

## Christian Church in the Southwest Restructure FAQs

### Goals/Purpose/Ministry Outcomes

#### **Why is Regional restructure happening now?**

In August 2016, it became clear to the Regional Council that one of the Areas in the CCSW had become insolvent and governance structures were becoming inactive. The Regional Council took responsibility to protect remaining assets of that Area and administer Area affairs for at least one year, as requested by the Area leadership. In October 2016, the members of the Regional Assembly voted to trust the Regional Council to take whatever actions we deemed necessary to allow Regional ministry to reorganize structurally and financially.

Since then, the Restructure Dialogue Group has met three times. The Restructure Dialogue Group is comprised of Area Moderators (or their representative), a TCMF representative, a Southwest Hispanic Convention representative, and the Regional Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer.

- At the March 10-11 meeting, the Dialogue Group discussed positives and challenges occurring in the Region and the Areas; reviewed comparative financial statements; and came to a consensus that some other structural arrangement had the potential to improve ministry within the limitations of our financial resources. The group deliberated over various structure options.
- At the April 28-29 meeting, the group reviewed a congregational map of the Region that illustrated some of the geographic challenges, including why simply re-drawing Area lines was unlikely to solve financial viability issues or provide necessary resources for ministry and local connections. We asked questions about the remaining structural options (Single or Multi-Region): Would it be financially feasible? Could it provide the ministry needed? What are the obstacles to implementation? We used hypothetical organizational charts and budgets to evaluate the models at hand. The unanimous conclusion was that placing all administrative and staffing responsibilities at the Regional level and employing Community Regional Ministers located across the entire Region best met the three criteria. Areas would continue to provide valuable volunteer-led ministry.
- May 5-6, the Regional Council met, discussed, and approved the conceptual framework proposed by the Restructure Dialogue Group and also empowered that group to meet again to work out more details. In June, the Dialogue Group met again and discussed feedback we had received. That feedback required us to answer the question “What plans and processes will we make and follow in order

to ensure that restructure will positively impact ministry across the Region and throughout our congregations?”

[Visit the CCSW Restructure page](#) to read all of the updates we’ve sent out along the way, which will provide an even fuller picture of the steps we’ve taken since the 2016 Regional Assembly. The Dialogue Group recognizes that there are still many details that need to be considered and planned for with the help of others throughout the Region.

### **How will progress and accountability be communicated?**

The Regional Council and Restructure Dialogue Group have been releasing updates within 1-2 weeks after meetings to keep everyone in the CCSW up to date. They have been distributed via e-mail, Facebook, and YouTube (one video is there so far!). We plan to have town hall meetings in each Area in Fall 2017, with at least one of them live streamed to maximize access for those who cannot physically attend. We also hope to host some webinars to give updates, hear feedback, and answer questions. Since the May Restructure update, there have been Area discussions about it, and feedback has been shared with Dialogue Group members in a variety of ways.

### **How does the new model make things better for the local churches and for the Areas?**

In this new model, there is great potential for flexibility, greater connection between congregations, and increased resources shared with all CCSW churches. Envision:

- Regional staff with greater accountability and flexibility for ministry
  - Regional Minister and Regional Executive
  - Community Regional Ministers (CRMs) – 5-10, mixture of part- and full-time; areas of expertise can be shared across the entire Region but connections maintained locally
  - Centrally-managed support staff
- Areas relieved from financial and administrative management to pursue ministry at the direction of their own Area boards. Especially, but not limited to
  - Volunteer-based local collaborative ministry (Disciples Women, Disciples Men, Youth/Camp)
- The overall mission and witness of the church will be strengthened through greater transparency and cooperation across areas.
  - Greater transparency about the financial health, ministry needs, and missional goals of congregations and areas across the region will allow for increased partnership.
  - Congregations and constituency groups will be better equipped to liaison and partner with one another across the region, sharing resources, ideas, and funding to enrich ministry across the Southwest Region.

- Personnel, financial, and support resources for key initiatives (e.g. new church starts, youth ministry, transformative ministry, etc.) will be more readily available for congregations and constituency groups across the region.

### **How will churches gain or continue access to resources and support?**

Locally-based Community Regional Ministers will be primary points of contact for congregations and ministers. However, churches across the Region will also receive educational materials, trainings, ideas, support, and other resources in an ongoing and as-needed basis from all of the Regional staff. Community Regional Ministers will have areas of special interest and skillsets to offer in addition to the duties they share. For example, one CRM might specialize in social media communications, while another might specialize in mission and outreach. These CRMs would share their skills in Regional newsletters, workshops, and by other avenues to strengthen churches and ministry Region-wide.

### **Are the Areas going away?**

No, they aren't. Area staffing as we have known it may go away, but that is very different than Areas going away. We see advantages of operating in a cohesive team rather than 9 silos, with each capable of hiring a maximum of one full-time Area Minister and one admin. Our hope is that each Area has at least one CRM to relate to and liaison with. On top of that, Areas will receive diverse resources from other CRMs. The Region will take over some administrative aspects, freeing Area volunteers to attend to the ministries that energize them. So, Areas will have a broader range of resources to draw on and more time and attention to give to the ministries to which God is calling them to.

### **Is this going to end my Area's opportunities for ministry and fellowship (like Men's and Women's retreats, etc.)?**

We sure hope not! These have largely been volunteer led in the past, and we are counting on them to continue. They are essential points of connection between congregations. In fact, the hope would be that with a robust and diverse CRM team, CRMs could have Regional liaison roles to assist to the extent possible with both Regional and Area Men's, Women's and Youth ministry groups.

### **What will happen with Area boards/officers/ministry committees/assemblies?**

Area boards/officers/ministry committees/assemblies will still exist. Staffing will happen at the Regional level, but Area ministries will continue to serve local congregations and communities. Area boards, officers, and committees will have less administrative work

since personnel and most financial operations will happen at the Regional level. Areas will have more time and attention to devote to their collaborative ministries.

**Will Area Committees on Ministry continue in the same form, a new form, or as a ministry of the Region?**

ACOM will continue to serve in a critical role of providing oversight, education, and nurture of ministry throughout the Region, especially in the preparation of Commissioned Ministers for outstanding leadership. This need is growing exponentially as more congregations are unable to have full-time ordained ministers. Working together, we will be able to provide a variety of educational opportunities to enrich commissioned ministry. ACOM will continue to be a liaison between congregations and RCOM with candidates seeking ordination.

**Financials**

**Is the Region restructuring to shore up its own finances?**

No, we are doing this because Area finances and a lack of services in some Areas demand action. Regional leadership (comprised largely of Area and constituency group leaders) want to walk *with* Areas, not take *from* them. If we keep operating the Region the way we are, the Region would need to respond to Area financial situations ranging from insolvency to reliance on accumulated resources. Currently, no Area is self-sustaining based on congregational support. Some Areas come close to being self-sustaining, but they rely on funding models that may not be sustainable.

**What is the Regions' projected financial management plan?**

The Office of General Minister and Treasury Services ("OGM-TS") maintains the Region's financial accounting and reporting, under the supervision of the Region's staff and Officers. This system of financial management provides competency for this function, consistency, supervision, and internal controls.

**Have financial projections or budgets been prepared reflecting the proposed restructure plan?**

Yes. Simplified budgets for a variety of scenarios were created during the deliberation process to consider feasibility. Hypothetical 2018 and 2019 budgets were prepared in the same level of detail and format currently used by the Region to evaluate and illustrate the recommendations from the Restructure Dialogue Group. The hypothetical budgets reflected the Region incurring a deficit in 2018, funded by accumulated resources from operating surpluses in recent years when the Region was without a full time Regional Minister, and a balanced budget for 2019. The balanced budget in 2019 assumed that congregational support for Region was materially consistent with current levels of congregational giving to Area, Region, and DMF, and was sufficient to fund a

personnel structure consistent with the Restructure Dialogue Group's proposed vision. [Those budgets are published here.](#)

### **Is the Region going to take our Area assets?**

No, the Region fully expects each legal entity to hold onto its property, permanent funds, etc. and manage it as it sees fit. If there is a time in which an Area ceases to exist as a legal entity, then it may choose to do something with its assets. Until then, they belong to the Areas no different than today.

### **How will Areas' various financial assets (cash on hand, permanent funds, endowments, designated funds, properties) be managed?**

This will be the responsibility of Area boards and officers to determine. If they are not able to do so on a volunteer basis, the Region recommends outsourcing financial accounting and reporting to the OGM-TS. If all Areas outsourced financial accounting and reporting to the OGM-TS, each Area's financial records would be maintained independently, but the same account structures, reports and processes could be used Region-wide across all Areas. Authorizations for use of funds would still come from Area boards, Moderators, and Treasurers – not Regional staff or leaders.

### **Where do we send our financial support from congregations? To the Area, Region, or Disciples Mission Fund?**

This is still under deliberation. The desire is to create administrative simplicity while also ensuring that no less funding is available for Regional staff than existed in Region and Areas combined in the recent past.

### **Will Areas still have budgets?**

Yes. However, this will need to be in collaboration between Area and Regional leadership to ensure that funds for Regional staff are available. A final recommendation on how congregations will financially support the Region will impact the budgeting process. We will need to develop a method that allows Area leaders to develop plans to utilize their assets/resources while allowing Regional leaders to develop budgets for the entire Region.

### **How do we get funds for our collaborative ministries?**

This will be determined after we finalize a recommended funding and budgeting plan. We will be seeking input from congregations about how to proceed.

## **Staffing**

### **What will be the responsibilities and expectations of the various positions?**

These responsibilities will be developed in concert with the Regional Minister and the Regional Council along with the personnel committee, Area representatives, and constituency groups. One of the primary responsibilities of these staff members will be to represent the Region to local areas and congregations. We hope that the called ministers and staff will reflect the diversity of our church and that their varied skillsets will meet the diverse needs of our congregations. Periodically, Regional leadership and the personnel committee will reassess staffing needs based upon feedback from congregations.

### **How can our hiring/call process mirror what we want church to look like?**

The Restructure Dialogue Group has generated a proposed plan for the hiring process that will provide diverse community participation from across the Region. This will be presented to the Regional Council in August 2017. After presentation to the Regional Council, this FAQ will be updated to explain the approved process for hiring.

### **Will the Areas have input in selection of Community Regional Ministers?**

The Restructure Dialogue Group has generated a proposed plan for the hiring process of CRMs that will include representation from the community to be served. This will be presented to the Regional Council in August 2017. After presentation to the Regional Council, this FAQ will be updated to explain the approved CRM selection process.

### **Will the CRMs have any connection to Area Boards or “Area” events such as training, assemblies, etc.?**

It is expected that CRMs will serve in liaison rolls with existing Areas, though their service Area may include geography not limited to a single Area. Similarly, an Area may receive services from more than one CRM as appropriate.

### **How can we be assured we will get the administrative services we need?**

The Regional Minister and Regional Executive will work together to make sure that congregations across the Region receive the administrative services you need. The Regional Executive is responsible for creating administrative consistency across the Region, and supervising administrative staff. While centrally managed, it is undetermined to date whether all administrative staff will be centrally located or if some may be located in communities where appropriate.

### **Are the end dates for the current Area Ministers and Administrative Assistants set in stone?**

No. We have a timeline, but understand that some deadlines are moveable. Also, it could very well be that current Area staff is transitioned into new roles as Regional staff. The timeline that we are working with is this:

- Fall 2017 – Call Regional Minister
- By January 1, 2018 or earlier (subject to placement of Community Regional Ministers) – Area financial support from the Region would stop
- During 2018 – call/hire Regional Executive, administrative support, and CRMs as Areas are ready for transition
- Fall 2018 – Report actions taken to Regional Assembly
- By January 1, 2019 – Complete restructure implementation

However, we do think it is important to set specific timeline expectations and work towards them in order to implement the plan effectively.

### **How will this new organizational structure enhance the lives and ministries of Regional staff?**

In our current organizational structure, some Area Ministers are stretched extremely thin by the large Areas they must cover. Others feel different strains, such as financial difficulties and redundancy of infrastructure. The new restructure has the potential to provide for healthier working conditions for the staff – thereby preventing burnout and promoting better quality of life while enhancing ministry at the same time.

Additionally, more robust resources may be available to congregations with a diverse group of staff. Rather than hiring “generalists” to do everything as an Area Minister, some staff may be hired as “specialists” in certain skills that can be shared regionally. When a congregation has a specific need, they will not be limited to calling on the CRM their Area has a liaison relationship with, but rather can access the diverse resources of the Regional staff.

With a centrally hired and managed staff, we can ensure that the Regional staffing includes members that can relate and connect to all congregations, including those of minority groups.