

Notes from a Meeting for Information on the Formation of the Non-Geographic Presbytery 25/03/19

Addendum: The new name for the NGP is "Generate Presbytery" as from 08/04/19

- Churches are not growing. This is a problem in the Uniting Church.
- Congregations need to be reaching out, and being the Church throughout the week, not just on Sunday morning.
- We need a structure where that can happen, a vision of what the Church can be.
- The Assembly decision on same-gender marriage clarified what their thinking is. The Assembly has a different understanding from the NGP of mission. The Assembly has agreed to an understanding of mission which is inward-focused.
- But mission is about Jesus! The Church needs to be outward-focused.
- At the heart of God's mission is preaching the Gospel, telling what God has done in Jesus.
- Need to find other churches who we can go forward together with in mission, free to do mission the way we understand it.
- Assembly showed there are different 'gospels'.
- But we need to reach out to others, bring them to Jesus.
- Paragraph 1, Basis of Union – we haven't done very well in that.
- Many churches are ageing, numbers declining, they haven't seen anyone converted, come to Jesus, for a very long time. Millions of dollars' worth of property, but small congregations.
- There has been dissatisfaction by Ministers with only one Presbytery in SA, not able to resource churches to do the work of mission, the heart of God
- What happens if a church doesn't join the NGP? The alternative will be a choice of at least two geographically-based Presbyteries. Don't know what the missional focus of these will be – the congregations who choose to join will decide between themselves what that focus is. No decisions yet on how they will be set up or operate.
- Need to decide which Presbytery to join by 7th June. Needs 2/3 majority of the congregation by secret ballot.
- The focus of the NGP is four-fold: conversion growth, leadership, making disciples, church planting. Encouraging congregations to see these things happen.
- All congregations, small or large, will be encouraged to get on with the work of the gospel, to be those who glorify God in word and deed.
- Evangelism is hard in Australia.
- The NGP will encourage churches to do 'something' to bring people to Jesus.
- Our hope is not in the NGP, but in Jesus.
- Pulling each other towards the mission that we have – for people to know Jesus.
- NGP: We want to reach people for Jesus, to see conversions, to disciple them, to plant more churches.
- NGP: We believe the Scriptures in this way: that the gospel is about people coming to know Jesus. We believe the Scriptures also say marriage is between a man and a woman.
- Each congregation needs to make a decision on what Presbytery to join. Whichever one sees mission the way we see it. If no decision is made you will join by default one of the other Presbyteries.
- Seek to understand God's heart for those who are outside the church. Be gospel-focused.
- There will be at least two other Presbyteries, so there is not an 'us and them' created.
- The NGP is congregations with like-mindedness. It has the function of a Presbytery.
- What about cultural diversity? The NGP won't tell congregations how to do mission; it will be driven by mission in their local contexts.
- Are we locked into a particular Presbytery? No, churches can change down the track.
- What is the theological 'flavour' of the other Presbyteries? They will contain many different theological viewpoints, not one particular theology. It will depend on which churches join them.
- What about Minister training, training those 'on fire for the gospel'? Is the College able to train for this? We have two of the leading Evangelical teachers in Australia at the College – Craig Bailey and Tim Hein.