



SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

Summary of Proposed Revised Bylaws

In 2009, the SWC engaged in a full year of engagement to discern our shared mission and purpose, and to evaluate the extent to which our current practices were suited to help us meet our long range goals. Much came as a result of that, and one was a dawning awareness that our structure inhibited our abilities to reach those goals. A commitment was made to think creatively about how to restructure the Conference in a way that would enhance our ability to move into a better and brighter future.

As a result, the Board came to last year's Annual Meeting asking permission to amend the Bylaws if and when they felt it would enhance our operational efforts (that permission was granted); and with a promise to present a new set of Bylaws to this year's delegates. A Task Force was created, and by May 2010 wrote a document that included a Timeline; Core Concepts, Principles, and Commitments; Essential Components; What Is Broken with the Current Model; and Tasks.

I am happy to report that they hit every timeline as required, writing a first draft by December; presenting a second draft to the Executive Committee in January; a third draft to the Board in March; and a final draft to the Conference by April 1. The document that is now circulating has been reviewed by the Executive Committee and the Board, neither of which made any substantive changes to the document; both of which made necessary corrections to the document; and both of which enthusiastically and wholeheartedly recommended the passage of the new structure and Bylaws by the delegates at Annual Meeting 2011. I would add that the document has also been reviewed and edited by our legal counsel, Frank Fox.

I want to highlight the three primary bodies in the new structure, and state briefly with each one what their essential function is.

The **Mission Planning Board (MPB)** has the responsibility to discern the shared mission of the SWC, and to test whether or not our resources are being fully utilized and wisely stewarded for the sake of that mission. It will set and maintain the long range vision, plan, and mission of the Conference and ensure that we are on track to meet our long range goals. It will meet twice a year in various locations throughout the Conference. It will be a separate and independent body from the Executive Board, not a subsidiary body. It will be comprised of a representative from every church in the Conference, the officers of the Conference, and any SWC representative serving the National structure of the Church.

The **Executive Board (EB)** will manage the business of the Conference. It will be comprised of the officers and five at large members. It will be a separate and independent body from the Mission Planning Board and not a subsidiary body of the MPB, though it will take strong direction from them to ensure that the assets they manage are utilized for the purpose of our shared mission and long range goals.

Ministry Teams (MT) will be called for by the MPB, and will be formed in order that the Conference can live out its shared mission. The MTs will be open tables at which all who feel passionate about, called to, and qualified for that Ministry will be welcome to participate. The Bylaws will neither stipulate what teams need to exist, nor will they assume that any team currently created will be needed in perpetuity. As the mission called for by the MPB changes over time, it will be likely that new MTs will have to form while existing ones phase out.

The full text of the proposed revised bylaws is available on the Southwest Conference website and from your local Southwest Conference church.





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Mission Planning Board – MPB

Members for this selected by each local church; also includes officers of the SWC and SWC representatives to National Boards

Meets twice a year

Primary Purpose:

To discern the mission of the SWC

Tasks:

- To discern and communicate the mission of the SWC to the EB and to all covenant partners
- To become familiar with the mission goals of the denomination and evaluate the compatibility with our Conference goals
- To evaluate the manner in and extent to which our resources are being brought to bear on the mission of the SWC
- To identify what resources are currently unavailable to the Conference that might be needed in order to achieve our mission goals
- To be aware of the extent to which our long range goals are being inhibited or enhanced by our current practices
- To be fully aware of all assets and resources of the SWC
- To maintain access to database of individual gifts, talents, and resources that can be called upon to fulfill our mission goals
- To review all annual reports produced of the Conference entities and determine whether or not they are functioning to help the Conference achieve its mission
- To determine the continued utility or need of any Committee, Board, Ministries, or Task Forces
- To evaluate the purpose, need, and work of the Ministries Teams of the SWC
- To determine whether or not additional Standing Committees are needed for the sake of the Conference
- To identify for the Nominating committee the gifts, skills, and talents they feel are essential on the Executive Board
- To serve as a liaison between the Conference and the local churches, each of which will have a representative; and to communicate directly to the local churches what is happening in the Conference and Wider Church
- To gather twice a year in locations around the Conference for the purpose of completing their tasks
- To make use of developing technologies to enable consistent communication throughout the year and to keep current with Conference activities





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Executive Board

Comprised of the Officers of the Conference and 5 at large members

Primary Purpose:

To resource the Mission of the Conference and to manage the business of the Conference
Meets six times a year

Tasks:

- Enact and maintain the policies of the SWC
- Develop priorities consistent with the mission of the SWC
- Oversee the work of the Standing Committees
- Manage the property and assets of the SWC
- Create a search committee in the absence of a Conference Minister, and hire an Interim when needed
- Establish the budget for the SWC
- Oversee the finances of the SWC
- Create and maintain any Temporary Committees or Task Forces needed to do the work of the SWC
- Determine the staffing needs of the SWC
- Coordinate the programming of the SWC
- Establish new churches

Ministries

Members actively serve on a Ministry when and if they feel called, gifted, and qualified for the purpose for which it is formed

Primary Purpose:

To enact the mission of the Conference

Tasks:

- Meet as needed to undertake the mission goals of the Conference
- Develop networks of Mission and Covenant Partners whose resources can be utilized to fulfill the mission goals of the SWC
- Facilitate and Coordinate the work of our Covenant Partners in the fulfillment of our mission goals
- Develop a pool of available resources that can be used to accomplish our mission goals, and find creative ways both to make use of them and to empower our covenant partners to make use of them
- Discern emerging needs and communicate to the SWC and its Covenant Partners, and recommend shared responses to those needs
- Organize the work of the Ministry Team so that the efforts of all who are participating can be fully utilized and strategically orchestrated
- Report to the Mission Planning Board what they are doing to fulfill the mission goals of the Conference, and whether or not there is a continuing need for the Ministry Team to operate
- Report to the Executive Board and to the Mission Planning Board how any resources that have been allocated to them have been utilized, and what has been accomplished with those resources

