



Functional Guidelines for Church Plant Steering Committees

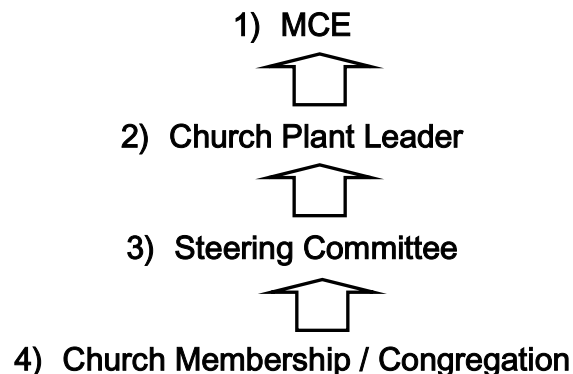
Midwest Church Extension – PO Box 337 Remington IN 47977

Introduction

During the initial stages of a church plant, while it is governed by a Steering Committee, guidelines are needed to promote its health and development. The information contained in this document explains how a Steering Committee functions within the framework of the MCE Constitution & By-Laws, Mission Plant Covenant, and the Missionary Ministry Covenant. Application of the guidelines contained in this document will enable the Steering Committee to minister in a way that will be most beneficial as it seeks to provide the protection and guidance that will lead the church plant toward maturity.

I. Lines of Authority

Scripture clearly teaches the importance of order and authority within the local church. Midwest Church Extension provides that important element of stability through the structure illustrated below. This structure shall remain in place for as long as the church is in need of a Steering Committee. When the church is able to appoint biblical leadership from among its membership, this structure shall be adjusted to reflect the replacement of the Steering Committee with the church's own leadership team. This general structure, however, shall remain in place for as long as the church plant remains under the auspices of MCE.



1. All MCE church plants operate under the general oversight of Midwest Church Extension's Board of Directors by virtue of the authority and administrative oversight which it has delegated to the MCE Executive Director and his staff.
2. Each church plant has a designated plant leader (the missionary pastor) or an appointed representative to lead the ministry of the plant. The Church Plant Leader serves as chairman of the Steering Committee and is authorized by the Executive Director to oversee the daily operation of the plant ministry. In the use of that authority, he shall be responsible for proper involvement of the Steering Committee members in the leadership of the plant ministry.
3. Members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the MCE Executive Director. Individual Committee Members must remember that their relationship with the Plant Leader is not supervisory, but supportive. The Plant Leader is directly accountable to the MCE Executive Director, and the Committee as a whole shall be responsive to the direction of the MCE Executive Director during the entirety of its existence.
4. The congregation in each MCE church plant is expected to cooperatively submit to the authority vested in the Church Plant Leader and the Steering Committee. In those church plants which have established a voting membership, such members shall always be free to exercise their constitutional privileges, except in cases where such exercise results in a violation of the Scriptures or MCE policy. Neither shall such privilege extend to voting on issues that have not been presented with consent of the Steering Committee.

II. Functional Overview

The Steering Committee has the function of cooperating with the Plant Leader in facilitating the efficient local administration of the church plant.

A. Direction

Direction for development of the church plant will be provided by MCE through the Plant Leader and / or the Executive Director. This direction is to be communicated to the Steering Committee by the Plant Leader. The Steering Committee will then provide whatever cooperation is required to implement the direction which has been communicated.

B. Communication

Effective, accurate, bi-directional communication is essential to plant development and health. Great care must be taken to maintain healthy channels of internal communication (within the plant family) as well as channels of external communication (between the plant and MCE).

The Steering Committee is to facilitate the internal communication by apprising the Plant Leader of any matters that are affecting, or may affect, the health and development of the flock, or hinder the advancement of the ministry. Such matters include (but are not limited to): problems, spiritual needs, suggestions, etc. Likewise, when the Committee deems it appropriate, individual members of the Steering Committee shall regularly engage in healthy communication with members of the congregation by interacting with them as they explain the decisions of the Steering Committee.

III. Ministry of the Steering Committee

A. Duties

1. The Steering Committee shall meet only at the call of the Church Plant Leader on at least a monthly basis. The Church Plant Leader shall prepare the agenda and preside over each meeting. A committee member shall be appointed by the Plant Leader to record the minutes of each meeting. Copies of the agenda and official minutes shall be filed, in timely fashion by the Church Plant Leader, with the Executive Director.

As part of each monthly meeting, the Steering Committee shall receive and review a written report from the treasurer of the church. The committee shall ensure that records are kept of all receipts and expenditures, using accepted accounting practices.

2. The Steering Committee shall arrange for appropriate maintenance and care of buildings and grounds, the custody and storage of all church equipment and any required setup and restoration of meeting spaces before and after services.

B. Communication Process

1. **From MCE to the Steering Committee**

The Executive Director will communicate direction to the Church Plant Leader, who then is responsible for relaying this direction to the Steering Committee and / or the congregation.

2. From the Steering Committee to MCE

The Steering Committee members shall address all communication to the Executive Director through the Church Plant Leader. The Church Plant Leader shall be the Steering Committee's liaison to the Executive Director.

IV. Amendments to the MCE Steering Committee Guidelines

In the spirit of unity and the interest of ministry excellence, MCE graciously will entertain suggested amendments to improve these guidelines. Suggestions arising out of a plant Steering Committee shall be discussed by that Committee and entered into its records. The Church Plant Leader will then communicate such suggestions to the Executive Director. He shall give those suggestions due consideration and make a decision regarding them.

In the same spirit and interest, the Executive Director may determine the need to amend the Guidelines at his own discretion.

In either case, when such amendments are pending the Executive Director shall notify all Church Plant Leaders affected by the pending action before the amendment shall go into effect. After each Church Plant Leader has promptly acknowledged the pending action, the Executive Director shall publish the amended Guidelines and distribute them to the Church Plant Leaders for use by the Steering Committees.