

A section from the
On the Way Together
Report
September 2009



inquire
imagine
innovate implement



On the Way Together **Report on a Spirited journey towards the future**

On the Way to Together is a special project of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. This project has been developed in response to a requirement of the Synod meeting 2007 that the General Secretary provide to the Synod meeting of 2008 a Synod strategic plan.

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Understanding provocative propositions and proposals

The second step in the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage is Imagine. Our pilgrimage takes us into places rich with imagination. What we imagine can be turned into a provocative proposition, and then developed into a provocative proposal.

Understanding the terms

Provocative means that the statement provokes or calls us into the future. Being provoked stretches us to move beyond the *best of what is* now, toward the *best of what will be* soon.

A *proposition* is a statement written in the future tense as if it is a present reality.

A *proposal* in this case is a story revealing the details of the proposition in a way that invites others to share our imagined future.

We have identified the themes and their descriptions from the *Inquire* step of the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage. Now we are ready to use them to stimulate and direct our imaginations.

The journey through *Imagine*

Pilgrimage implies movement. Not just physical movement. More importantly it is a spiritual movement. We are seeking an awakening to the future into which God graciously calls us. *Imagine* invites us to engage with at least four distinct movements.

First, our invitation is to imagine the story of God's relationship with us in five to ten years time. This is not just a random imagination. Our imaginings are guided by the themes. Perhaps just one theme will capture our attention and stimulate our imagination. Maybe two or more themes working in a dynamic relationship

with each other will invite us into a vivid, visionary experience.

In our imagination, we are transported forwards to somewhere between 2013 and 2018. We 'see' what is happening, who is involved, how it is happening and we envision the results. We see, in our imagination, the church as the *sign* of God's reign in our neighbourhoods. We hear and watch the church being a *foretaste* of God's reign. We watch as the church acts as an *instrument* to bring about God's reign: loving, healing, reconciling, liberating and restoring the whole creation.

Second, having explored our imagination, we reduce what has been imagined to a proposition. We might begin with something such as:

Imagine if, by 2013 the church is...

Or,

Imagine the neighbourhood of 2014 being...

Or perhaps,

It is 2015. Relationships between _____ and _____ are...

Each proposition should point to the church being in some way a sign, a foretaste or an instrument of the reign of God.

After the propositions have been drafted, check to ensure that each is grounded in at least one On the Way Together theme and two to five particular theme descriptors. Remember, each theme and its accompanying description includes awareness of the context in which the church worships, witnesses and serves. These were embedded during the Spirited conversations of the *Inquire* step of the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage. We can add to the themes and descriptions other information where this helps us understand our identity and purpose

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as the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. This checking process will affirm that any proposition will uphold the values and best traditions of the church.

Third, return to the scenario you first imagined. Recall the colour, the sounds, the actions involved in the scenario. One way to do so is to participate in a guided meditation. Find a quiet place. Sit comfortably. Begin with a centering exercise, such as:

Close your eyes. Allow your breathing to settle into a regular pattern.

Listen for exterior noises and dispel them. Now listen for and dispel your body's interior noises.

When you are ready to enter your imagination...

You are returning to your church activity, program or project after a holiday.

It is your first day back in this setting. You are approaching the door.

Now you have entered the space.

Stand still. Watch what is happening. Note the colours, the action.

See it with the eye of a keen observer.

Listen to the sounds, the conversations.

See what is on the walls. See what is in the spaces.

Taste the air, feel the materials and notice the quality of what is happening all around you.

Observe keenly. Look around. Stay with the image.

Take it all in.

After the guided meditation, consider the scenario imagined. Ask yourself *how does the scene reflect the church being a sign, a foretaste or an instrument of the movement of God?*

Now write the scenario as a story. Be careful not to write a report. This is a story. Preserving the narrative style is important. This story is your provocative proposal. You are telling your story to a community, not reporting to a board.

We are imagining stories of when and where God's life might be released and realized through us. We are imagining how we are joined to God in God's mission in our neighbourhoods and perhaps even globally. Using our imagination, we have extrapolated from what we have identified of the church at its best. This is revealed in the themes and theme descriptions. Doing so invited us to 'see' beyond the present, to envision what might be as if it is already happening. The theological word for this is *prolepsis*. This seeing is what the Jewish prophets did. It is the same style of seeing that Jesus engaged, standing in the tradition of the prophets, as he spoke about the reign or movement of God.

Think about your capacity to imagine. How much capacity do you imagine you have? There is a relationship between the extent to which we engage our imagination and the type of change we will effect. Use the following chart to help you reflect on the relationship between our capacity to imagine and the levels of innovation required to bring about the changes we desire.

The diagram in *Figure 1* shows that low energy for innovation will produce fine tuning change. Higher energy is likely to produce restructure or even a new initiative.

Fine tuning that which already exists requires only a shallow imagination. On the other hand, creating an entirely new thing requires a deep imagination. Have you

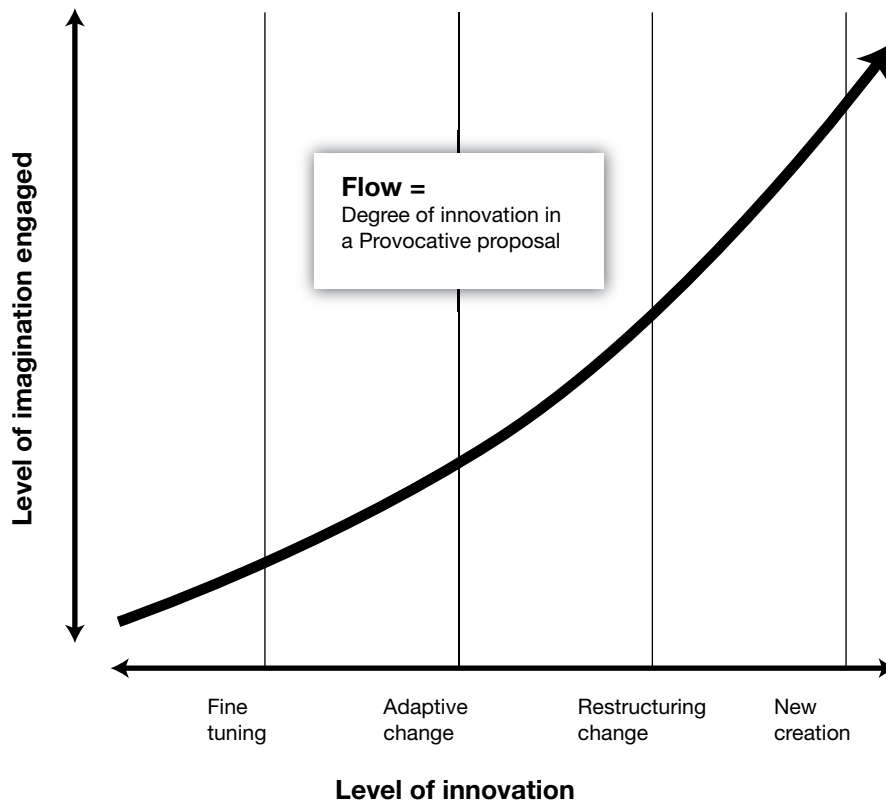


Fig 1. Flow = Degree of Innovation embedded in a Provocative Proposal

noticed how often church groups retreat to the safety of a shallow imagination? This means they always end up with fine tuning. But when church groups engage deeply with their imaginations, new initiatives and significant innovations may result.

Testing the viability of a provocative proposal

The fourth movement of *Imagine* is testing to see if a provocative proposal is really provocative. Will it do its work properly as we journey together along the pilgrimage? That is, is the *flow* in the provocative proposal deep and strong? Will it bring about innovative, creative change?

Each provocative proposal can be rated for its relative strength on a scale of 1 to 5. For example, in the following rating scale, we have used the image of a pulse to suggest strength. A strong pulse will indicate that there is a great deal of life in the proposal. A weak pulse will indicate that the proposal needs urgent attention or resuscitation. Pulse, or overall strength, can be determined by the collective response you give to the eight characteristics listed below. So, applying this rating scale, how strong might your provocative proposal be?

When taken together, these characteristics can give us an indication of how innovative our provocative proposal might be.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------|
| Undetectable pulse | weak but feel a faint pulse | definite but comfortable pulse | strong pulse | pulse is bursting our current containers |

Fig. 2 A scale for rating the strength of a provocative proposal

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The characteristics that ‘prove’ the quality of a provocative proposal are as follows.

1. **Is it provocative?**
Does it stretch or interrupt the current situation? Does it generate something new? Or will it merely fix or fine tune what already exists?
2. **Is it grounded?**
Do you have examples from elsewhere that illustrate real possibilities of this provocative proposal?
3. **Is it desired?**
Could we, with God’s help and the Spirit’s inspiration, really bring this scenario to life? How do we know that this scenario is congruent with the gospel?
4. **Is it stated in bold terms?**
Does it take us beyond our comfort zone?
5. **Does it guide?**
Does the proposal call the church into the future, in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Can you see clearly the particular theme and descriptors that helped to generate this proposal?
6. **Does it expand?**
Is there something different, new and refreshing that the proposal points to as possible changes or developments?
7. **Is it a high involvement process?**
Will it engage our diversity, be inclusive and relational?
8. **Will it stimulate learning?**
That is, new learning, across boundaries?

Ask these eight questions of each proposal. Some will prove to be provocative proposals straight away. Other might require more work, perhaps by a group. Some will be proven to not be provocative proposals at all. These can be either dropped or modified until they meet the criteria.

Having developed, tested and adopted these proposals we are almost ready for the next step of the *On the Way Together* journey – *Innovate*. But first, take some time to rest.

Contemplate the work that has been done. Ask yourself:

- *What have we done?*
- *Where have I / we seen God at work or revealed in what we have done?*
- *How do I / we know God differently because of this experience?*
- *What do I / we want to say to God, having done this work?*
- *What does God want to say to me, to us?*
- *Listen.*

Perhaps you might join a small group of people who have travelled the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage so far. Share with each other the fruits of your contemplative time.



Sample provocative propositions

The following eleven provocative propositions are samples only. Each reveals its links with one or more of the *On the Way Together* themes. Reading carefully, you may glimpse some of the theme descriptors.

These samples are longer than a normal provocative proposition. This is to assist readers' understanding.

These provocative propositions relate to different councils or agencies of the church. This is intentional to show how provocative proposals arise in different contexts.

In the section following this one, a further set of samples is provided. These show in more detail how the themes, theme descriptions and the provocative proposition can be developed into a provocative proposal.

Each sample provocative proposal embeds hints or suggestions about how it might be implemented.

1 Sample provocative proposition

UnitingCare agencies deliver targeted and easily assessed services for the disadvantaged in new communities in outlying areas. Services are based on partnerships, are inclusive and build social capacity within communities. Each service has been developed with the input of the people to be served. This helps us ensure cultural appropriateness. Each service has been credibility tested to ensure that it is firstly a witness to God's good news. UnitingCare agencies together with CTM are developing new learning units. These will orientate staff to the ethos of the UCA acting in local neighbourhoods. Reporting is primarily to the people participating in and receiving the services. Other reports are of secondary significance.

2 Sample provocative proposition

The UCA throughout Victoria and Tasmania exhibits extraordinary cultural diversity in its worship, witness and service. We are listening effectively to many cultures and generational subcultures. We are learning to broaden our appreciation of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in today's Australia. Inclusivity challenges our presumptive behaviours. We are alert to the unintended violence in our attempts to embrace the neighbour who is different. We modify our approaches accordingly. Embracing cultural diversity has enriched interfaith conversations and relationships. Our unity is greater. Our diversity is deeper and broader.

3 Sample provocative proposition

There are 40 recently established grassroots Christian faith communities, associated with the presbyteries and Synod of UCA in Victoria and Tasmania. They embrace a great diversity of expressions of church. They are united in being *the people of God on the way to the promised goal*. The participants are predominantly under 40 years of age. They are Christian missional communities engaging with particular neighbourhoods and subcultures. The growth of new faith communities is one result of dedicated funding, resource development – the "40/40 Initiative" – and revision of UCA polity to support such initiatives.

4 Sample provocative proposition

Congregations, schools, agencies and chaplaincies are public faith sources resourcing our neighbourhoods. We have invited our neighbours into our institutional settings. In turn, we are accepting an increasing number of invitations

to assist with crafting and delivering public ceremonies. We are developing partnerships to raise awareness of the spiritual wellbeing of the people within our neighbourhoods. The CTM and CFM are providing introductory community development courses with a theological foundation. These assist with recruiting and equipping teams. The teams are assisting congregations, schools and agencies to be more engaged with their neighbours. They share stories of the Christian faith and listen to life and faith stories from other perspectives. On this common ground we discover how to share the Gospel in new and inspiring ways.

5 Sample provocative proposition

Synod operations and presbyteries provide joint integrated and shared services. Councils in their own right connected through the polity of the church, Synod and presbyteries are meeting regularly to plan, assess and prioritize activity. Services and support are provided on a function by function basis. Teams of Synod and presbytery staff work together on initiatives to existing ministries with local congregations and faith communities. Synod and presbytery operations are funded out of one liquefied asset corpus. Technology makes possible new levels of collaboration. Resource development is a high priority for Synod agencies. Application of the resources remains a high priority for neighbourhood congregations and faith communities.

6 Sample provocative proposition

The UCA understands that its people, property and finances are for the missional use of the whole church. We affirm the principle of 'commonwealth for common good'. We lift the levels of trust between those who seek the funds of the church and those who collect and allocate them.

Synod priorities, agreed by both the Synod and the presbyteries, establish preferential biases. Initiatives are realistically funded to achieve their objectives. Church funds are allocated to congregations on a new missional church understanding. These funds act as a catalyst, attracting other resources. Together these resources are birthing new alliances and invigorating new initiatives in the neighbourhood.

7 Sample provocative proposition

The church has an all councils inspirational missional framework for growth. A new network has sprung up, assisted by but not limited to the CFM. The network commissions research. Reflection on the research is published on the Internet and in hard copy. The research is primarily ethnographic in style. It focuses on the stories of particular communities and neighbourhoods around themes associated with being missional church or missional communities. CFM's *Missional church inquiry tours* are a popular and influential source of inspiration. BOMaR policies provide significant incentive to liquefy under-utilized properties, releasing funds to missional initiatives supported by the network. The network has attracted overseas Christians, leaders and theologians. Agitators and curators of emergent Christian communities in Australian and overseas are active across the network. CTM and CFM have developed resources and methods to sustain the research and the academic credibility of the published work. Our practical scholarship is attracting significant interest from other churches and Christian organisations.

8 Sample provocative proposition

Faith communities, congregations or agencies with church property find new ways to make their property available to neighbouring organizations. Congregations establish innovative ways to partner and participate with the building users. There are increasing opportunities to offer hospitality to former strangers. Practical hospitality initiatives include establishing the church buildings as safe places for difficult conversations. They provide a centre for everyday explorations of spirituality, including Christian spirituality, forming alliances with community organisations to provide programs that equip people of various cultures and generations to develop a resilient, thriving community. Some congregations have a range of community house style programs. These are sustained by careful attention to the quality and depth of hospitality. The church is discovering that many missional church initiatives do not require a lot of money. But they do need time and attention by church members and neighbours working together.

9 Sample provocative proposition

Presbyteries work with faith communities and congregations within and across their boundaries to develop new missional congregation networks. Each network clusters similar missional church initiatives. The networks are discovering ways to communicate over distance and difference. Some have crossed Synod boundaries. Faith communities and congregations are enthusing each other, sharing resources and insights, celebrating achievements and witnessing God's grace and faithfulness. Stories are shared beyond the participating congregations networks through web and other technologies. The innovative approaches and story telling enrich congregations and presbyteries.

10 Sample provocative proposition

Each council, agency and school implementing a new missional activity is assigned a coach. Coaching has enlivened accountability to the councils or boards whose policies empowered new the initiatives. There is excitement about rediscovering Christ in community. Funding for coaches is delivered in the total resource package each new initiative requires. Coaches have assisted people involved with each initiative to reflect theologically, to discover and share new insights and to adjust specific activities to suit the particularities of a given context.

11 Sample provocative proposition

The Synod, together with all other councils of the UCA in Victoria and Tasmania, has established an agreed understanding of what is meant by the term 'missional church'. The CTM and CFM bring contemporary theological, biblical and contextual and cultural considerations to this understanding. Public events, courses and online resources sustain the participation in this dialogue. Applying missional church indicators arising from this work guides BOMaR's considerations and allocation of funds. Moving from being 'a church with a mission' to embracing the 'missional church' understanding unsettles some congregations and leaders. Missional church requires different processes and establishes alternative priorities. However, the shift encourages innovation to reconnect with the neighbourhood.

1 Sample provocative proposal

The following provocative proposal builds on previous sample provocative proposition 1.

This is a UnitingCare provocative proposal, so you will observe the story is told from this perspective.

Reading carefully, note how the initial provocative proposition has been fleshed out in more detail than usual. And note how this is done in a story telling style.

This will help us understand how the proposal works as a story that invites our participation and planning attention. It should also help us recognise ourselves, our context and the cultural characteristic of our community in the story.

Our next steps will be to convert the story of what is happening in five years time

into the actions that have been taken to achieve this story's reality. We call this movement of the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage, *Innovate*.

Themes used

Spirited listening, giving voice
Living God's transforming story

Key descriptors identified

- Solidarity with marginalised/ disadvantaged
- Giving voice and advocacy for the disadvantaged
- Uniting Church agencies carrying public face of delivering services
- Sharing good news stories about personal and neighbourhood transformation

1 Sample provocative proposition

UnitingCare agencies deliver targeted and easily assessed services for the disadvantaged in new communities in outlying areas. Services are based on partnerships, are inclusive and build social capacity within communities. Each service has been developed with the input of the people to be served. This helps us ensure cultural appropriateness. Each service has been credibility tested to ensure that it is firstly a witness to God's good news. UnitingCare agencies together with CTM are developing new learning units. These will orientate staff to the ethos of the UCA acting in local neighbourhoods. Reporting is primarily to the people participating in and receiving the services. Other reports are of secondary significance.

Sample provocative proposal

UnitingCare services are innovative and locally relevant, meeting the needs of disadvantaged families, children, young people and individuals. Developing new services and improving existing services are community exercises. People from the neighbourhood are invited to contribute ideas, resources and energy to develop and implement the services. Mentoring and coaching relationships are assisting people to develop new skills and to build on existing strengths.

Our approach to community service through community development is unique. It is based on a Gospel understanding of Christian hospitality and generosity. It is recognised by the Asset Based Community Development Network and by the Search Institute Thriving Communities organization.

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Connecting into worldwide networks of community development groups through these two organisations is enriching our work and building our reputation. We are linked with TAFE colleges and universities whose students study our approach. We teach others how to adopt and adapt our approach to their contexts and cultures. The faith based nature of our approach sustains the uniqueness of both theory and practice.

New services are now operated by agencies as part of the Uniting Church in partnership with congregations, other community service organisations and the broader community. UnitingCare agencies work together with neighbourhood people and groups to advocate with the government, business and general public. They are achieving better outcomes for people alienated, isolated or oppressed. Together we seek access to the community's resources to secure

the liberation of our neighbours from that which entraps and belittles them. The community is thriving. The levels of community participation, neighbourly cooperation and community are at an all time high. Many people once diminished in one way or another now report a deeper sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. They talk about being included, valued and respected as fully participating members of their community. Initiatives arise spontaneously in response to felt and perceived needs.

2 Sample provocative proposal

The following provocative proposal builds on previous sample provocative proposition 2.

This is a Synod provocative proposal, so you will observe the story is told from this perspective.

Reading carefully, note how the initial provocative proposition has been fleshed out in more detail than usual. And note how this is done in a story telling style.

This will help us understand how the proposal works as a story that invites our participation and planning attention. It should also help us recognise ourselves, our context and the cultural characteristic of our community in the story.

Our next steps will be to converting the story of what is happening in five years time into the actions that have been taken to achieve this story's reality. We call this movement of the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage, *Innovate*.

Themes used

Engaging diversity
Living God's transforming story
Liberating stewardship

Key theme descriptors identified

- Cultural and generational subcultural diversity
- Respecting the UCA's traditions, but re-traditioning too
- Commitment to being genuinely multicultural
- Respect for Christian traditions that accompany various cultures
- Learning and formation for discipleship
- Innovation and flexibility in church structures

2 Sample provocative proposition

The UCA throughout Victoria and Tasmania exhibits extraordinary cultural diversity in its worship, witness and service. We are listening effectively to many cultures and generational subcultures. We are learning to broaden our appreciation of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in today's Australia. Inclusivity challenges our presumptive behaviours. We are alert to the unintended violence in our attempts to embrace the neighbour who is different. We modify our approaches accordingly. Embracing cultural diversity has enriched interfaith conversations and relationships. Our unity is greater. Our diversity is deeper and broader

Provocative proposal

The evidence of having listened to the stories of the cultures and generational subcultures within the UCA is clear. We are learning about being one in Christ. The various councils of the church and the bodies set up to advance their work, reflect and affirm the church's cultural diversity.

We look at the ethnic origin reflected in the faces of our leaders and see many cultures present. The ways in which we do the 'business' of the church now reflect the various methods or patterns of Christian discernment and decision making of these participating cultures.

Our language in public services reflects our work to ensure that language is not a

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barrier. We are working to use languages that embrace the diversity of cultures present or within the neighbourhood. Our recent work with translations of African and Asian-Australian resources for worship has enriched monocultural congregations' worship. These resources have bridged a gap between new arrivals and long time members. Some congregations are running 'start up' language courses for 'wasp' congregants. There is a lot of sharing and fun as new words are learnt, new sounds made and new rhythms acquired. As a result of the start-up courses, initiatives in local liturgy are attracting new people to existing congregations. Using languages of origin in public and private spaces has helped to communicate that the church is a safe place to gather. Some exciting new community activities are arising from these connections. We are able to identify real needs through languages of origin. Working together across cultures, we are working out how to address these needs with respectful awareness of cultural traditions.

We have discovered that our African, Indian, Asian, Middle Eastern and Islander people have contributed to our understanding of God. Together, they have assisted us in rediscovering

something of our Christian heritage. The CTM and Discipleship Education staff, whose African and Asian heritage shapes theology and Christian practice, have contributed to the development of a series of short term, intensive courses. These explore Christianity from the perspectives of different cultures and nations. The presence of many cultures and subcultures has prompted us to greater efforts in respectful listening and practical learning for discipleship in an ever increasing mix of cultures and subcultures.

In the course of our studies and developing relationships, we have discovered that other people can perceive our approach as sometimes violent. We are addressing presumptive behaviours and language. We are ensuring as best we can that our words and actions prefer the other person's culture and ways of doing things above our own. We are learning how to adjust our Australian body language so as offer genuine inclusion. TAFE colleges are assisting with the development of resources and training. The CFM is working with us to increase our sensitivity to these and others issues.

3 Sample provocative proposal

The following provocative proposal builds on previous sample provocative proposition 3.

This is a Synod provocative proposal, so you will observe the story is told from this perspective.

Reading carefully, note how the initial provocative proposition has been fleshed out in more detail than usual. And note how this is done in a story telling style.

This will help us understand how the proposal works as a story that invites our participation and planning attention. It should also help us recognise ourselves, our context and the cultural characteristic of our community in the story.

Our next steps will be to converting the story of what is happening in five years time into the actions that have been taken to achieve this story's reality. We call this movement of the *On the Way Together* pilgrimage, *Innovate*.

Themes used

Encountering Christ in community
Living God's transforming story
Engaging diversity
Liberated stewardship

Key theme descriptors noted

- Innovation
- Embedded in community
- Christ in community
- Flexible use of resources
- Attention to youth, young adults
- Diversity of subcultures, locations, neighbourhoods
- Innovation and new initiatives

3 Sample provocative proposition

There are 40 recently established grassroots Christian faith communities, associated with the presbyteries and UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. They embrace a great diversity of expressions of church. They are united in being *the people of God on the way to the promised goal*. The participants are predominantly under 40 years of age. They are Christian missional communities engaging with particular neighbourhoods and subcultures. The growth of new faith communities is one result of dedicated funding, resource development – the “40/40 Initiative” – and revision of UCA polity to support such initiatives.

Provocative proposal

There are more than 40 new faith communities associated with the presbyteries of the UCA in Victoria and Tasmania. Each one is significant to the life and witness of the Uniting Church because it is predominantly populated by people younger than 40 years of age. Each is significant to the Uniting Church also because each has chosen its own way to be present in its neighbourhood. Few of these new faith communities are using traditional buildings. Each has chosen a location for gathering that reflects the life style and aspirations of the local people. This freedom to choose how to be church has helped each faith community to explore the gospel with fresh eyes and hearts. It has also given

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permission to express God's good news in ways that make sense to the people of the neighbourhood. As a result we now have new faith communities which diverse groups of people are adopting as their place, space and people.

These new groups have chosen to remain as faith communities rather than become congregations. The Uniting Church has struggled to formally modify its constitution and regulations. While revision is now underway, it is incomplete. Thus the polity of the more traditional church is currently incapable of bearing fully these new expressions of church. However, exciting conversations are continuing about emerging a polity that can hold these new communities in relation to each other yet continue to generate different futures of the Church.

Presbyteries, together with the synod have formed a temporary body, NEW – New Emerging Ways – to provide thinking space. The CTM and CFM have provided various models for theological reflection. This is helping the leaders of the new faith communities to wrestle with a polity that will honour the best of our UCA traditions but also encourage diversity and a more robust unity. Most of the leaders of the faith based communities acknowledge that the conciliar heritage of the UCA creates a working basis for openness and flexibility to continue the journey in association with the UCA. There is an increased willingness on the part of the more established UCA councils to embrace the new faith communities, to listen to their stories and to struggle with the polity issues raised by their vitality.

The Synod now has a 40/40 policy of dedicating 40 per cent of all funding received to new faith community initiatives. After five years, this has generated the critical mass required to establish new faith communities. The CTM, Discipleship Education and CFM, and through alliances with TAFE colleges and universities, and with property developers, have developed

new resources and ways of delivering these. The leadership of new faith communities now have access to the best available for emergent churches.

There are now 40 new missional teams. Together, these are developing new faith communities and providing leadership to those already started. Each team is composed of paid and unpaid persons, trained and persons in training, ordained and ordinary people. Some teams are now beginning a second generation of internship based training to develop more teams. Each team has established patterns of missional activity arising from a shared understanding of being a missional church. The theological college's flexibility in providing new education and formation programs 'in situation' is attracting participation by other Christian and community organisations.

Some new faith communities are embedded in the corporate areas of Victoria and Tasmania. People gather before during and after working hours to pray, celebrate the Lord's Supper and to serve their neighbourhood. Some have gained a reputation for excellence in matters of commercial ethics. Others have found a niche in biomedical ethics. Yet others have found ways to minister to the people trapped in the casual workforce.

Several of the new faith communities are exploring ways to bring together senior management with employees and unions. These gatherings are focused on creating initiatives to assist the settlement, training and employment of refugees now flooding into Victoria and Tasmania.

Other new faith communities have been established in café and public spaces around apartment towers in the CBD and some outer suburban centres. These spaces are providing natural gathering places, lending a more informal, generationally and culturally appropriate ambience to Christian gatherings. The emphasis for the participants is on

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attending to their personal Christian disciplines as they engage with their vocation. Communities are experimenting with forms of worship appropriate to their context and the sub-cultures with whom they engage.

Some new faith communities have set up as havens for Christian spirituality. They are discovering ways to deepen and broaden their journey in Christian faith through reviving some ancient practices, and creating some new practices. This year some people are launching a small number of semi monastic communities in the new high density living areas around railway stations.

In borrowing something from the Uniting Church's rich heritage, adding to this particular 'stuff' from the neighbourhood context, and mixing all of this with the sub-cultures of the people they are settling amongst, the new faith communities are a new apostolate. Some of their participants are beginning to write theological reflections on their journey,

publishing these on web logs, in public poetry and story telling displays and through photojournalism exhibitions. Some are telling their story and sharing their life globally through new facilities on the Internet. Technology is playing a critical and essential role in sustaining vital relationships between participants. Sharing food and leisure together around times of worship and witness are central for some.

Sample provocative proposal 3



Sample provocative proposal 3