

Strategic Plan Communications Plan

Who is the audience for the Strategic Plan?

- Mission & Ministry Board and Church of the Brethren staff

Who is the audience for this communications plan?

- District executive ministers, district boards, and local pastors
- Each audience will need its own approach and materials
- Our team feels that our communication plan would be most effective if it focused on the “big picture” elements of the strategic plan (the Compelling Vision/Jesus In the Neighborhood Vision and Background Vision Strategies) as opposed to the Foreground Vision Initiatives and Midground Vision. Our audiences will be more interested in the strategies that will help us reach the Vision, rather than the specific details of the Foreground Visions, for example, which will change regularly and are primarily for the board and staff.

The message being communicated will change and evolve as time goes on. Initial communication to CODE and district boards will focus primarily on informing and educating, but the message will eventually shift from simply educating about the Strategic Plan to eventually celebrating and sharing how the Vision is being lived out in districts and congregations, including but not limited to the Background Vision Strategies.

Audience 1: CODE (Council Of District Executives)

Why? CODE or District Executives are the connection between the districts & congregations and the denomination. DEs can amplify messages from the denomination, and connect local ministries to denominational foci (for example, connect a congregation’s racial justice work to the Strategic Plan’s call towards racial justice). DEs will need to be informed in a way that generates enthusiasm.

Medium of communication: Included as part of the General Secretary’s report at the CODE meeting in January.

Audience 2: District boards

Why? In some ways there are similarities to CODE, but mostly district boards are a connector or bridge between local congregations. For this audience, we want district boards to understand how the Strategic Plan can inspire and challenge local congregations and districts, and how MMB and staff can support and connect districts to the Strategic Plan, with what they are already doing or could be doing.

Medium of communication: A brief presentation (briefer than the presentation to CODE) followed by conversation around the background visions. This presentation could be given by members of the Strategic Planning Committee and/or the Strategic Plan Formation Team.

Audience 3: Pastors

Why? Pastors are most engaged with local ministries and could most easily connect their ministries to the strategies of the Strategic Plan and Compelling Vision.

Communicating with pastors will need to consist of a multi-pronged approach. We should not assume that a single mode or method of communication will reach all pastors. It will also be important to provide resources that are translated into Spanish and Haitian-Creole.

Media of communication: Presentations to pastors groups, webinars, town hall meetings, documents online, Newline articles, and/or Stewardship communications. Any presentations could be given by members of the Strategic Planning Committee and/or the Strategic Plan Formation Team.

Future Communication/Engagement:

Issue a challenge to congregations/pastors involving creative sharing about how the Compelling Vision and/or the Background Visions are being lived out

For example: submit artwork about how your congregation is embodying the biblical call to love your neighbors to be displayed online or at Annual Conference; or work with Brethren singers/songwriters to create hymns or songs with lyrics about the Background Visions; or have congregations submit brief 2-4 minute videos of how your church is reclaiming New Testament models of giving

Timeline/Stages of the communications plan:

1. Identifying audiences, the specific needs for those audiences, and the purpose of communication to those audiences (Fall 2020)
2. Developing and sharing presentation with CODE (January 2021)
3. Developing and sharing presentations with district boards (Spring 2021)
4. Developing, translating, and dispersing resources for pastors, district newsletters, Newline, etc. (Spring 2021)
5. Compelling Vision is addressed at Annual Conference (Summer 2021)
6. Invitations to congregations re: artwork, songs to share how they are living out the Vision (Fall 2021 and beyond)

Accompanying Resources:

- FAQ developed by FVI 1 Task Team
- Strategic Plan Interpretive Document developed by FVI 2 Task Team
- Presentation about the Strategic Plan with general script to be used by presenters

Estimated costs:

\$200 for translation of resources

Next Steps / Recommendations:

- Our team recommends that the board votes to add the scriptural references (appendix 2) of the Compelling Vision Interpretive Document to the Strategic Plan Summary document.
- Our team recommends that the FAQ developed by FVI 1 Task Team and Strategic Plan Interpretive Document developed by FVI 2 Task Team are both translated into Spanish and Haitian-Creole.
- Our team recommends that our team continues to operate until the accompanying resources named above are finalized.
- Our team recommends that we hand off the implementation and oversight of the communications plan to the MMB's Strategic Planning Committee.



Church of the Brethren

MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN A VISION STORYLINE

COMPELLING VISION (Beyond the Horizon Vision)

JESUS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.

STRATEGIES (Background Vision) See reverse for more information

PURSUE CHRIST'S CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP	EMBODY THE BIBLICAL COMMAND TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS	SEEK GOD'S RACIAL JUSTICE	RECLAIM NEW TESTAMENT MODELS OF GIVING
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ONE YEAR FOCUS (Midground Vision)

SEEDS SOWN ON FERTILE GROUND

By the July 2021 Board meeting, the Mission and Ministry Board and Staff will be ready to execute on the Strategic Plan's Strategies in partnership with the wider Church. Accordingly, all staff, departments, and board committees will be able to articulate how their ministries are serving the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

NEXT STEPS (Foreground Vision)

INVITING LABORERS TO THE VINEYARD: FOSTERING COLLABORATION	PROCLAIMING THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR: PRIORITIZING COMMUNICATION	CASTING AWAY STONES: EVALUATING SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES	LOOKING FOR LAMPS FULL OF OIL: ORGANIZING STRUCTURE
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A More In-Depth Look at the Strategies

Compelling Vision

JESUS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.

Strategies

1. Pursue Christ's Call to Discipleship

We will create and sustain a flexible framework for formation that nurtures innovative, adaptable and fearless disciples who more fully articulate their faith and embody the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ.

How does this strategy support the Compelling Vision? Discipleship formation is a key component of the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision. We claim this as a Brethren value but haven't had a specific framework created to do this well. We believe discipleship is a key part of what it means to be a Christian but we have left this up to congregations or individuals to figure out what this means. The vision asks us to develop specific methods and resources to equip people to be innovative, adaptable, and fearless disciples. Ephesians 4:1-16 describes the call to lovingly equip and encourage disciples to promote the growth of the body of Christ.

2. Embody the Biblical Command to Love Our Neighbors

We will create and curate tools and resources that equip our congregations and members to cultivate empowering and mutually transformative relationships with their neighbors within and beyond their specific context.

How does this strategy support the Compelling Vision? The Jesus in the Neighborhood Vision calls for relationship-based neighborhood engagement, which goes beyond one-way, transactional ministries but instead creates more mutually empowering communities. Jeremiah 29:4-7 calls us to "seek the peace of the city," describing an environment that lifts up both the congregation and the communities in which it exists, both locally and globally.

3. Seek God's Racial Justice

We will identify and critique, confess and repent of the whiteness and racialized hierarchy that have been integrated into Brethren identity, and we will dismantle those barriers and structures that prevent us from becoming a community of all nations, all people, all languages living together in the presence of God.

How does this strategy support the Compelling Vision? The Jesus in the Neighborhood vision calls us to live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ, describing not the absence of conflict but rather the deep shalom of being in right relationships across differences. In the spirit of Galatians 3:26-29, in order to grow the body of Christ and love our neighbors, it is necessary to break down the racial barriers and hierarchies that keep us from fully embodying the beloved community, so that we might get a glimpse of the profound vision of Revelation 7:9.

4. Reclaim New Testament Models of Giving

Committing to both organizational mission and ministry with our neighbors, we will transform our collective culture and giving practices to reflect the just and equitable distribution of God's resources to eradicate needs as embodied by the early church.

How does this strategy support the Compelling Vision? The early church as described in Acts 4:32-35 was a place of radical commonality and generosity. This image challenges us to see the ministries of congregations as deeply connected to the ministries of districts and the wider denomination. It also calls us—together, as the Church of the Brethren—to share God's resources, in an effort to be mutually supportive as we seek to live out the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision.