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# RUPERT'S LAND? WE DO MISSION TOGETHER!

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I grew up in a family that loved to use little proverbs like, “Many hands make light work.” It usually preceded an “invitation” to help my mom with the dishes, or join other members of the family in spring cleaning the basement! In my late teen years I worked in the produce department of a large supermarket where the task was to “move” as much fruit and vegetables as we could. And we all knew that for some odd reason, two persons could prepare twenty cases of head lettuce faster, and more enjoyably, than one person could finish ten cases. Having to trim up ten cases on your own felt like doing a ‘penal sentence’. Talking and joking your way through twenty with a partner was almost fun. There was something about doing it *together* that made the difference.

Most of us are learning that *mission* is the primary work of our Church. And it seems that, whether we like it or not, we’re discovering more and more mission that “ought to be done” – whether it’s downtown, down south on the next farm, or down in the poorest country in the world. The trouble is, we seem to be aware of only a handful of people in our parish that already wear the label of ‘mission leader’ and they’re already stretched so thin that we don’t dare ask anything more of them, for fear that they might give it all up. And somehow, it’s always the work that is *not* getting done that we are aware of, worry about, and feel helpless to do anything with.

Now, if you had about 70 church communities like the typical one described above, and you knew there was all kinds of untapped potential in each of them, but you had no idea where each person’s gifts and interests lie, where would you start? Surely the obvious thing to do would be to provide them with some sort of way of helping discover where their members’ expertise and passions lie. And in order to build up their sense of confidence and ability, wouldn’t you first help them to realize all of the mission work they *are* accomplishing, and help them to celebrate that? And once you had folks feeling more positive and energized, then you’d work at helping them discover new ways they could offer their time, talent and treasure to the various works of mission to which they feel called.

But wait! These are tired, discouraged, and mostly isolated folks – each struggling in their own church community just to keep doing what they’re doing – each trying to trim their ten huge cases of lettuce on their own!

So why not *bring them together*! Certainly we know that we’re much better at seeing and affirming other peoples’ potential, than we are our own. And we also know that the invitation to share a gift, show someone else how to do something, or to “be an expert from somewhere else” is much more attractive, than merely being “stuck with a job at home.” And then we’d find ways to work at mission *together* – making obvious connections of similar location, similar interests, and similar challenges.

So how does God call us to do mission? Together! We work together at discovering and developing our gifts for ministry. We assess together where we are already doing effective mission locally and globally. We discover and learn together how to best use the gifts we have. We challenge each other, in encouraging and supportive ways, to work more intentionally at new mission needs, and we identify together the special priorities for mission in our neighbourhoods.

“Okay, so how should I get started?” you ask. GET TOGETHER! Talk with members of your own parish about where you think the Church needs to make a difference. Talk with people you know in other parishes in your deanery

and churches in your neighbourhood. Call up those “diocesan folks” and tell them what you need to make something happen in your area.

This is the way mission needs to happen in Rupert’s Land. It’s also what we’ve said about ourselves in Direction #1 of The Way Forward Diocesan Action Plan: *Support and challenge parishes and groups of parishes to be active and energized mission centres in their local communities and beyond.*