

**Central Plains Mennonite Conference**  
**Restructuring proposal**  
**Presentation Draft. April 2010**

*Preamble.* Conference leadership believes we can better organize for mission: what God is doing and wants to do in the regions of Central Plains. There are gaps that exist in our current structure and we are moving into missional theology as a guiding principle for our conference. So it makes sense to organize now with these emerging changes in mind. Structural changes lie primarily, though not entirely, along the lines of staff assignments. Happily, we haven't experienced conflict among staff or conference leaders. Rather, we've been operating with a good dose of fuzziness, particularly around the relationship between the moderator and the executive conference minister roles. What is most unclear in our present working structure is who tends the vision; if it's everyone's job, often no one has permission to do it. We hope this revised structure and its companion job descriptions will offer clarity and free us to cooperate more fully with the reign of Christ on earth.

*Process.* The following recommendations are not made in haste. For two years, staff has been visiting and interviewing congregations and from that experience we've adopted four goals to help us live into our vision and mission statements (see below). Conference Council appointed a Structure Task Group that spent the subsequent year interviewing conference leaders, pastors, and committee members to identify what is missing in our current structure. The task group also studied structures of similar-sized conferences in Mennonite Church USA.

Conference Council affirmed this direction in its November 2009 meeting. Council also contracted additional time with Tim Detweiler to visit each CPMC pastoral cluster to share how the proposed structure would work in the ministerial leadership area, and to gain pastors' input and suggestions. Additionally, Council posted the structure on the CPMC website and invited delegate responses.

Conference Council brings this recommendation to delegates asking for approval of a three year trial period, after which an evaluation will be conducted.

The revised structure is built on the following statements approved by Central Plains delegates.

**Vision statement**

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. (Mennonite Church USA)

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Central Plains Mennonite Conference is to lead congregations as they proclaim and become a sign of God's reconciling work in the world.

**Goals**

1. Identity: CPMC congregations, rooted in Anabaptist tradition, seek to embody the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. Leadership: CPMC calls and equips pastors and congregational leaders with missional vision and leadership skills for the church.
3. Relationships: CPMC congregations develop loving relationships with one another, as well as with Christians across the church and around the world, to discern a common way of life as a contrast society.
4. Spiritual Formation: CPMC congregations teach and engage in vital spiritual practices in the context of faithful witness.

*Commentary on organizational chart. (See chart below.)*

The assumption behind this organizational chart is that conference work is most effective when a combination of salaried staff, contract staff and volunteers work together. Salaried staff can propose contract staff (limited time, no benefits, expenses paid) to the board for approval. Salaried staff will oversee work areas but delegate responsibility either to volunteer task groups and their volunteer chairs or to elected committees that work in defined areas. The board may call any or all task groups to join the board meeting, or may focus on one area per board meeting. This keeps volunteers working at areas of giftedness and passion and keeps the structure more flexible. Not all task groups need to be “staffed” at all times. The blue boxes on the chart below describe the responsibility area. Sometimes this will be work done by the conference ministers and sometimes volunteer task groups will be formed for this area. These are intentionally left nebulous for maximum flexibility in arranging how to get the work done.

Elected committees will remain for such purposes as credentialing, church planting, etc. These will be elected for specific terms to allow for continuity in these areas of ongoing work and continuing field relationships.

Task groups will be formed by the Conference Board to accomplish a specific task in a given time period. The time period can be extended by the Conference Board should not be considered indefinite. When the task group has finished its assigned task, the members are released and the task group is disbanded.

The .5 salaried staff positions may be combined as gifts allow, such as the Executive Conference Minister and the Witness and Partnerships portfolios.

While salaried staff have a distinct portfolios, all share goals of identify formation, leadership development for laity and pastors, relationship and networking. Cross-fertilization in these goals is expected among discreet portfolios.

*i.e. The Ecuador task group may be always grooming the next leaders for this partnership.*

*i.e. The ECM oversees annual meeting but the CM for Communication oversees all publicity about it and consults as to the resourcing possibilities at annual meeting.*

## **CONFERENCE BOARD**

The governing board is led by an elected moderator and assistant moderator and 4 elected officers of the conference for a total of 6. These elected members do not represent any committee, but are to be representatives of the mission of the conference over all. This forms an “executive” function for financial decisions and legal signatories. It meets in 3-4 regular sessions with staff and volunteer leaders of whatever task groups are in place and functioning at any given time. This body hires and supervises the Executive Conference Minister. The board is charged with setting direction and empowers the staff to carry out the vision. Each member of this board will have specific terms of service, nominated by the discernment process and elected by the delegates at the conference sessions.

## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The smaller leadership team is led by the Executive Conference Minister and consists of the moderator and other salaried staff. It is more nimble and consults on monthly decision-making and direction. The Executive Conference Minister and Moderator consult for smaller, weekly decision-making and direction.

## **EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE MINISTER**

The vision of the conference is primary to this role, so gifts of articulation and theological reflection are essential. Funding and development, stewardship, office and administration, discernment coordination, annual meeting and working closely with the moderator are Executive Conference Minister tasks. This staff person supervises other salaried staff and hires in consultation with the board. This person also supervises the finance officer and office manager. This person also leads the conference in tending to relationships: congregations-and-conference, congregation-to-congregation, congregations-and-denomination, and global church. The Executive Conference Minister coordinates overall gift discernment of task group appointments for geographic and gender balance.

### **CONFERENCE MINISTER FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP**

This staff person oversees a standing elected committee on credentialing and coordinates local volunteer staff working with congregations in the calling system for pastors and pastoral reviews. This person networks relationships to meet needs in all geographic areas of the conference, recognizing that the people in place in each geographic area will not necessarily look the same, but be configured according to gifting and needs and availability. This person may call a task group for leadership development.

*i.e. a gifted retired pastor in Wellman makes annual pastoral accountability visits for all of SE Iowa pastors. A gifted volunteer in Mt. Pleasant is trained by the Ministerial Leadership staff person to walk with congregations in SE Iowa in pastoral transition and the calling process. Another (or the same) gifted volunteer is trained by the Ministerial Leadership staff person to walk with congregations in SE Iowa doing pastoral reviews. These workers have their expenses paid, donate their time unless a stipend is needed, and are accountable to the Ministerial Leadership person who supervises groups like theirs throughout the conference.*

### **CONFERENCE MINISTER FOR WITNESS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

This staff person oversees the conference witness and mission work and is the staff contact person for partnerships. The Ecuador task group chair is accountable to this person, as well as the church planting task group. Likely a peace & justice task group would be formed. This person would hire and supervise contract workers as needed.

*i.e. currently the new ministries work of Mark Van Steenwyck and the Hispanic ministry work of Ramiro Hernandez would be supervised by this staff person*

### **CONFERENCE MINISTER FOR CHRISTIAN FORMATION**

This staff person has three areas of responsibility: equipping congregational youth leaders, recommending resources for Christian formation, and overseeing a communication plan for the conference as whole. The web site and newsletter are primary communication avenues and editorial councils may be developed for each. Task groups that resource and equip congregational lay leaders would be appointed and supervised by this staff person. Likely this staff person would team with the staff Executive Conference Minister in annual meeting planning.

*i.e. a youth and young adult task group may be appointed to plan annual youth events, while the staff person continues to provide resources on the web/newsletter. From time to time, task groups may be formed to research and work on other areas of spiritual formation and nurture: worship, education, spiritual practices, etc. The denominational resource advocate role would be filled by this staff person.*

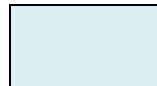
# Central Plains Mennonite Conference

## Proposed organizational chart



**KEY TO CHART**

Elected committee or staff position=



Task Group=



Area of Responsibility=

