

## Being Ohio Conference Only—FAQ's

### Frequently asked questions:

- How will opting out of MC USA affect future pastoral searches? Would an Ohio Conference Only congregation still be able to access the full MLI resources?
  - Even now, according to protocol, MLIs are to be distributed by MC USA personnel at the request of area conference staff such as regional pastors or conference ministers.
  - Congregations do not have direct access to MLIs, and the handling of MLIs is to be within fairly definitive guidelines.
  - An Ohio Conference Regional Pastor could request MLIs for an Ohio Conference Only congregation.
- Because that Ohio Only congregation would not be contributing to the upkeep of the MLI system since any of their giving is to Ohio Conf only, there would be some charge to receive MLIs. We do not yet know that charge. Perhaps about \$400 for a search cycle, but this is an early estimate.
  - If an Ohio Conference Only congregation wishes to have someone who does not already have an MLI in the system, that person would have to complete an MLI, and there would again be a charge. If the pastor only wanted to apply to one Ohio Only congregation, there would be charges normally supported both by yearly fees for licensing, and for the costs of completing various parts of the MLI. Costs would likely be about \$ 20/hour plus fees for background checks and such.
- How would opting out affect the salary and benefits package of the pastor?
  - Even now salary and benefit packages are negotiated between congregations and pastors. MC USA does not control this aspect of that ministry partnership.
  - Any congregation could utilize the paper worksheet for calculating salary and benefits according to MC USA Guidelines. However, to leave MC USA and then utilize their resources for insight in such matters would seem somewhat presumptuous to some. Perhaps a non-MC USA congregation should voluntarily submit a donation for services rendered to MC USA when using MC USA resources.
    - The MC USA guidelines are tailored to MC USA typical pay scales. Other denominational pay scales would often be somewhat higher.
    - MC USA would of course have no records for work experience for any candidate who was not in their system.
- What about the Corinthian Plan?
  - The board has agreed to grandfather in pastors who were covered and then left MC USA, for a period of two years. Right now they are considering whether a pastor who was not covered earlier and then begins as a non-MC USA congregational pastor would be covered. Broad promises with long time tables should not be made. Simply too many things are up in the air. Check with Denise Henke of Everence ([denise.henke@everence.com](mailto:denise.henke@everence.com)).
- What about Everence resources, etc.?
  - Everence is multi-denominational, and so we think Everence will not take issue with connection as long as affiliation with Everence is made in some way. Again, congregations will want to clarify with Everence. (See <http://www.everence.com/> for contact information.)
  - Lilly Grants administered through Everence will not be available for Ohio Conference Only congregations or pastors, since the requirements are tied to specific denominations: MC USA and Conservative Mennonite Conference.
- How would the funding be separated?
  - This is a relatively simple procedure. Funds are checked as they come in to see if they are Ohio Conference Only or Ohio Conference and MC USA.
  - They are entered as two different lines in the accounting software/books.

- Those funds designated as Ohio Conference Only would not be included in any percentage giving to MC USA.
- **Ohio Conference will not forward on any contributions to any MC USA entities on behalf of an Ohio Only congregation. Doing so would make the likelihood of making mistakes in this regard very high and would be potentially confusing to those working with the books.**
- If we opt out of remaining with the denomination, would our delegates be able to vote on everything at Annual Conference Assembly, even if it was something pertaining to MC USA?
  - This particular question deserves to be discerned by the congregations of Ohio Conference in disciplined communication with representatives of MC USA, which we should recognize has a vested interest in such arrangements. We know of very few organizations which do not follow some agreed patterns around such matters.
- How would opting out change our relationship to Mennonite Mission Network or other affiliated organizations?
  - Your congregation would be removed from all MC USA-related mailings, emails, etc.
  - Your congregation would have to “opt in” to receive any such information.
  - These entities would of course still receive and welcome direct contributions from either congregations or individuals.
- If we opt out, will our voice still be channeled through Ohio Conference to MC USA?
  - Ohio Conference lives out its communal life first of all on the Conference level. The Leadership Team of Ohio Conference is committed to communicating the realities of congregational responses to various actions, etc., of MC USA.
  - The newly developing pattern will likely involve small task group communication with representatives of various MC USA entities. This should provide a more disciplined communication pattern.

Note: Even as understandings and structure are changing within Ohio Conference, these things are likely to change at the denominational level in the near future.

Also, the answers to many of these questions change considerably if a congregation chooses to leave both MC USA and Ohio Conference, both for the congregation and for pastors of these congregations.