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Global Anabaptist Missions Consultation

Vision Discernment Team

Introduction

We are gathered together in Guatemala City, from many nations of the world, speaking many languages, to think together about our mission. We celebrate together what God is doing through our global family of faith. At times we have been amazed at how much is being accomplished. We have heard about how God is moving among us: new churches, the training of mission workers, outreach among unreached peoples, younger churches sending out missionaries, prophetic voices related to peace and justice, care for the weak and downtrodden in our societies, faithful witness in the midst of persecution, the breaking of regional barriers and the creative use of resources in the midst of need. During our days here sisters and brothers have also begun planning new ways of doing mission together.

We are also perplexed as we address the complexities of our world. We live in the midst of alienation from God as evidenced by war, poverty and affluence, persecution, the secularization of society, the challenges of technology, pandemic diseases, globalization and environmental degradation. We are challenged by these needs to seek new ways of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in our world.

We recognize that this challenge is not easy. As we seek ways to work together as a global Anabaptist community we recognize that:

1. There are differing views of the mission or the church among us. We see tensions among us as we bring together being and doing, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment and how we understand Shalom and the Kingdom of God in relationship to our mission. We seek to multiply faithful fellowships of followers of Jesus Christ, but we still have work to do in defining how to establish those fellowships and what those fellowships should look like.
2. How we live and work in relationship with each other, our understanding of what it means to be the church, is not always clear. We need to find language and metaphors that help us define how we will work and celebrate together that we are the body of Christ. We need more communion among us and to walk

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with our sisters and brothers who live in difficult situations, often in the midst of persecution.

3. We need to develop new more effective models for sharing and using the resources God has given us. Our worldwide resources are not evenly distributed, so we need to seek ways to share our material, human and spiritual resources so that they are used most wisely for the Kingdom.
4. As we organize ourselves for the task before us we need to look at our structures so that they create the space that allows us to work together. Our models of organization need to affirm our Kingdom and Anabaptist values, calling us to be radical Christians, involving all of the body and all our gifts. Our organizational models of mission need to be incarnational, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Our vision as an Anabaptist Global Community

We acknowledge that God has given us some unique gifts through our Anabaptist heritage for the use in His Kingdom: peace building, faithful communities developed around the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and a historical zeal for evangelization and a prophetic voice. We need to reaffirm the vision of our Biblical and Anabaptist ancestors, calling people to conversion and following Jesus Christ in our various 21st century contexts.

We lament:

Our lack of conscious dependence on God.

Our loss of zeal and vision in living and proclaiming the Kingdom of God in our world.

Our limited Christian peace witness in the midst of violence and our passivity in the face of injustice.

Our failure to participate adequately in the suffering of our sisters and brothers.

The divisions and conflicts within our family of faith.

The excluding ethnicities and ideologies that have distorted our concept and practice of community.

The undiscerning acceptance of the spirits of the age: spiritism, consumerism, materialism, individualism, etc.

Our passive acceptance of the political boundaries of the world as the basis for our mission strategies.

The squandering and hoarding of our resources.

We commit ourselves:

- To *Missio Dei*, acknowledging our reliance on God, through worship and prayer.
- To recapture the historic Anabaptist zeal for proclaiming and living the Gospel as expressed in the New Testament, e.g., Acts. 2.
- To mission strategies that fully embrace the Biblical insistence and teaching on peace and justice.
- To active participation in the suffering of our sisters and brothers, through prayer, through prophetic witness, through incarnational presence and through solidarity networks.
- To active pursuit of reconciliation and communion within our faith community.
- To multiplying faithful, welcoming accountable communities of faith, in acknowledgement of our need for one another.
- To a Biblically holistic appreciation for and critique of cultures and powers.
- To redefine our mission strategies in ways consistent with our distinct identities as members of one global family of faith.
- To intentionally function as healthy interdependent members of the global body of Christ.

Going Forward as a World-Wide Community

We encourage:

1. The MWC General Council to establish a permanent, facilitated global mission council:
 - For the gathering and dissemination of information about our many mission efforts around the world.
 - To provide forums for missiological discernment and training
 - To promote regional and national mission consultations and projects
 - To facilitate the exchange of resources for use in new and ongoing mission efforts beyond the local congregations
1. Existing mission agencies, departments, committees and commissions of all MWC member churches, to commit a fair share of their budgets for the implementation of the MWC mission council, to assure the carrying out of the tasks listed above.
3. Council of International Ministries, to move toward framing its work within regional mission structures so that USA and Canadian mission efforts become more integrated with and accountable to efforts of the churches in the various regions of the MWC.

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4. Church bodies:

To draw together and mend broken relationships for the purpose of common witness.

To acknowledge and affirm women, youth and the disabled in their mission efforts and incorporate them into the mission planning and decision making processes.

5. Existing regional councils to intentionally develop regional mission consultations and projects