

BCMB Common Understandings

Preamble: This statement describes the ethos and priorities that we as Mennonite Brethren churches in British Columbia share and to which we aspire. It is intended to encourage, guide and inspire one another to greater faithfulness and effectiveness, and promote understanding for those who are new to our fellowship. Our Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith remains the authorized and comprehensive doctrinal foundation upon which these understandings are built.

1. Jesus at the Centre of Everything (Colossians 1:17)

We see ourselves first and foremost as followers of Jesus Christ. We are a people redeemed and justified by Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection. We now seek to put His life and teaching at the centre of our lives as we:

- read the Bible, illuminated by Jesus' life and work
- discern our ethics through the lens of Jesus' example
- worship God, radiantly revealed in Jesus Christ
- experience community created by Jesus' indwelling Spirit
- live out God's gospel mission with Jesus' authority and power

2. Preaching and Discipleship shaped by Scripture (Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 4:2)

God's Word, the Bible, is our functional and final authority for faith and life. We read, understand and obey the Bible in the context of community. We value both the ministry of preaching and teaching the scripture, as well as the participation of each member of the community as we search the scriptures to discern God's will and leading together. Our churches place a high value on equipping people to think biblically about our world.

3. Community formed by the Holy Spirit (John 16, 1 Corinthians 12, Galatians 5)

Our common experience of the living Spirit of Jesus filling our lives, and our gatherings, generates the holy character of Jesus within us and motivates us to live lives of worship and mission. Our prayer life is an essential link by which the Lordship of Christ and leading of the Spirit is cultivated. The gifts and fruit of the Spirit at work in our lives build up the church, empower us in mission and allow us to live in gracious accountability.

4. A Church that is on Mission (Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8)

God, who came into this world to seek and to save the lost and to set the captives free, is now sending His people out with the same mission. Through prayer we receive power and guidance to participate in God's redemptive mission. Both locally and globally, we empower and support one another to preach and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. A Church that Reflects Jesus Transforming Life (1 Peter 2, John 13:14)

Following Jesus means we practice justice, generosity and peace-making in our relationships and in our community engagement. Our allegiance to the Kingdom of God commissions us to live selflessly, as visible reminders of God's love and goodness, and to seek the peace and well-being of our society. We glorify God by being creative and careful stewards of culture, by speaking prophetically against idolatry and by enduring the persecution and sacrifice to which Christ calls us.

6. A Church that Serves in an Atmosphere of Cooperation and Accountability (Hebrews 10:25, Philippians 2:2)

Our collective commitment is that each church will give expression to these common understandings in a culturally relevant manner and will seek to remain supportive and engaged with the wider Mennonite Brethren family and its ministries. Belonging to this family includes affirming our Confession of Faith, pastoral credentialing, and engaging Mennonite Brethren agencies and ministries with financial support and participation.