

# Crossroads Conversation Preparation Checklist

## Initial Preparations

### Initial Preparations: Congregation

To ensure a successful conversation about the congregation's future, the church leadership should prepare in some particular ways:

#### ❖ Gather a Prayer Team

- Congregation should gather a prayer team of 4-6 people (true prayer warriors) who will have an outward focus. We say "outward focus" because most prayer teams focus on the joys and concerns of the existing congregants. Focus prayer on the mission field of people who don't have a relationship with Christ, community civic leaders, the congregation's transformation process, the pastor and Crossroads Team, and specific guests who have attended church services.
- The prayer team could also encourage congregational prayer. Help the congregation commit to pray for the church and its mission field in the days and weeks leading up to the Paragraph 213 Conversations.

#### ❖ Select Congregational Crossroads Team to take part in the ¶213 Conversation

- The Crossroads Team representing the congregation should include the elected Lay Leader and be composed of 6-8 laypeople (not on staff) and pastor. An associate pastor that has overall congregational duties (i.e. not focused on a single area or department of ministry) should also be included.
- In some cases, the DS or the Office of Mission Field Engagement may work with multiple congregations together as a group.
- This team is temporary, designed for this purpose; other teams may need to be created for the next steps a congregation as the congregation proceeds.

#### ❖ Communicate

- The ¶213 Conversation is designed to assess local church *potential* in the mission field.
- Results are never assumed. Recommendations are discovered in prayerful community.
- Continue to communicate throughout the process. It is incumbent upon the leadership to communicate progress and discoveries from the ¶213 Conversation with the rest of the congregation. Without regular and intensive communication, the Leadership Team's recommendations and plans will lose their contextual foundations. Lack of communication can also breed mistrust. So, communicate, communicate, communicate!

## **Initial Preparations: Information Sharing with Facilitator**

*Facilitator is the District Superintendent, Office of Mission Field Engagement Staff, Circuit Elder, Center for Vitality staff, or other person as assigned by the DS.*

### **¶1213 Conversation Church Packet**

The congregations' appointed clergy, or assigned lay preacher, is responsible for supplying the facilitator and the Crossroads Team with the following information at least ***two weeks before the first session***:

#### **❖ History of the Church/Charge**

- Write a brief history of your congregation (maximum four pages). Include those events that contributed to periods of growth or decline in the number of people participating. Write in a factual style. Avoid the temptation to puff the story for public relations and the temptation to inject personal commentary regarding past problems.

#### **❖ Facilities**

- List dates and provide descriptions for any building construction, major renovation, land acquisition, or leasing of facilities.
- List the amount of acreage you own, lease, or rent, the square footage of building(s), and number of parking spaces (distinguishing between off-street and street parking).

#### **❖ Congregational Goals, Ministry Plan, Mission and/or Vision**

- Send any mission or vision statements. Also include a copy of any ministry plans or goals that the congregation has decided upon recently.

#### **❖ Church Structure: How are decisions made?**

- Write a summary of your congregational structure, including the individuals or groups who are responsible for program decisions, budgeting, and financial oversight, buildings and grounds, and any other major interests of the congregation.
- List committees, task forces, program teams, etc., and explain how they relate to boards or councils.
- Provide an organizational chart that reflects your current structure.

#### **❖ Financial**

- Without listing names, state the amount given by each of the top five contributors of record in the last fiscal year. Total these amounts and state the percentage of giving this total represents in relation to total contributions.
- State the total number of contributors to the congregation during the last fiscal year and the average amount given per contributor during the last fiscal year.

## Initial Preparations: Information Sharing with Facilitator

Facilitator is District Superintendent, Office of Mission Field Engagement Staff, Circuit Elder, Center for Vitality staff, or other person as assigned by DS.

### 213 Conversation District Packet

The congregations' appointed clergy, or assigned lay preacher, is responsible for contacting the district office to have a 213 Conversation District Packet sent to the facilitator at least two weeks before the first session. **The District Office will supply the facilitator with appropriate information:**

#### ❖ Vital Signs Statistics for Three Years

- Total Membership
- Worship Attendance
- Professions of Faith
- Small Group Participation
- Mission Engagement Participation

#### ❖ MissionInsite Demographic Data

- Select **ExecutiveInsite** Report
- Customize setting and selection area for the church
- District Office may train church leaders to obtain their own report
- Local church leaders may be able to best define their mission field area

*One advantage of the MissionInsite report is that it can be ordered for a "custom polygon," an area defined by any combination of map features. For example, a rural church's ministry area might be bounded by a highway to the north, a county line to the east, and a river that curves around to form the south and west sides of the polygon. The congregation can also use drive times or a simple radius to create a shape that is helpful in mission field identification. A pastor or lay leader may wish to team up with the district office to create a report.*

#### ❖ Financial Data

- Equitable Compensation Amount
- Conference Obligations Record
- Current Debt on Assets Amount
- Total Annual Expenses
- Total Operating and Benevolent Giving

#### ❖ Extracts from the Last Two Year's Charge Conference Packets

- Mission and Ministry Discussion Answers
- Pastors' Reports

#### ❖ Recent Congregational Profile completed by SPRC

## Preparations: Meeting Schedule and Plans

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### Meeting Space

- Table(s) set up in a U shape with chairs facing the middle
- Nametags or name tents for participants
- Flip chart with easel & markers
- Facilitator may bring one or two flipcharts and a projector for digital computer slides. Facilitator and host pastor should coordinate AV use and requirements. A screen or a white wall space may be needed.
- Suggested: Bottled water, snacks or candy for each table
- For gathering of Crossroads Teams from multiple churches, round tables or smaller table groupings are suggested so teams can group together and facilitator can move around between teams

### Crossroads Conversation Team

- The Crossroads Team representing the congregation should include the elected Lay Leader and be composed of 6-8 laypeople (not on staff) and the pastor. An associate pastor that has overall congregational duties (i.e. not focused on a single area or department of ministry) should also be included.
- In some cases, the DS or the Office of Mission Field Engagement may work with multiple congregations together as a group.
- This team is temporary, designed for this purpose; other teams may need to be created by the congregation for the next steps that follow the ¶213 Conversation

### Schedule

- Three sessions are outlined for the ¶213 Conversation
- Each group session is two hours long
- At least 2-4 weeks should be scheduled between the first and second sessions to allow for time to complete homework
- Before the first session, Crossroads Team members should each have a copy of some documents:
  - ✓ "Purpose & Expectations for the Paragraph 213 Conversation"
  - ✓ Three agenda Single-page outlines of all three meeting agendas
 A Team Member Guidebook is available that will provide these tools and more in a single downloadable format

### Congregational Communications Plan

- ¶213 Conversation is designed to assess local church *potential* in the mission field. Results are never assumed. Recommendations are discovered in prayerful community.
- Include the congregation in the process, especially early on, by sharing the questions and the learnings. The recommendations of the Crossroads Team will be shared later.
- Continue to communicate throughout the process. It is incumbent upon the leadership to communicate progress and discoveries from the ¶213 Conversation with the rest of the congregation. Without regular and intensive communication, the Leadership Team's recommendations and plans will lose their contextual foundations. Lack of communication can also breed mistrust. So, communicate, communicate, communicate!