

The church's mission coworkers immerse themselves in local culture, seek to hear the voice of the local people, and respond by offering support, encouragement and empowerment. This is particularly so in the area of human rights, where the dignity of people made in the image of God must always be respected, however different their way of life may be from that of the mission coworker.

This model has mutual benefits - mission coworkers learn about themselves as well as others, through their experiences. Inevitably, they have revealed to them new and life-changing aspects of God which they are able to share on their return to Australia.

The Uniting Church constantly seeks to affirm its biblical and theological understanding that "Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries". (basis of union para 2)

Leadership

"The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ has commanded his Church to proclaim the gospel both in words and in the two visible acts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper" (basis of union, para. 6). It baptises those who confess the Christian faith and children presented for baptism. It takes responsibility for their instruction and nourishment in the faith. It ordains those it believes God has called to be ministers of the word and deacons. It commissions lay people it believes God has called to be elders, lay preachers, youth workers and community ministers.

Vital statistics

The Uniting Church is the third largest Christian denomination in Australia. It has around 2,800 congregations, 51 presbyteries and seven synods. Uniting Church members number 300,000 while 1.3 million Australians claim an association.

Uniting Churches are found throughout Australia.

The church has a special ministry, through Frontier Services, to the people of the outback - some of its ministers are "patrol padres" and "flying padres".

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress is the Aboriginal arm of the church, with 10,000 to 15,000 Aboriginal and Islander people involved.

From 5-7 per cent of Uniting Church members worship in languages other than English, in 25 different language groupings plus various Aboriginal tribal languages.

The church is diverse, with a range of views and practices in theological and spiritual emphasis, worship style, social opinions and mission focus.

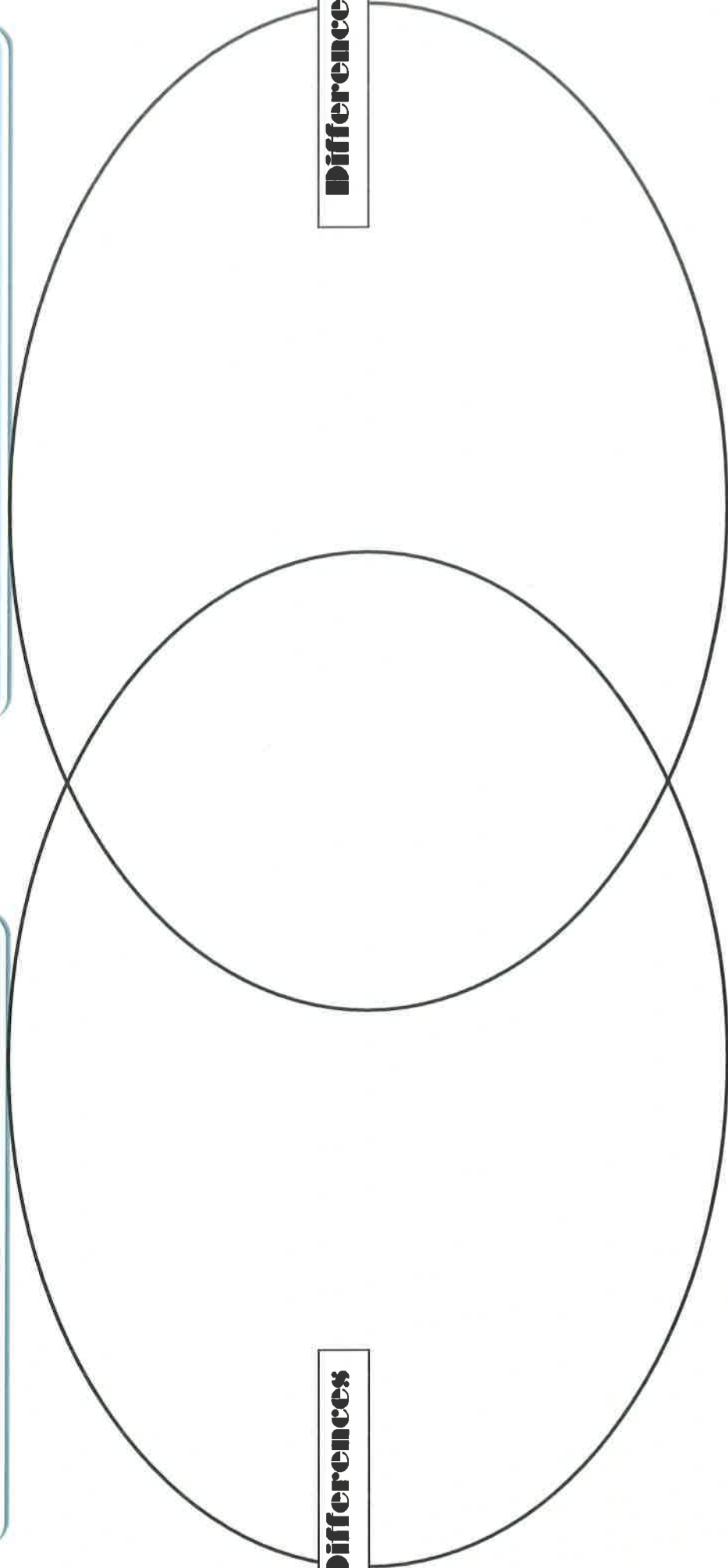
It has 48 schools, ranging from long-established schools with large enrolments to small recently established low-fee schools.

More than 20,000 people are employed by the church in community services work, particularly in aged care, Lifeline, hospitals, nursing, family support services, youth services, and care for the homeless.

A national agency guides the way the church tries to live with understanding, peace and harmony with people of other faiths.

Presbyterian

Christian reformed



Differences

Differences

Similarities



Christian Reformed Churches of Australia

Grace alone Christ alone Faith alone Scripture alone



Biblical Standard

The beliefs and doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church of Australia are based on the Holy Bible, God's infallible written Word contained in the 66 books the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks.

Beliefs: Doctrinal Standards

The Christian Reformed Church of Australia subscribes to the following confessions:

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Belgic Confession

The Canons of Dordt

The Westminster Confession

Beliefs: Ecumenical Creeds

The Christian Reformed Church of Australia subscribes to the following three creeds:

The Apostles' Creed

The Athanasia Creed

The Nicene Creed

Another valuable resource is: Our World Belongs to God

A Contemporary Testimony

What the Presbyterian Church of Australia Believes

Doctrine

The highest standard by which the Church's belief and practice is to be measured is the Word of God; the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. So that others can clearly understand what the Presbyterian Church of Australia believes is taught in the Bible, the Church has adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith (with two minor amendments) as a statement of its key doctrines. While the Church believes the Confession sets forth Biblical doctrines accurately and reliably, the Confession is always referred to as the subordinate standard, and the Bible is the supreme standard. You will find the Church's doctrine of the Bible defined in Chapter 1 of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Confession of Faith is quite detailed, and explains the Bible's teaching on God, Creation, the wonder of being human and the awfulness of sin, and the whole work of God in salvation. The Confession is careful to emphasise that this salvation is by the sovereign Grace of God. It also sets out clear positions on living the Christian Life, and worshipping as a part of the Church in society. The Confession ends with a simple statement on the expectation that Christ will one day return.

Copies of the Westminster Confession of Faith (as amended by the Presbyterian Church of Australia) can normally be obtained from the Church Office in your State. Copies of the original form of the Confession are generally available from most Christian bookshops, and various editions of the Confession in a more modern English are also available.

At the time the Presbyterian Church of Australia was formed, it also adopted a Declaratory Statement. The Declaratory Statement does not replace the Bible or the Westminster Confession of Faith, but was designed to show how the Westminster Confession of Faith is to be interpreted and used by this Church. The introductory wording from the 1901 Scheme of Union is given below, and shows how these are all related.

The Supreme Standard of the united church shall be the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments:

The Subordinate Standard in the united church shall be the Westminster Confession of Faith, read in the light of the following declaratory statement:

The Declaratory Statement has six clauses. Among other things, these clauses require the Church to be grounded on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, to accept the events of the incarnation, life, death resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the events at Pentecost as real supernatural events, to be eager to preach the gospel to all, to hold out the moral law of God as binding on all people, to affirm the freedom of the Church from all civil headship and control, and to allow liberty of opinion on matters in

the subordinate standard not essential to the doctrine it teaches so long as this liberty is not abused to the injury of the unity and peace of the Church.

When a minister or elder is first ordained (specially set apart for their work in the Church) they make a solemn declaration that they personally accept these doctrines, and they promise to keep on teaching and supporting these beliefs throughout their ministry. They also promise to fulfil their duties as set down in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. The promises are repeated each time they take up work as a minister or elder in another congregation. These promises are summarized in what is called a Formula which all ministers and elders sign. [see appendix]

Worship

The worship of the Presbyterian Church has always been marked by simplicity and reverence. It consists of praise, prayer, the expounding and preaching of the Word of God, and the sacraments. In the Presbyterian Church, the minister has the privilege and special calling to arrange the worship service and to preach, and this will naturally lead to some variations from congregation to congregation. The central purpose of worship is always to bring glory to God, and this must always control what happens in a worship service. Occasionally someone approved by the minister may be invited to preach, but the minister is always answerable to other ministers and elders (i.e. the Presbytery, see below) for what happens.

The Church believes that there are only two sacraments; Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ought to be observed properly and carefully. Christian baptism is only to be administered to those who become Christians as adults, or to the children of at least one Christian parent. It is not a social or community ritual, and will almost always be administered as part of a regular worship service. Baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling or pouring of water, but those who have received baptism by immersion in other Christian Churches are also recognised as baptised. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered in all our congregations, more or less frequently, as the minister and elders may determine.

Use the Hillsong Mission Statement to organise their beliefs in the categories below.

Beliefs about God

Beliefs about Jesus

Beliefs about forgiveness

Beliefs about sin

Beliefs about the Bible

Pentecostal

HILLSONG CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

To reach and influence the world by building a large Bible-based church, changing mindsets and empowering people to lead and impact in every sphere of life.

This mission is outworked through two major campuses (City and Hills), a city-wide network of Connect Groups, contributing ministries and extension services.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that the Bible is God's Word. It is accurate, authoritative and applicable to our every day lives.

We believe in one eternal God who is the Creator of all things. He exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is totally loving and completely holy.

We believe that sin has separated each of us from God and His purpose for our lives.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ as both God and man is the only One who can reconcile us to God. He lived a sinless and exemplary life, died on the cross in our place, and rose again to prove His victory and empower us for life.

We believe that in order to receive forgiveness and the 'new birth' we must repent of our sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and submit to His will for our lives.

We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptised in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues.

We believe that God has individually equipped us so that we can successfully achieve His purpose for our lives which is to worship God, fulfil our role in the Church and serve the community in which we live.

We believe that God wants to heal and transform us so that we can live healthy and prosperous lives in order to help others more effectively.

We believe that our eternal destination of either Heaven or hell is determined by our response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back again as He promised.

BAPTIST UNION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

AS APPROVED BY THE 2003 ASSEMBLY

1. THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE GODHEAD

There is one God Who is eternal personal Spirit. He is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness and love. God is Triune in essential being and revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Godhead is eternally one with God the Father of whose person and glory Jesus is the accurate expression. To become human He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, the nature of God and human nature, were united in one Person; truly God and truly human.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity is eternally one with the Father and the Son yet He is sent by Them to achieve the divine purpose in the world and in the Church.

4. THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the infallible Word of God. They were written by holy people of God inspired by the Holy Spirit and have supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

5. THE SINFULNESS OF PEOPLE

People were made in the image of God and for fellowship with God. By transgression of God's command humankind fell from fellowship with God and their nature was corrupted. As a consequence all people are spiritually dead under Satan's dominion and control and subject to God's wrath and condemnation. Therefore, apart from God's grace, people are helpless and hopeless.

6. CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR THE SIN OF MAN

In order to redeem people from the guilt, penalty and power of sin, Jesus Christ became human and died a sacrificial death as our representative substitute. By His resurrection, God's acceptance of His atoning death was demonstrated. This atonement is sufficient for the whole world, but effective only in those who received it. The sinner is justified and reconciled to God, not through any personal merit, but solely on the basis of God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus Christ received through faith.

7. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the acceptance of God's provision of salvation. The Holy Spirit convinces sinners of their sinfulness, leads them to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and so brings them to spiritual birth as God's children and to fellowship in Christ. Working within the life of believers the Holy Spirit makes real the presence of Christ, witnesses to their relationship with God, leads into all truth, bestows gifts

for effective service and produces graces for holy living.

8. THE CHURCH

The Church is the body of people whom God has separated from the world through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. All regenerate persons are members of the universal Church of God which takes local form wherever groups of believers unite for worship, fellowship and service in accordance with scriptural principles. All believers are called to a priestly ministry in the offering of spiritual sacrifices and sent into the world to be witnesses. God calls individuals to positions of oversight and leadership or to special ministries. The Church recognises such by ordaining pastors, commissioning missionaries, appointing deacons and other leaders, following New Testament practice.

9. THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS ONLY BY IMMERSION

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a public declaration of a person's faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In accordance with New Testament Scripture it should be administered only by total immersion which symbolises the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection, the remission of sins and the believer's dedication of himself to God to live and walk in newness of life.

10. THE COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ instituted by Him to be celebrated with the elements of bread and wine by believers in Christ until the end of the age. It commemorates and declares our thanks for the Lord's substitutionary death. The celebration of the ordinance expresses our fellowship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ as members of the Body of which He is the Head.

11. THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

At the end of this age, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in His glory to the earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom of God awaits His return.


12. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

At the end of the age, there is to be a resurrection both of the righteous and the unrighteous. After death people's bodies return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous to be with Him and the unrighteous to be reserved for the judgment.

13. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS IN A FUTURE STATE

God has appointed a day of final judgement for the world. At that time Jesus Christ will judge every person and each will receive reward or punishment according to their deeds. Those judged righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

Brainstorm



Justify the need
for unity among
Christian denominations