

Executive Summary - The Role of Mennonite Church Canada (Nationwide Office) within the Nine Actionable Items

This summary highlights the distinct and recurring role of **Mennonite Church Canada as the nationwide office** across each of the Nine Actionable Items. Taken together, these items clarify that the vocation of the nationwide church is **not in particular program delivery or local animation**. Rather, across all nine items, the nationwide office is entrusted with a set of interrelated responsibilities that serve the whole church in Canada:

1. **Theological and Ecclesial Leadership** – articulating shared convictions rooted in Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and identity.
2. **Coherence and Alignment** – ensuring that diverse initiatives across the church contribute to shared outcomes rather than fragmented or competing efforts.
3. **Nationwide Platforms and Systems** – creating structures, frameworks, and resources that Regional Churches and congregations can adapt within their own contexts.
4. **Equity and Access** – attending to disparities in capacity, voice, and opportunity across regions and communities in Canada.
5. **Accountability to Formation** – continually asking whether the church's structures and practices are genuinely forming faithful disciples, leaders, and communities.

This summary is drawn from the larger document, ***Nine Actionable Items – A Work in Progress***, which presents detailed considerations, ideas, and possible next steps that together describe what *could be* and what *we aspire to together*. Mennonite Church Canada is constituted through the covenantal relationship of five Regional Churches. While Mennonite Church Canada is therefore inseparable from its member regions, this document intentionally names distinctions in role and responsibility so that each body can discern its work faithfully and contextually.

The Actionable Items seek to articulate a shared nationwide direction while fully respecting the legitimacy of Regional Church and congregational discernment. Regional Churches are already engaging several items. They may choose to emphasize or prioritize different items based on their own sense of call, context, and capacity. These differences are not deviations from the shared vision but faithful expressions of contextual discernment within a common ecclesial framework.

Accordingly, this document is not a set of mandates. Instead, it offers a coherent, aspirational framework to guide collective discernment, collaboration, and accountability across Mennonite Church Canada. At the conclusion of each Actionable Item summary, links are provided—where applicable—to fuller considerations, ideas, and possible next steps for Mennonite Church Canada's nationwide office, the Regional Churches, and local congregations. These are offered as resources for ongoing prayerful discernment as the church together seeks to follow God's call on our shared path. In several areas, the Mennonite Church Canada nationwide office has already moved beyond consideration toward early implementation and budgetary commitments, allowing some of these items to begin taking shape.

Finally, the ordering of the Nine Actionable Items is not intended to signal priority or relative importance. Rather, the sequence reflects how these items emerged and cohered through the discernment and creative process to this point.

Actionable Item 1: Nationwide Youth Ministry Strategy

Nationwide Office Role: *Theological vision, coherence, advocacy, and accountability*

Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office holds responsibility for articulating the theological rationale and desired outcomes of youth ministry rooted in Anabaptist-Mennonite discipleship. The nationwide church ensures that youth ministry across Canada is shaped by shared convictions rather than trends, personalities, or uneven local capacity.

Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office provides common language, frameworks, and theological resources that Regional Churches and congregations may contextualize. It advocates for youth within broader ecclesial priorities and coordinates nationwide gatherings in partnership with Regional Churches. The accountability question for the nationwide church is structural: *Is the church designed in a way that can actually form youth into mature followers of Jesus?*

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

[Households](#)

Actionable Item 2: Ministry with Young Adults – Nationwide Strategy

Nationwide Office Role: *Legitimacy-giving, platform-creating, and barrier-removing*

In ministry with young adults, Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office shifts from outcome-setting to permission-giving and accompaniment. The nationwide office names young adults as full participants in ecclesial life, not as a transitional demographic, and works to remove structural barriers that exclude mobile or non-traditional forms of belonging.

Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office creates nationwide platforms where young adults can discern vocation, contribute to nationwide conversations, and shape theology and mission. It also champions innovation emerging from young adults, even when it challenges inherited structures. The key accountability question is whether Mennonite Church Canada itself is a place where young adults can discern and use their gifts for the body.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

[Households](#)

[Young Adults](#)

Actionable Item 3: Internship Program

Nationwide Office Role: *System host, quality steward, connector, and funding facilitator*

Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office serves as the vision holder and coordinating body for internships, ensuring they prioritize formation, calling, and discipleship rather than labour needs. The nationwide office develops and maintains the shared infrastructure—applications, policies, placements, evaluation, and storytelling—that allows internships to function equitably across the Canada and within ministries.

The nationwide office cultivates partnerships with program areas, educational institutions, Regional Churches, congregations, and international companions, while also providing centralized financial administration and fundraising support when appropriate. The nationwide office role ensures consistency, breadth, and theological integrity while leaving contextual discernment and daily accompaniment to partners associated with the internship and sending congregations.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 4: Peace Church “Committee”

Nationwide Office Role: *Theological renewal, resourcing, coordination, and accountability*

Mennonite Church Canada’s nationwide office leads by re-affirming peace as core to who we are as a people of God. It is evident in every aspect of our discipleship, rather than an optional ethic or outsourced advocacy. The nationwide office convenes the Peace Church Committee, adopts a renewed theological statement, and commissions accessible formation resources.

The nationwide office is responsible for integrating peace formation into leadership expectations, credentialing, and nationwide gatherings, and establishes accountability mechanisms to measure impact across congregations. By reframing advocacy as a *fruit* of formation, the nationwide office ensures that peace remains embedded in the church’s worship, teaching, and communal life.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 5: Diaspora Church / Underrepresented Leadership (DCUR) Training

Nationwide Office Role: *Framework-setting, curriculum development, legitimacy, and measurement*

The nationwide office articulates the theological and organizational rationale for intercultural governance leadership and develops a shared, adaptable curriculum for DCUR formation. The nationwide office funds this work, legitimizes it as leadership formation rather than diversity compliance, and models non-token leadership practices.

It establishes paths for mentorship, apprenticeships, and equitable appointments, and tracks outcomes related to influence, retention, and leadership movement. The nationwide office ensures that underrepresented leaders are not merely present, but formed, supported, and empowered within church governance.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 6: Renewing and Planting Congregations

Nationwide Office Role: *Theological interpretation, resourcing, and alignment*

The nationwide office provides theological clarity and shared frameworks for understanding congregational life cycles, renewal, loss, and new beginnings. The nationwide office develops tools such as health assessments, revitalization handbooks, and leadership training pipelines, while also funding re-visioning and restart processes.

The nationwide office normalizes courageous endings and experimentation through storytelling and policy support, helping the church understand revitalization as faithfulness rather than crisis management. It also ensures theological integrity during transitions and aligns congregational processes with Anabaptist convictions.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 7: Intercultural Church Steering Committee (ICSC)

Nationwide Office Role: *Prophetic voice, connector, and conscience*

Through the ICSC, the nationwide office sustains a focus on interculturality as discipleship, grounded in Christian hospitality and mutual transformation. The committee advises nationwide office staff, councils and committees, accompanies Regional Churches, and encourages congregations, without functioning as a program office.

The nationwide office ensures intercultural commitments shape decision-making across revitalization, church planting, governance, youth ministry, and leadership development. Its role is to hold the whole church accountable to shared belonging across difference.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 8: Worship Resources (Peace and Intercultural Church)

Nationwide Office Role: *Naming, aligning, and amplifying*

Mennonite Church Canada partners with *Together in Worship* by publicly naming peace and intercultural worship resources as important formation tools for this season. The nationwide office manages this partnership and aligns these resources with these emphases, promotes them through nationwide communications, and frames their use as practices of discipleship and hospitality.

Rather than mandating use, the nationwide office normalizes collective engagement, reinforcing worship as a primary site where the church is shaped into who it becomes.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Actionable Item 9: TRC Call to Action #60

Nationwide Office Role: *Content leadership, coordination, and theological framing*

Mennonite Church Canada responds to Call to Action #60 by embedding Indigenous-led theological learning into expectations for pastoral and denominational leadership. Through the Indigenous Relations Coordinator, the nationwide office develops or curates core learning resources, integrates them into leadership formation, and names this work as a nationwide commitment.

The nationwide office ensures reconciliation learning is ongoing, structurally supported, and rooted in discipleship rather than optional compliance, while Regional Churches and congregations embody this learning locally.

Click a button below to see suggested opportunities in more detail:

[Nationwide Office](#)

[Regional Churches](#)

[Congregations](#)

Concluding Perspective

As mentioned above, the covenantal relationship of the Regional Churches shape every aspect of our nationwide expression. Across all nine Actionable Items, the nationwide office serves as the theological and relational centre of gravity for Mennonite Church Canada by holding vision, building systems, ensuring equity, and asking hard formation questions. The nationwide office does not replace Regional Churches or congregations; instead, it creates the conditions in which all can act faithfully, coherently, and together in following Jesus. The opportunity before all of us is to imagine how and in what ways we might embody these nine actionable items. There is no expectation of uniformity, “compliance” or other power-oriented inducement. Rather this is about creation of space, nurturing opportunity, and respecting further discernment of God’s call that is lived out in the practical discipleship of these member groups.

Nine Actionable Items – A Work in Progress

Draft 3, May 12, 2026

Preamble

These nine actionable items emerged from discussions with the Executive Ministers Group (EMG) during their meeting in Niagara Falls in January 2026. As part of this process, the group reviewed survey results submitted by over 100 constituents in response to the Key Initiatives. These initiatives were developed by the EMG and MC Canada staff based on the *Gathering 2025 Summary* document, which synthesizes more than 600 pages of notes contributed by delegates, congregation representatives, and participants at Gathering 2025 in Waterloo, Ontario.

For review, the **Four Key Initiatives** are:

- 1. Centring on Jesus Through Theological (Spiritual) Renewal**
- 2. Becoming a Vibrant Intercultural Church**
- 3. Discovering, Calling and Equipping Leaders for the Church**
- 4. Embodying Peace as a Witness and a Bridge**

There were many possible action items suggested by the 100+ constituents, but given Regional Church capacity constraints, the EMG agreed to the eight. The ninth (re: TRC) was only realized as a possibility after the meeting.

Nine Actionable Items

- 1. Nationwide Youth Ministry Strategy**
- 2. Ministry with Young Adults – Nationwide Strategy**
- 3. Internships**
- 4. Peace Church “Committee”**
- 5. Diaspora Church/Underrepresented Leadership Training**
- 6. Renewing and Planting Congregations**
 - a. Renewing Congregations**
 - b. Planting New Congregations**
- 7. Intercultural Church Steering Committee**
- 8. Worship Resources** (emphasis - Peace and Intercultural Church)
- 9. TRC Call to Action #60**

What appears below is an ideal, **tiered development** of each of the nine. Given the diversity of our Regional Churches and congregations, we recognize that implementing this will most likely be a work in progress. Each Regional Church and congregation is encouraged to engage each item as best they can. Further, this document does not specifically name how each program area or staff of MC Canada will engage, nor does it name how our schools, camps and related organizations may intersect. Those engagements will need to develop as the agenda moves forward.

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 1

Nationwide Youth Ministry Strategy

Nationwide Youth Ministry Strategy

Growing out of our binational *Vision: Healing and Hope Statement*, we have an accompanying Congregational Youth Ministry Statement. The world youth are growing up in is vastly different today than when this statement was drafted. However, we can still see [this statement as articulating our outcomes](#).

Holding this statement as a guide, responsibilities across the nationwide church can best be categorized as follows:

- Nationwide Office: theological vision, coherence, resourcing, accountability
- Regional Churches: contextualization, coordination, leadership development
- Congregations: lived formation, relational ministry, practices
- Households: primary faith formation, daily discipleship, modeling

Each level contributes differently to the same outcomes, rather than owning separate or competing goals.

Nationwide Office

Responsibilities:

Tend the vision, theology, and exercise system-wide coordination.

Role with Respect to Outcomes (resulting from discernment from all levels of the church):

- ✓ Articulate the theological rationale for youth ministry (Anabaptist-Mennonite discipleship, community, peace, calling, vocation).
- ✓ Names the desired outcomes as shared commitments across the church.
- ✓ Strive for coherence so youth ministry is not driven only by trends, personalities, or local capacity.
- ✓ Provides nationwide frameworks, language, and theological resources that Regional Churches and congregations can adapt.
- ✓ Advocate for youth within the whole church, integrating youth faith formation into broader priorities (ecclesiology, justice, mission).
- ✓ Together with Regional Church leaders, coordinate regular nationwide events
- ✓ Guide and direct communication and fundraising activities to support

Accountability Focus (what the nationwide office consistently asks of itself):

- Is the church *structurally capable* of forming youth into mature followers of Jesus Christ?
- Are nationwide priorities, staffing/funding models, and leadership pathways aligned with the stated outcomes?

What the Nationwide Church Does *Not* Do:

- Direct Regional Church nor congregational youth ministry.
- Control curriculum or methods at the local level.

Regional Churches

Responsibilities:

Contextualization (to the respective RC), coordination, and supporting congregations.

Role with Respect to the Outcomes:

- ✓ Translate the nationwide vision into regional contexts (urban/rural, intercultural, theological diversity).
- ✓ Support and equip congregations through:
 - Youth pastor/leader mentoring
 - Training events
 - Peer networks
 - Regional Church youth events (e.g. retreats, youth camps...etc.)
- ✓ Discover, call and develop young leaders emerging from congregations.
- ✓ Encourage shared ministry where congregations lack capacity on their own.
- ✓ Notice patterns and gaps across congregations and respond strategically.

Accountability Focus (what the RC consistently asks of itself):

- Are congregations adequately supported to live into the outcomes?
- Are youth leaders trained to have biblical, theological and pastoral capacity?
- Are smaller or struggling congregations being left behind?

➤ Bridge Function:

Regional Churches act as the **bridge** between the collectively held nationwide vision and congregational practice.

Congregations

Responsibilities:

Embodied formation and belonging. This is the most direct and weighty responsibility for achieving the youth ministry outcomes.

Role with Respect to the Outcomes:

- ✓ Create communities of belonging where youth are known by name and trusted.
- ✓ Practice intergenerational faith formation, not siloed youth programming.
- ✓ Invite youth into real participation in worship, decision-making, service, and leadership.
- ✓ Model Anabaptist-Mennonite discipleship through observable practices (bible study, prayer, practicing peace, generosity, mutual aid, discernment).
- ✓ Support youth through life transitions (school, work, faith questioning, baptism, membership).
- ✓ Equip member households to live as faithful disciples
- ✓ Consider the inclusion of youth from unchurched households to be normative
- ✓ Recognize that belonging may precede believing and behaving

Accountability focus:

- Do youth experience the congregation as a place where they belong?
- Is the faith community the centre of their lives?
- Are faith practices visible, shared and modeled, not just taught?
- Are adults prepared to mentor rather than manage youth?

Note:

Congregations are where outcomes either become lived realities—or remain aspirational language.

Households (families, guardians, chosen families)

Responsibilities: Daily faith formation and modeling. In Anabaptist-Mennonite life, faith is “caught as much as taught” - historically, we have used the word “*gelassenheit*” to describe this.¹

Role with respect to the Outcomes:

- ✓ Model discipleship in everyday life (peacemaking, decision-making, generosity).
- ✓ Practice faith at home through habits, conversation, prayer, and storytelling.
- ✓ Support youth participation in congregational life rather than outsourcing faith formation to programs.
- ✓ Accompany youth through questions, doubt, and discernment, not rushing outcomes.
- ✓ Practice hospitality with those outside the home so that youth grow up seeing their home as welcoming space to others

Accountability focus:

- Is faith integrated into daily life or isolated to church activities?
- Are youth experiencing coherence between home and church?

Key clarification:

Households are partners with congregations.

Summary Table

Level	Core Responsibility	Nature of Contribution
Nationwide Office	Vision and theological coherence	Direction-setting, resourcing, accountability
Regional Churches	Contextual support and leadership development	Translation, training, coordination
Congregations	Embodied discipleship and belonging	Practices, relationships, participation
Households	Daily faith formation	Modeling, accompaniment, reinforcement

¹ Adaptation will be required for youth coming from unchurched households.

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 2

Ministry with Young Adults

Nationwide Strategy

Ministry with Young Adults – Nationwide Strategy

Below is as strategy for ministry **WITH** young adults (~ ages 18–30). It assumes that they are already active followers of Jesus, emerging as leaders, and sometimes between households, congregations, and places. This model builds on the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement with an emphasis on formation-through-participation and shared leadership.

In **youth** ministry, we would ask: *How do we form them?* In **ministry with young adults**, we ask: *How do we walk with, entrust and be shaped together with them?*

Some key realities that shape this framing:

- Many are geographically mobile (post-secondary education, work, exploring).
- Many are forming new households (alone, with roommates, with partners, or non-traditional kinship – often temporary).
- Many are already exercising leadership—formally or informally.
- Many are choosing whether to belong or seeking to belong, rather than inheriting belonging.

The above informs responsibility at every level.

Nationwide Office

Responsibilities:

Legitimizing young-adult leadership and belonging across the whole church. For young adults, the nationwide church's role shifts from *vision shaping* to permission-giving and platform-creating and being accomplices.

Roles with Respect to Outcomes:

- ✓ Explicitly name young adults as full participants in the life of the nationwide church, not a transitional or preparatory group.
- ✓ Affirm their mobility, liminality, and vocational experimentation as faithful ways of discerning God's call on their life.
- ✓ Adjust structural barriers that unintentionally exclude young adults:
 - Membership expectations tied to long-term residence
 - Leadership models dependent on tenure or institutional familiarity
- ✓ Create nationwide spaces where young adults:
 - Discern vocation (church and non-church)
 - Contribute to denominational conversations
 - Help shape theology, mission priorities, and public witness
- ✓ Fund and champion innovation emerging from young adults, even when it varies from inherited congregational models.

Accountability Question for the Nationwide Office:

Is MC Canada structured as a place young adults can *discern their God-given gifts and use them to build up the body?*

Regional Churches

Responsibilities:

Accompaniment, leadership development, and connection. Regional Churches become a critical connector for young adults, especially those who relocate.

Roles with respect to Outcomes:

- ✓ Recognize mobile young adults, helping them find meaningful connection to new faith communities when they move.
- ✓ Actively develop leaders-in-context rather than waiting for “fully formed” leaders.
- ✓ Offer mentoring and coaching that is:
 - Relational, not programmatic
 - Flexible in time and commitment
- ✓ Identify leadership gifts early and invite young adults into real responsibility:
 - Committees
 - Discernment/task groups
 - Regional initiatives
- ✓ Support non-congregational expressions of church life where young adults are already active:
 - Campus ministries
 - Justice initiatives
 - Worshiping communities-in-formation

Accountability Question for Regional Churches:

Do young adults experience the Regional Church as a *partner in vocation*?

Congregations

Responsibilities:

Shared leadership, belonging, and mutual transformation. For young adults, congregations are no longer the only sites of formation, but contexts of co-leadership.

Roles with Respect to Outcomes:

- ✓ Relational welcome that moves quickly to trust
 - A short space with regard to “observe first, lead later”
 - But “participate as you discern belonging”
- ✓ Offer real roles that matter, not only age-bounded or provisional ones
 - Worship leadership
 - Preaching/Teaching
 - Discernment and decision-making (within and beyond committee structures)
- ✓ Make space for questions, critique, and difference
 - Including biblical/theological rethinking and institutional frustration
- ✓ Practice intergenerational mutuality

- Older members learning from younger adults
- Young adults influencing congregational culture and priorities
- ✓ Support new household realities
 - Singles
 - Shared housing
 - Emerging families
 - Non-traditional caregiving arrangements

Accountability Question for Congregations:

Do young adults experience the congregation as a place where they are *needed*, not just welcomed?

Households (redefined)

Responsibilities:

Intentional communities of practice. For ages 18–30, “household” must be redefined beyond the nuclear family.

Households may include:

- Roommates
- Chosen family
- Partners or young families
- Intergenerational living arrangements
- Hybrid communities of faith and friendship

Roles Related to Outcomes:

- ✓ Practice everyday discipleship together
 - Shared meals
 - Bible Study and Prayer
 - Hospitality
 - Economic sharing
- ✓ Integrate faith with vocation
 - Work decisions
 - Ethical dilemmas
 - Political and social engagement
- ✓ Sustain spiritual practices outside formal church participation
- ✓ Offer mutual accountability and care

Rather than seeing households as *recipients* of church ministry, the church recognizes them as significant, sometimes primary sites of ecclesial life.

Accountability Question for the Church:

Do we recognize and bless these households as authentic expressions of church?

Young Adults Themselves (explicitly named)

One critical change: young adults are no longer only recipients of responsibility—they carry responsibility themselves.

Shared Responsibility:

Agency, Discernment, and Contribution.

Young adults are invited and expected to:

- Take responsibility for their spiritual formation
- Practice discernment alone and in community
- Offer their gifts to the church and the world
- Remain in conversation—even in disagreement
- Shape new expressions of Anabaptist faithfulness

This invitation must be explicit, not assumed.

Summary Table

Level	Core responsibility	Key emphasis
Nationwide Office	Legitimacy and platform	Permission, coherence, large-scale inclusion
Regional Churches	Accompaniment and leadership development	Mobility, mentoring, connection
Congregations	Shared leadership and belonging	Trust, participation, mutual transformation
Households (redefined)	Lived discipleship	Practices, vocation, community
Young Adults	Agency and contribution	Discernment, leadership, faithfulness

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 3

Internship Program

Internship Program (primarily for youth/young adults)

Guiding Principles (drawn from the MC Canada staff-written proposal)

- Calling is discerned in community, not only individually
- Congregations can be both sending and receiving bodies
- Nationwide scope enables breadth, equity, and consistency
- Regional Church bodies provide relational proximity and contextual wisdom
- Internships prioritize formation and discipleship, not just skills or labour
- Flexibility and differentiation are essential (placements, funding, duration)

Nationwide Office

Responsibilities:

Vision-holder, connector, steward of quality, and system host.

A. Program Vision & Strategy

- Articulate the theological and missional purpose of internships as spaces for:
 - discernment of calling
 - leadership development
 - participation in God's reconciling work
- Ensure alignment with **Key Initiative 3: Discovering, Calling, and Equipping Leaders**
- Maintain a nationwide strategy for youth/young adult engagement

B. Program Coordination & Infrastructure

- Employ or designate a part-time Internship Program Coordinator who:
 - Receives applications from potential interns and congregations
 - Curates internship possibilities across MC Canada (IR, CA, IW, CommonWord, administration, congregations, international companions)
 - Works with MC Canada coordinators/directors to shape placements around intern gifts and interests
- Creates and maintain shared systems for:
 - applications
 - placement matching
 - policies, agreements, and guidelines
 - evaluation and reporting

C. Partnership Development

- Cultivate and formalize partnerships with:
 - MC Canada program areas (IR, CA, IW, etc.)
 - Regional Working Groups
 - Educational institutions (CMU, Grebel, others)
 - Existing internship programs (e.g., Activ8, Youth Farm, camps)
 - International companion churches and organizations

- Enable differentiated internships that remain distinct from academic practicums while allowing for credit where appropriate.

D. Formation & Quality Assurance

- Coordinate intern orientation, formation resources, and closing reflection processes
- Develop and provide:
 - mentor training resources
 - best practices for accompaniment
 - tools for storytelling, reflection, and discernment
- Ensure consistent attention to:
 - spiritual formation
 - healthy supervision
 - safety and risk management
 - intercultural learning (especially for international placements)

E. Funding Oversight & Administration

- Provide centralized financial administration when appropriate:
 - receive donations that support interns and provide receipts
 - paying expenses
- Support interns and congregations with:
 - fundraising tools and templates
 - letters, newsletters, storytelling platforms
 - MC Canada web and social media amplification
- Secure and manage seed funding for:
 - program coordination
 - communication infrastructure
 - mentor formation supports

Regional Churches

Responsibilities:

Relational bridge, contextual guide, and placement incubator.

A. Contextual Discernment & Support

- Assist in discerning:
 - appropriate placement settings for interns
 - contextual realities (cultural, theological, geographic)
- Help ensure internships are contextually faithful and feasible within the region

B. Placement Identification & Development

- Identify and support internship opportunities within:
 - regional ministries
 - congregations
 - camps
 - justice or peace initiatives

- Encourage collaboration across congregations when a single congregation cannot host alone
- Work with nationwide staff to refine placements as regional needs evolve

C. Relational Oversight

- Provide a regional point of contact for interns and mentors
- Offer pastoral or collegial support to:
 - supervisors
 - mentors
 - congregational leaders
- Assist with conflict resolution or discernment challenges if they arise

D. Integration with Existing Regional Programs

- Connect internships to:
 - regional youth events
 - leadership development initiatives
 - discernment retreats or gatherings
- Encourage interns' participation in regional life so they experience the broader church

Congregations

Responsibilities:

Rooting calling, providing daily accompaniment, and embodying community both as senders and receivers of interns.

A. Calling, Discerning & Sending (Sending Congregations)

- Act as primary discernment community before, during, and after the internship
- Affirm and bless the intern's participation through:
 - prayer
 - commissioning
 - ongoing relationship
- Participate in vocational conversation rather than merely "releasing" the intern

B. Hosting & Supervision (Receiving Congregations)

- Provide:
 - a safe and meaningful ministry context
 - clear expectations and responsibilities
 - regular supervision and feedback
- Identify one or more mentors committed to:
 - spiritual accompaniment
 - storytelling and reflection
 - helping name gifts and growing edges

C. Community Integration

- Integrate the intern into congregational life:
 - worship

- meals
- small groups
- intergenerational relationships
- Help interns experience ministry as relational, embodied, and communal

D. Financial & Practical Support

- Participate in funding the internship as able through:
 - direct financial contributions
 - housing or meals
 - fundraising participation
- Support communication with the wider church through:
 - updates
 - stories
 - prayer requests

E. Post-Internship Discernment

- Engage the intern in reflection after completion:
 - What was learned?
 - What questions of calling remain?
 - How might the congregation continue to support next steps?

How the Pieces Fit Together (At a Glance)

Level	Core Function	Key Gift
Nationwide Office	Vision, coordination, partnerships, quality assurance	Breadth, consistency, resourcing
Regional Church	Contextual support, relational oversight, placement development	Proximity, trust, local knowledge
Congregation	Discernment, mentoring, daily community life	Depth, belonging, embodied faith

Benefits of this Model:

- ✓ Respects congregational polity while avoiding isolation
- ✓ Prevents over-centralization while ensuring equity and coherence
- ✓ Makes internships formation-first, not task-first
- ✓ Scales organically as interest and capacity grow
- ✓ Allows flexibility in funding, duration, and placement without losing identity

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 4

Peace Church “Committee”

Peace Church “Committee”

Mandate:

To reestablish Mennonite Church Canada congregations as *peace churches* by renewing biblical/theological clarity, congregational formation, and lived practices rooted in the Jesus way of peace.

Initial Timeframe:

18–24 months, with a final report and implementation pathway.

Guiding Convictions:

- Peace is not primarily advocacy; it is often **costly discipleship** that springs from a life transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Peace is not optional ethics; it is a key theme in the biblical narrative, it is **Gospel** (Good News) for the world.
 - Peace is not outsourced to specialists/interest groups; it is **congregational vocation**.
 - Peace must **be taught, practiced, and rehearsed** across all ages.
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COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. Clarify How We Understand Mennonite Peace Theology

Purpose: Reground “peace” biblically, theologically and ecclesiologically rather than politically or programmatically.

Key Questions:

- What do we mean by *the Jesus way of peace*?
- How do Scripture, Anabaptist theology, and lived tradition define peace?
- What has been lost, reduced, or confused in recent decades?

Outputs:

- A concise theological statement: *Peace as Faithful Discipleship*
 - Teaching-level interpretation (not more academic-level writing)
 - Articulation of peace as:
 - Nonviolence
 - Nonresistance
 - Enemy-love
 - Reconciliation
 - Costly discipleship
 - Communal practice
-

2. Assess the Formation Gap in Congregations

Purpose: Name honestly how peace formation has weakened.

Focus Areas:

- Preaching and teaching
- Baptismal preparation
- Sunday school and youth formation
- Leadership development
- Congregational decision-making and conflict

Outputs:

- Nationwide listening process (pastors, educators, youth leaders)
- Short diagnostic tool for congregations
- Identification of common obstacles:
 - Fear of controversy
 - Political polarization
 - Theological vagueness
 - Time and capacity limitations

3. Re-Center Peace Formation in Congregational Life

Purpose: Move peace from statements to practices.

Core Practices to Address:

- Teaching peace explicitly from the pulpit (more than a Sunday near Remembrance Day)
- Practicing nonviolent conflict resolution
- Forming habits of listening, patience, and truth-telling
- Integrating peace into worship, sacraments, and congregational rhythms

Outputs:

- A framework of *Peace-Forming Practices* for congregations
- Clear expectations for what it means to be a “peace church” today
- Connection between peace formation and membership/baptism

4. Develop Accessible Formation Tools

Purpose: Ensure peace teaching is usable, not idealized.

Potential Resources:

- Sermon series outlines
- Adult and youth curriculum
- Baptism and membership catechesis materials
- Small group studies

- Peace practices tied to the church year

Outputs:

- Modular, easily adaptable resources
 - Emphasis on story, testimony, and practice
 - Materials suitable for urban, rural, small, and large congregations
-

5. Reframe Advocacy as a Fruit of Formation

Purpose: Restore proper order—being precedes doing.

Key Distinction: Advocacy should arise from formed communities, not replace formation.

Outputs:

- Theological framing connecting congregational practice to public witness
 - Guidance on how congregations discern engagement with public issues
 - Clear differentiation between:
 - Government advocacy
 - Prophetic witness
 - Congregational discipleship
-

6. Recommend Structural Alignment and Accountability

Purpose: Ensure that peace remains central to our witness.

Questions:

- How are leaders trained?
- How are pastors supported?
- How are congregations encouraged and held accountable?

Outputs:

- Recommendations for:
 - Ministerial credentialing expectations
 - Continuing education
 - Congregational self-assessment
 - Integration into existing denominational processes
-

RESPONSIBILITIES BY LEVEL

Nationwide Office

Responsibilities:

Creates an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of ecclesially/pedagogically minded persons from the Regional Churches. The committee carries the following agenda.

Theological & Visionary Leadership

- Articulate and adopt a renewed peace theology statement
- Publicly reaffirm peace as central to Mennonite identity
- Ensure peace is framed primarily as discipleship, not policy

Resource Development

- Coordinate and commission high-quality peace formation resources
- Curate nationwide repository of materials
- Support theological educators and practitioners

Leadership Formation

- Set expectations for peace theology knowledge and practice for credentialed leaders
- Integrate peace formation into nationwide leadership events
- Support continuing education initiatives

Coordination & Accountability

- Encourage Regions to prioritize peace formation
- Collect feedback and measure impact
- Report regularly to congregations and assemblies

Regional Church

Responsibilities:

Pastor Support & Capacity Building

- Train pastors in teaching peace confidently and pastorally
- Facilitate peer learning groups focused on peace formation
- Provide coaching for congregations navigating conflict

Contextual Adaptation

- Adapt resources to regional realities
- Encourage experimentation and sharing of best practices
- Support rural, small, or overstretched congregations

Relational Accountability

- Ask peace-formation questions in minister reviews
- Encourage congregations to reflect on peace practices
- Normalize peace as part of healthy congregational life

Congregations

Responsibilities:

Teaching and Worship

- Preach and teach peace explicitly, not implicitly
- Integrate peace language into worship, prayers, and music

- Teach the Jesus way of peace across all ages

Formation Practices

- Include peace commitments in baptism and membership processes
- Practice nonviolent communication and reconciliation
- Create spaces for testimony and story-sharing

Congregational Culture

- Model respectful disagreement
- Resist fear-driven narratives
- Encourage discernment over partisanship

Local Witness

- Engage community conflicts and needs as peacemakers
- Serve, reconcile, and accompany rather than dominate
- Let advocacy flow naturally from lived discipleship

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Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 5

(DCUR)

Diaspora Church/Underrepresented Leadership

Training

Diaspora Church/Underrepresented Leadership (DCUR) Training

Guiding Principles (apply at all levels):

- **Formation *Before* Appointment**
 - Governance participation should be the outcome of formation, not a test of readiness.
- **Mutual Adaptation**
 - DCUR leaders are not merely adapting to MC Canada systems; governance cultures must adapt as well.
- **Relational Legitimacy**
 - Leaders gain authority through relationships, mentoring, and trust, not just through elections.
- **Transparency of Power**
 - Governance norms, decision-making authority, and informal influence must be named explicitly.
- **Non-Token Pathways**
 - Multiple people trained at once, staggered appointments, and meaningful roles prevent isolation.

Core Components of the Strategy

A Governance Leadership Pathway (nationally coherent, regionally delivered)

A shared pathway with three stages:

- 1) **Orientation** – understanding Mennonite governance culture
- 2) **Apprenticeship** – shadowing and supported participation
- 3) **Authority** – full governance responsibility with ongoing mentoring

A Common Curriculum, Contextually Adapted

Curriculum focuses on:

- Mennonite ecclesiology and polity
- Consensus decision-making
- Fiduciary, legal, and ethical responsibilities
- Power, conflict, and voice in MC Canada church systems
- Intercultural leadership and biblical theology of shared authority

RESPONSIBILITIES BY LEVEL

Nationwide Office

Responsibilities:

A. Set the Framework

- Articulate a theological and organizational rationale for intercultural governance leadership.
- Define minimum standards for:
 - Governance training
 - Mentorship expectations
 - Non-token appointments

B. Develop and Maintain the Core Curriculum

- Create a modular governance training curriculum that regions/congregations can adapt.
- Ensure materials are:
 - Plain-language
 - Available in diverse languages where feasible
 - Grounded in Mennonite theology and compliant with Canadian nonprofit law

C. Fund and Legitimize the Work

- Provide:
 - Dedicated funding for regional training cohorts
 - Honoraria for mentors and trainers
 - Travel and childcare subsidies for participants
- Publicly name this work as leadership formation, not diversity compliance.
- Note: this as contributing to **Key Initiative (KI) #2 Becoming a Vibrant Intercultural Church** and **KI #3, Discovering, Calling and Equipping Leaders**

D. Model the Change

- Recommend Joint Council and related committees:
 - Incorporate apprenticeship models
 - Include multiple DCUR leaders at once where possible
 - Pair new leaders with experienced governance mentors
- Publish stories of *how* leaders were formed, not just who was appointed.

E. Measure What Matters

- Track:
 - Retention of DCUR leaders in governance
 - Movement from congregational → regional → nationwide roles
 - Perceived influence, not just presence

Regional Church

Responsibilities:

A. Identify and Invite Leaders Early

- Work with congregations to identify:
 - Emerging leaders
 - Informal influencers
 - Those trusted within diaspora congregations
- Invitation matters: leaders are called, not self-nominated.

B. Run Regional Governance Cohorts

- Convene annual or biannual cohorts (6–12 people).
- Mix:
 - Diaspora leaders
 - Other underrepresented leaders
 - A small number of experienced leaders-in-training as allies
- Emphasize:
 - Story-sharing
 - Case studies from real regional decisions
 - Practice with consensus and conflict.

C. Create Apprenticeship Roles

- Design non-voting or limited-scope roles on:
 - Regional councils/committees
 - Task groups
- Apprentices:
 - Attend meetings
 - Receive agendas in advance with coaching
 - Debrief decisions afterward

D. Train the Mentors

- Prepare existing leaders to mentor across cultures:
 - Naming unwritten rules
 - Making space in meetings
 - Intervening when voices are overlooked
- Mentorship is a formal responsibility, not an optional kindness.

E. Recommend, Not Just Elect

- When vacancies arise:
 - Actively recommend trained leaders
 - Advocate for their readiness
 - Ensure more than one new leader is appointed at a time

Congregations

Responsibilities:

A. Normalize Governance as Ministry

- Teach that governance is:
 - A spiritual calling
 - A form of pastoral responsibility
 - Not merely technical or bureaucratic

B. Identify Leaders Beyond the Usual Criteria

- Look beyond:
 - English fluency
 - Familiarity with Robert's Rules
 - Long Eurocentric Mennonite family history
- Value:
 - Trust within the community
 - Cross-cultural wisdom
 - Experience with organizations outside the Mennonite system

C. Create Low-Risk Leadership On-Ramps

- Committees with real responsibility but strong support
- Rotating chair or co-chair models
- Team-based leadership rather than individual roles

D. Provide Cultural Interpretation

- Explicitly explain:
 - Why we try to build decisions and why it takes time
 - How disagreement is best expressed
 - When silence means consent—and when it doesn't
- Do not assume these norms are self-evident.

E. Publicly Bless Leaders for Broader Service

- Commission leaders who are moving into regional or nationwide roles.
- Frame this as the congregation *sending* leaders, not losing them.

◆◆◆ Avoiding Tokenism: Structural Safeguards ◆◆◆

- Appoint more than one DCUL leader at a time.
- Ensure leaders have:
 - Real portfolios
 - Access to informal decision spaces
 - Mentors with authority
- Build time-limited training systems, not permanent “emerging leader” categories.

Implementation Timeline (Example)

Year 1:

- Nationwide curriculum written/finalized
- 1-2 regions pilot governance cohorts
- Mentor training launched

Years 2–3:

- All regions running cohorts
- Apprenticeship roles standardized
- First cohort moves into elected governance roles

Year 4+:

- DCUR leaders mentoring others
- Visible pathways from congregation to regional to nationwide leadership
- Governance culture itself begins to shift

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Actionable Item # 6

Renewing and Planting Congregations

Renewing and Planting Congregations

A. RENEWING CONGREGATIONS

Core Principles (across all levels):

1. **Missional Discernment:** God’s mission in a specific place comes before institutional preservation.
2. **Shared Accountability:** Revitalization is a covenantal responsibility, not congregations “failing alone.”
3. **Contextual Expression:** Congregations adapt to local realities (e.g., changing neighbourhoods) while remaining Anabaptist-Mennonite.
4. **Pastoral Care & Truth-Telling:** Honesty paired with deep compassion.
5. **Death and Resurrection Theology:** Faithful endings can lead to new life.

A Revitalization Framework

Phase 1: Assessment & Discernment (12–18 months)

All congregations periodically engage in a **guided health and mission review** that leads to one of three pathways that determine the next phase for each congregation.

Common Discernment Questions:

- Is the congregation bearing spiritual fruit?
- Is it interculturally and intergenerationally accessible?
- Is leadership sustainable?
- Is there energy and willingness for adaptation/change?
- Is the congregation’s current format still the best vehicle for God’s mission here?

Outcome: **Clarity, not pressure.**

Pathway 1: **RENEW**

Congregations needing minor adjustments

Characteristics:

- Stable attendance and finances
- Healthy relationships
- Missional drift, stagnation, or cultural disconnect
- Change readiness is high

Primary Focus:

Strengthening discipleship, leadership, and a shift toward outward engagement.

Responsibilities:

Congregational Level

- Lead renewal initiatives (worship renewal, discipleship pathways, community engagement)
- Engage in leadership development and evaluation
- Address low-level conflict or adaptive challenges
- Own experimentation and learning

Regional Church Level

- Provide coaches and mentors (pastoral and lay)
- Offer targeted training (adaptive leadership, intercultural ministry, digital ministry)
- Normalize small-scale experimentation
- Create peer support/learning cohorts

Nationwide Office Level

- Develop shared tools (health assessments, renewal handbook)
- Fund leadership/transformational development initiatives
- Curate theological resources on congregational renewal and discipleship
- Highlight stories of renewal across Canada through Comms

Pathway 2: RE-VISION

Congregations facing deep adaptive challenges

Characteristics:

- Plateaued or declining attendance
- Aging demographic with limited younger engagement
- Leadership fatigue or chronic conflict
- Attachment to past models
- Still has assets (people, location, reputation)

Primary Focus:

Reimagining identity, mission, and structure.

Responsibilities:

Congregational Level

- Enter an intentional re-vision covenant with the Regional Church
- Engage in deep listening (community exegesis, lament, storytelling)
- Make difficult decisions (program elimination, leadership restructuring)
- Release nostalgia and emphasize curiosity in discernment
- Accept external facilitation

Regional Level

- Play/provide the primary leadership role
- Appoint a revitalization guide or transition pastor/staff person
- Set clear timelines and decision points
- Hold congregational leadership accountable to change commitments
- Provide conflict mediation
- Name when revitalization is no longer viable

Nationwide Office Level

- Provide training for persons to lead congregational revitalization and adaptive change
- Create funding streams for re-visioning processes
- Provide theological/ecclesiological clarity: *What must remain non-negotiable? What can change?*
- Develop theological/ecclesial language for loss, grief, and transformation

Pathway 3: RESTART/REPLANT

Congregations beyond viable revitalization

Characteristics:

- Steady decline for many years
- Unsustainable leadership and finances
- Missionally disengaged
- Primary identity is maintenance/survival
- Exhaustion, frustration and grief dominate

Primary Focus:

Honoring the past while releasing the congregation for new mission.

⇒ Restart/Replant Options ⇐

1. Graceful **closure**
2. **Merger** with another congregation (e.g., Diaspora Congregation)
3. **Relaunch** as a new worshiping community
4. Repurposing assets for new ministry (**redevelop** property for to add a housing option)

Responsibilities:

Congregational Level:

- Engage in grief work and closure rituals
- Participate honestly in discernment
- Release the need to control assets and future direction
- Bless and be curious about new expressions of church
- Name faithfulness without equating it to survival

Regional Church Level:

- Offer council in the decision to restart or close
- Provide transition leadership
- Care for remaining members with dignity
- Guide legal, financial, and property processes
- Discern potential new ministry in the location

Nationwide Office Level:

- Provide clear policy frameworks for closure, mergers, and restarts
- Fund and oversee new church expressions
- Deploy trained church planters or experimental leaders

- Ensure theological integrity during transitions
- Help reframe endings as part of discipleship

System Supports (for Renew, Re-vision and Replant/Restart)

1. Revitalization Council (Nationwide):

- Representatives from nationwide office staff, Regional Churches, and practitioners
- Oversees strategy health, learning, and refinement

2. Congregational Lifecycle Policy/Handbook:

- Names that congregations naturally move through seasons
- Removes stigma from decline, change, or closure

3. Leader Formation Pipeline:

- Specialized training for:
 - Revitalization pastors
 - Intentional interim ministers
 - Restart leaders
 - Lay change leaders

4. Storytelling & Normalization:

- Share stories of:
 - Courageous endings
 - Failed experiments
 - Unexpected new life
- Make revitalization normal discipleship, not crisis management

In Summary

Level	Primary Role
Congregation	Engage honestly, experiment faithfully, release control
Regional Church	Discern, guide, intervene, and accompany
Nationwide Office	Resource, train, align, and theologize revitalization

B. Planting New Congregations

A Framework for Planting Intercultural Congregations

Guiding Convictions (Theological Anchors):

This strategy stands on these Anabaptist convictions:

1. **Church is a discerned community**, not a founder-driven enterprise.
2. **Mission is local and contextual**, not transferable by formula.
3. **Leadership is communal and mutual**, not driven by one personality.
4. **The Gospel is reconciliatory**, crossing boundaries of culture, power, and privilege.
5. **The Church is formed through practice**, not attraction or branding.
6. **Sending is a disposition**, not an individual calling alone.

Intercultural church planting is therefore not “adding diversity,” but **forming new communities of reconciliation** shaped by shared life, reflective of the New Testament.

Why Past Approaches Have Struggled (Diagnostic Summary):

Mennonite Church Canada has:

- Imported church planting models misaligned with Mennonite polity.
- Relied on charismatic individuals without communal scaffolding.
- Launched plants too early, before trust and intercultural competence formed.
- Believed that imagination would be enough – lacked clear strategy.
- Under-resourced the long, relational pre-launch phase.

This framework corrects those issues structurally.

An MC Canada Church Planting Pathway

Ecclesial Discernment & Missional Grounding (2–3 years):

No public services. No branding. No launch date.

Purpose:

To discern whether God is already forming a new community across cultural lines.

Key Practices:

- Deep neighbourhood listening
 - Intentional intercultural relationships
 - Shared meals, mutual aid, and discipleship practices
 - Trust-building before structure
 - Formation of a missional nucleus, not an audience
-

Intercultural Focus - A Non-Negotiable Shift:

Intercultural church planting requires **structural asymmetry correction**:

- Eurocentric Mennonite culture cannot be the neutral default.
- Leadership must be shared from the beginning.
- Power, language, worship expression, and theological formation must be co-negotiated.

This means **slower growth** but **deeper ecclesial integrity**.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nationwide Office

Primary Role:

Theological/Ecclesial Stewardship and **Capacity Building**. The nationwide church does not plant churches directly but creates the conditions for faithful planting.

Responsibilities:

1. Articulate a Mennonite Ecclesiology of Church Planting

- Publish a clear theological/ecclesial framework for planting grounded in:
 - Local/Congregational discernment
 - Covenant membership
 - Mutual accountability
 - Non-coercive mission
- Name practices that contradict Mennonite theology (e.g., founder ownership models)

2. Create an Intercultural Church Planting Hub

- Comprised of:
 - Intercultural practitioners
 - Diaspora leaders
 - Eurocentric Mennonite leaders
- Functions as:
 - Training centre
 - Learning laboratory
 - Accountability table

3. Fund the *Pre-Launch* Phase

- Shift funding away from:
 - Sunday-service launches
- Fund instead:
 - 2–3 years of relational (neighbourhood) groundwork
 - Language and cultural learning

- Shared leadership formation
- Normalize co-vocational and team-based models

4. Nationwide Learning Loop

- Collect and share learning from:
 - Failed plants
 - Diaspora communities moving toward interculturality
 - Revitalization-to-planting transitions
- Failure is documented and shared without shame

Regional Churches

Primary Role:

Discernment, Oversight, and Accountability. Regional Churches are the ecclesial authority for recognizing, resourcing, and, when needed, stopping a plant.

Responsibilities:

1. Own the Call — Not Just the Candidate

- Church plants proceed only when:
 - The Regional Church discerns a *missional calling*
 - Not merely endorsing an individual's vision

2. Appoint a Church Planting Discernment Circle

- Includes:
 - Executive minister (or Regional Associate)
 - Intercultural leaders
 - Local pastors
 - Diaspora voices
- Meets regularly throughout the entire process

3. Require Team-Based Leadership

- No solo planters
- At least:
 - Two cultural perspectives (unchurched can be one perspective)
 - Shared decision-making authority
- Explicit attention to power dynamics

4. Provide Pastoral Cover and Intervention Authority

- Regional Churches:
 - Intervene early in conflict
 - Set developmental thresholds
 - Can pause or end a plant without stigma

Congregational Level (established congregations)

Primary Role:

Sending, Hosting, and **Midwifing** new communities. New congregations grow best when born from existing ecclesial bodies, not independent initiatives.

Responsibilities:

1. Become Sending Congregations

- Commit:
 - Core people
 - Financial resources
 - Ongoing relational accountability
- Sending congregations relinquish control while remaining covenant partners

2. Incubate Intercultural Communities

- Host:
 - Shared meals
 - Multilingual worship experiments
 - Story-sharing across cultures
- Expect/welcome discomfort and mutual transformation

3. Release Assets

- Buildings, land, and finances repurposed for new communities
- Especially in restart contexts (see prior framework)

4. Mutual Transformation Commitment

- Sending congregations expect to be permanently changed
- Intercultural planting is not charity; it is discipleship

Pathways to Intercultural Formation

Starting Point	Strategy
Diaspora congregation	Accompaniment toward shared leadership and community-facing mission
Declining Eurocentric congregation	Restart as an intercultural worshipping community
Neighbourhood initiative	Slow formation toward a covenant community
Multi-congregational effort	Shared intercultural launch team

Summary Table

Level	Core Responsibility
Nationwide Office	Theologize, train, fund pre-launch, normalize learning
Regional Church	Discern, oversee, intervene, covenant
Congregational (established)	Send, host, relinquish, be transformed

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 7

Intercultural Steering Committee

Intercultural Church Steering Committee (ICSC)

Proposed Mandate Renewal

Mandate Statement (**Core Purpose**)

The Intercultural Church Steering Committee (ICSC) exists to call, guide, and accompany Mennonite Church Canada in becoming an intercultural church by reclaiming Christian hospitality as a core Anabaptist-Mennonite practice, nurturing love across difference, and supporting systemic transformation at the nationwide, regional, and congregational levels. Mennonite Church Canada understands interculturality not as a program or competency, but as a form of discipleship, rooted in the way of Jesus, shaped by mutual love and care, and expressed through shared life with those who are different.

Theological Orientation and Guiding Principles

The work of the ICSC is grounded in these convictions and principles:

- 1. Hospitality is a Core Feature of the Gospel**
Intercultural life begins not with strategy but with the practice of welcoming the stranger and allowing ourselves to be changed.
- 2. Love Precedes Competence**
Skills and training serve the deeper work of learning to love neighbors, fellow believers, and leaders whose histories, cultures, and power differ from our own.
- 3. The Church Is Formed by Its Practices**
Interculturality is cultivated through shared meals, shared leadership, shared suffering, and shared discernment.
- 4. Transformation Is Mutual**
Intercultural church is not about inclusion into a dominant culture, but about reciprocal conversion across cultures.
- 5. Structures Must Serve Reconciliation**
Ecclesial systems either reinforce separation or enable shared life; the ICSC attends to both.

Scope of **Responsibility**

The ICSC serves the whole denomination through its connection to the Joint Council. It has differentiated attention to nationwide, regional, and congregational expressions, acting as a connector, catalyst, and conscience rather than a program manager.

Primary Responsibilities

1. Cultivate a Theology and Practice of Christian Hospitality

Core Emphasis of the Mandate

The ICSC will:

- Re-articulate **Christian hospitality** as a core Anabaptist practice for this time
- Encourage practices that move beyond “welcoming diversity” toward shared belonging
- Lift up hospitality as:
 - spiritual discipline
 - leadership posture
 - congregational way of life
- Promote practices such as:
 - shared meals across cultures
 - story-sharing and testimony
 - mutual care and material sharing
 - shared discernment and decision-making

Hospitality is framed not as politeness, but as **making space in our lives, institutions, and power structures for others.**

2. Support Intercultural Transformation Across All Levels of the Church

Nationwide Office Level

- Serve as a theological and prophetic voice within MC Canada via the ICSC
- Advise nationwide staff and boards on intercultural implications of:
 - revitalization
 - church planting
 - leadership development
 - governance and policy
 - youth/young adult ministry
 - nationwide program areas
- Help ensure that intercultural commitments shape decision-making, not just statements

Regional Church Level

- Accompany Regional Churches as they:
 - assess congregational health through an intercultural lens
 - guide revitalization, re-visioning, and restart processes
 - discern intercultural church planting opportunities
 - seek to diversify their boards and committees
- Support the EMs/CLMs in developing:
 - relational authority across cultures
 - confidence in naming power dynamics
 - capacity to intervene when harm occurs

Congregational Level

- Encourage congregations to engage interculturality as:
 - a spiritual journey
 - a communal practice
 - a long-term commitment
 - Provide guidance/assistance for:
 - intercultural hospitality practices
 - shared leadership experiments
 - navigating conflict and misunderstanding faithfully
 - Normalize slow growth, discomfort, and learning as signs of faithfulness
-

3. Reframe Intercultural Competency as Formation, Not Certification

The ICSC will:

- **Affirm** the value of intercultural competency training seeing it as one tool
 - **Resist** reducing intercultural competency to:
 - checklists
 - workshops
 - individual credentials
 - **Encourage** training that is:
 - relational
 - practice-based
 - rooted in lived experience
 - **Promote** formation pathways that integrate:
 - theology
 - spiritual disciplines
 - embodied practices of hospitality
 - accountability over time
-

4. Accompany Revitalization and Church Planting with an Intercultural Lens

Building on recent learning, the ICSC will:

- **Work alongside** those responsible for:
 - congregational revitalization
 - restarts
 - intercultural church planting
 - **Help identify** when:
 - revitalization efforts unintentionally reinforce monocultural norms
 - diaspora congregations are isolated rather than accompanied
 - **Advocate** for:
 - shared leadership from the earliest stages of new communities
-

- slow, relational planting processes
- equitable sharing of power, voice, and resources

5. Foster Learning, Storytelling, and Communal Accountability

The ICSC will:

- Gather and share **stories** of:
 - faithful hospitality
 - mutual transformation
 - difficult learning and failure
- **Create spaces** for:
 - honest reflection
 - lament and repentance
 - celebration of growth
- **Help the church learn together**, rather than expecting congregations or leaders to navigate intercultural challenges alone

Posture of the ICSC

The ICSC operates with:

- A posture of encouragement, not directive
- A posture of accompaniment, not evaluation
- Commitment to:
 - care-filled truth-telling
 - listening across difference
 - courage in naming systemic barriers

The committee does not replace regional or congregational leadership but **strengthens the whole body's capacity to live interculturally.**

Summary Mandate in One Sentence

The Intercultural Church Steering Committee exists to help Mennonite Church Canada rediscover Christian hospitality as a core Anabaptist practice and to accompany the whole church—nationally, regionally, and congregationally—toward lives of shared belonging, mutual transformation, and love across difference.

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 8

Worship Resources

Worship Resources

Mennonite Church Canada has a partnership with **Together in Worship (TiW)**. TiW is a curated collection of free online resources from Anabaptist sources that support communal Christian worship. TiW is comprised of volunteers who curate these resources and make them available on the CommonWord website.

TiW's goals are:

- Curate words, music, other artistic expressions, and teaching resources
- Support leaders in communities that have diverse practices
- Encourage worship resonant with scripture
- Share Anabaptist Mennonite resources online with an ecumenical church
- Invite individuals and communities to create and contribute resources

They aspire to support Christian worship centered on Jesus that embraces the differences found in the church—including gender identity, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and sexual orientation. We aim to provide resources that dismantle systems of oppression and join in God's reign of justice and love.

When the Nine Actionable Items were emerging, volunteers from TiW offered to curate resources giving particular attention to Peace and Intercultural Church. Below is a strategy for the TiW resources to be promoted by the Regional Churches and used in congregations.

Simple Strategy for Sharing *Together in Worship* Resources

(Peace & Intercultural Church)

Goal:

To help congregations discover and use worship resources on peace and intercultural church by embedding them into the normal life and leadership of Mennonite Church Canada.

The assumption is simple: **worship shapes who we become.**

Guiding Emphasis:

- These resources are about formation, not just content
 - They support **Christian hospitality**, reconciliation, and love across difference
 - Use is encouraged, modeled, and normalized—not required
-

Nationwide Office

Role:

Name, Align, Promote

- Publicly name TiW peace and intercultural resources as important tools for this season of the church
- Regularly link them to nationwide emphases (Peace Sunday, Intercultural Sunday – if one is designated - prayer initiatives, ACG's, Gatherings)
- Promote them through MC Canada communication channels
- Partner with the Intercultural Church Steering Committee to frame these resources as practices of hospitality and discipleship

Key Action:

Offering the encouragement that in *using these resources collectively we are building up our body.*

Regional Church

Role:

Encourage, Model, Support

- Regional Church leaders introduce and recommend the resources to pastors and worship leaders
- Use the resources in regional gatherings and worship events
- Encourage congregations in revitalization, restart, or intercultural work to use the resources over a season
- Create space for pastors to share what worked and what was difficult

Key Action:

When regional leaders use and affirm the resources, congregations tend to follow.

Congregational Level

Role:

Practice, Adapt, Share

- Congregations are invited to:
 - try the resources in whole or in part
 - adapt them to their context
 - use them regularly, not just for a special Sunday
- Worship leaders and lay planners are encouraged to learn about what is offered, not just pastors
- Congregations are invited to share stories of learning and growth

Mennonite Church Canada

Actionable Item # 9

TRC Call to Action #60

TRC Call to Action #60

In Summary:

Call to Action #60 asks **churches** to:

- Educate clergy and leaders on:
 - Indigenous history and rights
 - Residential schools
 - Treaties and the legacy of colonization
 - Indigenous spiritual traditions
 - Do this in ways that are ongoing, theologically grounded, and led by Indigenous voices
-

Simple Strategy for Mennonite Church Canada

Goal:

To provide all pastoral and key congregational leaders in Mennonite Church Canada and opportunity to receive ongoing formation related to Indigenous history, spirituality, and reconciliation, led by Indigenous voices and rooted in Christian discipleship.

Key Leaders

- **Indigenous Relations Coordinator (IRC)** – nationwide theological and relational leadership
 - **Regional Church Leadership Ministers (CLMs)** – implementation, accountability, accompaniment
-

Nationwide Office

Role:

Content, Coordination, Support

Indigenous Relations Coordinator will:

- Develop (or curate) a set of core learning resources, led by Indigenous teachers, focused on:
 - Residential schools
 - Treaties and land
 - Indigenous Christian and spiritual perspectives
 - Ensure resources are:
 - theologically grounded
 - accessible
 - appropriate for Anabaptist-Mennonite contexts
-

- Work with nationwide staff to:
 - name Call to Action #60 as a denominational commitment
 - integrate it into leadership expectations (not optional enrichment)

Key Outcome:

A clear, shared learning pathway for the whole church.

Regional Church Level

Role:

Implementation, Encouragement, Accountability

Regional Church Leadership Ministers will:

- Ensure that pastors and credentialed leaders in their region:
 - participate in learning related to Call #60
 - revisit this learning regularly (not one-time only)
- Integrate Call #60 learning into:
 - pastor gatherings
 - credentialing processes
 - continuing education expectations
- Invite the Indigenous Relations Coordinator or local Indigenous leaders to:
 - lead regional learning events
 - guide reflection and discussion

Key Outcome:

Call #60 becomes part of what it means to be a leader in **MC Canada**.

Congregational Level

Role:

Participation and Practice

Congregations are encouraged to:

- Support their pastors and leaders in participating in Call #60 learning
- Engage selected congregational learning opportunities when invited
- Connect learning to:
 - worship
 - prayer
 - land acknowledgements that lead to action
 - practices of hospitality and relationship

Key Outcome:

Learning moves from information to lived discipleship.

How This Stays Simple

- No new committees
- No complex reporting
- Use existing leadership gatherings
- Focus on formation, not compliance
- Led by Indigenous voices, supported by church structures

One-Sentence Summary

Mennonite Church Canada implements TRC Call to Action #60 by equipping leaders through Indigenous-led theological learning at the nationwide level, embedding it into leadership formation at the regional level, and supporting congregations to live this learning as Christian discipleship.

DRAFT