

### Statement on Remaining with MC USA

1. How does this statement change our relationship with MC USA?
  - a. The organizational relationship with MC USA remains the same for Ohio Conference. With the possible exception of some Ohio Conference-only congregations, things would not change greatly.
  - b. The emphasis here is focusing on building relationships and what we as OC can do together rather than focusing on what MC USA is doing or has done. Working together we will attempt to influence the larger Mennonite Church as stated in the resolution.
  - c. In the expressions of some boundaries and expressions of Ohio Conference concerns, OC is signaling an intention to speak more directly to MC USA about perceptions causing disruption and concern for constituents. Areas of concern and intended arenas of conversation are examples of conversation possibilities. This is not a summation of our complete relationship.
2. The tone of the expressions seems to some to be expressing mostly a somewhat negative posture toward MC USA. Is there some space for expression of appreciation toward MC USA, its endeavors and resources in this document?
  - a. Admittedly the felt need both to state our intention to remain along with the felt need to convey the sense of concern from a good number of OC people may have brought out a serious tone. We encourage those who feel mostly positive things about MC USA to express this to Leadership and in our communal life.
  - b. Much of the conversation about the larger Mennonite Church has been characterized by negativity and a perceived departure from values traditionally embraced by Ohio Conference. Differences exist on how best to address these departures and the seriousness of the changes in other conferences and congregations, even as some important ministries of MC USA have been valued.

### Membership Resolution

1. Does the Membership proposal, by creating two different membership categories, actually work against unity in Ohio Conference?
  - a. The Membership Resolution is more of a Third Way of what can be done with some remaining tension for some congregations around continued connection with MC USA. Leadership agrees that two membership categories may not be the ideal in some ways. But hoping to give a few congregations enough "space" to remain as "Ohio Only" congregations seems a worthwhile structural change in this time.
2. Have all the logistics of this two member category approach been figured out?
  - a. The tracking of funds for both categories seems readily done. Because our budget for MC USA is based on a percent of congregational giving, donations from non-MC USA churches will not be included in those calculations. We will likely need to ask the question of how two membership categories should be considered at various times, such as at votes with regard to MC USA.
  - b. We will still need to make some decisions about the use of the MLI for search processes with churches that leave MC USA but remain in Ohio Conference. We have been in conversation with MC USA about the possibility of using the MLI on a contract basis.
3. Will the concerns of "Ohio Only" congregations still be expressed to MC USA entities?
  - a. Leadership remains committed to speak for the body of the Ohio Conference, and these congregations will remain part of the Ohio Conference. Perhaps our focus needs to be that of a full expression of the nature of OC in general discussions. Also, we hope that MC USA staff shows a desire to hear what various parts of OC feel about the ministry they are providing.

### Year of Covenant

1. What happens if a congregation does not sign the covenant?
  - a. Congregations that do not sign the covenant will remain part of Ohio Conference unless they directly inform OC of a communal decision to leave.
  - b. The regular support given to Ohio Conference congregations will continue to be given to them, i.e. pastor peer group support, regional pastor support, etc.
  - c. They could attend the Year of Covenant events but would be expected to abide by the understandings of those who did sign the covenant.
  - d. They would likely find OC focused on the Year of Covenant and less ready to engage some other agenda
2. After the one-year covenant ends, does Ohio Conference Leadership have a plan of next steps?
  - a. The hope for the one-year covenant is that it will reveal a "communal" way forward, more than simply an "organizational or structural" way forward. After working at the relational events, will we be drawn into a new depth of relationship and find that helping us come to peace with "living in communion with one another"?
  - b. We would also hope to find new disciplines of community to which we could intentionally give some attention regularly to help maintain and strengthen our connection and trust with one another.
  - c. With the companion focus on the Year of Mission, we would hope to discover new insights and creativity around mission among OC congregations.

- d. We intend to begin clarifying the vision and purpose of the Ohio Conference, providing some goals and objectives for our lives together as a result of the Year of Covenant.

#### Budget and Spending Plan

1. What should be especially noticed in this 2016 Budget and Spending Plan?
  - a. This plan started from an austere projection of income and hence has an austere spending projection.
  - b. This is not a deficit budget. Consideration was given to expected decreases in income as some leave OC.
  - c. Staff time is especially impacted by this approach to the budget. Such reductions would be expected in an endeavor like Ohio Conference, where staff expenditures are a primary portion of all expenditures.
2. How will OC continue to provide the support and expertise to congregations and pastors that has been so much a priority in OC?
  - a. Creativity will be necessary, certainly. And some changes may be necessary. This will need to be discerned.
  - b. The congregations and people of Ohio Conference have shown remarkable generosity in response to some more recent requests for additional giving. Such generosity could also help sustain the best supports possible.