



BOARD FOR  
**LOCAL MISSION**  
*new and renewing churches*

# Strategic Direction 2014 – 2015 and beyond



Finalised by BLMiss on 18/9/2014  
Approved by GCC on 17/10/2014



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## Introduction

This **Strategic Direction for the Board for Local Mission 2014 – 2015** sits under the objects of the Church and its strategic direction. Since General Synod in 2013 established the Board for Local Mission (BLMiss) as an interim board of Church, which is also subject to the governance review established by the same Synod, our strategic direction focuses on this synodical term while still indicating our intentions for the following years.

**The Objects of the Lutheran Church of Australia** include to

- (a) fulfil the mission of the Christian Church in the world by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the Sacraments in accordance with the Confession of the Church laid down in Article II;
- (f) encourage every congregation to carry out its mission to its local community;
- (g) establish, develop and support new congregations where it is not possible for individual congregations to do so;
- (i) dialogue with other Christian church bodies;
- (l) publish, procure and distribute literature compatible with the Confession and principles of the Church;
- (m) minister to human need in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in the spirit of Christian love and service and provide institutions and agencies for this purpose;

The 2013 General Synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia adopted a working document entitled, **Lutheran Church of Australia Strategic Direction 2013 – 2018**. It contains three strategic priorities, two of which are foundational and a third which is supportive:

1. **Grow** as God's people
2. **Go** as God's people
3. **Enable** us to Go and Grow through
  - A. Governance and Leadership
  - B. Communications and Engagement
  - C. Assets and Resources



**Grow** and **Go** are ongoing tasks that intertwine. There is no linear sequence that says first we *grow* until we reach maturity, after which we begin to *go* into the world. If we wait until we feel ready, most of us will never *go*. Rather it is **as we go that we grow**. We don't seek to learn a whole lot of things just in case we need them, but as we *go* we discover what we need to study and how we need to be equipped and so we *grow*. As Paul says to Philemon, "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." [NIV v6]



In adopting the tagline

## *New and Renewing Churches*

BLMiss wishes to communicate that its focus is on both new mission initiatives and assisting with renewing existing congregations and other ministries. **Renewing Churches** and **New Churches** are therefore our two strategic priorities.

### **The Objects of BLMiss**

#### **The Board for Local Mission has been established to**

- (a) nurture a growing missional culture in the LCA; and
- (b) promote, resource and coordinate within the Church participation in the Triune God's mission to Australia and New Zealand to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all people. (John 20:21-23; see also Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20)

[From the Terms of Reference adopted by General Synod in 2013]

### **We work through the Districts**

BLMiss is an LCA church-wide department that is firmly embedded in the districts of our church in their primary role of providing support for the ministry and mission of their congregations, schools and other agencies and auxiliaries. We are based around district mission and congregational support departments and their directors in SA/NT, Qld, Vic/Tas and the LCNZ, while also seeking to work closely with the NSW and WA Districts. We therefore support the mission work of the districts in order to share resources, minimise duplication and maximise outcomes.

### **A Joint Mission with other LCA Departments**

BLMiss does not wish to duplicate the work of other LCA departments, boards, agencies and auxiliaries or to provide additional resources in their areas of primary responsibility and expertise. Rather we seek to work with them to support their work with specifically missional resources and know-how. We seek to support the College of Bishops in their challenging task of overseeing the mission of the LCA. In short we see ourselves as a part of the LCA team and will help where we can.



## Joining the Triune God in his Mission to his World

**When we use the word *mission* in this document we mean that just as God sent Jesus to bring forgiveness of sin, and salvation to our world, so he sends us to bring this good news to people everywhere.**

Our God has always given himself to his creation. The Father gave his Son to our world in sending him to take on human flesh, to suffer and die on a cross before being raised to life again on the third day. Father and Son then sent the Spirit to be their presence at work through the word, the water, the bread and the wine. Jesus' mission continues through the church as Father, Son and Holy Spirit send us to the people of our world with the good news of our reconciliation to God through the forgiveness of sin. [John 17:18; 20:21-23]

### **God and his Church are Missional by Nature**

Mission is part of God's very being, his character and nature. Just as God is love, so God is mission, because in mission God gives his love to his world. Thus mission is not just something God does; it is part of who he is.

In the same way mission is not just something the church does; it is part of who we are. It is not just one program in the church among many; as though it were an optional extra – nice to have but not really essential. Mission is just as much part of the essence of the church as is, for example, worship, teaching and service to those in need which flows from God's work in our lives. We are a missionary people. It is who we are.

God's mission to the world creates a people – a church – who in humility and brokenness, with weakness and failure, live the life of the new creation in the midst of this old world. The life we live is not perfect, but it is real. Our mission is not triumphalist; it is lived in the shadow of the cross. Our community is not some impossible ideal, but marked by struggle and disappointment, while all the time being covered by forgiveness and grace.

The Church, therefore, does not have a mission (or two); the mission of Jesus Christ has a church. The church is both the object and agent of God's mission. The mission creates the church and then sends the church out into the world. In this task God has given the church the means needed for the mission, namely the word, the water, the bread, the wine; through which the Spirit works to bring people to faith in Jesus.

### **We bring the life of Jesus into our Communities**

Jesus took on flesh and became a human being and lived in a community in our world so that he might redeem us and finally restore the world to what God intended in creation. We are part of that mission as we go and embody the life of Jesus in the cultures of our world so that we might live the life of God in their midst.

Just as the Trinity is three persons in community so we also go into the world together and not as individuals. Mission is therefore something we do together; it is relational with interdependence and 'mutual indwelling', as is the Trinity. [John 14:8-11; 17:20-24] We invite others to join us in being drawn into the life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the forgiveness of our sins.



## Vision and Purpose

Since being sent in mission is part of the LCA's identity rather than just one of its many programs, the work of the Board for Local Mission is to promote, resource and coordinate the growth of missional culture in all the diverse ministries of the Church. The BLMiss therefore has the same vision, purpose and values as the Lutheran Church of Australia, namely...

**Our Vision** is to see God's love in Christ coming to life in people everywhere through a Lutheran Church that joyfully receives, lives and shares the gospel (cf 1 John 4:9-12).

**Our Purpose:** God grows us as his people to a mature faith in Christ – a faith that comes to life through effective witness and ministry, so that people everywhere may know Christ and his love.



## Values

**Our Values** are derived from our Lutheran identity: 'grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone', all summed up in 'Christ alone'. They are grounded in God's saving work through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are freed by God's grace to participate in his vision and mission for the world. Through faith in Christ, by the work of the Holy Spirit we are a church:

### ***Shaped by the Gospel of Grace***

The love of God in Christ is an undeserved gift from God. It is the transforming agent and motivation for all we do in ministry and mission (2 Cor 5:14). We humbly come before God, who alone strengthens and equips us for our tasks. We gather with fellow believers, feed on God's word and receive together at the Lord's table in order to grow in love for God and for one another as we go out into our daily lives.

### ***United in Christ***

We are blessed by God with diverse backgrounds, talents, skills and opportunities. The Spirit brings us together as members of the body of Christ through one baptism. We declare our unity in our confessions, as contained in the Book of Concord. We live out our unity as the LCA.

### ***Blessed by Relationships***

We acknowledge that God's love is often seen and experienced most clearly within relationships. So, we support and respect one another. We listen to and learn from one another, to sustain and build up one another and our communities in the bond of love.

### ***Inspired by Compassion***

We are called to love in actions as well as by words. We strive to serve with the heart of Christ and we serve with the gifts of the Spirit. We join with Jesus in especially serving those people who are suffering, disadvantaged and marginalised.

### ***Marked by Integrity***

As faithful stewards of God's blessings, we strive for excellence in all we do. We use effectively and efficiently the gifts we have been given, knowing that to whom much is given, much is required. We are accountable to the people we serve, to each other, to our wider communities and to those who have entrusted resources to us.

Likewise, as seen in the following pages, the strategies and reflections of BLMiss grow out of the strategic goals adopted by the LCA in its ***Strategic Directions 2013-2018*** document. Our strategies and reflections are organised under the two aspects of our tagline, ***renewing churches*** and ***new churches*** as our strategic priorities. The LCA strategic priorities of *go* and *grow* apply to both new and renewing churches.

# Strategic Priority 1: Renew Churches

## LCA Strategic Goals

**1.1 Develop a passionate faith in individuals, families and communities shaped by a growing understanding of God's word, nurtured and sustained in prayer and worship.**

01. Establish training and mentor programs that equip and support more lay leaders and pastors to effectively lead and facilitate opportunities for people to grow in faith.



02. Support the growth of small group ministries in communities where people can together grow in their faith through the study of God's Word.
03. Make readily available study-related resources for use by individuals, families and communities to assist them in their 'growing as God's people'

## BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

This is a foundational goal that undergirds the growing of disciples who trust God's promises and therefore increasingly live the life of Jesus in the world. BLMiss will work with others to encourage and resource discipleship.

We need more emphasis on apprenticeship and immersion models of learning, and not just on lecture/seminar styles.

In the medium term BLMiss will

- partner with lighthouse congregations to provide immersion experiences of healthy church life and mission;
- encourage successful practitioners to routinely work with apprentices; and
- encourage the growth of a mentoring culture in the LCA.

BLMiss will continue to support the annual *Lead Pastors* retreats, through the involvement of mission directors and the identification of suitable resources.

Small groups remain a crucial environment for growing and maturing accountable Christian disciples, for providing pastoral care & support and for developing local mission initiatives.

BLMiss will take immediate steps to create web-based and social media access to best-practice resources for the maturing of disciples, ministry and mission.

### Definition of Timeframes

Immediately = by the middle of 2015

Medium Term = by the end of 2016

Long Term = after the start of 2017

Ongoing = happening now and will continue

## Renew...

### LCA Strategic Goals

**2.1 Develop a missional culture where individuals, families and communities are inspired, passionate and active in sharing the gospel in word and action**

01. Establish a shared understanding of what it means to have a mission culture in the LCA, and clearly articulate the core values underpinning a missional culture.

02. Develop a missional framework based on the core values.



03. Establish strategies to ensure the missional framework informs all the goals under Strategic Priority 2.

### BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

This is core BLMiss business! Everything we do is directed to this end. BLMiss will immediately and in an ongoing way facilitate the study of culture-change in communities like the LCA.

This is an issue that currently requires greater focus and consensus within the LCA. BLMiss will immediately and in an ongoing way take the lead in working with other LCA agencies to build consensus around a Lutheran understanding of mission and in particular it will

- work with pastors conferences to develop a shared understand and broad agreement in regard to the theology of mission; and
- use media, including *The Lutheran* and the LCA Webpage, to engage the whole membership of the Church in the process of growing our understanding of mission.

Recognising that it is the Lord who grows his church BLMiss will encourage the identification and removal of blockages that hinder such growth.

BLMiss will immediately take the initiative in convening a gathering of relevant LCA departments to develop a shared framework in regard to missional principles and values as they apply to the LCA.

BLMiss will take every opportunity to promote within the Church and its agencies the content of the LCA Strategic Direction 2013 – 2018 that was adopted by the 2013 General Synod.

## Renew...

### LCA Strategic Goals

#### 2.3 Support and equip communities to use new, innovative and collaborative mission-oriented approaches in changed and changing mission fields

01. Develop and trial new and innovative mission partnership models between congregation / school / aged care and other agencies.
02. Improve cooperation with other churches and groups in order to learn new and better ways to expand mission across Australia and New Zealand.
03. Enhance existing successful initiatives to support action by communities and individuals to go as God's people into their local mission fields.
04. Develop and facilitate ways for successful mission-focused initiatives to be shared across the church and so encourage and empower others to adapt them in their local situations.
05. Ensure district and national support is available, and known to be available, to help facilitate action at the local level.



### BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

Our society is both changing and growing in its diversity. The strategies that were effective yesterday may no longer be so today. The successful approach in one context may not easily translate into another.

In the medium term BLMiss will seek to collaborate with LCA schools departments to encourage their mission in reaching staff, students and their families with the gospel.

BLMiss will work with district mission departments in an ongoing way to learn from what others are doing and to share our insights.

In the medium term BLMiss will encourage each congregation and other faith community in the LCA to host mission initiatives that engage with their local community.

In the medium term BLMiss will work through district mission departments to source and share innovative and collaborative approaches to mission that will inspire creative approaches in other places.

In an ongoing way BLMiss will enable the district mission directors and their departments to collaborate in their support of local mission in the LCA.

In the long term BLMiss will seek additional financial resources that it can use to seed new local mission initiatives.

## Renew...

### LCA Strategic Goals

#### 2.5 Support the development and growth of new mission fields which God has already opened to us

01. Build capability to identify church communities which are presented with growing mission opportunities.
02. Support growing mission fields to achieve their full potential by investing resources, including prayer, funding and, trained people.
03. Establish ways to ensure that the experience and lessons from these growth areas can be replicated in other contexts.
04. Enhance the ways people called into new, growing and challenging mission fields are appropriately supported and cared for.

#### 2.6 Support existing communities to be active in mission

01. Develop capacity of communities in areas such as strategic/ministry planning, budgeting and resource mobilisation.
02. Develop strategies that help build capacity of communities to carry out mission plans, including professional support and financial assistance.
03. Develop new ways for communities to access ideas and resources, including through appropriate technologies.

### BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

Our current congregations are mission outposts in vast mission fields. These fields are ripe for harvest. We pray the Lord of the harvest to send out more workers into our existing neighbourhoods and networks.

In an ongoing way BLMiss will encourage the district mission directors to keep an inventory of congregations with particular mission opportunities.

In an ongoing way BLMiss will provide funds for travel, accommodation and other expenses to enable people resources to be utilised in other parts of the Church.

BLMiss will immediately encourage and coordinate prayer support for local mission in the LCA.

See strategy under goal 2.3.2

See strategy under 2.3.5

See strategies under 2.3



See strategy under 1.1.3

## Renew...

### LCA Strategic Goals

#### 3B1 Increase enthusiasm for mission by sharing how love is coming to life through individuals, families and communities.

01. Develop strategies that clearly and effectively communicate a growing missional culture in the LCA which excites and energises people.
02. Develop strategies that enhance the sharing across the LCA of effective and successful mission practice.
03. Ensure a stronger priority on the perspective of the 'person in the pew' is reflected in all communications strategies.

#### 3C2 Effective use of assets and resources that releases more support to mission and ministry

05. Develop new revenue streams for the LCA through effective relationships with appropriate partners.

### BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

In the medium term BLMiss will develop a comprehensive multi-media strategy for communicating inspiring mission stories to all generations in the LCA.

This is the primary responsibility of LCA Communications. BLMiss has an encouraging and supportive role.

See strategy under 2.3.2

We need to ensure that we communicate substantial ideas in understandable language through appropriate means.

Recognising that people like to give to specific projects, in the medium term, BLMiss will provide opportunities for donors to give to a range of ministries that operate under the auspices of the board.



# Strategic Priority 2: New Churches

## LCA Strategic Goals

### 2.4 Develop proactive strategies to seek and open new mission fields to which God is leading us



01. Develop initiatives, with allocation of appropriate resources, that build sustained ministry among and by ethnic groups in our diverse and multicultural society.
02. Develop strategies to identify, plan and resource new long term mission opportunities.
03. Continue to build and resource church-planting activity, supported by ongoing mission-focused training for leaders.
04. Develop and resource initiatives that effectively engage young people, especially 18–30-year-olds.

## BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

BLMiss has launched its new church planting program and continues to support church planting projects approved under the old scheme and ongoing African and Asian ministry projects.

BLMiss will take steps to make its *Church Planting Mentor / Mission Facilitator* staff position full-time from the beginning of 2015.

BLMiss will continue to seek God's leading in prayer as we discern which new mission fields should be our priority.

In an ongoing way BLMiss will continue to provide financial and policy support for the districts of the LCA as they engage in ministry and mission with African and Asian people who have recently settled in Australia and New Zealand. In future this may include other groups.

BLMiss will continue the full-time Asian Ministry Coordinator position and will seek to establish a half-time African Ministry Coordinator position in 2015.

Through its church planting program BLMiss will immediately facilitate the planting of churches that plant churches.

Through its church planting program BLMiss will immediately assist in the formation of healthy sending churches through a three year process.

This is a primary responsibility of the Board for Child, Youth and Family Ministries, which BLMiss will seek to support in the medium to long term, by collaborating with BCYFM in regard to missional strategies and the provision of resources.

New...

## LCA Strategic Goals

### 2.2 Encourage strong missional-oriented leadership by supporting pastors, lay workers and other leaders to be effective ministers of Christ in a changing world.

02. Develop strategies to identify people, both within Australia and from overseas, who are gifted in evangelism and capable to support mission-focused initiatives at the local level.
03. Enhance and expand training for people who have been identified with the giftedness to lead and strengthen mission capacity at a local level.
04. Develop strategies to identify, train and engage people from ethnic communities with evangelising leadership gifts, and support them to work within those communities.
05. Develop training programs that build capacity in community engagement, organisation and mobilisation.
06. Identify, support and learn from 'centres of excellence' and establish ways to ensure that the lessons are shared and applied.

## BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

In the first instance the focus of BLMiss in regard to leadership development will be through the training associated with its church planting program.

BLMiss will immediately work with sending congregations and partner congregations and their district officials to identify leaders and team members for church planting projects.

BLMiss will immediately provide formation and training for church planters and evangelists for the church planting program.

ALC and the districts provide training, mentoring and support for Specific Ministry Pastors of ethnic communities. In an ongoing way BLMiss will monitor the effectiveness of these processes and make recommendations to the College of Bishops, as applicable.

In an ongoing way BLMiss will work with our African & Asian communities to identify potential future pastors and other leaders and to begin investing in their training.

In the medium term BLMiss will provide resources for congregations and church plants to listen to and engage with their communities. We recognise that this is also core business for ALWS and other agencies so BLMiss will seek to collaborate with others when appropriate.

See strategy under 2.3.2



**LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
OF AUSTRALIA  
*where love comes to life*

New...

## LCA Strategic Goals

### 3A1 Improve capability and performance of our leaders

01. Establish ways to identify and fast-track development of potential leaders (spiritual, administrative, mission)
02. Continue to build appropriate training programs to develop emerging leaders and support their ongoing leadership development needs.
03. Improve support programs to ensure care for leaders in their respective areas of ministry

### 3A3 Improve governance and management structures

01. Ensure that governance structures are appropriate to the current needs and requirements of the LCA
02. Streamline and align management-related functions for greater efficiency to better support the achievement of the LCA's Objects and strategic priorities

## BLMiss Strategies & Reflections

See strategies under 2.2



In the medium term BLMiss will develop processes for appropriate, supportive, non-controlling oversight of church planting projects by pastors and other leaders of sending congregations.

In regard to the governance relationship between sending congregations and their church plants, and taking into account the changing contexts in which the church works and plants new churches, BLMiss will draft processes, in the medium term, that focus on objects and outcomes and not on control and regulations.

The processes by which the LCA recognises membership, collects statistics and authorises participation in the life of the wider church will need to be reassessed.