



Section 13

Reports to 2013 Synod

Ministry and Mission Report

DEPARTMENT OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

There are some who would argue that the Church exists primarily for the sake of those who do not yet belong. This is a debate that we cannot enter into here. However, suffice it to say that Jesus Himself said that He came to seek and save the lost¹. Additionally Jesus left instructions that we were to 'make disciples'². Also Jesus said that He would build the Church³.

It is against this backdrop of imperatives that the Department for Ministry and Mission has pleasure in presenting its annual report to Synod.

There have been significant changes within the department since our last Synod. Rev Graham Harms who ably led the department for twelve years retired to the Barossa Valley in South Australia. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to him and gratitude to God for the way in which he used his gifts in the service of both God and the congregations of the LCAQD. His depth of theological insight was a gift to our District and we are the recipients of the many initiatives that he put into place.

District Church Council called Rev John O'Keefe, a parish pastor who had been in Queensland for nine years to replace Rev Harms. He took up his role on 22nd October 2012 and was installed into the position 2nd December 2012. A few months prior to Rev Harms' retirement District Church Council appointed the Director of Ministry and Mission as a consultant to DCC. This initiative has enabled the Director to better understand the matters that are affecting the District and has better equipped him to serve our Church and support the Bishop. Another significant change to the role was the change in reporting line. The Director now reports to and takes advice from the Bishop (alongside his reporting to the Council for Ministry and Mission CMM). This change has resulted in CMM re-examining their role and responsibilities.

MISSION AND MINISTRY PRIORITIES

If the people of God were going to be disciplined through a Church programme it would have already occurred.

We are a blessed people because we have the God given gift of faith which we acknowledge every time we say the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed. Luther's explanation reminds us that our very ability to believe in Jesus is a gift of God Himself.

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the

¹ Luke 19:10.

² Matthew 28:19, 20.

³ Matthew 16:18.

one true faith: in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will at the Last Day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.”

God is passionate about humanity – each one of us and that as we respond to Him we are drawn deeper into the Trinity and we grow in our relationship with Him. As we grow in our response to God’s love, we become more passionate about this faith we have been given and a natural outflow of this is that we wish to see others sharing in the hope that we hold.

Our Church is commanded in Scripture to grow and respond to the Great Commission. We each need to see ourselves as a disciple of Christ. In response to God’s grace, mercy, forgiveness and love some have found the following pattern helpful in their spiritual walk. This is easily remembered as an acrostic.

D.I.S.C.I.P.L.E.

Daily Bible reading (Hebrews 4:12)

Intentional daily prayer (Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1);

Sunday worship each week (Exodus 20:8)

Christian Community – participation in a Small Group (Acts 2:46; Hebrews 10:25)

Involved with those inside and outside the Church in service (1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:10; James 2:26)

Purposeful giving – Biblically based finances (Malachi 3:10; Mathew 23:23; Acts 20:35)

Lead others to Christ (1 Peter 3:15)

Enjoying this gift of life (Phil 4:4)

As those who have received the gift of faith it is our joy to share this with others.

Our new director has made sharing this across our District (and beyond) as a priority for the department.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our District in its Strategic plan has noted the following areas as Strategic priorities.

1. Youth and Young Adults – Develop and implement initiatives to retain and grow youth and young adults (18-30 year olds).
2. Communication – Improve communication across the District.
3. Mission – Invest and support mission initiatives particularly in African and Asian Ministry.
4. Leadership – Invest in leadership, training, coaching, mentoring and development of pastors and key office holders.

Each of these focus areas have a Mission and Ministry imperative and impact on the department either totally or partially in cooperation with others. The department works in cooperation with other LCAQD departments in delivering the strategic outcomes.

A day long orientation programme was held in June for new and 'newish' pastors to the Queensland District. This is to become an annual feature and will again present an overview of the many and varied ways that our Church impacts on the lives of Queenslanders. The pastors heard from:

Bishop Noel Noack

Liz Crawford – Director LCA, Professional Standards Unit

Aaron Glover – Director, Lutheran Youth of Queensland

Jacqui Kelly – Chief Executive Officer, Lutheran Community Care

Sue Kloeden – Executive Director, Lutheran Education Queensland

Lyndal Mayer – Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Lutheran Early Childhood Services

John O'Keefe – Director, Ministry and Mission

Michael Turner – District Executive Officer, Queensland

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REPORT

'We need to Change' are words we have been hearing at Synods and other gatherings for many years. However change will not come about unless it is supported widely and introduced gently.

In our North Queensland ministry change is on its way and it's not what we thought it might look like. How the Spirit has worked in ways that didn't even occur to us is amazing.

The 'season' of the Far North Queensland Lutheran Mission Committee concluded in 2011 with synod voting to disband this committee. They moved on.

By the end of 2010 a new era had begun and in January 2011 Pastoral Carer David Spanagel was invited to serve this community along with Wujal Wujal and Coen. With the help of Volunteers in Mission being high on the agenda they have managed to continue this ministry in a modified way.

The distances present challenges as covering this area, almost the size of Victoria, in an effective manner needs to be creative.

While it has taken a while to settle into a new way of ministry, the effect this strategy has had on Hope Vale in particular has been significant.

Our Elders/Leaders have stepped up, taking services on a regular monthly basis. With the age of elders adding up to many years of ministry in our church it has been necessary to join the wave of change to find the next generation to step up and take more responsibility. Sharing the load and level of responsibility has been the focus. The Spirit has led a number of people to consider and accept this additional challenge. They are on the cusp of taking the next step to equipping these people using the experience of local people as a part of the education process.

Christmas at Hope Vale 2012



The Financial challenge is always a core issue. With major financial restructuring in the communities, this has impacted on the church work in a very significant way. With less disposable income a proportionate decrease in church income has also occurred. It is believed that Hope Vale can return to a financially independent situation and to this end they are in the process of considering every possibility.

In Coen and Wujal Wujal where membership is in the vicinity of 50 in each place, viability will not be achieved. This is where they greatly appreciate any financial support received as they attempt to balance the ministry costs in these places.

Coen being five hours drive to the north and Wujal Wujal two hours to the south from the ministry centre at Hope Vale means significant savings are being experienced rather than serving these centres from Cairns.

Confirmation Class at Hope Vale 2013



Wujal Wujal has perhaps made the biggest adjustment with services being held generally on a monthly basis and upon request. Exceptions will always be made for both baptisms and funerals. The people here hold the desire to have a fulltime resident person. To achieve this we continue to rely on Volunteers in Mission and that is our appeal for members of the Lutheran Church of Australia to consider serving for short periods in this capacity.

Housing at Wujal Wujal for volunteers has become an issue with it now reaching a stage where action is needed. They are exploring available options. Without accommodation there is little chance for the level of ministry that the locals would like to see.

Coen is the most distant centre. Visits are undertaken on a monthly basis subject to weather conditions. In effect we are able to provide services for about six months per year. With each visitation the welcome is like a long lost family member returning home. Attendances have been relatively good especially on occasions when a Baptism is requested. In 2012 this occurred on 3 of the visits with attendance at each occasion in excess of 50 people.

Baptism at Wujal Wujal



In summary, the ministry expresses thanks to the District for their ongoing support. They appreciate your prayers and donations as this all provides incentive to continue this remote ministry.

God has been good in every way as we seek to follow His direction knowing that we are 'All one in Christ Jesus'. Galatians 3:28

AFRICAN MINISTRY REPORT

ST LUKE'S, WOODRIDGE INTRODUCTION

Last August, St Luke's was fortunate to receive a pastor (Jade Bauer) with the aid of the District. As such, a focus for Pastor Jade was to be on African ministry, particularly with the Sudanese people in and around the Woodridge community.

It has been a learning curve for Jade, one with both challenges and rewards. He has managed to develop a wonderful rapport with the Sudanese people, of both mutual respect and a love stemming from the love of God in Jesus.

KEY AREAS OF MINISTRY

1. VISITING

- a) Pastor Jade – together with two well respected Sudanese members – quickly identified the need to visit Sudanese families. The need to have a Sudanese person/s present for the visits was evident and as such, a Sudanese elder and another Sudanese man fluent in four languages formed a visiting team.

The impact of these home visits have been fantastic, initially, and resulted in the Sudanese attendance growing each Sunday. The challenge came however, when the two Sudanese men visiting with him were unable to continue due to study, work and family commitments. This means that it is much harder to enter homes where English is not proficient and then be able to understand the problems etc. that are being faced. Hopefully, opportunity will arise where a new Sudanese person will be able to attend with Jade for visits.

- b) Pastor Jade has also identified the need for Sudanese women to talk about their family/life issues. This has led to two female members of St Luke's now visiting the Sudanese women in their homes and reporting to Pastor Jade about any particular pastoral needs etc.

2. TEACHING

Another area that needed attention was in teaching the faith.

- a) Many Sudanese come from other denominations or are lacking in an understanding of the Lutheran church and its beliefs. A study group was quickly formed to work through a modified version of "God for Us." This has proven to be very rewarding for those who attend. As with any other area of ministry to the Sudanese however, regular attendance is a challenge. This is due to work or study commitments, family commitments or Sudanese community events.
- b) Teaching has also involved the Small Catechism and providing the Sudanese with booklets on core elements of the Christian faith.

3. EDUCATION

- a) Monthly cooking classes have been organised whereby the Sudanese women can learn recipes from Australian culture.
- b) Assistance for those studying at TAFE or university where applicable – with assignment formatting, help etc.

4. FELLOWSHIP

- a) The Sudanese people are extremely hospitable and love having family outings and events. Knowing this led to family days being organised at various parks for fellowship and lunch. The best part of these is the amount of Sudanese people that attend when things go according to plan.
- b) Pastor Jade or at least one of the elders of St Luke's, always tries to be present where possible for the Sudanese peoples' own special events. This has proven to be fantastic in earning respect from them.
- c) An area of challenge that still exists, yet has become much better since last year, has been the interaction between all members at St Luke's with the Sudanese. The difference in culture seems to be the sticking point in this area and more joint fellowship is the key to overcoming this obstacle.

5. WORSHIP

- a) During worship the Gospel is read in both Dinka and English.
- b) Pastor Jade has also tried to establish a Sudanese choir for worship. When it has come together it has enriched worship wonderfully, however the challenge has again been availability and time for the Sudanese. This is an ongoing goal for ministry.

6. ATTENDANCE

Currently, there are five regular Sudanese families attending worship (25 including children). This number fluctuates very regularly due to availability of transport or other commitments.

OTHER AREAS OF AID FOR MINISTRY TO THE SUDANESE

A paid part-time Sudanese lay worker to work in tandem with Pastor Jade would be ideal. The Sudanese, together with Jade, have identified that this would be ideal for the growth of mission and ministry in the context of Woodridge and surrounding areas.

While Jade has worked with one Sudanese man for this position (voluntarily, and under pastoral supervision), the Sudanese man has had to stop due to study and work commitments. Having a paid position for this role would deal with this challenge.

There are two Sudanese men capable for this role at St Luke's (speak the four languages fluently), however they need to earn an income to support their families and study – hence the need for a paid position.

CONCLUSION

Pastor Jade is finding ministry to the Sudanese very rewarding and enjoyable. It is travelling along at a steady pace and many of the challenges being faced are slowly being ironed out.

The Sudanese in Woodridge and surrounding areas have come to call St Luke's their home of worship and are very happy to have a pastor that is not afraid to get amongst them and their culture. As they would say themselves, *"God is good...all the time! All the time...God is good!"*

OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CONGREGATION, TOOWOOMBA.

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

Our Saviour's Lutheran Congregation is located on the south side of Toowoomba in the suburb of Harristown, and is in many respects a typical suburban Lutheran congregation. Founded in the early 1960s to reach out to young families settling in the area due to its affordable housing, the congregation expanded with the "baby boom" of the period but in more recent years has experienced an ageing membership and numerical decline reflecting the changing demographics of its "catchment area". Now, however, they find that God is doing a "new thing" among them. Over the last three years an outreach ministry to African refugee immigrants has developed at Our Saviour's which, under God's blessing, has seen steady growth both in terms of numbers of people attending worship and the spiritual life of old and new members.

The story began with Teresa Lacca and her daughter Mercy, who began attending Our Saviour's regularly a little more than three years ago because the church was within easy walking distance of their home. Teresa is an Acholi woman from southern Sudan who has a gift for languages (Acholi, Swahili (the *lingua franca* of East Africa), Arabic and English!). Outreach has proven to be the key to the development of the African outreach ministry. Through Teresa's outreach two new families began attending Our Saviour's in 2011 and through word of mouth among the local African community they are now ministering to seven families numbering thirty-five people who all worship regularly (groups represented include mainly Acholi and Hutu and Tutsi people from Rwanda). The congregation is also in contact with approximately 20 more African folk in the local area but find it hard to transport all who wish to come to church at any one time! Earlier this year, with the generous assistance of several congregations from the Darling Downs Zone, a few individuals beyond the Zone and the LCAQD they

purchased a mini-bus which assists with transport needs. The bus has been a great blessing as it allows for greater efficiency in their transport operations for worship on Sundays and other activities through the week. However, at times the congregation still feels that the work God is giving them to do is constrained by a lack of human resources; as an ageing congregation they simply do not have the resources to meet all the needs that present themselves as a result of the African outreach.

As the African ministry developed they focussed on three key areas of ministry – worship, pastoral care and education. To date the African people have worshipped together with the Australian congregation. This has not been without challenges for both communities but it is felt that considerable progress has been made in integrating the African folk into the local congregation and encouraging the Australian members to be welcoming, although there are still areas that need to be worked on. They are also planning an African service for a Saturday evening, probably on a monthly basis, to provide their African folk with the opportunity to sing their own worship songs and receive catechetical instruction via simpler sermons which can be translated into Swahili on the spot. African people love to sing and they are also very keen to learn more about the Christian Faith and have a lot of questions! It is quite possible that this service will attract further African attendees to Our Saviour's, even if only on a monthly basis. A youth choir consisting mainly of African young people, but open to all, has been started; they have sung in the Divine Service on two occasions to date, singing both traditional hymns and contemporary songs. They have been very well received by the congregation.

The pastoral care needs of the African people are extensive and the congregation simply cannot cover all of those needs with present resources. Most of the adult refugees have terrible events seared into their memories which cause them much trauma and the children have experienced difficult conditions growing up in the refugee camps. However, they are resourceful and optimistic people who have kept a strong faith in their Lord and Saviour despite these past experiences and they are determined, with God's blessing, to make new lives for themselves in Australia. The pastor counts it a privilege to minister to these people who can teach us so much about resilience and faith. Tribute is due here to the pastoral work done by Pastor Emeritus Norman Wurst and his wife Joy, members of the congregation who have thrown themselves into this work with enthusiasm and wisdom, and several other laity who have taken the African families into their hearts.

In regard to education a number of African ladies have been admitted to holy communion after instruction and last year five African youth were confirmed after completing a full course of Confirmation instruction (three of these children have only been speaking English for two years, but they are very bright and rapidly becoming fluent in English). The pastor is most happy to report that all of these recently confirmed young people attend worship regularly! Catechisms and Prayer Books are much appreciated by the African members – these are provided in Acholi, Swahili and English as required. Special assistance in the form of tutoring has also been provided to one very bright African girl who had only sporadic schooling in Africa but has this year entered grade 8 at a local high school and thus has a lot to catch up on.

The congregation thanks the supporters for their assistance, without which they could not have progressed in this ministry to its present state. They ask that this work is kept in your hearts and your prayers. Above all they thank the Triune God, Father, Son and

Holy Spirit, who is doing this “new thing” among them by enabling them to minister to our African brothers and sisters in Christ and in turn wonderfully blessing Our Saviours through them!

ASIAN MINISTRY

We thank God for His Word as recorded in 1 John 4:2-12 in which we find special relevance for the Asian Ministry in the past year.

“Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.....

They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, we are from God,

...No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

The Asian Ministry has experienced real challenges recently. However our confidence is in The Lord; we are from God.

1. DOCTRINAL AND HERESIES DISTURBANCE

- a) We have found that doctrinal heresies come with new migrants from China.

Previously, most migrants from China were non-religious atheists. However, with the rapid growth of the underground church in China, there is a good proportion (estimated 7-8%) of recent migrants from China that are “Christian”. Most of the underground churches in China are led by untrained lay people and result in various forms of heresies. Chinese migrants bring with them different ways of being church as well as heresies. In the past year, the cult “Eastern Lightening” which denies the Deity of Jesus grew rapidly in Brisbane. They put full page advertisements in newspapers on a regular basis, attacking the traditional churches and their beliefs. They also pretended to be church seekers and joined our church activities and Bible Studies with the intention of taking our people away to their “church”. The impact on our members is not to be taken lightly. It also has a serious impact on outreach. The general Asian Community in our society simply think that the churches are fighting and deride the church for this.

- b) Growing leaders with Mainland China backgrounds.

The church needs to be intentional and resourceful in reaching out to people from mainland China - building up the potential leaders in terms of language, theology, ministry and people skills.

At present, we don't have any pastors from Mainland China and the effectiveness of reaching out to these Chinese Christians and pastoring to them is considerably hindered.

- c) Speaking from the viewpoint of the world.

St John warns us that heresies come with “speaking from the viewpoint of the world”.

Helping equip our lay leaders to conduct such discussions in a biblical and Godly way seems to be equally important in “fighting” these heresies.

d) Growing “Love” in our congregations.

In talking about doctrinal matters, St John quickly turns to “love”.

“No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

When we emphasis the purity of the gospel, loving relationships grow our ministry. Loving relationships are the way people “see” God.

Loving relationships are amongst the Asians. They are also among all people in our church with our diversity of “different skin colours”. This will make our church unique and attractive. In the past year, we have experienced challenges, big and small in learning to love and in expressing our love to each other.

2. MODEL OF MINISTRY REVIEWED

The present model of this ministry is “One Congregation, different languages, different ministries”. This model has been used for over 10 years and we see many benefits in it. However, the success of it depends on many factors and they are often uncontrollable.

The model has been reviewed in the past year and we would like to develop a model that would encourage the Asian community to take up their responsibilities in ministry in terms of making decisions, finance, management etc. By taking up these responsibilities it will give them ownership and help in their maturity and growth. A model in which the Asians are structurally separated from the Anglo congregation but still in partnership in ministry with them would be another healthy way to go.

We also hope that the model will release the Anglo congregation from the burden of bearing the full responsibility of the Asian Ministry; however an understanding of the needs of such a ministry is always a real challenge. The way that Anglos and Asians partner together in ministry can be flexible and they can work together in ways that are comfortable to both parties. This may be a good step towards growing love in our church.

3. CHANGES AND UPDATING

- a) City Chinese congregation has moved to St. Peter’s College
- b) Chinese Services at Coopers Plains have moved to Rochedale while family services remain in Coopers Plains.
- c) Other opportunities under consideration: Toowoomba and Gatton, Indonesian Ministry.
- d) In other Districts: Sydney has started a new ministry in Ryde;

Melbourne has started a Mandarin ministry in Box Hill

Perth is planning to branch out to Duncraig.

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. - Matthew 9:37-38

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH, BEENLEIGH, MISSION STIMULUS GRANT

The 2013 MSG (Mission Stimulus Grant), has enabled the Bethesda church family to begin a process of transformation from being a pastor centred congregation to one where every member is active in living out the Gospel and sharing their faith with those around them. A part of this is setting up systems that enable and support future growth and expansion. It has enabled them to employ a lay worker as Connections Coordinator, who has assisted us with:

1. Discerning their Vision and Mission
2. Establishing Growth Groups as an accepted and valued part of congregational life
3. Producing visitor packs for distribution to visitors and members
4. Introducing visitor cards so we can follow up on newcomers
5. Implementing an appropriate data base for upgrading their record keeping
6. Following up contact with visitors and members
7. Engaging a wider proportion of the congregation in assisting in the work of the church
8. Encouraging the financial security of Bethesda by supporting development thinking

The stimulus grant also enabled them to sponsor nine members in Lab 1 training, so that they are better able to identify members who are in crisis, engage in loving listening and to participate in visiting.

The congregation also recognises that they are at a plateau point where alternative worship times are needed to open doors to more potential members. They are trialling a Saturday evening service called 5.30 Connect and also different options for a 2nd Sunday service.

The congregation still has a long way to go in transferring the vision from the leadership team to one where the whole Bethesda church family understand and engage in what they are trying to do, however the grant money has enabled them to make a good start.

As this 'culture change' is at least a 4 – 5 year process, the congregation sees that they need to continue with what they have begun. They intend to raise money to support this work into the future and to develop a 10 year plan which will give them some firm direction.

Once again we thank LLL for the \$20 000 grant. It has helped Bethesda change its direction and work towards a sustainable future where the Gospel, the power of God to salvation, can shine into the Beenleigh area in a sustainable and life changing way.

The last word is left to Scripture; "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ...". Matthew 28:19.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Bergmann, Chair, Council for Ministry and Mission

With the assistance of:

Jade Bauer, Pastor, Woodridge

Mark Hampel, Pastor, Beenleigh

Mark Henderson, Pastor, Harristown Toowoomba

John O'Keefe, Pastor, Director for Ministry and Mission

Brian Shek, Pastor, LCA Asian Ministry Coordinator

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