

**VISION<sub>2055</sub> Newsletter 3**  
**July 2007**

**VISION<sub>2055</sub> is about long term developments in the presbytery. Actions now and in coming years will influence what kind of church there will be in the future.**

**Keith Hamilton shares his hopes for the Uniting Church in 50 years time.**

When the Uniting Church turns eighty, fifty years from now, I see a church that will be confident in its identity and place within the Australian church scene and Australian society. I see a church that works hard at welcoming people, and helping people become followers of Jesus Christ in life transforming and life affirming relationships. I see a church that is meeting the challenges of 2055 with grace and confident trust in God. I see a church in which all people, of different cultures, ages and genders are welcome.

I see a church in which people, confidently encouraged by the Holy Spirit, live out their faith, and express their faith in personal devotions, small support groups and large dynamic services of worship. I see a church in which people, confidently encouraged by the Holy Spirit, share their faith in families, in work places, and in leisure activities. I see a church in which people, confidently encouraged by the Holy Spirit, are engaged in acts of service in the community. I see a church in which people in every congregation, small group, house church, and faith community feel tangibly connected to the whole church. I see a church where there is mutual trust between councils of the church, mutual trust between congregations, even where there is a diversity of opinions on theology, practice of ministry, and approaches to mission. I see a church that values its history and is able to give thanks to God for the faithfulness and VISION and audacity of the church in the first thirty years, and so is encouraged to take risks for the sake of the gospel in ventures unknown, in ways of church previously unforeseen in response to the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

**VISION<sub>2055</sub> is a vision for the presbytery area, namely western Sydney. Many congregations have now affirmed the overall vision but are unsure how they can be involved. It is up to each congregation to decide for itself how it can appropriately do so. Congregations do well to think in terms of local, regional and international mission. How are they fostering mission in each of these? The presbytery is the region, so VISION<sub>2055</sub> invites congregations to be connected in particular ways to mission that is that is happening across our presbytery. Below are comments**



**and suggestions from several people in the presbytery.**

**VISION<sub>2055</sub> - Getting involved**

We have huge and expanding mission possibilities in Western Sydney within a 50 minute drive of every one of our congregations. What marvellous things would God do if every congregation and faith community throughout the presbytery supported mission in Western Sydney as a key mission objective. The mission field is just a few suburbs or paddocks away!

What is needed?

- Mission needs prayer*
- Mission needs people*
- Mission requires money*
- Mission requires faith*
- Mission demands commitment, persistence and patience*
- Mission is built on love for people whatever their circumstances.*



How can I help?

- Become a member of the VISION<sub>2055</sub> prayer chain
- Become a depositor in the VISION<sub>2055</sub> Self Help Fund
- Make a gift to the VISION<sub>2055</sub> fund
- Give prayerful consideration to the possibility of becoming a VISION<sub>2055</sub> mission leader
- Encourage someone you know to be involved.

*Trevor Knight- Chairperson*



### The wisdom of Oscar Romero

Kent Crawford believes every congregation can allow the movement of God to transform by opening ourselves to the wisdom encapsulated by the words attributed to El Salvadorian martyr Archbishop Oscar Romero. His words invite us to look beyond this year's budget, recent trends in attendance, and asking what we can reasonably expect to accomplish with whatever resources we can tally in front of us. Vision2055 invites us all to fundamentally allow God to be the director of our actions and plans, rather than our own limited dreams and visions.

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.*

*Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.*

*No statement says all that could be said.*

*No prayer fully expresses our faith.*

*No confession brings perfection.*

*No pastoral visit brings wholeness.*

*No program accomplishes the church's mission.*

*No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about.*

*We plant the seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further development.*

*We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.*

*This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,*

*an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference*

*between the master builder and the worker.*



### VISION2055 –

#### Catch the wind

I believe that the presbytery VISION2055 is an excellent guide for ministry and mission for the next generation, and it embraces a sound theology for the rapidly changing church of the present. Recently I have begun to explore some mission initiatives in our region together with other ministry agents in the same area (Guildford, Granville, Merrylands, Greystanes). This was based on the spirit of VISION2055. Our desire is to enable these congregations to “catch the wind” now, so that people can decide how best to “do” the future church. I could appreciate VISION2055 more in the process as it was applied to real contexts in our local congregations. Also, it is a practical way to test VISION2055 for me.

Jason Choi



### VISION2055 –

#### Sharing skills and resources

VISION2055 is an opportunity for individuals or groups in the presbytery to use their skills (eg. financial, business, trade, leadership) and other resources (like property) to serve God's mission. By understanding the wider needs, we all can ensure our resources support effective mission in an equitable way. Our church does not exist for itself but to serve the kingdom of God through what we say and do - not just in our immediate community but beyond. We all need to understand the bigger picture so we can then see how our gifts and resources can be effectively used.

John K Martin



## VISION2055 - Co-operating in mission

At the heart of the long-term vision of the Presbytery stands the conviction that we can be more effective in the cause of the gospel by working co-operatively in partnership across congregations rather than keeping our sole focus on 'doing our own thing.'

To test this conviction we could make a start by encouraging congregations to take these steps:

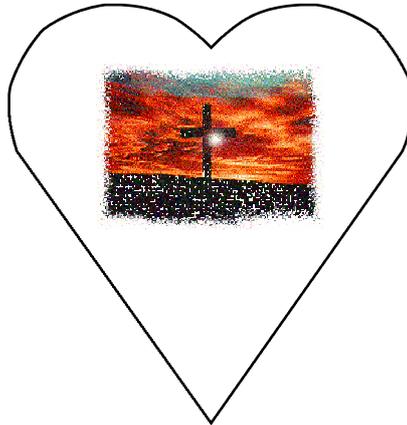
- 1) arrange to gather with 2, 3 or more other congregations who serve the same general region to listen to each other's story, including opportunities and challenges in mission.
- 2) each congregation to then engage in some serious and searching self-examination asking these questions of themselves:
  - a. *where is there an overlapping of their 'story' and visions for mission and ministry with other congregations?*
  - b. *what creative co-operation could lead to an increased impact for the gospel in the region through some form of co-operative action rather than merely 'going it alone'?* (such 'creative co-operation' could range from intentional and focused ongoing communication and prayer for another congregation's mission, through working together on specific mission or ministry projects, through sharing ministry leadership or material resources, to coming together as one congregation in mission)
  - c. *if we are to assume that it is God's desire for us to become increasingly effective in the cause of the gospel, can it be argued that such creative co-operation is contrary to the will of God?*
  - d. *in order to be fully faithful to God, what action will we now take?*

Graeme Gardiner

### VISION2055 –

#### Working together

*VISION2055 is not about a nebulous group of people somewhere 'out there.' It is about the people who are the body of Christ within the Presbytery. When we think about the Body of Christ in the local setting, it makes sense to see many people's gifts and skills working together to make a difference in the local area. But a larger picture is seeing the Presbytery as a larger body of Christ. It's like seeing ourselves as Australians, working within NSW, within our local area.*



*Each one of the congregations and individuals within the presbytery has a role to play. We are all needed to work together- otherwise we end up with some disconnected hands or feet and a very dysfunctional body. We actually need some of the hands or feet (or whatever) in some congregations to share their gifts and skills with others so we don't become lopsided or malformed. It is together, in our local area but ALSO in our regional area that we are the body of Christ.*

*Christine Bayliss Kelly*

### VISION2055 – Encouraging integrated services

VISION2055 will encourage congregations such as St Mary's in their work of developing an integrated children and family service. The vision encourages congregations and UCA agencies to work closer together. At St Mary's this means developing a service where the congregation and faith community will facilitate ministry and mission with Children's Services, Newpin Burnside in an integrated service on the one location.

*Keith Hamilton*

