



Resource Centre

# From our Churches

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*Date:* 2009

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## Vision Focus Team

### Retreat Notes

*Topic: Creating Disciple Making Communities*

We began by looking at what characteristics (rather than just skills) we bring to the Vision Focus Team. We need a variety of leadership characteristics based on our Anabaptist model of the priesthood of believers. It became evident that we are well balanced between adventuresome, curious, responsible and harmonious traits.

Visioning time has continued to be a vital part of the VFT meetings. The following questions continue to help us look at the Big Picture and create some goals:

1. Who are We? (Identity)
2. What Business are We in? (Purpose)
3. What Values Matter Most? (Core Values)
4. Where are We Going? (Vision)
5. What are our Goals or what is God calling us to do? (Priorities)

We discussed how leadership is a partnership between Pastors, VFT and other leaders in the congregation. It is about doing the right thing. It is also about focusing on the outcomes.

Management is doing things right. We learned that most congregations can be over managed and under led. Leadership has to do with helping congregations change. Leading involves staying focused on the Big Picture questions (ends or outcomes) and we trust that the means will be figured out by the people on the core teams, committees, task groups etc.

*This fall our pastors are offering a Foundations Course for adults: a reintroduction to Christian faith and practice from an Anabaptist perspective. This can contribute to our answers of visioning questions 1 & 2.*

A task group has been meeting to review our growth commitments and other documents that pertain to our core values. Their revisions and recommendations will be ready for VFT followed by the congregation sometime in the new year.

At the last congregational meeting in early summer we made a slight change to our Vision Statement to include welcoming and hospitable. There was lively discussion and the general feeling was that our statement helps to focus on what God is calling us to do.

During the past year VFT has considered the following goals for our congregation:

1. Growing new leaders
2. Nurturing conversation. We need everyone's wisdom for the wisest result. The wisdom of the whole group is greater than the sum of the parts. To guide us, we have our Speaking with Care Document.
3. Building Christian community in a fragmented society (we can be a role model on the VFT, work as the disciples did where they came together to foster trust, energy and creativity for going out to fulfill our Vision)
4. What is our biblical story and how will we tell it?

Comments on the aforementioned goals:

- Outreach – during recession we as a church can model our walk with God, help people to God, and provide “family”. Programs need to be up and energetic (recession or no recession).
- We need to change to create space. One way would be to include people who wander in and out without judgment or “jokes.” Keep in touch.
- Resources for living in a confused world
- “Learn with us” rather than “we’ll teach you.”
- Building up and encouraging members (not only focusing on new people (outreach). We need something to invite people to, i.e. healthy, caring congregational life)
- Adapting programming to escalating rate of change. At the same time, we continue following Jesus (identity)
- Name the toxins, eg. greed that could interfere. Jesus identified right vs wrong. We need to do that without finger pointing.

- We have observed more participation when we have round table discussions. More effort could be put into VFT keeping the congregation informed about the discussion that has occurred.
- Look for possibilities to engage more people in a variety of leadership roles.
- **We realized that sometimes things are happening even without our planning. When we become attentive to what is going on we become aware of how God is working in our midst not necessarily according to our plan.**