

## Analysis of Church Reform Priorities: CCCG Priorities matched to Synod on Synodality

CCCG reform focus	Synod Reflections	Specific Synod desired Actions/Outcomes	Synod Accountability measures	Areas for on-going CCCG reform & follow up focus	Other Comments
<i>Transparent</i>	<p>P69: The bishop is called to serve this portion of the people entrusted to him...not to perform alone...(others) are co-responsible with him.</p> <p>P77: Lay faithful should be given greater opportunities for participation...to pastoral needs of our time...co-responsibility.</p> <p>P92: “Episcopal authority is not without limits ...it may not ignore a direction which emerges through proper</p>	<p>P70: A bishop’s service is a service in, with and for the community...This is why the Synodal Assembly desires that the People of God have a greater voice in choosing bishops.</p> <p>P71: During the course of the synod the need emerged to offer bishops ongoing formation...to clarify the role of auxiliary bishops and to expand the tasks that bishops can delegate.</p> <p>P77: Lists cases where specific initiatives should be taken to achieve greater participation in decision making in various ecclesial areas.</p> <p>P92: The formula in Canon Law, “merely consultative” should be reviewed to eliminate the possibility of</p>	<p>P78: No specific mechanism is identified, but there is a clear desire for progress in these areas, particularly at the local (parish?) level, where it suggests approaches should be explored.</p> <p>P92: Decision making should be characterised in 3 aspects: (1) clearly defining the object of the consultation and who has ultimate responsibility; identifying those who ought to be consulted, those with specific competency or affected; and ensuring everyone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure bishop formation is provided/used &amp; propose input relating to it;</li> <li>• Assert rights for and advocate how lay input to bishop selection should occur;</li> <li>• Advocate for best practice mechanisms for lay participation and co-responsibility &amp; demand progress schedules and reports;</li> <li>• Advocate for &amp; monitor local explorations</li> <li>• Insist on the full adoption of the recommendations of the Report: Light from the Southern Cross, which the Australian bishops have sought to sideline and forget.</li> <li>• Serious implementation of the report now becomes a measure of</li> </ul>	<p>Part 3 of the Synod Report can fairly be seen as a validation of key points outlined in the CCCG submission to the PC.</p> <p>It is a curious fact that the views expressed by Australian Catholic laity, spurned by the Australian bishops, have now been give Synod and Papal endorsement. The Australian bishops need to explain this anomaly to the People of God in Australia and the Australian people</p>

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	<p>discernment with a consultative process...”</p> <p>P79 &amp; 80: Commitment to proper decision making, accountability and evaluation of decisions are seen as integral to responding to the Word and determining the paths of mission.</p> <p>P95 – 102: Decision making ...must be accompanied and followed by practices of accountability and evaluation, undertaken in a spirit of transparency. ..It has been requested that a greater light be shed on the meaning of transparency.</p>	<p>ambiguity...appropriate to carry out a revision of CL from a synodal perspective...</p> <p>P95 - 102: Words connected to the synodal process include: truth, loyalty, clarity, honesty, integrity, consistency, rejection of obscurity, hypocrisy, ambiguity, and absence of ulterior motives...thus when we are speaking of transparency we are referring to a fundamental</p>	<p>has access to relevant data. (2) respect for those consulted and input offered sincerely; (3) competent authority in making the decision should clearly express reasons for it. Synod states “Without concrete changes in the short term the vision of a synodal church will not be credible...will alienate the People of God who had drawn strength and hope from the synodal journey. Local churches need to find ways to implement these changes”.</p> <p>P95 - 102: All of these words and attributes must therefore</p>	<p>the extent to which the Australian bishops accept the outcomes of the Synod and the agenda of Pope Francis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCG need to formally raise the 3 aspects of consultation, discernment and decision making and announcing, with the A/bishop given the approach he has exhibited in relevant matters of the A/diocese. The point needs to be made that past practice will no longer be tolerated and that CCCG wishes to work with him to settle proper procedures for this A/d.</li> </ul> <p>All of these words (attributes) should constitute a matrix that CCCG could use to assess whether the steps being taken in a parish or diocese are consistent</p>	<p>as these matters go to findings of the Royal Commission.</p>

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		<p>attitude grounded in scripture. Transparency...safeguards the trust and credibility needed by a synodal church that is attentive to relationships.</p> <p>P98: “The absence of these practices is one of the consequences of clericalism.”</p>	<p>characterise consultation, discretion and decision making. Matters such as “privacy...can never become the pretext for a cover-up...”</p> <p>“Wherever the church enjoys trust, the practice of transparency, accountability and evaluation helps strengthen its credibility...even more critical where the church’s credibility needs rebuilding.”</p>	<p>with the outcomes sought by the Synod.</p>	

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<p><i>Accountable</i></p>	<p>P99: “It is necessary to have structures and methods for regularly evaluating the exercise of ministry...</p> <p>P102: “It seems necessary to ensure, at the very least, and everywhere of the following: Finance councils; lay participation in pastoral and financial planning; annual financial reports; periodic evaluations of all ministries and roles”</p>	<p>P79 &amp; 80: Trust is built on transparency and accountability. Mutual trust is essential for decision makers and the People of God. These elements should characterise “ecclesial discernment”.</p> <p>P88: Synod invokes the triple ‘nothing without’ principle: the bishop, the priests and the people.</p> <p>Evaluation allows a way of assisting the minister...(and) the local church in learning from experience, adjusting plans &amp; determining the outcomes of its decisions”</p> <p>P102: “This is not a bureaucratic task...but a</p>	<p>P84: Identifies 6 steps for the process of “ecclesial discernment”</p> <p>P101 Local churches are responsible for developing effective forms and processes of accountability and evaluation in a synodal way...it is also necessary to draw on the skills of those, especially lay people, who have greater expertise re accountability and evaluation. Best practice in civil society should be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The steps set out in the report provide CCCG with a check list for authentic discernment which can now be invoked with full authority by the laity.</li> <li>• Triple “nothing without” is a bulwark for acknowledging the People are legitimately a part of all decision-making processes.</li> <li>• CCCG has specific expertise in these areas that has been consistently rebuffed in the A/diocese. These matters should be confronted in light of the Synod report.</li> <li>• CCCG should make clear that it now has a Synod mandate to pursue these matters regularly and consistently.</li> </ul>	<p>Genuine discernment has been a failure in the Aust church, based on the PC experience when it was ultimately treated as a franchise held only by bishops.</p>

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		<p>powerful educational tool for a change in culture.”</p> <p>P103 – 108: The Synod insists that Diocesan &amp; Parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils be mandatory.</p> <p>P103 – 108: Rapid implementation of these entities required for achieving speedy progress on synodality. “It is necessary to ensure that members of D &amp; PCs are able to propose agenda items...ecclesial discernment will benefit from a greater openness, an ability to analyse reality and a plurality of perspectives.”</p>	<p>considered for adaption to church contexts. Implementation of accountability and evaluation processes to be included in ad limina visit reports.</p> <p>These entities are to be mandatory with rapid implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCG could offer its expertise in these areas in a constructive way, indicating that it will no longer tolerate the dissembling that has occurred to date.</li> <li>• CCCG needs to liaise with A/diocesan authorities, and offer to assist, re the manner in which advice is communicated to all parishes and levels in the A/diocese.</li> <li>• Making PPC and DPC mandatory presents a powerful checklist for CCCG to insist on within the A/diocese. It is another ‘goodwill indicator’.</li> <li>• Members ability to raise agenda items and greater openness, analysis of reality and plurality of views should be key criteria for assessing real progress.</li> </ul>	<p>A/b Prowse has never enthusiastically embraced these participatory structures and can be expected, on past performance, to hasten slowly in this area – hence it should be a major focus for CCCG.</p>

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<p><i>Inclusive</i></p>	<p>P52: Inequality between men and women is not part of God’s design.</p> <p>P60:..women continue to encounter obstacles in obtaining a fuller recognition of their charisms....this is to the detriment of serving the Church’s shared mission.</p> <p>P121: The church “...aspires to be a network of relationships” ...promotes a culture of encounter...inclusion of the marginalised...</p> <p>P124 – 129: “A synodal style allows local churches to move at</p>	<p>P99: “If the synodal church wants to be welcoming, then the culture and praxis of accountability must shape its actions at all levels.” “...the dimension of authority’s being accountable to the community is in need of restoration.”</p> <p>P110 – 119: The sense of place has changed.....multicultural and digital cultures impact thinking. Parish is distinguished by being a community that is not self-selecting.</p> <p>Placing greater value on the ‘intermediate’ spaces between local church and the universal church (e.g. provinces and national groupings) can foster a more meaningful presence</p>	<p>P60: This assembly asks for full implementation of all opportunities already provided for in Canon Law with regard to the role of women... There is no reason or impediment that should prevent women from carrying out leadership roles in the church...the question of women’s access to diaconal ministry remains open. This discernment needs to continue.</p> <p>P121: In adapting Christian life and the expression of faith to different cultures, Bishops’ Conferences need to “work with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively monitor progress on use of current opportunities in CL. (It would be useful to identify areas for progress within existing rules);</li> <li>Demand explanation for lack of initiatives within current framework;</li> <li>Continue to publicly advocate for progress on diaconate and priesthood for women &amp; urge Aust bishops engage in such advocacy with Rome.</li> </ul> <p>Paras 120 – 129 contain the seeds for establishing a framework for local decision making at Bishop Conference level on issues relevant to achieving local-specific reforms. It is predicated on Bishops Conferences having the insight, courage and competence to undertake such initiatives.</p>	<p>P52 statement is a negative way of expression. If the last 2 sentences of this para are to be believed – the church must change its position on women!</p> <p>In its PC submission CCCG specifically called for all current opportunities in CL to be utilised.</p>

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	<p>different paces...(this)...can be valued as an expression of legitimate diversity and an opportunity for sharing gifts and mutual enrichment “.</p>	<p>of the church...such ministry allows enabling it to “be adapted to the character and disposition of each culture”.</p> <p>The Synod envisages further clarification around this “decentralisation” and...the exercise of that competence for appropriate and enculturated ways of authentic teaching of the one faith...”</p> <p>...necessary to clarify theological and canonical matters...to realise “sound decentralisation”.</p>	<p>involvement of the whole People of God”.</p> <p>The Synod clearly wants to see progress on these matters, both in terms of establishing a working framework and protocols and in the approach of local Bishops’ Conferences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCG should take a public profile that supports the proposed ‘decentralisation’ and identifies matters where an authentically Australian approach to church issues would be advantageous in advancing the church’s mission in this country (e.g. flexibility in priestly ministry to account for shortage of priests in rural areas);</li> <li>• Seek to be a partner with the ACBC in exploring and exercising the discretion of this flexibility.</li> </ul>	<p>Longer term these initiatives have the potential for a more relevant and mission effective church. The document recognises, however, that this will require courage and imagination in both discernment and action.</p>

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<p><i>Non-clericalist</i></p>	<p>P74: ...helping bishops, priests and deacons to rediscover co-responsibility in the exercise of ministry...&amp; collaboration with the People of God.</p> <p>P79 – 84: See comments above under Transparency and Accountability</p> <p>P 98 – 102: Clericalism is based on the implicit assumption that those who have authority in the church are not to be held accountable for their actions and decisions...</p> <p>P140 – 151: Formation is a critical requirement going forward as a synodal church. “Synodality implies a profound vocational and missionary</p>	<p>P74: .A wider distribution of tasks &amp; responsibilities and a <i>more courageous discernment</i> of what properly belongs to the ordained...&amp; what can and must be delegated...</p> <p>“Nothing without...the People” specifically legitimises lay involvement in all ecclesial discernment and decision making.</p> <p>P98 – 102: See initiatives under Transparent and Accountable</p> <p>P140 – 151: These cannot come about unless accompanied by focussed formation processes...the ‘active participation’ of everyone is decisive for synodality...There was a marked insistence ...of the</p>	<p>P74: It will also help to overcome clericalism, understood as the use of power to one’s own advantage &amp; the distortion of the authority of the church that is at the service of the People of God.</p> <p>P98 – 102: See initiatives under Transparent and Accountable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose &amp; develop examples of ‘best practice’ templates or frameworks for “<i>courageous thinking</i>” at P, D and BC levels.</li> <li>• Actively monitor and comment publicly on progress or lack of progress (indicator of clerical goodwill).</li> <li>• See other initiatives under Transparent and Accountable</li> <li>• CCCG should engage with bishops and the Australian Bishops Conference to seek a seat at the table for planning of the formation program. (This would be one way to have visibility into progress and the approach for this critical component).</li> </ul>	<p>Agenda and initiatives in this area link to those under Transparent and Accountable.</p> <p>The formation initiative is absolutely critical to ensure that synodality becomes an entrenched cultural &amp; ecclesial feature. If the formation reforms fail, then synodality will wither. It will also likely be a key resistance point from an entrenched clericalist perspective. It is critical therefore that lay</p>



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	<p>awareness...a renewed way of living ecclesial relations and a new dynamic regarding participation...adopting the practice of ecclesial discernment and a culture of ongoing evaluation.”</p> <p>P148: “a widely expressed request that discernment and formation of (priests) be undertaken in a synodal way,,,with significant presence of women, immersion in the daily life of communities and formation to enable collaboration with everyone and the practice of ecclesial discernment.</p>	<p>need for a common and shared formation...We need to train formators for this process.</p> <p>P148: Formation of priests in the way identified “implies a courageous investment of energy..”</p> <p>Formation of bishops is just as necessary so that they... exercise in a synodal manner the authority conferred on them.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCG should be a loud and firm advocate for the radical overhaul of priestly formation and the imparting of the skills for a synodal church.</li> </ul>	<p>organisations are active and assertive in their advocacy and monitoring.</p>

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<i>Humble</i>	P 47: “Practised with <i>humility</i> , the synodal style enables the Church to be a prophetic voice in today’s world.”			CCCG should continue to articulate the ways in which the church could/should be authentically humble. This attribute has linkage with <i>Non-Clericalist</i> .	

**Notes:** The Synod document comprehensively addresses at least three of the CCCG areas of focus, namely *Transparent, Accountable and Non-Clericalist*. On each of these topics it clearly can be said that the Synod endorses and validates the positions advanced by CCCG.

The Synod makes only a tentative response in relation to the focus area of *Inclusive* and is silent on the topics of priestly ordination of women and acceptance of LGBTQI people. These are key areas for on-going advocacy by CCCG. While not addressing specific areas of CCCG advocacy, the Synod, in addressing *Inclusive*, outlines the steps for a frameworks or protocols that could enable local Bishops’ conferences to seek and/or approve changes of specific relevance to regional or national jurisdictions. In this there is potential for building a scaffolding for future change.

The other key area of focus identified in the CCCG submission to the Plenary Council was for a *Humble* church. This is seemingly relegated to being a desired characteristic of a synodal church, albeit one that would give it a more ‘prophetic voice in the world’. A *Humble* church is clearly consistent with a synodal church.