

# Membership in Christian Churches Together

*Action by the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly at San José on July 6, 2007:  
“That Mennonite Church USA join Christian Churches Together in the USA.”*

## Executive Summary

Christian Churches Together is a fellowship of Christian churches in the U.S. whose mission is “to enable churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.” CCT is unprecedented in including significant participation from Pentecostal, Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox and mainline Protestant churches. The vision for CCT began in 2001 when a diverse group of Christian leaders met and lamented the divisions within the body of Christ and expressed a longing for an expanded Christian conversation. Ron Sider, a Mennonite leader, has played a significant role in the formation of CCT. Significant leaders of both the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals have supported the formation of CCT.

Once a year CCT brings together leaders from this broad range of Christian denominations. A primary emphasis initially is on building relationships among leaders through prayer, fellowship and conversation about our commonalities and our differences. With prayerful discernment over time, there may be opportunities for shared witness and mission. In CCT, decisions are reached by consensus, assuring that every voice is heard and that no action is taken to which a member church objects. CCT will thus primarily provide a setting for conversation and relationship.

Joining Christian Churches Together would be a modest, though important, step for Mennonite Church USA. Practically it would mean that (1) Mennonite Church USA leader(s) will participate in a two-and-a-half day annual CCT assembly; (2) Mennonite Church USA will make an annual membership contribution anticipated to be \$1000; (3) Mennonite congregations and conferences could participate in regional CCT forums on diverse topics. More importantly, membership would signal our desire as a denomination to relate to and dialogue with other members of the body of Christ. It would indicate that we see ourselves as one part of the body of Christ, with important gifts to offer and to receive as we seek together to be faithful.

For the past four years, Mennonite Church USA leaders have attended CCT meetings as guest observers. At the 2004 Mennonite Church USA Interchurch Relations Consultation, organized by Executive Leadership, participants strongly encouraged moving toward membership in CCT. In July 2005, information about Christian Churches Together was presented to delegates at Charlotte 2005 and possible membership was discussed in table groups and during an open-mike session. Strong affirmation for moving forward was voiced.

In the fall of 2005, a summary of delegate responses, together with a question and answer sheet about Christian Churches Together, was sent to all area conferences requesting their response. Strong affirmation for joining Christian Churches Together, along with some questions and counsel, was received from area conferences.

Conference representatives had further opportunity to discuss this issue at the Constituency Leaders Council meeting in October 2006. In consensus they recommended to the Executive Board that Mennonite Church USA join Christian Churches Together. In its January 2007 meeting, the Executive Board made a consensus recommendation to the delegates who will gather in San José that Mennonite Church USA join Christian Churches Together.