upon factors involving the totality of an individual. The hungry must be fed, the naked must be clothed, the prisoners must be visited, and emotional and other needs of persons must be addressed as the church emerges. It has been characteristic of the Church of the Brethren, that wherever we have engaged in evangelical mission, we have also been involved in building and staffing schools and hospitals, improving water supplies, and responding to other physical and emotional needs. The wholistic approach to others recognizes the soul as many-faceted and does not neglect any aspect of human need. It also recognizes the spiritual needs of the person as having particular significance for the focus of the emerging church.

Evangelism Presents Theology to "Beginners" in a Simple, Straightforward Way

It is important to begin where the target population is in terms of its level of Christian understanding. For example, an emerging church that uses the "calling out" model with apostolic leadership assumes that most of those who participate will have little or no background in the Christian faith as the Brethren have understood it. This means that teaching, preaching, and worship, at least initially, need to be characterized by simplicity and straightforwardness. The leadership will avoid theological concepts and language that might be appropriate in an academic context but do not communicate well to the predominant population. The intent of the apostle is not to impress the hearer with Iris or her intellectual depth, but rather to present the Christian faith in a compelling manner that leads to transformation.

It is helpful to have someone with little or no background in the Christian faith review for clarity and readability any materials used in discipleship training. Implementation of vision must include an intentional plan to accomplish faith stage transitions while maintaining a place for beginners. This plan should involve an effort by the apostle and the emerging church to train and support discipleship facilitators.

Chapter Five

Leadership for Church Planting

"We had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others" (1 Thess. 2:2b-6)

The role of the church planter, or apostle, is key in the successful development of an emerging church. As one authority on new church development states, "the best way to start a new church that will attract a large cadre of enthusiastic charter members and continue to grow in numbers year after year is to identify the right person to be the mission-developer pastor and for that minister to continue as the pastor for a minimum of twenty-five years. Choosing and retaining the right pastor clearly is the key variable in planting a new mission that will continue decade after decade to challenge an ever-growing number of people with the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. (Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, 38.) Identifying and placing leadership may well be the greatest challenge that we face in planting new churches. Where will we find today's apostles? How will they be formed and developed? What will they look like? How will we know they are ready?

The Evolution of the Set-Apart Ministry Within the Church of the Brethren

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am, send me!'"(Isa. 6:8)

In former times the prevalent ministry model for the Church of the Brethren was a plural, non-salaried approach, sometimes referred to as the "free ministry." In this model, a congregation was served by several ministers who were called by the congregation from its midst for a lifetime of unpaid service with training by the elders. This approach to ministry, with some variations, still flourishes in some areas of the Church of the Brethren.

This model went hand-in-hand with the many-fold congregational model (see Chapter Three), which often had several preaching points. One way of providing leadership for the "outlying houses" that were developed was for the congregation to call young men into the ministry whose outlook and zealotry might have been a bit much for the main meetinghouse of the

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congregation. The energy and enthusiasm of these young ministers benefited the developing congregation. With experience and further training, many of these persons grew into "home mission pastors" who planted congregations that continue to flourish today. Notably, the majority of our current congregations (788 out of 1055) were planted before the widespread acceptance of the professional ministry.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the predominant model for staffing a new church development was to place a seminary graduate with some pastoral experience and an interest in church planting in the emerging church. This position was to be granted salary and benefits according to the denominational scale for a full-time pastor. The new pastor generally had little or no input into the visioning behind the emerging church or into the plan for its implementation. This model called more for a technician than a visionary.

This model has faced increasing challenges in recent years. The cost is in excess of \$50,000 per year. Fewer pastors meet the above-mentioned qualifications, with limited training in evangelism or new church development. Many pastors, even those who are seminary trained, have found themselves ill-equipped to face the relational, organizational and spiritual demands of the emerging church.

A New Apostolic Model

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I, send me!'" (Isa. 6:8)

There is another model emerging. In this model, rather than recruiting apostles for church planting, the district may encourage self-identified apostles or apostle teams to come forward with vision, energy, and enthusiasm for new church development. Such energetic individuals may not, however, have had much training. Because of the potential value of this model, districts should create a supportive infrastructure to provide: 1) remedial and on-the-job training for such persons; and 2) a training program which can expand the pool of persons both willing and prepared to serve in new church development ventures.

Personal and Professional Characteristics of an Apostle

"The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task" (1 Tim. 3:1)

There are both personal and professional qualities that are desirable in an apostle/church planter. Different sects and fellowships, however, have different ideas as to what those ideal qualities are. Following are some of the qualities that strengthen the ability of an individual to serve as an apostle/church planter for an emerging Brethren congregation.

Personal Qualities

Desirable personal qualities include

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- Vision
- Faith
- Integrity
- Passion
- self-awareness
- a relational orientation
- skill in discernment
- self-motivation
- inclusiveness
- flexibility tenacity
- patience

Vision An apostle is visionary, and can clearly articulate his or her vision. An apostle can see beyond the obvious. He or she must be able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit for his or her own ministry. New churches emerge as people respond to a vision cast by an apostle. Thus, an apostle must not only see and envision, but also possess the skills necessary to articulate clearly a vision, and to inspire and attract persons from the target populations.

The Apostle Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. He did not seek to minister to persons of Jewish origin. He reached out to those who were considered pagans and nonbelievers. He cast his proclamation of the gospel in such a way that these new people could understand it. The first element in his strategy was to reach the "god-fearers," or Gentiles who believed in and sought to serve the God of Israel. Those Gentiles who, in response to Paul's ministry, became Christians were organized into freestanding congregations. These Christians were then motivated to reach other Gentiles who were not "god-fearers." This vision, given by God, cast by one man and received by many, changed not only the hearts of a few individuals, but the entire world.

While this may be a challenge to the normative Brethren way of doing church, we need to remember that our denomination forbearers were persons willing to challenge the norms of doing church in their day. Guided by their study of scripture, our ancestors in the faith were also visionaries who were convinced of the truth of their vision and who inspired others to join them. In our day, though our own normative patterns run deep, we too have the opportunity for new light and life to break through and challenge accepted truths and existing patterns as we see the radical new opportunities God is providing to the church.

Faith The apostle has a strong faith in God, serves and acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and believes in and experiences the transformational presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The spirituality of the apostle is centered in faith in God, rather than in the body. Like Moses, the apostolic leader recognizes that majority rule often produces golden calves instead of precious truth. This faith should be coupled with an experiential knowledge of the faith and practice of the Church of the Brethren as a New Testament church. It is essential that persons believe and practice what they preach, as well as have the strength and courage to proclaim and practice God-given

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truths even when they conflict with culture and community.

Integrity Apostles model Christian character. What is done often teaches more than what is said. This does not suggest that apostles must be perfect; but rather that they experience on a daily basis the transformation to which we are all called.

Passion The apostle demonstrates a zeal or passion for what he or she is doing. Passion is the fire in the heart that propels the apostle in this new context. It is the zeal that energizes the implementation of vision. Apostles believe in the vision. It is difficult, if not impossible, to convince another person of something about which you are doubtful. Likewise, those who support and hold accountable the apostle must give permission for him or her to show passion.

Self-Awareness provides insight into one's own methods, moods, and motivations. It includes recognition of one's personal power and influence. Knowing, liking, and being oneself communicate a sense of stability to those one seeks to serve. What the apostle says and does has heightened importance in the faith community. This does not indicate that the individual apostle is greater than the community or its membership. It simply acknowledges the importance attached to the leadership role. More is expected of those to whom much is given.

Relational Orientation A church planter/ apostle are relationally oriented. A church is a network of interconnected relationships. In order to plant and lead an emerging church, the apostle must have a high willingness to engage new persons in relationships that have the potential to become pastoral and which may result in positive spiritual transformation. The successful apostle understands human nature and takes the time to get to know other people. He or she listens and seeks to understand the identities, aspirations, and strengths of those who may become part of the emerging church.

Skill in Discernment Discerning persons are able to observe, to analyze, and to devise. The discerning demonstrates a critical detachment from their context. This freedom allows them to determine needs in their communities and amongst their constituencies. It develops the ability to imagine, or "think outside the box," which enables them to address these needs using conventional or unconventional means.

Self-Motivation Because the entire constituency of an emerging church can often be found in the front seat of an apostle's vehicle and because such ministries often develop at a distance from accountability and support centers, it is crucial that the apostle be a self-motivated individual. The apostle must work with very little supervision and input. Knowing "what needs to be done and when" lies at the core of emerging church administration. Entrepreneurial skills are a tremendous benefit for the apostle.

Inclusiveness The apostle practices "inclusiveness." It is the practice of intentional welcoming and hospitality. Inclusiveness points toward the genuine acceptance of other persons and the

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willingness of the apostle to call out the gifts and abilities of all. Everyone can do something if they are included and involved.

Flexibility This is the ability "to go with the flow" when circumstances turn out differently than planned. It means that the apostle will not expend energy uselessly in going against the grain, but will adapt as situations and circumstances require. The flexible recognize that no one can plan for every event and that planning requires constant reevaluation and redirection.

Tenacity Persistence is a necessity in the visionary leader. Those who are persistent and reflective learn from their defeats and losses. Having integrated these hard-earned learnings, the persistent begin again with wisdom, insight and a new approach.

Patience Patience is another valuable apostolic trait. The planter learns that growth, both in terms of faith and of numbers, comes incrementally and is the result of constant attention to the implementation of vision. Planting a church always takes longer than most can imagine. Patience enables the apostle to avoid the depression when speed is more highly prized than time.

Professional Qualities

In addition to these valuable personal traits, it is important that an apostle/church planter also have these attributes:

- Pastoral gifts
- Significant ministry formation
- A formed faith and clear understanding of Brethren identity
- Focus
- Leadership
- Commitment to a lengthy tenure

These attributes, as with the personal qualities, are modified in some instances if the model chosen is based upon a team rather than an individual.

Pastoral Gifts Desirable pastoral skills in an apostle/ church planter include: biblical, theological, psychological, sociological, and historical knowledge; excellent preaching and teaching ability; listening abilities (which include hearing what is not said and the ability to interpret body language); gentle but pronounced evangelical skill (the ability to share the Good News with others); and the ability to develop reasonable plans to implement the vision of the emerging church. New Testament texts listing desirable qualities for ministry include Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

Significant Ministry Formation Apostles are formed by life experience as Christians, as pastors, and as organizers. Individuals who are new to the faith are not viable candidates for an apostolic ministry. Years must pass and various situations must be experienced first-hand before one is able to serve in this role (see 1 Timothy 3:6). New Christians are often filled with apostolic traits such as

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wonder and enthusiasm, but they do not have the grounding that the passage of time brings. Such persons might, however, be ready to serve for a period of time in a form of apprenticeship or after the example of Paul and his disciples, such as Timothy.

Planting a Church of the Brethren also requires that the apostle understand at an intimate level who the Brethren are and why; both the strengths and weaknesses of Brethren identity. Much of what it means to be Brethren are difficult to discern from our formal statements, literature and historiography. Because being Brethren is defined culturally and sociologically as much as theologically, our identity is communicated in subtle and informal ways. Apostles from non-Brethren background will need formation over a period of time in a congregation that exemplifies the highs and lows of who we are in order to have the understanding necessary to plant a Church of the Brethren.

Pastoral experience, particularly in one or two successful pastorates, may provide an otherwise suitable candidate with the experience necessary to plant an emerging church. Lack of pastoral experience should not automatically limit service, however, if the candidate has particular entrepreneurial experiences in business or other organizations. One authority notes that some persons who have founded so-called mega churches had no pastoral experience whatsoever.

Educational preparation, while necessary, can take a number of forms. Though seminary training provides a definite advantage, economics and other limiting factors make it more likely that educational formation will include a college degree, a district-based, academy-certified training program, and specialized new church development training.

Focus If vision is the "fire," the implementation of vision is the "focus". The apostle is clear about priorities, possesses excellent time management skills, and has the resolve to follow through on activities.

In terms of pastoring, the apostle's attention should be focused on:

- Quality worship and preaching
- Relationship-building with prospective members and ministerial peers ("pounding the pavement" in order to get to know the community, visiting other congregations and doing a religious census of the community)
- Membership training and support, including visitation
- Developing excitement in partner congregations and the district structure

The apostle must be able to discern the most important activities and what is of lesser importance. The Steering Committee from the district and the emerging fellowship should work with the apostle to structure a shared ministry that makes the most effective use of his/her time. For example, other persons should be recruited prior to the beginning of worship services to work as a team on worship order, celebration, drama, and music. Newsletters, directories, bulletins, and publicity materials should be entirely lay-produced with some input and direction from the pastor.

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When confronted by time dilemma, the planter/ apostle should always choose a "people" activity rather than a "paper" activity.

Follow through on assignments, whether externally or internally, should be a hallmark of the apostolic style. Performance, particularly performance above expectations, always demonstrates the ability to focus and is attractive to those one is attempting to reach.

Leadership The leadership role and style of the apostle are crucial in developing an emerging church. It is important to understand what these roles are and how they must be manifested. In 1939, Kurt Lewin, a German psychologist helped to define three main leadership styles. These are:

- *Autocratic* -The autocratic leader decides all policy and gives all orders to group members.
- *Democratic* -The democratic leader encourages group determination of policy and enables the group to interact within itself.
- *Laissez-faire* -The laissez-faire leader provides very minimal leadership for the group and interacts with group members in only a marginal or average manner. (Richard E. Rusbuldt, Basic Leader Skills, 1981 , Judson Press, page 20)

No leader uses one of these styles on every occasion. Different styles work best at different stages of a church's growth. (The "Laissez-faire" model, however, rarely lasts in either an existing or an emerging church.) Most pastors serving existing churches manifest the democratic style. Because the "calling out" model of church planting depends so heavily upon the vision of the apostle(s), it would be rare, if not impossible, for a facilitator to serve in such a capacity. The apostle in this model must begin with a style that is much more autocratic than would normally be tolerated and move, as the church grows in numbers and strength, to a predominantly democratic style. Apostles, obviously, are rare and unique individuals in this and other ways.

Leadership includes organizational talent. Administration and organization is, at heart, the ability to know the right time for the right action. Knowing how to structure basic programs in such a way as to facilitate the maximum ministry with the minimum output of time, energy, financial and other resources is a tremendous gift in a leader.

Commitment to Lengthy Tenure Several years ago the average length of a pastorate in the Church of the Brethren was estimated to be four years and eleven months. Experience reveals that most new church planters in the Church of the Brethren do not attain even this average tenure. This is often due to the pressure felt by those in apostolic ministry and the lack of support they receive. It is sometimes due to the fact that the new church planter chosen has a pattern of short tenure. Many persons involved in planting new churches agree, however, that a longer tenure is a key factor in the health, longevity, and prosperity of the emerging church. Longer tenure seems to provide a stability that is centered in the strong individual. Intentional care needs to be taken by the apostolic leader and the accountability structure to ensure that more and more persons are included and involved in the leadership, ministry, and mission of the emerging church as it grows.

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The Church of the Brethren, since the days of Conrad Beissel, has had a sense of suspicion concerning strong, charismatic leadership. We sometimes fear that persons who are gifted, able, and articulate may create a "cult of personality." Sometimes our suspicions are justified, but at times we miss the opportunity that could be created by a diversity of leadership styles. The apostolic style is a "stretch" for us, but it is absolutely essential to the development of the emerging church and to the health of the overall denomination. We often subscribe to the myth that the properly trained and credentialed minister is interchangeable with any other equally trained and credentialed minister. That does not square with our experience. Schaller states that, "The dream that any fully credentialed minister can effectively serve any congregation has practically no overlap with contemporary reality." (Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, 1991, Abingdon Press, page 38) Apostles are special not because they are intrinsically any better than any other minister, but because they bring a needed configuration of ministerial skills to the demanding task of church planting.

Other Leadership Issues

Apostle or Apostolic Team?

The single apostle Most of the Church of the Brethren congregations emerging since the Second World War have featured a staffing model characterized by one apostle, or "pastor/developer." This model is now often prohibitively expensive. There are, however, situations in which this model or a modified version might still be used with success. A full-time minister might be placed in a situation where a substantial core group (70 or more persons) with strong stewardship potential is available. This context might be found when a congregation or congregations choose to send members to colonize a given area or when there is a separation in a large existing church. These circumstances are not unknown, but they are rare. A part-time minister could profitably be placed in a situation where the "gathering in" model is used and a core group of Brethren are organized and meeting. The type of individual suited for this model is described in Chapter Two in the "gathering in" model.

The apostolic team There is a number of advantages to this model. The apostolic team approach has great continuity with our Anabaptist heritage and past ministerial practice. It balances community values with the need of the church body for set-apart leadership. It fits with the biblical accounts of Jesus sending forth the disciples two by two in mission and ministry, as well as with the practice of the New Testament church found in the Acts of the Apostles.

Apostolic teams can bring a wide range of mission and ministry gifts to the emerging church. This allows for a greater degree of specialization and lessens the stress that arises from one individual having to be all things to all people. It recognizes that both laity and clergy are engaged in the process of ministry. Teams provide a built-in, on-site support group, and add synergy to the effort.

In a generation where preferences regarding worship and music is diverse, leadership in these

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areas is key. When using a contemporary music or blended worship format, this leadership may actually be more difficult to obtain than pastoral leadership. The apostolic team approach overall can bring a greater depth and breadth to the planting of most emerging churches.

In many circumstances, where vision is clear and the energy is compelling, apostolic teams can be relocated to the new ministry context with the minimum of financial investment on the part of the sponsoring organization. Most, if not all, team members will be self-supporting or bi-vocational in their approach to ministry. This redeployment of human resources, when properly envisioned, developed, and supported by districts or coalitions can provide for the planting of multiple congregations.

It is essential that those who comprise the team be of one mind concerning the vision and the plan of implementation. This is most easily accomplished when the team itself originates and develops the vision. Individual members of the team must also take care to develop their own personal interests and relationships apart from the emerging church. This provides a sense of objectivity in team relationships and prevents depression caused by difficult circumstances or daunting challenges from the new church. Intentional communication and integration require a greater time investment in this model. Regular meetings together for sharing, planning, review, and evaluation are necessary for effective communication between team members. Since team members will change from time to time, it is also important to have an agreement from the beginning concerning the orientation and integration of new persons. Even though the emphasis of the team is on what is done together, the team must from the beginning call one of their team members to be the leader and convener of the group. This provides for housekeeping and administrative efficiency.

Family Issues for the Apostle

If the planter is married, his or her family must be supportive of the apostolic ministry. Being a part of an apostolic family means making some sacrifices. However, these sacrifices should be made with the knowledge of those who sacrifice rather than in a unilateral way by the apostle. The apostle must also take care that the nurture of his or her family is a priority. Particular care must be taken for the children of the apostle. Children are often the only members of their age group present in the beginning. Their spiritual, emotional, social, and recreational needs must be considered and addressed. Apostolic ministry, whether done individually or in a team, is a time and energy consuming effort. This is intensified by a model that requires self-supporting or bi-vocational ministry. It is important to avoid setting artificial goals or time limits. Such goals (sometimes referred to as "management by objective" goals) can be made far more important than they actually are.

Assessment of the Apostolic Candidate (and Spouse)

It is highly recommended that any individual considered for church planting undergo a formal assessment of attributes for this unique ministry. Districts often require assessment of planter candidates prior to engagement. Assessments are conducted to determine the candidate's capability to successfully plant a new church. A central purpose of the assessment is to aid the

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church planter candidate in development of self-awareness. The process can identify areas of strength as well as areas for personal and professional growth.

Current assessment approaches require that the planter candidate (and spouse, if married) spend a two-to-four day period at a recognized assessment center. This is preceded by the completion of an application, a resume, professional references and various profiles including personality indicators and spiritual gift inventories. At the center, qualified staff persons interview, observe, and evaluate the church planter candidate throughout the process. The process normally includes interaction with other church planter candidates, discussion of various hypothetical church planting environments, and the development of a new church development action plan by the candidate. At the conclusion of the process, the evaluators make a final assessment and recommendation for each individual. This is shared with each candidate in an exit interview.

Among the characteristics commonly evaluated in an assessment are:

- Ability to envision
- Internal motivation
- Ownership of ministry
- Spousal cooperation
- Depth and expression of faith
- Relational skills
- Commitment to church growth
- Ability to include and involve others
- Group process skills
- Personality traits such as responsiveness, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience.

The greatest benefit of assessment is that it allows the individual and sponsoring organization to make prudent choices prior to a church planting effort. It provides an objective appraisal of a church planter/apostle candidate, affirmation of the planter's skills and better understanding of the methods needed for coaching and support. Some limitations of assessment include the fact that Brethren do not have an assessment center and must utilize the programs of other groups who may or may not understand Brethren values, and sometimes (in the case of very conservative assessment centers) exhibit gender bias in assessing leadership ability.

Chapter Six

Laying the Foundation for New Church Development

Beginning a District Process

Initiative for the emerging church may arise from any level of a district. Although most emerging churches arise from the efforts of a visionary apostle / church planter, a different individual, group, congregation, or the district structure itself may develop a vision for planting a new church. Different situations require different steps, but the information below can assist in taking the necessary first steps toward planting a new church.

Selecting a Steering Committee

A Steering Committee of five to seven persons can provide support, guidance, and linkage between the emerging church and the district, as well as between the new church and neighboring congregations. This Steering Committee should be carefully selected by the appropriate district agency and be accountable to it. Good candidates for the Steering Committee are persons with considerable experience in congregational life and structure that are committed to transformational outreach, willing to support new approaches, and invested in the overall mission of the Church of the Brethren. They should be open minded, encouraging, and supportive persons, with proven discernment ability. Background in new church development, evangelism, building, finance, legal, and/or organizational areas can be a great asset. The composition of the committee should be balanced so that the members have a range of backgrounds, interests, and skills. Districts that have had experience in new church development may draw from the pool of core group members of the new congregations in their districts. The District Executive or other staff charged with responsibility for new church planting is expected also to be a regular support and resource for the Steering Committee.

During the early stages of an emerging church's life cycle, the Steering Committee may focus on one or more areas depending on the situation. If the apostle is self-identified and has approached the district agency, the role of the Steering Committee would be to determine the viability of the vision and target community of the potential emerging church. If the vision is viable, the Steering Committee will provide assistance in its implementation according to district practice and policy. On occasion, a Steering Committee might be appointed to survey all or part of a district territory in order to determine the potential of various localities.

If the potential for an emerging church has been brought to the attention of the appropriate district agency but no visionary church planter has emerged, the Steering Committee might be organized to investigate and make a recommendation on a particular possibility. If there is a strong potential for an emerging church, the Steering Committee, in concert with the appropriate district

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agency, needs, with prayer and contemplation, to seek out an apostolic leader or team to help develop a vision and plan for implementation. The Steering Committee should integrate the leader or team as quickly as possible into the visioning process. The potential church planter must have major influence in the development of the vision and the implementation plan early on in the process. Such input enables the planter to serve not just a technician but as a leader. It is important to keep in mind that it is not the Steering Committee, but the apostle or the team that will bring forth the emerging church.

The apostle/planter and the Steering Committee may then work together to develop the project proposal. This proposal, described at greater length later in this chapter, consists of the vision, plan of implementation, and financial plan for the emerging church. With the approval of all concerned parties, this document sets out the terms of relationship between the emerging congregation, the district, and partner churches, if any. It is the statement of common expectations, as well as affirming the district's blessing and approval to proceed.

Choosing a Target Community

When considering a target community, room must always be given for God's inspiration concerning 'the right place'. Recognizing this need for flexibility in any plans and objectives, there is still a valuable place for discernment based on information that we can gather about those communities.

Therefore, the district agency responsible for emerging churches must be alert to opportunities within and adjacent to the territory prescribed for their district. Major factors that should be monitored on an ongoing basis are:

- Economic conditions
- Employment trends
- Population growth
- Migration patterns

The ability of a New Church Development Committee to survey, research, and discern can provide helpful guidance in divining opportunity.

Growing population and strong economic growth are often factors in church extension. A booming economy in a particular area will induce migration because of the employment opportunities it provides. Study of Brethren migration patterns in the 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrates this. The Brethren, often in large groups or colonies, settled in areas that provided greater economic opportunity. Young families were attracted by the possibilities of more land at less cost offered by railroads seeking to increase the population of their service territories. Individuals were attracted to urban areas for positions in manufacturing and other industries. The same economic motivations exist today. We are, for example, a predominantly rural denomination that stresses the importance of education. Our professionally educated young people today often leave their communities of origin in search of better job prospects in urban and suburban areas. Such areas may be prime opportunities for extension efforts.

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How might a committee acquire this sort of information? The study of economically-induced migration patterns begins as an informal process. Read the "non-resident" membership listings in the collection of congregational directories found in most district offices. Check the obituary columns in those places with large concentrations of Brethren. Where are the survivors of Brethren mothers and fathers living? It will not take long to discern where people are moving. As patterns become apparent, contact some of these individuals to find out why they moved. Such places, then, are the target areas for study, consideration and the planting of new churches.

The Internet provides a ready source of material on population trends, economic growth and migration patterns. A number of district committees have also obtained more in-depth analyses of their particular zip code areas through an agency called *Percept*. *Percept* (800-442-6277) provides regional demographic information to churches, including projected population density and distribution, population change, diversity, family structure, education, lifestyles, and religious preferences.

While urban and suburban areas present good opportunities, there are other possibilities as well, such as resort areas and rural areas. In thinking about resort or rural areas, though, note that they require a much greater commitment of time, energy, and funding than is necessary in a more populated area with a wide economic base.

Our denominational experience has shown that many of our troubled congregations are on the fringes of our districts. A congregation that is planted away from the center of district activity will have the best chance of succeeding when there is an excellent prospect for planting additional congregations in the same area. Mission statements for the initial new congregation should include reference to these possibilities and demonstrate a commitment to further church planting.

Sometimes a target community may be suggested not by research or a strategic plan, but through the appearance of someone or some group with a vision to reach out to a new population. God does inspire persons concerning the "right place." This means that along with the careful monitoring of the factors above, there needs to be openness to new opportunities. The divine call sometimes sends us to unexpected places, to reach out to people who are very different from us. Nineveh was God's choice—not Jonah's.

Identifying the Target Group

In order to identify the target population, the apostle/church planter and support group must ask: "What kind of person is consistent with our vision? What do they want out of life? With what issues do they struggle?" After considering questions such as these, a profile of this type of person, a ministry method, and an implementation strategy can be developed and refined.

In the past, the core group of any new fellowship would normally include a high percentage of Church of the Brethren members, usually from diverse backgrounds. If the vision of the emerging church is to be "the Brethren" in a particular place and the "gathering in" model is chosen, this may still be an option. However, even then, great care must be taken to involve and value persons who

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have no experience of Brethren faith and practice.

If the vision of the emerging church is an outreach focused upon unchurched persons in a given area and/or if a congregation larger than 50-75 members is contemplated, it is more effective to pursue the "calling out" than the "gathering in" model. Brethren or former Brethren should not be specific targets of this model.

Selecting a Facility

The apostle/planter, in consultation with the Steering Committee, should locate a facility appropriate for worship, study, and fellowship. It should be available for rent or lease. There are some particularly desirable elements of such a facility. It should:

- have high visibility and traffic count
- have adequate room for the present and for expansion during the lifetime of the lease
- **be attractive**

It is wise to avoid the invisible facility chosen "one-block off the main road" because it is cheaper and to avoid any facility that lacks access to good parking. (See Chapter Seven for a more detailed discussion of location.)

Choosing a Name

A name for the new fellowship should be chosen very early in the process, preferably as a part of the project proposal. Choosing a name should not be delayed in order to wait for the gathering of a core group. Emerging churches that wait to choose a name often find that there are as many choices as there are members.

It is key to choose a name that reflects the vision of the church planter or apostolic team. It should communicate in a word or phrase the central core value of the new faith community. The name should be chosen carefully. It is undesirable to change it easily or often. As the church is a body of faith whose ministry and mission will extend over generations, its name should impart a sense of stability and identity.

It is possible to give a church two names, one for public use and one for legal purposes. The public name is used to identify the emerging church in the community and in conversation. The public name, usually in combination with the denominational symbol, may be used on the building, directional signs, bulletins, newsletters, correspondence, and other publicity. Whether or not to use the denominational name as part of the public name is an issue to consider. Factors to take into consideration include how well the Brethren are known in a given area and whether using the name would be a detriment to attracting new persons. In areas where the Brethren are not well known, it is advisable not to use the denominational name publicly.

The church's legal name is the corporate name registered with the state and used in the constitution and bylaws. While the public title may not include the denominational name, the

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corporate must do so. For example, one might take "Living Faith Fellowship" as a public name, but use "Living Faith Church of the Brethren, Inc." as the legal name.

When naming a church, it is a good idea to avoid names which:

- Call attention to individuals or families
- Use the word "memorial"
- "Number" the church (i.e., First Church of the Brethren)
- Could be construed in a pejorative way (e.g., Battlefield Church or Dry Run Church)

Although some denominations use the names of saints, this has not been a typical Brethren practice (St. Paul Church in Cana, Virginia is the only such example in the Church of the Brethren). No emerging church should choose a name already in use in their district and should strongly consider avoiding the usage of a name already used by another congregation of the Church of the Brethren.

Preparing a Project Proposal

The Project Proposal (or ministry plan) is a multi-page document used to outline the project, to secure district approval for fellowship status, and to request funding from the appropriate district agencies. Although contents may vary by district, at a minimum the document should include:

- An overview of the area chosen for the emerging church with relevant demographic and economic information
- Vision and mission statements
- A clear strategy for achieving the vision with a flow chart demonstrating proposed developmental stages
- A financial plan or budget defining proposed income and expenditures for a six-to-eight year period
- A partner congregation plan, including the basis for allocation of requested contributions
- Any other materials requested by the district structure

This document should be prepared jointly by the apostle/planter and the Steering Committee. As the project evolves, input should be received from the core group of the emerging church. When there is consensus, the Steering Committee should forward the completed proposal to the New Church Development Committee or other District equivalent for approval and for further recommendation to the District Board. If a partner church arrangement is a part of the proposal, it should be reviewed by the Commission on Stewards of the District Board or its equivalent. When the District Board approves the proposal, the emerging church will then have the spiritual, financial, and support commitments necessary to proceed. At that point the only remaining administrative action necessary is for the District Board to recommend that the emerging church be received as a fellowship and its delegates recognized by the District Conference.

Organizing the Finances of the Emerging Church

Very early in the life of an emerging church, the Steering Committee should designate one member

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of the core group as treasurer and, if possible, another member as the financial secretary. A checking account should be authorized for receiving and dispersing funds. This should be done in the name of the district with a prior, blanket authorization from the District Board. An account name would appear as follows:

- Name of District -Church of the Brethren, Incorporated
- Name of Project Street or Post Office Box Address
- City, State and Zip Code

If the project has no address, the treasurer's address may be used. All financial institutions are required by law to have the Social Security Number of an individual or the Taxpayer Identification Number of an organization in order to open an account. The Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) of the sponsoring district agency should be used. The district should audit the checking account on a yearly basis.

Budgeting and Financial Projection

After completion of the financial plan required in the project proposal (detailed above), the budget should be reviewed and amended at least annually (It is sometimes necessary to do so more often). Budgeting must be driven by the vision of the emerging church and the strategy by which that vision is implemented. Every member of the emerging church should be familiar with the income necessary to meet the budget and encouraged, through an every member enlistment, to give sacrificially to the ministry. Budgets should be large enough to challenge those present without putting too great a burden on the active membership. In most cases, the budget goals for giving should be set in excess of twice the average per capita giving for the district involved.

Incorporating the Project

It is possible to incorporate a religious congregation in almost every state within the U.S.

Incorporation provides a number of benefits to a fellowship. These include:

- Liability and loss limitations for the church leadership and membership. A corporation possesses, in a legal sense, "personhood." This provides a greater margin of protection for the assets of church leaders in the event of a lawsuit or default by the incorporated church.
- Greater willingness of financial institutions to lend money.
- Greater ease in purchasing and transferring real estate. Unincorporated congregations wishing to sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of real estate are normally required to have such transactions reviewed and approved by the appropriate court of law for their jurisdiction.
- Facilitation of application for non-profit status as a "501 (c) (3)" or charitable corporation under the federal tax code. This means that contributions to the organization are "tax exempt."

Information about the incorporation process in your state is available from either the Secretary of State or from the State Corporation Commission. It is important to engage an attorney in the state in which corporation is desired in order to understand the peculiarities of that state's law and to facilitate the process.

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There are some general prerequisites for incorporation:

- Inclusion of a statement that provides for a reversion of the assets of the corporation to the district within whose boundaries it operates
- Choice of a legal name (not necessarily the operating name) which plainly includes the denominational title
- Designation of a registered agent (sometimes an attorney retained by the emerging church or the chief administrative officer) for the corporation who can receive correspondence related to corporate matters from the state (including renewal) or be served with process in the event of litigation involving the corporation
- Written approval, preferably by certificate of resolution, by the district board (or equivalent judicatory body) of the articles of incorporation in their final form
- The decision-making process of the corporation must be clarified in the articles of incorporation. This requires submission of a constitution and by-laws. Therefore, the Steering Committee and the core group of a fellowship must prepare documentation clarifying authority and demonstrating the actual process being used to make decisions. This must be updated as process and roles change.

Applying for an Employer Identification Number

As soon as an official name is chosen, the project should apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a federal Tax Identification Number (TIN). This number is used to identify a business entity. The appropriate application, Form 55-4, is available from any office of the Internal Revenue Service, by telephone or at their web site.

Applying for a Bulk Mailing Postal Permit

It is helpful to have a non-profit postal permit in order to send out mailings of 200 or more pieces at a reduced rate. This facilitates direct mailings, as well as the mailing of newsletters and other publicity pieces. The U.S. Postal Service requires that applicants provide proof of non-profit status and the constitution and bylaws of the organization. If your emerging church chooses not to incorporate, you may use the non-profit status of the Church of the Brethren. Most district offices have a letter available with the appropriate certification and number.

Chapter Seven

Building Upon the Foundation

Recruiting a Core Group

For the new church to develop there must be a core group willing to make a personal investment of self and resources to the vision of the emerging church. Chapter Three described a variety of models for the philosophy and recruitment of that group.

In the beginning, it is the role of the apostle to teach the leadership team and core group how to guide the church. The vision and theological core values of the emerging church must be communicated in a clear and concise manner from the beginning. Each prospective member of the core group must be able to articulate and accept the non-negotiable principles prior to inclusion. Clarity of vision makes it possible to focus resources in an efficient and appropriate manner. Small groups provide an important tool for this effort.

Expanding the Core Group through the Development of Small Groups

The early church was essentially a small group movement. Jesus selected twelve individuals of varying and diverse background as learners and companions along the way. Over a three-year period, they learned about Jesus' mission and ministry. These apostles, and others after them, spread the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, and the entire Mediterranean basin. Likewise, the Apostle Paul began his approach in each town and city by seeking out Gentiles who already sought to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These persons, who were often adherents of the local Jewish synagogue, understood the basics of monotheism and the history of God's revelation to the Hebrew people. Those who chose to accept Paul's understanding of Jesus as Messiah were cast out of the synagogue. They organized themselves into small groups of believers. As a result, cities in Asia Minor and the rest of the Roman Empire had multiple small groups of Christian fellowships.

The Church of the Brethren, from its beginning, has also been essentially a small group movement. Because of the importance that Brethren place on discipleship and the need to live according to the example and teachings of Jesus, we have not been a Christian movement that lends itself to mass evangelism. Therefore, in order to avoid creating multiple small congregations, it is important for us to recover an understanding of the Church as one based upon multi-cell group meetings which worship together.

The cell or small group method calls for the creation of numerous small groups that together become the foundation of the worshipping community. Each cell has the four core purposes: fellowship, worship, training, and service. A particular cell may give different weight to each of the four core

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purposes, yet each of these must be present. Most groups should number from ten to twenty persons. Each group has a leader, a leader-in-training, and a host. Group meetings are informal and normally held in a place other than the house of worship.

The participants in every small group should understand from the beginning that no group is formed to be a permanent institution. Groups will arise, mature, and diminish as time progresses. Many groups will divide and reproduce themselves in other configurations as leadership develops and needs shift. Therefore, every small group within an emerging church should provide a context whereby leadership for continuing and future groups is developed. Initially the responsibility of the apostle (or apostolic team) this responsibility is passed along to each group as new leadership is developed. The growth of such leadership is essential to perpetuate the life and vitality of the community. Without it, a leaderless group becomes like the branch of a tree that does not produce fruit. It will not endure and must be pruned.

When to Begin Holding Public Worship Services

A truism of new church development is that the larger the core group, the larger the resulting congregation. If the vision of the leadership team is for a congregation of one thousand or more, the core group must be large enough to provide leadership to attain that size. If the vision is for a congregation of one hundred, then the cadre required is smaller. A rule of thumb is one core group member for every ten who are expected to join the resultant congregation. District committees should not recognize groups as fellowships before a minimum threshold of participation is achieved.

In the Northern Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, which has championed the "twelve by twelve" method of church planting, every emerging church must wait until twelve groups of twelve persons are organized and functioning before holding their first worship celebration. This ensures that the congregation that emerges has a strong and durable foundation for its life and witness.

The first worship service should be held on a date that is calculated to encourage maximum attendance from the desired population. Some new congregations have found success by having their first worship celebration on Palm Sunday. This date is chosen since the following Sunday is Easter, the most heavily attended Sunday of the year, which attracts numerous persons who may not attend on a regular basis otherwise. Other appropriate seasons for beginning worship may include Advent (the four Sundays prior to Christmas) and the Sunday following Labor Day in early September. It is best to avoid beginning worship celebrations during the summer months and around three-day weekends or major holidays. It is important to keep the inaugural worship service separate from any district-wide celebration service in recognition of the beginning of the new fellowship.

Selecting a Site for Worship

The site of the initial worship celebration and subsequent services should be chosen with great care. In general, the worship site should be easily accessible and able to accommodate the maximum expected attendance. To be accessible, a site should have maximum visibility from a well-traveled public

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highway, adequate parking, and clear signage that can be seen from a distance. Sites on a major highway or in heavily trafficked area help to maximize attendance potential. It is wise to avoid a site one or more blocks off a main highway or in some other manner invisible to the traveling public. Parking should be available at a ratio of one parking spot to every two persons expected in attendance, and the sanctuary area should offer 10-15 square feet of space per expected worshiper (less for smaller sanctuary, more for larger), so that congregational growth is possible.

Other factors to consider include the cost of rent and other fees, the amount of storage and auxiliary space, and the amount of assembly and disassembly required for every congregational service. Another issue, often overlooked, is the possibility of expansion if the attendance of the worshiping community enlarges. Some sites do not lend themselves to ease of enlargement. (Further discussion of property and building is found in Chapter Eight).

Preparing for the First (and Subsequent) Worship Services

Preparing to hold worship services involves various practical considerations. The worship center must, of course, be clean and an atmosphere created that is conducive to worship. The proper equipment must be available. For contemporary worship, this will require use of various types of audiovisual equipment, such as projectors for Power Point and video presentations, and stereo equipment that can play tapes, compact discs, or other media. At the current time, the purchase of such equipment requires \$10,000 to \$15,000. If contemporary or blended worship is a priority, this cost is worth the investment. Contemporary and blended worship also requires considerable space for dramatic and musical presentations, as well as a different electrical and sound wiring system than is needed for traditional forms of worship. Whatever form of worship is chosen, a good quality piano or keyboard is essential. Since most new churches are located in "portable" worship centers, it is important to consider the use of individual, stackable (and preferably upholstered) seats. Mobile seats are a requirement for those emerging churches which must set up and take down everything each week in rented or loaned non-church quarters.

It is necessary to develop sufficient human infrastructure for the ongoing public worship of the emerging church prior to the commencement of the first service. There are few circumstances more discouraging than a tremendous first worship service followed by a second Sunday that is not well prepared. Succeeding worship services should be conducted at the same or better level, than the inaugural worship. It is difficult to attract, retain, and integrate new persons if the worship rhythm or quality is inconsistent from week -to-week.

In simple terms, this means that leadership for music, hospitality, preaching, worship, and other areas must be in place and committed for a lengthy period of time. This is extremely important regardless of the type of worship presentation that is planned for the emerging church.

- **Music** It is important to have an ongoing music leadership team. Stable music leadership is key to the emerging church's worship life. It is difficult to attract, retain and integrate new persons if the worship rhythm or quality is inconsistent. It is to the emerging church's advantage to develop a music team with breadth and depth both in numbers and in quality of performance prior to beginning worship.

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- **Hospitality** Another indispensable team is the hospitality group. These are those persons responsible for being greeters, serving as ushers (these may also serve as the counters and bankers for the offering), providing nursery and childcare, and providing fellowship opportunities and refreshments and food. It would be difficult to understate the importance of this team. They (' provide visitors' first impressions of the new congregation. Those who minister to the children provide a lasting impression. The nursery and other childcare spaces should be maintained according to the highest standards, newly furnished, and appropriately decorated. This will require ingenuity on the part of those fellowships which choose to rent space in public schools or other similar venues. Most of the first worship services and a reasonable number thereafter should provide a reception-like fellowship opportunity at their conclusion. These opportunities provide an opportunity for casual conversation and relationship building.

Other helpful teams might include:

- **Teaching** A teaching ministry team can plan, staff, and encourage learning opportunities such as Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Adult Bible Study, Children's Church, as well as age and gender-based activities.
- **Facilities** A facilities ministry team is responsible for setting up the worship area and disassembling it as needed.
- **Drama** A drama ministry team may be responsible for creative, stimulating presentations of the Christian message that are relevant to contemporary life and to all ages.
- **Worship Coordination** A worship coordinating team may be formed which might include a member from each team and the apostle or other leadership.

Media and Message: Reaching the Community

"Out of sight...out of mind" is a cliché that is all too often true for congregations, both existing and emerging. Emerging churches, though, have no choice but to engage the public. A great deal of effort is needed, once the core group has reached sufficient size to begin public worship, to make others aware of the emerging church and to invite them into its life. This process needs to be pursued on two different levels, "passive" and "active."

"Passive" Techniques for Reaching Out

At the most basic level, a number of steps must be taken. These include:

- A listing in the local telephone directory, as well as in surrounding communities if located in a metropolitan area
- An advertisement in the church or religious affairs page of the most widely circulated local newspaper
- An attractively designed website linked to an area-wide church directory on the internet a brochure to describe the community to visitors
- Adequate signs marking the worship site and its entry points

Telephone Listing Every emerging church should have a listed telephone number from the very

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beginning. If necessary, calls might be forwarded to voice mail if there is no on-site staff or volunteer available to receive calls. All calls received should be responded to in a prompt and courteous manner. Having a message system that records the date and time of the call is very helpful. Securing a business telephone line gives the group an automatic listing in the local Yellow Pages. Being listed under "Church of the Brethren" or "Brethren" makes it possible for persons of Brethren background to locate the emerging church. This is particularly important in metropolitan areas to which such persons are migrating. If this is the case, it may be wise to list the church in neighboring communities as well.

Newspaper Advertisement An advertisement in the church or religious affairs page of the most widely circulated local newspaper is desirable for similar reasons. It allows for those of Brethren background to locate the emerging church and has the additional effect of making the church's presence known in the community. A telephone listing or Brethren advertisement will not, however, succeed in attracting the great majority of persons whom the new church desires to reach. After all, many of these people are not looking for and probably haven't even heard of the Church of the Brethren.

Website An attractively designed website linked to an area-wide on-line church directory is key to attracting new people. More and more people who are seeking spiritual depth and religious discipline are using Internet search engines to locate congregations in their area. A website allows a church the opportunity to share quite a bit of information in various forms, including sound and video clips. Of all the basic elements, this is the most cost-effective and productive form of increasing awareness of the emerging church. It is easily revised and provides an opportunity to be in dialogue with unknown persons.

Brochure Every emerging congregation should produce an attractive, informative brochure prior to the beginning of public worship. This brochure, often in a tri-fold format, shares basic information about the leadership, vision, mission, worship and other service times, address, telephone number, Internet address, website location, and a map which provides clear directions to the worship site.

Signage should be clear and adequate, both at the worship facility and en route to it. It is helpful to have a lighted sign at the worship facility, particularly if the site is located in commercial property such as a mall or shopping center. (In fact, some lessors require such signing in order to preserve conformity with neighboring businesses.)

"Active Techniques" for Reaching Out

A number of active techniques are available, which have been used with varying amounts of success. The three most often used are:

- Direct, face-to-face contact with individuals in the community
- Telephone solicitation
- Direct mail

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These strategies may be used by themselves or in combination with one another. Each brings a particular advantage and each has some drawbacks.

Face-to-face contact Direct, face-to-face contact with individuals in the community can be very helpful if well planned. Here are two possibilities:

- *The door-co-door survey* In this method the apostle or apostolic team develops a survey form similar to a religious census. This document is then used as the basis for a door-to-door approach in a targeted neighborhood or community. It includes questions about the faith preferences of those interviewed. Not only does it provide an opportunity to get to know the community, it also allows the interviewer the opportunity to share about the emerging church. It is a one-time event that is not easily repeatable. Those considering this approach should be aware of whether local culture will accommodate this option or whether another direct approach should be taken.
- *"Servant evangelism."* This is a similar strategy that could be used in combination with or as a substitute for the door-to-door survey. Servant evangelism takes the form of performing some small task, such as handing out free soda in front of a shopping center or other high traffic area. Attached to the soda or other item is a card identifying the emerging church. This allows for some conversation and relationship building on a less intrusive basis and is a repeatable activity. Whatever approach is used, there is no replacement for face-to-face contact as a relationship builder. Without personal relationships with God and with others, there is no church, existing or emerging.

Telephone solicitations During the past few years some congregations have used telephone solicitations as a method to increase awareness and build relationship. These methods involve recruiting persons to make a specified number of telephone calls within a given area. The callers follow a script that provides information about the emerging church and allows for the development of a mailing list. This method works best within an area of high population density. It is much less effective in an area where the population is dispersed or where there are multiple communities adjacent to one another. Groups marketing this approach claim that 10,000 calls will produce 1,000 names and addresses for a mailing list. Theoretically, this approach alone would then provide initial attendance of approximately 100. While some congregations have been started successfully with this method, it suffers from certain drawbacks. The lesser of these is the need to have a large pool of persons available to make calls at peak calling hours and to have a site with sufficient telephone lines. The greater issue, though, is that there is a general resentment about telemarketing. For some, these methods reduce the sharing of the Gospel to huckstering. While church organizations are exempt from legal restrictions under the current version of the "Do Not Call" registry, there is no exemption from the ire of people who feel that their home life is invaded by such calls.

Direct mail this is a key strategy, and should not be neglected. It has great potential if it is conscientiously carried out over a long period of time. It may be used in conjunction with other strategies. Both the postal service and other organizations market mailing lists tailored by community, zip code, or carrier route. These allow an emerging church the opportunity to make it known in a well-

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defined area for less time and money than with telephone solicitation. Mailings should be simple and attractive. There are companies which supply materials that may be modified for use by any congregation. Every mailing should include a simple map that clearly indicates the church's location. Use of direct mail makes it imperative to have a postal permit. The process for obtaining a postal permit, which allows bulk mailing at reduced rates, is described at the end of Chapter Six.

This method has the advantage of being less intrusive and less expensive than telephone methods, and it is repeatable. Unfortunately, some congregations give up on this method because they do not see immediate results. Direct mail does not bring an immediate surge in attendance and participation. Mailings need to be repeated because a given piece of bulk mail may not reach its destination, and because repeated mailings tend to build interest. This strategy must be pursued diligently over time using multiple mailings before it can begin to produce effectively.

Media and Message: Reaching the Church's Constituency

There is no substitute for good communication within the constituency of a church. Constituency is not restricted to the local participants; it includes also the partner churches and other persons whose good will, prayers, and assistance are necessary for the emerging church to prosper. Communication to both the inner core and the outward community should be among the highest priorities of the emerging church.

There are four main methods of maintaining regular communication with the constituency of an emerging church. These are:

- Announcements prior to worship
- Worship folders or bulletins
- Newsletters published on a periodic basis
- Congregational meetings

Announcements of future activities and general news should be shared prior to every worship service. These need to be given careful thought and preparation. Good announcements, portraying church activities intelligently and creatively, build attendance and enthusiasm for these events. Only the most important items should be included so as to maximize the amount of time available for worship. The remainder may be dealt with through the written media of the congregation. Everyone should be reminded from time to time of the process by which the church shares such ordinary information. Poor announcement practices can diminish attendance and create discord within the congregation.

Bulletins and worship folders should be colorful, attractive, and well-designed. They should be uncluttered, easy to understand, and contain the information necessary for newcomer and continuing participant alike. They should avoid tightly packed text, church jargon, poor grammar and spelling, unnecessary levity, and the sharing of too much information. Prayer concerns should be kept to a minimum and not be repeated from week to week. Some emerging churches send bulletins to absent members as a courtesy. With the proliferation of personal

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computers and the increasing number of persons who are computer literate, there are many opportunities to enhance this basic but vital ministry of the church.

Newsletters issued on a monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly basis significantly enhance the church's communication to local residents, to denominational and district leaders, and to partner churches. It is likely that in the beginning, the outside mailing list will be larger than the local mailing list. Newsletters should share many of the same characteristics of bulletins. They can include material of spiritual significance, such as an article or Bible Study by the apostle or a member of the apostolic team. They may share progress and advancement as well as needs and aspirations of the emerging church. Most newsletters do not require more than two or three double-sided pages including the mailing information. Too much information causes significant details to be lost. Every newsletter should, however, call attention to the emerging church's mission statement and vision.

There is no better form of communication, other than occasional personal letters of thanksgiving and sharing by the apostle or a member of the apostolic team, to partner churches and other leaders. The periodic appearance of the newsletter in the mail is at the very least a reminder that the emerging church exists and that it values those who contribute to its future spiritually, administratively, and financially. It also diminishes the ability of the rumor mill to shape perception of a new congregation within its district and provides an ongoing record of the experiences of the emerging church.

In those situations where a great majority of participants have access to e-mail and the Internet, it is possible to supplement a printed newsletter with e-mail or website updates issued on a weekly or other regular basis. This might allow for less frequent distribution of printed and mailed newsletters. Email and website news updates should not, however, be used exclusively. There are considerable numbers of people who do not yet understand or utilize computers regularly or with ease.

Congregational meetings These are great forums for intra-congregational communication. They can be called to share information, to discuss business items, or to envision and discern. Meetings allow for an exchange of ideas, aspirations, and concerns. Misunderstandings can be clarified or resolved. A sensitive moderator is particularly helpful in conducting meetings that move the emerging church forward with the greatest agreement and commitment possible.

Assimilating New Members

Assimilation of new members is a key to a healthy, growing church. Including and involving new people should happen in a variety of ways. Classes for seekers and newcomers are an important tool for orientation and information about the denomination and the church. The vision and core values of the emerging church must be communicated with clarity and brevity to each prospective new member. As persons enter into membership, they need to be able (apart from circumstances of disability) to articulate and claim those core values. No congregation can provide for every strain of thought or meet every spiritual need. A clear vision makes for clear priorities. These

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priorities enable resources to be expended in an efficient manner.

While membership classes are essential, other events and activities have greater and longer-lasting relational impact than do membership classes—such as fellowship events, delegation of responsibilities, and, above all, a willingness to make a place for every newcomer. No assimilation technique can substitute for a genuinely caring and hospitable spirit. Unless there is willingness on the part of the core group to make a place for newcomers, other strategies are in vain. Making a place for seekers involves getting to know them, learning about their family and occupation, consistently greeting them, including them in casual conversation and, saying in word, deed and expression: "You are welcome here!"

Fellowship events in an emerging church must be frequent and varied. These provide an opportunity for informal contact and relationship building. Later, as the church faces challenging issues, solid relationships among people will provide depth and stability. As the church grows, each person needs to be given a definite responsibility, no matter how small. This provides an opportunity for people to demonstrate commitment and ability. It increases their stake in the life of the congregation and allows the emerging church to discern where their talents might best be employed. A church should never allow a distinction to arise between workers and spectators. Everyone should be included in the mission and ministry of the church.

Chapter Eight

Land and Location

Stage One: Transitional Facilities

In the first years, emerging churches most often migrate from one short-term facility to another before settling in long-term facilities. The listing below documents the evolution of three emerging churches planted between 1994-1996 from the use or rental of short-term space to the construction or purchase of long-term facilities:

| <u>Church One</u> | <u>Church Two</u> | <u>Church Three</u> |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Community Room of Health Center | 1. Living Room | 1. Small Church Fellowship Hall |
| 2. Warehouse Unit of "Strip" Shopping Center | 2. Chapel of Large Church | 2. Small Church Sanctuary |
| 3. Office/Community Room of Shopping Center | 3. Bank Community Room | 3. Another Small Church Sanctuary |
| 4. Built New Facility on Five Acre Tract of Land | 4. Lions Club Building | |
| | 5. Shopping Center | |
| | 6. Warehouse | |
| | 7. Purchased a Ten-Year Old Church Facility on a Three Acre Tract | 4. Purchased Derelict Community Center and Rebuilt as a Church Facility with Labor Assistance from Partner Churches |

Initial Location

Emerging churches often begin in the facilities of congregations of another denomination. Often this space is rented, but some churches share their space for a small contribution or even give it to the new church as a gift. Usage of another church facility often involves the fellowship hall, the sanctuary or chapel, and classrooms. The advantage of this arrangement for a new church is that it provides a recognizably worshipful environment. The disadvantage, except when using a Seventh-Day Adventist facility, is that worship and other meeting times must be adjusted to accommodate the schedule of the host church.

Other temporary locations favored by emerging churches include meetings in homes, community rooms of a commercial establishment, and clubhouses or community centers. Meeting in a home ordinarily does not cost anything beyond the hospitality of the owner. Homes provide a very congenial place for small or cell group ministry to develop. They do have certain disadvantages as well. All but the smallest of emerging churches will soon outgrow a home site, the narrow door and small size of most residential rooms feels exclusive to some persons, and many persons are

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intimidated by visiting the home of even the most hospitable "stranger." Community rooms, clubhouses, or community centers are often very cost effective for emerging churches. They provide much more room than a home and often have a piano available. On the other hand, they generally require the user to set up and take down for each meeting. Another disadvantage is that they become difficult to use when a multi-class Christian education program develops.

Longer-term, but still temporary locations

Longer-term locations which emerging churches have used include leased storefronts or shopping center facilities, rented warehouse structures, and facilities rented from public schools, colleges, or daycare centers. These often provide worship and office space, as well as room to subdivide for age group activities. Storefronts and shopping center facilities, if wisely chosen, can provide tremendous visibility for an emerging church. Shopping centers are sometimes located adjacent to movie theaters. Theaters can be rented and used for worship services, while the shopping center facility can be used for classroom, fellowship and office space. Retail and warehouse space does not require constant set up and removal. Space leased or rented from a public school or a college does require continual set up and takedown. Any space leased from other than a church, governmental entity, or nonprofit corporation, will require the lessee to pay the real estate taxes as a part of the lease agreement. This is true even when the lessee is an emerging church. A longer-term disadvantage for these types of locations is that leases terminate, often after three years, and may not provide for renewal. In addition, some persons do not consider a new church to be stable unless it has its own facility. Investment in property and building is seen as a commitment and an investment in becoming an ongoing part of the wider community.

Other possibilities for longer-term facilities include restaurants, funeral homes, nursing facilities, and other commercial space. Most of these have excellent parking. Space and time constraints in restaurants limit their practicality. Funeral homes often have fully equipped chapels, but the association with death is an impediment for some people. One emerging church moved its services to a nursing home, which gave the nursing home residents access to on-site ministry. In such a situation, however, care needs to be taken that members continue to be recruited from outside the facility as well.

Stage Two: Long-Term Facilities

At some point, perhaps three to five years within the life cycle of the emerging church, an assessment of long-term property and building needs should be made. It is vital that this be done in the context of developing an overall vision for the congregation. It is wise to appoint a task group to oversee this process. The church may also work in partnership with the District Steering Committee and the New Church Development Committee, although the primary responsibility must rest with the congregation.

Developing a Vision

There are a number of questions that must be answered before an emerging church begins seriously to consider land and location issues. All of these questions are related to and shaped by

the vision that calls the church into being. The most important of these questions are:

- What do we want to be?
- Where do we want to be?
- How much are we willing to invest?

What do we want to be?

This question encompasses various aspects of congregational identity that influence facility decisions, such as worship style preference, projection of congregational size, type and diversity of desired activities, and aesthetic taste.

Worship style preference dictates the type of structure and infrastructure required for the church building. An emerging church pursuing a traditional worship service has different needs than one that leans toward blended or contemporary services. Configuring a worship center for a pipe organ is a radically different prospect than creating space for the electrical/video/ sound equipment needed for contemporary worship. Dramatic presentations and choral music require particular design elements for the chancel space. The emerging church must avoid spaces that are not friendly to their chosen worship style.

Most emerging churches begin without an image of how large they hope to become. It is important to project how large the congregation may be within ten or more years. Buildings bought, built, or rented should provide sufficient square footage in the worship center to accommodate the space needs of the current congregation plus room to accommodate growth. It is better to have too much space than not enough.

The emerging church must also consider the type and diversity of nurture and fellowship activities hoped for in the next ten or so years. Multi-purpose spaces can accommodate meals, celebrations, church school, and other educational or relationship building endeavors.

The emerging church should consider matters of aesthetics and appearances in considering location and facility. Although congregations do not often discuss such matters, most persons have an opinion or preference concerning architectural design, interior and exterior decoration, color scheme, landscaping, and a myriad of other details. Much of this is shaped by generational concerns, past experience, and class orientation. Such discussions and considerations, however, should be shaped by the emerging church's vision of who is to be reached by the new plant.

This is not an exhaustive list of issues relevant to defining goals for land and location. It is important to engage the services of an experienced consultant or facilitator when considering such crucial factors.

Where do we want to be?

This is another critical question for developing vision in regard to facilities. The emerging church should determine the boundaries of the area that it seeks to serve and locate accordingly. A new

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congregation seeking to serve a metropolitan area will answer this question differently than one planning to serve a single city or a neighborhood. In towns and cities bordering on rural areas, answers may be determined by what public services, such as water, sewage and other infrastructure are available. Congregations may have to modify location in view of land usage, zoning, and building codes.

How much do we invest?

New Church Development Committees and related steering committees are encouraged to refrain from purchasing land until an emerging church develops, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Real estate is expensive. Advance purchase ties up resources in a piece of property that may not be used for years and in some cases may never be used. Funds thus invested do not advance the work of new church development during that time and can cause a district to lose out on other promising opportunities that may arise. Members of an emerging church that is heir to district property sometimes feel trapped by a vision that is not their own. It is better for district committees to assist a fellowship in getting successfully established. Members of the fellowship can then pursue location (and construction, if necessary) according to their own leading. At that point the District may be able to assist with grants or co-signing of notes.

Assessing the Options

There are a number of longer-term facility options to consider, including:

- Purchasing property with the intention of building
- Purchasing an existing church site
- Purchasing a building and renovating it
- Continuing in rental facilities

Purchasing Property with the Intention of Building

Emerging churches should only purchase property as they approach the point of building: Why pay to make interest and principal payments on a site that is useful only for placement of a "New Home of the Emerging Church" sign and for outdoor activities? Site selection should balance the following considerations: acreage and type of property needed, visibility of location, price, and financing.

Urban and suburban emerging churches seeking property for a building site should plan on purchasing not less than five acres and at least eleven acres, if possible. Greater acreage provides for expansion at a later date and prevents the emerging church from becoming "land locked." Acreage purchased should be free of easements for or actual utility lines which limit usage of the property. If at all possible, property should be located on an arterial highway for maximum visibility. This provides for the greatest number of walk in visitors and will be a continual reminder of the emerging church's presence in and commitment to the community. Those charged with site location should consult early on with governmental authorities about land usage and zoning code requirements. Some jurisdictions have such stringent codes that land becomes almost unusable for church purposes because of the expenses involved in meeting the necessary requirements. One emerging church discovered that their property was only usable if they built a parking lot. Cost of construction for this lot was over twice as costly as their planned building.

It is difficult to find an appropriate location in a suburban area for less than \$10,000 an acre. Often, in growing areas, desirable property may cost in excess of \$100,000 per acre. Very few emerging churches, even with district and partner church support, can afford a piece of property costing from \$500,000 to \$1.1 million. Another variable is financing. How much funding is available from the emerging church for a down payment on a piece of property? Down payments normally require from 10-to-25 % of the purchase price. Thus, if eleven acres were found which were suitable and priced at \$ 10,000 per acre, the down payment required would probably range from \$11,000 to \$27,500. An emerging church should not plan to finance a figure that requires total yearly payments exceeding 25-to-33% of its annual giving. Any amount greater than this, begins to hinder the ministry of the new church. Such a debt can warp the evangelical outreach of the emerging church in such a way that transformation of individuals becomes less important than attaining the maximum number of giving units.

The emerging church should engage a registered architect with experience in church design to do cost estimates, site planning, concept drawings, and construction plans for the new building. Although costly, the services of an architect smooth approval by governmental authorities of a proposed building and avoid common errors of "homegrown" church design. Some districts possess plans and construction drawings used in past building projects that can be used with alteration. This should, however, be done only with the guidance of an architect.

Every building project should have a contractor who has experience and good references. The costs of commercial construction can be lessened if the emerging church secures the services of a contractor amenable to the use of competent volunteer labor. Many members of the Church of the Brethren, both within a given district and across the denomination, are willing to give time and energy to church construction projects. Among these are experienced contractors, as well as numerous roofers, plumbers, electricians, and others. These include, but are not limited to, the persons whose efforts undergird the Brethren disaster response ministry. One very attractive and useful church/daycare facility built in the late 1980s in Virginia was constructed almost entirely with volunteer labor. It now has an assessed value of \$ 1.4 million, a testimony to the quality of its volunteer construction.

The Pitfalls of Donated Property Emerging churches should be wary of donated property. On occasion persons will appear who offer the new congregation a particular site. Both the motives of the donor and the property require a rigorous review. Does the donor just want to be helpful? Does their generosity bring with it a desire to control or some other hidden agenda? What restrictions and reversions will be written into the deed? In times past, many of our existing congregations were built upon donated land that was of little value otherwise, not well located and subject to various restrictions. It is most often best to wait until the congregation is sufficiently strong to purchase choice property outright rather than to be bound to an undesirable site.

Purchasing an Existing Church Site

Purchasing an existing church site has a number of advantages for the emerging church. An existing

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church property provides site and building in one step. This eliminates the difficulties in construction (including zoning and building code requirements), streamlines the financing process, and provides land and building for a package price (at times for less cost than land alone). For emerging churches located in isolation from regional centers of Brethren activity, this option requires housing and feeding volunteer workers from a distance. Nevertheless, in spite of the obvious advantages, the emerging church and its sponsors will want to take a hard look at the location of the property, the acreage involved, the parking spots available, the condition and attractiveness of the building both inside and out, the relationship between the appraisal and the cost involved, and the availability and cost of financing. If these factors are well balanced and fit the vision of the emerging church, this is a highly recommended option.

Purchasing a Building and Renovating It

Some emerging churches purchase existing structures not built for church purposes and renovate them for use as a worship center. Buildings formerly used as freestanding commercial facilities with abundant floor space and parking often provide a fine facility for a new church. These may be renovated in a cost effective manner using volunteer labor. Congregations can reserve unused space for storage pending need for full usage of the facility.

Renovation and usage of such facilities, however, is subject to zoning requirements and the willingness of governmental authorities to allow a change for that particular property if necessary. Jurisdictions are not normally happy about removing property from tax rolls. The church should gauge the amount of time, money, and energy that will be necessary in order to change the zoning classification. If the process will be a lengthy one and the site is not the most desirable, the church should probably look elsewhere.

An additional caution is that renovated facilities are most often purchased from for-profit corporations and have, therefore, been assessed and taxed by local governmental entities. Property purchased by a church for renovation will be exempt from property taxes when it is in use. However, during the transition period the congregation may have to pay property taxes for a period of time extending from one day to one year.

One emerging church near an inner city solved this problem in a unique way. The church purchased an entire "strip" shopping center for usage as their worship center. They did not seek exemption from property taxes, and chose instead to rent a substantial portion of the building to commercial businesses. The rental income was sufficient to pay the mortgage and the real estate taxes, and to supplement the income of the church. Neighbors were pleased by the improved appearance of the property. The church gained a facility with plenty of room, great visibility, and excellent parking capacity.

Continuing in Rental Facilities

Buildings and property require considerable investment on the part of the emerging church, not just in terms of finances, but in terms of spirit and emotions as well. Care must be taken that such material matters do not subtly erode the vision, mission, ministry, and purpose of the emerging

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church. "Ecclesia," the New Testament word for "church," does not refer to a building. It always refers to "those who are called out" from society at large to be salt and light. The early Brethren were hesitant to build church structures because of their pietistic views concerning the large and ostentatious buildings of the state-sponsored churches. We too, while recognizing the importance of land and location as a necessary aspect of mission and ministry, must take care not to let building concerns obscure the greater matters before us. Buildings and land exist to serve the church. People do not exist to serve the church property.

Some emerging churches, in fact, decide to move from one rental space to another as their space needs grow so they can continue to emphasize people rather than facilities. This does, indeed, have the advantage of placing the role of the building and property in proper perspective with the overriding importance of the church as people. The drawback is that it does not build a sense of ownership in the community nor does it display what some persons would consider commitment to being an ongoing part of the community.

It may also be the judgment of the emerging church, its steering committee, and the appropriate district agency that more time needs to pass before the membership and resources of the fellowship permit purchase of property. In that case, the focus of the church should be on building ministry rather than a facility, and continuing to rent space is the most desirable option.

Chapter Nine

Partnership and Role Definitions

Though role definitions in relation to emerging churches within the Church of the Brethren have changed a great deal, there have been two constants over the past one hundred and twenty years. First, the greatest responsibility for planting and sustaining emerging churches remains with the districts of the denomination. The second, equally important constant is that this mission requires the assistance of other partners whose roles are indispensable. Thus, districts must work in partnership with the General Board, Bethany Theological Seminary, the congregations, and other districts. All this is done under the guidance of the Annual Conference. Specific roles delegated to particular agencies change frequently. This chapter outlines the present understanding of roles and partnerships in the area of new church development.

Levels of Denominational Authority and Their Roles in Relation to New Church Development

The Role of the Annual Conference

The Annual Conference is the highest denominational authority of the Church of the Brethren. Once a year delegates from congregations and districts gather to seek to discern the will of God for the denomination under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In this role the Annual Conference approves the polity of the denomination. Polity contains those concepts that have governing force in the life of the church and that provide a basis upon which every member and agency of the church can appropriately order mission and ministry in concert together. In keeping with the heritage of the Brethren, polity statements are brief in nature and understood against the backdrop of the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus.

There are few polity statements relating to new church development. Most relate to the recognition of congregations by the districts. Some deal with the place of church extension in the district structure. Authority for new church development is delegated to the district agencies. There is only one major statement on church extension in Annual Conference minutes. This *1958* statement is, however, largely outdated.

The Annual Conference also provides an arena in which information concerning new church development may be shared through insight sessions and in which emerging churches may be officially welcomed and recognized.

The Role of the General Board

Under the 1997 redesign of the General Board the place of new church development within the overall denominational structure was again redefined. For over a century preceding the redesign,

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considerable resources from the wider denomination were directed to new church development by the board and its predecessors. The work of the General Board in new church development began with the appointment of "The General Church Erection and Missionary Committee" appointed by the 1884 Annual Conference. The object of this committee was "to build, or assist in building plain houses of worship, and to send suitable brethren to preach the Gospel, distribute tracts, and to organize and build up churches where there are favorable openings." It was not meant to supplant the district structure, but to assist where local resources were not sufficient. Over the next century this modest beginning grew to include paid staff (directors of new church development, fund raisers, and architects), the production of materials for new churches, the granting and loaning of funds to emerging churches, and numerous other forms of assistance. The current role of the General Board has been shaped in part by the limited resources available to the denomination at this time, as well as attention being directed to congregational revitalization. Nonetheless, in its current role, the efforts of the General Board are undergirded by the knowledge that God's mission means reaching out through healthy existing congregations and through the planting of emerging churches.

Current aspects of this work in new church development are lodged with the Director of Congregational Life Ministries. A New Church Development Advisory Committee, consisting of one district executive and other persons with experience or interest in emerging churches from five geographical areas, has been meeting since 1999. Members of the committee are appointed by the Director of Congregational Life in consultation with the General Secretary. Activities of the committee and office of Congregational Life Ministries have included:

- Assisting in new church development training events at Bethany Theological Seminary and at other institutions.
- Arranging a Church Planter Assessment at Ashland Theological Seminary.
- Providing training for coaches of new church planters.
- Developing this New Church Development Manual for the denomination.
- Presenting insight sessions and recognizing new churches at Annual Conference.
- Providing networking and consultation.
- Allocating limited grants for particular needs from the Emerging Global Mission Fund

It is crucial to have a denominational church agency with national reach in order to assist the efforts of the districts. Basic elements of coordination that are necessary include creation and dissemination of guidelines and suggested procedures, development of training, coaching and networking events, and assistance to smaller or geographically dispersed districts.

The Role of Bethany Theological Seminary

Bethany Theological Seminary is the only graduate school of theology sponsored by the Church of the Brethren. It is therefore in a position to shape current and future leadership of the denomination for further ministry and mission. Bethany has begun to work at encouraging the development of emerging churches by developing, in partnership with other agencies, church planting seminars geared to those persons within the denomination who have interest and desire.

The Role of Congregations

The 1958 Annual Conference "Statement on Church Extension" encouraged congregations to take a strong role in beginning new congregations and broadly defines the expectations: "The local church takes initiative, gives leadership to, and finances in whole or in part new congregations. Some strong congregations are doing this, and thereby becoming stronger. Others may find real enthusiasm and financial resources in developing new congregations, aiding them with funds for building and pastoral support. A local church takes such initiative in consultation with the district." (*Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Church of the Brethren, 1955-1964, page 112*)

Congregations are in the best position to be aware of the conditions in their communities and the needs of individuals and community groups. Stronger congregations or coalitions of congregations can reach out to new populations through new church development. Every congregation can become aware of the great number of unchurched persons whose lives could be transformed by relationship with Christ and the church, of the need to reach out to these persons and of the great effectiveness of emerging churches in doing so. Such education can lead to partner church arrangements that allow every congregation the opportunity to see firsthand the value of new mission and ministry.

The Role of Districts

Since the creation of the district structure over 140 years ago, districts have played the key role in new church development. Because districts are geographically defined and often cover wide territories in the United States and Puerto Rico, they are positioned to focus upon regional trends and opportunities for the development of new congregations. Districts carry the greatest responsibility for the envisioning, planting, supporting, sustaining and development of emerging churches.

Various denominational statements have affirmed the significance of the districts in new church development. In 1960 a study committee investigated the issue of church extension and concluded that:

"The more important question in Church Extension for the district is where and how shall new congregations be established? How can the Church of the Brethren grow in the changing society of North America? Shall the Brethren attempt to plant churches everywhere across the United States and the world? Or shall new congregations be formed in proximity to already established Brethren congregations? Who shall decide where the new congregations shall be located?"

The study committee believes this is a major responsibility of the district organization. The district must be large enough to have the resources and leadership for this task of church extension. Very few congregations are strong enough to do it themselves and the denominational headquarters is too far removed from the local situation. The Brotherhood should provide expert leadership in site location, fundraising, and architectural counseling but the responsibility should rest with the district. The district should assume major

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financial responsibility and supervision for new church projects. If the district is too small neighboring districts should be encouraged to unite in the project." (Reports of the Study Commissions on The Nature and Function of the Church of the Brethren, 1960, pp. 1V24-1V25),

Various statements since then have continued to lift up the key role of the district in church planting.

Models of District Structures for Facilitating New Church Development

Districts need to create structures to initiate, encourage, and supervise emerging churches. Without a specific structure in place very little can be accomplished at the district level. There have been a number of methods by which districts have organized themselves to facilitate new church development. The following models are listed in the order of their prevalence.

Committee reporting to Commission

The district structure described in the polity of the Church of the Brethren does not consider church extension to require a freestanding commission at the District Board level. The *2001 Manual of Organization and Polity* states that the District Board's Commission on Witness "**direct the work of church extension through the development of new congregations, the growth of existing ones, and the receiving of unrelated congregations**" (p. 69). A number of districts have such committees in place. They are either wholly engaged in the work of new church development or they combine this task with responsibility over revitalization of existing congregations. Virginia District currently has a Church Extension Committee that relates directly to the Executive Committee of the District Board. This arrangement has the advantage of facilitating timelier decision-making for the Church Extension Committee.

Commission reporting to District Board

In some districts, the work of new church development is of such a magnitude that it requires the formation of a New Church Development Commission or Church Development Commission as an integral part of the District Board. It places the support of emerging churches on a par with the work of the other commissions. This has the advantage of raising awareness of the importance of new church development, as well as promoting quicker decision-making.

Board reporting to District Conference

One district recently legally incorporated a free-standing New Church Development board reporting directly to its District Conference. This action places the church extension work of this particular district on par with its District Board and Camp Boards. The implications of this action for emerging churches in this district are unclear.

Considerations for Districts Establishing New Church Development Entities

General policy and oversight

In order to organize effectively for new church development, every district should have a structural entity which focuses upon this need, if possible, exclusively. Although new church development is sometimes yoked with congregational revitalization this appears to diminish the overall focus of a given district on new mission. George Bullard's description of the phases of the congregational life cycle demonstrates that emerging and existing churches are at two radically different points. Revitalization requires considerably greater energy, more time investment, and produces smaller results. Many denominations have found that it is easier to give birth to congregations than to reorient existing congregations. It is easier to form new congregations than to transform ingrained patterns of thinking, attitude, and behavior that diminish congregations spiritually, financially, and numerically. It is easier to establish member's expectations of ministry at the birth of a congregation than to change long-held understandings. If it is necessary to combine these two responsibilities in one organizational body, it would be helpful to form two particular task groups to focus on these two different ministries.

For medium-sized and larger districts, it is probably best to organize the New Church Development group as a committee that is directly appointed by the Executive Committee (or Leadership Team) and whose chairperson is a part of the board and Executive Committee. Depending upon the size of the district and the potential for multiple emerging churches, this committee might have from five to nine members. As the number of steering committees increase, it is important to increase the membership in order to provide for liaison relationships. An alternative is to have a commission focused upon this task alone as a component of the overall board structure. Care should be taken in this case, however, to make certain that persons with experience and enthusiasm for emerging churches are chosen for the District Board.

Smaller districts or districts with a wide spread geography might consider forming coalitions with neighboring districts to concentrate upon this ministry with a regional focus. This would provide greater opportunity and resources for those areas with a smaller denominational presence.

Staff configurations

In most districts, the District Executive is assigned responsibility for working with emerging churches.

This includes administrative staffing for the New Church Development Committee and its steering committees. Certain districts have other arrangements including: delegating emerging churches and related administrative work to the Associate District Executive or employment of a part-time staff member to serve as Director of Church Development.

New church development makes progress only to the degree that the District Executive or other appropriate staff member has a vision and commitment for it to succeed. The District Executive has the involvement and overview of the needs of the overall district ministry and its constituent congregations that allows for a balanced approach to needs and resources. A key role of the District Executive is to help church planters and those who have enthusiasm for specific projects to

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negotiate and work with the polity of the Church of the Brethren and the policies and practices of their particular district. The attitude of the District Executive can have a tremendous effect upon those seeking to plant new churches. This implies that the District Executive shall endeavor to work with such persons to overcome bureaucratic barriers and to release their vision and energy for the edification and growth of the church overall.

Whatever staff configuration is used, it is important that district staff involved with new churches have lengthy tenure. Over a period of time, due to the term limits built into committees and commissions, staff members will increasingly carry the institutional memory of and the vision for emerging churches.

Steering Committees

A Steering Committee of five to seven individuals provides the linkages between the appropriate district structure, often a New Church Development Committee, and the budding project or fellowship. The function of the Steering Committee is "to do preparatory work, select leadership, project budgets, help name the new congregation, and serve as the local board until the group gathers strength. As the congregation develops, the role of the district's support committee diminishes and phases out." *Releasing The Power: A Manual of Policies and Guidelines for Leaders Assisting Congregations in Development and Renewal*, 1986, p. 24.

The Steering Committee should be appointed by the New Church Development Committee and responsible to it. Persons named to the Steering Committee, except for the designated chairperson, should be persons of lengthy experience with congregational life and structure, committed to transformational outreach to individuals, and supportive of the overall mission of the Church of the Brethren. It is helpful to have persons with background in evangelism, building, finance, legal, and organizational issues. The New Church Development Committee should designate from its own membership a chairperson for the Steering Committee. This ensures a strong linkage between those who exercise general oversight and those who have focus on one project or fellowship. There should be definite term limits established for membership. No individual should serve longer than two three-year terms. The District Executive or designee is normally a helpful presence with the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee acts as the church board equivalent for an emerging church during its project and fellowship stages. Its functions are to develop and set policy and procedure, as well as to providing, guidance and support. The Steering Committee is not responsible for carrying out the ministry of the emerging church. Steering Committees should take care to encourage the development and involvement of leadership within the emerging church. Paternalism and the development of dependency relationships can subtly erode the vitality and vision of a new church development. During the fellowship stage members of the fellowship should gradually replace Steering Committee members appointed by the New Church Development Committee. [See Chapter 10 for discussion of the three stages of the emerging church: project, fellowship, and congregation. By the time the emerging church is recognized as a congregation, the chairperson designated by the New Church Development Committee should be the only non-member of the congregation on the Steering Committee.

Chapter Ten

Polity and Guidelines for Projects, Fellowships and Congregations

"The new church effort is initiated as a project, then is chartered as a fellowship, and eventually becomes a fully recognized congregation. The district conference, upon recommendation of the district board, approves each stage." (Releasing The Power, pp. 24-25)

Projects

Securing project status provides a means whereby an emerging church can use the denominational name, receive agency mailings, be listed in the Church of the Brethren Yearbook and, most importantly, engage in ministry and mission on behalf of the denomination. This is not a level of organization that is officially recognized by the polity of the Church of the Brethren. Project status was originally defined in 1983 by guidelines that originated with General Board staff and others. These guidelines were refined in 1986 and were published as *Releasing the Power: A Manual of Policies and Guidelines for Leaders Assisting Congregations in Development and Renewal*.

(Note: Relevant passages from the 1986 guidelines comprise much of the content of this chapter, and so are not indicated by quotes. Suggested additions by the author of this manual are provided in small caps. References from the denominational polity are indicated in bold type.)

Guidelines for recognizing projects

The first stage leading to the formation of a new congregation is the project. When the district decides to establish a new congregation and commitments are made, but before there is a recognized group, it is useful to refer to the project. The project needs a support or steering committee, a budget, a new church developer / pastor, a designated parish area and a name. Until a group is formed and memberships gathered and until the district conference recognizes the group as a fellowship, it is a new church project.

A PROJECT, IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS STEERING COMMITTEE, IS AUTHORIZED AND EXPECTED TO:

- HAVE A NEW CHURCH DEVELOPER /PLANTER WHO HAS A WELL-DEVELOPED MINISTRY PLAN, WITH A VISION, MISSION STATEMENT AND A SET OF CORE-VALUES THAT REFLECT THOSE OF THE DENOMINATION
- RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD ITS MINISTRY
- ENGAGE IN APPROVED FUND-RAISING WITH PARTNER CONGREGATIONS
- EMPLOY PASTORAL LEADERSHIP OR ENGAGE A MINISTRY TEAM
- DEVISE A PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR APPROVAL BY THE APPROPRIATE DISTRICT AUTHORITY

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- CARRY OUT OTHER FUNCTIONS OF A FELLOWSHIP NOT OTHERWISE NAMED OR FORBIDDEN IN CONSULTATION WITH AND BY THE APPROVAL OF ITS STEERING COMMITTEE

PROJECTS ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO:

- POSSESS OR TITLE REAL ESTATE OR BUILDINGS IN THE PROJECT NAME
- INITIATE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS UNDER THE PROJECT NAME
- RECEIVE MEMBERSHIPS OR HOLD BY BAPTISM, TRANSFER OR AFFIRMATION
- BE OFFICIALLY REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCES; OR
- CALL A MODERATOR WITHOUT DISTRICT OVERSIGHT.

BECAUSE BOTH PROJECTS AND FELLOWSHIPS ARE UNDER THE CARE AND SUBJECT TO THE COUNSEL OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS, ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES SHOULD BE INITIATED ON BOTH A FORMAL AND INFORMAL BASIS AT THE BEGINNING. A WRITTEN, QUARTERLY REPORT SHOULD BE FILED WITH THE APPROPRIATE DISTRICT AGENCY DETAILING MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE, FINANCIAL AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION. THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE OR DESIGNEE SHOULD CONTACT THE PASTOR OR MAIN CONTACT PERSON IN EACH NEW FELLOWSHIP WEEKLY TO LISTEN TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH PLANTER AND TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT.

Fellowships

A fellowship is recognized as a congregation under development. Usage of this term dates as far back as the early 1940s. It was regularized by a recommendation to the Annual Conference from the General Brotherhood Board in 1967. Since then, fellowships have been authorized as transition structures recognized by polity for New Church Developments. The *2001 Manual of Organization and Polity* reiterated that "**A new church development shall be called a 'fellowship'...**" (p. 56).

Guidelines for recognizing fellowships

The project becomes a fellowship recognized by the district and the denomination when the district conference takes action to grant that recognition and organization.

The STEERING COMMITTEE for the new church project, working with the pastor and local leaders, prepares the way for a written recommendation KNOWN AS A PROJECT PROPOSAL for recognition as a fellowship to go to the district board OR APPROPRIATE AGENCY UPON RECOMMENDATION OF THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OR COMMISSION. The board OR APPROPRIATE AGENCY then takes the recommendation to district conference.

To be recognized as a fellowship, a group may qualify when:

- It is an approved new church development project of the district.
- It has regularly scheduled meetings for worship.
- It has pastoral leadership approved by the district.
- It has elected a moderator and board chairperson from nominations submitted by the district.
- It has a mission design and the declared intention of doing ministry on a long-term basis as

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a congregation.

- It has a viable group of persons committed to become members and to serve together as an identifiable body in the mission of Christ.
- It practices stewardship and financial responsibility as an important aspect of its life and development.

When a fellowship has been recognized it has all the rights and responsibilities of a congregation except that the securing of its leadership, PROPERTY OR REAL ESTATE DECISIONS, and the planning of its program continue to be supervised by OR ARE THE PREROGATIVE OF the district. It is expected to:

- Organize it to carry out the normal functions of a congregation.
- Receive members by baptism, by letter and by reaffirmation of faith.
- Observe all the rites and ordinances practiced by the Church of the Brethren.
- Develop and carry forward a program designed to meet the needs of its constituency.
- Send delegates to Annual Conference and district conference on the same basis of representation that applies to established congregations.
- Take responsibility for developing its own budget in consultation with its Steering Committee.
- Move forward vigorously in evangelism and growth, reaching out to the people of its community in love and mission.

The internal organization of the fellowship should develop as needed, according to the size of its membership and the availability of leaders and in accord with its programs and goals. The fellowship should work toward denominational organization as outlined by the polity of the Church of the Brethren. TIME SPENT ON DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CONSTITUTION EARLY ON ENDANGERS THE OUTWARD FOCUS AND EXCITEMENT THAT A NEW FELLOWSHIP MUST POSSESS. LET THE STEERING COMMITTEE ACT AS CHURCH BOARD AND SLOWLY LET STRUCTURE EVOLVE WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE COMMITTEE. IF TIME MUST BE SPENT IN DISCERNMENT LET IT BE SPENT IN DEVELOPING A PURPOSE STATEMENT AND SEEKING TO SHAPE THE CORPORATE LIFE OF THE GROUP AROUND THAT STATEMENT. As DISTRICT MEMBERS OF STEERING COMMITTEES WITHDRAW, PREFERENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS.

After district conference has recognized the group as a fellowship, plans should be made with district participation for a celebrative worship event when the new organizational status is formalized and the charter is opened for members to be received. SUCH AN EVENT SHOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR AFTERNOON OR EVENING TIME IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR THE GREATEST PARTICIPATION AND INCLUDE A MEAL IF POSSIBLE.

ALTHOUGH NO PARTICULAR NUMBER OF PERSONS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP IS NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE A FELLOWSHIP, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THERE BE A MINIMUM OF TWENTY TO FORTY PERSONS.

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Congregations

Districts have the authority, on behalf of the denomination, to recognize congregations of the Church of the Brethren. According to the *2001 Manual of Organization and Polity*, "**all Church of the Brethren congregations that are recognized by the district as organized churches shall be member churches of the district within which they are located**" (p. 56).

"The establishment of new congregations is a major and viable way of extending the ministry of Christ to the world. A congregation is a community of faith which can relate significantly to individuals, to families, to communities, and to the structures of society. The congregation is not only the instrument which gathers and forms the body of Christ but is also a catalyst which interacts in a church-world context, both hearing and responding to the needs of humanity. It is a witness which leavens the world. It not only calls individuals to the discipline of our Lord but also commissions them to bear witness to the gospel within and beyond the household of faith. The congregation provides a relevant base prophetically, didactically, and financially for creative ministries in the power structure and in contemporary society.

Congregations are institutions. They are not quickly established or easily dissolved. They represent the combined products of prayer, planning, patience, and the multitudinous resources of life. To establish a congregation means to make long-range commitments in terms of personnel, finance, and the intentions of the church. Therefore it becomes necessary to spell out as clearly and carefully as possible the policies and procedures that relate to this endeavor" (Church Extension Policies And Procedures, Ministry and Home Missions Commission, General Brotherhood Board of the Church of the Brethren, 1966 , p. 3).

Organization of New Congregations

"A body of members or the district board through its appropriate commission may call for organization when, in the judgment of the said commission, conditions of the place from which the call comes justify such organization. Area councils of churches should be notified and their counsel sought and considered.

The call for organization shall be the responsibility of the district board through its appropriate commission. A moderator shall be selected by the responsible commission. The commission shall provide assistance and counsel in establishing a plan of organization. It shall also assist the organizing congregation in the election of such officials as may be deemed advisable.

The new organization shall then be reported to the district conference and, after its acceptance as a fellowship or congregation by that district conference, its delegates shall be seated in the district conference." (*2001 Manual Organization and Polity*, pp. 71-73)

Guidelines for recognizing congregations

The congregation is a basic unit of the church at work in the world. It is to have a ministry relevant to the changing times, being creative and faithful in communicating the word and love of God. The congregation should develop its own constitution and by-laws in harmony with Church of the

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Brethren and district polity. According to the 2001 Manual, "**A new church development shall be called a 'fellowship' until it has seventy-five or more members and is chartered as a member church**" (p. 56). This membership requirement does not, however, have any warrant from the Annual Conference. It stems from guidelines authorized by the General Board in 1966 and is not mandatory. Nevertheless, it does serve as a reminder to districts to ensure that congregations have a sufficient resource base for effective ministry in the local context.

All property acquired by the congregation should be held by local trustees in trust for the teaching and dissemination of the gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the beliefs, practices, and doctrines of the Church of the Brethren as set forth and promulgated from time to time by Annual Conference. In addition, restrictive covenants should be obtained in all deeds of conveyance, as follows:

- That if the property ever ceases to be used in accordance with the provisions set forth in the first paragraph, or in cases where the congregation has been closed or the property abandoned, the district conference of the district in which the congregation is located may, upon the recommendation of the district board, assert title to the property and have the same vested in the district board, as trustees for the district.
- That before a legal title to the property can be conveyed, consent of the district board must first be secured, and the deed of conveyance must have affixed thereto the signatures and acknowledgments of its executive officers.

The congregation should handle all its property concerns in accord with the entire polity statement in the *Manual of Organization and Polity*.

Dividing Organized Congregations

Church of the Brethren congregations was originally organized on a geographical basis with definite boundaries. Brethren who resided within the boundaries of a given congregation were expected to be members of that congregation. This is likely because Brethren hesitated to build meetinghouses for fear that these would be confused with "the church," and also because they were familiar with the concept of parish practiced by the state churches of Europe. Early in the twentieth-century, faced with controversy and dissent arising from the issue of proper dress, certain districts were divided in order to separate various factions from one another. Finally, in 1932, Brethren were given the freedom to place their membership in whatever congregation they chose. Thus, modern Brethren tend to think of their congregations in terms of the location of the church building and not a "mission" territory.

One remnant of this system, still acknowledged by our polity, deals with the division of congregations. Many congregations developed numerous meeting points served on an itinerant basis by the plural ministry of the church. This system was particularly prevalent in the triangle reaching from the Indiana/Ohio border across to Eastern Pennsylvania and south to North Carolina. Some of these developed into sizeable groups with their own meetinghouses. As they developed they were often split off from the mother or "source" congregation, given their own organization,

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allowed to choose their own ministry and allocated their own territory. This process has continued into the present era. During the last fifty years one district has organized seventeen congregations from meeting points inherited from its predecessors. Other districts have experienced a similar transition. In 2002 only three multi-meeting point congregations exist: Pocahontas with three meeting points in West Virginia, Troutville with two meeting points in Virginia, and Sandy Creek with four meeting points in West Virginia.

Here is the current guidance of the polity for division of congregations:

"If a majority of an organized congregation decides to divide into more than one Church of the Brethren congregation, the congregation shall notify the district board of that decision and the date of the congregational business meeting to determine lines, division of church property, etc., and to elect a moderator for each of the new congregations and other officers, if deemed advisable. The district board shall then send at least one member of the appropriate district commission to the meeting to assist the congregation in those tasks. The new organization(s) shall be reported to district conference and recognition shall be obtained, after which the delegates of the newly formed congregation(s) shall be seated.

If a minority of a church desires to be organized, they may petition the district board. This board shall call a business meeting of the congregation and after hearing the reasons for and against a separate organization, shall make a report of its findings. If this report is favorable to the petitioners and is accepted by the congregation, the new organization shall be effected and reported to the district conference as above.

If the report of the district board favoring the new organization is rejected by the congregation, the district board may, if deemed advisable, organize the petitioners as outlined above, provided two-thirds of the petitioners support the new organization.

If the report of the district board is unfavorable to the petitioners, they shall be counseled to work in harmony with all the other members in a spirit of love for the best interests of the congregation and to exercise patience until such time as conditions may be more favorable."

(2001 Manual of Organization and Polity, pp. 71-73)

This polity, by implication, allows for the creation of multi-meeting point congregations as need and opportunity exist. It is the basis, along with the 1958 Annual Conference statement, which lends authority to congregations of the Church of the Brethren to initiate emerging churches on a local level. However, it must be noted that this is to be done only in consultation with the district involved.

Receiving Unrelated Congregations

An unrelated congregation is one that exists independently of any affiliation or background with the Church of the Brethren. In several areas where Church of the Brethren congregations is located, other groups without denominational connections have expressed interest in becoming a part of

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the denomination. Occasional adoptions have occurred during the past century, primarily involving ethnic churches. These have been brought into the denomination with varying degrees of success.

Guidelines for receiving unrelated congregations

Polity for receiving "unrelated congregations" is defined as follows: **"When an organized congregation seeks to affiliate with the Church of the Brethren, the district board shall initiate a series of exchange visits and conversations with the congregation to explore the theological, biblical, and ecclesiastical perspectives and beliefs of each. If there proves to be potential for mutual compatibility and supportive participation, the district board shall recommend to district conference that the district and congregation enter into a year of dialogue and fellowship. During the ensuing year, the district board will review and evaluate the relationship and make recommendation to district conference for final action."**

(2001 Manual of Organization and Polity, pp. 71 -73)

The following guidelines (also part of the *Releasing the Power* document) are intended to provide an experience of mutual respect and regard for the interests of districts and exploring congregations, as they move in orderly fashion to a decision regarding affiliation.

Three stages are important in the formation of a relationship:

- Stage I-Pre-Covenantal
- Stage II-Covenantal
- Stage III-Confirmation and Celebration.

Guidelines for each of these stages have been established as follows:

Stage I -Pre-Covenantal (several months up to one year)

First Contact may be initiated by a person or persons officially representing a group interested in exploring a relationship with the Church of the Brethren. First contact may also be initiated by individuals or several persons officially representing the Church of the Brethren. Such contacts shall be communicated to the district executive within the area.

The Inquiring Group shall make a written statement of interest in exploring a relationship with the denomination. The inquiry shall be addressed to the appropriate district executive.

The District Board shall respond in writing to the group interested in exploring a relationship with the denomination.

A Relationship Committee, made up of an equal number of representatives from the district and the inquiring group, shall be named. It is suggested that five persons represent each body. The pastor or acknowledged leader of the inquiring group and the district executive of the district shall

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be included.

The Relationship Committee shall:

- Facilitate the relationship process through all three stages or as far as necessary.
- Facilitate dialogue, sharing and clear communication on behalf of the process for the benefit of both parties.
- Facilitate opportunities for persons of both parties to participate in activities together. Develop a recommendation for the district board and the official body of the inquiring group regarding affiliation.

Shared Responsibilities include:

1. Providing opportunities for mutual acquaintance and sharing of:
 - a. Church of the Brethren history, beliefs, practices, life and leadership style, ecumenical relationships, and polity with the leaders and members of the inquiring group
 - b. The history, beliefs, leadership, and decision-making patterns of the inquiring group with members of the Church of the Brethren
 - c. Opportunities, both formal and informal, for participating together in each other's settings in worship, dialogue experiences, musical and cultural events, work days, retreats, fellowship meals, etc.
2. Drafting written statements which set forth mutual expectations and understandings of the prospective partners, including the privilege of discontinuing the process by either part with appropriate notice to the other.

Stage II Covenantal (one to two years)

1. The Covenanting Congregation shall:
 - a. Engage in an in-depth study and discussion of Church of the Brethren history, doctrine, polity, and practice.
 - b. Experience Church of the Brethren rites and ordinances.
 - c. Become acquainted with the Church of the Brethren style of decision making, including the congregational business meeting and the recommended Brethren plan of organization. (Although congregations are urged to move toward these patterns, an identical form of congregational life is not a pre-condition for being part of the Church of the Brethren, as long as polity is not violated.)
 - d. Select representatives to attend district and Annual Conferences to become acquainted with Church of the Brethren program and organization and sense of community.
 - e. Accept opportunities to become acquainted with the ministries, programs, and resources of the respective district (e.g. district office, camp(s), home(s), retirement institution(s), and area college(s)).
 - f. Accept opportunities to become acquainted with the national ministries, programs, and resources of the Church of the Brethren (e.g. Church of the Brethren General Offices, Bethany Theological Seminary, New Windsor Service Center).

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- g. Decide whether to seek a formal relationship with the Church of the Brethren. If positive, make written request for recognition as a congregation of the Church of the Brethren, indicating formal action by the group, a proposed name, a plan of organization/charter including the property agreements and polity statements, and the names of officers.
 - h. Initiate the request for ministerial standing in the Church of the Brethren for its pastor.
2. The Covenanting District shall:
- a. Provide internship experiences for pastors of the covenanting congregation, where possible.
 - b. Enable participation by the pastor of the covenanting group in an area minister/pastors' support group, in all cases.
 - c. Schedule visits to the covenanting congregation by district and national staff persons for dialogue and sharing as well as specific and specialized tasks.
 - d. Encourage in district congregations a study of the history, culture, and faith experiences of the covenanting congregation.
 - e. Provide opportunities for members of the covenanting congregation to study the history, polity, and program of the Church of the Brethren; experience the rites and ordinances of the denomination; to attend its conferences; be aware of local, state, national, and world-wide ecumenical relationships; become acquainted with its district and national institutions and service agencies.
 - f. Evaluate on a regular basis the progress and growth of the covenanting congregation and the health and maturity of the relationship.
 - g. Interpret expectations and mutual accountability of the congregation within the denomination, including the financial support of district and denominational programs.
 - h. Decide whether to accept the written request of the covenanting congregation for a relationship with the Church of the Brethren.
 - i. Implement the formal procedures in regard to the review of ministerial credentials and clarification of issues relating to employment in the Church of the Brethren (insurance, pension, etc.); interpret the ministerial accountability system and code of ethics.
 - j. Develop a trust agreement on property issues.
 - k. Prepare a formal resolution to the district conference recommending acceptance as a member congregation/fellowship and the seating of elected delegates.

Stage III-Confirmation and Celebration

- 1. The Covenanting Congregation shall:
 - a. Be represented and recognized through its elected delegates to district conference

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and Annual Conference.

- b. Commit itself to financial and spiritual involvement and support.
2. The Covenanting District shall:
 - a. Recognize and accept the covenanting group through its district conference
 - b. Recognize the ministerial standing of the pastor in the Church of the Brethren.
 - c. Arrange a time for formal reception for the congregation and the pastor.
 - d. Make arrangements for denominational recognition of the congregation at Annual Conference.
 - e. Provide information for the district directory and the denominational yearbook.
 3. Shared responsibilities include:
 - a. Chartering and signing of an agreement of trust.
 - b. Continuing mutual nurture and involvement in the life and witness of Christ's church.

Chapter Eleven

Partner Relationships with Emerging Congregations

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"
(Phil. 1:3-4, NIV)

The Church of the Brethren assists emerging congregations through a process of consultation and partnership. Various mission agencies of the denomination work together on some tasks. Districts can provide helpful assistance in the beginning phases of a new church effort. Later, when property and building issues arise, districts are sometimes able to provide grants) loans or assumption of indebtedness. (Finances are increasingly the responsibility of the emerging project/fellowship as various developmental stages are achieved.) Other resources include "source" or "mother" congregations, as well as partner church relationships. Source congregations are those individual churches whose resources, not only financial, but human and spiritual as well, allow them to create new meeting points or actually plant an emerging church. Partner church relationships, normally created within a fellowship's sponsoring district, engage the personal and spiritual resources of a number of congregations to assist the development of new mission points. The General Board of the Church of the Brethren offers training, assessment, coaching, and networking opportunities. Some one-time grants are available for specific purposes from the Emerging Global Mission Fund.

Stewardship/Financial Expectations of the Emerging Church in the Project and Fellowship Stages

The level of commitment of the active participants in an emerging church largely determines its life expectancy. Therefore, developing churches are encouraged to completely support their own ministries as soon as possible. This minimizes the possibility for dependency relationships to develop and emphasizes the tremendous importance of local ownership. Some recently developed Church of the Brethren congregations is among the leaders of the denomination in per capita giving.

Stewardship is an indispensable element of a vital spirituality. It must be interwoven into the teaching, preaching, and lifestyle of every emerging church. Beginning with the core group, participants should be encouraged to support not only their own ministry but the outreach mission of the district, denomination, and wider church as well. It is recommended that ten percent of the local giving should be set aside for outreach during the first year in the life of a project/fellowship. This percentage should be increased yearly thereafter until it represents a significant part of an emerging church's budget.

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The project proposal of every new fellowship should contain a projected financial plan, or budget, covering the first five to seven years. The mission statement and core values are central to this planning process. This plan includes projected sources of income, such as the giving of the emerging church, district grants, and partner church contributions. Projected expenditures include funding for the leadership, fellowship, teaching, publicity, outreach, facility, and other programs of the emerging church. This financial planning is a cooperative process between the leadership and constituency of the emerging church and the steering committee of the district involved. It must be accomplished early in the process and revisited on a regular basis. Reevaluation must take place, at minimum, on an annual basis. New needs and priorities will develop as unforeseen circumstances occur and the emerging church grows in experience and maturity. It is important that the new church not allow its spiritual development to be impeded by the contrived figures that are a necessary part of financial projection. It is equally important that the sponsoring district demonstrate a willingness to allocate funding out of the sequence prescribed in the project proposal as need and opportunity arise. This might be termed as "non-restrictive sequencing."

The emerging church's financial plan enables the district and partner churches to develop the necessary resources to provide stable commitments over a period of time. In addition, it provides a basis for judging the depth and commitment of those who seek to be recognized as a part of the denomination. It must be owned by all the foundational members and needs to be reaffirmed as new persons become active. Every member enlistment done every year and the envelope system of giving in support of the total ministries of the emerging church continue to be productive approaches for developing and building local commitment.

One of the greatest challenges for a new church is moving from rental facilities to a home of its own. Purchase of a building or a building project may proceed when the total funds needed are available and it is clear that the new group can underwrite its share. These include building funds accumulated by the emerging church, grants from the district if available, and loan funds from financial institutions. When multi-writ facilities (e.g., such as worship center as first unit and fellowship space as second writ) are envisioned, all necessary funds must be in sight when the original unit is started and in hand by the time it is completed. The movement from rental to owned facilities can occur as early as the second or third year, but more often it will not be until the fourth or fifth year. Well-constructed and visually appealing church buildings may be created by usage of large amounts of volunteer labor from the district and the denomination. Emerging churches contemplating such assistance should begin consultation with the appropriate district agency well in advance of the point of need.

A professionally guided financial enlistment to underwrite purchase or construction of a building is often the best method for encouraging maximum commitment to the task at hand. This should take place at a time determined by the steering committee in consultation with the emerging church. The leadership may be selected and financed by the district, the church, or a combination of both. Such an enlistment emphasizes the fact that financial responsibility is an essential part of discipleship and helps to establish a pattern for future enlistments.

Some congregations have explored alternative funding methods. We mentioned previously the example of a church that purchased an entire strip mall and rented out commercial space to businesses. Another example is a congregation that built a building larger than its immediate needs. This structure included space for a daycare facility. Rental payments from this space provided the mortgage payments and some facility maintenance over almost two decades. This alternative provided for good usage of the church property and enabled construction of a building sufficient for future expansion. A drawback is that the congregation has not developed the level of giving it could have after two decades of existence.

District Role in Providing Support to Emerging Congregations

The district is the focal point for support, both spiritual and financial, for new fellowships. This has been true since the district structure was first envisioned in 1858.

The district is a mission organization possessing a prescribed territory, which presents opportunities for mission. As a mission agency, the district redirects resources from its general constituency (the congregations and their membership) to particular areas of mission and ministry (such as new church development). Districts provide financial assistance to emerging churches in a variety of ways. These include:

- Grants
- Loans
- Purchase of property
- Debt or lease assumption

Grants are ordinarily made by districts in light of available resources and on the basis of the emerging church's projected needs spread over a period of years. Budget projections are normally made for a five to-seven-year period and are included in the project proposal submitted by a project/ fellowship for its initial approval by the district structure. One recent project proposal for a six-year period was based on projected needs of \$339,000. Of this amount, 18% was to be supplied by district grants, 9% by the partner congregations and 73% by the congregation itself.

Congregational giving should be projected to increase steadily. District and partner congregation funding should be allocated toward the beginning of the period and tail off toward the ending to avoid long-term dependency on extra-congregational funding. A normal condition of receiving a district grant is submission of a written quarterly report to the appropriate district agency. This provides accountability and ensures that funding is used as designated.

Loans may be necessary in emergency situations or other unforeseen circumstances of a short-term nature. As with grants, the possibility of a loan from the appropriate district agency depends upon the funds available. Such loans are normally made for amounts of \$10,000 or less with little or no interest. Repayment by the emerging church is often spread over twelve to twenty-four months. A particular difficulty with loans can be the development of an adversarial relationship between district and project / fellowship if repayment does not follow the agreed upon schedule.

Purchase of property was once more common than it is currently. In the past districts would

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purchase real estate in growing communities or areas with potential with the intention of building a church there. Property costs have risen, however, and district resources have not generally risen accordingly. Purchasing real estate for prospective church development can cause new members to feel tied to a vision which they do not fully own. Further, it is now thought that the first priority of districts should be on forming new congregations rather than on land speculation. For the new fellowship, it is best to focus first on gathering the ecclesia, the membership body, rather than spending tremendous time and effort on land and building. When a fellowship is successfully established it can pursue location and construction, with the expectation of some financial and other forms of assistance from the district.

Debt assumption is the practice of allowing an emerging church to use the credit of the district to purchase property and buy or build a church facility. In this process, the proposed property is deeded in the name of the district board or appropriate agency. The indebtedness is negotiated and closed by the district board. The emerging church pays the down payment and makes the subsequent installment payments. When the indebtedness is eliminated, the district conveys the property to the corporation or trustees of the new congregation with a trust or "reversion" clause in the deed. A variant practice is for the appropriate district board to co-sign a note on behalf of the new church. Lease assumption is the similar practice of a district board leasing a building or space on behalf of the new group.

Debt and lease assumption can be of tremendous value to the emerging church. The greater size and larger net worth of the district board facilitates a speedier purchase or lease with fewer conditions and less cost than a project or fellowship might obtain on its own. This method of assistance does require careful evaluation of the possible risks on the part of the district as well as a willingness to foreclose in the event of a default.

The Importance of Building District Resources for New Church Development

Districts must develop financial resources in order to implement any vision of effective and multiple emerging churches. These resources are achieved through a combination of strategies. Methods commonly used in the Church of the Brethren include:

- Making new church development a line item in the district program budget
- Conducting special ministry and mission funding efforts
- Developing bequests and planned giving
- Creating endowments using the assets of congregations that have ceased to exist

District budgets have often contained line items for general new church development and/or for specific projects/fellowships. This is a reminder of the importance of new church development to the overall health of the church and helps to create district-wide ownership of the program. It should not be the sole source of district assistance to emerging churches. In a time when congregations experience or perceive diminishing financial resources for outreach ministries, district budget line items compete with many other ministries. This natural prioritization minimizes the line item as a major method of resource development. It may, perhaps, simply fund the expense of the district group responsible for new church development.

Special ministry and mission funding efforts, formerly known as financial or capital campaigns, are a crucial element in the development of district resources for emerging churches. Such efforts are often a part of an overall financing effort for district ministries including leadership development, assistance to smaller membership congregations, and camping facility improvements. They enable districts to plan for a five-to-ten-year cycle of renewal and new growth. Like the stewardship efforts of the fledgling fellowship, these district efforts must be undergirded by a clear and compelling vision. The importance of assistance to emerging churches must be demonstrated and explained with such clarity as to preclude misunderstanding.

Mission resourcing efforts require:

- The development of a coalition of district stake holders willing to envision the future and to commit themselves to providing the leadership for underwriting the vision
- The calling of an individual or team with professional fundraising experience whose expertise will be essential in engaging the resources of the district constituency
- The articulation of the overall vision of the mid-term district future in positive terms and the use of current, appropriate technology in sharing of this vision
- The recognition that competent personal contacts with individual givers and congregational units are vitally important to the success of the funding effort.

Such efforts in the recent past have produced the resources necessary for multiple new church starts, as well as other important ministries. They must be preceded by careful and continuous interpretation of the central importance of new church development to the greater health of the district and denomination. Likewise, they must be succeeded by the faithful stewardship of the funds received.

The development of **bequests and other planned giving** activities can provide a supplementary source of income for the emerging church mission of the district. Such gifts provide donors with the opportunity to share the fruits of their labor in a ministry that has the potential to effect transformational change in the lives of individuals and the world for generations to come. These bequests are best given to the general work of new church development rather than being specific to a particular effort or project.

The use of assets derived from the sale of the property of congregations which has ceased to exist, is a unique opportunity for districts. Dying is a part of the life cycle for congregations as well as individuals. One source estimates that over 500 congregations of the Church of the Brethren have ceased to exist in the three centuries of our life and work. District agencies must take particular care in their use of these assets placed in their care. It is good stewardship to use funds derived from liquidated assets (such as the real property of former churches) to create an endowment to fund new projects (such as new church development) that advance the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ. Such an endowment should be created in consultation with the attorney retained by the district. It should have a specific lifetime (perhaps ten to twenty years) and must have the approval of the district board or other religious corporate entity. Creating an endowment for new church development provides for resurrection and new life within the denomination and

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district even as we experience the passing of congregations that, while once vital, are now dying.

Not all districts possess resources sufficient to engage in the above practices effectively on their own. In this situation it is recommended that "districts join with other districts in order to enlarge resources and personnel in an area strategy for church extension" (1958 Annual Conference "Statement on Church Extension").

Assistance from Partner Congregations

Partner congregations are invited to enter into relationships with emerging churches to provide spiritual and financial support, as well as other ministry assistance. In larger districts, these relationships can include from twelve to twenty-four congregations in a given geographical region. At times, various areas of an individual district are in distinct relationship with particular emerging churches, Partner congregations often covenant with the new project or fellowship to:

- Pray for the new group on a regular basis
- Provide presence in worship and other events through visitation by partner church members
- Provide volunteer labor for construction or rehabilitation of buildings
- Provide funds or other necessary items over a period of time to assist with program or material needs

Funding by partner congregations is normally amortized on a declining scale over a period of years, often three to six in number. This is determined by the projected needs of the project/fellowship and other resources available. These relationships are developed in consultation with the district involved and are approved by the appropriate judicatory structure.

The nurture of these relationships is the responsibility of the new project or fellowship. A new mission is encouraged to interpret its vision and goals to the partner churches through on-site visitation. This develops relationships between people and can build a sense of ownership on the part of the partner congregations. Such interpretation is enhanced by media-presentations including a promotional video-although no technology can replace personal contact. Partner church relationships are then sustained by regular contact from the new project/fellowship through newsletters geared for the partner churches, written expressions of appreciation on a regular basis, exciting reports to the district board/conference and follow-up visitation as energy and geography allow.

Because districts are unequal in size and resources, partner church relationships sometimes develop across district boundaries, Inter-district relationships may unfold when one partner has opportunity and limited resources while another partner seeks opportunity and has resources, Some examples of this type of cooperation include a congregation in Pennsylvania that provided major assistance for a new church development in Louisiana, a number of congregations in one district in Virginia that contributed funds to a New church development in another district in North

Carolina, and a district in Virginia that assisted a congregation in Puerto Rico, This form of partnering is done in consultation with the appropriate district agencies.

Assistance from a Source Congregation

Source or parent congregations are those congregations (or clusters of congregations) that develops new meeting points. Sometimes called "mother churches," these congregations have the human, financial, and spiritual resources to plant and encourage emerging churches as well as the desire and commitment to do so without appreciable outside assistance. In the past, when congregational identities were fixed by geographical boundaries rather than building location, multi-meeting point congregations developed to meet the needs of their far-flung membership. As time passed and these meetinghouses began to grow numerically and mature spiritually, they sometimes separated from the source church to become congregations in their own right. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, some urban congregations developed Sunday school missions that prospered to the point that they became meeting points and then developed as congregations. More recently, during the post-war era, suburban congregations were created from core groups derived from one or more nearby congregations.

In recent years, as church life has become more focused upon a single building location, as the plural ministry has faded, and, in some cases, as maintenance and management have replaced mission and ministry in congregational life, the concept of one congregation being the source of one or more other communities of worship has been neglected. As the examples above illustrate, however, we have models within our denominational history of how this might be done. The polity regarding "division of an existing congregation" a holdover from the era of multi-meeting point congregations, allows for the creation of such arrangements. Today, source congregations might create new meeting points not for convenience of travel, but rather to reach new populations or to minister to nontraditional needs.

Congregations that consider developing new meeting points should consult with the appropriate district agency, and, in areas where there are multiple congregations, with their neighboring congregations. Ongoing conversations are essential to clarify appropriate boundaries, enhance communication, and diminish misunderstanding. They often result in a helpful expansion of partnership and additional resources for the new project.

Source congregations might consider developing steering committees to administer new meeting points according to the example provided in Chapter Eight. These would be developed with the intention of moving the new group toward self-government in six years or less. Strong consideration needs to be given to the leadership, financial resources, and location of the emerging meeting point. It is recommended that such ministries not be initiated at too great a distance geographically from the source.

Denominational Assistance

Prior to the 1997 redesign, financial aspects of new church development were handled in partnership between the districts and the General Board. In the redesign, districts were assigned

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the primary responsibility for these financial matters. The General Board no longer provides loans or grants for building or program purposes. However, significant resources are devoted to training opportunities and leadership development. The recently established Emerging Global Mission Fund provides support for emerging domestic and foreign missions, including new church planting. It supports international evangelism and church planting, as well as church planting in the United States and Puerto Rico. The fund allocates grants to projects in the early stages of their efforts to create new congregations worldwide. Given the current level of support to the Emerging Global Mission Fund, no U.S. program grant can exceed \$2000. This may change if the fund grows in size. Those with interest in the guidelines and requirements for application should contact the Executive Director of Congregational Life Ministries, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

Chapter Twelve

Developing a Coaching Network for the Apostle

"Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you!'" (Exod. 18:17-19a)

Nature and Purpose of the Network

Church planters have often worked alone, with very little support, encouragement, or accountability. Their mission has been a lonely and, sometimes even invisible task. Emerging churches are often located in areas far from a center of Brethren activity. In recent years, it has become evident that a greater level of support is needed than that which the Steering Committee and the District Executive or other responsible staff normally provides. District staff members do not have the time, in light of the geography and resources available in most districts, to provide the needed measure of support. What is needed is someone able to "coach" the church planter/ apostle to success.

Coaches can be recruited from the constituency of the district. They are often successful former church planters, former district executives or staff with experience in facilitating emerging churches, lay persons who are businesspersons or entrepreneurs with a passion for outreach and new church development, or other persons with demonstrated leadership skills. Coaches will require initial training before their service and follow-up training as they continue.

Goals and Objectives

The objective of coaching is to empower apostles/church planters to move their project from its start to full membership as a congregation within the district. A coach should have three major goals:

- To support the apostle/ church planter
- To encourage the apostle as a leader
- To provide an accountability point for the apostle

The coach supports the apostle/church planter by serving as a living reminder of the importance of his or her ministry to the entire district. The coach is someone to turn in difficult circumstances. A coach can listen, aid in discernment, and help formulate direction.

A coach encourages the apostle to stretch beyond his or her perceived limitations as a leader. For example, leaders often get bogged down in minutia and detail. If apostles begin to lose sight of the vision, his or her ability to lead and inspire the core group is diminished. The coach must help the apostle to focus on the end result, not on the bumps along the way. A biblical example of coaching

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is found in Exodus 18: 13-26, in which Jethro confronts Moses about his inability to delegate authority and power. The ability to share and delegate leadership is crucial if an emerging church is to grow beyond a single cell. Coaches help the apostle "not to sweat the small stuff."

Deadlines are a necessary, if not always pleasant, fact of life. The presence of a coach provides an accountability point for the apostle. Those who are accountable work harder. It is helpful also that the coach be someone who is not involved in the bureaucratic side of church planting. Coaches provide positive accountability because they work with the practical and spiritual elements of the apostle's ministry.

Content of Coaching Sessions

At the beginning of their relationship, the coach and the apostle/church planter need to develop an agreement concerning the nature of their relationship. This agreement should be reviewed and renewed annually. Each coaching year can be formed around six sixty-day cycles (Jeff Wright of the Center for Anabaptist Leadership calls this the "6/60" coaching model). The content of the coaching encounters differentiates them from mere social encounters. Session content centers on addressing four key questions:

- What three objectives would the planter / apostle like to accomplish in the next cycle?
- What are the obstacles to accomplishing these objectives?
- What is the most important thing the apostle/planter needs from the coach?
- How will the apostle/planter know that the investment in the coaching relationship has been worthwhile?

Development and Maintenance of the Coaching Network

Responsibility for developing and maintaining a coaching network is the responsibility of the appropriate district staff, the district new church development agency, and the apostle/church planters themselves. The District Executive or other designated staff person should play a key role in recruiting and assigning coaches. The apostles need to understand the importance of their coaching relationship and commit to utilizing fully the services of the coach.

The New Church Development Committee, or its equivalent, develops and maintains the coaching network by providing training opportunities for those selected as coaches and by monitoring the effectiveness of the relationships. Most districts will not have the resources to sponsor training events within their own limited bounds. Both introductory and advanced courses are available from *The Center for Anabaptist Leadership* (based in California) and other para-church organizations. In order to spread the cost of leadership, regional clusters of districts may wish to sponsor training sessions at a central location on a periodic basis.

Appendix One: Printed Resources and Websites

Particular works directly related to New Church Development:

Jones, Ezra Earl. ***Strategies for New Churches***. New York, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1976.

Ezra Earl Jones formerly served on the staff of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. His particular expertise was in the areas of church planting and renewal of existing congregations. This volume provides a frame-work and process for planting new congregations that over the past three decades, continues to be sound and trust-worthy counsel. A portion of the material deals with the redevelopment of older congregations.

Murray, Stuart. ***Church Planting***. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 2001.

Murray is an English Anabaptist scholar, writer and teacher. This book presents the foundational material and practical counsel for emerging churches in a manner which is congenial to Brethren understandings of the Gospel.

Redford, Jack. ***Planting New Churches***. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1978.

Francis Jackson "Jack" Redford served for a number of years as the Director of the Department of Church Extension of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. This three section work, while dated in many respects, provides an overview of the foundations of church planting, a nine-step method of church planting and the mission pastor from a believer's church perspective.

Schaller, Lyle E. ***44 Questions for Church Planters***. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1991.

This volume, by the noted United Methodist authority on American church life, is very easy to read and deals with the basic points of knowledge necessary to plant a new church. In addition, he makes a compelling argument for the necessity of new church development that should be required reading for every denominational leader.

Prior New Church Development Manuals and related denominational documents:

Church Extension Policies and Procedures. Elgin, Illinois: Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board of the Church of the Brethren, undated (1972).

Manual of Organization and Polity. Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 2001.

Crouse, Merle and Earhart, Stanley J. ***Releasing the Power: A Manual of Policies and Guidelines for Leaders Assisting Congregations in Development and Renewal*** Elgin, Illinois: Parish Ministries Commission of the General Board of the Church of the Brethren, 1986.

Crouse, Merle. ***Developing New Congregations in the Church of the Brethren***. Elgin, Illinois: Parish Ministries Commission of the General Board of the Church of the Brethren, 1983.

Lehman, James H. ***Thank God for New Churches: Church Planting -Force for New Life***. Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1984.

Stoll, Dale L. ***Church Planting from Seed to Harvest***. Elkhart, Indiana: Mennonite Board of Missions and Newton, Kansas: General Conference Mennonite Church, 1986.

Works not directly related to New Church Development, but helpful to church planters:

Biesecker-Mast, Susan and Gerald (editors). ***Anabaptists and Postmodernity***. Telford, Pennsylvania: Pandora Press, 2000.

Borden, Paul D. ***Hit the Bullseye***. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Clapp, Steve and Bernhard, Fred. ***Hospitality: Life in a Time of Fear***. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Life Quest, 2002.

Clapp, Steve. ***Overcoming Barriers to Church Growth***. Elgin, Illinois: The Andrew Center, 1994.

Easum, William M. ***The Church Growth Handbook***. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Mann, Alice. ***Can Our Church Live?*** The Alban Institute, 1999.

Schaller, Lyle E. 21 ***Bridges to the 21st Century***. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Sweet, Leonard. ***Postmodern Pilgrims***. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.

Internet websites of general interest to church planters and committees

<<http://www.newlifeministries-nlm.org/contents-cp.htm>>

The foregoing is the internet address of the church planting resources found on the New Life Ministries website. New Life Ministries began as The Andrew Center, started by the Church of the Brethren and now shared with other denominational and para-church partners. The common heritage of these partners is that of the Anabaptist/ Believers' Church movement.

<<http://www.mislinks.org/church/chplant.htm>>

This is the church planting resource page for MisLinks. MisLinks describes itself as a web-based directory focused on offering for missionaries, mission pastors, teachers, and researchers, students of mission and mission agencies. It was initiated in 1997 by Scott Moreau of Wheaton College and Mike O'Rear of Global Mapping, International. Their aim is

to serve the larger missions community

<<http://www.brethren.org/bethany/academy.htm>>

The Brethren Academy, which coordinates the various non-seminary ministry training programs of the Church of the Brethren, provides Church Planting Training in collaboration with the New Church Development Advisory Committee of the Church of the Brethren General Board. These emerging efforts currently focus on a bi-annual conference hosted by the Academy at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana.

<<http://www.ashland.edu/seminary/centers-slc.html>>

The Sandberg Leadership Center of the Ashland Theological Seminary (The Brethren Church) located in Ashland, Ohio offers a one-week intensive seminar in church planting and church planter assessment. The focus of this seminar is spiritual foundation of the planter and the formation of a network of prayer, as well as proven principles of church planting. Considerable attention is given to the "Cells and Celebration" model of church planting to varied forms of contemporary and blended worship and to the post-modern context of Christian mission.

<<http://www.urban-anabaptist.org/>>

The Center for Anabaptist Leadership is a Mennonite-affiliated organization based in southern California which provides resourcing for church planters and coaching. The self-described mission of CAL is to equip "church leaders through grassroots training, personal coaching and strategic consulting, so that congregations become vital centers of God's mission in the City through Christ, embracing evangelism, deliverance, liberation and justice and grounded in prayer, work and hope."

<<http://www.evangelismconnections.org>>

Evangelism Connections, a cooperative work and relationship between the Church of the Brethren, Reformed Church of America, American Baptist Churches, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and the United Church of Christ, is in the process to establishing a cooperative website for evangelism resources from the cooperating churches. In addition, Net Results will be a cooperating participant. **Plans are for the site to be active in the Fall of 2004.**

Appendix Two: Job descriptions

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- I. Philosophy
 - A. Purpose
 1. Developing new congregations is understood to be a key part of every district's participation in the ministry of Christ. It is an integral part of the Church of the Brethren program for evangelism and church growth.
 2. The emphasis on new church projects will be given to leadership development, to faithful and effective witness and to people, with the understanding that land and buildings are only tools chosen to serve the needs of mission and congregational life.
 3. The New Church Development Committee is responsible for developing plans and recommendations for the initiation and supervision of new congregations, including the surveying of population areas.
 - B. The goal of each new church project is to
 1. Call all persons to faith in Jesus Christ.
 2. Develop new faith communities where Jesus is Lord, enabling people to
 - a. Grow in the knowledge of God's Word
 - b. Apply that word in faithful living
 - c. Share the good news with others
 - d. Join in God's ongoing mission and ministry.
 - C. Leaders of new congregations shall be given training in the teachings and practices of the Church of the Brethren and shall be expected to follow the guidelines of the Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity. The responsibility for this training shall be lodged with the New Church Development Committee and/ or its designee/ so
- II. The New Church Development Committee
 - A. Structure
 1. The New Church Development Committee is appointed by the District Board Executive Committee and is reportable to the Executive Committee. The District Executive shall have staff responsibility relating to the New Church Development Committee.
 2. Authority, The New Church Development Committee shall have the authority to use staff and volunteer time and expend funds from the New Church Development Fund as needed for survey work, exploration of potential new church sites, negotiation of purchases, and expenditures as authorized by the District Board and/or Executive Committee in consultation with the New Church Development Committee chairperson. The New Church Development Committee may also expend funds as necessary in searching for pastor/developers of new church projects. Land acquisitions and building projects shall be approved by the District Board.
 3. Tenure: Members of the New Church Development Committee, in order to have continuity, shall serve for a three-year term and may succeed themselves one time. A less than three year term shall count as a full term.
 4. A written quarterly report from the New Church Development Committee shall be given to the District Board by the chairperson of the committee or their designee.

B. Responsibilities

1. To develop and update a strategy for new church development for the district in view of the opportunities and resources available in light of the recommendations of Annual Conference and the New Church Development C9.ordinath1g Committee.
2. To survey areas for the district to determine potential for new church development utilizing the services of an outside consultant for New Church Development.
3. To make recommendations as to locations and sites to the Executive Committee for approval of the District Board.
4. To make recommendations on plans for the initiation and development of new congregations as timing, funding needed and style of ministry. To review and make recommendations concerning projects initiated by other persons or groups within the District.
5. To be available to the Commission of Stewards for counsel and/ or participation in New Church Development fund-raising efforts.
6. To appoint a Steering Committee for the pastor/developer and new fellowship.
7. To appoint a Search Committee to interview candidates and recommend for approval pastor/developers for new church projects.
8. To maintain an oversight and supervisory responsibility of all new church development projects. New Church Development Steering Committees are reportable to the New Church Development Committee.
9. To develop, staff, train and maintain a coaching network for new church planters.
10. Guide a failing fellowship through the closure process.

C. Guidelines

1. The decision to plant a church is to be based on a clear understanding of demographic and economic data and cultural variations. Clustering of new church projects, especially in an area where Church of the Brethren population is sparse or non-existent, is an important consideration. Such clustering will enable mutual support and the strengthening of corporate witness in the area.
2. A wide variety of models will be used for establishing new church projects. Sponsorship may vary, but the norm of District and General Board joint sponsorship will be supplemented by established churches parenting new church projects with assistance from the larger church.
3. A partnership and a strong working relationship between all parties are necessary, with the New Church Development Committee consulted early in the process.
4. Decisions related to style of congregational life, pastoral leadership, selection of location, building site, building plans and financing will be made in consultation with local, district and General Board representatives, as appropriate. The Steering Committee is expected to provide in writing to the New Church Development Committee a specific vision for implementing decisions in each of the above areas.
5. Since funds available for new church development are limited, priority in approving the beginning of new projects will be given to those which show promise of:
 - a. Early self-support capabilities
 - b. Meeting an urgent need for winning people to Christ and our Anabaptist witness
 - c. Helping to cluster Church of the Brethren congregations for mutual support and

a strengthened corporate witness in that area. When a proposed project is located near existing Church of the Brethren congregations, the counsel and support of those groups will be sought prior to proceeding.

6. The New Church Development Committee may request the assistance of other districts in starting new congregations. This will be done through conversation involving the denominational New Church Development Coordinating Committee and the New Church Development Committee.
7. New church projects may be developed in areas not covered by the existing boundaries of a given district. Such decisions will be made in accord with the criteria and rationale for district alignment as determined by Annual Conference and in consultation with the appropriate neighboring district.

III. Funding for New Church Projects/Fellowships

A. Policies:

1. All requests for grants, loans, and other financing must be made in writing prior to any expenditure.
2. All new church projects will be assigned a member of the New Church Development Committee who will serve as liaison and as chairperson of the steering committee.
3. A steering committee comprised of representatives from the Fellowship, nearby and/or partner congregations and the New Church Development Committee liaison shall be appointed. They shall meet at least quarterly.
4. Each project will be expected to develop vision and mission statements declaring the intent of ministry and its local emphasis.
5. Each project shall submit a multi-year development plan or project proposal which includes growth goals giving objectives, business plan and leadership expectations.
6. Pastoral leadership shall be called from amongst those persons recognized and ordained by the Church of the Brethren. Any exceptions shall be considered in consultation with the Commission on Ministry. An assessment of church planting skills shall be required of each candidate for pastoral leadership.
7. Each new project/fellowship is expected to submit a quarterly Partnership Report to the New Church Development Committee.

B. Support Guidelines,

1. District grant support will be allocated according to a support plan of no more than four years, as follows:

| | | |
|-----------|-----|----------------|
| 1st year— | 40% | |
| 2nd yea— | 30% | |
| 3rd year— | 20% | of total grant |
| 4th year— | 10% | |
| 5th year— | 0% | |

Total grant money allocated will be determined subject to funds available and project requests.

2. Grants and loans for the acquisition of land and/or buildings shall be made on the basis of guidelines set by the New Church Development Committee and adopted by the district board

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE POSITION DESCRIPTION

I. PURPOSE

New Church Development Steering Committees exist to study potential church extension projects; to provide guidance, encouragement and accountability to developing fellowships; and to provide for communication between the New Church Development Committee and those involved in planting churches in areas deemed promising.

II. COMPOSITION

Committees are composed of five to seven persons chosen by the New Church Development Committee. The chairperson shall be a member of the New Church Development Committee and shall be the primary liaison with and advocate for the Steering Committee. Other members shall include a balanced representation of local and district laity and clergy with a predominant number from outside the project area under consideration. Persons chosen shall have a vision and passion for church growth and mission enterprise. Terms shall be indeterminate. The life cycle of a steering committee will end when a project is deemed no longer viable or when the resulting fellowship is accepted by the District Conference as a recognized congregation. During the life of the committee district members shall be replaced and supplemented by active local participants. Subcommittees may be appointed using persons not named to the parent committee with oversight by a member of the committee. It is envisioned that the committee can become the nucleus of the church board of the resulting congregation.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY

New Church Development Steering Committees are reportable and accountable to the New Church Development Committee. The District Executive or designee shall serve as staff consultant.

IV. FUNCTION

The Steering Committees shall carry out their purposes in the following manner:

- By diligent study of the potential of their assigned area of responsibility
- By proposing the initiation or the abandonment of specific projects. By providing guidance, encouragement, support and accountability for projects and fellowships.
- By sharing points of celebration, progress, needs, concerns and information with the New Church Development Committee through the liaison representative.

- By familiarization with current church growth and development concepts and practices through reading and participation in appropriate seminars.
- By learning denominational and district polity, policies and guidelines for New Church Development.
- By organizing sub-committees to deal with various needs of the emerging churches composed of a majority of local persons.

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE / STEERING COMMITTEE LIAISON

- Each Project/Fellowship shall have a liaison from the New Church Development Committee to the Steering Committee until congregational status is achieved or the Project/Fellowship is closed.
- Persons chosen to be liaisons shall come from the New Church Development Committee, or if necessary, be appointed by the New Church Development Committee. Liaisons shall not serve more than two three-year terms.
- Liaisons will familiarize themselves with the materials in denominational manuals and other current publications regarding church growth and polity. The New Church Development Committee shall provide the materials needed for such familiarization.
- Liaisons shall organize and facilitate the Steering Committee for maximum effectiveness.
- Liaisons shall meet with their Steering Committee at least quarterly and be available for "on call" counsel.
- Liaisons will share the Steering Committee's quarterly report with the New Church Development Committee.
- Liaisons shall be responsible to initiate such reporting as necessary.
- Liaisons will share concerns and encouragement from the Steering Committee with the New Church Development Committee and the District Executive as needed.
- Liaisons will share guidance, encouragement, and concerns from the New Church Development Committee with the Steering Committee.
- Liaisons shall be invited and encouraged to participate in leadership development and training experiences.
- Travel reimbursement, if needed, shall be negotiated with the Project/Fellowship being served. Initial conversations should make clear the needs, expectations, and available resources in this regard.

DIRECTOR OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Church Development:

- Relates to and coordinates the work of the Church Development Commission
- Aids in the development of, oversees the implementation of and promotes the church Planting philosophy and strategy of the district
- Oversees and resources church revitalization projects
- Cast a district-wide vision for evangelism, church growth and congregational health and Vitality
- Monitors the fiscal state of all church planting and revitalization projects

- Assists in providing a district staff presence in congregations
- Time commitment will be two days or eighteen hours per week

Appendix Three: General Board Structures for New Church Development

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHURCH OF THE BROTHERS GENERAL BOARD

Background

The New Church Development Advisory Committee has been meeting since 1999. In that time the committee has had an opportunity to assess the state of New Church development in the denomination. There have been conversations with new church pastors, district committees responsible for new church development, district executives, and others with an interest in new church planting. There is strong interest in the denomination for new church planting. Some districts have strong committees in place and are actively working at planting new churches. Other districts are just beginning to rethink and reinvigorate their church planting strategies.

While it is the primary task of the districts (and congregations) to begin and support projects and to recruit leadership for planting new churches, there continues to be a strong need for General Board involvement in new church planting. This involvement signals to the denomination that planting churches is an important priority.

The financial support for this committee will be made available through the Emerging Global Mission Fund, established by the General Board in March 2000. For church planting within the United States, the fund will be used to support the work of the committee to train and assess new church planters and provide focused financial support for new church fellowships in the form of program grants.

Composition

The New Church Development Advisory Committee shall consist of six persons appointed by the Director of Congregational Life Ministries in consultation with the General Secretary. This will be a "working committee" reportable to the General Board through the Director of Congregational Life Ministries. The committee will be made up of one new church practitioner from each Congregational Life Team Area, and one District Executive, with every two people serving a three-year staggered term.

Responsibilities

The Committee's responsibilities will include:

- a. Development and implementation of a training/ assessment program that is congruent with the Church of the Brethren beliefs and values
- b. Development of a coaching. mentoring model for new church development
- c. Development of a manual or handbook of workable models for a new church planting
- d. Representation on the Grant Review Committee which issues grants for new church projects
- e. Establishment of supportive relationships with new church planters, pastors, and core groups

- f. Establishment of guidelines for issuing grants from the EMGF for state-side church planting projects

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN GENERAL BOARD NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT

Vision

Reaching the unchurched through the planting of new churches is one of the top priorities of our denomination.

Mission

The General Board's Congregational Life Ministry Office will facilitate the development of training events and support systems needed to equip and supply the denomination with trained planters and district new church development committee members.

Core Values

- *God seeks to share an abundant life with all.*
- *God offers a relationship with Jesus Christ which transforms women and men, releasing them from the power of sin and filling them with the joy of this abundant life.*
- *Churches are the primary vehicle where the relationship with Jesus Christ is shared and lived out in a community of discipleship.*
- *New churches are the best means of reaching the unchurched with the good news of Jesus Christ.*
- *The Church of the Brethren has a unique and much needed understanding of God's abundant life.*

In the expression of our faith, the following characteristics are minimal expectations:

We are a people who:

- *Love and serve a gracious, generous God.*
- *Seek to live out the New Testament in its fullness.*
- *Seek to live at peace with God, ourselves, and neighbors.*
- *Seek the mind of Christ in dialogue with our sisters and brothers.*
- *Seek to love all people as does God.*
- *Seek to share the abundant life with those beyond our membership.*

Appendix Four: The Congregational Life Cycle

George W Bullard, Jr. currently serves, according to the internet website for the Hollifield Leadership Center <<http://www.hollifield.org/hollifield/co=unities.shtm1>>, as the Associate Executive Director Treasurer for Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, a regional denominational organization with almost 4,000 congregations who have 1.2 million members. His vision is to use his spiritual and strategic giftedness to empower congregations and congregational leaders to fulfill their vision for the growth of God's kingdom. A native of Raleigh, N.C., Bullard has coached numerous local, regional and national denominational organizations among various Baptist groups. Since 1996 his ministry has been expanded to include work with various denominational families throughout North America including the Church of the Brethren.

Bullard has described five phases and ten stages of the congregational development cycle in the April 2000 edition of *Congregational Passage: The Lift Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development*. Each stage is characterized by an emphasis on particular combinations of four organizing principles. The four organizing principles are:

- V: Vision/ Leadership/ Mission/Purpose/Core Values
- R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship
- P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities
- M: Management/ Accountability/Systems/Resources

The ten stages and their corresponding phases with combination of organizing principles and duration (**highlighted are the most significant for working with emerging churches**) are:

- 1. Early Growth -Birth (Vrpm) -Six months to two years**
- 2. Early Growth -Infancy (VRpm) -Three to five years**
3. Late Growth -Childhood (VrPm) -Five to six years
4. Late Growth -Adolescence (VRPm) -Six to eight years
5. Prime/Plateau -Adulthood (VRPM) -Three to five years
6. Prime/Plateau -Maturity (vRPM) -No set time
7. Early Aging -Empty Nest (vRpM) -No set time
8. Early Aging -Retirement (vrPM) -No set time
9. Late Aging -Old Age (vrpM) -No set time
10. Late Aging -Death (m) -No set time

Developmental questions-asked at each stage:

- Who are we in faith?
- What is our mission?
- Who is our neighbor?