

# Vision and Values of Metropolitan Community Church

*Prepared by David Coltheart, Pastor MCC Brisbane*

## History

In 1968, at the age of 28, former Pentecostal minister Troy Perry was searching for renewed spiritual life. But after his partner announced their relationship was over, Troy tried to commit suicide. After much prayer, Perry experienced a renewed sense of spirituality. As he continued to pray, a complete stranger encouraged him by saying: "God has a ministry for you. You are going to pastor a church."

After Perry placed an advertisement in the *Advocate* magazine in October 1968, 12 people joined him at his Los Angeles home. They sang, prayed and shared in the Communion service. They continued meeting weekly in Perry's lounge room until the following year when they shifted to rented accommodation in the nearby Women's Club. Due to discrimination, the church, by now numbering 200 attendees, was forced to move several times, eventually meeting in a theatre in Hollywood. At the end of 1968, Perry conducted the first public same sex wedding ceremony in the USA.

In 1970, representatives from eight other churches met in the first general conference of MCC. The following year, the Mother Church was established in Los Angeles with more than 1,000 members present. A woman pastor, Freda Smith was appointed within MCC in 1972.

Expansion overseas began in 1973 with the opening of the first churches outside of the United States. In 1985, MCC held a 50-hour AIDS prayer vigil in San Diego. By the following year, it became known as the International AIDS Day, which has since spread around the world and is held on 1 December annually. During the 1980s and 1990s, MCC conducted thousands of funerals and memorial services at a time when no other churches would provide dignity to victims of HIV and AIDS.

MCC Brisbane began as Christ Community Church in 1974. It was renamed Metropolitan Community Church Brisbane and became part of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) after the visit of Rev Troy Perry in 1975. After years of meeting in various parts of Brisbane, including Woolloongabba, Kelvin Grove, Wynnum and West End, we moved to the Uniting Church in New Farm in mid-2015. Rev Leigh Neighbour, who retired in June 2015, is our Pastor Emeritus. The interim pastor for MCC Brisbane is Pastor David Coltheart. David has had more than 30 years of pastoral and evangelistic ministry in a church of another denomination before becoming a member of MCC in 2012.

Membership of MCC has grown to over 43,000 members and adherents, in almost 300 congregations in 22 countries. An updated Statement of Faith was voted at the MCC General Conference in Vancouver, Canada in July 2016.

## Mission

*Be MCC: Transforming ourselves as we transform the world.*

There are three parts to our wider mission:

1. Metropolitan Community Church is an increasingly global and diverse people. We proclaim and practice a liberating spirituality. We aim to address the issues of our world.
2. We are called to equip leaders, congregations and ministries to do the work of justice and compassion. We strive to integrate our sexuality and spirituality, gender identity and expression.
3. We will do this through training, theological exploration, expanding partnerships and engaging with other justice movements.

## Vision

Metropolitan Community Church is compelled by an unfinished calling and a prophetic destiny. We are a global movement of spiritually diverse people fully awake to God's enduring love. Following the example of Jesus and empowered by the Spirit, we demand, proclaim and perform justice in the world.

## Values

### **1. Inclusion**

Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to be the conduits of faith where everyone is included in the family of God and where all persons are welcomed at God's table.

## ***2. Community***

We offer a safe and open community for people to worship, learn and grow in their faith. We are committed to equipping ourselves and each other to do the work God has called us to do.

## ***3. Spiritual Transformation***

We proclaim a message of liberation from religious oppression. We reach out to those experiencing God for the first time. We believe that when people are invited to experience God through the life and ministry of Christ, lives will be transformed.

## ***4. Social Action***

We are committed to resisting structures that oppress people and stand with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems. We are guided by our commitment to global human rights.

## **Statement of Purpose**

As God's liberated people, we boldly:

### ***Reclaim our Identity***

At MCC, we believe that even in our humanness, we are God's people. We are liberated from the definitions placed upon us by others. We are created by God both body and spirit. We believe our sexuality is a gift from God. We no longer distance our bodies from our experience with God. We are a people who proudly participate in the communion of body and spirit.

### ***Advance Our Call to Social Justice and Action***

At MCC, we believe that Jesus led the way in acts of compassion and acts of justice. Because we have been a people in the margins of society, we understand fully the grace that God has extended to us. We seek to distance ourselves from exclusion and draw ourselves closer to including all those who are marginalized in any way. We stand boldly with those who resist the structures of exclusion, as Jesus did, and work to ensure that all people are freed. In the margins, we are blessed.

### ***Tell the Story of God's Transforming Grace***

At MCC, we come as we are to Christ and are changed by what we find. We experience a God with open arms, inviting all to take the journey of faith and transformation. We are growing in our faith and claim that our place in society has magnified our place in God's family. We are one of the many voices of God that, until now, has been lost in the margins.

### ***Nurture the Value of Community***

At MCC, we believe our ultimate ministry is in the world. We know that in order to prepare ourselves for radical service that changes lives, we must equip ourselves and others in the safety of a supportive community. We strive to live out a message that rejects the idea that any are excluded from the family of God.

### ***Build Bridges that Liberate and Unite***

At MCC, we have experienced the soul destruction that comes from hate filled rhetoric. In restoring our souls, we find that our voices will speak the liberation that comes through peace, compassion, love, respect and grace. As followers of Jesus, we believe in everyone's privilege to work out their own salvation. While we are a Christian church who follows Jesus, we respect those of other faiths and work together with them to free all those who are oppressed by hate, disregard and violence.

## **Strategic Plan**

MCC has developed a Strategic Plan to help us live out our mission and more fully live into our vision. The Strategic Plan aligns the gifts and resources God has given us take advantage of our opportunities.

Objectives for this plan are:

- 1. Global Growth:** Become a growing multicultural, international, spiritual community.
- 2. Justice:** Claim our prophetic role as a justice movement for the 21st century.
- 3. Congregations and Ministries:** Strengthen our congregations and ministries.
- 4. People:** Cultivate, nurture, and deploy lay and clergy leaders who are equipped and empowered to carry out our global mission.
- 5. Finances:** Build a culture of generosity to achieve our vision and mission.

***MCC Brisbane needs committed, enthusiastic and regular members to fulfil our mission in our area. We need you!***