

Ministering Communities in Mission - Introduction



Introduction

Thanks for looking at this section of the website and its resources for understanding and implementing the Vision of the Church Becoming a Ministering Community in Mission. We will keep using the term 'MCiM' as shorthand.

This area sets out the vision and provide assistances for people in the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, in Australia. We hope that other Dioceses also find the material useful.

MCiM has been going strong in Newcastle for 4 years and now a significant number of parishes have embraced the vision. But, we are not alone in this journey. The Dioceses of Tasmania and Willochra are strong partners within the Anglican Church of Australia. A number of Dioceses in the Anglican Church in New Zealand, the Church of England, and the Episcopal Church in the United States have already moved in the direction.

What is MCiM?

MCiM is a way of being church that sees baptism as the entry into Christian ministry. Every person in the Church has abilities and gifts to offer. This view is based on what we find in the Bible, especially in the teaching of Saint Paul, where the church is seen as a community of ministers. His missionary methods are again influencing the church because we in Australia are becoming within our own culture a missionary church.

In the Diocese of Newcastle, we are seeing a fresh appreciation of the importance of each congregation being a community of ministers rather than being a passive community dependent on the ministry of one or two professional clergy.

How important is MCiM?

On St Andrews Day, 2009, the Bishop of Newcastle (Dr Brian Farran) ordained 15 priests, most of whom will serve in local ministry. In his words, the ordination *"heralds to the parishes of the Diocese, especially to rural parishes, that this Diocese is committed to ensuring all parishes can be churches with provision for Word and Sacrament and not missions awaiting ministry from other places.*

We will not by our inaction allow parishes to decline into ecclesial nursing homes with the sacraments provided from external bigger parishes. Nor will we sanction a sacramental ambulance service that rushes in and out of local communities with palliative sacramental care.

This Diocese is unashamedly Pauline in its commitment to the stability and integrity of churches right throughout the Diocese. This Diocese is not myopic in shrinking its vision of church to chaplaincies for middle-class suburbia.

We will be the church with resident priests in communities from which the other denominations have withdrawn. This is a huge affirming statement to towns and villages throughout the Diocese as much as it is to the growth corridors within the Diocese.

We need 'walking sacraments' that are out and about in rural towns, suburbs and the inner city –visible and public, not cloistered in Sunday chaplaincies. We need priests ... giving the green light to congregations to be missional within communities and not just to be Sunday care centres."