

GUIDELINES FOR BECOMING AN ORGANIZED CHURCH

STAGES IN DEVELOPMENT

The birthing of churches generally follows three stages of development:

1. **The Ministry Stage** – the initial stage of core group formation with people meeting on a regular basis with the possibility of becoming a church.
2. **The Pre-organized Stage** – where sufficient strength in attendance, leadership involvement, missional activity in the community and financial support warrant becoming an official church plant. The CCD “Agreement for Becoming a CCD Church Plant” guides the functioning of this stage of development. At this stage, the pastor and a steering committee are appointed by the District Superintendent and function under his supervision. The plant is eligible for opening its own bank account and for registration as a charitable organization.
3. **The Organized Stage** – at which time the church plant has approved the minimum of 25 official members. The church is eligible to elect its own board and recruit its own pastor as it formally adopts the constitution of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

1. Conduct a membership course (see CCD website for sample outline). Have the Steering Committee interview prospective members, asking them to share their testimony of faith in Christ. Members of an Alliance church need to demonstrate evidence of a vital relationship with Christ through a verbal confession of faith and baptism.
2. Once the minimum of 25 people have been approved for membership by the Steering Committee, contact the district superintendent or his representative to arrange a suitable date for a special organization service. As a rule, this service takes about 20 minutes and can be added to the end of a regular worship service. Here are the typical elements of an organization service:
 - a. Introductory remarks celebrating this milestone in the church’s development.
 - b. The passing of Resolutions (see attached) which will serve as the governing document of the church. This needs to be signed by the Pastor, Secretary of the Steering Committee and District Representative.
 - c. The reception of new members. Membership cards should be filled in and presented to each person as they are welcomed as chartered members. A list of members in alphabetical order needs to be available for the pastor and district representative.
 - d. Prayer of dedication for new members and the church.
 - e. Celebration. The church may want to plan a special meal or refreshments following the service. It would be great to have a group photo of chartered members taken.

The newly organized church is now in a position to establish its own bylaws and elect its elder board at its first annual meeting. The church should draft bylaws for membership approval as well as elect a board within one year following the organization service. Sample bylaws are available from the district office. Bylaws of the church need to be approved in advance by DEXCOM (District Executive Committee). A draft of bylaws should be sent to the CCD Director of Finance and Operations.