

## The Anglican Church

The Core Purpose of the Anglican Church in Perth, as articulated by the Diocesan Mission Plan is as follows:

We are a people called to worship God in Christ and by the power of the Spirit to share radical love with the world, building communities of hope, healing and transformation

The Key Mission Areas are:

1. Listening and Telling the Good News of Jesus
2. Building Vital Worshiping Communities
3. Reaching out in Loving Service

The Five Marks of Mission of the World Wide Anglican Communion are as follows:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

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*"Mission is the bedrock of all we are, do and say as the people of God."*  
- Missio Committee World Wide Anglican Communion

*Do we see mission as "the bedrock of all we are, do and say as the people of God"?*

**The Anglican Church's emphasis upon mission and outward orientation is predicated upon two things. The first is the nature, being and character of God. The second is the context of the world in which we live.**

Here is Canning Vale's vision, mission and method described in accordance with the character of God. However, in the first instance I thought it helpful to review some information regards our own societal context.

## Our Australian Context

1. **10% of people** in society attend Church. However it should be noted that of this 10%, **many only attend Church at Easter and Christmas** etc. It should also be noted that this statistic includes people are attending non-Anglican Churches.
2. **23% of people** in society used to go to Church, yet don't anymore; and this group is split into two subgroups:
  - a) are people who have been part of Church in the past but have been **hurt** or **offended** in some way and decided to **never go back** to Church again.
  - b) are people who have just moved away from Church for non-offensive reasons, **something simply changed in their life**. They may have moved suburbs or the Church may not have served their life stage anymore etc. These people aren't hostile to returning to Church, **they're just awaiting an invitation** to return to a life-giving expression of Church.
2. **67% of Australians** have never darkened the door of a Church - except for the odd funeral or wedding - and **have no real desire to do so**. Church is simply not a part of their story or experience.

**This is not to say that 67% of Australians aren't spiritual people.** On the contrary our society is very spiritually open; have you noticed the star sign reports in almost every newspaper, magazine and popular radio station? This statistic doesn't reflect a lack of spirituality. ***It reflects the vast majorities lack of connection between the Church and their spirituality.***

## Church Plant in Canning Vale

In regards to the church plant in Canning Vale, there are a couple of reflections that I would like to begin with. Dave Male notes that: *The issue isn't church, the issue is the mission. How does that work out in church? Being mission shaped is not just about young families etc **but how we connect with people outside ourselves.***

I understand this to mean that we can't simply plop a church into Canning Vale, do good Anglican worship, good preaching and have

a welcoming morning tea each Sunday... and then expect people to come. Church simply doesn't exist on most peoples radar. Moreover, people are able to drive anywhere they want to and go to a good well established church - be it Anglican or otherwise.

The challenge we are facing is how each (Christian) person lives (in community) in such a way as to be so informed and transformed by the vision and Spirit of God that we live our every day lives totally counter culturally. That is - not intimidated by the current social context and ambivalence (or antagonism) towards God, but - guided in all our relational dealings according to a missionary attitude, connecting with people outside ourselves *concerning God and how people live every day in the light of the reality of God and his desire to be in relationship with us as Saviour and Lord.*

This is incredibly difficult. I'm not sure how you are going with that regarding your relationships with neighbours, kids, work colleagues and extended family; but for me, this is a new necessity that my family and I are learning to live into! It's really hard to learn a new language or assimilate into a new culture, especially when the existing one permeates every living waking moment.

Nevertheless, the above social context and the character of God are the two 'spaces' or 'realities' that we must live into. And this is not beyond God, and his grace is sufficient for us. Indeed he is the Lord of all the earth.

### **The Vision:**

(who God has made us)

If you look at the four dots on the picture below for 30 seconds and then shut your eyes tightly, what do you see?



What is the parable here? People see a messy congregation of dots and squiggles and lines, and maybe a bit of love at the center. I think this is Ephesians 4.11-16:

The vision, or the end point, or the heart of God for humanity is made known in verses 13 and 16. Individually we grow to the measure of the full stature of Christ, or in the NLT:

“until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son ***that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.***”

The vision is that individually we become like Christ.

These individual people are likened to being ligaments or limbs of a body, not just any body but Jesus Christ’s body. So verse 15 - 16 reads:

“... [we are] growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit

together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing...”

So all the dots, and squiggles are like Jesus individually but more than that, they all function together as one picture to make **the** picture, Jesus Christ. We are the body of Christ (his Spirit is with us), and he - Jesus - is the head of his own body, but we are his **body** the body of Christ (his Spirit is with us).

### ***Individually becoming like Christ, together becoming the body of Christ***

#### **The Mission:**

(what we do)

To be a community of followers of Jesus, helping others become followers of Jesus, who will help others become followers of Jesus, who will...

Matthew 28:16-20 (See also Mk 16.14-20; Jn 20.19-23; Acts 1.8)  
*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped 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.”*

Hence the community looks like:

**Community of disciples** - 11 disciples at the beginning - who, **Worship** (even with doubt) Jesus, and who as a worship community,

**Go** - are sent - to make disciples i.e. do what Jesus has done to them.

In this three fold way of living and being (a community of disciples, worshiping Jesus, going to those who aren't yet disciples/christians) *the church is the church*. That is it looks like and acts like Jesus:

*For God so loved the world that he **sent** his only son...*

*I **worship** you Father because you have not revealed these things to the wise...*

*Jesus chose 12 **to be with him**...*

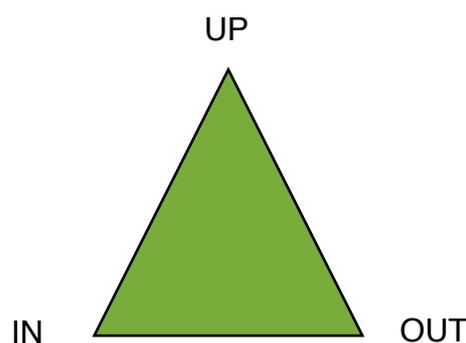
## The Method:

The vision - to become like Christ - informs the mission - to be followers (learners) of Jesus who help others become followers (learners) of Jesus - which informs how we live - the same way Jesus lived and commanded us to live - as a community, worshiping Jesus, continuing his mission to make disciples of people who aren't yet followers of him. I think this simple picture, UP/IN/OUT communicates it well. *A **balanced** Christian lives in each direction with equal time, weight, prayer, energy and commitment.*

UP: worship

IN: followers of Jesus being in one another's company together

OUT: sent to those who don't know Jesus yet



## Where We're At Now:

1. We have become re-established as a core group of followers of Jesus committed to UP (worship) and IN (relationship with one another)

- a.begun with 6, currently have 11 plus 8 kids
- 2.Two missional visions have surfaced (OUT)
  - a.an orientation to isolated and struggling women
  - b.an orientation to young families
- 3.We are in the process of orientating ourselves around the OUT's
  - a.Ladies group meeting weekly
  - b.Park Crawl every fortnight plus a mid week meeting at the park (Thursdays)
- 4.Continuing to personally model the vision, mission, vehicle and values (above) "follow me as I follow Christ" Paul said.
  - a.framing pastoral concerns and needs in the context of the community more so than individual issues/needs.
- 5.Encouraging people to meet with others at times other than Sundays to do IN:
  - a.praying and reading the bible together (following Jesus together)
  - b.having fun/meals together etc, developing friendships
- 6.Continued prayer for, and growth in Christ of, a core group of 20-25 people

### **Difficulties:**

- 1.Pressure to grow numerically in order to define success and cover expenses
- 2.Time poor people (working, other priorities etc)
  - a.I am lucky to have people come to one, 3 hour event per week
- 3.Most people aren't yet equipped as followers of Jesus, I.E.:
  - "anyone who is a disciple of Jesus:
    - a.should have the confidence to pray to God for their friends to see and know Jesus
    - b.should have the confidence to tell their own story of Jesus being a part of their lives to save/help.
    - c.should have the confidence to invite people to things. Especially if it is worth going to." (Dave Male)
- 4.A small core group (less than 25 people) makes gatherings - including Church - intimidating for new people, there is no where for them to come and sit back and check us out and watch - very full on for new people or people exploring the church.

5. Cultural loneliness, isolation and atomisation means people are not able to look OUT to others because their immediate need is IN - fellowship, intimacy, shared life, being with like minded people in a non Christian/secular society etc.

## **Hopes and Goals:**

By the end of this year we hope:

1. to have 20 - 25 people
2. to have each person committed to a prayer/bible reading partner or friend (IN), and to be
3. established in either God's mission to young families or isolated women.
4. to have one other OUT focused ministry beginning.
5. that each of these 20 - 25 people will:
  - a. have the confidence to pray to God for their friends to see and know Jesus,
  - b. have the confidence to tell their own story of Jesus being a part of their daily lives to save/help, and
  - c. have the confidence to invite people to things. Especially if it is worth going to.

## **What We Need:**

1. prayer
2. encouragement
3. finances (if only 10 average Australian wage earners tithed (gave 10%) a full stipend would be covered. If 20 average Australian wage earners tithed, two full stipends would be covered. If 30 average Australian wage earners tithed, two full stipends plus a church building would be covered... etc)
4. dedicated Christians willing to be equipped to live as Christian missionaries in a secular (though spiritual) Canning Vale
5. a core group of 20 - 25 people to be connected to the community so that others can come and see and test us out without feeling smothered or overwhelmed
6. new visions for mission (OUT)