



# The Christian Reformed Church Classis Alberta North

## Supplemental Agenda for 147<sup>th</sup> Session, October 20-21, 2010

First Christian Reformed Church of Red Deer, Alberta

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**DELEGATES PLEASE NOTE:**

**Both the Classis Budget for 2011 and the Time Schedule** which accompany this supplemental Agenda are REVISED from the one sent out with the main Agenda. Please use this one instead.

## Calvin Theological Seminary Highlights

1. CTS invites you to become a Facebook friend of the seminary to receive regular updates on life at CTS.
2. Rev. Jul Medenblik will begin his term of CTS president next summer, 2011. He will be available for limited service to CTS in the coming year. President Plantinga and President-elect Medenblik are working together this year to provide for a smooth transition next summer.
3. President Plantinga has completed a rewrite of "A Sure Thing," a course for high school students. He is also doing a major rewrite of the Belgic Confession section of "A Place to Stand" for the 450th anniversary of the Belgic Confession in 2011
4. CTS is grateful for strong enrollment numbers this fall with 103 new students, including 50 M.Div. students!
5. CTS is thankful for its partnership with congregations and pastors in the training of pastors and ministry leaders. 9 out of 18 Mentored Ministry Group leaders this year are pastors: Mike Abma, Ruth Boven, Erica Dekker, Lynn Barger Elliott, Donald Klop, Daniel Mouw, William Renkema, Reggie Smith, and David Struyk.
6. Why not study Ephesians in Ephesus? Fourteen Calvin seminary students plus three Calvin College students participated in the seminary's first international travel course in Turkey taught by Professor Jeffrey Weima.
7. Thanks to pastors and others for recommending great students for Facing Your Future! This summer 34 students experienced theological education at CTS and ministered in Paterson, New Jersey, Tualatin, Oregon and Toronto, Ontario.
8. This past year congregations contributes collected special offerings of over \$100,000 to support Facing Your Future and Ministry Incentive Plan (a revolving student loan fund)! Praise the Lord!
9. The seminary's certificate program is catching on! These programs are geared toward church members and church staff interested in specialized training, but not planning to complete a degree program. Certificate programs are available in nine areas: church planting, educational ministries, English Bible, Ministry, Missions and Evangelism, Pastoral Care, Theology, Worship and Youth Ministry. Applicant must be high school graduates, and can find more information at [www.calvinseminary.edu/degrees/certificates/](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/degrees/certificates/)
10. In the Fall of 2010 CTS will launch a new website called "The Ministry Theorem," designed to provide pastors and church leaders with ideas, inspiration, and resources for heightening our Christian appreciation for the ways science reveals the wonders of God's universe to us.

## Classis Home Missions Committee

The committee met on May 6<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>. The members of CHMC are Rick Abma, Bruce Gritter, Henry Steenbergen, Peter Tuininga and Anne VanderHoek with one lay-person position still to be filled to replace Bernie Kolkman who served for seven years.

CHMC continues to hear updates from Victor Ko regarding the blessings and challenges of **mosaicHouse** and supports Victor accordingly. Classis will hear some of these stories of harvest blessings and challenges. CHMC has had extensive discussions on a 3-5 year strategic plan for future church planting in Classis Alberta North as to what this might look like. Martin Contant (Regional Leader for Home Missions in Western Canada) has been meeting with CHMC to help us in these discussions.

From these discussions CHMC is recommending that classis adopt a proposal for a new “Neighbourhood Life” mission initiative starting in the Laurier Heights neighbourhood in Edmonton but with the intent that this model could work in neighbourhoods not only in Edmonton but in other communities of Classis Alberta North (see attached proposal). This proposal is designed in part to assist congregations within Classis to equip members to share and live out the gospel in their neighbourhoods.

CHMC wants to make it known to the churches that CHMC has been authorized by Classis Alberta North to provide financial support for special outreach ministry projects proposed and initiated by congregations within classis. There is a protocol for churches to make applications to CHMC for this funding. Take note that these grants are available for up to \$3000 or one-half of the projected costs of the project, whichever is least. Please contact Anne Vanderhoek, CHMC secretary for further information. [annevh@clearwave.ca](mailto:annevh@clearwave.ca)

### Recommendations:

1. That Victor Ko speak to Classis to provide an update on the blessings and challenges of the mosaicHouse church plant.
2. That Martin Contant address Classis about the challenges and opportunities that Home Missions faces on a denominational level in light of new economic conditions.
3. That classis adopt the “Neighbourhood Life Proposal” as a new initiative for participating in God’s mission in our region (with the \$25,000 funding request covered by \$10,000 within the 2011 budget and the other \$15,000 coming from reserve funds in the CHMC account).
4. That Classis adopt the 2011 budget as proposed by CHMC (and adjusted by CIC).

Respectfully submitted on behalf of CHMC,  
Henry Steenbergen (chair of CHMC)  
September 15, 2010

## Neighbourhood Life Proposal

Classis Alberta North ☞ Home Missions Committee ☞ Fall 2010

This proposal is founded on the previous work of Classis Alberta North (CAN) in pursuing the mission and Kingdom of God in our region. The first initiative in this decade was the planting of The River. Then Trevor Vanderveen (currently serving as Lead Pastor of First CRC Vancouver) prepared and presented a report in 2007 on behalf of CHMC entitled, "Planting Seeds: Edmonton Area CRC Church Planting" noting that *the continued growth of the region represented by Classis Alberta North both in population and diversity represents a vast church planting opportunity. In the words of Jesus, "the harvest is ripe"*. The conception and birth of mosaicHouse followed. Last year (Fall 2009) in following, Classis reviewed a "CHMC 3-5 Year Strategic Plan".

The latter Strategic Plan included the following:

*If a strategic plan is to be helpful and effective, it is essential that CHMC and Classis recognize and embrace the changing nature of both the church and church planting in Canada and Alberta North. In his influential book, "The Forgotten Ways", Alan Hirsch identifies 5 key areas in which the church, especially in post Christian cultures like Canada, Australia and Europe, must re-define itself if it is to successfully engage the culture and win people to Christ. They are in his words, "a powerful paradigm grid with which we will be able to assess our current understandings and experiences of church and mission."*

The report concluded that *Given the above changes, it should be assumed that going forward new church plants and "missional communities" might take any number of different imaginative and incarnational forms (samples were given in that report) ... and that ... CHMC and Classis must develop a strategic plan that takes into account the aforementioned dynamics. Moreover, because this new landscape for church planting is so fluid, wisdom dictates that CHMC and Classis should focus on creating the optimum conditions for church planting and missional communities going forward, rather than setting artificial goals as to how many and what type of communities ought to be planted. If, as Hirsch indicates, missional movements and networks spread like viruses, it makes sense to encourage the spread of the virus rather than dictate how the virus should spread.*

The following proposal will use Hirsch's grid as outlined in that report (those components are in italics) to explain and present the case for Classis support of a Neighbourhood Life initiative as a creative way to begin to implement this 'strategic plan'.

### **1. The Missional/Incarnational Impulse**

*Hirsch argues that we are past the days in which the church can expect that merely by being "open for business", un-churched people will find their way in. To coin a phrase, "if we build it, they WON'T come". If the church is going to be effective moving forward, it MUST find ways to bring the church to Canadian culture. The goal is to seed and embed the Gospel into different cultures and people groups. This means a much greater emphasis on multiple missional movements reaching increasingly divergent parts of our society.*

Neighbourhood life is all about being the Presence of Jesus where we live (which is the incarnational impulse Hirsch and others describe based on Scripture). It begins where we are-where God has sent us (missional)/placed us *to dwell among* and it calls us to keep God's 'second greatest' command - loving our neighbours, the people right in front of our noses, who live next door.

As the “called out ones” (*ecclesia*) in their neighbourhoods, God’s people are the sign, foretaste and servants of the Kingdom of God that others might experience His reign. Of course that can only happen if we are there- present, living amongst, partnering with, developing relationships. The mission statement of the CRCNA describes ‘transforming lives and communities’. Being attentive to the people and place where we live helps us begin to do that.

Thus, the Neighbourhood Life initiative is aimed at modelling, encouraging, equipping and supporting those who are intentionally developing relationships and engaging in their neighbourhoods.

Check out: **Rediscovering the Art of Neighboring**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jpOYiXzwyA&feature=Playlist&p=ADF76C04975CC3A4&index=0&playnext=1>

In so doing, the movement will have mission as its organizing principle. In other words, everything that it does will be shaped by, determined by the mission. God is missional ... in following, so are His people; we are His sent Ones.

## **2. Leadership**

*New churches and missional communities will increasingly be drawn to leaders who have the gifts and skills to lead effectively and the passion to creatively engage the work of reaching people for Jesus. Pastors will be assessed and rise to influence not on the basis of their degree or diploma, but on their ability to fulfill the office. Future pastors will be raised up from the harvest and for the harvest by other apostolic leaders and disciplined into leadership rather educated into leadership. To be sure, education will still be important. However, how leaders are educated will change. Things such as internet and distance learning, just-in-time training, self-education, mentoring and tent making will all be key aspects in the formation of a new generation of church leaders.*

Hirsch and others (our Reformed theology) go onto affirm the priesthood of all believers. In addition, the missional church advocates ‘the mantra’ of the Chinese underground church, “Every believer is a church planter”. Neighbourhood life seeks to live this out by acknowledging, empowering and affirming local believers in their neighbourhoods living out Kingdom community with a mission. Believers in and with their neighbourhoods pray, extend hospitality, serve, care and disciple (before people even know they are being disciplined) as the priests of their neighbourhood, loving as Jesus loves!

Leadership of Neighbourhood Life is M-E-S-S-Y. Leaders cluster together and participate in peer coaching which is aimed at...

M Modelling of the incarnational-missional impulse in their neighbourhood;

E Equipping and being equipped for it

S Supporting it and being supported

S Sharing the stories

Y Yielding to the Spirit/ Yielding control (e.g. See #4 *Organic* below- being viral; discovering what God is up to and partnering with Him- prevenient grace, etc.).

## **3. Disciple Making**

*New churches and missional communities will be increasingly concerned not with nurturing church members, but with nurturing Christian disciples. They will not pander to “consumer” Christians who demand Christian goods and services. Instead, joining these missional enterprises will require a high degree of commitment and sacrifice on the part of adherents. As such, new churches and missional communities will tend to be smaller, slower growing and more intimate as they focus more intently on the practice of spiritual disciplines. The upside of this will be the emergence of many more disciple making disciples who take their faith and Christian commitment with utmost seriousness.*

Neighbourhood life forms/unites around loving God and loving our neighbours. In BEING good news to our neighbours we help them to *hear* the good news. The focus is on doing life together and out of

those relationships flow the questions and responses, the tangible meeting of needs and evidence of the Kingdom of God reigning. This incarnational approach is quite different from inviting a neighbour to a program, class or worship service.

#### **4. Organic Structures**

*The future of church governance and structures will become more flexible as emerging missional communities organize themselves missionally. In short, the model of church based primarily on congregation, programs, buildings and membership will fade. In its place will emerge a network of churches and missional communities embracing appropriate structures for metabolic growth. In Hirsch's words, "we need to develop a notion of Christian community, worship, mission, and organization which, like the NT ecclesia, is more flexible, adaptive and responsive to change." (pg. 199). This is evident in many denominations including the CRC, as they focus on nurturing partnerships and mutual empowerment.*

Each neighbourhood group/missional community will develop certain parameters and covenant practices as it grows and participates in God's mission according to God's leading in their context. The movement will function more like a starfish than a spider. In other words, as the DNA of a starfish is in every cell such that when cut off, even a small bit of a leg will grow into another whole starfish so each *communitas* will multiply and manifest itself uniquely, contextually while retaining a connection to 'mother' for accountability and support (e.g. administration).

Thus, in these missional communities, community will not look like a 'traditional' church plant but will each carry the DNA of a church in their neighbourhood.

#### **5. *Communitas* (Hirsch's term for community with a mission)**

*New churches and missional communities will be much more radical. They will have a deeper sense of being "in it" together and therefore will take much greater risks for the sake of the gospel. Their mantra will be, "me for the community and the community for the world." As such, we should expect more passionate and uniquely functioning churches and missional communities moving forward.*

*Communitas, in the way I want to define it, is a community infused with a grand sense of purpose; a purpose that lies outside of its current internal reality and constitution. It's the kind of community that "happens" to people in actual pursuit of a common vision of what could be. It involves movement and it describes the experience of togetherness that only really happens among a group of people actually engaging in a mission outside itself. Alan Hirsch*

A simple way to define *communitas* is "community with a mission".... which is, in its simplest form, the church. Neighbourhood Life then is 'the church' on mission in its context, in the neighbourhoods where *we live and move and have our being*.

This proposal thus, seeks to embrace and live out all of the above dimensions of effective missional movements as presented and as already being manifested and blessed, not only in Edmonton but in a wide variety of communities across North America.

**Purpose :** To catalyze, equip and nurture neighbourhood missional communities (*communitas*) that are trailers of the Kingdom of God where they live, by loving their neighbours and making their neighbourhoods better places to live.

*Missional leaders commonly speak of "moving back into the neighborhood," of learning to listen and build relationships and create a context in which the gospel may flourish in word and deed. Mark Priddy*  
[\*A New Imagination for the Church\*](#)

### **Primary movements in neighbourhood missional community 'planting':**

- Identifying the neighbourhood and attending to it (E.g. Offering hospitality; praying for, serving, engaging).
- Gathering "kingdom seekers" in the neighbourhood, eating, learning, meditating on Scripture, and praying together...
- Discerning what God is doing in the neighbourhood and participating in it.
- Being/becoming the 'priests' of the neighbourhood.
- Sharing stories with the larger body of Christ and encouraging her and being encouraged by her; participating in missional cluster gatherings such as N3 (Neighbourhood Network Nights) and Missio Explorers.

### **Typical qualities of a neighbourhood communitas/church plant:**

- Five to fifteen households from a neighbourhood committed as the core or "bounded" group defined by a set of missional practices which are a reflection of the group's commitment to Jesus as Lord.
- Each neighbourhood communitas (church) includes (integrates and seeks to balance) the functions of "Word-centeredness", "community" and "mission".
- Other households participate in some of the life and activities of the core group and are invited into the 'bounded' set.
- Regular activities of a group consist of; meals together; meals together/socials/parties/community time with the neighbourhood, community engagement, caring for the needs of those on the margins of the neighbourhood, Bible reading, celebration gatherings, serve projects to make the neighbourhood a better place to live; engagement of the neighbourhood in larger mission events (e.g. fund raiser for Haiti), etc.
- Informal and small group connections which are recreation, discipleship or care based.



### **Neighbourhood Life Catalyzer's Role**

- To facilitate and lead their own Neighbourhood Communitas- modelling it!
- To center, equip, encourage and send other neighbourhood communitas leaders- missional Kingdom workers/ 'lay church planters' throughout Classis Alberta North.
- To provide and train for M-E-S-S-Y Leadership in CAN churches- e.g. coaching, clustering, etc. 'traditional' (for lack of a better term) church pastors/leaders in being M-E-S-S-Y and facilitating such movements in and through their congregations. This is in conjunction with Home Mission's Western Canada's Missional Leadership Team (HM-WC-MLT) and Forge Neighbourhood Life.
- Other oversight and support for neighbourhood communitas.

### **Funding Request from Classis**

Three Years at \$25,000/year includes salary (for approximately 10 hours/week) and resourcing. CRHM will also be contributing for additional hours and Cluster leadership throughout Western Canada (see below for specific related HM goals\*).

**Community Type****Ministry Type**

- Any Neighbourhood
- ✓ CPD Church Planting & Develop
  - ✓ MFC Mission-focused Churches
  - ✓ EM Educational Mission- in as much as the campus is a
  - ✓ MLD Missional Leader Develop

**Ministry Name:** Neighbourhood Life/ Missional Communities

Ethnicity: Diverse

Pastor/Leader: Karen Wilk

Address: 8115 133 Street, Edmonton

(780)483-8064; kwministry@shaw.ca

Treasurer Email: kaweah@rivercommunity.ca

Cheque Payable to: The River Community Church

**Mail cheque to:** 3935 114 Street, Edmonton, T6J 1M3

Classis: Alberta North

HMRL: Western Canada

**\* Home Mission Goals**

*\* In conjunction with Classis Alberta North (CAN) Home Missions Committee prepare a proposal for the following--*

- 1] Catalyze targeted (willing and interested) CRC leaders into “Missional Clusters”, and include them where possible, in existing ecumenical clusters for purposes of peer learning, accountability and shared affinity for their city (Edmonton).

**Actions Steps:**

- a. Casting the vision /telling the stories at various gatherings....
  - i. “Love your Neighbour” Presentation at Classis Alberta North Meeting- October
  - ii. DOE- November 6<sup>th</sup>- Neighbourhood- Mission focus/theme- lead/facilitate with Martin Contant
- b. Promotion of learning opportunities primarily through personal engagement of leaders, and invitations to Forge Canada and other missional events in the city;
  - i. Organize 2-4 *Day's With* throughout the church season...
    - The first is to be held on September 23-24 with Paul Sparks and Tim Soerens.

- c. Lead/facilitate monthly N3s (Neighbourhood Network Nights);
- d. Lead/facilitate monthly Forge Cluster/Hub gatherings for M-E-S-S-Y leadership (Leaders that **M**odel, **E**quip, **S**upport, **S**hare stories and **Y**ield to the Spirit).

2] Develop two additional “Missional Clusters” in Central Alberta and also assist in developing one in Winnipeg, MB.

**Action Steps**

- a. Work cooperatively with the Regional Leader, the CHMC's of the respective classes and Forge Canada-
  - i. Participate actively in the work of the MLT of HM Western Canada
- b. Meet with ‘potential’ leaders in Lacombe/Red Deer area and Calgary...seek to establish monthly gatherings in these centres-
  - i. Coach/encourage/bless the leaders of these clusters;
  - ii. Equip the clusters with resources, support, etc.

3] Develop several pilot projects that nurture neighbourhood missional communities that embody the principles of the missional-incarnational church.

**Action Steps**

- a. Identify potential leaders.... cast vision, coach, encourage, etc.
- b. See above – Facilitate the Missio Explorers Cluster and Missional Streams, etc.

4] Nurture Laurier Heights neighbourhood as a missional community, being attentive to how the Spirit is developing this transforming neighbourhood as a demonstration of His kingdom and as a paradigm/pattern for others.

## Classis Interim Committee

Excerpts from CIC meeting of Sept. 20, 2010; **motions in bold require Classis approval.**

1. **Motion: CIC recommends to Classis that \$5000 be added to the 2011 budget for the Classis Leadership Team. Ongoing funding will be contingent upon the partnership relationship with King's being further clarified and approved at a future Classis meeting.**
2. **Rev. Walt Brouwer** reviewed his planned prayer exercise for the upcoming Classis meeting. CIC was favourably impressed with Walt's plan to publish a semi-annual prayer calendar.
3. Calvin College Board of Trustees requests nominees from CAN. Churches have been informed to send names of nominees to the Clerk by Oct. 15. West End CRC and Fellowship CRC each have a nominee already.
4. Time Schedule adjustments: Classis Home Missions Committee asked for 30-40 minutes for **Rev. Henry Steenbergen** to present a "Neighbourhood Life Proposal" and the CHMC Report. CIC received the Neighbourhood Life Proposal after the budget had been formulated. The committee is looking for a funding commitment of \$25,000 a year for three years, which includes the hiring of a new Classis employee. **Motion: CIC recommends that the committee be given time to report on the concept to Classis in October 2010, and that churches and the Home Missions Committee look at this matter and make specific recommendations at a future meeting of Classis.**

Classis Interim Committee members: Herman Berkenbosch, Rev. Gary Bomhof, Rev. Fred Bultman, Rev. Martin Mobach (chair); Rick Struik (Stated Clerk), Arlene VandeKamp (Assistant to Stated Clerk), Bill Wildeboer.

## Classis Youth Ministry Committee

Our committee has been meeting regularly with our consultant, Ron deVries. One of the primary things we have done in those meetings is hear from him the work that is being done in youth ministry in the Classis. He keeps us apprised of the churches that he has been working with and how that is going for him and them. His report to classis gives a summary of those activities to this body. We have been pleased with his performance and have encouraged him in continuing with the direction he has been taking the position.

Other issues facing our committee have been looking at how we can facilitate the beginnings of a more unified hiring process for youth pastors (which could be applied to other staff positions) and a common evaluation procedure for churches to use with the same. There is a growing concern for such things to happen and there is also a growing body of literature in that regard. Ron has been taking the point on this issue as well and his work has been appreciated and has guided us well in these conversations.

We have also been encouraging the formation of classis wide events that will be available for Jr High. A group has taken this on and we will continue to support them in doing so with grant money and with other support as necessary. Sr High activities and Young Adult activities have also been supported. We see more of these and are excited that especially in the area of Young Adult activities, that the group is self-functioning and needing very little assistance. We hope that in some way this is part of the answer to what is seen as a drop in Young Adult presence in the church.

Also we have been able to assist in getting a retreat set up with Youth Unlimited for Youth Workers in Western Canada. Last year they met in Radium, BC and will again this coming winter. People were greatly blessed by this ministry offering and we encourage the churches to let their youth workers (Paid and volunteer) know of this event and encourage and financially support their youth leaders to go to this event.

On another note, one of our members, Cindy Tuininga, will be unable to take part in our committee for the next few months for medical reasons. We ask that as you keep the work of our Consultant and our committee in your prayers that you will remember her in a special way as well.

The committee thanks Classis for its support, its guidance and the privilege of serving in this way on behalf of the youth of our classis.

Submitted by Rev. Dan Meinema