

## *Draft Summary Reference to Recommended Changes in the VMC Bylaws*

January 10, 2019

The following document identifies key changes in each of the 7 Recommendations. Each section identifies proposed changes and provides a brief rationale for them. They are:

### **Recommendation 1 - Delegate Assembly** (see VMC Bylaws, Article III: Assembly, p 6)

#### **Changes in function:**

1. To foster more worship and fellowship and storytelling of missional efforts
2. Clarifies Delegate Assembly as final authority for polity and policy decisions
3. Ratifies all Conference Council operational decisions, and policy and polity proposals
4. Voting members of Delegate Assembly are designated congregational delegates, pastors and oversight leaders (lines 121-123). **Conference ministries, conference endorsed ministries, and oversight clusters no longer have delegate status.**
5. Has authority to censure congregations when the Faith & Life Commission, and Conference Council have deemed their beliefs and practices are incompatible with the beliefs and practices of the Conference.

**Why?** These adjustments in responsibilities are in keeping with VMC as a *conference of churches*.

### **Recommendation 2 - Conference Council (CC)** - (see VMC Bylaws, Article III: Conference Council, p 7)

#### **Changes in function:**

1. Has legal and fiduciary responsibility for VMC (was assumed, but not written).
2. Becomes smaller in size, down from 18 to 9-12 members (see lines 145-147)
3. Nominees for CC must be ratified by the Assembly Delegates by 66% (see line 152)
4. Decisions, polity and policy, made by CC must be ratified by the Delegate Assembly
5. Supervisory responsibilities are clarified (was assumed but not written):
  - a. CC supervises the Executive Conference Minister (lines 174-175).
6. Executive Conference Minister supervises the Oversight Leaders in consultation with FLC (lines 207-210), and
7. Oversight leaders supervise the pastors within their district or cluster (lines 287-291).
8. Maintain a membership grid of CC. The intent is to promote diversity. The following breakout shall be followed as nearly as possible: 40% minimum representation by gender, 25% persons of color, 25% under 40 years of age. (Lines 156-157)

**Why:** As noted above, staff of VMC related agency boards currently sit on CC. CC will appoint diverse candidate leaders, with input from district pastors and lay leaders, who have leadership skill sets needed on Conference Council (Lines 161-164).

### **Recommendation 3 – Faith and Life Commission (FLC)** - (see VMC Bylaws, Article IV: Commissions, Faith and Life Commission, p 13)

#### **Changes in function:**

1. FLC will maintain its primary functions as detailed in the Bylaws
2. FLC responsibilities are clarified, including giving leadership to: (lines 194-206)
  - a. Faith, life and district and congregational missional efforts
  - b. Pastoral support, education and supervision

3. Establish criteria for pastoral credentials; needs ratification by CC and the delegates. (line 199, 220-224)
4. Consults with the new Ministerial Leadership Credentials Commission (MLCC) in pastoral matters (lines 229-231).

**Why?:** The Faith and Life Commission's work and contribution is understood as vital to the Conference, pastors, and districts, and is deeply appreciated; therefore, it remains and its role is clarified.

**Recommendation 4 – Ministerial Leadership Credentials Commission (MLCC)** - (see VMC Bylaws, Article IV: Commissions, Faith and Life Commission, p 13)

**Changes in function:**

1. Newly proposed VMC commission responsible to process ministerial credentials. (lines 214-224)
2. Reports to Conference Council and FLC. (lines 230-231)
3. Leadership role to facilitate granting ministerial credentials (lines 247-261)
4. Responsible for pastoral disciplinary process (lines 241-255)

**Why?** Separating MLCC responsibilities from FLC responsibilities is important in light of the scope of the credentialing work and need for visibility within the conference.

**Recommendation 5 – VMMission** - (see VMC Bylaws, Article IV: Commissions, Virginia Mennonite Missions, p 13)

**Changes in function:**

1. In keeping with the Polity Task Force recommendation to move to a "conference of congregations", agencies including VMMission's role are adjusted
2. VMMission is separately incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in Virginia, with its own Constitution, Bylaws, board, and distinct vision/mission
3. VMC and VMMission will develop a Memo of Understanding to maintain a healthy partnership (lines 282-284).

**Why?** Clarifies the how VMC and VMMission already function.

**Recommendation 6 – Conference Districts** - (see VMC Bylaws, Article V: Districts, p 8)

**Changes in function:**

1. Districts Councils may organize themselves to address the needs, mission, and goals of their districts so long as they meet VMC criteria and function (lines 299-312).
2. **Why?** Provides autonomy in creating local district structure perceived necessary to facilitate their needs, mission and goals.

**Recommendation 7 – Discontinue the Congregational Life Commission** - (VMC Bylaws, Article IX: Section 5, Congregational Life Commission, p 13)

**Changes in function:**

1. The education ministry of VMC lay and clergy will be distributed between CC and FLC.
2. CC will coordinate this ministry with the appointment of Task Forces as necessary.

**Why?** "Due to the above changes in function, and the distribution of responsibilities between CC and FLC, the function of a CLC is no longer needed in the new VMC structure."