

Shared affirmations of the seventh Latin American Anabaptist consultation
10-14 February 2014

1. We resolve to focus on our communities as a sign, a symbol and an instrument of hope in a hopeless context, which wants to convince us that the horizons are closed. The church is the body of Christ. If someone is not in the body we have to integrate that person, assuming the commitment to be an inclusive church.
2. We want to commit ourselves to evaluate the practices of the church – such as worship, community life, approach to the Word, ways to do evangelism – as we reflect on the extent to which these practices reflect the gospel of the Kingdom.
3. We are called to be incarnational. Anabaptist identity is in the journey itself, not in the finish line. Defining ourselves is not a theoretical question but it has to be done in dialogue at local levels, since it is an identity that keeps on building itself, a humble identity that recognizes change according to each context. We assume the Anabaptist identity that has been received, which is a dynamic identity that recognizes a legacy that is not normative at all, but is in process, is humble and accepts the challenges of inclusion, environment, marginalization, the working of the Spirit and the hermeneutics of the community.
4. Transformation is a foundation of Anabaptist theology. The one who makes all things new is God. Everything new comes from God and we are agents of that transformation.
5. We need to get the message out and there are two ways of doing so: one is to go out voluntarily to walk along with people and the other one is when we allow people to speak to us on their own terms, when we accept other ways of thinking that reflect the values of the Kingdom.
6. The evangelical culture is present in the Mennonite identity in Latin America, so we should take a closer look at theology, enabling changes in our understanding of God from the Anabaptist vision. Anabaptist theology should be undertaken as pilgrims – since we the people of God are pilgrims – to be able to address the challenges of our present society.
7. Anabaptists imagined the church as a foretaste of the kingdom. The church not only proclaims the kingdom of God but is also the community of the kingdom – the first fruits of the kingdom. Therefore, our ecclesiology must show evidence of the kingdom that we proclaim, and should do this, among other things, by being a biblical, liturgical, discipling and peacemaking community.
8. While a major challenge is to resume and strengthen our Anabaptist identity, many of our congregations are drinking from other wells, when the Anabaptist spirituality of the sixteenth century and its subsequent developments offer ample room to promote the mission of the church in our Latin American culture. We recognize that no one can go into mission without theology, so we need to work on the Anabaptist theological identity in our congregations to find the relevance, the validity and the urgency of Anabaptism for our time, which lies in following Jesus.
9. There is a sense that we need a more consistent and contextualized training, with a

more biblical-theological and experiential clarity within our pastoral work. In view of this, we emphasize our main Anabaptist distinctives for pastoral work: Christ is the centre of our faith, the community is the core of our lives and reconciliation is the heart of our vocation.

10. In the face of so many uncertainties in our Latin American context, we have a well-rooted certainty and we confess that Christ is the centre of our worship, proclamation, evangelization, discipleship and model for spreading peace and justice in the world.
11. The Sermon of the Mount (also called the curriculum of the Kingdom or the Sermon of the Kingdom) is the plan for the life of the church, the foundation of life for the believers, and the beatitudes are hope, the expectation of a better world. God has hope for new life and we are part of that hope.
12. We are united as Anabaptist brothers and sisters to share a pastoral hope in the reality of our context, with the validity and urgency that following Jesus calls us to, that the God of hope demands from us, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.