



The Diocesan Mission – Midpoint Report

***Achievements and Challenges
in
Becoming a Missional Diocese***



Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

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Achievements and Challenges in Becoming a Missional Diocese

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Overview

The Diocesan Mission adopted by the Synod in 2002 has a number of important aspects. It acknowledges our dependence on the Holy Spirit but is deliberately ambitious – both in relation to outcome and time.

Having reached the mid-point in that Mission with undiminished commitment it is appropriate to take stock of the achievements and successes to date, as well as critically review the areas for improvement and challenges that have emerged.

We are yet to see radical change on a large scale throughout the Diocese –

- Many new congregations have begun, but most involve the re-planting of an existing group rather than the formation of a new missional congregation.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of people training for ministry and in the number of ordained and lay staff in parishes, yet we struggle to identify and train entrepreneurial leaders and the total number of people attending our churches has stabilised in the last 3 years.
- Resources are still largely focused on ministering to church members rather than connecting with the community.
- Partnerships between Diocesan organisations and parishes have been strengthened and new non-parish based ministries formed, but we are yet to see much fruit from this work.

The next stage of the Mission is centred on the Connect09 initiative calling upon all members to ‘Pray. Connect. Expect.’ The focus is to redirect ministry from congregational gatherings to parish outreach. We want individuals and churches to be intentional and creative in building connections with society, recognising that will mean changes in our church programs and how our paid staff and others spend their time.

Outside the Diocese we are seeking to strengthen our strategic links with leaders in churches which are part of the new Global Anglican Future movement. In part these links will be used to significantly expand the distribution of Moore Theological College’s PTC course materials.

Through all this we are praying for the Holy Spirit to lead a mind-change or paradigm-shift in all our members so that many more of us will be filled with a sacrificial compassion for the lost in all the world and become active in mission.

History of the Mission

The need for the Mission

The composition of the community in the area covered by the Diocese has changed significantly over the last 40 years. Whereas in the mid 1960s 35% of the population called themselves Anglican, in the latest census data that figure has declined to only 18%. Sydney and Wollongong are becoming increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse cities with a steady increase in the proportion of the population who speak a language other than English, now representing more than 1.2 million people.

Over the period 1996-2006 the number of people in Sydney claiming Anglican affiliation declined by 85,000. Although this represents a smaller decline than some other Protestant denominations, it should be compared with the growth in other categories – ‘No religion’ (80,000), followed by Islam (64,000), Catholic (52,000) and Hinduism (37,000).

Even in those areas of Sydney with the highest proportion of self-identified Christians, the proportion who attend an Anglican church is rarely more than 3% of the population.

The parish church

The basic tactic of the Diocese has always been parish-based ministry. The parish is the geographical area in which a self-sustaining church ministry is established. During the latter part of the 20th century though the population grew, the number of parishes remained basically static so that the average number of parishioners per parish increased from 9,000 in the 1960s to 16,000 today. In fact these averages conceal another problem because as private transport became easier, many branch churches were closed and from 1966 to 2006, the average number of people served per church building increased from 4,500 to 12,000.

Over this same period, as nominal church membership declined, parish churches turned their attention away from evangelising nominal Anglicans within the parish boundary, towards pastoring congregational members who were attracted to the church.

While accepting the value of the “attractional” churches, the aim of the Diocesan Mission is to further develop the parish model in order to reach the population. Much can be learnt and applied in making church more attractive but if we are to reach our initial goal of 10% of the population, it is critical that we reconnect with the population within our parishes and beyond.

New sectors of the community

Diocesan organisations such as Anglicare, Youthworks and Anglican Retirement Villages have specialised in reaching particular sectors of the community with programs that run alongside parish-based ministries. Various non-denominational para-church ministries like Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students and Know Your Bible have operated independently.

There is a growing mix of ethnicities in the Sydney population, with fragmentation and diversity posing new challenges to parish ministry.

Becoming a Missional Church

The change that has occurred in the wider community calls for a fundamental mind-change / paradigm-shift in the way our churches see themselves and respond.

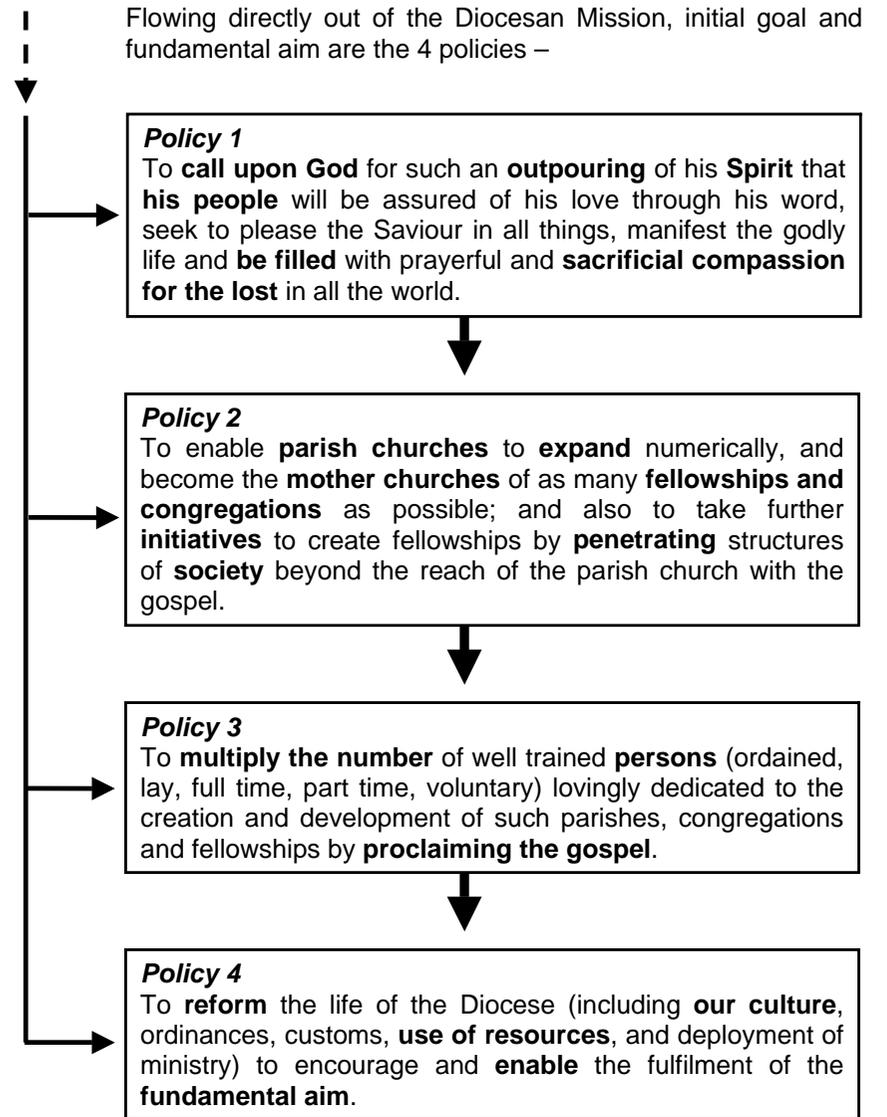
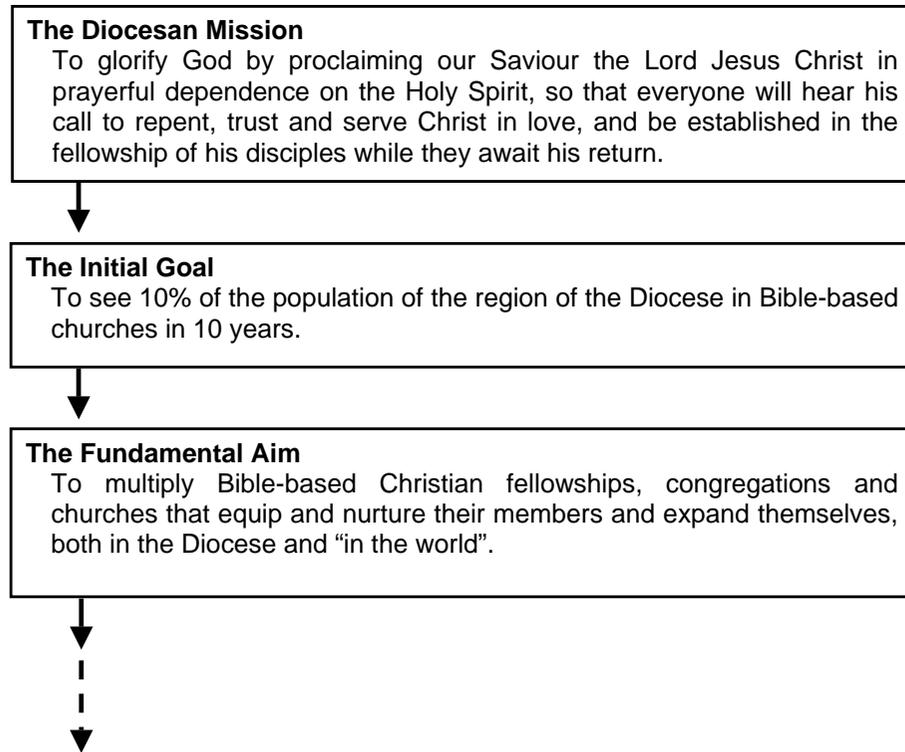
Fundamentally it is no longer valid or viable to see ourselves as purely an open door, operating an ‘attractional’ model. Society will relegate us to the status of a ‘club’, without any universal right by default to access the community.

We need therefore to shift our thinking to become a missional church – to see ourselves as needing to bring the good news of the gospel to our community for many of whom it will be a foreign concept, much in the way Christian missionaries have traditionally viewed bringing the gospel to Africa. In this paradigm every member of the church needs to operate as a missionary. The leaders, ordained and lay, as well as the regular members of our churches all need to be involved in this endeavour.

The need for this mind-change is urgent. If we were a secular organisation we might be concerned with a loss of ‘market share’ because that has implications for our future profitability or even viability. However, we know that the need to turn this situation around is far more important than a question of our own comfort or even survival – the ‘great commission’ makes it clear that we need to be focused on making Jesus known in our community. It is a matter of love for others and obedience to the Lord.

As the pull of the ‘attractional’ model of church has declined along with the proportion of the population that identifies as Anglican, our ease of access to, and acceptance by the community (through SRE, for example), is coming under increasing challenge.

The Diocesan Mission 2002 →



Progress report

Policy 1 – Prayer and sacrificial compassion for the lost

Achievements

There has been a marked increase in commitment to ministry during the first five years of the mission. This has been accompanied and is evidenced by an increase in financial commitment from our congregations.

Offerings across the Diocese have grown from \$34 million in 2001 to \$54 million in 2007, an increase of 60%. This is a matter of great thankfulness to God for the generosity he has put into the hearts of his people.

There has been a renewed emphasis on preaching God's word – especially on preaching in a way that will move God's people to action out of concern for the lost.

We have seen a growth in willingness to invite people to church. Qualitative research for Connect09 shows optimism and a commitment to evangelism.

Small groups have flourished across the Diocese, boosting commitment from members and providing ministry opportunities for lay leaders.

The Preliminary Theological Certificate (PTC) courses developed by Moore College, have been widely promoted within this Diocese and in "all the world".

CMS Summer School has seen enormous growth and is a particular focus for the work of CMS in this Diocese.

Areas for improvement / challenges

Along with the advances above we would hope to see much more evidence of a sacrificial commitment to the lost, demonstrated by a majority of our members actively sharing the Gospel with their friends and neighbours. There remains much work to be done to motivate and equip ordinary church members for the missional mind-change that is needed.

Policy 2 – Expand, plant and support congregations

Achievements

As a result of the Diocesan Mission, many new churches have been planted in the Sydney Diocese and others revitalised. While many of these churches have grown in size beyond their original core group, it is less clear as to the size of the contribution to growth in the Diocese overall. However it should be noted that the Sydney Diocese has enjoyed attendance growth over the past

decade during a period when Anglican attendance across Australia has been declining. This is in part due to the establishment of new churches in the Diocese, conforming to the broader pattern seen across the NCLS data nationally.

Since the Mission started in 2002 there has been much talk of commencing new congregations within existing parishes. At the moment we know of 136 new congregations that have commenced in this period. In the Georges River Region there are 14, in the Northern Region 35, in the South Sydney Region 17, in the Western Region 31 and in the Wollongong Region 39.

There has been a deliberate strengthening of partnerships between parishes and Diocesan organisations (Anglicare, Anglican Retirement Villages & Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, in particular). Parishes and these organisations have benefited from the synergies and alignment with the Diocesan Mission. There is evidence of cultural change as part of that process.

There have been instances of parishes taking new initiatives to support surrounding churches.

Areas for improvement / challenges

Not enough parishes are planting congregations, particularly new missional congregations, although there has been considerable re-planting of existing congregations with evidence of some attractational growth from the new surrounds and constituency.

While new work in some areas has begun to reach certain socio-ethnic groups, many more groups are yet to be impacted.

With some notable exceptions, particularly amongst some of the larger churches, the 18-25 age range continues to be underrepresented in our churches.

The work amongst young people at schools throughout the Diocese remains one of our most significant and strategic areas of connection with the wider community. In Primary and Secondary schools we have both dedicated volunteers and skilled staff teaching Scripture and delivering SRE programs. The challenge is to strengthen the linkages from this work to parish life and ministry.

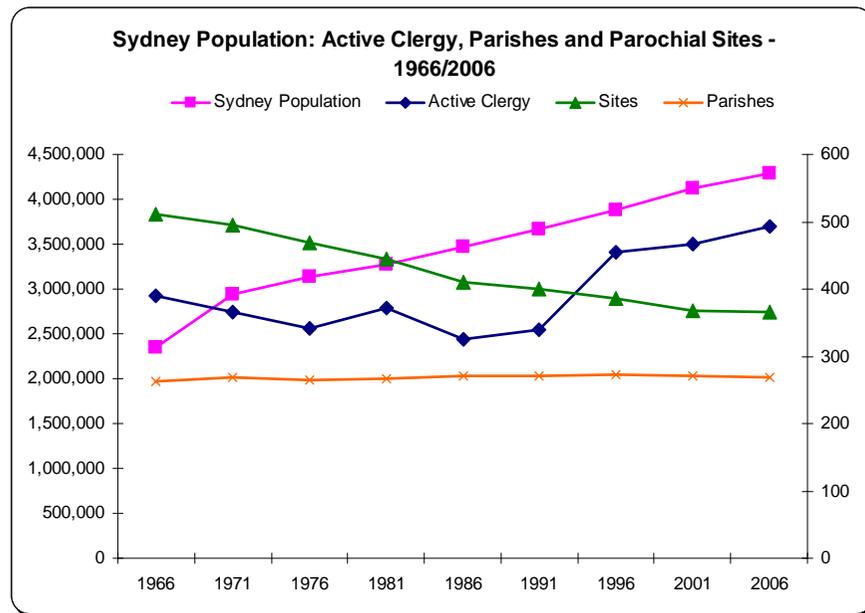
Attendance numbers in the Diocese have stabilised over the last 3 years with the reported average weekly attendance showing only 0.5% growth from 2004 to 2007.

Despite the variety of training and resource materials available to encourage and prepare lay people for missional activities, many of our members are not yet active in mission. The gap between acceptance and agreement with the need for mission and a change of behaviour to actually engage in and practice such behaviours points to the need to engender a mind-change or paradigm-shift in our members.

Policy 3 – Multiply well-trained workers

Achievements

The Diocesan Mission aims to capitalise on the growth in ministers in the last quarter of the 20th century. While the population grew, the parishes remained static, the number of church buildings declined and there was an increase in the number of full-time ministers. It is hard to calculate the many non-ordained ministers who joined the staff of our churches at this time. But the number of ordained ministers (and other full-time paid ministry staff) working in the Diocese took a sharp turn upwards.



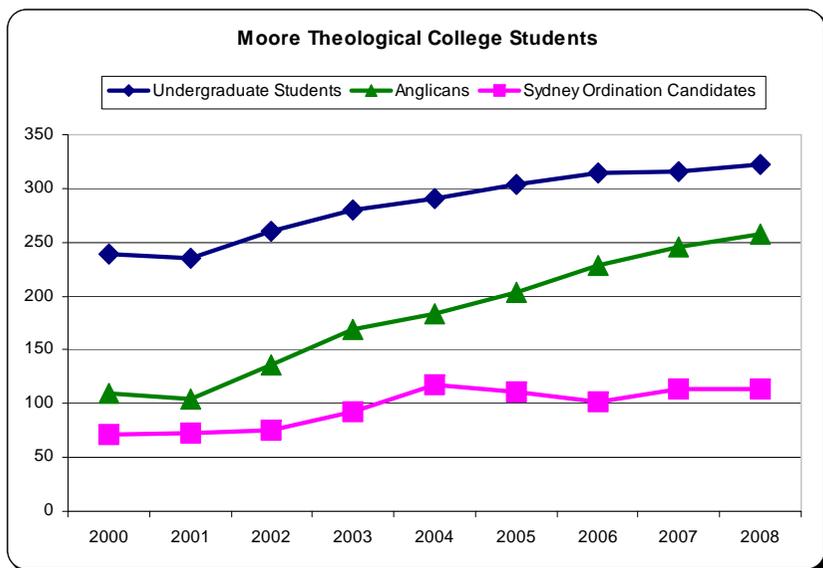
Recruitment and deployment –

- Moore Theological College and Youthworks College are enrolling high student numbers.
- Ordination candidates have grown from 20-30 per year prior to 2005 to 40-50 per year since then.
- Youthworks College has also seen enrolments grow by 100% over the last three years. The Year 13 program is growing, expecting 50 applicants in 2009.
- Ministry Training Strategy programs continue to attract more trainees.
- Ministry Training and Development has prioritised the development of young clergy and assistant ministers. An intentional practical training program spanning from the 1st year of college until the 4th year post college has been implemented. The number of ministry chaplains engaged as mentors to young clergy and assistant ministers has been expanded from 6 to 50.
- Ministry Training and Development continue to provide targeted training through ministry intensives featuring leading speakers (eg the September 2008 intensive with Don Carson, Mark Driscoll and Kent and Barbara Hughes).

Areas for improvement / challenges

Despite a significant increase in the number of full-time ministers, the numbers of such people have not kept pace with the demand. There is a shortage of qualified people to fill all levels of paid ministry positions with vacancies for rectors, assistant ministers and youth ministers as well as those with the special skills needed to start new congregations.

There has been a steady growth in the number of students undertaking theological training at Moore Theological College, and an even faster increase in the number of those who are Anglicans, but the growth in the number of Sydney ordination candidates has not kept pace with these two indicators.



Students from multi-ethnic backgrounds are still under-represented in our colleges. There are few ministers training from lower socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and few with a demonstrated ability to successfully bridge the gap into lower socio-economic community groups.

We praise God for the number and quality of students coming forward, but there is significant concern that a relatively low number of students have the special aptitudes and opportunities to be church planters. Missional church plants need people with a particular mix of leadership and entrepreneurial qualities to generate their own resources and growth.

The primary focus of Moore Theological College has been to provide a sound theological education that qualifies people to be teachers and pastors in an Anglican church. The result is that many of our ordained leaders are well equipped to minister. However, a need has been identified within the Diocesan training matrix to deliver further preparation for parish management, team leadership and the planting of missional churches.

Future growth in the number of people that can be trained through the current theological programs is constrained by the training colleges' infrastructure. There is not enough space or physical resources at either Moore Theological College or Youthworks College to continue expanding student numbers in the existing residential programs.

NCLS survey results and other indicators point to lay ministry and leadership as key challenges. Our lay people are not being given sufficient

opportunities, structures or vision to equip, mobilise and encourage them to get involved in ministry in their parish.

Policy 4 – Reform structures to remove blockages to Mission

Achievements

There has been a deliberate and pronounced focus of resources in the Diocese on Mission-related outcomes. One example of this is seen in the adoption of a strategy-driven approach to the allocation of recurrent Synod funds, i.e., the income available from the Diocesan Endowment.

The links between parishes and the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat have been strengthened through the delivery of a number of workshops and a range of practical initiatives to support administration in the parishes covering things such as property advice, banking services, risk management, legal, accounting, remuneration and employment advice.

Much valuable work has been done by Christians working through para-church organisations with an interest in reaching particular sections of the community. The Synod has passed two ordinances to assist Church planting by such groups. The Recognised Churches (Provisional Status) Ordinance 2007 enables non-geographical special interest church plants to become independent recognised units within the Diocese prior to their meeting the membership and financial thresholds required for full parish status under the Recognised Churches Ordinance. A second ordinance, the Affiliated Churches Ordinance 2005, enables non-Anglican evangelical church plants to be associated with the Diocese while remaining flexible in their patterns and development.

The Synod has also passed two ordinances to reform the way in which parishes are administered. The Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 enables parishes to be administered as a whole rather than by reference to their church or churches. The Associated Congregations (Amendment) Ordinance 2005 enables congregations which do not meet in a church building to be formally associated with a church for vestry meetings and other purposes.

Areas for improvement / challenges

A number of our parish processes are still difficult and complex, e.g., the process to build or refurbish a ministry centre continues to be a drain on resources and energy that might otherwise be directed to ministry and evangelism.

The existing culture is seen to have many of the following characteristics –

- Leadership which is theologically well-trained but where business and administrative acumen is variable and serendipitous.
- Lack of understanding and certainty about the value of partnerships and services available within the Diocese.
- Disagreement over the nature and scope of Diocesan responsibility and control.
- Leadership/strategy planning learned on the job.
- Insufficient engagement and contribution of laity in church and parish activities.

The next phase

Connect09 – strategic response to key issues

The first phase of the mission focused minds on a wider, missional vision and what might be need to facilitate that vision.

The second phase provides a strategic framework for practical implementation.

The scope of such an ambitious undertaking is already testing the existing structures and providing a clearer picture of where the existing roadblocks lie.

Connect09 has as its heart the redirection of ministry from congregational gatherings to parish outreach in two ways –

- *Reconnecting the churches with the wider community* – Demographic and social changes have brought a “disconnect” between local churches and their wider communities. Many people do not personally know an active church-going Christian. There must be a change in mind-set to focus on ‘intentional’ contact that leads to genuine ‘connection’ with people so the gospel of Jesus can be shared in an atmosphere of love and concern for others.
- *Refocusing the local congregation on the parish* – Network evangelism alone will not bring the growth we seek and will not, by itself, reach the tribes and deserts in our cities. We need to spend significant time focusing on the wider community if we are to reach them with the gospel. This will mean changes in our church programs and how our paid staff and others spend their time. In fact, such a mindset will touch every aspect of our church life. Changing internal “culture” is very difficult, and we trust Connect09 will be a help and a catalyst in this. Connect09 is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a new horizon.

A general observation is that we must do something different to what we have been doing if we desire different outcomes. The slowing of the growth rate of the Diocese despite supplying extra ordinands is concerning. We need to look at our traditional recruiting and training methods to supplement the solid work being done. Connect09 could play a vital role in opening up possibilities.

This is not to say that the mind-set and cultural changes have not been present in embryonic form in some areas of ministry or clearly evident in others. But Connect09 is an opportunity to extend the scope of that approach through our structures and congregations.

Challenges and Objectives for 2010 – 2013

Policy 1 – Prayer and sacrificial compassion for the lost

The significant opportunity represented by Connect09 will help create a missional mind-set but this must be accompanied by prayer and the certainty of God’s sovereignty. This is reflected in the first priority given to prayer in our policy framework and in Connect09. The theological reflection underpinning the program gives primacy to concern for the lost and the work of the Holy Spirit in speaking to the hearts of people. This must be reflected in the ongoing missional activity beyond 2009.

Beyond the Diocese, the Global Anglican Future movement has provided a clear focus for work supporting gospel ministry. The second tenet from the *The Jerusalem Declaration* says –

“We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church’s historic and consensual reading.”

We will continue to encourage and support strategic partnerships with organisations that can bring sound biblical education to key leaders within Bible-based evangelical churches represented in the Global Anglican Future movement.

The Work Outside the Diocese Committee has proposed the following framework –

- 40% of funds spent within Australia with an emphasis on continuing support for Bible-based ministries in other states and among indigenous groups.

- 60% of funds being spent on areas outside Australia with an emphasis on the GAFCON network, opportunities for the Diocesan leadership to contribute to strengthening of links and the encouragement of leadership and mission.

Exciting opportunities are opening up to use the Moore Theological College PTC courses to help equip the very large number of new Christian leaders emerging throughout Africa and elsewhere. For modest incremental cost, the strategic benefits could be great.

Policy 2 – Expand, plant and support congregations

The Diocesan Mission has a fourfold policy that connects our strategy to our tactics. Policy 2 involves three basic tactics –

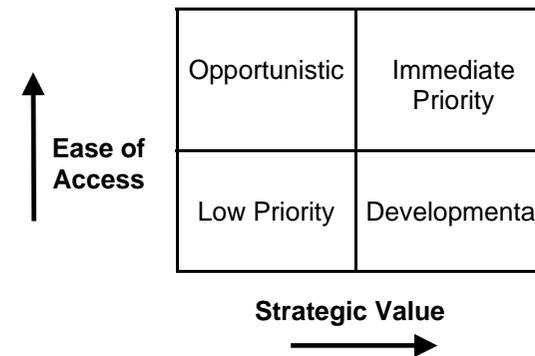
- To increase the number of ministry and congregation-planting parish churches,
- To plant as many fellowships and congregations as possible, and
- To penetrate structures of society beyond the reach of the parish church.

Two kinds of church plants have been developed within the Diocese in recent years. Both have had beneficial effect in drawing newcomers into church attendance. The dividing and replanting of congregations has been the most widely-practised form of church planting since the Mission began. However of recent times we have seen the commencement of “missional” church planting. These churches do not start with a large nucleus from the mother church but a very small group of church planters.

A major challenge for this next phase of the Diocesan Mission will be to use Connect09 as the springboard to engender a mind-change or paradigm-shift to see ourselves as a missional diocese: the essential next step in the Diocesan Mission. In part our success in making this change will be reflected in the degree to which we can shift the emphasis from congregational church plants to the more risky missional church plant model.

To capitalise on the increase in full-time ministers that began at the end of the last century it is important that we deploy this labour into mission rather than maintenance. This can be done by deployment into churches that are looking to reconnect with their parishes, are seeking to plant new congregations/churches, and are reaching new sectors of the community.

There are two key factors therefore in setting tactical priorities: the ease of access to people and the strategic value of the work. Together these give a paradigm that would appear like this –



A ministry in any of the four boxes can be undertaken and resourced, however –

- In general those ministries that fall into the "Immediate Priority" box are the ones that will give the quickest return in terms of increased resources and so should be the first priority. These are represented by those areas which have the highest strategic value and the greatest ease of access.
- The "Opportunistic" box will not grow resources, but because it is easy to undertake it will be too attractive to resist.
- The "Developmental" ministries are the ones that will take more planning effort and resourcing but are critically important to invest in for the long term development of our ministries into new areas and sections of society.
- In general it will be wise to avoid investing in difficult ministries that are of little strategic value ("Low Priority").

This paradigm is an aid to plotting the priority of whatever parish development, church planting or non-parochial ministry we wish to invest in. The needs and opportunities for ministry of the gospel are greater than our resources to undertake them immediately. We inevitably have to make choices as to which project we undertake, knowing that in doing so we are postponing other projects.

In 2004 NCLS and Anglicare carried out attendance projections and estimates based on the 2001 Census and using the NSW Council of Churches as the benchmark for Bible-based churches. They found that in order to achieve the initial goal of 10% of the population in Bible-based churches, the Anglican attendance would need to reach around 230,000, which is approximately 4 times the current average adult Sunday attendance.

Many of our training tools come from university settings and there is a need to translate these for parishes to use across wider age groups. Cultural

differences in the various areas of Sydney need to be considered when developing lay training materials. In particular, many of the materials available now do not reflect the needs of lower socio-economic or non-English speaking regions.

In 2001 the Synod adopted a strategy-driven funding model. The Diocesan Mission has provided the rationale for a particular set of strategies. As the strategic plan for 2010-2013 is further developed it will form the basis for the allocation of recurrent Synod funds. The recommendations for the allocation of Synod funds for the period 2010-2012 that will come to the Synod in 2009 will reflect the priorities established in the final form of this report.

Policy 3 – Multiply well-trained workers

The Diocesan Mission aims to turn the increased ministry workforce towards parish evangelism rather than congregational development. The aim is to utilise this increase in labour to reach the population at large rather than to commercialise ministry within the parish church. There is no gospel value in replacing voluntary ministry with large teams of paid workers in each parish caring ever more intensively for static or diminishing congregations.

Four points of focus have been identified –

- *Recruitment and deployment.* How to intentionally recruit large numbers of suitable persons for paid gospel ministries and to ensure that they are fruitfully placed in ministries which advance the gospel.
- *Theological education.* How to support preparation of biblically-formed gospel workers who know God and are equipped to make him known.
- *Developing ministry.* How to provide for such help in on-going ministry which will further equip with knowledge and skills, enable ministers to be missionaries and church planters and offer the nurture and support which will develop ministry.
- *Shaping volunteers.* How to recognise, research and develop ways and means of equipping and motivating lay people to become active partners in the gospel.

In terms of recruitment and deployment –

- Moore Theological College and Youthworks College need to be enrolling twice as many students in 2013 as in 2008. Potential church planters need to be identified earlier in their course (eg Church Army profile) and receive some specialised training.
- Partnerships with para-church organisations need to expand with the aim of recruiting twice as many candidates in 2013 as in 2008.
- More multi-layered recruiting will need to be fostered to provide the rest of the large increase in recruits. Local churches and regions need

increasingly and intentionally to recruit able ministers into training and service. Specifically, recruiting should be sought from a diverse social and ethnic background and also from the ranks of experienced Christians who will bring leadership skills developed in their careers.

- Local churches and fellowships will need to empower and resource lay leaders who are identified as church planters to start new congregations.

The theological education available will need to include –

- Continuation of our long term commitment to theological formation of our pastor/teachers. Hence Moore Theological College will need to expand its facilities for residential training.
- Expansion of Youthworks College facilities so that they can double the number of trainees and Year 13 students.
- Flexible delivery of diploma courses expanded for mature age recruits.
- More external courses, especially an expanded Preliminary Theological Certificate from Moore Theological College resourced to cater for 12,000 students worldwide.

Policy 4 – Reform structures to remove blockages to Mission

Existing structures and culture are not necessarily broken but they are in need of considerable reform.

There is also a strong desire within the Diocese to improve for the sake of human capital and for mission.

Therefore, the ongoing strategy should focus on –

- *Research:* Analysing society and churches and publishing material which will assist in the effective leadership of parish churches and Diocesan organisations.
- *Legislation:* In light of research and in consultation with other policy groups, analysing existing legislation and promoting review and reform.
- *Structures:* Analysing and reviewing the relationship between Diocesan structures and organisations to maximise resources for Mission.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

BISHOP PETER TASKER

Chair, Mission Board Strategy Committee

23 September 2008