

The White Paper on New Ministry Opportunities in the Selkirk Region

Luke 9:2 "...and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal."

What is it that we are called by Christ to do?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as yourself (Mt. 22:37-40).

Feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, invite in and welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, tend to and heal the sick, visit the imprisoned (Mt. 25:31-46).

Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Mi. 6:8)

Executive Summary

We are concerned about declining numbers of people in our parishes. We are concerned about people leaving the Anglican Church of Canada because we are perceived to be irrelevant, and not engaging people in authentic spirituality and ministry. We are concerned about our ineffectiveness in connecting with people who are un-churched, especially younger generations. We believe our Diocese needs to make a substantial shift in the way we work. We propose following a 'mixed economy' model of church that continues our strong and rich heritage of parish based ministry, while also engaging in forms of non-parish-based ministries, to address the concerns named above. We propose four potential solutions for the Selkirk region:

1. Using a non-parish site, a missionary collective would work in the context of a coffee shop, or some kind of a 'Third Space' to connect with people, engaging in community and spiritual development.
2. An intentional religious community of lay and ordained people, engaging in prayer, liturgy, community and spiritual development, and service in a secular context.
3. An intentional youth church – a programmatic centre for faith, spiritual, and leadership development of youth in the context of liturgy, prayer, service – connecting their faith with action.
4. Connecting the UVic Anglican chaplaincy with Camp Columbia encouraging faith, spiritual, and leadership development in young adults making links between their studies, their faith, and their work, also providing the context of prayer and liturgy.

We believe that without any delay, solutions numbered one and two could be acted on immediately, either separately or together. The development of solutions numbered three and four would take some more time in developing, and within a slightly longer time span, flourish.

Introduction

This document outlines four bold solutions for the challenges facing our Diocese. Within the crisis of declining membership and revenue therein lies the opportunity to foster new, dynamic initiatives to redefine the very way we practice our faith.

The Diocese has been exploring solutions to the problem of decline since 2004. Research findings are available from the Diocesan Ministry Resource Team, the follow up work of the Diocesan Ministry Resource Implementation Team, the Diocesan Congregational Development Team and the Congregational Development Officer. The message presented by this research is clear: *Now is the time to act!*

The Diocesan Transformation Team's report proposes some very bold next steps for Synod and the Diocese. This White Paper is intended to help with this process, while recognizing that specific people need to be consulted for specific aspects. For example, budgeting and finances will have to be brought up with the Diocesan treasurer and financial officer. Personnel will have to be brought up with the Bishop and the executive Archdeacon. Property issues will have to be brought up with the property and lands committee, etc.

Diocesan Aims

There has been much discussion in the Diocese about the need to reach out in new ways to the unchurched and the lapsed. It is time to put into practice what we have learned from the thoughtful research done and explore in real pragmatic steps what it could mean for us as a diocese to be expressing new ministry initiatives.

Anglican Gifts

As a starting point we have the diversity of Anglicanism, and the 5 marks of mission to help us understand that the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ - to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, to teach, baptize and nurture new believers, to respond to human need by loving service, to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.¹

The most successful companies in the world operate via research and development wings that are well funded and supported. Archbishop Rowan Williams asserts that we need a “mixed economy church” - one that is a mixture of traditional as well as non-traditional initiatives.

We have the good fortune of also having the results of the Vision 2019 process undertaken by the national Anglican Church of Canada. Now more than ever,

- It is important to move beyond current perceived limitations and to embrace new thinking about what church is and about what ministry is.
- Anglicans can offer new and different ways for people to deepen their spirituality and relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ.

Stumbling Blocks

Now is an opportune time to ask the questions about the efficient and Christ-centred use of clergy, laity, and the abundance of resources in the Diocese to the end of reaching out in new ways:

- There is a growing sense that reaching out means moving well beyond the existing church model of a physical plant and street address.
- The precedent has been set elsewhere: throughout the United Kingdom, in the United States, as close as the Church of the Apostles, Seattle, WA, in Canada via Emerge, Diocese of Montreal, and Jeremiah House Project, Diocese of Toronto.

¹ The Five Marks of Mission - <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm>

It is now time to develop new and creative projects in this Diocese. Transformation simply has no chance unless we change our current practices.

Our Hope and Desire

According to Matthew 10, Jesus intimately engages the disciples by naming them, giving them authority to cleanse unclean spirits and to heal dis(ease), and commissions them to go out into the world in order to seek God's lost people.

As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. (Matthew 10:7-11)

- We desire to act on scripture by owning the gifts of having been named, of having been given authority, and of having been invited to reach out.
- As Church the time is at hand to be reaching out to people who are unchurched: people who are yearning for God without even knowing it, and people who have walked away from the church, the lapsed.
- It is time to offer a mixed economy church, providing for new alternatives in ministry and inviting people in contemporary and pertinent ways to find belonging, to experience believing, and to behave as with faith.
- In his book *They Like Jesus But Not the Church*², Dan Kimball defines 'Missional' as being missionaries rather than operating mission departments. The emphasis is on being missionaries. Kimball's invitation involves a shift from Sunday Christianity to a lifestyle based in faith, where relationship building is the work of mission; as opposed to evangelizing a target audience.

Opportunities

Presented next are four different ideas about how we can make creative use of resources in our Diocese. These ideas involve clergy, laity, and land resources in a combination of ways. You are asked to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to read through the ideas, pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit again and then to deliberate, discuss, and act.

This is not a business plan. Each of these ideas needs to be developed with specific details and a business plan that would look different in each case with regards to costs, personnel, and property. We invite your engagement with the larger vision from which these ideas take shape.

Component 1 The Vision of a New Model of Doing Intentional Church

We propose that the Diocese of British Columbia create a 'Missionary Collective' composed of a minimum of three diocesan clergy-persons. Send these missionaries into the community of the Capital Region District with the task of collecting research in the wider community; listening to and speaking with people in the community. The purpose of this

² Kimball, Dan *They Like Jesus But Not The Church*, insights from emerging generations, Zondervan, 2007

survey is to identify what the wider community values, believes is ultimate, holds meaningful, believes is life-giving.

This data would then be presented to the diocese to, identify further opportunities for building relationships that provide invitation, hospitality and growth. This key step is - we go “where the people are” to reconnect with their needs and identify our niche in their community.

Next, establish a non-church site in downtown Victoria as a base from which to operate. The site would eventually incorporate a coffee shop where religious and spiritual discourses would be accepted and encouraged. We will utilize low and no cost internet based social networking solutions to connect with potential clientele. A pattern of daily worship would be established and available, but not imposed; a meditation/prayer room would be provided within the site. Its target patrons would be the coffee shop crowd who are looking for ‘more.’

Ideally, a two story building downtown, where the synod office could be located upstairs. The mission site/coffee shop would be visible and accessible on the main level. The required coffee shop staff salaries would be paid from the revenue generated by the cafe. The 'Missionary Collective' would be three full time equivalent staff positions. We could estimate the full time equivalent positions being paid at Diocesan scale with benefits.

Component 2 The Vision of an Intentional Community

We propose that the Diocese of British Columbia supports the creation of an Intentional Community that is rooted in the thinking of the monastic tradition, but is modified to be inclusive of people who choose to be partnered.

- The Intentional Community would be developed by a core group identified and approved by the diocese.
- The development of a Rule of Life, policies, and procedures will ensure the health and safety of the Intentional Community.
- An emphasis would be placed on living out prayer, social justice, outreach, collaboration, volunteerism, and hospitality; all offered to the service of God. As a result the Intentional Community will nourish the members on their journey to holiness, teaching, welcoming, and ministering via core values of Jesus.
- This Intentional Community will take a leadership role in the worship and operation of the Intentional Church concept cited in component one.

This solution would require two full time equivalent staff positions. We estimate these positions being paid at Diocesan scale with benefits.

Component 3 The Vision of an Intentional Youth Church

There are many programs which offer youth the opportunity to engage their faith with social justice and outreach initiatives – mission trips, camp programs, youth groups, and other avenues. These are all excellent, time-proven ways of providing opportunities and experiences to youth. Rather than the one-off type of event, or the annual trips, or camps, we propose that that there be a continuous program that encompasses all of the above and more. There are a number of models to look at and also groups / organizations to work with: i.e.; Ask &

Imagine³, Boys and Girls Club⁴, The Open Table⁵, to name a few. With the availability of the Camp Columbia site – this option offers an opportunity to partner with the National Church and all Canadian Dioceses to develop a program that would be headquartered at Camp Columbia. This program would offer youth and practitioners the opportunity to explore the components of worship, including but not limited to music, liturgy, prayer. Both youth and practitioners would receive training in leadership and other aspects of youth ministry. As the headquarters of an intentional youth church, there would also be participation in the coordination of assigned work places on-site and with other partnered locations across the diocese, province and country.

This solution would require at least one full time equivalent staff position in the role of coordinator and 1 – 2 administrative positions, and after that other support staff positions to be determined.

University Chaplaincy – A Renewed Focus on Youth and Young Adults

The chaplaincy position at UVic (currently 15 hrs/week) could be combined with the Camp Columbia Director position from September to April that person could divide their time between chaplaincy work and camp work, and from May to August he or she could be at the camp, while most university students are away from the campus and programming is usually minimal.

Students from UVic could work as camp counsellors over the summer; there could be retreats held at camp in the fall and winter semesters for university students; campers coming to the university later as students would already have a connection to the chaplain; and so on.

With one full-time person focusing on youth and young adults and their spiritual development, action, community building, learning, and growing, and working with the Family Ministries Coordinator, a much more seamless approach to ministry to the under-30s could be developed.

A site would be identified in Victoria as a designated experimental church community, where liturgies and ministries could be freely developed to meet the needs of the unchurched and spiritual seekers who do not usually look to traditional Anglican churches. That space might include a coffee shop/internet cafe, offices, counselling space, a gathering space for speakers, concerts, and a house that could be rented by students who want to live in an intentional Christian community.

This component would require one full time equivalent staff position. We would estimate this positions being paid at Diocesan scale with benefits. We would estimate the need for a property, either the use of a church, rectory, rental, or purchase. An operating budget would have to be worked out relative to the scope of the component.

In summary, this vision includes:

- A strategic connection between university chaplaincy, youth and young adult ministry, and Camp Columbia's ministry
- The designation of a church in Victoria as an experimental one.
- Appropriate space dedicated to worship, outreach, counselling, performing arts, and administrative offices
- A house where students and others live in intentional Christian community

3 Ask & Imagine <http://www.askandimagine.org/> - a Canadian Anglican/Lutheran program where "faith meets real life"

4 Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria camp program <http://www.createaripple.net/>

5 An ecumenical young adult oriented church in Ottawa <http://www.theopentable.ca/>

Final Thoughts

We believe our diocese possesses at this time a rare opportunity for action. The way we see it we are in a window of opportunity - an opportunity to go beyond what we have always done and engage an expression of our faith that will challenge us – and for good reason. There are real challenges facing us no matter which direction we turn.

We believe the question is not 'can we afford to do this?' nor even 'can we afford not to?' but 'what is it that we are called by Christ to do?' That question leads us to ask further 'what is holding us back from doing it, and in any and every possible way we can?' **Any option we choose will carry risk, but the ones presented here are robust, viable visions that we are excited to share with you.** They represent a summary of the "work in the soil" that many feel has been quietly continuing in what some would consider a dark time in the life of our regional church.

We welcome your support and feedback.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. D. Scott McLeod

The Rev. Christopher Parsons.

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