

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Life is better connected.

Zambian Proverb, *'When you run alone, you run fast. But when you run together, you run far.'*

Authentic community really occurs when we value the worth of each person.

ACC Value: **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY**

Community best happens through supporting and accountable relationships.

We desire to create an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness through an attitude of inclusion.

James 2:8-9 (CEV) You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves. ⁹ But if you treat some people better than others, you have done wrong, and the Scriptures teach that you have sinned.

Stereotyping Leads to Prejudice

Stereotyping is a lazy way of lumping together everyone from a particular class or people group with certain ways of doing things.

By nature, we judge according to outward appearances.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV) For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

Prejudice is a perception problem.

Prejudice divides, isolates, and ostracizes people.

Prejudice is mostly rooted in ignorance.

*Acts 10:34-35 (NIV) Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that **God does not show favouritism** but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right."*

*Galatians 3:28 (NIV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

Jesus' perspective: no one is more superior to anyone else.

Key Statistics

- In 2019, there were over 7.5 million migrants living in Australia.
- This was 29.7% of the population that were born overseas.
- Every single country from around the world was represented in Australia's population in 2019.

- More people immigrate to, than emigrate from, Australia thereby adding to the growth of the national population.
- The various waves of migrants from numerous countries over time, have had an important effect on the diversity of Australia's population.

The Local Church is to reflect Kingdom Culture!

The challenge for every local church is to be inclusive of every ethnicity that is represented in its community.

Emphasizing one ethnic group makes the church irrelevant to other people groups. Such a church only builds walls, instead of building bridges.

The Local Church needs to separate itself from any prejudice, discrimination, segregation and racism.

- **Prejudice** judges a person's character by their outward appearance.
- **Discrimination** deprives a person of the right to have.

- **Segregation** deprives a person of the right to belong.
- **Stereotyping** deprives a person of the right to be.
- **Racism** deprives a person of the right to birth.

*Acts 10:34-35 (NIV) Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that **God does not show favouritism** but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right."*

Jesus shows no favouritism to any race that assumes it is superior to another.

People knew that Jesus saw beyond their label.

Jesus built an inclusive community of faith, that was motivated by love and acceptance.

2 Peter 3:9b (NCV) (God) does not want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives.

Galatians 6:2 (MSG) Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law.

James 1:27 (ERV) The worship that God wants is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.

1 Corinthians 9:22 (TLB) Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

As a church we must represent the inclusive mindset of Jesus!

VISION (*Why we exist*)

To be a Christ centred community of believers who obey the Great Commission.

We must show the **way** of Jesus, by being an **authentic** Christ follower in a Christ following **community** pursuing those far away from Jesus!