



Moving Forward Together 2013

BACKGROUND

The Special Synod of 2009 approved a new structure and a new focus for our Province. The new structure includes new roles and responsibilities for the different components of the Southern Province. The new focus centers on eight interrelated characteristics of healthy congregations. (See page 4 for a brief listing).

Working with these eight characteristics, the Synod of 2010 approved Resolution 34, providing a **strategic direction** for our congregations and province to be implemented over the intersynodal period, 2011-2014. (See page 4 for a brief list of the direction statements. The full text of Resolution 34 can be found at www.mcsp.org).

One of the new functions of the PEC is to set **priorities and goals** based on Synod's strategic vision and then pass those priorities along to our congregations and to the Board of Cooperative Ministries (BCM).

WHAT CONGREGATIONS ARE BEING ASKED TO DO

In response to the strategic direction of Synod and the priorities set by the PEC each congregation is asked to:

- Get to know the eight characteristics of healthy congregations.
- Review the relative strength of each characteristic in the congregation.
- Consider the 2-3 characteristics that the PEC has decided to emphasize each year.¹
- Determine which of the eight characteristics will be an area of focus for development.
 - At least one characteristic should be chosen, and probably no more than three in any given year.
 - Congregations are encouraged (**but not required**) to focus on the characteristics the PEC is emphasizing. They may adapt the emphases suggested by the PEC for their own particular needs and context.
- Develop specific plans about how the chosen areas will be addressed.

¹ PEC chose Ministry and Cooperation for 2011 and Leadership and Mission for 2012. Suggested actions for those characteristics are included in Appendix A.

- Have specific ways of measuring or determining progress.
- Network and share within the Regional Church Conferences (RCC) to discover best practices, resources, ideas, etc.
- Utilize the Board of Cooperative Ministries (BCM) and its staff for support, resource and consultation.
- Follow through on the plans that are made, measurement of progress, etc.

The process outlined above can be simplified into these three questions:

1. **“Where are we going?”** -- Which of the eight characteristics are we focusing on as a congregation?
2. **“How will we get there?”** – What are the specific plans we have for addressing the chosen area(s) and moving toward greater vitality?
3. **“How will we know when we have arrived?”** – What measurements for progress toward our goals do we have?

During Quadrennial Reviews, church boards will be asked to assess how their congregation is doing regarding each characteristic and to describe current actions for focusing on healthy characteristics.

PEC EMPHASES FOR 2013: GROWTH and RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST

The PEC has chosen to emphasize **GROWTH and RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST** for 2013:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Brief Description</u>	<u>Synod Strategic Direction Statement</u>
Growth	Increasing participation, attendance and membership	<p>Focus on core ministries, such as youth; teach parents to keep youth in church; mission; attractive church fellowships offering variety of experiences; or other programs responsive to the leading of God in each congregation.</p> <p>Focus on intentional greetings ministry, which might include a more systematic approach to Sunday morning greeting; printed calling cards to give visitors; website/social media outreach; neighborhood outreach; and "Open Door" lunches among other ideas.</p>
Relationship to Christ	Bringing individuals and the congregation into greater harmony with God with a new sense of faith, love and hope.	<p>Priority Initiatives for Relationship to Christ:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching and building a strong Christian foundation 2. More emphasis on creating an atmosphere of ongoing revival, renewal and rededication <p>Other priority initiatives: Strengthen Christian families in the congregation by establishing focus groups and other learning opportunities.</p>

For fuller descriptions of Growth and Relationship to Christ, see resources at www.mcsp.org.

Here are some suggested ways that Growth and Relationship with Christ can be addressed:

GROWTH:

- Designate time at a church board meeting or retreat to discuss “growth”: how it may be defined (numbers, mission, giving, spiritual maturity); what encourages or hinders growth; what God may be calling them to
- As a congregation or RCC, hold a workshop/discussion at convenient time for parents on "keeping youth in church", using available BCM resources (www.moravianbcm.org; www.mcsp.org)
- As a congregation or RCC, sponsor a group interested in committing to following the "Loving Hearts United" curriculum
- Make an intentional effort to improve external communications about mission and ministry (i.e., initiate/update website/social media)
- Each congregation shall conduct at least one new activity focused on inviting and/or welcoming visitors to worship or other church activities

RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST:

- Coordinate---as a congregation or RCC---a service or initiative for revival, renewal and rededication
- Actively encourage your pastor to set aside time for personal spiritual renewal
 - Ensure that your pastor(s) attend the Interprovincial Ministers Retreat May 28-31st in Harrisonburg, Virginia
 - Enable your pastor to identify and attend continuing education on personal spiritual growth in 2013
- Explore enhancing prayer ministry within your church (prayer bands, intentional prayer before/after church gatherings etc)
- Moravians believe that sacraments express and strengthen our relationship with Christ. Set up a study group (congregation or RCC) to discuss Holy Communion using the new booklet “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing”
- Encourage church members to attend spiritual retreats (Provincial Women’s Retreat April 26-28; Moravian Music Festival July 14-20, Lay Seminary, etc).
- Begin a new adult discipleship class or encourage members to participate in Geminschaft or other spiritual growth programs

Eight Characteristics of Healthy Congregations

(As adopted by the 2009 special Synod. Full descriptions are at www.mcsp.org)

Focus on Relationship with Christ personally and corporately: Bringing individuals and the congregation into greater harmony with God with a new sense of faith, love and hope.

Mission: An outward focus that networks locally, nationally and globally to remember, seek out, and serve our neighbors.

Growth: Increasing participation, attendance and membership.

Leadership: Ensuring wise direction, administration and accountability for the community.

Worship: Proclaiming God's Word through scripture, preaching, music and sacrament.

Cooperation: Bringing church members into greater harmony with one another to build community.

Stewardship: The effective use of individual and community time, talent and treasure.

Ministry: The processes through which we learn and grow as individuals and in community to care for ourselves and serve others.

Strategic Direction Statements

(From 2010 Synod resolution # 34. See www.mcsp.org for the complete text)

Focus on Relationship with Christ personally and corporately: to teaching and building a strong Christian Foundation in order to create new relationships with Christ and an ongoing atmosphere of revival, renewal and rededication.

Mission: to intentionally discipling, equipping, resourcing and using the gifts of youth to prepare them to minister to their peers (e.g. ages 18-30).

Growth: to grow in spirit and numbers, churches need to focus on a few specific core ministries that are intentional in growing members and participation in number, in discipleship and in relationship and be intentional with connecting visitors to the congregation.

Leadership: to recruit, develop and nurture leaders, among the laity, boards and professional staff, with a sense of discipleship, mission, and community, and equipped with communications, conflict management, and other spiritual disciplines to lead small groups, congregations, and our Province, as guided by God's Holy Spirit.

Worship: To worship that encompasses all of life and deserves our fullest attention in education, preparation, leadership and full-hearted participation.

Cooperation: to sharing freely, facing and resolving conflict, making the whole greater than the sum of the parts and co-creating a safe open place for interaction.

Stewardship: to a deeper understanding of our discipleship and baptismal identity.

Ministry: "Down and Out," tapping more deeply into the assets God has given us so we can look and reach outward in mission.

APPENDIX A: Suggested Action Items for Ministry & Cooperation (2011 emphases) and Leadership & Mission (2012 emphases)

MINISTRY:

- Each congregation will identify one current ministry that they can enhance, strengthen and improve in 2011, make specific plans to do so, and develop specific measurements of “success” in that improvement.
- Each congregation will identify one new ministry (engaging a new or missing group within or outside the church) that they will initiate in 2011 and develop similar details action plans for implementation.

COOPERATION:

- Each congregation will have their RCC representatives participate fully in their RCC during 2011, with no less than 75% attendance by each representative at RCC meetings.
- Each congregation will initiate at least one training event for church board and key leaders (committee chairs, etc.) in the area of communication and/or managing conflict, with a participation level of at least 75% from the leadership. (Such training can be for the broader membership, if desired.)
- Each congregation will foster cooperation and communication by ensuring that RCC representatives have time regularly set aside at board meetings for sharing, reporting and interacting; and by including news and information about RCC activity in congregational newsletters, bulletins, web-sites, etc.
- Each RCC will work at cooperation by fulfilling item “d” under its duties as found in the Book of Order: “Promote sharing of strengths, gifts, assets, and best practices of each congregation.”
 - This will include intentional asset mapping within the RCC to identify strengths, gifts and assets
 - Collaboration will be such that every congregation and fellowship in an RCC will have a specific opportunity during the year to share at least one strength, gift, or asset with one or more of the other member-groups of the RCC.

LEADERSHIP:

1. Plan and/or participate in an idea-sharing "best practices" gathering with members of their RCC. For example, host a meeting of those involved in Christian education to share successes and challenges; convene a meeting of those responsible for "buildings and grounds" to share resources.
2. RCCs host a discussion on "small group ministry", and each congregation identify a new small group ministry to implement in 2012; review experiences in late 2012 (Boards and/or RCC).
3. Ensure RCC member attendance at the 2012 Intersynodal Gathering (April 27-28, 2012).
4. Arrange for leaders to participate in at least one educational event on conflict management and/or communication skills in 2012
5. Plan a leadership development retreat or event for board members, committee chairs, and other ministry leaders, including new and prospective leaders.

6. Recognize and celebrate the gifts and contributions of church leaders via a “worker's Lovefeast” or during a special worship service or other event(s).

MISSION:

1. Identify at least 1 initiative to enhance congregational understanding of a "day in the life" of youth and young adults.
2. Participate in at least one intentional mission-oriented gathering of/for youth of partner congregations.
3. Each RCC identify one community need to focus on together for 2012.
4. Plan an intergenerational mission study series for Sunday School, mid-week programming, or a seasonal emphasis.
5. Plan and carry out a way for youth in your church or RCC to have an ongoing connection with youth in another province of the Moravian Unity (perhaps making use of social media or other technology).