



CHURCH COMPASS

Mission Motivation: Identity | Purpose | Future

Church Compass is a self-assessment tool designed for churches seeking to change their conversation from a 'church' conversation to a mission conversation.

The questions and thought starters are a way to begin describing the Identity, naming the Purpose and discerning Futures for the church as a Community of Hope and Compassion.



CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania are deeply indebted to leaders and conversation partners who over many years have consistently invited everybody in the movement to 'change the conversation'. Explicitly or implicitly this has often been in dialogue with Lesslie Newbigin's challenging question from the late 1960s: "...what would be involved in a genuine missionary encounter between the gospel and the culture...?"

What then does it mean for a church (and for CCVT) to change the conversation in this season?

For many it could mean changing the conversation from a focus on 'fixing the church' (making it 'healthy', getting its governance right, finding ways to be financially sustainable etc) to a focus on mission (and engaging the neighbourhood as 'local missionaries', as a sign, witness and foretaste of God's Kingdom). As others have written, it is Christology first, then Missiology and finally Ecclesiology. Cultural circumstances and consequential anxieties constantly tempt us to put the last first. To put it another way, a good theology of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit will write our story around mission in our context, and thus propelled by mission, appropriate (and diverse) shapes of church will emerge. Mission will have a church, rather than a 'church' having a mission.

Given this frame, the 'church' conversation is changing to a mission conversation.

Now, it must be said, the church, the body of Christ is an important tool to bring in the Kingdom. As Paul writes in Ephesians while explaining his missional calling, *God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.* However, as important as it is, the church is not the Kingdom.

The mission conversation is already being deeply engaged in different ways in different locations. But in some (or many) places it isn't. That's where the 'church' conversation has become the main game; and mission is lost in questions of 'church' maintenance, sustainability and survival as numbers diminish, the average age of a congregation increases, energy and morale fall and neighbourhood awareness and engagement are wistfully held memories. When this happens the resources God has given the movement to be true to the call he has placed on us in that location can be lost, eroded or used to prop up history, rather than meet emerging local mission opportunities. Changing the conversation to mission can mean letting go of long held practices and local traditions and "the way we do 'church' around here".

Describing our task as building Communities of Hope and Compassion, demonstrated by particular practices, changes the conversation from 'church' to mission. Re-imagining ministers as Leaders who lead these Communities, with their own particular practices, also changes the conversation. Propelled by mission, CCVT as a Renewal Movement will be a diverse sign, witness and foretaste of the Kingdom in our neighbourhoods; city and country, rural and regional, suburban and inner-city, in Tasmania and Victoria.

At the same time, locally and globally, we will be rediscovering, renewing and re-releasing the deeper story of our movement, a pioneering, frontier spirit of innovation, simplicity and adventure, and be celebrating where that is already happening.

This Church Compass can be one way to begin changing the conversation...



DESCRIBING YOUR CHURCH

Thinking of your church...

When was it most alive, most motivated, and most excited about its present and its future?

What made it exciting? Who was involved? What was happening?

Describe how people were feeling.

Where do you see God at work?

What practices or ways of life are most important?

What do you value most about this church?

Where might your church be 'getting in the way' of God's activities?

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE REFLECTIONS, WRITE BRIEF SNAPSHOTS OF YOUR CHURCH IN THESE AREAS:

History and DNA

Purpose and Vision

People

Property

Governance

DESCRIBING YOUR CHURCH'S LEADERS AND COMMUNITY

CCVT has formed a series of indicators for leaders (Ministers) and churches (Communities of Hope and Compassion). Describe how your church is developing these indicators by using one or more of the following:

S=Strength, G=Growth Area, ?=Unsure and #=Priority Area

LEADERSHIP

Intentionally lead a change in the Community's conversation from a 'church' conversation to a 'mission' conversation.

Lead the Community into becoming an 'order of local missionaries'.

Are clear about their ministry and mission direction, with an ability to develop, lead and communicate a compelling vision of a 21st Century Community of Hope and Compassion.

Nurture and deepen faith through promoting and leading spiritual formation for all Community participants, including spiritual practices like prayer, reflection etc.

Plan, participate in and lead worship experiences that engage the head and heart in culturally relevant ways

Identify, develop and support emerging leaders; encouraging all people in the Community—younger and older, women and men - to discover and use their gifts, shaped by the five-fold ministry pattern of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor/Teacher in Ephesians 4.

See evangelism as the responsibility of both the Leader and the people in the Community, each being equipped to guide others into a transformational faith experience.

Actively discern where God might be nudging the Community to be releasing and nurturing new Communities.

Exhibit team work, and are able to build, inspire and lead a staff or volunteer team.

Embrace change and empower ministry; knowing how to interpret and lead change.

Anticipate and use conflict for growth, with an ability to manage conflict.

Understand the need for healthy ministry, maintaining personal, professional and spiritual balance and standards.

Celebrate lifelong learning, and model to the Community a desire and capacity to be such a learner.

COMMUNITIES

Is actively changing the Community's conversation from a 'church' conversation to a 'mission' conversation.

Is becoming an 'order of local missionaries'; confident of affirming and translating the story of God's salvation through Jesus Christ in a variety of ways and contexts.

Gathers and grows disciples of Jesus, who are becoming lifelong learners with a developing spiritual maturity, evidenced by the fruit and gifts of the Spirit, each seeking to operate within the fivefold ministry pattern of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor/Teacher of Ephesians 4.

Sees worship, prayer, discernment and learning as expressions of a gathering and sent Community, propelling people outwards to a watching and waiting world.

Centres its life on the Bible and in particular the New Testament; reading it and discerning from it a picture of God's Kingdom, the salvation story, and transforming spiritual practices.

Invites accountability to one another; demonstrating the fruit of time spent in supporting and watching over one another in love.

Knows it is an incomplete expression of the reign of God, and is committed to the journey of seeking and discerning a fuller and fresher expression of Christian witness, unity and life.

Welcomes the stranger, demonstrating hospitality and its message of grace and generosity.

Has mission as its priority and actively engages all those who are yet to belong.

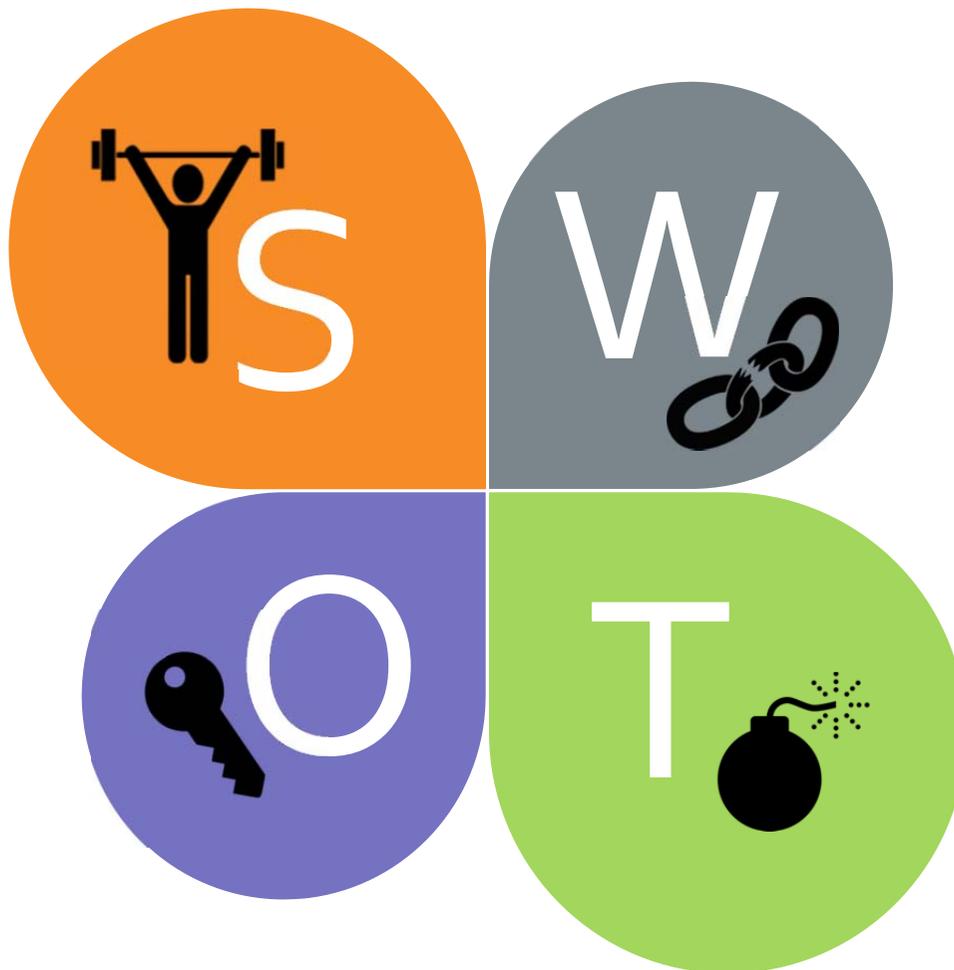
Is open to discern where God might be nudging the Community to be releasing and nurturing new Communities.

Seeks to name where God is at work in their neighbourhood and to join with him there, exhibiting an observable and graceful influence and impact.

Engages its neighbourhood, by being an incarnational 'contrast' community, and a witness, sign and foretaste of the Kingdom.

Practices justice and reconciliation as signposts of the Kingdom; revealed by a diversity of age, gender, race, ability and socioeconomic identity.

What are our church's **strengths**?



What are our church's **weaknesses or growth areas**?

What are the **opportunities** our church has?

What are the **threats** our church faces?

DESCRIBING YOUR CHURCH'S CONTEXT OR NEIGHBOURHOOD

AGE STRUCTURE/DEMOGRAPHIC

Who are the people your church serves, or could serve?

EDUCATION LEVEL

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

INCOME and WELLBEING

Are you aware of relevant National Church Life Survey (including ABS and Local Gov.) data?
 Please tick here if you'd like to know more.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

COMMUNITY NEEDS

HOW DO THE ABOVE DESCRIPTORS COMPARE WITH YOUR CHURCH'S PARTICIPANTS?



If a specific Project emerges as areas of Focus are discerned and Priorities are determined, you could reflect on these mission propelled questions.

-  WHY? Why has this Project been chosen? Is it a mission project?
-  WHAT? What is the Project and what does it seek to do?
-  WHEN? When will the Project begin?
-  HOW? How will it be monitored?
-  WHO? Who will lead, champion and support the Project?

