



VISION
2019

Dream the church



Engaging in God's Mission

Introduction



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If you are unable to download and print your own copies of *Engaging in God's Mission*, you may request a copy from Clementina Thomas, tel. 416-924-9199, extension 361 or e-mail cthomas@national.anglican.ca.

What is the Anglican Church of Canada's vision for participating in God's mission in 2019? This study guide is a first step in answering that strategic question. *Engaging in God's Mission* invites Anglicans across Canada to learn about the mission of our national and worldwide church, and to discern God's dream for mission in their own parishes.

A second step of visioning will be the "Tell us your story" portion. All Canadian Anglicans, groups or individuals, are invited to send General Synod a snapshot of where your church is now, and where you would like to see the Anglican Church of Canada in 2019. Responses can be sent in a variety of media (video, letter, audio) and will be reviewed by the Vision 2019 committee. Everyone is encouraged to join in on either, or both, of these [Vision 2019 steps](http://www.anglican.ca/v2019) (see www.anglican.ca/v2019 for more details).

Where have we come from?

Starting with its establishment in 1893 as a way for dioceses to join together in a common mission, the Anglican Church of Canada's *raison d'être* is to do mission, to participate in Jesus' proclamation of God's "kingdom come, on earth." The church's understanding of mission has transformed and been renewed – with the [Netten Report in 1979](http://www.anglican.ca/gs2007/media/mk-governance.htm), (www.anglican.ca/gs2007/media/mk-governance.htm), the Anglicans in Mission campaign in the early 80s, the [Preparing the Way strategic plan of 1994](http://www2.anglican.ca/about/cogs/preparing-the-way.htm) (www2.anglican.ca/about/cogs/preparing-the-way.htm) and [Serving God's World, Strengthening the Church](http://www2.anglican.ca/about/framework/index.htm) (www2.anglican.ca/about/framework/index.htm) in 2004.

Internationally, the Anglican Consultative Council developed the [Five Marks of Mission](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm) (www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm) between 1984 and 1990, and they have been widely accepted as a "checklist" for the people of God in mission. They shape the contents of *Engaging in God's Mission*.

They are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

(*Bonds of Affection*—1984 ACC—6 p. 49,
Mission in a Broken World—1990 ACC—8 p. 101)

Leaders' Guide

Engaging in God's Mission is a series of six study sessions based on the Five Marks of Mission. The Five Marks of Mission were developed by the Anglican Consultative Council more than 20 years ago. The study sessions are designed to help participants explore what the Scriptures have to say about God's mission; learn how the local and worldwide Anglican Church participates in that mission; and envision new directions for the Anglican Church of Canada to participate in mission until 2019.

About the Five Marks of Mission

In 1984 the [Anglican Consultative Council](http://www.anglicancommunion.org) (www.anglicancommunion.org) began to develop a "mission statement" for the worldwide Anglican communion, resulting in the formulation of Five Marks of Mission. These were subsequently adopted by the bishops of the Lambeth Conference in 1989, and re-affirmed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1990. The Five Marks of Mission are a work in progress that continues to be reviewed and adapted, while offering the Anglican Communion a practical checklist for mission work and a comprehensive view of Christ's Mission.

They are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society;
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Using the Study Guide

This study guide is set out for use over six sessions, but sessions can also be combined for a day-long event or adjusted according to your own unique needs.

Each session includes the following components:

- opening and closing prayers;
- a scripture study;
- a brief theological reflection;
- a story from a partner in mission;
- three or four discussion questions.

The package of Additional Resources contains texts for some of the sessions as well as for further study and reflection. We have included a list of hymns you might use at the beginning or end of the session if you have a musical group.



Learn how the local and worldwide Anglican Church participates in that mission.

Envision new directions for the Anglican Church of Canada to participate in mission until 2019.

We hope you will enjoy Engaging in God's Mission and embarking on the journey of discerning, dreaming, and deciding about the future of our church.

Leaders' Guide continued

We suggest you read through the material and review the additional resources available for each session. The stories in this study series are stories from our “Partners in Mission.” The notion of **partnership** is crucial to how the Anglican Church understands mission. What does partnership mean to you? There are some resources to help you think about what we mean by “partnership” in the opening Overview session.

You might consider designating another member of your group to be a “theological reflector.” Their task would be to read and mark the scripture passages, to research any background information about the scripture passage, and to read the Theological Reflection in full for each Mark of Mission. The theological reflector could then share what they have learned with the rest of the group, as part of the scripture study portion of the session and within the group study, and contribute connections he or she sees between the group discussion and scripture.

Participants might be invited between sessions to read the alternative partner stories and to find inspiring examples (web page, newsletter or newspaper articles) of how your own or other parishes and your diocese are engaging in mission.

It is often good to have a variety of ways to discuss the questions — brainstorming ideas with a flip chart, sharing responses in pairs or other small groups and then sharing with the larger group, or large group discussions. It may be helpful to read some or all of the material aloud together.

Read the interview with Archbishop Hiltz in *Additional Resources* extending his invitation to study the Five Marks of Mission.

Have people from your group volunteer to read, research and present the background of the *Five Marks of Mission*, also in *Additional Resources*, as well as “Understanding Partnership in Mission: A Brief Reflection” and “Ten Principles of Partnership.”

A parish project

Consider making a bulletin board display for the parish. It might include:

- A list of the Five Marks of Mission;
- Articles and pictures (from the Anglican Journal, your diocesan paper, the [anglican.ca](http://www.anglican.ca) website) of how the Anglican Church of Canada is carrying out each Mark of Mission at the parish, diocesan, or national level;
- A map of the Anglican Communion, available from the Partnerships department, Anglican Church of Canada at 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 3G2 or call Clementina Thomas at 416-924-9199 x 361;
- A [map of the dioceses and provinces of the Anglican Church of Canada](http://www2.anglican.ca/resources/posters/map.htm), available online at <http://www2.anglican.ca/resources/posters/map.htm> or from Josie De Lucia in the Communications department at Church House, 416-924-9199, ext. 294.



For Discussion

1. Do you think of the Anglican Church of Canada as “beloved”?
What makes it beloved for you?
2. What was the first thing you learned about mission and the Anglican Church of Canada?
3. What do you value or appreciate about the Anglican Church of Canada’s way of doing mission?
What would you like us to be doing differently?
4. Discuss what partnership means to you.
Discuss its implications for mission.

sermon

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

Theological
Reflection

🕯 Opening Prayer

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in His name and for His sake. Amen.

🕯 Scripture Study

Mark 6: 30-44

The feeding of the five thousand

🕯 Closing Prayer

Oh Lord our God, You have made all races and nations to be one family, and you sent your Son Jesus Christ to proclaim the good news of salvation to all people. Pour out your Spirit on the whole creation, bring the nations of the world into your fellowship, and hasten the coming of your kingdom. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As a “mark of mission,” proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom restores to the church an appropriate humility about who initiates mission. The Kingdom is something we may discern, inhabit and enact, but it is not something we initiate. Mission is God’s initiative, and so we begin by proclaiming that God cracks the shell of inevitability that binds us, brings business-as-usual to an end, and defies common wisdom about what can and cannot be.

by Archbishop DOUGLAS HAMBIDGE

The Offering: Today’s Gospel is all about the mission and life of today’s Church. It lays a foundation for all organizations, programmes and strategic plans. It is basic to the life of every congregation.

The Scene: There is a crowd of people, the disciples and Jesus. The crowd is probably weary, cranky and demanding. The disciples have had enough. Perhaps they thought Jesus had had enough too. They had a remedy. They urge Jesus, “Get rid of the people — send them away.” We’ve done all we can; we’ve nothing more to give — now it’s quality time for us. Have you never felt like that?

Jesus sees it differently and responds, “They have no need to go away. You feed them!” There are so many demands made on us today that it’s easy and understandable to feel like the disciples. Oh for some quality time for ourselves — no demands — no pressures — no problems or conflicts — one long retreat. “Lord send them away!”

Knowing the needs and understanding the pressures, Jesus responds, “You feed them!” But that’s the problem. Our resources are minimal — we’ve not even

enough for ourselves. In fact we are almost content to celebrate a theology of scarcity — we know what we do for others is of necessity limited.

The Resources: The disciples know they haven’t got enough; they have found one little boy willing to hand over his lunch. Five bread rolls and two sardines. There’s a laugh! Even when we re-examine our resources, they look pathetically inadequate in the face of the needs and the demands. It’s true that when we look again, we do have resources — we have more than most in the world...but what are they among so many?

The Miracle: “Bring those inadequate resources to me” says Jesus. “Now make the people sit down — make them know they belong here — make them feel at home — assure them they are not an intrusion or a nuisance.”

Jesus takes the inadequate resources. He blesses, breaks, and shares them with all the people. Listen to what the Gospel writer says, “They all had enough”. And Jesus has them pick up the left-over food, and without a word tells them that when people offer what they have, inadequate as it is, in the generous bounty of God, there is enough for all.

🕯 For Discussion

1. After a day of people coming and going and no break, the disciples urge Jesus to send the crowds away. We can imagine what they’re thinking — “we’ve done all we can, we’ve nothing more to give.” How does Jesus change the situation?
2. Are there people we want to send away from our church doors because we have no resources? What could we do differently?
3. In what ways does the life of the religious communities, such as the Melanesian Brotherhood or the Sisters of the Church, proclaim the Good News to the people of the Solomon Islands?
4. Name two or three things your church could do in your community that would proclaim good news in our time.

Excerpted from resources prepared for the training and mission of the Melanesian Brotherhood by the Reverend RICHARD CARTER, MBH.

TIS FIVE-THIRTY in the morning. A bell made from a gas cylinder is rung. In the darkness over 100 young men, aged between 18 and 35, wake up, get up from their mats and prepare for prayer. In the chapel they kneel in silence. The sun is rising and light streams through the window above the altar. The parrots arrive and bounce on the blossom outside. First Office begins and the whole community bursts into a rich roar of song. This is Tabalia, on the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. It is the headquarters of the Melanesian Brotherhood, reckoned to be the largest male religious community in the Anglican Communion. The community works in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Palawan in the Philippines. It numbers over 250 brothers under vows and more than 150 novices in training.

Anyone who has visited the Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands cannot fail to have noticed that religious

life is flourishing. Today, when many religious communities are finding it hard to attract young vocations, the contrast one finds in Melanesia is remarkable.

There are four Anglican religious communities working in the Solomon

These evangelists walk the roads with bare feet and no money.

Islands: the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Sisters of Melanesia, the Society of St. Francis and the Sisters of the Church. All these communities live under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and all these communities are full of young people with far more applications than they are able to accept....

Many have been inspired by the life of other brothers and sisters and the stories they have heard about these communities. Each village will talk

with pride about any relation who has joined. These young people have a grace, which is unmistakable. They are greatly respected and yet have a simplicity and humility that reaches the hearts of all age groups. Their life has a spontaneity and joy very close to the song of the beatitudes. People sense that this is what the Christian church should be like.

This is real evangelism that goes on largely unsung, un-financed, undocumented. These evangelists walk the roads with bare feet and no money. These are evangelists whom people can welcome in their homes like returning sons or daughters, who will share whatever food there is and who will sleep on a mat and help hoe the garden, catch the fish or repair the roof. These are the evangelists who will come whenever they are called to pray for the sick, solve a village dispute, calm down a husband who is drunk. And when they visit, they bring a sense of goodness, the sense that something better is possible. ♡



Sisters of the Church, Solomon Islands

ANDREA MANN



Leafhouse on Mlaita, Solomon Islands

T. BROWN

Theological Reflection



Opening Prayer

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in His name and for His sake. Amen.

Scripture Study

Acts 8:26–38

Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch

Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, Who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit, keep your children, born of water and the Spirit, faithful to their calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Believe” can mean (and I think in this case does mean) “hold dear.” Holding dear is more than... consent to an idea – it is commitment to a living reality, the triune God, and to the new life that comes to us from that God. To “teach” someone the truth of this God is so much more than offering a course or suggesting a book. To teach a new believer the truth of God must surely include some fairly fierce reflection on how it is evident, in our common life in the church, what we hold dear. Can our word – “believe” – become flesh?

For Discussion

1. *The passage from Acts tells us that the Holy Spirit directed Philip toward the southbound road to Gaza.*

Where do you think the Spirit is directing the church today?

2. *“What is to prevent me from being baptized?” asked the Ethiopian eunuch.*

Are there factors that might prevent some people in our community from being baptized?

What are they, and how might they be removed?

3. *Bishop Patrick Yu, an area bishop of the diocese of Toronto, attributes his decision to be baptized as a young person to the quality of education and the example of the principal and some of his teachers at his Anglican primary school in Hong Kong.*

What examples of educational experiences do you know of that have helped people decide to be baptized?

What examples of educational experiences have alienated people from the church?

4. If someone were looking from the outside at the common life of your church, what conclusion do you think they might draw about what you “hold dear”?

partner's story
A Bishop's Early Hong Kong Years

by ALI SYMONS

LET'S ROAST A pig today!" Madame Lai had invited some high schoolers over for a cooking lesson, and now she was beckoning them out to a spit on her balcony, in a swankier Hong Kong neighbourhood than most of the kids were used to. It was sometime in the 1960s, and a certain Patrick Yu (now Bishop Yu, diocese of Toronto) was in this group of young cooks.

Bishop Yu remembers much about Madame Lai, who served as principal of St. Stephen's Primary School and superintendent of the Sunday school (both Anglican institutions). "She would do all these crazy things," he recalls, "It was fun, and I think she embodies a real commitment not only to God, but to the church."

A "tough, but fair" teacher, who personally funded students' spiritual retreats, Madame Lai was just one Christian influence during Patrick Yu's education. For a boy who grew up in a nominally Buddhist family, the school

assemblies were powerful experiences. He eagerly absorbed the new Bible stories and songs (although the catchy Cantonese tunes were familiar).

By the time he was in high school at neighbouring St. Paul's College, 13-year-old Patrick felt ready for baptism. "I think I knew then that I had become a Christian very gradually, and it seemed

"I think I knew then that I had become a Christian very gradually, and it seemed logical to pursue baptism as a sign that I am a Christian."

logical to pursue baptism as a sign that I am a Christian," he said.

But this wasn't the end of the story, of course. Bishop Yu's spiritual formation continued gradually, and he points

out that "it wasn't always rosy." There were some in the school who were not good Christian examples.

Later in high school, another bright light appeared: an English missionary named Dr. Campbell came to teach chemistry and scriptures. "He was a very good teacher, and openly Christian," remembers Bishop Yu. "He would recruit us to go help with special needs people, and he would really care for us, pray for us during our exams and so on." Half the class converted to Christianity. ♡

Bishop Yu is still in touch with these formative communities. He still gets mail from his old Sunday school, which produced countless priests, and at least two bishops. Just a few weeks ago, Bishop Yu and his wife (also a St. Stephen's graduate) flipped through the old school prayer book, and were delighted that they still could sing half the songs.



Hong Kong

ANDREA MANN



St. Stephen's church and school

PATRICK YU

Theological Reflection



Opening Prayer

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in His name and for His sake. Amen.

Scripture Study

Mark 10:46–52
Jesus heals Bartimaeus

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, your son Jesus Christ has taught us that what we do for the least of your children we also do for him. Give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all Who gave up his life and died for us but lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Finally, I wonder if we can allow ourselves to name, celebrate, and be grateful to those who by their acts of loving service towards us have allowed us to be the subjects in our own lives, who have responded generously to our needs, and have credited us with positive characteristics and traits. I think this is why Jesus makes such a point of washing Peter's feet, when Peter wants none of it. Can we become servants like Jesus without allowing him to serve us? And if, in our competence and dignity, we cannot allow such a thing to happen, I wonder if we will be able to give that gift to others.

For Discussion

1. *Jesus and his disciples were walking on the road out of Jericho when the shouts of Bartimaeus interrupted their journey. We read that Jesus stood still and summoned Bartimaeus to come to him.*
In what ways does our church need to “stand still” and stop what it's doing in order to hear and respond to the cries around us?
2. Who can we name in our own lives who has acted with loving service towards us, responding to our needs, crediting us with positive characteristics and traits?
What does this tell us about giving loving service to others?
3. *Barry and Freda Bear were faithful in their call to serve, even in the midst of pain and heartbreak. Their prayer was “God, you got me into this: now you're going to have to help me!”*
What ministry of service is God getting you into?
How is God going to help you?

by BARRY AND FREDA BEAR

I ALWAYS WANTED to help in the church, and I did what was necessary, such as cleaning or taking part in the services. But it was hard for me to read, and I was always afraid of making mistakes in the readings. I often wondered how other Aboriginal people could just get up and speak. However, I finally got my lay reader's license, then was elected people's warden, and was appointed rector's warden after that, holding the position for a number of years.

Then one day the rector called me to a meeting with the elders of our church community, asking me to come alone. There they prayed for me, but I didn't realize what they were up to. Later in the meeting, they asked me to go into ministry. I was shocked by this request, especially coming from the elders, but everyone present encouraged me to go for it. I asked them to give me some time to think and pray about it. When I went home and told my wife what had happened, she thought it was a good idea too, saying, "Somebody is going to have to take over one of these days." A couple of days later, when we told our children, one of the boys said, "Go for it!" They were all in agreement....

Ministry in the Aboriginal community is different from ministry in a non-Aboriginal context....Many of our people went to residential school and are still hurting. The non-Aboriginal clergy who came to our community had no idea of the extent of the pain that they were holding. Many who had been abused would not even mention it, because who could they trust? Only now, after years of keeping everything in, are people starting to come forward. They need to hear the testimonies of me and others like me, who have been through it all and

have really begun to deal with the pain. Listening to such testimonies is more important for them than attending an organized church service, which seems too demanding for them. To promote trust and understanding, we started having small sharing circles with only a few participants....

Many who had been abused would not even mention it, because who could they trust?

My wife and I are very involved in the Rupert's Land Indigenous Council for our diocese. We feel strongly that

education has to be a priority in order for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to understand each other. Many non-Aboriginal people do not know the history of our people, how things were taken away from us and how we survived, why we feel the way we do, and why many of us have a hard time trusting anyone....

Many times during these heartbreaking experiences, I have prayed, "God, you got me into this: now you're going to have to help me!" God hasn't failed us yet. God gives us the strength we need to get through the difficult days when we most need divine help. ♡

Barry Bear is a priest in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. This story is excerpted from Welcoming the Stranger: Mission as Transformation (Anglican Book Centre, 2007). Used with permission.



*Anglican Indigenous Sacred Circle, Pinawa, Manitoba 2005:
Barry Bear shown at left.*

Theological Reflection



Opening Prayer

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in His name and for His sake. Amen.

Scripture Study

Jeremiah 22:13–17

The prophet Jeremiah addresses King Jehoiakim, one of the last kings of Judah before the Babylonian exile, comparing his regime with that of his father, King Josiah.

Closing Prayer

O Lord our Creator, by your holy prophets you taught your ancient people to seek the welfare of the cities in which they lived. We commend our neighbourhood to your care that it might be kept free from social strife and decay. Give us strength of purpose and concern for others, that we may create here a community of justice and peace where your will may be done, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Among the marvellous capacities we humans have is the capacity to organize, to order our life together according to common goals and desires. So many good things come out of this ability – health care, education, public safety, food production and distribution, constitutional democracy, to name a few...

One of the challenges for those whom God calls in baptism to “strive for justice and peace among all people” is to recognize that even when we benefit from a structure (what so many of us call ‘normal’), that structure may and likely does create less happy outcomes for others.

For Discussion

1. What does the Jeremiah text tell us about the characteristics of the current king’s regime as compared to that of his father?

What differences do you see between Canada and the world of two generations ago (1960s) and the present day?

2. *Theologian John Haughey once wrote, “We [Christians] read the gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know nothing of the gospel.”*

Does this ring true for you?

What examples can you give that illustrate his point?

3. *The Millennium Development Goals are all about wealth and poverty — on a global scale, among nations.*

Find out what your group knows collectively about the goals.

4. What can one person do to change the relationship between rich and poor in Canada and globally? Begin by looking at your calendars, computers, and cheque books.

Discuss what they reveal about what you think, and how you spend your time and money.

How can these values change so you can help world leaders meet the Millennium Development Goals?

In a joint statement read at the end of an ecumenical “Walk of Witness” in Ottawa Sept. 25, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Bishop Susan Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, said Canadians care about the poor. “According to a recent Angus Reid poll, poverty ranks among the top four issues in the current federal election campaign,” they stated.

The two church leaders said that on a global scale, 1.4 billion people live in conditions of extreme poverty and that every three seconds a child dies from poverty-related causes. “Every day, 50,000 people die,” they said. “Every night 800 million people lie down in hunger.”

In Canada, 770,000 people – 40 per cent of them children – rely regularly on food banks, said the pair. “In 1989, Members of Parliament made a pledge to end child poverty by the year 2000. Eighteen years later the child poverty rate remains the same – 12 per cent. They added, “In First Nations communities, 25 per cent live in poverty.”

The church leaders read the two-page statement as a public “Act of Witness” outside the UN Association Office in Ottawa following the “Walk of Witness” in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The event coincided with the gathering of world leaders at the United Nations in New York held in an attempt to ramp up the world’s commitment to the MDGs.

The five-hour program in Ottawa began with a worship service at Christ Church Cathedral where signs naming the eight MDGs were held up by participants, including Bishop John

The MDGs are: eradicate extreme hunger and poverty; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

Chapman of the diocese of Ottawa, Bishop George Bruce of the diocese of Ontario and Bishop Philip Poole, suffragan bishop of Toronto. The MDGs are: eradicate extreme hunger and poverty; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability;

and develop a global partnership for development.

“Today we call on world leaders, including our own prime minister, to keep their promises and to establish a timeline for achieving these goals,” said Archbishop Hiltz. “The poor can wait no longer.” †

Excerpted from a Sept. 26, 2008 article in CrossTalk, the diocese of Ottawa newspaper.

For Further Study

A major justice issue in Canada is the work of building right relationships between the Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people of this land. For the Anglican Church of Canada in particular, the legacy of Residential Schools has revealed a great deal about the “unjust structures” of society that we now must seek to transform.

If your group wishes to learn more, there are some materials in Additional Resources you may use as an alternate or additional study for this fourth mark of mission.

Theological Reflection



Opening Prayer

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in His name and for His sake. Amen.

Scripture Study

Genesis 1:1—2:4
The Creation story

Closing Prayer

Maker of the universe, Source of all life, give us grace to serve you with our whole heart, that we may faithfully perform your will and joyfully participate in your creation, to the praise and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It is part of our ministry, as people baptized into ministry that follows the way of Jesus in service of God's mission, to hear the call of the ancient text, as it echoes the pleading of this tired earth. To hear the ancient text, and to hear the ancient promise as well, that if we will open ourselves to the transformation God offers us in our baptism, we will awaken from the nightmare of a ravaged earth to God's dream of a new creation, of a city at whose heart the tree of life grows, "with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing fruit for each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2, NRSV).

For Discussion

1. Think of the parts of creation that are most meaningful to you.
How have they changed in your lifetime?
How are you affected by these changes?
How are you responding to them?
2. What increases your anxiety about God's creation?
What gives you hope?
3. Have you made changes in your life to live gently and justly as part of God's creation?
4. What changes has your church made that will help to reduce its carbon footprint?
What more could you, your parish or community do to "awaken from the nightmare of a ravaged earth"?

CLIMATE CHANGE is increasingly regarded as one of the greatest threats to the wellbeing of our planet. More than 2,000 scientists who contributed to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predict that by 2100 the average temperature of the earth will climb between 1.5 and 6 degrees Celsius, with consequences to the health and safety of all living creatures. They found that most of the warming in the past fifty years could be attributed to human activities and in particular to burning fossil fuels.

Since the 2007 General Synod, the Task Group to Reduce Carbon Emissions of the Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee has been exploring ways to support Anglican churches to reduce their carbon footprints. The diocese of New Westminster has contributed its

technology to help the Task Group hold “virtual” meetings by conference call enhanced by web video conferencing.

The Task Group’s goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in parishes

The Task Group’s goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in parishes and dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada.

and dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada, through networking, partnering with ecumenical justice organizations, showcasing innovative “greening” projects and developing financial resources to help parishes and dioceses conduct energy audits and retrofits.

A key partner in this work is Faith and the Common Good, a network of faith communities in Canada whose different religious traditions value the earth as a sacred gift for humankind. Greening Sacred Spaces, a program of Faith and the Common Good, is designed to help faith communities re-establish the balance of creation and become more harmonious with the natural world. KAIROS, another key partner, launched the Carbon Sabbath Initiative (CSI) this fall, a program with workshops and tools designed to help groups of people form carbon reduction groups within parishes, congregations or communities. ♦

This article appears on the website for Partners in Mission and Ecojustice, a committee of the Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod.



Climate Change Conference

KEN GRAY

After learning about God’s mission, please add your voice to the visioning. As part of Vision 2019, all are invited to send General Synod a snapshot of where your church is now, and where you would like to see the Anglican Church of Canada in 2019.

Visit www.anglican.ca/v2019 for more details, or a limited number of informational DVDs are available. To order, call (416) 924-9199 ext. 236.



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