

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Report to the Executive Commission 2009

The Committee:

A new committee took over the work of Church Development and Planning after the 2008 Assembly and comprises of: Chris Judelsohn (convener), Margeaux Engelbrecht (secretary), Wonke Buqa, Kingsley Dale, Lynn Forman, Theo Groenewald, Vuyo Mbaru, Vusi Mkhungo, Chris Moore, Lulama Mshumpela, Matorofa Mutanganavo, Moshe Rajuili, Mukondi Ramulondi, Craig Smith and Stephen van Schalkwyk.

Church Growth?

The committee recognises and affirms that Church Growth centres around and is founded upon church development, i.e. the development of the ministry or spiritual life of congregations (leadership training, outreach programmes, evangelism, worship, stewardship, discipleship etc.). We believe that a developing or growing church will plant new worshipping communities because it is in the 'nature' of the church to grow. Of course, growth should be measured in a number of ways, i.e. in terms of the finances and/or the spiritual life of the members and/or the attendance/membership and/or the ministry of the congregation. This growth will be influenced by the context in which a congregation finds itself.

Work of the Committee:

To this end the committee believes that the purpose of its work is:

- To function as a Church Growth resource group within the UPCSA that will enable and equip established congregations to develop and grow their ministry. To get Ministers, Elders, Congregations and Presbyteries thinking and doing church growth.
- To seek creative ways to enable and equip congregations and Presbyteries in planting new churches.

To achieve these purposes the work of the committee has been divided into 4 focus areas: **Church Development, Church Planting, Grants/Loans, and Church Growth Fund.** Each of these focus areas will be reported on in this report by firstly, pointing out the on going work of the committee and secondly, by highlighting some of the new ideas the committee is looking at in each area.

Church Growth Conference May 2009:

However, before reporting on the focus areas, it bears mentioning that the committee held a Church Growth Conference in May 2009 in Rosettenville. Each Presbytery was invited to send at least two delegates to the conference to do the following:

- To discuss what Church Growth is?
- To identify the different contexts of congregations in the UPCSA (data collection) and ask the question of what Church growth looks like in these contexts.
- To celebrate stories of Church growth in the UPCSA.
- To be spiritually fed.
- To ignite and fan the flame of Church growth in the UPCSA, primarily through the Presbyteries.

Insights from this conference have been incorporated into this report and of note is the **Appendix: Ministry in different contexts in the UPCSA**, which includes a table that lists, according to Presbyteries, the contexts of the different congregations and also the responses to the three questions asked of the delegates regarding church growth in each context.

FOCUS AREAS:

1) Church Development (Thinking Church Growth)

On going work:

- Training – *Building up a missional local Church* – University of Pretoria. The committee offers study grants to Ministers and encourages congregations to make use of the various courses offered at the Centre for Contextual Ministry. Details can be found at www.ccm.up.ac.za
- Youth Pastor/Director/Workers. This relates to the qualifications, status, remuneration and work of Youth Pastors/workers that were first raised at the 2008 Executive Commission. The Executive instructed the CDP committee to discuss this idea with the Assembly Youth Committee. The Youth Committee responded by affirming that the envisaged

appointment does not fall into their brief. The CDP committee is in favour of establishing a recognised UPCSAs ministry within congregations with oversight of young people along the lines first proposed, but before bringing proposals to the Assembly would first like to consult with the Ministry Committee.

- Church Development Conference. The committee hopes to hold an annual Church Development Conference with next year's conference focused on the subject of developing the local church/congregation with electives and guest speakers on topics relevant to congregations in all contexts in the UPCSAs.

New work:

- Looking at lay leader training and especially at training for the leadership in outstations.
- Creating a resource centre for the UPCSAs (website driven – www.upcsa-cdp.org.za).
- Pooling the ministry resources currently being used and developed across the UPCSAs by ministers and congregations.
- A Church Growth Newsletter celebrating stories of Church growth in the UPCSAs.
- To identify and engage the leadership in growing congregations in the UPCSAs with the intention of learning from them and then passing these lessons on to other congregations.
- Create Church Growth workshops (consultations) for use in Presbyteries or congregations focussed on the different contexts in the UPCSAs.

(See the Appendix to this report for thoughts on Church Growth in different contexts)

2) Church Planting

On going work:

- Encouraging church planting through established congregations or Presbyteries using the categories of Nuclear, Transitional and Constituted congregations.
- Encouraging the use of Church Development Evangelists (CDEs).

New Work:

- Review the current model of church planting in the UPCSAs, particularly in light of the continued existence of Preaching Places/Stations and Out Stations.
- Review the definition of a congregation in the UPCSAs.
- Review the historical/biblical ministry of the Evangelist in light of the current ministry of the CDE.
- Review the requirements to being a CDE.
- Offering financial support to 1 or 2 new church plants each year, i.e. in terms of building structures, purchasing land, providing resources (hymn books etc.).

Something to celebrate:

It was with joy that reports of new church plants from various Presbyteries were received at the recently held Church Growth Conference. Despite the economic and social hardships being experienced in Zimbabwe, we heard about how that Presbytery has embarked on a Church Growth/planting campaign that aims at doubling the number of congregations in Zimbabwe by 2012. The Presbytery has been divided into 6 regions to better facilitate this strategy. The result is that new churches have been planted in areas yet unreached by the UPCSAs, for example, in the north west of the country. The three Presbyteries in Zambia have also been working hard at growing the church there and planting new congregations. Zambia trains their own CDEs and with grants from the CDP committee are able to place the CDEs in various places around the country. They have also found that twinning new church plants with established congregations has been key to the success of their church planting. We heard from the Lekoa Presbytery that, despite poor resources, they have identified at least three places to plant new churches. In the Free State three churches have recently been planted and there is a drive to plant a church in Rocklands. In the Western Cape we heard about Imizamo United Church that has been planted in the township of Grabow and how the model of community outreach projects was used in establishing and growing that congregation. We heard about the 4Ways United Church in the Presbytery of eGoli that was planted 3 and half years ago and is about to call their first minister. The Presbytery of Tshwane has recently identified two Church Growth projects and appointed two CDEs.

3) Grants:

On going work:

- CDE grants - R12 000 per year, per project diminishing over a three year period. Currently there are 9 CDEs in Zambia, 22 CDEs in Zimbabwe & 5 in RSA.
- Buy-Out Grants - R12 000 per year, per main station (mother congregation) diminishing over a three year period.
- Property grants – Three grants of R15 000 per project per year.
- Assessment relief for growth orientated appointments.

New Work:

- Property Grants for 2009 of R89 000 to 4 projects. An extra allocation from the Robert Niven Trust allowed the committee to give extraordinary and once off grants (not budgeted for) to congregations for work on new buildings.

4) Church Growth Fund:

The committee is busy working on the establishment of a UPCSA Church Growth Fund. Both the Finance Committee and Priorities and Resources Committee have expressed support for the establishment of a fund of this nature and over the coming months the committee will put a proposal together to be presented to the 2010 Assembly. It is envisaged that this fund will:

- Offer substantial loans to congregations for the purchase of property.
- Offer grants to congregations in economically constrained contexts for the purchase of property.
- Offer financial support for evangelical work in new church plants for a limited period, probably 2 years.
- Purchase property in new/growing residential developments for the future planting of congregations.

The Fund will need to have a substantial cash injection with which to start operating; upwards of R20 million, as well as ongoing deposits to sustain the fund, though some of the capital will be recouped from loan repayments.

Conclusion:

Though the UPCSA faces a number of challenges we should not lose sight of the fact that the church is growing and that ministers, elders, congregations and Presbyteries should be encouraged to think and do Church Growth. The danger of focussing too much energy and resources and time on 'putting out fires' is that

we land up being unable to see beyond the problems and so get caught up in a cycle of blame and shame that slowly breaks down the work of the Spirit in the life of Ministers, Elders, congregations and Presbyteries.

This committee's deepest desire is to see the Church Grow, in all ways, and to accomplish this we want to see Church Growth high on the agenda and in the minds of every Minister, Elder, Congregation and Presbytery.

**CJ JUDELSON
CONVENER**

Proposals:

- 1) Executive receives the report
- 2) Executive notes that the purpose of the work of the committee is:
 - To function as a Church Growth resource group within the UPCSA that will enable and equip established congregations to develop and grow their ministry. To get Ministers, Elders, Congregations and Presbyteries thinking and doing church growth.
 - To seek creative ways to enable and equip congregations and Presbyteries in planting new churches.
- 3) Executive notes the recently held Church Growth Conference at which 13 Presbyteries were represented and the enthusiasm and passion for Church Growth the conference generated amongst the delegates.
- 4) Executive notes the new work the committee is engaging in within the 4 focus areas of its work.
- 5) Executive notes the intention of the committee to present a comprehensive proposal to the 2010 Assembly for the establishment of a UPCSA Church Growth Fund.
- 6) Executive commends the Appendix to this report entitled '**Ministry in different contexts in the UPCSA**' to all Sessions/Councils as a discussion document/discussion starter for Church Growth in their congregations.

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The question that now faces the committee is: How can we best equip and encourage Church Growth in these different contexts, particularly with respect to the many outstations that some congregations comprise of or serve?

Church Growth in different contexts:

In an attempt to address the question above, the committee asked those who attended the Church Growth Conference to answer three questions on Church Growth with regards each of the broadly defined contexts listed above. The results of this brainstorming session are listed below for your interest, thought and action.

QUESTION 1: Which ministries (both to those outside the church and those in) are most important in this context?

City:

- Out-reach to children: Week days, Education, Opening the church to the community for children's activities
- Outreach to refugees – foreigners, including skills training
- Outreach to prostitutes and substance abuses
- Prayer ministry
- Street Evangelism
- Counselling and caring
- Environmental ministry

Suburban:

- Children's & Youth ministry
- Vibrant worship
- Holistic small groups
- Fellowship/celebration events
- Creation of lasting "in-depth" relationships
- Counselling and support for trauma, crises, etc.
- Evangelism
- Support for and involvement in outreach projects

High Density:

- HIV/Aids: Counselling, Education, Home based care

APPENDIX:

Ministry in different contexts in the UPCSA

The committee felt it important to get some idea of the different contexts our congregations find themselves in and what portion of the UPCSA congregations are found in each context. The committee settled on 4 broadly defined contexts namely: **Inner City, Suburban, High Density Urban and Rural**. The table below lists the results from 13 of the 19 Presbyteries. Included in this table is an indication of the number of vacancies in each Presbytery as well as the number of outstations in each Presbytery. We recognise that the figures in the table may not be 100% accurate, but they do give an indication of what is happening 'on the ground', as it were.

Presbytery	Vacant	Outstations	City	Suburban	High Density	Rural
Drakensberg	2	105	2	4	3	9
EGoli	7	16	4	17	12	0
Free State	9	31	2	3	12	5
Lekoa	11	6	4	2	6	1
Limpopo	5	112	2	0	2	12
Thukela	7	65	3	3	4	5
Transkei	3	158	1	0	1	18
Tshwane	8	27	1	14	12	2
W. Cape	10	6	4	25	14	2
Zam. Copp.	7	0	8	0	2	2
Zam. M'ch.	2	22	2	1	5	2
Zam. Mun.	3	23	3	0	6	1
Zimbabwe	23	37	2	24	1	7

- Soup kitchen/food parcels/feeding schemes
- Healing services
- Ministry to victims of crime, abuse (women, children, men), rape, those rejected by society and to the elderly.
- Evangelism to children and adults
- Children ministry care/spiritual support
- Skills development: life skills
- Funerals and weddings
- Pastoral care – follow-up
- Working with other congregations/denominations

Rural:

- Children and youth
- Focussed women ministries
- Health and education
- Ministry to orphan, refugees and the physically abused
- Ministries for men
- Ministries for elderly and people with disability (being intentional about visibility)

QUESTION 2: What are the greatest needs for congregations in this context?

City:

- Parking space
- Transport
- Security
- Interventions in substance abuse

Suburban:

- Addressing the busy lifestyles of members of the congregation
- Pastoral care: divorce, funerals, marriage counselling
- People (laity) to be trained and equipped to lead
- Adult Christian Education
- Care and ministry for children
- Prayer meetings
- Biblical literacy.

High Density:

- Poverty alleviation
- Job creation – employment
- HIV/Aids
- Transport
- Addressing high crime rates

Rural:

- Trained leaders at all levels – especially Elders in out stations.
- Networking with community leaders
- Mature, sensitive engagement with cultural traditions
- Commemoration services
- Biblical literacy.

QUESTION 3: How is church growth measured in this context?

City:

- The churches influence in the community
- The commitment of church members through different ministries
- The church representing the community and meeting the needs of the people
- The ability to accommodate the needs of the community regarding worship.

Suburban:

- A combination of membership, financial and spiritual growth
- Loving relationships, serving hearts.
- The planting of new churches

High Density:

- Numbers: Membership, attendance at worship services, visitors
- Activities: Choir, Associations, skills training
- Consistency of attendance
- Financial growth.
- Buildings – well maintained
- A long ministry by the minister.

Rural:

- Good attendance and growth in membership
- Vibrant worship, life of church
- Visible pastoral care
- Sense of 'ownership' by the members
- Generosity in tithing
- Out-reach work