

General Proposal 5

Project Plenty

That the Synod

1. Accept the Project Plenty report *Shared life. Flourishing communities* and thank the Synod Standing Committee and Project Plenty team for their work
2. Adopt the 2025 ambition, four mission priorities and the commitments contained within the report as a set of mission priorities and directions that will guide its work for the period 2020-2025
3. Invite congregations, presbyteries, agencies, schools and other bodies of the church to consider committing to the ambition, mission priorities and commitments in their own context
4. Invite congregations, presbyteries, agencies, schools and other bodies of the church to partner with it in developing and agreeing the specific commitments contained in the report and any resulting budget and implementation arrangements by 30 April 2021 (with the process to be determined pending COVID-19 limitations)

The scope of a proposal

Project Plenty is the name given to a whole-of-Synod mission planning process we have shared since the 34th Synod in May 2019, and which reaches a critical point at the 35th Synod with the consideration of the report *Shared life. Flourishing communities* which forms part of this submission.

The report outlines the process of discernment taken in that time, offering as its outcome a set of mission priorities and directions for the next few years in our shared life. The report is not a detailed operational plan, nor a set of instructions to be followed in every part of our church. It is the shared voice of our church, gathered, sifted and discerned through a careful process of listening and discovery, in response to the simple question “what is the Spirit calling us to offer our world?”

The proposal is simple in nature: to accept the report, to adopt it as naming priorities in the life of the Synod, to invite other councils and bodies of the church in Queensland to similarly consider it, and to commit ourselves to further work in pursuit of the mission priorities and directions the report names.

Adopting this proposal does not commit us to a full and final outcome, or to a detailed step-by-step blueprint, but acknowledges the directions and priorities we share, and commits to working toward them intentionally and collaboratively, open to further discernment along the way.



Rationale

We live in a world in which change is relentless and accelerating. This was evident before Covid-19 arrived and is even more clearly the case now. The extraordinary rate and reach of change that confronts us all, and that defines the context in which the church lives and works and participates in God's mission is before us every day.

Faced with a context such as this, we owe it to ourselves, to our church, to God, to continually keep a discerning eye turned toward our missional life in the world. We can continually ask one another "what is God saying to us as church, and in turn to our society at a time such as this?". We ought continually ask "what does the Kingdom of God look like here and now?" and "how do we proclaim God's kingdom in fresh words and deeds in this context?"

We are collectively a large, complex organism. We are a church that gathers in more than 200 places across the state with something like 15,000 people every week to worship, to disciple, to pray, to be community. We are a church that employs more than 20,000 Queenslanders to work with us in our shared commitment to Jesus' purpose that all might have life in all its fullness. We educate thousands of young people. We care for the sick. We commit to our Queensland community. We visit the imprisoned. We stand against injustice wherever it is found and our courage and compassion allows. We are richly blessed with extraordinary people, incredible skills, astonishing degrees of passion and commitment, a remarkable inheritance of property and financial assets, and a collection of relationships that reaches into every corner of Queensland's society.

To be this church, to do justice to our collective commitment to worship, witness and service, we have to pay attention to our context. We have to continually pray, and wonder, and notice both what is going on around us, and what God is calling us to do and be in any given moment.

We know and rightly say that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. We cannot however, ignore the constantly changing context that demands our attention and informs our practice.

This call to be always open to God's calling and correcting is deeply embedded in our *Basis of Union*. This call to fresh words and deeds to bear witness to timeless Kingdom truth is clear within the *Basis*. This call to follow Christ, to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God is loud and clear in our foundational documents, and in our ongoing commitments to our nation.

All of this is the background to Project Plenty.

Project Plenty is our attempt to contribute to this ongoing work of discernment. A period in which we pause, however briefly, to take stock of what's going on both within and beyond our church; a period in which we collectively and intentionally pray and wonder and seek the Spirit's guidance for our collective next steps.



Over the 18-month period we have shared for Project Plenty, we have not attempted to produce a detailed operational plan that reaches into every corner of our church. We have not attempted to develop a complete set of strategic objectives for the assent of every council of the church, and each of our component committees, boards or organisations.

What we have done is listened carefully to one another, and through that listening, believe we have heard God's Spirit. We have found ourselves reminded of our essential purpose in God's mission. We have been reminded of our identity, of what makes us who we are and how we are to organise ourselves. We have recalled our commitment to realising the kingdom of God come near.

We have found (or been reminded of) some themes, or signposts – what we have called our “mission priorities and directions” that will help guide us along the way for the next few years. If we pay attention to these, we can be re-energised in our commitment, reconnected in our relationship, newly encouraged in our service, better equipped in our understanding. We can both live out our own discipleship, as well as inviting others more deeply into that same discipleship adventure.

Shared life. Flourishing communities presents a comprehensive overview of the journey we've shared during 2019 and 2020, and the mission priorities and directions we've together discerned. The document represents, to the best of the ability of the Synod Standing Committee and the Project Plenty team, the voice and discernment of the church. It is offered to the 35th Synod, the meeting of the council for consideration, adoption and guidance. It may, if we allow it, help point the way for the years to come.

Proposers

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