

GENERAL SYNOD

Challenges for the Quinquennium

Progress Report from the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops

Foreword

In January 2011, the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops submitted a report to the new Synod *Challenges for the New Quinquennium (GS 1815)*. Building on the then Archbishop of Canterbury's Presidential Address of November 2010 it said:

"In reflecting on the opportunities and challenges facing the Church of England the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops identified three themes which, taken together, would provide a robust framework for shaping the work of the next five years.

They are:

- contributing as the national Church to the common good;*
- facilitating the growth of the Church;*
- re-imagining the Church's ministry."*

The Council and the House set out in GS Misc 995 (June 2011) some more specific proposals for developing these themes and a year ago the Synod received a progress report (GS Misc 1025). In addition successive editions of the Council's annual report have highlighted particular pieces of work undertaken at national level.

At this mid-point in the quinquennium the Council and the House of Bishops thought that the time had come to try and give a more rounded account of what has been achieved so far under each of these three important themes and of what still remains to be done.

This report comes with two important health warnings. First the ground that it covers is necessarily selective and illustrative. The take note debate that the Business Committee has agreed to schedule will provide an opportunity for Synod members to fill out the picture from their own experience.

Secondly, the Council and the House of Bishops want to follow up this take note debate with three further, more focused debates over the next twelve months on each of the three themes. If the Business Committee is content, we hope in November to bring forward a motion for consideration on evangelism and church growth. Debates on aspects of the common good and on reimagining ministry will follow in February and July.

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✠ Sentamu Eboracensis

June 2013

The changing context

1. The arrival of the new Archbishop of Canterbury has taken place at the midpoint in the life of this General Synod and just past the midpoint of the Parliament elected in May 2010. Unexpectedly it also coincides with the beginning of a new papacy.
2. After the excitements of the Jubilee year and the Olympics the public mood appears subdued and apprehensive. Fears of the collapse of the Euro and an imminent international financial meltdown have become less acute than they were, but the economic and political context remains fragile.
3. Domestically, what seems clear is that the best hope economically over the next few years is for a slow recovery. The state of the public finances also means that public spending is likely to have to remain under tight control whichever parties are in power. Life for many is going to be tough.
4. Compared with a decade ago, when the last Archbishop of Canterbury was taking up office, the international security situation has changed significantly. Then the memory of 9/11 was still fresh and the initial conflict in Afghanistan was about to be overshadowed by the hugely contentious invasion of Iraq.
5. But if the specifics have changed, conflict and uncertainty are no less prevalent. The continuing fallout from the Arab spring, jihadism, the Syrian civil war, the fighting parts of sub-Saharan Africa, deep rooted problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan and new tensions in parts of East Asia are all a reminder that peace and stability are exceedingly fragile.
6. In addition, here at home, the relatively benign constitutional developments that were bedding in a decade ago – the Human Rights Act, devolution to Scotland and Wales, a political deal in Northern Ireland – have given way to more anxious and existential questions. Is Scotland to remain part of the Union? Is the United Kingdom to remain part of the European Union?
7. Against that background the position of the Church of England and other churches in the public square shows signs of paradox. Throughout much of Western Europe the political influence of churches has been much diminished by secularism or scandal. Religious reservations to the introduction of same sex marriage have had limited traction in several Western European countries.
8. As against all that, Church news remains big news. There was intense interest in the Synod's decision on women bishops. The appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury generated much interest. The selection of a new Pope was major world news.
9. It is within that broad context that the challenge of leadership within the Church of England falls to be considered. The opportunities for contributing to the common good at a time of considerable social and economic distress are enormous. But the Church of England's capacity will be less than it would wish unless it can also make progress in reversing the long term decline in numbers and increase in the age profile of its membership.
10. Manifestly results turn primarily on what is done at parish level under the leadership of bishops in their dioceses. But it is also the responsibility of the Synod, the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners to support encourage and incentivise a wholehearted commitment to evangelism and growth.

11. Growing the church and serving the common good have repeatedly been described as complementary. GS1815 quoted Archbishop William Temple on this subject: *“If we have to choose between making men Christian and making the social order more Christian we must choose the former. But there is no such antithesis. Certainly there can be no Christian society unless there is a large body of convinced and devoted Christian people to establish it and keep it true to its own principles”*¹
12. Whilst acknowledging no antithesis between the first two quinquennial goals, the quotation from Temple gives some justification for addressing first in this paper what is being done to promote the growth of the church.

Mission and the growth of the Church.

13. In July 2011, Synod passed an amended Private Member’s Motion which called on the Archbishops’ Council and the House of Bishops to work together to develop GS Misc 995 further towards becoming a “national mission strategy” which would support dioceses, deaneries and parishes in their mission. A small group under the chairmanship of the Bishops of St Albans has worked on this and their report, *Making New Disciples: the Growth of the Church of England*, is being circulated separately as GS Misc 1054. It is referred to at several points below.
14. As *Making New Disciples* notes, “The Church does not have a top-down command economy, and fresh moves of the Spirit tend to start at local level”. Indeed, “making new disciples and the strategy relating to it are primarily worked out at local level – in dioceses, under the leadership of the diocesan bishop, and in parishes.”
15. The role of bishops in leadership for mission is emphasised in a discussion paper recently produced by the Bishop of Sheffield and annexed to this note. It highlights the importance of learning from our ecumenical partners by drawing, among other things, on his experience as Anglican Fraternal delegate to the Synod of Bishops in Rome. This paper, *How may bishops lead in growing the church?: The seven disciplines of evangelisation*, has been offered for discussion among the bishops and more widely throughout the church. The congruence between this paper and *Making New Disciples* is considerable.
16. Both papers note, interestingly, that there is a particular Anglican dimension which, at least until recently, has militated against a culture oriented towards growth – the assumption that growth is a core concern for one party within the church and can safely be left to them: in short, the mistaken conflation of evangelism/evangelisation and evangelicalism. *Making New Disciples* sketches some basic reasons why growth is an authentic priority for all the strands within Anglicanism and should be a practical priority for all.
17. Deep cultural change is not, usually, achieved solely through initiatives and policy decisions but by developing a powerful narrative which supersedes old ways of thinking. Such a narrative needs to draw authentically on the traditions and beliefs of

¹ William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, Penguin, 1942, p.90.

the church and demonstrably recall Christians to their vocation to live in witness and service. Fundamentally it is dependent on a renewal of prayer and the religious life within the Church of England. That has to be a key priority. Without such a renewal the encouraging signs of transformative narratives of growth which now exist in different parts of the church will not gain real traction.

18. Changes in thinking must be reflected in new practices. Here, the NCIs have been pursuing many opportunities to add value to diocesan and parish initiatives and building capacity for mission in ways which are best tackled at national level.
19. The Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council are working together through the Strategy and Resourcing team to identify where growth is taking place and the shared characteristics of dioceses which are growing. This new knowledge is being pursued in partnership with researchers from Durham University.
20. Another outcome of this work is the new Church Growth website which aims to be a "one stop shop" for resourcing church growth, mission and evangelism (<http://www.churchgrowthrd.org.uk>)
21. Collaborating with other agencies has multiplied what otherwise would be impossible to do alone. One example was the creation and distribution of 750,000 Diamond Jubilee New Testaments in 2012 as a venture between MPA and HOPE.
22. The theological colleges, who continue to rely heavily on money provided by the dioceses via the Archbishops' Council, have been pursuing new initiatives in support of mission. For example, St John's College Nottingham and Cranmer Hall Durham now have Centres for Church Growth and Ridley Hall has a centre for pioneer learning which for example facilitates, with Church Army, the Break Out conference for pioneers each year.
23. Fresh Expressions has been a transformative movement over the last decade or more. The MPA with colleagues from Research and Statistics have worked together on ways of ensuring that the growth within Fresh Expressions is properly counted and valued. Fresh Expressions are now such a significant part of the life of the church that it is time to start treating them as mainstream rather than novel or marginal activities. The way the church continues to support the ecumenical Fresh Expressions team whilst ensuring that the movement becomes properly embedded in the life of the church is currently being explored by the Archbishops' Council.
24. An example of how the Fresh Expressions movement is evolving and deepening its ecclesiology can be seen in the way some Fresh Expressions are starting to understand themselves as a modern manifestation of the religious community life within the church. CMS and the Church Army have also begun to see themselves as missional communities governed by a rule of life. The goal for the church is numerical *and spiritual* growth and the theological and ecclesiological seriousness that is now being manifested is taking mission and evangelism far beyond "initiatives" and placing them at the heart of the church's very identity.

25. Two areas of activity with strong missional dimensions are the church's continued major involvement in schools (extending well beyond Church of England schools) and the growing diversity of chaplaincy provision. A full account of the major changes and challenges in the education area is outside the scope of this overview and will be provided when Synod comes in due course to consider the follow up to the Chadwick report on the Church School of the Future.
26. On chaplaincy, a major research project is under way following the burgeoning interest in chaplaincy in different sectors, including, but now extending far beyond, the traditional chaplaincy fields of higher and further education, hospitals, prisons and the services. For instance, police chaplaincy has grown from virtually a standing start in 2000 to cover almost every constabulary in the country.
27. Many of the stories told by those who come to Christ include the ministry of a chaplain in some form or at some stage. Yet the "bridging" nature of chaplaincy, between the church and predominantly secular institutions, means that the language of mission, evangelism and conversion cannot simply be transplanted from the church's internal context.
28. Many other significant programmes have been launched: the Archbishop of York's "Towards the re-evangelisation of the North" project; work by MPA, HOPE and others to set up Mission Academies to build up young evangelists; the established and developing work of the College of Evangelists, the Fellowship for Parish Evangelism and the network of Diocesan Missioners; the work of the House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council to develop new resources in catechesis; the new projects on christenings and funerals, following the well received weddings project; work to simplify the church's processes in order to release more resource locally (see GS Misc 1048) which reports on this 'simplification' work.
29. Alongside this activity the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners have been investing in more rigorous ways of assessing effectiveness. In addition to the research referred to in paragraph 19 above, indicators have been developed with a view to capturing more accurately the scale and diversity of church life and its reach into local communities. The Research and Statistics Department has also adapted its collection of data from parishes and dioceses in order to gather some fresh data while still allowing comparability across the years so that trends can be clearly identified.
30. The most recently published statistics (for 2011) included some encouraging signs, with an increase of 5.1 in adult baptisms and 4.3% in the baptisms of infants and children. The number of Christmas worshippers was also significantly up on 2010. But after many years of decline in attendance figures the further fall in weekly attendance, albeit of only 0.3%, underlines the major challenge that the Church of England still faces in achieving substantial and sustained growth.

Contributing to the Common Good

31. When the three Quinquennial goals were set in 2010, the process was accompanied by a substantial theological paper on the place of the Common Good in Christian thought and action. That remains the foundation for this strand of work. Christian discipleship

involves the pursuit of the good of all people because the earth is the Lord's, we pray for his Kingdom to come on earth as in heaven and so we seek structures and ways of life in this age which reflect God's love for all his children.

32. The Samaritan did not pass by the wounded man, even though he was a stranger. Remembering Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, and seeking to follow in his way as one who alleviated human suffering around him, Christians are called to serve their fellow men and women and to model good living and good relationships for all.
33. There is also a missiological element in the pursuit of the common good. The Christian vision of love for neighbour and stranger is a hugely attractive one. Even in a competitive and self-centred culture, the virtues of sacrifice and serving others attract admiration, credit and affection. The church is not validated by its service to the community, but when its service to others stems demonstrably from its trust in God and its vision of his Kingdom, God is glorified and new disciples are attracted to the Christian way.
34. The Church of England's presence in every community and its 16,000 church buildings, many of them increasingly adapted over recent years so that they can potentially host a wide range of social and economically beneficial activities, gives it a unique reach. The current recession has sharpened the need for the Church to be faithful to its historic vocation to serve the common good.
35. At local level, meeting the needs of those hit hardest by the recession has seen the burgeoning of food-banks, many set up by churches and many others drawing on Christian volunteers.
36. The Trussell Trust is one example of a Christian charity at the forefront of the development of food-banks. According to their data, there are:
 - 325 food-banks currently launched
 - which fed 128,687 people in 2011-12, and expect this to rise to 290,000 in 2012-13
 - 3 new food-banks are set up every week
 - 1,200 tonnes of food donated in 12 months
 - 4,360 volunteers in 2011-12

Separately, a CUF survey of around 900 churches at the end of 2011 found that more than 1 in 4 had a food-bank (ranging from a small cupboard of tinned food to a Trussell Trust food-bank).

37. In these and many other ways – for example through an extensive involvement in schools, colleges and universities – individual Anglicans as well as churches are demonstrating commitment to the ideals that the government once espoused under the title of the Big Society. There is still work to be done to express the proper balance between voluntary action and the proper boundaries of state provision. But in the meantime, churches are championing the interests of those who, in times of austerity, are most at risk of losing out.
38. The new impetus for Christian social action is being resourced by MPA's new interactive website, Resourcing Christian Community Action (<http://www.how2help.net>). A Synod debate in November 2010 prompted extensive

research into what churches are already doing for their local communities, the website allows any church or individual to go connect straight to others who have experience to offer in diverse areas of social action.

39. In a society where material inequality has been deepening for many years, poverty remains an intractable problem which damages many lives and weakens the cohesion of communities. Several dioceses have taken a leading role in Fairness Commissions, set up to develop a public dialogue about what a fair society would look like and how steps can be taken towards such a goal. Churches have also been involved in the Living Wage campaign which seeks to ensure that hard work is remunerated at a level that will sustain a decent existence. A recent PMM at Synod committed the church to setting a good example by paying at least the Living Wage to its employees at all levels.
40. In the work of public apologetics, the bishops supported by MPA and other colleagues at Church House, have continued to offer reasoned, theologically informed, responses to policy initiatives and to build a public perception that it is in the interests of the common good that Christian virtues should, overtly or otherwise, inform public policy, whether in relation to banking standards, international development, genetics, welfare and health service reform or the myriad other subjects on which submissions are produced and speeches made..
41. The Second Church Estates Commissioner has continued to use his position in the House of Commons to put the church much more on the front foot in engaging with MPs and with the wider political debate.
42. It would be misleading to present the churches as poised to offer an alternative to the welfare state. Indeed, they have no wish to see a properly comprehensive response to basic material needs replaced by a patchy and unpredictable range of charitable responses.
43. But the Church of England remains committed to showing what a rich civil society might look like and how a Christian vision of society can benefit people of all faiths and none. Part of the problem faced by state welfare has been an excessive growth in the culture of entitlement and the erosion of the strong, informal, local community and voluntary structures that existed a few decades ago to the point where the balance between local neighbourliness and state provision has been skewed unsustainably. The relationship of the church to the structures of state welfare will be explored further in a paper to Synod for debate in July 2013.
44. The Church of England has also continued to pursue its historic vocation of promoting social cohesion through its support for the Near Neighbours Initiative. The Archbishops' Council has facilitated the imaginative work undertaken by the Church Urban Fund, with £5m of funding from the department of Communities and Local Government, to foster greater resilience and cross community cooperation in areas with a high proportion of people from other faiths.

Reimagining Ministry

45. Five particular areas of work are emerging in the area of reimagining and transforming ministry, both in the light of the quinquennial objectives as reflected in the discussion of the Archbishops' Council and also arising out of the work of dioceses as they plan and create strategies for their ministry and mission.
46. The first is the encouragement of vocations to ordained & lay ministry which meet the church's needs for mission. The numbers remain encouraging. There are currently 1,230 people in training for ordained ministry. Over the past decade the annual number of ordinations has remained consistent at between 470 and 570. In 2012 the number of young people (aged under 30) accepted for training for the Church of England ministry was 113, 22% of the total and the highest number since 1992.
47. Nevertheless, there is a growing sense that the current stress on the individual's sense of vocation needs to be redressed to a greater extent by reference to the kind of clergy who are suited to the present mission challenge and especially to meet the need for greater diversity.
48. National programmes to encourage vocations among younger people and those from BME backgrounds are already in place. There is scope for further work with disabled people and those from underrepresented social and economic backgrounds, so that the face of the ministry reflects the face of our communities. Dioceses are beginning to develop ministry plans and these need to be supplemented with strategies for recruitment related to their overall ministry needs. To complement this, quality assurance for the national selection process, especially under the criteria of leadership and mission, needs to be developed.
49. The second area is concerned with "turning rhetoric into reality" in lay participation, formation, ministry and discipleship. In terms of changes in the culture of the church, there seems to be a shift from formal ministries to informal styles of service, and a greater focus of interest in service in the community on the part of lay members of churches simply as Christians.
50. It may be that there is a need for the modes of recognition of such lay involvement to be re-understood. Further work is still needed at national level and in dioceses to develop a better shared understanding of lay ministry & discipleship in the Church of England. As already noted, lay education and ministry are largely determined locally in dioceses and parishes. However, there is a national role in collating the broader picture and setting a tone.
51. So three pieces of work are now under way to develop better understanding across the church, to encourage a more strategic approach in dioceses and to give strong affirmation to lay ministry and discipleship. These are:
 - For the Education Division to **audit and review lay education provision across the dioceses for report to the Archbishops Council by the end of 2013 and for circulation to dioceses**
 - For Ministry Division to **review the range of lay ministries exercised in dioceses for report to both Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops by May 2014 and in order to assist dioceses in strategic planning**

- Using the quinquennial CMD review in 2013 on behalf of the House of Bishops, to **assess what further training and support incumbents need in order to be positive leaders who encourage collaborative working between all members of the church and to advise Bishops and dioceses.**
52. These areas of work will help prepare the ground for a wider debate about the contribution of the laity to the mission and ministry of the church, on the basis of some facts. Strong feelings and deep convictions should be acknowledged here. On the side of some laity there is frustration that the gifts and commitment which they bring are not recognised and utilised. On the side of some clergy, there is a mixture of fear about their own position and lack of will or ability to engage with the changing situation of ministry and society.
 53. A third area is the need to make a step change in provision for clergy support and development, especially in the case of incumbents. The national quinquennial Continuing Ministerial Development review in 2013 will present a picture of actual provision and future requirements and standards in light of the new context of Clergy Terms of Service and the mission and growth agenda in a report to the House of Bishops and with reference to the particular needs of stipendiary and self-supporting ministers, ministers in secular employment, Fresh Expressions and Pioneer ministers and chaplains. This review will need to explore how a higher level of provision for CMD can be resourced and funded.
 54. A fourth area recognises the need to plan the use of scarce ministerial resources. Several dioceses have recently produced strategic plans for mission and ministry, or refreshed existing ones. A number of these have set out an explicit growth agenda and exhibit creative and exciting ideas for encouraging collaboration and team work in the service of mission. Church House staff are actively encouraging this through the provision of web access and consultancy. This covers a range of issues from financial planning to deployment plans and pastoral organisation.
 55. From the diocesan side there is a need to build on the national network of Diocesan Directors of Ministry or their equivalent and to ensure that every diocese has a known point of contact on ministry deployment and strategy with their national colleagues. Strategic plans need to take into account all the resources which are present in a diocese or deanery, including Fresh Expressions and Pioneer ministries, chaplaincies, schools and those whose access to the church and its worship can easily be ignored, such as Deaf people and those with disabilities and specific learning difficulties.
 56. A final and more generic area is the encouragement in the ministry of the church a culture of growth and innovation. A key aspect of encouraging this approach is readiness to reflect and think anew. The validation partnership recently signed with Durham University will provide a context for high quality research on the future of ministry and training which will feed into theological education and influence those at the initial stage of their ministry development.
 57. There is scope to use the opportunity of the Durham Common Awards to encourage the focus on mission and growth in the period of initial theological education and to engender in new ministers the values and practices which promote it. Links with other university departments such as Kings College London also provide stimulus and fresh

approaches to familiar issues around leadership through research and consultancy. Alongside the readiness to take risks and innovate for growth, there is a need for disciplined and profound reflection which helps to direct energy and commitment intelligently.

Conclusion

58. Two and a half years are a very short period in the history of the Church of England. Perhaps the most rapid recent changes of activity and emphasis have been in serving the common good where tensions generated by recession have brought this area of mission and ministry sharply to the fore.
59. But it is, rightly, the challenge of growth that is increasingly at the centre of the church's agendas. As in New Testament days there is a sharp awareness of the challenge posed by an abundance of fields white to harvest and a relatively limited supply of labourers.
60. And so at the root of the central challenges facing the Church of England lies, as it always has done, a spiritual challenge. As the risen Christ said to Peter: 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' As *Making New Disciples* suggests, the core of cultural change lies in prayer and faithful reflection so that activity, programmes and initiatives are all seen as means of advancing the Kingdom of God not ends in themselves.

The Seven Disciplines of Evangelisation

A discussion paper

Steven Croft

June, 2013.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” John 3.16

In October 2012 I was the Anglican Fraternal Delegate to the Synod of Bishops in Rome: a three week gathering of Roman Catholic Cardinals and Bishops with Pope Benedict to explore the single theme of the new evangelization.

The Synod of Bishops was a rich experience of listening to another Church reflect on the challenge of growing the Church and of the role of Bishops in leading that process.

This paper is a reflection arising from sharing in the Synod and my own experience thus far of attempting to develop vision and strategy for growth within the Diocese of Sheffield and more widely.

The paper is framed as a series of brief propositions and questions for discussion.

The paper was originally prepared as a discussion paper for the annual meeting of Diocesan Bishops and Archbishops of the Church of England on 10th April, 2013. I have made some revisions to the paper following discussion with fellow bishops. The original paper had five disciplines. I have now added a sixth (placed first) following a suggestion made by the Bishop of London and a seventh (placed last) taking up a number of suggestions made by colleagues, including the Bishop of Connor whose diocese I visited the day after the English bishops meeting.

The original title of the paper was “How may bishops lead in growing the Church?”. I have retained some of the emphasis on the role of bishops specifically in the text of this version of the paper. However I believe the questions of how to give leadership in this area is relevant to all ordained and lay people who share in the oversight of God’s Church. I therefore hope that the paper will be relevant to a number of groups across the Church of England and not only bishops.

1. Growing the Church in the present context is immensely challenging

I returned from the Synod of Bishops convinced that the Church all over the world is having the same conversation about the challenge and difficulty of evangelization. I expected to hear about challenge and difficulty from Europe and North America and about growth and hope from Asia, Africa and South America. There were some contrasts but in fact the picture was much more one of challenge in the face of a uniform, powerful, global secularizing culture.

The difficulty in the transmission of the faith in the face of this secularizing culture is at the root of many of the other difficulties we grapple with as Churches (apparent lack of finance, vocations, the need to re-imagine ministry, decreasing resources to serve the common good).

The questions we are grappling with in our dioceses and in the Church of England are not unique to Anglicans or to Christians in Britain or the Church in Europe. They are global questions and, I would argue, the single most serious challenge the Church will face in the next generation.

How should we lead and guide the Church in this aspect of our life given this challenging context?

We need to be realistic about the challenges. We need to practice and live hope as a key virtue in leadership. We need to be deeply rooted in prayer and in the scriptures. We need to be aware that the leadership we offer individually and bishops, clergy and lay people sets a tone and makes a difference to the whole church. We need to prioritise thinking and reflection around this issue. We should beware of simplistic rhetoric and easy solutions.

2. We need a richer dialogue on evangelization and growing the Church

The Synod of Bishops was able to set aside three whole weeks to deal with a single issue and was itself part of a longer five year process leading up to and from the Synod. This meant that there was in depth engagement with the subject over many hours of listening within a coherent and transformational process. Major theological and practical resources will in due time emerge from this process.

By contrast, many discussions of growing the Church and evangelization at senior level in the Church of England are superficial, skate over the surface of the issues and make little progress.

Some of the reasons for this are:

- The agendas of bishops meetings and other meetings are dominated by questions of gender and ministry and human sexuality leaving little quality space for deeper engagement with evangelization.
- We feel a constant need to balance our agendas between serving the common good on the one hand and evangelization/growth on the other as if they were in competition (there was no evidence of this in Rome). It becomes impossible to devote even a whole day to growth and evangelization.
- The evangelization and growth agenda is seen as the province of a particular church tradition and which is regarded with suspicion by those not of that tradition (again there was no evidence of this in Rome).
- It is also possible that, as individuals and as a body, we see the complexity of the call to grow the Church and we are in danger of being overwhelmed by that complexity. It is easier to address the more specific questions.
- At the same time there is a prevailing myth that we ought to be (and perhaps some are) competent at leading the Church into growth and therefore we don't need to focus our conversation here.

How can we better develop this richer dialogue on evangelization and growing the Church to nourish our individual and corporate leadership as bishops?

We need to cherish humility before one another and before God in this area: this is not something we know how to do. We need a richer and more precise vocabulary for disciplines which further to the growth of the Church (see below). Our thinking needs to be nourished both by research and by theological reflection on evangelization. We need to reserve and protect the agendas of our Synods and other meetings to deepen this conversation. Our styles of learning in this area need to become much more like learning networks, intentionally sharing and developing good practice. We perhaps need an ongoing educational and transformational process to our discussions leading to clear outcomes.

3. We need a clear, shared understanding of the disciplines and practices which help to grow the Church.

There have been many attempts to develop comprehensive strategies for growth in the life of dioceses and the life of the national church in recent years.

Typically these strategies deal with a wide range of presenting issues. However, it is important to distinguish within these strategies those disciplines and practices which help to grow the church on the one hand from the elements often included in strategy documents which do not directly contribute to the growth of the Church (but which often dominate so called “growth strategies”).

It is important to name the truth that, though it is vital, pastoral re-organisation of parishes into larger mission partnerships or units with fewer stipendiary clergy in changed roles will not, of itself, lead to the growth of the church. Nor, by itself, will mission action planning. Nor will the more vigorous development of lay or self-supporting ordained ministry. Nor will the redrawing of parish, deanery or diocesan boundaries or the creation of more advisor/coaching posts. Nor will the restructuring of clergy or lay formation by itself lead to growth.

All of these practices are likely to form part of diocesan strategies. They are all probably necessary and good developments for the future life of the Church. They need to be happening. I support almost all of them. We should certainly discuss them together as bishops more than we do.

However, whilst these areas may be vital, they are not the core disciplines and practices which lead to evangelization and will lead eventually to the growth of the Church. Any of them can become a distraction insofar as it becomes such a priority that it distracts attention away from the core disciplines which do produce growth.

I would define the core disciplines and practices for growth as those which invite, encourage and enable people to become Christians and to grow as disciples of Christ as part of the Church and to fulfill their calling in serving the common good.

People come to faith by encountering the Christian gospel as children, as young people and as adults, through being nurtured in that faith and enabled to grow to maturity as disciples through being part of supportive and missional church communities. Where this is happening, there is likely be new life and growth in the local church.

There are, of course, different ways of describing these disciplines and practices. I suggest here that there are seven such disciplines which have deep roots in Scripture and the tradition and need to be at the forefront of our thinking in the Church today.

1. The discipline of prayerful discernment and listening (contemplation)
2. The discipline of apologetics (defending and commending the faith)
3. The discipline of evangelism (initial proclamation)
4. The discipline of catechesis (learning and teaching the faith)
5. The discipline of ecclesial formation (growing the community of the church)
6. The discipline of planting and forming new ecclesial communities (fresh expressions of the church)
7. The discipline of incarnational mission (following the pattern of Jesus)

At present our conversation about growing the church lacks a precise vocabulary. It feels rather like having a conversation about liturgy without being able to subdivide the subject appropriately (into for example, the Office, the Eucharist, Initiation and so on).

The names of some of these disciplines are borrowed (with their titles) from the Roman Catholic vocabulary used in the Propositions from the Synod of Bishops (with some minor variations). The sixth is at present a distinctively Anglican addition to the disciplines.

These seven disciplines are not the property of a single tradition within the life of the Church nor of a single denomination. Wherever they are practiced faithfully in the life of the Church throughout the world, there is growth in the number of disciples and the quality of discipleship.

Developing and recovering these disciplines in the life of the contemporary church is not simply about excavating a tradition. Each needs to be continuously developed in a dialogue of active listening to contemporary culture which is where we begin.

The discipline of prayerful discernment and listening. This first discipline is both a distinct set of practices and the foundation for each of the others. The transmission of the Christian faith is a divine as well as a human activity. It is only possible in the life of the Spirit. This deep truth is carried in the story of Pentecost and Jesus' instruction to the disciples to wait for the power of the Spirit. It is carried in the beautiful picture of the vine, where it is the life of Christ which flows into the branches and bears fruit. The Church is called to abide deeply in Christ continually as the foundation and source of her life through prayer, worship and the sacraments. **Contemplation** is the wellspring of evangelism.

This deep abiding in the life of Christ needs to be accompanied by a careful attention to what God is doing already in each different place, community and context and out of that listening to discern carefully the best and most helpful place to begin. One of the features of the gospel stories and the Acts of the Apostles often commented on in the tradition of the Church is the way in which Jesus and the apostles deal in different ways with different people. There are no repetitive formulas to be repeated in each place but prayerful and careful openness to the Spirit and discernment in context. The contextualisation of mission and in the life of the Church flows from this deep and careful listening.

How can we encourage the whole Church in this deep abiding in the life of Christ? How can we encourage new vocations and new forms of religious life? How can we better encourage the careful attention to context and a willingness to abandon formulaic approaches to mission? How can we together encourage research and deep listening to our culture as the foundation of evangelization?

The discipline of apologetics is the practice of **defending and commending the Christian faith** in dialogue with individuals, with specific communities and ideas and with whole cultural movements. Its roots are deep in Scripture (in Job and Daniel, in the Acts of the Apostles). It serves to strengthen the faith of believers, to remove obstacles to faith in hearts and minds and to prepare the ground for the initial proclamation of the gospel. It is a discipline which is massively under resourced in theological education and research and in the life of the Church. It is a discipline exercised through a variety of media: through films, novels, new media and the sciences as well as philosophy and theology. It is a ministry exercised in the pulpit, in pastoral encounters, in schools, in engagement in the public domain, in writing and broadcasting.

How can we offer a lead in this area ourselves and be better equipped as apologists for the Christian faith? How can we ensure that this discipline is better and more systematically resourced in the next generation?

The discipline of evangelism (or initial proclamation of the faith) is the habit and practice of sowing the seed of the gospel in the lives of those who have not yet heard its life-giving message. The Roman Catholic vocabulary is “initial proclamation” and the term evangelism is reserved as a generic, non-technical term used both for the whole and the parts of the process. We have a similar tension in the Church of England usage. This discipline is somewhat better resourced in our own life. We have a College of Evangelists, Church Army Evangelists, a network of Diocesan Missioners and often local licensed evangelists in dioceses dedicated in different ways to the initial proclamation of the faith in imaginative and effective ways. Nevertheless as our culture changes and evolves there is a need to continue to reflect and to develop resources and tools for this initial proclamation of the faith.

How can we lead in this area ourselves and be better equipped as those who announce good news and tell the gospel to those who have not yet heard its message? How can we ensure that this discipline and set of practices grows and deepens in the coming years?

The discipline of catechesis is the discipline of **teaching and learning faith** and especially teaching the faith to those preparing for baptism (and confirmation) and those who have been recently baptized as they grow into mature discipleship. This is a discipline where the Roman Catholic Church has done very significant work over the last two generations (evidenced in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the RCIA). This discipline is heavily disguised in our own discourse. We have developed the habit of referring to it either by the brand names of popular courses (Alpha, Emmaus, Christianity Explored) or else by generic titles such as “nurture courses” which cannot carry the weight of the Christian tradition or the range of pastoral practice involved in catechesis.

Catechesis of adults and children and young people is absolutely critical to the growth of the church. It is the discipline through which new disciples are formed and take their place in the life and witness of the Christian community. We need urgently to recover a sense of the family as a primary agent of catechesis in teaching the faith to children and young people.

Catechesis engages three theological disciplines of doctrine, liturgy and formation/education. As the Church of England we have done some work in each of these areas but little to bring them together in a systematic way.

Bishops are central to the development of catechesis. In the early tradition, bishops are at the centre of baptismal teaching preparation. They are the chief ministers of baptism and lead in Christian formation. All clergy and licensed ministers need to share in this ministry and its oversight.

How can we lead in this area of catechesis in our own pastoral practice and in the development of our liturgical and teaching ministry? How can we develop a renewal of training in catechesis for clergy and lay ministers? Are there initiatives we can take together which will promote and develop effective catechesis? These might include a renewal and revision of the catechism as well as the development of new resources for Christian formation.

The House of Bishops and the Archbishops Council have recently taken an initiative to develop new resources in this area. The Bishops of Chelmsford and Stockport, Dr. Paula Gooder and myself are developing a new resource, *Pilgrim: a course for the Christian journey*. The course will be launched in September.

The discipline of ecclesial formation is the discipline of **growing the community of the church** as the number of disciples grows. In many places, church congregations are now primary communities not subsets of existing communities. By and large, Christian disciples need more intentional support in living out their discipleship in a more secular environment. This discipline, like the others, has very deep roots in scripture and the tradition (*“My little children, for whom I am again in childbirth until Christ is formed in you” Gal. 4.19*). However it is a discipline which is undergoing change because of the wider environment and the changing role of the stipendiary clergy.

This discipline is absolutely vital to the growth of the church. Those who come to faith need to be incorporated into living, growing, supportive and Christ like Christian communities.

At the Synod of Bishops, one place this discipline was evident was the very significant development of small ecclesial communities in many parts of the Roman Catholic Church over the last 15 years. At the turn of the millennium, base ecclesial communities were largely associated with Central and South America and a particular theological movement. It is clear that in many places they have become a significant pastoral movement of renewal and support of congregations, actively supported by bishops and Bishops Conferences.

How can we lead in this area of ecclesial formation? How can we equip clergy and lay people for the leadership of change in this discipline? How can we develop different and consistent models of good practice which are faithful to Anglican identity and ecclesiology?

The discipline of planting and forming new ecclesial communities. This is the discipline discovered in the earliest days of the New Testament Church which has been slowly recovered in the Church of England through the insights of returning missionaries such as Roland Allen, the church planting movement, Mission-Shaped church and the development of fresh expressions of church.

The Church in much of the rest of the world is increasingly looking at the Church of England's engagement with this discipline to provide positive lessons and direction for the future.

As a Church we have invested significantly in this discipline in recent years. We have recently committed ourselves, through the General Synod Debate on *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church* to continued investment and development. There are very clear indicators that investment here is leading to the growth in the church. However there remains a significant agenda for the future.

How can we continue to lead the church in the work of planting and forming new ecclesial communities? How do we continue to encourage the growth of wisdom and pastoral practice? How do we continue to develop and deploy the gifts of pioneer ministers? How do we integrate the life of fresh expressions of church into the mixed economy of diocesan life?

The discipline of incarnational mission (following the pattern of Jesus) According to the Gospel of John, Jesus commissioned the disciples with these words: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20.21). The incarnation and the ministry of Jesus is to be the pattern of all Christian mission, including the ministry of evangelization and growing the Church. The discipline of patterning our mission on the life of Christ takes us back to the first discipline of prayerful discernment and attention to context. However it must also include ensuring that we are church which not only invites people to come to us but which continually goes, in different ways, in search of the last, the least and the lost, taking the message of salvation. We must ensure that the evangelization we attempt is not in word only but supported by our actions and our service of the common good and the wider ministry of reconciliation. We must ensure that our evangelization is contextual, that the one gospel takes flesh in different forms with different people and therefore that we must pay attention to questions of inculturation. We must be alert to particular moments of opportunity both as individuals and as a Church in reading the signs of the times, not slaves to a single strategy or programme but alert to the movement of the Holy Spirit. We must be prepared for the untidiness and mess which always accompanies experiment, evangelism and growth. Above all we must clothe our apologetics, our proclamation, our teaching, and our planting and building of the churches in love, without which all we do is nothing.

How can we so watch over and lead the Church of England that the Church grows together more deeply into the likeness of Jesus Christ even as we seek to grow the number of Christian disciples and the number of church communities? How do we ensure that our ministries remain personal as well as institutional, building community rather than reinforcing hierarchy?

4. In conclusion

If bishops, clergy and lay disciples are to lead effectively in growing the church, we need a richer and more sustained conversation with the whole church about how this task is taken forward. We then need that conversation to lead to action both within dioceses and action taken on behalf of the Church of England.

This paper suggests an agenda for that conversation based around seven disciplines which are essential for evangelization. Each discipline is in a different place in terms of development and pathways forward.

The paper feels to the author to be provisional and unfinished. The aim is to help to take a conversation forward rather than prescribe a programme or a series of projects.

To return to the Synod of Bishops in Rome, the first place we need to come to in our thinking about evangelization is the place of realizing that we are inadequate to the task before us. It is as we come to that point, by the grace of God, that we are open to the insights of others, to the guiding of the Spirit and a renewing encounter with the risen Christ.

✂ Steven Sheffield

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