

CONDUCTING A MISSION STUDY

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



THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

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

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

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

Reflections of Glen Powell on Bosch ‘Transforming Mission’

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

David Andrews, Christ-Anarchy, Lion 1999

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INTRODUCTION

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

The Assembly regulations relating to placement of ministers require that each congregation seeking a new placement complete a profile. This profile is used by the Placements Committee [2.7.17(f)] to provide the names of possible suitable persons for the vacant position to the Joint Nominating Committee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Which process to use:

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

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

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

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

Additional Mission Study Resource:

John N. Hooper, Presbytery Minister, UCA Victoria Synod has designed a Mission Study Workbook which can be used to complement any of the above workshop processes, or it can be used as an alternative process for conducting a mission study.

The workbook can be downloaded from the Internet or you can request a copy from the Synod of NSW & ACT, Board of Mission (see contact information at the front of this Guide)

Leader's Notes:

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

We hope and pray that this pack will enable your congregation to begin a journey of discovery that will lead to a vibrant and effective mission in your community.

Adapted from "**Mission Study to Congregational Profile**" 2000
Tina Rendell, Rob Stoner, Graham Johnson, John U'Ren, John McGookin

CHAPTER ONE

EASY-TO-FOLLOW MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP PROCESSES

MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION A

Author: Rob Stoner

OVERVIEW

“Worship that looks like a planning day”

Or

“A Planning Day that looks like worship”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(90 mins)

Step 1 - Opening to Vision/worship

(15 mins)

Includes:

- Welcome and Notices
- Songs/hymns of praise
- Prayer of Invocation
- Introduction to the process (*see Leader's Guide*)

Step 2 – Move into Conversation Groups

(3 mins)

- a) Move into “**conversation groups**” of about 6. Because related people often sit together, a process is needed to randomly allocate them to groups (*numbering off, numbers/symbols attached to seats beforehand, or just ask them to mix up*).
- b) Distribute Response Sheet 1 (and pens, if needed)

Step 3 - “Prayers of Thanksgiving”

(12 mins)

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

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

Inform them that their process in the group is to:

- **Reflect** upon the question
 - **Talk together**
 - **Record** their findings on the response Sheet.
- b) After 5 minutes (*keep the process moving*), ask group recorders to share their response (*succinctly*) with whole group [5 mins]

Record whole group responses on Butchers paper.

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

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

Step 4 - "Prayers of Confession"

(12 mins)

Repeat the process above around the question:

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

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

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

Step 5 - Hymn/Song

(3 mins)

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

Step 6 - Hearing the Word of God

(16 mins)

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

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

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

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

Reading: Matt 28 : 16-20 [4 mins]
Location: Mountain top
Time: Later? - not day of resurrection
Disciples' Response: Worship - yet some doubted
*Commission: **Go..... and make disciples/pupils/followers.... of all nations/people = gentiles/pagans/non-believers***
Question: *What ministry of ours (i.e. God's ministry through us) will enable non-believers to learn about, be converted by, and become followers of Jesus Christ?*

Reading: Mark 16 : 14-16 [4 mins]
Location: At table (meal) - Jerusalem or elsewhere? Upper room??
Time: Later
Disciples' Response: Lack of faith and hardness of heart
*Commission: **Go..... into all the world.... and proclaim the good news.... to all creation (whole created order - shades of St Francis!)***
Good news?? (see Mark 1 : 14-15)
= Now is the right time (kairos= God's time)
Kingdom of God is at hand
Repent and believe
Question: *What ministry of ours will:*
(a) *help people believe that the Kingdom of God is present and active here and now?*
(b) *help people to hear and live out the call of the Kingdom on their life?*

Reading: Luke 24 : 44-49 (see also Acts 1:8) [4 mins]
Location: Upper room in Jerusalem
Time: Day of resurrection
Disciples' Response: Joy, disbelief, wonderment
Commission: Repentance and forgiveness - proclaimed to all nations (as in Mark)
You are my witnesses

**Stay..... here in city (Jerusalem)....
until clothed with power from on high**
Acts 1:8 - "You will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes upon
you..... (then) you will be my
witnesses"

Question: **What ministry of ours will:**
(a) **open people's lives (more) to
the power of the Holy Spirit?**
(b) **enable the Spirit's
power/ability/capacity to be
(more fully) released in the
lives of our people?**

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

Location: Upper room
Time: Day of resurrection
Disciples' Response: Fear and disbelief
Commission: "As Father sent me, so I send you"
"Receive Holy Spirit"
Forgiveness]

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

Location: On the beach
Time: Later?
Disciples' Response: Impatience
Commission: (Given primarily to Peter)
"Feed/tend/ be like a shepherd to...
my sheep/lambs"

Question: **What ministry of ours will:**
(a) **"feed" those who already
belong to the flock of God?**
(b) **tend/shepherd/care for those
who are part of the flock?**

Hearing the Word of God (continued)

[30 mins]

Move back into conversation groups

Reflect on Scripture

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Morning tea break

15 mins)

Session Two

(1 hr 50 mins)

Step 7 - Opening to Vision/worship (10 mins)

- Gather as one group
- Songs (as people gather)

Step 8 - Seeing the big picture (10 mins)

Depending on what you decided above, either:

- (a) Present the summary collated over morning tea, or
- (b) Invite brief sharing from groups about Where their conversation gone to this point

Step 9 - Move into conversation groups (3 mins)

Hand out Response Sheet 2.

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

Step 10 - “Prayers of Intercession” (45 mins)

- a) Invite the conversation groups to respond to the next exercise and question.
 - Think about the specific people who constitute:
 - our congregation
 - our leadership
 - our community
 - our world
 - ***“What is God calling us to do, in concrete actions, that will turn the vision God has given us into specific acts of ministry that will affect the lives of those who we serve?”***

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

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

- b) Invite groups to share with the whole group.

Record on butchers paper - add to record on walls [20 mins]
Step 11 - "Act of Commitment" (15 mins)

Return to conversation groups.

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

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

- b) Then invite their personal reflection on the question:

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

- c) Who will be responsible to ensure we act on the decisions we have made today?
- d) Who will be responsible for summarising and delivering a report of this service to Church Council?

Step 12 - "Offering" (10 mins)

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

Encourage them to:

- a) Add any specific comments/ideas that build on those presented
- b) Add their name (or other names from their group's deliberations) in response to the reflection in the "Act of Commitment" time:

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

Step 13 - Sending Out (5 mins)

Includes:

- Hymn/Song (of dedication to God's work)
- Prayer seeking God's blessing on all that has taken place and all that promises to come as you faithfully respond to God's vision for your congregation.
- Benediction

Shared lunch

ORDER OF SERVICE

Gather as the people of God for worship

Vision/worship (part 1)

Welcome and Notices

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

[Move into “conversation groups” of about 6]

“Prayers of Thanksgiving”

Working In conversation groups

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

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group and then pray together

“Prayers of Confession”

Working in conversation groups

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

Reflect - Talk - Record

Share with the whole group and then pray together

Song/Hymn

Hearing the Word of God

The "Great Commissions"

Matt 28 : 16-20

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

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

What ministry of ours will:

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

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

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

What ministry of ours will:

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

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

John 21 : 15-19

What ministry of ours will:

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

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

Reflecting on the Word of God

Working in conversation groups

- passages as a starting point)
- Respond to the questions
- Spend time in prayer
- ***"What do we hear God calling us to be and to do in the next 1-3 years?"*** (Dreaming the "big picture")
- Reflect - Talk - Record
- Share with the whole group

Morning tea break

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

Vision/worship (part 2)

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

Seeing the big picture

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

“Prayers” of Intercession

Working in conversation groups

- Think about the specific people who constitute
 - our congregation
 - our leadership
 - our community
 - our world

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

- Reflect - Talk - Record
- Share with the whole group

“Act of Commitment”

Working in conversation groups

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

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

“Offering”

Walk around room:

- (1) Add any specific comments/ideas that build on those presented
- (2) Add you own name (or other names) in response to the reflection in the “Act of Commitment“ time:

[Monetary offerings will also be received during this time]

Sending Out

- Hymn/Song
- Prayer
- Blessing

Shared lunch

GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 1

“Prayers of Thanksgiving”

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

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

“Prayers of Confession”

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

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

Hearing the Word of God

“What do we hear God calling us to be and to do in the next 1-3 years?”
(Dreaming the “big picture” using the “Great Commissions”)

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.....

Matt 28 : 16-20

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

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.....
.....

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

What ministry of ours will:

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

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

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

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.....
.....

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

What ministry of ours will:

(a) **open people’s lives (more) to the power of the Holy Spirit?**

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

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

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John 21 : 15-19

What ministry of ours will:

(a) **“feed” those who already belong to the flock of God?**

.....
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.....

(b) **tend/shepherd/care for those who are part of the flock?**

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

GROUP RESPONSE SHEET 2

“Prayers” of Intercession

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

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

“Act of Commitment”

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

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

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

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.....
.....

MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION B

Author: Tina Rendell

OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(2 hrs)

Step 1 - Song: (5 Mins)

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

Step 2 - Readings: (15 Mins)

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

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Romans | 12: 1-8 |
| 1 Cor | 12: 12-31 |
| Ephesians | 4: 1-16 |

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

Step 3 - Prayer: (5 Mins)

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

Step 4 - Mission Reflection: (35 mins)

Break into groups of 6-8 people:

- a) Divide the following passages amongst the groups.
 - John 20: 19 – 22
 - Luke 7: 18 – 22
 - Matthew 28: 16 – 20
- b) Discuss:
 - ***“How does this passage help you to understand what the word mission means?”***

- ***“How does this relate to the way we talk about mission today?”***
- c) Feed back to everyone in the large group, your responses to these questions.
- d) Brainstorm together (with the leader/facilitator writing responses on a whiteboard/overhead projector/butchers paper) people’s responses to the following statement:
“Mission is.....”

BREAK**(15 mins)****Step 5 - Current Mission focus:****(10 mins)**

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

- a) ***“What is the current major mission of this congregation or group?”***
- b) ***“What do you do well?”***
- c) ***“Who is your mission currently focused to?”***

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

Step 6 - Local Community:**(15 mins)**

“What are the characteristics of your community?”

- a) *The people?*
eg: Age breakdown, ethnicity, education, employment
- b) *Their lifestyle?*
eg: When do people travel to work, school, shops? When are people at home? What do they do on the weekends?
- c) *Their needs and hopes for the future?*
eg: what are the major issues for people in your community, what are people looking for in your community-an opportunity to connect or be alone, what kind of community do they want to live in?

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

Step 7 - Mission Focus into the future:**(20 mins)*****“Who is God calling you to be in mission with?”***

- a) Spend a few minutes looking at your answers to the questions on your local community.
- b) In silence reflect on where you think God may be leading your congregation. *Are there one or two groups of people in your community that God is calling your congregation to make a mission priority?*
- c) As a large group share your responses.
- d) Vote on which 1-3 people/groups** you believe God is calling you to make a priority for the next 1-3 years.

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

Session Two

(1 hr 45 mins)

Step 8 - Current mission activities:

(10 mins)

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

- a) ***“What are you currently doing to be in mission to the people groups you have decided to focus on?”***
- b) ***“What are you currently doing to be in mission to others?”***

Step 9 - Planning your mission activities:

(50 mins)

- a) Break up into *groups focused on each people group* that your congregation will have a mission focus to. For example, if your congregation wishes to make its mission priority families with young children and retired people then the congregation needs to be broken up into at least two groups.
- b) Each group needs to identify 1 – 3 activities that will either *extend* your existing mission to your people group or will add something *new* to your mission to your prioritised people group/s.
 - *Consider the following question: “What can your congregation/group do to more effectively connect to and serve your prioritised people group/s?”*
 - *You may decide to consider extending your mission through the following areas of the church’s life and mission or choose some other area:*
 - outreach / community service
 - pastoral care
 - increasing a sense of “community”
 - worship
 - small groups
 - nurturing/growing peoples faith and discipleship
 - growing leadership opportunities etc...etc...etc...
 - Think about what you learnt before about the needs and hopes of these people. What does worship or pastoral care or outreach/community service need to look like so

that you can share the love, compassion and hope of the gospel with these people?

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

Step 10 - Deciding together what we will be doing: (30 mins)

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

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

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

- a) Form a 'Coordination Group': Identify 1 – 3 people to oversight each activity. (These people will remind the congregation of their commitment to their people groups and the activities that have been decided on. They are the people who are make sure that the ideas and vision of this planning day do not 'fall into a black hole').
- b) Set a date for the 'Coordination Group to meet and develop plans for:
 - i. A list of the people with the gifts/skills/passion to support each activity (see Leader's Notes - Taking stock and Leadership)
 - ii. A timeline for each activity
- c) Identify who will bring regular reports to Church Council.

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

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

Close with prayer / song

MISSION PLANNING WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

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

MISSION REFLECTION

Read the following passages:

- John 20: 19 – 22
- Luke 7: 18 – 22
- Matthew 28: 16 – 20

Discuss:

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

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

CURRENT MISSION FOCUS

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

What do you do well?

Who is your mission currently focused to?

MISSION STUDY WORKSHOP OPTION C

Author: Graham Johnson

OVERVIEW

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

TIME REQUIRED:	Approximately 4.5 hours including morning tea and lunch.
LEADERSHIP REQUIRED:	The Process is designed to be able to be led by local leadership without the presence of a specially trained Consultant
METHOD OF OPERATION:	The process works in both small group, and large group mode. You will need to see that each small group has at least one person able to articulate or record the insights of that group.
ATTENDANCE REQUIRED:	It is recommended that as many persons as possible be part of the process. The process depends for its success on wide involvement of members of the congregation included all key leaders and decision makers.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Session One

(2 hrs 20 mins)

Step 1 - Introductory Worship (10 mins)

Step 2 – Introductory relational exercise (10 mins)

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

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

- a) **"What is the Church?"**
Have your group answer this in 30 words or less
- b) **"What is its mission?"**
Have your group answer this in 30 words or less
- c) **"What are the key characteristics of our community?"**
Have your group agree on six
- d) **"What are the key characteristics of your congregation/s?"**
Have your group agree on six words to describe your congregation/s

Brief Break (15 mins)

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

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

Longer Break (35 mins)

Session Two

(2 hrs 30 mins)

Step 5 – Key questions to consider... continued

- e) **What area or areas do we choose to be our mission focus over the next 12 months?** (30 mins)
(worked at this in small groups)
- f) **Discuss the suggested areas for focus** (30 mins)
(work on this as a whole group)
- g) **If there are more than five focus areas identified, seek to reach consensus on what are the three or four major key focus areas.** (30 mins)
(e.g. a focus on work with young families, a focus on a weeknight worship service and a focus on redeveloping the Pastoral Care Program)
- h) **Which person, persons or groups have a passion for each of these focus areas?**
and
what are some strategies or activities or programs that may be appropriate to explore? (30 mins)
(work prayerfully to discern answers to this question)
(having membership lists for each small group may be helpful for this task)

Step 6 - Pulling it all together (20 mins)

a) Write up the results

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

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

b) Implementation

- Form a 'Coordination Group' from 1-3 identified in (h) who will oversee each activity. (These people will remind the congregation of their commitment to their mission)

focus areas and the activities that have been decided on. They are the people who will make sure that the ideas and vision of this planning day do not 'fall into a black hole').

- Set a date for the 'Coordination Group to meet and develop plans for:
 - i. A list of the people with the gifts/skills/passion to support each activity (see Leader's Notes Taking stock and JH Leadership stuff)
 - ii. A timeline for each activity
- Identify who will bring regular reports to Church Council.

Brief Closing Worship

(10 mins)

CHAPTER TWO

LEADER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION TO LEADER'S NOTES

The information in this 'Leader's Pack' provides recommendations on:

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

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

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

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

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

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

GETTING YOUR CONGREGATION FOCUSSED

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

Preaching

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

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

Sharing the story and newsletters

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

During Worship

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

UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Gathering information about your local community

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

- Who lives here?
- Family structure?
- Economic/employment situation?
- Ethnic background?

Examples of where this information can be obtained:

- The local council (Community Service or Urban Planning Departments)
- Local councillors
- Australian Bureau of Statistics for Census data
- The local library
- NCLS Social Profile

Exploring the needs and hopes of your community

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

An example of a question that can be posed is:

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

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

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

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

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

Questionnaire about your community

© John N. Hooper 2000

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

a) Statistics - Community Age Structure – 1996 or 2001 Census

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

- b) The population of the community is:
 - stable
 - growing
 - changing in composition
 - declining
 - culturally mixed

What do these figures suggest to you?

.....

.....

.....

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

.....

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- d) List any social issues and concerns in your community.

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.....

- e) Are there particular events and stories that shaped your community?

.....

.....

.....

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

.....

.....

.....

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

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

.....

.....

.....

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

.....

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.....

j) Ecumenical Activity

1) What ecumenical activities occur in the community?

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

2) What significant expressions of Christian unity have been achieved?

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

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONGREGATION

Identify current mission activities

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

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

Charting the current mission activities:

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

Mission Planning and A Comprehensive Approach Grid

Designed by Mark Hillis (May 2001)

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

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

A: The grid has been tested for its comprehensive fit with many congregations, in terms of its ability to collect accurate descriptive information about the life and activities of a church congregation. It has the added advantage of being sufficiently flexible to, if necessary, add columns or rows. In the processes of gathering, and then analysing, information

about a congregation, one is able to survey the “gaps” that appear (as empty squares) in the grid and to assess whether those “gaps” are significant or not for the current or future life and mission of that congregation. As an analytical tool, I have found this grid most enlightening and empowering for congregations to:

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

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

1. The grid is made available to groups and individuals that are aware of particular activities/ ministries (*Work of the Church* on the grid, see example) and *where or with whom the work takes place*. Relevant parts of the grid are filled-in with brief descriptions and later collected.
2. The planning team or consultant collate the various contributions and draw up a complete grid with all work included. This completed form of the grid is circulated, to confirm the entries and to collect any ministries or activities that have been overlooked.
3. The completed form of the grid is studied by the planning team along with analytical data such as Census, National Church Life Survey, Local Government demographic studies etc.
4. A planning process is devised to bring representatives of the congregation together to explore the grid and the implications of Step 3 for the mission planning of the church.
5. Questions may be asked, like '**What are we called to be?**' and '**Whom are we called to serve?**' Information from the grid and other studies can show how things are at present and will help to project a vision for the future (via a goal-setting or other exercise).
6. “Gaps” in the grid can be examined for their fit with the goals of the congregation to see whether they are significant or necessary. [For example: (a) Demographic data will reveal whether some age-group work would be relevant; or (b) Local Community knowledge may show whether some wider community work is adequately catered for or would benefit from the involvement of the church.]

7. Where “gaps” are perceived to be significant, a close examination of the grid can be used to show whether some current activity may be expanded or changed to help fill a “gap” in the church’s mission. [For example: (a) A church that is running a Kid’s Club and wants to do more significant ministry with local families may be able to upgrade or extend its work with kid’s club parents and siblings and seek advice and support to explore the possibilities; or, (b) The same church wishing to explore mission with young teens may seek advice and support in how to provide effective mentoring for older children in the Kid’s Club, and thus build a ministry from the current service base.]
8. The very design of the grid can help churches evaluate their mission. For example, the column headed *Wider Community* can be explored in relation to all the *Work of the Church* headings. A church is forced to consider whether it has any “wider community” impact through any of its current activities. By considering how it may be able to make its *Worship and Prayer* or *Christian Education* or *Leadership Development* work available to the “wider community” beyond the church, a congregation is starting to think seriously about its mission. It may also consider how the resources of the wider community may help with the development and training or the social action of its members – mission is not just a one-way endeavour! [For example, some congregations have used community organisations and professionals to help train the church pastoral care workers or to heighten awareness about community needs. Many churches have harnessed the expertise of local school staff to help train their Scripture teachers.] It is all part of opening-up to the work God is already doing in the world Christ came to serve.

Mark Hillis (May 2001)

Further Reading:

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

Roberto, John (et.al. 1996) *Comprehensive Approach*. Melbourne: JBCE

GRID A

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

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

GRID B

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

Identify the strengths and gifts in the congregation

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

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

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

Other Resources:

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

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

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

"COMMUNITY BUILDING HELPS PLANNING"

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

- **A shared meal (with or without activities or games afterwards) greatly helps the group to become a cohesive unit. There are few better ways to break down barriers and grow friendships than to share a meal together.**
- **Conducting a community building exercise**
The following is an example of a community building exercise that can be done a week before the mission planning workshop is conducted and it will take about 40 minutes to complete.

Growing a Garden - A Planning Exercise

Author: Jenny Tymms, Mission Consultant, Qld

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

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

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

and if there were opportunities for people to learn how to grow gardens in their own places.

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

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

Kinds of issues likely to be raised:

- What kind of garden?
- Vegetable garden - what kind of veggies?
- Open park land?
- Native trees and shrubs?
- Flower gardens - all kinds?.

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

- what gardening skills do you have in the group or what gardening skills might there be in the wider community? **who are we? What do we love? What are our skills?**
- what kind of climate, soil is the town you have come to? What will grow, what will not? **Data about the particular context**
- what do we think will capture the imaginations of the people of the town, what is missing in their lives? Places to play, or reflect, to picnic together, to make food together? **Data about the people and the missional context, the needs?**
- how big is your plot of land? **What are our resources?**
- what plants are available? How much will they cost? What kind of ongoing work will they need? **What are our resources?**
- do you want the same kind of garden that can be grown in backyards? Or something different? **what is our purpose?**

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

**The purpose will guide the kind of garden.

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

Maybe different people have skills at different parts of the process. Some have the knowledge about the plants or could go and explore

this, but won't be able to do the actual planting. One is able to keep the dream alive to offer cups of tea and encouragement. One will lend their gardening tools. Utilising gifts in planning and implementation,

2. When you've decided the purpose - have to plan the shape and the plants. Who will do what and when? **Action planning**
3. Details of where to get the plants, extra soil?
4. Who's going to do the actual digging? The actual planting? No point in planning something huge if you don't have the energy and agility to do it.
5. Are you going to involve other people from the community in the planning? In the actual growing of the garden? Is there a way of involving the children in the schools? The parents of children. You are convinced that gardening is good for the soul, how to encourage non-gardeners to try it? **Processes of involvement**
6. What equipment will you need? Will you do one bit at a time or shape the whole thing?
7. Who's going to maintain it? Is there a way of involving others?
8. How with all these questions and issues - **do we keep the dream alive? ie maintain the motivation?**
9. Will we have an organising committee? Subcommittees appoint a leader, a spokesperson for the community? What is the best way of organising? **Structure for planning and implementing?**

QUESTIONS

- a) How does the group become a gardening community and not just be a community that owns a garden?
- b) What is the difference? - people are actively involved in the gardening, have a love of being involved
 - there are gardening opportunities for people
 - people share their practices, pass on tips, and tell their gardening stories.
 - its not just left to the experts, to the paid gardeners.
 - becomes part of their life
 - people's differing skills are used for the benefit of the whole

GETTING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED

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

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

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

HINTS AND TIPS FOR CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP

Hints and Tips for Session Leader Techniques

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

Attitude

- Motivate the participants.
- Stay enthusiastic (and SHOW IT)
- Talk LOUDLY and CONCISELY (20-30% more volume than normal).

Get the group members "on their feet" whenever possible.

Documentation

- Write CLEARLY and in LARGE CAPITALS
- Use 2 sets of media
 - When finished with one, and agreement reached, hand it over to the scribe for documenting, then continue on with the other
 - Keep the PACE FAST but, DO NOT CONTINUE until everything relevant is DOCUMENTED and UNDERSTOOD
- Do NOT allow the conversation to continue more than 15 minutes, without recording anything

TAKING STOCK

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

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

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

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

Other Resources:

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

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

LEADERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Minister of the Word
- Deacon
- Youth Worker
- Lay Pastor

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

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REVIEWING THE PROGRESS YOU'VE MADE

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

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

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

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

- *choose different scripture passages that reflect on mission, or read a story or passage from a book that helps the congregation think about church/mission or refer to National Church Life Survey or other resources for activities or stories*
- *briefly revisit the characteristics of the local community and review which group(s) of people God is calling the congregation to be in mission with and reaffirm the commitment to these people (after about 3 years the congregation may wish to seriously review the groups, adding or changing the priorities)*
- *always integrate theological reflection and prayer into the study/planning process, it's a reminder to the congregation of why they are spending this time on mission study/planning and it further opens them up for the Spirit of God to work in their lives, in their community and in their planning processes*
- *engage in a more thorough planning process. The National Church Life Survey and Uniting Church Synods and Presbyteries may be able to assist you with added resources when reviewing your mission study/planning processes*

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Websites:

www.countrytowns.com.au
 Southern Grampians Shire Council
www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

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