



Church of the Brethren

Strategic Plan 2020

Reviewed and approved by the
Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board
19 October 2014

Directional Goals (6) Sustainability and (3) Congregational Vitality
reviewed and affirmed by the
Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board
18 October 2015, 11 March 2017

Directional Goals (1) Brethren Voice and (5) Service
reviewed and affirmed by the
Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board
12 March 2016, 22 October 2017

Directional Goals (4) International Mission and (2) Church Planting
reviewed and affirmed by the
Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board
16 October 2016, 10 March 2018

Updates to original document are italicized.
Objectives completed are in strikethrough mode.

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.

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Preamble/Prayer

*As we envision the next decade
for the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren,
we pray that . . .*

Christ will be at the center of all we do.

We will discern God's yearnings for our ministries by prayerfully gathering around the Word.

We will creatively imagine and live out God's vision for reconciliation and healing.

We will help the Brethren express faith through humble service, simple words, and courageous proclamation.

We will grow into a community that more fully reflects all God's people.

We will embody Jesus' example of servant leadership.

We will provide opportunities for Brethren to be involved in hands-on ministry so that God's transforming energy is released through committed service and support.

Our Brethren dedication to peace, simplicity, and community will undergird all aspects of our life and work.

May the Holy Spirit empower us as we respond to God's yearnings.

Directional Goal (1): Brethren Voice

Equip the Brethren to speak Christ's peace and love to each other, to neighbors, to ecumenical and interfaith communities, and to national powers.

“. . . to give light to those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

–Luke 1:79

Directional Objectives

Speaking among Brethren

- 1.1 Emphasize our understanding of scripture and the way it grounds our voice
 - 1.1.1 Promote biblical literacy for all ages
 - 1.1.2 Encourage the communal study of scripture
 - 1.1.3 Ground our denominational messages in scripture
- 1.2 Strengthen Anabaptist and Radical Pietist values
 - 1.2.1 Speak peace and love and model another way of living in today's culture
 - 1.2.2 Increase training and education in the church's peace witness
 - 1.2.3 Revitalize conscientious objector training and documentation
 - 1.2.4 Provide materials that form faith through a Brethren lens
- 1.3 Inform church members about the activities and values of the Church of the Brethren
 - 1.3.1 Develop guidelines and practices that improve the quality and clarity of the organizational voice
 - 1.3.2 Employ a range of media suitable for the diversity among the Brethren
- 1.4 Cultivate diversity while maintaining a distinctive Brethren "accent"
 - 1.4.1 Produce resources in the primary languages of sister Church of the Brethren bodies to facilitate a diversity of voices
 - 1.4.2 Create policy and best practices for new media and social networking
 - 1.4.3 Explore additional ways to foster thoughtful conversation among Brethren

Speaking to others

- 1.5 Communicate broadly through a range of appropriate media
 - 1.5.1 Maintain an active website that conveys a clear message about who the Brethren are
 - 1.5.2 Disseminate regular news and information about Brethren activity
 - 1.5.3 Use social media and other technology to supplement more formal modes of communication
 - 1.5.4 Collaborate with other organizations to amplify our public voice

- 1.6 Equip congregations to speak publicly with a Brethren voice
 - 1.6.1 Help congregations make use of Brethren news locally and tell their particular stories
 - 1.6.2 Develop means for members and congregations to speak to governments and their communities

- 1.7 Develop new ways of witnessing to Christ's peace
 - 1.7.1 ~~Build on the energy created by international gatherings of peace churches~~
 - 1.7.2 Cultivate relationships and networks to increase the common witness of "just peace"
 - 1.7.3 Work with other faith communities to define and develop cultures of peace around the world

Directional Goal (2): Church Planting

Cultivate a growing movement of emerging mission points and church planting.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

–1 Corinthians 3:6

Themes:

1. How we build a movement and extend the passion for new churches to congregations/districts
2. How we support the planters

Directional Objectives

- 2.1 Increase time, attention, and value given to telling the stories of making disciples and new church starts (at denominational, district, congregational, and individual levels)
- 2.2 Support the emergence by 2020 of 250 diverse new starts, at least one-third of which are intercultural and urban
- 2.3 Develop a diverse and deep network of sources from which to identify potential new planters
- 2.4 Build a mature and functional infrastructure for calling and supporting church planters, including a process of assessment, a network of coaches and mentors, and a flexible training system
- 2.5 Cultivate a replenishing pool of financial resources with which to enhance the planting network and strategically support new mission points and churches
- 2.6 Work toward denominational and district polity, policies, and structures that support the emergence of new churches and the welcome of adopted congregations
- 2.7 Rely increasingly upon the expertise, gifts, skills, and understanding of Church of the Brethren leaders for all aspects of the movement (assessing, training, coaching, strategic planning, etc.)

Directional Goal (3): Congregational Vitality

Strengthen the Brethren as we live into our calling as joyful communities of radical, compassionate disciples.

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds. . . .”
–Hebrews 10:24

Directional Objectives

We are called to cultivate vital and vibrant congregations as communities that gather, call, form, and send disciples.

- 3.1 Equip congregations to be gathering communities that:
 - 3.1.1 Invite and welcome new people into their midst
 - 3.1.2 Replenish and grow numerically and spiritually, reflecting the diversity present within its community/context
 - 3.1.3 Follow Jesus in a uniquely Brethren manner
 - 3.1.4 Demonstrate evolving and maturing worship practices
 - 3.1.5 Provide welcoming spaces for participants to explore questions of life and faith

- 3.2 Equip congregations to be calling communities that:
 - 3.2.1 Nurture and invite individuals to make a public confession of faith and commitment to a life of radical, compassionate discipleship
 - 3.2.2 Utilize intentional processes to identify, nurture, and make the most of the spiritual gifts of all individuals and the congregation as a whole
 - 3.2.3 Value and nurture its leadership through calling, training, and sustaining them
 - 3.2.4 Intentionally cultivate skilled leaders, encouraging them to function creatively and strategically
 - 3.2.5 Value and expect leaders to exhibit holistic health: spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and relational
 - 3.2.6 Expect leaders to value and pursue learning as a lifelong vocation

- 3.3 Equip congregations to be forming communities in which:
 - 3.3.1 Scriptures are studied and come alive as disciples grow in faith and service
 - 3.3.2 Disciples are shaped by the life and teachings of Jesus
 - 3.3.3 Spiritual practices and ordinances are taught, cherished, and sustained
 - 3.3.4 Congregational and ministerial ethics guidelines are normative for community life
 - 3.3.5 *Stewardship of creation, time, talent, and treasure is practiced, celebrated, and shared.*

- 3.4 Equip congregations to be sending communities that:
 - 3.4.1 Empower individuals to participate in God’s mission in the wider world
 - 3.4.2 Value and partner with new church starts
 - 3.4.3 Understand and value their role in developing and sending leaders for congregational, district, and denominational mission

Directional Goal (4): International Mission

Grow the church of Jesus Christ around the world in partnership with sisters and brothers within the Church of the Brethren and beyond.

“Therefore, as you go, disciple people in all nations. . . .”

–Matthew 28:19 (International Standard Version)

“... so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

–Romans 1:12

Directional Objectives

4.1 Current mission partners

- 4.1.1 Support, enhance, and undergird current mission partnerships through mutual and regular visitation, sharing stories, communication, and shared programming
- 4.1.2 Support the growth of the church within the local cultural context by periodically evaluating shared vision, developing partnership agreements, and reviewing administrative practices
- 4.1.3 Facilitate mutual leadership development through education and training in the Bible, Brethren beliefs, ethics, ordinances, and theology

4.2 Church of the Brethren constituency

- 4.2.1 Develop and nurture passion for and commitment to global missions with districts, congregations, and individuals
- 4.2.2 Plan and implement immersion experiences with current mission partners that offer opportunities for relationship building, learning, sharing the gospel message, fellowship and service
- 4.2.3 Enhance a deeper understanding of Church of the Brethren global mission philosophy and partnerships
- 4.2.4 Enhance deeper understanding of the Church of the Brethren as a Christian World Communion

4.3 Future mission partners

- 4.3.1 Seek, be attentive to, and engage in opportunities for the Church of the Brethren to develop new holistic global mission partnerships to grow the body of Christ
- 4.3.2 Explore opportunities to work ecumenically in global mission

4.4 Church of the Brethren World Communion

- 4.4.1 Develop a 21st Century Global Mission Philosophy addressing the world Church of the Brethren
- 4.4.2 Work to establish a global Church of the Brethren council

Directional Goal (5): Service

Challenge and equip the Brethren to integrate faith and service,
deepening our faith as we respond to human need.

“ . . . let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”
–1 John 3:18

Directional Objectives

- 5.1 Provide opportunities for faith-filled service of varying time commitments in diverse settings
- 5.2 Develop a culture of service, challenging all in the church community to engage in a week of service each year and a year of service in one's lifetime
- 5.3 Challenge congregations in the US and around the world to address local community needs through service programs
- 5.4 Prioritize service ministries in specific areas of human need or a selected geographic region
- 5.5 Equip Brethren of all ages to integrate their faith with a lifestyle of service and broadly share their stories
- 5.6 Assist individuals, groups, and congregations in raising support for service ministries and volunteers
- 5.7 Provide education, advocacy, and opportunities for conscientious objection to war and alternative service in the event of a military draft
- 5.8 Seek opportunities to collaborate with related agencies in resource management and program development

Directional Goal (6): Sustainability

Assure that the vision for the Mission and Ministry Board is embodied in an organization that is sustainable, flexible, streamlined, and interdependent, and which calls forth committed support from congregations and individuals.

*“For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ.”*
–1 Corinthians 12:12

Directional Objectives

- 6.1 Organizational practices
 - 6.1.1 Understand, develop and demonstrate the behaviors and practices of a learning organization.
 - 6.1.2 Ensure that initiatives and ministries remain relevant and dynamic by assigning time frames, where appropriate, at the end of which an evaluation process determines the continuation of the program or necessary changes.
 - 6.1.3 Engage in periodic review of how effectively the organization’s initiatives and ministries match the vision and mission set forth by the Board.
- 6.2 Human resources
 - 6.2.1 Develop an intentional approach to employment practices so that positions (salaried or hourly employees, contractors or volunteers) carry out the organization’s mission effectively and efficiently.
 - 6.2.2 Develop recruitment and retention plans that recognize the essential need for a diverse, gifted and committed workforce, reward employees’ competencies and continued growth.
 - 6.2.3 Engage in the periodic review of the organization’s position descriptions, examining the effectiveness of the position within the mission of the Board and the fit of the current person filling the position.
- 6.3 Physical resources
 - 6.3.1 Determine the current and future physical needs of Church of the Brethren ministries and take action to align property ownership or occupancy with ministry priorities and available resources
 - 6.3.2 Maintain property in ways that are consistent with the church’s commitment to care for creation.
- 6.4 Financial resources
 - 6.4.1 Develop a comprehensive funding plan that includes a philosophical framework, fundraising strategy, financial campaign(s), fee for service revenue, and additional avenues for support.
 - ~~6.4.2 Define a method of measuring the appropriate proportion of financial resources allocated to program versus administration and fundraising activities, and use this measurement for assessment and clearer reporting.~~

- 6.4.3 Review the suitability of the various self-funding ministry models for today's realities and recommend any changes that would improve the effectiveness and viability of those ministries.
- 6.4.4 Collaborate and/or coordinate with other Brethren organizations in fundraising for partnered ministries such as the Brethren Academy.
- 6.5 Information resources
 - 6.5.1 Develop and implement strategies for efficient use of technology that helps the organization fulfill its mission, enhances interactions with the church, and safeguards information
 - 6.5.2 Develop philosophies, expectations and strategies for the *security and* preservation of and access to denominational information, records and materials
 - 6.5.3 Encourage constituents to participate in our ministries through enhanced communication efforts focused on a message of sharing God's sufficiency and blessing.

APPENDIX

Organizational Mandated Functions

Give recognition to the many tasks and responsibilities carried by the staff of the Church of the Brethren by virtue of office, legal necessity, and assignment by action of Annual Conference.

*“ . . . to give light to those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

–Luke 1:79

Objectives

- 7.1 Responsibilities identified by Annual Conference, Standing Committee, and Bylaws
- 7.1.1 The General Secretary
- The Ecumenical Officer of the denomination, and as such, represents the denomination with the World Council of Churches, WCC International Affairs Committee, National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, Christian Churches Together, Communion Secretaries/Christian World Communions, and Council of Moderators and Secretaries of Anabaptist Churches
 - A member and convener of the denomination’s Leadership Team which serves as the executive committee of Annual Conference
 - Chair of the Mission and Ministry Planning Council
 - The chief executive officer of the Mission and Ministry Board
 - Maintains the records of the MMB and the executive committee
 - An ex officio member, without vote, of the Mission and Ministry Board and the executive committee
 - Appoints the treasurer with confirmation of the Mission and Ministry Board
 - Maintains the minutes for the Emergency Disaster Fund, Global Food Initiative, Capital Purchases
 - Defends polity when challenged legally in consultation with the Executive Committee, the Leadership Team, and the treasurer
 - Interagency Forum
 - Convener and keeper of minutes of the Vision of Ecumenism for the 21st Century Study Committee
- 7.1.2 The treasurer is:
- An officer of the corporation, and responsible for management of denominational assets
- 7.1.3 Office of Ministry
- Oversee processes for calling, training, credentialing, placing and nurturing leaders, especially pastors.
 - Steward and custodian of Church of the Brethren ministry documents.
 - Collaborate work with Global Mission in establishing guidelines for ministerial credentialing in new mission initiatives.
 - Staff Liaison with the Council of District Executives
 - Facilitate work of the Pastoral Compensation and Advisory Board
 - Facilitate work of the Minister’s Association
 - Convene Ministry Advisory Council
 - Oversee Minister’s Assistance Fund

- 7.1.4 Global Mission and Service
Executive Director provides mission report annually to the Standing Committee
- 7.1.5 Congregational Life Ministries
Co-coordinators Directors introduce newly recognized fellowships and congregations at Annual Conference
- 7.2 Other organizations whose structures require our representation
 - 7.2.1 The General Secretary serves on the following boards by virtue of their governance documents.
 - Elizabethtown College
 - Bethany Theological Seminary
 - Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust
 - 7.2.2 The treasurer serves as organizational representative to the Gahagen Trust
- 7.3 Items of a custodial nature assigned by the organization
 - 7.3.1 The General Secretary
 - Performs duties vested in the president of the corporation
 - Responsible for planning, coordinating, and evaluating program administered by the Mission and Ministry Board
 - Responsible for employment of adequate levels of staff and expertise to accomplish the ministry, mission and service of the organization
 - Coordinates denominational representation at the United Nations DPI/NGO
 - Provides all meeting coordination for the Mission and Ministry Board
 - 7.3.2 The treasurer
 - Maintains tax exempt status for the denomination,
 - Files annual reports of the corporation and maintains corporate status with the State of Illinois,
 - Completes an annual financial audit for the corporation
 - Assists the General Secretary with all legal matters in defending polity and church operations domestically and internationally
 - Coordinates legal defense of civil and criminal accusations in coordination with the General Secretary and the Office of Ministry and as needed with the Executive Committee through the General Secretary
 - Maintains denominational data base
 - Secures and maintains insurance
 - Oversees maintenance and ownership of denominational property located in Elgin, IL, New Windsor, MD, and Germantown, Pa
 - Accountable for the viability and maintenance of the Germantown Trust
 - Maintain the Brethren Historical Library and Archives as the official repository of historical documents and resources of the denomination
 - Fulfills financial responsibilities and expectations of the corporation
 - Manage contractual relationship with vendors providing employee benefits and Human Resource management services
 - Assure compliance with federal and state employment law
 - Establish and maintain human resource practices for the organization

- 7.3.3 Office of Ministry
 - Collaborates work with Congregational Life Ministries in holding ministry related meetings with CLM executive and staff
 - Collaborates with Bethany Theological Seminary in the operation of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership for ministerial leadership, a certificate level ministry training partnership of the denomination
 - SVMC Board of Directors

- 7.4 Participate with other groups and organizations out of historical or programmatic similarities. These help sustain our uniqueness and position in the greater church and society.
 - 7.4.1 Congregational Life
 - Bethany Youth Ministry Institute Advisory Board
 - Fellowship of Brethren Homes
 - Intercultural Advisory Committee
 - Ecumenical Youth Ministry Staff Team
 - Evangelism Connections

 - 7.4.2 General Secretary's Office
 - News Services – Reporting to and connecting with ecumenical news service bureaus
 - Messenger Editor – Bethany Seminary Peace Essay contest Planning Committee and judge
 - Office of Public Witness – HPC/FORCC
 - Donor Relations – Ecumenical Stewardship Center, One Great Hour of Sharing

 - 7.4.3 Global Mission and Service
 - Mission – Mission Advisory Committee, Heifer Board of Directors
 - Service – IMAWorld Health, Church World Service, NVOAD

 - 7.4.4 Organizational Resources
 - Gahagen Trust
 - Germantown Trust

- 7.5 Ad hoc committees or work assigned by the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board