



together on the way enriching community



Newsletter

2

June 2010

What is this renewal process about?

Paragraph 18 of the Basis of Union states:

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ON THE WAY

The Uniting Church affirms that she belongs to the People of God on the way to the promised end. She prays God that, through the gift of the Spirit, he will constantly correct that which is erroneous in her life, will bring her into deeper unity with other Churches, and will use her worship and service to his eternal glory through Jesus Christ the Lord.

In the past two years there has been the emergence of many factors, spiritual, governance, financial, that have led to a determination to invite the people of the Uniting Church in Queensland to be involved in a process to look more deeply at the essence and future of the church.

The 27th Synod (November, 2008) resolved to encourage the Uniting Church in Queensland to enter into a time of discernment. Specifically, it was resolved that the Synod:

- Is ready to watch and see what God is doing.
- Is ready to yield its will and to seek the will of God.
- Encourages congregations, presbyteries and agencies to enter into a time of discernment as to how God would have them enter into the new ministries God is calling them to.

Over the past eight months, the Synod Leadership Team has appointed a Steering Committee comprising Mr Robert Packer, Ms Anne Cross, Rev David Baker, Rev Douglas

Jones, Rev Bruce Johnson, Ms Mardi Lumsden, Rev Robyn Kidd and Ms Colleen Geyer to develop a process to enable the Uniting Church in Queensland to undertake a journey of discernment together and to oversee that process.

This journey of discovery and transformation, Together on the Way Enriching Community, provides an exciting opportunity to draw on the wisdom and inspiration of as many people as possible who share in the life of our Church in Queensland. It is hoped that this process will lead to:

- **Discerning a shared direction for the next 10 years of the Uniting Church in Queensland which enriches community, local, state, national and global.**
- **Revitalising the Church by providing an optimistic view of where the Church is heading and enabling people to identify with and participate in bringing about that shared direction.**

What will be achieved?

An enriched and enriching community which has:

- A clear statement of Call and Gospel Values
- An articulated Vision and Directions for the next 10 years
- Viable, sustainable governance and management structures

and overall, people who have participated and are committed to the future of the Church with ministers, elders and other leaders "leading congregations into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world". (para 15(b))



Who will be involved?

Ultimately, members of the Uniting Church in Queensland and employees within the Church and services will be involved and be part of the future direction of the Church.

The discernment process will continue throughout 2010 and 2011, and hopefully will be completed by the 29th Synod in October 2011. During this time people will continue to gather to reflect upon the present reality, the Call and Gospel Values of the Church, the vision and directions for the next ten years, the form and structure necessary for the directions to be achieved. Biblical resources and core theological commitments of the Uniting Church have informed and will continue to inform this renewal process. This is a spiritual journey bringing together the multiple gifts needed in discerning the future.

What has happened so far?

On 29-30 January, an initial workshop was held for leaders from each of the presbyteries, key synod staff and chairpersons. The Steering Committee then prepared resources to assist people in the discernment process and, from February to April, across Queensland follow-on workshops were conducted that provided opportunities for people in the church and its agencies to be involved in the discernment process.

Over four hundred people were involved in those workshops which explored our understanding of the purpose of the Uniting Church in Queensland as part of the mission of God, and the values that should inform our common life over the coming decade.

The Steering Committee, drawing upon the feedback from those workshops, prepared a **Call and Gospel Values** document which it offered to the 28th Synod as a basis for the next step in the renewal process, the

discernment of a Vision and Directions. The 28th Synod considered the Call and Gospel Values document and endorsed it with some suggested changes.

The **Call and Gospel Values** material has been modified by the Steering Committee in the light of the Synod's feedback and is included in this Newsletter.

What happens next?

Further workshops are to be held from July to September providing as many people as possible with the opportunity to be involved in discerning the Vision that we believe God is giving to us for the Uniting Church over the coming ten years.

There will be an initial workshop for leaders on 31 July followed by workshops across the Uniting Church in Queensland. The feedback from these workshops will then inform the next step for the Steering Committee as it draws together a Vision and Directions statement for consideration and affirmation by the Council of Synod in November, 2010.

The Church's Call at this Time

"... in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

As part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic church, we acknowledge God's mission to the world in Jesus Christ and share its commitment to serve the world for which Christ died.

As a fellowship of the Holy Spirit confessing Jesus as Lord through worship witness and service we journey as a pilgrim people towards God's reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.



In response to God's call at this time, the Uniting Church in Queensland is committed to:

Uniting in Christ
acting with love
living with hope
witnessing in faith
working for justice

Gospel Values

As the Uniting Church in Queensland sharing in God's mission in the world, we will be guided by values that derive from and give expression to God's reconciling action in Jesus Christ.

In response to God's grace, we are called to live out these values:

Faithfulness
Compassion
Humility
Truthfulness
Justice

These gospel values will inform our lives as individuals and as the community of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

Faithfulness

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

We respond to God's faithfulness to us by living the gospel story by gathering in worship and sharing good news.

Related themes: prayer, renewal, community, belonging, hope

Compassion

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Caring for others and being cared for is at the heart of our Faith. Caring is the ultimate basis for true community. Compassion is the force that drives us to eliminate suffering and encourage new ways of being in the world.

Related themes: love, action, respect, reconciliation, inclusion

Humility

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness, and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-8)

We are called to reflect a Christ-like life towards others, through service, sharing the gospel and demonstrating servant leadership.

Related themes: grace, wisdom, insight, service, generosity, forgiveness, wonder

Truthfulness

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. (John 1:14-15)

As Jesus is revealed to us as the light of the world, coming in glory truth and unfailing love and faithfulness, so we will be known for our integrity truth telling and honour for all people.

Related themes: integrity, advocacy, reconciliation, honesty, forgiveness, peace

Justice

Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him and he will proclaim justice to the nations... He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. (Matthew 12: 18, 20)

Because God requires that we do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God, so we understand that all we have is to be shared with others and the resources of our planet directed to the benefit of all. We will achieve this in word, deed and action.

Related themes: mercy, hope, risk-taking, commitment, mission, advocacy, action

Note 1: The "related themes" above are drawn from contributions from the workshops held in February to April, 2010, for this process.

Note 2: Scripture texts are from New Revised Standard Version (1989)

OVERALL RENEWAL PROCESS

Prayer and Liturgy support in each step of the process to be done by individuals, communities and congregations

STATEMENT OF CALL AND GOSPEL VALUES

February, March, April 2010

Gatherings of many people to:

- Reflect on the biblical stories of journey
- Reflect on the theology underlying the Church
- Analyse the internal and external environment
- Commence the development of a Statement of Call and Gospel Values.
- Engage as many people as possible in the journey

21-25 May 2010

Statement of Call and Gospel Values engaged with and reflected on by the Synod.

20 June 2010

Sunday Worship to pray as a whole Church for the journey of discernment that the Church is undertaking. Worship resources are now available online for this service

VISION AND DIRECTIONS

July, August, September 2010

Gatherings of many people to:

- Begin the Visioning Process – What as the Uniting Church are we being called to be like in 2020?
- How can we be the people of God for our world today?

October 2010

Collate all data for Vision.
Write Vision based on work gathered.
Identify barriers to moving forward.
Develop Directions for the next 3 years to move towards our Vision, based on data gathered.

November 2010

Vision and Directions affirmed by the Council of Synod.

IMPLICATIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

February – June 2011

Undertake process for reviewing governance and management structures in light of Vision and Directions.

2011

Engagement of congregation members, staff, elders, and leaders in ways of implementing the Vision and Directions.

October 2011

Vision, Directions and Governance and Management Structures affirmed by the Synod.

