

The New ERC Strategic Plan  
Town Hall Meetings, Fall 2017  
Kevin Richardson

Where we are and where God is leading the Eastern  
Regional Conference, Churches of God....

Vision Statement: *The ERC exists to glorify God by multiplying healthy churches that introduce persons to Jesus Christ and disciple them into fully devoted followers.*

*The ERC exists to multiply healthy, life-giving churches led by healthy, life-giving pastors and served by healthy, life-giving regional leadership.*

#### Today's Situation

- Between 2006 and 2015 the region has experienced an aggregate decline of 1.4%, with existing churches declining 8%, and most congregations shrinking even more. We have failed to draw into our churches the emerging generation of children, youth and young adults.
- While we have more churches today (145) than in 2008 (141), our average attendance is lower.

#### How Did We Get Here?

- We have planted more churches in the last decade than any other decade in the last 100 years. We have planted churches but at the expense of our established churches.
- In the last ten years, 8 churches have closed. Five have left the denomination (doesn't include new church plants in the last ten year).

#### How Did We Get Here?

- Despite having more churches now than in 2008, we see numbers continue to decline—attendance, salvation, baptism, membership.
- While some of our churches are clearly engaging God's mission, too many have become inwardly focused and continue struggling.
- With a core of aging churches and the median age of ERC clergy rising, we face a challenging but not unconquerable situation.
- The loss of next generation and young leaders has had a crippling effect which will take years to remedy.

#### Available Options

- Continue things as they are and watch the region continue to shrink
- Develop a new strategic plan that will build on the core of healthy, life-giving churches and systematically seek to help every church be healthy and life-giving.

- We believe that the Holy Spirit is convicting us to take bold, decisive steps.

#### Goal and Objective

- We commit ourselves and our resources to reaching the next generation for Christ, both churched and unchurched, seeking God for a season of church renewal and multiplication that will reverse our region's pattern of decline. The ERC will work together to empower all of our churches to become healthy, life-giving churches led by healthy, life-giving pastors and served by healthy, life-giving regional leaders. To this end we will passionately pursue the following goals together.

### **GOAL #1: REFOCUS, RESTRUCTURE AND IF NECESSARY, REPLACE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TO ACCOMPLISH THIS STRATEGIC PLAN.**

Objective: Refocus and restructure regional leadership into the following four Commissions, with a regional staff member assigned to each one:

- Church Health (Responsible for Goal #2);
- Pastoral Health (Responsible for Goal #3);
- Church Multiplication (Responsible for Goal #4);

- Credentialing and Placement (Responsible to help place and credential pastoral leadership for the accomplishment of all three goals).

### **GOAL #1: REFOCUS, RESTRUCTURE AND IF NECESSARY, REPLACE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TO ACCOMPLISH THIS STRATEGIC PLAN.**

Objective: Conduct an assessment of current regional staff to determine which members can effectively support the strategic plan; develop transition strategies as necessary.

Objective: In 2017, recruit and place leaders in each of the four commissions who wholeheartedly support and are able to implement this strategic plan.

Objective: Provide leadership coaching, accountability and support to the Executive Director to enable him to oversee the execution of this strategic plan.

- Recommend one or more of the strategies. Summarize the results if things go as proposed. Suggest what to do next Identify action items.

Proposed ERC Staffing Structure  
**ERC Staff**

Executive Director  
Director of Church Health  
Director of Pastoral Health  
Director of Multiplication  
Director of Communication  
Executive Assistant  
Financial Secretary (part-time)

Church Health Commission

**The Church Health Commission** oversees the advancement and development of church health in the ERC. The Commission will seek to resource churches, pastors and leaders with best practices for ministry and church development. Specifically, the Commission will: Oversee, schedule and resource the hubs established in each district to provide essential teaching, training, and resourcing for pastors and leaders. Serve as the mediator for church conflict and reconciliation as well as pastor and council issues. Oversee the interim ministry for the purpose of placing skilled and qualified interim pastors for placement in churches in transition. Church Health Commission approves all building programs and provide counsel in regards to building, remodeling, purchasing, selling or leasing space for congregational use. Will be the approval process for recommending churches to the Home Mission Council for financing.

Oversees the renewal and revitalization efforts of churches in serious decline. Encourages every church to be evangelistic, missional, and engaged in global missions. Oversee the annual evaluation of church health for every church in the region. Encourages congregations to be effective disciple makers. Guides congregations to provide effective children, youth and family ministries.

Pastoral Health Commission

**The Pastoral Health Commission** will seek to improve the effectiveness and health of pastoral leaders in the Conference. The Pastoral Health Commission will seek to encourage and develop pastors for effective ministry through pastoral care and counsel, resourcing, mentoring and coaching and if needed professional counseling. The Commission will:

- Provide annually retreats and other activities to foster spiritual vitality and health in pastors including the pastor's prayer retreat and clergy couples retreat
- Oversee and develop mentoring and coaching relationships for pastors
- Provide teaching, training, and resourcing on soul care, maintaining a Sabbath, and developing effective boundaries and time management skills.

#### Pastoral Health Commission:

- Provide counsel to pastoral spouses as needed
- Aid and assist pastors in transition by providing financial and other resources and conducting an exit interview for pastors leaving a charge.
- Working with administrative councils to help them more effectively care for and provide for pastors and their families
- Oversee the annual evaluation of pastoral health for each pastor of the region

#### Church Multiplication Commission

**The Church Multiplication Commission** will seek to help churches multiply disciples, leaders, ministries, and churches. The Commission will oversee church planting as well as efforts for multiplication through our established churches. Specifically, the Commission will:

- Foster the development of new churches through the multiplication efforts of the established churches.
- Provide a structure for developing new churches that includes the assessment of churches and planters

Church Multiplication Commission works to champion multiplication of disciples through resourcing and training in discipleship ministries.

Promotes the establishment of leadership development and multiplication throughout the region. Works with new churches to be multiplying other new churches.

Continues to resource and provide for new church plants and to care for them after they launch. Provides an annual church evaluation for all churches in their first ten years

#### Credentialing and Placement Commission

**The Credentialing and Placement Commission** will seek to work with pastors sensing a call to ministry, oversee their development and work to place them in ministry. The Commission will serve as the body for credentialing, both licensing and ordination for all pastors. The Commission will further work with the local church in placing pastors in ministry. Specifically, the Commission will:

- Interview all persons sensing a call to ministry and seeking to serve as a pastor in the region.
- Provide funding with stipulations for those seeking theological education.
- Oversee the licensing and credentialing of all pastors as well as the service of ordination during the annual conference sessions.

#### Credentialing and Placement Commission:

- Oversee the continuing education of all pastors in the region.
- Work with the local church in the pastoral search process.

- Establish the guidelines for pastoral compensation and certify all pastors seeking approved ministry status.
- Certify pastors for retirement
- Officially appoint pastors to congregations
- Address theological issues relevant to the pastors and congregations of the Conference

**GOAL #2: EMPOWER THE MAJORITY OF ERC CHURCHES TO BECOME HEALTHY, LIFE-GIVING MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE FORMATION AND SUPPORT OF A VIBRANT NETWORK OF CHURCHES COACHING CHURCHES**

- Objective: Conduct a church health assessment of 70% of ERC churches.
- Objective: Help 60% of ERC churches develop a strategic plan for church health and missional renewal through an established hub network
- Objective: Establish a Coaching Network led by healthy, missional pastors which involves at least 50% of ERC churches.
- Objective: Offer a series of high quality training seminars on church health and missional vitality.
- Objective: Establish a Church Health Commission in 2017 led by regional leaders with the strategic leadership skills to oversee the implementation of this goal.

**GOAL #3: INSURE THAT THE MAJORITY OF ERC PASTORS ARE RECEIVING THE SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY THEY NEED FROM REGIONAL LEADERSHIP, LOCAL CHURCH AND PEERS TO MAINTAIN EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUAL VITALITY.**

- Objective: Provide regional training for local church administrative councils which enables 75% of them to develop and implement a plan for the care and support of their pastor(s).
- Objective: Identify or create pastoral support groups to enable at least 50% of ERC pastors to receive regular and meaningful care and accountability.
- Objective: Beginning in the Fall of 2017, provide at least three soul care retreats a year to help ERC pastors cultivate spiritual health and intimacy with God.
- Objective: Establish a Pastoral Health Commission in 2017 led by regional leaders with the pastoral gifts and administrative skills to oversee implementation of this goal.

## **GOAL #4: DEVELOP A CULTURE OF MULTIPLICATION AMONG A CONTAGIOUS CORE OF ERC CHURCHES THROUGH A NEW 'BIFOCAL' VISION FOR CHURCH PLANTING AND RENEWAL.**

Objective: Conduct an assessment of church planting effectiveness over the last ten years in the ERC, and develop a strategic plan to implement a new 'bifocal' vision.

Objective: Identify and support at least five ERC churches that will plant another church within five years.

Objective: Identify five ERC churches willing to call a new pastor to lead them into a church transformation process; recruit, place and support these 'turn-around' pastors.

Objective: Launch a new leader initiative which identifies, recruits, places and supports at least ten 'next generation' pastors in new church plants or revitalization missions by 2025.

Objective: Ten healthy new church plants by 2025.

### Next Steps

- Begin establishing huddles across the region
- Develop a new constitution
- Continue to develop new commissions
- Promote and cast vision for the new plan

- Begin working towards the objective with set goals for 2017 and 2018
- Develop a budget/spending plan based on the plan and the new commission structure
- Get the right people on the bus—staff, commissions, hubs, etc.

### The ERC in 2022

We believe that with the implementation of this plan and the blessing of God, we will see the ERC become a revitalized network of life-giving churches that have moved beyond tradition to effectively share the Gospel in a post-modern world. We believe that through prayer, strategy, effective resourcing and God-given leadership, we will help our churches realize their full kingdom potential and move from overall decline to overall growth, effectively reaching the next generation for Christ. We believe that this plan will enhance our ability to reach the lost, serve the least, disciple the believers, develop leaders, and send forth a new generation of Christ followers who seek to further His Kingdom.

### The ERC in 2022

Through hard work, fervent prayer, effective strategy, and healthy relationship, we are trusting God that we can become a healthy, family of life-giving churches that are all about Jesus. We are trusting that God will so embolden this plan and our efforts with His Holy Spirit that by 2022 the ERC will be on a trajectory of seeing 200 healthy, life-

giving churches across the Eastern United States of America. To this end we labor for the glory of God!

#### What We Need From You

- Prayer support
- Engagement in the plan
- Participation in the hubs
- Your best efforts to be a healthy, life-giving leader

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

#### Notes/Questions:

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