

Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

“Guidelines for Leaders” - Chapter 6

Multiplication of Parishes



The “multiplication” of our parishes into a larger number of vibrant, self sufficient units is an important part of our Diocesan strategy for growth, mission and ministry. Our ten year plan, adopted by the Missionary Conference in September 2007, is to grow:

- ✦ From 13 (12 parishes and 1 school) in 2007
- ✦ To 19 or 20 in 2008
- ✦ To 28 in 2010 (including two Deputy Archdeacons)
- ✦ And 32 (with six Archdeaconries) in 2017 at our 30th Anniversary.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain why multiplication is so important for our Diocese, and to give guidance for the process.

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist

1. Motivation to Multiply

We see multiplication as the way forward for a number of reasons.

1.1 Effective Mission

We need to multiply *for effective mission*. Jesus commanded his church to “make disciples” of every nation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:8). God’s love motivates us to reach out to the world to proclaim the Good News and care for those who are suffering (2 Corinthians 5:14-21, Matthew 25:31-46). There are many challenges and opportunities before us:

- ✦ To plant new churches in areas where there is no church at all or no Anglican presence;
- ✦ HIV & AIDS Outreach (Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Voluntary Counseling and Testing, Education...)
- ✦ Christian Community Development to address poverty and other basic needs.

We cannot reach out if we are struggling to survive in our enormous parishes - where priests cannot even keep up with the demands of their existing chapelries and congregations.

1.2 Effective Ministry

We need to multiply *for effective ministry*. Ministry is more than taking communion services and conducting funerals! Each chapelry should be growing in worship, education (e.g. training lay ministers and equipping all God’s people for life and service), pastoral care and fellowship (e.g. small groups and caring for

one another - becoming a new “extended family”). This was the pattern of the early church (Acts 2:42-47) and we need to set our clergy free to lead us into those things.

1.3 Effective Finances

We need to multiply *for effective finances*. With enormous parishes and many congregations it is hard to manage money effectively. Many people are not motivated to give because they do not feel any sense of “ownership” of the church. Smaller parishes mean that people can have better “value for money” and experience the benefits of their giving to God and the church. There are more than enough people in each of our proposed parishes to give all the money that will be needed.

1.4 Effective Communication

We need to multiply *for effective communication*. When parishes have many chapelries and congregations covering large distances, communication becomes difficult and meetings are unwieldy. For example, a parish with 20 chapelries has about 50 people on the parish council! Smaller parishes make it possible to schedule meetings, keep in touch with one another and work together.

2. Process and Principles

2.1 A Process

Multiplication is a *process*. It takes time and hard work to set up all the systems and get everything happening in a new parish. So, although there will be a date when a new parish officially comes into being, it will actually take place over a period of time. It is a bit like growing up as a person: although we officially and legally become adults on our 18th birthday we really grow up into adulthood over many years. During this time many people (parents, teachers, friends and others) support and guide us.

The Diocese and the “parent” parish are there to support new parishes as they come into being. A typical process would be something like this:

- 1) A large parish re-organises itself into several “clusters” which will form the basis of new parishes. Before multiplication, a cluster should be up to date with its financial contributions to the parish.
- 2) The parish leadership applies, through the parish council, to the Bishop for permission to multiply. This process could be initiated by the Bishop who could recommend to the parish and the cluster / area / chapelry that he feels they are ready for multiplication.
- 3) The Diocesan Leadership Team and Diocesan Administrator work with the new parishes to set up basic leadership, administration and financial systems.
- 4) The Bishop officially launches the new parishes.

After this, work continues with the process of becoming vibrant self-sufficient parishes.

2.2 Important Principles

When a large parish multiplies some parts are left with more infrastructure than others. For example the “parent” parish may have a rectory, office, or parish vehicle. The division of these assets must be a process of discussion and negotiation. But some assets (e.g. a rectory) cannot be moved and it is unrealistic to expect the “parent” parish to buy it back from the daughter parish. In these situations DFB has decided to reduce the assessment of the new parishes so that they can use their money to build up the resources they need. Parishes without Rectors have an Investment Fund to which they have been contributing through their assessments to the Diocese. DFB can also use the Bishop’s Ministry Fund to help pay the stipend of the first Rector of a parish for the first few years.

2.3 After Multiplication

The formation of a new parish is the *beginning* of a journey - not the end! The challenge after multiplication will be to grow into a fully established parish:

- 1) A Stipendiary (paid) Rector - the team leader and vision-bearer who equips and releases others for ministry;
- 2) A team of Community Clergy (not paid) - who share in the sacramental, preaching and teaching ministry;
- 3) Many Lay Leaders - these may be elected (e.g. Parish Councils and Churchwardens), licensed by the Bishop (e.g. worship leaders and preachers) or appointed (e.g. leaders of ministries and groups).
- 4) All God’s people discovering and growing in their gifts and ministries.

3. The Diocesan Contribution

All the Diocesan structures exist to help our parishes become what God wants them to be - vibrant communities of faith. When it comes to multiplication of parishes, we are there to guide, support and serve. Each Diocesan department or staff person has a particular role to play.

3.1 Diocesan Administrator

The Administrator does many things on behalf of the parishes: e.g. paying stipends and overseeing insurance. The Diocesan Office also acts as a “friendly banker” for parishes. You can invest money through the Diocese for many different purposes - and because we have a combined portfolio, we can earn good interest rates:

- ⌘ Vehicle and transport funds
- ⌘ Building funds
- ⌘ Investment Fund (savings towards a new Rector).

The Diocesan Administrator is also there to give practical help and advice on any financial matter - how to prepare budgets, financial statements, etc. We also

have a team of “Independent Verifiers” who can verify parish accounts (in place of a formal audit) in preparation for Vestry meetings.

3.2 Diocesan Leadership Team

The Leadership Team, under the direction of the Diocesan Leadership and Communications Manager, has been given the task of piloting the multiplication process with parishes. This means that they are available to meet with leaders and congregations to help them with practical issues along the way.

In particular the Team has expertise and experience in training parish leaders, especially Church Councils, Churchwardens and Treasurers. They can also help resolve conflicts and disputes.

3.3 Training for Ministries (TFM)

The Diocesan TFM Committee is made up of a sub-committee for each Archdeaconry and focuses on the training of lay ministries. Their special interests are:

- ✦ Training and Licensing of Licensed Lay Ministers (who assist with worship, preach conduct funerals etc);
- ✦ Training and developing resources for Small Groups;
- ✦ Training of those who prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation;
- ✦ Training and resources for Sunday Schools.

Parishes are encouraged to do their own training, using Diocesan materials, and also to work together in Archdeaconries to organise training events.

3.4 The Bishop

The Bishop’s role is to oversee the whole process of multiplication of parishes. He formally inaugurates new parishes. Normally, he visits each parish in the Diocese once or twice per year - including an annual Confirmation service. With the growing number of parishes, the bishop will find it harder to visit each parish twice per year! However, it will give him the opportunity to visit places that were not parishes before.

The biggest challenge facing the bishop is to identify and train people for the ordained ministry - especially those who will serve as Rectors of parishes. Between 2007 and 2017 we will have to train or find more than 20 new Rectors if we are to meet the challenge we have set ourselves!

4. For You To Do...

In order to prepare for multiplication there are three main areas with things to do.

4.1 Agree Formally

The Bishop needs to know that the multiplication has the support of the people who will be affected by it. Therefore, he should receive letters from the Councils of the parish that plans to multiply into several new parishes and the new parishes that will be formed as a result of the process. These letters should include:

- ✦ The proposed name of the new parish (the Bishop may have already been using a “Working Name”, but this can be changed).
- ✦ A suggestion about who should be the Rector or Priest in Charge of the new parish (there may already have been discussions about this with the Bishop).
- ✦ The proposed boundaries of the new parishes that will result from the multiplication - including a list of chapelries and congregations.

4.2 Prepare Financially

It is important to prepare financially for the new parishes. As mentioned above, the Diocesan Administrator and Leadership Team will be there to support you.

4.2.1 Prepare a Budget

Chapter 5 on “Financial Responsibilities” gives guidelines for this process. It is important to think about:

- 1) All the **expenses** that the parish is likely to incur. This will include things like the Diocesan Assessment, Transport, Clergy costs, Supplies for worship... and any special plans or programmes that the parish has in mind.
- 2) All the sources of **income** for the parish. This will include giving by members of the parish to their chapelries, the contributions of each chapelry to the parish and applications to the Diocese for help. There will need to be strategies to teach people about God’s love and our response to that love.

4.2.2 Plan Ahead!

Many new parishes will not be able to afford a full time Rector at the beginning. So, plans need to be made to build up the infrastructure and giving to support a Rector in the near future. It will be valuable to work out what will be needed and set specific goals for this:

- ✦ What will be needed? House, car, money for allowances, increased assessment...
- ✦ By when will we aim to have a Rector?
- ✦ How will we save money so as to meet these goals?

The Diocese has a saving scheme to help you prepare in this way. If you give more than your assessment, the money is set aside for you to use in the future.

4.3 Get Ready for Action

Establishing a new parish is a call to action by all the members! There will be new opportunities for many people to discover and use new ministries to serve God and the community. Here are some of the things that will need to emerge as the parish grows into its new life.

4.3.1 Diocesan Rules

The Diocesan rules specify the basic things that have to be organised in any parish - previous chapters of these guidelines explain them in a friendly way, so please study them and invite the Leadership Team to conduct training sessions to help you. For example, you will need to:

- ✦ Hold Chapelry and Parish Vestry meetings, elect churchwardens and appoint treasurers; begin to hold Parish Council meetings.
- ✦ Open bank accounts where needed.
- ✦ Elect people to represent the parish at Archdeaconry Council meetings, Diocesan Standing Committee and Diocesan Synod. This is very important so that the parish can contribute to the wider life of the church and benefit being part of it.

4.3.2 Ministries and Organisations

As the parish gets established you will need to set up teams for various ministries and organisations. For example:

- ✦ Women's Organisations: work with the Diocesan MU and AWF executives to set up branches in the new parish.
- ✦ Training for Ministries: get help from the Diocesan TFM Committee to appoint a parish TFM coordinator and team.
- ✦ Youth: appoint a parish Youth Coordinator who can serve on the Diocesan Youth Council.
- ✦ Choirs Fellowship: encourage choirs to affiliate to the Fellowship and appoint a coordinator for the parish.
- ✦ HIV and AIDS: Ask the Diocesan Task Team, Diocesan Director and Archdeaconry Coordinator to help you to set up a parish team for this vitally important ministry.

As we have said before, all of these things will take time - and they will give an opportunity for more people to discover their gifts and grow in new ministries.

Finally... remember that the Diocesan staff and organisations are there to help you. We want you to succeed and will give you all the support we can!