

A More In-Depth Look at the Strategies

Denominational 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.