

SEIZING THE EPISCOPAL MOMENT'

*A Manifesto of Hope for the Episcopal Church (by Donald Schell and Karen Ward)
4.27.09 written, 5.10.09 edited by (Nate Dawson)*

FOREWORD by Brian McLaren

A group of creative and forward-thinking bishops are meeting in Chicago April 28-29, 2009, to talk about Episcopal futures. I'm thrilled to hear about this, and wanted to offer a few thoughts that I hope could be of some help and encouragement.

The best church I was ever a part of was an Episcopal congregation. The best pastor I ever had was an Episcopal priest. During my twenty-four years in nondenominational ministry, I constantly drew on my two years' experience in that Episcopal congregation, and the *Prayer Book* was an indispensable resource at every turn. And now, in my work as a writer and speaker, I constantly tell people that I think this moment of ecclesial and global crisis and opportunity that we describe as the postmodern transition or the great emergence could be an Episcopal Moment.

I see in the Anglican Communion a store of theological, liturgical, spiritual, and relational treasures that could create space for millions of people who are currently and increasingly disaffected from conventional Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Mainline Protestant church life. And to me even more significant, Episcopalians could create space for a wave of spiritual seekers who feel the call of God toward transformation and mission, but can't find a welcome into existing religious institutions.

Yet, I'm also aware of the internal struggles, the numerical decline (as reported by the latest *Blue Book* document from the House of Deputies), and the critical aging of the denomination (with an average age of 62, compared to 32 for the nation as a whole). These are not insignificant challenges, especially when they amount to the loss of the equivalent of one diocese per year.

I believe that this time of internal stress could converge with our amazing moment of opportunity in the church and culture at large. It could bring the Episcopal Church to a point of willingness to make needed changes and innovations that could be historic. But the window of opportunity could be missed, which is why I hope the bishops and other leaders of the church will seize the moment and become willing to take bold and critical action.

In my opinion, the greatest and most urgent need is to create a zone of innovation and empowerment, a zone in which creative young/emerging leaders (bishops, priests, worship leaders, others) can be supported to plant new faith communities relevant to the needs of young adults while being exempted from conventional internal politics and institutional constraints. To put it in historical terms, the Episcopal Church in America could do for emerging leaders in the 21st Century what the Church of England failed to do for John Wesley and the thousands of young leaders he recruited and trained in the 19th Century. **Or not:** *as the opportunity could easily be missed.*

Please read "SEIZING THE EPISCOPAL MOMENT." Especially the part where my friend Karen Ward writes about this as "*A Preferential Option for the Future.*"

I have proposed this kind of innovation to a few other denominations, and although it is under consideration, these other denominations don't have the advantage of being able to use the Episcopal structure for the advantage of such a project. A group of highly creative bishops would, I believe, be uniquely able to create a parallel pathway that would train emerging missional leaders for innovative ministry – and especially for the development of new faith communities that would appeal to young adults. In so doing, these bishops could respect existing pathways that train leaders for conventional ministry and simultaneously protect these emerging leaders from conventional mindsets that are too

often, as Karen says, “exhausting and disheartening.” On this pathway, what she calls “a preferential option for the future” would be normative.

As attractive as the Episcopal Church could be for the thousands of emerging leaders and potential members I speak to and network with across the country, **conventional institutional barriers and conditions render the Episcopal church a gated community to them in most cases, and the entrance code is carefully guarded.** In contrast, I think of a friend of mine who was just welcomed by one of the Episcopal break-offs and ordained an Anglican priest within a year (after having been an established and recognized missional leader in another tradition) and he will soon become a “bishop for church planting.” He is being given amazing, unprecedented freedom to recruit, authorize, and train new kinds of leaders, form new congregations, and pursue mission. Sadly, in my opinion, the churches he develops will provide neither women nor gay and lesbian people the freedom to participate and serve that would be provided by the Episcopal Church, and I only wish (and pray) that the Episcopal Church would provide equal or greater freedom and opportunity for gifted emerging leaders.

As I said, I have seen signs of hope in two or three mainline denominations – signs that they would find ways to create space for emerging leaders who might otherwise start nondenominational churches (as I did) or join more conservative denominations. But no group is better positioned to seize this moment, I believe, than the Episcopal Church, and my hope and prayer is that a cohort of courageous and creative bishops will find or make a way to create a zone of innovation, a zone characterized by “a preferential option for the future.” I would do all I could to help in this process.

I’m praying for all of you bishops in this emerging mission adventure, and hopeful for great outcomes with God’s help, in God’s “*kairos*” moment. Feel free to contact me if I can be of help in any way.

PREFACE

The idea for this short paper was born from a kitchen table conversation between myself, and Donald Schell in San Francisco. I was in San Francisco for a meeting of “Anglimergent – TEC” hosted at St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church, March 15-17, 2009. By happenstance (or perhaps not) I was housed (Angli-couched) at the home of Donald and Ellen Schell. At first it would seem that Donald and I had little in common... but over the course of conversation, a great commonality about mission innovation within the Episcopal Church came to light. Donald had founded St. Gregory’s as perhaps the first “proto-emergent” Episcopal Church in 1975 and I founded Church of the Apostles, Seattle (a six-year-old emerging Episcopal mission) in 2003.

Donald’s section is his reflection on the 34-year mission and ministry of St. Gregory’s, offering invaluable insights for better support of emerging Episcopal mission today. My section highlights missional challenges and opportunities for The Episcopal Church within the postmodern cultural context, and lists some concrete actions that any diocese could take up to help move “Anglimergence” forward.

All in all, our aim to is to make a small contribution to the wider emerging church and mission conversation taking place and to help TEC seize our “Episcopal Moment,” taking a more intentional and active part in “the Great Emergence” and God’s future with hope.

PART 1

DISCERNMENT OF VOCATIONS IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Will our missionary-driven, nonstandard congregations contribute their best people to our church's next generation of leadership?

(by The Rev. Donald Schell, President, All Saints Company, and Founder, St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, San Francisco)

Across the United States something is stirring that Brian McLaren has called "the Episcopal Moment." People, promisingly including a good number of younger adults, are looking for something that the Episcopal Church at its best has always offered:

- open-hearted faith that's genuinely rooted in Christian tradition
- mystery without mystification
- shared authority
- questioning and learning together
- community prayer and action.

That's my summary, not Brian McLaren's, and we could happily refine that list together because we know what he's talking about—it's the church that we love. But this new interest and these new voices are also challenging us and inviting us to make our practice more vibrant, more alive, and, most of all, more welcoming to strangers seeking God. And when we notice the graying demographic of our church and clergy – when I was 35, I was the age of an average Episcopal priest. Now, at 62, I'm a little older than our average priest, but now the average age of our whole church population.

We are blessed with a "moment," but also challenged with a moment of crisis... People are asking the best we have to offer, wanting to join us sharing our practice of Christian faith and Gospel with their friends and strangers. How could we miss? Isn't this our golden opportunity? What more should we do now than be ourselves and do what we've always done?

Sadly, our church's history in this country includes many missed opportunities for mission. The best we have to offer and "just doing what we've always done" have often been in tension. But for the 1950s "doing what we've always done" has offered the Episcopal Church a different kind of moment. I'm proud of the work Rick Fabian, my wife Ellen, and I did founding St. Gregory's in the late 1970s. We were the first new church plant in the Diocese of California in about twenty years. I recall with wonder hearing of a retired colleague who had founded the previous ten or dozen churches. In the Post-World War II suburban population explosion in California, family-centered religion gave us a welcome growth impetus without seeming to change a thing about us.

Clarence Stacey did his work well, but he had a formula: where to buy land, how to start a Sunday School, how to recruit an Altar Guild Mistress and an Acolyte Trainer, what a church should look like, and what to buy from Almy's to outfit it. Clarence's work was remarkable and completely of its time.

Thinking of the startling changes that have happened to our country and society since, where has our church been asking the questions of how we reach a radically altered demographic? Do we understand how differently people form communities today? Or how many people are hungry for community but reject what the church once offered them (or dread what they imagine church to be because they've only gotten a media picture and have literally never been to church).

And if we're really interested in supporting new congregations, new ideas, and emergent leadership, can we actually do it with a standardized formula for "raising up" (maybe a euphemism) and "forming" new ordained and lay leadership. *What about leaders emerging in emergent settings? How can we welcome them?*

PARABLE OF THE RECORD INDUSTRY

I was talking about the church with Jake Slichter, drummer of Grammy-nominated, platinum record Semi-Sonic, and author of *So You Want to be A Rock n' Roll Star*. Jake's book got *New York Times* reviews. He was featured on NPR. The book is on the reading list of courses on the record industry for its page-turning story of a multimillion-dollar

Industry, which is setting itself up for collapse by trying to capitalize on success while avoiding any risk. As an Episcopalian, Jake wondered, "Will this be the same story of our church too?"

As Jake tells it, rock 'n' roll grew and shaped popular culture because intuitive genius label chiefs launched musically compelling labels like Motown Records, labels that were eager for new developments, pushed talent toward its highest expression, and felt and even anticipated the enthusiasm of a record-buying public. The label chiefs' genius was in creative imagination, an ear, and an ability to recognize a possibility that no one had heard or seen before in a new artist. **When they listened to "homemade" recordings, they trusted their personal hunch.** They were listening for something special, something that would go somewhere. When they watched new performers, they saw what talent could grow into. *They took big risks because they believed in what they were doing. And, in their way, they understood what we call "formation."* They might patiently work with a new artist through initial records that sold all right, but didn't make it anywhere near a top 40s hit. Sometimes they guessed wrong and failed, but they had an extraordinary track record, and their artists, with lots of coaching, shaping, and prodding were making music people still listen to.

The record label chiefs practiced "artist development" and jealously guarded the authority to make it happen, even when it took a few album cycles to build an artist or group up to a really wide appeal. Singers and bands worked hard for the music. Bands built fan base on the road, starting locally and built up to regional tours, to smaller clubs and to a widening circle geographically and bigger clubs as

the fan base grew. When the music was going somewhere and sales were slowly building, the company chief would invest in the tours to keep the record in play and the group on the road, watching a band's following grow as a group developed its unique sound.

As the industry grew bigger, record-producing corporations bought up the small labels and "the record industry" was born. And with the industry, one by one, the older label chiefs were replaced by executives focused on getting dependable returns on investments by putting their promotion money into "proven winners" and promoting these "proven winners" using "proven methods."

The industry focus subtly shifted from making music to producing hits, and industry executives listened less and less to music, and more and more read profit reports to project SURE-FIRE blockbuster artists. The new practice abandoned what we'd call discernment and formation work, the tricky engagement with music-making artists and unpredictable fans. The risk that kept the executives' attention was their own job security. Dependable product and dependable immediate results would keep them from getting fired.

"Business sense" paid little attention to musical sense. And business sense (as was happening increasingly in American business) wasn't just bottom line, but shorter-term returns. Records were promoted or dropped literally on the basis a quarter's financial returns. Executive turnover happened at an increasing rate (like rector firings?) as this new breed of music executives' careers lived and died on a single quarter's results.

What was the result musically? Making the same choices over and over again created an unresponsive industry focused on fewer and fewer performers. Predictably the big labels delivered less and less originality, the hits got bigger as there were fewer popular bands. And the big companies mostly scoffed at groups with local followings and smaller independent record producers. From a financial perspective the policy missed some really major opportunities. For example, U.S. bands were not promoted in Europe unless they had proven U.S. hits. But the U.S. bands that had (and occasionally still did) made it big on word-of-mouth in Europe often did NOT have American hits.

The industry was convinced its ship was unsinkable. The iceberg it hit was a massive change in technology with cheaper digital recording, on-line downloads ("piracy!"), and YouTube. New technology had done an end-run on the industry's closed loop for marketing and made actual popular appeal powerful—and the bottom fell out of a music business that had made itself massively unresponsive to music-makers and music-lovers.

What warning should our church take from the record industry? We're not looking for blockbuster hits or career-making profits. What we want to do is share the Gospel, live faithfully, and heal and transform people's lives. Considering what

happened to the record industry, we need to listen to our talent search agencies (Commissions on Ministry). **Are we continuing to ask an emergent congregation or a leader raised up in the richness and unpredictability of this “Episcopal Moment” whether we can be certain this person will propagate nothing but familiar, recognizable, mainstream Episcopal-Church-as-we-know-it?** A confident “yes” will make our future as safe as the record industry's.

A GENERATION-LONG SUCCESS STORY

In 1978 California's Diocesan Convention welcomed St. Gregory's as an “experimental mission” with voice, vote, and an assessment. It was the year before final authorization of the 1979 Prayer Book. Bishop Kilmer Myers and his then Executive Officer George Hunt encouraged the diocese to seat this new mission with its declared plan to continue organizational and liturgical experimentation beyond the new Prayer Book even after it was fully authorized.

As an experimental mission, St Gregory's was what Bishop Myer's successor Bill Swing came to call an “Episcopal peculiar.” Initiatives for innovation came from the leaders, lay and ordained, of St. Gregory's, but the bishop was kept informed and could, by his sole judgment, stop anything St. Gregory's was doing, or even close the mission.

For the next seventeen years St. Gregory's grew slowly in rented space. Through all this time parishioners were much younger than diocesan or national median age. Many were returning to give church another chance after having left it hurt or disappointed, and after the first decade, St. Gregory's began drawing people who were completely unchurched, unbaptized, uncatechized. In many instances, these were people who had never been to a church service except perhaps a wedding before they came to St. Gregory's.

Around 1995 big changes finally made St. Gregory's an accepted and trusted member of the diocesan family of churches. From 1993 through 1998 St. Gregory's moved from mission to parish status, built and moved into an award-winning new church building with good space to grow, got national press coverage in the *New York Times*, *Episcopal Life*, and *Christian Century*, and local coverage in *San Francisco Weekly*, founded a food pantry that gives free groceries to 500 people each week, and in this transition managed to convince a somewhat reluctant diocese to welcome the gift of some remarkable new leaders who have gone from St. Gregory's to serve where the church sent them.

St. Gregory's people were either new to church or else newly returned to church and determined to do church in a new way. Particularly in a setting that embodies shared leadership and values their voices, new people aren't stymied by skepticism about what's possible. New voices and new vision stretch the church toward mission in unexpected ways. As a green newcomer, not yet baptized, Sara Miles conceived and launched the St. Gregory's Food Pantry that she wrote about in *Take This Bread*. After St. Gregory's pantry, Sara founded more than ten other

pantries around the city. Her conversion and formation were happening as she taught the congregation how to feed the poor, designing the pantry to give food from the church's altar in the center of its worship space, recruiting volunteers, and fund-raising for the pantry. As a community organizer and activist she knew things about listening to people and caring for people that guided her phenomenal development of St. Gregory's existing initiatives to structure intercessions and pastoral care around lay people's care for one another.

HOW DOES A DIOCESE FEEL ABOUT INNOVATION AND SUCCESS WHEN IT'S HAPPENING FOR A NEWCOMER TO THE DIOCESAN FAMILY?

In St. Gregory's first twenty or so years, while the congregation slowly grew, the diocese in a variety of ways—as a system, in its structures, through diocesan leadership (apart from the bishop)—regularly ignored St. Gregory's and sometimes held it at deliberate arm's length. The point of telling this isn't to fault the diocese. It's a predictable system response to change, almost like a body's immune system trying to decide whether something new that's growing is an infection or a pregnancy. Change and “the new” aren't always life-giving.

Looking back now we can see that all the time St. Gregory's was growing from a dozen to over three hundred members, all the time St. Gregory's continued to evangelize multigenerationally including young adults and families with Sunday-School aged children, all the time St. Gregory's was growing toward a financially independent full parish in the diocese (without diocesan funding as it grew), the Diocese of California, like our church nationally, was losing membership and widening its demographic age gap with the American population. *So as St. Gregory's was making rich discoveries in mission, theology, and organizational approach, the normal, predictable system response to change and the unfamiliar marginalized and occasionally attacked St. Gregory's, **so that at key points, the mission could not have survived without the unwavering encouragement and protection of Bishop William Swing.***

OFFERING THE WHOLE CHURCH GIFTS OF LEADERSHIP

One of the ways St. Gregory's experienced local marginalization was in attempts to deny the growing congregation access to processes shaping church leadership – particularly the local seminary (Church Divinity School of the Pacific) and the Commission on Ministry. Again, the structures were doing what we all could and should have imagined they would do, and the time of that resistance is now long past. But the story matters for other new work in any diocese.

So, for Church Divinity School of the Pacific – how does a seminary work with innovation and new development in a congregation?

More or less until St. Gregory's moved from mission to parish status, Church Divinity School of the Pacific would not allow seminarians to do field education at St. Gregory's. This wasn't a policy about mission churches. The director of field education told us we offered nothing of value to Episcopal seminarians. He

considered St. Gregory's an irresponsible assault on the new Prayer Book and on church order. When the student association invited one of St. Gregory's clergy to come address the regular student-initiated forum on the topic of spiritual formation in community, the then Dean of the Seminary called a special all-school meeting in the same place and time and apologized to the clergy presenter at 10 p.m. that the "urgent" agenda had filled all the available time. In a friendlier, but no less marginalizing vein, the professor of pastoral theology told me, "St. Gregory's is the church of the future, but we're preparing priests for the present, and the present is crushingly boring. We can't let them see what you're doing." Louis Weil was the first, strong voice of encouragement and support, speaking very publicly for the legitimacy and responsible thinking behind St. Gregory's experimentation. Like Bishop Swing, he offered the Gamaliel-like counsel to wait and see what the Spirit might be doing.

While our local Episcopal Seminary was refusing to allow us to let us be a field education placement site, St. Gregory's had several years of good experience with field education seminarians from Pacific School of Religion (primarily UCC and United Methodist) and San Francisco Theological Seminary (Presbyterian). And at CDSP's neighboring Jesuit seminary, John Baldovin, SJ, was requiring all his students at the Jesuit Theological Seminary in Berkeley to attend at least two liturgies at St. Gregory's and was himself a quarterly guest preacher at St. Gregory's.

Arthur Holder's appointment as CDSP's field education director changed things for St. Gregory's. I'll never forget his phone call us asking why we'd never had field education seminarians from CDSP. We said we had been forbidden turf. "That's over," Arthur said, "I've got some interested students I'd like you to consider." We were glad to welcome Episcopal seminarians, glad to participate in the field education supervisors' monthly reflection, and loved the work. What we've heard from the seminarians who worked with us is that St. Gregory's proved an excellent training site, offering them powerful, formative learning from working in a congregation where so much care was put into the "why" and "how" of the congregation's life. We also had summer interns from the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield, England, and an Episcopalian from Yale Divinity School/School of Sacred Music—all moved and inspired by their work with us.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY – how do we begin to actually raise up leaders for our church? - A Case Story

Sara Miles was founding the food pantry, her evident gifts for diaconal work prompted me to ask the COM about getting Sara trained and ordained a deacon while continuing her ministry at St. Gregory's. At that point our diocese could see no way forward unless Sara first moved to a "regular" Episcopal church for a couple of years and then spent three years in our diocesan School for Deacons. Sara's sense of call to the work of the food pantry, to shaping lay pastoral care at St. Gregory's, and to writing pastoral apologetics and narrative theology for major print and on-line media made the ordination hurdles appear detrimental to a growing ministry that was generating her sense of call. *She (and we) decided that her "going*

forward” meant staying in the work she was doing and not seeking ordination at the cost of her ministry. Possibly if the question had come up a year or two later, the Commission would have explored a different answer. We were just at the threshold of St. Gregory’s becoming a trusted and credible congregation in the diocese. Again, I offer that “threshold” observation with a sense that it’s a predictable systemic transition. We had many friends around the diocese in both clergy and lay leadership. St. Gregory’s work was admired; the last resistance was finding a common mind to welcome the congregation’s gifts to the church beyond its own life.

In the time of this transition St. Gregory’s had five other remarkable people who were moved to pursue ordination. Those five St. Gregory’s aspirants got mixed messages from the Commission on Ministry. ***They were asked how they could really know the Episcopal Church coming from St. Gregory’s*** and were told they’d be better off transferring to another parish (and then waiting three years) before continuing application. And there were Commission members who saw they had a great deal to offer.

St. Gregory’s implementation of a very effective parish vocations committee weighed in favor of these aspirants. In fact it was around this same time that the COM asked other congregations to learn from St. Gregory’s way of implementing the parish vocations committee process *But the question of whether they “knew the Episcopal Church” came up again when they were postulants, and again when they applied for candidacy.* And a minority voice continued to think that coming from St. Gregory’s should mean the Commission could require extra field education or a post-seminary year of “just living” in a “real” or “regular” Episcopal congregation.

Eventually, I was able to serve on the COM myself, which was enlightening and helped me think of our dilemma in systems terms. I began to recognize that St. Gregory’s aspirants were hearing the same suspicion that COM members offered to a specific handful of congregations that were too Anglo-Catholic, too social-justice oriented or too urban... and another persistent, marginalizing judgment was clothed in the pronouncement that we ordain clergy “for the WHOLE church.”

In my two terms on the COM, I did see things shift somewhat. We began to take stock of our grayer-haired and whiter-skinned demographic in the diocese, and COM members began acknowledging that we were acting more like gatekeepers than actually discerning and encouraging callers to ministry.

We began notice and question ourselves for turning away the more interesting and energized people while we welcomed the grayer, more conformist. *We had a lot of habit to overcome with our gate-keeping concern about standard Episcopal church experience, our suspicion of youth, and our anxious focus on imagined “authority problems.” This generated a process inclined to reject or defer anyone young, anyone visionary, or anyone who hadn’t spent a long time in a conventional Episcopal Church setting.*

In fact, the kinds of places we were skeptical of were actually places where pre- and post-ordination formation was taking place. They were the places that actually DID raise people up. Middle of the road congregations were more like to send someone whose vocation was a personal inspiration. *Yet the very specificity of formation from a particular congregation may be the most powerful shaper for wider vision and mission in the church.*

By now St. Gregory's has established itself as strong contributing parish in the Diocese of California. Times have changed profoundly. Institutions are the continuing life of community – they're right to trust longevity, familiarity and what's dependable. And we were glad to have become a congregation our new bishop could enjoy and be proud of, one that he could single out for a public welcome and have it make sense to the diocese. St. Gregory's is known in the diocese as a solid, team-playing parish that happens to have a strong mission focus, a food pantry, and some unusual liturgical practices.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN – WHO FACES THESE START-UP CHALLENGES NOW?

What would have made this story different? What opportunities did we all miss in the intervening stage of system mistrust when the congregation's growth was wildly fresh, unpredictable and innovative?

What if our dioceses had, as Karen proposes, a Canon Missioner who was charged with helping congregations discern and put forward emerging leaders? In other words, what if we had people whose work was facilitating local Christian communities actually discerning and calling leaders to consider what their leadership might be (including lay or ordained)? What if we began to understand formation as fundamentally the result of our praying together and asked ourselves how to make certain community prayer and formation was happening before, during, and after training and preparation for ordination?

If what we're looking for is real pioneers, evangelists, founders, and builders of community, we've got to have pioneering communities that are determined to do the discernment work thoroughly before anyone diocesan meets with an aspirant, and our communities have to be fully prepared to say a firm "no" or "not yet" to someone whose sincere, personal sense of call doesn't manifest in the energy and commitment that inspires others to join the work.

Without full willingness to say no, local communities necessarily put diocesan COMs back in the gatekeeper function. And my experience of serving on one is that we did that function as poorly with safe and predictable congregations as we did with more out-there places and ethnic ministries.

A bland but persistent aspirant from a predictable congregation would, almost certainly, get a recommendation to the bishop if s/he was persistent enough (and compliant enough with COM counsel and directives). ***Patience and perseverance are taken as good enough substitutes for passion and inspiration. Result? Passionless, uninspiring postulants.***

All of that is short of the other important question, an alternative track for preparation. That one takes some thinking together. In the Diocese of California, at least, there is a somewhat unclearly defined “alternative track” that was originally conceived for candidates whose primary language was other than English.

What Karen Ward proposes is a *new form “pioneer missionary program” that is “apprenticeship based,”* missionary leaders serving within specific cultures expanded to include “emerging generation” pioneer leaders (ages 40 and under). This is a new and sorely underserved people group and culture very critical to our church's future viability.

A new pioneer alternative track would have real missional field work, formal study in a local seminary, reading, and spiritual formation in a cohort of pioneer minister peers that in combination would allow people to grow into ministry where they were called, that increases (rather than decreases) the community's investment in the aspirant during the process, and that, even during preparation, offers the community the maturing ministry of someone that knows it well and from within.

I think the crucial thing about defining an effective alternative track is thinking through what would enable it to prepare ordained leadership BETTER than seminary, at least for the people you/we or anyone were putting forward in that way. What does better mean?

- More rooted and formed for actual, specific ministry.
- More solid theologically and scripturally than a typical M.Div seminary graduate
- Already having a significant working synthesis of theory and practice (what most of us had to put together as we began work after seminary).

What about the “for the whole church” argument?

Our typical way of dealing with that information is to systematically sever the tie between the postulant and the sponsoring congregation/community. This is another reason Brother Jude would see the process working so badly for the Franciscans. Our experience in San Francisco is that most of our seminarians went to CDSP, so nearby. But once their training started we saw little of them and, of course, they were told upfront in COM settings, *“Don't expect to go back to the place that sponsored you.”* I think what we're interested in turns that around. **Training from, with, and in the local community, followed by ordination to serve for some time in the local community, finally raises the skills and consciousness of the ordained person to a point of readiness to serve in other (standard or nonstandard) communities.**

Adequate formation in a nonstandard setting including good intellectual/spiritual formation would prepare some younger, enthusiastic, visionary innovators to spend part of their ministry bringing good energy and life to standard places.

I'm writing this immediately after a series of conversation with my own seminary's alumni council and dean about the future of ministry formation in our church during which we all talked about how formative praying together daily was for us in seminary. *Going from that conversation to writing and thinking about nonstandard communities and helpful nonstandard paths to ordination feels like cognitive dissonance unless there's some larger picture, some overarching set of questions about what we're doing in discernment and formation (pre- and post-ordination and for people who will never be ordained).*

At the seminary, I found myself musing aloud how centers for learning (where some of our priests would continue to get M.Div's in residential programs) might also become centers of ongoing community and formation for the ordained.

Now right after those seminary conversations, what I'm also remembering is this piece of personal history – my first four years as a priest, serving as a college chaplain at Episcopal Church at Yale, I had the amazing privilege of sharing leadership at and always being present with twenty or so undergraduates for a public, all welcome, highly participatory sung daily office and Eucharist at Dwight Chapel on Yale's Old Campus. It was there that a lot of St. Gregory's practice began and also there where we used, elaborated, and developed the proposed Order of Worship for the Evening. Boone Porter told us that E.C.Y.'s use of that evening office was crucial in shaping it and ensuring its inclusion in the finished 1979 Prayer Book.

Thinking about those four years at Episcopal Church at Yale, I realized that the most significant piece of my priestly formation came after ordination.

So then I wondered how the experience of our small vowed religious orders might help us think about this? And how else are exciting daily or frequent-during-the week praying communities already forming people for lay or priestly leadership? And where it's not happening, what forms might we deliberately shape or how else encourage people to pray together daily (or very frequently) as they prepare and study in a disciplined way for ordination?

So what about neo-monastic emerging communities where regular shared prayer and discernment is part of their common life helps the community discern a new leader's calling? And how do COMs hear and understand the power of this experience?

Meanwhile as more and more dioceses have at least some locally raised up and trained clergy, how might fixed places of continuing education become fixed places for formation in prayer in community?

I think the biggest question is around formation for all our leadership is continuity- how we do or don't encourage formation both before and after ordination. ***What equivalents or likenesses are there to these traditional religious orders in emerging communities, and if this is a new life inspired by the Spirit for all of our sake, how do we bless and serve the opportunity it presents us for mission and for nurturing of new leadership?*** What values do we

actually mean to uphold? And if we all – local communities, bishops, commissions on ministry, seminaries and other training centers - a committed to the central value of spiritual, intellectual, and practical formation of Christian leaders, with that value in sight, we must ask how such formation is accomplished and how it's not accomplished in dependably predictable “training” and credentialing.

CONCLUDING PARABLE(s): 'DEC and Apple' and 'Toyota and Prius.'

Along with inviting our church to think about the record industry, authors Clayton Christensen, Johnson, and Michael Horn and Curtin Johnson ask innovators in education to compare and contrast the histories of DEC (Digital Equipment Corp) and Toyota in their book *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*.

Clayton Christensen's organizational research and theories center on sustaining and disruptive innovation. He notes that healthy organizations foster steady '*sustaining* innovations' but also that the most vital of organizations know that another, different and critical kind of innovation and outreach that is '*disruptive*' needs protection (or at least separate nurture) to thrive.

Christensen tells the story of the collapse of Digital Equipment Corp (DEC) the world's premier maker of minicomputers. They were known throughout the industry for powerful, continuous innovation of massively powerful small computers. They and their market agreed that the kind of computing NASA, General Motors, and the U.S. government needed to do was well worth the \$250,000 price tag on the computers and the extensive training it took an engineer specialist to operate one.

DEC completely missed what was happening when Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs began building a \$500 small computer in a garage. DEC understood serious, dependable markets and computing power and thought the Apple2e was laughable. The world had changed and DEC didn't even notice... A dozen years later DEC was dead. *The laptop computer, like church mission to people who haven't been part of church, launched a new conversation, created a new market, triggered an avalanche of collaborative innovation and the laptop toy offered massive computing power to a public that DEC never imagined would ever want or need a computer.*

Christensen contrasts Toyota's development of the *Prius* which was purposefully allowed to develop apart from existing Toyota structures. Toyota knew that they needed their very best and most imaginative engineers to work on the *Prius* project and that those engineers - the internal combustion guys, the battery guys, the brake guys, all had a clear, massively supported mandate and culture to support sustaining innovation where they were working. So Toyota 'uprooted' them and set the *Prius* development project completely outside the usual lines of authority and in a special (flexible) accountable relationship to the company's hierarchy. They did that for two generations of *Prius* development because what

Christensen calls 'disruptive innovation,' venturing into new territory, new relationships to the wider world, new mission needs a significantly different kind of space and less structure than good sustained innovation.

The *Prius* project is now being folded back into regular Toyota structures. That piece of disruptive innovation was massively successful, and for sustained development, the larger organization can now embrace and support the new thinking because its new sense (and how it relates to older technologies) is evident.

Looking back for a moment to the DEC and Apple example. I've also been thinking that the reason Apple didn't become the industry giant was that IBM and particularly Microsoft grasped the opportunity Apple had created better than Apple and proceeded with a mix of sustaining and disruptive innovation. Apple keeping their source codes proprietary was intended to make their disruptive lead permanent but it left them isolated when the industry and big company like IBM (and a soon to be big company like Microsoft) could go further and be more effective with **the right mix of disruptive innovation in freestanding development centers** and reintegration of solidly established innovation into the organizational stream of the whole.

I haven't got the full history and business data, so the IBM/Microsoft bit is just my hunch, but Toyota's plan certainly points that direction.

Christensen's analysis about the Prius helps us see why the COM structure in our church, just a generation old and invented by the last modern generations of radicals to democratize the vocations process got co-opted to sustaining innovation before it had done its disruptive work. Some of our bishops are noticing that the current COM structure is actually 'advisory' to the bishop and are asking whether they can do a '*Prius* project' alongside of it for mission, which recognizes the need for sustaining work, but which had also learned that for maximum vitality to be nurtured to serve today's new emerging mission context the 'disruptive work' often led by new, emerging generations 'radicals,' ought also be supported, authorized and resourced. To me this makes very good sense.

Donald Schell, April 24, 2009

PART II

“PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE FUTURE”

A Manifesto of Hope for the Episcopal Church

(by Karen M. Ward, Founder of Church of the Apostles mission, Seattle, WA)

I'm Karen Ward, the “Abbess and Vicar” of apostleschurch.org, Seattle, WA. I am a “convert” to Anglicanism over a twenty-year-long journey in my life.

In January 2008, to engage my great passion for my new Communion, I began a website and community called “*Anglimergent*,” as a hub for conversation and

community among “diverse Anglicans from around the world who are engaging emerging church in mission.” As an 'vintage' Gen X leader, I am excited to participate in what is beginning to happen “around the edges” of our Anglican Communion often being led and scouted by emerging generation leaders from the UK to the USA and beyond ... and I am seeking to help bring insights from the missional edges/ frontier, into our center, in order to broaden and deepen Anglican participation in what Phyllis Tickle calls “the Great Emergence.”

The Episcopal Church, I believe, is at a missional nexus and crossroads. At this unique moment in our history, two equally accessible pathways (yet with widely divergent outcomes) stand before us. One pathway is that of continuing and substantial decline in our membership, identity, purpose and capacity for mission. The other pathway is that of seizing what Brian McLaren calls “the Episcopal moment” by embracing missional change, towards an exciting renewal of our identity, purpose, and participation in God's mission.

“CRISIS-OPPORTUNITY”

In February 2005, The Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism sounded a warning bell, with a sobering assessment of facts and trends that describe the state of The Episcopal Church as this point in time.

They wrote:

The most urgent message the Commission has to convey to the Church is not a happy one. The 20/20 movement challenges us to engage God's mission. One measure of our success would be the doubling of our average Sunday attendance by the year 2020. Current data indicates that we are going in the wrong direction. So far, what has doubled is the rate of decline in attendance... “The numbers should alarm and disturb us...

Decline is serious. When we fear losing what we have and love, we bury our talents. We close down and cling to what is familiar but not working, instead of opening up to new information and new ways. When we eventually recognize decline, we may take action, but it may be too little too late. We have not yet passed the “point of no return,” but that point exists.

Right now, renewal is still possible. But if our current rate of decline continues, renewal will become increasingly difficult. *We do not know when that moment will come. We face difficult questions as a church: What are we willing to do to change the course of our future? What are we willing to stop doing? At which General Convention will we debate a Resolution to dissolve the Episcopal Church?*

*Let us be clear: we are talking about the decline of the Episcopal Church, not of God's mission. God works in mysterious ways, and the Holy Spirit will find a way to reach the people of the 21st century. **The question is whether our historic tradition and church will be connected to that work....** Mission means Evangelism, we need to communicate and embody the gospel story in a rapidly changing world of multiple generational and cultural experiences. The Episcopal Church has never engaged in domestic mission in the way that is called for now...*

Also the 2009 report to the 76th General Convention on the State of the Church notes that:

The age structure of The Episcopal Church suggests an average of forty thousand deaths and twenty-one thousand births, or a natural decline of 19,000 members per year," a population larger than most dioceses. The advanced—and still advancing—age of our membership, combined with our low birth rate, means that we lose the equivalent of one diocese per year.' And *'The Committee of the State of the Church heard repeatedly that **The Episcopal Church may guilty of producing leaders for a church that no longer exists.'***

In the midst of this challenge of real and serious decline, there is also great opportunity for a renewed future, as we step up to face these challenge with honesty and become more *serious* and *intentional* in engaging missional change head on.

In my view, the great challenge and opportunity for the continued viability of The Episcopal Church (and other mainline churches) can be summed up in two words: **"Leadership and Imagination."**

A "new kind of leadership" is needed, one that can truly "*see*" the world around us and help us "re-imagine" church for this new world. We need leadership that can:

- introduce major and radical *change* to our diocesan *structures* and *modes of operating* that are *leaner*, more *viral*, more *opportunistic*, and more *permeable* and *adaptable* for mission.
- begin a serious *refocusing of energies* and *resources* around the "*Five Marks of Mission*" of the Anglican Consultative Council.
- give priority to *recruiting, training, ordaining and deploying new kinds of "pioneer clergy"* with missional skill for cultural navigation and contextualization (as is already being done in the Church of England with their "Pioneer Missioners" program).
- give priority to *retooling existing churches* and *planting new* and "*fresh expressions*" of church that are at ease doing ministry in today's culture and the postmodern world.

"A PARABLE OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY"

On the global and emerging Anglican online community I curate at Anglimergent.org, Wendy Johnson, the Gen X-aged Director of Communications for the Diocese of Minnesota, compared the crisis in the church to that in the culture around us in her post entitled "**Bailouts and the Institutional Church.**" She writes:

*I've spent several days now listening to NPR going on about the bailouts. And for good reasons. This is a big deal. It seems we're witnessing the collision of several factors -- among them are a twisted-up economy, a prolonged war, greed, corporate dishonesty, and poor leadership. **But, I believe, the most devastating and long-standing reason is an utter failure of imagination in these corporations that led to their inability to adjust their structure to changes in the world around them.** Consider that the big 3 automakers have consistently*

invested in SUVs and large engine models despite the fact that demand points toward smaller and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

*And now these industries are coming to Congress, to the American people, asking for a bailout. **But are they going to change their business model? Will their infrastructure be transformed to overcome these factors that led to the present situation? Or, are we simply propping up a system that is ultimately unsustainable? Is it a stretch to think that this parallels what has been happening in our church?***

But where's the imagination? Where's the recognition that the world has changed, people's expectations and behaviors have changed, and we -- whether we are large industries or a church -- are failing to change with it? Are we behaving like these failed leaders in the auto and financial industries and just trying to prop up a system that will at some point inevitably collapse into itself? We elected a president who ran on the banner of "change." The jury is still out on how much "change" will actually occur. However, doesn't that point us to the fact that we as a society are crying out for something new, something creative, something that is sustainable, that brings us together... Can't the church get over itself enough - can't we be creative enough -- to be that in this world?

The challenge is this: **As presently constituted, most of our diocesan Commissions on Ministry and seminaries continue to operate much like the Big Three auto makers.** They are well designed to serve the needs of the established Episcopal Church (which is in steep decline).

If our core structures for approval and training of leadership remain focused on "guarding and maintaining" the culture of the established church, they are highly unlikely to evolve and give a preferential option to candidates who can serve the needs of the church that is emerging without Episcopal intervention to insist on real and substantive change.

Currently, when some emerging and mission-oriented leaders do manage to "get through" the established church approval process, they are often sent *away* from their mission fields and into seminaries still oriented to the established church and without the needed capacity to enhance the missionary skills of leaders who enter with them.

Our country has managed to begin the process of 'institutional change' by electing Barack Obama. I hold that there is much hope for our church as well as **diocesan Bishops already have the authority they need to begin to make the changes that our church needs now.** Such change needs to be bold. **It will call for the 'Big Three like' structures in at least some pioneer willing diocese to embrace a 'paradigm shift' that will support and resource new 'Prius like' structures to be formed *along side* existing structures, in order to incubate 'the new.'**

In our postmodern culture, where the average American citizen is 32, the average Episcopalian is 62, and the majority of COM's are led and populated primarily by modern generation leaders, but for our missional future to be unleashed new leadership drawn from the postmodern generations will need to be given the reins. Most candidates who come before our COM's from now onward are

native postmoderns from Generations X and Y. Such emerging generation leaders (the oldest of which are in their mid-40s) are native navigators of the postmodern culture and thus uniquely capable of helping the church chart a new course into the future of ministry. As U.K theologian and futurist Gerard Kelly writes, ***“Leadership is first and foremost about the future.”***

In an article on postmodern leadership, Kelly continues:

If leadership is not about a focus on the future, what is it about? In a culture in transition, leaders are by definition those who see the future first and inspire our imagination towards it... Leadership that doesn't inspire the imaginations of those who choose to follow is little more than cleverly disguised bureaucracy. "The greatest leaders are those who explain the world," and thus help us to gain control of our destiny. If human beings did not need help in understanding their times and inspiration to overcome fear and inertia, they would not need leaders. It is crucial that leaders see this and take seriously their responsibility to inspire—to switch on the imaginative functions of those they lead. This is just the opposite of closing down creativity because it is too much of a threat.... Our culture is crying out for leaders, regardless of gender, age, and social background, who are ready to look ahead, to grasp intuitively the outlines of an emerging landscape and to chart a course that they and those who travel with them can follow.

To chart such a course will mean, very often, to miss out on the rewards of staying put. Kelly goes on to say:

There will be many in leadership who are just not ready for a frontier-town culture, who have invested too heavily in the acquired status of a settled life. But there will be others—some thrown into leadership for the first time—who thrive on the gold-rush mentality of social change and bring a flood of new thinking to their responsibilities. These are the leaders who will break the cultural ice and blaze a trail into the future.

‘Hire talent’ (or as I say identify, recruit and ordain talent) ***is one of the key principles for new-paradigm leadership. Leaders need to see themselves increasingly as those who recruit, resource, and release the gifted people who are going to get the job done.*** The capacity to inspire courage, to give vision against the odds, to create dreams out of the raw materials of fear and uncertainty is more needed than ever in a context of fluidity and change.

“FRESH EXPRESSIONS” + ESTABLISHED CHURCH = MIXED ECONOMY ANGLICAN FUTURES

Several times I have mentioned “fresh expressions of church” as a way to talk about the need for establishing “a preferential option for the future” in the Episcopal Church. *Fresh Expressions* is terminology that is used in the UK and the Church of England to talk about this same reality. The biggest proponent of *Fresh Expressions* alongside emerging leaders is the Archbishop of Canterbury.

For many *Anglimergents* across the world, Archbishop Rowan Williams is a major inspiration, because in the area of Anglican futuring and how we position ourselves in relation to culture within the Western parts of our family, he is providing true leadership, which is always about the future.

Fresh Expressions is a bold attempt by the Church of England to give a preferential option for the future. The established church is just that, established.

In order for a “mixed economy to flourish” concentrated and intentional work is needed to cultivate the birthing of new forms alongside old ones, *as without the new forms taking an equal place, our “economy” and ability to speak will continue to diminish, if we remain unresponsive to the massive cultural shifts happening in our world.*

Archbishop Williams writes:

In all kinds of places, the parochial system is working remarkably. It's just that we are increasingly aware of the contexts where it simply isn't capable of making an impact, where something has to grow out of it or alongside it, not as a rival (why do we cast so much of our Christian life in terms of competition?) but as an attempt to answer questions that the parish system was never meant to answer....

*At present, we stand at a watershed in the life of the Church of England - not primarily because of the controversies that have been racking us, but because we have to ask whether we are capable of moving towards a more “mixed economy” - recognizing church where it appears and having the willingness and the skill to work with it. **Mission, it's been said, is finding out what God is doing and joining in. And at present there is actually an extraordinary amount going on in terms of the creation of new styles of church life.** We can call it church planting, “new ways of being church” or various other things; but the point is that **more and more patterns of worship and shared life are appearing on the edge of our mainstream life that cry out for our support, understanding and nurture if they are not to get isolated and unaccountable...***

These may vary from the classic church plant model - a new congregation generated by an older one - to the Thursday night meeting for young people once a fortnight, the Sunday evening Songs of Praise in the pub, the irregular but persistent networking with the people you met at Greenbelt or Spring Harvest, the mums and toddlers event on Tuesday morning or the big school Eucharist once a term which is the only contact many parents and friends will have with real worshipping life. All of these are church in the sense that they are what happens when the invitation of Jesus is received and people recognize it in each other....

*Can we live with this and make it work? This is where the unexpected growth happens, where the unlikely contacts are often made; **where the Church is renewed (as it so often is) from the edges, not the center.** We need a positive willingness to see and understand all this - and to find the patterns and rhythms and means of communication that will let everyone share the benefits.*

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury (from his Presidential Address to The General Synod of the Church of England at York, 2003)

PREFERENTIAL OPTIONS FORWARD - A SPIDER BECOMES STARFISH

In their 2006 book *The Starfish and the Spider*, Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, a pair of MBAs from Harvard, apply their learning from powerful decentralized organizations (from Al Queda to Alcoholics Anonymous) towards revolutionizing how businesses can begin to shift their paradigms and learn to succeed in the postmodern world. Without such a shift, many modern businesses will have little chance of competing in the new world.

The title metaphor refers to two creatures that seem similar on the outside but possess an internal architecture that is vastly different and leads to vastly different outcomes for how each is fit to survive or thrive (or not) in today's world.

When you cut off the head of a spider, or too many of its legs, it dies, whereas a starfish has no "head" (or centralized life support system). The starfish carries its full DNA sequence within all of its parts, giving each leg of the starfish the capacity to regenerate and carry on when distanced or cut off from other parts. Any severed starfish leg can grow into an entirely new and whole starfish.

The established modern church and its rules and culture for forming leaders operate like a spider. Emerging elements within The Episcopal Church seek to operate as a starfish and harness the same power of "peer2peer" relations, at work in emerging businesses, systems and culture: from *Facebook* to *Ebay*, from *Wikipedia*, to *Craigslist*, from *I-Tunes* to *Skype* and from *Yelp* to *Twitter*.

It still assumed that the only way to prepare leaders for "the whole church" is to move everyone "to and through" one of eleven Episcopal seminaries, and that without this the most cherished aspects of our church life and tradition will die.

If this were true, then our demise might be close at hand, as escalating costs, crushing student debt, declining enrollments and curriculums that lag behind in teaching skills needed for engaging mission in a post-Christian and postmodern world have already "set the writing on the wall."

The starfish ethos espouses a different principle, which is basically this: ***wherever* there are faithful Episcopalians, faithful Episcopal leaders can be formed**, as at our core, when the modern overlay is removed, the church has always been a starfish, a lively network and web of peer relationships in the Spirit, which is the body of Christ... a body that is naturally regenerative, that can grow, prosper and raise up competent, faithful leaders in any location and context.

'STARFISH' THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND 'PRIUS' DIOCESAN MISSION AND MISSIONERS FOR THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Below is an initial listing of some possible, concrete and doable Starfish and *Prius* oriented actions which I believe can be undertaken by any diocese wanting to seize the future and place a priority on developing the new and "fresh expressions" needed to create a true "mixed economy" church.

The following actions would *intentionally introduce change* within existing "spider" systems and structures and *intentionally redirect and reorient resources* towards the birthing of full, and vital expressions of church in each of our local, diocesan contexts and in ways that can help sustain renewed missional futures across the church.

As with many movements of change, things can start small. ***All this will take is three to five dioceses led by pioneering Bishops*** who are committed to taking timely actions that give a preferential option for the future, now.

1. A cohort of pioneering Bishops could covenant together to authorize a “pioneer ordination track” in their respective dioceses that operates as a parallel track to existing Commissions on Ministry. The establishment of a pioneer track is needed to “break the pattern” and allow new work to begin unencumbered by the weight and inertia of past and current practices which have developed to maintain the established church “as is” (and thus continue our current slope of decline). Models already exist for doing this in the Church of England. The Diocese of Olympia has outlined a prototype program that could begin this year. Bishops can work on this together and *learn as they do it*

2. The cohort of pioneering Bishops could authorize local seminary training combined paired with a locally earned Anglican Studies Certificate and a local cohort formation for pioneer missionary leaders (with most being under age 40). Pioneer leaders could study at an accredited, local, non-Episcopal seminary (of another mainline denomination) and also obtain an Anglican Studies Certificate local to their mission fields. Each pioneer would be part of a pioneer cohort and engage in neo-monastic spiritual formation within their mission work daily and within their pioneer cohort, monthly (for Eucharist, Daily Office, learning and reflection) as well as doing concentrated times (2 to 6 weeks per year) of formation at an Episcopal seminary or Episcopal monastic setting. Pioneers could also be expected to work for at least three years within their sponsoring diocese. Basically these pioneers would function like a “missionary third order” within each diocese and under the diocesan bishop's authority and protection.

3. Pioneering Bishops could call an experienced, emerging mission leader to serve as “Canon for Emerging Mission” in their respective dioceses.

The Canon Missioner would oversee the pioneer track for ordination and have authorization to scout, recruit, select and train candidates for pioneer ministry. **The ability of the Canon Missioner to work directly with pioneer candidates and develop a theological education and fieldwork plan tailored to each candidate and their specific work in emerging mission (that many differ in some aspects from the established requirements of existing COM's) is critical.*

The Canon Missioner would be directly accountable to the diocesan Ordinary and function as a *talent scout, coach* and *mentor* for leaders seeking to birth new forms of church and mission in the diocese.

The Canon would also be an abbot/cohort leader for the cadre of pioneers and would oversee regular and structured gatherings of the pioneers for spiritual as well as missional formation.

The Canon for Mission might serve part-time with the diocese and remain a parish priest in touch with the mission field and not far removed from the young pioneers under their care.

The Canon for Mission would often be a sort of 'veteran pioneer,' someone not unlike Neo, a leading character in the Matrix movies. Neo has a unique feature; a plug in the back of his neck. What this means is that he is bi-cultural and a bridge. He is born of the new culture, but is able to travel back and forth and navigate between two worlds. Such travel is not easy and requires a certain stamina, a high tolerance for risk and for weathering the dis-orientation it takes to shift back and forth to bridge the two worlds. And like most bridges, such leaders need to have strong backs as bridges do get traversed across. But even so, such leaders can even find having folk walk across backs as rejuvenating!

INTENTIONAL 'RECEPTION' OF THE GIFTS OF YOUNG CONVERTS

Many of the pioneer missionary aspirants, postulants and ordinands will be Neo like as well, and with perhaps 60% or more of them being converts from free church Evangelical traditions, as many younger leaders from such backgrounds are hungry to take in and thirsty to drink deep from the ancient Christian tradition and wisdom of Anglicanism. And *if we receive, welcome and embrace them* them, they can use what they take in and drink from in order to fuel our future mission in the emerging world. The Canon for Mission will be on the look out to scout such leaders by travel in circles with and among young, emerging 'post-Evangelicals.'

Because such converts will make the conscious choice to 'join' our Anglican tribe they will come to us bearing great gifts of fresh eyes, fresh insights and fresh ability and deep passion to bear witness among non-churched people, how Anglicanism is uniquely gifted to speak to the spiritual hungers of emerging generations and the postmodern world.

The Pioneer Missioner cohort may well operate Matrix ship 'Nebuchadnezzar'. It may look rag tag and made of an assortment of MacGyver like rigged parts, but it will function as a hybrid, like the *Prius*, designed to travel and maneuver well across two worlds, present and present/future.

4. Each diocese could establish a Diocesan School for Mission (also under the auspices of the Canon for Mission) as a means for providing practical and mission training for established parishes and priests, as well as being a "module" included in the education of pioneers. Training days could be offered 2-3 times per year and with 3-5 days per course.

5. Each diocese could intentionally use their first emerging church plants as a diocesan training grounds for the new.

Rather than dismiss and isolate new form church communities and their mission innovations, pioneer dioceses would embrace these communities and the new kinds of leaders they raise up. Pioneer Bishops would "protect" these new

churches and give them sufficient time to grow, develop as well as to serve as “mission labs” for the diocese. This will also mean no longer viewing them as not being part of the “real” Episcopal Church or capable of forming leaders for “the whole church” (learning from the example of St. Gregory's). As such places, far from being “defective,” are often more able to show us what vibrant “mission contextual” (and still whole church connected) expressions of Anglican life and witness can look like.

6. Each diocese could establish a “Commission for Emerging Mission,” composed of lay and ordained missional, pioneer and young adult leaders. The commission would work on the formation of young adults (35 and under) across the diocese for mission and service grounded in the Baptismal Covenant, as well as sponsoring evangelistic events that are culturally relevant and where young adults can bring their non-churched peers to introduce them to Anglican Christianity and our Episcopal Church. Such a Commission exists already in the Diocese of Olympia under Bishop Greg Rickel. See www.emergingmission.org

7. Each diocese could establish a Pioneer Ministry Formation Team, as a sub group related to the CFEM (Commission for Emerging Mission) specific to ministry discernment credentialing for Pioneer Missioners. As I said earlier: **The ability of the Canon Missioner working with a Pioneer Ministry Formation Team) to work directly with pioneer candidates and develop a theological education and fieldwork plan tailored to each candidate and their specific work in emerging mission (that many differ in some aspects from the established requirements of existing COM's) is critical.*

This recommendation may be the hardest to stomach. As it in some ways sets up a parallel structure to the established COM. *Thus* it will be very tempting for some to opt for the more 'reasonable' 'sustained innovation route' of simply 'adding in' the Canon for Mission and a token few other Neo types to existing COMS. But what may well be missing is that the gifts of 'disruptive innovation' that a Pioneer Ministry Formation Team would bring, the gifts that can build our 'Prius', will remain shut out.

I hope for what Don Schell said earlier in the conclusion of his section of this paper that *'(Clayton) Christensen's analysis helps us see why the COM structure in our church, just a generation old and invented by the last modern generations of radicals (boomers) to democratize the vocations process got co-opted to sustaining innovation before it had done its disruptive work. Some of our bishops are noticing that the current COM structure is actually 'advisory' to the bishop and are asking whether they can do a 'Prius project' alongside of it for mission, which recognizes the need for sustaining work, but which had also learned that for maximum vitality to be nurtured to serve today's new emerging mission context the 'disruptive work' often led by new, emerging generations 'radicals,' ought also be supported, authorized and resourced. To me this makes very good sense.*

My own Bishop, Greg Rickel has acknowledged that our systems have an allergic reaction to the very leaders we need to help us seize our future, and that Bishop has become more about 'saying no' to things (gate-keeping) rather than saying yes to new, and faithful things.

WANTED: 'GENERATIVE BISHOPS WHO CAN, PRUNE, BLESS AND RELEASE'

Our church will not right away, but eventually commend and applaud any of our bishops willing to shift their use of their authority away from primarily a blocking /stopping function and more towards a 'generative function,' that may also block, but block 'for' the future,' clearing the backfield' or clear out our springs, so that new fresh waters of faithful missional innovation can begin to flow and that, those who would lead our 'diocesan *Prius* divisions' both *accountable, blessed, resourced* and *released*.

8. Each diocese could adopt a 10-Year “Mixed Economy” Mission Strategy with plans for seeding a specific number of urban, suburban, rural ethnic and multi-cultural church and ministry (non-parochial) plants (such as cafe churches, network churches, pub congregations, house churches, emerging communities within existing parishes). For a listing of all kinds of emerging Anglican Church plants and ministries, see the *Anglimergent.org* 'directory' page.

Each diocese could set goals to 'ordain to mission.' Setting targeted numbers and types of candidates to provide leadership for the mission strategy priorities the diocese sets. For example if our average Episcopal priest is 62. For 'numbers'

9. Each diocese could seriously consider setting target goals (for a set number of years perhaps 4 to 6) that 50% of holy orders slots are intended for candidates under age 35, 20% under age 45 and 30% older ages. Then after 4-6 years of operating with such goals, our clergy rosters WILL start to 'look more like the average North American,' with an average clergy age around 40 instead of the current 62.

Also, set target goals for a certain percentage for various 'ethnic' and primary languages other than English clergy needed for specific mission in your diocese. For example, if plan to plant four new missions among Mexican Americans, then at the same time start to recruit and prepare enough Mexican Americans candidates for holy orders to serve these new congregations once developed.

I use the words target and goals on purpose, as this is a modern, dogmatic 'quota system.' I believe post-modern is post-quota, but pro-intentional actions toward your set mission goals in terms of recruiting the kind of leadership needed to realize your goals. This is not about modern and false polarities such as 'young vs. old clergy' or 'big vs. small government.' This is about 'what will work' for engaging mission in emerging culture.

So as TEC wants to do mission work to reach the emerging population (which has an average age of 32 or 33), then we will need to take *real* and *intentional* actions in our diocese now to begin to re-align our ordained leadership age to be within seven years of the average American citizens age.

For 'types' of candidates, diocese should seriously consider a preferential option for recruiting and nominating candidates for ordained leadership that are intentionally: **missionary, entrepreneurial , younger and Anglican.**

Missionary: Having a clear, focused and palpable 'passion' and zeal for *embodying contextualizing* and *sharing* the Gospel as a their primary work.

Entrepreneurial: Being capable of starting (from scratch or the ground up) new fresh innovative and faithful forms of church (church plants, other new creative outreach ministries within existing parishes and non-parochial settings) that can embody and proclaim the Gospel effectively with today's culture and amongst emerging generations.

Younger: Setting goals to nominate and intentionally recruit a majority of those under the age of 35 for Holy Orders, for all of reasons I outlined previously above.

Anglican: Those who will lead us from and out our of a clear Anglican identity is critical for effective mission. Leaders must lead *ad fontes*, from the wellsprings of who we are, and help our people be formed as Anglicans who draw from our deep spiritual giftings, bring those giftings to bear in living out their Christianity as a way of life and addressing the needs of neighbors and the world around us.

9. Each diocese could create and endow a capital “Fund for Mission” setting a diocesan goal of raising 5-10 million dollars by cultivating a base of major local diocesan donors interested to invest strategic vision for Anglican futures.

The fund would be used to support the Diocesan Mission Strategy for planting new and mixed economy forms of church as well as funding Mission Grants for established congregations.

9. Each diocese could establish pioneer Curacies and Missioner placements for “on the job training” of young missional priests and seminarians. *Some pioneer missioners could be authorized to start new churches or other forms of mission simultaneous to their seminary training* at a local seminary. Learning and doing need not remain linear and sequential. Action and reflection can form a “interwoven way of learning and doing” that is mentored and “apprenticed.”

Others pioneers can work as missioner interns starting new work and cross-fertilizing mission within established congregations. Pioneer Missioner and Curates would meet as a regularly as a cohort that functions like a local, diocesan “missionary order” for ongoing spiritual formation, support and shared learning.

10. Each diocese could begin to shift the leadership make-up of their established Commission on Ministry from having a majority of “established church” oriented leaders mostly from the modern generations, to a majority emerging church oriented leaders from emerging generations, including some church planters and others with emerging mission experience to shift the COM cultural norms from those that are “native” to the emerging context and emerging generations of today where our mission must be reoriented if we are to remain a viable denomination serving the *Missio Dei* in the new emerging world. This will go a long way in keeping COM’s oriented to the future, which leadership, is primarily about... Also when diocese makes the leap to embrace 'disruptive' innovation as in

the parable of Toyota and the Prius, those from the Prius division can be reintegrated into a new COM culture that is more of like mind, heart and vision moving forward.

Let us not allow the “Great Emergence” to pass The Episcopal Church by. This is our “Episcopal Moment.” There is so much hope... as our Anglican tradition has everything needed to speak deeply and powerfully to the spiritual hungers of seekers in the postmodern world.

In many ways what this paper is calling for is NOT a radical break from our history and ethos, but a *radical re-embrace* of what being Anglican means within our present culture and for God's mission day. So let us seize our moment and take an active part.

“That in all things of human ordering or human choice, relating to modes of worship and discipline, or to traditional customs, this Church is ready in the spirit of love and humility to forego all preferences of her own.” (Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, 1886)

PARABLE OF THE TOYOTA AND THE PRIUS ADDEDNDUM

The need for ongoing cycles of disruptive (alongside sustaining) innovation is clear... In the May 11, 2009 issue of *Newsweek* on the 'Tectonic Shifts' page, Daniel Lyons writes the essay 'Time for a Trade -In' He says: *'To most of us Toyota's Prius style hybrids still seem like the cutting edge of cool, the latest, greatest technology in cars. But nine years after the Prius was introduced in the United States, some are calling it obsolete...'*

It seems that the next generation of car design visionaries are moving beyond the 'traditional hybrid' to develop totally electric drive trains that eliminate gasoline assists altogether and use only the power of recharging batteries, as the auto industry is being continually 'shaken and stirred' by new disruptive waves of technology. To me, this is precisely the point of the 'Parable of the *Prius*' that Don Schell wrote about.

The church will do well to continually scout for, embrace, resource, 'bless and release,' disruptive leaders and the faithful innovations they bring, not as a 'best,' but as an 'ongoing' practice...

In many and various ways, 'disruptive' innovation has always been and will ever be part of the church. Yet we are ever in need to be reminded again and again of this fact. The source of our disruption is ever the Spirit of God, who broods over us, shakes us, and stirs us to prevent stagnation and keep us ever looking over the horizon.

In the ongoing process of taking part in God's new thing, we will always need 'scouts and prophets' to lead us... those who glimpse and perceive God's future and are compelled (and hopefully called) by the church to help lead us in renewed directions within and towards it, as it ever springs forth.

Karen M. Ward, April 27, 2009