

BROTHERS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

**Report to the O.F.M. Provincial Ministers
on Possible Models for Revitalization and Restructuring
of Franciscan Life in the United States**

*Respectfully Submitted
by:*

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INTRODUCTION

The Context

In October 2014, the seven O.F.M. provincial ministers of the United States selected a team of three brothers, Page Polk (St. John the Baptist Province), Richard McManus (St. Barbara Province) and William Beaudin (Holy Name Province). The team's task was "to prepare proposals to be considered by the Ministers Provincial ... which would lead to a process or processes for revitalization of Franciscan life and ministry ... and which would include a reduction of the number of Provinces in the United States" [*US Franciscans Revitalization Team Job Description*, p. 1]. Soon dubbed the Franciscan Interprovincial Team (whose acronym FIT bears no reference to the exercise regimen of its membership), we began meeting in mid-December and, on February 1, 2015, took up residence in the former curia of the Immaculate Conception Province in New York City to devote ourselves full time to the charge we had been given. Over the next few weeks, we charted a possible course of action for interprovincial renewal and reconfiguration entitled, *Brothers for the Twenty-first Century: A Process for the Revitalization and Restructuring of Franciscan Life in the United States, 2014 – 2017*. The plan was approved by the seven provincials at their meeting in Albuquerque, NM on February 24, 2015.

In Phase One of the plan, FIT was to construct various models for what a reconfiguration of U.S. provinces might look like. Since the majority of friars in the U.S. had expressed their desire to "have a place at the table," these models, snapshots or outlines of our future were to include all seven provinces and were to be crafted with several criteria in mind. The models needed to be "(1) consistent with our mission, vision and values; (2) attentive to our fraternal life; (3) demographically and financially stable and sustainable; (4) attentive to the care of our senior friars; (5) attentive to the signs of the kingdom among us; (6) connected to ecclesial structures; (7) inclusive of all friars; [and] (8) attentive to issues of governance, formation and vocation recruitment" [*A Process for the Revitalization and Restructuring of Franciscan Life in the United States, 2014 – 2017*, p. 3]. The team has tried to take this charge seriously. The following report with its introductory "reader's guide" is the result of our efforts to do so.

Disclaimers and Parameters

The models presented in this report are by no means complete pictures of our collective future. Were they images on a computer screen, they would be woefully lacking in pixels. At best, they are the thought-experiments of a tiny group of friars, all three of whom are white, monolingual, ordained and in their sixties. Although we hail from three different provinces and two distinct regions of the country, we hardly qualify as a heterogeneous cross-section of the friars of the United States. Neither are we experts in any field that might be the least bit helpful in completing the assignment. None of us is

a demographer, statistician, actuary, systems analyst, accountant or M.B.A. There have been many days thus far in the process when we wished we were all six, with Franciscan historian, pastoral theologian and futurologist thrown in for good measure. But, to recast St. Paul's disclaimer in the plural, by the grace of God we are what we are. It will take the diversity and imagination of the friars themselves to fill in the pictures or to dream better dreams, and it will take the expertise of provincial treasurers, financial advisors and legal counsel to assess their feasibility.

Besides the narrow confines of our ethnic, linguistic, educational and professional backgrounds, the makers of these models operated under several other constraints including lack of access to financial information and that enemy of all good intentions—time. Other constraints were self-imposed. While seeking to present a spectrum of models, we excluded, *a priori*, any model that would privilege one component of our Franciscan vocation over another or one group of friars over another. So, for example, you will find here no models of provinces built around a particular work, friar demographic or interpretation of the Rule. There are no “education” provinces, “missionary” provinces or “parish ministry” provinces, just as there are no specifically “Hispanic,” “Asian-American,” “clerical,” “lay,” “poor,” “chaste” or “obedient” provinces. One would hope that every province of friars in the U.S. would mirror the rich diversity of the American Catholic Church; would honor the freedom St. Francis gave his brothers to engage in any kind of honest work that did not impede “the spirit of prayer and devotion;” would enable the friars to “observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity;” and would allow the bright light of their fraternal witness to “shine before all.”

For better or worse, all the models presented here bear some relationship to U.S. geography. Granted, none of the current provinces has strict geographical boundaries. Several provinces overlap the same region of the country. While a few of the models seek to tidy up this somewhat haphazard arrangement, others accept the current reality and propose straightforward mergers of existing provinces. None of the models ignore the plain fact that the vast majority of the friars in the U.S. live in the northeastern quadrant of the U.S., or that St. Barbara and Our Lady of Guadalupe are the two western provinces. Geography isn't everything, but it has to be taken seriously in any discussion of provincial realignment. Whether FIT took it *too* seriously and thereby manifested a lack of imagination, a lamentable failure to “think outside the box,” is for the friars of the U.S. and their servant-leaders to decide.

The Template

All of the models follow the same format. There are two main categories: “Considerations of Restructuring” and “Possibilities for Renewal.” As the titles suggest, the first set of considerations has more to do with reconfiguration; the second with revitalization. If the first category gives the frame for a picture of a possible future, the second hints at what the friars might actually be doing in the picture. Another helpful metaphor, closer to our Franciscan roots, might be the pilgrimage. St. Francis counseled

his brothers to be “pilgrims and strangers in this world.” As most pilgrims learn in their religious travels, a pilgrimage has a route and a planned goal with set stops along the way. It has a structure. But that structure is in the service of a conversion experience whose path no travel agent, however pious, can plan and whose goal no guide, however prescient, can predict. So, if the first category in our template deals with the structural elements of the pilgrimage, the second tilts toward the intangibles of personal and communal conversion.

No doubt, those who are eminently practical will find the information in the first section to be sketchy, and the suggestions in the second section to be wildly speculative. Words like “perhaps,” “could” “might” and “maybe” abound. As was stated above, these models are thought-experiments meant to advance the national conversation about the friars’ preferred future. They are intended to stimulate discussion and reflection rather than to supply detailed instructions for building a new province from the ground up. They beg to be revised, reshuffled, clarified, combined, and supported with hard data. One or the other of them may prove untenable and beg to be discarded.

Each of the main categories of the template encompasses three or four subsections that require preliminary comment.

Maps and Stats

The shaded maps are suggestive, not definitive. If, say, the left two thirds of the map is darkened and called the “Western Province,” no claim is being made that the friars are now, will be or should be living and working in every state west of the Mississippi. States that are “marbled” on the map indicate the presence of more than one province operating within their borders.

The statistics for the number of friars currently living within the “boundaries” of the proposed entities are based on the directories of the present seven provinces. However, as any provincial secretary can attest, directories become outdated on their way to the print shop. The number of friars who *will* be living within the proposed entities a decade down the road is no more than an educated guess whose accuracy is tempered by at least three factors: the possibility that a policy of “open enrollment” will be adopted, a policy whereby any friar from one of the existing provinces could apply for membership in any of the new entities; the possibility of a new entity in the South that would rely heavily on volunteers from the other provinces; and the fickleness of Sister Death whose quixotic ways none can avoid but few can predict. However, before leaping to the conclusion that the numbers are useless, we should note that the 2012 *Trends* projections, prepared for the Interprovincial Commission’s 2013 report to the U.S. provincials, and updated and adjusted by FIT, have proven to be remarkably accurate. In any case, the statistics will give the reader some sense of the “workforce” of each of the proposed entities and how much of that workforce is dependent on the good health and good will of our golden jubilarians.

Optimistic readers, and God knows we need them, will hasten to point out that FIT's friar population estimates for 2025 do not include novices or simply professed. This omission has nothing to do with pessimism and everything to do with prudence. Who knows how many men will be drawn to our way of life in the next decade? But even were he multiplied a hundredfold, a candidate who enters our fraternity two or three years from now may not be assignable outside a formation house until *after* 2025, given the extensive preparation time needed for his Franciscan, ministerial and occupational formation. Bear in mind that the focus of the statistics is on the *workforce*, not because work trumps our fraternal life, but because, in their visioning of the future some friars are quick to say, "The Province should do x, y or z," but are slow to ask, "And who might these 80 plus year-olds be who are ready, willing and able to do it?" In his *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot claimed, "Humankind cannot bear very much reality." He forgot to add, "But an occasional dollop doesn't hurt." Perhaps, we might think of the numbers as one such dollop.

Before moving on from friar population statistics, the obvious needs acknowledgement. Friars are not statistics. Behind every number in this report are the names, faces, faith experiences, personal histories, gifts and talents, fond hopes and deep desires of real men who have devoted their lives to "observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" as lesser brothers. Remembering that they are *our* brothers is a fraternal obligation which the members of FIT take soberly and seriously.

Work Within and Without

The overview of the types of work in which the friars are currently engaged supplies a few more pixels to the picture. It hints at the variety of ministries, trades and occupations of the friars in the U.S. It makes no judgment about one work being better than another, much less about how the friars of the new entity might best occupy their time in the future. That is for the brothers and their leaders in the new entity to decide. However, some of those decisions cannot and should not be put off until the reconfigured provinces are up and running. Given our diminishing personnel resources, we are beyond separating the ministerial wheat from the chaff. We are in the painful position of having to separate the wheat from the wheat. Whether we like it or not, we are forced to exercise our Franciscan poverty by dis-appropriating ourselves from places that are rife with fond memories and ripe with fresh possibilities. As the Interprovincial Commission pointed out, since "no restructuring model will produce many additional men to deploy in ministries in the new Provinces ... the new Provinces will still have to discern which of the ministries inherited from the existing Provinces should be continued and which will be relinquished. Indeed, refocusing ministerial priorities should be part of the process *leading up to the creation of a new Province*" [*Interprovincial Commission Report to the Ministers Provincial of the United States*, p. 11; italics in the quote were added for emphasis].

The brief sections in each of the models on Provincial Administration and Formation assume that a province requires the full-time services of at least nine friars to staff its curia and vocation/formation programs. The figure is based on the average

number of “curial” brothers (5) and “formation” brothers (4) currently working full time in the seven provinces. The sections go on to approximate the number of friars who could be reassigned to other ministries, external or internal, should the proposed reconfiguration of provinces and a reduction in duplicated services occur. While the *Interprovincial Commission Report* was correct in its caution that restructuring will not produce a bumper crop of friars for the external works of the provinces, most of the models presented in this report suggest that there will be *some* personnel gain. No province needs two provincials, three vicars and four directors of post-novitiate formation. The six capable brothers who would no longer be needed in such roles after a merger could apply their estimable gifts and talents more directly to the evangelical and pastoral needs of the People of God. In view of the personnel crunch that all the provinces in the U.S. are experiencing, it is good to be reminded of restructuring’s more palpable benefits.

From Manpower to Money

When it came to the financial dimensions of restructuring, FIT drew a nearly complete blank. This is by no means an insignificant lacuna in this report. As of press time, no financial information for any of the current provinces was available to us. The seven provincials have empowered their treasurers to disclose to us the cost to each province of administration, formation and elder care. The treasurers have gathered and collated much of this information, and are well on their way to completing their assignment. Their findings will be released in the near future. Given the complexities of closing out one fiscal year and opening another, we owe them a debt of gratitude for taking on yet another accounting project. However, even if FIT had such information in hand when crafting the models, the financial picture of both current and future provinces would be purely speculative. Only a fool would hazard a guess as to the assets and liabilities of any province of which he is not a member, but only a fool would enter into a corporate merger without a complete financial assessment of one’s potential partner or partners. At some stage in the process of provincial restructuring, and sooner rather than later, the treasurers of the seven provinces will need to evaluate the viability of the proposed models using real numbers. There seems to be no point in forwarding a model to the friars of the U.S. for their discussion and discernment if it fails to pass the financial sustainability test.

Seeds of Revitalization

The second major category in the template, “Possibilities for Renewal,” begins with a section on Fraternal Economy. The phrase is borrowed from the reflections of David Couturier and his Capuchin brothers on their Franciscan call to poverty and prophetic witness. It involves a mutual and equitable sharing of human, spiritual and material resources among the brothers. It takes to heart the Pauline and Pentateuchal injunction, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little” [2 *Corinthians* 8:15, *Exodus* 16:18]. It also heeds two of St. Francis’s favorite admonitions from Galatians: “bear one another’s burdens” and “serve one another through love” [*Galatians* 6:2; 5:13]. The generosity in giving and the

graciousness of receiving, the equity and mutuality involved in crafting a truly fraternal economy among the friars of the U.S., could be both cause and effect of our Franciscan renewal. It has the evangelical potential for making the witness of our fraternal life more credible and persuasive to a nation enamored of social and economic Darwinism.

The contents of the remaining three sections under “Possibilities for Renewal”—Fraternal Life, Franciscan Work and Vocations—are just that: possibilities. They are merely meant to prime the pump of the friars’ visioning of their fraternal and ministerial future. They may be exhausting to read, given the repetition of text from one model to another, but they are by no means exhaustive. We offer them, as well as the models in which they are embedded, with the hope of generating a lively exchange of ideas and information, wisdom and insight, dreams and desires, not to mention mad flights of fancy, among the friars of the U.S. and their brothers who serve them in provincial leadership. It is, after all, FIT’s commission from the seven provincials, “to instigate, animate and sustain honest conversations among the friars that will be personally, fraternally and institutionally transformative” [*A Process for the Revitalization and Restructuring of Franciscan Life in the United States, 2014 – 2017*, p. 2]. If our service to the brothers produces that coveted outcome, we will count ourselves among the blessed.

Points for Reflection

As you the provincials review the models and discuss them with your definitoria, it might be fruitful to keep the following questions in mind:

- ❖ Which models offer the friars of the United States real hope of enhancing in the future what they truly value in the present—vibrant fraternal life and vital Franciscan work?
- ❖ Which models might help us as a fraternity-in-mission to respond more effectively to the evangelical and pastoral challenges facing the Church in the United States?
- ❖ How might the models be revised and improved in order to make them *more* attentive to the values and desires of the friars, and *more* responsive to the needs of God’s people?
- ❖ Which models show potential for sustainability over the long haul? Which do not, and are there strategies for making those models more viable than they presently appear to be? (Needless to say, the provincial treasurers could be enormously helpful in answering those questions.)

Kindly recall that the goal of Phase One of our agreed-upon process for renewal and reconfiguration is “a consensus of U.S. provincial administrations at their August 2015 gathering on the provincial reconfiguration models that will be presented to the friars of the U.S. for their prayerful consideration in Phase Two” [*Brothers for the Twenty-first Century: A Process for the Revitalization and Restructuring of Franciscan Life in the United States, 2014 – 2017*, p. 4]. At the August meeting in Techny, IL, it will be the task of the servant-leaders of the friars in the United States both to hone and to own the models they deem worthy of their brothers’ discussion and discernment. Doubtless, every friar who participates in the Techny gathering will not agree with every facet of every model that gains a consensus. And by consenting to forward a set of models to the brothers of the U.S., none of the participants at Techny will be casting his vote to join one or the other of the proposed entities the day after tomorrow or even three years hence. He will simply be encouraging his brothers to “think on these things” because he and his fellow provincials and councilors agree they’re worth thinking about.

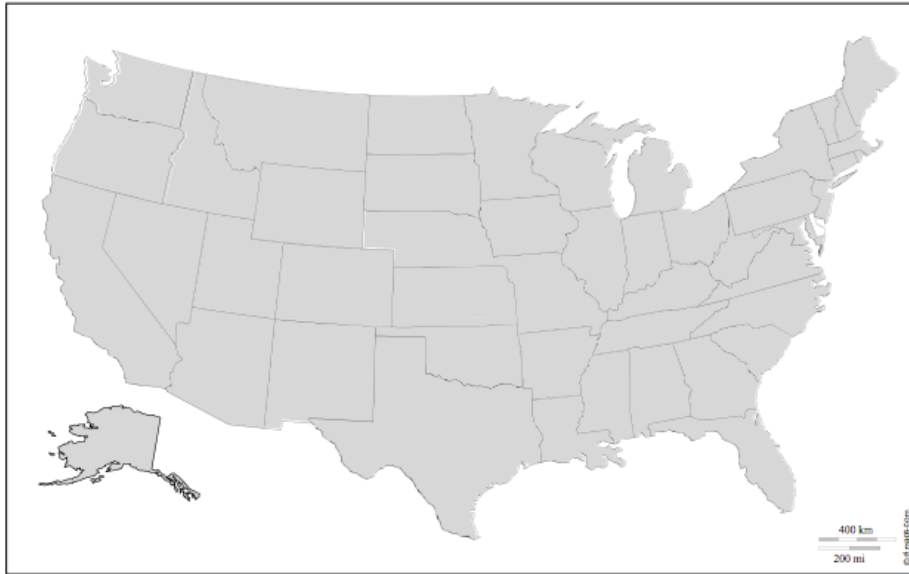
A Table of Plenty

In our fraternal conversations about a sustainable future for Franciscan life in the United States, it would be both tempting and myopic to limit the concept of sustainability to money and manpower, and to confine it to a context of scarcity and want. Like the Union general George McClellan who never thought he had enough men to launch a new campaign, or like the mother in D.H. Lawrence’s *Rocking Horse Winner* who never thought she had enough money to secure a nice lifestyle, we friars can sometimes fall into the trap of focusing on what’s missing and overlooking what’s there. We can forget that we are disciples of him who “came that [we] might have life and have it in abundance” [*cf. John 10:10*] and who portrayed his Father’s reign in images of superfluity and excess: the unearned treasure; the priceless pearl; the miraculous harvest; the spreading branches of a mustard tree; the vineyard owner whose generosity borders on foolishness; the feckless son whose homecoming is feted with signet ring, flowing robe and fatted calf; the extravagant waste of expensive perfume; the riotous wedding feast where tipsy guests drink the wine cellars dry until Jesus himself restocks them! Evangelical sustainability is a sharing in abundance, not a rationing of crumbs. So, too, is Franciscan sustainability. When Francis uses the Umbrian cognate of “sustain,” he does so to express the liberality and fruitfulness of our sister, Mother Earth [*The Canticle of the Creatures*, v. 9]. If what we are after in this pilgrimage of restructuring is the revitalization of *Franciscan* life in the United States, then it is vitally important that we pursue the goal with one eye on the minority of diminishment but with *both* eyes on the fraternity of abundance.

The table at which our brothers in the United States have chosen to have a place is, indeed, a table of plenty. May we, their servants, set it beautifully.

15 July 2015
Feast of St. Bonaventure

MODEL A: ONE U.S. PROVINCE



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

In many ways, this model is elegant in its simplicity. Take a map of the United States, the directories of the seven provinces, eliminate the administrative redundancies and you have a rough picture of the new entity. Should a proposal for one U.S. province be presented to the friars for a definitive vote in the spring of 2017, and not all seven of the current provinces decide to join it, what would remain of the model is a union of the willing.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entity in 2015

Model A: Personnel Data for 2015

PROVINCE	2015 Population		Active under 65	Active 65 – 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirmed, Non- assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
ABVM	108		18	30	20		38	0/2
HN	294		100	71	53		57	3/10
IC	124		34	30	26		28	3/3
OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0/2
SB	164		63	32	15		47	0/7
SH	197		55	49	46		45	0/2
SJB	146		31	49	21		43	0/2
TOTALS:	1087		320	277	186		270	6/28
% of total U.S. friar population			30%	25%	17%		25%	3%

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entity in 2025

Model A: Personnel Projections for 2025

PROVINCE	Estimated 2025 Population		Est. Active under 65	Est. Active 65 – 74	Est. Active 75 +		Est. Retired, Infirmed, Non- assigned	Est. Novices/ Simply Professed
ABVM	55		5	15	10		25	?
HN	190		60	55	25		50	?
IC	75		20	20	15		20	?
OLG	40		10	10	5		15	?
SB	105		30	40	10		25	?
SH	115		15	40	20		40	?
SJB	90		15	20	15		40	?
TOTALS:	670		155	200	100		215	+ 'X'
% of total U.S. friar population			23%	30%	15%		32%	

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entity

Model A: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/Work Force

PROVINCE		ABVM	HN	IC	OLG	SB	SH	SJB	TOTAL
2015 Total Population		108	294	124	54	164	197	146	1087
Active Work Force		70	225	90	40	110	150	100	785

Model A: 2015 Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Category by Percentage**

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY		ABVM	HN	IC	OLG	SB	SH	SJB	Average
A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"									
1. CHAP.		28	9	2	8	2	13	7	10%
2. EDUC.		8	21	0	3	8	8	9	10%
3. WORD		2	5	6	6	9	8	12	6%
4. WORLD		2	3	30	0	8	4	6	7%
5. DOM. MISS.		0	1	0	30	10	3	0	4%
6. PROF.		<1	<1	2	0	5	3	2	2%
7. PARISH		21	30	30	27	30	18	30	26%
8. SHRINE		0	15	5	0	3	14	<1	8%
9. SOC. SERV.		1	3	0	0	2	5	6	3%
10. ARTS		3	<1	0	3	2	3	1	2%
Subtotal A		66%	87%	75%	74%	79%	79%	76%	79%
B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"									
1. FORM./VOC.		1	2	6	3	6	2	5	3%
2.MAJ.GUARD./FRAT. SERV.		17	3	6	7	3	7	9	7%
3. FRAT. ADMIN.		9	7	8	9	8	9	8	7%
4. FRAT. HEALTH		7	1	5	7	4	3	2	4%
Subtotal B		34%	13%	25%	26%	21%	21%	24%	21%

****Work Force Categories:**

A. External Ministries:

1. CHAPlains: e.g., campus ministry/ hospital/ military/Poor Clares/ O.S.F.
2. EDUCation: teacher/professor/school staff and administration
3. WORD: retreat/ hermitage/ itinerant preaching/ media/ spiritual direction
4. WORLD: Provincial commitments and individual assignments outside the U.S.
5. DOMestic MISSions: Native American
6. PROFessions: e.g., counseling, legal, medical
7. PARISH
8. SHRINE: e.g., service churches, old missions
9. SOCial SERVices: direct works with the poor
10. ARTS/Trades/Tech

B. Internal Ministries:

1. FORMation and VOCation directors and assistants
2. MAJor GUARDian/FRATernal SERVICE: e.g. friars outside the provincial curia whose primary responsibility is the care of the brothers in the local fraternities
3. FRATernal ADMINistration: friars working in provincial or general curiae or on interprovincial assignments (e.g. FIT)
4. FRATernal HEALTH: e.g., friar elder care directors and care givers

I.e Provincial Administration

One would assume that, with the reduction of seven provincial administrations into a single central office, a significant number of “curial” friars could be reassigned. Six provincials, the full time vicars, six provincial secretaries, as well as several friar treasurers and development directors would (no doubt happily) be unemployed. However, given the sheer size and complexity of the new entity, some of those seasoned administrators might be needed as additional staff in the curia, and the six definitors, perhaps with extensive regional responsibilities, may need to be full time, at least for the first years of the new entity. With those caveats in mind, were Model A adopted, as many as 20 friars currently working in provincial administration could be available for other work.

I.f Finances

Centralization of finances has its merits. There could be significant savings from the reduction of seven provincial administrations into one. Combining the portfolios of several provinces into a central investment fund would lower brokerage fees. There could be savings in centralized purchasing, payroll management and personnel policies, as well as a reduction in health care and car insurance costs by negotiating the best “affordable” plans with a larger pool of friars. However, when it comes to the monthly allowance, monetary gifts, vacations, travel stipends and automobile use, the rubber of economics hits the road of fraternal life in very different places for the friars of the U.S. The standardization of financial policies and procedures will, no doubt, be a neuralgic issue in the creation of any new entity, let alone a single U.S. province.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

Although the number of senior friars in the U.S. will remain relatively constant over the next ten years, the ratio between active and retired friars will shift from 3:1 to 2:1. Nobody needs to tell the provincials or their councilors and treasurers that elder care is and will continue to be a major concern for any O.F.M. entity in this country. While the financial cost of such care for our brothers will be significant, the financial resources of the seven provinces will be pooled to meet their legitimate needs. The new entity would inherit from its founding provinces 15 retirement fraternities, 2 assisted living and one skilled nursing facility. While standardizing retirement and senior health care policies, maximizing complementarity of facilities and reducing or eliminating redundancies will be important agenda items for the new province, respecting the wishes of our elder brothers to retire in place and, in the case of infirmity, to be cared for in familiar surroundings needs to be weighted in their favor, lest they become the unfortunate victims of restructuring.

1.h Formation

We assume that a minimum of ten friars would be needed to mentor the new entity's formation program and engage in full-time vocation ministry, and we estimate that as many as 20 friars currently in formation/vocation work would be available for reassignment. The existing seven provinces already cooperate in and contribute to a common novitiate program, and have made great strides toward a common ratio for all levels of formation. The creation of a single O.F.M. entity in the U.S. may send far fewer shock waves through the system of formation than through other areas of our fraternal life. Since there is less unanimity when it comes to ministerial training sites, the new province would need to settle on a center for theological studies with the possibility of an alternate site for special cases involving issues such as language skills and academic background. Because one of the goals of postulancy is that the candidates be introduced to the fraternities and works of the province, it is conceivable that a postulancy program in a single U.S. province would be something of a cross-country pilgrimage.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

Of all the proposed models, a single province would rank highest on the fraternal economy scale. It would be a case of "all for one and one for all." The friar personnel, the leadership pool, the skills of seasoned administrators, the rich traditions, the best practices, the ministerial gems and the financial resources of seven provinces would be shared by all the brothers in the U.S. So would the liabilities and the burdens.

II.b Fraternal Life

Corporate efficiency is not necessarily inimical to fraternal life. If the union of seven provinces into one can better husband our personnel and financial resources, train the leaders who will serve us, care for our wounded brothers, foster physical, psychological and spiritual wellness, level out inequities, and encourage transparency and accountability among us, then "corporate" (from the Latin word for "body") may not be such a bad thing for the bodies, minds and souls of the brothers.

The 2013 Interprovincial Commission Report offered a few suggestions of how the quality of fraternal life might be addressed in the new entity. It noted that "with one Province, there would likely be the need to create regions ... that would enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy for fraternal purposes." It went on to say that "it would not be necessary to formally erect dependent custodies—the statutes of the new Province could create internal regions that could fulfill many of the same functions. These regions would deal mainly with 'personnel' issues within their region, build up fraternal relations, do some planning with regard to ministries in their region ... Perhaps the definitory of the

new Province could consist of representatives of the various regions (this is the system the OMI's use)" [*Interprovincial Commission Report*, p. 18].

The new entity would certainly offer the friars of the U.S. an enormous variety of fraternal life settings from which to choose—large communities and small; urban, suburban and rural; from coast to coast, from north to south, with brothers from sundry cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic backgrounds.

It should also be noted that, for nearly two decades, many friars in the U.S. have been the beneficiaries of interprovincial formation programs; that roughly 10% of the friars in the U.S. serve on interprovincial committees of one kind or other; and that the interprovincial retreat program is now in its 15th year. Even now, we are not complete strangers to one another.

Nevertheless, fashioning a new identity from seven distinct provincial cultures, overcoming a narrow regionalism, encouraging the friars to move beyond the "borders" of their former provinces and to root their Franciscan vocation more deeply in the Rule and Life that we share in common will pose challenges for the new entity.

II.c Franciscan Work

- Currently, the friars in the U.S. are involved in a dizzying array of work, both internal and external, both ministerial and otherwise: missions foreign and domestic, ministry of the Word both on the road and in retreat centers, education and media, parishes and service churches, soup kitchens and shrines, fine arts and skilled trades, health care and social work, administration and finance, chaplaincies and pilgrimages, justice and peace advocacy, as well as ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities. The list is lengthy, and further possibilities are limited only by the interests, energy and imagination of the brothers.
- A single province might bring about better coordination and collaboration among friars with similar interests.
- A single province might better align the friars' interests and talents with ministerial placements.
- A single province would offer the possibility of seeing the big picture of the pastoral and evangelical challenges of proclaiming God's reign in the U.S. and being more strategic in responding to those challenges.
- A single province might encourage a renewed sense of Franciscan itinerancy and mission as friars move out of their comfort zones to generously respond to the needs of God's people in other regions of the country.

- A single province could speak with one voice in advocating for the Kingdom's agenda of reconciliation and peace, justice for the poor, the care of creation, the sanctity of life, recognition of and reverence for the dignity of all God's daughters and sons, both within the Church and in the public sphere.
- The development office of a single province would have a powerful and persuasive story to tell those who might be interested in partnering with us in support of our mission.
- The domestic and foreign missions of the U.S. provinces would be brought together under one roof, a potential plus in fostering a missionary spirit among the brothers and in seeking financial support for our missionaries.
- A single province would bring together the precious resource of our younger friars and could empower and support new ministerial ventures.
- A single province could afford us greater freedom to respond more effectively to tectonic shifts in U.S. demography.
- We need to recognize that, by 2025, the pool of working friars will be about 60% of what it is today. We can't be everywhere. A single province would challenge us to identify the vital centers where a vibrant fraternal life can be lived and meaningful work can be done, and then to focus our resources of time, talent, treasure and missionary zeal at the intersections of our deep desires with the great needs of God's people in the U.S. and beyond.

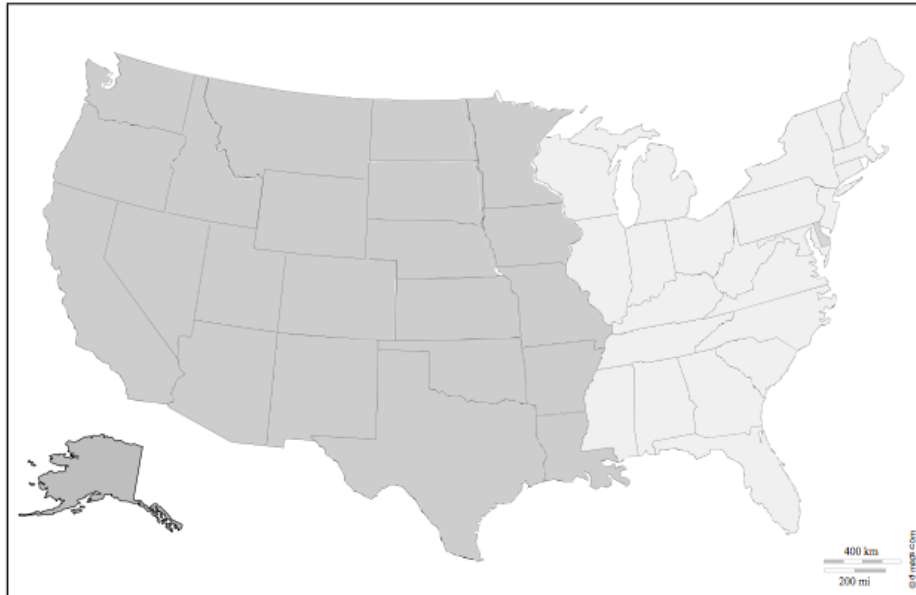
II. d Vocations

One province would have the advantage of one vocation office website, one message to potential candidates, one clearing house, one set of admissions standards, an end to interprovincial competition for the next generation of friars, and a national network of local contacts and communities of hospitality for those interested in our way of life. It would also be able to offer a generation of young men, who are enamored of options and highly resistant to confining boxes, a vast array of fraternal life settings and ministerial choices.

Addendum:

The model offers a certain degree of flexibility. All the provinces could choose to form and join the new entity at the same time, or the entity could emerge in stages, beginning with the ready and willing, and allowing the willing but unready (not to mention the ready but unwilling) to join later. The legal and financial complexities of bringing so many entities together under one corporate umbrella would be painstaking, time-consuming and expensive. On the plus side, the viability of this model is less vulnerable to one or the other province voting to opt out in 2017. As noted in the description of this model, if a few provinces chose to leave their “place at the table,” what would remain is a union of the willing and an overall reduction in the number of U.S. provinces—one of the signature goals of restructuring.

MODEL B: TWO PROVINCES—WEST - EAST



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

One of the models proposed for discussion by the 2013 Interprovincial Commission, Model B is geographically-based, using the Mississippi River as the dividing line between two new provincial entities. Although largely a merger of existing provinces, friars from the current central provinces who live and work in Alaska as well as in the “border” states of Missouri, Louisiana and Texas would be affiliated with the Western Province. The Eastern Province would include friars, friaries and ministry sites from the HN, IC, SJB, SH and ABVM east of the Mississippi, while the Western Province would include friars, friaries and ministry sites from ABVM, OLG, SB, SH and SJB west of the Mississippi. Needless to say, that a friar who is currently living and working on one side of the river should not preclude his choosing to become a member of the new entity on the other bank.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2015

Model B: Personnel Data for 2015

FRIARS	2015 Total Population		Active Under 65	Active 65 - 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirm, Non-assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE								
From ABVM	4		0	4	0		0	
From OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0 / 2
From SB	164		63	32	15		47	0 / 7
From SH	55		15	18	13		9	
From SJB	12		5	2	5		0	
Subtotal:	289		102	72	38		68	0 / 9
EASTERN PROVINCE								
From ABVM	104		18	26	20		38	0 / 2
From HN	294		100	71	53		57	3 / 10
From IC	124		34	30	26		28	3 / 3
From SH	142		40	31	33		36	0 / 2
From SJB	134		26	47	16		43	0 / 2
Subtotal:	798		218	204	147		200	6 / 19

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2025

Model B: Personnel Projections for 2025

	Estimated 2025 Population		Est. Active under 65	Est. Active 65 - 74	Est. Active 75 +		Est. Retired, Infirm, Non-assigned	Est. Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE	185		50	55	20		60	'x'
EASTERN PROVINCE	485		110	140	75		160	'x'

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entities

Model B: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/Work Force

PROVINCE	WESTERN						EASTERN					
Friars from:	ABVM	OLG	SB	SH	SJB	Subtotal	ABVM	HN	IC	SH	SJB	Subtotal
Total Population	4	54	164	55	12	289	104	294	124	142	134	798
Active Work Force	4	42	110	46	12	214	66	225	90	104	88	573

Model B: Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Categories by Percentage

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY	WESTERN		EASTERN	
I. A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"				
1. CHAP.	7		11	
2. EDUC.	5		13	
3. WORD	9		6	
4. WORLD	4		8	
5. DOM. MISS.	12		<1	
6. PROF.	4		<1	
7. PARISH	29		27	
8. SHRINE	2		11	
9. SOC.SERV.	5		2	
10. ARTS	3		1	
Subtotal A	80%		81%	
II. B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"				
1.FORM./VOC.	3		3	
2.MAJ.GUARD./ FRAT. SERV.	6		6	
3. FRAT. ADMIN.	8		7	
4. FRAT. HEALTH	3		3	
Subtotal B	20%		19%	

I.e Provincial Administration

Western Province: Currently, there are 12 friars working full time in their provincial curiae west of the Mississippi. Were Model B adopted, as many as 7 or 8 of them could be available for other assignments. With half as many friars in the Western Province as in the East, fewer full-time friars may be required for provincial administration.

Eastern Province: Currently, there are 18 friars working full time in their provincial curiae east of the Mississippi. Were Model B adopted, as many as 13 of them could be available for other assignments. However, given the sheer size of their friar population, the Eastern Province may need at least a few full-time regional definitors, especially in the first years of the new entity, in order to promote fraternity and mission within its various geographical regions.

I.f Finances

There could be significant savings from the reduction of seven provincial offices into two and from a reduction in brokerage fees through centralized investment management.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

Western Province: Approximately 35% of the friars presently living west of the Mississippi are 75 years of age or older. This would increase to 43% over the next decade. Currently, there are two O.F.M. retirement friaries within the borders of the new entity, no provincially-owned assisted living or skilled nursing care facilities, and various arrangements with non-O.F.M. facilities for assisted and skilled elder care for our brothers. It would need to be decided under which province's aegis SH's retirement house in Crowley, TX would fall and who would be responsible for the care of the senior friars who live there.

Eastern Province: The new entity would assume significant obligations for the care of our senior brothers. It would include the bulk of ABVM, SH and SJB provinces whose cadre of friars 75 and over now stands at 43% of their membership, a figure that would climb to 48% by 2025. There are 13 retirement communities, two assisted living facilities and one skilled nursing home under O.F.M. aegis east of the Mississippi, as well as various arrangements with non-O.F.M. facilities for assisted and skilled elder care for our brothers. While respecting the understandable desire of our senior friars to remain relatively undisturbed by the creation of any new entity, the varying policies and procedures regarding elder care of five different provinces would need to be standardized, complementarity of facilities maximized and redundancies reduced or eliminated.

1.h Formation

We assume that a minimum of four friars would be needed for each new entity's formation and vocation programs, and we estimate that three or four friars in the West and as many as 14 in the East currently in formation/vocation work could be available for reassignment. We also assume that each of the two provinces would maintain its own postulancy and post-novitiate programs and that both would share a common novitiate. Where postulancy and post-novitiate formation would take place would be a provincial decision, as would the location for theological/ministerial education. All seven U.S. provinces currently share a common novitiate. There is less unanimity when it comes to ministerial training sites. SB friars attend Franciscan School of Theology/Oceanside while OLG friars attend Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. SH, ABVM and SJB friars study at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, HN friars at Catholic University of America, and IC friars at various pontifical universities in Rome. For the sake of forming a critical mass of peers in post-novitiate ministerial formation, each new entity may need to settle on a single primary site.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

Western Province: Combining OLG, SB and those friars from ABVM, SH and SJB who choose to remain west of the Mississippi will broaden the leadership pool as well as the fraternal and ministerial options available to the friars of the current provinces. The inclusion of SH's presence in San Antonio into the new entity would unite under one provincial "roof" the pastoral care of the old missions currently entrusted to the friars of the U.S.

Eastern Province: The new entity with the greatest number of senior friars would be able to draw on the financial resources of five provinces to care for them. The seasoned curia personnel as well as the best administrative and financial practices of five provinces could prove to be an embarrassment of riches in the operation of the new entity. The existing geographic overlap of HN and IC in the east, as well as of ABVM, SH and SJB in the central states would challenge the friars of the new entity to think strategically and synergistically in their approach to fraternal life in mission within each region of the province.

What is less than an equitable distribution of friar resources in this model is the large numerical discrepancy between the Eastern and Western provinces with around 800 brothers in the east and 300 in the west.

II.b Fraternal Life

Western Province: The new entity would be able to offer the friars fraternities of various sizes in urban, suburban and rural settings as well as a rich multicultural, multilingual and even multinational diversity. The friars in the West already share a commitment to living simply, to recognizing and nurturing the vocation of lay friars, and to collegial decision-making. Every effort will need to be made to help friars from ABVM, SH and SJB living and working west of the Mississippi to feel welcome and included in a new entity comprised largely of friars from SB and OLG.

Eastern Province: Again, the new entity would offer an enormous variety of fraternal life settings, a mix of cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as the rich traditions of five different provinces. Those traditions and the stories in which they are often embedded are precious to the friars. The new entity will need to find ways to celebrate and share them. On the other hand, the friars of the new entity will be challenged to build their fraternal life not on past provincial identities, but on the Rule and Life that all friars share as their common patrimony from St. Francis.

III.c Franciscan Work

Western Province:

- The new entity would offer a wide range of ministerial options to the friars: parishes, retreat facilities, old mission sites, Native American missions, campus ministry opportunities, direct service to the poor as well as the opportunity to build on a rich tradition of nourishing the Franciscan intellectual tradition at FST and elsewhere.
- Bringing the Native American missions of the Southwest as well as Alaska under one provincial umbrella would provide an opportunity to renew and re-energize the friars' long-standing commitment to the indigenous peoples of the United States.
- Likewise, housing the friars' ministry to the old missions under a single provincial "roof" would encourage the development of a pastoral plan whereby the missions become instruments of evangelization to both "faithful" pilgrims and "secular" tourists. The canonization of Blessed Junipero Serra would challenge the friars to make the old mission sites not only monuments to the Franciscan missionary spirit of the past, but opportunities for Franciscan missionary evangelization in the present and future.
- Friars from OLG with an interest in retreat ministry would now have several options opened to them in the new entity. This could bring about a revitalization of what has been a ministerial gem of SB.

- The new entity might better coordinate ministry to Hispanic immigrants in the border states of CA, AZ, NM and TX.
- Because of significant growth in what some demographers refer to as the “New Sunbelt,” the Western Province might insert a new or renewed O.F.M. presence in expanding urban centers such as Houston, Denver and Salt Lake City.

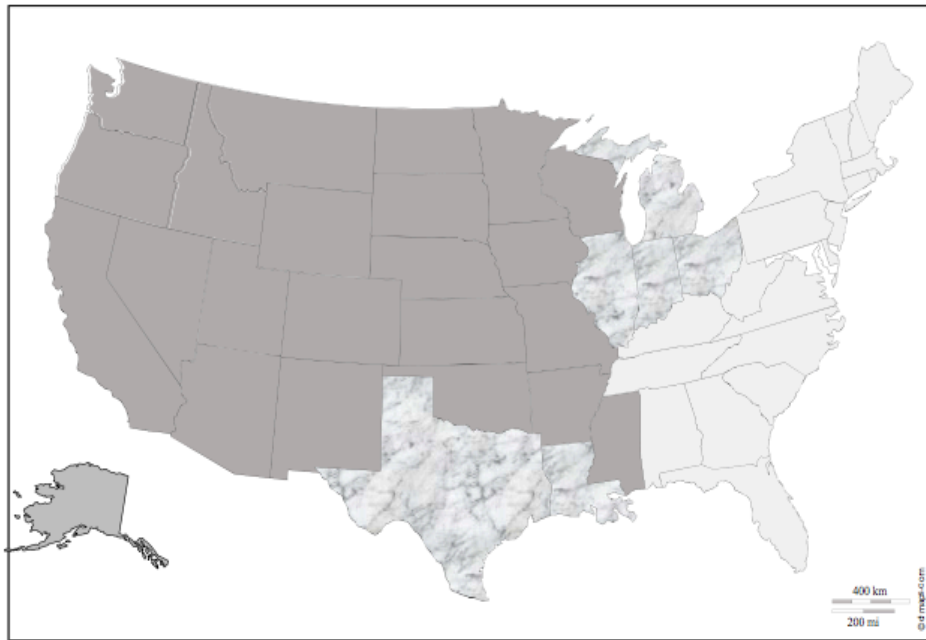
Eastern Province:

- The new entity would be option-rich in its variety of ministries. There are parishes of all sizes and descriptions, service churches and urban ministry centers, retreat facilities, direct service to the poor, media, ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities as well as to Eastern Rite Catholics, a shared commitment to the Franciscan intellectual tradition that includes corporate sponsorship of and individual friar involvement in several high schools, colleges, universities and schools of theology.
- The friars of the new entity would be challenged to reshape and refocus their ministerial energies on large, vital urban centers in the northeastern, north central and southeastern regions of the country and to develop a pastoral plan that would bring complementarity and synergy to Franciscan ministry in cities like New York City and Boston where two provinces have, in the past, been co-present but not necessarily coordinated in their efforts.
- The existence of large friaries in urban centers might encourage the friars of the new entity to establish regional friaries, fraternal and ministerial hubs in which friars who do not work at the same site could share a common life and out of which various kinds of Franciscan work could be performed.
- The Eastern Province would inherit from IC, SJB, SH and HN respectively, the pastoral care of missions in Central America and Jamaica, a ministry to Native Americans in northern Wisconsin and the assistance given to HN missionaries in Peru. This would provide the new entity with a sizable missionary “footprint” and help nurture the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation. Jamaica has the unique advantage of offering an overseas missionary opportunity to English-speaking friars who are not bi- or multi-lingual.
- The Eastern Province would be challenged both to polish its treasure-trove of current ministerial “jewels” as well as to extend our Franciscan presence in the southeast where the population in general and the Roman Catholic population in particular are growing rapidly. The Southeast is not only growing; it is growing more diverse and, in some areas, is becoming more urban. This is a fertile field for what friars do best.

II.d Vocations

Perhaps, the single biggest vocation recruitment tool is a vibrant fraternity doing vital work. Both new provinces would have such fraternities. Each would also be able to offer a generation of young men enamored of options a wide variety of locales, work and fraternal life settings from which to choose. The significant reduction in the number of provinces competing for vocations would allow for a more unified message and vocation outreach.

MODEL C: TWO PROVINCES—WEST-EAST



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

Model C would entail a straight-forward merger of four provinces—SB, OLG, ABVM and SH—to form a “Western” Province (the adjective would become quite elastic in the process) and of three provinces—SJB, IC and HN—to form an “Eastern Province.” The two new provinces would overlap in Texas, Louisiana, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2015

Model C: Personnel Data for 2015

PROVINCE	2015 Total Population		Active under 65	Active 65 – 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirmed, Non- assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE								
ABVM	108		18	30	20		38	0 / 2
OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0 / 2
SB	164		63	32	15		47	0 / 7
SH	197		55	49	46		45	0 / 2
Subtotal	523		155	127	88		142	0 / 13
EASTERN PROVINCE								
HN	294		100	71	53		57	3 / 10
IC	124		34	30	26		28	3 / 3
SJB	146		31	49	21		43	0 / 2
Subtotal	564		165	150	100		128	6 / 15

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2025

Model C: Personnel Projections for 2025

	2025 Estimated Population		Est. Active under 65	Est. Active 65- 74	Est. Active 75 +		Retired, Infirmed, Non- assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE	315		60	105	45		105	'X'
EASTERN PROVINCE	355		95	95	55		110	'X'

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entities

Model C: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/Work Force

PROVINCE	WESTERN					EASTERN			
Members	ABVM	OLG	SB	SH	Subtotal	HN	IC	SJB	Subtotal
Total Population	108	54	164	197	523	294	124	146	564
Active Work Force	70	40	110	150	370	225	90	100	415

Model C: 2015 Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Categories by Percentage

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY	WESTERN					EASTERN			
Members	ABVM	OLG	SB	SH		HN	IC	SJB	
I. A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"									
1. CHAP.	28	8	2	13		9	2	7	
2. EDUC.	8	3	8	8		21	0	9	
3. WORD	2	6	9	8		5	6	12	
4. WORLD	2	0	8	4		3	30	6	
5. DOM. MISS.	0	30	10	3		1	0	0	
6. PROF.	<1	0	5	3		<1	2	2	
7. PARISH	21	27	30	18		30	30	30	
8. SHRINE	0	0	3	14		15	5	<1	
9. SOC.SERV.	1	0	2	5		3	0	6	
10. ARTS	3	3	2	3		<1	0	1	
Subtotal A	66%	74%	79%	79%		87%	75%	76%	
II. B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"									
1.FORM./VOC.	1	3	6	2		2	6	5	
2.MAJ.GUARD./ FRAT. SERV.	17	7	3	7		3	6	9	
3. FRAT. ADMIN.	9	9	8	9		7	8	8	
4. FRAT. HEALTH	7	7	4	3		1	5	2	
Subtotal B	34%	26%	21%	21%		13%	25%	24%	

I.e Provincial Administration

Western Province: Currently, there are 16 friars working full time in the provincial curiae of ABVM, OLG, SB and SH . Were Model C adopted, as many as 9 of them could be available for other assignments. On the other hand, given the sheer geographical size and spread of a province that would span five time zones (including Alaska), there may be need for full-time regional provincial councilors who could be responsible for promoting fraternal life, ministerial planning and personnel issues within their regions. Another governance challenge for such a widespread entity would be the provincial chapter. Would an open chapter be feasible? If not, would reverting to chapters of ex-officio and elected delegates be unpopular with the friars of four provinces who have grown accustomed to more “democratic” and collegial decision-making at the highest level of provincial governance?

Eastern Province: Currently, there are 13 friars working full time in the provincial curiae of SJB, IC and HN. Were Model C adopted, as many as 8 of them could be available for other assignments. Again, both the geographic and demographic size of the new entity may require the services of full-time definitors.

I.f Finances

There could be significant savings from the reduction of seven provincial offices into two and from a reduction in brokerage fees through centralized investment management.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

Both new entities would assume significant obligations for the care of our senior brothers. The treasurers of the constitutive provinces of the new entities would need to determine whether or not there would be adequate financial resources resulting from the mergers to meet this challenge.

Western Province: In what would become the new entity in the “West”, there are now seven O.F.M. retirement communities. There are no provincially-owned assisted living or skilled nursing care facilities but there are established agreements with several facilities, most of which are run by other religious communities.

Eastern Province: In what would become the Eastern Province, there are now nine retirement communities, two assisted living and one skilled nursing facility under O.F.M. aegis, as well as various arrangements with non-O.F.M. facilities for assisted and skilled nursing care for our brothers. While respecting the understandable desire of our senior friars to remain relatively undisturbed by the creation of any new entity, the varying policies and procedures regarding elder care of three different provinces will need to be

standardized, complementarity of facilities maximized and redundancies reduced or eliminated.

1.h Formation

We assume that a minimum of four friars would be needed for each new entity's formation and vocation programs, and we estimate that as many as nine friars in the West and nine in the East currently in formation/vocation work could be available for reassignment. We also assume that each of the two provinces would maintain its own postulancy and post-novitiate programs and that they would continue to share a common novitiate. Where postulancy and post-novitiate formation would take place would be a decision of each new entity, as would the location for theological/ministerial education. Presently, priestly formation takes place in six different locations among the seven U.S. provinces: Franciscan School of Theology/Oceanside (SB), Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio (OLG), Catholic Theological Union in Chicago (ABVM, SH, SJB), Catholic University of America (HN) and various pontifical universities in Rome (IC). For the sake of forming a critical mass of peers in post-novitiate ministerial formation, each new entity may need to settle on a single primary site.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

Of all of the two, three or four-province models for reconfiguration presented here, Model C provides the most equitable distribution of our greatest resource: the friars themselves. It also divides the wealth of provincial cultures, strengths, traditions, "best practices," ministries, as well as the cadre of experienced leaders and administrators more or less evenly between the two new entities.

II.b Fraternal Life

Western Province: The new entity would be able to offer the friars fraternities of various-sizes in urban, suburban and rural settings, and a rich multicultural, multilingual, multi-topographical, multi-meteorological (think Chicago and San Diego in mid-February) and even multinational diversity. It would bring together younger friars from the four constituent provinces, many of whom already know each another from common novitiate and post-novitiate formation programs. The Western Province will face a challenge in bringing together friars who were shaped by four distinct provincial cultures and at least three distinct regional cultures, and who will be spread across the U.S. from San Francisco to Cleveland.

Eastern Province: The new entity will have the advantage of having most of its friars clustered in the Northeastern U.S., although Galveston, TX where SJB staffs a parish is a long way from Derry, NH, IC's northeastern-most friar community. As with the Western Province, the new entity in the east would offer an enormous variety of fraternal life

settings, a mix of cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as the rich traditions of three different provinces. Those traditions and the stories in which they often embedded are precious to the friars. The new entity will need to find ways to celebrate and share them. In some cases, they will also be challenged to seek reconciliation and healing for any past grievances, wounds and prejudices members of one province may have knowingly or unknowingly harbored and inflicted on friars from another province.

III.c Franciscan Work

Western Province:

- The new entity would offer a wide range of ministerial options to the friars: educational institutions, parishes of all sizes and descriptions, retreat facilities, old mission sites, urban ministry centers, the Franciscan Pilgrimages Program, Native American missions, campus ministry opportunities and direct service to the poor.
- The new province would have the opportunity to build on a rich tradition of nourishing the Franciscan intellectual tradition at O.F.M. sponsored institutions like Franciscan School of Theology, Catholic Theological Union, Quincy University, Padua High School, Hales High School and elsewhere.
- Bringing the friars' Native American missions in Alaska, Wisconsin and the Southwest under one provincial umbrella provides an opportunity to renew and re-energize the friars' long-standing commitment to the indigenous peoples of the United States.
- Likewise, housing the friars' ministry to the old missions under a single provincial "roof" would encourage the development of a pastoral plan whereby the missions become instruments of evangelization to both "faithful" pilgrims and "secular" tourists. The canonization of Blessed Junipero Serra would challenge the friars to make the old mission sites not only monuments to the Franciscan missionary spirit of the past, but opportunities for Franciscan missionary evangelization in the present and future.
- The new entity might better coordinate ministry to Hispanic immigrants in the border states of CA, AZ, NM and TX.
- Because of significant growth in what some demographers refer to as the "New Sunbelt," the Western Province would be challenged to insert a new O.F.M. presence in urban centers like Denver and Salt Lake City.

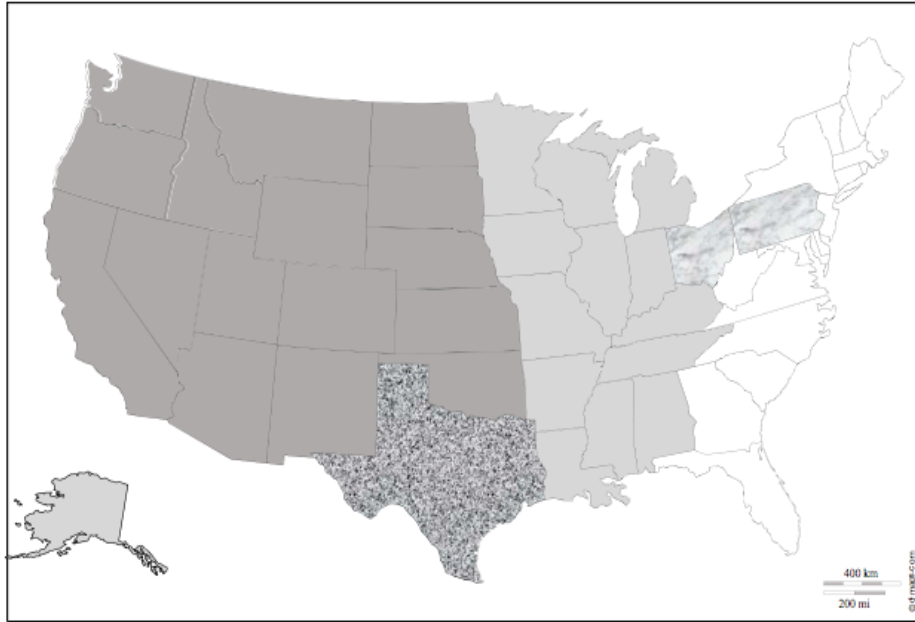
Eastern Province:

- The new entity would be option-rich in its variety of ministries including parishes, service churches and urban ministry centers, education, retreat facilities, foreign missions, direct service to the poor, media, and ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities.
- The friars of the new entity would be challenged to reshape and refocus their ministerial energies on large, vital urban centers and to develop a pastoral plan that would bring complementarity and synergy to Franciscan ministry in cities like New York City and Boston where two of the constituent provinces have, in the past, been co-present but not necessarily coordinated in their efforts.
- Corporate sponsorship of Catholic Theological Union, Roger Bacon High School, St. Bonaventure University and Siena College, as well as individual friar involvement in other academic institutions provide fora in which the Franciscan intellectual tradition could be nurtured in the new entity.
- The existence of large friaries in urban centers might encourage the friars of the new entity to establish regional friaries, fraternal and ministerial hubs in which friars who do not work in the same site can share a common life and out of which various kinds of Franciscan work may be performed.
- The Eastern Province would inherit from IC, SJB and HN respectively, the pastoral care of missions in Central America and Jamaica, and the assistance given to HN missionaries in Peru. This would provide the new entity with a sizable missionary “footprint” and help nurture the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation. Jamaica has the unique advantage of offering an overseas missionary opportunity to English-speaking friars who are not bi- or multi-lingual.
- The Eastern Province would be challenged to polish its treasure-trove of current ministerial “jewels,” and to continue to provide oases of ecclesial hospitality and reconciliation where the Word can be preached accessibly, the Eucharist celebrated joyously, and bridges between people of different races, cultures, lifestyles and means can be established or strengthened.
- The Eastern Province would also do well to extend our Franciscan presence in the Southeast where the population in general and the Roman Catholic population in particular are growing rapidly. The South is not only growing; it is growing more diverse and, in some areas, is becoming more urban. Cities like Charlotte, Atlanta, Orlando, Miami and Houston are fertile fields for what friars do best.

II.d Vocations

Perhaps, the single biggest vocation recruitment tool is a vibrant fraternity doing vital work. Both new provinces would have such fraternities. Each would also be able to offer a generation of young men enamored of options a wide variety of locales, work and fraternal life settings from which to choose. The significant reduction in the number of provinces competing for vocations in the same region would allow for a more unified message and vocation outreach. Each of the two entities would have “access” to parts of the country where the Catholic population is growing. Each would also have a ministry to and regular contact with young people through campus ministry centers and in their respective corporately-sponsored secondary and higher educational institutions.

MODEL D: THREE PROVINCES—WEST-CENTRAL-EAST



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

One of the three models of the 2013 Interprovincial Commission, Model D proposes a straightforward merger of SB and OLG into a Western Province; ABVM, SH and SJB into a Central Province; and IC and HN into an Eastern Province. The model recognizes certain regional and cultural affinities of the friars in the Southwest, as well as the history of friars from different provinces in central and eastern states living and working in the same region, sometimes in the same city and, in a few instances, within walking distance of each other.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2015

Model D: Personnel Data for 2015

PROVINCE	2015 Total Population		Active under 65	Active 65 - 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirm, Non-assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE								
OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0 / 7
SB	164		63	32	15		47	0 / 2
Subtotal	218		82	48	20		59	0 / 9
CENTRAL PROVINCE								
ABVM	108		18	30	20		38	0 / 2
SH	197		55	49	46		45	0 / 2
SJB	146		31	49	21		43	0 / 2
Subtotal	451		104	128	87		126	0 / 6
EASTERN PROVINCE								
HN	294		100	71	53		57	3 / 10
IC	124		34	30	26		28	3 / 3
Subtotal	418		134	101	79		85	6 / 13

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2025

Model D: Personnel Projections for 2025

PROVINCE	Estimated 2025 Population		Est. Active under 65	Est. Active 65 - 74	Est. Active 75 +		Est. Retired, Infirm, Non-assigned	Est. Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE	145		40	50	15		40	'x'
CENTRAL PROVINCE	260		35	75	45		105	'x'
EASTERN PROVINCE	265		80	75	40		70	'x'

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entities

Model D: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/Work Force

PROVINCE	WESTERN			CENTRAL				EASTERN		
Members	OLG	SB	Subtotal	ABVM	SH	SJB	Subtotal	HN	IC	Subtotal
Total Population	54	164	218	108	197	146	451	294	124	418
Active Work Force	40	110	150	70	150	100	320	225	90	315

Model D: 2015 Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Categories by Percentage

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY	WESTERN		CENTRAL				EASTERN	
Members	OLG	SB	ABVM	SH	SJB		HN	IC
I. A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"								
1. CHAP.	8	2	28	13	7		9	2
2. EDUC.	3	8	8	8	9		21	0
3. WORD	6	9	2	8	12		5	6
4. WORLD	0	8	2	4	6		3	30
5.DOM.MISS.	30	10	0	3	0		1	0
6. PROF.	0	5	<1	3	2		<1	2
7. PARISH	27	30	21	18	30		30	30
8. SHRINE	0	3	0	14	<1		15	5
9. SOC.SERV.	0	2	1	5	6		3	0
10. ARTS	3	2	3	3	1		<1	0
Subtotal A	74%	79%	66%	79%	76%		87%	75%
II. B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"								
1. FORM./VOC.	3	6	1	2	5		2	6
2.MAJ.GUARD./ FRAT. SERV.	7	3	17	7	9		3	6
3. FRAT. ADMIN.	9	8	9	9	8		7	8
4. FRAT. HEALTH	7	4	7	3	2		1	5
Subtotal B	26%	21%	34%	21%	24%		13%	25%

I.e Provincial Administration

Western Province: Currently, there are eight friars working full time in the provincial curiae of OLG and SB. Were Model D adopted, three of them could be available for other assignments. Numerically, the Western Province would be the smallest O.F.M. entity in the U.S. and may require fewer full-time friars in provincial administration than either the Central or Eastern Province.

Central Province: Currently, there are 12 friars working full time in the provincial curiae of ABVM, SH and SJB. Were Model D adopted, the new province may gain as many as seven brothers for other work assignments as a result of a merger.

Eastern Province: Currently, there are 10 friars working full time in the provincial curiae of IC and HN. Were Model D adopted, five of them could be available for other assignments.

I.f Finances

There could be significant savings from the reduction of seven provincial offices into three and from a reduction in brokerage fees through centralized investment management within each of the new entities.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

Western Province: As it stands now, there would be one O.F.M. retirement house under the aegis of the new entity, no provincially-owned assisted living or skilled nursing care facilities, and established agreements with several elder care facilities, most of which are run by other religious communities.

Central Province: The entity in the U.S. with the highest percentage of friars 75 years and older in its membership would assume significant obligations for the care of our senior brothers. The treasurers of the constitutive provinces of the new entity would need to determine whether or not there would be adequate financial resources resulting from the merger to meet this challenge. There are now 10 retirement communities and no O.F.M.-“owned and operated” assisted living or skilled nursing home facilities in SJB, SH and ABVM. These entities have various arrangements with non-O.F.M. facilities for the health care needs of our senior brothers who are infirm.

Eastern Province: Currently, between IC and HN, there are five retirement fraternities, as well as two assisted and one skilled nursing facility. Cooperation between the two provinces has already begun in the arena of senior health care. With the exception of the St. Petersburg-Clearwater area of Florida, there do not seem to be significant regional

redundancies of elder care facilities between the two provinces. Complementarity of facilities would need to be maximized.

1.h Formation

We assume that a minimum of four friars would be needed for each new entity's formation and vocation programs, and we estimate that two friars in the West, eight in the Midwest and three in the East currently in formation/vocation work could be available for reassignment. We also assume that each of the three provinces would maintain its own postulancy and post-novitiate programs; and that they would share a common novitiate. Where postulancy and post-novitiate formation would take place would be a provincial decision, as would the location for theological/ministerial education. ABVM, SH and SJB already share a common post-novitiate/ministerial formation program. HN and IC, while maintaining distinct postulancies, have moved toward greater cooperation in their pre-novitiate program. However, friars in formation to ministry from OLG and SB currently pursue their studies at two different theological centers, as do friars from IC and HN. In order to provide a critical mass of peers in post-novitiate formation, both the Western and Eastern Provinces might need to settle on a single site for their respective entities.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

Western Province: Uniting OLG and SB broadens the leadership pool and the variety of ministries for both provinces. Existing cooperation in their formation programs, similar lifestyles, a shared history of service to Native Americans, as well as living and working together in a region of the United States redolent with Hispanic culture hold the promise of forming a cohesive and sustainable union.

Central Province: The entity with the highest percentage of senior friars would be able to draw on the financial resources of three provinces to care for them and, as noted above, would gain as many as 15 brothers for new assignments as a result of a merger. ABVM, SH and SJB are blessed with highly capable friars in their provincial curiae, a definite plus for the administration of the new entity. They share certain cultural affinities and have a proven track record of cooperation, especially in the area of formation, which could lay a solid foundation for the new province.

Eastern Province: IC and HN are the two provinces in the U.S. with the most extensive geographic overlap. Indeed, one curia is a mere 15-minute subway ride from the other. They have a joint fraternal and ministerial presence in two of the major cities on the east coast—New York and Boston. A merger holds the possibility of capitalizing on their complementarity of fraternal and ministerial resources.

II.b Fraternal Life

Western Province: The new entity would be able to offer the friars fraternities of various-sizes in urban, suburban and rural settings as well as a rich multicultural, multilingual and even multinational diversity. The friars in the West already share a commitment to living simply and could support one another in maintaining that commitment. The friars of SB and OLG share a tradition of collegial decision-making which could easily be sustained and enhanced in a new entity whose size in numbers by 2025 would be close to “the rule of 150,” considered by some sociologists to be ideal for group relationality and cohesion.

Central Province: For 20 years, friars from ABVM, SH and SJB have lived and studied together in a jointly sponsored post-novitiate formation program. Many of the younger friars from the three provinces already know one another. Many more friars, particularly from ABVM and SJB, got to know one another from an extensive conversation that explored options for greater cooperation and the possibility of a merger. So, bringing the three provinces together into a single entity would not be a union of strangers. It would, however, have its fraternal challenges. Reconciling distinct provincial cultures would call the brothers to a deeper level of Franciscan identity.

Eastern Province: The new entity would offer the friars a wide variety of fraternal life settings. Since the two provinces involved in the merger already live and work in relative proximity to each other, there would be a minimum of geographical dislocation for the friars. Many friars from the two provinces already know each other and, in some instances, have worked and even lived together. They also share common historical roots. Both provinces have a well-deserved reputation for hospitality and recognize the importance of a good table in promoting fraternal life. The younger friars from IC who have studied in Rome could encourage an expansive and international sense of Franciscan brotherhood in the new entity. HN’s higher percentage of lay brothers under the age of 60 would offer the hope of highlighting and enhancing a vocation that is absolutely essential to our Franciscan identity as a fraternity-in-mission.

III.c Franciscan Work

Western Province:

- The new entity would offer a wide range of ministerial options to the friars: urban, suburban and rural parishes, multicultural ministry, retreat facilities, old mission sites, Native American missions, campus ministry opportunities, direct service to the poor as well as the opportunity to build on a rich tradition of nourishing the Franciscan intellectual tradition at FST and elsewhere.
- Bringing the friars’ Native American missions in Alaska and the Southwest under one provincial umbrella provides an opportunity to renew and re-energize the friars’ long-standing commitment to the indigenous peoples of the United States.

- Friars from the OLG with an interest in retreat ministry would now have several options opened to them in the new entity. This could bring about a revitalization of what has been a ministerial gem of SB.
- The new entity might better coordinate ministry to immigrants in the border states of CA, AZ, NM and TX.
- Because of significant growth in population and diversity in what some demographers refer to as the “New Sunbelt,” the Western Province might explore the possibility of re-establishing an O.F.M. presence in Denver or Salt Lake City.

Central Province:

- The new entity would be option-rich in its variety of ministries. There are parishes of all sizes and descriptions; a downtown service church in one of the most vibrant cities in North America; direct service to the poor; retreat facilities; foreign and domestic missions; African-American ministry; Franciscan Media; the Franciscan Pilgrimages Program; the fine arts; ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities as well as to Eastern Rite Catholics; a shared commitment to the Franciscan intellectual tradition that includes corporate sponsorship of and individual friar involvement in three high schools, a university and several schools of theology.
- The Central Province would inherit the pastoral care of SJB’s mission in Jamaica. Coupled with SH’s long history of and present involvement in missionary outreach, both foreign and domestic, the new entity holds the promise of re-emphasizing the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation. Jamaica has the unique advantage of offering a missionary opportunity to English-speaking friars who are not bi- or multi-lingual.
- The founding provinces of the new entity already have significant footholds in the southern U.S. which is becoming both more populous and more diverse. The friars of the Central Province might explore the possibility of expanding their presence in Texas, especially in the fast growing Houston area.

Eastern Province:

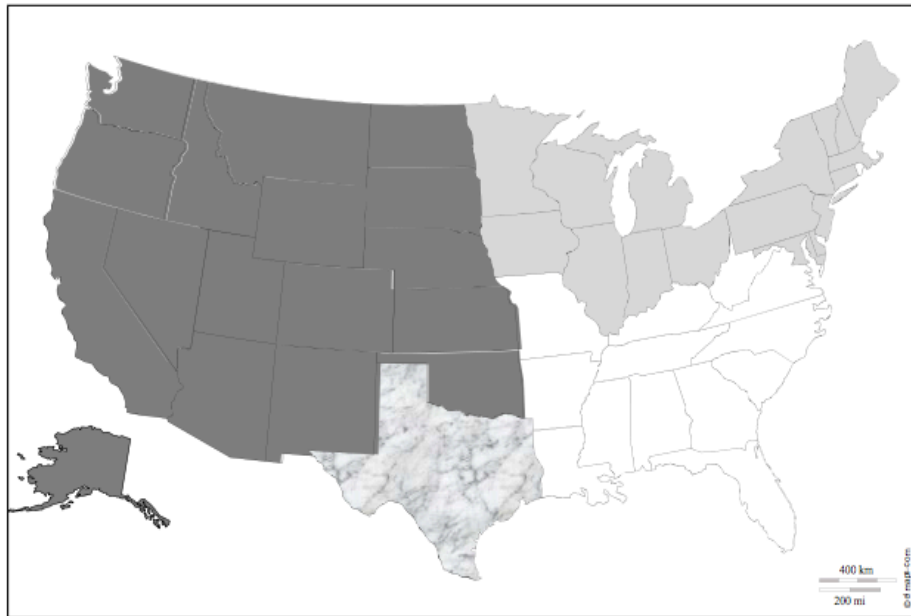
- The ministerial opportunities for the friars of IC and HN would be expanded by a merger, with options that include urban, suburban and multi-cultural parishes; service churches; direct service to the poor; retreat facilities; foreign missions; ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities; as well as corporate sponsorship of and individual friar involvement in educational institutions at all levels.

- The friars of the new entity would be challenged to bring complementarity and synergy to Franciscan ministry in New York City and Boston where the two founding provinces have, in the past, been co-present but not necessarily coordinated in their efforts.
- The existence of large friaries in urban centers within the new entity might encourage the friars to establish regional friaries, fraternal and ministerial hubs in which brothers who may not work together can share a common life and out of which various kinds of Franciscan work may be performed.
- Corporate sponsorship of St. Bonaventure University, which was established by the “founding friar” of IC, and Siena College as well as individual friar involvement in other academic institutions provide fora in which the Franciscan intellectual tradition would continue to be nurtured in the new entity.
- The Eastern Province would inherit IC’s mission to Central America and the support of HN’s friars in Peru. Not only might this highlight the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation; it might also provide a Spanish-language immersion experience for friars preparing for ministry to the fastest growing and soon to be majority ethnic group in the U.S. Catholic Church.
- The Eastern Province would be challenged to expand our Franciscan presence in the thriving urban centers of the southeastern U.S. where the population in general and the Roman Catholic population in particular is growing rapidly.

II.d Vocations

Perhaps, the single biggest vocation recruitment tool is a vibrant fraternity doing vital work. All three provinces would have the means to nurture such fraternities. Each would also be able to offer a generation of young men enamored of options a wide variety of locales, work and fraternal life settings from which to choose. With a three-way longitudinal division of the U. S. no province in this model would be cut off from vocation prospects in areas of the country where the Church is growing. The significant reduction in the number of provinces would bring about a greater unity in vocation outreach and reduce competition for vocations within the same geographic region.

MODEL E: THREE PROVINCES—WEST-NORTH-SOUTH



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

A variation on the second model which the 2013 Interprovincial Commission proposed for discussion, Model E would create a Western Province that would merge SB and OLG as well as include SH's sites in Alaska, Crowley and San Antonio; a Northern Province consisting of the friars, friaries and ministry sites from Wisconsin to New Hampshire, and from Boston to Washington, DC; and a Southern Province that would extend from Missouri to Virginia and from East Texas to Florida. Obviously the model would involve more than a series of mergers, and would be a significant reconfiguration of the friars of at least four of the seven provinces.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2015

Model E: Personnel Data for 2015

FRIARS	2015 Total Population		Active under 65	Active 65 - 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirmed, Non- assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE								
From OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0 / 7
From SB	164		63	32	15		47	0 / 2
From SH	19		6	4	7		2	
Subtotal	237		88	52	27		61	0 / 9
NORTHERN PROVINCE								
From ABVM	100		18	22	20		38	0 / 2
From HN	238		84	58	42		41	3 / 10
From IC	119		33	30	24		26	3 / 3
From SH	140		39	31	31		37	0 / 2
From SJB	130		26	44	15		43	0 / 2
Subtotal	727		200	185	132		185	6 / 19
SOUTHERN PROVINCE								
From ABMV	8		0	8	0		0	0 / 0
From HN	55		16	12	11		16	0 / 0
From IC	5		1	0	2		2	0 / 0
From SH	37		10	14	7		6	0 / 0
From SJB	16		5	5	6		0	0 / 0
Subtotal	121		32	39	26		24	0 / 0

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2025

[Since creating a new Southern Province would involve a significant redistribution of friars in the United States, we cannot hazard a guess as to the friar population of the proposed entities in 2025.]

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entities

Model E: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/ Work Force

PROVINCE		WESTERN		NORTHERN		SOUTHERN
2015 Total Population		237		727		121
Active Work Force		167		517		97

Model E: 2015 Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Categories by Percentage

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY		WESTERN		NORTHERN		SOUTHERN
I. A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"						
1. CHAP.		5		11		13
2. EDUC.		6		13		3
3. WORD		9		7		7
4. WORLD		7		9		2
5. DOM. MISS.		15		<1		0
6. PROF.		2		2		1
7. PARISH		30		23		48
8. SHRINE		2		11		0
9. SOC.SERV.		2		2		6
10. ARTS		3		1		1
Subtotal A		81%		79%		81%
II. B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"						
1.FORM./VOC.		4		3		0
2.MAJ.GUARD./ FRAT. SERV.		5		5		12
3. FRAT. ADMIN.		7		10		6
4. FRAT. HEALTH		3		3		1
Subtotal B		19%		21%		19%

I.e Provincial Administration

Western Province: Currently, there are eight friars working full time in the provincial curiae of OLG and SB. Were Model E adopted, three of them could be available for other assignments.

Northern Province: Currently, there are 18 friars working full time in the provincial curiae of ABVM, SJB, IC and HN. Were Model E adopted, the new province may gain as many as 13 brothers for other work assignments as a result of a merger.

Southern Province: Since this would be an entirely new entity, there would be no personnel gain for external ministry. While the geographic spread of the new entity would be extensive, it would contain the fewest number of friars of the three proposed provinces. As is currently the case with OLG, the new entity may not require more than a handful of friars working full time in provincial administration.

I.f Finances

It is very difficult even to hazard a guess at what the financial picture of Model E might look like.

No doubt, in both Western and Northern Province there would be cost savings from reducing the number of provincial administrations and houses of formation as well as reducing brokerage fees with centralized investment management.

Presumably, the creation of an entirely new entity in the South would be a project of the U.S. sub-conference of the ESC. Are there sufficient financial resources in the combined assets of the existing U.S. provinces to cover the start-up costs of the new entity, endow it and provide for the retirement and health care needs of several hundred senior friars in the U.S.? Answering that question will require the combined wisdom of the provincial treasurers and the external financial experts who advise them.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

Western Province: Currently, there are two O.F.M. retirement houses within the borders of the new entity, no provincially-owned assisted living or skilled nursing care fraternities, and established agreements with several elder care facilities, most of which are run by other religious communities.

Northern Province: With the highest concentration of senior friars in the north, would the combined resources of the former ABVM, SH, SJB, IC and HN provinces be sufficient to care for them? That is by no means an insignificant question raised by this model. There

are currently 13 retirement fraternities, two assisted living friaries and one skilled nursing facility within the borders of the new entity.

Southern Province: To which province would the retirement friaries in St. Petersburg and Clearwater, FL, currently under the aegis of HN and IC, ultimately belong—the Northern or the Southern? A large facility like St. Anthony Friary in St. Petersburg not only functions as a home for HN’s retirees. It has also served simultaneously as a regional friary for brothers doing full-time external ministry; a sometime retreat facility; a vacation house; and a meeting place for regional fraternal gatherings, SPUTY support groups and interprovincial events. Would it best serve the Northern Province or the Southern Province? And if the retired friars currently living in Florida become members of the new entity in the south, could the financial resources of the province support them? Most, if not all, the friars in the U.S. would agree that the reconfiguration of the seven provinces should be particularly attentive to the care of our senior friars and disrupt them as little as possible. Without changing the address of our retirees in Florida, would the transfer of their “allegiance” to a new province in the South constitute a significant disruption?

1.h Formation

We assume that a minimum of four friars would be needed for each new entity’s formation and vocation programs, and we estimate that two friars in the West and nine friars in the North currently in formation/vocation work could be available for reassignment. We also assume that each of the three provinces would maintain its own postulancy and that they would share a common novitiate. Where post-novitiate formation would take place would be a provincial decision, as would the location for theological and ministerial education.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

Western Province: The union of SB and OLG and the inclusion of SH friars in San Antonio would broaden the leadership pool and the variety of ministries for the friars of the new entity. The inclusion of SH’s presence in San Antonio into the new entity would unite under one provincial “roof” the pastoral care of the old missions currently entrusted to the friars of the U.S. A shared commitment to serving the poor and living simply, a history of service to Native Americans, as well as living and working together in a region of the United States redolent with Hispanic culture hold the promise of forming a cohesive and sustainable union.

Northern Province: The entity with the highest percentage of senior friars would be able to draw on the financial resources of five of the existing provinces to care for them and, as noted above, would gain as many as 22 brothers for new assignments as a result of a merger. Each of the existing provinces is blessed with highly capable friars in their

provincial curiae, a definite plus for the administration of the new entity. They are also blessed with long and distinguished histories that contain a rich legacy of ministry to the immigrant populations of the U.S., particularly in the cities of the Great Lakes and the Northeast. This shared legacy could be the basis for a renewed evangelization of some of the largest metropolitan areas in North America.

Southern Province: The very creation of an entity in the South would be an enormous and potentially exciting undertaking for the friars in the U.S., especially for the northern-based provinces that have an established presence there. It would require the pooling of financial and personnel resources of all the existing provinces, and would rely on the faith and generosity of brothers currently living and serving in the North to move south in response to major U.S. demographic shifts, unmet pastoral needs, and the lure of a fresh initiative in balmy climes (!) and in the service of God's people. Perhaps, the new southern entity could begin as a dependent custody of the Northern Province until such a time as it could stand on its own.

II.b Fraternal Life

Western Province: The new entity would be able to offer the friars fraternities of various-sizes in urban, suburban and rural settings as well as a rich multicultural, multilingual and even multinational diversity. The friars in the West already share a commitment to living simply and could support one another in maintaining that commitment. Their tradition of collegial decision-making could easily be sustained and enhanced in a new entity whose size in numbers by 2025 would be close to "the rule of 150," considered by some sociologists to be ideal for group relationality and cohesion. As with any of the models involving a union of SB, OLG and the SH friars in San Antonio, the large geographic expanse of the new entity will require a commitment on the part of the friars to come together and get to know one another.

Northern Province: The new entity would be rich in fraternal life options. Many of the friars already know each other from common formation programs, interprovincial meetings and events, and from living and working in each other's backyards. This would not be a union of complete strangers, although friars on the East Coast may be less familiar with friars from the Great Lakes region than they might be with each other. The new entity would have the advantage of the highest O.F.M. population density of any region of the country which would foster fraternal gatherings. The new entity would, however, have its fraternal challenges. Reconciling five distinct provincial cultures would call the brothers to a deeper level of Franciscan identity and fraternal love as well as encourage them to be ministers of reconciliation to one another.

Southern Province: The friars of the new entity will have the chance to forge their own provincial identity. Given the wide swath of real estate which the Southern Province would encompass and the multiplicity of their provincial origins, the friars in the new entity would have to work intentionally and diligently to build fraternal relations beyond the front doors of their friaries, just as our foreign missionaries did in the past. Since, at least initially, the new province will be populated by friars from the North and West who

were willing to move in order to live and work with our brothers in the South, the fraternal life of the province would be blessed with a reservoir of generosity, disponibility and openness to change.

III.c Franciscan Work

Western Province:

- The new entity would offer a wide range of ministerial options to the friars: parishes, retreat facilities, old mission sites, Native American missions, campus ministry opportunities, direct service to the poor as well as the opportunity to build on a rich tradition of nourishing the Franciscan intellectual tradition at FST and elsewhere.
- Bringing all but one of the friars' Native American missions under a single provincial umbrella provides an opportunity to renew and re-energize the friars' long-standing commitment to the indigenous peoples of the United States.
- Likewise, housing the friars' ministry to the old missions under a single provincial "roof" would encourage the development of a pastoral plan whereby the missions become instruments of evangelization to both "faithful" pilgrims and "secular" tourists. The canonization of Blessed Junipero Serra would challenge the friars to make the old mission sites not only monuments to the Franciscan missionary spirit of the past, but opportunities for Franciscan missionary evangelization in the present and future.
- The new entity might better coordinate ministry to Hispanic immigrants in the border states of CA, AZ, NM and TX.
- Because of significant growth in population and diversity in what some demographers refer to as the "New Sunbelt," the Western Province might explore the possibility of re-establishing an O.F.M. presence in Denver and Santa Fe and expanding our presence in San Antonio.

Northern Province:

- The new entity would be option-rich in its variety of ministries. There are parishes of all sizes and descriptions; downtown service churches; direct service to the poor; retreat facilities; foreign and domestic missions; African-American ministry; Franciscan Media; the Franciscan Pilgrimages Program; ministry to specific ethnic and linguistic communities as well as to Eastern Rite Catholics; and a shared commitment to the Franciscan intellectual tradition that includes corporate sponsorship of and individual friar involvement in several high schools, colleges, universities and schools of theology.

- The friars of the new entity would be challenged to reshape and refocus their ministerial energies on large urban centers in the northeast and north central regions of the country. In his “Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis begins to articulate a vision for urban ministry: “What is called for is an evangelization capable of ... reach[ing] the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed, bringing the word of Jesus to the inmost soul of our cities. Cities are multicultural ... Various subcultures exist side by side, and often practice segregation and violence. The Church is called to be at the service of a difficult dialogue.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 74). The friars of the North already have vital urban ministry centers in which such a dialogue can take place and where imaginative pre-evangelization programs could be developed to sow the seeds of the gospel in “the secular city,” just as, in the past and present, they have been oases of hospitality and reconciliation.
- No other province in the U.S. would be the corporate sponsor of a half dozen educational institutions. The Northern Province would be a key player in promoting the Franciscan intellectual tradition. It would have the opportunity to better coordinate the friars’ ministry of education, to develop synergistic relationships between its corporately sponsored high schools and colleges, and to develop the potential for future vocations inherent in regular, sustained friar contact with young people in the schools.
- The existence of large friaries in urban centers might encourage the friars of the new entity to establish regional friaries, fraternal and ministerial hubs in which friars who may not work together can share a common life and out of which various kinds of Franciscan work may be performed.
- Presumably, the Northern Province would inherit from SH, IC, SJB and HN respectively, the pastoral care of the Native American mission in Ashland, WI, the overseas missions in Central America and Jamaica, and the assistance given to HN’s friars in Peru, giving the new entity a sizable missionary “footprint” and highlighting the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation. Jamaica has the unique advantage of offering a missionary opportunity to English-speaking friars who are not bi- or multi-lingual, and the mission in Central America could provide a Spanish-language immersion experience for friars preparing for ministry to the fastest growing and soon to be majority ethnic group in the U.S. Catholic Church.

The Southern Province:

- The investment of personnel and financial resources in the creation of a new province in the South would be consistent with our past provincial histories of moving with the waves of immigration in order to serve the People of God. The South is the fastest growing region in the U.S. With the highest concentration of friars in the northeastern quadrant of the country, O.F.M. demographics are out of step with national demographic trends. Whether or not a new province is erected

in the South, this discrepancy will need to be addressed in the revitalization of Franciscan ministry in the U.S.

- Currently, the friars working in the South are serving in parishes, education, campus ministry centers, retreat centers, hospital chaplaincy, direct service to the poor, and multicultural ministry. Presumably, the friars of the new province would develop their own ministerial profile. They would be challenged to respond to the pastoral needs of God's people in a distinctly Franciscan way by emphasizing the evangelical witness of their fraternal life and by creating regional friaries in which and out of which both ordained and lay friars could live and work.
- The Southern Province might focus fresh energy on burgeoning urban centers like Charlotte, Atlanta, Tampa, Orlando, Miami and Houston.
- Since much would be new, the whole province would have a keen sense of being "on mission."

II. d Vocations

Perhaps, the single biggest vocation recruitment tool is a vibrant fraternity doing vital work. All three provinces would have the means to nurture such fraternities. All the provinces, especially those in the North and West, would be able to offer a generation of young men enamored of options a wide variety of locales, work and fraternal life settings from which to choose.

Regionalization of provinces may be more attractive to younger candidates with few siblings who do not wish to live on the other side of the country from their family of origin.

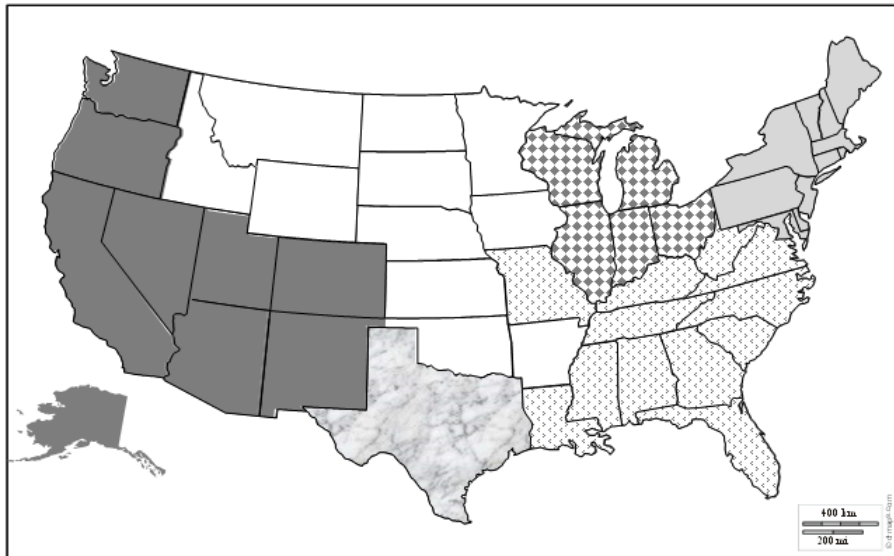
The multicultural fraternities of the Western Province can attract multicultural candidates to our way of life by offering a critical mass of friars from similar backgrounds. Good weather, dramatic topography and simple living cannot be discounted as attractions to potential candidates. The Western Province has a high concentration of both Hispanic and Asian Catholics from which Franciscan vocations have come, a trend that will hopefully continue. On the other hand, the anti-immigrant sentiment enshrined in post-911 laws has had a negative impact on vocation recruitment, particularly in this region of the U.S.

The Northern Province has a potent vocation recruitment tool in its strong presence in vibrant, populous and diverse magnet cities with large Catholic populations like Chicago, New York and Boston.

The Southern Province would have the distinct advantage of working in a part of the country where parishes are opening rather than closing, the Church is growing rapidly, the culture is less secular, church attendance is more regular, and religious commitment is

mainstream. This, coupled with its campus ministry centers at secular universities, may give a new and fragile entity in the South a much-needed recruitment advantage. The significant reduction in the number of provinces would bring about a greater unity in vocation outreach and reduce competition for vocations within the same geographic region.

MODEL F: FOUR PROVINCES—WEST – NORTH CENTRAL - NORTHEAST - SOUTH



I. Considerations of Restructuring

I.a Description

Perhaps, even more so than the previous models, Model F is something of a “thought-experiment.” It would move beyond mergers of existing provinces and involve a major re-imagining of the friars’ presence in the U.S. The model is built on three premises. First, friars place a high premium on fraternal relations, which is very good news for a group of men who are inspired by the fraternal vision of St. Francis. Second, despite the claims of Facebook devotees that they have several hundred “friends,” some social scientists assert that human beings can maintain only a limited number of meaningful relationships and that group cohesion depends on respecting that limit. (The cross-cultural research of British anthropologist Robin Dunbar sets the number at around 150.) Third, the friars’ presence in the U.S. tends to be clustered, with one-third of the brothers living in three states (California, Illinois and New York) and two-thirds of them living in a dozen major cities.

With these considerations in mind, Model F proposes four new entities, three of which capitalize on existing concentrations of friars in the southwestern, north central and northeastern portions of the country and one of which would require a new missionary focus on the southern region of the U.S. The Western Province would extend from San Francisco to San Antonio with a Native American mission in Alaska. The North Central Province would extend from the Mississippi River to the western border of Pennsylvania and northward to the Great Lakes. The Northeastern Province would include New England as well as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. The

Southern Province would extend from East Texas to Florida and from Missouri to Virginia.

Among other factors, the viability of this model would depend on the generosity of friars willing to relocate to address the evangelical and pastoral needs of the southern U.S. and on the establishment of a national, interprovincial “superfund” for the care of our elder retired and infirm brothers.

I.b Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2015

Model E: Personnel Data for 2015

FRIARS	2015 Total Population		Active under 65	Active 65 – 74	Active 75 +		Retired, Infirm, Non- assigned	Novices/ Simply Professed
WESTERN PROVINCE								
From OLG	54		19	16	5		12	0 / 7
From SB	164		63	32	15		47	0 / 2
From SH	19		6	4	7		2	
Subtotal	237		88	52	27		61	0 / 9
NORTHERN PROVINCE								
From ABVM	100		18	22	20		38	0 / 2
From HN	238		84	58	42		41	3 / 10
From IC	119		33	30	24		26	3 / 3
From SH	140		39	31	31		37	0 / 2
From SJB	130		26	44	15		43	0 / 2
Subtotal	727		200	185	132		185	6 / 19
SOUTHERN PROVINCE								
From ABMV	8		0	8	0		0	0 / 0
From HN	55		16	12	11		16	0 / 0
From IC	5		1	0	2		2	0 / 0
From SH	37		10	14	7		6	0 / 0
From SJB	16		5	5	6		0	0 / 0
Subtotal	121		32	39	26		24	0 / 0

I.c Estimated Friar Population within the Proposed Entities in 2025

[Since creating a new Southern Province would involve a significant redistribution of friars in the United States, we cannot hazard a guess as to the friar population of the proposed entities in 2025.]

I.d Current Ministerial Assignment Distribution within the Proposed Entities

Model F: 2015 Population and Active Ministry/ Work Force

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY	WESTERN	NORTH CENTRAL	NORTHEAST	SOUTHERN
2015 Total Population	237	359	368	121
Active Work Force	167	235	282	97

Model F: 2015 Active Ministry/ Work Force Profile in Work Categories
by Percentage

PROVINCE/ CATEGORY	WEST	NORTH CENTRAL	NORTHEAST	SOUTH
I. A. "EXTERNAL MINISTRY"				
1. CHAP.	5	18	7	14
2. EDUC.	6	10	15	3
3. WORD	9	7	5	7
4. WORLD	7	5	12	0
5.FOR. MISS.	15	<1	1	0
6. PROF.	2	3	1	1
7. PARISH	30	17	28	48
8. SHRINE	2	10	12	0
9. SOC.SERV.	2	3	2	6
10. ARTS	3	2	1	1
Subtotal A	81%	75%	84%	80%
II. B. "INTERNAL MINISTRY"				
1.FORM./VOC.	4	3	3	0
2.MAJ.GUARD./ FRAT. SERV.	5	9	4	12
3. FRAT. ADMIN.	7	9	7	6
4. FRAT. HEALTH	3	4	2	1
Subtotal B	19%	25%	16%	20%

I.e Provincial Administration

Smaller provinces would keep provincial administration lean and close to the friars. It would certainly be easier for a provincial to get to know 130 brothers rather than 330, and for the brothers, in turn, to get to know him. Smaller provinces also pose fewer logistical problems for open chapters.

I.f Finances

As it does with friar personnel, this model relies on a major re-allocation of the financial resources of the friars of the U.S. in order to create a completely new province in the South and to establish an interprovincial “superfund” for elder care.

[Specific financial information was not available to FIT for this report.]

I.g Senior Care

The financial obligation of giving our elder brothers the retirement support and the health care they deserve weighs heavily on every province in the U.S. Currently, it would appear that the weight is somewhat unevenly distributed. Some provinces have and, for the foreseeable future, will continue to have a higher percentage of brothers 75 years and older than other provinces; some provinces are better positioned financially to provide for the care of their seniors, although the two provincial dynamics are not necessarily co-terminus. The viability of any new O.F.M. entity in the U.S. will depend on several factors that certainly include development initiatives and vocation recruitment, but will also depend on the new entity’s ability to support its elder brothers. Model F would shift the financial burden of caring for senior friars from the individual provinces to a central fund for all the O.F.M. entities in the U.S., a fund that would be established by the existing seven provinces and would be sustained by investment, development work and ongoing contributions from the new entities.

1.h Formation

We assume that there would be four postulancy programs, that the interprovincial novitiate would continue, and that each of the new entities would determine the best location for post-novitiate and priestly formation. In order to ensure a critical mass of candidates and simply professed friars, two or more of the new entities might choose to join forces in one post-novitiate program, as the friars in the Midwest have been doing for many years, and/or a “peripatetic” postulancy that would spend a portion of the year in each of the constitutive provinces.

II. Possibilities for Renewal

II.a Fraternal Economy

The model is premised on an equitable distribution of the friars' personnel resources in the U.S. and on shared responsibility for elder care and some aspects of formation among the provinces. Each new entity would draw together friars from different provincial cultures with the possibility of crafting a new provincial identity that is greater than the sum of its parts.

II.b Fraternal Life

The model is designed to enable and enhance fraternal relations by keeping the provinces small. It would be easier to get to know one another on more than a superficial level in a province of 130 say, than in a province of 700. The dissolution of old provincial boundaries in the creation of four new entities would demand that the friars seek their Franciscan identity in our common Rule and Life and in the essentials of being a lesser brother to all. Smaller, more circumscribed provinces would also mean embracing minority. We would need to accept and even celebrate the fact that we are no longer three, five or even eight hundred strong, and instead find our strength in fraternal bonds and in a shared sense of mission. Smaller provinces would also encourage collegial decision-making and interdependence, and allow for the continuation of open chapters in each of the entities.

Western Province: The new entity would be able to offer the friars fraternities of various-sizes as well as a rich multicultural, multilingual and even multinational diversity. The friars in the West already share a commitment to living simply and could support one another in maintaining that commitment. Their tradition of collegial decision-making could easily be sustained and enhanced in a new entity whose size in numbers by 2025 would fall well within "the rule of 150." As with any of the models involving a union of SB, OLG and SH friars in San Antonio and Alaska, the large geographic expanse of the new entity will require a commitment on the part of the friars to come together and get to know one another.

North Central Province: The new entity would encompass two of the cities in the U.S. with the highest concentration of friars—Chicago and Cincinnati. Relative geographical proximity would be an aid to fraternal relations. Many of the friars in the Midwest already know each other from common formation programs, interprovincial meetings and events, and from living and working in each other's backyards. A north central province would respect the regional culture of the Midwest and recognize the similarity of backgrounds of the friars who grew up there. The friars in this part of the country are already very comfortable with and committed to gathering regionally for recreation, prayer and provincial business.

Northeastern Province: The new entity would be rich in fraternal life options from communities of two or three friars to communities of twenty or thirty. Since many of the friars of IC and HN already know each other, have worked and even lived together, the new province could build on these fraternal relationships as well as on their well-deserved reputations for hospitality. Two of the four cities in the U.S. with the highest concentration of friars—New York and Boston—would fall within the boundaries of the Northeastern Province, a definite plus in gathering the friars from different communities for recreation, days of recollection and ongoing Franciscan, pastoral and theological formation. Building bridges, seeking common ground and, where necessary, seeking reconciliation would be high on the list of fraternal priorities of the new entity.

Southern Province: The friars of the new entity will have the chance to forge a completely new provincial identity—an exciting prospect. Given the dearth of high concentrations of friars in the South except for the St. Louis and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater areas, the wide swath of real estate between East Texas and Florida, and the multiplicity of provincial origins among the current friar residents and the volunteers upon whom the creation of a Southern Province would depend, the friars in the new entity would have to work intentionally and diligently to build fraternal relations beyond the front doors of their friaries, just as our foreign missionaries have done in the past. Fraternal and ministerial hubs would need to be identified that could become centers of hospitality in the new province. Since, at least initially, the new province will be populated by friars from the North and West who were willing to move in order to live and work with their brothers in the South, the fraternal life of the province would be blessed with a reservoir of generosity, disponibility and openness to change.

III.c Franciscan Work

Because the model not only recognizes but seeks to capitalize on smaller provinces, the friars in each new entity will need to identify and focus their energies on core ministries as well as fraternal and ministerial hubs in and out of which our fraternal life can manifestly be our greatest evangelical witness. Recognizing both the history and the current lived reality of the friars, these hubs would most likely be in the major cities of each region of the country.

Western Province:

- The new entity would offer a wide range of ministerial options to the friars: parishes, retreat facilities, old mission sites, Native American missions, campus ministry opportunities, direct service to the poor as well as the opportunity to build on a rich tradition of nourishing the Franciscan intellectual tradition at FST and elsewhere.
- Bringing most of the Native American missions under one provincial umbrella provides an opportunity to renew and re-energize the friars' long-standing commitment to the indigenous peoples of the United States.

- Likewise, housing the friars' ministry to the old missions under a single provincial "roof" would encourage the development of a pastoral plan whereby the missions become instruments of evangelization to both "faithful" pilgrims and "secular" tourists. The canonization of Blessed Junipero Serra would challenge the friars to make the old mission sites not only monuments to the Franciscan missionary spirit of the past, but opportunities for Franciscan missionary evangelization in the present and future.
- The new entity might better coordinate ministry to Hispanic immigrants in the border states of CA, AZ, NM and TX.
- Friars from OLG with an interest in retreat ministry would now have several options opened to them in the new entity. This could bring about a revitalization of what has been a ministerial gem of SB.
- Because of significant growth in population and diversity in what some demographers refer to as the "New Sunbelt," the Western Province might explore the possibility of re-establishing an O.F.M. presence in Denver and Santa Fe, and/or expanding the friars' presence in San Antonio.

North Central Province:

- A downtown service church in one of the great cities of North America; direct service to the poor; retreat facilities; foreign and domestic missions; African-American ministry; Franciscan Media; the Franciscan Pilgrimages Program; the fine arts; ministry to specific ethnic, linguistic and racial communities, a commitment to the Franciscan intellectual tradition that includes corporate sponsorship of and individual friar involvement in several high schools, colleges, universities and schools of theology—all these ministerial options and more would be available to the friars of the new entity in the Midwest.
- Like their brothers in the Northeast, the friars of the new entity would be challenged to find the right balance between sustaining a vital ministerial presence in vibrant urban centers while accompanying and assisting those who struggle in post-industrial cities of the North, some of which are also experiencing an influx of new immigrants.
- With their corporate sponsorship of three high schools, a university, the Catholic Theological Union and individual friar involvement in other academic institutions, the North Central Province would be a key player in promoting the Franciscan intellectual tradition. It would have the opportunity to better coordinate the friars' ministry of education, to develop synergistic relationships between its corporately sponsored high schools and university, and to develop the potential for future vocations inherent in regular, sustained friar contact with young people in the schools.

- The existence of large friaries in urban centers might encourage the friars of the new entity to establish regional friaries, fraternal and ministerial hubs in which friars who may not work at the same site can share a common life and out of which various kinds of Franciscan work may be performed.
- The North Central Province would be responsible for the pastoral care of SJB's mission in Jamaica as well as SH's mission to Native Americans in Northern Wisconsin, thus providing a missionary dimension to the life of the new entity and missionary opportunities to English-speaking friars who are not bi- or multi-lingual.
- The high concentration of friars who currently live and work in the southern Great Lakes region offers the hope of fostering the evangelical witness of our fraternal life.

Northeastern Province:

- Living and working in a region that is still heavily, although often nominally, Roman Catholic, the friars of a Northeastern Province would be challenged to extend their outreach to the alienated, the un-churched and the un-catechized through pre-evangelization, evangelization and "come home" programs; to provide pastoral and liturgical oases in the midst of what can sometimes feel like an ecclesiastical desert; to expand their ministry to new immigrants who continue to move into the major cities of the region; and to do all this within the context of the "secular city" and a decidedly post-triumphal church.
- The new entity would be option-rich in its variety of ministries. Within the region envisioned for the Northeastern Province, there are currently urban, suburban and small city parishes; service churches; education ministry; two retreat houses and a ministry to Byzantine Catholics; an itinerant ministry of the Word; campus ministry; outreach to new immigrants; direct service to the poor; and multicultural ministry.
- The friars of the Northeast have a long tradition of promoting the Franciscan intellectual tradition at St. Bonaventure University, Siena College, the former Washington Theological Union, several high schools that were sponsored by HN and IC, as well as by a number of friars teaching and engaging in pastoral ministry at other Catholic and secular high schools, colleges and universities. While there are no longer O.F.M. sponsored high schools in the region, the friars remain integral to the life of Siena and St. Bonaventure. Sustaining and nurturing a significant Franciscan presence at these institutions and in the academic world of the northeastern U.S. would be a challenging, but salient investment of friar personnel and intellectual capital in one of the oldest ministries of the Order.
- With the inclusion of Washington, DC in its "borders," where HN currently maintains an active JPIC office, the new entity would be positioned to "capitalize

on the Capital” in its advocacy of laws and policies that are consistent with the values of God’s reign.

- The new entity could better coordinate the work of the friars in Boston and New York where currently two provinces maintain friaries and engage in pastoral ministry.
- The Northeastern Province would be responsible for IC’s mission in Central America and for the assistance given by HN to its friars in Peru, thus underlining the missionary dimension of our Franciscan vocation in the new entity. The mission in Central America could also provide a Spanish-language immersion experience for friars preparing for ministry to the fastest growing and soon to be majority ethnic group in the U.S. Catholic Church.

The Southern Province:

- The investment of personnel and financial resources in the creation of a new province in the south would be consistent with our past provincial histories of moving with the waves of immigration in order to serve the People of God. The South is the fastest growing region in the U.S. With the highest concentration of friars in the northeastern quadrant of the country, O.F.M. demographics are out of step with national demographic trends. Whether or not a new province is erected in the South, this discrepancy will need to be addressed in the revitalization of Franciscan ministry in the U.S.
- Currently, the friars working in the South are serving in parishes, education, campus ministry centers, retreat centers, hospital chaplaincy, direct service to the poor, and multicultural ministry. Presumably, the friars of the new province would develop their own ministerial profile. They would be challenged to respond to the pastoral needs of God’s people in a distinctly Franciscan way by emphasizing the evangelical witness of their fraternal life and by creating regional friaries in which and out of which both ordained and lay friars could live and work.
- The Southern Province might focus fresh energy on one or more burgeoning urban centers like Charlotte, Atlanta, Tampa, Orlando, Miami and Houston.
- Since much would be new, the whole province would have a keen sense of being “on mission.”

II. d Vocations

The emphasis of the model on fraternal relationships among the friars of each new entity may be attractive to young men seeking a close-knit religious “family.”

Regionalization of provinces may also be more attractive to younger candidates with few siblings who do not wish to live on the other side of the country from their family of origin.

The multicultural fraternities of the Western Province can attract multicultural candidates to our way of life by offering a critical mass of friars from similar backgrounds. Good weather, dramatic topography and simple living cannot be discounted as attractions to potential candidates. The Western Province has a high concentration of both Hispanic and Asian Catholics from which Franciscan vocations have come, a trend that hopefully will continue. On the other hand, the anti-immigrant sentiment enshrined in post-911 laws has had a negative impact on vocation recruitment, particularly in this region of the U.S.

Both the North Central and Northeastern Provinces would have a potent vocation recruitment tool in their access to young people in populous and diverse magnet cities with large Catholic populations like New York, Boston and Chicago, and in the high schools and institutions of higher education under their corporate sponsorship.

The Southern Province would have the distinct advantage of working in a part of the country where parishes are opening rather than closing, the Church is growing rapidly, the culture is less secular, church attendance is more regular, and religious commitment is mainstream. This, coupled with its campus ministry centers at secular universities, may give a new and fragile entity in the south a much-needed recruitment advantage.

Regionalization of provinces would reduce competition for vocations within the same geographic area of the country.

