

Vision Process, Including Future of Farm Property

Five-Year Vision and Financial Plan Process

Having focused FMC's mission summary as "Equipping leaders to Empower others to Embrace God's mission;" and now proposing three core processes of Identity Formation, Leadership Transformation, and Healthy Relational Patterns; along with three strategic values of being Intercultural, Formational, and Missional in everything we do; the Conference Board is preparing a five-year vision and financial plan to implement the mission, core processes, and strategic values over the next season of ministry. Delegates will confer at Conference Assembly Gathered on November 11-12, 2005, about this process to be implemented next year.

The five-year plan process will be created immediately following the November 11-12, 2005, Conference Assembly Gathered by a team appointed by the Conference Board, comprised of FMC leaders and constituency representatives. This team will interact closely with another team addressing the future of the Indian Creek Road farm (see other side). The following principles guide these processes:

1. FMC Conference Board and staff intend to use FMC assets more intentionally to carry out FMC mission, core processes, vision, and values to equip leaders (credentialed and "lay") of congregations to fully realize what God is leading them to be and do, and so they can lead their congregations to do the same.
2. Holding a property of significant "value" (historical, agricultural, environmental, spiritual, and financial value) merits intentionality about why FMC would or would not continue to own farm property and/or how the property would be used. (FMC's Yoder Road property was sold this year to Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania; FMC's Souderton Center property is a long-term ownership property that directly underwrites conference expenses to maximize the impact of contributed dollars from congregations and individuals.)
3. A five-year vision and financial plan would address:
 - a. A vision specifically structured around implementing FMC's mission, core processes, and values.
 - b. Interrelatedness of four financial sources:
 - 1) Annual budgets (five in succession),
 - 2) Existing funds (restricted, designated, and undesignated),
 - 3) FMC properties (mainly money from the March 2005 sale of the Yoder Road campus already in hand, as well as from a transaction with the Indian Creek Road farm, and income from long-term ownership of the Souderton center),
 - 4) New initiative to raise money for specific capacity-building vision components (e.g., Christian formation and church planting grants, technology to better link all congregations and CROs for resource sharing, etc.).

More detailed ideas and information about the five-year process, as well as the farm, will be available for discussion and discernment at the September/October Conference Assembly Scattered meetings and to congregations following those meetings. Congregations in Northern PA and Vermont will receive information in other ways.

Future of the Indian Creek Road Farm Property

FMC leaders are advocating a more intentional focus regarding use of FMC resources and assets in light of the importance of our mission and emerging vision. The 40-acre farm owned by FMC since 1955 has been a point of discussion on several occasions in the past. Driven by a growing sense of urgency to increase our collective Anabaptist vision in the communities in which God has led us, the Conference Board has been in conversation with its finance committee and property board to sell several properties that do not directly impact the mission of FMC as an organization. A number of people especially impacted by and/or concerned about the future of the farm have been in conversation with conference leaders.

This is not to say that the various properties could not be used to impact the mission, but rather to find ways to use these resources as fully as possible. Since the mission of FMC is not primarily to own and hold increasing amounts of property (as witnessed by the history of stories of Mennonites in other eras and places), the Conference Board is urging delegates to help discern the best ways to apply these resources to, and help shape, the emerging vision that is surrounding the conference's mission of "equipping leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission." The February 2005 Vision and Values meetings have borne out the importance and urgency of defining and witnessing to our collective Anabaptist Christian story among our communities in which we live during this challenging time in the USA.

With the goal of releasing and intentionally applying FMC resources to accomplish FMC's stated mission, part of the September and October Assembly Scattered meetings will be used to seek counsel regarding the process and principles for discerning the future of the Indian Creek Road farm:

Proposed overall PROCESS steps for farm property discernment:

- 1. Delegates and other constituents confer at the September and October 2005 Conference Assembly Scattered (CAS) meetings to improve and own the process to be used for the year preceding the 2006 Conference Assembly Gathered; part of discernment is to suggest names of persons to serve on a team that will build a farm property proposal.**
- 2. October 31—Conference Board and staff revise the farm process and principles using counsel from Sep/Oct CAS meetings; a team is appointed, building on names gathered at CAS meetings; the goal will be to obtain commitments prior to the November 11-12, 2005, Conference Assembly Gathered.**
- 3. Revised farm process will help shape, and be integrated into, a 5-year (vision/financial/ministry) plan process which is to be presented at the 2006 Assembly Gathered November for affirmation and implementation.**
- 4. This means there would be two separate but related processes: one focused on the future of the farm, and one outlining a 5-year vision and financial plan for living into FMC's vision.**
- 5. From this constituency-influenced 5-year vision/financial plan, FMC staff would shape a 3-year ministry plan with concrete goals and outcomes impacting the next three annual budgets.**