



1 **Clarification of Agency Governance &**  
2 **Operational Alignment**

3 May 1, 2023

4 **MC USA Executive Board Resolutions**

5

6

7 **Introduction**

8 This document outlines three individual, organizational recommendations for the delegates of Mennonite  
9 Church USA (MC USA) to consider at the 2023 MC USA Delegate Assembly. The document also includes a  
10 request for counsel and advice from the Delegate Assembly.

11 For the past 21 years, we have been adapting to the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church  
12 and the Mennonite Church that formed MC USA. It is time for us to lead this denomination and to ask  
13 ourselves what is best for the future, not the past.

14 After several years of working out the kinks of a new denomination, we embarked on the [Journey Forward](#)  
15 [Process](#). Our denomination is leaner and growing into a body doing relevant ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.  
16 We will not forget the rich and diverse legacy we share as Anabaptist Mennonites. Still, we want to embrace  
17 the variety of ways that we do ministry and service throughout the denomination. Our structures and how  
18 we function at the denominational level need to align with our theology and be flexible and forward-looking.  
19 Also, our two-year meeting cycle does not allow for adequate discernment, processing or execution of MC  
20 USA Delegate Assembly actions.

21 Our current governance and operational structure must be updated to recognize the following:

- 22 • Reduced number of MC USA constituents, volunteers and staff.
- 23 • Post-COVID challenges of the broader Christian church.
- 24 • Legal complexity and liability of managing multiple boards.
- 25 • Changes in how services are delivered and utilized.
- 26 • Ongoing communication challenges.
- 27 • Changes in MC USA demographics.
- 28 • Lessons learned from 21 years of operating as MC USA, including historical reports, reviews and  
29 surveys.

30  
31

32 **Resolution 1: Change the MC USA Delegate Assembly to a**  
33 **Triennium Cycle**

34 The Executive Board recommends that the MC USA Delegate Assembly move from a biennial cycle to a  
35 triennial cycle and update the bylaws listed in the delegate docket. The reporting to and the gathering of the  
36 delegate body will occur every three years versus every two. The membership terms on the Executive  
37 Board shall begin with the first meeting following the close of the triennial meeting of the Delegate  
38 Assembly.

39  
40 Proposed bylaw changes related to resolution 1.

- 41 • 344-357
- 42 • 405-409
- 43 • 485
- 44 • 503
- 45 • 517-524
- 46 • 651;659
- 47 • 897-899

48  
49 These line numbers are for ease of reference to posted English version only. Please refer to actual posted bylaw  
50 document for change details.

51  
52 **Resolution 2: Change to clarify the role of the program entity**

53  
54 In MC USA, a program entity is a specific group or organization within the church that focuses on carrying  
55 out a particular program or activity. These entities are often made up of organizations that share a common  
56 interest, values or goal, yet they may have their own systems for operating. By updating its bylaws, MC  
57 USA seeks to clarify and formalize the roles and responsibilities of these partnering entities within the larger  
58 church community yet retain a close partnership.

59 The Executive Board recommends updating the MC USA bylaws to clarify the role of program entities and  
60 simplify language related to the governance relationships in Article X.

61 Proposed bylaw changes related to resolution 2

- 62 • 327-328
- 63 • 465-469
- 64 • 771-794
- 65 • 885-893
- 66 • 985
- 67 • 1014-1023

68  
69 These line numbers are for ease of reference to posted English version only. Please refer to actual posted bylaw  
70 document for change details.

73 **Request for the Counsel and Advice of the Delegate Assembly**

74 **MC USA BYLAWS ARTICLE X.3.F**

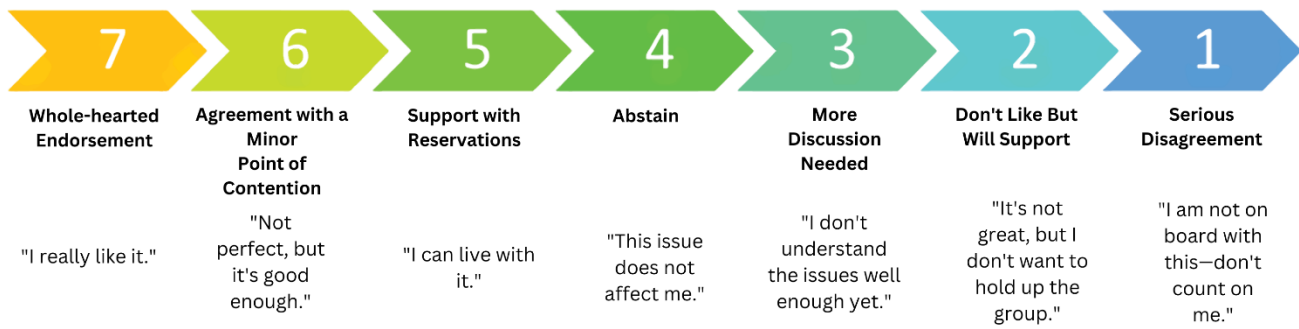
75 Establishment or termination of Churchwide Program Agencies. Churchwide program agencies may be  
 76 established or terminated as the Executive Board determines from time to time and on such terms and  
 77 conditions as the Executive Board determines, with the counsel and advice of the Delegate Assembly.

78 After conversations with the leadership and boards of Everence and MHS Association and their affirmation,  
 79 the Executive Board of MC USA is considering shifting Everence and MHS Association from agencies of  
 80 MC USA to essential ministry partners administered by covenant agreements rather than our current  
 81 structural agreements. The MC USA Executive Board recognizes the following:

- 82 • Legal complexity of managing both these “member-driven” organizations.
- 83 • Additional federal regulatory obligations of Everence and MHS Association.
- 84 • The scope, interest and board composition of these groups is not “MC USA” only.

85 Per the bylaws, before the Executive Board can make this decision, it must seek the counsel and advice of  
 86 the Delegate Assembly. The Executive Board is requesting feedback via the following questions:

- 87 1. How supportive are you of the change in designation?  
 88 Using the Gradients of Agreement Scale (1-7). One end of the scale is “whole-hearted endorsement”  
 89 (7) of the action that was proposed, and the other end (1) is “serious disagreement.”  
 90



- 91
- 92 2. What specific concerns do you have about the shift in status to ministry partner?  
 93 a. Everence  
 94 b. MHS Association
- 95 3. Are there certain details that you feel are essential to be included in a ministry partner agreement  
 96 with:  
 97 a. Everence  
 98 b. MHS Association

99 Please list any specific points you feel must be included in such an agreement.

101 **Resolution 3: Change in Agency Status**

102 The Executive Board recommends repositioning Everence and MHS Association from MC USA churchwide  
103 program agency status and establishing them as program entities (ministry partners). The Delegate  
104 Assembly authorizes changes to the MC USA bylaws to reflect this.

105 Proposed bylaw changes related resolution 3.

- 106 • 847-871
- 107 • 954-977

108 These line numbers are for ease of reference to posted English version only. Please refer to actual posted bylaw  
109 document for change details.

110

## Churchwide Impact Statement

Three organizational resolutions are listed in the document, and each shall be considered separately by the delegates, but each resolution is designed to:

- Create strategic alignment between MC USA, its agencies and ministry partners.
- Strengthen accountability and quality of service by regularly developing intentional review and evaluation processes.
- Reduce operational and governance complexity.
- Bring clarity to the operational and governance authority of the MC USA Executive Board.
- Formalize a realistic governance scope and capacity of the MC USA Delegate Assembly and Executive Board.
- Reduce the human and financial cost of the current MC USA governance operations.

This proposal addresses the following in MC USA:

- The meeting cycle for the MC USA Delegate Assembly and its governance functions.
- The role of program entities in MC USA.
- The agency status of Everence and MHS Association.
- The complexity and flexibility of the MC USA bylaws

The resolutions will alter the MC USA bylaws, the MC USA delegate meeting cycle and, potentially, the bylaws of various MC USA agency boards. A change in the Delegate Assembly cycle impacts board member appointments and terms.

With an additional “off-year,” the schedule change provides more opportunities for local community service and global engagement. The Executive Board and staff will work with MC USA conference leaders, agencies, ministry partners and other constituents to continue to engage youth to ensure opportunities for Anabaptist faith formation and community building.

## Budget Estimate

The Executive Board staff estimates that switching to a triennium will save at least 30% for both delegates and the denomination in a six-year period. The example below does not consider inflation over six years. There may be additional savings from a reduction in board meetings. There could be a gain in operational efficiency, as organizations have more time for strategic planning and other strategic initiatives that are sometimes disrupted by the biennium cycle.

Another benefit of meeting less frequently is the possibility of greater attendance at our triennial gatherings, which would lower the per-person cost of attendance.

## Six Year Delegate Assembly Cost Example

Biennium (3 meetings)	Triennium (2 meetings)	Sample Cost		
\$1,110.00	\$740.00	Delegate Registration	\$370.00	
\$1,800.00	\$1,200.00	Hotel Cost	\$150.00	4 nights
\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00	Travel	\$500.00	
\$4,410.00	\$2,940.00	Estimated Total		
	\$1,470.00	Triennium saving for 6 year period		
	33%			
		<b>MC USA Convention Budget</b>		
\$3,300,000.00	\$2,200,000.00	<b>Budget</b>	\$550,000.00	Cost broken down annually
	\$1,100,000.00	Triennium saving for 6 year period		
	33%			

142

143 **Resources**

144 The resource page lists resources and educational material to aid the study and discernment of the  
145 resolutions.

146 [Journey Forward Mennonite Church USA](#) | [Español](#)

147 [Current Mennonite Church USA Bylaws](#) | [Español](#)

148 [Proposed Mennonite Church USA Bylaws \(with tracked changes\)](#) | Próximamente traducción al español

149 [Everence Statement](#) | [Español](#)

150 [MHS Association Statement](#) | [Español](#)

151 [Process FAQ](#) | [Español](#)

152