

# Intentional Supply Ministry Report

Glen Waverley Uniting Church Feb-Sep 2023



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For the Church Council Meeting on 21 Aug 2023

## BACKGROUND

This report is a reflection of my ministry at Glen Waverley Uniting Church from Feb till mid Sep 2023. The term 'Intentional Supply Ministry' is not normally used in Uniting Church, but this role can help to focus particular areas of ministry that a congregation needs in transitional period. In Glen Waverley's case, one minister has moved to other placement at the end of 2022 and the other minister is preparing retirement at the end of 2023. In order to prepare this ministry team change, the congregation made two profiles for the new ministry team and JNC was actively discerning God's guidance. For this transitional period, Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal raised a possible Supply Ministry suggestion and I suggested "Intentional Supply Ministry" so that both the congregation and myself can focus on clear direction and effectively engage a meaningful ministry development for the incoming ministry team. On 19th of Jan, during a zoom meeting between leaders of the congregation and myself, three priorities below were agreed and following church council meeting on 23rd Jan they were endorsed;

- 1) Building up Intercultural Ministry
- 2) Leading worship
- 3) Training congregational leadership

In order to support these areas, Hoon requested a task group, and the council re-activated Intercultural Task Group to work together in these areas of focus.



## ACTIONS IN EACH PRIORITIES

### 1) Building up Intercultural Ministry

- (1) Intercultural Task Group: Monthly meeting was agreed by members with hybrid meeting (both face-to-face and zoom) at the first Friday of the month. During these meetings, the task group assisted the preparation of the Indonesian Festival and Intercultural worship workshop, discussing many aspect of intercultural ministry within the congregation.
- (2) Assisting Indonesian Festival (5-7 May): there was already a group who have been preparing this Indonesian Festival and continuing relationship building with GMIM, Riedel congregation. The task group actively involved to organise the festival, especially providing theological and cultural perspective in building relationship with mutual respect instead of colonial hospitality relationship which has one way of giving and the other just receiving.
- (3) Intercultural Bible Study: 10 sessions of Intercultural Bible Study and 3 sessions of DNA Bible Study has been offered on the first and third Tuesday of the month, 1pm face-to-face and 7:30pm hybrid with zoom session. These Bible Studies are designed to build up **cultural intelligence(CQ)** in order to increase skills and understandings when we engage with different cultural groups, not just ethnic boundaries, but also generational or theological boundaries. These studies, ultimately enables us to cross-over boundaries in our community we are called to serve and hopefully continue to build relationship with others. We started with defining multiculturalism and learned from movie stories and biblical stories to learn cultural intelligences and in the summarised format of 3 DNA studies, how to be a live-giving church, as a community and individuals, providing different perspective from the old invasive evangelism of Christendom paradigm to the invitational and inclusive evangelism for the post-modern and post-Christendom world we are living. Seven key learnings when we cross boundaries are identified and 10 ways to improve cultural intelligence are shared as bellow.

#### **Seven Key learnings when we cross boundaries**

1. Listen to God's calling
2. Leave your comfort zone - support system, biases
3. Communicate without presumption
4. Build relationship with mutual respect
5. Be the blessing to others
6. Pursue the truth - submerge yourself into God
7. Trust God and be yourself

**10 ways to improve cultural intelligence**

1. Understand your own cultural background.
2. Make an effort to learn about other cultures.
3. Seek out opportunities to interact with people from other cultures.
4. Try to become more aware of your own cultural biases and assumptions.
5. Be open-minded.
6. Be flexible.
7. Be patient.
8. Communicate effectively.
9. Focus on building relationships.
10. Learn a new language. (<https://blog.talaera.com/cultural-intelligence>)

**Lists of Intercultural Bible Study**

	Video Clip	Topic	Bible Story	Bible passage
1	60 Minutes - Has Multiculturalism failed?	Defining Multiculturalism	Abraham's Cross-cultural Journey	Gen 12:1-13
2	Boston Legal - We are a Christian nation and this is our time.	Majority and Minority	Joshua's Cross-cultural Challenge	Joshua 1:1-11
3	Terminal - ignoring the rules, but concentrating on the people	Language Issue Rule vs People	Pentecost: Cross-cultural Event	Gen 11:1-9, Acts 2:1-13
4	School Ties- Antisemitism in school	Crossing Racial Boundary	Philip's Cross-cultural Message	Acts 8:26-40
5	Rabbit-proof Fence-Neil the Devil	Crossing Social Boundary	Peter's Cross-cultural Vision	Acts 10:1-20,25-35
6	Gov. Ad. & Kick-Footy & Soccer	Different Group Dynamic	Paul's Cross-cultural Mission	Acts 20:1-3, 25-36
7	Shrek- People have problem with me	Friendship without presumption	Moses' Corss-cultural Life	Exodus 1:8-22
8	The Matrix- Choice of Red pill or Blue pill	Choice to pursue the truth	Ruth's Cross-cultural Choice	Ruth 1:1-18
9	Remember the Titans-Creating a team	Courage to cross racial boundary	Esther's Cross-cultural Courage	Esther 4:5-17
10	The Last Crusade- three challenges	Penitence, Word of God and Leap of faith	Denial's Cross-cultural Faith	Daniel 1:7-15, 6:13-16, 19-23

**List of DNA Bible Study**

DNA of the Early Churches- Church (Advent study)		
Week 1	God's church in crisis?	What is the church? (Acts1:1-11)
Week 2	Church after Christendom	Who are the disciples? (Acts1:12-26)
Week 3	Living in the Post-Modern world	Who is the Holy Spirit(Acts2:1-21)
Week 4	Post-Christendom <i>ekklesia</i>	Fellowship of the believers(Acts2:22-47)
DNA of the Uniting Church- Jesus (Lenten Study )		
Week 1	Uniting Church in transition	What do we believe(Acts3:1-15)
Week 2	Secular to Multifaith Society	Who is Jesus(Acts3:12-26)
Week 3	Living as Christian radicals	Why did Jesus die?(Acts4:1-12)
Week 4	History of Multiculturalism in UCA	Why and how should I read the Bible? (Acts 4:13-22)
Week 5	Basis of Union and other inheritances	Why and how do I pray?(Acts4:23-37)
DNA of Growing Churches- Movement (Easter Study)		
Week 1	The idol of Church Growth	What is not a growing church?(Acts 5:25-42)
Week 2	Four scenarios of our future	What burdens us not to grow?(Acts 10:1-20)
Week 3	Attractional to Kingdom model	What drives us to grow?(Acts 9:1-18)
Week 4	Mission or Worship	Life-giving Church. How?(Acts8:9-25)

## 2) Leading Worship

It was important to support the ministry team with leading worship as one minister already left and the responsibilities on Neil has been increased. I have shared the responsibility with Neil and the team during my time and trying to continue to build up cultural intelligence in the message as well as the Bible Studies.

The key points were emphasised with following 3-Cs, which I believe the important keys to understand the biblical messages and to build up cultural intelligence;

- (1) Christ-centred
- (2) Cross-cultural
- (3) Christian Movement

With these keys, members of the congregation are encouraged to see things from a different perspective, like Copernican revolution where Geo-centric paradigm was changed to Helios-centric paradigm, indicating our "I-centred" worldview also need to change to "Jesus-centred" worldview.

I brought two illustrations to congregation in order to explain, 1) Global Worship 2) Mt. Everest. If we see things from God's perspective our 1 hour worship is only part of 24 hours non-stop worship as the time zone changes around the globe and the top and bottom of the Mt Everest is not even a little bump in God's perspective from the universe. These perspective change or culture change is the foundation in building up cultural intelligence as well as spiritual perspective. I am also thankful to God for the lectionary readings during my time were all speaking some aspect of these 3 Cs and I didn't have trouble preaching the same message to one week at 9.15am group and next week at 11am with different Bible readings.

## 3) Training congregational leadership

(1) The first suggestion was to prepare "**Intercultural Worship Workshop**" (Sun, 16 July, 2pm) based on our Bible Studies and cultural intelligence that have been learned. The task group organised with me suitable time, contents and format of the workshop and it has been well prepared and following contents were shared and discussed;

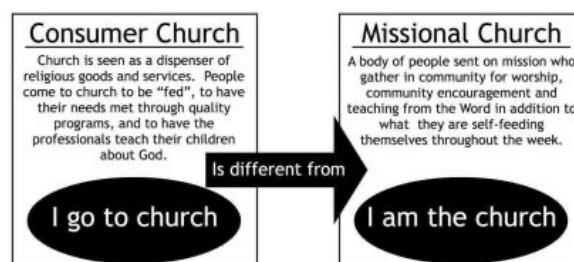
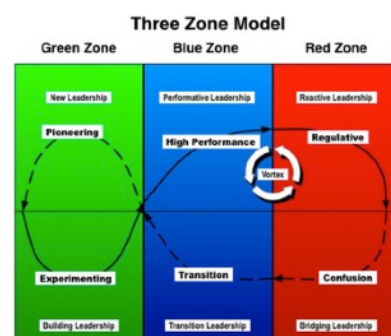
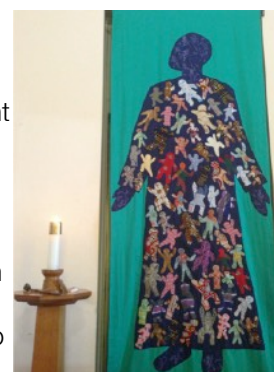
Session 1: Understanding Worship

Session 2: Using Cultural intelligence

At the first session, we discussed the meaning of worship that is a space where God's revelation and Human response are happening. Intercultural worship also need to fulfil these two way communication and help different groups in the community to encounter God's presence in worship. For this purpose, intercultural worship should be using i) inclusive language ii) inclusive action and iii) inclusive attitude. In the second session, reminding Cultural intelligence we learned from Intercultural Bible Study, we reviewed intercultural worship ideas including reviewing our Indonesian Festival combined service.

### (2) Church council Devotions

As part of a leadership training, I volunteered monthly Church Council devotion time to introduce missional frameworks and leadership models. In May council meeting, Three zone model was introduced and it explains different style of leadership in different stages of the life cycle in an organisation. Especially the danger of votes was introduced when the organisation focus on recovering the high performance stage with quick solutions, instead going through deeper discernment process with proper review and transitional stages. In June council meeting, Triple-loop Learning process was introduced so that the leaders can ask proper question of our identity first, instead of quick solutions of how to fix our problem or changing goals. In July council meeting, the concept of Missional church was introduced in comparison to Consumer church. In August council meeting, the DNA of UCA with five loaves and two fish illustration is once again mentioned as a tool for an invitational evangelism with the spyglass story by Richard Evans.



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## A BRIEF REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

Last seven and half month of Intentional Supply Ministry at Glen Waverley, can be considered a short time to learn everything, but I clearly experienced many signs of God's presence and witnessed many blessings here and there in the congregation both in ministry and mission.

Even in multicultural/intercultural ministry, there are many outstanding activities and programs are already in place, serving different needs of different cultural groups. Different worship services on Sunday are just a reflection of our diverse intercultural ministry practice, because if we encourage different groups to develop their own cultural characteristics and energy, each group

can specialise and build up their own strength to invite others to share God's love and grace, instead of putting everything in one basket to struggle and to waste our energy to fiddle with each other's differences.

Based on my limited experiences in last 26 years in VicTas synod, I believe there are not many congregations that desires and actually implements to be an intercultural church.

However I also collected some negative opinions that we are not doing enough and need to do more. I believe these feelings are coming from some different understandings and expectations of multiculturalism.

Following points are some of reasons why people may feel negative about our current intercultural ministry;

- 1) Too many programs but not enough communication and focused/agreed direction
- 2) Still living with Sociological multiculturalism that considers minority groups to be assimilated or educated.
- 3) Misunderstanding of the unity in diversity, trying superficial union not allowing diversity.
- 4) Inherited Christendom system that is no longer serving current post-modern society and people.
- 5) Lack of communication and wide-spread culture of despair, constantly discouraging innovative ideas.

Despite of these mixture of unhealthy assumptions within the congregation, we still have much deeper desire to be a healthy intercultural church and participate in God's Mission (*Missio Dei*) that is intercultural relationship building in our community.

Rev. Dev Anandarajan said, being an intercultural Church means a church with "mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of indigenous and second peoples in the total life, mission and practices of the whole church".

No matter what terminology we use, multicultural, cross-cultural or intercultural, as long as we have mutual respect and full participation as one body of Christ, we are intercultural church and will be able to grow as an inclusive and life-giving church. With new ministry team to be embark in 2014, I pray that we can continue to use cultural intelligence and be able to build a healthy body of Christ.

I also would like to express my deepest appreciation to the whole congregation their support and working together during my time here. It has been a great blessing for me personally as well as learning many things. May God continue to bless us and guides us into God's continuing intercultural ministry and mission. Amen.



## Recommendations

- 1) To receive this report.
- 2) To continue the Intercultural Task Group within the Church Council with regular reporting such as three monthly or as the task group decide appropriate. Possible areas the task group can oversight are; (1) support Indonesian fellowship, (2) promote intercultural event including cultural festival, (3) recommending Bible Readers in other language, (4) recruiting further members from culturally diverse groups.
- 3) To build up leaders with language skills such as Indonesian or Chinese to prepare future relationship development in our community. It would be helpful to build up leadership team before developing culturally diverse fellowship groups.
- 4) To continue building relationship with Riedel Indonesian congregation for it is a great opportunity to expand our cultural exposure and learn from each other's different faith journey, both culturally and theologically.
- 5) To consider intercultural month every year, preferably in July when there is UCA's intercultural labouring Sunday, organising special worship and programs for culturally diverse experience and opportunity to invites community.
- 6) To consider training welcomers, wearing name tags and displaying welcoming signs in many languages so that the community can notice our intention to be inclusive and intercultural church.

