
Compelling Vision Conversation at District Conference 2018

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“Where There Is No Vision, the People Perish”

(Prov. 29:18a KJV)

The Church of the Brethren stands at a crossroads. Recent decades have been defined by paralyzing conflict. In response to the ongoing conflict, at the 2017 Annual Conference, the delegate body affirmed a report from the Leadership Team and the Council of District Executives regarding “The Authority of Annual Conference and Districts regarding the Accountability of Ministers, Congregations, and Districts.” That report concluded with this assertion: “To stay on the journey together, it is also crucial that the church discern the compelling vision that this body of Christ is called to pursue.”

Leadership at both the denominational and district levels has affirmed calling a team to guide the denomination through a process of conversation and discernment in an effort to arrive at a compelling vision rooted in our shared commitment to live as Christ’s disciples. It is an invitation to place our trust in God’s Spirit and engage in a visioning process to discern what God is calling us to do together with the fervent hope that our commitment to one another and to serving our God as the body of Christ might be renewed through this shared journey and a sense of shared mission. For as Eugene Peterson says in his paraphrase of Proverbs 29:18: “If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what (God) reveals, they are most blessed.”

Conversations began at Annual Conference this summer, and will continue in districts and with various constituency groups through the fall and winter, and culminate at Annual Conference in 2019. We are committed to engaging as many people as possible in the process, providing opportunities for individuals to give voice to their passions and concerns, listen to one another, and work together to identify common threads and themes that might point to a shared and compelling vision.

As we embark on this journey together, it is our prayer that: our relationships with one another will be strengthened and deepened, transcending points of disagreement; we will be able to celebrate the ongoing presence and activity of God’s Spirit at work among us; we will be open to what God is calling us to do together as Christ’s disciples; the vision ultimately articulated will lay claim to our hearts and our minds, our imaginations and our spirits, shaping our identity and inspiring our ministry at the congregational level, the district level, and the denominational level; and

we will wholeheartedly embrace the challenge set before us by that vision, affirming contextual creativity as we actively seek to embody that vision.

In the Pacific Southwest District, a two-hour block of time has been set aside at District Conference for participants to engage in a guided conversation as part of the compelling vision process. Whether or not you are planning to attend all of District Conference, we hope you will join us for the conversation, scheduled from 1:00-3:00 on Saturday afternoon at Hillcrest (you will need to register selecting a “Vision conversation only” registration to reserve a seat at a discussion table). During that session participants can expect to spend most of the time actively engaged in small group conversations around a series of questions. We hope you will join us on this journey.

www.brethren.org/news/2018/compelling-vision-process-team.html

www.brethren.org/news/2018/compelling-vision-team-lays-out-road-map.html

Christology is the focus of our Pre-Conference Event

As District Conference gathers to *Focus on Jesus*, the pre-conference event for ministers and other leaders will give it’s attention to a workshop focused on Christology, the study of the nature and work of Jesus as revealed in the scriptures. The event, which will provide ministers with 0.6 CEUs in area 1 Biblical Studies, will examine general understandings of Jesus as well as the ways Brethren have approached this in our history and today.

Leadership for the workshop will come from Josh Brockway, Director of Spiritual Life and Discipleship for the Church of the Brethren. Josh holds a Ph.D. from American University in Patristics and his dissertation focused on the writings of John Cassian, a monk and theologian of the 4th and 5th centuries. Josh provided major shaping of the 2015 Congregational Ethics paper passed by Annual Conference, and has a passion for the relational nature of belief and practice by individuals and the church community. Josh is an engaging presenter that will challenge participants to think deeply about the subject at hand.



Josh Brockway
Photo by Regina Holmes

Registration for this event is \$25 and includes lunch at Hillcrest during the event. Registration for this will occur as part of the process of registering for the conference. If you need childcare for this event, please indicate that in registration so that we can make plans to provide for this need. Registration and Childcare close October 25.

www.pswdcob.org/events/ministers
