

**Central Texas Conference**  
**Rationale for 2021 Budget Proposal as Related to CCYM/CTCYM**  
**and FAQs**  
**September 2020**

The Central Texas Conference has no desire nor plans to diminish its support for and to the youth of the Conference. In fact, we believe that by reimagining the way the conference provisions youth ministries and missions we have an opportunity to expand youth ministry training and development and youth fellowship events and camps, while still offering a quality and enriching mission experience each summer and increasing the number of local churches that have the opportunity to participate.

Faced with the financial reality of 2020, the Central Texas Cabinet was tasked with reimagining the conference for 2021 and beyond so that we might continue to effectively engage our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world while being good stewards of the resources available to us. This reimagining process involves the 2021 budget. Because children and youth ministries are so vital toward successfully achieving our mission, the Cabinet, in consultation with members of the conference staff and the CTC Core team, considered several solutions for meeting the conference-wide needs of our youth. This led to the proposal laid out in *Forward to a New Spring*. As we move forward in reimagining the conference, the Cabinet and other conference leadership will be increasingly engaged with conference youth leadership and local church youth leaders in our efforts.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) express the Cabinet's rationale for the proposal presented in the *Forward to a New Spring* document as it relates to the youth ministries and missions of the Conference. It is offered in hopes of clearing up some of the regrettable misunderstanding and misinformation that has surfaced due to our failure to share our thinking with our vital and passionate young leaders earlier in this process.

**Are you suggesting or supporting the idea that Youth Ministry should be defunded throughout the Central Texas Conference – at the conference AND local church levels?**

Absolutely not. The youth of our conference are a powerful and proven resource in our mission of making of disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. What we are suggesting is that due to the realities of our time – fiscal and social – it is time to reimagine and refocus our resources on how the conference supports our youth. We strongly support the need for effective, disciple-making youth ministries at our local churches. We also want to more effectively and directly support our local church Youth Leaders. The new conference structure put forth in the proposed 2021 budget provides funding for three District Student Discipleship Coordinators - one to support each DS and work closely with the youth leaders of each district area.

**How would the District Student Discipleship Coordinators support local church youth leaders & ministries?**

Our youth leaders do so much more than referee bubble soccer matches and organize pizza parties. The CTC youth leaders are charged with doing a lot of the heavy lifting in raising up the next generation of church leadership while helping their youth navigate through some of the toughest and most confusing times of life – all on shoestring budgets and not much, if any, paid staff. The intent of the District Student Discipleship Coordinators is to leverage our talented people to support, train and mentor our youth leaders in their student ministry efforts, which could include (but is certainly not limited to) creating a team to lead multi-church mission trips as well as other disciple-making programs and opportunities.

**If you value youth ministry so much, why are you removing conference-level support?**

The conference is not and will not cease supporting our youth and youth ministries. However, we know that much more ministry occurs and many more disciples are made at the local church level than at the conference level. As such, we propose shifting our youth ministry resources to the district level, to be handled by district youth leaders who know the ministry context extremely well and can more easily and directly support youth leaders and our youth.

**Does the proposed budget mean that Glen Lake Camp and Midwinter retreats will go away?**

Even in light of the fiscal challenges we are currently facing and project to face in the next few years at least, our children and youth ministries are too important and the need to raise up the next generation of leaders in the church is so great, we prioritized the need to sustain Glen Lake Camp. The Mid-Winter Youth Retreats are treasured traditions for the youth of our conference – traditions we hope that CCYM will continue for years to come. CCYM leadership is already exploring options for next year, including offering a virtual 2021 Mid-Winter. As there remains uncertainty about COVID-19 and large group gatherings, a virtual option for 2021 aligns with protecting the health and safety of our students and adult volunteers.

**Who made the decision to delete CTCYM from the 2021 Conference Budget?**

The Cabinet put the budget together with assistance from members of the conference staff. It was reviewed with CF&A and Core Team. Both groups voted to approve the budget to be sent to the Annual Conference.

**Why was the decision made to delete CTCYM from the budget?**

As we were preparing the budget, we realized we needed to “reimagine” the Conference and could not prepare a “business as usual” budget. Connectional Mission Giving (CMG), which has been declining the last few years, dropped sharply in 2019 to 83% of budget. In 2020, CMG is more than \$550,000 below 2019 through July, which indicates that CMG collections will drop significantly again this year. We made several structural changes to the Conference, which includes deleting CTCYM as it currently exists and shifting youth ministry support out to the Districts with additional support. Other significant changes are also proposed in the budget, including staff reductions, DS reductions and other spending cuts.

The critical question we face is how to enhance our ministry and core mission. We believe that we will actually increase the effectiveness of and overall participation in student/youth ministry in making disciples by pursuing a reimagined structure.

**So, the budget is the only reason you cut CTCYM?**

No. While reduced CMG has been an issue, the Cabinet and others took this opportunity to re-imagine the Conference and how we should be organized going forward. As part of that, we believe that student ministry resources should be moved from the Conference level and positioned closer to the local church. We will have a District Student Discipleship Coordinator aligned with each DS to help coach other youth directors on discipleship and lead teams to create multi-church youth events and other discipleship opportunities. While we appreciate the rich history and positive impact that CTCYM has had on participants, leaders and those receiving assistance, there are a variety of ways that youth may engage in missions.

**But CTCYM is a Conference-wide program. Doesn't this show the value of the connection?**

Actually, while CTCYM is offered as a conference-wide program, only about 20-25% of our churches choose to participate and the participants come largely from Tarrant County and churches close to Tarrant County. During 2019, 42 of the 64 churches (out of a total conference of around 275 churches) participating in CTCYM were from Tarrant County and nearby areas. In one sense, this is logical due to the large number of churches in and close to Tarrant County. In another sense, it tells us that this is not a program utilized broadly across the Conference. While we appreciate the rich history and positive impact that CTCYM has had on participants, leaders and those receiving assistance, there are a variety of ways that youth may engage in missions. A significant number of CTC churches (estimated to be as many as 50+ in a given year), of varied sizes, types and geographies successfully participate in annual youth mission trips and projects outside of the CTCYM structure.

**I thought CTCYM was paid for by the fees charged to the participants?**

In a normal year, CTCYM fees pay for a portion of the cost to create the CTCYM mission trips, including Conference staff and other expenses, plus the direct expenses of food, supplies, etc. for the centers. Costs not covered by fees must be covered by the Conference budget. However, we need to budget for the full cost of the staff and related expenses, as we cannot predict the fee revenues to be received. For example, in 2020 we had to refund fees collected as the trips were canceled due to COVID-19.

**So does this mean that youth mission trips are over?**

Absolutely not! This conference had youth mission trips for many years before CTCYM and will continue to have youth mission trips in the years ahead. By shifting the resources back to the district and local churches, churches can decide how they want to do mission trips. Do they want to go with other churches? If so, which ones? Where do they want to go?

**How much do we need to add back to the budget if we want to keep CTCYM?**

We would recommend adding \$200,000 to the 2021 Conference Budget to cover the cost of staff and other expenses. However, simply adding the money into the budget does not guarantee we can add back the staff and CTCYM. Each line item in the budget is funded by Connectional Mission Giving (CMG) sent by the local churches to the conference. Given the financial uncertainties that face many of our local churches, and the recent declining trend in CMG collections, it is quite feasible that the necessary funds would not be received in 2021.

**How long a process do you envision this transformation to the new structure? How long is it going to take to hire the three Student Ministry Coordinators?**

The Cabinet will be meeting in September to begin implementation of the new structure, including new districts and other staff and budget changes. We anticipate implementing most of these changes over the balance of 2020, such that we are mostly in our new structure by January 2021. A few changes may not be complete under July 2021.

**This plan seems great for local churches who already have a vital and vibrant Youth program (probably churches who were already not that active in CTCYM), but what about local churches who are struggling in that area and don't have a vibrant program or effective, trained youth leadership? Isn't this going to really hit the small- to medium-size churches and their youth hardest?**

We believe this is one of the strongest benefits of this new approach. We believe having three District level resource persons available to help local church youth leaders will provide more opportunities for churches to grow stronger discipleship within vibrant youth groups.

**Isn't this just another example of how the youth are really not valued?**

On the contrary, we believe this approach provides more resources to the local churches to help them with their youth groups. Currently, we have one Conference-level person focused on youth. This new structure will provide three people located in the Districts. In fact, approximately 20% of the total 2021 Conference budget is dedicated to young people and young adults, including the District Student Discipleship Coordinators, Glen Lake Camp and campus ministry.

**Why didn't the Cabinet share this information earlier?**

The Cabinet had a number of meetings during June with various groups, including district meetings, to discuss the "Forward to a New Spring" approach and the 2021 budget. We should have met with the CTCYM and CCYM leadership. We apologize for this oversight; we have already begun meeting with them now and plan to increasingly engage with the youth leadership of the CTC as this process unfolds.

**How confident is leadership that this is the right direction for our conference youth?**

While this may be a challenging time for us, we move forward in faith, convinced that God will continue to work through the Central Texas Conference to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Whether through this proposed strategy or through our current CTCYM strategy or some other strategy yet unknown to us, the Spirit will lead us and work in and through us to touch the lives of young people, to call them to discipleship, and to grow them into strong, faithful and fruitful leaders in the life of the church.