



## MISSION CONVERSATIONS *and the* *Synod's Strategic Framework*

# Mission Conversations

### *Mission conversation frameworks*

A framework can be understood as a supporting 'structure' that underpins or informs a process of decision or planning. In this sense, frameworks are created to keep a process on track and to make the process as effective as possible.

A range of frameworks is available to offer helpful 'structures' for your mission conversations. Every framework offers strengths and weaknesses, with no single framework likely to fulfil all your conversation needs. A skilled facilitator, together with your Presbytery and Synod's equipping Leadership for Mission (eLM) unit, is able to:

- a. explain a range of frameworks for consideration;
- b. help select the most helpful frameworks for your context; and
- c. work with you in building a conversation process informed by your chosen framework(s).

Of course, helpful local and regional frameworks may inform the context of your gathered community. These may include your own existing guiding plans (whether or not they need updating) and your Presbytery's articulated strategic or regional plans.

A collection of some additional frameworks are listed in 'A resource toolbox for MISSION CONVERSATIONS'. Mission conversations are unavoidably influenced by frameworks (whether participants are aware of this or not). If frameworks are not knowingly chosen, then it is likely that a framework(s) will be inadvertently adopted. It is important to be aware of the framework that has been adopted to ensure you are happy with its guiding principles.

### *The Synod's Strategic Framework – a particular framework for mission conversation*

The Mission Conversations resource understands that the Synod's Strategic Framework is an important 'dialogue partner' to weave into our gathered community conversations. It is particularly important because the Framework articulates the *mind of the Synod*. It encapsulates the outcomes that came from an intentional effort on the part of the whole Synod, with help from a full diversity of gathered communities, to give focus and direction to the Church's contemporary participation in God's mission.

The Synod's Strategic Framework is adopted as 'a primary aid for spiritual discernment and focus for the Synod'<sup>1</sup>. It is a Framework that helps establish an environment for focusing upon God's mission and discerning mission

participation. The Framework elements are described in a series of booklets that include:

- **Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles: Information and exercises to help focus on God's Mission** (March 2017)
- **Supporting information on the Statements of Intent** (July 2017)
- **Understanding the Strategic Priorities (2016-2022)** (November 2017)
- **Engaging the Areas of Focus: Informing a Whole of Church conversation** (November 2017)

The first of these booklets reminds us that: 'The Vision and Mission Principles seek to invite discussion, provoke questions and provide focus for discerning the renewing work of the Spirit'<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore clear that the Synod's Framework invites mission conversations. The exercises in the above series of booklets encourage gathered communities across the Synod to explore questions of purpose, identity and call in response to the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in our day.



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## *The Synod's Framework and vital threads for conversation*

The *Mission Conversations* resource, '**Vital threads for MISSION CONVERSATIONS**', proposes that mission conversation involves a weaving of five vital threads<sup>3</sup>. It suggests that healthy conversations unfold when, with the Spirit's help, the five vital threads are woven within a helpful framework(s). Such frameworks: (i) allow for adequate attention to be given to the vital threads, and (ii) provoke focused discussion, questioning and spiritual discernment within the gathered community.

As noted above, the Synod's Strategic Framework is considered an important 'dialogue partner' for such 'weaving' conversations. This particular Framework offers the voice of the Synod – the voice of the wider Church – to any gathered community's mission conversation. It is evident that various parts of the Strategic Framework speak in particular ways to the identified vital threads. While the Framework has the potential to inform conversations at any stage, particular connections between the Framework and the vital threads include:

### **a. Listen**

– dialogue with the ***Vision and Mission Principles*** to explore “Who are we?” and “Why are we?” as gathered communities of the Church;

### **b. Look**

– dialogue with the ***Areas of Focus*** to explore “Where are we?” and “When are we?” as we seek to be God's people in our contemporary time and place;

### **c. Discern**

– dialogue with the ***Vision and Mission Principles*** and ***Strategic Priorities*** to listen for where and how we might ***AFFIRM*** and ***DISCOVER*** signs of mission life in our gathered community; and

### **d. Name**

– dialogue with the ***Statements of Intent*** to enrich the details as to how we will travel forward with identified mission commitments.

## MISSION CONVERSATIONS and the Synod's Strategic Framework

<sup>1</sup> Synod 2016 resolution 16.6.20 C

<sup>2</sup> Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, *Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles: information and exercises to help focus on God's mission* (March 2017)

<sup>3</sup> For details describing the vital threads for mission conversation refer to the resource '**Vital threads for MISSION CONVERSATIONS**'

