

Franconia Mennonite Conference  
**Church Together Statement**  
**Going to the Margins: Kingdom Mission Strategy**

**Purpose/Reason:**

The vision of the Franconia Conference is to “equip leaders to empower others to embrace God’s mission” and the conference priorities are to be “missional, intercultural, and formational”. Therefore, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to solidarity with those on the margins of the Christian community, our neighborhoods, and society at large, seeking transformation in ourselves, those to whom we minister, and the unjust systems we encounter.

**Statement:**

We advocate that Franconia Conference be intentional about identifying those on the margins of our churches and society, and provide resources for the work of mutual transformation according to the good news of Jesus Christ. Society has deemed certain people less valuable than others, failing to recognize their gifts, knowledge and wisdom. As a result, they are pushed to the margins of our communities, and experience systemic oppression and injustice.

In contrast to society, the good news of Jesus Christ offers healing, restoration, and new life to all people. Therefore, it is important that we are deliberate in going to the margins of our communities, seeking relationships rooted in mutuality and justice. Everyone has gifts to share within the body of Christ, and if any are devalued or unrecognized, the whole body will suffer.

In Scripture, we see Jesus affirming the value and image of God in those on the margins of his culture and society: tax collectors, women, lepers, the ceremonially unclean, Gentiles, etc. Today, marginalized people groups include but are not limited to individuals and families experiencing mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, physical and intellectual disabilities, incarceration, racism, poverty, war, oppression and exclusion. **Who are the marginalized individuals and families in your context and how are you intentionally reaching out and entering their lives with the love and hope of Jesus Christ?** If we are to be faithful disciples of Christ and make seeking God’s Kingdom our number one priority, these are the people with whom we must be in solidarity.

We desire Franconia Conference to support congregations in this work of disciple making<sup>i</sup> & transformation with and among marginalized people groups, so that all involved can be formed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, and the Kingdom of God can be manifest here and now.

We propose the following actions:

1. Congregational led
  - a. Each congregation to identify those on the margins of their context and steps to develop relationships
  - b. Listen to stories of people who are part of those marginalized communities
  - c. Partner locally and globally with marginalized communities for gospel proclamation and to address various forms of injustice and oppression, working towards spiritual & social transformation.
  - d. Church planting - Work with conference to begin and nurture emerging Christian communities into becoming sustainable, thriving congregations.
2. Conference led
  - a. Empower LEAD Ministers and delegates to hold congregations accountable to fulfilling this vision
  - b. Church planting - Work with congregations to support and nurture fragile emerging Christian communities into becoming sustainable, thriving congregations.

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<sup>i</sup> In this church together statement, disciple of Jesus is defined as:

1. One who affirms Jesus to be the way, the truth and the life and that only by repentance and faith in Him can one be restored to God
2. One who embraces Scripture as the ultimate authority for salvation, Christian living, and understanding the human experience.
3. One who is committed to ongoing discipleship that includes forming new disciples
4. One who is led by God’s Spirit to be a witness for Christ, fight against injustice and oppression, and meet the needs of those around us.
5. One who faithfully communicates the Gospel to their community
6. One who joyfully and expectantly awaits the restoration of all things through Christ