

Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

Ministry Plan

2005 – 2007

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Upper Island Cove
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Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

Diocesan Ministry Plan

This Diocese is an integral part of the body of Christ - a Church empowered by the Spirit through the study of Scripture and the worship of God; proclaiming the good news, as it reaches out in love to relieve the burdens and hurts in the world and affirming the joys.

These words introduce the mission statement of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. They provide a solid foundation on which to introduce any and all initiatives of the Diocese and so they are used here to serve as a point of reference in setting forth a ministry plan for the next few years. It keeps the focus on the greater mission of the Church rather than on distracting details.

The Context

In December 2004 Bishop Pitman sought the advice of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee in putting together, with consultation, a plan to guide his ministry in the early years of his episcopacy. The recommended approach was to review proceedings of conferences, meetings and consultations over the past few years, (e.g., the Diocesan conference in November 2002), engage in dialogue with a broad representation of the Diocese, and to place the Diocesan plan in relation to the national church document, "Serving God's World, Strengthening the Church, a **Framework** for a common journey in Christ." Also the outcome of the planning process was to be specific, pragmatic and action-oriented strategies that could be acted on quickly and definitively.

While the Plan is generally applicable for the whole Diocese the consultations were mainly with the four deaneries on the island. The Labrador Planning and Strategy Conference (2005) addressed issues specific to ministry in Labrador parishes. The report of that conference should be read in conjunction with this one.

First, we acknowledge a reality that is undeniable. The core ministries of parishes and Synod Office must continue independently of this plan. Church services will continue, children will be baptized and confirmed, the dead interred, and the Gospel preached and acted on. The purpose of this Plan is to identify the challenges that either distract from or impede growth and/or renewal in those and other ministries. Certain realities of the present time do create challenges for ministry in the Diocese. One of those is shifting population demographics.

The characteristics of the population are changing in ways that make it difficult for the Church in some parts of the Diocese to function as it has in the past. Simply there are fewer people in the province than there were ten years ago. As well the profile of those that remain has changed and continues to change. The general population decline from low birth rates and out-migration is compounded by the shifting of population from rural communities to urban areas, mostly to the north-east Avalon Peninsula. Coastal Labrador

communities are an exception. Birth rates are high and the proportion of the population of school age is higher than perhaps any other part of the province.

The immediate implications of the population decline and movement include declining attendance at worship, overextended ministries serving too few people, an excess of building capacity, burgeoning expenses and diminished revenues. Several parishes struggle to survive financially. Yet those who remain in smaller communities need spiritual support and pastoral care as do others.

A second reality is to acknowledge and respond to the fact that the Church does not play the same role in peoples' lives that it did a generation ago. The long established assumption that each generation followed in the denominational footsteps of the forefathers is no longer valid. As the young assert their financial and personal independence from family so they exercise their freedom to depart from the Church they knew as children, if they even knew the Church in their youth. Yet recent research has shown that people are still very spiritual, believe in God and in some instances turning to the Church for spiritual fulfillment.

Another compelling challenge to the Church today centres on Anglican identity. Who makes up the Church? How does the Church include gays and lesbians, marriages between Christians and non-Christians, the “floaters” – those who are constantly seeking a faith community they can relate to, and all who fall outside the white, English, conservative Anglican stereotype. How do we right the wrongs of the past without creating divisions and departures? What is our Diocese's place in the bigger picture of the National Church and the Anglican Communion?

There are other issues, too, but we will confine our Ministry Plan to dealing with those that appear to be most pressing in this Diocese. Drawing on inputs from events of the past few years, we have organized this Plan under five themes:

- † **Leadership**
- † **Stewardship**
- † **Anglican Identity**
- † **Evangelism and Outreach**
- † **Congregational Development.**

Challenges to Ministry in the Diocese

In this section we identify several challenges under each theme in order to be clear about what actions are needed and justifiable.

Leadership Challenges:

- † Strengthen the Diocesan family;
- † Deal with declining attendance at worship and weak financial support;
- † Acknowledge and re-affirm episcopal leadership;

- ✚ Clarify responsibilities of those who work in the Diocese, including clerical and lay;
- ✚ Develop leadership attitudes and skills and distribute leadership responsibilities widely;
- ✚ Use existing structures, e.g., deaneries, to communicate and to articulate vision and goals;
- ✚ Be very intentional in communicating with all those who have an interest in the affairs of the Diocese.

Stewardship Challenges:

- ✚ Engage in an intensive and sustained program of stewardship education;
- ✚ Prepare people to lead stewardship initiatives;
- ✚ Provide resources for teaching;
- ✚ Practice good stewardship principles as a Diocese and as parishes;
- ✚ Teach and practice proportionate giving;
- ✚ Promote planned giving;
- ✚ Come to grips with the deficit financial situation in parishes and in the Diocese.

Anglican Identity Challenges:

- ✚ Make organizational adjustments to accommodate demographic changes;
- ✚ Address issues around alienation from the church;
- ✚ Recognize and acknowledge differing views on homosexuality and same sex blessings;
- ✚ Build stronger communion between parish and Synod Office, between priest and Bishop.

Evangelism and Outreach Challenges:

- ✚ Clarify what evangelism means in this Diocese for those times and in this culture;
- ✚ Retain active members;
- ✚ Re-enlist the lapsed;
- ✚ Minister to the seekers;
- ✚ Allocate a significant portion of the Diocesan and parish budgets to outreach ministries;
- ✚ Engage in national, regional and local consultations on evangelism.

Congregational Development Challenges:

- ✚ Find ways to support struggling congregations;
- ✚ Identify and make known types of organizational support and resources for congregational development;
- ✚ Examine and experiment with alternative ministries that can work in the Diocese;

- ✠ Support stewardship development at parish level;
- ✠ Find creative ways to minister to youth and young adults.

These five themes are not intended to cover the whole scope of Diocesan activity. The core ministries of the Diocese will continue, albeit, with modified emphases. But priorities have to be established so that the Plan is not excessively burdensome or beyond the capacity of individuals and the corporate body to deliver. Focusing on a small number of clearly defined initiatives with intensity and direction can achieve the desired outcomes.

We recommend that addressing challenges around **Leadership** and **Stewardship** be given priority for the **two year period** following Synod 2005. Following that period Diocesan leadership can explore how to proceed with one or two of the other themes.

Action Plan

The mission statement for the Diocese provides guidance in how we should maintain focus on matters that are at the heart of a “Church empowered by the Spirit”. It reads:

Therefore with grateful hearts, we covenant to:

- *worship and praise Almighty God.*
- *provide the means for spiritual growth.*
- *interpret the teaching of Jesus for our time.*
- *teach Christian doctrine in the Anglican tradition.*
- *proclaim the gospel message through witness and evangelism.*
- *challenge injustices.*
- *pray for and nurture our Christian community and the world.*
- *be faithful to our Anglican identity shaped by scripture, tradition, reason and experience.*
- *be faithful, wise and responsible stewards of God's gifts of creation, redemption and empowerment.*

In pursuit of at least some of these covenants the following courses of action are recommended for Leadership Development.

Leadership Development:

- 1) Host an annual educational conference for the purpose of addressing an issue that affects present clergy and present situations. In actioning this proposal first identify the issue through consultation with clergy and then choose the leader(s). Several suggestions have been made. A few are listed here.
 - Biblical perspective of leadership – servant leadership;
 - Leadership for youth ministry;
 - Managing diminishing resources and membership;
 - Identifying and nurturing people’s gifts;
 - Clergy wellness and personal development.
- 2) Create and utilize a personnel committee in an ongoing manner. The mandate of this committee could include:

- Developing and using Letters of Agreement or Covenants to affirm the relationship between clergy, the parish and the Bishop;
- Developing and using evaluation programs for Diocesan personnel to guide and monitor their ministries. Include both external and self-evaluation techniques;
- Organize and conduct Leadership Institutes to develop specific skills among clergy and lay people in response to identified needs or concerns within the Diocese or within parishes. For example, a two-day seminar offered in July and August will allow clergy to attend when not on holidays. If held between Tuesdays and Thursdays parish weddings could probably be avoided. It would be helpful to include Synod Office clergy in this. Suggestions put forward during consultations include:
 - ✓ Managing Stewardship programs;
 - ✓ What should we expect of church members and how do we make expectations known? Who belongs?
 - ✓ Discussion on Anglican identity;
 - ✓ Homosexuality and Anglicanism.

- 3) Plan to address issues before they become problems. Compile a Policy and Procedures Manual to guide decision-making and to ensure consistency of action in areas where practices vary because of lack of clarity. Use the administrative structures that are presently in place for more effective communication, education and ministry, e.g., Administration and Finance Committee, Diocesan Council, deaneries and arch-deaneries, deanery councils and synods. Put the Policy Manual on the Diocesan website.

Some items suggested for inclusion in a Diocesan Manual are:

- ✓ Identify resources for clerical and lay use;
 - ✓ Procedures for making decisions regarding the structure of parishes;
 - ✓ Policies regarding the consistent administration of Baptism, Confirmation and marriage preparation;
 - ✓ A communications policy.
- 4) Improve the interchange of information within the Diocese. Publish a bi-weekly electronic newsletter with contributions from Synod Office and parishes. Update the Diocesan website on a bi-weekly basis or more often if needed.

Stewardship Education and Development:

Be faithful, wise and responsible stewards of God's gifts of creation, redemption and empowerment. - Diocesan mission statement.

The following courses of action are recommended for Stewardship Education and Development.

- (1) Gather resources and provide education to enable parishes throughout the Diocese to enter into a stewardship program around proportionate giving, e.g., Grow 2%. This could be seen as a Good News opportunity for those parishes who want/are able to move forward on stewardship.
- (2) Help parishes that for various reasons feel unable to undertake a stewardship program. The Monitoring Committee and the proposed 'white paper' would certainly be helpful in this area.
- (3) Prepare to deal with roadblocks that may be encountered and prove difficult to work around. Use the recommendations of the *Ministries in Action Report* (Parish Demographics) and the Boundaries Committee to assist in this area.
- (4) Communicate opportunities for Planned Giving and take advantage of personnel and educational resources to promote Planned Giving.

Implementation Plan

We are recommending the acceptance of this Plan and that responsibility for its implementation be undertaken by Diocesan Council. The actions named above can be achieved by assigning specific tasks to three existing committees and three additional ones to be created by Council.

The table below shows the tasks, the name of each committee, its status, timeline and manner of reporting.

Implementation Plan and Schedule

Task	Committee	Status	Timeline	Reports
Organize educational conferences	Ad hoc committee	To be named by Diocesan Council	One conference in 2006	To each Diocesan Council meeting
Deal with personnel matters	Personnel Committee	To be named by Diocesan Council	Ongoing until next Synod	To each Diocesan Council meeting
Compile a Policy Manual	Policy Manual Committee	To be named by Diocesan Council	June 2005 – May 2006	To each Diocesan Council meeting
Implement a Stewardship Program	Diocesan Stewardship Committee	Existing	Choose program before Dec. 2005. Implement in 2006.	To each Diocesan Council meeting
Assisting parishes with financial issues	Monitoring Committee	Existing	Ongoing	To each Diocesan Council meeting
Deal with matters of parish viability	Boundaries Committee and Demographics Committee	Existing separately or combined	Ongoing until next Synod	To each Diocesan Council meeting and to 2007 Synod