

Cell-Based Church Multiplication

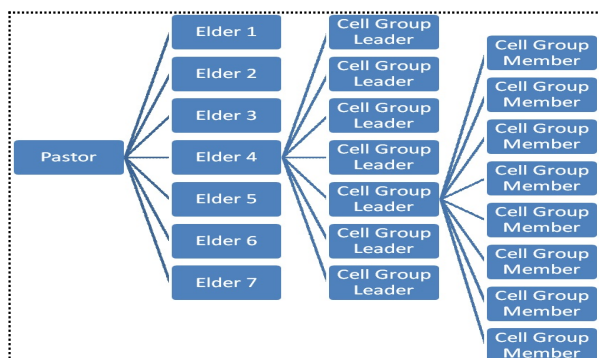
The Church Planting Taskforce (CPT) met in Melbourne on 03 February 2010. Three church plants are currently being funded by the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia:

- The Wheatbelt Fellowship (Perth, WA)
- Redeemer Christian Church (Kingston, TAS)
- Mansfield CRC (Brisbane, QLD)

What follows has been adapted from the report Mansfield gave to the CPT.

Mansfield CRC Committed to Church Planting

Our vision is to grow our church to the point of 'multiplication' or church planting. Strategically, this will be achieved through the working and multiplying growth of intentional, evangelism-oriented cell groups working in our community. Our desired target and numerical indicator for planting a new church will be to reach a church population of 350 members and regular attendees. This figure has been decided upon the following structural method of a cell-based church:



You will notice that in this structure for every 1 pastor there are 7 elders, for 1 elder there

are 7 cell group leaders and for 1 cell group leader there are 7 cell members (1x7x7x7). If a church has achieved this structure more or less, they have reached capacity. The total size of the church will be 343 members, not including those who do not participate in cell groups. At this point the church will be looking to multiply (or plant) another church. This structure will then be reproduced in the new church plant to a point of 1x7x7x7.



It is our hope to reach this number by the end of 2011. In our opinion this is within our reach and should give us enough staying power and support to be able to fund a planter church. We reach this opinion through the growth we have experienced in the past year, and we predict a similar growth next year (2010). The following observations have helped us in getting to this conclusion, namely, consistent, across-the-board growth in all the current cell group demographics.

A few numbers:

- Our cell group attendance is now roughly 200 people.
- Our morning service sees on average 190-210 people. Our evening service (predominantly young adults) caters for 40 people on average. Therefore MCRC serves 240-250 people per week on average.

Growth Through Families

We have 15 family cell groups with 147 adults attending these groups. The growth experienced in 2009 was from 10 groups to 15 at the conclusion of the year, meaning that 5 new groups were formed during the last 11 months.

Most groups have children attending as well and ways of ministering to them will be on the agenda for the next Cell leader's workshops. Our Sunday school has grown with two classes during the previous year, namely the pre-school class and ROC Youth (ages 13-15) catechism class. Our Know-Your-Bible groups grew from one group to four groups, meeting regularly on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Attendance from our cell group leaders to our quarterly workshops have been good with 75-80% attendance on average.

Our hope is to establish and strengthen 4 family cell groups which have already been started in 2009 but will become, God willing, fully independent and healthy in 2010. This will be in addition to any new and spontaneous formations of other groups.

Lighthouse (Young Adults)

Since the beginning of 2009 we have multiplied 3 new cell groups and are now at the total of 7 cell groups, totalling 37 students and young professionals. These figures are on

the conservative side of the scale, with cell groups consistently fluctuating higher than the membership numbers. And we can with confidence claim that we minister to more than 50 young people on a weekly or fortnightly basis in and through our cell group ministry. Along with these new cell groups, several leaders-in-training have been identified as possible candidates for new groups next year.

Our intake of new cell group members have come through two main methods.



Firstly, through the Lighthouse evening services, where new faces are met and where the process of relationship building begins to a point where cell leaders feel comfortable inviting them into cell groups. Secondly, new group members have come through existing relationships with current cell group members through uni, school, and work. In both these cases it is amazing to witness how unique each person's journey with God looks. We have seen both mature and young Christians, and also non-Christians, being invited to groups and also becoming integral members of their cell groups.

In the new year we would like to start a stronger coaching relationship with our current Lighthouse cell leaders, including a retreat in the first quarter to focus ourselves on the task at hand.

New Initiatives

Initiatives for Next Year directly impacting church growth and cell group functioning:

In addition to individual initiatives to do with the broader cell group ministry (ie. establishing, training, encouraging of cell groups), there are several initiatives which MCRC are planning to run in 2010 which will impact on church and cell group growth.

1. Counselling Initiative for 2010:

We will run repetitive Information Seminars throughout the year, focusing on the following issues:

- Abuse
- Depression / Anxiety / Panic Attacks / Compulsions
- Marriage Preparation
- Relationship Skills and Marriage enrichment
- Divorce & Separation
- Stress Coping Strategies

These Seminars will be aimed at our community and will be 'non-Christian friendly', but they will each have an additional voluntary component: Biblical Perspectives. Here attendees may decide if they want to hear about Christian values in relation to these issues and becomes a way of evangelism and outreach. The initiatives will be promoted under the Name of our Counselling Ministry: Good News Counselling (see web page: www.goodnewscounselling.com)

Additionally, we will initiate the establishment of Depression / Anxiety / Compulsions Support Groups, which may in the longer term become potential cell groups.

These initiatives are aimed at needs-oriented evangelism, the establishment of new relationships with those in need in our community.

2. Optimizing Infrastructure Initiative

We will be setting our processes in place to cater for the physical infrastructural needs of MCRC as we continue to grow.

- We will be creating a workgroup to look into the needs and requirements for our vision and mission to be met, keeping in mind our desire to facilitate a church multiplication in 2011.
- Our philosophy is not to build bigger churches, but to multiply and to create capacity for further growth. However, we need to optimize what we already have and we hope to come up with innovative and creative solutions to our problem of numerical growth.

3. Coaching and Mentoring Initiative

We want to focus on maintaining strong, healthy cell group leaders; not forsaking them while we work towards growing the church.

We will be purposefully creating a coaching strategy for our cell group leaders in 2010 where they will be regularly supported, encouraged and trained to become more effective at pastoral care and outreach within their cell groups.

While it is important for MCRC to reach the 350 member mark in order to multiply, we want 350 healthy members, not a group of flabby, unfit and unready Christians. We want to be able to sustain the growth we have experienced by keeping the current members fit and healthy. Not only will this help to keep them involved in the church, it will also make it easier to reach even more people because they will have realised that we are all called to evangelism and will be living out the Great Commission.

We are very aware that despite our best plans and efforts, despite our dreams and visions, it is God who grows his church (Psalm 127, Matthew 16:18) and that He is ultimately in control. We humbly ask his guidance and blessing on our actions and ask that the Church Planting Taskforce and the rest of the

CRCA keep us in prayer as we earnestly desire
to fulfil the Commission Jesus gave us.