

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*M & M International* was retained by Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land to conduct a Planning Feasibility Study to investigate the support for a \$5,000,000 financial campaign to fund the following:

- Parish capital, ministry and outreach needs.
- The education and training needs of laity and clergy of the diocese.
- The ongoing program needs of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.
- The education needs of clergy and laity in the diocese.
- The financial needs of the existing programs for Indigenous peoples.
- Congregational and Stewardship Development office support.
- Outreach Ministry support at the parish level.
- National and International mission and ministry needs of the Anglican Church of Canada.

## Study Findings

The process used in the feasibility planning study was so comprehensive that it provided literally tens of thousands of bits of information, including statistical data as well as comments by parishioners and others across the diocese. The study tools employed, including consultations with groups, individual interviews, and open forums and online surveys, provided a comprehensive and inclusive process unlike any other in Canada to date.

## Image

The Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land is perceived favourably by nearly forty eight (48%) percent of respondents and unfavourably by forty six (46.5%) of respondents. In addition, respondents felt that sixty nine percent (69%) of others would have a negative view of the diocese. The diocese is seen to have successfully managed to avoid the loss of churches to ANiC and has been able to maintain its ability to govern as an ecclesial body. People generally like the Bishop personally and find him to be personable and pastoral. However, the diocese and its leadership is not perceived as a well managed entity. It lacks a long range plan that meets the needs of the parish churches in these challenging times. The synod office and the leadership are described as unresponsive to the needs of the parishes and the many organizations tied to the

diocese. Parishes have remarkable needs that, with the help of the diocese, could resist the current trends of membership loss and lack of resources. Participants said that they would like to see an overarching strategic plan that leverages resources to provide assets for the ministries of the diocese. A plan that lays out a direction for the parishes, support for the clergy and laity as well as support for ministries to the Indigenous peoples and the South Sudanese communities is needed.

Finally, the diocese has a reputation of unfinished work and even failure. Respondents pointed to V & V as unfinished. Respondents also pointed to other recent initiatives that failed or failed to be completed. Most want and require feedback on the success or failure of the initiatives in the diocese.

The following key opinions were expressed by participants:

- On balance, people are split on the effectiveness of the Diocese.
- Respondents want to know what visionary response leadership has for the decline in parish rolls and the subsequent decline in parish revenue.
- Respondents in rural regions of the diocese would like to benefit more directly from programs offered by the diocese.
- Respondents have a strong connection to their individual parishes.
- The Bishop is seen as a pastoral leader and many people would like the bishop to spend more time working to develop a vision for the diocese and getting agreement on it.
- Respondents want to participate in a Vision for the Diocese – a vision that meets the realities of the parishioner in the pew.
- People want to see a Strategic plan that is endorsed by the synod and provides some direction and support for parishes and ministries in the diocese.

## **Case for Support**

In general, the content of the Case for Support was clearly understood by respondents in both the face to face interviews and by those who participated in the online survey. However, many

viewed the Case for Support as a document that, while directional, lacked specifics. Others mentioned that it lacked excitement and may be seen as a document that maintains the status quo.

Respondents were careful to respond as accurately as possible to whether they supported the elements of the Case. The National Church support for Indigenous Peoples for suicide prevention and stipends for non-stipendiary clergy garnered the highest support from respondents (90%). In general, respondents could clearly identify the needs in their parishes and more than eighty (80) percent of respondents identified these needs. However, the diocesan needs, while perceived as important, ranked much lower than both the National Church initiative described in the Case for Support and the parish's individual needs.

Parishioners are moderately supportive of the Case for Support as articulated in the study. The elements are seen as important, however, they do not translate into tangible outcomes that many believe are necessary for the Church to thrive.

## **Leadership**

In the current climate, campaign leadership and volunteers can be difficult to identify and attract. This is also a source for concern for the Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land where support for participation on committees is low, indicating that people are generally unwilling to become involved. Respondents would be more eager to participate in their own parish campaigns.

## **Goal Attainability**

Participants were not optimistic about the attainability of a \$5 million goal with less than 1 in 3 believing that the diocese could raise such an amount. Participants suggested that people in the diocese generally have capacity to give. However, many recognize that parishes in the diocese are struggling with their own budgets and many parishioners are on fixed incomes. In general, the respondents felt that a goal of \$3.0 million would be the maximum amount the diocese could raise.

## **Financial Support**

A relatively high proportion of participants (76%) would consider a financial gift to a campaign in the diocese. The online survey produced a lower percentage of potential funders to the diocese with slightly fewer than fifty-five (55) percent agreeing to give or consider a gift to a financial initiative. Seventy-two (72) percent of participants disclosed an amount while an additional twenty eight (28) percent of respondents in the face to face interviews preferred to withhold their gift amount at this time. The value of potential gifts ranged from \$183,500 to \$390,000 or slightly more than \$3,500 as the average gift amount. The online survey captured another six (6) gifts that ranged from \$27,000 to \$35,000 or slightly more than \$4,500 per gift. There were two (2) major gifts of \$25,000 or above identified in the study. Finally, greater than seventy seven (77) percent of face to face participants were graded as benefactors to the campaign or as probable benefactors to a campaign as assessed by the *M & M International* interviewers.

It needs to be noted that the potential for bequests from parishioners in their Will was moderate with nearly twenty three (23) percent of those interviewed suggesting that they have already had left a bequest to the Church. An additional thirty (30) percent suggested that they would consider discussing a planned gift. The parishes and diocese stand to benefit the most from attracting these bequests with nearly fifty-five (55) percent willing to leave their bequests with them.

## **Other**

A number of other key factors were indicated, and participants were eager to offer opinions and suggestions that would support the successful implementation of a campaign. A Strategic Plan and overarching Vision for the diocese is seen to be a priority for parishioners in the diocese. The diocese needs to experience success in order to gain the confidence it needs to move into a campaign. Complete transparency and increased communications efforts were seen as essential in the eventuality of a campaign and there was general agreement that the Case requires more specificity.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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More than 100 people responded to the Planning Feasibility Study by providing an interview or responding online. Most of the respondents in the face to face portion of the Study are, or were, in leadership positions in the diocese or in their congregations. The study revealed that:

- a vision of “what the diocese needs to be” both presently and in the future is needed
- Actions that build trust and energy for new growth must be undertaken
- parishioners feel uncertain about the future
- diocesan leadership has not demonstrated the ability to successfully conduct effective change oriented programs
- respondents are concerned about the state of their parishes
- participants believe that there needs to be a “shake - out” and that the status quo is not an option for the diocese
- participants believe that some churches should be closed and funds distributed to fund healthy parish growth.
- there is a desire to tackle the issues and respondents are looking to the diocese for leadership.
- a campaign in the diocese does not have the support of leaders and parishioners in the diocese

The Planning Feasibility Study has provided insight into how parishioners in the diocese view their leadership and the future of the Church. Parishioners are concerned for the long term viability of their parish and the Church. We heard that the diocese needs a vision and that parishioners would welcome change - a change that inspires them. They want to support a vision for growth, outreach and ministry that is not currently present. A fundraising campaign can support that vision financially, but it cannot develop it, endorse it or communicate it.

It is the opinion of *M & M International* that the Diocese of Rupert’s Land is not in a position to launch a fundraising initiative in support of the Preliminary Case for Support tested in the Study

at this time. In our opinion, it will be some time before the diocese is able to proceed into a campaign.

*M & M International* recommends that:

1. Leadership commence a consultative process to build action plans to address the needs of the churches in the diocese.
2. Constituents from across the diocese participate in an organic process to build the plans.
3. The team develops concrete and viable action plans to achieve the results established as vital to healthy churches.
4. Leadership develops a transparent financial plan.
5. The membership of the diocese invests, financially and otherwise, in those plans.
6. The diocese “start small” with a few successful initiatives. There is a need for people in the diocese to witness success.

The following initiatives must be undertaken to complete the Study effectively:

- Communicate the results of the Planning and Feasibility Study
- Send personal thank you letters to all study participants – both face to face and on-line participants
- Send the Executive Summary to all participants – both face to face and online.

## Summary

In summary, *M & M International* believes that the Anglican Diocese of Rupert’s Land is not in a position to undertake a comprehensive diocesan centred campaign at this time. A broad consultative planning process followed by a strong concrete strategic plans are needed to bring the diocese to a place where funding can be sought. The diocese needs to demonstrate success and a transparent financial accounting of the assets and spending priorities of leadership.