

Reformed denominations join to plant churches

by [Paul R. Kopenkoskey](#) in the [May 31, 2011](#) issue

After splitting more than 150 years ago, the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church are joining together to launch a church planting project in four "test areas" across the United States.

The project, dubbed Kingdom Enterprise Zones, aims to plant ten to 20 congregations in western Michigan, Florida, Arizona and California. Both denominations are funding the plan with help from a "significant" grant from the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation.

The only real difference between the two churches is the CRC's greater emphasis on Christian schools, said Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, the outgoing general secretary for the RCA.

"This is not related to church buildings but a gathering of a community of faith," said Julius Medenblik, the president elect of the CRC's Calvin Theological Seminary. "The implication would be that this pilot program would affect many more churches than the ones started."

Granberg-Michaelson said traditional church steeples and wooden pews are not part of the new church planting movement. "They're going to take on a variety of forms because we're discovering the subcultures that are represented in our society require a diversity of styles," he said. "The message of the good news of the gospel is consistent, but the way in which it's expressed in different subcultures will and should vary a great deal."

—RNS