



WORKING ETHOS

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It is not always known or obvious, but Churches of Christ began as a unity movement. Known more predominantly as a restoration movement, restoration was originally seen as a means to a means to an end; restoration would produce unity, and unity would usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

This restoration was a restoration of the New Testament norms and practices, a 'restoration of the ancient order'. It was not about new denominations and structures but about the Church on earth being one, just as Jesus prayed for his disciples and those who would follow after them in Gethsemane.

This oneness was a pattern modelled in and flowing from the Godhead. Founded under certain cultural conditions in the early American republic, the DNA of this group of disciples, moving to and from several other global locations, likewise caught fire in Australia.

The 20th century saw significant evangelism by these churches of Christ pioneering men and women in Australia. Into the 21st century, a crisis became evident. We had lost sight of our identity. Old forms persisted, but the 'who' and the 'why' were not easily discerned. Who are we? Why do we exist? There was a sense we were stuck.

The Church is facing a new season. She always is. In this cultural moment, we are moving to the margins of our communities after having enjoyed a central place in culture. We are facing a decline. We are even facing a kind of death. Not the kind to produce fear, panic, or hopelessness, but the kind that leads to renewal. There is hope, but we must face this reality. We must name it. All churches and denominations are facing this. And in so doing, just perhaps the spark that began this network of churches is about to be fanned into flame.

The time for competing against each other is over. The need for the unity of the Church is paramount. We need each other, and we know it in new ways. We will know it in deeper ways still before this decade is finished. More than ever, the world needs to see this witness.

And, so we come, humbly, not assuming our right to exist, but seeking God for what He would have for this part of his eternal Church. As a network, we are locally governed, diverse in expression, affiliated for purpose, and united through our ethos, in and under the authority of Jesus, the Logos. It is the Logos that precedes our ethos. And from our shared history and our shared voices, these following images have emerged.

Something that attempts to name our culture, our ways of being together for this time and place. Our ethos. This is what we are for! And it is a living thing. As we think generationally, to the future horizon, we hope this work will continue to be refreshed by those that follow, as frequently as the times and context necessitate. All of this for the glory of God and the good of all.



fresh hope

Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT

Our ethos consists of seven distinctions, not one of them unique to Churches of Christ, not one of them more important than the other. It's their combination that is powerful, that shapes our presence, purpose, and horizon.

SENT – with Kingdom Priorities

We proclaim and demonstrate with compassion the good news of Jesus. We are sent by Him into the world, with a personal and shared mission to make disciples. Within this mission, larger than ourselves, we work with others to see His Kingdom come.

Matt 28:18-20, Luke 19:10, Ephesians 4:11-14, John 17, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

ANCHORED – in the Scriptures

We have the Scriptures as our anchor, tethering us to God and His redemptive story, preventing spiritual drift. In them we find life-giving, soul-enriching and mission-equipping truth. They are complete within themselves, holding the place of God-given authority in the personal and shared Christian life. The scriptures unify us in the essentials of faith, while also providing a framework for exploring the variety of application in love.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, Luke 24:32, Hebrews 4:12

EMPOWERED – By the Spirit

We rely on the indwelling power and counsel of the Holy Spirit, humbly offering our gifts in loving service to God and others. Conscious of the spiritual battle, we walk in step with the Spirit bearing His fruit as He leads, guides and transforms us into the likeness of Jesus.

Galatians 5:16-26, John 16:13-15, Ephesians 6:12

WELCOMED - into Family

We are baptised into Christ, who makes us family with both God and each other. We acknowledge that our bonds of spiritual connection are life-giving, the breaking of which can result in hurtful loss. From a place of genuine connection and mutual accountability we sacrificially love, honour

and support one another, from generation to generation.

Romans 12:9-16, Romans 6:3, Galatians 6:2, John 1:12-13, 1 John 3:16, Philippians 2:5-11, Ephesians 1-3.

ENGAGED – in Transformation

We cultivate spiritual practises that awaken us to the presence of Jesus who transforms us by His Spirit into His likeness. We are invited into this formational process for the Glory of God, the blessing of others and the abundance of our own lives. We navigate life's experiences of suffering and joy together through the sharing of story, discernment, affirmation and communion.

Revelation 3:20, John 10:10, Proverbs 27:17, Romans 12:2, Luke 22:19-20, Romans 8:28-29

ADVENTUROUS – in Restoration

We courageously bear witness to Jesus in a rapidly changing world with creativity and innovation, gentleness and respect. Holding methodology lightly, we actively restore New Testament patterns for the Christian life in fresh ways. With reflective experimentation, we persevere in our pioneering and we champion the 'have a go' mindset.

Isaiah 43:19, Matthew 13:52, Acts 1:8, Matthew 9:14-17, 1 Peter 3:15

ALONGSIDE – in Service

We embrace humble service that equips and empowers the body of Christ, releasing the priesthood of all believers. We express this in reciprocal ministry, a mutual offering of love, gifts and resources for the extension of His Kingdom.

Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:10-13, Philippians 2:5-11, John 13:12-17, 1 Peter 2:9