

Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer – February 2019

Background to the Mission Catalyzer Recommendation

Our Current Reality: Having reviewed the past four years stats of Classis Huron (CH), our churches total membership has reduced from 7,773 in 2015 to 7,523 in 2018. A reduction of 250 members. There has been 467 infant baptisms in four years, meaning that the average CH congregation baptizes 6 infants per year. In addition, we have received 80 members through evangelism, averaging about 1 person per church per year. There have also been 241 reversions, or about 3 per congregation per year. Put another way, our 20 established congregations, averaging 375 total members are seeing 1 person come to Christ through evangelism, while 3 others are leaving the church through reversion. The current reality is that as a Classis, we have a crisis! Things are changing in our churches and in our culture at a rapid pace. Together, we can strengthen our missional engagement, and what it means to embrace a shared responsibility for the region of CH as a whole.

God's Preferred Outcome: God's desire which He puts onto our hearts is that the gospel message will go out and more people will come to Christ. That each of our churches will be fully engaged in mission in our neighbourhoods, in our region, and in our world.

The Mission of CH is “We will foster the Kingdom through shared resources toward spiritual renewal.”

The Vision of CH is “the congregations, ministries, missional communities and people of CH will surrender to the word of the Spirit of Mission of Jesus, to embody the Kingdom of God. Recognizing the urgency of the times, we stand on the foundation laid for us by previous generations and step forward in the same faith we have been taught.”

In 2014, CH approved a five year plan with five ministry initiatives (briefly summarized):

- Initiative 1: Missional Clusters: To encourage missional clusters of churches and leaders to engage in ministry partnerships, to foster missional leader development, and collaborate in ministry initiatives. This was to equip us for mission without creating new or rigid organizational structures.
- Initiative 2: Plant & Water: We desire to plant two new churches by 2018. And continue to water and support church plants in becoming organized, contributing stakeholders in CH and denominational ministry, and invest in congregations who need support for specific measurable missional discipleship efforts.
- Initiative 3: Increase Creative Funding: Look for alternate streams of funding for ministry growth in CH.
- Initiative 4: Consider Campus Ministry Expansion: To seek out the possibility to expand Campus Ministry at both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier.
- Initiative 5: Consider Classis Ministry Staff: Adcom will direct a process for looking at our ministry needs and hopes and learning from other Classis in order to create a recommendation as to whether and what type of staff person would advance our mission by helping us grow internally (our youth) and externally (our neighbours), keeping in mind the advice to make whatever positions we might look at task-and-timelines-specific with annual revisiting of goals and purposes to maintain sustainability and effectiveness.

What's Next? Consistent feedback from CH credentials have included councils requesting assistance with local mission, discipleship, and community engagement. Leadership in CH churches is naming the current reality, and having the courage to respond accordingly and sacrificially as servants in unity on mission.

In 2017 CH meetings, there was discussion on the ministry plan initiatives. Following that meeting, the Classis Ministry Committee (CMC) discussed the role of the Classis Huron Home Missions Committee (CHHMC) in furthering that plan. It was also agreed that the Ministry Plan needs to be discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.

As a result, the CHHMC was empowered with this task. This committee brought forward a plan to hire a part-time Mission Catalyzer. The recommendation for a CH Mission Catalyzer is in response to feedback received from CH to provide support for our established churches in their own outreach endeavours. We recognize the desire for CH to support both new church plants and the mission work of our established churches.

CHHMC was tasked to seek out opportunities that will work towards CH mission and the initiatives. CHHMC looked into what other Classes were doing in this area. We met with representatives from a nearby Classis that has a pastor serving as a paid part-time Mission Catalyzer (one day per week).

The CHHMC put together a draft Mission Catalyzer job description presented at the September 2017 Classis meeting for feedback. The feedback was mostly positive, and there was also a clear sentiment that this was too much work for a one-day per week position. There was also some concern about the proposed salary numbers being somewhat high. CHHMC received the feedback, and re-worked the job description, which was then submitted as part of the February 2018 Classis agenda, but due to the length of that meeting, the recommendation was tabled, and discussed at the September 2018 CH meeting.

In addition, following the February 2018 Classis meeting, CHHMC entered into discussion with Resonate Global Missions Regional Leader, Kevin DeRaaf. Resonate desires to hire a part-time "Mission Leader" within Classis Huron to stimulate and equip congregations to become more missional in their focus. CHHMC thought this would complement with our proposal for CH to hire a part-time Mission Catalyzer. In addition, Resonate was prepared to provide some of the funding for this position.

Feedback from the Classis meetings and discussions with Resonate, led to some changes in the job description to reflect this additional new focus. Instead of the original one-day per week proposal, the job description is proposed to include two-days a week with one-half day of those two days devoted to Resonate Global Missions. Following the September 2018, clarity on the job description and accountability were brought forward, and CHHMC was to re-address these important concerns.

Recommendation to Classis Huron on Mission Catalyzer

Purpose: To support a missional movement in Classis Huron by empowering Christian Reformed churches and key leaders to engage in God's mission.

Motion: That Classis Huron approve the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

- **That** Classis Huron hire a part-time Mission Catalyzer along with Resonate Global Missions fulfilling the job description attached to this recommendation, and empower the CHHMC to hire the individual.
- **That** the Mission Catalyzer position is for two days of work per week or equalling 16 hours per week.
- **That** Classis Huron remunerate a Mission Catalyzer for two days of work per week. The total amount for the 16 hours would be \$25,000. This would be \$5,000 supported by Resonate and \$20,000 supported by CH. (Note: this would be 16 hours / week for 50 weeks of a year).
- **That** Classis Huron approve \$5,000 in costs relating to employee costs and mileage, some of which will be pro-rated with Resonate.
- **That** the Mission Catalyzer position be accountable to Classis Huron and provide regular reports to the CHHMC through the chairperson.
- **That** this be a four year pilot project, reviewed annually.
- **That** the monies for the first part-year of this position be used from the Creative Outreach Venture Fund to cover the wages and costs of this position. There is \$14,000 in this fund.

Grounds:

1. This position falls in line with Classis Huron Mission and Vision statements, and facilitates the implementation of the five-year ministry plan approved by Classis in 2014.
2. It reflects the input of Classis Huron delegates at the September 2017 and September 2018 meetings.
3. The work of similar positions in other Classis appear to benefit the congregations.
4. This position will complement the work of the CHHMC and Resonate.