



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Reconciliation Reference Team Report

- **What would an affirmation vote at Assembly 2017 mean?**
  - Both Eastern District and Franconia Conferences would enter a *“formal engagement process for the purposes of healing and reconciliation and with the intention of becoming a single, unified conference by November 2019.”* In other words, a yes vote means undertaking a two-year process as laid out by the Reference Team Report that works at reconciliation and developing what a merged conference would look like.
  - An affirmation vote at Assembly 2017 does **NOT** mean merger. A vote on whether or not to merge would come in November 2019 after a spring delegate review of a possible mission and structure.
- **What does a “formal engagement process” look like?**
  - The Exploring Reconciliation Reference Team has laid out what this process could look like in their final report. See pages 7-11 in that report.
    - It would consist of the formation of two teams: One working at reconciliation and the healing of emotional and spiritual wounds. The other working at a shared identity and structure including mission and vision.
- **How much energy would this take from Conference?**
  - It is anticipated that continued efforts toward reconciliation and possible merger would be done by the two teams, composed of appointed volunteers, as outlined in the Report.
  - Some tasks or responsibilities may be assigned to sub-committees of qualified persons.
  - Each conference would continue giving primary attention to their ongoing mission.
- **Will delegates be able to provide input to the process?**
  - Both Conference Boards anticipate requesting nominations for members of the two teams outlined in the report. The teams to ultimately be appointed by both Conference Boards.
  - Both Conference Boards expect the two teams outlined by the Reference Team Report to come up with a plan as to how they would engage delegates throughout their process, so delegates would be able to provide ongoing input.
  - The Conference Boards also expect to regularly receive reports from the teams and to ensure ongoing communication with delegates as to the progress of both teams.
- **What is the vision and mission that would bring us together?**
  - The “Identity Development and Structural Implementation Team” identified in the Reconciliation Reference Team Report is charged with developing a mission, vision and values statement intended to provide a common identity and purpose for a unified conference. This is to be presented to the delegates at a Spring 2019 assembly according to the report and approved by delegates prior to a decision on merger.
- **Is there an expected cost to an ongoing process?**
  - Not at this time.
- **How does Eastern District feel about Franconia and a possible merged conference being bi-costal?**
  - Leadership has said they believe this opens more opportunities for the Kingdom of God.

- **What are the major similarities and differences between Eastern District and Franconia Conference when it comes to Polity?**
  - Both Conferences share a similar board and committee structure. They also share two joint committees, the Sistering Committee a regional group of Mennonite Women and the Peace and Justice Committee.
  - Terms for moderators and board members are different. Eastern District's Moderators rotate annually, and Franconia Conference's Moderators serve three year terms and up to three terms for a total of up to nine consecutive years.
  - Two major differences come regarding credentialed leaders:
    1. In Eastern District credentialed leaders are not automatically voting delegates. They must be appointed by a congregation. In Franconia Conference, if you are credentialed you are automatically a voting delegate.
    2. Franconia Conference requests all member congregations who designate a paid pastoral leader to seek credentialing for that pastor through Franconia Conference. Eastern District does not.
- **What implication does this process bring for staffing?**
  - During the process:
    - For Franconia Conference staffing is expected to remain the same with the possible addition of another LEADership Minister to tend to new congregations.
    - Eastern District Conference will discuss staffing at Conference Assembly and discernment will begin at November's Conference Administrative Board meeting. Possibilities include using contracted pastors/staff for relating to the congregations and possibly retaining Scott Roth for administrative and denominational relationship duties.
  - Following the process:
    - The "Identity Development and Structural Implementation Team" identified in the Reconciliation Reference Team Report is charged with developing "an organizational chart showing board/staff relationships and staffing positions in the new conference."
    - It is anticipated that current staff would be given the opportunity to remain in or apply for a position within the new conference if they so choose.
- **Is it possible to have a successful merger given what is currently happening with Mennonite Church USA?**
  - Yes. Conferences have merged and done so successfully. Those involved in other successful conference mergers were consulted by the Reference Team when compiling their report.
  - Other successful conference mergers include:
    - Central Plains merged in 2000 from Northern District Conference (General Conference Mennonite) and Iowa-Nebraska Conference (Mennonite Church).
    - Pacific Northwest Conference formed in 1994 from the merger of Pacific Coast Conference (Mennonite Church) and the northern part of Pacific District Conference (General Conference Mennonite).
    - Pacific Southwest Conference also formed in 1994 from the merger of the southern part of Pacific District Conference (General Conference Mennonite) and Southwest Mennonite Conference (Mennonite Church).
- **Will the end result be a merged Conference?**
  - This is yet to be determined.
  - The recommendation is to convene a spring 2019 assembly devoted to processing the recommendations of the proposed "Identity Development and Structural Implementation Team," including the proposed name, Mission/Vision/Values statements, and budget.
  - At the November 2019 Assembly, a vote will be taken to determine whether to become a unified conference.