



# Circles of Dialogue

## Summary of Participant Responses

September 27, 2022 through  
April 20, 2023

# Overview

Beginning September 2022 through April 2023, 16 Circles of Dialogue were facilitated by the President across the six districts of The Alliance Canada. Each dialogue was followed by a survey for those who were unable to attend in person, and the survey was sent to international workers. In all, 608 individuals participated in person, and 82 participated by survey.

The diagrams on pages 6-9 of this report are a summary of participant's responses from the in-person events and the online survey on the following four questions posed:

1. What is right? What do we need to optimize?
2. What is broken? What do we need to fix?
3. What is confusing? What do we need to clarify?
4. What is missing? What do we need to add?

Responses with greater frequency appear at the top of the circle; those with lesser frequency appear at the bottom of the circle.

# Preamble

Assembly 2022 resolved that the development of a new strategic plan be prioritized as the key deliverable of the President's first year in office and that the development process include listening to the constituents, national and international.

The Circles of Dialogue were facilitated to provide an opportunity for The Alliance Canada to reflect together on where we are today so we can strategize with greater focus and intentionality for tomorrow. Our collective gratitude to those who participated. Your responses and reflections are summarized in this report and provide valuable insight and information to help us lead with intentionality and make strategic decisions.

As data is analyzed, it is clear there is consensus with our workers and districts on key priorities to optimize, areas to fix and clarify, and things we need to add.

# Preamble

As you read through this report, you may find a dichotomy for some responses. For example, we find *diversity* mentioned in ‘What is right?’ and in ‘What is broken?’ Participants identified that what is right is our unity across diversity in ethnicity, gender, age, roles, and perspectives, and still the need for continued growth of diversity at leadership levels. Some areas appear more than once because the Circles of Dialogue uncover areas of strategic opportunity and areas for strategic improvement. Where dichotomies exist they serve to highlight that, while our trajectory and stance are moving in the right direction, we need to be continually making improvements.

We are moving forward together with a listening posture. Ultimately, the cry of our hearts is, “Oh God, with all our hearts, we long for You. Come, transform us to be Christ-centred, Spirit-empowered, mission-focused people, making disciples everywhere”.

We share a common goal – that the name and fame of Jesus increases in all we do.

# Overall Key Themes



## Gender and Sexuality

Concerns were that The Alliance Canada was moving away from our orthodox position on gender and sexuality. Clarity was desired and it was communicated that we remain committed to our historical and orthodox position while recognizing the need to strengthen our posture and praxis.



## Theological Formation

New additional pathways and structures for theological training and recruitment are needed. Continued and growing lack of confidence in current theological formation format, reach and outcomes.



## Unified Momentum

Deep appreciation for Alliance identity, mission, vision, and unity as a diverse denominational family while recognizing the need for improved communication and clarity around structures and decision making.

# What is right? What do we need to optimize?



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# What is broken? What do we need to fix?

## Theological Education & Recruitment

Concern over theological formation format, reach and outcomes. Expressed need for new/additional pathways for theological training and recruitment.

## Communication

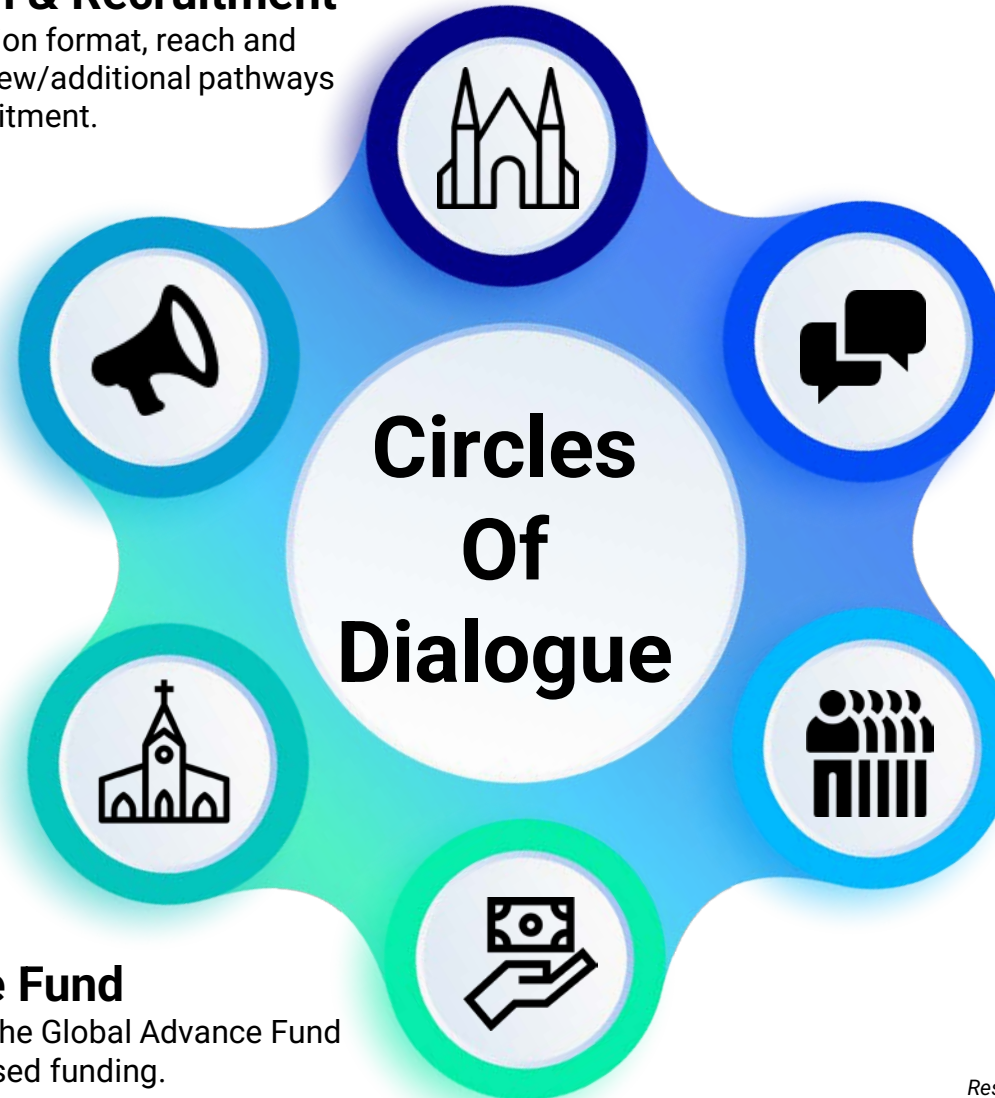
Disconnect between national and churches, district and churches, and churches to each other. Need better storytelling.

## Church Models

Welcome new expressions of church. Rethink the institutional model of church.

## Global Advance Fund

Lack of clarity on how the Global Advance Fund works. Need for increased funding.



## Constructive Dialogue

Need healthy ways of engaging in dialogue and theological reflection on important issues.

## Diversity in Leadership

Lack of ethnic and gender diversity in leadership. Isolation of ethnic churches.

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# What is confusing? What do we need to clarify?

## Denominational Structure

Role of the NMC vs district vs church and the relationship between them. NMC and district leadership roles. Who does what? Who has the authority to make decisions?

## Human Sexuality and Gender

Clarity on the Alliance's position and praxis on sexuality and gender.

## Alliance Identity

What does it mean to be Alliance? What does unity look like across diverse perspectives?

## Clarify "Big Tent"

"Big Tent" does not work in all situations. Clarify boundaries and define the core without adding more policy. Clarify Alliance identity.

## Leader Development

Clarity on the relationship with official schools. What are the additional pathways and structures to developing new leaders and who is responsible?

## Global Advance Fund

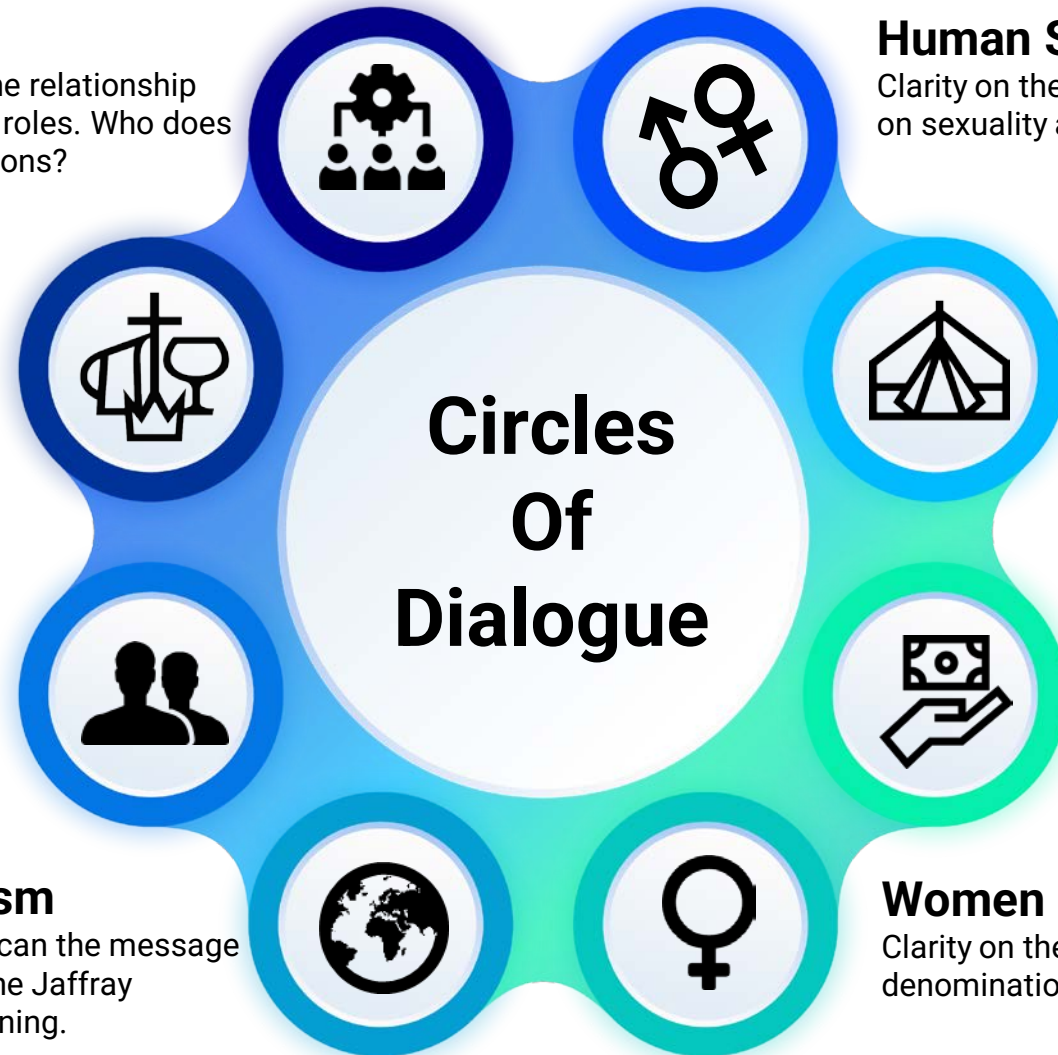
Clarity on the funding model. How does GAF support IWs? How else are funds used?

## Mission and Evangelism

Clarity on Alliance mission. How can the message get to the churches? Clarity on the Jaffray Project. Need for evangelism training.

## Women in Leadership

Clarity on the role of women in leadership in a denomination that is both egalitarian and complementarian.



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# What is missing? What do we need to add?

## Resource Sharing

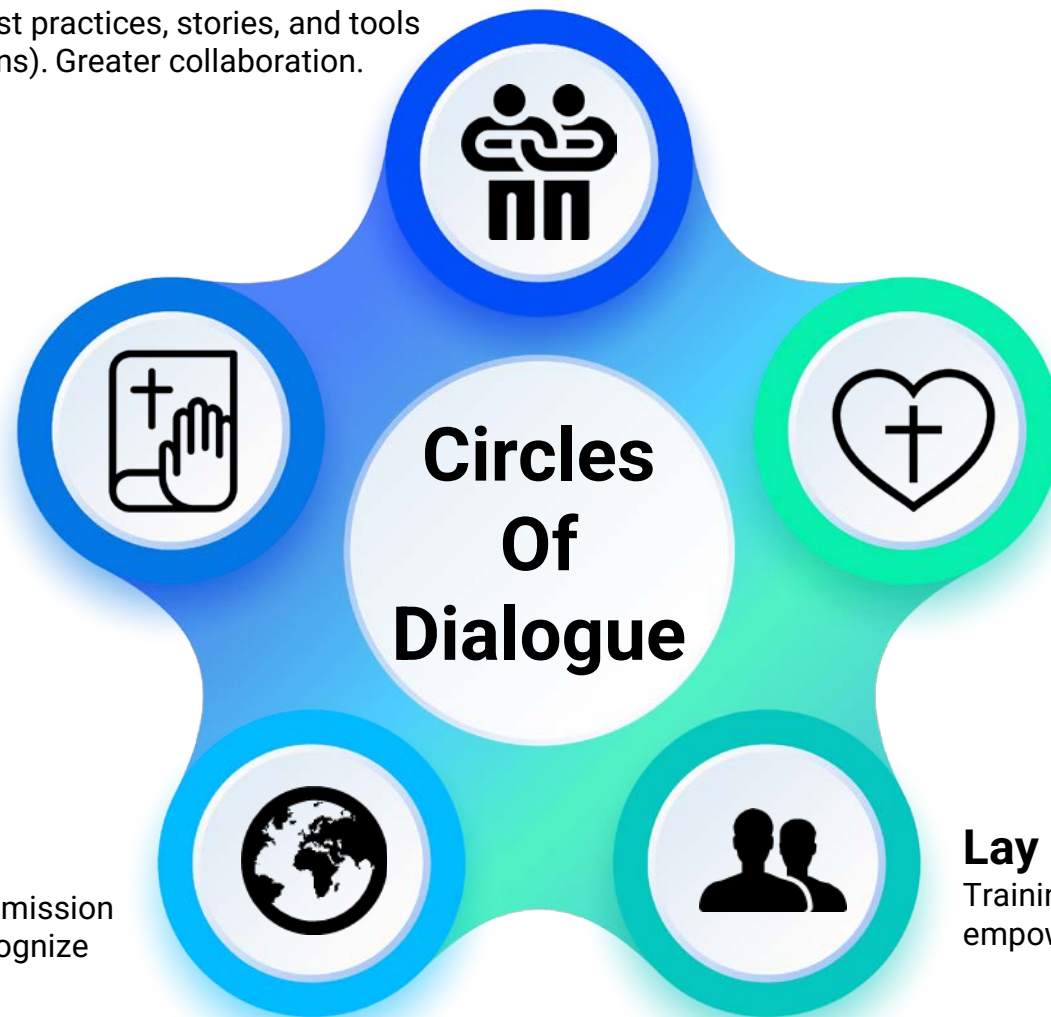
Sharing resources across churches and districts. Resources include teaching, training, best practices, stories, and tools (HR, Finance, Communications). Greater collaboration.

## Theological Reflection, Guidance, and Resources

A safe place for theological reflection. Guidance for navigating culture. Resources for addressing issues.

## Missional Engagement with Churches

Increased connection between churches and mission fields. Opportunities for pastors to learn. Recognize both international and national mission.



## Pastoral Care

Pastoral care for pastors – accountability, mentorship, regular check-ins, and mental health support.

## Lay Empowerment

Training and resources for churches to raise up and empower lay leaders.

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