

# EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

## Being missional



*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*  
Romans 15:7

**“No longer can evangelism be one program or ministry function alongside others. Rather, in an evangelising (or missional) church culture, speaking the name of Jesus Christ and telling the story of what God has done for us will become as natural as talking about our families. It is who we are.”** Steen Olsen

Reaching out in Christ’s name reflects Jesus’ directive to his disciples in Matthew 28:19 “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit”, and verse 20 “and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” commends a way of life that is the responsibility of all of us, not just for the attention of a few. It suggests a way to live in this present age. We are Jesus’ disciples in today’s world. It is up to us to reach out with the love of Jesus in our culture and in our time.

Here are four areas we have identified that are worth paying attention to:

### 1. Diversity

The increasing diversity throughout Australian society in the length of lifespan, in generational identities, in family structures and marriage patterns, and in ethnic makeup.

### 2. Digital Technology

The rise of new digital technologies that are reshaping society, and the emergence of a connected, networked society.

### 3. Religiosity

The dramatic change and increasing diversity in the religious beliefs, practices, and affiliation of Australians.

### 4. Religious Transmission

The decline in religious transmission from generation to generation.

As we endeavour to focus on being missional it is helpful to understand the spiritual and religious diversity of people that exist in Australia.

### **Vibrant Faith and Active Engagement.**

This describes people who are actively engaged in a Christian church, are spiritually committed, and growing in their faith.

### **Participating Occasionally, but**

**Uncommitted.** This describes people who attend church activities, but are not actively engaged in their church community or spiritually committed. They may participate in significant seasonal celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, and celebrate sacraments and milestone events, such as marriage and baptism. Some may even attend worship regularly, and send their children to a Christian school. Their spiritual commitment is low and their connection to the church is more social and practical than spiritual.

**Spiritual, but Not Religious.** This describes



people who are spiritually hungry and searching for God and the spiritual life, but most likely are not affiliated with organised religion and an established tradition. The *Spiritual but Not Religious* reflect a growing minority of the Australian population, especially among young adults.

**Unaffiliated and Uninterested.** This describes people who experience little need for God and the spiritual life and are not affiliated with organised religion and established Christian churches. The *Unaffiliated and Uninterested* reject all forms of organised religion and reflect a steadily increasing percentage of the Australian population, especially among young adults.

It can be a daunting task to reach out to such a diverse range of people with the love of God. Where do we even begin?

Consider the following two strategies:

**1. Missional faith formation** *expands and extends the church's presence through outreach, connection, relationship building, and engagement with people where they live—moving faith formation out into the community.*

Developing targeted approaches and strategies designed around particular needs and life situations. These approaches and strategies need to be contextual. They need to be built around the gifts and skills of your congregation and community.



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For example:

- Develop community settings for church ministries and faith formation by offering courses and workshops in a school, community centre or coffee shop.
- Open church events and programs to the whole community such as community meals and playgroups.
- Create an inviting website and an active Facebook page to connect with people.
- Connect with people's life issues and situations by offering career mentoring, parenting courses, life skills courses, and more.
- Connect with people during transitions and milestone moments such as marriage, birth of a baby, starting school, funerals, just to name a few.

**2. Missional faith formation** *provides pathways for people to consider or reconsider the Christian faith, to encounter Jesus and the good news.*

Missional faith formation guides people as they move from discovery to exploration to commitment. Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation are examples of a pathway with formational content. Provide opportunities for participation in the life of the faith community through small group Bible study, worship, acts of service and hospitality. Resources like *The Alpha Course* series cover the basics of Christianity in a multi-session course in a supportive small group environment. These types of programs and processes provide pathways for people to grow toward a life of discipleship and lifelong faith.

The mission of the church is God's mission. Sent out by the command of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the people of God participate in God's 'plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ.' (Ephesians 1:10)

