

Organizational Strategy Culture and Structure

for

Mennonite Church USA 2001 - 2011

January 30, 2001

Prepared by the Transformation Team

Tim Burkholder, Ron Byler, Donella Clemens, Jim Harder, Miriam Martin,
Dwight McFadden, Jim Schrag, Karl Sommers, George Stoltzfus, Ted Stuckey

CONTENTS

| | <u>Page(s)</u> |
|---|----------------|
| Preface | 1 |
| Part I: Organizational strategy of Mennonite Church USA..... | 2-11 |
| Biblical and theological understandings..... | 2-3 |
| Vision | 4 |
| Mission and role | 5 |
| Societal and cultural context (2001) | |
| • Challenges to the church..... | 6 |
| • Internal strengths and limitations of the church..... | 7 |
| Core strategies | 8-9 |
| Goals..... | 9 |
| Imagining the future: 2001 to 2011 | 10-11 |
| Part II: Culture and structure of Mennonite Church USA | 12-16 |
| Primary relationships..... | 12 |
| Organizational culture | 13 |
| Organizational structure | |
| • Executive leadership..... | 14-15 |
| • Churchwide program agencies..... | 16 |
| Attachments..... | 17-24 |
| Organizational structure illustrations..... | 17-20 |
| • Mennonite World Family..... | 17 |
| • Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership..... | 17 |
| • Mennonite Church USA networking | 18 |
| • Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA | 19 |
| • Parts of Mennonite Church USA..... | 20 |
| Definitions Appendix I..... | 21 |
| Power, Authority, and Accountability Appendix II | 22 |
| Governance Structure of Mennonite Church USA Appendix III..... | 23 |
| Endnotes | 24 |

PREFACE

1 This document contains two main components:

- 2 X Part I is a description of the **organizational strategy** for Mennonite Church USA.
- 3 X Part II is a description of the recommended organizational **culture** and **structure** to carry
- 4 out the strategy.

5 The purpose of the **organizational strategy** is to:

- 6 X clarify what Mennonite Church USA, one member of the worldwide Christian church, can
- 7 become in the 21st century.
- 8 X identify the path we believe God is calling us to follow over the next ten years as we
- 9 participate in building the church of Christ.

10 The scope of the organizational strategy includes the entire Mennonite Church USA
11 (congregations, area conferences, churchwide ministries). Many stakeholders provided insightful
12 feedback to earlier drafts of this document. Various committees and planning teams have used it
13 over the past year to gather consensus about the future as we complete **Project: Transformation**.
14 We believe that developing a common understanding of strategy – the primary focus of work for
15 the new church – is important **before** we lock in decisions about infrastructure and related
16 programs. Ultimately, we hope this strategy provides inspiration to help congregations fulfill the
17 whole church's vision.

18 Part II, **organizational culture and structure**, builds on the organizational strategy and identifies
19 organizational dynamics and infrastructure to carry out it out. It has been a year since this
20 document was originally written, and it will be another year (February 1, 2002) before actual
21 operations of these new structures begin. Consequently, Part II continues to evolve as the new
22 church takes shape. The Transformation Team will soon finish their work, and hand over further
23 development to the Executive Board. Examples where additional work is needed include the more
24 detailed design of Executive Board Offices, and the relationship with Anabaptist Associations. In
25 regard to the latter, work has begun on defining the relationship with Mennonite Health Services.

26 We are indebted to the results of the congregational study **Envisioning a New Mennonite**
27 **Church**, along with the work of the Integration Committee and the U.S. Country Committee for
28 providing the foundational inspiration and essential elements of this plan. In addition, many staff
29 members and conference leaders provided helpful advice. Conversations with the Executive
30 Director of Mennonite World Conference provided new insights. This document represents a new
31 system of relationships designed to achieve unity in building up the cause of Christ in the world.

32 One of the questions we ask is *How can we expect to create something truly new (transformation)*
33 *if our advice comes predominantly from persons in the present system?* Part of the answer comes
34 from doing our best to listen carefully, and to respond selectively. The rest of the answer comes
35 from our affirmation that God is building His church through us, and that we are living into
36 something new that God is doing. We believe that transformation will occur through the leading of
37 the Holy Spirit. We are grateful for God's leading among us, excited about what God has revealed
38 to us, and believe this blueprint reflects God's desire for us.

Part I: Organizational Strategy of Mennonite Church USA

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

39
40
41 Biblical and theological affirmations are the foundation and inspiration for the church's purpose.
42 Strategies and structures should align with these foundations.

43 **1. God's redemptive work sets the agenda for the church.**

44 God's mission is to set things right with a broken, sinful world, to redeem it and to
45 restore it to God's intended purpose. This mission of God is the church's reason for
46 being. By participating in God's mission, the church is a living sign of God's intended
47 future for the world.

48 **2. Mission is rooted in God's love, focused on Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

49 The mission is **God's**. We are involved in mission because we are recipients of God's
50 grace and have been invited by God to share the same love for the world that God
51 demonstrated in sending Jesus. **Jesus**, who went about preaching, teaching, healing the
52 sick and delivering people from evil spirits, who was crucified and resurrected, is the
53 means (the way), the message (the truth) and the model (the life) for all mission. After
54 Jesus' ascension, the **Holy Spirit** was poured out to move, transform, inspire and
55 empower the church in mission. The church nurtures its life in the Spirit through Bible
56 study, prayer and other spiritual disciplines.

57 **3. The church is an invitational, worshiping people, living as a contrast community.**

58 The church is a sign of God's redemptive activity. It is called and sent into the world to
59 invite all people into community and to demonstrate the living presence and power of
60 God through announcing salvation, proclaiming and demonstrating peace, and serving a
61 needy world in the spirit of Jesus. The church demonstrates its faithfulness to God's
62 purposes by being a responsible steward of God's creation and living as a prophetic
63 community in relation to the powers of the world.

64 **4. Healthy congregations extend and reproduce themselves.**

65 Every congregation is called into health and vitality and to engage collectively in
66 activities that give birth to new congregations and ministries.

67 **5. The gospel is reconciling, holistic and transforming.**

68 The church announces the good news to the world that people and communities can be
69 reconciled to God and to one another, be transformed into Christ's image and can
70 experience the healing of God's grace and peace.

71 **6. Incarnational ministry takes context seriously.**

72 Whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ encounters a new culture, we can be sure that the
73 God of the gospel has already affected that culture. The mission of God is always
74 incarnational, best demonstrated by "the Word becoming flesh." This means that the
75 church pays close attention to discover the activity of God already present in that context
76 and to make the mission of God good news in a relevant and transforming manner.

77 **7. The church expects opposition and is willing to suffer.**
78 In the midst of a fallen world, the church expects that opposition and hostility will often be
79 present. The church chooses to risk its life to represent the love and presence of Jesus,
80 even when this may result in misunderstanding and suffering because of the many
81 authorities and powers in the world that oppose the values of God’s authority. The church
82 stands in solidarity with poor and oppressed people and places its hope in God’s future.

83 **8. The final victory already belongs to God through Christ.**
84 The church around the world is a light to the nations, testifying to the power of the
85 resurrection. It is a sign for the world of the “great multitude” described in the book of
86 Revelation: people from every nation, tribe, and language standing before the throne of the
87 Lamb praising God.

88 **PURPOSE**

89 *What is the purpose of the Christian church?*

90 ***The purpose of the church is to participate fully in God’s work of setting things right in a***
91 ***broken world, redeeming and restoring all things in Christ to God’s intended design as we live***
92 ***into God’s new future that has already begun.***

93 Every organized expression of the Christian church has sought to express this purpose in light of
94 its unique history and ministry. It is the aspiration of Mennonite Church USA that all of its parts
95 work together to align themselves with this purpose.

VISION

What is God calling Mennonite Church USA to become?

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.¹

Mennonite Church USA is a new church body through which God is doing a new thing (Is. 43:19) among Mennonite people. God is sending us, along with all Christians, into all the world as ambassadors of Christ, (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:19-29; John 20:20-21). God has blessed us with a unique Christian perspective through our Anabaptist² faith heritage. God is calling us into a new fellowship, for new and effective witness.

These gifts from God have brought us to a historic crossroads, creating a new design for our relationships and renewing our commitment to the convictions we hold in common.

Throughout Mennonite Church USA we believe God is calling and sending us to:³

- | | |
|---|---|
| 109 X Joyfully offer all we are and all we have to God in | 134 X Identify with the world community of |
| 110 worship. | 135 Mennonites as one among many interdependent |
| | 136 Mennonite churches around the globe. |
| 111 X Preach, teach, and live God=s written Word in a | X Explore new partnerships with other Anabaptist |
| 112 way that is relevant to our time. | and Christian groups that build up the cause of |
| | Christ in the world. |
| 113 X Develop new means and methods to teach and find | X Promote peace, justice and reconciliation, first |
| 114 direction from scripture. | among ourselves, then to the entire world. |
| 115 X Celebrate the rich diversity of music and worship | X Practice anti-racist principles in church systems |
| 116 traditions in our church. | as a demonstration of reconciliation. |
| 117 X Pray for and encourage one another. | X Confront the spiritual, social, political, and |
| | economic challenges of our time. |
| 118 X Care for the resources that God has entrusted to us | X Carry out God=s mission in the world, |
| 119 out of gratitude for God=s generosity. | expressed in word and deed, starting in the |
| | congregation and extending to the global |
| 120 X Release our material abundance to meet the | community. |
| 121 physical and spiritual needs of others. | X Witness to God=s healing and hope in our lives. |
| 122 X Form communities of believers that are connected | X Extend grace, joy and peace in our homes and |
| 123 and accountable to each other. | congregations, to our communities and the |
| 124 X Lift up the calling, equipping and sending of | world. |
| 125 leaders as a priority for the church. | X Grow in faith and in numbers through studying |
| 126 X Call forth, equip, and honor the spiritual gifts of all | the scriptures, forming new relationships, and |
| 127 members of Christ=s body for the work of God in | being open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our |
| 128 the world. | midst. |
| 129 X Adopt attitudes and lifestyles, born of hearts and | X Embrace this moment in the history of |
| 130 minds reconciled to God through Christ, that are | Mennonite Church USA as an opportunity to |
| 131 life-giving and that attract others to Christ. | increase our witness, strengthen our identity, |
| | and bring honor and glory to God. |
| 132 X Practice obedience and allegiance to Christ no | |
| 133 matter the cost. | |

137

MISSION AND ROLE

138

Who is Mennonite Church USA? What role does it play?

139

MISSION: Mennonite Church USA

140

To participate fully with God in setting things right in a broken world, we share with others the gift of God's love through our worship, witness and life together.

141

142

143

We **worship** God through our praise, prayer, and study of scripture. We **witness** through serving people in need and by inviting people to faith in Jesus Christ and to join the community of believers. Through our **life together**, we challenge each other to become more Christ-like by the power of the Holy Spirit.

144

145

146

147

ROLE: Mennonite Church USA

148

Mennonite Church USA exists as a community of believers in local congregations, as a community of congregations in area conferences, and as a churchwide body in the USA. It joins with the Mennonite Church in other countries as part of the worldwide Mennonite community of faith.

149

150

151

152

153

The role of Mennonite Church USA is to:

154

154

X Share the good news of Jesus Christ through word and deed, calling people to salvation in Christ, and to form Christian communities of love and service to others.

155

156

157

158

159

X Establish, teach and promote the core values and beliefs of the church based on scripture and express them in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*⁴.

160

161

162

163

164

165

X Confront forces of the world which work against God's intent for all creation.

166

167

168

X Encourage and enable congregations to actively engage in God's mission in the world.

169

170

171

172

X Be a channel for dialogue and witness to other church bodies and to governing authorities.

173

174

X Be antiracist in all areas of church life and program.

X Tell the story of God's faithfulness in our journey as an Anabaptist people.

X Provide a sense of larger community, creating a common identity for ourselves and recognized by those with whom we come in contact.

X Call and train leaders who know how to apply the Gospel in our time.

X Encourage teamwork and effective partnerships between all parts of the church.

X Combine resources to do together what we cannot achieve alone.

SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT (2001)

175 Mennonite Church USA lives in a context where the
176 values and norms of secular society increasingly
177 oppose those of Christ=s church. It can no longer be
178 assumed that civic organizations, political figures,
179 and community activities support the values of the
180 Christian church to the extent they once did. Popular
181 media and information technology strongly influence
182 us in ways that undermine our Anabaptist values and
183 practices. Additionally, the church itself is in danger
184 of being co-opted to serve the purposes of the
185 world=s agenda rather than the agenda of God.

Our Mennonite congregations and communities
recognize these influences as we encounter our own
brokenness and the anguish of a secular society.

It is urgent that within such realities Mennonite Church
USA find its way as an agent of God=s love. It must help
equip its members, congregations, and area conferences
to recognize and meet the significant challenges posed
by the dynamics of contemporary society. In accepting
the call of God to engage in mission, we are faced with
these challenges to the church:

Challenges To The Church

- 187 1. **Core beliefs.** Articulating our core beliefs in ways that bring meaning and hope for
188 people seeking a sense of purpose and spiritual meaning for their lives.
- 189 2. **Racism.** Increasing our understanding of enduring problems of institutionalized racism
190 in our country.
- 191 3. **Family life.** Offering support to build and maintain healthy family relationships.
- 192 4. **Peacemaking.** Meeting the demand for peacemaking and conflict resolution skills
193 resulting from the increased concern about violence in our society.
- 194 5. **Global relationships.** Developing deeper relationships with the church in other parts of
195 the world and increasing mutual accountabilities.
- 196 6. **Individualism.** Balancing the modern lures of individualism with commitments to
197 community life and purpose.
- 198 7. **Materialism.** Understanding that wealth is intended to serve God rather than self,
199 through generous sharing of our resources to help meet the basic needs of all.
- 200 8. **Balance.** Recognizing that work commitments should not overshadow family and
201 church priorities.
- 202 9. **Anabaptist beliefs.** Responding to the growing interest in Anabaptist concepts and
203 theology among other Christian groups, even as we strive to embrace that rich heritage
204 ourselves.
- 205 10. **Conflicting beliefs.** Creating an awareness and critical understanding of the various
206 religious streams competing for the loyalties of our membership.
- 207 11. **Program support.** Encouraging members to channel their financial gifts to and through
208 the various parts of Mennonite Church USA and encouraging attention to resist the
209 appeals of independent, para-church organizations.
- 210 12. **Economic shifts.** Discovering methods of obtaining financial support from an urban
211 economy that is supplanting our rural farm economy as the source of financial resources
212 for the church.

Internal Strengths and Limitations Of The Church

214 As we engage the challenges presented above, along
 215 with other opportunities that emerge, we affirm the
 216 internal strengths and acknowledge the internal
 217 limitations that Mennonite Church USA brings into
 218 its life and ministry. Through appropriate

understanding of our strengths and gifts placed in
 balance with our weaknesses and limitations we
 are best equipped to meet the challenges of
 ministry in the congregation and beyond. We
 observe these internal strengths and limitations:

219 *STRENGTHS*

- 220 1. **Integrity.** High integrity recognized in both society and the religious community.
- 221 2. **Worship and church attendance.** With 90% of our members attending church
 222 regularly⁵, worship is central to our life and identity.
- 223 3. **Global awareness.** Expanded perspectives through exposure to other world cultures.
- 224 4. **Peace witness.** Strong commitment to nonviolence and use of conflict resolution skills.
- 225 5. **Income and giving.** Above average income and giving to the work of the church.
- 226 6. **Community.** A natural communitarian impulse demonstrated by an emphasis on
 227 congregational relationships and mutual accountabilities.
- 228 7. **Service.** Strong support of volunteer efforts, relief and service activities.
- 229 8. **Holistic theology.** Holding word and deed together.

230 *LIMITATIONS*

- 231 1. **Scale.** Size and dispersion of membership limits the creation, scope and delivery of
 232 denominational programs.
- 233 2. **Biblical and historical knowledge.** Concern for lack of knowledge of the scriptures and
 234 our own Anabaptist history among the present membership.
- 235 3. **Leadership.** Lack of clarity on the type of leadership needed by the church for the
 236 future; a perceived shortage of Anabaptist-trained pastors and staff leaders.
- 237 4. **Disagreements.** Tendency to fracture (split apart) due to strongly held convictions
 238 which are interpreted as differences in understanding of faithfulness.
- 239 5. **Church culture.** Genuine acceptance and integration of people of diverse cultures and
 240 ethnic groups is limited in our predominantly homogenous congregations.
- 241 6. **Rural/urban transition.** Struggles of transition from a predominantly rural church to a
 242 more urban church.
- 243 7. **Releasing gifts of all.** Fully recognizing and releasing the gifts of women, of people of
 244 color, and of other non-traditional Mennonites to the work of the church.
- 245 8. **Internal focus.** Excessive attention to internal agenda at the expense of external
 246 relationships.

CORE STRATEGIES

Action statements that describe what we can do to close the gap between the present and our vision for the future.⁶

247 This is a *kairos*⁷ moment in the life of Mennonite Church USA! In listening to God's call to bring together our
248 church bodies, we also hear a call to recast our church for the future. As we are being sent into God's mission in
249 the world, we are called to model transformation in Christ for this generation and future generations of
250 Mennonites. Our interconnected core strategies direct us upward to God, outward to the world, inward to
251 strengthen our community of faith and onward to develop skills for growth.

252 1. Grow in our faithfulness.

253 Jesus Christ calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. Through God's saving grace, we are empowered to be
254 Jesus' disciples, filled with His Spirit, following the way of Christ through suffering to new life. As we walk by faith
255 in Christ's way, we are being transformed into his image.⁸ God is calling and sending Mennonite Church USA to:

256 a. Discipleship

- 257 X Strengthen our understanding of Christ as the center of all of life, and live accordingly.
- 258
- 259 X Equip congregations to study the scriptures, and to be taught by gifted teachers, in order to
- 260 discern and follow the call of God.
- 261

b. Spirituality

- X Rediscover the rich meaning and power of giving our gratitude and adoration to God through worship.
- X Foster spiritual growth and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in applying the truth found in scripture.
- X Share our testimony with others.

262 2. Reach out to the world around us.

263 God calls us to Preach and proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight to
264 the blind, release to the oppressed@ (Luke 4:18). As Christ's ambassadors, we allow God's healing and
265 hope to flow through us to the world. God is calling and sending Mennonite Church USA to:

266 a. Mission

- 267 X Be intentional in welcoming new persons to become part of our congregations and the new churches we plant.
- 268
- 269 X Emphasize evangelism, addressing both spiritual and physical needs, calling people to faith and justice.
- 270
- 271
- 272
- 273 X Send and receive mission workers to support mission efforts around the globe.
- 274

b. Service

- X Strengthen our system to encourage all members to serve persons in need.
- X Provide opportunities for service (both short and long term) in a way that invites others to come into our midst and serve us even as we go out and serve others.
- X Develop and strengthen ministries of healing and hope.

275 3. Strengthen our community of faith.

276 God calls us to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace. We are called to model our relationships with
277 each other after the example and teachings of Jesus. As stewards of God's gifts, we seek to experience a
278 foretaste of the coming reign of God in our common life together. God is calling and sending Mennonite
279 Church USA to:

280 a. Community

- 281 X Help congregations to develop their identity as a primary faith community that counteracts the temptations of modern society.
- 282
- 283

284 b. Education and nurture

- 285 X Equip congregations to strengthen nurture activities for all age groups.
- 286
- 287 X Provide encouragement and incentives for our youth to understand and appreciate our Anabaptist heritage and beliefs.
- 288
- 289
- 290 X Enable Mennonite students to take Anabaptist courses while in non-Anabaptist school settings.
- 291

c. Stewardship

- X Help church members develop a new appreciation of biblical stewardship that celebrates God's generosity by sharing with others.

d. Unity in diversity

- X Promote Anabaptist models for peace and reconciliation when there is conflict within our own community (members, families, and congregations.)
- X Provide resources to help the church appreciate its diversity (racial, geographic, economic, and theological) and to use it effectively.

- 292 **4. Develop core skills for growth.**
- 293 Mennonite Church USA must develop core skills in order to grow B in both numbers and strength of conviction. God
- 294 has drawn together two church groups for a greater purpose. As faithful stewards, and with the power of the Holy
- 295 Spirit we will develop and implement new resources for transforming the church B to close the gap between what God
- 296 is calling us to become, and where we are today. God is calling and sending Mennonite Church USA to:
- 297 **a. Identity and vision**
- 298 X Clarify our new identity and vision for the future so
- 299 that every member of Mennonite Church USA
- 300 appreciates our past, knows what the new church
- 301 stands for, and where it is going.
- 302 X Promote this identity and vision with other Christian
- 303 groups and to the world at large so that our
- 304 distinctiveness is more clearly understood.
- 305 **b. Leadership** Recognize our leadership challenges and
- 306 work diligently to overcome them. We will:
- 307 X Establish and promote training programs to develop
- 308 leaders for the future needs of the church.
- 309 X Provide a sufficient number of pastors with
- 310 Anabaptist training for our churches.
- 311 X Develop and implement a system of leadership
- 312 nurture and placement to match leadership gifts
- 313 with needs throughout the church.
- 314 X Value staff in conference and churchwide offices as
- 315 crucial assets, and provide funding for their work.
- 316 **c. Peace and reconciliation**
- 317 X Build new resources to place conflict resolution at the
- center of our congregational life and commend it to
- the world at large.
- X Make anti-racism a new frontier of peace and justice.
- 318 **d. USA Teamwork and Partnerships**
- 319 X Design partnerships and encourage teamwork among
- all parts of the church.
- 320 X Establish closer relationships with other Anabaptist
- groups; develop ecumenical relationships with other
- 321 Christian groups.
- 322 **e. Global Teamwork and Partnerships**
- 323 X Recognize our place as a national church within the
- global Mennonite church by:
- 324 B Establishing a strong relationship with Mennonite
- World Conference.
- 325 B Developing bilateral and multilateral partnerships
- with churches around the world, beginning with
- 326 Canada.⁹

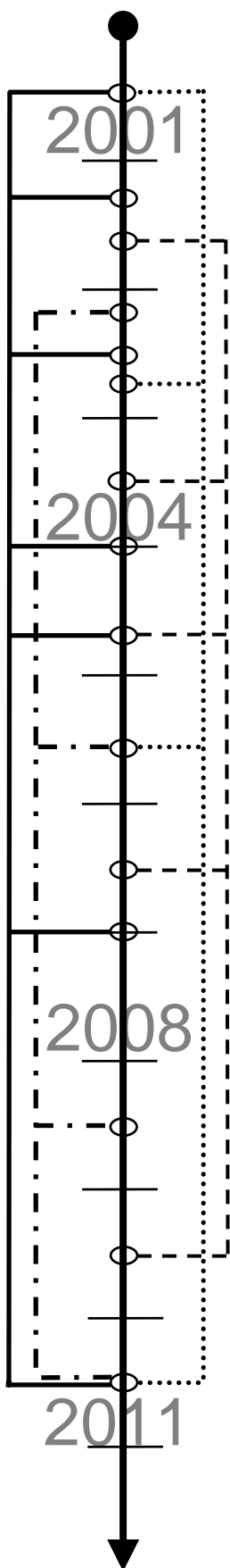
GOALS

July 2001 through June 2004

- 318 **1. Grow in our faithfulness.**
- 319 **a. Discipleship** Provide a renewed emphasis on
- 320 congregational study of scripture. Develop and
- 321 promote new resources which will enable effective
- 322 teaching to enhance our understanding of God's call.
- 323 **b. Spirituality** Develop new worship resources that
- 324 enable congregations to offer their praise and
- 325 thanksgiving to God revealing His power in new ways.
- 326 **2. Reach out to the world around us.**
- 327 **a. Invitation** Develop support at all levels of the church
- 328 for a common local church identity and practice that
- 329 welcomes all people into fellowship and ministry.
- 330 **b. Global Mission** Create an identity with the
- 331 congregation as a center of mission participating in
- 332 collaborative ministries with other congregations,
- 333 conferences, agencies, and worldwide partners to bear
- 334 witness to Christ by planting churches, meeting human
- 335 needs, and bringing healing.
- 336 **c. Evangelism** Partner with sisters and brothers from
- 337 around the globe to release the energy of the laity in
- 338 our congregations for their witness and evangelism.
- 339 **d. Service** Develop mission training activities providing
- 340 new service opportunities for many age groups.
- 341 **3. Strengthen our community of faith.**
- 342 **a. Stewardship** Establish a churchwide stewardship
- 343 resource that builds past stewardship initiatives and
- 344 provides support and encouragement for members and
- 345 congregations in their stewardship journey.
- 346 **b. Education and nurture** Provide resources for
- 347 families to live in harmony, and to pass on the beliefs
- 348 and values of the church. Enable more persons to
- 349 attend Mennonite schools by making them affordable.
- Strengthen congregation-based teaching aimed at
- equipping church leaders and workers.
- 350 **4. Develop core skills for growth.**
- 351 **a. Identity and vision** Provide resources for
- 352 congregations to appreciate the past, to understand the
- 353 new identity and vision of Mennonite Church USA,
- 354 and to use this in promoting their identity in their own
- 355 communities.
- 356 **b. Leadership**
- 357 X Inaugurate a 10-year leadership project to call out
- 358 leaders who are committed to our Anabaptist
- 359 beliefs and who are willing to seek training in
- 360 Mennonite or related Anabaptist seminaries.
- 361 X Review and update leadership training programs so
- 362 they are consistent with the vision for Mennonite
- 363 Church USA in the 21st century.
- 364 **c. Peace and reconciliation** Develop a new peace
- 365 ministry focusing on anti-racism that involves all
- 366 congregations.
- 367 **d. USA Teamwork and partnerships**
- 368 X Encourage and support the transformation of area
- 369 conferences as they develop new relationships and
- 370 partnerships that strengthen the church.
- 371 X Initiate discussions with other Anabaptist groups
- 372 regarding new partnerships.
- 373 **e. Global teamwork and partnerships**
- 374 X Develop mutual expectations for partnering with
- 375 Mennonite World Conference.
- 376 X Begin partnering with Mennonite World Conference
- 377 affiliated conferences around the world, with the
- 378 goal of adding one new partnership each year.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE: 2001 TO 2011

*This time line is intended to help persons imagine the future.¹⁰
 What key events might mark our progress over the first ten years?
 We expect these milestones could result from implementing our core strategies.*



MISSION and SERVICE —————

- 2001 Delegates approve USA global mission strategy; Global ministries round tables begin.
- 2002 Develop a churchwide growth strategy; establish goals for church planting.
- 2003 Ten international evangelists itinerate in the USA and stimulate spiritual renewal; promote churchwide **Year of Service**.
- 2004 Launch mission exploration and apprenticeship program; 20 participants a year begin one or two-year assignments.
- 2005 Five multi-ethnic mission leadership training institutes established; all new church planters participate in discernment and training program.
- 2007 75% of all congregations are active in an urban mission partnership.
- 2011 Participation in **Year of Service** exceeds 2000 people, 20 global mission round tables are functioning.

GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS - - - - -

- 2003 Strategy is completed with Mennonite World Conference to establish partnerships with Mennonite church bodies around the globe.
- 2006 Mennonite Church Mission is part of a global mission structure of accountability and sharing.
- 2009 Every area conference is participating in a pulpit exchange with a group of churches in another country or culture.
- 2011 The 2011 Assembly celebrates partnerships with 10 other national Mennonite church bodies; representatives from many other countries are present.

EDUCATION - - - - -

- 2002 Develop youth and adult nurture curriculum materials: *The new Mennonite Church USA C identity, vision, and outreach*.
- 2004 Anabaptist course offerings are available to Mennonite students in non-Mennonite colleges.
- 2005 Enrollment of Mennonite students in Mennonite colleges shows a marked increase as a result of implementing new churchwide tuition support plans making the cost of a Mennonite education more affordable.
- 2007 A measurable increase in biblical literacy is documented among young people enrolled in their first year at Mennonite high schools and colleges.
- 2010 Mennonite seminaries have implemented study programs in five strategic non-Mennonite seminaries across the country to increase the availability of Anabaptist education. Enrollment of Mennonite students has doubled since 2001.

LEADERSHIP

- 2001 Initiate *Leadership 2010*, a project to strengthen leadership in the new church.
- 2003 Mennonite schools and seminaries complete new leadership training tools to implement *Leadership 2010*.
- 2006 College level leadership training courses are widely available to people of color groups and are provided in their own language.
- 2011 The report on *Leadership 2010* documents that leadership training and development activities have succeeded in eliminating a previous shortage of Anabaptist-trained pastors and other staff leaders.

STEWARDSHIP —————

- 2003 At least 30% of congregations have participated in a *first fruits* giving seminar and have written a narrative budget, connecting their congregational mission to their use of funds.
- 2004 Every area conference participates in *Stewardship University* which offers a variety of resources to help individuals and congregations in their stewardship journey.
- 2006 75% of our congregations have participated in a *first fruits* giving seminar and have written a narrative budget, connecting their congregational mission to their use of funds.
- 2008 A new stewardship education campaign kicked off in 2004 which integrates *Stewardship University* is embraced by 75% of all congregations.
- 2010 Congregations have embraced a *first fruits* giving concept resulting in a 50% increase in the proportion of their budgets allocated to causes beyond themselves.
- 2011 As a result of the stewardship emphasis, the Ecumenical Stewardship Center reports that Mennonites top the per member giving chart for the first time.

PEACE - - - - -

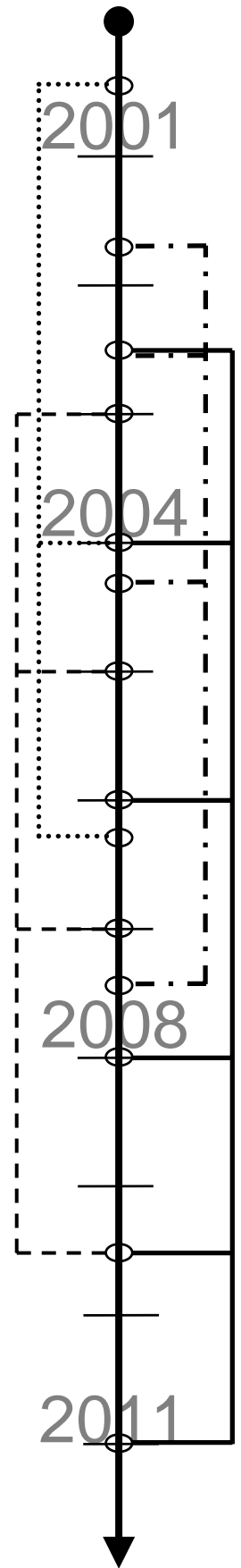
- 2002 Implement a new churchwide *Peace Center* for conflict mediation serving as a resource for peace and reconciliation both within the Mennonite community and beyond.
- 2003 Launch *Second Mile*, a peace process for congregations.
- 2005 The Mennonite *Peace Center* gains national attention for its work in mediation and conflict resolution. It is also called on to help other denominations deal with racism.
- 2008 The Mennonite *Peace Center* plays a key role in the passage of peace tax fund legislation which pays for peace instead of war.

WORSHIP - - - - -

- 2003 A philosophy of worship has been developed to guide the Mennonite Church in shifts toward contemporary worship styles.
- 2005 Worship leadership seminars have been offered in every Mennonite Church USA conference to communicate the philosophy of worship and train worship leaders.
- 2007 In their annual assemblies every area conference in Mennonite Church USA models God-focused worship that unites head and heart through a variety of cultural and artistic expressions.
- 2010 Mennonite artists and musicians complete a new illustrated electronic hymnal which includes original compositions side by side with hymns from the past, offering a unique blend of worship styles for Anabaptist congregations and house churches.

TRANSFORMATION

- 2001 Delegates authorize the Mennonite Church USA; all area conferences join.
- 2004 Transformation of area conferences now results in several larger configurations, each of which has established strong partnerships with churchwide programs to resource the needs of their congregations.
- 2007 A new transformation project begins with the goal of joining the Mennonite Church USA together with some related Anabaptist groups.



Part II: Culture and Structure of Mennonite Church USA

350 *What organizational dynamics should we establish?*
 351 *How should we organize to carry out our strategies?*
 352

353 Members of Mennonite Church USA experience
 354 relationships in the context of fellowship, partnership
 355 and common witness with Mennonites in organizational
 356 settings close to home and around the world.



A. Primary Relationships of Mennonite Church USA

359 Functions of the parts of the church in relation to each other:

see pages 17-19 for additional illustrations

1. Congregations

- 360 X Provide the entry point for persons into the church and thus into active participation in all parts of Mennonite Church USA. both corporately and individually experience nurture, worship and other faith expressions.
 361 X Provide the primary group identity for individual members in support of mission and service.

2. Area Conferences

- 365 X Provide for the training and credentialing of congregational pastors/leaders. X Function in a middle judicatory role, connecting congregations and churchwide parts.
 366 X Provide critical mass to deliver services to member congregations. X Connect to churchwide governance primarily through membership in the Constituency Leaders Council, a new means of representative positional authority.
 367 X Give leadership for networking among congregations especially for fellowship and mission endeavors.

3. Churchwide Program Agencies

- 372 X Provide leadership, resources and networking with other programs to facilitate efforts that cannot readily be done in area conferences and congregations. X Provide expertise and linkages to fulfill common goals with other parts of the church, particularly conferences and congregations.

4. Executive Leadership

- 376 X Provide leadership and coordination for the whole church in all its parts. X Ensure that ministries and services created are based on the core values held by all parts of the church.
 377 X Provide links that unify and advance the effectiveness of the whole of Mennonite Church USA, including the development of policies, long-range vision and goals. X Express concern for the good of all, through articulating core values and developing systems of sharing resources.
 378 X Provide for essential program elements not covered by churchwide program agencies (e.g. ministerial leadership and congregational life.) X Serve as the official point of reference between Mennonite Church USA and other denominations and church groups.

5. Anabaptist Associations

- 386 X Provide for professional, mission, and service opportunities and collaboration for a broader Anabaptist constituency (MCC, MEDA, MHS, etc.) X Enable settings for conversation and discernment of common faith issues.

6. Global Mennonite Partners

- 390 X Provide a community of Mennonite churches across the globe of which Mennonite Church USA is one church among many. Mennonite World Conference provides links between these churches. mission of Mennonite Church USA through fellowship and service opportunities with the global Mennonite church.
 391 X Enhance the understanding of the identity and X Partner in unique ways with Mennonite Church Canada to enable joint programming.¹¹

396 **B. Organizational Culture of Mennonite Church USA**
 397 (for Churchwide Programs and Executive Leadership)

398 **Organizational Culture:** *the values, goals, and norms of behavior*
 399 *that define our relationships.*

400 **1. Assumptions for the organizational culture of Mennonite Church USA**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>401 X Growing healthy, missional congregations is 402 the primary focus of all parts of the church.</p> <p>403 X The development of a new organizational 404 culture requires change.</p> <p>405 X Networking and flexibility are both necessary 406 in and among all parts of the church.</p> | <p>X Organizational culture must reflect the theology and values of the church.</p> <p>X Executive leadership will focus on teamwork and collaboration among all parts of the church.</p> <p>X Transformation should be understood as an ongoing process, with review and revision as needed in the future.</p> |
|---|---|

407 **2. Two defining characteristics: Networking and Flexibility**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>408 X Networking</p> <p>409 Networking provides accessibility of all 410 parts of the church to each other. 411 Networking includes formal and informal 412 connections that move around, within, 413 beyond, up and down. Multi-directional 414 communication flows are essential to 415 successful networking.</p> | <p>X Flexibility</p> <p>A flexible organization is able to respond readily to changing needs and circumstances. Dispersion of authority throughout an organization enhances its degree of organizational flexibility.</p> |
|--|--|

416 **3. Leadership in a network-oriented, flexible Mennonite Church USA**

| Leadership seeks a healthy balance between: | |
|---|---|
| <p>X vertical relationships</p> <p>X single point of control</p> <p>X A strong task orientation</p> <p>X single direction information flows</p> | <p>X horizontal relationships</p> <p>X shared decision-making responsibility</p> <p>X a strong process orientation</p> <p>X multi-direction information flows</p> |

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>417 X <i>Leaders of the different parts of the church</i> 418 <i>support each other by sharing information</i> 419 <i>and by discernment of common goals. This</i> 420 <i>results in a broader ownership of the</i> 421 <i>denomination's vision, heightened levels of</i> 422 <i>trust and diminished resistance to change</i> 423 <i>(greater flexibility.)</i></p> <p>424 X <i>Executive leadership</i> provides for collaboration 425 <i>between all parts of the church, encouraging and</i> 426 <i>enabling initiatives in many settings, achieving</i></p> | <p>enhanced results for the whole of the church.</p> <p>X <i>Executive leadership</i> gives its energies to support the well-being of each part of the church and creates opportunity for interdependence between the parts, all in the service of an overarching vision and goals.</p> <p>X The nature of executive leadership's power and authority in Mennonite Church USA is found in Appendix II.</p> |
|--|--|

427 **C. Organizational Structure for Mennonite Church USA**

428 The objective of this section is to clarify how
429 responsibilities are defined and allocated between
430 the various parts of the church to carry out the
431 organizational strategy. The concern in this
432 section is not one of governance, but rather

identification of the relationships between the different
parts of the church that are needed to achieve the goals
of the church. Greater detail is provided for the
executive leadership part of the church in order to lay
the foundation for its evolving role.

433 **1. Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA**

434 **a) Functional responsibilities**

435 The Report of the U.S. Country Committee, approved by delegates at St. Louis '99, identified the
436 following functional responsibilities of the Executive Board and staff of Mennonite Church USA. It:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 437 X Acts on behalf of the Delegate Assembly | X Maintains communication channels and networks. |
| 438 when it is not in session. | X Gives leadership to generation and allocation of |
| 439 X Articulates Mennonite Church USA | resources. |
| 440 denominational vision, provides for spiritual | X Fosters partnerships with Mennonites in Canada |
| 441 oversight, and coordinates churchwide | and worldwide. |
| 442 programs. | X Establishes links with other denominations. |
| 443 X Ensures a safety net for small conferences and | X Receives counsel from the Constituency Leaders |
| 444 entities (critical mass and revenue sharing.) | Council. |

445 **b) Operational responsibilities**

446 The effective discharge of these functions by the Executive Board and its staff requires attention to the
447 following operational responsibilities:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 448 X Ensure that activities and programs align | relationships throughout the church. |
| 449 with the values, reflect the priorities, and | X Provide added capacity for generating resources |
| 450 achieve the mission and goals of Mennonite | and minimize excessive competition for resources |
| 451 Church USA. | among the same constituency. |
| 452 X Maintain the focus on maximizing services | X Practice good stewardship of resources and |
| 453 for congregations and area conferences. | maximize efficiencies across the parts of |
| 454 X Build cooperation and collaborative | Mennonite Church USA. |

455 **c) Organizational design to carry out responsibilities**

456 The Executive Board provides a leadership
457 role for Mennonite Church USA in
458 identifying common values, goals, and ends
459 by:

- 460 X nurturing the “heart and soul” of the
- 461 church by articulating the church’s
- 462 calling, and
- 463 X focusing its energies on empowering all
- 464 parts of the larger church to achieve
- 465 those ends.

466
467 The Executive Board will assign its
468 operational responsibilities to an Executive
469 Director who will be responsible to secure

additional staff and to define their specific duties
to fulfill the work of the Executive Leadership
part of the church. An Associate Executive
Director will assist the Executive Director in
carrying out the work. One important aspect of
the work of the Executive Board staff focuses on
network responsibilities which enable teamwork
and partnerships to flourish throughout the
church. Executive Board staff will be organized
around various functional **offices**, which enable
them to engage in networking as well as to
provide specific program functions that are not
performed elsewhere in the church. Diagrams on
pages 17-19 illustrate these roles.

470 **d) Offices of the Executive Board**

471 Through Executive Board staff, the offices
 472 of the Executive Board provide support in
 473 carrying out the core strategies and goals of
 474 Mennonite Church USA. They assume
 475 responsibility for pastoral oversight by:
 476 X providing the basis for mutual
 477 understanding, good will, and unity in
 478 Christ within the Anabaptist-Mennonite
 479 view of the gospel,
 480 X providing means by which the whole
 481 church can express its vision and
 482 mission, and
 483 X enabling the care of relationships in and
 484 between parts of the church.

They assume responsibility as the programmatic arm of the Executive Board by:
 X modeling and practicing churchwide networking that identifies, convenes, and walks beside other leaders throughout the church.
 X providing specific services to area conferences and congregations that lead by inspiration of ideas, building trust in relationships, and offering “added value” to local resources.
 X collaborating with conferences and program agencies to identify short and long-term means to enhance their capacity for ministry.

485 Initial proposals provide for the following offices, with the understanding that they will become
 486 functional starting February 1, 2002, the effective date of Mennonite Church USA.

| OFFICE | SELECTED FUNCTIONS |
|--|--|
| <i>Congregational Life</i> | <i>Provide resources for: Worship, Age-Specific Ministries (children, youth, young adult, adult), Congregational Literature, and Family Life. Enable networking of Evangelism, Stewardship, Peace and Justice.</i> |
| <i>Ministerial Leadership</i> | <i>Provide pastoral oversight, leadership, coordination, resources and support to the ministerial leadership system. Share in the spiritual oversight of Mennonite Church USA.</i> |
| <i>Communications</i> | <i>Build strong vision and identity throughout Mennonite Church USA, handle marketing and promotion, communicate news and information, and provide a public voice in national and ecumenical circles.</i> |
| <i>Cross Cultural Ministries*</i> | <i>Enable fellowship and advocacy; provide for healthy pastoral systems and relationships with conference and denominational agencies; serve needs of Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Asian, and other groups.</i> |
| <i>Finance and Administration</i> | <i>Provide oversight for the financial affairs of Mennonite Church USA, arrange for asset management, accounting and auditing services. Provide human resources functions, data processing functions, and handle legal matters.</i> |
| <i>Conventions</i> | <i>Plan for churchwide gatherings with programming that encourages participation by all age groups and segments of the church: Adults, Youth, Young Adult, Junior High, and Children. Secure facilities and appropriate funding.</i> |

487 * A proposal for a Cross Cultural Ministries office has been developed but not yet formally approved.

488 In addition to the offices identified above, the Executive Board and staff will establish formal
 489 relationships with various committees and constituency groups. These are shown in the graphic
 490 illustrations that follow.

491 **2. Churchwide Program Agencies of Mennonite Church USA**

492 Churchwide program agencies provide
 493 leadership and resources for carrying out
 494 the core values and priorities of the
 495 church. They provide critical mass for
 496 specific projects that other parts of the
 497 church are not able to handle. They
 498 cooperate and network with other parts of
 499 the church around common goals. A

Board of Directors governs each Agency.
 Initial proposals describe the following
 churchwide program agencies of Mennonite
 Church USA. The Executive Board may
 authorize or create additional program
 agencies as needed in the future to carry out
 the vision and strategies of Mennonite
 Church USA.

| PROGRAM AGENCY | PURPOSE |
|--|---|
| <i>Mennonite Education Agency</i> | <i>To strengthen the life, witness, and identity of Mennonite Church USA through accredited education. This is carried out by promoting the vision of Mennonite education, developing schools/programs which meet constituent needs, facilitating cooperation and collaboration among the various institutions, and providing means of accountability and support between the church and the schools.</i> |
| <i>Mennonite Mission Agency</i> | <i>To lead, mobilize, and resource Mennonite Church USA to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ, so that every congregation and all parts of the church will be fully engaged in God's mission, reaching from across the street to around the world.</i> |
| <i>Mennonite Publishing Agency (Mennonite Publishing House, Inc.)</i> | <i>To publish and distribute Christian literature through the operation of publishing houses, bookstores, or otherwise in the United States, Canada and abroad.</i> |
| <i>Mennonite Stewardship Agency (Mennonite Mutual Aid)</i> | <i>To lead members of Mennonite Church USA toward greater practice of biblical principles of holistic stewardship. It carries out this responsibility by providing programs to assist members in the stewardship of money, health, time, and talents.</i> |

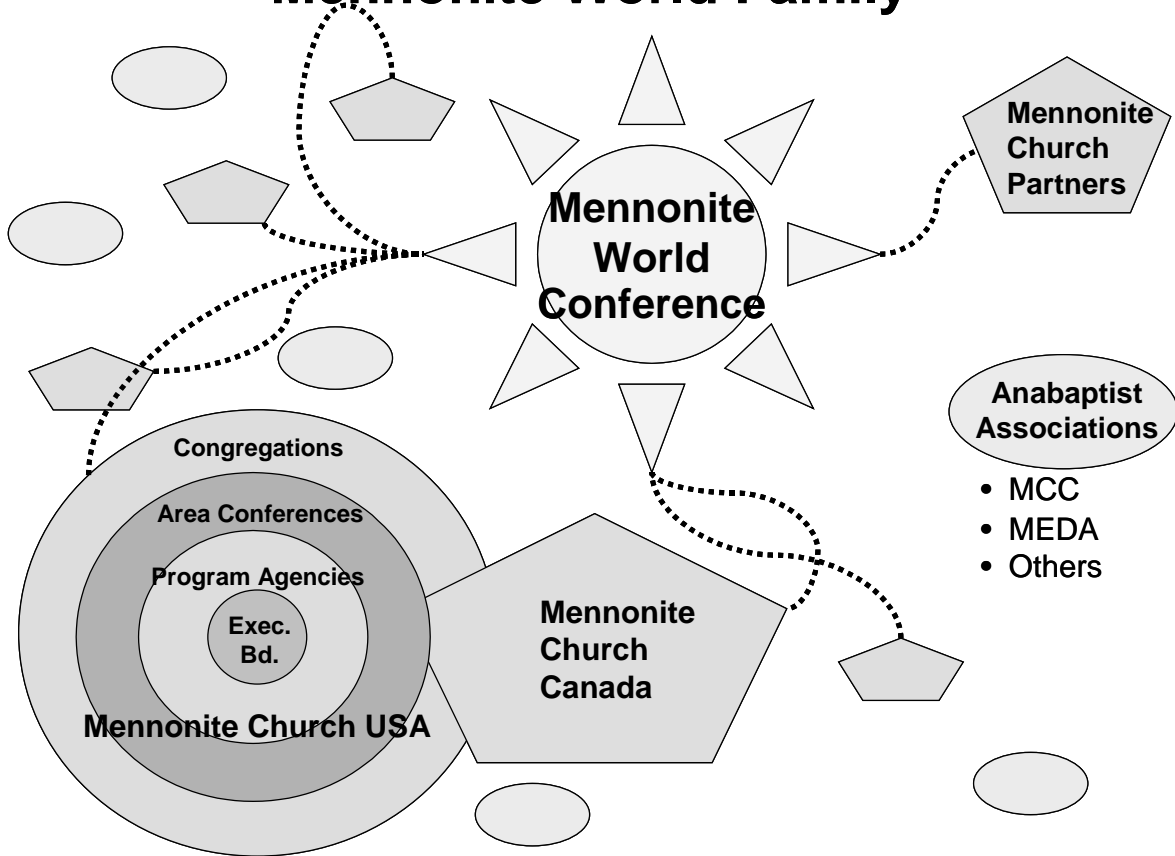
500 Churchwide program agencies work in
 501 collaboration with the various offices of
 502 the Executive Board to serve the needs of
 503 area conferences, congregations, and
 504 individual members. An Executive
 505 Council chaired by the Executive Director

will include the executive officer of each
 program agency along with the Directors of
 each Executive Board office. Its purpose is to
 share information, test proposals, enable
 collaboration and provide unity in carrying
 out churchwide priorities and goals.

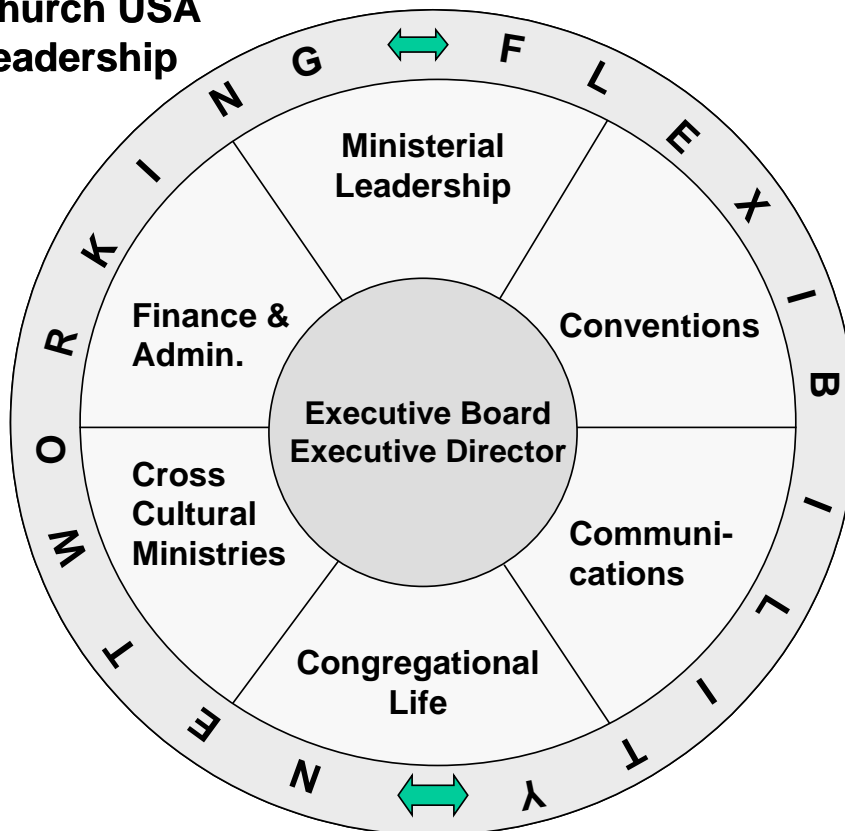
506 **D. Illustrations of the organizational structure of Mennonite Church USA**

507 The following pages contain four graphic illustrations of Mennonite Church USA and a chart.
 508 These are presented in order to gain a more complete understanding of the relationship between
 509 the various parts of the church.

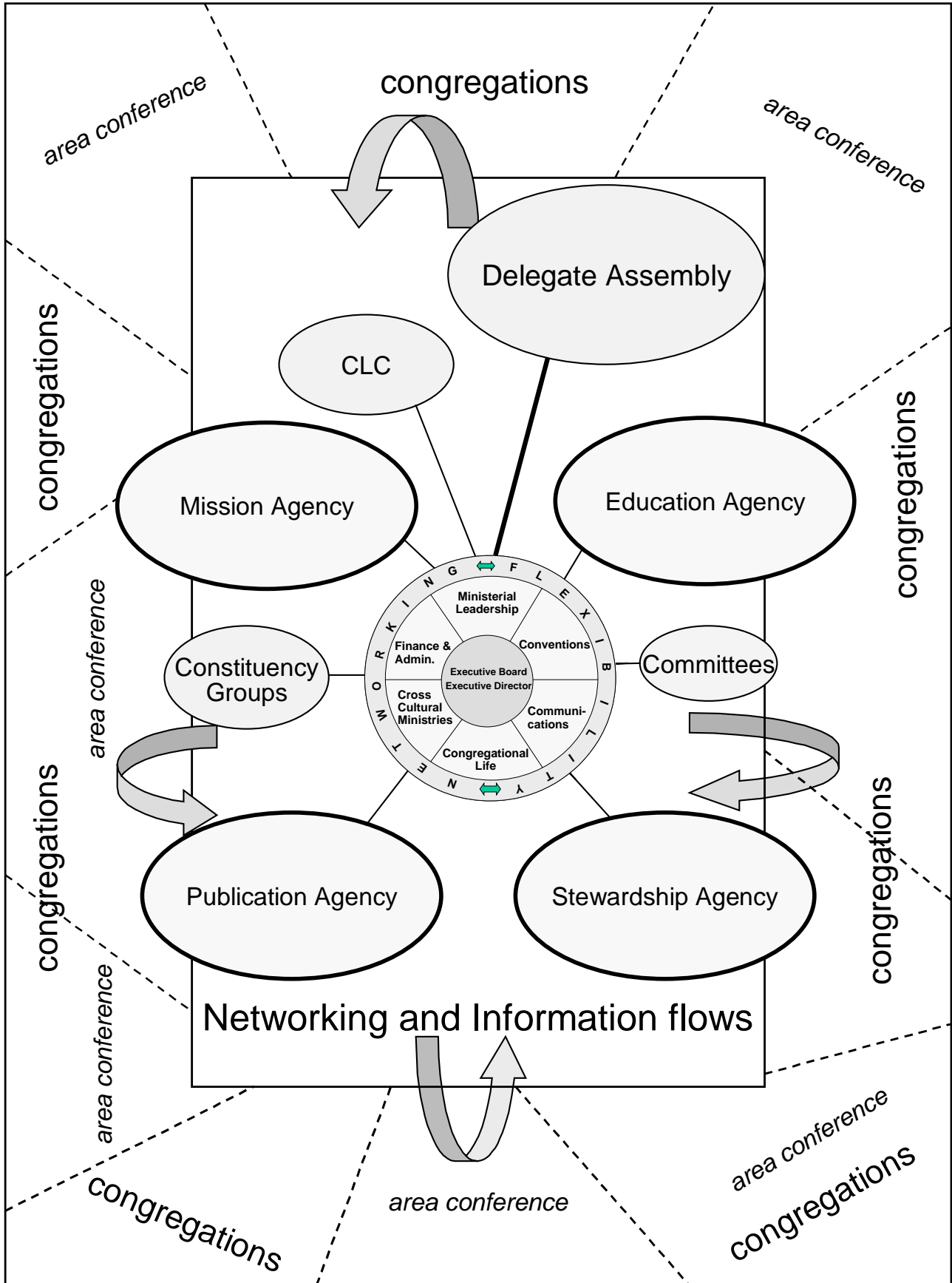
Mennonite World Family



Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership



MENNONITE CHURCH USA

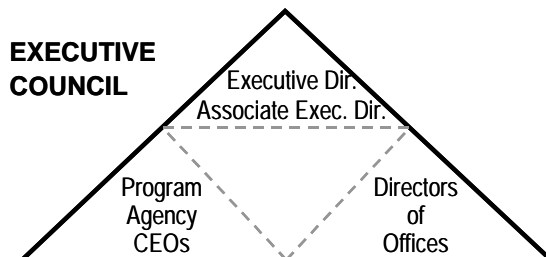
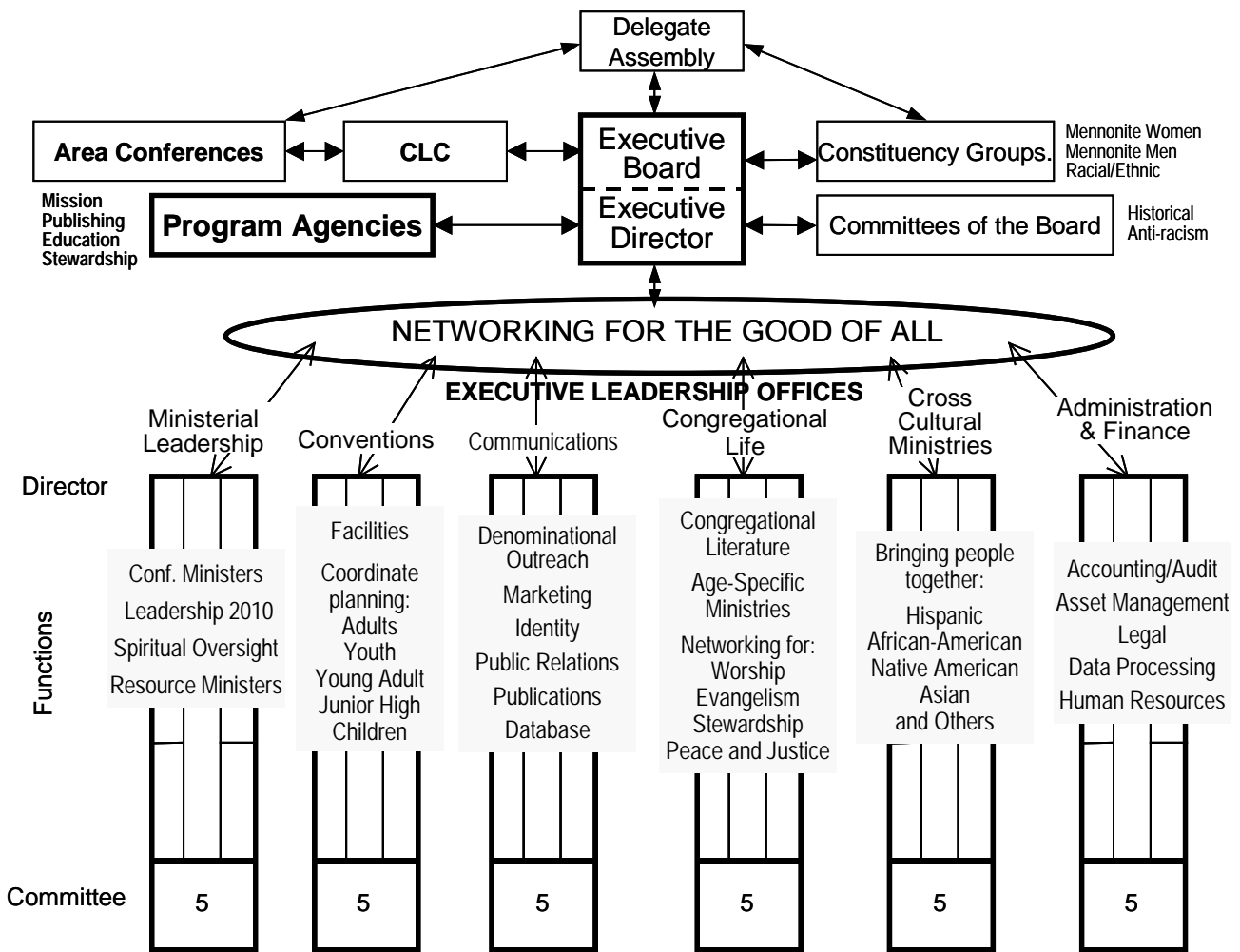


↑ relative size ↓

Executive Leadership Mennonite Church USA



***** The diagram below illustrates the Executive Leadership part of the church*****



| DESCRIPTION OF | PARTS OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| | CONGREGATION | AREA CONFERENCE | CHURCHWIDE PROGRAM AGENCIES | EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP |
| PURPOSE | X Serves as entry point for individuals into the church. X The primary support & mission group for individual members. | X Community of congregations. X Provide critical mass for program. X Provide guidance. X Provide for accountability. | X To provide leadership and resources for carrying out the core values of the church. X To provide critical mass when area conferences are unable to do so. | X To unify, guide and assist the whole church. X To lead by expressing and promoting the identity, core values, and priorities of Mennonite Church USA. |
| FUNCTIONS | X worship X fellowship X nurture/education X mission X service X stewardship | X fellowship X ministerial credentialing, placement X cooperative mission X leadership nurture X oversight | X Mission X Publishing X Education X Stewardship/Mutual Aid | X Establish vision, long range goals and priorities. X Provide for the well-being of each part, and collaboration among all parts of the church. X Enable networking among all parts of the church around common goals and issues. X Manage relationships with the global church and other denominations. X Maintain relationships with the CLC, various committees and constituency groups. X Executive Board staff will manage these offices: X Congregational Life X Ministerial Leadership X Communications X Cross Cultural Ministries* X Finance X Conventions |
| RATIONALE / ADDITIONAL COMMENTS | § Responsible for members and local program. | § Responsible for network accountability and mission objectives among congregations. | X Directly responsible to carry out specific churchwide goals. X Network responsibility to connect with all parts of the church around common goals. | X An Executive Council chaired by the Executive Director will serve to inform, test proposals, enable collaboration and provide unity in carrying out churchwide priorities and goals. X Networking will provide unifying, efficient links to facilitate work done by program agencies, area conferences, congregations, and other interest groups. |
| STAFF | Pastor Church Staff | Conference Administrator Conference Minister(s), staff | Executive Director Program Staff | Executive Director Executive Board Staff |

*A proposal for a Cross Cultural Ministries office has been developed but not yet formally approved.

510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549

APPENDICES

Appendix I

DEFINITIONS

Church The entire spectrum of the denomination: its members, its congregations, area conferences, churchwide programs, and executive leadership.

Denomination Mennonite Church USA in all its parts.

Networking Cooperative efforts combined to achieve a common end by two or more parts of the church.

Churchwide Parts of Mennonite Church USA that relate to the other parts, that is, churchwide programs and executive leadership.

Partnership Collegial and cooperative relationships among the parts of Mennonite Church USA or with other denominations or national churches.

Transformation Major change across the spectrum of the church.

Localism The continuing trend toward greater concentration of resources, efforts, initiative, and decision-making in congregations and conferences.

Community A core value of Mennonite Church USA expressed in all its parts that emphasizes unity in the diverse body of Christ.

Vertical Relationships Working relationships based on the understanding of a power of one over the other (sometimes referred to as hierarchical relationships).

Horizontal Relationships Working relationships based on information flow and decision-making responsibility; relationships defined based on the unique role and gifts of the parts.

Teamwork Using the unique role and gifts of selected persons and parts of the church to accomplish a task.

Critical Mass Accumulation of sufficient resources to achieve a goal or accomplish a task.

Appendix II

551 The following document from the U.S. Country Committee Report (pages 50-51 of the *St. Louis <99*
552 *Convention Workbook*) reflects policy to be developed and implemented within Mennonite Church
553 USA.

554

555 ***3.1 Power, Authority and Accountability in the Denomination***

556

557 In designing the proposed structures that follow, the U.S. Country Committee is attempting to
558 implement the following perspectives on power, authority and accountability in the U.S.
559 denomination:

560

561 § The church requires structures that empower its leaders to guide and direct others in appropriate
562 ways toward achievement of agreed-upon goals. This is power and authority at its best B a
563 "necessary good" within any large organization.

564

565 § To be effective, the exercise of *executive authority* (policy determination and implementation
566 oversight) needs to rest in the hands of a workable group of clearly identified individuals (the
567 "Executive Board" in the model which follows.) This group, in turn, is selected by and is
568 accountable *to the whole* of the church for their results and is charged with looking after the
569 interests *of the whole*. A critical balance of necessary skills and perspectives within this group is
570 best achieved through some mechanism of *coordinated selection* (the "Leadership Discernment
571 Committee" in the model that follows.)

572

573 § While the executive function is charged with discerning and implementing the intent of the
574 whole on an ongoing basis, *final authority* to ratify major issues of policy and priority for the
575 church denomination must be exercised by a substantially larger body of *representatively*
576 *selected* delegates meeting in periodic assemblies. These delegates, by virtue of the process used
577 to select them, are able to speak to the interests and perspectives *of the parts* of the church that
578 they represent--such as congregations and conferences (the "Delegate Assembly" in the model
579 that follows.)

580

581 § In addition to the constitutionally-mandated decision-making bodies of a church denomination
582 (i.e., the Delegate Assembly and its Executive Board), there exists another category of leadership
583 defined by roles played in other denominational structures (leaders of area conferences,
584 recognized groups, etc.) These leaders carry *positional (or role) authority* from the conference
585 or other recognized groups bringing major issues and concerns of their respective constituent
586 entities. Effective church structures require a mechanism of inclusion by which such counsel can
587 be sought and processed (the "Constituency Leaders Council" in the model that follows).

588

Appendix III

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

The following chart from the U.S. Country Committee Report (page 55 of the *St. Louis <99 Convention Workbook*) reflects the system of governance for Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA.

| | Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) | Executive Board (EB) | Delegate Assembly (DA) |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Purpose | Discerns, advises | Leads, acts | Networks, approves |
| Meeting Frequency | Annual (winter) | Tri-annual (winter, spring, fall) | Biennial (every other summer) |
| Chair | Moderator-elect | Moderator | Moderator |
| Size | 75 or more | 20 (or 21) | 1,500 or more eligible |
| Membership | 2-3 each from: § Area Conferences § Recognized groups (e.g. Mennonite Women, AAMA, etc) | § 5 Executive Committee § 7-8 faith and life focus § 7-8 program area focus | § 1 delegate/100 congregational members § 1 delegate/1000 conference members § 3 plus 1 delegate/1000 members of each recognized racial/ethnic group |
| Observers/ Participants | Executive Board and Program Board CEOs | Program Board designees and Partner observers (e.g. Mennonite Church Canada) | Fraternal guests and non-delegate attendees |
| Functions | § Serves as council of denominational Aelders@ § Engages in conference-to-conference and entity-to-entity dialog § Voices collective aspirations and concerns to denominational leadership § Exercises discernment and gives counsel to Executive Board § Provides opportunity for communication with program entities | § Articulates US denominational vision § Provides for spiritual oversight to US body § Coordinates activities of program entities § Ensures safety net for small conferences and entities § Maintains communications channels § Gives leadership to resource generation and allocation § Fosters partnerships with Mennonite Church Canada, other Mennonites and other denominations | § Represents congregations and conferences § Discusses/decides major policy issues § Acts on recommendations and activities of Executive Board § Discerns the voice of the Spirit in the midst of the Assembly |
| Staff | General Secretary or designee | General Secretary and Associates | General Secretary and Associates |

NOTES

-
1. Statement adopted 1995. The priorities of the original statement of Vision: Healing and Hope were (1) Christian spirituality, (2) Christian stewardship, (3) Leadership, (4) Life together, (5) Evangelism, and (6) Peace and reconciliation. These priorities have been included as concepts in the points listed.
 2. The word Anabaptist as it is used throughout this document refers to the basic beliefs of persons who joined the Anabaptist movement of the 16th century. Anabaptists are the Mennonite, Brethren and other groups today who strive to live out these beliefs.
 3. The points listed are not intended to represent an order of priority.
 4. The current edition was Aadopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, meeting at Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30,1995. The twenty-four articles and summary statement were accepted by both groups as their statement of faith for teaching and nurture in the life of the church.@ (Introduction, p. 9)
 5. This information is from the *1998 Mennonite Identity/Integration Project: Quantitative Study Final Report* prepared by Parkwood Research Associates, April 8, 1998, page 8.
 6. Our vision for the future is described on page 2.
 7. AKairos@ is a Greek word, with rich meaning, signaling a special time of opportunity.
 8. From the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Article 17.
 9. Multilateral means that partnerships will have more than the intended partner involved in their formation and can be initiated by any party.
 10. The events and achievements noted in this list are not meant to prescribe the future, but rather be descriptive of selected noteworthy events that might occur as we are open to the leading of God's Spirit working among us.
 11. Delegates at St. Louis <99 approved the recommendation from the Integration Committee ACanada/U.S. Partnerships@ (pages 83-88 of the delegate workbook.) In addition, the Transformation Teams from Canada and the US have developed further guidelines in their paper AForming Partnerships@ reviewed with the Executive Board in February, 2000.