

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About The Mennonite Inc. and Mennonite World Review Inc.

TMI: The Mennonite Inc. began as part of the formation of Mennonite Church USA in 1998. The Mennonite magazine represents the merging of The Mennonite (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Gospel Herald (Mennonite Church) publications. TMI publishes a monthly magazine and manages digital media platforms, and its board is responsible to MC USA.

MWR: Mennonite World Review Inc. began in 1920 and operates as a nonprofit based in Newton, Kansas. MWR publishes a biweekly newspaper and manages a website, and is independent of any Mennonite conference or denomination.

Current MWR-TMI Task Force members:

Barth Hague, TMI board chair

Sheldon Good, TMI executive director

Shé Langley, TMI staff

Hans Houshower, TMI board member

John Longhurst, MWR board chair

Paul Schrag, MWR editor/publisher

Marathana Prothro, MWR board member

Steve Kriss, MWR board member

Phil Rich, MC USA Executive Board/Executive Committee member

Why merge? Is this necessary?

For more than a year the MWR and TMI boards discussed various options for increased collaboration between the organizations and, ultimately, both boards recommend merging and creating a new organization together. The MWR and TMI boards are pursuing merger at a time when both organizations have fought to remain “in the black.” While it is not a crisis situation, at current trends, falling circulations for both publications indicate both organizations will have trouble surviving beyond the next 5-10 years on a budget driven largely by a print publication. Both boards believe that in this era of media transformation, MWR and TMI are stronger together than as small, separate entities. Combining the resources, talents and supporters’ good will of the two leading U.S. Mennonite publications, MWR/TMI will create a financially sustainable independent media organization that strengthens Anabaptist communication.

Based on input from MC USA members, delegates and CLC elders, the staff and board of MC USA will determine how to respond to changes resulting from the merger and loss of the TMI media channel, and how the denomination will meet the communication needs of MC USA.

What would Mennonite Church USA constituency gain? Lose?

This is an opportunity to redesign a print publication and digital platforms that tell the stories of Mennonite constituents, congregations and institutions. MC USA and other Mennonite groups

would gain an organization that is adaptable to changes in the ways people use digital and print media and that provides engaging journalism — news, opinion, inspiration, investigation, reflection — that explores the intersection of faith, life and culture through an Anabaptist lens.

MC USA would lose an official media platform (both print and digital) dedicated to MC USA voices and news. While TMI already publishes some content by people outside of MC USA, and has readers outside of MC USA, its primary target audience is MC USA members; the new organization will seek content and audience from across Mennonite and Anabaptist groups, including MC USA.

In terms of structure and polity, MC USA would lose a churchwide entity whose board is responsible to the MC USA Executive Board and whose executive director participates in the MC USA Governance Council.

What is TMI's relationship with MC USA?

TMI's board is responsible to the MC USA Executive Board. The Executive Board and Delegate Assembly each appoint three TMI board members. TMI is a financially independent, self-supporting nonprofit incorporated in Indiana.

TMI has three purposes: 1) To provide forum for the voices of Mennonite Church USA, 2) To promote the ministries of MC USA, and 3) To provide an editorial voice that is collaborative with, but distinct from, denominational leadership.

What is the vision of the proposed new organization?

The merged organization will function as an independent editorial voice serving a variety of Anabaptist communities, without organizational ties to any particular Anabaptist denomination. According to the merger recommendation made by both TMI and MWR boards, the merged organization will aspire to maintain a supportive relationship with Mennonite Church USA and give priority to serving MC USA members, who are the largest constituency of both existing organizations.

How will the new organization maintain a “supportive relationship with MC USA” and give “priority to serving MC USA members”?

The new organization plans to include members of MC USA as columnists and contributors (in addition to board members); to provide coverage of MC USA conventions, business meetings, and agency, area conference, and congregational happenings; and to engage organizations with connections to MC USA in print and online advertising opportunities. Most of the readers of both merging entities are currently members of MC USA. Independent of any denomination or conference, the new organization will give priority to serving its predecessors' largest constituency — the members of Mennonite Church USA — while reaching diverse Mennonite groups and covering the broad range of Anabaptism.

Who will be the new organization's target audience? What will the new organization's products be?

The new organization's audience will be all Mennonites and other Anabaptists, primarily in the United States. The new organization anticipates that the majority of their readers will continue to be members of MC USA.

In terms of content, MWR brings a commitment of inclusion of Mennonite voices across denominations, while TMI brings a commitment of inclusion of racial-ethnic voices within MC USA. The new organization's products have not yet been developed, though its flagship print publication and various digital platforms will be designed to reach the largest possible audience.

What steps have been taken so far toward merger? What steps remain?

- April: MWR and TMI boards approved the merger in principle
- April: TMI presented the merger proposal to the Executive Board and invited feedback
- August: Drafts of a merger agreement and new organization bylaws presented to the Executive Board
- August: MWR and TMI boards both approved the merger agreement and bylaws
- October: CLC provides feedback on the potential termination of TMI
- November: Special Delegate meeting provides feedback on the potential termination of TMI
- December: Executive Board takes action regarding transfer of assets and termination of TMI