



## Evangelical Congregational Church

The CIT News is published by the CIT Team of the Evangelical Congregational Church so the members of National Conference can know about our progress in discovering the Lord's leading.

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### A Simple Question

On March 8, 2012 the National Ministry Team voted to have the Bishop appoint a Task Force to wrestle with the question of "What should the denomination fund by mandate?" and comprehensively review all financial structures of the National Conference of the EC Church.

While the question dealt primarily with financial structures, it

was agreed that there would have to be a comprehensive review and strategic plan of how we "do denomination" in the 21st Century. That process eventually led to the National Conference overwhelming a Covenant during the 2014 sessions of National Conference:

1. We will move to a regional shared ministry and leadership model.
2. We will reevaluate our denominational relationships with

3. We will substantially reduce denominational operating expenses.
4. We will significantly reduce ministry fund asking from local churches.

The challenge that our denomination faces today is to find solutions that both address the financial concerns and enables our local congregations to more efficiently and effectively fulfill the God's mission.

### The Covenant Implementation Team

The Covenant Implementation Team has worked long and hard, making very difficult decisions. I am thankful for the unanimity experienced in the team throughout this past year. I am thankful too for the amount of time and effort the team members have given to this project, some taking days off from work to attend meetings. You may not agree with the plan or every point of the plan, but I trust you will express your appreciation to the pastors and lay people who have given so much to this effort.

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## The Big Picture

When the Covenant Implementation Team took on the task of addressing these points we understood we would need to face a series of decisions that must be sequentially followed. Though challenging, they are certainly not insurmountable. As the team discovered solutions for each challenge, we would see the need to address connected areas involving supervision, stationing, credentialing, and resourcing. In addition, we believe that our discoveries are providing correction in some areas where our ability to deliver assistance seemed to be lacking in the past.

It all begins with the church as adopted by the 2014 National Conference — *“The Church is the people called by God to his mission. As the church we are a people redeemed through Jesus Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit to live in community as witness to God’s love and intention for humanity and the whole created order. The church’s work is accomplished as we receive God’s blessing and bless the world around us in the name of Jesus and in the power of his Holy Spirit. ...The local congregation can expect its relationship with the denomination to be one in which the local church enjoys enhanced opportunities to bless the world through denominational connections and re-*

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*ceives resources through those same connections that further enable the local church to fulfill its commission.”*

We then looked at the denomination’s structure in its basic functions and grouped similar positions, committees, and commissions we were able to re-arrange everything into four quadrants based upon their function in relation to the mission.



We will **activate this mission** by preparing men and women and resourcing churches in order to accomplish the mission on the various fields where God is sending us throughout the world.

We’ll **direct this mission** by deciding our standard practices, collaborating with our leaders, and continually evaluating our ministries.

We will **support this mission** by supervising our operations—stewarding assets and providing the necessary services to accomplish the mission across the network.

We’ll **celebrate this mission**

by embracing our directives, motivating our delegates, and helping them to engage the world for mission.

This entire process began with a significant question about the financial viability of our ministry fund system. As of mid-February 2015, the 2014 ministry funds are 5% lower than 2013 ministry funds. If we make no adjustments to our affiliate support, personnel, or structure, our projections show that our ministry funds would exceed 10% (not including the camp add-on) by 2018.

The Covenant Implementation Team and the Benefits Corporation have worked diligently to develop a series of phased initiatives which, if adopted by the National Conference, would in time significantly reduce both the National Conference budget and therefore the amount required in ministry funds from local churches.

We understand that embracing reality and moving forward always involves a choice between risk and comfort—that is the substance of faith and life! We believe there are significant opportunities for the EC Church to change for the better—not only as a denomination, but as local churches. Ultimately, we cannot achieve the components of the Covenant without making major changes to our current leadership structure, to long-standing budget items, and to relationships with ministries.