

The logo features the words "MISSION Stories" in white, bold, sans-serif font. "MISSION" is in all caps and smaller than "Stories". The text is centered within a glowing blue circular ring that has a sparkling, particle-like texture. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue with faint, larger-scale "MISSION Stories" text visible.

**MISSION
Stories**

For more information, visit faithstories.org.au

Mission Stories

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

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*With Jason Bray and Mike Crowhurst, Red Earth Films,
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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 our 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? What are our 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 connecting us with? To which people groups do we relate naturally? To which groups do we need to build bridges?

6. Community of Integrity

How do we hold together the many aspects of God’s mission?

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?



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.



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.



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.



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?



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?

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?



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?



PRAYER TIME

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?



FURTHER READING

Congregations

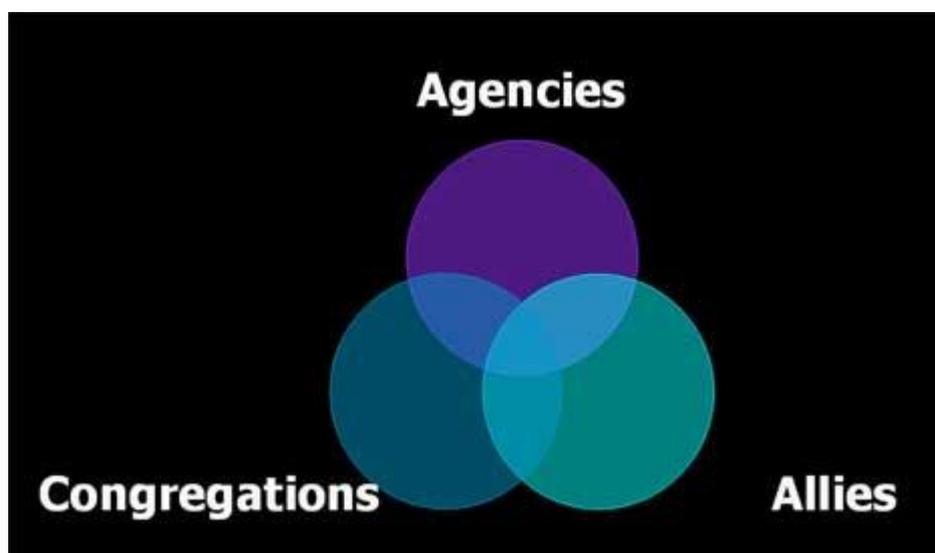
The congregation normally gathers people from all ages and stages of life, with varying levels of commitment to the life and mission of the church. We have formal congregations, usually associated with public buildings, alongside informal networks of Christians who may meet in homes, workplaces or social 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.



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.



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



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

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).

 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.



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.

Dreaming Together a Future with God

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

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.

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)

