NEWCOMERS MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH:
A Program Proposal

BACKGROUND

The influx of newcomers and the corollary settlement issues besetting them are significant opportunities for churches to initiate a newcomers ministry. While there is significant government support to newcomers through the services of settlement organizations, church ministries for newcomers are essential for the reason that Churches in Canada have grown tremendously through new immigrant members as well as the establishment of immigrant churches. As many newcomers come into Canada without the saving knowledge of the Gospel, such influx becomes an avenue for churches to fulfill both commandments to "welcome the strangers" (Lev. 19: 33-34, Matthew 25:31-40) and "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) right within their communities.

In view of this, an environmental analysis was initiated that became the basis for the development of the newcomers ministry of The Peoples Church. The study revealed nuances of the needs of different newcomer groups (i.e., refugees, international students, and new immigrants) from the perspective of faith-based organizations and churches serving them. The determination of these needs, as well as the viability of establishing partnerships and collaborations, led to the identification and establishment of priority programs in the areas of settlement, housing, and employment.

The study further showed that the issues affecting newcomers are legion prompting a comprehensive approach to newcomers ministry. Such comprehensive approach necessitates differentiating ministry activities for each newcomer cluster as their needs vary.

On the basis of the key findings of the study, the proposal is an attempt to establish a framework and strategy for the establishment of the newcomers ministry.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The role of the church in support of settlement and integration needs of newcomers could not be underestimated. The mission and ministry of the church for newcomers hinges on the Biblical mandate to welcome strangers and as such is an essential church ministry.

As there is a need to inculcate these Biblical principles into the lives of church members and different ministries, the ministry to newcomers of The Peoples Church will be volunteer-led and thereby involve a constant call for church institutional resources and individual capacities of church members to initiate the proposed activities delineated in the study as well as those identified in the course of program implementation.

As the program utilizes a relational approach, a key strategy for settlement support is the one-on-one "walk with a newcomer" where a church member is paired with a newcomer to deliver agreed upon settlement needs and support. The congregation will also be called upon to respond to other needs in the areas of housing and employment.
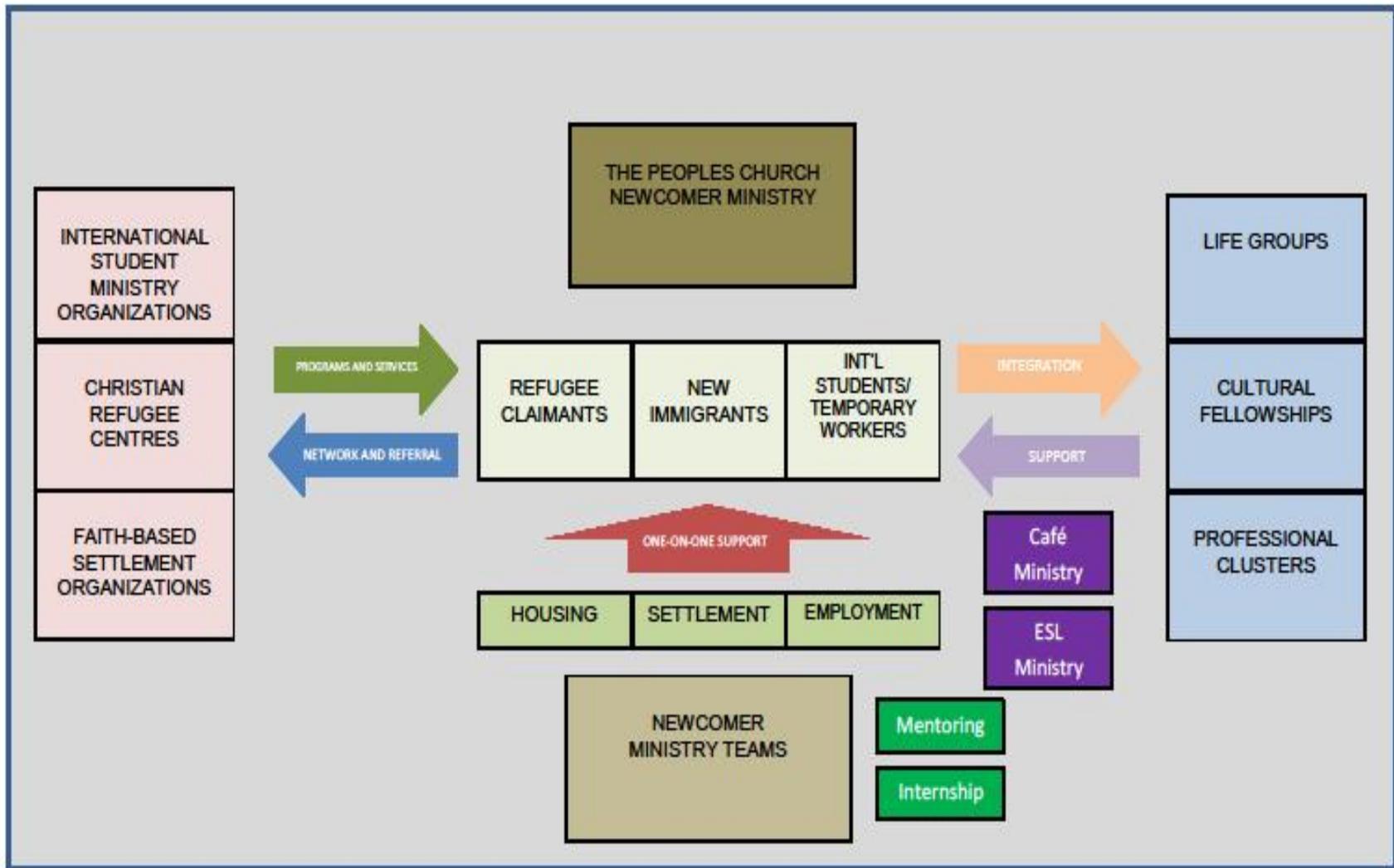
The expansion of support and integration will also be done through the participation of key ministries and fellowships of the church such as the cultural fellowships and the lifegroups to enhance the relational, social, and spiritual components of the ministry as there is an implicit recognition that the program has a missiological purpose.

Furthermore, the need to provide settlement services will be served through the aforementioned establishment of networking and partnerships with other non-profit and faith-based organizations to deliver these services inside the church facility. In this way, this creates an avenue for the promotion of the church as a space for settlement support as well as relationship-building.

The development of ministry activities and programs will be both demand-specific and "client-driven" and thus will result to a non-structured way of identification and scheduling until the time there is regularity in activity demand that would lead to institutionalization. What is

crucial is that these activities will be based on the three program components to ascertain that there are only core ministry initiatives.

The figure below provides the operational framework that shows the three core ministry areas (hosting, housing, and employment), three core linkages or program delivery (partnership with faith-based organizations, ministry collaboration with internal church ministries, and volunteer walk), as well as three or four newcomer target clusters.

THE PEOPLES CHURCH NEWCOMER MINISTRY

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

CHRISTIAN REFUGEE CENTRES

FAITH-BASED SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

NETWORK AND REFERRAL

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS | NEW IMMIGRANTS | INT'L STUDENTS/ TEMPORARY WORKERS

INTEGRATION

SUPPORT

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

HOUSING | SETTLEMENT | EMPLOYMENT

NEWCOMER MINISTRY TEAMS

Café Ministry

ESL Ministry

Mentoring

Internship

LIFE GROUPS

CULTURAL FELLOWSHIPS

PROFESSIONAL CLUSTERS

OBJECTIVES

This proposal seeks to provide a strategic direction in supporting the settlement needs of newcomers in the areas of settlement, housing, and employment, and other corollary settlement support programs and ministries.

Specific objectives of the proposed ministry include:

1) Supporting settlement needs of newcomers through implementation of immigration type-specific programs leading to ease in integration and improved capacity for community contribution.

2) Enhancing existing church ministries for church-based settlement programs through the initiation of volunteer-led ministry activities and development of inter-ministry collaboration.

3) Strengthening network and partnerships with other churches and faith-based organizations that serve newcomers to develop shared ministry models, avenue for knowledge exchange, and initiate collaborative programs and activities.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME											
	First year				Second year				Third Year			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Establishment of network and linkage with partner organizations	■	■	■									
Launching of Newcomers Ministry	■											
Formation of Church ministry clusters		■										
Establishment of linkage with cultural fellowships and life groups			■	■								
Hosting Ministry												
- Developing of newcomers needs checklist	■											
- Formation of volunteer bank		■	■									
- Training of volunteer team			■		■		■		■		■	
- Matching newcomers				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
and volunteers				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
- Activity initiation for newcomers			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Employment Ministry												
a) Mentoring												
- Information Session for mentees			█		█		█		█		█	
- Orientation for Mentors			█									
- Pairing			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
b) Internship												
- Establishment of church structure for mentoring				█	█							
- Screening of interns					█							
- Orientation of mentors					█							
- Pairing/matching					█	█						
- Initiation of activities						█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Materials Support												
- Gathering information on newcomers needs		█	█									
- Development of website access				█								
- Promotions					█							
Housing Ministry												
- Identifying housing needs of newcomers					█	█						
- Scanning of housing options							█	█				
- Setting of system for maintenance and operations									█			
- Accommodation of newcomers									█	█	█	█
- Establish network with Homestay program			█									
ESL Ministry			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The program will be directed by a Newcomers Ministry Pastor who will serve as program director. The Newcomers Ministry Pastor will ensure the integrity of the program through developing and overseeing activities implementation, initiate collaborations and partnerships to expand program reach, and provide consistent report and program evaluation.

The program is envisioned to have key personnel for effective implementation. These include the need for a Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator, Employment Coordinator, and Housing Coordinator.

The Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring availability of resources and facilities for activities, communicate with church personnel in coordinating ministry events and activities, and provide leadership to the one-on-one hosting by determining appropriate match between newcomers and volunteers. The Coordinator will also consistently make calls and invite volunteers to the ministry.

The Employment Coordinator will serve in providing leadership to the employment ministry by creating structure to the employment mentoring program and the corollary identification, training and monitoring volunteer mentor engagement. The Employment Coordinator will also be responsible for the internship program by taking the lead in screening potential newcomer mentees and volunteer mentors, and monitoring program progress through constant monitoring and evaluation.

The Housing Coordinator will establish a housing bank and information, conduct research on housing issues and opportunities, and identify housing needs of newcomers.

SUSTAINABILITY AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

There will be an annual program evaluation to identify program gaps and issues that will serve as lessons learned and feedback mechanism to ensure that the program and specific activities serve their purpose. Program revision will be based on this annual review.

As there is a significant demand for resources, there will be a process of identifying external resources to seek possible funding opportunities. Networking and collaboration will also be instituted so as to leverage institutional resources and program expansion.

The current set of activities is considered as pilot initiatives particularly in the first year of program implementation which is the establishment phase. Consideration will be given to the

provision of support to migrant workers and undocumented persons who are considered as the most vulnerable among the newcomer sectors.