

Bishop Peter Carrell's Presidential Address, Synod, 06/09/2019

Introduction

Why are we here in this place at this time for the purpose of doing the business of the Diocese of Christchurch?

The answer lies in our gospel reading last night from Luke 5.1-11.

God in Jesus Christ has called you and me – the church – into being and given us a task to do, to draw more and more people into the church, into God's family.

In the Christian movement Jesus catalyzed into life and growth through history there are moments when we pause to take stock.

Some of those moments are captured in the New Testament epistles, for example our passage last night, Colossian 1:9-14.

Paul and other writers of the epistles take stock:

- is the church on track?
- Is it focused on Jesus Christ?
- has it lost sight of Jesus through distractions?
- why is it allowing itself to be divided?
- does the church grasp the big picture of what God is doing in the world?

Every synod is a pause in the life of a diocese.

It is time to ask questions of ourselves but the questions are not primarily about whether the statistics on p. 30 of the reports contain an error of data compilation.

The questions are (or ought to be) primarily about our life in Christ.

Christ is the foundation of the Diocese, the inspiration for what we do and the end towards whom we travel in this life as successors to those he first called from their fishing nets.

In our Synod our reports and bills and motions as I read them are properly about a Diocese taking a moment to pause, to review, to take stock, to ask whether we are heading in the right direction – the direction, that is, which is faithful to the call of Jesus to fish for people, and the direction which is never satisfied until we see the fullness of the kingdom of God.

My address to you is also part of pausing to reflect on where we are going.

It is an opportunity for me to share with you my vision for the future and proposed strategic themes as I lead you, having been called by God through you to be your bishop.

PART A: The Diocese of Christchurch, 2018-2019

I begin this part of the address by saying thank you.

Praise and thanks to God who has both called us into being as a Diocese and who continues to work among us and with us. Through God we have been blessed in the past year in many ways, for which we give God thanks.

It is also appropriate to offer our human thanks to our peers and colleagues who have done so much for us.

On behalf of the Diocese I thank Archbishop Philip Richardson for his superb leadership as our pro tem bishop from early May 2018 until my ordination and installation on 9 February this year.

Alongside him were Helen Roud, Vicar-General, and Peter Hurricks, Episcopal Commissary: thank you Helen and Peter for all you did to ensure episcopal oversight and ordering of our life was well exercised during the interim period.

I also thank, on behalf of the Diocese, the many people, clerical and lay, paid and unpaid, elected or appointed, who have worked so hard over the past year and who make the Diocese of Christchurch what it is.

The list is extensive, it is readily found across the pages of our Diocesan prayer cycle, and I hope we are praying for each other with thanksgiving across each Sunday of the year and each day of the month.

I work more closely with some on the list than others, there are more than a dozen names in this category, I will not list you all, but you know who you are: thank you, thank you, thank you.

I also warmly thank the following people who are leaving one of our three major Boards in the Diocese:

CPT: Wayne Hart, Roger Sutton & Roger Bridge.

Anglican Care: the Rev'd Katrina Hill.

Standing Committee: Judith MacKenzie, the Rev'd Matthew Ling and Lyndsey Sturge.

Disaffiliation

The past year, since we last met as a Synod has been a year in which the ordinary mission and ministry of God's faithful people in our Diocese have been overshadowed by a tear in the fabric of our fellowship.

Consequential on the decision of General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui 2018 to permit the blessing of same sex civil marriages, when we met in September 2018 we knew that virtually all the congregations of three parishes, a significant portion of a fourth parish, along with their clergy, and one or two others were disaffiliating from our Diocese.

Since then other clergy and members of congregations have left us. By my count nine new churches have been formed within our Diocesan boundaries, coalescing with at least three other churches in the South and North Islands into a new diocese of some dozen churches, with a soon to be ordained bishop, Jay Behan. What is it in the waters of Canterbury which has led to the predominance of Canterbury churches in this new venture?

I know that across our Diocese these disaffiliations have resulted in pain, anger, confusion and distress. There have been consequences on multiple levels of our life together.

However, as God's people, we are always called to hope, to faith and to love. Even amidst the pain of these past twelve months, there has been hope, faith and love – sometimes faint, often strong.

We have seen creative and courageous efforts made to rebuild congregational life. There has been determination that quota will continue to be paid. There have been unsung heroes among clergy and lay leaders in affected ministry units – I salute you and thank you for your faithfulness and your vision for the future of your parishes.

Nevertheless, we have lost something which will be very hard to regain: a significant portion of Anglicans aged under 60 years have disaffiliated.

We need to reflect very carefully on this fact of our life together. That is, that when sociologists tell us that most younger generations are liberal minded on the matter which has divided our church, the largest portion of younger generations in our Diocese have not reflected society at large.

Younger Christians actively involved in congregational life in the 21st century are predominantly conservative in theological and ethical outlook. If as a Diocese we ignore this observation, we do so at our peril.

Recovery

Immense work has been undertaken on the reinstatement of the Cathedral in the Square; significant progress has been made on Recovery Programme as a whole, including the opening of All Souls, Merivale-St Albans; and generally our property portfolio is changing as some post-quake rationalization of churches takes place. This past year has seen, for instance, St Anne's St Martins, St James' Lower Riccarton and St John's Bishopdale put up for sale.

At other moments in our Synod timetable we will have time to consider various matters to do with the Cathedral Reinstatement and our Recovery Programme, but here I want to acknowledge the hard work CPT, parish, CCRL and CCRT staff, vestry and Board members have put into making things happen, including raising much needed funds for work to proceed. Thank you.

Property and Mission

In our Synod we have a few motions concerning assets, especially property in relation to our participation in the mission of God.

I see these motions as representing some frustration, some dreaming and some aspirations to be better resourced in our gospel mission. I hear, as you likely do also, some talk about how we might better deploy assets across our Diocese for a better focused mission.

However, it is important that we have an accurate understanding of the situation we are in.

A Diocese is a network of parishes and other ministry units such as schools and chaplaincies, each focused on a specific local ministry.

Most parishes have a local ministry to their neighbourhood.

Our schools have a local ministry to their students, staff and parental community.

Each parish has some kind of asset such as a church, hall and vicarage held in trust by CPT.

Each school owns its own assets.

Chaplaincies in hospitals, prisons and military establishments have no assets.

The Diocese in its own right has very few assets.

That is, better deployment of assets across our Diocese for a better focused mission is in the hands of the parishes.

There is no Diocese of Christchurch which can force parish A to give up a surplus asset so that Parish B can be better resourced.

We can agree, however, via Synod to voluntarily give up some of our assets for a common pool (e.g. for planting new churches in new neighbourhoods) or for a particular project.

Or, we should note, Parish A, does not need to wait for Synod: it can give away assets because it sees the possibilities for flourishing in Parish B.

The single most powerful signal of a change in the deployment of assets would be initiatives taken by individual parishes to give away surplus assets in order to develop focus, strategic mission in another part of the Diocese.

But let's be open and honest with ourselves about how likely such a generous, helpful outcome is to happen.

This past year many parishes have sought to use their assets to support, sustain and develop the mission to which God has called them in their local neighbourhoods.

In a couple of instances there have been signals that gifting is going to take place. But for the most part each parish is pretty desperate to use what is at hand, feeling that any surplus available to themselves is desperately needed for their local mission, rather than be gifted away.

There is one other aspect of property which I want to comment on. This is the situation when a parish wants to spend down assets otherwise set aside for maintenance of buildings or for the purchase of a vicarage.

On the one hand CPT has an obligation to protect those assets on the basis that its knowledge of 163 years of property matters tells trustees and staff that there always comes a future point when funds are needed by parishes for the development of its buildings.

On the other hand, parishes have an obligation to forward the proclamation of the gospel and the building of the kingdom of God.

The tension we experience between these two obligations is as predictable as it is healthy.

In my view this tension is resolvable through communication which leads to understanding of the importance of our respective obligations.

But also critical is the role the Synod plays: we set guidelines and rules about things such as vicarages.

We cannot set rules which shape Standing Committee and CPT responses to parish requests and then demur when the response is not to our liking.

Excitement and Faithfulness

Notwithstanding difficulties and dilemmas touched on in the paragraphs above, there is much happening in the Diocese to be excited by.

One of the most exciting experiences of the past year for me has been the multiple ways in which lay and clerical leaders have stepped up to lead their congregations in worship, together reaching out in ministry and mission to the community which surrounds their ministry units.

A huge number of people in our Diocese quietly get on with the tasks God has assigned to you. It is a privilege to meet so many of you, to talk about what is happening among you under God, and then as bishop to go away knowing that the work continues faithfully because of your responsibility and dedication to the work of Christ in the world.

PART B: The Diocese of Christchurch and its surrounding world

It is a truism to observe, once again, that the Diocese of Christchurch exists in a surrounding world. But it is an important and relevant truth.

Tragically this truth was brought home to us on 15 March this year when terrorism struck our city and killed fellow citizens who could as easily have been you and me if the terrorist had been slightly differently motivated.

The state of the global economy is affecting investment returns on funds held in trust on behalf of ministry units by the CPT.

Rising sea levels due to climate change will affect the eastern seaboard of our Diocese, especially the eastern suburbs of Christchurch city.

Climate change is affected by pollution and by the amount of trees consuming carbon dioxide.

In recent weeks we have been alarmed at the extent of burning forests in the Amazon catchment.

Did you know that one reason for burning forests in that part of Brazil is to increase the amount of land available to grow soybeans, that China is very keen on those soybeans, and the reason for their keenness are the tariffs on US soybeans being imposed by President Trump?

No one on the eastern seaboard of the Diocese gets to vote for or against Trump and his crazy economics, but when he sneezes he increases the chance that we catch cold here in a land faraway.

A correspondent this week observed to me “The more I talk and work on the issue of caring for our planet, the more I hear people are worried and don’t know where to turn”. We must reckon with this anxiety as part of the context for our mission.

Not only Trump but other global politicians are ratcheting up rhetoric which divides humanity. When polarized humanity intersects with economic slump, global conflict is close at hand: that is a lesson from the 1930s.

Last Sunday 1 September 2019 was the 80th anniversary of the beginning of World War 2. Many people still alive remember 1 September 1939. We have no excuse for forgetfulness.

Tragically we are in the grip of a political aspiration which intends to divide one human from another and to risk the wellbeing of people through creating chaos in marketplaces. This is against the spirit of the gospel.

A theologian, Masure, once profoundly observed, in 1934, that,

“Fundamentally the Gospel is obsessed with the idea of the unity of human society.”¹

¹ E. Masure, conference in *Semaine sociale de Nice* (1934), p. 229, cited in de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (1988), p. 15.

In the world surrounding the Diocese of Christchurch where divisive forces are at work, we have opportunity to witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by always working for unity, among ourselves, in our local communities, in our nation and in the world.

Justice is integral to genuine unity. To work for unity in society is necessarily to work for justice. That is, to work for right and fair relationships between people.

As Christians we are all responsible for this work for it is the work of the kingdom of God. But in our Diocese we have an extra dimension to such work through the faithful work of Anglican Care.

This past year has seen significant change to Anglican Care's operations and to the structure of the leadership of Anglican Care. New directions are emerging under the leadership of Roger Sutton, Matthew Mark and Patrick Murray. There is no person who engages with one or more of the outreaches of Anglican Care who is not a victim to one degree or another of the outworking of global forces in the world which surrounds us.

Every person we engage with through such ministries is our opportunity to be obsessed with the unity of human society, to be obsessed with bringing the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ to the lives of the last, the least and the lost in our midst.

Part C: The regeneration of the Diocese of Christchurch

Introduction

What kind of Diocese will we be in 2030?

Asking that kind of question helps us determine what we do in the years between now and 2030.

What kind of a Diocese could we be in 2030?

We could be healthy, happy and harmonious. And we should be. But that is a bit general!

My vision is that we are a **regenerated** Diocese – a Diocese regenerated through Christ.

Our statistics about decline in attendance, decline in baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals are well known to us as Synod members.

Here is one table:

	Total Attendance for worship in Dio Chch
2014	356,080
2015	351,448
2016	316,098 [a blip re counting?]
2017	336,155

(2018 figure not included as data collection incomplete for that year).

Here is another statistic: around five years ago there were four young adult evening services in parishes in Christchurch city which have not subsequently experienced disaffiliation. Today there is just one such service.

Statistics are one thing, another is what we see with our eyes:

- I see a Diocese dominated by participants aged over 60 years.
- I see a Synod which represents that domination well

My vision is that in 2030 our eyes will tell us that the majority of our worshippers are aged under 60 years.

My vision is that in 2030 our statistics will tell us that we are growing again as a Diocese.

My vision is that in 2030 our testimonies will tell us that we have rediscovered ourselves as te Hāhi Mihinare, the missionary church.

The alternative in 2030 is that our eyes, our statistics and our hearts will tell us we are about to die. You do not want that. I do not want that. We do not want that future.

This focus on **regeneration** is because we are missing generations in many parishes:

- Children
- Youth
- Young adults

- Middle Age (40-60 year olds).

What are we to do if we are to be regenerated as a Diocese?

- (i) To be a praying Diocese would be an important first step. Only God can regenerate us. Only God can turn people's hearts to the living Christ. Our regeneration must be through Christ.
- (ii) To be a thinking Diocese would be an important second step. Thinking, that is, about what it means to be Anglican missionaries. Thinking about what message we are communicating to our neighbourhoods.

One challenge is to think about what it is that is "good" in today's world about our "news" about Jesus – a world in which many people are completely disinterested in our news, whether or not it is good news.

This challenge is the challenge which the church has always faced with the gospel.

With what language will we proclaim it?

With what emphases will we convey the message of God's saving love for a world which has lost its way?

Another challenge is to think robustly about whether our message is:

- Institutionally ethical
- Socially viable
- Personally effective
- Intellectually plausible

In the 21st century we need all four aspects of our message about Jesus Christ. We cannot get only three of the four correct and expect to win people for Christ.

Historically the Anglican church has a good track record of being a gospel church which is institutionally ethical, socially viable, personally effective and intellectually plausible.

But in the 21st century we cannot rest on our laurels.

- (iii) To be a changing Diocese would be an important third step.

Talk of regeneration is not about saving the Anglican club from closure.

It's about re-discovering our purpose as New Zealand's Missionary church.

But mostly we do not think of ourselves as a missionary church. To do so would be a cultural change and cultural changes are hard to make.

Our cultural tendency is to look in on ourselves, to preserve what has been our way of doing things, and to focus on the needs of those who currently come to church.

The cultural change we need is to think about church being for those who do not currently attend and to let the past go.

There is talk around the Diocese about “strategy” and “what is the strategic plan which will guide us forward.”

A wise person has said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

That is, culture, or the way we do things in our ministry unit, all too often kills any and every strategic plan.

Let me put that more positively: where we have seen change in the Diocese in the years since the quakes we have seen people open to changing the way they do things. Open to change of parish culture in order to be a different kind of parish.

It is not easy but it can be done.

We can be a different Diocese in 2030.

We see the gifts God has given us, along with our passion and commitment for the church. We have everything in our church to see renewal come. We have the ability to put together a strategic new direction and make it happen.

But are we willing to do things differently? Can we see the culture of our ministry unit changing?

Many Anglicans eagerly say “Yes” to such a question and five years later things are just the same!

That means that culture is deep rooted in each of us and that we do not understand the inordinate capacity of culture to kill strategy before it is birthed.

Ruthless honesty about the way we are doing things and whether that way is inhibiting the gospel will bring a lot more change than if the bishop or ministry educator or archdeacon tells us what to do according to a strategic plan.

It has been said to me that “Good Ecclesiology is a commitment to reality no matter what the cost.”

We can and will regenerate ourselves if we reform our culture – if the way we do things around here changes so that new generations of Anglicans find their home in our Diocese.

- (iv) Fourthly, we can be a regenerated Diocese in 2030 if we make it cool to talk about evangelism – if we recognise that the path to regeneration is through spiritual regeneration – conversion of people to Jesus Christ.

STRATEGY, GOAL AND VISION: a vision and key themes to guide us towards regeneration

Strategic vision:

What is my vision for the Diocese of Christchurch in 2030?

Here is a snapshot:

- a diocese in which God is glorified and the Gospel is proclaimed vibrantly in word and in deed, with its churches –all the churches – likely fewer in number than we have today - full on Sundays, with every generation represented in the congregations,
- and our multi-purpose buildings are busy Tuesdays to Saturdays with community serving activities and spiritual growth Bible study and fellowship groups;
- our cathedral in the Square is barely big enough for regular Diocesan youth services;
- Theology House has a staff of two full-time theologians, one of whom is a leading advocate for social, political and community issues of the day;
- there are several Anglican congregations in Christchurch city which no one is sure about where they meet because they keep moving but Facebook 3.0 keeps the networks informed.

What would help us to know that the vision was becoming a reality through the 2020s?

We should set a strategic, measurable goal. This is my proposal for a strategic goal.

Strategic Goal: Regeneration of the Diocese from 2019 -2030, measured by attendance numbers and by age profile of the Diocese, with reference to specific age surveys for the years, 2020, 2025 and 2030.

If our surveys measure failure then we at least have tried to achieve something. I would rather be a failure on this score than be the bishop who was scared to fail.

As we make our way through the next decade or so, what strategic emphases will be important?

I suggest it is time to move on from talking about Christ-centred mission, raising up young leaders and faithful stewardship, though not because any of these three values are no longer important. They remain important but we need some refreshment and refocusing.

I want to introduce three strategic themes.

Strategic Themes:

DISCIPLES, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES

If you take eight words away from today, please take:

“Regeneration through Making Disciples, Supporting Families, Strengthening Communities.”

Or, just four words: Regeneration: Disciples, Families, Communities.

What do I mean when talking about Disciples, Families and Communities?

DISCIPLES

Disciples making disciples who make disciples

Presuppose here is importance of defining Christians in the 21st century as people who follow Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

This theme includes the following aspects of discipling and discipleship:

- Attending to children, youth, young adults, to new Christians, including Deeper Camp, Eco monastery, Cursillo and Growing Disciples programme being run by the McMillans, building on Phil Trotter's work.
- Fosters church as Movement > Institution
- Church as house of prayer and teaching space
- Includes our work in schools and universities
- Critical to future or "next" generation of leaders
- Includes our commitment to World Mission
- Incorporates nurture through ministries of Word and Sacrament
- Being a disciple is costly – in obedience, in standing out from the world and its pressures to conform, in faithfulness over the long haul of life – and being a disciple is about growing into Christ-likeness.

FAMILIES

Families growing children, youth, young adults and including middle aged and older persons - celebrated and supported by the whole church family.

"Family" as an elastic term in today's context. "Whanau" or "household" also possible.

Most Christians are discipled within family contexts

Regeneration tomorrow begins today with family members: children, youth, young adults, parents, and involves grandparents ministering with wisdom and from experience

"Families" is a specific focus on generations in the 0 – 60 age range but is not exclusive of those aged 60+, many of whom are vitally integrated into the life and work of families as children and grandchildren are nurtured and supported by multiple generations.

This theme acknowledges that some ministry units are able to minister at this time to (say) children but not to (say) young adults.

This theme raises the possibility of becoming a diocese that is known for its helpful parenting seminars and practical help offered to struggling parents. What can we do for (e.g.) young parents and for couples who have been married for a long time?

COMMUNITIES

Communities of faith serving local communities

We follow Christ as disciples in communities rather than as discrete individuals – that is the New Testament way.

Disciples form faith communities, faith communities are located somewhere (even on the internet!) and thus have a larger “local” community around them which is to be served in word and deed with gospel motivation, so that the bread of the gospel is shared with those who are spiritually hungry.

Faith communities often have lots of satellite communities to which they are strongly or weakly connected – interdependence between communities of faith is to be encouraged.

There are many kinds of communities, including rural, urban, inner city communities.

Within this theme I envisage communities taking ownership of their local mission.

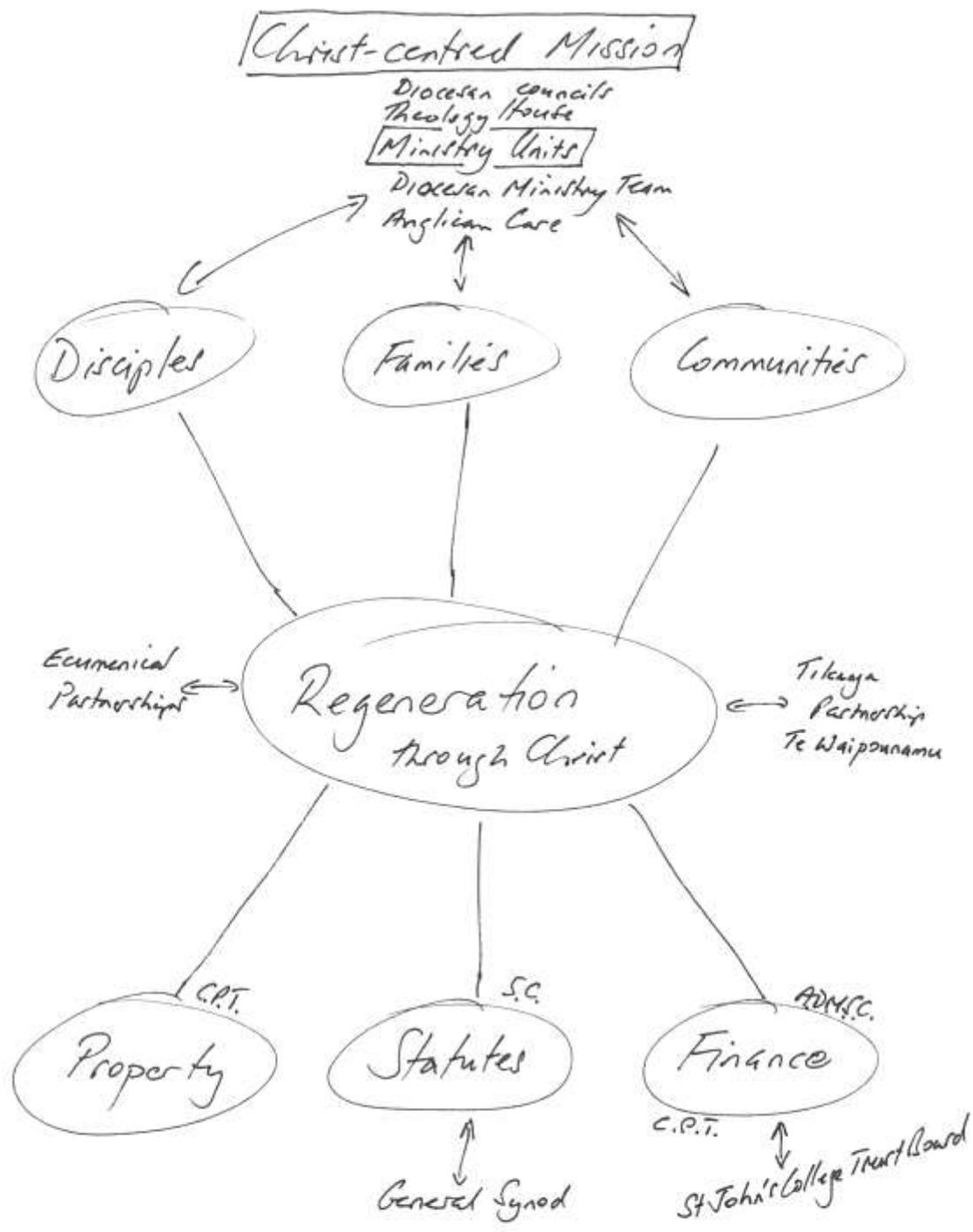
When communities develop strategy and vision for themselves, they own it and work it out.

Within this theme the role of bishop/diocese is to bless the local and to connect the local to the universal.

Illustration of strategic themes

In the diagram that follows I make the following points:

- That all I am saying continues our former strategic concern for Christ-centred mission
- That Regeneration of the Diocese will happen as we focus ourselves, whether we are a ministry unit (parish, school, chaplaincy, other) or a Diocesan council or Board, or the Diocesan Ministry Team or Anglican Care, on one or more of:
 - o Making disciples who make disciples
 - o Supporting families
 - o Strengthening communities
- That Regeneration needs resourcing and so below the phrase “Regeneration through Christ” there are three circled words critical to the Diocese being regenerated: our use of Property, the helpfulness of our Statutes, and the application of our finances.
- That we are not alone in what we do: we are in partnerships, with Tikanga Maori and with other churches, principally the Presbyterian church but also in significant but non-structured ways with the Roman Catholic church.



Resourcing Christ-centred Mission

Strategic directions and values to guide decision-making in the Diocese and within its ministry

units: The following would be helpful, in my view, as your bishop:

As a Diocese, when making decisions, we will:

1. Acknowledge that the local is connected to the universal and the universal is made up of the local: we walk and work together, ministry units and Diocese, towards regeneration of the ministry units of the Diocese.
2. Entrust decision-making, within constraints of civil and canonical law, to local faith communities.
3. **Ask ourselves (Vestry, Standing Committee, CPT Board, Anglican Care, Diocesan ministry Team, other Diocesan bodies), what will:**
 - a. ***Make Disciples***
 - b. ***Support Families***
 - c. ***Strengthen Communities.***
4. **Repeat (3) as we make decisions about personnel, property and planning!!**
5. Bless thriving local churches and flourishing mission initiatives with practical support, thoughtful encouragement and public acknowledgment.
6. Strengthen weak local churches but always be willing to make change when, after a reasonable time period, strengthening has not yielded flourishing.
7. Acknowledge differences between rural and urban parishes (e.g. in respect of differing abilities to maintain property).
8. Acknowledge special situations in the Diocese, notably, the Chatham Islands, the West Coast parishes, Lyttelton and the Mission to Seafarers, the Transitional Cathedral, Rolleston, Hornby, Templeton and West Melton in relation to Wigram.
9. Offer, for a reasonable period, intense "life support" for the parishes most affected by disaffiliations in 2018-19.
10. Take account of short term needs (1-2 years), medium term considerations (5-6 years), and long-term strategic value (2030).
11. Be open to new arrangements for parishes and archdeaconries so that we support ministry to local communities across the rural districts and urban areas of our Diocese.
12. Invite generosity from ministry units as they support other ministry units.
13. Nevertheless be open to synodically and consensually determining aspects of resource sharing.
14. Encourage new initiatives in mission and ministry and acknowledge the possibility of risk to current ventures when new things happen.
15. Continue support for and engagement with ministry units which have chaplains: schools, hospitals, residential care facilities, universities, armed forces, emergency responders, police.
16. Favour co-operation where this is either locally desired or become necessary, especially with Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, while always supporting identity and strengthening accountability.
17. Lighten the property portfolio of the Diocese which is held in trust by the Church Property Trustees, acknowledging that a regenerating Diocese is unlikely to increase the number of administratively minded Anglicans, by encouraging parishes to reduce their holdings of churches, halls and houses.

But this won't work without change of culture ...

Changing Culture in the Diocese: some pointers to kinds of change we would need to see among ourselves in the decade ahead ...

- (1) Changing culture of "each parish for itself"
 - a. Parishes helping parishes and other kinds of ministry units: people, money, time.
 - b. Strengthening what is going well in our neighbour's ministry, not just our own
 - c. Strategic vision and plan for local areas, developed collaboratively between parishes
 - d. Sharing services (especially major festivals) – Anglicost, The Dwelling Place, Pasifika service at St Barnabas.
 - e. Robust discussion re tithing (or other percentage) of property sales
- (2) Changing culture of preservation of the current generation of older power brokers
 - a. We must find new generations of lay leaders
 - b. We must find new generations of clerical leaders
 - c. Yes, this may mean painful, compulsory retirement of older people, before they let go of their power and position.
 - d. Do we need to strengthen Diocesan legislation on this matter? (We made one attempt a few years ago. That is not the only way forward we could attempt.)
- (3) Changing culture of Diocese: from thinking of ourselves as "institution" to "family"
 - a. How do we do "family" in our Diocese? For example: a different kind of Clergy Conference?
 - b. Ensure invitations to spouses and children to join Diocesan services and events, and this may cost money through payment for childcare facilitators.
 - c. Communication which presupposes we are a family of Anglicans who are interested in each other's stories and who care for each other.
- (4) Changing culture of thinking of ourselves as "parish" to "neighbourhood faith community."
 - a. What, where and to whom is our mission?
 - b. What resources of people, property serve that mission?
 - c. How flexibly can we respond to spiritual and material need within our local community?
- (5) Changing culture from struggling, defeated, disheartened Christians to a family of joyful, confident disciples following Christ in costly obedience.
 - a. There is a culture of "defeat" among some of us – including some of our younger people.
 - b. Growing Disciples is seeking to address this culture of defeat.

Am I dreaming (as in offering a fantasy that can never come true)?

Recently Teresa and I, along with many others from our Diocese took part in The Abbey, a Tikanga Pakeha youth gathering at Living Springs. 270 church leaders present, about 95% of whom were aged under 30.

Being with this lively, energetic, Spirit-filled fellowship of present and future leaders of our church showed us that it is not a fantasy to envision a regenerated Diocese of Christchurch.

Conclusion

There is so much more to be said but I must stop here to allow for our discussion and feedback to emerge from that discussion.

We can be regenerated through Christ as a Diocese.

The pathway I am charting is along the way of Making Disciples, Supporting Families and Strengthening Communities.

Is it our will together for this to be our vision and our way forward?

*Bishop Peter
06 September 2019.*