



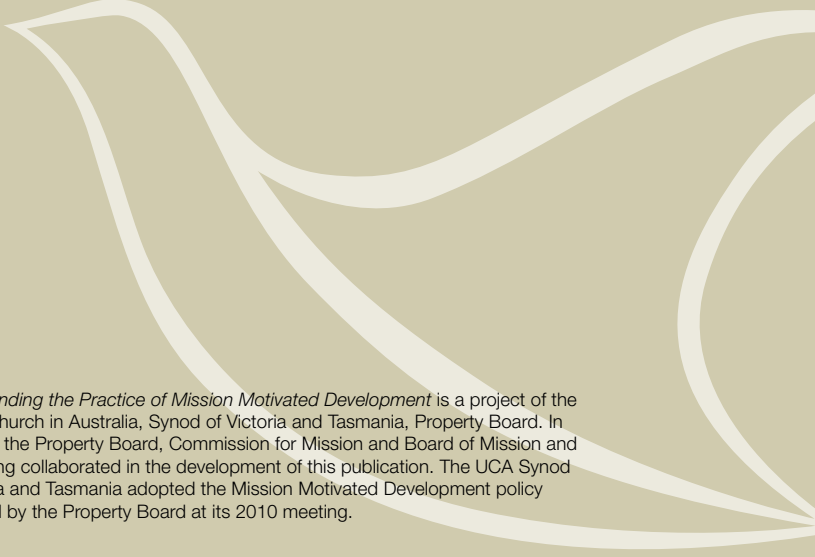
Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Understanding the Practice of Mission Motivated Development



Second edition
now with Helpful Hints

Understanding the Practice of Mission Motivated Development



Understanding the Practice of Mission Motivated Development is a project of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Property Board. In particular the Property Board, Commission for Mission and Board of Mission and Resourcing collaborated in the development of this publication. The UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania adopted the Mission Motivated Development policy proposed by the Property Board at its 2010 meeting.

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Introduction

An explanation


This book *Understanding the Practice of Mission Motivated Development* arises from the Synod's Property Board 'Proposal 20' that was passed by Synod in September 2010.

Under the *UCA Regulations*, **the Property Board has a large area of responsibility on behalf of the Synod.** The Property Board

- *advises the Synod on policies* relating to property within the bounds of the Synod;
- *supervises the implementation of policies* relating to property within the bounds of the Synod;
- *initiates proposals with respect to property matters*;
- *receives proposals submitted* to it by presbyteries, Church Councils, institutions or agencies and ensures that each proposal is in accordance with the policies of the Synod with respect to property matters, development and mission;
- *consults where appropriate.*

It was recognised that BOMAR and the presbyteries have a key mission role in the life of the Synod, and are to be consulted as part of any Property Board discussion about the missional use of property.

The Property Board has been acutely aware that the number of proposals for building works is growing and proposals are increasing in complexity. The Board has also been keen to ensure that in approving property proposals it is carrying out the wishes of the Synod. In response to these matters, the Property Board held workshops in February 2010 to explore the Uniting Church's approach to property development, the gifting of congregational properties to agencies, and the types of development the church should engage in. This resulted in Proposal 20.



In adopting Proposal 20 (May 2010), the Synod endorsed the following guiding principles for future decisions concerning property matters:

- (a) There is a place in the Synod for mission motivated development.
- (b) As all property is held in trust, the sharing of the common wealth needs to be taken into account in every property development.
- (c) Missional use of property must be considered in any proposal before the Property Board.

This book focuses on the first and third aspects of these principles: mission motivated development and missional use of property.

This book sets out a common understanding of what is meant by 'mission motivated development'

In addition, the book provides ten principles for use in assessing whether or not any property development proposed is indeed mission motivated.

How to use this book

The book is divided into three sections.

Section one – meanings and intentions

Readers and users of the book may explore what the Property Board means and intends by the term ‘mission motivated development’. This section includes reflections on the tradition of the Uniting Church and Bible passages. At the end of this section, ten principles are identified that, when taken together, provide a guide to determining mission motivated development.

Section two – case study

Readers and users of the book can see how the principles of mission motivated development might occur in conversations about a property development proposal. In addition, users of the book can observe how the new form for both the Property Board and BOMAR – ‘Form One Getting Started’ – has been completed as the group working on the proposal progressed their conversations.

Section three – practice

This provides an opportunity to practise developing a property proposal through a second case study, but this time readers and users of this book are invited to work through the case, developing their own proposal as they apply the principles of mission motivated development and attempt to complete ‘Form One Getting Started’.

Appendix Five helpful hints to next steps

Following experience gained through feedback to the first edition of this book, five helpful hints offering practical guidance have been added to the second edition. These include:

1. approach your presbytery from the very beginning;
2. practise discernment;
3. take time;
4. give priority to relationships;
5. identify opportunities, rather than needs.



SECTION ONE

Meanings and intentions

Understanding three words

Each of these three words has a particular meaning for the church.

When the three words are used together as 'mission motivated development', their combined meaning guides the church's property development.

We begin by exploring the meaning of each of the three words. Having done so, we will then understand the meaning of mission motivated development.

Mission

Mission is a word we hear used in many different ways. The church is not the only organisation that talks about 'mission'. Companies often have their mission statement in a public place for customers to read. Community organisations and caring agencies publish their mission statements in brochures. Military institutions speak of 'their mission'. Perhaps you have watched television programs with spy thriller plots, such as 'Mission Impossible' or 'Spooks'. Characters in these fictional programs talk about 'the mission'. In the film *The Blues Brothers*, one of the leading characters even talked about being 'on a mission from God' as they sought to reunite an old band.

With the word 'mission' being used in so many different contexts, what does the church mean when it talks about 'mission'?

Chris Walker adds:

'Mission is not simply an extra activity to the life of the church - something to be added to faithful worship and compassionate service.


'God the Creator has a purpose for creation and engages with creation to move it towards its intended end.

Mission

God's sending forth

'Mission' means 'a sending forth'. It describes purpose. Although widely used in many settings, it is fundamentally a Christian word. As God sent Jesus Christ into the world, so the church, the body of Christ, is sent into the world to continue Christ's mission (John 20:21).¹

¹ Chris Walker, *Towards a Theology of Mission*, A paper submitted to the UCA Assembly Standing Committee, June 2010, para. 1.



'The whole church and not only parts of it are called to participate with God in this all-encompassing mission process. 'It involves nothing less than the reconciliation and renewal of people and the whole creation.'

Theologian Darrel Guder defines mission as:

*'The church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The church is fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending, its purpose to serve God's healing purposes for all the world as God's witnessing people to all the world.'*²

The church is grounded in the calling and sending nature of God. The church is not an end in itself, but is a partner to God's mission in the world. The church is one of the means by which God's purposes will be achieved.³

The word 'mission' does not appear in the Bible. However, another way to understand mission is to consider the ideas from the Bible that are associated with it. There are more than ninety different expressions that contribute to our ideas about mission.

We can summarise these ideas as follows. Mission assumes

- that everything has its beginning in God;
- that there is an overarching purpose – God's purpose for all creation;
- that there is a sending pattern –
 God sends the Son, God sends the Spirit, God sends the church...
- that the one sending another has authority to do so;
- that there is a task for those sent, a task that addresses God's purposes;
- that the one in authority knows about a person or community, part of or all of creation, who will benefit by receiving those sent and the task that person or group will perform.

What does this mean for us?

1. Christians and the church are called to God's mission in the world. It is not 'my mission' or even the 'church's mission'. The mission is God's. The purpose of the church is to be a partner in God's mission in the world.
2. Christians and churches are sent by God to continue Christ's mission in the world. Looking at Jesus' character, teachings, relationships and activities helps us to see how to conduct ourselves when we are engaged in God's mission in the world. Sometimes this also means making the shift from *servicing others to sharing among one another* - as John's Gospel reminds us, '*I no longer call you servants, but friends*'.²
3. God's Holy Spirit inspires Christians and the church for God's mission. The Holy Spirit is our constant companion, the very presence of God, as together we embark upon God's mission.
4. Through discernment, each expression of the church can become aware of and informed about its particular calling to God's mission. Once the church knows its calling, it can be sent into God's mission in the company and power of God's Holy Spirit.
5. The church assesses the relationships, activities and outcomes of the various mission initiatives to see if they are consistent with Jesus' example.

² Darrell Guder, 'Walking Worthily', in *Princeton Theological Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2007), quoted in Walker, paras 2 and 3..

³ See the *Basis of Union*, paras 3 and 4; and Randal Prior's paraphrase in *Towards Intentional Missional Communities* (CFM 2008), Section One, p. 7, and in 'Gospel, Culture and the Future Church' in *On The Way Together REPORT*, pp. 54ff, 2008.

Motivation

Significant Bible passages

There are many references to God's mission in the Bible. Each has a particular meaning as well as contributing to our whole understanding of mission. There are three significant Bible passages.

Luke 4:18-19 Jesus' calling and purpose

This text tells us about Jesus' calling or vocation. The words come from Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. Like the prophets who preceded him, Jesus' calling to God's mission involved good news of liberation from captivity, healing and restoration, and freedom from oppression.

Throughout the gospels, we read stories of Jesus' mission in action. His mission was intensely personal. Jesus met people, developed relationships and engaged in deep conversations. To put it in today's language, Jesus met and related with people with real names, and actual addresses. Stories about Jesus' relationships with some of these people are included in the four gospels.

Motivation

Motivation names impulses, causes or callings that drive behaviour. Christians and churches find their vocation (calling) in God's mission through the Holy Spirit's particular calling to the way of Christ in their context and cultural setting.

Liberty and freedom came though Jesus' teachings and examples of extraordinary compassion and unconditional love.

Jesus did not pursue a political campaign to win liberty. Neither did he assert royal power to grant freedom. There were no plans or actions for conquest. There were no strategies for colonising the structures or cultures of other parties or people. There were no plans for a victory parade or party. Liberty and freedom came though Jesus' teachings and examples of extraordinary compassion and unconditional love.

Jesus chose an alternative way to that of Empire. Personal and communal transformation came through shalom, or wholeness, embodied by Jesus.

*“Shalom offered a vision of flourishing, abundant life, of peace and reconciliation, justice and transformation, love and inclusion for all creation.”*⁴

Jesus conveyed shalom through hospitality, giftedness, relationships, curiosity and creativity. He shifted the narrative from a focus on Empire to a focus on relationships. This meant transformation from power to grace, from demand to love, from compliance to dissent, from contract to covenant.

Reference to *the year of the Lord's favour* shows that Luke imagined Jesus' calling to include the restoration of community. This had been depicted in the celebration of jubilee. You can find out more about Jubilee by reading Leviticus 25.

Matthew 22:34-40 – The Great Commandment

A lawyer asked Jesus a testing question: ‘Which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus replied, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... and... you shall love your neighbour as yourself’.

Of all Jesus' teachings about God's mission and human life, this is probably the most significant. A Christian's, and indeed the church's, first loyalty is to God. Faithfulness to God is of far greater importance than achieving any goal on God's behalf, no matter how strategic such a goal might seem to be.

The second part of Jesus' answer to the question tells us about a Christian's disposition towards other people. Each person is to be loved in the same way as the Christian loves her or his own life.

Some people have suggested that it is this particular teaching of Jesus that provides the basis for any church's partnership in God's mission. Jesus' teaching speaks to the heart of Christ-like character. You can read more about this essential, servant character of Christ and of all Christians in Philippians 2:1-11.

**...the church's,
first loyalty is
to God.**

**Each person
is to be loved
in the same
way as the
Christian loves
her or his own
life.**

4 An Economy of Life, Reimagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World, 12th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2009.

Matthew 28:18-20 The Great Commission

Someone observed that each of the gospels begins with an invitation to 'come see' and ends with an exhortation to 'go tell'. Matthew's version is more detailed, as well as more direct, than the other exhortations to 'go tell'. Matthew's gospel emphasizes practical Christianity. For Matthew, an encounter with Jesus Christ compels one to share the good news.

When we read gospel stories about encounters with Jesus, they sometimes end with the character rushing off to tell others about the experience. Sharing the good news is an essential aspect of discipleship. Mathew's gospel envisages that other people who experience God's good news through Jesus Christ will also become followers – disciples. They too will live a disciplined life, observing Jesus' teaching and responding faithfully to his continuing call to God's mission in the world.

What does this mean for us in the practice of a mission motivation?

1. *The church will live out its vocation faithfully and consistently, embracing its call to witness to and serving God's saving purposes in the world.* The church's motivation for mission arises from God's relationship with the people who are the church. Faithfulness to God is essential. Loyalty to God's purposes is fundamental.
2. *The church will accept the Spirit's calling to God's mission as its vocation.* Any relationship or activity conducted in the spirit of God's mission will reflect the character and disposition of Jesus' relationships and activities.
3. *Mission is a movement.* Getting to know people is necessary. These may be people with whom we live or work, play sport or spend time in leisure activities. Some may be people who have come to the church to seek assistance in some way or other. Sometimes people who are not members of the church might be looking for opportunities to assist people who are struggling in one way or another. Perhaps the church can embrace these people in its service of others, too. Such partnerships provide natural settings in which to share the gospel.

4. *A Christian's speech and actions match; a church's words and deeds agree.* God's mission is about much more than simply policy initiatives, service delivery, program implementation or leasing church property. Any mission initiative begins in a relationship between at least two people. One person in the relationship is following Jesus' teachings and example. The other person or group in the relationship is perhaps in need of the benefits an encounter with the Christ brings – compassion, love, grace, healing, restoration, renewal. Or perhaps one person has a vision that requires a partnership with a Christian neighbour to be realised. The church understands that the spiritual dimensions of any release, reconciliation, restoration or renewal comes through encounter with the risen Christ. This means sharing *the story* as well as *the life* of Christ. Both word and deed are shared. A Christian mission initiative will make space for activities to share both deed and word. Some people may even become disciples of Jesus Christ as a result of having encountered Christ through the church's mission work.
5. *The results of Christian mission are reconciliation, restoration and renewal.* This means that more than welfare is anticipated. The capacities or giftedness of the church, together with its enterprise, may bring about such outcomes.

Development

Development of property, or any other asset the church might access, must be motivated by the church's calling to God's mission.

Development is not a worthwhile end in itself. *For example:* Building a larger, more elaborate worship centre when the congregation has dwindled steadily for the past decade and shows no signs of revival or regeneration is highly questionable. What expression of God's mission is in mind?

Neither is development a neutral means - a mere tool - by which to accomplish some other worthy end. *For example:* A church might think that developing its property will increase its capacity to make money from rental that, in turn, might be spent on ministry or community service programs. What expression of God's mission do you see here?

Development

A stage of growth; advancing some project or cause; improving land or buildings; adding equipment or buildings to vary or increase the usefulness of a property; enlarging or increasing properties and/or buildings to gain greater use, or to take advantage of an opportunity or situation...

Development and progress are not necessarily concepts congruent with Jesus' way.⁵ The disposition and activities, as well as the product of 'mission motivated development', will reflect the purpose and character of the church.

On the other hand, the Uniting Church understands that development of church properties is a necessary activity. The Uniting Church has many properties. The properties have diverse designs and are constructed from a wide range of materials. Church buildings are used for a great variety of purposes. Most of the Uniting Church's buildings were designed for particular uses. At some time, the congregation or church body decided to whom they had been called and what they were sent to do. The design of the building usually focused on ways to prompt and engage with this purpose. However, buildings often outlast their original purpose and congregations. When this happens, there is a sense in which the building shapes the people who continue to occupy and use it. 'Mission Motivated Development' is one way to reclaim a building for a particular purpose that makes sense both to the church members and to the local community,

now and into the future. We might think about this activity as regeneration, bringing new life to property in keeping with the purpose we are pursuing.

What does this mean for us?

Mission motivated development means intentionally discerning God's mission and aligning property development so that it is

- congruent and consistent with the church's calling and purposes,
- to bear witness to the Christ,
- in a particular place,
- with particular people,
- at a particular time...

a faithful expression of the church sent to serve God's mission in the world, for all the world.

Reflecting on our understanding of *mission, motivation* and *development* set out above, the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania suggests ten principles to guide discernment about any 'mission motivated development'. These are set out below.⁶

However, before reading about each of the ten principles, a word about how these work.

The ten principles are to be applied and observed *both* in the process of writing a proposal, and in the finished work. The principles do not impose a checklist, which, when 'ticked off', ensure the acceptability of the proposed development. If the ten principles are treated as a check list to be ticked off, dysfunction and resentment will be the result.

Rather, the ten principles are to be taken together and applied during the conversations by way of stimulating ideas, introducing fresh perspectives, prompting timely reminders about ethos and disposition, etc. Used in this way, the ten principles assert a dynamic influence on the conversations about a proposed development. In fact, the ten principles can become a major stimulus to creativity and innovation.

Mission motivated development means intentionally discerning God's mission and aligning property development...

⁶ For a detailed discussion of the ideas of growth, development and progress from a Gospel perspective, see *An Economy of Life, Reimagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World*, 12th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2009.

Ten principles to guide mission motivated development

These principles can be demonstrated in proposals and plans. The principles can be applied to requests for permission to proceed as well as for funding to do so submitted to the Property Board on one hand and the Board of Mission and Resourcing on the other.

1. Vocation

Development will match the calling, or vocation, of the local church congregation and/or church agency.

2. Relationship

The proposal is the result of experiences arising from existing relationships, the hopes identified for these and desirable, new relationships. Relationship means that there is a shared life with another person who 'has a name, a face and an address'. Relationship does not mean a 'target group' defined by several different characteristics or needs.

3. Community building

The proposed development is primarily designed to inspire, enthuse, develop, enrich, enhance and deepen the many facets of a thriving servant community. This means that people are valued for their gifts and abilities, capacities and potential. This means that people are not described by social needs or disabilities – their 'defects'. Rather, they are considered in terms of their 'potential assets.' Everyone has an opportunity to contribute, whatever their circumstance. Compassion is at the core of this understanding about community building.

4. Presence

Development will sustain the church's commitment to being '*an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself*' (*Basis of Union*, para. 3) with the people of the neighbourhood or wider locality. Christ's commission to each Christian is to act according to the way of Jesus. This means being a devoted disciple, discipling all people as each Christian lives her or his life in the world.

5. Story

Development refers to the on-going narrative of particular locations, places or sites, where the people of God live, work and enact the faith of Christ; and gather to generate, share, collect and value stories.

6. Place

The proposal acknowledges that 'place' matters: that the geographical and cultural context of the development is critical to the nature and purpose of the development. 'Place' shapes our lives, and therefore shapes and informs any Christian's or local church's missionary purpose. 'Place' also shapes the expression and understanding of the gospel.

7. Shared decision-making

Mission motivated development accepts that from time to time the particular form or expression of mission may change. Nothing stays the same.

8. Innovation and initiative

Mission motivated development implies creativity and innovation according to the purpose of God's mission in a specific context.

9. Holistic approach

The church will exercise a wholehearted commitment to a holistic approach to all development. Carefulness with respect to the environment, ecology of the area and neighbours will be evident.

10. Contextualisation and fluidity

Mission motivated development means that, in addition to the 'place', the proposed development is responsive to the characteristics of a particular context where the local church or church agency's property is located. Such characteristics might include social demographics, economics, ecology, political nuances, sub-cultural practices and mores, etc.

Everyone has an opportunity to contribute, whatever their circumstance.

...the geographical and cultural context... is critical to the nature and purpose of the development.

6 For a more details discussion of each of the ten principles, see *Towards an Understanding of Mission Motivated Development* - a resource paper available on the UCA Synod of VicTas website. To locate this document, go to <http://www.victas/uca.org.au> and select 'Property and Insurance Services', then select 'property and funding resources', then select 'guidelines and resource materials'.

Ensuring our proposal is for ‘mission motivated development’

Discerning the details of being sent into the neighbourhood and community to be the light and life of Christ is a matter of Christian spiritual discipline. Discernment as a spiritual discipline means commitment to listening, prayer, self-examination, truth telling. As previously stated, applying the ten principles of mission motivated development is not a simple matter of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ measure, or a checklist to use in ‘tick-off’ manner. Eventually, discernment leads to the people of the congregation or local church aligning vision with passion and desire with vocation. Now that we have discerned Christ’s call to God’s mission with our neighbours, and having imagined what that might look like, we can work out what to do to realise the vision.

Reflect on the meaning of ‘mission motivated development’ set out above. Consider the ten principles with respect to your property development proposal.

Ask yourself:

■ **Reflect:**

Which of the ten principles can we list as having been addressed in our proposal?

■ **Probe:**

How have we engaged with these principles?

Are there some principles that our proposal fails to meet?

■ **Edit:**

What changes to our proposal might ensure that it becomes more aligned with ‘mission motivated development’?

■ **Partner:**

With whom can we discuss this proposal to probe further the character of its mission motivation before it is submitted to the appropriate Synod body?

Further explanation and resourcing

For a more detailed discussion about 'mission motivated development', see the following resources papers, which are installed on the Synod's website – www.victas.uca.org.au and accessible via the Property section of the site, located in 'Forms':

- *Towards an understanding of 'mission motivated (property) development'*,
and an accompanying resource titled: *Mission Motivated Development – Practical tools for determining mission motivation*. This resource provides typical questions that may be used when probing a property development proposal to determine the relative strength of its motivation in respect of mission.
- *Understanding Commonwealth within the UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania* - for an explanation of stewardship with respect to a common wealth.
- *Discerning Mission and the Use of Property* - for the Board of Mission and Resourcing policies with respect to property sales proceeds and stewardship of the church's common wealth.

**Discernment
... means
commitment to
listening, prayer,
self-examination,
truth telling.**

**... aligning vision
with passion
and desire with
vocation.**



SECTION TWO

Case study

Wotchadoin UCA

Setting the Scene

Wotchadoin UCA, a small congregation in a country town about two hours from Melbourne, has an idea to breathe life into its people and make new connections with the local people.

The Wotchadoin UCA timber church where they worship every second Sunday is heritage listed and located on a block of land in the centre of the town. They have a large block of land next door that was purchased some time ago with a plan to build a hall but this has never been realised.

The local area is undergoing resurgence as a place for the arts and people who want to live away from the hustle and bustle of the city. There is also a significant group of unemployed young people who struggle to connect with the community.

The town's close proximity to Melbourne means that people can move from the city and still keep in touch with their friends and families in Melbourne. A V line train service operates three return trips a day to the city and the station is about 500 metres from the church.

The congregation has no capital base to draw on and has approximately \$15,000 in the bank. Its current income is \$40,000. The manse, used by the minister, is in good condition. To date, the congregation has used its reserves to pay its 0.8 minister and has now applied for a grant.

A conversation and an idea

Over a cuppa at morning tea one Sunday, the following conversation takes place...



tea & coffee



Do you think we should sell all the shops?

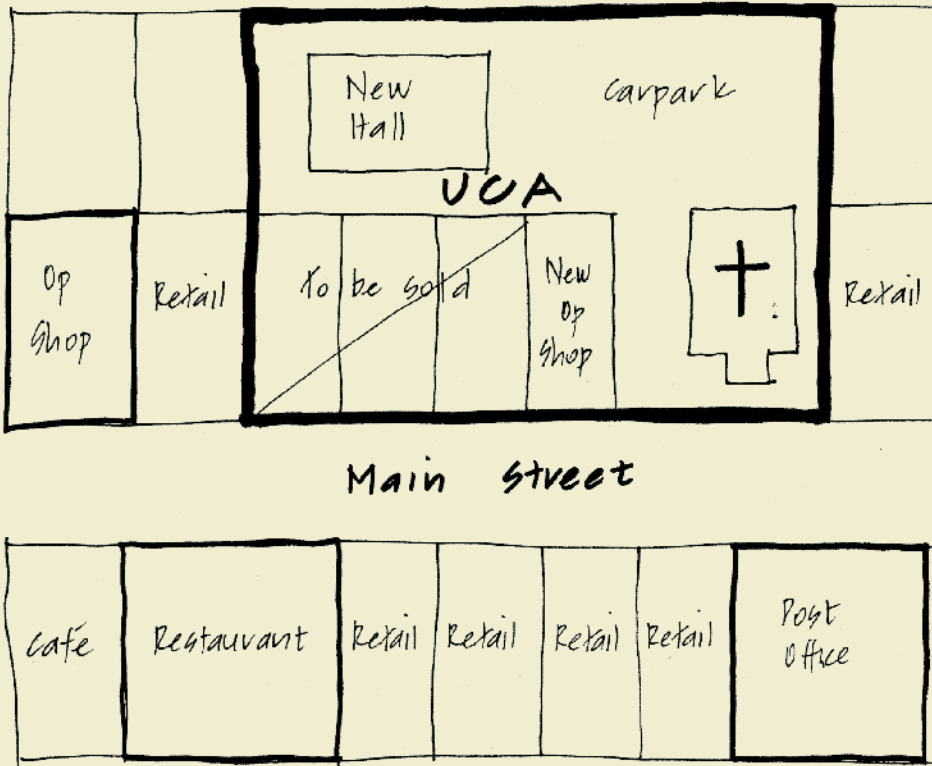
And if we hire it out the rent could pay the minster's stipend.

No, I think we should look at setting up an op shop and so if we build four we could sell three.

Will that raise enough capital to pay for the hall?

Yes I think so.

Right. Let's take this further... I'll ring Debbie and have a chat about it 'cause she's the chair of the church council.



Getting Started – introducing ‘Form One Getting Started’

The chair of Watchadoin Church Council remembers that they received some information about mission motivated development. She suggests that, before they do anything else, a group from the congregation should spend some time looking at the ten principles of mission motivated development: vocation, relationship, community building, presence, story, place, shared decision making, innovation and initiative, holistic approach and contextualisation and fluidity.

She also suggests they have a look at ‘Form One Getting Started’. What follows here are some key responses to questions in ‘Form One Getting Started’ as the group was able to complete it.

Excerpt from 'Form One – Getting Started'

2	CONTEXT: Look around your local neighbourhood and community. What are some signs of God's presence and work that you see?
	The resurgence of the arts community in the town has meant that people are being encouraged to be more creative; and to be confident that they have something to offer, like baking, doing patchwork or growing vegetables.
3	VISION: What could make a difference to people's lives, their environment and relationships in this neighbourhood or community?
	Not sure.
4	YOUR IDEA: What could you do to respond to some of these possibilities and make a difference?
	Construct four retail shops and a hall near the church. Sell three of the shops and set up an op shop in the fourth. Rent out the hall to community groups to meet needs and provide income to pay the minister's stipend.
5	REFLECTION: What do you see of the Christian message and practice in your idea?
	Good stewardship of resources. Reaching out to community.

Mission motivated development principles applied

A short time later, a group meets to talk about the principles of mission motivated development.

They start by considering which of the ten principles they have engaged with when coming up with their proposed property development.



Then they consider to what extent their proposal is in agreement with the ten principles.



Finally, they wonder if there are there some principles that their proposal fails to meet.



That leads the group to consider what changes they could make to their proposal to ensure that it becomes more aligned with 'mission motivated development'.

Jane's lounge room



A revised 'Form One – Getting Started'

Here is Form 1 as the group was able to revise it.

3

VISION:

What could make a difference to people's lives, their environment and relationships in this neighbourhood or community?

We imagine a place where we connect with the young people in our town who are unemployed and/or homeless. We see ourselves building on relationships we have already initiated. We will spend some time in company with young people, offering friendship and creating a place together where they can hang out or have the chance to do some work experience. We see a skilled, faithful team of life coaches – some from both the church and community. We imagine a friendly café with comfy chairs and low cost good tea and coffee, with good quality food that attracts people from the arts community and people who are homeless. We imagine a meeting place to share skills, buy and sell crafts, share stories, exhibit art, invite guest artists and bring friends. We enthusiastically anticipate changes in ourselves as these relationships grow.

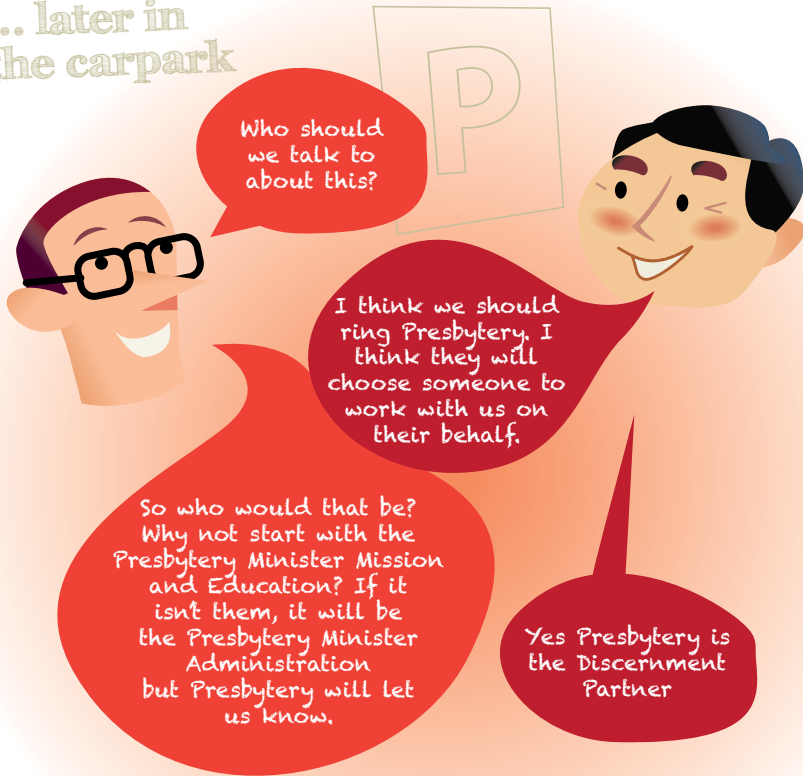
4

YOUR IDEA:

What could you do to respond to some of these possibilities and make a difference?

Construct four retail shops and a hall near the church.
Sell two shops, set up a café and art gallery as a social enterprise in one shop and an op shop in another.
Rent out the hall to community groups to meet needs and provide income to pay the minister's stipend.

... later in
the carpark



Who should we talk to about this?

I think we should ring Presbytery. I think they will choose someone to work with us on their behalf.

So who would that be? Why not start with the Presbytery Minister Mission and Education? If it isn't them, it will be the Presbytery Minister Administration but Presbytery will let us know.

Yes Presbytery is the Discernment Partner

The congregation went to Presbytery with their revised version of Form 1 and their responses to the mission motivated development principles. They talked about next steps. Presbytery thought the group had made a great start and were really interested in what the congregation was talking about. The Presbytery Minister Administration made a time to come out and chat to them, and suggested that, before the meeting, they think some more about how the hall fitted in with their vision.



SECTION THREE

Practice case study

St Allkumas UCA

Setting the scene


St Allkumas UCA is a suburban congregation. Recently, the members of this local church have been reflecting on their past and wondering about the future of their church. They are concerned to be good stewards of the resources and assets of the church, as well as to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in their response to needs observed in their suburban community.

A church meeting and an idea

At a congregational meeting, the congregation affirmed its desire to establish a program to assist Sudanese refugees settling in the area. It was suggested that one way was to set up a homework club, providing tutorial assistance. Several St Allkumas members identified a homework club as a positive and helpful setting in which to get to know Sudanese families, especially parents and children, after school hours. Also, it was pointed out that a homework club could make good use of St Allkumas legendary hospitality and might even lead to mutual friendships between church members and the Sudanese families. Some St Allkumas members expressed the hope that such an initiative by their church might inspire other organisations to consider ways in which they might assist refugees to settle in. Some thought that individuals and even other organisations might want to partner with St Allkumas' church in the homework club initiative.

Information about property

St Allkumas property includes a building that could be used for the homework club. However, this building is currently leased out to a community organisation. St Allkumas has lost a previous link with this organisation whose staff have become increasingly professionalised. Currently this is a 'landlord/tenant' relationship.

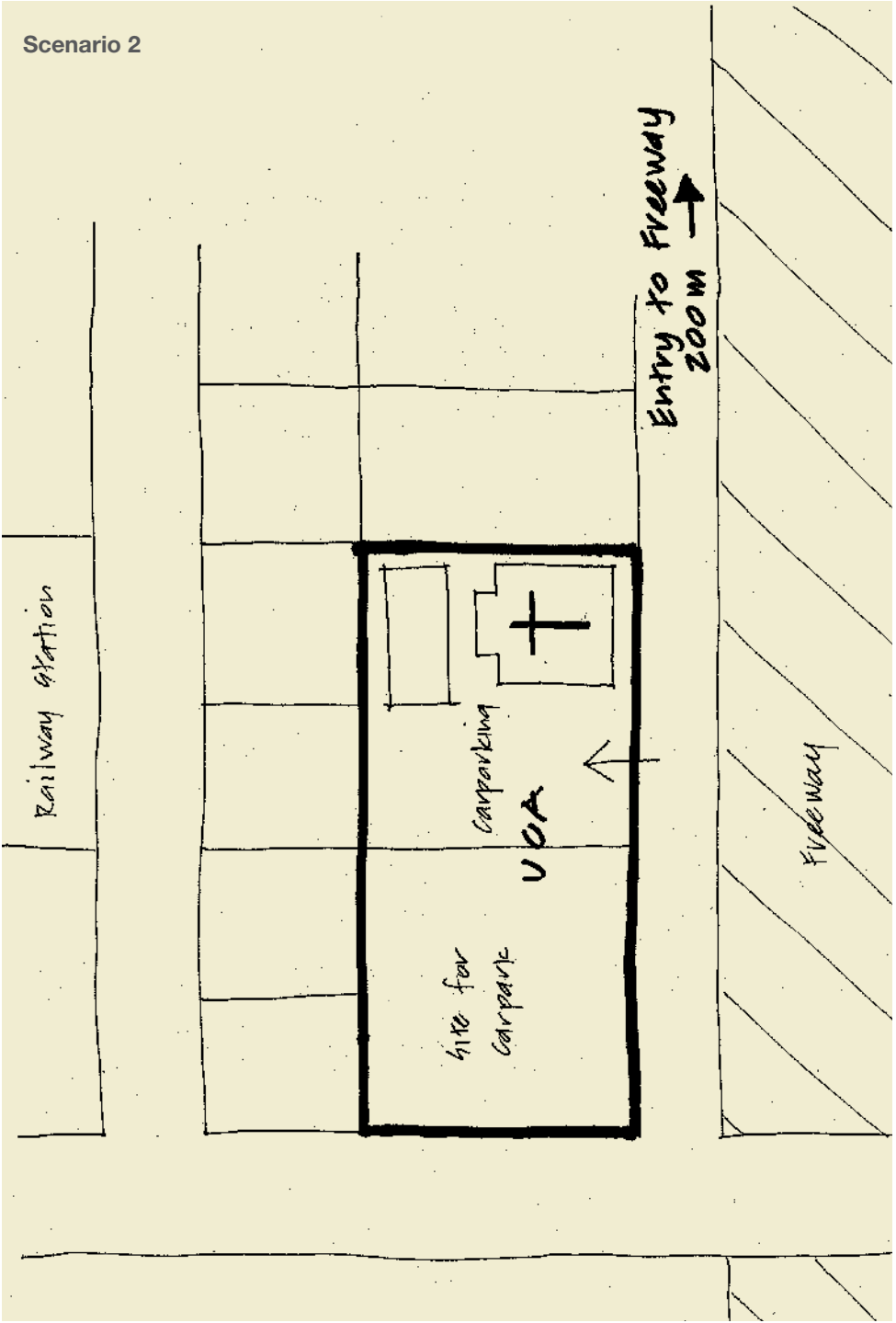


The congregation uses the rental income to support the stipend and associated costs of their Minister of the Word. If the rental income could not be allocated in this way, the congregation would need to find funds elsewhere in order to sustain a fulltime Ministry placement.

St Allkumas also 'owns' (has beneficial use of) a large block of undeveloped land adjacent to the worship building. This land is used for casual car parking and is administered by the church office. Income is minimal. After maintenance expenses, car parking income is allocated to two outreach programs and an overseas mission organisation. A developer has approached St Allkumas with an idea about building a multi-storey commercial car park on the land. The developer has offered a joint venture arrangement, which will mean that St Allkumas receives secure rental income for use of the land. So, if the development went ahead, the congregation would be able to secure a ministry placement for several years. The developer would take full responsibility for the development and building project. The development would be strata titled and part owned by the church.

There is high demand for car parking in the immediate vicinity of St Allkumas as suburban commuter numbers expand exponentially, and as land free of buildings rapidly disappears under a new shopping precinct and a high-rise residential development. The State Government plans to upgrade the suburb's public transport system.

Scenario 2



Getting started:
Introduce 'Form One – Getting Started'

2	CONTEXT: Look around your local neighbourhood and community. What are some signs of God's presence and work that you see?
3	VISION: What could make a difference to people's lives, their environment and relationships in this neighbourhood or community?
4	YOUR IDEA: What could you do to respond to some of these possibilities and make a difference?
5	REFLECTION: What do you see of the Christian message and practice in your idea?

Apply mission motivated development principles

- Which of the ten principles does this proposed property development engage with?
- To what extent is this proposal in agreement with the ten principles?

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Revise 'Form One – Getting Started'

Revise this Form One following conversations about the ten principles.

2	CONTEXT: Look around your local neighbourhood and community. What are some signs of God's presence and work that you see?
3	VISION: What could make a difference to people's lives, their environment and relationships in this neighbourhood or community?
4	YOUR IDEA: What could you do to respond to some of these possibilities and make a difference?
5	REFLECTION: What do you see of the Christian message and practice in your idea?

APPENDIX

Helpful hints

Throughout **Section two** and **Section three** of this book, practical activities have been linked to the use of 'Form One – Getting Started'. However, experience suggests a few hints might guide practical activities.

Five helpful hints to next steps

1. Approach your presbytery from the very beginning
2. Practise discernment
3. Take time
4. Give priority to relationships
5. Identify opportunities, rather than needs

1. Approach your presbytery from the very beginning

As a Council of the Church, the presbytery has a significant role to play in the development of Church property.¹ The presbytery is the 'Discernment Partner' to the congregation. (NOTE: For UnitingCare agencies, UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania is the discernment partner; for Uniting AgedCare and schools, Synod is the Discernment Partner).

The **Discernment Partner** may appoint a person or small group to act as a **Discernment Guide** to the congregation, Church Council agency board or governing body in any property development matter. People allocated the role of 'discernment guide' are of most benefit to the congregation or agency, and presbytery or Synod when they are involved with the conversations right from the start.

2. Practise Christian communal discernment

Discernment means to 'uncover'. *"If Christian mission is about 'seeing what God is doing and joining in'... then discernment, and the cultivating of an environment which enables discernment, are the leadership capacities most needed at this time"*.

(Graham Cray, *The Discerning Leader*, Grove Books, 2010.)

¹ See 'Constitution And Regulations', Section 3.4.4 – Responsibilities of the Presbytery, in particular 3.4.4(s).

Discernment may be described as a means to:

- recognize and acknowledge what God is doing, and what God desires;
- imagine a situation from God's perspective;
- 'uncover', rather than 'make', a decision;
- listen to the Holy Spirit, who prays within, among and with us.

a. The role of the 'discernment guide' is to facilitate discernment.

They do not act as 'mission consultants', nor do they 'approve' the final proposal or ideas it might contain. The work of the 'discernment guide' is critical to informing the 'discernment partner' with respect to the nature, purpose and quality of the journey undertaken by the body proposing property development. The test is whether or not the discernment engaged has been a journey worthy of the practice of Christian communal discernment.²

b. Discernment and capacity.

'Clarifying information' and 'reasoning it through' includes becoming clear about the skills, knowledge, experience, time and availability of leadership to deliver a mission motivated development. These are 'assets' that contribute to delivering the proposed development in an efficient and effective manner. Ideas will have emerged from 'Form One – Getting Started' to raise these considerations. What might the group or Church Council 'uncover' as it seeks to assemble these 'assets' from within the local church or beyond?

c. Discernment and timing.

'Clarifying information' and 'reasoning the matter through' also means considering a timeline for the development. It takes time to plan, organise and construct property development. The Synod Property Service Unit staff can advise you about timelines. Important elements with respect to timing are to ask about -

- i. *Timeliness*: What has persuaded us that this is the right time for this development?

2 Synod has provided every presbytery with a kit of resources to equip discernment guides. See the resources available on www.victas.uca.org.au and follow the pathway on Property Board / Property Trust page.

See also "A Discernment Partner is 'the relevant associated oversight councils and their delegates'. In the case of a congregation or faith community this would include the presbytery and / or relevant nominees and sub-committees. A presbytery would partner with BOMAR." (*Discerning Mission and Use of Property, Property Sale Proceeds Policy*, 'Definitions', p 15, UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, 2011.)

- ii. *Salience*: What has convinced us that this development is necessary at this time?
- iii. *Readiness*: What evidence have we ‘uncovered’ that has persuaded us we are ready to undertake this development, now?

d. Discernment and business plans.

Once you have completed ‘Form One – Getting Started’, you will move on to ‘Form Two – Discerning and Deciding’. At this stage it is time to begin considering the two finance questions:

- i. *What will it cost?*
- ii. *And where will the funds come from?*

Inquire broadly about funding sources. Think beyond the usual UCA Church funds. Consider partnerships that might bring funds to the project. Identify philanthropic sources, government sources and community initiatives.

Including information about expenditure and income, together with all of the other sorts of information involved in proposing a mission motivated development, is a significant contribution to ‘clarifying information’ and ‘reasoning the matter through’. These are two movements of a Christian Communal discernment journey.

After a period of ‘prayerful resting’ with the information and ideas, there will be time for ‘letting go’ of some ideas and embracing others. Realities about costs might be one ground on which some ‘letting go’ has to happen, or some further exploration is required to enable the original proposal. Other grounds for ‘letting go’ could be the practicalities of the design, the need to ‘stage’ the actual building of the development, or the rethinking of partnerships.

3. Take time

Moving from imagination to a detailed proposal takes time. In fact, building a property takes time. Be prepared for a long rather than short journey.

When working with 'Form One – Getting Started', spend time on the first question before moving to the next questions. For example:

- *Make copies of the four main questions listed on 'Form One – Getting Started' (see P34).*
- *Distribute these to small groups of 3 to 5 people.*
Allow time for these small groups to consider their responses to the questions, one at a time.
- *Collect and collate the response to each of the questions.*
- *Feed these back to the small groups for further reflection and editing.*
- *Collect and collate again the second round of offerings.*
- *'Chunk down' these editions into a coherent, paragraph or two as a response to each of the four questions. Feed this edited work back to the congregation for consideration and comment.*
- *Continue this process until the congregation or agency board has reached a common understanding and can agree to the response as being representative of the insight and wisdom of the whole body.*
- *Now you are ready to complete 'Form One – Getting Started' for submission to the Presbytery. Consider the Presbytery's feedback and modify your 'Form One – Getting Started' if necessary.*
- *Next step – go to 'Form Two - Discerning and Deciding'. This form becomes a 'first-draft' proposal.*

4. Give priority to relationships

In particular give priority to people with whom the local church has already established relationship or is already working to establish relationship. That is: buildings do not attract people, but relationships between actual people with real addresses and known personalities do. Never underestimate the impact of making friends. Friendships become stronger when together we can practise commitment, challenge resistance, accept rejection, and inspire communities.

5. Identify opportunities, rather than needs

Identifying opportunities that connect with your vision is much more likely to result in unexpected partnerships. You might think that a need creates an opportunity. Sometimes this is so. But meeting needs always leads to 'glass half empty' thinking and in the end to creating a service through programs. Opportunities position us to expect mutual participation, where everyone involved has something to bring to the table – 'glass half full' thinking if you like. Keep your list of opportunities up to date. You might not engage all of them, but a list will offer opportunity to prayerfully select some that are worthy of further exploration.



Further explanation and resourcing

For a more detailed discussion about ‘mission motivated development’, see the following resources paper, which are installed on the Synod’s website – www.victas.uca.org.au and accessible via the Property section of the site, located in ‘Forms’:

- *Towards and understanding of ‘mission motivated (property) development’*, and an accompanying resource titled: *Mission Motivated Development – Practical tools for determining mission motivation*. This resource provides typical questions that may be used when probing a property development proposal to determine the relative strength of its motivation in respect of mission.
- *Understanding Commonwealth within the UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania* – for an explanation of stewardship with respect to a common wealth.
- *Discerning Mission and the Use of Property* – for the Board of Mission and Resourcing policies with respect to property sales proceeds and stewardship of the church’s common wealth.



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