

**THE SOCIAL CHANGES RESULTING IN AN INCREASING ‘DISCONNECT’ BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY/CULTURE, THE CHURCH’S PERCEIVED IRRELEVANCE, AND DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH [**

***This broad topic was seen to be the biggest issue facing us, and the church in general, when discussed at Church Council***

Some of the’ thought starters’ are in the following questions. A few comments from the Council follow each question:

**1. In what areas has the community / culture ‘grown apart’ from the culture, interests and forms of the Church?**

**What does this look like, given the recognised ‘disconnect’ between the Church and wider community/culture?**

Church was the centre of community; or, in a less complicated society was it one of the institutions that held society together? (Family. Church. Police, Army. Government)

Society is no longer a simple society with generally held beliefs and values. Technology, instant communication, global transport, different patterns of employment (or unemployment) change the very way we live. It is a 7 day 24 hour world.

The views and values of the different generations separate us. It is a multi-faith society– or some believe they have no faith. The church has different or no relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Priorities are governed by availability of time, work, money, family needs and personal aspirations.

A person’s community is their contact list – email, facebook, fellow workers.

The church is seen to be out of step with society - science; church preaching and practice; child abuse Royal Commission’

We live in the “I” world, not the “We” world.

An associated and following question might be:

**2. Is it feasible to think of this as an opportunity that we can plan to capitalise on - or is it more a case of do we have a ‘value’ that we need to adopt for all our planning?**

What do you think? How do you see it?

**3. How might we as a church ‘connect’ with the wider community – through action and/or communication and/or relationships?**

Be in touch with the community. Be tuned to the community and know the needs, hopes, fears, passions etc all around.

Be a friend. Have a friend Look for the ‘God moments’ that arise to do or say (and often think!)

Be an example – love, serve, listen and share.

All of this assumes:

- a) We love our God and believe it is his way;
- b) We have faith that says we are part of God's creation and are walking with him in the daily making of his kingdom being on earth for all.
- c) We will live our faith and not be ashamed of it.

**All of the above come from our views within the church. We are possibly/probably right. But have we asked those 'outside' of the church what they think? How do they see it?**

**4. Are we thinking of this as something we can plan to 'do' together - or something we expect a minister or 'other people' to do for us?**

For our thinking and discussion. That will shape our 'what' and 'how'.

**5. How do we expect 'connection' to relate to our ministry, mission and growth? Are we thinking 'new people coming to (old) church - or are we thinking 'new ways of being church that will share the love/life of Christ with people wherever they are'?**

More thinking and thoughts needed.

**6. What leadership, equipping or other resourcing is required to capitalise on this opportunity, whatever it is?**

This will shape our praying, planning, acting and paying.

**REMEMBER – WE ARE NOW LIVING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**