

CONDUCTING A MISSION STUDY

**A Step-by-Step Guide
of
Easy-to-Follow
Mission Planning Processes
for Congregations**



**uniting
church**

in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

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**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Uniting Mission & Education

16 Masons Drive
North Parramatta
NSW 2151
Australia

Ph: 02 8838 8912
Fax: 02 96836617
ume.nsw.uca.org.au

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When Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, Adam is believed to have remarked to Eve: “My dear, we live in an age of transition”.

W.R. Inge (1870-1954) Dean of St. Paul’s, London

“Through mission the people of God are both transformed into more Godly people and also participate in transforming the world into the kingdom of God.”

Reflections of Glen Powell on Bosch ‘Transforming Mission’

“We cannot save the world if we are cowards; to save the world we will need to be heroes. But we need to remember that heroes are generally not fearless people; they are fearful people, who act in spite of their fear. The opposite of cowardice is not the absence of fear. The opposite of cowardice is courage in the fact of fear.

David Andrews, Christi-Anarchy, Lion 1999

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER ONE - EASY-TO-FOLLOW MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP PROCESSES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION A (Author: Rob Stoner)	5
OVERVIEW	6
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS	8
Session One	8
Session Two	12
ORDER OF SERVICE	14
GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 1	17
GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 2	19
MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION B (Author: Tina Rendell)	20
OVERVIEW	21
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS	22
Session One	22
Session Two	25
MISSION PLANNING WORKSHOP HANDOUTS	27
MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION C (Author: Graham Johnson).....	31
OVERVIEW	32
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS	33
Session One	33
Session Two	34
MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION D (Author: Duncan Macleod)	31
OVERVIEW	32
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS	33
Session One	33
Session Two	34
Session Three	34
Session Four	34
Session Five	34
Session Six	34
CHAPTER TWO - LEADER'S NOTES	81
INTRODUCTION TO LEADER'S NOTES	82
GETTING YOUR CONGREGATION FOCUSED.....	83
Preaching	83
Sharing the story and newsletters	83
During Worship	83
UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY.....	84
Gathering information about your local community	84
Exploring the needs and hopes of your community	84
Questionnaire about your community	85
UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONGREGATION	89
Identify current mission activities	89
Identify the strengths and gifts in the congregation	95
"COMMUNITY BUILDING HELPS PLANNING"	97
GETTING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED.....	101

HINTS AND TIPS FOR CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP	107
Hints and Tips for Session Leader Techniques	107
Attitude	107
Documentation	108
TAKING STOCK	109
LEADERSHIP	111
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114

CHAPTER ONE

This package provides a smorgasbord of ways in which a congregational Mission Study can be conducted. It is offered in the hope that whatever the size or style of congregation you represent, you will find an option which is user-friendly for your situation and which can be undertaken without outside expert leadership.

The Assembly regulations relating to placement of ministers require that each congregation seeking a new placement complete a profile. This profile is used by the Placements Committee to provide the names of possible suitable persons for the vacant position to the Joint Nominating Committee.

It is expected that there will be a special consultation/mission study conducted by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation as a means of completing the required profile.

As a result of a national gathering of Synod representatives in Brisbane early in 2000, a small team of people representative of the majority of States in Australia have united to develop this pack of resources, believing that the concept of a special consultation or mission study can be a rather daunting experience and the report that is produced could be ineffective if it is undertaken only at the time of a vacancy in a congregation and the subsequent urgency to begin the process of a call of a new placement.

It is our hope that these user-friendly options for congregational mission studies will encourage congregations to begin to conduct annual mission studies so that this experience will become part of the culture of a congregation and provide a regular evaluative process relating to the mission of the congregation.

Congregations who conduct regular mission studies will find that the exercise of preparing the profile required by Assembly on new placements to be relatively simple as they need only summarise the congregation's mission objectives defined during the regular mission study processes.

There are four step-by-step options in the package from which a congregation can select to follow. Each of these options can be tailored to suit the congregation needs.

All these Mission Planning Processes are to help you clarify the direction of your future congregational life and can be used by a congregation seeking to provide a brief, but clear profile of its mission plan for the Placement Procedures

Which process to use?

This guide describes four 'workshop-type' processes that congregations can use to help them creatively and prayerfully reflect and discern the areas where God is leading them in mission. A summary of the four optional workshop processes is outlined below and the details of each one are given in Chapter One.

Sent out in Worship - Workshop Option A

Congregations wishing to consider their mission priorities during a joint worship and planning service would select this option. The process, which takes just over 3 hours, is particularly helpful if the most convenient opportunity for a congregation to gather to reflect on their ministry and mission priorities during a normal worship service. The format looks like an Order of Worship (and indeed worship components are included) and is designed to replace a congregation's normal Sunday morning worship with an extended gathering which takes the whole morning.

Who We Are in Mission - Workshop Option B

This option is a 4-hour or two 2-hour workshops that can be used by congregations who wish to identify which people in their community they wish to focus their mission and service. This process helps congregations think about how they can have a 'people' focussed approach to their ministry and mission.

Key Questions - Workshop Option C

This option is a simple workshop that can be done in one 5-hour session or two 2.5-hour sessions. Congregations who wish to more effectively be 'the church' in their local community can use this process. It assists them to assess their identity, their mission and the next steps in mission in order to clarify their goals and/or renovate their existing mission.

Mission Stories - Workshop D

This option is a 6 session workshop designed to be run over six weeks, linked with the Mission Stories DVD (available for \$30 from Mediacom Resources). The workshop helps congregations explore their own stories and document their own capacity for living out the gospel in their community.

Leader's Notes:

The 'Leaders Notes' at the back of the package contain some additional resources as well as hints and tips on how to facilitate and lead a congregation's mission activities.

**“SENT OUT IN
WORSHIP”
MISSION STUDY
WORKSHOP OPTION A**

Author: Rob Stoner

OVERVIEW

“Worship that looks like a planning day”

Or

“A Planning Day that looks like worship”

The process looks like an Order of Worship (and indeed worship components are included) and is designed to replace a congregation’s normal Sunday morning worship with an extended gathering which takes the whole morning (about 3 hours plus morning tea break and shared lunch together).

However, it is clearly intended that the end-point of the morning be the basis for a Vision Plan that can guide the congregation into the next 3-5 years of its life. [Like all planning processes, although the vision is cast for a period of 3-5 years, it needs to be reviewed more frequently e.g. annually.]

The people gather in church (or other appropriate space) and the seating is arranged for opening worship to begin using pews/single chairs so that they can be arranged into “conversation groups” of about 6-8.

In my introduction to the congregation, I used the following paragraph, which I include for your encouragement and to use as you wish in the process.

“Today is a day to soar like eagles. It has nothing to do with crows or magpies. [that’s a football reference for you eastern-staters] It is not a day to scratch around like turkeys or to be chicken in the face of the challenge, but to soar with the power of God’s Spirit, to truly be people of the resurrection. For the challenge we will hear today from Jesus is based on his post-resurrection words of commission to his disciples. So let the Spirit of the risen Lord Jesus guide you today, that together we may hear the challenge for us, as disciples in this place.”

It is intended that this process be used in conjunction with:

The “Order of Service” and allows each person to see the flow of the whole process Two Group Response Sheets, which provide for small groups to record their outcomes and report back to the whole group

These sheets need to be adapted for your congregation by inclusion of Congregation Name and Date.

Times shown in brackets at each stage of the process reflect the time taken in the congregation in which this process was originally trialled. This was a congregation that averages 35-40 adults and children in worship and had about 30 participating in the process. More time will be needed in larger congregations to allow for more small groups to be reporting back.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(90 mins)

Step 1 - Opening to Vision/worship

(15 mins)

Includes:

Welcome and Notices

Songs/hymns of praise

Prayer of Invocation

Introduction to the process (*see Leader's Guide*)

Step 2 – Move into Conversation Groups

(3 mins)

Move into “**conversation groups**” of about 6. Because related people often sit together, a process is needed to randomly allocate them to groups (*numbering off, numbers/symbols attached to seats beforehand, or just ask them to mix up*).

Distribute Response Sheet 1 (and pens, if needed)

Step 3 - “Prayers of Thanksgiving”

(12 mins)

a) Invite people to work in their conversation groups, about the question: [5 mins]

“What have we done, in and through our congregation, over the last 1-3 years, for which we are thankful to God?”

Inform them that their process in the group is to:

Reflect upon the question

Talk together

Record their findings on the response Sheet.

b) After 5 minutes (*keep the process moving*), ask group recorders to share their response (*succinctly*) with whole group [5 mins]

Record whole group responses on Butchers paper.

[I prefer Butchers paper because then the group responses can be displayed on the wall. These are needed in step 14 below. I also collected all the Group Response sheets at the end of the day to aid in writing up the outcome.]

c) Lead the group in prayers of thanksgiving based on what has been reported and collated. [2 mins]

Step 4 - "Prayers of Confession"

(12 mins)

Repeat the process above around the question:

"What did we plan or hope to do, over the last 1-3 years, which has not yet happened and for which we would like to say "sorry" to God?"

[This is a "process" question and you may want to add in a "relational" question, such as:

"In what ways were we not open/loving/accepting of each other that may have limited the possibilities which God had in mind for us?"]

Step 5 - Hymn/Song

(3 mins)

[One, which speaks of God's grace in the light of our "confession" above, or one which invites us to be open to what God wants to reveal to us through God's word.]

Step 6 - Hearing the Word of God

(16 mins)

The next task of the groups is to reflect together on selected passages from the Bible.

The four passages used are the "Great Commissions" given by Jesus to his disciples after the resurrection.

[I know that traditionally only the Matthew passage is called the "Great Commission", but I have used a bit of license here.]

The texts are presented in the order we discover them in our Bible, not in the order that they were written. With each passage, I had someone read the text, and then I spoke briefly to it using the notes below.

Reading: Matt 28 : 16-20 [4 mins]

Location: Mountain top

Time: Later? - not day of resurrection

Disciples' Response: Worship - yet some doubted

*Commission: **Go..... and make disciples/pupils/followers.... of all nations/people = gentiles/pagans/non-believers***

*Question: **What ministry of ours (i.e. God's ministry through us) will enable non-believers to learn about, be converted by, and become followers of Jesus Christ?***

Reading: Mark 16 : 14-16 [4 mins]

Location: At table (meal) - Jerusalem or elsewhere? Upper room??

Time: Later

Disciples' Response: Lack of faith and hardness of heart

*Commission: **Go..... into all the world.... and proclaim the good news.... to all creation (whole created order - shades of St Francis!)***

Good news?? (see Mark 1 : 14-15)

= Now is the right time (kairos= God's time)

Kingdom of God is at hand

Repent and believe

*Question: **What ministry of ours will:***

help people believe that the Kingdom of God is present and active here and now?

help people to hear and live out the call of the Kingdom on their life?

Reading: Luke 24 : 44-49 (see also Acts 1:8) [4 mins]

Location: Upper room in Jerusalem

Time: Day of resurrection

Disciples' Response: Joy, disbelief, wonderment

Commission: Repentance and forgiveness - proclaimed to all nations (as in Mark)

You are my witnesses

Stay..... here in city (Jerusalem).... until clothed with power from on high

Acts 1:8 - "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you..... (then) you will be my witnesses"

*Question: **What ministry of ours will:***

open people's lives (more) to the power of the Holy Spirit?

enable the Spirit's power/ability/capacity to be (more fully) released in the lives of our people?

*[I chose **not** to use John 20 : 19-23 (the equivalent reading, but I include it's comparative notes for completeness to aid you in your preparation:*

Location: Upper room

Time: Day of resurrection

Disciples' Response: Fear and disbelief

Commission: "As Father sent me, so I send you"

*“Receive Holy Spirit”
Forgiveness]*

Reading: John 21 : 15-19 [4 mins]

Location: On the beach

Time: Later?

Disciples’ Response: Impatience

Commission: (Given primarily to Peter)

“Feed/tend/ be like a shepherd to... my sheep/lambs”

Question: What ministry of ours will:

“feed” those who already belong to the flock of God?

tend/shepherd/care for those who are part of the flock?

Hearing the Word of God (continued) [30 mins]

Move back into conversation groups

Reflect on Scripture

[Allocate reading to each group so that the four Gospels are evenly distributed around the groups –each group begins with and has its main focus on just one of the Gospels but may look at the others if time permits]

Invite the groups to reflect on their reading, respond to the questions set for that reading (recording their answers on the Response Sheet), spend some time in prayer, then ponder the question:

“What do we hear God calling us to be and to do in the next 1-3 years?”

(This is dreaming the vision “painted large” – every and all responses are recorded so that through the contributions of every member the group may discern what God is saying.)

[You need to exercise some discernment towards the end of this group time about which process is most helpful for where the conversation groups are up to in their work.

In the initial design of this process, it was anticipated that the groups would finish the above task prior to morning tea so that we could collect all the Response Sheets before they went to morning tea. During the morning tea break, 2-3 of us could collate their dreaming/vision to form a basis for the next session.

In practice, the groups were not ready to hand up their sheets, so we did not do any collation during the break. Instead, we waited for them to report verbally about their responses to this point in step 10 below.]

Morning tea break

(15 mins)

Session Two

(1 hr 50 mins)

Step 7 - Opening to Vision/worship

(10 mins)

Gather as one group
Songs (as people gather)

Step 8 - Seeing the big picture

(10 mins)

Depending on what you decided above, either:
Present the summary collated over morning tea, or
Invite brief sharing from groups about Where their conversation gone to this point

Step 9 - Move into conversation groups

(3 mins)

Hand out Response Sheet 2.

[The groups may need time to conclude their discussion remaining from step 7 above – but encourage them to be succinct and to move on as soon as possible.]

Step 10 - “Prayers of Intercession”

(45 mins)

Invite the conversation groups to respond to the next exercise and question.

Think about the specific people who constitute:

our congregation

our leadership

our community

our world

“What is God calling us to do, in concrete actions, that will turn the vision God has given us into specific acts of ministry that will affect the lives of those who we serve?”

Remind them of the process: **Reflect - Talk - Record** on Response Sheet.

This is a process in which we are attempting to develop some “concreteness” to the vision that God is giving us. [25 mins]

Invite groups to share with the whole group.

Record on butchers paper - add to record on walls [20 mins]

Step 11 - “Act of Commitment”

(15 mins)

Return to conversation groups.

Invite them to respond as a group to the following question:

“Who do we perceive has the gifts and passion to enact these steps we have chosen?”

Then invite their personal reflection on the question:

“Where am I called to use my gifts in enabling these visions to become specific acts of ministry?”

Who will be responsible to ensure we act on the decisions we have made today?

Who will be responsible for summarising and delivering a report of this service to Church Council?

Step 12 - “Offering”

(10 mins)

Invite all participants to get up and walk around the room. Encourage them to:

Add any specific comments/ideas that build on those presented

Add their name (or other names from their group’s deliberations) in response to the reflection in the “Act of Commitment” time:

Make provision for monetary offerings to be also received during this time.

Step 13 - Sending Out

(5 mins)

Includes:

Hymn/Song (of dedication to God’s work)

Prayer seeking God’s blessing on all that has taken place and all that promises to come as you faithfully respond to God’s vision for your congregation.

Benediction

Shared lunch

ORDER OF SERVICE

Gather as the people of God for worship

Vision/worship (part 1)

Welcome and Notices

Songs/hymns of praise
Prayer of Invocation
Introduction to the process

[Move into “conversation groups” of about 6]

“Prayers of Thanksgiving”

Working In conversation groups

“What have we done, in and through our congregation, over the last 1-3 years, for which we are thankful to God?”

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group and then pray together

“Prayers of Confession”

Working in conversation groups

“What did we plan or hope to do, over the last 1-3 years, which has not yet happened and for which we would like to say “sorry” to God?”

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group and then pray together

Song/Hymn

Hearing the Word of God

The "Great Commissions"

Matt 28 : 16-20

What ministry of ours will enable non-believers to learn about, be converted by, and become followers of Jesus Christ?

Mark 16 : 14-16 (see also Mark 1 : 14-15)

What ministry of ours will:

help people believe that the Kingdom of God is present and active here and now?

help people to hear and live out the call of the Kingdom on their life?

Luke 24 : 44-49 (see also Acts 1:8)

What ministry of ours will:

open people's lives (more) to the power of the Holy Spirit?

enable the Spirit's power/ability/capacity to be (more fully) released in the lives of our people?

John 21 : 15-19

What ministry of ours will:

"feed" those who already belong to the flock of God?

tend/shepherd/care for those who are part of the flock?

Reflecting on the Word of God

Working in conversation groups

passages as a starting point)

Respond to the questions

Spend time in prayer

"What do we hear God calling us to be and to do in the next 1-3 years?"

(Dreaming the "big picture")

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group

Morning tea break

(During which the dreaming/vision will be collated to form a basis for the next session)

Vision/worship (part 2)

Songs (as people re-gather in the big group)

Seeing the big picture

(Re-capping the vision we have heard from God)

“Prayers” of Intercession

Working in conversation groups

Think about the specific people who constitute

- our congregation
- our leadership
- our community
- our world

“What is God calling us to do, in concrete actions, that will turn the vision God has given us into specific acts of ministry that will affect the lives of those whom we serve?”

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group

“Act of Commitment”

Working in conversation groups

“Who do we perceive has the gifts and passion to enact these steps we have chosen?”

“Where am I called to use my gifts and passion in enabling these visions to become specific acts of ministry?”

“Offering”

Walk around room:

Add any specific comments/ideas that build on those presented

Add you own name (or other names) in response to the reflection in the “Act of Commitment” time:

[Monetary offerings will also be received during this time]

Sending Out

Hymn/Song

Prayer

Blessing

Shared lunch

GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 1

“Prayers of Thanksgiving”

“What have we done, in and through our congregation, over the last 1-3 years for which we are thankful to God?”

.....
.....
.....

“Prayers of Confession”

“What did we plan or hope to do, over the last 1-3 years, which has not yet happened and for which we would like to say “sorry” to God?”

.....
.....
.....

Hearing the Word of God

“What do we hear God calling us to be and to do in the next 1-3 years?”

(Dreaming the “big picture” using the “Great Commissions”)

.....
.....
.....

Matt 28 : 16-20

What ministry of ours will enable non-believers to learn about, be converted by, and become followers of Jesus Christ?

.....
.....
.....

Mark 16 : 14-16 (see also Mark 1 : 14-15)

What ministry of ours will:

(a) help people believe that the Kingdom of God is present and active here and now?

.....
.....
.....

(b) help people to hear and live out the call of the Kingdom on their life?

.....
.....
.....

Luke 24 : 44-49 (see also Acts 1:8)

What ministry of ours will:

open people's lives (more) to the power of the Holy Spirit?

.....
.....
.....

enable the Spirit's power/ability/capacity to be (more fully) released in the lives of our people?

.....
.....
.....

John 21 : 15-19

What ministry of ours will:

"feed" those who already belong to the flock of God?

.....
.....
.....

tend/shepherd/care for those who are part of the flock?

.....
.....
.....

GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 2

“Prayers” of Intercession

“What is God calling us to do, in concrete actions, that will turn the vision God has given us into specific acts of ministry that will affect the lives of those who we serve?”

.....
.....
.....

“Act of Commitment”

“Who do we perceive has the gifts to enact these steps we have chosen?”

.....
.....
.....

“Where am I called to use my gifts in enabling these visions to become specific acts of ministry?”

.....
.....
.....

**“WHO WE ARE IN
MISSION”
MISSION STUDY
WORKSHOP OPTION B**

Author: Tina Rendell

OVERVIEW

This mission study workshop will encourage your congregation to reflect on some aspects of the role and mission of the church, think about who God is calling you to be in mission with and make some decisions about the best way your congregation can effectively live out that mission.

This process encourages congregations to start thinking about people before programs and activities. It assumes that if we are *clear about 'who' God is calling us to be in mission with* and we are open to creatively sharing 'the whole gospel with the whole person' then insights and ideas about appropriate mission strategies can grow.

You can run this as 4-hour or 2x 2-hour workshops. You will get the most effective and lasting results by including as many members of the congregation present, including current and emerging key leaders.

It is critical that people who will be participating in the key decisions in Session Two of this process participate in the thinking and decisions made in Session One. During Session Two the congregation/group will have the opportunity to remember their reflections from the previous session on the church, mission and the local community and make some decisions about how they will begin/extend their mission to the people groups that they have identified.

Choose a small group/organising team to prepare for the day – including at least one person to lead/facilitate the sessions. It is *best if the leader/facilitator is **not** your minister* or a key leader in your congregation that will want to make a considerable contribution to the planning. Maybe you could invite someone from a neighbouring congregation to facilitate/lead the day or someone in your congregation that has experience in teaching or strategic management at work.

Use language that your congregation/group are comfortable with. You may choose to call this a 'Mission Study Workshop' or a 'Mission Planning Event' or a 'Goal Setting Afternoon' or two evenings focusing on 'future directions'. Language can open people's eyes to new possibilities or alienate people from some good very ideas. Start where people are at by using language that they can clearly understand. This is particularly important if you are trying to extend their ideas and concepts about the world, the church and mission.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(2 hrs)

Step 1 - Song:

(5 Mins)

Choose a song or hymn that encourages your faith or promotes a sense of community

Step 2 - Readings:

(15 Mins)

In groups of 2 or 3 choose **one** of the following passages:

Romans 12: 1-8

1 Cor 12: 12-31

Ephesians 4: 1-16

“How does this passage assist us to understand what it means to be the Church?”

Step 3 - Prayer:

(5 Mins)

As a whole group, pray for the people, gifts and experience God has given your group/congregation and ask for insight about where God may be leading you in mission.

Step 4 - Mission Reflection:

(35 mins)

Break into groups of 6-8 people:

Divide the following passages amongst the groups.

John 20: 19 – 22

Luke 7: 18 – 22

Matthew 28: 16 – 20

Discuss:

“How does this passage help you to understand what the word mission means?”

“How does this relate to the way we talk about mission today?”

Feed back to everyone in the large group, your responses to these questions.

Brainstorm together (with the leader/facilitator writing responses on a whiteboard/overhead projector/butchers paper) people's responses to the following statement:

"Mission is....."

BREAK (15 mins)

Step 5 - Current Mission focus: (10 mins)

Speak to the person next to you for 5 minutes about the following questions:

"What is the current major mission of this congregation or group?"

"What do you do well?"

"Who is your mission currently focused to?"

As a large group share your responses together and write up on whiteboard etc.

Step 6 - Local Community: (15 mins)

"What are the key characteristics of your community?"

The people?

eg: Age breakdown, ethnicity, education, employment

Their lifestyle?

eg: When do people travel to work, school, shops? When are people at home? What do they do on the weekends?

Their needs and hopes for the future?

eg: what are the major issues for people in your community, what are people looking for in your community-an opportunity to connect or be alone, what kind of community do they want to live in?

As a large group together spend five minutes responding to a., b., & c. Write your responses on a whiteboard/paper so that everyone participating can see this clearly.

Step 7 - Mission Focus into the future: (20 mins)

"Who is God calling you to be in mission with?"

Spend a few minutes looking at your answers to the questions on your local community.

In silence reflect on where you think God may be leading your congregation. *Are there one or two groups of people in your community that God is calling your congregation to make a mission priority?*

As a large group share your responses.

Vote on which 1-3 people/groups ** you believe God is calling you to make a priority for the next 1-3 years.

** This is the group of people you are going to focus particular attention on in the next few years. The group that you may grow an outreach/community activity or small groups or a particular worship service for. (Examples of people groups - young families, retired people, high schoolers, newcomers to the community, baptism families, people connected to the soccer club, unemployed etc.)

Session Two

(1 hr 45 mins)

Step 8 - Current mission activities:

(10 mins)

Together as a large group spend a few minutes identifying the current activities of your congregation/group through answering the following questions:

“What are you currently doing to be in mission to the people groups you have decided to focus on?”

“What are you currently doing to be in mission to others?”

Step 9 - Planning your mission activities:

(50 mins)

Break up into *groups focused on each people group* that your congregation will have a mission focus to. For example, if your congregation wishes to make its mission priority families with young children and retired people then the congregation needs to be broken up into at least two groups.

Each group needs to identify 1 – 3 activities that will either *extend* your existing mission to your people group or will add something *new* to your mission to your prioritised people group/s.

Consider the following question: **“What can your congregation/group do to more effectively connect to and serve your prioritised people group/s?”**

You may decide to consider extending your mission through the following areas of the church’s life and mission or choose some other area:

outreach / community service

pastoral care

increasing a sense of “community”

worship

small groups

nurturing/growing people’s faith and discipleship

growing leadership opportunities etc...etc...etc...

Think about what you learnt before about the needs and hopes of these people. What does worship or pastoral care or outreach/community service need to look like so that you can share the love, compassion and hope of the gospel with these people?

(Have a short break / cuppa during this group time)

Step 10 - Deciding together what we will be doing:

(30 mins)

Together as a large group hear the ideas from the small groups. Write these up for everyone to see.

Together vote on which *1 – 3 activities for each people group* that your congregation can feasibly step out in faith and do in the next 12 months.

Step 11 - A commitment to make it happen: (10 mins)

Form a 'Coordination Group': Identify 1 – 3 people to oversight each activity. (These people will remind the congregation of their commitment to their people groups and the activities that have been decided on. They are the people who are make sure that the ideas and vision of this planning day do not 'fall into a black hole').

Set a date for the 'Coordination Group to meet and develop plans for:

A list of the people with the gifts/skills/passion to support each activity (see Leader's Notes - Taking stock and Leadership)

A timeline for each activity

Identify who will bring regular reports to Church Council.

Step 12 - Reaffirm who we are and who we follow: (10 mins)

People will be tired and there may have been times where different experiences and passions have lead people in different directions. Choose prayers and songs that provide a sense of healing and hope for this community of Gods people into the future.

Close with prayer / song

MISSION PLANNING WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

The following pages can be duplicated and distributed as handouts at the workshop to assist the participants with their reflections and discussions as they work through the process.

MISSION REFLECTION

Read the following passages:

John 20: 19 – 22

Luke 7: 18 – 22

Matthew 28: 16 – 20

Discuss:

“How does this passage help you to understand what the word mission means?”

“How does this relate to the way we talk about mission today?”

CURRENT MISSION FOCUS

What is the current major mission of this congregation or group?

What do you do well?

Who is your mission currently focused to?

KEY QUESTIONS MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION C

Author: Graham Johnson

OVERVIEW

This is simple process to assist congregations to assess their identity, their mission, and the next steps in mission. It is also a process that can be used by a Congregation seeking to provide a brief, but clear profile of its mission plan for the Placement Procedures.

TIME REQUIRED: Approximately 4.5 hours including morning tea and lunch.

LEADERSHIP REQUIRED: The Process is designed to be able to be led by local leadership without the presence of a specially trained Consultant

METHOD OF OPERATION: The process works in both small group, and large group mode. You will need to see that each small group has at least one person able to articulate or record the insights of that group.

ATTENDANCE REQUIRED: It is recommended that as many persons as possible be part of the process. The process depends for its success on wide involvement of members of the congregation included all key leaders and decision makers.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(2 hrs 20 mins)

Step 1 - Introductory Worship (10 mins)

Step 2 – Introductory relational exercise (10 mins)

Have small groups suggest an animal or plant which best symbolises your congregation. Have people give reasons for their particular choice. From the whole group, choose one that is perceived as the most appropriate

Step 3 – Key questions to consider (in small groups) (40 mins)

a) "What is the Church?"

Have your group answer this in 30 words or less

b) "What is its mission?"

Have your group answer this in 30 words or less

c) "What are the key characteristics of our community?"

Have your group agree on six

d) "What are the key characteristics of your congregation/s?"

Have your group agree on six words to describe your congregation/s

Brief Break (15 mins)

Step 4 - Report back from each group from discussion Q's a,b,c,d (30 mins)

As a whole group

(the aim of this activity is to achieve a clearer understanding of the nature of the Church, your community, and your congregation's mission in that community)

Longer Break (35 mins)

Session Two

(2 hrs 30 mins)

Step 5 – Key questions to consider... continued

e) What area or areas do we choose to be our mission focus over the next 12 months? (30 mins)
(worked at this in small groups)

f) Discuss the suggested areas for focus (30 mins)
(work on this as a whole group)

g) If there are more than five focus areas identified, seek to reach consensus on what are the three or four major key focus areas. (30 mins)
(e.g. a focus on work with young families, a focus on a weeknight worship service and a focus on redeveloping the Pastoral Care Program)

h) Which person, persons or groups have a passion for each of these focus areas?
and
what are some strategies or activities or programs that may be appropriate to explore? (30 mins)
(work prayerfully to discern answers to this question)
(having membership lists for each small group may be helpful for this task)

Step 6 - Pulling it all together (20 mins)

Write up the results

Assign a small editorial team to write up the results of (a-d), and (g) for presentation for consideration by the Church Council and the Congregation as their 'Missional Vision, and their chosen Missional Focus areas for the immediate future.'

Use this statement after approvals by the Church Councils as a simple, clear outline of the Missional Vision of the Congregation/s in any Placement process.

Implementation

Form a 'Coordination Group' from 1-3 identified in (h) who will oversee each activity. (These people will remind the congregation of their commitment to their mission focus areas and the activities that have been decided on. They are the people who will make sure that the ideas and vision of this planning day do not 'fall into a black hole').

Set a date for the 'Coordination Group to meet and develop plans for:

A list of the people with the gifts/skills/passion to support each activity (see Leader's Notes Taking stock and JH Leadership stuff)

A timeline for each activity
Identify who will bring regular reports to Church Council.

Brief Closing Worship

(10 mins)



Uniting Church In Australia
Queensland Synod

presents

MISSION Stories

A short group-based course aiming to assist you in
discerning your focus as a community of the gospel.

Recommended age:
Young Adult and older

A RED EARTH FILMS PRODUCTION

Mission Stories

**A six part learning guide to the
Church in Mission**

*Written by Duncan Macleod for
Pilgrim Learning Community
Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod*

*With Jason Bray and Mike Crowhurst, Red Earth Films,
and Peter Armstrong as narrator.*

Welcome to ***Mission Stories*** – a discernment resource designed to help church leaders discover more about their God-given calling to local mission. The course consists of six sessions, each lasting between about 1½ and 2 hours. Throughout this journey you'll watch some inspiring stories, share your own experiences, study the Bible, pray together and discuss ideas. Between each session you are encouraged to research and record information relating to your own local setting, as well as put your learning and discoveries into practice.

The titles of the different sessions are:

- Session 1 – Mission in Context
- Session 2 – Gospel People
- Session 3 – Relational Disciples
- Session 4 – Partnering with God's People
- Session 5 – Who are your peoples?
- Session 6 – Mission Together

COURSE GOALS

1. To encourage Christian leaders to reflect on God's mission in the world.
2. To inspire Christian leaders to explore the potential of the local church, in its various forms, for to embody the Christian gospel.
3. To equip Christians in discipleship in the context of everyday relationships.
4. To build partnership between congregations, agencies of the church, local community stakeholders and people who have become alienated from the institutional church.
5. To encourage cross cultural engagement in mission.
6. To affirm the holistic nature of mission as carried out by many expressions of the church.

The course is best done over an extended period of time, allowing time for research and documentation between each session.



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Most groups find it important to have someone lead or facilitate the group meeting. It doesn't have to be the same person every week. People may take it in turns. But always start with a more experienced leader to show others with less experience how it is done.

Facilitation is very important given the diversity of people within a group. There is likely to be a range of ages, a mix of spiritual experiences and a variety of viewpoints on social and political issues. Some people may also have better interpersonal skills than others (e.g. some will be better listeners; some may have more empathy than others.)

People move through three stages in developing their participation in a group:

1. Inclusion (how can I feel part of the life of this group?)
2. Influence (how can I have some say in what happens?)
3. Intimacy (how can I feel close to the other people?)

The facilitator is a person who will help other people in a group participate more fully. The facilitator of a **Mission Stories** group needs to find ways to:

- Welcome people.
- Invite each one to participate.
- Value each one's contribution
- Encourage each one to offer their own contribution while still being open to the ideas of others'.
- Encourage people to exchange differing viewpoints in a spirit of humility (building each other up) rather than merely debating opposing positions (and tearing one another down);
- Challenge people to help each other step out of their comfort zones, and take small but significant moves to embody their learning in their daily lives.

Each session has two video components, with material presented by Peter Armstrong alongside personal reflections and case studies.

Each session includes Biblical reflection and opportunity for personal and group prayer.

Each session includes opportunities for further reflection, using excerpts from The Basis of Union.

Each session invites people to talk about their own experience, relating to 'homework' and life experience in general.

Each session invites people to reflect during the week on a reading and some kind of action research. Check at the beginning of each session on how people went. If necessary, catch up with the concepts introduced in the readings.

Most sessions include time for personal reflection and journaling.

Small group time is best when people share in groups of three to five people, preferably with continuity from session to session.

Foundational Theses

1. Christian mission belongs to God. Christian mission is centred in God's engagement with the world, highlighted in the sending of Jesus into the world. (John 1:1-14)

2. The people of God are called to join in the mission of God in worshipping, witnessing and serving in the wider community. This participation is inspired by the gospel story and words/actions of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20).

3. The fruit of God's mission is brought about by the Holy Spirit acting in, through and beyond the people of God. The results are lives transformed, communities changed and people made whole (Luke 4:18-19).

4. God acts through those who profess faith in Christ and put that faith into action. God's action and intent cannot be confined, contained or claimed exclusively by anyone. (Acts)

5. While the Christian gospel is for all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity or socio-economic context, it is and must be interpreted and embodied by particular people groups wherever they are. (Galatians)

6. God's missional engagement with the world is broader and deeper than any one person or group can comprehend. Together, as the reconciled and reconciling people of God, we have many opportunities to explore the fullness of God's action. (Ephesians)

Appreciative Inquiry Process

The Mission Stories process is ideal for the “Discover” part of an appreciative inquiry, and can lead into the “Dream”, “Design” and “Deliver” phases.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a discernment, planning and decision making process that moves beyond problem solving. Whereas the basic assumption underlying the problem solving approach regards organizing as a problem to be solved, appreciative inquiry sees organizing as a mystery or miracle to be embraced.

Appreciative Inquiry is often described as a discernment journey of four phases: Discover, Dream, Design & Deliver.

Discover Phase

In Discover the focus is on appreciating and valuing ‘the best of what is or what has been’. The emphasis is on what gives life to the context/person/organization – what happens when it is at its best. This is done through sharing stories guided by set questions. An important principle of the Discover Phase is to let every voice be heard.

We have designed Mission Stories to include small and large group discussion, research and documentation that will provide an overview of current understanding, awareness and experience.

1. Local Context

What do we believe God is calling us to be and do in this place and time? Do our mission statements and vision statements communicate this effectively? Do we match intelligent vision and courageous action?

2. Compassionate Community

How do we live out our call to be the community of Christ, embodying the values of the gospel? What are our shared values? Do we have shared missional priorities that shape the way we invest our time, energy and funds?

3. Empowering Disciples

How do we equip and resource people to respond to the call of God in their lives? What does that mean for people who are regarded as members of our community of faith? What does that mean for people who are on the margins of our community?

4. Partners in Mission

With whom will we collaborate in pursuing God’s vision for this place and time? What do we know about the work done by congregations, agencies, community organisations and individuals in our context?

5. Who are your People?

Who are the people groups that God is calling us to connect with? To which people groups do we relate naturally? To which groups do we need to build bridges?

6. Community of Integrity

How will we hold together the many aspects of God's mission? Are there parts of God's mission that we are neglecting? Are there aspects of mission that we allow to compete with each other rather than complement each other?

Dream Phase

The Dream Phase is about envisioning what might be in the near future. What might our participation in the mission of God look like in ten years time? Participants seek to discern what the Spirit of God is calling us to be by pulling together all that's been shared in Discover.

The dream process encourages the development of challenging proposals that are grounded in reality, expressed in bold, challenging terms and in the present tense, as though it were already happening. Shared dreams need to be congruent with our values and something we'd be passionate about seeing realized.

Local Context

What do we believe God is calling us to be and do in this place and time? How might this shared dream bring this to fruition?

Compassionate Community

How will this shared dream help us to live out our call to be the community of Christ, embodying the values of the gospel?

Empowering Disciples

How will we equip and resource people to respond to the call of God in their lives?

Partners in Mission

Who will we collaborate with in pursuing God's vision for this place and time?

Who are your People?

Who are the people groups that God is calling us to connect with?

Community of Integrity

How will we hold together the many aspects of God's mission?

Design Phase

Here the emphasis is on identifying the action areas and organizational arrangements needed to turn the overarching vision into reality. It's about determining the operational implications of the challenges that have been embraced.

The task here is to identify the cultural and behavioural changes, systems, issues and strategies necessary to fulfil the vision together with the relevant accountabilities, resources and timeframes. Findings are shared among all groups for ownership in plenary. Who will go? Who will they go to? How will they relate?

Deliver Phase

In the final phase the focus is on integrating the outcomes of the Design Phase into the organization overall. Attention is given to identifying the structures, systems, processes, relationships, identity perceptions & behaviours and communication strategies that will keep the vision alive.

1. Mission in Context

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This first session is designed to help us reflect on the ways in which God's mission is expressed in our community, including an awareness of the impact of context on our mission. The session focuses on how God's involvement in the world leads to us being sent into the local community.



Watch the first video in Session 1

Peter Armstrong reflects on the early Church, Christendom and the 21st century contexts of mission. Duncan Macleod and Geoff Thompson talk about opportunities for the Church in Australia at the end of Christendom.



1. Reflect on changes in your understanding of mission. When did you first think about the word, "mission". What did it mean to you then? In what ways has the word changed in meaning for you since then?

2. Can you think of examples of Christian community today living as a minority in a risky or dangerous place? Where in the world would this be most common? Can you think of examples of Christian community being privileged, part of a dominant culture? Where in the world would this be most common? Can you think of examples of Christian community operating in a way that demonstrates partnership with the local community?

3. How is today's Australian context different to that of the early Church? How is today's Australian context different to that of Christendom in Western Europe?



BIBLE READING

(15 minutes)

John 1:1-14, New Revised Standard Version

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The word "Mission" comes from the Latin phrase, "Missio", meaning to send. The Greek work used in the New Testament is "Apostoleo", to send. In Jesus we see the sending of God in action. Looking at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, what do we learn about the way God interacts with our world?

Incarnation as a word comes from the concept of being "in the flesh". What examples can you find of people continuing the "incarnational" life of God in your community?



VIDEO STORY

(10 minutes)

WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 1, TOWNSVILLE PERSPECTIVE.

A sample of worship, witness and service from three congregations in Townsville. Interviews with Anne Harley, Mark Dewar and Craig Mischewski, prison chaplains, radio DJ, local businessman and mens group convenor, MOPS convenor.

What do you think might make the Townsville environment unique, distinct or different to other places? How did the local churches in the video respond to their environment?

What makes your community distinct? What do members of your community celebrate together? What are the common hurts and hopes held in your community?



PRAYER TIME

(10 minutes)

Spend some time thanking God for the stories of mission that you have shared.



UNITING CHURCH ANGLES

(10 minutes)

The writers of the Basis of Union recognised that the Uniting Church's context has changed and will continue to change, using words that recognised our continuing need for discernment.

“The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring. The Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal. Here the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come. On the way Christ feeds the Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way.”

What would be the signs of us “staying on the way” as the Church in our local community?

Documenting Mission

Hard Data

Does your congregation have a mission statement? A vision statement? List them here.

What do these say about how your church understands its role in the mission of God?

What is the local context that God has placed you in as a community? Do you have a geographical focus? Do you have an age-related or ethnicity-related focus? Which institutions do you relate to?

Soft Data

What stories help you understand your context? What events or situations give you clues about the world you're called to live in? If you wanted to discover more of these stories, you could spend time listening to the listeners and the story tellers of your community. Spend time in conversation with hairdressers, taxi drivers, shopkeepers, employers, educators, town planners, and so on.

What are *your* stories of "being sent", into the local community and beyond? Include founding stories that have shaped your sense of identity, and emerging stories that provide hope for where you may be heading in the future.



FURTHER READING

We're looking at mission in this series with fresh eyes, knowing that our context is changing. The way we understand mission has changed because the world has changed.

A Walk Through Early Church

We begin in a room. No chairs. People sit on the floor. No front. Conversation flows around the room.

We're inside John 20:19-22, with the first disciples of Jesus. Jesus is with us speaking. "As the Father sent me, so I send you." So says Jesus to his disciples before he breathes the Holy Spirit into them.

The disciples are gathered in a locked room in Jerusalem, discovering that their world has become so much more dangerous. Before, they were followers of a Jewish rabbi. Now they're renegades, spreading the word on a subversive movement centred on the crucified and risen leader.

You are the followers of Jesus in the 33 AD

Where do you start?

To whom does Jesus send you?

No point in just hanging a shingle out the front door and hoping 'church goers' will turn up. They have to get out of the room and build an incarnational presence where people are. Some will go fishing. Some will hit the road. Some will stay in Jerusalem. They'll need to meet in homes, in public places, in Jewish synagogues, in the Jewish temple.

The 'Apostolic' paradigm begins with a strong sense of core membership. These are the followers of Jesus, an unknown, unpublicized Jewish sect. As time goes on persecution will lead to an urgent call to clarify who is in and who is not. As the Jesus movement becomes more and more culturally varied, there will be a call to clarify what is central to following Jesus universally and what is negotiable for each ethnic expression of the good news.

Can you think of places in the world where the church might be living in this framework? Where it is not safe to express faith publicly?

Christendom Community

We move into the church building, sitting in the pews facing the front, imagining our way into a village anywhere in Western Europe between 500 and 1700 AD. The lectern at the front indicates that there is an established leadership structure. We reflect on the likelihood that many in the room take key responsibilities in the ongoing life of the local township. Many of us would have met yesterday at the beer house with our families.

If Jesus were to stand with you today in this 15th century church, and say, “As the Father sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit”, where would you start? To whom does Jesus send you?

When we reflect on Jesus sending us as he was sent, we're not too sure what to think. Our weekly life is marked by stability and predictability. We count on nurture and loyalty to pass on the Christian way of life to each generation.

The challenge we face together is one of integrity. It is only when we have people from outside our context arrive in our village that we are likely to re-examine our everyday lifestyle, in the home, in the town hall and in the market. Change is slow.

We are vaguely aware of people beyond Christendom who need to hear the gospel and respond to it. Perhaps there are missionaries who will travel to those places to establish the kind of village life we have here.

Can you think of places in the world where the church might be living in this framework? Where being part of the local culture and part of the church are seen as the same thing?

Over the next few decades people in this part of the world will face the turmoil of the Reformation and industrial revolution. The Christendom model will be retained somehow through the establishment of national church structures as well as denominational structures that supersede national identity. Within those frameworks we will attempt to keep the stability and established order experienced in Christendom.

21st Century Australia

We move into the hall and find chairs to sit on. We have the choice about where to sit. We're now in a circle and expect people from around the circle to speak to one another rather than to the front.

How do we respond to Jesus standing here telling us that as the Father sent him, he sends us?

Everything is negotiable. Nothing can be taken for granted. No longer can we rely on loyalty based on a denominational tag, the attractiveness of a staff person, or a building and plant. No longer can we 'build it' and expect that people will come. We've noticed the changes even in the last fifty years. What worked in a cohesive community in the 1950s is difficult to achieve in our splintered communities today.

Unlike the early church, here in Australia we generally do not face a hostile world. As members of the Uniting Church we experience good will from community members, often because of a strong heritage of service provision. There is a danger of course that we'll be seen as service providers rather than as a community of everyday faith. Some people see us as a community of Sunday worship only.

We're aware of the fluid nature of our community. People come and go. They travel long distances to be with their friends and family. People sample community, trying out different churches, clubs and shopping centres. We need to find a way of being committed at the core, open at the edges.

We face the challenge of how we relate to a society in which one of the highest values is that of individual choice and freedom. While encouraging personal responsibility and celebrating diversity of cultural expression, the people of Christ live out the good news of community in which people of all backgrounds can genuinely love one another.

We face a temptation to develop a safe environment, a parallel universe, in which Christians are safe from the 'outside world'. However it is no easy task to simply enter existing networks in the community, particularly when our mobile lifestyle lead to people building networks with friends and family that have little connection with where people live.

Let's not overlook the breathing in of the Holy Spirit. We too readily discount the impact of Jesus' action because of our concern to distinguish ourselves from the Pentecostals, or our discomfort with the thought of being breathed upon! Jesus' action counters our tendency to over-intellectualise what we are doing. We desperately need the continuing inspiration of God, the time to draw close to Jesus as a community and be strengthened for mission.

Can you think of places in the world where the church might be living in this framework?

If Jesus were to stand with you today in this 21st century setting, and say, "As the Father sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit", where would you start? To whom does Jesus send you?

2. Gospel People

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This first session is designed to help us connect our understanding and experience of God in the world with our understanding and expression of being God's people sent into the world, embodying the compassion and generosity of the gospel.



WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 2, GOSPEL PEOPLE

Duncan Macleod and Geoff Thompson on being a Gospel people, reflecting the priorities of Jesus, grounded in the gracious, generous and compassionate nature of God.



We are called to take part in proclaiming and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ. Looking at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, what do you think the good news is about? How many ways can you find to describe that good news?



BIBLE READING

Acts 2:43-47

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Geoff Thompson talks about us finding our bearings in the gracious, generous and compassionate nature of God.

The Apostle's Creed talks about the community of Jesus being united (one), focused (holy), accessible (catholic) and sent by God (apostolic) into the world. We're called to become involved in God's work of reconciling, transforming, boundary crossing and sending. Where do you see this in action in this story of the early Church? Where do you see it in action in your context?



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 2, GENEROUS COMMUNITY

*Ashmore Uniting Church – Op Shop Fashion Show
Brad Foote and members of the Op Shop team reflect on being a gospel people in action.*

What did you pick up from this story?

When have you seen the church today express the compassionate and generous nature of God?



UNITING CHURCH ANGLES

“Jesus of Nazareth announced the sovereign grace of God whereby the poor in spirit could receive God's love. Jesus himself, in his life and death, made the response of humility, obedience and trust which God had long sought in vain. In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth, reasserted claim over the whole of creation, pardoned sinners, and made in Jesus a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love.”

Which images of good news can you find in this paragraph?

As members of the “new order of righteousness and love”, how do your worship, witness and service reflect the good news of Jesus in your local community?



PRAYER TIME

Documenting Mission

Hard Data

List documentation from your governing framework
e.g. Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Mission Priorities, Strategic Plan.

How do these reflect the priorities of the Christian gospel?

How has your church used property and funding for the benefit of others. Include ways in which you give away funds to others.

How does your shared stewardship reflect the priorities of the Christian gospel?

Soft Data

What are your gospel stories in action?

Find stories of how living out your values as a community has led to changed lives.

For example:

Stories of how compassionate relationships have changed lives.

Stories of how generous relationships have changed lives.

Stories of how standing in solidarity with the suffering has changed lives.

Stories of how offering forgiveness has changed lives.

Stories of how providing a welcome to strangers has changed lives.



FURTHER READING

There's a difference between a church with an occasional outreach activity, and a church that lives out of a deep understanding of God's compassion for the world. Moving beyond skin-deep compassion or superficial obligation involves a shared longing to see God's will being done in the community.

It's easy to slip into expecting the church to serve the needs of its members. Christian activist Harold Frey once said you'd think that John 3:16 read, "God so loved the *church* that He gave His only Son." What does the text really say? "God so loved the *world* that He gave His only Son"!

Our whole framework of mission comes from who God is, the relational God who engages with our world in compassionate love.

"God's church falters from exhaustion because Christians erroneously think that God has given them a mission to perform in the world. Rather, the God of mission has given his church to the world. It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. The church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God".

(Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: a passion for Christ, a heart for mission*, MARC, 1998)

Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God.

"It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."

(Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 1977)

There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. The Church must not think its role is identical to the *missio Dei*; the Church is participating in the mission of God. The church's mission is a subset of a larger whole mission. That is, it is part of God's mission to the world and not the entirety of God's work in the world.

What is the core message of the Christian gospel?

I recently came across a writer who suggested that we should be able to summarise the Christian gospel in ten words or less. “If you can’t summarize what you believe in ten words, do you truly understand what you believe? Maybe you can believe without fully understanding. But hey, it doesn’t hurt to burn some mental bandwidth to clarify what you believe. So, consider this micro-theology. Petite-worship. Nano-sermons.”

So what’s with the reduction to ten words? My first reaction to this exercise was concern that the good news spoken and lived by Jesus and his people is being reduced to one sentence to meet the obsession with conciseness honed in an era of modernism.

I can imagine Jesus sighing and asking, “Why does this generation ask me for a ten word sentence? I tell you the truth, not one ten word sentence will be given to it.” He’d then get in the boat and head off somewhere to spend time with people listening to and telling stories, doing life and thinking of all the ways he might give some insight into the Kingdom of God. When asked by Peter if he has a ten word sentence, he responds by saying ten times ten, Peter, and more.

Forgiveness by God invites all people to exercise forgiveness together.
Life given that we might live fully, with destiny beyond this age.
Strangers welcomed home by God to join an inclusive community.
Challenged by Jesus to change ways and transform the world.
The Spirit helps face hardship and inspire courage in others.
Loved unconditionally by God and called to love one another.
Created whole by God to guard the integrity of creation.
God giving capacity for insight and wisdom, exploring truth together.
Shame removed, new identity given, development of restoring community.
Reconciled with God and each other, becoming ambassadors of peace.
God’s strength and solidarity with the suffering expressed together.
Healing for broken bodies, emotions, relationships and communities.
Freedom for people trapped in addiction and oppression becoming liberators.

The Uniting Church Basis of Union encourages us to be people of the gospel in Paragraph Three, with a lot more than ten words!

“Jesus of Nazareth announced the sovereign grace of God whereby the poor in spirit could receive God's love. Jesus himself, in his life and death, made the response of humility, obedience and trust which God had long sought in vain. In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth, reasserted claim over the whole of creation, pardoned sinners, and made in Jesus a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love.”

There's a lot of good news in there for us to put into practice. God’s love for the poor in spirit. Jesus showing us who God is, with humility, obedience and trust. God's engagement with all creation. Sinners pardoned. Jesus commissioning a new community of justice and compassion. The gospel is simple and accessible but is deeper and more challenging than anything we could include in a ten word sentence!

4. Relational Discipleship

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This session helps us think through what being a member of a missional community might involve. We look at discipleship through the lens of transformation and renewal.



WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 3, CHANGING CONTEXT

Kaye Ronalds talks about relational missional discipleship, referring to the story of Russell Reynoldson's involvement in the Emerald community during the 2009 floods.

Discipleship is more than a private focus on living correctly before God. It's lived out in relationships, with God, in the context of primary relationships (family and close ones), in the context of our local community (work, play, study, street), and in our local community of faith.

Discipleship involves following Jesus, connecting with the people Jesus connects with, learning to live with God's compassion, being transformed as we live day by day.



What's your first response to the video?

What does Christian discipleship look like in action for you? What are the practices you need to develop to follow in the way of Jesus?



BIBLE READING

Matthew 28: 16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Jesus gives his followers the challenge of helping people in all people groups (nations, cultures, ethnic groups) learn to follow him as disciples, teaching them to do all the things he had taught them to do. What is your experience of this happening today?



UNITING CHURCH ANGLES

The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.

What might confessing the faith of Christ crucified involve in your context?

What does being Christ's faithful servant involve for you?

The gifts of God are given by the Spirit to help us take part in the ministry of Christ, in the world. How do you see yourself using God's gifts in your every day life?



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 3, SENDING COMMUNITY

Andrew Lee talks about being a disciple in Central Queensland and in Papua New Guinea. We talk to young people and their parents about their plans for a trip to Papua New Guinea. Bruce Mullan talks about how we equip people for discipleship in local and global contexts.

How do you see the people in the video living out their discipleship of Jesus? What training and preparation did they need?

What training and preparation might you and members of your community need to live out your discipleship?



PRAYER TIME

Documenting Mission

Hard Data

How do our members resource themselves as disciples?

What resources and programs do we invest in that help people grow as disciples?

How do those resources and programs equip people in everyday discipleship lived out in the community?

Soft Data

What stories do we have of members confessing the faith of Christ crucified?

What stories do we have of people using their gifts to serve in the name of Christ?

How do we help people discern their call to discipleship?

How do we commission our members in their everyday discipleship?

What are the stories of transformation?

What are the stories of perseverance that lead to transformation?

Further Reading

Discipleship is an all-age process, that continues to be explored in many ways.

Discipleship as a process that may begin well before any personal or public acknowledgement of God.

Discipleship as a process of steps, that may have little to do with pre-programmed expectations or schedules.

Discipleship lived out in practices, ranging from discernment through scripture, conversation and reflection, through to active participation in hospitality, compassion, leadership, listening, story telling.

Discipleship lived out in response to the gospel, leading to practices of forgiveness, acceptance and welcome, solidarity with the poor and suffering, courageous engagement in changing community values and practices, sacrificial giving, use of gifts and talents, stewardship of time and resources, honouring the body.

4. Partners with God's people

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This first session is designed to help us focus on our partnership with others in exploring God's mission. Who does God call to be involved in reconciliation and renewal? It's useful to think beyond our own congregation.



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 4, MEET OUR PARTNERS

Peter Armstrong takes us for a tour of Redcliffe, introducing us to the concept of partnering in God's mission, with congregations, agencies, community allies and exiles.



SMALL GROUP

1. In the video we saw a reference to mission of God being carried out by people in congregations, in agencies or parachurch organisations, by "exiles" who don't fit in our organisations, and by allies in the communities. Who do you know in your community that could be described in these ways?



BIBLE READING

Luke 10: 1-7

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid.'

Jesus sent his disciples out into communities, telling them to first find people of peace and hospitality. Who in your community have you found to be people of blessing and hospitality?

3. Uniting Church Framework

The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought. Within that fellowship the Uniting Church also stands in relation to contemporary societies in ways which will help it to understand its own nature and mission. The Uniting Church thanks God for the continuing witness and service of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr. It prays that it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.

What can we learn about our nature and mission from other parts of the Church?

What can we learn about our nature and mission from contemporary society?



WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 4, LOCAL PARTNERS

Peter Hobson and Glebe Road members take us for a tour of Ipswich, to meet members of the community who they regard as partners in mission. Colleen Geyer and Peter Overton about being the church beyond the congregation. The story of Townsville's Stable on the Strand introduces us to the collaboration between congregations of different denominations, the local city council and businesses.

Who are your partners or potential partners that fit with these categories? Who could you learn from?



Documenting Mission

Hard Data

Who are the other congregations in your neighbourhood or sphere of influence? How do you partner with them in mission?

Who are the agencies of the church in your neighbourhood or sphere of influence. Include other denominational and non-denominational groups, as well as individuals who are acting on behalf of the church. How do you partner with them in mission?

What are the community organisations and stakeholders you are in partnership with? How do you partner with them in mission?

Who are the people of faith who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to belong to organised expressions of the church? How do you partner with these people in mission?

Soft Data

Ask key members of your community about their perspective on the hopes and concerns of your community. People to ask might include employers, school principals, hairdressers, law enforcement staff, medical staff, tertiary education staff, leaders and participants in programs, people who use or share your buildings?

Questions to ask:

What is your best experience of this community?
What was your role in that experience?

What have you learnt from conversations with key people in your area?

Congregations

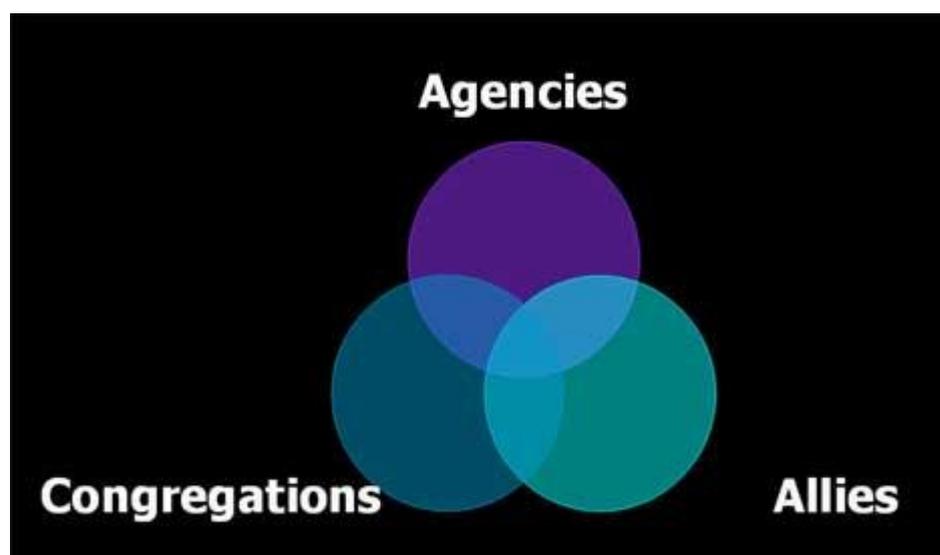
The congregation normally gathers people from all ages and stages of life, with varying levels of commitment to the life and mission of the church. We have formal congregations, usually associated with public buildings, alongside informal networks of Christians who may meet in homes, workplaces or social settings. How do we partner with people from other congregations, from other denominations, other ways of being the local church?

Agencies

An agency is focused on tasks and particular relationships. Staff and volunteers in an agency form a sense of community that is defined by the function of the agency. Obvious examples in the Uniting Church are Blue Care, Lifeline Counselling, Prison Ministries, Crossroads, Emmaus, church schools and hospitals run in the name of the church. Other examples would be groups set up to work with refugees, overseas mission organizations, interdenominational school chaplaincy groups, and action groups that focus on issues such as the environment or reconciliation.

What we have on the diagram has been described in anthropology as 'modality' and 'sodality' Local church and Para church organizations.

See more on the modalities/sodalities theme in Ralph Winter's missiology reader, [Perspectives on the World Christian Movement](#).



Allies

Allies are people who share and respect the values held by the organized church, but who do not easily fit into the way we operate. Many of these people, who may want to join in what God is doing in the world, have little interest in becoming members of a religious institution.

We might find these people on the local city or regional council. Or in the local business community. Perhaps people involved in playgroups or Alcoholics Anonymous. It might be people who consider themselves 'Uniting' when it comes time for the census. We might not get them to attend weekly worship. But they may become partners in mission as they consider how they put into practice their concern for the welfare of the community.

Having three-way conversations can get us beyond the dualist competition that so often breaks out between local and regional, congregational and agency, us and them.

Exiles

The exiles. The people who have pulled out of the organized church, yet who continue to exercise faith in action. Alan Jamieson, in his book, '[A Churchless Faith](#)', describes a wide range of people who were once active members of local congregations and parachurch organizations, but who continue to follow Christ. George Barna writes about these people in his book, '[Revolution](#)', describing an emerging network of Christians who have lost patience with congregational business and who want to get on with living as followers of Christ.

Many 'exiles' leave the Church because of frustration and disappointment. The 'Get Up and Go' people have 'got up and gone' when dreams, plans and possibilities were stifled or stonewalled. If we want to develop fresh and innovative approaches to mission, reaching new groups of people, we'd be well advised to consult with the Exiles.

We're sometimes tempted to write people off because they don't belong to our group, like some of Jesus' disciples.

Luke 9: 49-50 John answered, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not stop him; for whoever is not against you is for you.'

Each of these networks of people will be needed as we explore what it means to be the people of Jesus in mission in Australia. They each have strengths and liabilities. They can work separately, and usually do. But what happens when we work together? Sometimes it's disastrous! We struggle over the bottom line, the end result, 'what's in it for us'. Occasionally we're able to share resources, networks and insights.

If we engage with our community with a sense of poise, knowing who we are and whose we are, we more able to engage in partnerships with those outside our immediate circle.

5. Who Are Your People?

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This session helps us think through being in mission with particular people groups.



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 5, MISSIONAL EDGES

Rob Bos talks about his experiences as a Dutch born immigrant in Australia, as a member of Aboriginal communities, and as a visitor to North India.



SMALL GROUP

1. What experiences have you had of going into an unfamiliar culture?



BIBLE READING

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 9

Paul led the way on finding ways of relating to many different people groups? What would have been strengths of being so flexible? What were the risks involved in changing his approach?



UNITING CHURCH ANGLES

(The Uniting Church) believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries, and to this end the Uniting Church commits itself to seek special relationships with Churches in Asia and the Pacific. The Uniting Church declares its desire to enter more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church in Australia, by working together and seeking union with other Churches.

We have a mandate to present the gospel in ways that relate to people from any cultural, economic or racial background. How have you seen that carried out?



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 5, THESE ARE MY PEOPLE

Fa Ngaluafe talks about connecting with her Tongan community. Geoff Masclyn talks about his involvement in the local Ulysses Motorcycle Club.

Who are the people groups that you could spend more time with? What do you have in common with them?



PRAYER TIME

Documenting Mission

Hard Data

List information about your local context, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data from 2001, 2006, 2011.

How many people live there?

From the Australian census figures what do you know about the people groups living in your area?

What can you find about

Ethnic groups

Educational levels

Employment and income figures

Kinds of households?

How has your community changed over the last ten years? How is it likely to change in the next ten years?

How do these figures relate to the information you have on membership of your church?

Soft Data

Talking to people in your context what ethnic groups, interest groups, family groups, online communities do they connect with?

In what ways do you see the evidence of God's values being put into action in these people groups?

Where are the places of hospitality in which you might become guests or co-hosts?

What are the hopes and concerns found in these people groups?



FURTHER READING

Christianity is a universal movement, with a faith that can be adopted and adapted by people in any culture. We can attempt to work on a generic expression of church for a generic population, or we can nurture welcoming expressions of church that take on the colours, flavours, smells and tastes of local communities. Melting pot or spicy tossed leaf salad.

So how do we identify the people groups that we might connect with?

1. Is there a culture that has developed in the local community, associated with shared experiences and shared perspectives on the world? Rural and mining communities have economies that shape their culture, for example. What are the best expressions of that shared culture? This is an easier question to explore in smaller communities.
2. Are there particular ethnic identities in which people share a common understanding of the world? These people may have an existing connection through a soccer club (Spanish, Portuguese for example), a cultural dance group (Maori, Filipino, Cook Island). People may be scattered and disconnected, and looking for a place to be themselves.
3. Are there particular life stages or transition points that you have an affinity for? Pre-schoolers, school children, teenagers, young adults, students, parents of young children, engaged couples, parents of teenagers, divorcees, newly arrived immigrants, retirees, widows and widowers...
3. What about generational focus points? Do you have a natural affinity with the aspirations of Baby Boomers? Gen X? Gen Y? Not to be confused with life stages.
4. Are there particular clusters focused on needs that you could relate to? Think grief recovery, parenting support, disabilities, people on low income, single parents, mental health...
5. Are there shared passions that you could connect with? Gardening, fishing, music, art, food, sport, craft, biking, exercise, writing, movies, technology, gaming, photography, shopping, philosophy, travel, clothing, animals, science
6. Are there shared world views and spiritualities that you connect with? Progressive and careful thinkers? Passionate seekers of supernatural experience? Contemplatives? Activists?

6. Mission Together

LEARNING GOALS (2 minutes)

This session helps us think through what it might mean to hold together all that mission involves.



WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 6, MISSIONAL INTEGRITY

Clive Ayre introduces the Five Marks of Mission from the Anglican Consultative Council. We have examples given by Lu Senituli, Rodney Minniecon, Beatriz Skippen, Peter Hobson and James Hughes.

1. *Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God*
2. *Teach, Baptise and Nurture*
3. *Loving Service*
4. *Transform unjust structures of society*
5. *Safeguard creation and sustain the earth*



1. What parts of the five marks of mission do you most relate to? Which parts are more difficult?



BIBLE READING

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

Jesus in Luke 4:17-20

Jesus used Isaiah to talk about the ways the Spirit had commissioned him. What would you use today to describe the Spirit's calling, as an individual, group or community?



UNITING CHURCH ANGLES

The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world. The congregation will recognise the need for a diversity of agencies for the better ordering of its life in such matters as education, administration and finance.

The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church reflects the nature of God's mission, on its way to becoming the reconciling, transforming, boundary-crossing and commissioning people of the Gospel. The Basis of Union mentions education, administration and finance as needing organisation beyond the congregation, in a diversity of agencies. What other aspects of our life as the people of God might we need to plan for specifically?



VIDEO STORY

WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 6, WHAT ARE WE DISCOVERING?

Clive Ayre introduces us to a recent discovery at Caloundra Uniting Church, a calling to care for the environment.

What are the emerging dreams and visions that God is calling your community to explore?



PRAYER TIME



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

Hard Data

List the ways in which you as a community of faith recognize and support faith sharing, nurture of disciples and learning, serving together, transforming society and environmental stewardship.

List the action plans/strategies you have for building capacity in faith sharing, nurture of disciples, serving together, changing society and environment.

Soft Data

What are your stories of teamwork and collaboration that honour different gifts, ministries and approaches to mission?

What are your emerging stories of faith sharing, compassionate care, learning, changing the community and caring for environment.



FURTHER READING

Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission, endorsed by the Lambeth Conference 1988 and the Forum of Churches Together in England 1997, hold together expressions of mission that are at times set against each other.

1. TELL - To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom

Proclamation may be in words - effective communication of the Gospel - but also in actions, by living the Good News we preach.

2. TEACH - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

Christian discipleship is about lifelong learning, so we all need formal and informal resources for growing in faith, so that the Church is a learning environment for all ages.

3. TEND - To respond to human need by loving service

Churches have a long tradition of care through pastoral ministry. Christians are called to respond to the needs of people locally and in the wider human community.

4. TRANSFORM - To seek to transform unjust structures in society

Jesus and the OT prophets before him challenged oppressive structures in God's name. Christians should not only press for change, but also demonstrate justice within Church structures.

5. TREASURE - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Bible's vision of salvation is universal in its scope. We are called to promote the wellbeing of the human community and its environment, so that Creation may live in harmony.

Discovery to Dreaming

Looking back over the six sessions, what can you affirm about

- your understanding of mission
- your awareness of local community
- the way you describe yourselves
- the people you partner with
- the people groups you connect with
- the ways in which hold together the fullness of mission

What clues have you found that would help grow your effectiveness as God's people in mission?

- your understanding of mission
- your awareness of local community
- the way you describe yourselves
- the people you partner with
- the people groups you connect with
- the ways in which hold together the fullness of mission

What do you need to explore further in terms of

- your understanding of mission
- your awareness of local community
- the way you describe yourselves
- the people you partner with
- the people groups you connect with
- the ways in which hold together the fullness of mission

What are the resources you need to develop or find to help you take your next steps?

Which are the stories you need to hear and share?

Write Postcards to yourselves from 10 years in the future, writing about the way your community will have engaged in God's mission. You could use the six topics we used in Mission Stories, or the Five Marks of Mission, or just choose one thing that will have happened.

God is with us

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

The United Church of Canada, General Council 1968, alt. 1998

As a people journeying together we affirm our calling under God:

- to preach Christ the crucified and risen one and confess him as Lord
- to bear witness to the unity of faith and life in Christ, rising above cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries
- to engage in fearless prophetic ministry in relation to social evils which deny God's active will for justice and peace
- to act with God alongside the oppressed, the hurt and the poor
- to accept responsibility for the wise use and conservation of the finite resources of this earth for the benefit of all
- to recognise, treasure and use the gifts of the Spirit given to all God's people for ministering and to live a creative, adventurous life of faith, characterised by openness, flexibility, hope and joy

(based on a statement from the inaugural worship service of the Uniting Church in Australia June 1977)

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO LEADER'S NOTES

The information in this 'Leader's Pack' provides recommendations on:
Research and reflection that can be carried out prior to the Mission Study Workshop
Some tips and techniques for running the workshop
What to do after the planning workshop/service
How to discern what gifts and skills are needed to they would like in a minister or deacon to complement the existing gifts and skills of the leaders in the congregation.
Reviewing progress

As the mission study leader/facilitator, your role in these processes is to assist the congregation to discover the two or three things that God is calling them to do by giving serious consideration to their gifts and contributions and their mission field. Each of the processes in this package is different and a congregation can follow the easy step-by-step process when they are conducting a mission study, either for the placement of a new minister or at any other time.

There is no one way of 'being church' that is appropriate everywhere so the processes can be tailored to suit the congregation or the time that is available or the resources that are available.

While the congregation is following the process they are encouraged to focus on and discern:

Who they are as Christians
Who God is calling them to be in mission with in the community
What they can do through 1-3 areas of their life and mission to focus on the significant needs in the community
What strengths and gifts they have that can be used to serve most effectively
What strengths and gifts don't they have and they need to meet their mission goals

The information in this 'Leader's Pack' provides recommendations on the activities that can be carried out prior to the Mission Study Workshop as well as some tips and techniques for running the workshop and then what the congregation should do after they have completed the workshop.

GETTING YOUR CONGREGATION FOCUSSED

During the 3-4 weeks leading up to the workshop, you could try the following to get your congregation focussed on mission:

Preaching

To enhance the congregation's reflection on mission, some preaching relating to the mission of God and the role of the church, could be done prior to the workshop.

Refer to the bible passages in any of the options if necessary.

Sharing the story and newsletters

Sharing information about the community. The newsletter is a great opportunity to get the congregation thinking about mission in the community before the workshop planning day. As you gather the information about the community. Tell the stories, ask questions and share the statistics. This will get the people thinking about the community that God's located them in.

During Worship

Give an opportunity for people to come forward and give a 5-10 minute presentation about their local street or their workplace or of a particular situation they are aware of in the community.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Gathering information about your local community

To save time in the workshop, it is helpful to gather information about the local community, such as:

Who lives here?

Family structure?

Economic/employment situation?

Ethnic background?

Examples of where this information can be obtained:

The local council (Community Service or Urban Planning Departments)

Local councillors

Australian Bureau of Statistics for Census data

The local library

NCLS Social Profile

Exploring the needs and hopes of your community

To aid the congregation's deliberations about who they are in mission with, gather information about the areas where the community is in need. This information can be obtained from the requests that are asked of the church and also the responses from the community when they are asked who they believe needs the assistance of the congregation the most.

An example of a question that can be posed is:

"Are there any groups of people in this community that would benefit from personal, social or material support and help from our church?"

The list below gives some ideas about who to ask this question:

- The local council
- Local councilors
- The local library
- The community information service
- Community workers and organisations
- Local schools and TAFE
- Hospital social workers and other community services
- Local service clubs
- Publicans
- Shop keepers
- Chamber of Commerce

The local newspapers contain news items and stories about the community that the congregation might like to gather or follow-up on. This would also be a good exercise for the younger members of the congregation to participate in before the workshop.

It would be helpful to gather information about what community services are provided by other churches and agencies in the area

Questionnaire about your community

© John N. Hooper 2000

The following questionnaire may help you ask the right questions to gather the above information.

Statistics - Community Age Structure – 1996 or 2001 Census

	Number	%
0 - 4 years
5 - 17 years
18 - 24 years
25 - 34 years
35 - 49 years
50 - 59 years
60 - 69 years
70 - 84 years
85 years plus
TOTAL	100%

The population of the community is:

stable

growing

changing in composition

declining

culturally mixed

What do these figures suggest to you?

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Look at the NCLS statistics for your congregation from the 1996 or 2001 NCLS survey of your congregation. How do these figures compare with your congregational age structure? Does your congregation's profile reflect the age structure of the general community?

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List any social issues and concerns in your community.

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Are there particular events and stories that shaped your community?

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List any institutions in which the congregation has specific ministry and mission (e.g. education, hospitals, aged care etc) and indicate the nature of the ministry. [P1: 7]

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What organisations within your community do members of your congregation actively support and participate in? (eg CFA; CWA, Red Cross, Hospital Auxiliary, Historical Society, sporting clubs etc.)

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What festivals or other community events are held in your local community in which the congregation could participate, providing an appropriate Christian example and input?

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As you reflect on the community in which your congregation is placed, what particular needs stand out for you? Can you see where people are hurting and life is being devalued? Do any particular Bible stories, events or characters come to mind as you consider the issues in your community? How does this inform your understanding? What response does the Gospel demand?

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.....

Ecumenical Activity

What ecumenical activities occur in the community?

.....
.....
.....

What significant expressions of Christian unity have been achieved?

.....
.....
.....

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONGREGATION

Identify current mission activities

Become familiar with the current mission activities in the church. If the congregation is already working on a mission plan, an update of the progress of this plan should be available prior to the workshop.

If the congregation is not working to a specific mission plan, gather information about the current activities being carried-out by the various groups in the congregation and who participates/benefits from these activities.

Charting the current mission activities:

The congregation may find it more helpful and simpler to chart their current mission activities on a table. The results can be used to evaluate the church's activities to establish what the key mission areas are, or should be.

Mission Planning and A Comprehensive Approach Grid

Designed by Mark Hillis (May 2001)

The grids on these pages have been used with congregations to help with mission planning. They are based on an approach learned from John Roberto and through interaction with Uniting Education (see references below for further reading). The Grid (**A**) that is filled-in provides definitions for each of the activities described as **Work of the Church** in relation to each category of **Where or With Whom the Work Takes Place**. This sample grid is provided to help congregations use the blank form of the grid more effectively. *The blank form of the Grid (B) is provided for ease of copying or expanding.*

Q: Why use a grid like this for planning purposes?

A: The grid has been tested for its comprehensive fit with many congregations, in terms of its ability to collect accurate descriptive information about the life and activities of a church congregation. It has the added advantage of being sufficiently flexible to, if necessary, add columns or rows. In the processes of gathering, and then analysing, information about a congregation, one is able to survey the "gaps" that appear (as empty squares) in the grid and to assess whether those "gaps" are significant or not for the current or future life and mission of that congregation. As an

analytical tool, I have found this grid most enlightening and empowering for congregations to:

- Make a clear and comprehensive survey of their current activity.
- Discern what is being done and not being done by the church.
- Compare the current activity with a local community profile and other demographic data about the wider community and the church itself.
- Plan for change based upon accurate and up-to-date information.

How is the Grid actually used in mission planning? (Using an agency consultant or local planning team)

The grid is made available to groups and individuals that are aware of particular activities/ ministries (*Work of the Church* on the grid, see example) and *where or with whom the work takes place*. Relevant parts of the grid are filled-in with brief descriptions and later collected.

The planning team or consultant collate the various contributions and draw up a complete grid with all work included. This completed form of the grid is circulated, to confirm the entries and to collect any ministries or activities that have been overlooked.

The completed form of the grid is studied by the planning team along with analytical data such as Census, National Church Life Survey, Local Government demographic studies etc.

A planning process is devised to bring representatives of the congregation together to explore the grid and the implications of Step 3 for the mission planning of the church.

Questions may be asked, like '**What are we called to be?**' and **Whom are we called to serve?** Information from the grid and other studies can show how things are at present and will help to project a vision for the future (via a goal-setting or other exercise).

“Gaps” in the grid can be examined for their fit with the goals of the congregation to see whether they are significant or necessary. [For example: (a) Demographic data will reveal whether some age-group work would be relevant; or (b) Local Community knowledge may show whether some wider community work is adequately catered for or would benefit from the involvement of the church.]

Where “gaps” are perceived to be significant, a close examination of the grid can be used to show whether some current activity may be expanded or changed to help fill a “gap” in the church’s mission. [For example: (a) A church that is running a Kid’s Club and wants to do more significant ministry with local families may be able to upgrade or extend its work with kid’s club parents and siblings and seek advice and support to explore the possibilities; or, (b) The same church wishing to explore

mission with young teens may seek advice and support in how to provide effective mentoring for older children in the Kid's Club, and thus build a ministry from the current service base.]

The very design of the grid can help churches evaluate their mission. For example, the column headed *Wider Community* can be explored in relation to all the *Work of the Church* headings. A church is forced to consider whether it has any "wider community" impact through any of its current activities. By considering how it may be able to make its *Worship and Prayer* or *Christian Education* or *Leadership Development* work available to the "wider community" beyond the church, a congregation is starting to think seriously about its mission. It may also consider how the resources of the wider community may help with the development and training or the social action of its members – mission is not just a one-way endeavour! [For example, some congregations have used community organisations and professionals to help train the church pastoral care workers or to heighten awareness about community needs. Many churches have harnessed the expertise of local school staff to help train their Scripture teachers.] It is all part of opening-up to the work God is already doing in the world Christ came to serve.

Mark Hillis (May 2001)

Further Reading:

Mitchell, Craig (Ed. 1997) *A Comprehensive Approach: ministry and mission with children, young people and families*. Melbourne: JBCE.
Roberto, John (et.al. 1996) *Comprehensive Approach*. Melbourne: JBCE

GRID A

GRID A	Where or With Whom the Work Takes Place			
WORK OF THE CHURCH	AGE-GROUP	FAMILY	CHURCH-BASED	WIDER COMMUNITY
Worship & Prayer	Activity for or with any specific age groups that could be described as chiefly involving worship and prayer	Gathered' or 'at home' help, activity or resources relating worship and/or prayer to family life.	E.g. Church Services	Services involving worship but which are in support of or incorporating or celebrating wider community activities
Mission & Evangelism	Intentional faith sharing or outreach that aims to reach particular age groups.	Intentional faith sharing or outreach that aims to communicate with families.	Intentional faith sharing or outreach to persons connected with the Congregation.	Intentional faith sharing or outreach which focuses beyond the Congregation.
Christian Education	Intentional educative activities with specific generations.	Educative work for or with families in gathered, small group or home settings.	Educational activities or programs initiated through church-based structures.	Educational endeavour that supports learning in other than church settings.
Social Responsibility (Justice & Service)	Activity that enhances a just society and encourages generational groups to see their roles.	Activity towards the creation of a just society that helps families to play their part.	Activity towards a just and responsible society that has its identity in or through the Church.	Activity towards a just and compassionate society in concert with other groups, organisations or individuals.

GRID A	Where or With Whom the Work Takes Place			
WORK OF THE CHURCH	AGE-GROUP	FAMILY	CHURCH-BASED	WIDER COMMUNITY
Pastoral Care	Pastoral care with specific generational groups.	Pastoral care with families (whatever their structure) and with individuals understood as part of a family system.	Pastoral care carried out as a 'whole church' endeavour.	Pastoral care beyond the Congregation (E.g. institutions like schools, hospitals, Courts, community groups).
Church Community Life	Activities that boost or support teamwork and sense of community.	Activity that supports families in their health and sense of belonging.	Activity that enhances the Church's ability to provide and/or foster community.	Activity that enables shared community building in society.
Leadership Development	Intentional learning activity aimed to boost the skills, values, knowledge or attitudes of persons working with particular age groups.	Intentional learning opportunities aimed at enhancing awareness of the variety of family life and awareness of their specific needs.	Intentional learning opportunities for those who serve in specific functions on behalf of the Church.	Intentional learning made available by or for the benefit of society where the Church seeks to serve.
Advocacy	Work that consciously supports or enhances the service of specific age groups as a ministry priority.	Work which consciously supports the service of families (however defined) through the Church as a priority.	Conscious support and/or promotion of identity and community through the Church in its core ministry functions.	The Church acting to support aspects of community life, institutions, or service functions of value to persons.

GRID B

GRID B	Where or With Whom the Work Takes Place			
WORK OF THE CHURCH	AGE-GROUP	FAMILY	CHURCH-BASED	WIDER COMMUNITY
Worship & Prayer				
Mission & Evangelism				
Christian Education				
Social Responsibility (Justice & Service)				
Pastoral Care				
Church Community Life				
Leadership Development				
Advocacy				

Identify the strengths and gifts in the congregation

In order for a congregation to take advantage of God's gift of mission, they must discover their own particular strengths and gifts so that, after they have devised their mission plan, they can find out what strengths and gifts they need and build on the strengths they don't have.

Spend some time identifying what strengths and gifts are in the congregation.

As you think about the people and skills/talents/experience in your congregation, can you see any connection between the needs in the community and the gifts God has given your congregation?

Other Resources:

A user-friendly guide with worksheets has been prepared by Rev Dr Graham Beattie to help all the people in the congregation (especially the elders) to discover information about the spiritual gifts, heart desires or passions, abilities, personality traits and experiences which they have and which equip them for mission tasks in the Church and the community. The resource is called **“Discovering and Using God’s Gifts”**, if you wish to purchase copies, they are available from:

The Theology and Discipleship Agency
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly
P.O. Box A2266
Sydney South NSW 1235
Phone: (02) 8267 4204

See also ‘Taking Stock - Other Resources’ in the Leaders Notes of this guide.

“COMMUNITY BUILDING HELPS PLANNING”

The best decisions are made by groups that understand and can relate well to each other. To build-up your church community you may like to consider the following ideas to enhance relationships within your congregation and increase your ability to work as a team at the mission study workshop/service.

A shared meal (with or without activities or games afterwards) greatly helps the group to become a cohesive unit. There are few better ways to break down barriers and grow friendships than to share a meal together.

Conducting a community building exercise

The following is an example of a community building exercise that can be done a week before the mission planning workshop is conducted and it will take about 40 minutes to complete.

Growing a Garden - A Planning Exercise

Author: Jenny Tymms, Presbytery Minister, Northern Territory

Imagine that you are a group of people who have just arrived in a new town. You notice that a few people have gardens in their back yards but on the whole they are not growing well. The plants are scraggly and there are lots of barren patches and other parts are covered in weeds. Most people have no gardens at all and the nature strips and public areas are weeds.

You are a bit depressed. Imagine that each of you have come from places that have gardens everywhere. Where you come from lots of people love gardening and all the public places are rich gardens and parks where people enjoy coming to play and rest and have picnics together.

You talk about it a lot together. Wouldn't it be marvelous if this town somehow had a greater love of trees and plants; if somehow your own love of gardening could be experienced and practiced by others in the town. You talk about what a difference it would make if there were beautiful public parks and gardens and if there were opportunities for people to learn how to grow gardens in their own places.

Imagine that you have met together and have decided together to grow a public garden in an accessible part of the town. The local council has given you a plot of land and has said rather skeptically "go ahead."

What are the kinds of issues that you are going to need to explore if you are going to grow your garden together?

Kinds of issues likely to be raised:

What kind of garden?

Vegetable garden - what kind of veggies?

Open park land?

Native trees and shrubs?

Flower gardens - all kinds?.

How would you go about testing what kind of garden to make?

what gardening skills do you have in the group or what gardening skills might there be in the wider community? **who are we? What do we love? What are our skills?**

what kind of climate, soil is the town you have come to? What will grow, what will not? **Data about the particular context**

what do we think will capture the imaginations of the people of the town, what is missing in their lives? Places to play, or reflect, to picnic together, to make food together? **Data about the people and the missional context, the needs?**

how big is your plot of land? **What are our resources?**

what plants are available? How much will they cost? What kind of ongoing work will they need? **What are our resources?**

do you want the same kind of garden that can be grown in backyards? Or something different? **what is our purpose?**

**** what's the purpose of the garden? Is it for people to picnic in, to play in, or to practice gardening in? or to see all the different possibilities in?

**The purpose will guide the kind of garden.

*** the local context and the skills of the gardeners will help shape the particularities of the garden.

Maybe different people have skills at different parts of the process. Some have the knowledge about the plants or could go and explore this, but won't be able to do the actual planting. One is able to keep the dream alive to offer cups of tea and encouragement. One will lend their gardening tools. Utilising gifts in planning and implementation,

When you've decided the purpose - have to plan the shape and the plants. Who will do what and when? **Action planning**

Details of where to get the plants, extra soil?

Who's going to do the actual digging? The actual planting? No point in planning something huge if you don't have the energy and agility to do it.

Are you going to involve other people from the community in the planning? In the actual growing of the garden? Is there a way of involving the children in the schools? The parents of children. You are convinced that gardening is good for the soul, how to encourage non-gardeners to try it? **Processes of involvement**

What equipment will you need? Will you do one bit at a time or shape the whole thing?

Who's going to maintain it? Is there a way of involving others?

How with all these questions and issues - **do we keep the dream alive? ie maintain the motivation?**

Will we have an organising committee? Subcommittees appoint a leader, a spokesperson for the community? What is the best way of organising? **Structure for planning and implementing?**

QUESTIONS

How does the group become a gardening community and not just be a community that owns a garden?

What is the difference? - people are actively involved in the gardening, have a love of being involved

there are gardening opportunities for people

people share their practices, pass on tips, and tell their gardening stories.

its not just left to the experts, to the paid gardeners.

becomes part of their life

people's differing skills are used for the benefit of the whole

GETTING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED

The young people in the congregation should be encouraged to get involved in the mission study so that they can enthusiastically participate in the mission activities of their church and experience the joy of being in service with God to their community.

All the suggested activities in the Leader's Notes of this guide can be adapted for the young people. To encourage their participation, thought needs to be given to language and activities so that they are meaningful for those age groups (story books and/or interactive activities may assist this process). If the number of children and youth in the congregation is significant enough, you may wish to consider appointing a leader who will coordinate and facilitate appropriate youth activities.

During the Mission Planning Workshop, the young people could participate in the process that the general congregation follows, or they can follow a process of their own in order to discern a specific focus group that God is calling them to be in mission with.

Dreaming Together a Future with God

By *Duncan Macleod*

The dream phase is an exploration of what might be, in which people look at their hopes and dreams for their work, their working relationships, their organisation and the world around them. This is the “thinking outside the square” time, in which the lessons of the past provide clues but not final restraints.

The Dream process gives an opportunity to assess or reassess the shared vision, values and mission priorities of the congregation.

Shared Mission Statement

What language do we use to help us focus on our shared purpose? A mission statement or a vision statement needs to be memorable, repeatable and inspiring – something that can be demonstrated in a story, and shared visually.

Values

Having spent time in the Discovery phase are there any shifts in values? Values are the principles and assumptions that bind the congregation together. They help shape vision, clarify ministry distinctives and style, determine priorities and motivate people for action.

Missional Priorities

What are the emerging missional priorities that come out of the Discovery phase? Missional priorities are strategic focus points that connect with people groups. You could have one missional priority. You could have five missional priorities.

An effective missional priority names the focus of ministry, rather than a program. For example, religious education in a state school could be related to a missional priority of connecting with and empowering children in the local state school. This

Powerful Dream Questions

The questions we ask in the Dreaming time are about what could be. What is our potential future? How can we imagine God working around us, with us and through us in the future? The six questions used in the Discover phase can be used again in the Dream phase, applied to each missional priority.

1. How might our environment be different? How might we need to change our understanding of mission in response?
2. How could we embody the gospel as a community of compassion and generosity?
3. How might we resource people as everyday disciples of Jesus? What expressions of the gospel could we explore in practices of faith?
4. Who might we partner with, in our local community and beyond? What could we do together?
5. Which people groups could we be connecting with? How might we do that?
6. How might we more fully express the reconciling nature of God in our mission?

Listen to Members of the Congregation

Shared dreams often rise out of the hopes, desires, frustrations, angers, hurts, drives, interests and passions of individuals and groups. Tom Bandy talks about identifying “heart bursts”, the God-given callings that align us with our community. Bill Hybels asks the question, “What is my holy discontent?” Ann Morisy asks, “What is my prayer burden?”

It takes a community to dream a dream that will transform the community. It’s helpful to change the flavour of an organisation by bringing together different stakeholders whose perspectives will bring out different possibilities in each other. Bring in people who don’t normally have a say in the running of things. Borrow the perspectives of sub cultures which normally are glossed over for the sake of “middle of the road” peace. Bring people who can articulate what could be. Bring people who have been elsewhere and know that things could be different.

Kennon Callahan, in *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, suggests we ask our members five invitational questions.

1. What specific human hurts and hopes do you have longings to help with?
2. What concrete strengths do you have with which to share effective help for those specific human hurts and hopes?
3. What three to five persons do you know who have similar longings and strengths in your church or in your community?
4. What events in the community would make this mission effort timely?
5. In what specific ways is this emerging outreach one in which God is calling you to invest your life?

We could look at responses in terms of how we worship together, the programs we run, our engagement with the community, the ways in which we use and develop property, the ways in which we use our financial resources, planning for staffing, and collaboration with other congregations, agencies, companies and community organisations.

Provocative Proposals

We can foster provocative shared visions that need significant investments of time and resources. We can foster equally provocative visions that can be picked up and implemented by individuals and small groups without large budgets.

Take the Time

Dreaming requires patience, perseverance and prayer. It is tempting to short circuit the creative process when we become anxious about overly ambitious or competing pictures of the future. Rushing straight into design and delivery of programs can sabotage the development of effective mission.

It can be helpful to name a period of time as the era of fluidity, flexibility, possibility, in which we deliberately foster dreams. If you’re looking at future building projects, for example, set aside a time for “camping”, like the Israelites did with the

Tabernacle, trying out different options. If you're planning to start a new worship service, set aside a time for experimentation with different styles, formats, times and places. Get used to the idea of "one-off" learning opportunities that don't have to be continued forever.

Future Thinking

How do we avoid merely repeating the patterns of the past? Future thinking requires an awareness of how life progresses. I've found it's helpful to document the positive changes that have happened during the life times of an organisation or group of people. What technical advances made it possible to try new things? What people groups changed the way the organisation worked? What did each generation bring to the table? How did changes in the neighbourhood change the priorities and callings of the community?

Are there any changes in attitude and action that need to be explored in response to God's calling for the future? What needs to be let go? What needs to continue? What needs to be started?

More Than One Approach

There is usually more than one right approach for any challenge we set ourselves to. To get people to share a provocative proposal they need to have explored the options, shaped the options and flavoured them with their God-given perspectives.

Quotes on Dreaming

Some people see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not?

George Bernard Shaw

Nothing happens unless first a dream.

Carl Sandburg

"When I dream alone, it is just a dream. When we dream together, it is the beginning of reality."

Brazilian Proverb

Developing a Ministry Plan

By Duncan Macleod

A “ministry plan” is the people connecting with people part. We can become so caught up in the delivery of a service, or the running of an event, or the provision of an environment, that we overlook the human connections that need to be fostered. Who will be connecting with whom? How will this project deliver hope and healing? How will we embody compassion and generosity?

Events, whether they are one off or regular, need a ministry plan that goes beyond the running sheet. Who will be inviting people to these events? Who do we expect to turn up? Who will welcome the newcomers? Who will incorporate them into a community? How will we ensure that there is an experience of community? Playgroups, for example, become intergenerational centres of community when volunteers learn to build relationship as they serve cups of tea and coffee, read stories and facilitate play.

Service based projects need a community of people at their hub. An op shop, for example, thrives when staff and volunteers see themselves as a compassionate and welcoming community that turns customers into friends. Having professional staff can help ensure that our projects are of a high standard, but it takes a community to reach a community with warmth.

Ministry plans need to include “consumers” in decision making. We minister with people, not to them.

Carl S. Dudley, in his book, “Community Ministry”, puts it this way....

“When we minister to people, we reduce them to objects. “They” and “we” are different. “They” are called the clients, the “program consumers”, or the “target population.” We mistakenly believe that with our resources we are all powerful, and that with their needs they are weak. We are tempted to think as the providers of ministry, that we are the decision makers, and they are the recipients”.

A ministry plan needs to address the various levels of complexity in community work, as described in Dave Andrews’ book, *Compassionate Community Work*...

1. Community relief – You help people yourself
2. Community education – you train people to help themselves
3. Community confrontation – you challenge groups who won’t help
4. Community formation – you develop a way of helping one another
5. Community transformation – people adopt that way as a way of life

A ministry plan also needs to include leadership development and succession planning.

HINTS AND TIPS FOR CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP

Hints and Tips for Session Leader Techniques

Write down exactly what the participants tell you, don't phrase their points
Keep control, keep to the agenda
Always introduce a session (state objectives)
Guide the group by...
Asking OPEN questions, then more CLOSED questions
Offer suggestions for discussion (NOT solutions)
Acknowledge the contributions of the "quiet" members; they usually have something important to say.
Re-direct the "loud" or "dominant" members by ...
Interrupting and asking the rest for their opinion (making sure you follow the most significant point made by the original member)
Physically "screen-off" arguments
Use specific body gestures, to convey control but be GENTLE and SUBTLE
While discussion during the workshop is encouraged, ensure that it stays within a time limit and that the discussion time is turned into a decision time.
Stay in control; if a situation is going astray, don't hesitate to step in and gently restore order.

Attitude

Motivate the participants.
Stay enthusiastic (and SHOW IT)
Talk LOUDLY and CONCISELY (20-30% more volume than normal).
Get the group members "on their feet" whenever possible.

Documentation

Write CLEARLY and in LARGE CAPITALS

Use 2 sets of media

When finished with one, and agreement reached, hand it over to the scribe for documenting, then continue on with the other

Keep the PACE FAST but, DO NOT CONTINUE until everything relevant is DOCUMENTED and UNDERSTOOD

Do NOT allow the conversation to continue more than 15 minutes, without recording anything

TAKING STOCK

This section is to be completed by the Mission Co-ordination Group and the Church Council. Refer to the Joint Nominating Group (JNC).

Once the congregation has discovered what key mission focus areas God is calling them to be in, they need to decide what kinds of gifts, skills and resources are needed to fulfil these mission priorities.

A review of the gifts and skills of the congregation may be helpful. (See Leader's Notes, Understanding your Congregation – Identify the strengths and gifts in the congregation)

If the congregation is going through the mission study exercise for the placement of a new minister, now is the time when they need to decide what gifts and skills they would like in a minister or deacon to complement the existing gifts and skills of the leaders in the congregation.

Other Resources:

Once the congregation has decided what people groups they are going to be focussing on in mission, there is a resource available through UCA - Theology and Discipleship that they may wish to use to help them develop specific goals, plans and timetable. The resource is a booklet of studies for adults, young people and children called ***'Forward Together: Risking the way of Jesus'***, if you wish to purchase copies, they are available from:

The Theology and Discipleship Agency
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly
P.O. Box A2266
Sydney South NSW 1235
Phone: (02) 8267 4204

LEADERSHIP

This section is to be completed by the Mission Co-ordination Group and the Church Council. Refer to the Joint Nominating Group (JNC).

Once the congregation has completed their mission planning process, the direction of their future congregational life will be clearer. The following questionnaire will assist the congregation to come to a decision about what gifts and skills are needed in the leader or minister who will help them meet their mission commitments.

Outline the agreed Mission Goals/Priorities of the congregation for the next three years (refer to the Mission Study Workshop/Service).

.....
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.....

Given the Mission Goals that have been identified for your congregation, what are the principal responsibilities that the proposed minister might be expected to exercise?

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.....
.....

What particular skills would you look for in a minister to help you achieve your stated goals?

.....
.....
.....

Which type of specified ministry or leadership would be best suited to the ministry and mission goals of this Congregation/Parish/Mission Area?

Minister of the Word

Deacon

Youth Worker

Lay Pastor

What are the reasons for this choice?.....

.....
.....
.....

REVIEWING THE PROGRESS YOU'VE MADE

Most mission study/planning processes are best done once every 12 months. This is because mission planning is an ongoing learning process. We learn and plan best when we combine action with reflection and prayer.

Before the Mission Study Process can be considered finished, it is essential that there is a plan in place to meet annually to review and evaluate the progress that has been on the mission plan to see which goals have been achieved, which are no longer appropriate and which new goals need to be developed.

In 12-months time (and subsequent years) the congregation should conduct the mission study process again. Start by spending 1-2 hours evaluating what was planned the year before, how things went, what worked, what didn't and why, then follow the process.

You may wish to modify the process the second or third time. Suggestions for the second year of evaluation/planning:

choose different scripture passages that reflect on mission, or read a story or passage from a book that helps the congregation think about church/mission or refer to National Church Life Survey or other resources for activities or stories

briefly revisit the characteristics of the local community and review which group(s) of people God is calling the congregation to be in mission with and reaffirm the commitment to these people (after about 3 years the congregation may wish to seriously review the groups, adding or changing the priorities)

always integrate theological reflection and prayer into the study/planning process, it's a reminder to the congregation of why they are spending this time on mission study/planning and it further opens them up for the Spirit of God to work in their lives, in their community and in their planning processes

engage in a more thorough planning process. The National Church Life Survey and Uniting Church Synods and Presbyteries may be able to assist you with added resources when reviewing your mission study/planning processes

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www.countrytowns.com.au

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