

Discovery 20.21 Phase 2 Survey Responses

All Data summarized below was taken from the [Phase 2 survey](#) responses on the GOOGLE FORM (graphs/comments from the responses Summary tab) or [GOOGLE SPREADSHEET](#) created from the responses.

- 19 of our 33 congregations (58%) submitted responses to the Phase 2 Survey (listed below along with their process for forming a congregational response)
 - **Alice Mennonite Church**- small group meet
 - **Amani Community Church**- no response
 - **Argentine Mennonite Church**- A pastoral brief was emailed out to the congregation along with the attachments from SCMC. We also made our own Google form for the congregation to fill. We had a total of 4 couples and therefore 8 individuals responded.
 - **Bethel Mennonite Church**- Becky entered responses based on a letter sent by Pastor Bob Yates that answered the questions in Phase 2 of the Discovery Process. These are his words that represent the Council and Congregation based on conversations and meetings had over the last several years. The church is not participating in the process, but Council has supported Bob's limited involvement at SCMC's request to stay somewhat connected to the overall direction of the conference.
 - **Crystal Springs Mennonite Church**- Pastoral and congregation meetings, study of Confession of Faith, and open discussion.
 - **Greensburg Mennonite Church**- In 2001, GMC deliberately discussed joining MCUSA with reservations about several issues. We did not assume we would automatically join the new denomination. For a year, we held congregational meetings to discuss the direction of MCUSA relative to our ministry and mission, including the secondary place Biblical values seemed to occupy at that time. In 2015, following the Kansas City convention, it became apparent that MCUSA would eventually move to include the LGB+ people in leadership and membership, setting aside the Biblical teachings of sexuality and sin; GMC decided at Annual Meeting for Business in January 2016 to withdraw from MCUSA.
 - **Hesston Mennonite Church**- As we did with the last survey, we polled leadership within Hesston Mennonite. This included pastors, the council, and elders. Input was received from 12 persons.
 - **Hope for the Broken**- We offered the survey to all members of the congregation. Three families responded. (Mostly those in church leadership)
 - **Iglesia Menonita Nuevo Amanecer**- Our church made individual copies for each participating and active member of our church. Our pastor visited each family, prayed, reviewed and discussed the phase 2 packet. They dialogued, took notes and completed the questionnaire. 12 families participated in the survey.
 - **Iglesia Menonita Rey de Gloria**- It is difficult to get people together for this. Try as we might, we were only able to get 14 of us to get together by messenger to work on it.
 - **Inman Mennonite Church**- Because of Covid and how it has affected our congregation, our pastor compiled our answers based on conversations with members, and deacons, then approved them with the deacon chair.
 - **Journey Mennonite Church**- The congregational elders and pastors decided to compile responses for question 1 from only Journey the staff due to the detailed nature of these questions that the average congregant would have little to no knowledge of. The remainder of the questions 2-5 were sent to the congregation as a digital survey. A zoom discussion meeting was also offered for questions, conversation, and clarification regarding the survey. A congregational leader compiled all these results into a document that was submitted to the conference. Administrative assistant, Becky King, put the responses into the online survey using the highest percentage response for each question. Where there was an equal percentage of response, she

asked for a choice from the congregational leader and has denoted which response was submitted in the comment section along with the compiled notes for each question.

- **Kingman Mennonite Church** - With the challenges presented by the pandemic during the period allowed for this survey to be completed, and our lower participation in attendance, our leadership completed the responses to this form with the general consensus as to the perceived opinion on how our congregation would feel.
- **Light of Life Mennonite Church**- We emailed the information to the board members and a few other influential individuals within the congregation. We also made announcements about it on two successive Sundays and made the information available to anyone wanting to participate.
- **Peace Mennonite Community Church**- Discussed each question. Shared thoughts openly. Read Scripture. Prayed. Took time to think about it and sent survey answers to Pastor.
- **Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church**- The entire congregation was invited to participate however, due to the COVID situation, participation was spotty and the Church Council and elders completed the final form. We did ask MC USA to respond to the questions and Glen Guyton and Michael Denner provided us with responses.
- **Pleasant View Mennonite Church**- We hosted an evening of group discernment as well as made individual surveys available to anyone who wanted to complete one.
- **Spring Valley Mennonite Church**- Surveys were given to every member/attendee. Out of the approximate 20 adults who attend, we received 9 responses, but those reflect the core leadership of the congregation.
- **Whitestone Mennonite Church**-A congregational meeting was held. Everyone that participated in Phase 1 was invited to participate in Phase 2. The Phase 2 documents were sent prior to the meeting. The meeting was held via zoom, and had 70 persons/families attending. A representative from MCUSA was present. A brief history and role of MCUSA was presented and an opportunity to ask questions was provided. The link to the meeting, survey and documents were sent to everyone that attended or expressed interest in the Phase 2 process.

Congregations we have had no response from are:

- At the Feet of Christ Church
- Calico Rock Mennonite Fellowship
- Eden Life Church
- Herold Mennonite Church
- Iglesia Alfa y Omega
- Iglesia Menonita Buenas Nuevas
- Iglesia Menonita Calvario
- Iglesia Menonita del Cordero
- Iglesia Menonita Fuente de Agua Viva
- Iglesia Menonita Príncipe de Paz
- Metro Mennonite Church
- Mt. Pisgah Mennonite Church
- New Hope Fellowship
- New Life Christian Center

QUESTION 1.a.

We believe Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through MC USA developed curriculum for children, youth and adults (see MennoMedia (bullet 2) in History of MC USA for SCMC)

19 responses



- We use the MC USA developed curriculum for children and adults. (Crystal Springs)
 - We always start with Menno Media but do not use only Menno Media curriculum. The Leader magazine is used and deeply appreciated. We use Menno Media books extensively for various studies (Pleasant Valley)
 - 55 responses; very useful 58.2%, somewhat useful 27.3%, not useful 7.3%, don't know / no opinion 7.3% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. These surveys indicated 4 "very useful" 1 somewhat useful)
- Summary: The written comments provided were diverse. Written comments indicated that they had used teaching resources from MCUSA and appreciated them. They stated that they supported the Anabaptist mission. Other comments indicated concern that the materials are not biblically sound and expressed concern about the acceptance of LGBTQ persons. There were two comments that stated that our congregation could still access these resources even if no longer a part of MCUSA (Whitestone)
- Having resources from an entity that lifts up the values of Anabaptist theology and of peacemaking is critical in Mennonite congregations. We have used some other resources, as well. The leader magazine and other Christian formation material has been a particularly helpful tool in worship planning over the years. (Hesston)
 - Curriculum published by MCUSA has never been used in our adult and children's departments because teachers didn't think it meshed with our understanding of Christian living. (Greensburg)
 - we use their curriculum for the children, and seems the teachers are pleased with the content. MennoMedia changed to having to download the teachers guide and resource packet, and that is not going well so hopefully we can convince them to change that back to printed material. We haven't had a need for youth and adult materials for quite awhile, but I'm sure there's good adult stuff available. Not sure about youth. (Peace)
 - -We have used MennoMedia materials for children's Sunday School, Children's Club and personal devotions.
-If MCUSA is allowing homosexual leaders, how can we guarantee that that teaching will not seep into the curriculum that will be used and taught in the future?
-Not aware of any material used by us.
25% Very useful, 25% Somewhat useful, 25% not useful, 25% don't know. (Argentina)
 - We only use adult curriculum, but find it mediocre at best. We find other resources superior. (Spring Valley)
 - We believe it is important to know who writes the curriculum and what their beliefs are because our children will be taught this and be raised to believe what is taught. (Nuevo Amanecer)
 - We are aware of the curriculum and other resources that are available, but have found others that we used to be more useful and balanced. (Light of Life)
 - Our congregation is not currently using any materials or curriculum from MC USA. Although we have used some materials in the past, I do not believe there would be any interest or trust in doing so in the current direction of MC USA teaching and focus. (Bethel)

- 1-very useful, 2-somewhat useful, 8-not useful, 3-don't know / no opinion
We use very little MCUSA curriculum of any sort. It is way too expensive for us to afford. But we do use used MCUSA Curriculum donated to us by other congregations in the Hesston area. We find it to be very useful especially in the childrens age group. (Rey de Gloria)
- 33% somewhat useful, 67% not useful (response submitted in survey) .
-I have occasionally purchased children's resources that emphasize Anabaptist values.
-They haven't been useful in the past. I haven't looked at them in a long time because Meeting House has been putting out far superior content for youth ministry. (Journey)
- Although useful, we have noticed some of the materials we have seen have a "liberal" slant to them. Because of this, our congregation has stopped using much of what is available. (Inman)

QUESTION 1.b.

We believe MC USA provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through the sending organization of Mennonite Mission Network (see bullet 1 in History of MC USA for SCMC).

19 responses



- We give annual to Mennonite Mission Network (Crystal Springs)
- During the past 5 years several members participated with SOOP. Individuals in the congregation have served in a wide range of opportunities. We believe these experiences have enriched our congregation. (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 48.1%, Agree 35.2%, Disagree 5.6%, Strongly disagree 3.7%, Don't know/no opinion 7.4% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 don't know)
Summary: The work of MMN is supported by the respondents and is seen as important. The support of a larger denominational group that works with the broader church is valued. There were questions expressed about the utilization of the phrase "God's mission" and how that phrase is being interpreted. (Whitestone)
- Service to others, being the hands and feet of Jesus in a hurting world is something that Mennonites have traditionally done well and Mennonite Mission Network gives a strong framework for this service to continue for youth through older adults. This is a valuable agency with a vast array of resources and opportunities for individuals, families, groups and congregations to engage in missional work in our world. An avenue to bring healing and hope to others. MMN has changed over the years and is in the process of evolving still. While MMN and its opportunities are important it is not the only agency that one can participate in. (Hesston)
- GMC has helped support one missions couple, and we have developed a close relationship with them over the past 25 years. (Greensburg)
- These are good programs and very useful for those who participate. We should promote them more, but it seems our age groups don't fit into most of these currently. (Peace)
- 50% Don't Know, 25% Agree, 25% Disagree (Argentine)
- We have supported MMN missionaries and utilized MVS (Spring Valley)
- We have had some interaction with MMN and support their ministry. We pray that they continue to focus on evangelism and not get distracted by the many other legitimate concerns. (Light of Life)
- We no longer have an ongoing relationship with Mennonite Mission Network and we participate in missions both locally and globally through other ministry organizations. (Kingman)

- We have and continue to support many missionaries that are connected with Mennonite Mission Network. (Bethel)
- 10-agree, 4-don't know (Rey de Gloria)
- 100% agree
-Journey has had multiple people find life in the MVS and Service Adventure/Youth Venture programs. I'm thankful the DOOR trip didn't work out last year as the organization has become more outwardly liberal and probably wouldn't have been an ideal fit for our group theologically...even though we are a part of the same denomination. (Journey)
- Again, we have noticed a trend in materials to have a liberal slant on many issues. This is not a major issue, however it would be nice to see more conservative beliefs seen as well. (Inman)

QUESTION 1.c.

We believe MC USA provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through access to the Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) database in pastoral searches.

19 responses



- We use the MLI exclusively. (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 40.7%, Agree 24.1%, Disagree 11.1%, Strongly disagree 0%, Don't know/no opinion 24.1% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 3 strongly agree, 2 don't know)
Summary: The majority of written comments affirmed the value of the MLI and its role in assisting churches in finding pastors. There was concern voiced both that there are pastors in the MLI that support LGBTQ and also that SCC limits our congregation's access to these pastoral candidates. (Whitestone)
- -My understanding is that there are more church openings than credentialed Mennonite pastors and so having MLIs available to congregations seeking to fill a pastoral role is critical. This helps both the congregation and the pastor hear God's still small voice calling a pastoral candidate to a particular church.
-Having this process centralized has many benefits, especially since local churches do not have their own "HR" departments.
-I understand this is where we received information in our last pastoral search.
-Although I was not a part of the initial search progress, the understanding was that this was a valuable resource.
-I have not been on a search committee so cannot comment on this, but I have heard that it is a good resource.
-Access to the MLI database has been the primary mechanism for locating pastors when we are searching for someone with a general values alignment. If we were to lose access to this it would create a significant gap in any future searches in identifying values alignment and basic skill sets of potential ministers. (Hesston)
- It has been over 25 years since GMC has conducted a pastoral search. Before that, our search committees felt it necessary to eliminate most candidates that were offered, usually due to divorce status or educational background. (Greensburg)
- We use these resources when doing pastoral search and also use these when determining the pastors salary. The 2x I was on the search committee we used them extensively, altho now pastors coming out of seminary are more liberal now, making selection choices less appealing to our congregation. (Peace)

- Six years ago in our pastoral search we used Kurt Horst who used some of the databases to do congregational surveys. 25% Strongly Agree, 50% Agree, 25% Don't know (Argentine)
- We have not used MLI to find any of our pastors. We would question the doctrinal stances of those coming from most Mennonite Seminaries, or having served in most of the conferences. (Spring Valley)
- This is one aspect of MCUSA that we believe would be significantly missed if it were no longer available. (Light of Life)
- Previously Kingman Mennonite Church had used those resources for pastoral searches, but with the current theological direction not in alignment with our beliefs, our congregation would utilize other resources for pastoral search. (Kingman)
- 60% agree-- 40% don't know (Hope for the Broken)
- Bethel has previously used resources including the MLI database in pastoral searches. (Bethel)
- 7-agree, 1-disagree, 6-don't know/no opinion (Rey de Gloria)
- 33% disagree (response submitted in survey), 33% strongly disagree, 33% don't know/no opinion
-It seems like we have gotten almost no help in our last few pastoral searches through the MLI database.
-Currently SCMC uses this as the mail intake option, however I believe there are other options that would be less cumbersome and just as effective for recruitment and licensing. (Journey)

QUESTION 1.d.

We believe MC USA provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through our delegate involvement in biennial conventions. .

19 responses



- We are a small congregation but we try to have a delegate attend the convention. (Crystal Springs)
- We weren't sure the difference between part d and e. Former delegates felt the material provided to prepare for "convention" were helpful in both the logistics for attendance as well understanding delegate material. (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 40.7%, Agree 38.9%, Disagree 9.3%, Strongly disagree 5.6%, Don't know/no opinion 5.6% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 don't know)
Summary: The majority of written comments indicated that our congregation has not engaged in the conventions in a meaningful way. There has been a lack of reporting back from the delegates. There were a few statements of affirmation, stating that courage and support was found in other convention participants as well as learning about issues in the broader church. Other comments state that the conventions are expensive and should not encourage or be a vehicle for LGBTQ persons to voice their concerns and that MCUSA is not following biblical (Whitestone)
- -I have been to two conventions, both as youth, never as an adult, But these conventions bring people together across the US and beyond.
-I don't really know about their involvement.
-Because I have not been a delegate, I do not have first-hand knowledge; this is based on reports from others.
-Minimal pre or post-convention engagement by HMC delegates with the congregation. (Hesston)
- Biennial conventions occur too often and are too expensive to send a delegate every time; it doesn't seem a good stewardship of resources. The sessions a GMC delegate has attended in the past have only

revealed that we are ministering in a much different field with a different worldview. Conventions haven't proven very beneficial. (Greensburg)

- 50 % Don't know, 25% Agree, 25% Disagree Not aware of delegate potential involvement (Argentina)
- We feel the present climate at the conferences to be strongly biased against conservative and Biblical views on moral issues. We have not supported or attended the last four conferences. (Spring Valley)
- We enjoy the conventions, and church business is important, but we are not certain that they assist us in engaging in God's mission for us. (Light of Life)
- We have suspended any and all involvement with MC USA biennial conventions in the past 4 years due to the intentional inclusion of practices of religions other than Christianity and the promotion of lifestyles being encouraged and put in planning and leadership positions that are contrary to the teaching of the bible. (Bethel)
- 6-strongly agree, 4-agree, 2-strongly disagree, 2-don't know/no opinion (Rey de Gloria)
- 33% disagree, 50% strongly disagree (response submitted in survey) . 17% don't know/no opinion (Journey)

QUESTION 1.e.

We believe MC USA provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through our adult and/or youth participation in biennial conventions.

19 responses



- N/C (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 44.4%, Agree 29.6%, Disagree 9.3%, Strongly disagree 7.4%, Don't know/no opinion 9.3% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 don't know)

Summary: Youth conventions have been important for our youth in their faith exploration and formation. They have provided Anabaptist connections with other church members. Concerns have been voiced about the inclusion of Pink Menno and LGBTQ concerns at the conventions, including within convention topics. (Whitestone)

- -As mentioned above I participated as a youth (twice). Prior to heading to the convention I did not fully understand the Mennonite denominations and my experiences at convention led me to choose to attend a Mennonite college—that was not on my radar prior to my convention experiences. Seeing that there were Mennonites from across the USA and not just the few hundred I was aware of in my urban environment gave me a broader understanding of Mennonites and the values we stood for, that set us apart from others (radical following of Jesus' teachings and peace making were the two main values I clung to).
-“Strongly agree” related to youth participation. Convention participation continues to be a highlight for our youth. We have less “reporting back” from the adults who participated than from youth.
-I struggle with how this question is worded. Does attendance at a biennial convention provide us resources to engage in God's mission? That is debatable. Does the participation in MCUSA biennial convention link us to a broader fellowship of believers and provide a space for preaching and teaching from a variety of diverse perspectives? It most certainly does. The benefit of convention as I see it is to come together as one larger family and experience something greater than the local congregation where different voices who are not necessarily heard in the local congregation have a venue. And that is something that is worth staying connected to. (Hesston)

- Conventions seem to have little to do with local ministry and mission. Most people in the congregation see very little connection to national denomination and have little interest in it. (Greensburg)
- When we had youth, one of the highlights was going to the conventions. Not a lot of adults went other than the delegates. I think a fair amount of people in our church don't have any idea what conference is, or is connected in any way, which makes it less appealing to do anything like this. But I think the conferences are good and run well, other than getting into the messiness of business. (Peace)
- 50% Agree, 50% Don't know No information to the congregation. (Argentine)
- We view the direction of the mission of MCUSA presently to be unbiblical. As for our youth attending, we would strongly discourage attendance, fearful of what would be taught. (Spring Valley)
- We enjoy the conventions, but primarily for reasons of fellowship and networking. While those things are important, we are not certain that they assist us in engaging in God's mission for us. They have been a source of encouragement for some of our youth. (Light of Life)
- See answer above in 1d. (We have suspended any and all involvement with MC USA biennial conventions in the past 4 years due to the intentional inclusion of practices of religions other than Christianity and the promotion of lifestyles being encouraged and put in planning and leadership positions that are contrary to the teaching of the bible.) (Bethel)
- 7-strongly agree, 5-agree, 2-don't know/no opinion (Rey de Gloria)
- 67% disagree (response submitted in survey) , 33% strongly disagree
-We have skipped the last 2 conventions and intend to skip the next one for Journey Youth. The focus as I see it is not on Jesus. (Journey)

QUESTION 1.f.

We believe MC USA provides resources for our congregation to engage in God's mission through the resources found in the MC USA website www.mennoniteusa.org/.

19 responses



- We agreed that the resources on the website cover a wide scope of topics and are useful. We also admitted we were unaware of a number of the resources available on the website. (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 27.8%, Agree 37%, Disagree 5.6%, Strongly disagree 3.7%, Don't know/no opinion 25.9% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 don't know)
Summary: The resources identified were viewed as helpful. Many comments indicated that they aren't aware of all the resources and haven't utilized them. This includes not having visited the website. (Whitestone)
- -I don't really have a feel for how much this is used.
-A wonderful resource, I most recently went there to learn more about Conscientious Objectors.
-I had not used the website much before work on organization of our congregation. I found the leadership materials to be very useful, and became aware of the many other resources available. -While this is developing and changing, like many Mennonite Organizations the denominational website is rather lackluster and not a place I spend time looking for resourcing. (Hesston)
- Good resources there. Not sure how many people are aware of it or use it, but it's there if people want it. (Peace)
- 75% Agree, 25% Don't know (Argentine)

- No one uses it. (Spring Valley)
- Agree with reservations. There is a lot of good information, but also, I feel, a lot of distractions. (Light of Life)
- This resource is not utilized (Kingman)
- 40% agree - 60% don't know (Hope for the Broken)
- The statements of belief and Confession of Faith do not match the current practices of MC USA. We would not encourage use of the MC USA website as a resource. (Bethel)
- 3-agree, 1-disagree, 10-don't know/no opinion. Many of our congregation members do not have computers. (Rey de Gloria)
- 50% disagree (response submitted in survey) , 50% don't know/no opinion
 - I've never looked at the website.
 - They have resources but they really don't align with Journey's mission so not much is used. (Journey)

QUESTION 2

We believe our congregation's theological and moral values are reflected in Mennonite Church USA's teaching and practices.

19 responses



- We felt this is a loaded question, consequently the "no opinion" response. We are a diverse congregation. Diverse in social economics, faith traditions, rural-city, labor-skilled-management and first generation church attendance. We felt this question is setting a "trap" and we couldn't predict the what is being asked. (Pleasant Valley)
- Strongly Agree 24.5%, Agree 37.7%, Disagree 15.1%, Strongly disagree 13.2%, Don't know/no opinion 9.4% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 agree)
Summary: There is a definite divide in the statements by the written comments from our congregation. The comments indicate an agreement with MCUSA stance on LGBTQ issues and those in disagreement. Those who disagree state a biblical stance for heterosexual behaviors. There are also statements that indicate as a congregation, we have not articulated a particular position. (Whitestone)
- -We are called to bring healing and hope to a hurting world. Jesus taught us to love others, care for the orphan, the widow, the outcast, the alien, etc. I believe MCUSA provides avenues to bring healing and hope to those in need of healing and hope. But more importantly, when we engage in ministry with others we in turn are transformed and thus better able to hear God's still small voice. Jesus calls us to see the image of God in everyone we meet and extend a hand of hospitality to all. Additionally MCUSA has resources to equip congregations to dismantle racism and to work to make change in peaceful yet powerful ways! To me this is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus: love God, love others, and bring heaven to Earth through love and action, working for change that values peace, mercy and justice, ultimately resulting in empowerment of all and reconciliation.
-I believe our congregation is rooted in the theological and moral values as provided in the "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective: A Summary Statement." (The summary does not include specifics related to membership/marriage/sexuality; our congregation has not focused on those issues.)
-Up until recently I would have answered this question very differently. I had felt for the entirety of my time at HMC that our congregation and the denomination were in fairly good alignment. However, with recent events, voices that are being heard more loudly, and some teaching I have heard and inferred from private conversations I cannot say with confidence that the whole of HMC is in alignment with MCUSA. I would offer that I believe that the majority of HMC members would align with the majority of doctrine offered by MCUSA. (Hesston)
- It has become apparent in the last couple of years especially that MCUSA and GMC approach church, the Bible, theology and social involvement in totally different ways that are incompatible. (Greensburg)
- Over the years, there's been conflict over the issues that Clarence listed, and so the conservative Mennonites have pulled away, which means there are more and more liberal/progressive churches with less and less conservative churches to counteract them. Therefore, it's been easier to push the liberal agenda, and my observation is that there's a very vocal, strong, arrogant group that pushes very hard. With less conservatives involved, it's easy to run roughshod over any thinking other than the liberal agenda. I know good conservatives in churches still in MC USA - have a lot of relatives in those churches. So there's still churches there, but we don't hear so much from them. And my sister has told me that if the liberals can get rid of the conservatives, then the liberals can have things their way. So the question is, is MC USA

worth fighting for? Is it worth taking a stand against the liberal agenda and trying to bring balance and a conservative view as a witness to the truth of the scriptures? It's easier to walk away than to stand and fight, especially when a person feels they are the minority and under attack. But I grieve for the liberal churches that have lost their way. What is our duty/responsibility to be the light and truth to them? (Peace)

- 50% Disagree, 25% Strongly Disagree, 25% agree
 - Without elevating the sin of homosexuality above any other sin I would have to state that given Rom 1:24-32, 1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10 I humbly disagree with MCUSA's compromise in this area. It is far easier to give in to the culture than to love as Christ does. I believe compromising the teaching position of MCUSA to be welcoming to the LGBTQ community is to chose the easier way.
 - We appreciate the church's teaching with an emphasis on Christ's teachings, the teaching on non violence, simple lifestyle, discipleship and service. We are concerned about the recent teaching's on human sexuality which we feel is not consistent with scripture, and rather than being accommodative we want to allow the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Since Section III of the Membership Guidelines were taken out based on peer pressure, this does not show strong convictions of the leadership at the most top level- how can we trust them to stand for what is right? If individual decisions are left to the individual congregations and conferences, how can we for sure know what MCUSA stands for?
 - Confession of Faith seems to be a guide, not an interpretation of Scriptural teaching (Argentine)
- For our congregation, this is the central issue which demonstrates that MCUSA has drifted into Theological liberalism and has decided to ignore clear Biblical teaching on the homosexual issue. The denomination leadership has caved to cultural pressure and abandoned a high view of scripture. We cannot be affiliated with such teaching. This is a universal belief of our people. (Spring Valley)
- We no longer believe our congregational values are reflected in MCUSA teachings & practices. We feel MCUSA is turning a blind eye and disobeying Gods biblical teachings. Romans 1:18:32 (Nuevo Amanecer)
- We have been very disappointed with the theological and moral values that MCUSA has permitted and even embraced. (Light of Life)
- The current culture of MC USA is progressively taking on the standards of the world's culture and are divergent from the authority of Scripture. (Kingman)
- Agree- Contingent on no changes to membership guidelines (Hope for the Broken)
- 10-strongly agree, 4-agree (Rey de Gloria)
- 10.3% strongly agree, 13.8% agree, 24.1% disagree 41.4% strongly disagree (response submitted on survey), 10.3% don't know/no opinion.
 - MC USA's gradual drift away from the Confession of Faith, and ultimately the long-standing biblical interpretation and practice is evident and troubling. Sadly it may be time for us to seek another affiliation to allow us to pursue God's best for Journey and the communities we serve.
 - I believe that MC USA majors in social justice with not enough attention on Jesus.
 - Through the years, it has become more difficult to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ expressed as the most important teaching of MC USA. As a result, focus seems to be more on social issues and social justice without Jesus. That is alarming and though these issues are important, they lose the heart of Jesus and his saving grace.
 - This is the sort of question that addresses a moving target. Historically, I would have marked "strongly agree" but in recent years it seems that the denominational core (educational institutions, governing structures, fundamental values) have been influenced by social, political, economic, and individual freedom threads that have eroded the central consensus of the denomination. Leadership of MC USA, broadly construed, and traditional congregations, also broadly construed, seem to be headed in opposite directions. The gap between the outliers on all church issues and discernment conversations is growing, and the center positions are weakening and are held by fewer.
 - From the teaching and conversations with others, I believe the Journey church values are similar to my own. Sin is a difficult and hard topic. However sin is still sin. Our lives are called to become more like Christ. Which is to not condemn others or my acts of sin, but to bring them to the light for what they are, straying from the ways of living that bring us into harmony with God and His truth and love. And once sin is in the light, it is to be met with grace and compassion, for we all have sinned. Promoting sin as something that is acceptable and the way of God is not loving or compassionate. Perhaps it could feel that way in the moment because it avoids conflict and a difficult or messy conversation. But it is not a

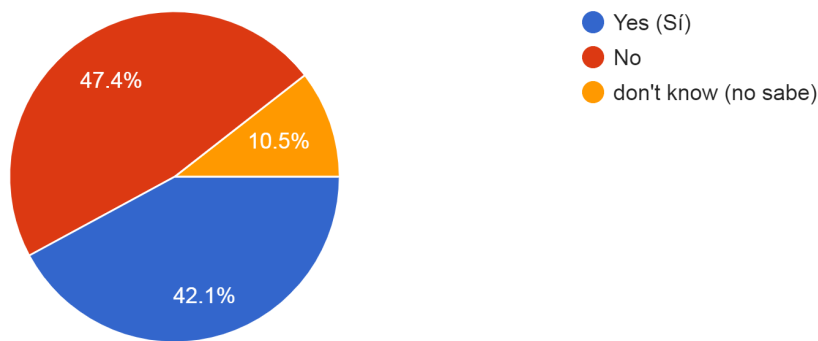
movement of grace or love. It is a movement of denial of both truth and compassion. Seeing someone caught in the deception of sin and telling them you love them so you will leave them there is not compassionate or loving. At the same time, seeing someone caught in the deception of sin and naming or labeling them by their sin and shunning them for their sin is not compassionate or loving. While we cannot promote sin as acceptable, we also must not push away the lost due to their sin. The conservative view can push away the lost by being judgmental and critical and demanding towards the sinner. While the liberal view may do nothing to help bring the sinner to fullness and true life in Christ. That is a lot to say that having a church organization promote sin as acceptable and God's will for someone's life is a very dangerous thing. It shadows or holds back the power of grace, the impact of truth, and the freedom of love. Therefore I believe the MC USA approach to human sexuality (homosexuality included) is harmful to the very people they are trying to 'love'. I recommend Journey and the SCMC move away from the MC USA to allow ourselves the distinction of a differing love and compassion. (Journey)

- While we believe we should be loving and understanding of everyone in every situation, this does not mean we should adjust our beliefs in order to show this. Biblically, scientifically, and according to nature, man is designed to partner with woman and while society thinks otherwise, we do not believe this to be morally, or theologically acceptable, nor do we believe the church should change its stance on this. Do we need to figure out how to relate to the world who is becoming more accepting of this, yes we do, and we do not yet know the answer, however we do not believe the answer is complete acceptance of behavior we believe is sinful.(Inman)

QUESTION 3.a.

Does your congregation have any relationships with other churches outside of SCMC but within MC USA?

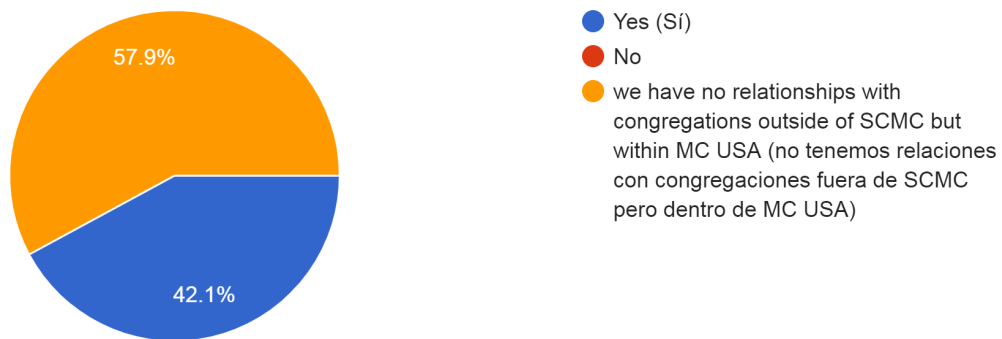
19 responses



QUESTION 3.b.

If you answered Yes to question 3.a., do you believe that relationship is important to your congregation?

19 responses



- We do not have any formal relationships with other congregations that involve any forms of governance. We collaborate with a number of congregations across MC USA. (Pleasant Valley)
- 3.a. Yes 31.4 %, No 18.6%, Don't know 50% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 3 strongly agree, 1 agree1 don't know)
3.b. Yes 50%, No 8.6%, we have no relationships 41.4% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. No responses received for this sub question)
Summary: Comments reflected that there was no ability to opt out of 3b if the answer to 3a was no or I don't know. There are relationships identified with other churches outside of SCMC, and that these relationships are valued. It was identified that broader relationships could be further enhanced. (Whitestone)
- -this is difficult to answer
- I'm not aware of any formal congregational relationships but I feel a connection to other congregations who are part of MCUSA when a pastor shares stories of past experience in another congregation or shares about meaningful relationships with others in a different congregation; I also have connections in other congregations outside of SCMC
- so as a part of this church I do experience important relationships to other congregations.
-Not to my knowledge
-I believe the relationship we have with the local ministerial alliance in addition to the relationships we have regionally with WDC churches both reflect the fact that HMC finds value in having relationships that sit outside of SCMC. (Hesston)
- GMC has remained involved with the county ministerial alliance and local congregations of all denominations. We find ministry and mission in our local setting very meaningful, working as partners with other congregations in carrying the gospel to our communities, addressing needs of the poor, caring

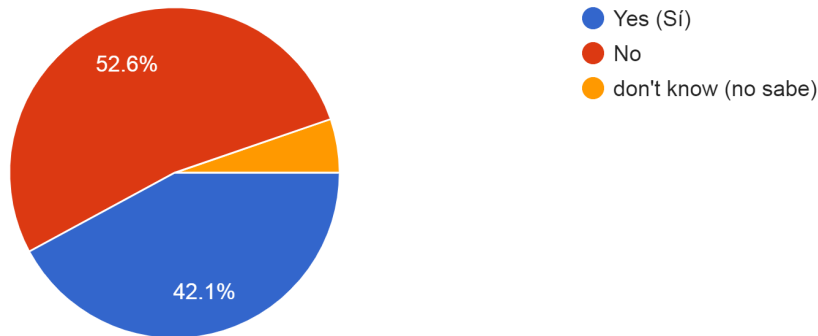
for the elderly, being involved in our schools, for example. Working with other congregations in our towns has proven rewarding and unifying. (Greensburg)

- Relationships matter and broader community relationships matter. Those relationships enable our church to be built at a reasonable price and with many volunteers. (Peace)
- 3.a. 50% yes, 25% no, 25% don't know
3.b. 50% yes, 50%
 - We have no relationships ...
 - We do have a relationship with Rainbow Mennonite Church and I appreciate having those individual relationships
 - We have contact with another Mennonite Church in Kansas City on some Saturday mornings. We also join Kalona Mennonite when we are visiting family and enjoy those contacts.
 - We have relationships with Argentine churches, that are not in MCUSA (Argentine)
- We have many contacts outside of the Mennonite fold, but none which are affiliated with other Mennonite conferences. (Spring Valley)
- For us this is primarily through the MCC Relief sale where we enjoy fellowship with many people we knew from the Mountain States Conf. But being part of, or leaving MCUSA will not change those relationships or opportunities. (Light of Life)
- We have in the past. The relationship to a particular conference is not as important as the theological and moral values. (Bethel)
- 14-yes. Many congregations from outside have come to RDG. Some of them have helped with the Summer Daycare either in person or financially. (Rey de Gloria)
- 3.a. 24% Yes, 35% No, 41% don't know (response submitted on survey)
3.b. 28% Yes, 14% No, 58% None (response submitted on survey)
 - There are several churches in MC USA and beyond that have been encouraging to us, and partners in God's mission. These relationships can, and should, continue even if our affiliation with MC USA comes to an end.
 - Some staff do, but generally speaking our church does not have that kind of connection.
 - JMC has relationships with churches outside of MC USA in which we find more togetherness in mission and vision.
 - Our congregation has valuable relationships with congregations within our local community; we do not have significant relationships with Mennonite/Anabaptist congregations beyond SCMC. (Journey)

QUESTION 4

We believe our congregation supports MC USA in our annual giving. (this can include MC USA general budget, Mennonite Education Agency (MEA), Mennonite Mission Network (MMN), MennoMedia, Mennonite Health Services Alliance (MHS), and/or Everence).

19 responses



- As our congregation grew in local mission, our funding followed. We continued to include the agencies of MC USA in our budget. There are direct contributions to the various agencies by individuals (Pleasant Valley)
- Yes 100% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 5 replied "yes")
Summary: Our church is fully aware of the financial support that we provide for MCUSA and its relationships with MCUSA agencies. (Whitestone)
- There is a very strong commitment to including MC USA in the budget. (Hesston)
- We give to MCC, SCMC, MDS. None of these really support MC USA. We use MennoMedia and Everence and MMN but don't donate to them (Peace)
- 75% NO, 25% yes (Argentine)
- Only through MMN and Everence. We have requested that none of our donations go to support MCUSA. (Spring Valley)
- We have not supported MCUSA financially as we are a fairly new church. When we assisted Iglesia Menonita del Cordero, we were active givers. (Nuevo Amanecer)
- We do support MMN on an annual basis. (Light of Life)
- A small percentage of our membership have Everence products and we participate in the matching grants. (Kingman)
- We do not directly support MC USA financially (Bethel)
- 14-no (Rey de Gloria)
- 76% Yes (response submitted on survey) , 3% No, 21% don't know.
-We have continued to support MC USA, with more of our funds going to MMN than the others. However, we have reduced our percentage of giving to MC USA as theological dissonance and relational distance has increased the past 5 years.
-It does not feel right to align with MC USA with the differences we sense and that would include supporting MC USA's general budget. However, if we are still going to use their resources then we need to fund them. (Journey)
- Our congregation has adjusted it's giving to MC USA over the last few years as we have felt them separating from us in their beliefs on the issue of sexuality. If the most recent proposals within MC USA regarding this issue are approved, our leadership will present to the congregation a motion to stop supporting them altogether. (Inman)

QUESTION 5

We find our congregation's affiliation with MC USA through SCMC to be meaningful to us.

19 responses



- The main "through" SCMC to MC USA connection we use the pastoral search process when we use the MLI. (Pleasant Valley)
 - Strongly Agree 38.6%, Agree 34.3%, Disagree 11.4%, Strongly disagree 4.3%, Don't know/no opinion 11.4% (5 paper copies of surveys received and are not reflected in the above pie chart. 4 strongly agree, 1 don't know)
- Summary: Although 72% of our response agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, there were written responses that indicate a division within our church regarding the meaningfulness of the relationships with MCUSA through SCMC. Approximately half the written comments indicated wanting to maintain a relationship with MCUSA. The other half indicate that the relationship with SCMC is more important than maintaining relationship with MCUSA (Whitestone)
- -I experience a greater sense of identity from affiliation with MCUSA than SCMC. Further, MCUSA has a compelling "renewed commitment" statement that SCMC could probably do a better job of utilizing than we currently do - Follow Jesus...Witness to God's peace...Experience transformation. It seems that over the last couple years MCUSA has worked hard to be a forward-looking body, remembering what we're good at and recognizing the gifts we have to offer the world (rather than bickering about what or who is right, as has happened previously); over that same time frame SCMC seems to have embraced more the conversation of what or who is right. This reflection is both sad to me and hopeful - sad that we have to do this in SCMC but hopeful that we can come out on the other side of it as a forward-looking body, remembering what we're good at and recognizing the gifts we have to offer the world.
 -I am not aware, nor do I understand the phrase "the affiliation with MC USA through SCMC"
 -I do not fully understand the connection that SCMC allows with MC USA. What is provided there and what is provided to the congregation directly? Is SCMC a conduit to MC USA? I find the MC USA meaningful, but I'm not sure I understand how SCMC connects into that relationship, versus with MC USA direct.
 -I have found that the majority of meaningful interactions with the denomination do not necessarily involve the conference other than as a simple mechanism and legal requirement to access the denomination. Could an affiliation with MCUSA be just as meaningful or more meaningful through an affiliation with a different conference? I would suggest that the answer may be yes.
 -It does not seem to be good stewardship to support two regional conference structures (Western District and South Central) within the same geographic area. That said, the relationship with MC USA is important to HMC. (Hesston)
 - The affiliation, partnership and fellowship of SCMC with MCUSA will continue to be an agitation because of the discrepancy between worldviews that exists. GMC recognizes that not all congregations may share this opinion and that others find meaning in relating to MCUSA as a conference. We have discerned our relationship with MCUSA already. We have received feedback that we need to stand aside in this process so as not to unduly influence it, while we have also received feedback that we should be involved in this process if we hope to have an effective voice and vote next summer. The contradictory signals have made it difficult to know how to respond to the discovery process. GMC has intentionally remained involved in SCMC by choice and desire to be affiliated with the wider church. (Greensburg)
 - I think having a conference in MC USA that represents the conservative viewpoint is good. I also have faith in SCMC that they are solid in their beliefs, they won't be swayed by the liberal agenda, but can "be in

the liberal world but not of the world". I just think we are called to do this. How can we influence others if we refuse to have anything to do with them? Or do we just run to our little group of like-minded people and find solace there? I know churches don't believe some of MC USA's agenda and are thinking they need to leave because of that. That's one way of taking a stand. I think the key here is learning how to stand firm. And I keep coming back to this for our church - we need to learn how to stand firm in our faith, how to defend our faith, to do thinking about what it means to be a Christian and get back to the basics, to learn apologetics. I heard on the radio this week that the younger generation has no idea how to explain or defend their faith. I think this is true for our church, including me. I think the church body in the US as a whole is really failing in this area. (Peace)

- 50% Agree, 25% disagree, 25% strongly disagree (Argentine)
- We actually find any affiliation with MCUSA to be a hindrance to our growth, as conservative believers do not want to be part of such an unbiblical organization. (Spring Valley)
- We believe MCUSA has provided our area conference with valuable resources and for that we are grateful, but we have reached a crossroads in our beliefs and this has impacted our church greatly. (Nuevo Amanecer)
- There is something about the roots that we have there, but over the last number of years we have grown further and further apart, and much of that change is the result of the theological positions that MCUSA has accepted and/or embraced. (Light of Life)
- Contingent on no change to Membership Guidelines (Hope for the Broken)
- 14-strongly agree, 2-agree (Rey de Gloria)
- 6.9% strongly agree 20.7% agree, 31% disagree 34.5% strongly disagree (response submitted on survey) , 6.9% don't know

-We have had no meaningful interaction through SCMC or directly at Journey since Ervin Stutzman & Terry Shue were leading. Journey is estranged from the MC USA family we once had, and more and more congregations have left as the denomination has failed to stay rooted in Scripture.

-Beyond some small pastoral/executive level things, I wouldn't say that Journey has a meaningful relationship to MC USA in any direction.

-I find affiliation to somewhere valuable. I perceive that our church is highly committed to Anabaptism more so than MC USA specifically. I am incredibly loyal to Journey Mennonite Church and trust the discernment of leaders as to where to affiliate.

-I know our congregation is heavily invested in SCMC and see that we financially give to MC USA, but rarely hear of our church using resources available from MC USA.

-MC USA does not reflect the biblical values in the same way that Journey sees them. It feels that the identification with MC USA at times can be a roadblock to ministry. The walls that denominations cause are not helpful to unity of the body of Christ.

-I believe there are few persons in our congregation that are in close connection with either SCMC or MC USA, however, for some, that connection with MC USA is very closely connected with their very Christianity. Not healthy, but a fact that needs to be considered.

-It used to be, but with MC USA moving in the direction they are, I'm afraid our affiliation is and will continue to be compromising to the witness of Journey in our community.

-Again, as mentioned above, my response reflects a shift from "strongly agree" previously held for years. I value, and believe our congregation values, our core traditional affiliation with Mennonite/Anabaptist theology, values, vision, and mission as articulated and demonstrated by denomination structures and institutions and mirrored by SCMC. However, the trend in recent years demonstrates a growing divide between MC USA (again in broad terms) and the vision, mission, and life of SCMC, and our congregation identifies more comfortably with the latter. (Journey)

- This one was borderline between agree and disagree. I (Pastor Jack) feel there has been a separation for many of our congregation from MCUSA over the last 8 or so years and this is the reason for this answer. (Inman)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- **Pleasant Valley-** We experienced a deterrent in completing the questionnaire, partly due to COVID but mainly due to the time of the church year. Sending the questionnaire out during preparation for advent with a due date several weeks before Christmas felt restrictive and fostered questions of skepticism of the process. How to explain this questionnaire to a first generation church attendee was a challenging process. The convoluted nature of several of the questions hindered the conversations, often requiring us to divide the questions without knowing if we were fairly dividing the question. We were able to teach people about how SCMC - MC USA is structured and were a little chagrined that we didn't fully understand the legal structure of responsibility of SCMC and MC USA. Ultimately we are deeply committed to MC USA, understanding it isn't perfect however it is faithful to God's call and work in our world today.
- **Whitestone-** Summary: The primary theme of the summary comments is that of finding unity. The respondents identify that this conversation is important, it should not divide us from each other. There is a willingness to engage, disagree and still remain in unity. There is fear that it may end in division, but that is not desired. It was also stated that the survey questions were somewhat vague and worded in ways that did not clearly identify what information was being sought. Other respondents indicated that it was challenging to answer some of the questions without knowing the direction that SCMC is going to take.
- **Hesston-** The process of Discovery 20.21 runs counter to where I feel God is calling----the energy going into this is taking energy away from loving others, welcoming the stranger and sharing the good news of the healing and hope that is freely offered to all through Jesus Christ.
- **Greensburg-** It appears that the Lord has turned MCUSA over to its desire to fully include same sex and transgender individuals in membership and leadership in keeping with Romans 1.24-25, despite the Bible's teachings. The decision seems to be based on current "science," and the Bible is being interpreted through this scientific lens instead of interpreting science through the lens of Biblical teaching and values. To discard the membership guidelines and revise Confession of Faith in view of cultural changes disregards Biblical teachings as authoritative. GMC discerns that God calls us to remain faithful in fellowship if SCMC upholds Scriptural teaching on gender, sexuality and marriage, as well as exclusive commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord alone. If SCMC discerns that God is releasing them to become inclusive of the same sex and transgender lifestyle, GMC cannot pursue that direction with the conference. It places self and sexuality above Biblical values and makes individual experience and feelings into a god. GMC cannot continue to be involved if sinful lifestyles are normalized and Biblical authority is constantly questioned.
- **Peace-** Explore the question of women in leadership in alternative options - Lancaster, Evana, ? What could Lancaster do FOR us?
- **Argentine-** When the merger was delayed to create MCUSA over the same sex issue, it should have raised red flags to begin with. That is a very basic theological belief that the Bible is very clear about. The National Executive Committee did make a huge mistake when they did not leave the power of decision at the top, but gave individual conferences and congregations power to decide what they wanted for themselves. This not only did a disservice to future generations, but is confusing for new members as to what they are choosing to join and be a part of. So, as I searched scriptures I came across just a few: Leviticus 18:22, 24 and 25: 22 "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin. 24 "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways. 25 Because the entire land has become defiled, I am punishing the people who live there. I will cause the land to vomit them out." Leviticus 19:1 later says, "Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." and later in verse 17 says, 17 "Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives.[c] Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin." So we must be determined to in vs.37 -"You must be careful to keep all of my decrees and regulations by putting them into practice. I am the Lord." Also, I haven't even started what I found in 1 Timothy 1:8-11, 5:20-21, 6:1-5 and vs.12.8 "We know that the law is good when used correctly. 9 For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their father or mother or commit other murders. 10 The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders,[a] liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching 11 that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God

5:20 Those who sin should be reprimanded in front of the whole church; this will serve as a strong warning to others. 21 I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone." When decisions are left to individual congregations, emotions and personal attachments get in the way of making sound and Godly judgments.

1 Timothy 6:2-5, 12 goes on to say, "Teach these things, Timothy, and encourage everyone to obey them. 3 Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life. 4 Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions. 5 These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth. To them, a show of godliness is just a way to become wealthy.

In closing, we encourage leaders of SCMC to follow Paul's encouragement to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12 to "Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses."

- **Spring Valley-** MCUSA has, in our opinion, moved away from the simple gospel message and has capitulated to ungodly cultural pressures on the issue of homosexuality. As the denomination has slipped into Theological liberalism we no longer desire to be a part.
- **Light of Life-** We have had ongoing concerns about the direction that MUSA has taken over the last years. And we are VERY concerned about the recommendations from the Advisory Committee that were made public last spring. We believe that the conclusions stated in that report are one-sided and do not reflect our theological position. If they are accepted at next summer's convention, we would certainly need to re-evaluate our relationship to MCUSA.
- **Kingman-** As we work through this process, our earnest desire is to operate in harmony with the Holy Spirit and that we would appreciate others opinions and maintaining our missional relationships within SCMC.
- **Hope for the Broken-** I do not find most of the questions to be relevant to the main question of whether we want to be part of an organization who wants to ignore or erase basic principles of God's commandments, to the growth of his church family, creation, and God's call to sanctity. The call to be in His image, without sin, blameless, to reach the stature of Christ. "We shall not add or diminish from the Word of God, that we may keep His commandments" Deuteronomy 4:2
- **Rey de Gloria-** We think that our relationship with the denomination itself, as with all other congregation, is minimal. We think that through the conference, the relationship is there. Especially in the South of Texas, it is almost impossible to have some type of communication with MC USA itself.
- **Journey-** Overall there were a small number of responses to the Phase 2 survey, likely due to a combination of: no in person services or meetings (due to COVID-19), lack of interest/information, high trust in JMC leadership, etc. There is broad agreement that being affiliated with a larger body of churches is valuable. However, the responses to the Phase 2 survey indicate that Journey leaders should look long and hard at the relationship with MC USA. There is a sense throughout that we are highly committed to Anabaptism at-large, more so than to MC USA specifically.

-Another observation to note...while 25-33% of respondents were generally supportive of Journey's affiliation with MC USA, they made little to no comments on the survey. While many of those that are concerned about Journey's affiliation with MC USA (66-75%), provided most of the comments and questions. Reading these results with these things in mind is important to understand them fully.

Other Comments summarized from submitted congregant surveys:

-I appreciate these questions being asked, and personally have no problem answering them.

However, I think the timing of this process and the need to use surveys and Zoom calls is tragic. I long for a way to come together to worship, fellowship, pray and discern these matters with other brothers and sisters. Clarity is needed for us to move ahead as a network of churches.

-We need to love all people, but not necessarily the world view. Not sure where MC USA is at on all the current issues.

-I believe that the Journey Congregations could thrive with an affiliation that is more focused on reaching out to a broken world. MC USA has been more focused on movement toward a "progressive" agenda.

-The theology of MC USA does not align with my beliefs