

Franconia Mennonite Conference Assembly

November 13-14, 2009

***Vision and Financial Plan Recommendations***

Progress Update for time period: January – August 2009

The following progress updates are ministry activities and/or tasks that represent a sampling of the work Franconia Conference Leaders and Staff are carrying out in fulfillment of the Vision and Financial Plan (VFP) recommendations. Note that many of these ministry activities overlap with other areas as laid out in the VFP. We trust this will give you a good feel and understanding of how the VFP is being carried out and where staff spend their time, energy and efforts.

This update is not comprehensive in that every single aspect, task or activity is listed. Rather it gives the big picture of work that is currently being done to fulfill the objectives laid out in the VFP. To read the full version of the VFP document visit [www.franconiaconference.org](http://www.franconiaconference.org).

The VFP informs the work of staff as it is integrally connected to the work of the Conference Board, Ministerial Committee and Finance and Properties Committees, which represents the executive level work of the Conference.

There are five overarching ministry areas framed in the VFP:

- A. Equipping
- B. Credentialing and Covenanting
- C. Property and Financial
- D. Human Resources Recommendations
- E. Review & Evaluation

Outcomes listed name the indicators or markers that are to be used to signal that the recommendations have been achieved.

**A. Equipping**

***Equip healthy and growing leaders***

*Increase the number of women, men, people of color, and young adults who respond to God's call to serve various ministries as pastors, missionaries, administrators, evangelists, teachers, poets, leaders, designers, and managers, among others.*

*A measurement of this goal would be continued healthy length of tenure for pastors in congregations with less short term unintentional pastoral leadership turnover.*

**Progress Update:**

Ongoing work at development of summer internship placements for students in collaboration with Mennonite colleges, Mennonite Central Committee and congregations. These interns have been a significant part of how Franconia Conference seeks to cultivate younger and upcoming leaders in partnership with other institutions and organizations.

Continued work in helping persons seeking opportunities for ministry in Franconia Conference or the broader Mennonite Church, to fill out a Ministerial Leadership Information Form, which is one key way that persons seeking a ministry position can process their sense of call.

Coaching current pastors and leaders and cultivating younger and upcoming leaders, continues to be a core task. Much of the core activity of Conference Staff centers around this task of coaching.

**A second measurement of healthy and growing leaders would include the following three outcomes:**

***Equip healthy and growing churches***

*Existing congregations need to fine tune their ministries, embrace strategies to learn and be transformed in the midst of conflict, and work together to clarify purposes in such a way that they become evangelistic by becoming magnetic and invitational.*

*Measurements of this goal include an increase in the number of member congregations and partners-in-mission, and a reduction in debilitating conflicts within member congregations.*

**Progress Update:**

Number of Franconia Conference  
Congregations in:

2006 = 40      2008 = 42  
2007 = 42      2009 = 44

Number of Partner in Missions:

2008 = 5 congregations and 4 networks  
2009 = 6 congregations and 5 networks

*(Please visit [community.franconiaconference.org](http://community.franconiaconference.org) for more information.)*

The roll-out, launch and implementation of the LEAD oversight platform has begun, with numerous congregations embarking in this new pattern of oversight. This represents a significant shift in oversight from previous patterns in that it is a team-based approach that includes lay leadership as well as trusted outside persons. Congregations such as Rockhill and Philadelphia Praise Center, among others, have been early adopters of LEAD.

A core task of oversight work is to provide leadership for congregations in conflict, transition and those dealing with difficult issues as well as resourcing congregational pastoral search committees through the pastoral search team of Franconia Conference. We continue to provide this leadership now through the LEADership Ministers (formerly known as Conference Ministers).

May's Third Thursday Pastors' and Leaders' Breakfast was lead by Julie Prey-Harbaugh, of One Childhood Consulting, on setting up proper boundaries in ministerial relationships. Julie Prey-Harbaugh continues to be Franconia Conference's recommended trainer in this area of ministry.

Conversation continue with Alpha Mennonite Church leaders in regards to following Christ with an at variance understanding and practice regarding congregational membership of persons with same-sex orientation and the potential relational implications as it relates to Franconia Conference. Conference leaders met with Linford King, Denominational Minister for Mennonite Church USA and Keith Reiger, neutral outside facilitator, to help staff and Conference Board Executive Committee examine current dialogue processes and offer suggestions for deepening healthy relational patterns in these difficult conversations. (For more information please reference the Conference Board Report in the online docket at [assembly.franconiaconference.org](http://assembly.franconiaconference.org).)

A Third Thursdays Pastors and Leaders Breakfast is being planned to look at MC USA's *Resolution on Following Christ and growing together as communities even in conflict*, passed at the Columbus Assembly, and to provide a place for pastors and leaders to share with each other what they are experiencing in their respective congregations pertaining to this topic.

Conversation and process with Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) leaders began in regards to Church of the Overcomer and the potential transfer of this congregation from LMC to Franconia (still in process).

Supportive work in the emergence of a new congregation connected with Philadelphia Praise Center (PPC). Grace Community Church in Charleroi, Pa. just south of Pittsburgh continues in relationship with PPC leadership under the auspices of Franconia Conference.

A full day of equipping for Transitional Ministers was held September 17th at Sandy and John Drescher Lehman's retreat center. Wayne Nitchzse (pastor, Perkasio), led an interesting and fruitful training about intentional spiritual practices entitled "Nurturing Healthy Spiritual Growth during Congregational Transition." LEADership ministers were invited to attend. The transitional ministers as well as Chris Nickels (pastor Spring Mount), Noah Kolb, and Gay Brunt attended this training.

Coaching and leading congregations, such as Bally, Garden Chapel, etc., through various ministry processes continues as well as working with congregational assessments in preparation for implementing the LEAD oversight platform

The ministry of Robert and Bonnie Stevenson and family, continues to be of great value. The Monte Maria Partner In Mission church – Tierra Prometida – continues under Bob's leadership. Renewed commitments were made during a review and updating time with Bob, meaningful personal interaction and encouragement were shared.

Conference Assembly planning and coordination continues to be a key work that seeks to implement this yearly identity shaping event. Work includes:

- Coordinating staff planning for the event
- Site visit and logistical work
- Updating delegate information from congregations and conference related ministries
- Preparing conference assembly information for delegate mailing and to be posted online

Prayer Gatherings with congregations included:

- Towamencin – focus on prayer support for pastors and prayer walking in their new space
- Swamp – led by John and Kerry Shuey, regional reps for the Church Prayer Leaders Network
- Souderton – Praying from a Kingdom Focus, taught by Noel Santiago
- Salem – Building a Prayer Ministry in the Local Church, with sharing by Dan Sell (pastor, Souderton)

Attendance at these meetings averages 15 persons and includes pastors, prayer leaders and intercessors. Worship, prayer, personal ministry, equipping and encouragement are part of our times together.

Continue in the work of convening woman pastors as a learning community to provide encouragement, support and resourcing to women pastors and credentialed leaders in Franconia Conference.

***Equip healthy and growing disciples***

*Equip congregations to increase their capacity to relate to, invite, welcome, and incorporate those who are not yet followers of Christ, into an explicitly Anabaptist-Mennonite faith frame of reference.*

*Measurements of this goal would include increased numbers of persons across the age range in service through church-related initiatives, young adults serving in leadership roles, and increased numbers of new followers of Jesus attending Franconia Conference congregations.*

**Progress Update:**

Conference Youth Ministry is organizing and planning the Fall Youth Leadership Retreat. We got together a planning group and began meeting in March to think about speakers, workshops and other ideas for the weekend. We have asked Pastor Leonard Dow, Oxford Circle, to speak at the retreat this year and he has accepted.

Youth Pastor Learning community – working through the book *Sustainable Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries. Also provided Internet Safety workshop for youth pastors, leaders, and parents

The annual Jr. High Lock In and Youth Leadership Retreat continue to be events seeking to provide laughter, equipping, encouragement, resourcing and support.

Our Partner in Mission with Iglesia Tierra Prometida, Monte Maria, Mexico, is producing a new church plant in Gaithersburg, MD. As Monte Maria has grown and developed new churches throughout Mexico, they have been encouraged to consider taking initiative in starting a church in the US. This has yielded the fruit of their establishing a new church in Gaithersburg, MD.

The church plant review of this church and their leaders Linker and Luz Sanchez, along with partners (Franconia Conference, Hopewell Network, King of the Nations) proved to be a time of great encouragement and progress. A group of approximately 30-50 regular attenders (new converts) have been gathering regularly and plans include continued growth through evangelism into near by areas such as Hagerstown. Ongoing coaching of Linker and Luz continues in equipping and supportive ways

The Network of Anabaptist Missionary Churches in Mexico and the United States (Red de Iglesias Misioneras Anabaptistas (RIMA)), under the leadership of Kirk Hanger and Ruben Mercado, continues their development as a church planting movement. Allan Yoder serves as Franconia Conference's primary coach. This means:

- Providing equipping and counsel for congregational leaders of key RIMA churches, including the church in Alexandria, VA.
- Engaging in specific issues that arise which need resourcing from beyond RIMA. This year we have been dealing with legal and visa issues for international leadership persons in RIMA.
- A highlight this year was ministering with spouses at a weekend congregational retreat at New Hope of Alexandria.

***Equip healthy and growing connections.***

*Develop closer connections to each other, develop healthy connections to MC USA ministries, develop stronger connections with MWC, and broadened ecumenical relationships.*

*This will be measurable in increased involvements in congregations with local, regional, and global initiatives.*

### **Progress Update:**

Met with MCC group in Philadelphia to hear concerns related to gun control and explore potential ways to work at this.

Project/site visit to Israel/Palestine to review work of Dave Landis with Aldo Siahaan (pastor, Philadelphia Praise Center) and consideration of continued ongoing involvement on behalf of the Jesus Trail initiative and supporting congregations—Franconia Mennonite Church, Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Philadelphia Praise Center.

Met with inter-conference representatives regarding the Gateway courses which are offered to Credentialed leaders around Anabaptist themes important to ministerial leadership.

Lora Steiner (former Franconia Conference staff) moved to Bristol, England, to spend three months living with Anabaptist Network Chair Stuart Murray Williams and his wife, Sian. Lora's work was with *Workshop*, a partner organizations of the Anabaptist Network that focuses on discipleship training. Her work revolved around evaluating and revamping current workshop materials to increase their transferability and accessibility.

Conference Board Member Yvonne Platts and staff leader Gay Brunt Miller traveled to the United Kingdom in February, partly as a pastoral visit to Franconia Conference intern, Krista Ehst (Perkasie), and partly to continue developing the partnership and relationships. Krista's presence, ministry, and work were greatly appreciated by all, and in particular by the church plant that she was working with in East London.

Franconia Conference participated along with the Hopewell Network of Churches in collecting and shipping relief supplies to Haiti in January, following the devastation of four hurricanes in the 2008 hurricane season. In addition to food, clothing, school and health kits, Franconia Conference also collected a total of \$6,000 for our Partner in Mission, Pastor Lesly Bertrand, to use among his people who are most affected by the storms.

Pastor Lesly Bertrand wrote saying, "I want to thank the people of Franconia Conference for the assistance that they sent us in Haiti. We received the food and clothes that your people sent to us. We want to thank you for your love and willingness to help us in Haiti. May God continue to bless you in your labor of love that you are doing for the Lord."

Franconia Conference leaders met with Pastor Alfredo Navea, of the Tabernacle of Christ churches in Vina del Mar, Chili, to review his plans and direction for ministry as a Partner in Mission and the potential expansion of new church development work in New York City.

As part of the Partner in Mission interaction a team from Franconia participated in the Monte Maria School of Ministry during the second weekend of May. The team included Allan Yoder, Nelson Shenk, Roy Yoder, Henry Yoder and Rebeca Yoder. The team taught and ministered throughout the weekend. One of the key focuses of this partnership includes promoting the

international connections and providing exposure to the students at Monte Maria to the wider Anabaptist Church.

Long time mission work connections in Cuba continue. Felix Rafael Curbelo from Cuba (Brethren In Christ pastor) met with Allan Yoder to share about developments and connections about the church in Cuba.

Adamino Ortiz along with his wife Ruth, traveled to Cuba in May 2009. Their activities included:

- Leadership development for pastors and church planters
- Teaching on the book of Joshua
- Ecumenical gathering of leaders for mutual resourcing, equipping and relationship building
- Visits with and encouragement of small house group leaders
- Facilitating and resourcing the first ever women's gathering conference focusing on the life of Esther as a leader of excellence
- Continuing the building project to upgrade the ministry's camp and retreat center; part of the vision for this camp is to also locate a library within it

Adamino writes: "We covet your ongoing prayers and support for our sisters and brothers in Cuba and for this country in general. The conditions there continue to deteriorate and people continue to suffer many needs. Yet God is active and doing a marvelous work in many places. We thank God for that and you for your generous support."

Regional prayer – Continue partnering with one of our Partner in Mission leaders, Joyce Moyer to discern partnership with 24 hour of prayer and worship events and deepening connection to the Franconia Conference Prayer Ministry. Also, a once a month prayer time focused on the region has begun.

Participate in the broader church through various committees including Youth Convention's *Speak up* planning committee, YMLT (Youth Ministry Leadership team) and the Youth Ministry Council

## **B. Credentialing and Covenanting:**

*Credentialing Ministers* – Develop a deliberate process of continuing education in consultation with pastors following generally understood denomination-wide practices of credentialing while recognizing local and contextual development and nuance.

### **Progress Update:**

A sampling of ministerial work includes: Pastoral installation of Aldo Sihaan at Philadelphia Praise Center; Approval of 3 ordinations: Brent Camilleri as associate pastor at Deep Run East; Tom Albright as pastor of Outreach from Whitehall to serve Ripple outreach ministry; Bob Helverson, Jr. as associate pastor at Salem Mennonite. Wes Boyer was commissioned at Vincent for mission work in Kenya under Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Through the School for Leadership Formation (SLF), planned and held the spring Formation Seminar, "The Church and Her Mission." Staff led the half-day seminar with a focus on the missional call of Christ applied to our various contexts. Formation training for leaders new to

Franconia Conference continues to be an integral part of our equipping and resourcing ministry

SLF also collaborated with Eastern District and Frederick Mennonite Community to host “Finding Our Way Together: Leadership in Challenging Times” led by Rick Stiffney. Over 60 congregational and Conference Related Ministry leaders attended this event. SLF also hosted Stuart Murray Williams in March for a Pastors’ and Leaders’ Breakfast on Post-Christendom.

Anabaptist Chaplains gathered as a way to provide support, encouragement and resourcing. Conversations focused on a variety of issues such as: the work that many chaplains do around end-of-life issues; resourcing conversation focused around the use of volunteers; conversation about developing metrics for measuring the “success” of chaplaincy ministry.

A “Day Apart” was provided for pastors and credentialed leaders in September at Camp Men-O-Lan. This was a time for these leaders to come and spend time with the Lord and also to receive personal prayer ministry for their lives and ministry

*Covenanting with Conference Related Ministries – Continue to develop relationships between Franconia Conference and the many related ministries that have sprung from within the Franconia Conference community. Continue to negotiate first-fruits contributions of cash and/or in kind services.*

### **Progress Update:**

Number of Conference Related Ministries:

2007 = 23

2008 = 23

2009 = 22 (This decrease represents the bringing together of Souderton Mennonite Homes with Dock Woods Community under one umbrella organization – Living Branches)

Collaborative meetings with Philadelphia Mennonite High School to plan urban young adult presentation for pastors and leaders prayer breakfast.

Exploring ways to increase Life With God broadcasting to more Franconia Conference churches. Conversations to consider periodic Spanish sermons/teaching are in the works.

Wording for the *Covenant of Understanding with Conference Related Ministries* has been finalized and distributed for signatures. This Covenant is intended to bring further clarity around the relationships and provide a foundation for further collaborative ministry between congregations and the respective ministries.

Prayer Gatherings with Conference Related Ministries included:

- Penn Foundation – prayer walking their campus, writing a crafted prayer for the ministry of Penn Foundation
- Spruce Lake Retreat - prayer walking on site, personal prayer ministry to staff
- Follow-up on a request for prayer ministry with staff of Care and Share;

Continued work with the Mennonite school’s strategic plan *GPS 2012* and their Connections Goal Team. The plan calls for “Boldly Opening Doors to Christ Centered Mennonite Education” and is linked to the *Passing on the Faith* work Conference leaders are engaged in.

Incubation of a potential new Conference Related Ministry, Living Hope Farm, continues to grow as the farm begins showing its first shoots. Farmer Jill Landes and Living Hope Farm task force member Henry Rosenberger, along with others, have been hard at work moving this new ministry initiative forward.

***Covenanting with Missional Initiatives*** – Redirect staff resources and invest considerable time and energy in catalyzing congregations, PIMs, and CRMs to develop and implement missional initiatives that have alignment with God's mission, are financially transparent, and have long-term sustainability and/or enduring impact.

**Progress Update:**

Met with Plains Mennonite to review Service Adventure possibility.

Newer worshipping communities among us continue to grow and are in need of additional space. Nations Worship Center is one of these. Currently, they are needing to raise funds for a building purchase. Additionally, Peace Fellowship in DC as well as Grace Community in Charleroi continue to grow and are at pre-natal stages of building needs.

A group of Franconia Conference congregations (Frederick, Boyertown and Perkiomenville), have implemented a missional outreach initiative in a local flea market. The initiative is the establishment of a Choice Books inspirational stand that seeks to provide a place of interaction and relationship building between church members and the community.

A number of Franconia Conference congregations (New Life Nueva Vida Norristown, Philadelphia Praise Center, Ripple Allentown etc.) are engaged in dealing with peace initiatives, immigration realities, community service and host of other types of activities and events that seek to deepen interactions and relationships with their respective communities.

***Covenanting with Congregations in Community*** – Conference staff would create various learning communities with Franconia Conference congregations, and others, around issues that relate to the health, witness and missional well-being of congregations.

**Progress Update:**

The Conference Board acted on the recommendation to have conference staff join the Corinthian Plan – providing health care coverage to pastors, credentialed leaders and workers in the church.

Continued the work with congregations to shape/introduce the LEAD oversight platform.

Various groups and congregations have begun and continue to work at Intercultural ministry approaches within their respective organizations.

Conversation/dialogue/intervention to support the ongoing emergence of Ripple Effects Lehigh Valley by defining new relationship with Ripple and Whitehall congregation.

Integrating the visit of Stuart Murray Williams with ongoing activities around formation in a post-Christendom context.

Exploring and deepening partner in mission relationships with urban congregations and initiatives in the Philadelphia and Washington, DC metro areas.

Beginning work of Intercultural Ministry Experience with Biblical Seminary to work at education focuses with our asserted intercultural, missional and formational values.

### **C. Property and Financial**

***Souderton Center Recommendations*** - Franconia Conference Office should relocate and downsize its square footage within the Souderton Center. Allow for the possibility of a nationally recognized retailer to become the end-cap store.

*FMC Properties should enter into marketing and management agreement(s) with an outside firm to provide greater visibility to the Center and maximize the Center's potential to attract and retain strong clients.*

#### **Progress Update:**

The offices of the Franconia and Eastern District Conferences will be moving to 569 Yoder Road, Harleysville, Pa. 19438. Our new telephone number will be: 267-932-6050 and the new fax number will be: 267-932-6055. Email and web site addresses remain the same as before: [info@franconiaconference.org](mailto:info@franconiaconference.org) for information and [www.franconiaconference.org](http://www.franconiaconference.org) for our web page.

We worked with MHEP and the FMC Properties Board to negotiate the lease for the new office on Yoder Rd.

- Worked with the space planner and building contractor to renovate the Yoder Rd. office according to Franconia Conference needs.
- Worked with Care & Share (C&S) and the FMC Properties Board to negotiate the lease terms for the 771 Route 113 office space.
- Worked with Care and Share board members and architect on C&S's renovations of the office space.

As has been stated already, the hope is that as we downsize and allow for all the retail space at the Souderton Center Plaza to be leased out, we'll move closer to having more of congregations' and individuals' contributed dollars going directly back into ministry.

***Indian Creek Road Farm Recommendations*** - FMC Properties moves to sell a development easement on part or all of the Indian Creek Road Farm's acreage, which will assure preservation of the farm in the long term as open space minimizing development beyond agricultural usage.

*FMC Properties uses funds from the development easement to pay down or pay off the mortgage on the Souderton Center.*

*FMC Properties should further divest itself from management of the Indian Creek Road Farm by leasing or through the possible sale of the Farm to an outside group(s) to develop sustainable creation-care oriented ministries that recognize the nature of the preserved open space of the land and may or may not become a CRM.*

#### **Progress Update:**

FMC Properties submitted the application to sell a development easement on all of the Indian Creek Road Farm's acreage. Unfortunately, we received a rejection notice for selling the development rights to the farm. We will continue to process this in the coming year.

A Task Force organized as Living Hope Farm has been formed. Members include: Greg Bowman, Charlotte Rosenberger, Henry Rosenberger, with assistance from Karen Moyer, Paul Harnish, Dan Lapp, and others. The farmer identified for Living Hope is Jill Landes of the Blooming Glen Congregation.

***Financial Recommendations** - These recommendations are being made to create a clearer understanding within the Franconia Conference constituency about how funds are generated and allocated.*

*Franconia Conference assumes a stable annual operating budget of \$1.0-\$1.25 million for the foreseeable future, with approximately 75% of the budget for missional/ministerial leadership, and approximately 25% of the budget for the support services.*

*Franconia Conference creates a three-tier budget structure, consisting of:*

- 1. Missional/Ministerial Leadership Budget financed by offering plate funds and business services revenue.*
- 2. Support Services Budget financed totally by funds generated through FMC Properties resources.*
- 3. Missional Initiatives Budget financed by special sources of income and contributions.*

### **Progress Update:**

As reported last year, the budget has been set up with this three tier approach which seeks to have more contributed dollars going back directly to ministry. An ongoing challenge that is still present is how to request funds for new missional initiatives that doesn't cause current contributed dollars to be redirected away from the missional programmatic and support services dimension of the Conference.

The Conference Board Finance Committee approved the 2008-2009 audit report and recommended it to the Conference Board who ratified it. For the complete audit report, visit [stewardship.franconiaconference.org](http://stewardship.franconiaconference.org).

2008 Conference Revenue at a glance, year ending January 31, 2009

- Total Revenue: \$1,319, 032
- Congregational contributions: \$636,094, Down 1% from 2007
- Property income: \$714,844, Up 10% from 2007
- Other contributions include estate gifts and special initiatives:
- \$263,013, Up 61% over 2007
- More information is available at [stewardship.franconiaconference.org](http://stewardship.franconiaconference.org)

2008 Conference Investments at a glance, year ending January 31, 2009

- Conference investments were hit hard this year during the economic downturn and total investment market losses were \$117,043.
- On the positive side, these conference investment funds were still able to yield \$143,875

for local and global missions, as well as conference support and capital expenditures.

Franconia Conference is audited annually by Detweiler, Hershey & Associates, Souderton, PA. Copies of the audit are available by emailing Conrad Martin, [ccmartin@franconiaconference.org](mailto:ccmartin@franconiaconference.org), or download a PDF of the audit at [stewardship.franconiaconference.org](http://stewardship.franconiaconference.org).

#### **D. Human Resources Recommendations**

***Focus on building and maintaining a cohesive leadership team.*** Franconia Conference needs to provide for staffing that has:

1. *A single and clear executive*
2. *Additional staffing for finance and communication*
3. *Specialized staff to implement various credentialing and covenanting activities*
4. *Regionalized pastoral support and oversight of congregations.*

#### **Progress Update:**

As a way to be clear and help focus staff priorities, time and energy, we have developed, reviewed and put in place new position descriptions as well as performance review processes. A significant portion of staff work will be embedded with the LEADership Ministers as they provide team based oversight to congregations.

Planning and coordinating a variety of meetings—Conference Board, Executive Committee, Ministerial Committee, Personnel Committee, Pastors and Leaders Breakfasts, Setting up credentials committee meetings with new candidates for licensing, maintaining Franconia Conference database, as well as MC USA Ministerial Leadership database etc. all continue to be core administrative tasks. Additionally, providing coordination and undergirding support to special meetings such as the LEAD roll-out and launch, have been key events requiring detail planning.

***Focus on organizational clarity through mission initiative development.*** Franconia Conference staff should be empowered to serve in more of a project development and brokering approach to equipping for mission, including the development of the criteria for credentialing and covenanting.

*Organizational clarity will include clear paths to access funding and resources that can help to implement newly covenanted initiatives to ensure broad access for conference leaders, congregations, ministries and partners.*

***Focus on the over-communication of organizational clarity.*** Franconia Conference staff should develop and implement a common communication strategy that keeps staff working within a unified message and presentation about Franconia Conference systems and priorities that can be repeated, that is simple, and that is communicated in multiple mediums.

#### **Progress Update:**

As of January 2009 *Intersections* has moved to a bi-monthly newsletter for a total of six issues for the year. The last issue of *Growing Leaders* was published in January as well. *Youth Breezes*, the youth ministry newsletter, is continuing to be produced quarterly.

Participation in a book consultation with Ervin Stutzman, former Dean of Eastern Mennonite

Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. Along with a diverse group of Mennonite theologians and leaders, and Herald Press, we discussed the books content and validity of its direction.

Website management and upkeep continue to be an integral part of Franconia Conference communications. Specially focused web pages have been created around the varying staff ministry focus. These include:

- creation and updating of [prayer.franconiaconference.org](http://prayer.franconiaconference.org) site;
- creation and updating of [stewardship.franconiaconference.org](http://stewardship.franconiaconference.org) site;
- updating and expansion of [slf.franconiaconference.org](http://slf.franconiaconference.org) site;
- updating the [youth.franconiaconference.org](http://youth.franconiaconference.org) site
- launching and updating of [community.franconiaconference.org](http://community.franconiaconference.org), an interactive directory.

We invite you to explore the new upgrades at [www.franconiaconference.org](http://www.franconiaconference.org)! We seek to keep the information up-to-date and relevant. Let us know how we can improve it. Contact Jessica Walter at [jwalter@franconiaconference.org](mailto:jwalter@franconiaconference.org).

## **E. Review & Evaluation**

***Activities addressing these recommendations should be reviewed annually by the Conference Board for compliance and adjusted accordingly.***

*A more extensive review of the implementation of these recommendations and an evaluation of their successful accomplishment of the specified outcomes should be undertaken, beginning on or about January 1, 2011, and completed in time for reporting to the Franconia Conference Assembly in the fall of 2011.*

### **Progress Update:**

The Conference Board has adopted the biblical story of Acts 15 as their “dwelling in the word” text for this year. This forms part of and informs the work of the Board that seeks to be centered in Jesus Christ.

The annual Conference Board Retreat provides a setting for a more extensive review of the work of the Conference. Considerable time was spent in reviewing the progress updates thus far of the VFP especially as it pertains to the launch and implementation of LEAD as well as the Covenants of Understanding with Conference Related Ministries.

## **Outcomes**

***If implemented in their entirety, the vision, goals, strategy, and action recommendations should provide for:***

1. *A stable, well-aligned financial environment that our membership is eager to support, with all support services met through related business activities at Souderton Center and Indian Creek Road Farm.*
2. *A narrative coherence measured by stable donated dollars and increased initiative related dollars for covenanted missional initiatives.*
3. *An increase in credentialed pastoral, congregational and conference related ministry leaders from previously under-represented communities: women, people of color, and young adults.*
4. *An increase in CRM related collaboration with Franconia Conference, measured by increase in the exchange of first-fruits giving and documentable services.*

5. *An increase in partnerships that have high missional value, financial transparency, and sustainability.*

## **Progress Update**

In all this work that is being done you may ask again, *why are we doing this?* In Terms of the vision and mission we're doing this because:

- Together, we have discerned a sense of call from God toward this vision and mission as affirmed by you, the delegate body of Franconia Conference;
- We are after establishing Franconia Conference now in such a way that the future continues to be bright and hopeful for the upcoming generations, as it has been for present and past generations;
- We want to be proactive in our endeavors, not only on behalf of Franconia Conference, but greater still for the sake of the unfolding reign of God!

***In short, we want to continue to see healthy and growing leaders, churches, disciples and connections!***

In terms of the structures/organization and finances, we're doing this because we want to see:

1. Financial cost for conference ministries being provided by congregational and other contributions
  1. initial costs for new ministry opportunities being provided through fund raising and/or other special sources (e.g. Grants, donors, special events, etc)
  2. initial costs for Conference Office administration and overhead being provided by the income from properties
2. Everyone connected to Franconia Conference knowing what Conference does and supports it financially and through their participation
3. More women, men, people of color, and young adults in leadership roles
4. The Conference Related Ministries continuing to help congregations in their mission and in so doing fulfilling their own mission, also Conference leadership facilitating this work
5. Conference Leaders, Congregations, and Conference Related Ministries working together in such a way that more Partners in Mission and missional initiatives emerge and more people are served and come to faith in Christ in our communities and in the world, for the sake of God's Kingdom reign!

## **Questions For Delegate Conferring:**

- As a delegate body, you have said to Conference Leaders that we are to be about this VFP work. As you note again the intended outcomes of this vision and financial plan, how do you see the outcomes being fulfilled? What do you feel needs more focused attention?
- As Conference Leaders we work with congregations, Conference Related Ministries and Partners in Missions. In your view, briefly describe what you see each of these parts of the whole being about.
- What counsel do you want to offer Conference Leaders for the upcoming year?