

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

The work of Evangelism in our diocese has continued in earnest this year. However, it is my opinion that the commitment to evangelism is not happening fast enough or our efforts are sometimes derailed by the stresses and pressures of doing ministry in this time and place. The more I travel about the diocese and beyond, the more convinced I become that God is calling us out of the status quo into a new way of being the Church and challenging us to offer the Gospel in new and creative ways. If we seek to be a vibrant, healthy, responsive community of faith, then evangelism is not an option. The Bishop's charge last year identified evangelism as one of the three components of the overall vision for ministry of our diocese. It was with that in mind that the evangelism working group moved forward with initiatives and support to parishes in order to realize that vision.

In the fall of 2006 the diocese engaged in a radio and newspaper campaign that was very well received both within our Church and outside of it. The feedback from the campaign suggested that it was highly successful for a number of reasons. First, attendance at church services over the Advent/Christmas season was up in 97% of the parishes in the diocese. Second, people reported that they often heard others speaking about hearing the radio spots and how unusual it was to hear a church being advertised; people were talking! Lastly, people commented on how much easier it was to talk to friends and family about their church because of this advertising; it made us proud. What was very important about the campaign was that it served to offer a healthy, even amusing, image of our church in a time when most of the press we had been receiving had been generally very negative. It is our hope that this year's campaign will build on that success and further assist in communicating to the world that within our Anglican communities, *'you mean more here!'*

This past year saw a number of parishes continuing with the Natural Church Development process by engaging in their second round of surveys with tremendous results. There are presently 25 parishes in the diocese utilizing NCD. It is one of the most effective and helpful means to determine what direction a parish should move in and we would highly recommend having someone assist your parish in determining whether it may be right for your community.

Workshops, ideas, and support are available to assist you in understanding how to begin evangelism within your community. Much of the work of the EWG is done with individual groups or churches; to date 84 parishes have contacted the evangelism office for some sort of assistance over the last two and a half years. We would encourage you to contact this office in order to determine what we may do in order to assist you in making evangelism an integral part of your mission and vision.

Thank you to all members of the Evangelism Working Group for your continued commitment.

Michael Patterson
Hugh Haney
Paul Tinker
Mark Tiller
John Bowen
Renee Desjardin

Cindy Blades
John Baxter
Ruth Anne Martin
Cheryl Fricker
Pam Guyatt
Rob Hurkmans

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Canon Michael Patterson