

# ***MOSAIC MEMO OF FINDINGS FROM LISTENING TOUR***

Presented to Mosaic Mennonite Conference



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
Participant Selection	4
Instrumentation	5
Analysis	5
<b>Key Learnings</b>	<b>5</b>
To what extent are Mosaic churches and CRMs aligned with Mosaic’s priorities?	5
What needs to be true in order for Mosaic to fulfill its priorities?	6
How do Mosaic’s priorities align with Mennonite Church USA?	7
What does Mosaic gain/lose in the Mennonite Church USA relationships?	9
How can Mosaic reconcile conflicts and address barriers as they arise?	9
How do people in the Mennonite community prioritize operating in a Spirit-led way?	10
Other Findings	10
<b>Implications</b>	<b>11</b>
Implication I: Mosaic should focus on creating opportunities to build relationships and create resolution and reconciliation within the conference.	12
Implication II: Mosaic should recommit to being Spirit-led.	12
Implication III: Mosaic should deepen its supports for the intercultural priority to address necessary learning and alignment across the conference.	13
Implication IV: Mosaic should invest in building leadership capacity at the conference level to navigate the complexities of a diverse and growing conference.	13
Implication V: Mosaic should better define and clarify its identity in alignment with its priorities.	14
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>14</b>
Frequency Chart for Themes grounded at > 20	14

## Overview

Mosaic Mennonite Conference was formed in 2020 as a reconciliation between the Eastern District Conference and Franconia Mennonite Conference. Prior to the merger, both conferences, though rooted in the immigration of Swiss and German immigrants from Europe,

had grown to include a range of diverse congregants from varied ethnic, socioeconomic, and community backgrounds. Franconia included congregations in California and Vermont as well as a growing Indonesian and Spanish-speaking immigrant population. Within its first year, Mosaic welcomed nine congregations from Florida that had been a part of the Southeast Mennonite Conference. This meant almost a quarter of its member congregations were situated outside of the historic home base of the Northeast Corridor, including Montgomery and Bucks counties in Pennsylvania.

Mosaic's growth not only solidified a membership of approximately 7,500 in 100 communities across eight states and six languages but also began to transform the conference towards a majority BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) congregation. The growth and diversification of Mosaics' conference is a welcomed change that is well aligned intercultural priorities. However, these changes in diversification sparked discomfort and unrest for many. This discomfort/tension escalated with the 2022 Repentance and Transformation (LGBTQIA) resolution from MCUSA. Numerous congregations withdrew from the conference. Due to this discord, the Mosaic delegates agreed to engage in a two-year strategic planning process focusing on clarifying internal and external relationships and determining the most efficacious pathway forward.

In 2023 Mosaic Mennonite Conference formulated the Pathway Steering Team to partner with Grovider, a tech-enabled knowledge management consulting firm to lead the strategic planning process. This included designing and co-facilitating a listening process to capture voices across the conference's diverse footprint. The listening tour was purposed to provide insights into the following learning questions:

- To what extent are Mosaic churches and conference-related ministries (CRMs) aligned with Mosaic's priorities?
- What must be true for Mosaic to fulfill its priorities?
- How do Mosaic's priorities align with those of Mennonite Church USA?
- What does Mosaic gain/lose in the Mennonite Church USA relationships?
- How can Mosaic reconcile conflicts and address barriers as they arise?
- How do people in the Mennonite community prioritize operating in a Spirit-led way?

In answering these questions, Mosaic sought to identify potential needs and barriers to address as a part of the strategic planning process, with the intent to increase overall clarity and alignment. Another objective was to uncover the diverse viewpoints within the conference. The answers to these questions would potentially aid in identifying and articulating sustainable goals and actions for the conference's future.

## **Methodology**

The Grovider team employed a bi-modal qualitative data collection approach that included both focus groups and interviews.

### **Participant Selection**

To answer the learning questions and gain an understanding of the community's perception of the conference's current state, Grovider and the Mosaic Coordinating Team worked to develop a tiered approach to participant selection. This included purposive sampling where focus group and interview participant selection was aligned with listening tour goals. Grovider partnered with the Pathways Steering Committee and Mosaic Coordinating Team to build a clear understanding of the best sample. Focus group participants were selected from the following entities:

- Pathways Steering Team
- Mosaic Staff
- Conference Board
- Pastors & Chaplains
- CRMs
- Young Adults
- Youth Leaders
- Retired Leaders
- Congregants

A total of 16 focus groups were completed. Three of those 16 focus groups (PST, Staff, and Board) were facilitated by Grovider; the remaining by Pathways Steering Team Members. This decision was made to ensure that groups provided psychologically safe spaces for individuals to share their honest reflections and insights. Additionally, the Grovider team would use the Board focus group to garner clarity on the direction for strategy development. Because Board members have a unique position of authority and influence, this focus group session was structured to illuminate the most productive approach for leveraging listening tour findings.

In addition to the focus groups, the Grovider team conducted 15 interviews with a sampling of individuals across the named participant groups. The interviews created an opportunity for Mosaic's leaders to share their perspectives about mission, vision, and priorities, as well as relationships and strategy development to help build culture and facilitate transformational change.

Participants were able to schedule interviews and focus groups using online bookings and email correspondence. All but one focus group was completed via Zoom. The board focus was facilitated using a hybrid approach where the Grovider facilitator supported a Mosaic facilitator virtually. All focus groups and interviews (including those facilitated by PST) were recorded and uploaded to a secure server owned by Grovider. Grovider maintained, organized, and stored all recordings.

## **Instrumentation**

The Grovider team used the learning questions to develop a focus group and interview protocol. As a part of the data collection process, Grovider piloted the protocol with the Pathways Steering Team (PST). This pilot served several purposes: 1) to capture data aligned to learning questions from the PST, 2) to gain feedback and consensus on the final instrument, 3) to train PST members on conducting focus groups. During the PST focus group, the Grovider and PST team engaged in a structured debrief where members provided input on the protocol, reflected on the process, and asked for targeted support to ensure they were prepared to facilitate focus groups independently. Edits were made to the focus group protocol to create a final instrument that would be used for subsequent data collection efforts. This final protocol was shared with PST, along with facilitation guidance and the process for data sharing. This edited protocol also informed the creation of the final interview protocol.

## **Analysis**

The Grovider team used a standard inductive coding process to analyze and categorize collected data. This process focuses on allowing major findings and themes to emerge during the read of data. This approach was chosen because of the exploratory nature of the listening tour. Each of the 31 transcripts was coded using qualitative analysis software so that key themes and patterns could be recognized and analyzed. Data coding revealed 115 total themes that were then streamlined to create 37 themes and further synthesized into categories aligned with the learning questions. This process of merging codes focused on similarities between themes and insights best aligned with learning questions. Of the final themes, each was reviewed to understand their “groundedness” or the frequency with which they appeared in the qualitative data set. “Groundedness” ranged from 2 to 56. Codes grounded at or above 20 were selected as most prevalent as this level of “groundedness” was determined to represent “mean” attitudes or experiences for interviewees and focus group participants (themes at an above 20 can be found in Appendix A). Groundedness was used to determine which themes to report on aligned with learning questions.

## **Key Learnings**

Learnings were compiled and categorized by theme and learning question to ensure ease of use in the strategic planning process.

### **To what extent are Mosaic churches and CRMs aligned with Mosaic’s priorities?**

In general, participants in the listening tour found very little misalignment between Mosaic’s priorities and those of their churches or ministries. However, findings from the listening tour revealed the following:

- Leaders within ministries are more aware of priorities and are not always sure how or if they should be more actively communicating them to congregants.
- Congregants are more likely to be aware of their own ministry’s articulated priorities. These priorities are still aligned with the larger Mosaic priorities but are more relevant to the local context.

## **What needs to be true in order for Mosaic to fulfill its priorities?**

Listening tour participants had a variety of insights to share regarding the supports and structures needed to ensure Mosaic fulfills its priorities. These insights fell into six categories that are listed and expanded upon below.

- **Clarity:** While remaining flexible is important, participants noted that too much flexibility causes confusion around the conference's identity. Clarity, on the other hand, creates an opportunity for everyone to get in alignment or make a choice regarding alignment.
  - **Organizational Structure:** where will the conference create structures and where will churches have autonomy?
  - **Expectations:** what is expected of leaders in implementing priorities?
  - **Decision Making:** how are decisions made, who is involved, and what can be expected?
  - **Conflict Resolution/Reconciliation:** what conflict resolution method will be used and how will capacity be built to implement?
  - **Alignment with MCUSA LGBTQIA+ Resolutions/MCUSA Guidance:** what does MCUSA believe and how will churches be expected to operate?
  - **Depth of Relationship with MCUSA:** will there be a change in the relationship with MCUSA?
  - **Intentions for Intercultural Work:** how can intercultural work happen more uniformly across the conference (specifically where congregations are not diverse or not in diverse communities)?
- **Congregational Support:** Participants shared that it would be important to equip leaders to move their congregations forward in alignment with priorities. Leadership development is one way to provide this support; however, specific priority-focused materials and resources would be another. While the participants could name several conference supports, many were focused only on leaders and not necessarily church members. Some participants thought there might be ways to use leadership resources to support the formational priority and create a leadership pipeline. Participants also noted that more conference specific events, resources, or training would be helpful.
- **Leadership:** Participants were interested in seeing clearer and more definitive leadership from conference leaders. Much of this was related to the focus on clarity. They believed it was the responsibility of conference leadership to provide clarity, create structures, and partner with church leaders to move the conference towards its vision and priorities. Many shared a deep appreciation and love for conference leadership but wished that conference leaders could balance the relational supports with tangible technical solutions and supports. Participants mentioned wanting more collective support for church leaders (problem-solving sessions, joint services, shared resources) and materials that leaders could use to deepen foundational work within their congregations.
- **Greater Focus on Discernment:** Participants universally agreed that being Spirit-led was important and noted that in order to be Spirit-led, the conference must place more attention on following God's will and discernment. This could mean building discernment practices, training, or opportunities into the formational priority. They believed that the focus on discernment had been lessened and that there were not as many options to engage in collective activities to increase the conference's ability to discern or reliance on discernment as a critical process in decision-making.

- **Transparency:** In addition to clarity, participants discussed wanting transparency as a part of understanding progress towards decision-making, navigating churches that leave, when conflicts arise within the conference, and struggles/challenges within the conference. Some even noted that transparency includes not just communicating information but also sharing early and explicitly when things cannot be shared, along with rationale. There was a preference for over communication vs. silence.
- **Collaboration and a Relational Approach:** Participants noted many ways that they believed collaboration and relationships would be critical to the path forward. Some of those included more (1) intentional relationship building between congregations across lines of difference (pastor swaps, joint services, etc.), (2) bringing pastors together to support each other, share resources or problem-solve, (3) developing relationship driven methods of conflict resolution (restorative circles), (4) creating a conflict resolution relational body that is diverse and not carried by conference leaders, (5) removing unnecessary bureaucratic structures in leadership development and credentialing, and (6) including relationship with God at the conference, church, and individual level within the formational priority and related formational resources.

**How do Mosaic’s priorities align with Mennonite Church USA?**

While there are differences in language, participants found Mosaic and MCUSA’s priorities to be mostly aligned in spirit and content. Focus group participants talked through ways to map MCUSA priorities on to Mosaic’s. This resulted in the relationships catalogued below:

Mosaic	MCUSA
<b>Missional</b>	Witness
<b>Intercultural</b>	Experience Transformation
<b>Formational</b>	7 K

The largest discrepancies were noted in the following areas:

- **Espoused vs. Lived Values:** Participants noted that there was not always collaborative engagement on shared activities and projects that aligned with espoused values. Many believed this was due to interpretation differences between MCUSA and Mosaic. Some expressed that as the largest conference within MCUSA, Mosaic could leverage its power to promote more clarity, or strengthen the alignment with MCUSA. Others felt that Mosaic was not always valued enough within MCUSA to play that role.
- **Racial Justice vs. Justice in All Forms:** Mosaic’s intercultural priority targets racial justice which many participants believed created practicality in operationalizing the intercultural focus. The broad stroke of MCUSA’s priority, while appropriate for a denominational body felt less attainable and actionable to some.
- **Shifts in Denominational Ideology regarding LGBTQIA Inclusion:** Participants shared that the greatest challenges with MCUSA stemmed from differences relating to LGBTQIA inclusion. The diversity within Mosaic is both a strength and a challenge in determining the next steps as there is a pervasive division and lack of agreement on the path forward. Some participants shared that Mosaic’s lack of clarity or guidance exacerbates this misalignment and creates chaos for congregations who are unsure of what these shifts mean for them.

- Differences in Where Emphasis is Placed: While priorities can be easily matched, MCUSA and Mosaic appear to weigh elements of their priorities differently.
  - References to Discipleship, Worship, and Peace: Participants found MCUSA’s references to being a disciple of Jesus, engaging in worship, and commitment to peace valuable and were interested in thinking more deeply about how that is implicitly or explicitly included in Mosaic priorities.
  - Diversity: MCUSA names diversity as revealing God’s beauty with a focus on justice, while Mosaic names intercultural as a priority and raises racial justice more specifically.
  - Relationships: MCUSA priorities call out a relationship with God more than relationships with people. Some participants wondered if Mosaic’s priorities can also center their relationship with God as essential to moving priorities forward while navigating the complexities of current tensions.

On the matter of whether Mosaic should remain with MCUSA, some participants did venture an opinion as part of discussing the relationship with the denomination. Below provides information on the frequency with which a specific desire regarding the relationship with MCUSA was expressed.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
<i>Stay with MCUSA</i>	Number of times staying with the MCUSA was mentioned	35
<i>Leave MCUSA</i>	Number of times leaving the MCUSA was mentioned	10
<i>Conditional Relationship with MCUSA</i>	Number of times adjusting the relationship to (i.e., "dotted line"), partnership, or conditional relationship was mentioned	10

Finally, participants noted that remaining in a relationship with MCUSA would require the following:

- Mosaic to become more comfortable with ambiguity: MCUSA is growing and shifting, which will affect Mosaic. The challenges being faced within MCUSA and Mosaic are not unique to the Mennonite denomination and will require an acceptance that there are no easy answers or fast ways to resolve everything. Participants noted that focusing on being Spirit-led is going to be critical because the current discord around LGBTQIA inclusion will not be the last major denominational conflict. Mosaic, therefore, needs an approach to managing change and internal tensions.
- A commitment from MCUSA to learning and corporate discernment: While MCUSA’s decision has created discord within MCUSA and Mosaic, participants noted that their willingness to continue to listen, grow, learn, and partner will be critical for the path ahead. Some shared that it should be one of the most important considerations for whether Mosaic stays with MCUSA.
- Clarity from Mosaic’s leadership regarding how MCUSA’s denominational resolutions would be applied: Despite growing discord within the conference, participants asked mostly for clarity from the conference. Understanding and receiving clear direction and guidance from Mosaic leadership would allow congregations to know how to proceed. While no one expressed a desire to see any churches leave the conference, many felt it was unfair for member churches to remain in limbo and for pastors and CRM leaders to have to field questions and need for clarity when they themselves were unsure and ill- equipped to know where Mosaic would ultimately land.



### **What does Mosaic gain/lose in the Mennonite Church USA relationships?**

In responding to the question about the specific benefits of MCUSA, participants named several direct and relationship-driven benefits. This included (1) financial and educational resources, (2) ministry-sustaining resources for smaller congregations, (3) fellowship with a broader body of believers, (4) a connection to the denomination and years of history, (5) accountability and guidance that allowed for some standardization within the denomination. These benefits provided some insights into reasons to remain a member of MCUSA.

Participants also shared the challenges of remaining in a relationship with the MCUSA. Some believed that the size created polarity and an inability to build consensus on theology. This was particularly critical for BIPOC members as they are less represented in MCUSA. They saw representations of this in the introduction of the Repentance and Transformation Resolution and believed this lack of consensus would eventually weaken the denomination. There was also some concern over how to navigate any resolutions coming from MCUSA and the need to gain added consensus within the Mosaic conference once a resolution was introduced. Many expressed that at the congregational level, people were less likely to engage MCUSA at all, which could affect the amount of voice Mosaic has within the conference. Finally, participants shared that MCUSA added an unneeded level of bureaucracy that sometimes caused tension and delay.

### **How can Mosaic reconcile conflicts and address barriers as they arise?**

When asked specifically about Mosaic’s response to conflict, participants shared a range of conflict response practices that are most frequently used within the conference. The chart below represents the frequency with which individuals expressed specific approaches:

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Conflict Avoidance</b>	33
<b>Secrecy or Private Dialogues</b>	12
<b>Leverage Relationships</b>	11
<b>Defensiveness or Silencing</b>	11
<b>Indirect Conversations (Conference Leaders Handle)</b>	9
<b>Move too Quickly</b>	6
<b>Scape Goat (Conference or Others)</b>	4
<b>Position Papers</b>	3
<b>Engage in Gendered Response (More Aggression Towards Women Leaders)</b>	3

In general, participants felt that conflict was often avoided or that conversations happened in secrecy in ways that were not productive to resolution. Some wondered how much cultural differences affected the most common ways of addressing conflicts, citing the denomination’s history of exclusion, interpretation of peace, as well as the growing BIPOC population who may feel uncomfortable engaging in direct conflict within the conference. Participants felt that challenges with conflict resolution could be addressed by adopting more transparency, understanding that seeking peace does not mean an absence of conflict, creating a reconciliation process (including restorative or peaceful practices) and deepening leadership’s commitment and capacity for conflict resolution. This included developing a conflict resolution process that should be developed along with training to support leaders with implementation.

### **How do people in the Mennonite community prioritize operating in a Spirit-led way?**

Being Spirit-led emerged as a significant priority across all participants. In order to move forward in alignment with that priority, participants believed that it was important for the conference to gain collective alignment on “Spirit-led” by clarifying the meaning and noting specific practices or ways of engaging that could support the conference in becoming more Spirit-led. One such process would include collective and collaborative scripture reading and discussion. Once clarity has been established, the conference would need to provide a structure rooted in the doctrine for navigating in a Spirit-led manner and look for opportunities to engage in the practice of discernment across congregations and as a larger community. Finally, participants believed that building trust in God’s work in each person and centering Jesus as a part of the discernment process would allow for a more Spirit-led approach. This trust would require a deeper focus on the formational priority so that congregations and leaders are aligned in foundation, understanding, and focus on what it means to be like Jesus. Some believed that this commitment to trust would also allow the conference to move in alignment with the Spirit while trusting that there might be variations in what each ministry within the conference is called to do.

### **Other Findings**

In addition to findings related to the learning questions, participants raised several key insights to address.

- Mosaic needs to determine its responsibility to address larger social issues, including (1) oppression of women and BIPOC, (2) poverty and economic disparity, (3) White supremacy and nationalism, and (4) immigration.
- As Mosaic continues to pursue its intercultural priority, it will be important to ensure that the depth of the priority includes valuing and respecting the voices of BIPOC leaders, churches, and congregants. In this way, the priority moves beyond representation, and diversity counts to shared power.
- There is a deep fear regarding what might be lost if Mosaic leaves MCUSA, but some believe this fear is unclear understandings or misconceptions regarding benefits. While those closer to leadership are more aware of the specific benefits provided by MCUSA, there are varying degrees of understanding across Mosaic broadly. Clarity regarding those benefits would help conference members understand exactly what might be lost should they sever the relationship.
- Most participants noted a desire for clarity related to Mosaic’s stance on the LGBTQIA question. In two of the 16 focus groups, there were very heated discussions regarding acknowledging homosexuality as a sin. Some participants in these groups vehemently disagreed with MCUSA and felt that Mosaic should not compromise on calling out this sin. They also believed that it was possible to convey this truth with a loving tone and operate in love towards all members of the congregation. They reiterated the church’s role in working with any person navigating sin to receive healing.
- Churches do not often feel that conference leaders are aware of the specific challenges and issues they face or needs that pastors might have. It would be more helpful for Mosaic to ensure there are mechanisms to elevate unique challenges and determine how support can be leveraged.
- Participants believed that the formational and missional priorities needed to be better resourced and supported by the conference. This included creating stronger formational resources at every age level, leveraging Sunday School as formational, deepening support for

planting churches, and building tools to help congregants grow their relationship with God. Opportunities for collaborative or collective mission work as well as a focus on growing and strengthening Mosaic’s global presence, were areas to address in the missional priority. Participants also expressed a desire to talk about how mission work can be evangelical and promote growth within the conference.

- While the intercultural priority is deeply emphasized, there is major work to be done to support the conference in living it out. Varying diversity/access to diverse individuals and ideas is limited for some congregations due to where they are located. Mosaic could play a stronger role by helping congregations connect across lines of difference. Additionally, stating the priority does not necessarily equip congregations and leaders to engage across lines of difference in the most effective ways. Some participants believe that much of the tensions within Mosaic stem from an inability to navigate differences well and a lack of readiness within the conference to truly become intercultural. This could also include unchecked bias and assumptions that affect relationships. Some BIPOC members expressed not being consulted or engaged deeply enough leading up to the July MCUSA conference and that there is often rushed decision-making that discourages collective struggle.

## Implications

As a part of the data collection process, participants were asked to express their hopes for Mosaic over the next five to seven years. This data was coded and aligned with findings from learning questions to develop a set of implications and next steps for the conference’s work. The frequency chart below shares insight into the expressed hope. Each implication considers the “groundedness” of shared aspirations.

Hope	Definition	Count
<b>Hope_Relationships</b>	Strengthen and grow internal relationships	64
<b>Hope_Spirit Led</b>	Deepen the ability to operate in a Spirit-led manner	41
<b>Hope_Acknowledge and Value Differences</b>	Grow in the ability to acknowledge and value differences	33
<b>Hope_Clear Identity</b>	Create, articulate, and activate a clear Mosaic identity	33
<b>Hope_Strong Leadership</b>	Strengthen conference leadership to support needs of conference and pastors to carry out priorities	25
<b>Hope_Keep Conference Together</b>	Heal divisions within Mosaic	16
<b>Hope_Live Espoused Values</b>	Align actions to communicated values and priorities	16
<b>Hope_Ongoing Growth/Transformation</b>	Commit to growth and focus on being transformed together	13
<b>Hope_More Denominational Resources</b>	Provide resources that support priorities	12
<b>Hope_Address Social Issues</b>	Respond to and acknowledge issues that affect churches and congregations	7

Hope	Definition	Count
<b>Hope_Global</b>	Lean into Mosaic’s global presence and impact	7
<b>Hope_Impact</b>	Become a more impactful conference	7
<b>Hope_Resolve LGBTQIA Question</b>	Provide clarity on Mosaic’s position on LGBTQIA question	6
<b>Hope_Balance Priorities</b>	Balance the focus across all three priorities including aligned resources and supports	2
<b>Hope_Accept Flaws</b>	Welcome the inevitable flaws that come along with being a large diverse conference	1

Implication I: Mosaic should focus on creating opportunities to build relationships and create resolution and reconciliation within the conference.

*Overview*

Based on the expressed hopes and data collected during the listening activities, relationships within the conference are torn and often difficult to repair due to a lack of clear structure for resolving conflict. The conference also does not provide enough opportunities for congregations, pastors, or ministry leaders to come together, get to know each other, and build. Intentional focus must be paid on developing a process of resolving conflicts, building internal relationships, ensuring conservative and progressive congregations can be heard in a balanced way, and equipping leaders and congregations with tools to navigate difficult moments.

*Potential Solutions*

- Develop and articulate a clear approach for conflict resolution along with aligned training and outline mechanisms for accountability;
- Add conflict resolution supports to leadership training structures;
- Create resources for congregations that support them in navigating conflict;
- Develop a structure for collaboration and relationship building, including activities to promote understanding and support across differences (pastor swaps, joint services, problem-solving sessions, and events that include a broad range of congregants/churches); and
- Develop conference-wide opportunities for conversation and discernment around areas of conflict (i.e., women in ministry, LGBTQIA, anti-racism, interpretation of Scripture, etc.)
- Implication II: Mosaic should deepen its commitment to being Spirit-led.

*Overview*

Based on the expressed hopes and data collected during the listening activities, participants shared that being Spirit-led is vitally important to Mosaic’s future. While the priority is clear, how Mosaic collectively defines and operates as a Spirit-led conference is less clear. Additionally, the conference could better articulate and activate its commitment to growth and transformation through Jesus.

*Potential Solutions*

- Develop and articulate Mosaic’s position and emphasis on operating as a Spirit-led body— consider adding this to the formational resources and priority statement;
- Create clearer articulation of the actions and activities that are necessary to operate as a Spirit-led body;

- Continue providing conference-wide supports and opportunities for leaders to engage in discernment activities (fasting, prayer), test the spirit, or read scripture;
- Ground any decision-making and conflict-resolution materials in Spirit-led focus (develop them using discernment activities or ground them in scripture i.e., Matthew 18); and
- Elevate the importance of being Spirit-led and focusing on transformation/growth as a part of the formational priority (build any necessary training or congregational support resources).

Implication III: Mosaic should deepen its supports for the intercultural priority to address necessary learning and alignment across the conference.

#### *Overview*

Based on the expressed hopes and data collected during the listening activities, to achieve the intercultural priority, the conference will need to acknowledge its gaps and challenges with living out espoused values related to this priority. While the intention has been stated, the priority elevated, and many churches and congregants are working to increase diversity or partner across lines of difference, time should be spent building inter-conference capacity, resources, and actions in alignment with the intercultural vision.

#### *Potential Solutions*

- Revisit the intercultural priority to determine the skills, habits, mindset, and practices necessary to live out the vision;
- Develop a set of resources (training, competencies, etc.) to support congregations/churches/pastors in assessing readiness and increasing capacity;
- Develop an approach to power sharing and decision-making that align with the intercultural priority; and
- Convene across lines of difference to problem solve with more frequency and embed a clear problem-solving and conflict resolution protocol.

Implication IV: Mosaic should invest in building leadership capacity at the conference level to navigate the complexities of a diverse and growing conference.

#### *Overview*

Based on the expressed hopes and data collected during the listening activities, participants believe that leadership is essential to the journey ahead. While the decision to create Mosaic was grounded in a desire to represent something different, the process of making the conference a cohesive entity is going to require decisive, transparent, and skilled leaders who can provide clarity, structure, care, and action when needed. Leadership will need to balance gentle understanding with strategic pushing to assist the conference in meeting its goals.

#### *Potential Solutions*

- Revisit the priorities and determine the skills that leadership must embody to lead the conference forward;
- Develop or engage a set of resources (coaching, training, competencies, etc.) to support leaders in increasing their capacity;
- Release a complementary set of leadership priorities that align with conference goals to clarify what conference members can expect; and

- Provide opportunities for conference members to provide feedback as well as create and commit to a cycle of continuous improvement regarding leadership impact.

Implication V: Mosaic should continue to define and clarify its identity in alignment with its priorities.

### Overview

Based on the expressed hopes and data collected during the listening activities, participants shared that Mosaic has not articulated a clear identity. This identity confusion has caused internal conflict, slight differences in priorities between churches and the conference, and a lack of certainty regarding Mosaic’s value to and ongoing relationship with MCUSA.

### Potential Solutions

- Refine key conference guidance materials (mission, vision, core values, denominational documents);
- Create clearer articulation of the specific actions and activities that are necessary or can assist congregations in activating each priority (formational, intercultural, missional);
- Provide conference-wide opportunities for members to hear from leadership or engage with identity-specific documents;
- Work with pastors to align priorities and identity documents to church priorities; and
- Provide opportunities for conference members to provide feedback/create and commit to a cycle of continuous improvement regarding conference identity.

## Appendix A

Frequency Chart for Themes grounded at  $\geq 20$

<b>Theme/Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
<i>Hope_Relationships</i>	When asked their hope for the conference, the number of times greater focus on relationship building was mentioned.	64
<i>Relational Approach</i>	Identifies the number of times participants mentioned the power and importance of relationship building to supporting the conference and navigating growth.	56
<i>Spirit Led</i>	Identifies the number of participants mentioned the importance of being Spirit-led and focusing on the Spirit to guide the conference forward.	52
<i>Reconciliation &amp; Conflict Resolution</i>	Identifies the number of times participants discussed reconciliation as an important focus of the conference's work. This included training and support for conflict resolution as well as ensuring that honest and open dialogue was centered.	51

<b>Theme/Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
<i>Benefits of MCUSA</i>	Identifies the number of times participants noted a specific benefit of MCUSA including denominational resources, broader community, finances, legal and professional services, regulations for salaries and certifications, and training supports.	48
<i>Formational</i>	Identifies the number of times participants discussed the role of the foundational priority. This included addressing the additional supports needed to ensure that foundational activities covered the range of ages within the congregation.	48
<i>Tensions</i>	Identifies the number of times that participants identified tensions inherent in the application of priorities. This included issues of defining and clarifying priorities.	43
<i>Hope_Spirit Led</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants expressed a desire for the conference to focus on becoming more Spirit-led in its future.	41
<i>Collective Alignment on Spirit Led</i>	This identifies the number of times participants communicated a need for Mosaic to define and align on what it means to be Spirit-led and support the conference in activating that definition.	39
<i>Tension in MCUSA Relationship</i>	This identifies the number of times participants expressed that tension exists between MCUSA and the Mosaic conference.	39
<i>Tension Between Mosaic and Churches</i>	This identifies the number of times participants expressed that tension exists between Mosaic and churches within the conference.	38
<i>Alignment with MCUSA</i>	This identifies the number of times participants expressed an alignment with MCUSA either as a congregation or relative to Mosaic priorities.	36
<i>Clarity of Expectations</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants expressed a need to clarify church and congregation expectations aligned to conference priorities. This includes greater definition of concepts expressed within priorities and how to activate them within a range of church contexts and specific priority aligned resources.	36
<i>Stay with MCUSA</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants expressed a desire to stay with MCUSA.	35
<i>Spirit Led = Discernment</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants noted that Spirit-led should focus on community discernment, collective time in scripture and prayer, and a willingness to test the Spirit.	35
<i>Hope_Acknowledge and Value Differences</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants expressed a desire for the conference to build the internal capacity to acknowledge and value difference including ensuring conservative and progressive congregations can be heard in a balanced way, there is a respect for what is contributed by more foundational conference members as well as newer congregations, and that there are opportunities to build relationship and understanding across those lines of difference. This theme also aligned with a focus on developing skills for intercultural and difficult conversations.	33
<i>Hope_Clear Identity</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants expressed a desire for Mosaic to develop a clear identity when asked what they	33

<b>Theme/Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
	hoped for over the next five to seven years. Clear identity included vision, mission, statement of faith, shared priorities, response to conflict, decision making approach, role within the denomination, church together statement, etc.	
<i>Conflict Avoidance</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that the conference appears to be conflict avoidant. This includes participants who noted that what might appear to be conflict avoidant could be speed of resolution. In these times, participants desired transparency to increase understanding of conflict resolution approaches.	33
<i>Value of Mosaic Relationship vs MCUSA</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that their strongest identity was related to Mosaic. This includes where participants noted that clarity from Mosaic is more important than resolutions from MCUSA.	33
<i>Intercultural (Area of Growth)</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that the intercultural priority was an area of growth. This included ensuring that intercultural activities were moving beyond representation to balancing the distribution of power and voice across the conference, being shaped by the diversity within the conference (i.e., becoming Mosaic), building deep, respectful, and intentional relationships across cultural lines of difference, as well as the need to provide more opportunities to engage interculturally in less diverse church populations.	32
<i>Leadership</i>	This identifies the number of times participants identified conference leadership as the most critical area of focus. This included leadership's ability to make clear decisions, support churches in alignment, communicate openly and honestly, and collaborate/create collaborations across the conference to address priorities.	32
<i>Role of Scripture in Spirit-Led</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that Spirit-led meant engaging the scripture and grounding decision making in scripture.	30
<i>Lack of Congregational Support</i>	This identifies the number of times participants mentioned that there are fewer congregational supports relating to conference priorities. This includes identifying that much of the leadership training and formational resources could be more universally developed to cover a wider range of congregants.	27
<i>Growth Requires Ongoing Learning</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that the conference would need to submit to ongoing learning to move their priorities forward.	27
<i>Intercultural (Strength)</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted that the intercultural priority seemed the most supported/strongest communicated across the conference.	27
<i>Navigating Diversity of Thought as Spirit Led</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted the tension between cultural expansion, navigating difference, and focusing on being spirit led. This includes conversations regarding how cultural	26



<b>Theme/Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
	differences might create diversity of thought in ways that feel at odds with being spirit led. This also includes where there was tension around how power (at the church and individual level) sometimes determines which version of “spirit led” is accepted at the point of decision making.	
<i>Clarity of Expectations re Priorities</i>	This identifies the number of times participants mentioned needing more clarity on priorities. This included leaders wanting the conference to be more explicit regarding exactly how they can live out priorities, resources for support, and the depth at which they should communicate and pursue conference priorities along with specific church priorities.	24
<i>Espoused vs. Lived Values (Area of Growth)</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants mentioned tension between what is communicated and what is done as an area of growth. This included expressed need for intentional supports to assist congregations and leaders in living out priorities.	24
<i>Readiness_Diversity/Intercultural</i>	This identifies the number of times participants mentioned the conference’s lack of readiness to take on diversity intercultural work. This included needing better resources to navigate cultural differences and conflict, supporting leaders and congregations in building capacity for difficult equity-focused conversations, and educating the conference towards awareness and understanding.	23
<i>Responsibility to Address Larger Social Issues</i>	This identifies the number of times participants elevated the need for the conference to address larger social issues (nationalism, immigration policies, patriarchy, poverty, economic inequality, white supremacy, racism, oppression)	23
<i>Role of Faith in Holy Spirit/God's Ability to Lead the Mosaic Forward</i>	This identifies the number of times that participants discussed the conference’s need to engage in prayer, fasting, or discernment to determine how to move forward. It also related to a focus on faith to guide internal relationships as believers (i.e., trusting the God in another person).	22
<i>Espoused vs. Lived Priorities (Alignment)</i>	This identifies the number of times participants noted a tension between the values the conference communicates and actions within it.	20
<i>Lack of Transparency (Area of Growth)</i>	This identifies the number of times participants mentioned that transparency is an area for growth within the conference. This included decision making, response to conflict, etc.	20