

# Compelling Vision Process Team Annual Conference 2018 Data Collection report

At Annual Conference 2018, the Compelling Vision Process Team led the gathered body in conversation around a series of questions to begin the process of helping our denomination discern a compelling vision for our life together. During this time, we asked seven different questions of both the delegates seated at the round tables, as well as non-delegates who formed small groups in the general seating area. The questions were presented in English, Spanish, and Haitian Kreyol. For most questions we asked each individual to engage in group discussion and then share their personal response in writing. For one question we intentionally asked for a just a group response and for one question we asked for personal responses without group discussion. Along with these responses we collected demographic information about age, gender, race and home district.

The purpose of collecting all of this information was to help us understand who was part of this conversation, but more importantly, to begin to identify themes to help shape the next steps of our conversation. While we may use this information to parse out the responses from particular demographics, or even search the responses to understand the nuances of particular thoughts and ideas, the first purpose of collecting these responses was to begin to identify the broad themes, common ideas, and larger questions that point toward further conversation. It is this lens that shapes the data reporting that follows in this report.

In the later pages of this report you will find a number of charts, graphs, and word clouds that offer a sense of what came out of these conversations. But first, a bit about the data we collected and the way we processed this data.

## Demographic Data

We collected four areas of demographic information. We chose age ranges that seemed most natural and helpful in giving us a snapshot of the denomination. We let people self-identify their gender. The race categories we used are consistent with those used by the Office of Intercultural Ministries to better understand the makeup of our denomination. People also wrote in their home district.

One might ask why we chose to collect this data. There are several reasons. First, this data allows us to do some self-reflection about the group that

participated in this conversation at Annual Conference 2018. For example, we can look at the responses to the question of race and ask the question of whether or not the minority groups in our denomination are adequately represented at Annual Conference and what we might need to do to ensure that all voices are, in fact, present when we have these conversations. Or, we might even look at the surprisingly large number of people who chose not to respond to this question and ask what we might learn about our attitudes toward the nature of race in general.

But more directly, having this data allows us to go back and see what different groups within our denomination have to say about particular questions. For example, we might want to learn about the differences and similarities in the ways people under 35 and over 70 feel about a particular issue. Having this data allows for those questions to be answered.

It is also important to note that the demographic information reported below is from the Thursday afternoon response forms. The number of respondents on Friday was a bit lower than it was on Thursday, but there was not a significant difference in the overall demographic percentages.

## Methodology

It is worth saying a word here about the way we went about collecting responses and how the main ideas from those responses have come to be visualized in what you find below.

At Annual Conference 2018 we collected responses from 1 question during the Thursday afternoon business session and 6 more questions during the Friday morning business session:

### *Thursday Afternoon*

- We have been called to work together to develop a compelling vision for the Church of the Brethren. At the heart of that vision is a desire to live as Christ's disciples. What compels you to follow Jesus?

### *Friday Morning*

- Yesterday, we began our conversation about following Jesus. With that conversation in mind, what are one or two values that you think we who are participating in this process share?
- You've heard your conversations yesterday and your conversation today. What are the themes you see emerging?
- Why is it important for God's people to have a vision?
- What can make a vision for the Church of the Brethren compelling?
- What about developing a compelling vision gives you hope?
- What question do you hope someone asks you during the compelling vision process?

All of the responses gathered for Thursday and Friday are from individuals, except for the second question on Friday: "What are the themes you see emerging?" For this question, we asked table groups to report what together they could agree were emerging themes. With the exception of the final question, written responses were only invited following a time of discussion in table groups. Individuals were invited to respond to the final question only in written form as they were leaving the delegate hall at the end of the session.

Immediately following the Thursday afternoon business session, the Compelling Vision Process Team (CVPT), along with a couple volunteers, entered the responses from the paper forms into a Google Form, allowing us to work with the data. Between 4:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m., the team entered 790 responses. In addition to the demographic data, we entered every single response to the question exactly as it was written. However, in order to help us get a sense of recurring themes, after entering each response verbatim, we also used a series of checkboxes to help us connect that specific response to a more general theme. For example, if someone said, "I follow Jesus because he saved my soul" we chose the keyword "Salvation". Or if someone said, "I follow Jesus because he cared for the poor and needy and I'm supposed to do the same", we might have chosen the keywords "Jesus example" and "service". This keyword method means that multiple perspectives on a particular topic were all recorded under the same theme. For example, many different views of salvation were captured in that one category. What it tells us is that, while we hold differing views, the topic of salvation is important and we need to talk about it. We then

used the words from the general theme checkboxes to create a word cloud which was presented to the delegate body on Friday morning.

When it came to the responses gathered on Friday, we asked for volunteers to help with data entry in the same way it was done for the Thursday question. On Saturday, a group of 20 people worked from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to enter the data verbatim while also using the checkbox method to identify broad themes.

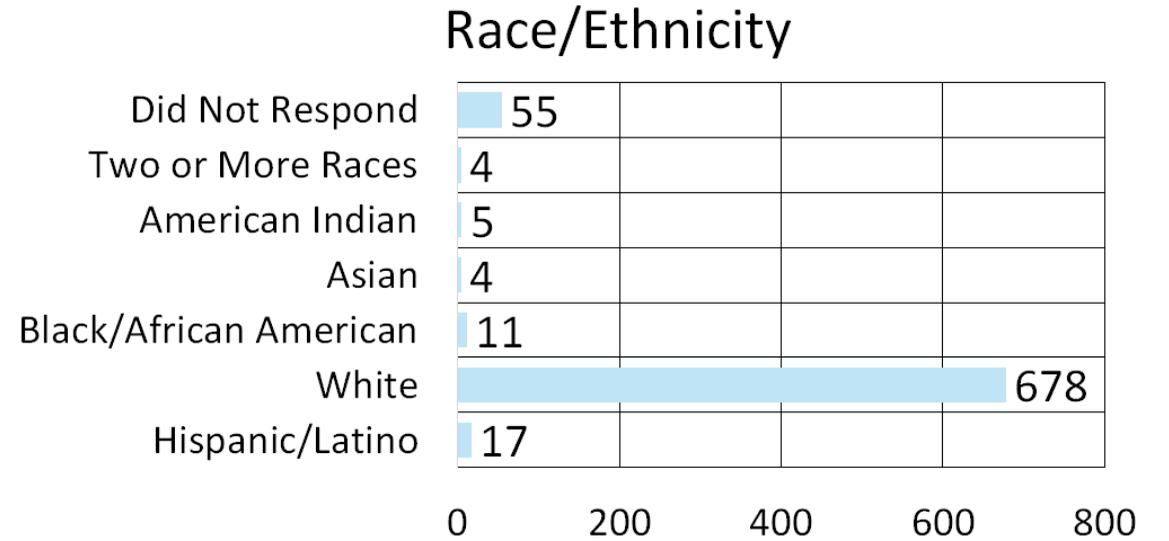
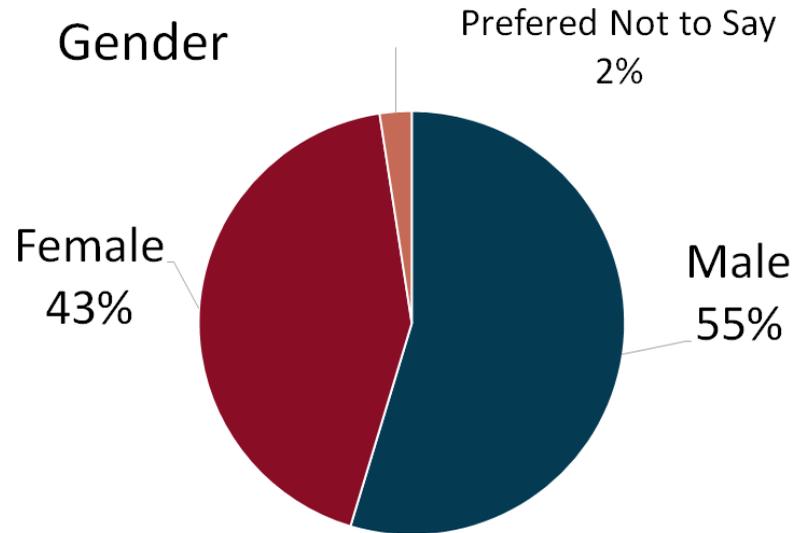
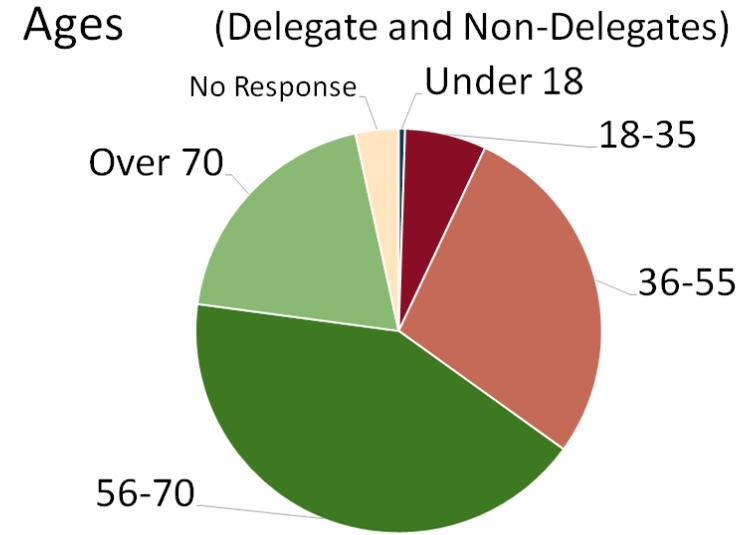
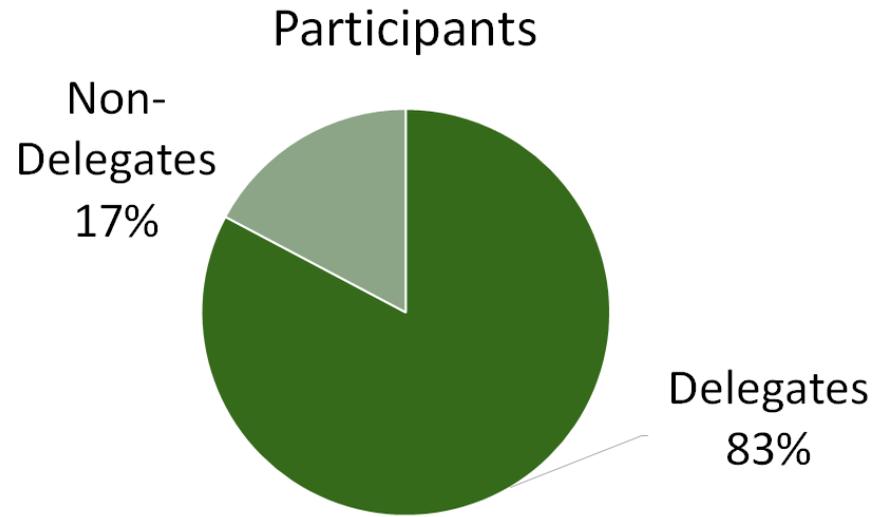
Later in this report, you will find 3 forms of visualization for each of the questions, except the final question. First, you will find a bar graph that includes each theme category identified. Everything listed was expressed at least once. Second, you will find a list for each question identifying the top 10 themes that emerged in the responses. Third, you will find a word cloud based on the themes. In those word clouds the larger a word, the more times it was used. Please note that all of three of these visualizations were based on the keyword themes, not the full verbatim answers people gave, except for the word cloud for the final question.

Again, we want to note that the goal here is to gain a broad stroke understanding of what themes, questions, and issues are emerging out of this conversation. This means we should hold the visualizations below somewhat lightly and in connection with the others. It is meant to help begin the conversation, not end it.

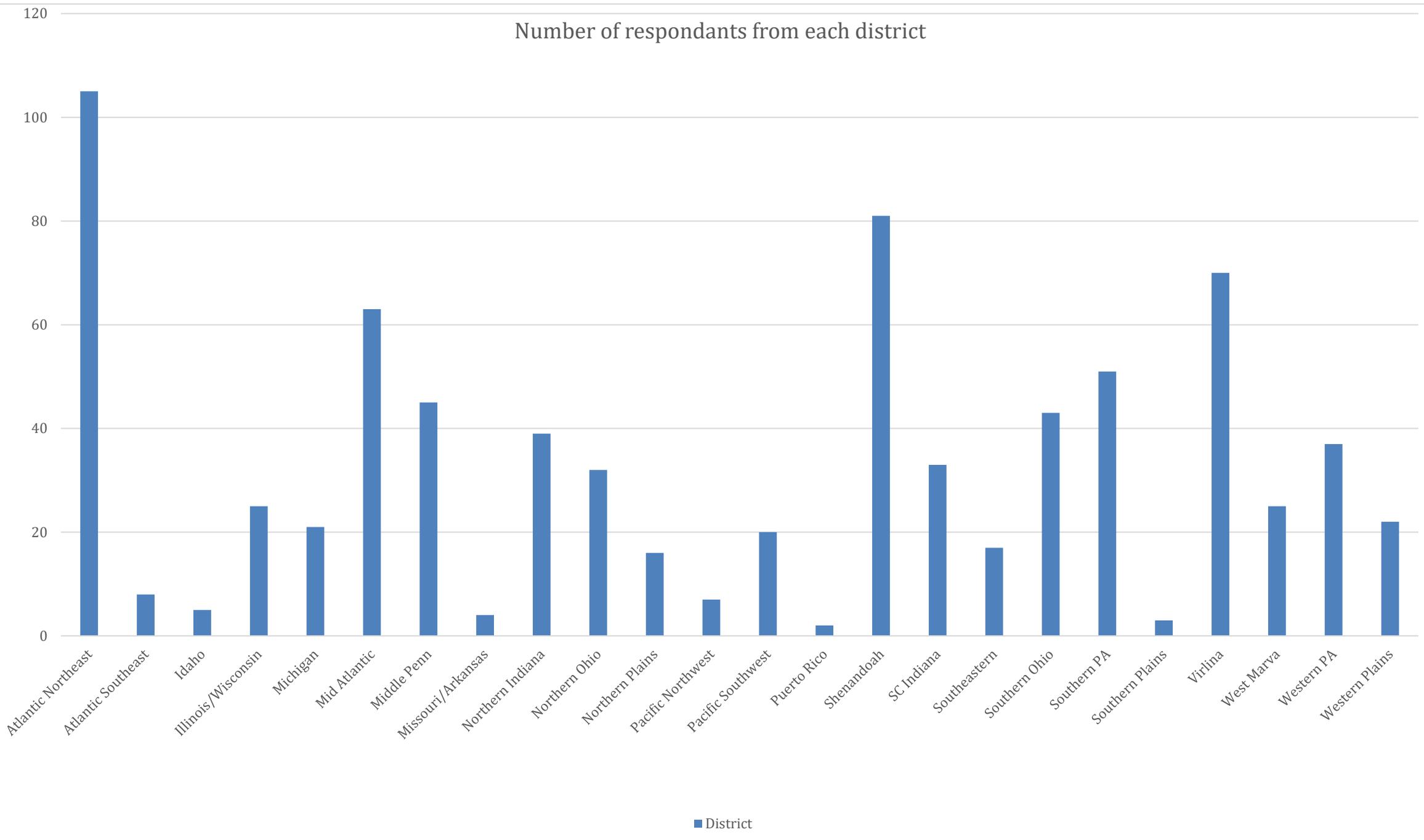
### **Continuing on**

The CVPT is continuing to reflect on, pray about, and sit with the responses from Annual Conference 2018. As our team continues to discern together, we are beginning to see themes emerging that will guide the next steps of our work. However, we are also keenly aware that the next steps in this process are highly reliant on you, dear reader, and what the Spirit is saying through you. It is our prayer that these responses offer insight to the CVPT and to everyone throughout the denomination as we take the next step together in our journey.

**Demographic data**



Number of respondants from each district

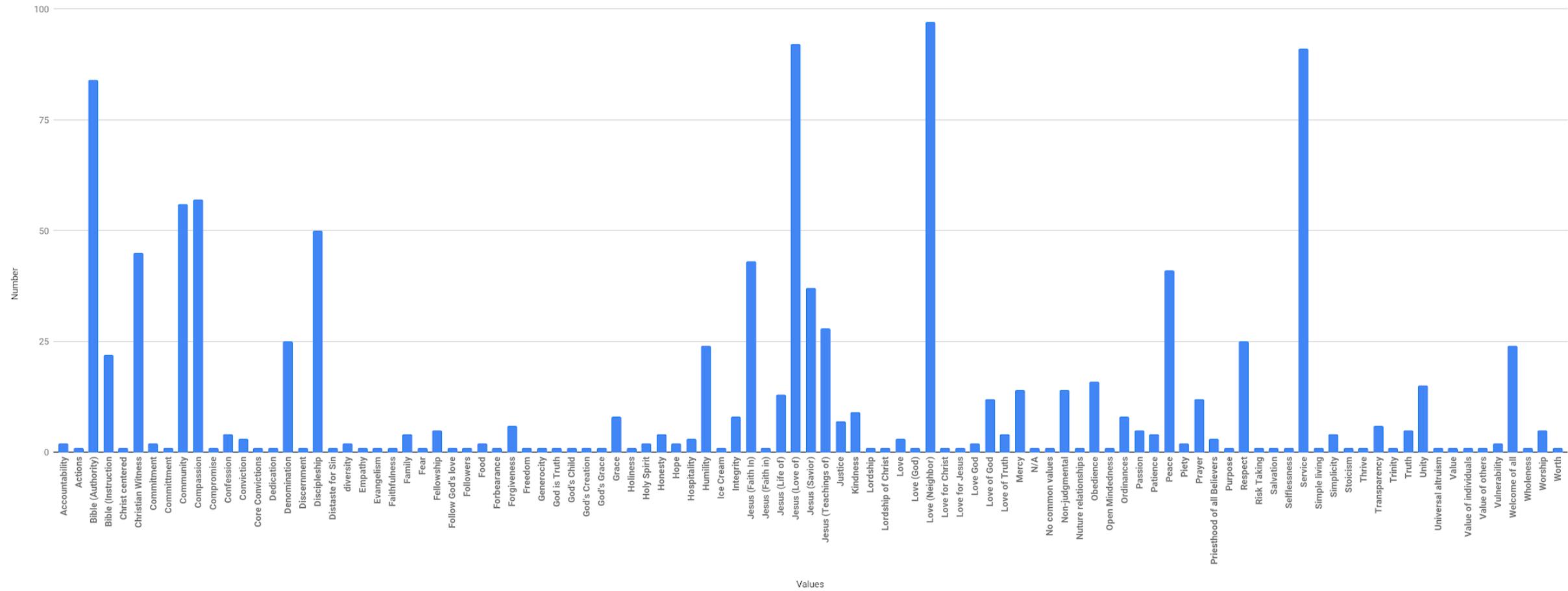






Friday Question 1: - Yesterday, we began our conversation about following Jesus. With that conversation in mind, what are one or two values that you think we who are participating in this process share?

Friday Q1 - Shared Values



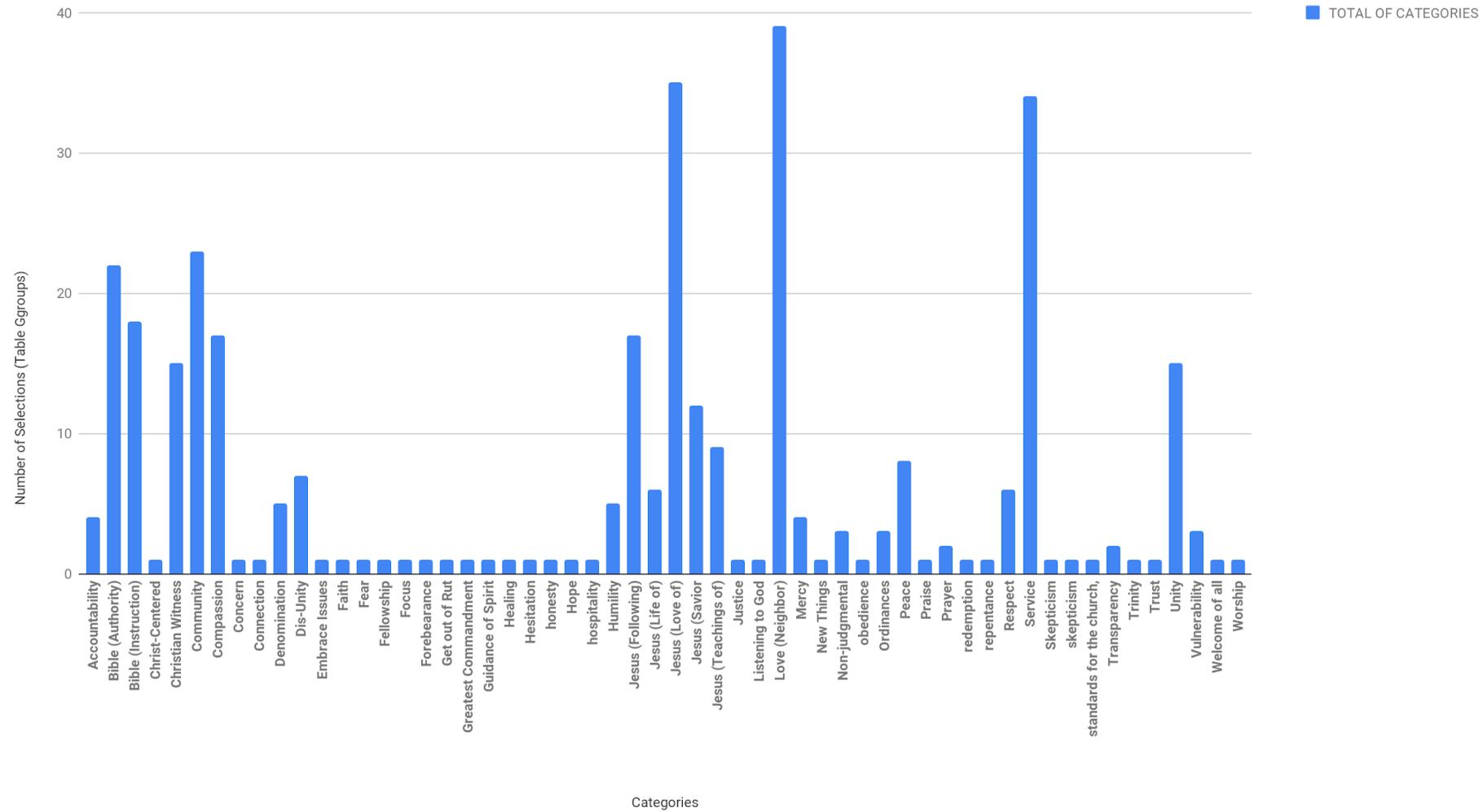
Friday Question 1: - Yesterday, we began our conversation about following Jesus. With that conversation in mind, what are one or two values that you think we who are participating in this process share?

| Top 10 Values (all demographics) |
|----------------------------------|
| 1) Love of Neighbor              |
| 2) Love of Jesus                 |
| 3) Service                       |
| 4) Authority of the Bible        |
| 5) Compassion                    |
| 6) Community                     |
| 7) Discipleship                  |
| 8) Christian Witness             |
| 9) Faith in Jesus                |
| 10) Peace                        |



Friday Question 2 (table response) - You've heard your conversations yesterday and your conversation today. What are the themes you see emerging?

Friday Q2 - Overall Themes



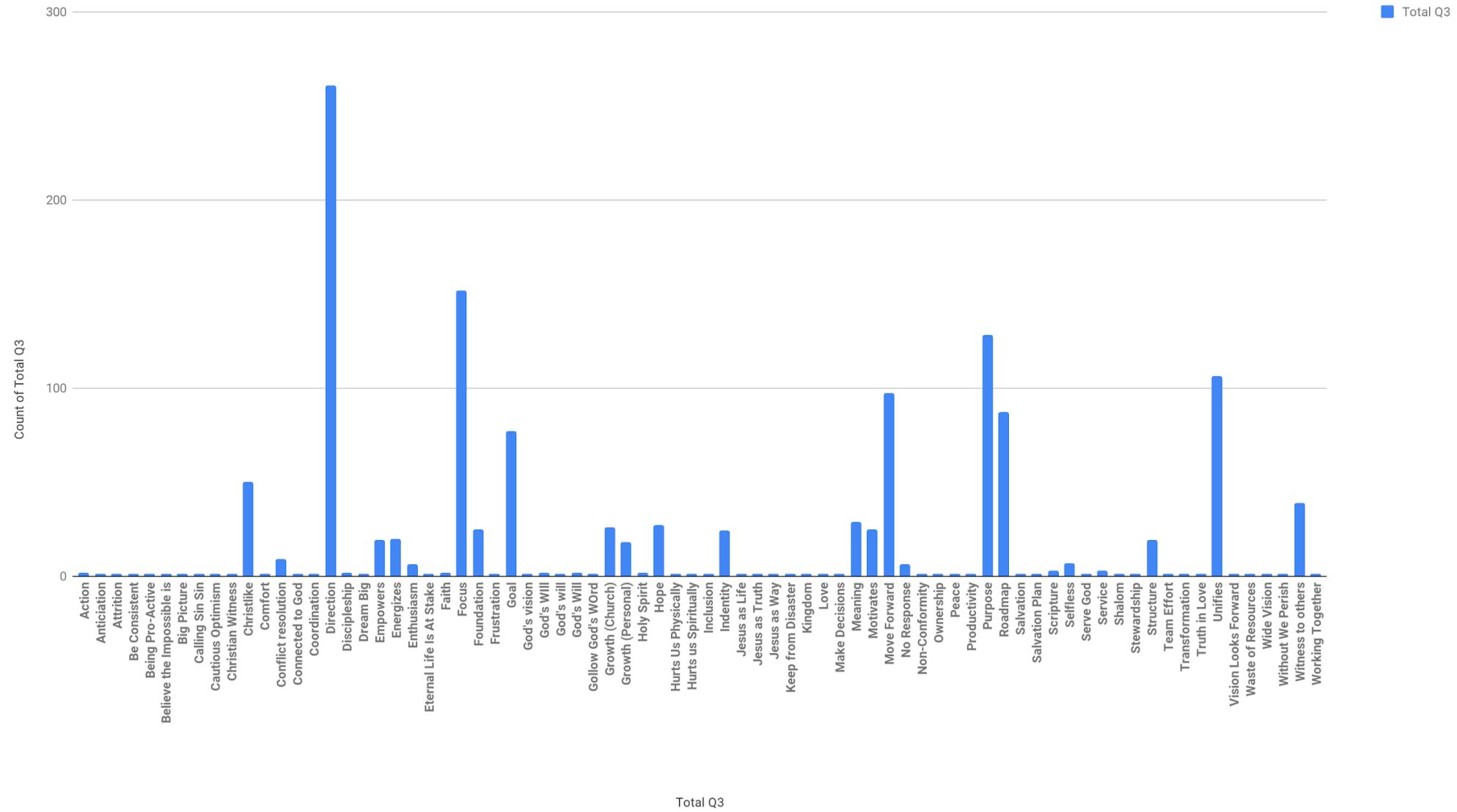
Friday Question 2 (table response) - You've heard your conversations yesterday and your conversation today. What are the themes you see emerging?

| Top 10 Overall Categories |
|---------------------------|
| 1) Love of Neighbor       |
| 2) Love of Jesus          |
| 3) Service                |
| 4) Community              |
| 5) Authority of the Bible |
| 6) Bible (instruction)    |
| 7) Compassion             |
| 8) Following Jesus        |
| 9) Christian Witness      |
| 10) Unity                 |



# Friday Question 3 - Why is it important for God's people to have a vision?

Friday Q3 -Why is a vision important



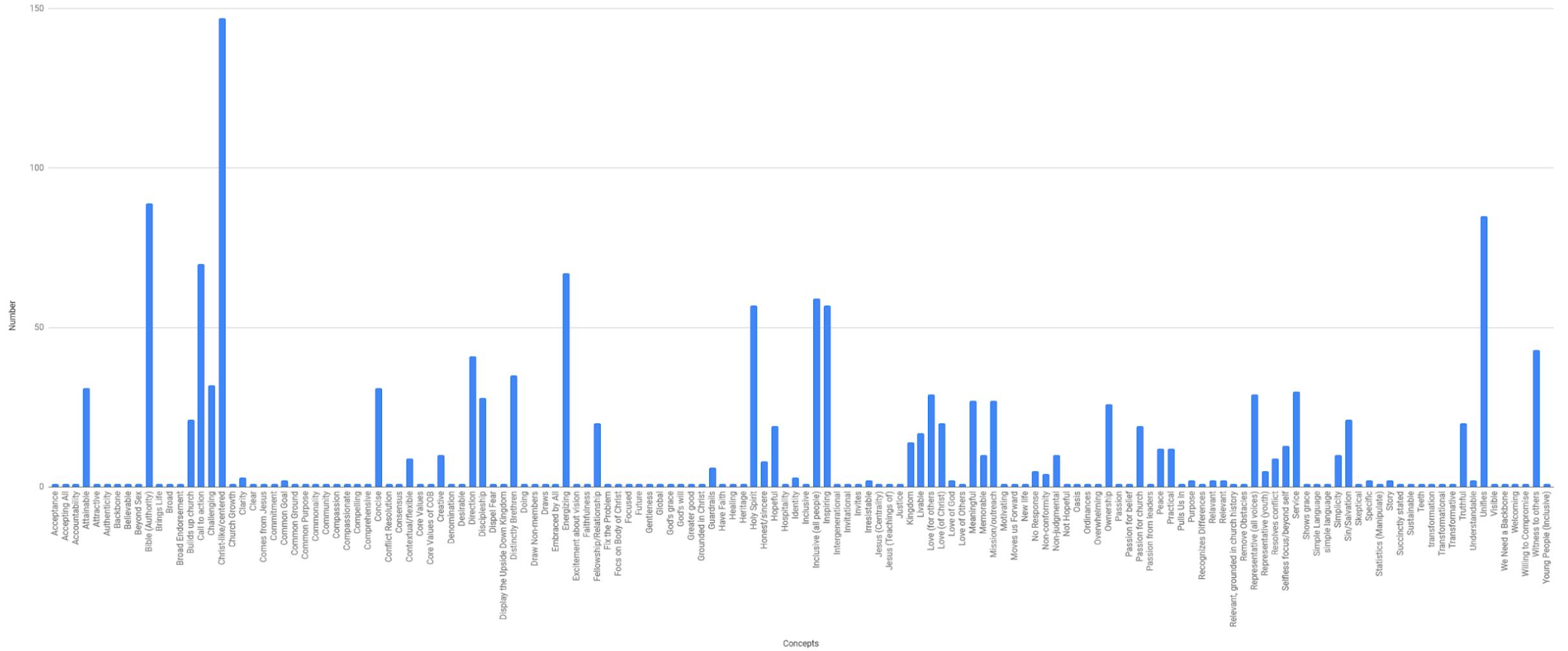
Friday Question 3 - Why is it important for God's people to have a vision?

| Top 10 Responses (ALL DEMOGRAPHICS) |
|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Direction                        |
| 2) Focus                            |
| 3) Purpose                          |
| 4) Unifies                          |
| 5) Move Forward                     |
| 6) Roadmap                          |
| 7) Goal                             |
| 8) Christ-Like                      |
| 9) Witness to Others                |
| 10) Meaning                         |



# Friday Question 4 - What can make a vision for the Church of the Brethren compelling?

Friday Q4 - What Makes a Vision Compelling



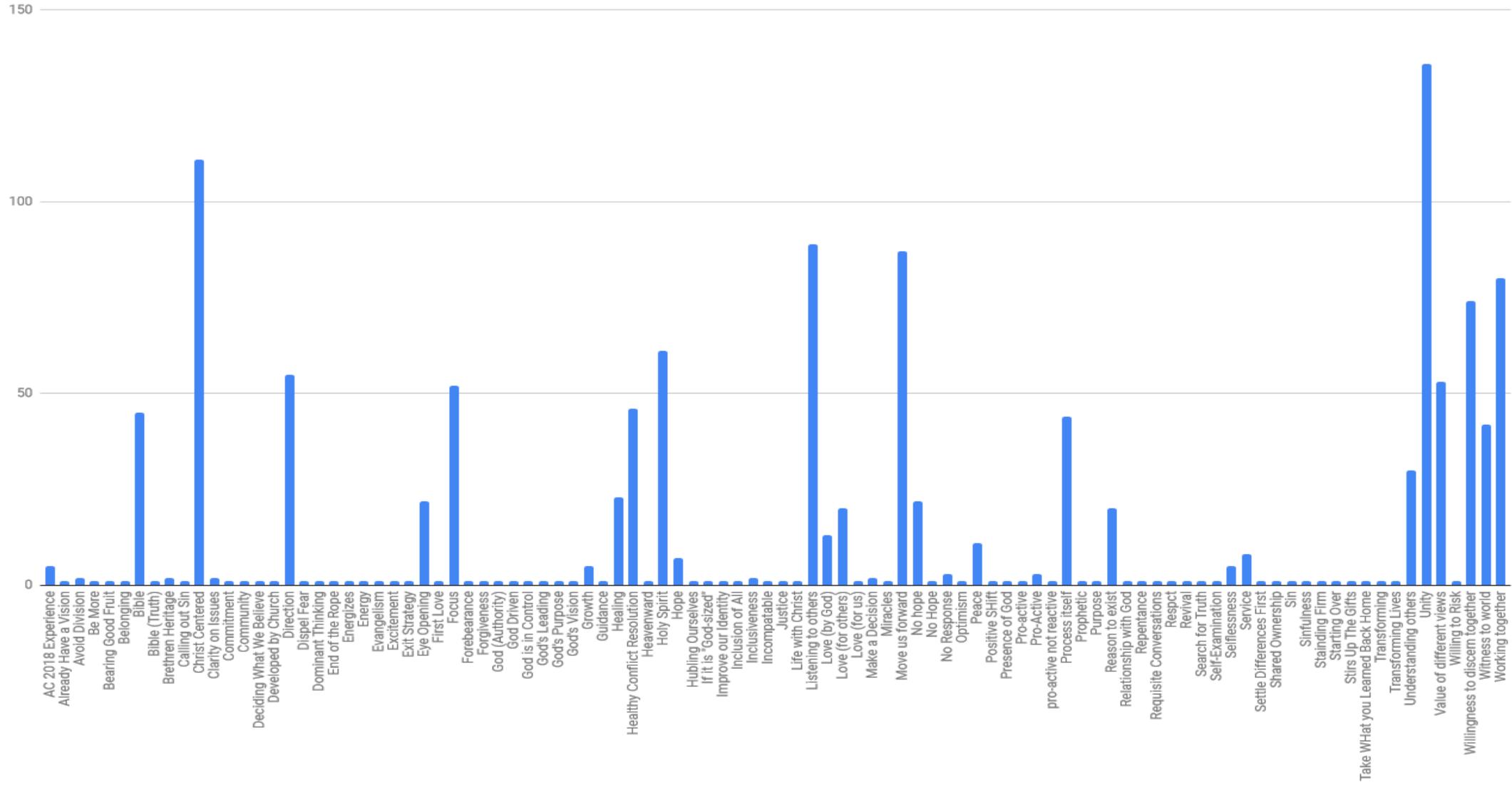
Friday Question 4 - What can make a vision for the Church of the Brethren compelling?

| Top 10 Responses (ALL DEMOGRAPHICS) |
|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Christ Centered                  |
| 2) Biblically Centered              |
| 3) Unifies                          |
| 4) Call To Action                   |
| 5) Energize                         |
| 6) Inclusive                        |
| 7) Inspiring                        |
| 8) Holy Spirit                      |
| 9) Witness to Others                |
| 10) Gives Direction                 |



Friday Question 5 - What about developing a compelling vision gives you hope?

Friday Q5- What gives you hope





Friday Question 6- What is one question you hope someone asks you?

