



# Strategic Roadmap: *Learning to Listen*

Susan Campbell, Organisational Development Director, reflects on the journey of developing the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Roadmap and how it became a lesson in listening.

A decade ago, when I took part in a group formation program for Spiritual Directors, I learnt to listen. I studied how to create safe and hospitable one-on-one listening environments, ask open-ended questions, utilise active listening strategies, hold silence, manage projections and navigate the confusing and wonderful art of discernment.

I wrote an essay about the quote, “To listen another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.” – Steere. With a whole lot of mistakes and practice, I very slowly grew into my skin of becoming a more generous listener.

**Over the last year I’ve been part of a small team tasked with the goal of writing a new organisational strategic plan for Global Interaction.**

As we began, I imagined the task before me: workshops, sticky notes, words, whiteboards, charts, tables, presentations, talking, talking and more talking. However, I very soon realised that my attitude towards the task was to radically shift.

My role was to invite individuals and groups from within Global Interaction and the broader Baptist movement to think and speak, adopting the posture of a spiritual director, *so I could listen.*

Listen carefully.

Listen deeply.

Listen for the question beneath the statements.



Listen for the hope amidst the groans.

Listen for the innovative idea buried in the mountain of words.

Listen for the possibility for the future in the narrative of the past.

**Listen for the movement of the Spirit, discerning God’s leading and guiding for the next season of our rich story.**

*Photo of an Ethnic Thai believer being baptised taken by Ron Coleman. Our vision is to see more communities following Jesus in their own distinctive ways.*



Covey writes, “Most people don’t listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” The gift offered to us in the dozens of consultation sessions was that **there was no pressure to defend, justify or solve. Instead, we asked questions to seek to understand.** Of course, there was time spent consolidating ideas, crafting words and creating tables, but the real work of this process has been the listening.

The result of our listening has been the creation of our 2021 - 2025 Strategic Roadmap – our vision, mission, values, priorities, desired outcomes and timelines. Vision readers will become familiar with this over time as we unpack the elements, tell stories about implementation, reflect on mistakes made and lessons learned and celebrate the realisation of some of our ideas. **Below you can see a defining part of the Strategic Roadmap in our key vision statements.**

Paul Tillich wrote, ‘The first duty of love is to listen’. As an expression of my love for our journey together in God’s mission, I hope I have listened well.

#### HOW WE LISTENED:

- 12+ months
- 30+ meetings
- 50+ hours on Zoom
- 100+ pages of notes
- 20+ drafts

With input from: intercultural workers, candidates, board members, pastors, theological college missiologists, young adults, partners and staff.

## What we see:

Vibrant faith communities following Jesus in their own distinctive ways

## Why:

Because nothing matters more than sharing God’s love for the world

## How:

Through Spirit-led people, humbly contextualising the Good News in every place

