



Working Document: A Vision in Context¹

Technology: Communication and Connection

With the prominence of technology in our society there is increased connectivity and communication. We must be careful that it does not get in the way of authentic relationships and our interactions with the created world, specifically in the context of the church. Technology has the potential to connect Anabaptists across the globe and bring many voices into conversation with one another.

How to Respond:

- Encourage a culture of setting down devices during times of fellowship and worship
- Create an online network to share resources
- Prioritize face-to-face interactions whenever possible
- Tool for learning about different expressions of faith
- A way to stand in solidarity with the Global Church

Commitment to a way of life rooted in Jesus

Central to an Anabaptist identity is an understanding that Jesus is the centre of our lives. A way of life committed to Jesus requires active participation in Christ's body and needs means of mutual support and accountability.

How to Respond:

- Talking openly about why baptism/membership are important
- Have a system to continually check in with people on their spiritual development (spiritual mentors?)
- Encourage intergenerational participation in church life
- Encourage participation in taking ownership of the church and participating in the committees and meetings that make decisions in the life of the church.
- Identifying and drawing out the gifts in people (not limited to Sunday morning worship)

Indigenous Peoples of Canada

We must recognize that the process of reconciliation will require our full commitment. We believe this commitment requires active and compassionate listening. It also calls us to acknowledge our own legacy of Mennonite settlement, colonialism on indigenous treaty land, and our involvement in residential schools.

How to Respond:

- Engaging and learning together through partnership with indigenous communities.
- Shared worship services that are inclusive of indigenous peoples.
- Partnering with other organizations and social justice initiatives that pertain to indigenous rights.

¹ This document was developed between January and February 2016 as a follow-up to "A Vision for the Church." Many of its categories became foundational for our response to Future Directions (see emergingvoiceonline.wordpress.com/documents).



Embracing Diversity

As people that are gathered from different backgrounds and traditions, we acknowledge that living in ambiguity presents many challenges and has led to both conflict and broken relationships. We hope that we can begin to acknowledge the ways that people have been hurt by the church as we begin to work towards reconciliation. We recognize and accept that we will never completely agree and hope we can embrace this ambiguity, in our common goal of seeking to faithfully follow Christ.

How to respond:

- Create inviting and inclusive worship spaces that enrich our communities.
- Actively build neighbor relations within our congregations and beyond.
- Share stories and learn from one another
- Working together for a common goal or joint project along with those we disagree with

Opportunity for Something New

As society continues to shift, we believe the Church too can instigate change. We encourage the Church to look at new ways of being together amidst increasing diversity. We believe the Church is called to actively respond to societal issues with confidence and grace.

How to respond:

- Discern how our traditions and beliefs apply to our current context.
- Ensure we do not lose past traditions that define our identity.
- Focus on the traditions we have neglected in the past.
- Create covenants as congregations to ensure that multiple voices are sought out.

Cultivating a Communal Identity

The church is a space where we are called to belong to a story that is much larger than our own. The church has the opportunity to offer an alternative to the dominant cultural narrative of individualism by encouraging relationship building and thoughtful dialogue.

How to Respond:

- Worshiping together and connecting with the wider church (eg. Through Assemblies, MWC, CMU etc.)
- Raising leaders who are committed to the communal reality of the church
- Encouraging interdependence, trust, and vulnerability through Small Group engagement and Mentorships
- Talking more openly about issues that are often assumed to only pertain to the individual (sexuality, mental health, money, trauma)
- Using congregational space to bring together members of the communities that surround our churches
- Encouraging the church to be proactive in discernment rather than reactive
- We have an ethical responsibility to challenge wrong action, and encourage self identity within a corporate identity