



Ministry update for Synod 2021

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY – YOUTH MINISTRY

What does it mean to prioritise young people?

In naming mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young people as a Synod Strategic Priority for 2016-2022, we commenced a conversation that raised the question – *how can every leader, every congregation, every presbytery and all Synod operations seek to support ministry with young people?*

We still have much work to do. It is my hope that this role has gone a small way in progressing that conversation. What we have learn thus far is contained in this report and at www.ucayouth.org.au, but here are a few guiding principles for us as we continue this important work:

- Young people are not simply a resource to staff church structures or prevent church decline
- Young people are not the future of the church – they are equal members of the kingdom of God
- Young people are diverse and complex, not a characatured monolith
- We have a biblical mandate to pass on the faith to younger generations

Continued evolution of youth ministry theology & practice

Guided by the latest in global scholarship, we can continued to learn from the evolution of theological approaches to youth ministry. This represents a shift away from a focus on program to a focus on relationship, transformation and the pursuit of joy. We can be assisted by the work of the International Association of the Study of Youth Ministry and the Yale Centre's Theology of Joy and the Good Life.

You can read more via our website <https://victas.uca.org.au/seeking-sharing-joy/>

Creating Creative Content during Covid

During the lockdown experience of 2020, the role experimented with content creation to support local communities grappling with remote church community. These included the [Work Experience Podcast](#), '[Calm Down](#),' a weekly entertainment show streamed live for 10 weeks, hosting 2 book clubs and running numerous Zoom-based training events and series.

We also assisted in producing updates regarding Covid restrictions and developing Digital Child Safe Guidelines with the Culture of Safety Unit.

Advocating for young people

Drawing upon our relationships with practitioners and young people, we also saw the opportunity to advocate to the wider church on behalf of young people. The issues we sought to raise included:

- Increased awareness of adolescent mental health & [how communities can respond](#)





- Exploring inter-generational divisions in migrant communities
- Elevating voices of young leaders (through Amplify 2019 and Work Experience Podcast)
- Challenging the infantilisation of young adults

Personal comments

When I commenced this role in 2018, I was deeply aware of the privilege it is to serve the church in such a position. I spent 2.5 years connecting with leaders and communities across our Synod, and was inspired by the faith and actions of so many young people.

I did not anticipate stepping away from this role quite this early, however I believe the same God who called me to this role now calls me to a different place. I know this same God also stirs within each of us a passion for an authentic ministry to young people, grounded in the gospel and characterised by joy.

Bradon French

Bradon French completed his ministry term in January 2021.

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