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One of the huge joys of being Bishop is being able to travel around the diocese to visit all the many congregations, meeting people of faith young and old, hearing the struggles of life in their place and hearing their hopes and plans for the future.

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Being in parish ministry tends to focus us on the joys and challenges of our own parish. It can become our sole focus! We may see beyond our own place to the rest of our region, if we go out to regional events, but often we don't do that.

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Now you are here at Synod with the opportunity to hear about other parishes and places. You will be sitting at numbered tables following this address in order for you to meet some folks from other parishes and to share stories, successes and challenges. I hope you will take that opportunity.

We have much to celebrate. Yes, we have some struggles. We also have a long history of surviving economic difficulties, of making do with what we have, of being creative in developing new approaches to life in small communities. After 300 years we are still here!

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Traveling around the diocese, I meet lay leaders and clergy who are being faithful to God where they are. They are praying, reading their Bible, joining in worship. They contribute help in their communities through Food banks and other resources. However, in those same communities I also meet people who know little about Christianity, who have a fear of entering a church building because they don't know what goes on in there and they don't want to look stupid!

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I meet people who say they want to be spiritual people and they have tried church but it does not engage them. There is a gap between those two groups – the ones who are inside a loving church community and those who might like to be but can't see how to get in. How do we bridge that gap?

In the last 2 years, I have been able to travel to other parts of our Anglican Communion as part of my Sabbatical and as part of participating in Anglican Communion meetings. What do Confirmation in Tanzania, Morning Prayer in San Francisco, Children and Music in Auckland NZ, ALPHA in England and the daily Word from the Society of St. John the Evangelist have in common? At first glance, perhaps nothing. But as I looked back, I realized that they are all trying to bridge that gap – to help people outside the church make a connection to our Anglican tradition or to help people inside the church to move outside and share.

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In Tanzania, Bruce and I spent time in the Diocese of Masasi where we have a PWRDF partnership (which I will talk about at another point in Synod) and where I have a connection with Bishop Patrick Mwachiko from his studies here in Canada, and being in a group together at the Lambeth Conference. When Confirmation happens, it is a whole village experience in Masasi. School is out for the day for those being confirmed. Children have been prepared by a Lay Catechist. They memorize the Catechism of their church (not much different from ours). During the service, the Bishop quizzes them on it!

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In San Francisco, we visited St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church. Every morning a small group chanted Morning Prayer together in the church. Who were they? Lay people - 2 were staff at the church, the others were going off to their day jobs after the service. They took turns leading and making sure we knew how to find our way through the service. It was clearly a choice for them to be there and there was a brief time after for special requests for the staff to pray. It was lovely.

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In England, while I was contributing to their struggle over whether women could be bishops or not, I met some passionate folks who described themselves as “Alphaholics”! They were involved in offering Alpha programs and in helping others to offer Alpha programs. They were excited to know that we have Alpha in our Diocese!

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During the Anglican Consultative Council in New Zealand, while I was in meetings, Bruce was able to visit lots of interesting places and programs as part of the spouses’ program. One that really captured Bruce’s attention was called Music and Children. Bruce visited the one offered by the husband of the Dean of the Cathedral. Some of the families involved were church families, but most of them weren’t. It was offered in the small hall of the Cathedral once a week. The biggest part of the recruiting was done by kids inviting other kids to “come and have fun”!

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I spent a week at the beginning and at the end of the Sabbatical at Emery House, the guest house of the brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). SSJE is a traditional Anglican monastery with regular hours of prayer, silence, work and times for caring for the community.

What do all these experiences have in common? Believe it or not, they are all attempts to form people in the Christian faith, particularly in the Anglican tradition. That formation is critical. Some of them even attempt to bridge that gap between those who have faith in God through Jesus Christ and those who might like to.

In Tanzania, the Confirmation preparation gave the young people a solid grounding in what they believed. They were proud to be able to answer those questions put to them by the bishop. There is still a place in education for a certain amount of memory work! But there were gaps in their formation and

one of those was around their role in regular Sunday worship. Bishop Patrick told the story of how the music changed in the worship services. He realized that young people were either dropping out of church or were not coming at all. He spent time with them asking, "Why do you not come?" Answer? "It's boring! The old people frown at us. The music is dreary!" (Hymns from the English hymnal in Swahili. They were tunes I recognized!) "Other kids make fun of us for going to church". There was a gap between the formation in Confirmation preparation and what they experienced in real life. There was a gap between the culture inside and outside the church. How did they tackle that?

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The solution about the music was a compromise worked out by the bishop with the elders and the youth. The Opening Hymn and all the music up to the offertory was from the old book and sung in the old style with no accompaniment. From the Offertory to the end was new style choruses led by the young people with their drums. We could see that now the youth come in numbers because they get to lead some of the music. It was a joy to watch the youth smile at the elders as they sang the old hymns and to see the elders begin to move to the music along with the youth as they together brought their offering forward and later as they danced out of the building together.

Christian formation for the youth and the elders

In this situation there was another gap in the formation – the young people did not know how to share with other youth outside the class what they has learned. Bishop Patrick tackled this in what I called his "community talk".

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At the end of each service, he would walk about in the church among the people. One of the talks for which I had a translator went something like this. "I hear there is a problem at the school this week. (Head nodding.) What is that about? I hear it is about arguments between Muslim and Christian students. (Heads nodding.) Why is that? We have the one God. We have Jesus. They have Mohammed..." And he went to help them frame ways to say what they believed while respecting the beliefs of the other students. Bishop Patrick was giving them very practical help to form them into responsive Anglicans.

Christian formation for the young people and the rest of the congregation

In San Francisco, those who came to Morning Prayer were not life-long Anglicans.

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They were all newbies. They had come either by way of being users of the food pantry, or because the doors were open and the chanting drew them in, or as Sara said of herself, "I was a nosy journalist and I wanted to see what they were up to passing around pieces of bread and sharing cups of wine!" They had all been welcomed into the community who gathered there. In a variety of ways they were formed by the teaching in the services, by group participation and finally when they felt they were ready, by

intentional preparation for Baptism. They had all been baptised as adults. They had then all taken up some role in the church community and coming to Morning Prayer was part of their ongoing formation.

Christian formation that led to baptism and service

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You are going to hear more about Alpha from our own “Alphaholic” Lisa Vaughn later in Synod so I am only going to say one thing here. Alpha is about crossing the gap from outside to inside the community of faith. Alpha is about sound teaching and community formation. It can be a great asset to one congregation for bringing new people in. It can also be a great asset to a whole community when it is offered ecumenically. It becomes a gift of renewal for the whole community, and some of our communities dearly need renewal.

Christian formation specifically aimed at those still outside the church

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The children and music program connected the desire of parents to have their kids learn music with the music tradition of the Anglican church. The children arrived running across the Cathedral courtyard, to trays of snacks. Bruce said he heard Anglican chant, Taize choruses, and what he was told were some currently popular songs. The children were learning words that spoke of God, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit. They were learning that people gather to sing to God as from time to time they came to sing in a service (and their parents came to too). They learned that they were valued because people from the congregation welcomed them and told them how much they loved the music.

Christian formation of a very different sort!

At SSJE they recently reworked their Rule of Life to consider how they could better serve God through their lives as brothers in this generation. One of the outcomes of that reflection is a well-developed web presence.

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Anyone can find them at www.ssje.org . They offer prayers, sermons, and other online supports. They also offer a thought for the day, called “Brother Give us a Word” that arrives in the email daily to give a focus for the day. And this is available to those seeking for something spiritual and who have not yet found their way to a Christian community and who might never go into a church building.

Christian formation

Worship

To us Anglicans, worship is very important! Through the centuries, so much of what we believe we learned through being in worship week by week through the words of the prayers and the words of the hymns and the actions of standing, sitting, kneeling, moving to the altar. So can you be an Anglican

without being in worship week by week? NO YOU CANNOT! When we say Common Prayer and Common Praise, we don't mean common as in ordinary. We mean common as in we do it together! Worship can be a powerful shaper of our lives – as individuals, as a community of faith. So we need to be there! When we invite people to join us for worship, what is that we want them to experience? Why do we want them to come? “To experience the power of the Gospel” and to be formed and shaped as disciples.

Jesus was very clear about Christian formation: Go and make disciples! Go and do it! Not “make” as in “force people to be disciples”, but “make” as in “form people to be disciples”.

How are we doing at making disciples?

As I travel around the diocese, I see lots of small congregations. We have lots of small communities. But I also see small congregations even where I see growth in population going on with lots of houses being built. I hear congregations talking about going to part-time ordained leadership even as I see Sobey's building a new store and a new recreation complex going up. What is happening?

A big part of what is happening is that we are failing at the task of making disciples. We are failing to form new Anglican Christians. Why? Did we learn too well not to talk about sex, politics or religion in public?! Maybe we shouldn't talk about sex, politics and religion, but we have to be able to talk about our faith. How else will those who have none, find faith, and love, and forgiveness? If we don't talk about our faith, how will anyone learn about the Kingdom of God, about the promise of eternal life? If we, as people of faith, don't share what we have with others, then we have failed to be true to Jesus' command to go and make disciples.

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To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom is the first mark of mission of the Anglican Communion. It needs to be our first consideration in our congregations and parishes and diocesan programs. We have at least 3 programs at the diocesan that give direction about sharing faith – Education for Ministry, Cursillo and Teens Encounter Christ. What else is happening in parishes? To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom means you need to know 3 things: what does proclaim mean, what is the Good News and what is the Kingdom of God. Are parishioners learning these things, learning them in a way that they can then share them, proclaim them in word and deed?

The second mark of Mission is “to teach, baptize and nurture new believers. Is part of your parish's vision the ongoing formation of new Christians? How do you do that? Who are the leaders in your parish who can teach – children? youth? adults? elders? What do you do to make people seeking baptism welcome? Is nurturing new believers included in your parish vision? Who are the leaders in your parish who do that?

Are you able to talk about what you believe with another person? What do you need in order to be able to share the faith that is in you with another person? Are you able to put your faith into action so that

your actions show your faith even if you can't get the words out? If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Sing together a hymn of the personal faith sharing of John Newton and that commends the same sharing to all of us.

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Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

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The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

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When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

The other commonality I see as I look at the big picture, concerns the other 3 marks of mission about meeting the needs of the world. In my travels I came to the interesting discovery that communities of faith who were addressing these "needs of the world" also had joyful, lively, growing congregations.

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If we focus first on Mark 3 about meeting human need with loving service, our parishes are doing a good job. We are good at supporting and serving in food banks, at contributing clothes to clothing depots, at

responding to requests for things like personal care products for groups like the AIDS Coalition, supporting transition homes for people needing refuge. As we participate in these activities, we are also being formed as Christ's disciples. We are doing what He told us, to care for the brothers and sisters in need. We do a good job of sharing what we have at the local and at the global level. Our diocese makes a good contribution to the PWRDF which shares what we give to help with relief and development work around the world. (You will hear more about that later in Synod.)

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But what about Mark 4, the human need for freedom from violence and the need for peace and reconciliation? This mark was reworked at the most recent meeting of the Consultative Council. Challenging violence came out of a mission conference where many of the participants came from war torn countries. They pushed the church to engage in peace making and reconciliation as part of Christ's mission to reconcile all people to God. The Inter Anglican Women's Network has also been promoting programs to eliminate violence against women. It may seem that the violence we have to deal with is small compared to other parts of the Anglican world. However, the recent increased awareness of the amount and extent of bullying in schools should cause us to be concerned.

How are we at challenging violence of every kind? What do we do about pursuing peace and reconciliation?

It seems that God created diversity - just consider the variety of plants, of animals! Biologists tell us diversity is essential for survival in plants and animals. Why do we think the human animal should not have diversity? Diversity in people should be valued, but instead it seems to create problems, conflict and sometimes even violence! "Why can't he see it my way?" "Of course we want new members, and we want them to be like us so they fit in!" "I don't understand why she doesn't think the way we do about that!" God's diversity is something wonderful! God did not create uniformity. Jesus did, however, pray for us to be one!

"I pray that they all may be one, so that the world may know that you sent me."

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Recently, when we had that reading as the Sunday Gospel, I had a talk with the children about colours - all the colours of the rainbow. We talked about having a favorite colour and wanting everything to be my favorite colour. But then I asked, "Can you have a rainbow that is all one colour?" The kids were very clear, "NO! You need all the colours to make one rainbow". Likewise, we need all our human diversity to be the rainbow people of God. Can we get to the point where we stop saying, "We're tolerant people; we can tolerate differences"? "Tolerate" seems to imply that I am right and you are wrong, but I will be tolerant and wait for you to catch up and come to see it my way! Could we ever say instead, "We value diversity; actually we want lots of different kinds of people in the group. It will take longer to make a decision, but it will be a better decision!"

Finding a way to approach diversity, so that we can pursue peace and reconciliation. If we are committed to these Marks of Mission for our Anglican Communion, then it is not acceptable for us to be deliberately creating discord among people through rumours or innuendo either in community or in parish life. Nor is it acceptable to say, "I will never forgive." If we do, we make a lie of praying the Lord's Prayer! Maybe we can't right forgive right now, but maybe in time with God's help. Saying, "I forgive you", and attempting reconciliation does not mean that we are saying what happened was OK. It was not OK. It broke the relationship. But we are saying that the relationship is important so we want to try to mend it or to create a new relationship based on new principles. If a relationship between 2 people in the congregation is broken, then the Body of Christ is broken and the Body of Christ needs to be whole. Pursuing peace and reconciliation is not an option. It is a necessity. As parishes, we can provide space, and teaching and prayer support in order to help our members pursue peace and reconciliation. If we can learn to do that well, then we have something important to offer to our broken world.

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In challenging violence, can also learn how to set some boundaries on what is acceptable behavior in our parish life. Several parishes have created Holy Manners documents. In business or school, they would be called "Meeting Norms". They define how we agree to treat each other, what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. E.g. We will listen to each other with respect, i.e. we will not interrupt the speaker. E.g. Yelling is not acceptable. Holy Manners is a document that helps groups like Parish Council monitor their own behaviour. If your parish does not have a Holy Manners agreement yet, your Archdeacon can help you to develop one! By developing these for parish life, the church models something positive for members for their family life as well as church life.

In another approach to challenging violence, a small group has begun to work on how the church can learn to recognize and prevent bullying in its own settings. A parishioner who has offered to serve on a Parish Council should not have to be fearful about going to a meeting because there is a bully who yells at them, or ridicules their ideas, or backs them up against a wall. Bullying is obviously a form of violence and we as God's people should be challenging it and naming it as unacceptable. This one of the ways we can meet the need of the world for places that are safe from violence and where peace and reconciliation can be pursued.

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To continue with a different version of meeting the needs of the world we look at mark of Mission #5. "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." Why is this a mark of mission? There are lots of groups with different motivations working to save and restore the environment. So what has this to do with the mission of the Anglican Church? This world is the world God created for us, the children of God, to inhabit. Too many Christians have taken the view that when the Bible said, God gave the humans "dominion over...every living thing that moves upon the earth", that meant we could do whatever we want with God's creation including wrecking it to meet our greed! Consider the damage being done to the earth by North America's greedy consumption of fossil fuels. If we are made in the image of God, then we are meant to share in the task of caring for God's creation, by being God's stewards on earth. We are those who have been put in charge to care for the world which

belongs to God. Human dominion, if it is to correspond to God's rule, has to be benevolent and peaceful, not greedy or destructive! What we do in our individual lives, or in parish life, or in diocesan life, has to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Some of our parishes are making great strides in trying to minimize their negative impact on the environment. Other parishes and the diocese have taken steps in making a positive attempt to be co-creators to restore and renew God's creation. We have an Environment Network that is part of the Mission, Outreach and Social Justice Team. The Rev'd Marian Lucas Jeffries is the Coordinator. Please introduce yourself and join the network.

Stand to sing a song about meeting the needs of the world

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1. Let there be light,
let there be understanding,
let all the nations gather,
let them be face to face.
2. Open our lips,
open our minds to ponder,
open the door of concord
opening into grace.

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3. Perish the sword,
perish the angry judgment,
perish the bombs and hunger,
perish the fight for gain.
4. Hallow our love,
hallow the deaths of martyrs,
hallow their holy freedom,
hallowed be your name.

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5. Your kingdom come,
your Spirit turn to language,
your people speak together,
your Spirit never fade.
6. Let there be light,
open our hearts to wonder,
perish the way of terror,
hallow the world God made.

One other observation from my travels around the diocese and around the world - all parishes, dioceses, and national churches wish they had more money and more staff to carry out God's mission!

In Tanzania, most of the clergy do not have a university education. The bishop would love for that to be able to happen. Many of the parish clergy get paid very little in money, although they do get land to have their own garden. The diocese and the parishes would like to be able to do more development work to meet the needs of their people. Our PWRDF is helping with that by offering another partnership grant for the next 5 years to continue and further develop the work. The Mothers' Union does great work in all kinds of ways, and they are building a Guest House that eventually will generate income to enable them to do more work.

In San Francisco, Sara would like to open the food pantry more days a week. That would require more money and larger donations of food and more volunteers to oversee it.

At the Monastery, the brothers would like to be able to welcome more guests on retreat, to offer more resources on line, maybe to develop the farm to a level where it could provide healthy food to the guest house and the monastery. These would all require an increase in financial resources that mainly come in the forms of donations.

I am sure that your parish would do a lot more faith formation, meet more human needs, take action on the environment, if only you had more money. Right?

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Well stewardship of our resources will always be an issue. God has given us so much and we give back to God in gratitude, we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies (And maybe some money!) to God. We all still need stewardship teaching in our parishes! We all also need to find out where the various resources of ability, time and money are located. As a diocese we are well aware of the need to find additional sources of funding in addition to parish allotment. That is why we have changed from an Administration & Finance Committee to a Financial Management and Development Team. We have excellent financial management in the Synod Office now and Peter Flemming and his team are available to help parishes with the management of their finances. IN the development area (the area of finding new sources of funding), in the past we had excellent development work done by Charles O'Neil and many parish are benefitting now from his work with people on wills. (We will recognize Charles' work for us tomorrow.) We also had great resources developed by the Planned Giving Committee and these continue to be available from the Synod Office. We had great support from individual Anglicans for the Leap for Faith campaign that raised just short of \$3 million dollars for specific work including the residential Schools settlement. That money will be all used up this year.

We were invited last year by General Synod to enter into a financial campaign called "Together in Mission". That proposal was that the funds raised would be shared 3 ways among the parishes, the diocese and General Synod. General Synod had developed a list of projects they wished to support and so did we. We had a feasibility study to determine how much money we might be able to raise and how much support there might be for a campaign. The results showed that we might be able to raise about \$4-6 million dollars. The study results also suggested that there were sufficient volunteers to assist with running such a campaign if we had the help of a professional fund raising company. The results showed little to no support for the General Synod wish list and strong support for three of our suggested areas

of work and little for others. We would need to redevelop our case for support. Diocesan Council approved moving on to the next steps to bring a proposal to Synod but only one member of Council offered to work on the campaign. In trying to move into the next steps, I could not find all those volunteers who were supposed to be out there. I could not make time in my own schedule to do the large amount of work needed to mount such a campaign. There was not much enthusiasm to rewrite the Case for Support. So there is no proposal to move forward with Together in Mission. If some of you were looking forward to it, I am sorry for your disappointment. If we move forward with any financial campaign, it will be the Bishops' Action Appeal Version 2.

Your diocese, like your parish, would like to have more money to do God's work, and we will continue to work on how to find it. For the 5 years in which we were doing the Stewardship workshops, we sang once in every workshop, the song,

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Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money
Maybe we're ragged and funny
But we'll travel along
Singing a song
side by side.

While money is important, money is not the measure of whether we are becoming Christ-centered, mission-minded, ministering communities of faith. For the last several years we have been trying to measure that using an adjusted version of the marks of a healthy parish from the Alban Institute.

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- IDENTITY: Our congregation knows who they are before God;
- VISION: Our congregations knows what it is called to do;
- STEWARDSHIP: Our congregation has the resources and leadership necessary to carry out it calling;
- WORSHIP: People experience the power and energy of the Gospel in their worship and life together;
- OUTREACH: The activities of the congregation make a discernible difference in individual lives and in the world around us.
- CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: The congregation is able to turn the energy generated by conflict into positive energy for mission and ministry.

These have been helpful to the few parishes who have used them. The Healthy Parishes Team is getting ready for a pilot study with some volunteer parishes to actually measure parish health. The idea of measuring our health as parishes seems to be a new idea to a lot of people. We have said that we want healthier parishes. IT is one of one of our focus areas. How will we know if the programs we implement have worked if we have no before or after measures? When the Team asks for volunteer parishes, don't be shy to offer!

To return to the bigger picture that I see in my travels, in spite of gloomy media predictions, the church is NOT dying. It is changing – in Tanzania, in San Francisco, at the Monastery, in New Zealand, and even in England! Change is also happening here in our Diocese. Being the church in a time of change is not easy. The old, so-called “tried and true” ways of being the church, of doing worship, of doing community service, of doing mission, are not working. In the words of one priest, “I am doing the things I was trained to do, and I think I am doing them well, but they are not working!”

In the places where parishes are thriving, faith formation is happening, and work is being done to meet the needs of the world. It does not matter whether the liturgy is from the Book of Common Prayer, or the Book of Alternative services, of some other source. It does matter that, along with worship, a life of faith is being modeled and taught and absorbed by the people who come there. When people know what the Good News is, what the Kingdom of God is and they can confidently proclaim them in word and action, then parishes grow and thrive. Not only do the parishes grow and thrive, but the communities in which they are located also find that their needs are being met by those folks who have learned that serving the brothers and sisters is part of their call to being a faithful Anglican Christian.

So after spending a year traveling and observing what do I know for sure?

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Faith formation that includes, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and baptizing, teaching, and nurturing new believers, faith formation is essential.

Meeting the needs of the world with loving service, whether providing basic needs for individual people, or attempting to challenge violence, or promoting peace and reconciliation, or caring for God’s creation, meeting the needs of the world with loving service is essential.

When we do these things we are faithful Jesus’ command to go and make disciples. And in the end, it’s not a bad thing, if people can say of us, that we were faithful to Jesus’ commands. So, go and make disciples! Just do it!