

GENERAL SYNOD 2017

DISCUSSION GROUPS – FLIPCHART MATERIAL

FRIDAY 9 JUNE 2017

SESSION FIVE – MISSION BOARD Stories and Statistics

Questions:

1. Share mission stories from your own experience. Do they resonate with any of the stories from the presentation?
2. How do you feel about the statistics?
3. How can the Mission Board help? What would you like to happen at diocesan level and as a province?

Dean Fostekew's Summary

1. Stories

Please refer to the other flip charts for stories of how “mission is matched” to the needs of the local community.

2. Statistics

- Statistics don't show the whole picture or the real picture
- Do we spend too much energy on survival rather than mission?
- How can we record figures for ecumenical worship; non-traditional forms of worship?
- How can we use statistics for mission?

3. Questions to the Mission Board

- Might now be the time to move to centrally funded clergy rather than congregational funded? It could enable clergy to be put in new areas of mission.
- Could congregations “Buddy” each other and share experience and resources for new areas of mission?
- What help can be given in areas such as:
 - church planting
 - grafting
 - training/finding youth workers
 - overcoming attachment to buildings or ways of doing church that need to change
 - reaching out to new areas of housing (also getting in at the planning stage)
 - how to do “pop-up” church
 - what is success and how can we measure it?

Group A

1.

- 20:20 Projects St Margaret's Newlands – aim to get congregation to engage with recipient orgs.
- Engaging with other faiths – sharing events and friendship – practical work, eg w. refugees – side issue of increased attendance.

2.

- Stats have become meaningless.
- Clergy estimates are nearly always accurate – attendees and communicants.
- Age profile missing – doesn't help in telling our story. Need richer picture.
- No counting of supportive spouses.
- Working on church growth model. Need to use church planting model – move to where people are.

Group B

Stats depressing but not the real picture. Outreach.

1. Cream teas – summer } Donations
Soup – winter }

Getting people in and see church.

Surgery – regular – diff churches.

“Thought of the week” ↑ newspaper.

There has been growth.

Group C

1.

- C.A.F.E – ABZ.
- Green initiative – garden produce sharing.
- Lunch time fellowship. Service, food, chat.
- Different days important – changing life patterns.
- Super Saturday – street people connection. Appropriate service for diff people.

2.

- Stats don't show the whole picture.
- Walking through the door – difficult.

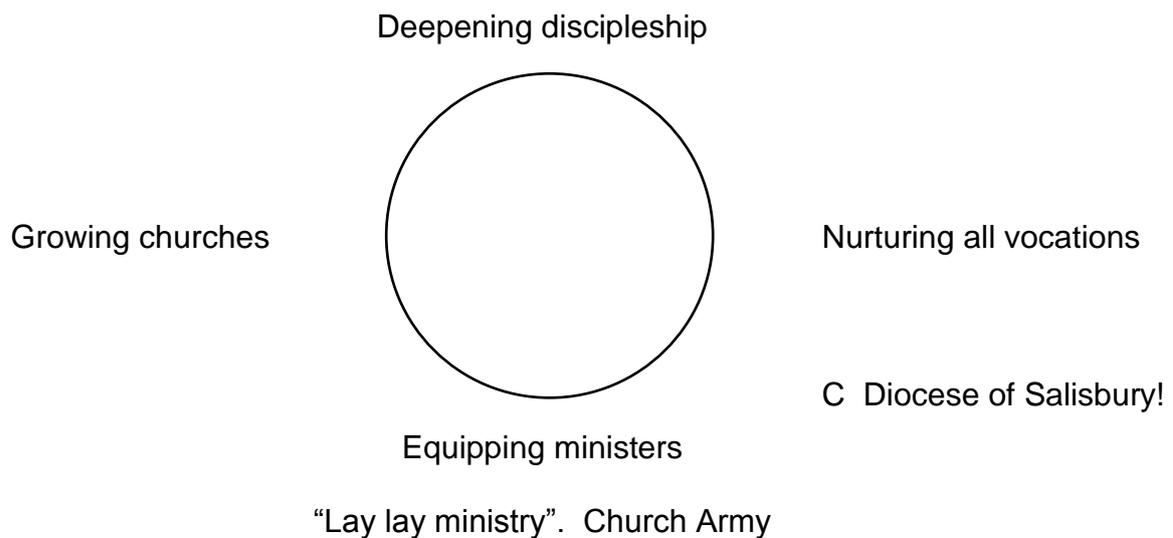
- Doing well but now shown.
- No. connected ↑ but ↑ Looks ↓
- Making disciples rather than seats on pews.

3.

- Resources for appropriate ministry.
- Urban v rural.

Group D – Table 10

- Interaction between vocations (rising) and membership/attendance? Increase in discipleship?
- Membership means different things in different churches.
- What are the “mission helpful” stats?
- Midweek activity? Ecumenical activity? ← Whose number?
- How to measure impact on lives?



Group E – Table 2

Church planting –

- planning May-September
- huge work
- functioning congregation
- financial and emotional cost – but worth it
- new is easier than resuscitating; no transfer – PPL from; no church history; former children of church; new Christians.

Growing congregations – planting church opportunity

Training pack for church planting, ie admin information
Experience and learning from others.

Pop-up church – if fixed new congregation too difficult to administer.

How do you measure success? Conversions? Numbers attending?

Group F

- Difference between mission and evangelism.
- Mission can move to evangelism as prompted by the Holy Spirit.
- Opening up building to community.
- Link with local schools that has three years down the line resulted in holiday club and then coming to church.
- Cathedral Café – hospitality and welcome to tourists.

Carol Latimer's paper on Grafting (SEI) good reading for the Mission Board

Group G

1.
and Missional activity is not always reflected in statistics.
- 2.
3. Communication – shared stories and ideas.

Group H - 16

- Matching mission to local community need.
- Financial sustainability directed to where needed – mission to community v church buildings.
- Sharing resources ecumenically (Aberfeldy/Wemyss)
- Culture of fundraising to survive.
- ?Plant a congregation (Westhill).
- General invisibility of church compared to other faiths.

Group I

Walk the streets showing we're Christian.

The statistics we record are outputs of inputs and functions we don't measure, but guess at.

Group J

- Size isn't everything.
- Proportion of population is more important than numbers *per se*.
- Family engagement challenges:
 - parent/carer pressures
 - other competing activities
- “Soft touch” mission – by example/showing, eg Souper Saturday/hospitality.

Group K – Table 5

- Moving to where the people are.
- Community hub – place for people to meet, eg lunch once a week, café, a space for different organisations to come together.
- Meeting the need in the local community.
- Churches being open (eg for art or music). Gives people a sense of ownership – “their church”.
- Intentional discipleship – what are the stories? Helping people explore the faith, ask the questions.
- How visible is the church building? Is the building loved?
- A meeting place run by church volunteers – coffee and cake once a week.

Group L – Table 14

1.

- Service of the Word – MONTHLY “a few”
- Bi-monthly (Tuesday afternoon) Prayer Book Service and cuppa: 24+ each time (who can't manage a Sunday).

2.

- Midweek Service (Stirling) – for same reason ...
- Cake and Communion on a Thursday when Sunday is a problem (Highlands).
- Transport issues and conflicting “events” re: SUNDAYS – and young families (and the demise of the Sabbath).
- New generation of Christians = not in church every week. Idiosyncratic.
- Traditional service/Liturgy increasing popularity:
 - ➔ comforting/reassuring
 - ➔ familiar
 - ➔ consistent

3.

- “Buddy system” for the newer congregations/the visitors.

Group M – Table 8

1. Mission Stories

New building in Aberdeen – led to increase in church community.

Mission to youth in community – life café/street café – engagement – going out – not waking. [urban model?]

Fellowship of churches group – ecumenical change of church interior – other groups now use church – CPR = Community Prayer Response – community response.

Messy Church – reaching out and developing relations with local families.

Sing in the city – use of church plant.

Group N – Table 9

- How helpful has it been to give dioceses responsibility for mission? (Used to be provincial and local church).
- Are Bishops really leaders in mission?
- What can we learn from the independent growth?
- Online presence? Facebook advertising?
- Different traditions can grow.
- Broad diet of worship on offer.
- Improve welcome for people.

Group O – Table 17

1. Stories

Cathedral congregation doubled in 10 years – welcoming – music/liturgy
Evensong – growth

Targeting families
Children to children mission
Children bring parents engagement
Cowal Games

2. Recording Sundays – what about other days?
Ecumenical activities – how to record figures
Statistics too inward looking – how can we look outwards
How to record “non-traditional” church activity numbers?
3. How can SEC train youth workers?
New housing – how do we target?
What are effective ways of engaging?

Can the church encourage “planning” to include more community type resources that might be used for worship
How to overcome attachment to a building

Group P

1.
 - a) Church doing more in working with young people in the community. Eg given – not on church premises.
 - b) Street pastors in Elgin (ecumenical) – and “school pastors” – (listening role).
2. New housing estates – we need churches to work together – how do we do that.

Develop/work with local Councils to make sure there is community asset built into plans (or churches).

Or purchase a property to use as base for outreach.

But Livingston shows difficulty of mission church planting ecumenically.

House churches in Argyll.

St Margaret’s Easter Road story – growth in community not for Sunday service.

Centrally funded stipends will give more flexibility to plant churches where there are none.

This table considers that the current way we pay stipends (each congregation being responsible) may impede mission because we cannot locate stipendiary priests in mission situations – in housing estates where there is no church, in towns and communities where the existing congregations cannot afford a full time priest. Or do church planting.

It may be time to consider moving towards a centrally funded arrangement for paying stipends. It means quota increases – but that is offset against the reduction in expenditure as not paying a stipend.

Group Q

In some areas, the mixture of lots of different churches means that people are going to church, but may be the SEC church small. Lots of independent churches springing up.

Vestry spending energy on survival not mission.

Growth amongst elderly – small congregations of elderly.

Partnerships and variety of worship serving different “groups” in community.

Sacred space for people, feeding.

Lots of ways of being present in the community, after school clubs, church space being used by community and relationships formed in these activities.

Group R

1. Mission Stories – how Jane’s stories resonate:

- Tin hut in St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane is now a foodbank run with help of church volunteers. People happy to discuss matters of faith.
- Moray, Ross and Caithness - installing lift, making church accessible.
- Edinburgh – vestry want to make church and people more friendly! Desire to keep church open for visitors. Large basement with lots of potential.

2.

- Statistics not representative of our churches.
- Communicant lists out of date??
- Fluid congregations.
- How do you do “small church”?
- Celebrating constraints and working with our weaknesses – what resources we have.

3. Mission Board help:

- Mission is small grassroots initiative (better than ideas imposed from Province).

Group S

1. Too many stories – not enough time.

Not all successful.

2.

- Need to recognise they don’t tell the whole story.
- Need to delve more deeply.
- New statistics will give more scope 😊 !
- Nature of change in statistics and age profile.
- Looking at statistics as a missional target.

3.

- Provincial roadshows?
- Provincial conference?
- Building up relationships.

Group T – Table 4

1. Resonance with stories presented?

When we think about responding to our communities’ needs – “yes”.

2. Feelings about statistics

- Depressing
- Frustration
- Need to be in it for the long term.

Group U – Table 1

1. Sharing Stories

- Reaching out to non-church people { - “knit and knatter” – people asking for prayer
{ - “brew and blether”
{ - “tea and blether”
- feeding in from monthly bingo!
 - pastoral chats happen
 - “Book Bug” – early years literacy
 - series of debates on current topics – invited speakers
 - restoring unused space