

Synod Standing Committee Advice to the Moderatorial Nominating Committee

Needs and Issues for the Church during the 2020 – 2023 Triennium

At its meetings on 8 October, 10 December 2018 and 11 February 2019, the Synod Standing Committee discussed the forward vision for the Uniting Church in Western Australia and requested the General Secretary to prepare this advice for review by the Synod Standing Committee and to pass it on to the Moderatorial Nominating Committee in accordance with By-Law 6.5.4(b). In addition to needs and issues of the Church during the next triennium, the Standing Committee also made some more general observations about the role of Moderator and these have been included in this advice. The advice should be read and considered in the context of the relevant Regulations, By-Laws and Rules.

Needs and Issues of the Synod for the Next Triennium:

The Diversity of the Moderator's Role

The office of Moderator is a diverse ministry within the Synod. The incumbent may be called on to be Pastor, Proclaimer, Prophet.

The Moderator, from time to time, may need to be:

- visionary
- counsellor
- encourager
- conflict manager
- facilitator of change
- reconciler
- healer
- net-worker
- interpreter
- advocate
- consultant
- risk-taker
- spokesperson

The person elected by the Synod in September 2019 to serve as Moderator for 2020-2023 will be instrumental in binding together the people of the Uniting Church in Western Australia within the Vision and Mission Principles adopted as the Synod's Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The Moderator will be a member of the UCA:

1. of integrity, in good standing in the UCA, who adheres to the Basis of Union.
2. whose spirituality, wisdom, sense of humour, pastoral insight and strong sense of the presence of God in the everyday is recognised and respected by others.
3. responsive to the call of God through the Church, whose ministry (lay or ordained) has included leadership in Councils and Committees of the UCA beyond the congregation.
4. whose leadership experience demonstrates a willingness to consult and an ability to listen deeply to the Gospel and the church, and interpret back to the church the challenging and prophetic Gospel message relevant to diverse contemporary faith communities.

5. who is capable of managing diverse agendas within short timeframes, working well to deadlines while often under pressure.
6. who is confident in the use of consensus decision-making in the councils of the church, and who values the discernment opportunities it offers in inclusive participation.
7. who promotes the ideals of good governance within each council of the UCA (Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries, Church Councils, Congregations) and understands the limits of each council's authority.
8. who appreciates the particular issues and opportunities arising in the Western Australia Synod as outlined in the rest of this document.
9. who is sensitive to and willing to nurture the special relationship of the Synod with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Western Australia.
10. who is sensitive to and willing to nurture the cross-cultural nature of the Synod.
11. who enjoys the company and enthusiasm of those under 30 years of age, values their insights and is unfazed by communicating via social media.
12. who demonstrates a range of skills and experience, and the flexibility necessary to represent the Synod in diverse settings and circumstances, from ecumenical and inter-faith discussions to appropriate responses to corporate, political and environmental issues, and questions of justice and peace.
13. who is not daunted by the rapidity of cultural change and generational mind shift.
14. who is able to articulate competently the decisions of the Uniting Church with courage and conviction through various media opportunities.
15. who nurtures their own journey of discipleship, setting aside time for personal reflection and devotions, their family and opportunities for re-creation and continuing education.

Broad Needs and Issues of the Church

- The Moderator gives spiritual leadership to the Church and is expected to take a lead role in encouraging her ongoing expression of her faith in Christ throughout her daily living
- We are in a 'new world' in which people do not relate to the church in the way to which we have been accustomed.
- As part of this, the demographic of the Uniting Church has changing, with implications for the age profile, the number of congregations, the size of congregations and the 'traditional' form of congregational life.
- So the Moderator will need to be able to think with imagination about missional leadership that will help the Church "to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds" (Basis of Union, Paragraph 11). He or she needs to have a Fresh Expressions mindset.
- Another way of putting this is that the Church needs someone who is passionate about the future, able to think into the future, engender hope, encourage innovation and, especially, engage with young people and with those in our migrant ethnic communities and multi-cultural congregations.
- There is a strong challenge to step up in the areas of worship, witness and service – to find new life.

Particular Circumstances and Events

- The outcome of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has led to a significant review of the Church's standards of safety for all vulnerable people and an improved compliance with regard to Professional Standards for all Ministry Agents. The Church has faced, and is likely to continue to face, a need to respond financially, emotionally and spiritually to survivors of child sexual abuse who had been in the care of the Church. The President and the Moderators of the various synods are the key spokespersons for the Church and the Moderator will need to be comfortable with speaking on these issues to the press and in offering apologies to survivors.
- During the current Triennium the Synod has moved towards a deliberate separation of Synod and Presbytery functions as defined in the Regulations. This has not been without difficulty. It will be important for the Moderator to ensure that these two interrelated councils understand their inter-conciliar nature and work together for the good of the Church. Additionally, the formation of a Congress Presbytery remains open. The current Triennium may also see the formation of non-geographic

Presbyteries in the Uniting Church and the possibility of this happening in Western Australia should not be discounted.

- Financially, the Church is likely to be strained with income limited to returns on historic investments and grants from agencies. The Moderator, as Chair of Synod, will need to be able to understand and support management in balancing the financial demands of the Church and the limitations on income.
- The Church will be in the final phase of the current Strategic Plan (2018-21) which addressed the Four Strategic Directions (Open Communication, Community Engagement, Education and Training, and Faith Formation). The Moderator will need to guide the Church in evaluating that Strategic Plan and assist in the preparation for a possible new set of Strategic Directions and Strategic Plan.

More General Observations about the Role of Moderator:

The Particularity of the Uniting Church in Western Australia

- Broadly, the Moderator needs to understand the complexities of leading the Uniting Church in Western Australia in a changing context.
- As part of the changed governance structure, the Moderator needs to be well aware of the implications of working with the Chairperson(s) of Presbytery. This involves being well oriented to the distinctive responsibilities of each role and how to manage the boundaries between them. In particular the Moderator will need to recognise the unique and special relationship which exists between the UCA and the UAICC in the possible establishment of a Congress Presbytery, and of the issues which may arise if non-geographic Presbyteries are formed.
- The Moderator requires flexibility, wisdom and an ability to grasp the complex issues with which the Church has to deal, including complex legal, ethical, business and accountability issues.
- The work of our schools and agencies, and their relationship with the wider Church is of crucial significance. The Moderator has a role as Visitor to these instrumentalities and is expected to be the primary figure in building the strength of a relationship with them and ensuring an ongoing bond.

The Boundaries of the Role

- The Moderator needs to be able to engage in a collaborative manner at the top level, able to engage in conversation and then having the ability to separate himself or herself from the conversation, knowing whether or not to make a decision and how to judge the timing of crucial decisions.

A Team Player

- It is important that the Moderator be a 'team player' - one who can generate within others a commitment to being team players, within the ethos of the Uniting Church.
- In particular, the Moderator must be able to work well with the General Secretary who, under the Regulations of the Church, is the executive officer of the Synod with executive leadership, pastoral and advisory roles. It is important that the Moderator understands the executive role of the General Secretary and the boundaries between that role and the role of Moderator.
- There are other important team relationships as well, with persons or bodies whose roles are important in the life of the Uniting Church and who represent valuable sources of wisdom and support for the Moderator. These include:
 - The Standing Committee of Synod;
 - The Synod Commissions;
 - The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress,
 - Chairpersons of Schools and Agencies;
 - The President of the National Assembly;
 - Moderators of other Synods, and
 - The Ex-Moderators and past Moderators.

Public Role and Relationships

- The Moderator is a significant public figure and leader within the community of Western Australia and it is important to both the life of the community and the work of the Church that this role be embraced and the many opportunities taken to develop good relationships. These relationships include those with his Excellency the Governor, the Premier and members of Cabinet, members of State and Federal Parliaments, civic leaders, consular staff and visiting dignitaries, and the media.
- Multicultural and cross cultural understandings and relationships need to grow and the Moderator needs to make connections and lead the Church in its appreciation of this.
- In addition to the well-understood importance of ecumenism, which for the Moderator includes developing strong relationships with the Western Australian Heads of Churches and their Association, the Moderator must also understand the contemporary importance of developing relationships with leaders of other faiths and of working in an interfaith context.

Long Term Leadership

- And finally, it is important that nominees for election as Moderator understand the long term leadership responsibilities that are involved with being elected Moderator. For a start, there is a formal seven-year commitment as Moderator elect, Moderator and then Ex-Moderator, before becoming one of the Church's past Moderators. In an important sense, having once become a Moderator, one never ceases to be a Moderator.