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Moderator

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Dear Pastor and Congregational Leaders:

We are living in a culture that seems bent on building walls rather than bridges. We see how the divisive debates in the news media also influence our conversations in the church. We believe it is time for the church to discern a different and more biblical way of seeking fellowship in the body even when we disagree. We extend an invitation to the leaders of every Central Plains congregation to **That the World May Know: A Conference on Christian Unity** on March 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at First Christian Church in Des Moines, Iowa. The purpose of this meeting is to recover a biblical view of unity and to discern commitments we can hold in common as we seek to follow Jesus in many places within Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

At our 2010 Annual Meeting, delegates at table groups responded to the work of the Unity Task Group with a lot of valuable feedback. This feedback included a clear call to clarify what we mean by "unity." To that end, we have written a paper entitled *Becoming a United Church in a World of Division: A Biblical View of Christian Unity*. We encourage you to read and discuss this paper together before the March 12 conference. It is available online at www.centralplainsmc.org. Click on "Unity Discussion."

One reason it will be important to attend this event is that it will provide a springboard for our agenda at our Central Plains Annual Meeting this summer, June 16-19 in Moline, Illinois. At Annual Meeting we will spend some focused time *practicing* our commitments for living together as a united church in a world of division. Together our delegates will discern the activities, practices, programs, and behaviors that will help our conference be *faithful* and united *in mission*. We believe that, guided by the Spirit, we can do this better and with more clarity than we have in the past.

Please join us for this important event. We hope that our meeting will culminate in formulating foundational commitments from our member congregations about what it means for us to walk together faithfully and united in mission. A brochure with registration form is enclosed. Please distribute copies of this brochure to your congregational leaders, either by photocopying it or by downloading copies from our web site. (It is not possible to register online.) We hope to see all our conference congregations represented at this important event.

Sincerely,

Diane Zaerr Brenneman
Conference Moderator

David Boshart
Executive Conference Minister