

Report from Mission West Covenant Team March 1, 2013

At each Area Assembly for Central, Hi-Plains and Tres Rios Areas, we ask each area assembly to consider and approve the following four actions:

- **Affirm the coming together as Mission West to collaborate in ministry**
- **Affirm the guidance and directions for future development as listed in this proposal**
- **Form a Common Mission Board with representatives from each of the three areas as directed by this proposal**
- **Empower the Common Mission Board to flesh out the details needed for staff development and financial support of our Common Mission, bringing their detailed proposal to each Area's Board or Council for approval.**

History of Covenant

Following the CCSW regional visioning sessions several years ago and their release of New Day New Direction Vision Statement, interested members from the Central, Hi Plains and Tres Rios Areas convened a gathering in January 2013 to develop a plan for implementing the vision in our Areas. The three areas gathered together with the hope we might make best use of our resources together rather than separately. The meeting resulted in a provisional Mission Statement for Mission West.

"To live out our ministry as a connecting community of communities seeking to serve Jesus Christ in the contexts in which God has placed us" (Adapted from CCSW New Day New Direction Ministry Plan).

A Covenant Team, comprised of two representatives from each of the three Areas, was appointed to develop a Covenant proposal for consideration. The Mission West Covenant Team has concluded their meetings over the past month. We took the building blocks of the provisional mission statement and the core transformational values upheld by the January meeting in Amarillo. Our goal was to come up with a structure for ministry and staff for Mission West. We have come to a model that we agree upon and present now for the three areas to review, discern and for Mission West to move forward with, in ministry to the world. We also realize that there is still much more to do and we hope that the three areas will continue to press forward together.

Description of Common Mission Board

We propose that a Common Mission Board be developed for Mission West. The Common Mission Board will develop further details of the covenant. This mission board will consist of nine individuals (three people from each area). Each Area's representatives will include at least one clergy member and one lay person. One of the three representatives should also be associated with the current Area youth ministry.

The Common Mission Board will be in place by September 2013 and will begin to evaluate Mission West and work on proposals to be ready for Area assemblies consideration by March 1, 2014. The current area councils/boards could work towards a proposal for an unified mission field, ultimately resulting in the end of each Area's separate council/board and the unification of all administrative and fiscal responsibilities if it is discerned to be in the best interest of the Areas. This mission board will focus on all aspects of the tri-area ministry. The Common Mission Board represents the totality of all three areas, not just the localities in which the individuals reside. The Covenant Team asks that the Common Mission Board keep at the forefront the diversity represented in Mission West (ethnicity, size of community, age and gender) when selecting area representatives as well as carrying out the ministry and mission of the Common Mission Board.

Additional Considerations

We have focused on the Provisional Core Principles for Transition:

- Ministry for all ages
- Heightened communication
- Horizontal Covenant Relationships
- Flexibility and transparency
- Mission Driven
- Caring for Clergy

We ask that the Common Mission Board use these principles as tools for transformation. Further visioning, imagination, and creativity is encouraged on the part of the Common Mission Board as they develop the future for Mission West. We give the following affirmations and recommendations.

Possible Staffing

As far as staff structure, we propose the following positions for Mission West:

Lead Missionary

Supervisor for staff

Search and Call

Church Relations (as relationship between clergy and congregation)

Community Building (between churches and between clergy) Finances and Fund

Raising

Participate in CCSW work with colleagues

Spiritual Retreats for Clergy and nurturing of relationships

Key supportive relationship with Common Mission Board

Youth/Young Adult Missionary

Coordinate and Resource youth ministries

Summer Camps

Retreats

Assist in recruiting, and developing educational programs for, youth ministers
Develop, promote, and conduct Mission Trips Curriculum Development
Assist in Coordinating Regional Youth Ministries Fund raising with youth
Search and Call

Clergy Standing and Leadership Development Missionary

Ensure compliance with General and Regional Church policies regards clergy standing
Develop and carry-out education programs for clergy and laity
Serve as a RCOM representative
Search and Call
Communication and Technology

Administrative Missionaries

Administration

Administrative support to all Mission West missionaries
Communication in all forms

Financial

Keeps all financial records
Provides reports to governing bodies
Using good accounting practices, supervises collections of receipts and payment of bills

In order to truly start anew and to give current staff a proper space for discernment, we recommend that all these positions be applied for (even by current staff that may fill these roles). We leave that process up to the Common Mission Board. Current staff will be moved into these provisional missionary roles for one year, starting once this proposal is agreed upon by all three areas. We ask that the Common Mission Board clarifies the exact job description of each missionary. We also recommend that the Youth/Young Adult Missionary be a full-time position. The administrative and financial missionaries will be responsible for all administrative and financial needs for the mission field, thus eliminating the need for each area to support its own administrator and accountant

Office

Affirming the need and importance to centralize the administrative process for Mission West to succeed and the provisional core principles of heightened communication, flexibility and transparency, we recommend that one Mission West office will be maintained for all three present day areas.

Clusters

Affirming the importance of local churches joining together in clusters and being mission-driven, we ask that clusters are intentional about sharing ideas, finding a common mission, focus on being relational and find spiritual practices to do as a cluster.

We encourage localities to form clusters, renew their covenants to live and work in relationship with other congregations at the cluster, area, mission field, regional and general church level. A ministry of Mission West Elders could be developed, using volunteers trained and supervised for nearby cluster ministries throughout Mission West. We also ask the lead missionary assist and encourage localities in forming these clusters.

Ministry Programs

Affirming the importance of all age-appropriate ministry throughout Mission West. We affirm the importance of ministering to people of all ages as a mission station. The ministry to youth in our three areas has been continually molding and transforming itself over the last few years. We applaud that and encourage them to continue to transform in the best way that will benefit Mission West camping program in sustainability, connecting our youth and building up leaders. We affirm the tri-area model with which the youth camp program is pursuing and evaluating this summer. We ask that the Common Mission Board evaluate and look for opportunities for more tri-area events. We encourage those vested in particular ministries and pursue of ministry together within Mission West. We also affirm the importance of ministry to seniors and families in all their many forms.

Clergy Nurture

We affirm the importance of clergy nurture and the education opportunities that have been offered to the clergy during the year of 2012-2013. We applaud the offering of education opportunities in multiple locations and different times throughout the year. We would like to encourage and offer opportunities of online covenant groups that are to meet regularly for spiritual and relational enrichment. We know the value of face to face relationships and encourage that if feasible. In order to increase connection and work within the vast geography, we ask that the Missionaries find ways to educate clergy perhaps through webinars about using technology to connect across many miles.

Sincerely,

Mission West Covenant Team

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Rev. David Hargrave, Brook Hollow Christian Church, Abilene, TX

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