

New Forms to start a Mission Motivated Development or Grant Application

Yes, I know, not the most exciting way to begin a conversation...

but

on behalf of **BOMAR, Property Board** and **CFM** we are excited because the new forms (attached) represent a fresh way of putting mission up front in decision making about property matters or funding matters.

So what's the excitement about?

Mission is clearly on the frontline, shaping how we *listen to* and *talk with* each other. This Church is a missionary movement. We're a Church committed to doing Jesus' stuff *in community*, in *bodily form*. This is our experience of commonwealth. And this is the liberty the Church enjoys, according to the *Basis of Union*, para 3.

Starting with and shaped by mission means there's opportunities to make big changes in how we listen, think and talk together across the various councils of Church.

Rather than thinking about gaining 'permission' from another Council of the Church, we'll be thinking about what relationships and commitments we make; the resources we need as we pick up our commission and are sent into God's mission.

Instead of talking about limits and rules, we'll talk about imagination, innovation and initiative. Rather than waiting until every 'T' can be crossed and every 'i' can be dotted, we'll share our conversations right from the start.

We reckon this change starts a real shift from cumbersome, hierarchical processes, to local creative enterprise. Praying together, studying scripture, listening and talking about stories of faith and faithfulness, noticing our neighbours, being inspired by relationships with individuals or groups who are in some or other 'the least, the last and the lost' in our community... These are the practices we hope the new processes will encourage. Engaging the heart, head and hands of the gospel – that's what we want to see across all Councils of the Church.

Oh, and of course we are excited about a process that is simple, straightforward and less cluttered than previous processes. Amen to that!

And we are excited that Property Board, BOMAR and CFM have worked together to bring mission matters, administration and process together in this fresh way.

Okay, where do we start?

With Getting Started, or Form 1 actually.

'**Getting Started**' is the title of Form 1. This form has 3 pages. Use this form to begin a conversation. The Synod bodies will receive '**Getting Started**' **Form 1** and record the details, allocating a number that will follow all future inquiries, forms submitted, letters sent etc. This number will be known as the '**Synod Reference Number**'. The form does not have an approval hanging over it. PART – that's the Synod's "Property Application Review Team" – might offer some early feedback.

Actually, '**Getting Started**' **Form 1** is the way a congregation or agency gives early notice of a mission discernment journey having begun to the Presbytery and the Synod. It's a sort of

public 'heads-up' – an “*Oi- we’re discerning God’s calling and getting ready to be sent into God’s mission over here!*” So we suggest using this form as soon as possible. In fact, the earlier the better! This way, **‘Getting Started’ Form 1** is a useful tool, rather than a permission seeking missile aimed at another Council of the Church.

A congregation, agency or other church body can begin their intent conversation using **‘Getting Started’ Form 1**. There are just 5 questions – 1 each about context, vision, idea, gospel reflection and possible cost.

These questions will **prompt discussion**. The responses to each will be seen as **initial responses**. They are not final concepts or actions. No-one’s going to hold you to these responses. Sometimes, people might even offer early helpful feedback. Whoever completes the form is not submitting firm plans - only giving a hint about their intentions. Responses to the questions show where the **discernment and discussions are heading**.

You could say that **‘Getting Started’ Form 1** makes the conversation public knowledge and invites other Councils into the conversation.

If this sounds like a focus for the Presbytery Minister - Admin, it can be; but think about PM’s M & E, too. Working together will enhance the ‘Getting Started’ experience.

Hang on, Where do PM’s M & E come in?

Right from the ‘get-set, go!’ Everyone can ‘*do with a little help from their friends*’ at such times. Have a look at the following explanation for each of the questions. Presbytery Ministers for Mission and Education, and / or for Administration can assist right from the outset. Each of the 5 questions is more easily understood and answered when a community talks about it. So here’s a few clues...

The first question - **context**:

Of the 5 questions, question (Context) will probably require assistance. The question asks local people to pop their heads up above their own local church or congregation, or the agency to think beyond the scope of their own programs and initiatives. So, ‘Heads up!’. Look around the neighbourhood or local community. Where are people serving God? Where are people who struggle finding assistance and life changing help? Where are people refurbishing the environment? Where are persons’ lives experiencing deep healing? Where is there evidence of restoration, or of justice (loyalty and faithfulness) in relationships. Where is there evidence of advocacy for a decent life and equity in access to the world’s resources. Where is there evidence of safe spaces and places for the tough conversations? Where is there evidence of resistance to destructive social policies promoted by any company or government? In short – where’s God’s Holy Spirit at work?

Some of the answers to this question will arise from the relationships, knowledge and activity of the local congregation or agency. Others will come from peoples’ knowledge about their neighbours or local community. Some answers might come from individuals’ connections with other organisations and institutions... Count them all in. God’s work is not limited to the one congregation or agency! Gather all the info you can. You never know which piece of information will be critical until you have it in front of you.

The second question - **vision**:

The purpose of the question is to get some broad thinking about vision out in the open. At this stage, details do not matter. But the vision that is written about will have some anchor in the reality of the people’s experience of the community or neighbourhood, as well as some pretty clear ideas about the nature of the gospel – especially with respect to the ‘least, last and lost’.

The third question – **your idea**:

No great detail – just a sketch of an idea, or 2 or 3 or... No decisions, but ideas we are thinking about, or discussing right now... Just 'bare bones' stuff at this stage.

The fourth question – **gospel reflection**:

Have a go at connecting your idea to the purpose of the gospel. Not a deep theological work, but an honest attempt to say, "*this is what we understand the gospel is about, how we see the Way of Jesus; and where we are right now this looks like...*"

The fifth question – **cost**:

Go on, take a stab! This is only a very rough estimate. The question does not require an audited statement of accounts. Not even an 'in the ball park' figure. But perhaps it is possible to hazard a guesstimate at this stage.

Right, so that's it for the congregation.
What about the presbytery?

This page is to be filled in by the presbytery's representative. Okay, that will be Discernment Partner and or Presbytery Minister Mission and Education or Administration. This will vary from presbytery to presbytery. The point is, someone close to the action when it comes to mission as well as property in the presbytery will be the person who signs off for the presbytery on this form.

The Presbytery's comment does not have to be seen or approved by the congregation. PART needs the realistic assessment and mature reflection of the presbytery's discernment partner, Presbytery Minister(s) or committee. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, that might be best kept to the presbytery at this stage. There's nothing like time and conversation, prayer and getting stuck into the struggle to bring people on board to mature a vision and temper with realism!

The 'Proposed Next Steps' section is a simple 'tick the box' set of options. This selection suggests the likely pathway from here forwards.

Then, it's up to the Presbytery Minister or Discernment Partner to send the completed '**Getting Started' Form 1** (3 pages) to the Property Services Unit at the Synod office.

Well Done! 😊

P.S. if you want to use this text for an oral presentation or explanation go right ahead. It's over to you...