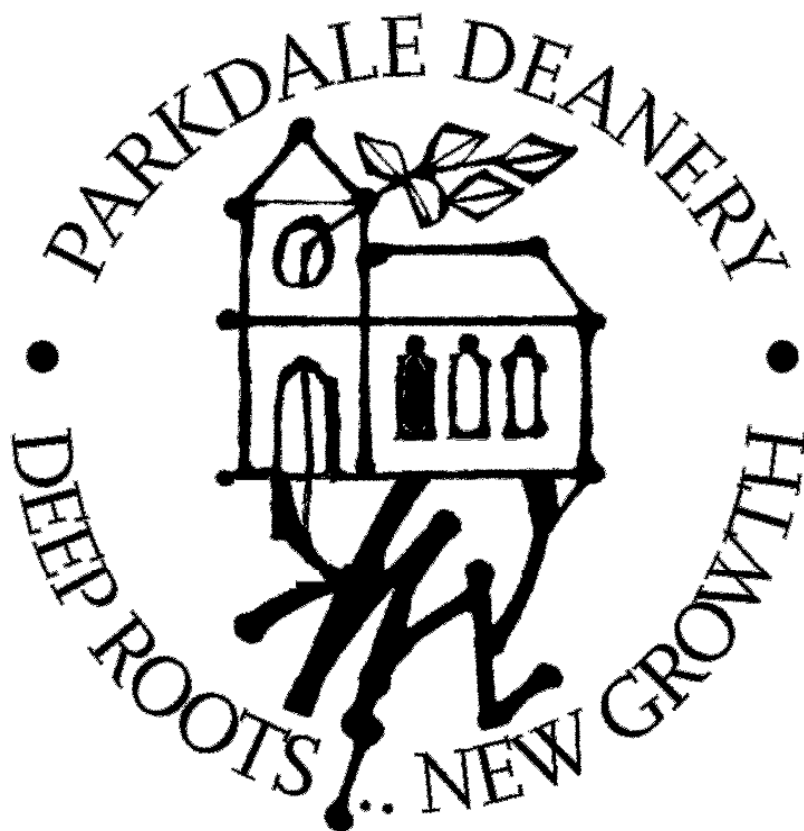


Report on Redeveloping Ministry in Parkdale Deanery for the Anglican Diocese of Toronto



Potentials

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B. Deep Roots, New Growth: Executive Summary

Motivation and issues that underlie this project

The motivations for engaging in 'Deep Roots, New Growth' are

- A belief that there are opportunities for growth and development in Anglican ministry, and a challenge to look beyond ourselves
- Challenges faced by most if not all of the Parkdale congregations – serious financial constraints, building management and maintenance, lack of effectiveness in ministry and deployment of resources
- Diocesan pressure to address these challenges and encouragement to work together to develop a collective way forward

The work of the first three research groups has shown on the one hand the opportunities for growth and development of ministry that is related to the urban context, and on the other the areas in which the congregations of the deanery are neither sustainable nor effective.

There is a will to address both opportunities and challenges in a positive and collaborative manner.

Goals of the project – we have achieved a focus

The goals of the project were

- a sustainable ministry (in terms of paid clergy, volunteers, facilities and ministry costs),
- the development of Christian community and ministry amongst present Anglicans, and
- a mission orientation (in terms of evangelism, social justice, partnerships with the arts and connections with other community groups).

Through the meetings, consultations, parish focus groups, information gathering and communications we have achieved

- A thorough exploration of the issues and information that is necessary for making informed and faithful choices
- A shared sense that the long term goals can best be realized by working together
- A focus for a mission oriented ministry and in the proposed Deanery Parish a way to shape and resource this ministry

When this project began, apart from clericus gatherings, there was no reason or opportunity for parishioners to work and plan together. Although there is a long way to go, the progress towards building community, creating relationships, and taking collective decisions among Anglicans in the Parkdale parishes has been remarkable.

The project has produced a heightened awareness of our urban context for ministry

The research group on context for ministry brought to light key facts and issues for Anglican ministry in this urban context. The group also put forward a theological challenge that has implications for ministry priorities. The social context for ministry in Parkdale Deanery reveals that

- there are 5,600 Anglicans (3.6% & 5th largest group) and 37,375 (23.6% & 2nd largest group) with no religious affiliation
- a very high percentage (up to 80%) of people who worship in the seven parishes come from outside Parkdale Deanery
- child poverty and homelessness are well above the city median, affecting especially, immigrants, children, mentally ill and Aboriginals
- there is a high concentration of people in the arts, and a diminishing number of venues and spaces for them to work in
- there is pressure on community groups who work with at risk groups that include youth, seniors and single parents

'We who worship in these parishes are called to Christ's work in this part of Toronto, regardless of where we may actually live.' Although there are some worthy activities, the Parkdale parishes do not have an effective social mission through which Anglican Christians are encouraged to live out their faith. 'Rather than focusing on maintaining an inward-looking liturgy and worship, with a variety of relatively peripheral ministries, we need to learn to think of ourselves primarily as the body of Christ in the world, with our liturgy and worship nurturing us for our core ministries in the world.'

The project has proposed an approach to evangelism and church growth

Evangelism and church growth intersect but are not the same. Both are high priorities for parish leaders and for this project. When asked to choose a book that represented the most important area for congregational development, the most popular book title (out of 26) chosen by focus group participants was 'Seeking the Seekers', indicating the need for congregations to be more effective in connecting with people who are searching for meaning and for God. Evangelism may be seen as effectively communicating the Gospel through word and deed without necessarily asking people to find and develop faith in the context of a congregation.

'Church growth' is the more traditional approach of Anglican parishes to evangelism: through entering and participating in congregational life, especially the liturgy, seekers develop faith in the context of a Christian community. There are many individual examples of this type of evangelism happening in the Parkdale parishes. However, overall numbers have been declining, and in general parish leaders are very dissatisfied with the level of effectiveness in this area of ministry. The way forward is to develop radical hospitality in congregational communities, to make 'accessibility' a watchword in our congregational life and liturgies, and to plant at least one more congregation around a 'seeker friendly' style of worship and learning.

The evangelism research group has recommended an approach to evangelism in which we

- understand our engagements with others as liturgical acts, as part of our worship
- develop our churches as safe spaces (buildings and people) - open, visible and accessible
- explore faith for ourselves and others as a narrative or journey
- take risks and accept changes

Evangelism should have a preferential option for vulnerable groups. We are called into relationship with vulnerable people.

There are opportunities for church growth. However, it is unrealistic to imagine that the Parkdale congregations will grow in numbers by simply continuing their present mode of operation. We know that it is very difficult for small, isolated congregations to grow in numbers. Larger congregations with a vision and a few strong ministries for which they are known, have greater potential for growth. New communities, new ministries and styles of worship, and opportunities for learning need to be initiated if the Anglican church wishes to increase its effectiveness. Significant leadership resources need to be dedicated to church growth and evangelism.

Involvement and leadership of laity

'Deep Roots, New Growth' has involved a large number of lay volunteers who have given considerable time and expertise to the project. (We have estimated at least 1500 hours of their volunteer time.) Not only has this been a valuable gift in itself, it has also awakened the possibilities for lay leadership and ministry in the deanery. Any future plan for ministry in the deanery must enable lay led ministry and also involve lay leaders in planning and governance.

Congregations

Strong identity and weak mission

The Parkdale parishes all have strong identities formed around worship, belonging to the church community, and their shared sense of history and tradition. Worship is clearly the central focus of parish life, and a very high proportion of leadership resources, both paid and volunteer, are devoted to liturgy and doing it well. Music is a very important part of parish life and worship. On a normal Sunday there are about 17 services (mostly eucharists). Averaged over the year total weekly attendance in the deanery is about 850. The largest attendance at the main Sunday service is about 120 and the lowest about 50 (on 'normal' Sundays). The church communities are characterized by strong relationships and attachments to the church. In most parishes the majority of parishioners travel in from well outside the neighbourhood.

By comparison to liturgy there is less attention given to other ministries: learning and spiritual growth, organized pastoral care (although there are ministries to nursing homes), outreach and social justice (again, some congregations are involved in Out of the Cold and community meals). Size and capacity has a lot to do with how much a congregation can take on beyond worship. High quality music, church related musical groups, concerts and the use of church space for musical events are characteristics of many of the parishes. The community life of the congregants is strong, and is reinforced through coffee hours, meals and celebrations.

The Parkdale parishes do not have a shared and articulated mission and vision to guide their life and develop their ministry. They rely on their identity. They can articulate with confidence who they are. They are less sure about who they are to become. 'We talk of mission, but live in the past,' 'Having a mission and vision means change, and we're not effective in change management,' were comments made during the third consultation that support this judgement.

Finance.

The two larger congregations are for the most part able to sustain their ministry and buildings with congregational givings. (However, one of these has incurred a debt in the course of employing a second, full time priest.) Three congregations are sustainable at present, but rely heavily on rentals. For various reasons they could be described as fragile, in the sense that a financial crisis would be difficult to overcome. Two congregations have a considerable debt to the diocese and do not at present have the capacity in their membership to maintain full time paid clergy, some part time staff, and their buildings. Financial sustainability is a key and pressing issue.

Buildings.

The Parkdale parishes have beautiful churches that are generally viewed as a wonderful resource. For their parishioners collectively they are 'peaceful, holy, welcoming, historic, versatile and intimate places, filled with liturgical celebration and music.' Many of the church halls and other facilities however are in need of repairs and experienced as aging and burdensome. Capital repairs and upgrades have ranged in the past three years from \$30,000 to \$375,000 and similar anticipated costs for the next three years range from \$5,000 to \$500,000. Some areas require immediate attention. Parishes range from being well prepared for these expenses to 'not at all.'

Functionality for worship is experienced as good or excellent everywhere, but four parishes find they do not have adequate space for large gatherings, meetings, administration and music. Five parishes have poor energy efficiency and four have poor accessibility.

The youngest church in the deanery was built in 1910 (St. Anne's). Older churches have historic value and charm. They are also more expensive to maintain and adapt to modern usage than more recent buildings. Responsible annual maintenance for these historic buildings should be set at 2% of their replacement value.

Some parishes have a long range plan for maintenance and development based on a thorough engineering and architectural assessment. This is not the case for most. Members of the congregational development research group strongly recommend putting in place a common management practice.

Clergy staffing.

The deanery parishes have inherited the dominant, almost exclusive model, of one or more priests serving a parish. However, there are wide discrepancies in the number of parishioners and in the demands associated with each parish, so that it can be argued that one parish is understaffed, while some others are overstaffed. This situation would be very difficult, even impossible, to address on an individual parish basis. However, to think collectively opens the possibility of making much more effective deployment of paid clergy.

Working together

A new structure and deployment of resources could enable effective ministries in the areas of social outreach, music and the arts, youth, learning and spiritual growth for

seekers, and evangelism. Working together makes sense for marketing, building management, volunteer training and leadership development.

Scenarios and preferences

There were four scenarios developed by the PMDC. These scenarios emerged from a consideration of all the possible ways of structuring and sustaining effective ministry in the Deanery. The scenarios are also based on the following criteria:

- we are working as a deanery
- we are worshipping communities
- our current buildings are both blessings and burdens
- evangelism and numerical growth are key
- we will be communities of compassion and hope with a mission aligned with diocesan priorities
- any scenario needs to be faithful, effective and sustainable

The four scenarios are:

- The Deanery Parish
- Three Parishes: St. Thomas's, St. Mary Magdalene's, and a parish created by combining the remaining five parishes
- Twinning: two twinning arrangements are created – St. Anne's and St. Matthias, and St. Stephen's and St. George's; the other three remain distinct.
- The Muscular Deanery

The fourth consultation discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario, and then indicated on a scale of 'strong yes – maybe – strong no' whether or not there was merit in pursuing the scenario. It was very clear that 'Three Parishes' and 'Twinning' should not be considered further.

The 'Muscular Deanery' envisages seven autonomous, self-sufficient congregations that work collaboratively and in cooperation on a variety of ministry projects under the umbrella of a strong Deanery Council.

- The Council is made up of enthusiastic and committed lay and clergy representatives from each parish
- There will be jointly funded personnel and a joint budget to resource deanery ministry initiatives
- Lay leaders will have new opportunities for ministry roles
- Effective communications will create a sense of ownership of deanery ministry among the parishes

The disadvantages to this scenario are

- The Deanery Council adds another layer of administration and governance to the existing parish structures; it will inevitably compete with the parishes for scarce resources of staff, money and volunteers.
- Not all seven parishes are currently self-sufficient; it is difficult to see where the deanery resources of staff and funding would come from

The consultation gave this scenario a guarded rating, with slightly more than half the members voting 'maybe', and the rest more or less equally divided between 'yes' and 'no'. While this option is still on the table, the general view was that it could not be implemented without a considerable loss of parish autonomy. Perhaps, as someone suggested, a strong Deanery Council could be viewed as an interim step.

Of the four, the Deanery Parish was the preferred scenario for the redevelopment of ministry in Parkdale. The essential features of this scenario are

- a single administrative and decision making council
- a single operating budget
- a team made up of 4 full time clergy and several lay staff with specialized ministries
- specific ministries with enlarged vision and resources
- 8 – 10 congregations; new worship directed to evangelism & growth
- retaining all existing buildings, not necessarily for current usage

The advantages to this model of ministry are

- it realizes a key value of the project, for all the parishes to work together
- a staff team will be far more creative, flexible and effective than the present situation of isolated clergy; there will also be more opportunities for lay led ministries
- it is sustainable and will achieve some efficiencies (the model shows a possible operating surplus)
- it enables new initiatives and dedicates staff resources to them
- it makes use of and retains all the existing buildings

The challenges that would need to be addressed are

- achieving buy in, especially from the two largest parishes
- planning and managing a radical change
- retaining present members
- loss of parish autonomy

The Deanery Parish was the only scenario that was given a positive rating by the consultation (10 'strong yes', 4 'yes', 8 'maybe', 4 'no', 6 'strong no') as 'worth pursuing.' Consultation representatives commented that it clearly involves the most amount of change of the four options. However, it also has the potential to generate the most energy and enthusiasm.

C. Process

This project began with ‘The Report of the Commission on Ministry in Parkdale Deanery’ (June 30, 2006) and Bishop Poole’s ‘Response’. Following a conversation with Bishop Poole on September 27 *Potentials* developed ‘A project proposal for a facilitated process to enable the redevelopment of ministry in Parkdale Deanery’ (October 10, 2006). This proposal formed the basis for the activities of ‘Deep Roots, New Growth.’

One key change in *Potentials*’ project proposal from the original conception was the addition of a series of consultations that would involve larger numbers of members from each parish and that would hear and reflect on the presentations from the various research groups. A second change was the addition of a research group and consultation on ‘congregational identity, resources and capacity.’ The heart of this research was a focus group conducted in each congregation by a *Potentials* consultant, and this had the effect again of involving a larger number of people first hand in the process. A third change was the suggestion to develop scenarios rather than recommendations at the end of the process. Scenarios suggest that there are options to choose from rather than one single recommendation. At the end of the day, of course, one scenario or a variation becomes the preferred way forward.

There were important further additions made by the Parkdale Ministry Development Council (PMDC), notably the formation of a communications committee, and discussions of the PMDC to define the reasons for undertaking the project, the values on which the project was founded and the role of leadership in change. Also, the PMDC came up with the name and logo for the project.

We will reprint the two relevant updates that describe the process. These updates were summaries, intended for members of the Parkdale congregations, and they were produced after the PMDC had made additions and developments to the initial proposals. We will also reprint some material not contained in the updates: *Potentials*’ comments on planning and the PMDC’s comments on values. We also make a few remarks on what, in the words of Prayer Book, was done and left undone.

1. An update from the PMDC, December 2006 (describing the process)

Introduction

Collectively the Anglican parishes of Parkdale Deanery face considerable challenges. The changing identity of the city also presents great opportunities for ministry that have not been grasped. Through this project we are addressing both the challenges and the opportunities before us. Our area bishop, Philip Poole, has made it clear that any future ministry must be faithful, effective and sustainable.

We are in a crisis, in the New Testament meaning of that word. For many reasons we cannot continue with ‘business as usual.’ The time to act is now. We are in a ‘kairos’ moment.

The Council

Bishop Poole has appointed the Parkdale Ministry Development Council (PMDC). This group is composed of the paid, accountable clergy and one lay representative from each of the seven Parkdale parishes.

The key responsibility of the PMDC is to propose recommendations for the Anglican presence in the present Parkdale Deanery that will include:

- a sustainable ministry (in terms of paid clergy, volunteers, facilities and ministry costs),
- the development of Christian community and ministry amongst present Anglicans, and
- a mission orientation (in terms of evangelism, social justice, partnerships with the arts and connections with other community groups).

The consultants and facilitators to the process are: Simon Bell (Diocese of Toronto), Ron Ewart (Potentials) and Paul MacLean (Potentials).

Communications

We know that, apart from regular meetings of the clergy, there has been little connection between the parishes of the Deanery. We believe that for this project to succeed we will need to initiate and foster relationships amongst members of the parishes. To this end we have created a communications sub group who are working hard on ideas to communicate clearly the results of the project as we proceed, and to create opportunities for parish members to meet and to learn about each other. Also, we have planned four consultations to help create the relationships we need to move forward together.

Process overview

In order to make recommendations that will lead to faithful, effective and sustainable ministry in Parkdale we need to prepare ourselves in two areas:

1. create a shared picture of our present situation – the context for ministry and the condition of our parishes (identity, ministry, finance, facilities etc)
2. options as to how we might respond to our challenges and opportunities

We are doing this preparation work in the following way.

1. Meetings of the PMDC.

The PMDC will meet monthly from October 2006 until June 2007. In the first three meetings the PMDC has worked at building relationships, identified the key values that will animate this project, discussed its role as leaders in change, and organized key areas such as communications. There is more foundational work to be done! The group is developing enthusiasm for the task ahead.

2. Four research groups.

These groups are researching the four key areas that we think are necessary for faithful, effective and sustainable ministry. The groups are composed of volunteers from the Parkdale parishes and work under the direction of the consultants. The groups have been

formed, and some of them are hard at work even now. (Note that the most extensive research will take place in the area of congregational life and development. In addition to filling in some questionnaires your parish will be asked to host a group interview led by one of the Potentials' consultants in January or February.)

- #1 Context for ministry and social needs
- # 2 Congregational life and development
- # 3 Christian presence and evangelism
- # 4 Models for partnerships in urban ministry

The findings of each research group will be presented and discussed at a half day consultation devoted to that topic. The results of the research and the consultations will be made available to all members of the Parkdale parishes.

3. Four consultations

Each parish will be asked to identify 4 – 5 representatives in addition to the members of the PMDC. These people will attend four half day consultations to hear the work of the research groups and to offer their best thinking about implications and possibilities for future ministry in Parkdale. The consultations are also an opportunity to build a community of people committed to Anglican ministry across congregational boundaries. The dates of these consultations are:

- February 22 (evening)
- March 20 (evening)
- April 24 (evening)
- May 24 (evening)

A work in progress

The purpose of this update is to bring you up to date on our work so far. Much of it has been about 'process': building relationships, clarifying, and planning. There's lots more to do! Once we get into the consultations there will be more 'content' that we can share with you. However, we know that the foundation for anything worthwhile is our community – being part of the Body of Christ. We hope you will take the opportunities to participate in this project and to become part of the expression of that Body in Parkdale Deanery.

2. An update from the PMDC, January, 2007 (describing why we are doing this)

At the January meeting of the Council we agreed upon a name for this project of ministry development in Parkdale: ***Deep Roots, New Growth***. This expresses the strong roots of the Anglican church in Parkdale and our hope that many kinds of growth will result from our faith in God and work together through this project. We expect to have a logo fairly soon.

We are investing considerable resources in ***Deep Roots, New Growth***. We have high expectations for what we can achieve, and we developed a statement that expresses our motivation and the reasons for engagement.

We are engaging in this project because ...

- We feel there are real opportunities for growth before us. Similarly, this project presents us with opportunities for creative interchange amongst parish and community leaders. It's healthy for all of us to look outwards.
- Collectively, our parishes face considerable challenges that need to be addressed in a future plan for ministry: not all congregations are financially viable; some congregations are overwhelmed by the demands of their buildings; many congregations feel they do not have enough leaders or members to be effective. In short, when the focus is on survival, there is no energy for vision or growth.
- The diocese is putting pressure on us to take a hard look at the reality of our situation. If we do this, we believe we will experience God's call to us to be the church in new ways in this urban setting.

We are engaging in this project as a deanery because ...

- In the past, as congregations in the deanery lost their capacity to be self-sustaining, they were closed. This approach was not strategic and did not challenge us to develop unique ministries for our changing urban setting.
- Although not all deanery congregations feel they are currently in a crisis brought on by scarcity of resources, the same issues may well affect the stronger congregations at a later time.
- There is an opportunity for together creating sustainable and faithful ministries, especially in areas of evangelism and social justice, that we cannot do as individual congregations. We need to think of ourselves as an Anglican presence in this part of the city. There are other examples where this approach has been successful.
- Our urban situation is complex, as are the congregational issues, and we need as many perspectives, resources and gifts as possible to respond effectively.

We are engaging in this project as a deanery now because ...

- Some of the congregations are at a crisis point and cannot sustain their buildings or ministry. A few congregations feel stagnant and wonder if they can continue without drastic change. Other congregations feel energetic, and have volunteers who see this project as an opportunity for using their gifts in an exciting and challenging venture.
- Our bishop and the diocese has responded, giving us the opportunity to propose ways in which we can collectively develop ministry in the diverse urban setting bounded by the Parkdale deanery, ministry that is sustainable, faithful and effective. This opportunity will not come in this form again.
- We believe God is calling us to this task now.

3. Potentials' favoured approach to planning

Engagement

We have a high value for engagement of all people with an interest in the outcomes of the project, at each stage of the project. In the case of this project, these people would include: the area bishop, members of PMDC, clergy and lay congregational leaders, the

Diocesan Council and possibly other diocesan committees whose mandate would include giving assistance or permission to any proposed changes. The outcomes of the project will need to 1) reflect the diverse interests of these groups, and 2) be focused in the desired future for the Anglican Church presence in this deanery. Our experience has been that the support of key congregational leaders is necessary for a successful outcome, particularly if there is to be significant change at the congregational level. This support needs to be elicited at the beginning of the project and developed as the project progresses through regular meetings and communications.

This project has a particular challenge, which is to engage very diverse congregations with very different demographics (internal and external) in a common enterprise.

An overview of vision planning.

- The first stage in a planning process is to identify the key issues and questions that need to be addressed, and to achieve some agreement as to what these are and the scope that is needed to explore them adequately.
- The second stage is to open up and explore all the dimensions of these issues. This will include the gathering of qualitative and quantitative information, and then engaging a large group of Parkdale parish leaders in reflection on what is learned through a series of consultations. The objective of this stage is to create a shared picture of those aspects of the Deanery, its congregations and ministries, and its context that are most relevant to the issues identified. Another objective is to build community amongst the participants. A vision needs a community.
- The next stage is to achieve a shared vision and direction that is expressed either through recommendations or scenarios. Whichever route is taken, these need to be lived out and expressed through agreed upon strategies. We understand the term ‘strategies’ to include processes for having conversations and taking decisions, ministry initiatives and projects, structural redevelopment and staffing, policies and practices, and building options. Strategies should also include processes for learning and evaluation.
- Although the changes in Parkdale Deanery go back many years, this particular project can be seen as a brief time of managed and intentional change within a larger whole. In order for this intentional time to be successful and contribute to lasting and beneficial effects, it is necessary to have clarity of purpose and process, clear decision points, and excellent communications.

4. How did we do?

For the most part the planned activities of the process took place. The PMDC held monthly meetings. The initial meetings concentrated on building community and trust among members, and looked at such areas as building communication, identifying values, leadership in change, understanding planning and change. When we entered the consultation phase the PMDC heard draft reports from the research groups and reflected on the results of the consultations. We held evaluations of the PMDC meetings, and these helped us improve future meetings. The satisfaction level increased with each meeting. Records show that attendance at the PMDC meetings was generally good, but not excellent. All seven parishes were not always represented.

Similarly, the four consultations took place as planned. They were well attended, although there was notable variation in the number of representatives sent by each parish, some parishes sending more than the suggested four or five, and some sending considerably less or even none. Attendance at the consultations ranged from about 40 participants and presenters to about 55. The discussions were generally lively, and were held in table groups mixed according to parish. People appreciated the opportunity to meet members of other parishes. Each evaluation helped improve the next consultation, and generally people rated the experience highly. The hosting parishes for each consultation provided a meal for participants, and this generosity added considerably to the building of community and the success of the event. Also, holding the consultations (and the meetings of the PMDC) in different parishes gave participants an important experience of the facilities of the Parkdale parishes.

The first three of the four research groups produced presentations for the consultations, and then more complete reports, which are found in the appendices. This research involved a significant amount of work by the volunteer groups. The fourth group on 'Models for Partnerships in Urban Ministry' did not convene. An alternative process filled the gap, whereby the PMDC and the consultants created four scenarios of structural models for discussion by the fourth consultation.

Communication with the parishes and development of relationships between parishes were identified as a very important part of this project. Plans were made for regular printed and verbal communications of the project, sharing through a website, events, and storyboards showcasing each parish. It is fair to say that not all the goals of the communications committee were realized during the course of the project. Experiences varied from parish to parish in the extent to which parishioners were made aware of the project and its developments.

Although there were omissions and not everything happened as planned, all in all the activities of 'Deep Roots, New Growth' were carried out and generated considerable support, participation, commitment and enthusiasm. At a rough estimate there have been a minimum of 1500 volunteer hours spent on the project, and probably considerably more. The process of course is not finished by any means. At this point we collect all that we have done and learned into a report so that parish vestries can take informed, good, faithful and sustainable decisions on the best way forward for Anglican presence and ministry in the Parkdale Deanery.

5. A discussion of the PMDC on the values underlying this project (from a meeting on November 22)

Within our own parishes we have experiences that we describe as transformative, revelatory, energy and life giving, bringing growth and change, taking us beyond ourselves, bringing people together. There is historical rootedness that leads to new ideas, music and joyful noise. These experiences represent some of the values we receive as members of communities of faith in the deanery.

Values expressed through leadership

We identified the values we want to see expressed in this project. These values represent our collective thinking. They will

- guide us in our working relationships with one another and with other participants in the project
- give direction to the project and its desired outcomes, especially through the working groups, consultations and communications
- picture the future we desire for the Anglican presence in Parkdale deanery

These are the values of this group as we look ahead to our leadership in this project. They will be the values to which we hold ourselves accountable, and by which we can evaluate the outcomes of the project.

We noted that these values seem to be aligned with the values expressed in diocesan policy. Also, there are a variety of values at work in parish life, some of which are compatible with those from our group discussion, while others may be at odds.

Values expressed through relationships

We endeavour to respect the values of others, particularly when they are different from our own. We appreciate each person as one of God's peculiar and unique creations. In our behaviour we reflect God's love through

- Listening
- Sensitivity
- Being light-hearted with a sense of abundance
- Selflessness
- Vulnerability
- Honesty
- Trust
- Commitment
- Collegiality

Values expressed through the project processes

While we respect the individuality and identity of each parish, our main goal is to foster a sense of family between the congregations and a recognition that we are joined together in ministry. We wish to create new connections, links and sharing through all the processes and communications of this project. We will pay attention to engaging youth. The project is an opportunity for people to use and share gifts for ministry, and it is the goal of PMDC to enable this to happen.

Values expressed through project outcomes & ministry development

We desire a ministry characterized by

- Growth - in energy, numbers, and spiritual development
- Gospel mission expressed in care for the community around us and bearing witness to God's presence in the city
- Creativity and innovation in our initiatives

- Financial sustainability
- Economies of scale (administration, physical plant, equipment etc)
- Inclusivity and diversity in our Christian communities

The diocesan values for ministry are: faithfulness, effectiveness, sustainability and diversity. The diocese wishes to encourage the building of communities of compassion and hope.

We realize that we will need courage and openness to change along the way. Furthermore, any recommendations and decisions will need to be well informed by facts – a good sense of our present reality.

D. Consultant's reflections

Realizing values: a sacramental act of a community

Throughout 'Deep Roots, New Growth' we have talked about values. They have been and remain a foundational aspect of the project. The PMDC spent a session discussing the values that would guide their endeavors. Focus group participants have identified the values they see in their respective parish communities. The diocese has articulated the values that shape its policy and priorities for parishes. The three research groups and the four consultations have worked at the values that should guide and inspire future ministry. It is this level of value that I want to draw your attention to in these reflections.

The project began with a bold intervention by Bishop Poole. This is the opportunity to work out a collective way forward that would address both the issues and the challenges for ministry present in the parishes and social context of Parkdale Deanery. The opportunity is bold in two ways. First, it suggests that a truly satisfactory solution is not to be found in the usual Anglican way, which is to rely on individual and autonomous parishes to carry forward the church's mission in the local context. Secondly, it requires the development of a community of people representing the parishes of the deanery where none has existed before (with the exception of the meetings of clericus). This intervention has brought all the values mentioned above into conversation, dialogue and some conflict. It has also brought into being a community with a particular task and mandate, the PMDC. The PMDC and the consultations are the primary groups where the discussion of values has taken place up to this point. In the next phase the discussion will include the parish vestries and other bodies.

The key questions are, What are the values that will guide and shape our future ministry? Are we prepared to be guided and shaped together?

William Temple, (said by Michael Ramsey to be 'the greatest theologian on the chair of Canterbury since Anselm'), built his theology on the idea of value. For Temple, value was dynamic and always in the process of realization, development, decay, death, and resurrection. Value had these elements: God's gifts of all that is possible and potential; the attractiveness of these gifts that draws humanity to them; the process by which we realize these gifts in our lives; values becoming concrete in all the fields of human endeavour. This idea of value is a sacramental theology – God's Spirit becoming actual through the material world.

People who took part in the focus groups were asked to take a mental picture that would reveal something significant about their congregation. We then talked about the values that we found in these pictures. (These 'pictures' and values are reprinted in the congregational profiles.) This is the heart of congregational life. It represents what is most attractive about each congregation, why people belong, why they commit time and energy to sustaining the congregation. In a sense the 'pictures' are a sacramental expression of the congregation, the physical embodiment of God's Spirit animating the community. However, this is not the whole story. We went on to talk about 'missing pictures,' 'pictures' that revealed some of the challenges the congregation faced, and what 'pictures' we might expect to take in five years' time. In other words, the values of the congregation include the future as well as the present and past, and limitations and

dissatisfactions as well as strengths. These new areas can add to the value of the congregation in that they provide new potential and possibility. The extent to which congregations are prepared to look towards their future through the lens of challenges and dissatisfactions is a good measure of their capacity to engage in the dynamic, sacramental process of creating value.

Parishes belong to a larger community, in this case the diocese. The diocese, through Bishop Poole, has been clear about the general values it expects from parish life, and these values are 'faithful, effective and sustainable.' The diocese is also clear that parishes should be engaged in ministry that makes a difference both in the lives of their parishioners and in the social and spiritual well being of the community in which the parishes are placed. If you look at the parish 'pictures' and the value summaries, you can find many wonderful examples of all these diocesan values. However, the diocesan values are not there simply to reaffirm the way things are and to make people feel good about themselves. They are meant also to raise FAQ's – frequently avoided questions. A good part of the project has been to look at what 'faithful, effective and sustainable' can mean in the Parkdale Deanery context, and to be made uncomfortable and dissatisfied.

Healthy organizations are ones that work at aligning the values of their various levels. In the Anglican church system this means finding alignment between the values of the diocese, the parish and all its members, and the clergy and other staff. Are all parts of the system working towards the same goals? If they are not, then conflict and unhealthy conditions will be created. This is a fair description of the situation of the Deanery prior to the beginning of the project.

The task of the PMDC, and ultimately of all the leaders in the Parkdale parishes, is to work at this alignment of values. It will mean change certainly. Not all the 'pictures' of congregational life will be the same in five years' time. However, change will happen anyway. We also believe that 'nothing of value is lost.' It is an act of faith in God, the source of all potential, to believe that new expressions of what faithful people hold most dear about their congregations will emerge and that new values will be realized.

Another of William Temple's thoughts is that the ultimate value is the creation of community – the communion of saints. The PMDC may not have quite risen to this level yet; however, they have had the wisdom to know that this project needs to create relationships and community in order to be successful, and they have identified some of the values to guide and shape this community. 'In our behaviour we reflect God's love through listening, sensitivity, being light-hearted with a sense of abundance, selflessness, vulnerability, honesty, trust, commitment, and collegiality.'

It is fair to say that these values have not always been realized. However, the role of community is to encourage and hold one another accountable, and (revising Browning), our reach should exceed our grasp, or what's a heaven for? The next phases of 'Deep Roots, New Growth' will need an expanded community of people who are prepared to be shaped by values such as these, and who have the courage to pursue the potential that God has for the Anglican church in this part of the city.

Taking decisions

The role of *Potentials*, as outside consultants and facilitators to churches, is to help our clients take good, faithful and sustainable decisions (very similar, in fact, to the diocesan standards of 'faithful, effective and sustainable'). In this contract we are preparing the various parties – PMDC, parish vestries, bishop, Diocesan Council – to take decisions that will impact the future of the Anglican Church presence in this part of the city.

- By 'good' we mean 'good' for the Anglican parishes and their members that presently make up the Deanery. We also mean 'the common good,' that is the Anglican contribution in the area of Parkdale Deanery to making a significant difference to the lives of people who are not members of the church.
- By 'faithful' we mean a basic orientation to God that is both past and future. Being faithful implies a connection to God through our history, tradition and identity as Anglican Christians. It also carries the meaning that St. Paul gives to faith, a belief in things unseen.
- By 'sustainable' we mean that decisions need to be sustained into the foreseeable future; they are long term. Finances and facilities are obviously an important part of sustainability; however, they are only a part. Human resources are more important to a church; these resources include human potential, capacities, competencies, energy, commitment and enthusiasm.

The decisions belong to the leaders and participants in the process of 'Deep Roots, New Growth' - to the vestries of the parishes, to the Area Bishop and to the Diocesan Council. We suggest that 'good, faithful and sustainable' are the criteria for discernment as the various parties in this project begin to take responsibility for the next steps. There is also an important act of trust in asserting that the decisions belong to all these people and bodies, and this trust is that the resources lie within the community for moving forward in a creative and responsible way.

We also suggest that, as much as possible, any decisions be taken in community, that is in full awareness that each parish community is part of a larger community of Anglicans who make up the Parkdale parishes. This can have a practical expression by having representatives of other parishes and the diocese present for the special parish vestries, for example.

Decline can be a wake-up call

The issues of sustainability that gave rise to this project are common to many churches, and not just in urban settings. In our work we see two approaches to decline. There are numerous examples of congregations that have slept through years of decline and now only have the desire and dwindling capacity to provide worship and fellowship for the small, tightly knit remnant of members. There are also examples where decline has been a wake-up call, where church leadership has first accepted that the congregation is in crisis, and then has started the process of responding. Our experience with these churches has been that when people accept that the viability of the congregation is in serious question, there is an impetus and opportunity to ask more fundamental questions about their identity and purpose: What are we here for? What is our mission? Decline in resources can be a wake-up call to some deeper issues. Delving into these issues of identity, purpose and mission can be an opportunity for significant renewal. It

is also true that such delving has to happen while there are still significant resources to devote to the church's future vision.

Having enough information

Asking fundamental questions requires exploration and discernment. This has been the work of the three research groups and the four consultations. Our opinion is that the exploration has been more than adequate for the next steps to be taken. There is a wealth of information that has been gathered and is contained in this report. Through the research group and consultation process the information has been presented, reflected upon, and then reported to the congregations, all in manageable doses.

Creating 'manageable doses' from a formidable mountain of data is a two edged sword. On the one hand summaries were necessary in order to have discussions in the consultations at a policy level that did not descend into debate about detail. On the other hand most people have not seen all the detail up to this point; they have had to take some of the summaries on faith and have had to reserve some questions they may have had. (This observation has particular reference to the financial data.) The data on which the summaries are based is included in this report and should be useful in the future. Readers will see that considerable pains have been taken to create a very detailed and accurate picture. This is true for the work of all the research groups. With respect to the financial picture, which forms part of the congregational research, there were particular challenges in presenting information that is consistent across all the parishes. For the most part this has been done successfully.

However, it also true that not all questions have been answered, and that probably some additional, important questions are waiting to be asked.

Vision and steps

In a change process that is radical and long term it is important to have both an inspiring vision and some manageable steps that we can take to help bring the vision into being. We need the picture of where we are going and we need a plan that will at least get us going in the right direction. Long term changes and developments need to be done in phases so that the prospect is not overwhelming. However, we can't spend all our time planning – there needs to be some fairly immediate and strategic actions that will generate energy. In the next phases we recommend paying attention to all three: vision, planning steps and actions. A good start has been made, but none of the three are complete.

Worship

Worship is clearly the highest priority for the Parkdale parishes. It is highly valued and done well. It is also an area of ministry that in the future will require careful thought, wisdom, and courage.

The challenges of having fewer resources can be seen as opportunities for radically renewing the personal and corporate practices of prayer and liturgy of the Christian communities that make up the deanery. (I use 'radical' in its meaning of 'returning to the roots.') Where does it make sense to explore new forms and patterns of prayer and liturgy? Where is it best to build on the strengths that are already present? Whatever the

final decisions, it is far preferable to make them on the basis of renewing worship life rather than merely rationalizing resources.

Dealing with debt

The starting point for this project was, to a certain extent, an intractable debt. As the project proceeded and the congregational research team gathered financial information, it became obvious that there is considerable financial fragility – in varying degrees - in at least five of the seven parishes. What has been achieved so far is to get a good deal of the financial information on the table. What lies ahead is the very challenging task of creating a plan whereby the total ministry and facilities are sustainable and an arrangement is reached with the diocese that will deal with the present encumbrances (that total well over ½ million dollars). There are various options, and the decision not to sell any of the existing properties may need to be revisited.

The whole people of God

By comparison to many other congregations (including Anglican parishes) the Parkdale parishes are characterized by a lack of lay knowledge and ownership of congregational life. Parishioners feel passionately about their congregations, and usually have a strong emotional attachment, but this is not the same thing. By 'knowledge and ownership' I mean a significant group of lay leaders who have a clear and shared understanding that has some historical depth of the church finances, the state of the facilities, a good overview of the ministry activities, the relation between the church and its environment, and a sense of the priorities of the clergy and how they spend their time. It's also useful to have a certain healthy detachment, being able to 'tell it like it is' without feeling the congregation has to be protected. Churches with this type of lay leadership, who work in close collaboration with the clergy, usually develop a shared sense of mission and find ways to live this mission out in practical terms. They also are able to talk about how they are doing.

To state categorically that there's a lack of all this in all the Parkdale parishes is, of course, false. It's a matter of degree, and no single congregation is going to get full marks on this scale. However, the comparison is something that my colleague and I observed in the course of this project. The Anglican system militates against lay ownership and responsibility to a certain extent by concentrating power in the hands of rector. However, I've worked with plenty of Anglican parishes where there is a healthy involvement of lay people. The up-side of the situation in Parkdale is that there is tremendous untapped potential for lay leadership and the development of ministry. The research groups and the consultations were living examples of this potential. Lay people will need to be given responsibility and authority.

Growth

A clear goal for this project has been to lay the groundwork for growth. Although there are different types of church growth (spiritual, organizational, ministry development), growth in numbers is what people mean. They look at the 2001 census where 5600 people living in the Parkdale Deanery identify themselves as Anglican, and then they observe that the averaged Sunday attendance in the seven churches is 850, and on a 'typical Sunday' is probably closer to 650. And they go on to note that the majority of church members do not live in the deanery. There must be room for growth.

I have summarized my thoughts and experience on this subject in 'Propositions on church growth in urban settings.' My view is that church growth is a process by which churches grow both in numbers and in faith. Newcomers become part of a congregation that itself is going through spiritual growth and transformation. Special attention is paid to the needs and integration of newcomers, but their very presence and spiritual seeking raises enlivening questions for those who have been long time members.

Is growth possible in Parkdale? My view is yes. However, it is not sensible to think that just by continuing with the current pattern of worship and ministry, or even by making a bit more effort, that growth will somehow happen. Here's a few more things to think about:

- Growth usually needs critical mass and resources. Part of the equation is creating diversity so that there are different groups of people to connect with and different interests represented, whether this happens within one congregation or more. With the possible exception of the two larger parishes, because of their limited capacity none of the Parkdale parishes can expect to grow on their own. The capacity to create sustainable diversity is a question for the two larger parishes as well. The scenarios are based on creating a better use and configuration of the resources present collectively in the deanery. Whatever pathway is chosen, leaders need to think seriously and strategically about how they intend to support growth with the resources they have.
- Growth comes from a sense not just of 'who we are' but of 'who we are becoming'. The whole parish needs to be growing and developing. This usually translates into an intentional process of developing mission, vision and ministry activities to support the mission over the long term. 'Being intentional' is the key phrase, and this represents a shift in culture for many congregations.
- I think we worry too much about what we can do to attract new people, and forget why these people might be seeking a church in the first place. There are of course many reasons, and I've tried to explore some of these in my book *Seeking the Seekers*, but the short answer is that many people will come to a church at a time of significant transition in their lives. We can become more aware of our spiritual needs at times when our lives are unsettled. Taking time to explore these needs in a safe environment, listening carefully and sensitively, making meaningful and practical connections – this is all part of what others in this report have described so well as 'hospitality'. Newcomers aren't arriving to pay the bills after all, they're Jesus in our midst. (Matt. 25.40)
- Finally, the most important part of parish life is its ministry – community life, worship, learning, pastoral care, and outreach (including social justice and evangelism). Having said that, parishes also need to invest in letting people

know about themselves, and when newcomers do arrive, to have a very good system in place for followup. This is really an aspect of baptismal ministry – incorporating people into the Body of Christ and having that Body grow and develop through the gifts of its new members.

Appreciation

I have made reference to the impressive contribution of many volunteers to this project. I would like to thank Norah Bolton particularly for her work on this report in addition to her considerable work as a member of the congregational development research group.

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On behalf of myself and my colleague Ron Ewart, I would like to convey our deep appreciation for the opportunity to work with you on 'Deep Roots, New Growth.' We have learned a great deal about the joys and challenges of urban ministry from this project and from all those who participated or gave leadership. I wish you well in the next steps of this adventure.

Paul MacLean, executive director, *Potentials*

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