

**CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY**  
**Second Revision - June 2006**  
**Adopted at the Home Missions Standing Committee Meeting**  
**29 August 2006 Minute 06/259.3**

**STRATEGIES**

**1. MOTHER-DAUGHTER CHURCH**

This approach is the preferred model for all church plants. It involves a local church taking primary responsibility for planting another congregation. The new congregation would normally be in its own area (Charge boundaries) but in some instances, with the approval of Presbytery, could be further a field.

In this model a mother church would send a core group from its membership to form a new congregation in a new area. The Mother church, working with the Home Missions Committee, would be responsible for providing initial leadership and ministry staff with assistance from the Home Missions Committee where required. The Home Missions Committee would appoint a minister to undertake this work.

The Mother Congregation needs to be committed to:

- a. Developing the leadership in the Branch Congregation with a view to becoming a Home Mission Charge with its own ministry, Session and Committee of Management
- b. Encourage the Home Mission Charge to proceed as soon as practicable to become a full Sanction Charge

**2. SPONSOR AND SUPPORT**

Where neighbouring congregations to the church plant area are not strong enough to daughter a new work, Presbytery should seek a strong congregation to sponsor and support the new work. The sponsor congregation should be within the same Presbytery so Presbytery can encourage and maintain full oversight of the new work.

It may be necessary or helpful for other congregations from within or beyond the Presbytery to become 'Partners' in providing prayer, finance and support for the new work. (Note: gifts of used and obsolete equipment should be discouraged.)

**3. LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT**

Any new work must be under the control and oversight of a full Session.

Those involved in Church planting must be accountable to and report regularly to the Session and Presbytery.

Leadership and Oversight are crucial because new church plants always face unique challenges and difficulties.

It is wise to establish a Committee of Management as soon as possible to encourage the new Church plant to take control of their finances.

A Church Plant needs three elders as a core (two as a very minimum) and as soon as these are available an embryonic Session should be formed ready to take control when the congregation becomes independent. (If suitable elders are not initially available pray every week until the Lord sends them!) Notice how Paul always appointed elders to the churches he established. Good leadership is essential.

While the new church plant is working under the oversight of the Mother Church, it is essential that the Mother Church Session clearly defines lines of communications, authorities and accountabilities to avoid any conflicts or tensions.

It is important that core elders know and support the style of ministry of the church planter. The initial years of the church plant are an intensive time, and disagreements over ministry style and philosophy would be destructive

Assessor elders may be needed initially, but should be replaced with local elders as soon as possible because have the knowledge and commitment needed to promote a developing work.

It is essential to have those who can fill the positions of Treasurer and Secretary as soon as a Committee of Management is formed.

#### **4. SEEDING A CONGREGATION**

Mother and Sponsoring Congregations must be willing to seed a new Church Plant with a core of committed members who have the vision for the establishment of a new church. Ideally, thirty adults should be recruited including a number of families. Experience has shown the larger the core group the faster the new church will grow.

There must be at least one or two elders or godly and experienced leaders in this group.

Just as it is important for the potential start-up elders to know and support the style of ministry of the church planter, it is also essential for the core group members to have confidence in their new leader. The core group should be involved in the selection process of the minister so they will be willing to work with him.

Church planters should be Ministers or Licentiates rather than Home Missionaries so they can lead the Session and take the sacraments.

## **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF PRESBYTERY**

### **1. OVERALL STRATEGY**

When a local congregation with vision approaches Presbytery to support a church plant the Presbytery Strategy Committee (or its equivalent) should assess the suitability and feasibility of such a project and report to Presbytery.

It is also the responsibility of Presbytery to survey the area within the bounds of the Presbytery and to identify locations where the planting of new churches should be considered. This should be done at least annually. A special sub-committee will usually be appointed to do this.

Having identified such areas, Presbytery should approach neighbouring congregations to see who is in a position to mother or sponsor a new plant in the area.

When there is a possibility of a new church plant, Presbytery should call all congregations within its bounds to pray for this venture and should regularly report progress so prayer support can continue.

### **2. SUITABLE LOCATION**

In determining areas for possible church plants, the Presbytery (through its Strategy Committee) should consider the following:

1. Is it an area of growing population?
2. Are there other churches that are Biblical, Reformed and Evangelical in the area?
3. Is it an area where Presbyterian families already live?
4. Are there suitable elders available to provide leadership in this area who are enthusiastic about clear, contemporary, Biblical ministry?
5. Is a suitable building available where services could be conducted?
6. Is there adequate seating?
7. Is there sufficient parking?
8. Is the location visible and easily to find?

### **3. MINISTRY**

Presbytery should determine how ministry is to be provided for the new church plant:

- a. Is the Minister of the Mother- Sponsor Congregation in a position to provide ministry initially?
- b. Are there elders who can preach and lead Home groups in the area?
- c. Does there need to be an approach to the Home Missions Committee for the appointment of a Minister or Exit Student? If this is the case and someone with limited experience is appointed, Presbytery must be satisfied the Senior Minister is in a position to help and support.

- d. Presbytery must be satisfied the Home Missionary/ Student Minister/Exit Appointment is one who will willingly work under the supervision of the Senior Minister and Session and is qualified for the special demands of Church Planting.

#### **4. OVERSIGHT**

Presbytery has the responsibility to provide pastoral care and oversight for all congregations and ministers within its bounds. Such oversight and pastoral care is more particularly needed in the early stages of Church Planting. To provide this, it is suggested that all Presbyteries:

- a. Require quarterly reports from the Mother/ Sponsor Church and the minister engaged in the church plant
- b. Authorise the Strategy Committee or one of its senior members to keep in touch and constantly liaise with those involved in the Church Plant and, where problems arise, provide counsel and help as quickly as possible
- c. Produce and distribute regular Prayer Bulletins to encourage prayer and support throughout the Presbytery and wider church. This could include articles for New Directions.

Presbytery may also need to appoint someone to keep an eye on the finances of the new congregation. Where necessary, Presbytery should liaise and report to the Home Missions Committee.

It would be good for the Moderator of Presbytery to visit the new congregation each year.

Presbytery could also encourage other congregations to invite the new congregation to join them in activities such as Training Days, Church Camps, Youth functions etc.

#### **5. FINANCE**

Before a new work is commenced, Presbytery must satisfy itself that such a work will be financially viable and that the funds are available to sustain the work at least for the first three years. Those proposing the new work will need to present Presbytery with a detailed budget.

Presbytery should discourage a new Church plant from incurring debt as this can hinder development at a later stage. It is strongly recommended that both premises for services and Manse accommodation be rented, preferably with a long-term lease.

Presbytery should investigate the possibility of some person or persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church purchasing a suitable house as an investment and leasing it long-term to the new church.

Regular reports to Presbytery should include a financial statement of Cash Receipts and Payments including the weekly level of giving.

## **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

### **1. OVERALL STRATEGY**

The Home Missions Committee needs to develop an overall strategy for Church planting which will include:

- a. Identifying areas of growth where church planting could be considered.
- b. Noting areas of significant population where no Presbyterian witness exists
- c. Encouraging Presbyteries to find ways to plant churches in these areas.
- d. Finding established churches which could be rejuvenated and, in consultation with the Presbytery, exploring ways and means of renewing the work in these Charges.
- e. Seeking Assembly approval for Developmental Charge status.
- f. Explicitly encouraging the planting of contemporary Presbyterian churches which will be warm and welcoming and understandable to average Queenslanders.

### **2. PROVIDING MINISTRY**

The Home Missions Committee needs to

- a. Challenge the whole church with the need for prospective candidates for the ministry to meet the need of new church plants.
- b. Encourage suitable elders especially those recently retired to consider moving to areas of new church plants. Providing training to elders in the particular needs and challenges of church planting.
- c. Canvas Bible Colleges and Theological Colleges Australia wide for those who could become Home Missionaries and Candidates for the Ministry and would be interested in Church planting.

### **3. FUNDING**

If a suitable plan is proposed to the Home Missions Committee, it may approve funding to help the mother Church, core group and partner churches meet the costs of the Church plant in the early years. This would be in accordance with the regulations of the funds from which the amount is provided.

### **4. SUPPLYING RESOURCES**

For every new Church plant the Home Missions Committee should provide a kit free of charge which would include:

- Minute Books for session and Committee of Management
- Roll Book
- Certificates of Transference
- Baptismal and Communicant Certificates

They should also prepare a Manual which would contain:

- a. Instructions for the Treasurer including:
  - How to set up a Church Bank Account (and what kind of account)
  - How to set up the necessary multi-column Cash Book or what is best computer software for church record keeping.
  - Instructions re G.S.T.
  - How and when to make Remittances to Church Offices
  - How to prepare a Budget
  - Monthly and Annual Financial Reports
  - Annual Audit regulations and requirements
  - Non Cash Benefit payments to the Minister
  - Necessary Insurance: what to do
  
- b. Instructions for the Session Clerk including:
  - How to keep minutes
  - How to set up a Roll
  - Drawing up an Agenda for Session Meetings and Annual Congregational Meeting
  - Returns which are required each year.
  - How to handle correspondence both out and in.
  
- c. Instructions for the Secretary of the Committee of Management:
  - How to keep Committee Minutes
  - How to handle correspondence
  - What to include in an agenda
  
- d. Instructions for the Minister including:
  - What returns (eg Schedule A) need to be completed
  - How to conduct a Session Meeting
  - Preparing men for the Eldership
  - Resources available for Christian Education/ Bible Studies
  - Obtaining a Blue Card. Dealing with children and the opposite sex.
  - Organising time and personal Spiritual life
  - Care of wife and family
  - Where to go for help on various needs

NOTE: In preparing Ministers for Church planting, I believe this is best done through a course on Church planting or by personal interaction with someone who has already been through the experience. Home Missions or CMT need to run these regularly to include elders and interested persons as well as for ministers and candidates for the ministry.