

**Proposal for an Inter-Classes, Inter-Denominational
Church Multiplication Team
for the Holland/Zeeland Region of
CRCNA and RCA Churches
April 2018**

Background and Opportunity

Since 2011, leaders in the CRCNA and RCA have been advocating a joint approach “for the development of visionary leaders and church planters who are theologically prepared and equipped to start and multiply churches that present the gospel in a way that is biblical, authentic, and contextual.”

(<https://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/crc-rca-create-church-planting-program>)

Approximately two years ago, Ken Ericks of the RCA and Amy Shenkel of the CRC hosted a lunch to invite local pastors to engage in collaborative work among the RCA and CRC. After this luncheon, Toby Gruppen hosted a follow-up gathering to invite the Holland/Zeeland RCA and CRC to work more collaboratively in church planting.

The first year of collaboration was focused on "reactive" ministry to help support and establish active church planting efforts. The second year became a more "future" focused effort to discuss potential church planting efforts. The group is now ready to move forward with a church multiplication proposal for Holland, Zeeland, and related areas.

Individuals included in the discussions of this group have included the following: Holland CRC – Art VanWy, John Burden; Holland RCA – Toby Gruppen; Zeeland CRC - Vern Sweringa, Mark Douglas; Zeeland RCA - Dan Ackerman, Gonzalo Venegas and Doug Baker.

The above-named persons have concluded that there is a need for collaboration and implementation on church multiplication by Reformed believers from the Holland/Zeeland area CRCNA/RCA classes, along with their participating congregations and regional agencies. They believe that God is leading them to be agents for empowering a regional movement of church parenting and planting.

This group acknowledges that each of the individual church multiplication (RCA) and home missions (CRCNA) teams has limited resources by themselves. After working together in a collaborative process for the past two years, they have identified complementary gifting in one another. They, also, have concluded that if steps are taken to work together, church planting efforts might possibly be increased exponentially.

Proposed Approach

In moving toward the development of this proposal, this group, now referring to itself as the Church Multiplication Team, has had detailed discussions about how to specifically approach church multiplication in the Lakeshore region. Areas that have received specific attention include: processes for equipping church planters, assessment procedures, residency opportunities, funding needs, development of a multiplication mindset in the churches, providing trained coaches, research into new planting opportunities, and establishing oversight processes. As a result of these discussions, the Team proposes a threefold approach to church multiplication among area classes. The approach includes the following:

1. Development and training of theologically Reformed church planters. This Team will initiate a process for discovering and developing future church planters and church planting team members. The development of a leadership pipeline would work with denominational agencies, seminaries, and

colleges for discovering potential planters, assessing them, and assisting them through coaching and mentoring in the development of church planting competencies;

2. Establishment of relationships with organized church pastors and leadership teams to train, equip and empower them (individually or collaboratively) to be parent churches. This process will be assisted by the Luminex Collaborative which provides training and support and which helps assess the health of a parent church in preparation for a new church plant. The Luminex Collaborative, a service of the RCA Regional Synod of the Great Lakes, often develops groupings of three to five local churches through a process of discerning gifts and resources to parent a local planting effort;
3. Development of Funding structures. The Team will be seeking to assist traditional church planting efforts (those needing short term funding with the intent of becoming self-supporting congregations within five years), missional/bi-vocational efforts (longer support up to ten years to engage unreached people groups), and micro-churches. Each of these models demands different funding strategies and focus;
4. Development of oversight processes for congregations from launch until organized, since on-going support and communication needs a clear process for new congregations to thrive;
5. Development of a five- to ten-year collaborative church planting/new missional efforts plan;
6. Development of a Facilities Management Team to assist in the future reality of congregations who have come to a closure of their ministry lifecycle and who now need a new missional effort.

The initial goal of the group is to have 5–7 congregations continually involved in the process of being equipped to be parent churches, to have 3–5 individuals continually in the church planter pipeline, and to plant 3–5 churches per year.

The financial startup request is for \$10,000 per classis for the first year, which would be used to help establish this Church Multiplication Team, which would start working on the six-fold initiative listed above. The development of this Team would open the opportunity for funding through the CRCNA/RCA Multiplication Initiative in order to provide a stipend for the Team leader, a retreat for strategic planning, and specific training for Team members to lead in coaching, assessment, residency placement and oversight.

Proposal Recommendations

This proposal seeks approval and support from the four classes' executive teams for the formation of an inter-classes, inter-denominational Church Multiplication Team, and it requests the following:

- that this Team utilize and seek support from personnel and resources of the "CRCNA/RCA Multiplication Initiative Implementation Team." See available examples: Suburban Chicagoland Cluster Funding Stream Proposal, Cluster Residency Plan, RCA Church Multiplication Grant Proposal, and New Congregation Plan;
- that the work, previously done by separate classis teams, now be administered by this one Team with representatives appointed from each of the four classes (3 persons per classis). These representatives are to be mutually accountable to (and report to) the Team and their individual classes. Representatives would be required to work through an application process and then be placed according to passion and gifting;
- that the leader of the Church Multiplication Team be appointed by the Team and approved by each classis;
- that funds budgeted by each classis for church multiplication(RCA)/home missions(CRCNA) be available to this new Team, in addition to the \$10,000 being requested of each classis;
- that the Team be authorized to function on behalf of the classes in seeking Kingdom Enterprise Zone funding from denominational sources and in managing its budget and administrative processes. See appended document: "Proposal for a New Initiatives Grant for a Holland/Zeeland Area Church Parenting

and Planting Funding Stream through the CRCNA/RCA Multiplication Initiative Implementation Team Over a Three-Year Period;”

- That authority delegated to the Church Multiplication Team to function on behalf of the classes be evaluated annually for its effectiveness;
- that the Church Multiplication Team provide quarterly written reports to each classis;
- that church plants which are moving toward organization decide for themselves on their preferred CRCNA or RCA denominational affiliation.

Summary

This proposal has been developed by pastoral leaders who share a passion for church multiplication. They look forward to the privilege of serving Christ and his church by facilitating Gospel outreach through church planting. It is the hope of Team members not only to plant churches that plant churches, but by cooperating together as CRCNA and RCA leaders, a refreshing example can be demonstrated of denominational unity.

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