



2017 PROPOSED GOVERNANCE CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

HISTORY AND RATIONALE

In 2009, the Massachusetts Council of Churches Strategic Action Plan Steering Committee presented the MCC Strategic Plan for 2009-2015. The strategic plan hoped **that by 2015, “Our new organizational model has developed from careful consideration of our constituencies and our priorities.”** This work culminated in the summer of 2015 with a Board of Directors Redesign Task Force, which undertook the task of recommending a revised MCC governance structures. We thank the Strategic Planning Committee and the Redesign Task Force for their faithful work.

In the fall of 2015, the Redesign Task Force recommended a governance model of a Working Board and Advisory Board. (More information on the roles and functions of each board can be **found in the “Process and Rationale” and “Task Force Proposal” documents included in this packet.**) The 113th Annual Meeting in 2016 voted to suspend the relevant sections of the Constitution and try out proposed model. Since February 2016, we have been living with the new governance model and soliciting feedback from stakeholders. We now find ourselves about nine months behind the original plan proposed by the Redesign Task Force. Perhaps we were overly ambitious. Perhaps this is a significant period of waiting as a new structure is about to be born!

The constitutional changes before you **formalize the new governance model we’ve worked** with for the past 20 months. The recommended changes have been prepared by MCC Staff, reviewed by legal eyes and organizational pros, sent to the leadership of our member denominations, and voted on and approved by the members of the Working Board. The constitutional changes have been made solely to reflect the changes in governance structure proposed by the Redesign Task Force in 2015. We now move to a 2/3 vote of MCC membership to make the changes official.

MAJOR CHANGES

Large Board of Directors becomes Smaller Working Board and Representative Advisory Board. One large change in the constitution, most of pages 2-6, is the shift of the responsibilities from the Board of Directors. The previous role of the Board of Directors will now be shared by the Working and Advisory Boards, as outlined in the 2015 Redesign Proposal. Please **note that for legal reasons, the Working Board is formally referred to as the “Executive Board”** throughout the constitution.

Streamlining required mandates for structure. This is the other major change in the Constitution, found on pages 6-9. The constitution included language of additional commissions and structures from an earlier era of our common ecumenical life. We celebrate

and give thanks for the faithful members and the work of the Commission on Christian Unity, the Strategy and Action Commission, Partners in Ecumenical Development, and other Task Forces **that built a strong foundation for our work today. Recently, we've updated our website with an** online Archive where important documents and resources composed by these groups can be accessed easily and for free (www.masscouncilofchurches.org/archive).

As the MCC looks at our changing ecclesial landscape and listen to the wisdom among us, lawyers and seasoned non-profit leaders advise that we streamline what our constitution requires, in order to give us freedom to adapt and respond **to the Church's current needs and** witness. The commissions and programs listed above have been inactive for some years. In some cases, the denominational staff positions that once populated many of these commissions no longer exist. It is time for our Constitution to reflect our reality, and provide the space for us to work diligently towards our hopeful future.

STILL TO COME

Yes, the work is not complete. In the next 3-5 years, we plan to look at changes in finances and membership. For now, let us celebrate the work of reform that has been completed, and look to the future with hope!