



# ‘BeComing Church’?

## Working Documents and Recommendations

Deanery Development Plan Documents  
*Summer 2010*

The principles under-girding BeComing Church discussions are ‘to re-conceive and inhabit a church’ for 2020 that is

**A: focusing on mission and discipleship** for today, rooted in

**B: local Christian communities of several types**, and being

**C: shaped in character and priorities** by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

### ‘BeComing Church’?

The title points to key dimensions for shaping our life together across the Deanery.

**‘Be’**: reminds us that WHO WE ARE in Christ is a priority. As those who carry his name today, any plans for development and any activity within the church need to be rooted in our trust, character and behaviour in Christ. (NB: before being given the nickname of ‘Christians’ Acts 11:26, early followers of Jesus were sometimes known through their character and behaviour simply as ‘followers of The Way’.)

**‘Coming’**: Development ideas are about the future - adapting and shaping the church for the life and tasks of tomorrow and today. Sustaining good tradition may not necessarily equate with simply continuing past habits & patterns as we look to sustain ‘the best of the old’ while embracing ‘the best of the new’.

**‘Church’**: a challenge for the church in each generation is to be renewed and refreshed, as we fulfil our calling to reflect the unchanging nature of God and share in God’s mission to the world of today: “to proclaim afresh in every generation”.

**‘Becoming’**: can be defined as not only “to grow or come to be”, but also “to show to advantage, look good with - ”. In seeking to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, the church should aim to present the faith in an attractive manner.

**~ ongoing oversight, monitoring & development to be by the Deanery Steering Group**

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**Distribution in August 2010:**

A Full Report to  
All clergy in Core Chapter  
Deanery Synod members  
PCC Secretaries

A Summary Report will go to  
All members of Wider Chapter  
Members of PCCs

Courtesy of St. Giles Church,  
the full report and papers will be posted electronically at [www.stgilesdurham.co.uk](http://www.stgilesdurham.co.uk)

*Our thanks to Rev Dr Alan Bartlett & St .Giles for hosting this webspace*



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## Contents

### Working Papers and Recommendations

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| • Contents   | 3           |
| • Introduction   | 4           |
| • Summary of Principles, Working Documents and Recommendations   | 5           |
| • 1. <b>WHY</b> is it important to consider the future?<br><b>Foundations and Values for exploring the way ahead</b> | 6           |
| • 2. <b>WHAT</b> can we do to shape the future?<br><b>Mapping the way forward</b>                                    | 7           |
| • 3. <b>HOW</b> can we help to grow the kingdom<br><b>Signposts and ‘catalysts’ for moving forward</b>               | 11          |
| • 4. Notes, Quotes and Questions   | 13          |
| • Appendices and Working Papers [as updated August 2010]<br>- the documents follow a numbered sequence               |             |

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# ‘BeComing Church’?

## Introduction

These papers summarise material and recommendations that have emerged after two years of work during 2008-2010 about shaping the life of Durham Deanery for the future. They are a ‘working document’, and as such represent a work in progress. The vision, frameworks and proposals now offered are NOT THERE TO BE IMPOSED - like a straitjacket - on anyone or any parish; but THEY DO OFFER ideas, proposals, fresh horizons and suggested actions to be considered prayerfully and imaginatively for the next stages of work together. A working document is to be used like a ‘Green Paper’ of tentative proposals for the future, calling for further consideration and adoption after fuller consultation within the proposed groups. Much of what is recommended may be developed from existing patterns of local relationships, groups and initiatives. Further key decisions and actions are now called for from the leadership and churches of the proposed groups working in partnership and collaboration.

With the exception of the number of stipendiary clergy and the Deanery total for Parish Share allocated each year by the DBF, there is very little that can or will be imposed on the Deanery, but much that is dependent of the local churches and leadership achieving sufficient consensus for decision and action.

Currently, in 2010, we are able to consider and opt for certain changes while there is time and opportunity; but the time may come when we may be forced into action, either through circumstances beyond our control, or because we have not been radical or practical enough, leading to hasty or unconsidered decisions!

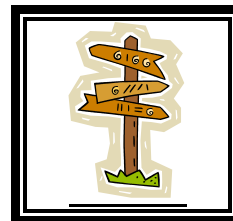
As a working document, specific ideas and recommendations in these pages can be understood as:

- **Provisional:** *“arranged or existing for the present, possibly to be changed later”*  
~ a thrust of any working document is that the ideas and proposals are for discussion and prayer, to raise vision, guide agendas, suggest possibilities and action. A main challenge is to take them seriously enough to consider, explore, pray; and then to adopt those ideas that we choose.
- **Pragmatic:** *“dealing with things in a practical rather than a theoretical way”*  
~ as a Deanery we are currently some way from any agreed consensus on what we might do, or even on some of the principles involved. Hopes, fears, anxieties, churchmanships, theologies, traditions and habits etc all have an influence! Perhaps what is crucial is that we learn more consciously to own and share our common identity in Christ, with the challenges involved in ‘focusing on mission and discipleship’, and the consequences of choosing those priorities, or not.
- **Prophetic:** *“predictive, presageful or ominous”*  
~ the material points to revised priorities and fresh forms of church life needing to emerge alongside what is traditional and familiar. Some of the implications are quite radical, representing a break with the traditional parish norms that have guided assumptions behind our life for many generations. In a rapidly changing world, in which the Christian currency is rapidly becoming devalued, not to engage with some of these challenges may be to invite further indifference from the wider community, and further erosion and decline of the church.

As the group with responsibility for overseeing the development of ‘Becoming Church’ ideas and proposals, **the Deanery Steering Group now invites parishes to work and pray together in area groups to consider these ideas and possibilities; seeking to discern, decide and adapt to changes required for becoming a different kind of church in 2020.**

## A WORKING DOCUMENT with PROPOSALS

### Summary of principles and recommendations



This document draws together some of the fruit of discussions in Durham Deanery to date about the future. From various options considered, a central theme to emerge (currently repeated in many Deaneries across the Diocese as they look to the future) is that whether we like it or not, the future will need to look very different! Behind all the paperwork and the discussions, a few principles and factors remain fairly constant in the situation. These include:

- This work is a response to a request from the Diocese to explore ideas and plans for ‘Growing the Kingdom’ through a Deanery Development Plan. It is understood that we are to be looking not for a fixed and rigid plan, but a series of hopeful signposts and emerging possibilities for the future.
- We are called to be ‘Focusing on Mission’ priorities (as in the ‘Growing the Kingdom’ template).
- In looking to the future, we do need to face current realities and likely future prospects - numbers, people, money and resources.
- Looking to a future for the long term leads to the consideration of different perspectives and possibilities from those that emerge when assuming we are primarily about sustaining the present.
- A faith perspective invites us to be open to and active with fresh initiatives of the Spirit.
- Vision includes a call for the personal renewal of all God’s people - clergy and laity together.
- Across the area, in focusing on local priorities we are to do so in the contexts of seeking common vision, collaboration and partnership, rather than self-interest.
- Authentic spiritual life, priorities, mission and service are to be rooted in prayer.
- We should prepare for, and be ready to embrace creative change when the future calls for significant adaptations from traditional and current forms of church life.
- All this is in the context of Durham, where ‘the body of Christ’ includes parish churches, the Cathedral, chaplaincies, other denominations and new churches etc.

#### **In summary, the main RECOMMENDATIONS are to:**

- 1. define and nurture Mission Localities
- 2. nurture Prayer for the Deanery and encourage personal Discipleship
- 3. establish and develop Locality Enabling Groups [‘LEGS’] for each Locality
- 4. consider developing Resource/Hub Churches within each Locality

The Deanery Steering Group will have a vital and important role in overseeing and encouraging developments from these recommendations.

#### **In ANTICIPATING CHANGE there will need to be a readiness to be:**

- Far sighted, with vision for long term horizons, but locally focussed for present discussion & action
- Recognising and developing particular catalysts for effective change
- Planning for ordered and sequential movement forward - healthy growth looks for organic and systemic changes rather than revolution.

#### **To use this document well, please consider it:**

- Not as an instruction manual, but rather as
- a guidebook, introducing some of the territory, concepts, language and possibilities to help the Deanery for the journey through unfamiliar territory; and
- a resource, putting certain ‘markers in the sand’ with data and principles for ongoing reference (there are many things that we simply don’t need to keep on reinventing!)

The following pages group the material around the key questions of WHY, WHAT and HOW for the future, and make certain recommendations. If the broad routes for development suggested are not to be adopted for the future, then other ways will need to be found, proposed and agreed soon.

# 1. **WHY** is it important to consider the future?



## Foundations and Values for exploring the way ahead

In church life we can be very busy just ‘keeping the show on the road’. A hidden assumption is often that things can just cycle round familiar routines and patterns of life. Not everyone wants to look to the future, especially if it seems to herald changes - some of which may appear uncomfortable, or even unwanted! However, in capturing a sense of honesty about the present, hope and faith for the future calls us to pause, reflect and hold a sense of vision for what God wants us to see. **As a Deanery:**

*[n = see accompanying notes on p.13]*

### **We recognise:**

- our common calling and character in Jesus Christ, shaped by Anglican traditions & distinctives. **n1**
- in Christ, we share the promise of quality and abundant life to be experienced in today’s world.
- that for the sake of current and future generations we are called not just to repeat the past, but to fresh explorations and expressions of church and faith.
- trajectories for the Anglican Church locally point to a steady decline in committed numbers, ‘greying’ of current church members, and a growing credibility gap for the gospel. **n2**

### **We affirm:**

- our trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as head of the church; and that our common life should be ‘mission-shaped’ according to the pattern of his character and calling.
- spiritual vitality can be sought in a refreshed and renewed relationship with Christ and a search for contemporary social relevance, including a meaningful renewal of some spiritual disciplines and established traditions.
- the need for local leaders and churches increasingly to work together in partnership and collaboration, both for ministry and mission. **n3**

### **We anticipate:**

- that the changes we seek may not be without regret, challenge and painful pruning (at both personal and structural levels) but that the future path, if taken in faith, offers the promise of Christ’s presence alongside to be experienced in fresh ways, with a sustaining hope and a Way ahead rooted in his promises and blessings.
- that the careful and prayerful seeding of fresh initiatives, in partnership with others and where we sense the Spirit of God is prompting us to work, can lead to real growth.
- that some difficult but genuine choices will be called for as we seek to be ‘focusing on mission’ - this will mean adjustments to our priorities: ie saying ‘yes’ to some things, but ‘no’ to others. **n4**
- it is possible to learn to breathe and live the rhythms of the gospel in fresh but authentic ways - ‘coming’ and ‘going’ in all the activities of discipleship, worship, evangelism, mission and service.

### **We will commit to explore together:**

- how to deepen and mature the Christian experience and character of existing church members. **n5**
- how to balance and enrich the life within our churches by combining ‘the best of the old and the best of the new’.
- how to develop meaningful prayer that anticipates being more energised by and ‘of the Spirit’.
- how to grow in confidence, with ability to ‘give account of the faith that is within you’. **n6**
- the issues, character and challenges involved in reaching out afresh to today’s generation.
- what it means to ‘Grow the Kingdom’ in our lives, communities and in the world. **n7**

### **We intend to:**

- take more seriously what it means to call ‘Jesus as Lord’ in our lives and local churches.
- develop prayer in dependence on God, and with the expectation that he will speak afresh!
- explore the meaning of a ‘mixed-economy’ church, and what this might mean for us in practice in local areas and for social networks across the Deanery. **n8**
- on a regular cycle, to review and plan afresh our local church priorities, worship and activities.
- choose to discuss, pray and work with others, especially within each community and local area. **n9**

## 2. *WHAT* can we do to shape the future?



### Mapping the way forward

Much of the thinking behind 'BeComing Church' is motivated by concern for a future that is focusing on fruitful mission and ministry, looking to develop and grow the church. The world is changing, and the repetition of familiar habits and patterns of church life is simply inadequate for much mission, worship and ministry today. Increasingly, we are to look to 'mixed-economy' patterns and strategies (by 'mixed economy', we mean the best features of traditional church patterns working in partnership with fresh expressions that re-imagine and re-shape the church for the future). Opportunities raised through 'BeComing Church' invite us to look quite radically at what is required for the future in the Deanery. As we consider the shifting patterns of life in society and local communities, and the possibilities for re-aligning the ministries and resources of the Deanery with a fresh call to mission, we will be able to discern and express new 'contours' for church life.

Within future scenarios, we are working with the prospects and hard reality of shrinking membership and reducing (stipendiary) clergy numbers. Currently, Durham is allocated 10.5 stipendiary clergy: we know that by 2016 the number will be 9, and by 2020 will probably be 8 (or less?). In this climate, the decline in clergy numbers is certainly an issue to consider, but it is not to be the main issue around which all else revolves - that would mean that we are simply planning to manage decline. The key values, vision and possibilities influencing 'BeComing Church' are about how to seed and nurture fresh mission for genuine development and new growth. They include a vision for deepening the Christian experience and an understanding of matters of faith among existing church members. This extends to nurturing greater confidence among God's people, discerning the gifts that God has given to all his people so that, with encouragement and training, they can be released for Christian witness, service and worship for today.

#### **The main recommendations are to:**

1. define and nurture natural MISSION LOCALITIES within Durham. *see note 10 & Appendix 5*  
*This is about the 'big picture', and working within broader mission areas that we are called to serve*

The idea and term of a 'Locality' is already established within Durham Diocese. This term can mean *either* a cluster of parishes working together (the 'technical' Diocesan use of the term to date) *or* the wider geographical and social networks and communities within which they sit (the natural, common meaning). In developing fresh mission-focussed 'shapes' and area patterns of church life, it is important to begin with current natural social and geographical groupings and networks, rather than with the parochial distinctions and churchmanships laid down in earlier generations. It is also important that the two understandings of the term converge so that across the Deanery genuine social and ecclesiastical Localities can emerge. **The definition of the exact working Localities for Durham is still open to discussion and decision.**

Durham is too large a city to work as one large Locality, but there are some sectors of the city which more clearly cluster around or align with particular radial access routes. Working from these principles, three Localities, defined as 'North', 'South/West' and 'East' can be defined to provide a **realistic and helpful starting point** for further conversations and collaborative church initiatives within these 'mission fields' of the Deanery. These three areas are not intended as a final blueprint to be imposed, and **alternatives** may wish to be considered that give more weight to certain village clusters, or the particular emphases of theological traditions. The hope and expectation is that by continuing the conversations, the localities can be agreed and defined by those on the ground who are 'working the patch'.

*(see more details in note 10 & Appendix 5)*

It is worth noting that there are a number of conceptual and legal possibilities that allow for groupings of churches and parishes while respecting traditions and theological distinctives. Locality areas can thus be realistically focussed and engaged with the social realities of today for effective mission. They can embrace the possibility of wider areas of concern in the community for mission and ministry, within which there can be narrower focal points to express networked belonging and focussed activity.

2. develop **PRAYER** for the Deanery and encourage personal **DISCIPLESHIP**

*This is about laying good spiritual foundations for the future*

It is a core principle and experience that discerning and faithful Christian witness and mission are grounded in effective prayer. As the early disciples prayed together their faith was nurtured, confidence in Christ blossomed, and they discerned particular promptings of the Spirit for fresh and fruitful mission character and focus to their lives. That experience continues through much of the story of the church! In other words, vibrant and discerning prayer expresses practical faith through lives of discipleship and mission activity which are properly dependent on God. Much fresh vision and growth for Durham Deanery can be anticipated and activated through such a bedrock of prayer directed to developing discipleship, meeting community needs, and listening and discerning to the involvement of the Spirit. This should be a major focus for local churches and Deanery Structures to encourage over the next few years.

3. establish and nurture **LOCALITY ENABLING GROUPS** ('LEG's)

*This is about the 'mechanism', or 'pivot', around which new possibilities and vision will coalesce*

Because many fresh things 'won't just happen', local churches and leaders are asked to commit to the Localities developing existing and new **Locality Enabling Groups** ('LEG's). These have the potential to become prime strategic vehicles for building relationships of trust, the mutual appreciation of gifts, growing in discerning prayer, sharing of vision and shared mission activities. A good working group will reflect the leadership - ordained and lay - of all participating churches. Where appropriate, they may wish to include those with whom effective partnerships are already active or desirable (eg ecumenical, or City Centre). Because relationships are central to such groups, it will be important for them to meet sufficiently often for those relationships to be nurtured effectively. Specific activities can then follow. (Appendix 7 sets out a vision for the development of LEG's, which together with Section 3 on the How questions suggests ideas and initiatives - Catalysts - for how strategic locality vision and priorities, with policies and activities, might develop over the next few years. n11

4. consider developing particular churches within each Locality as '**RESOURCE / HUB CHURCHES**', through which the whole church across the area can be resourced and energised, so as to adapt to function at several different levels.

*Such developments will give meaning to different levels of local church life for reaching an area*

Different expressions of church life and mission activity function better with varied sizes of groups. Working on principles and practices similar to those suggested by a 'Minster' pattern, such Resource/Hub churches could be discerned, adopted and developed as centres of Locality vision. (NB the term 'Minster' was considered, but to use the term in a City which has such an iconic Cathedral may not be helpful!) In time, such hubs could develop as the focal points for nurturing common Locality vision, initiatives and practices, with Locality-wide mission and ministry policies, coordinated teaching, training, resourcing, evangelism, community service and mission activity etc. Within Locality policies, cells and congregations would then offer a local or network sense of belonging, and express a range of activities to offer eg local worship, pastoral care, discipleship, and mission activity within coordinated vision. Some cells might develop geographically in local communities or neighbourhoods, but in time others might be initiated and develop within non-geographic networks of interest. Rather than try and define these different levels of church life in advance, we here recognise their potential relevance and reality and encourage each Locality to promote and develop them naturally within common policy frameworks.

The **DEANERY STEERING GROUP**, working with the Area Dean, will have a crucial role in supporting and overseeing developments within this fresh direction and vision, nurturing and coordinating initiatives and activities where appropriate. These proposals put a strong emphasis on each Locality taking their own initiatives for 'bottom up' networking, growing vision and effective common work. A broader 'top down' oversight and encouragement to stay 'on course' will be an important, parallel task within the Deanery. The Deanery Steering group is a natural group for this function: it is elected (so offers accountability), is connected to the Deanery Synod (conducting work on their behalf); integrates the concerns of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee (relevant if and when there are to be any formal changes to structures or legalities), and exercises responsibility each year for allocating Finances (resourcing the mission).

## Defining Localities?

There are a number of ways to approach the identification of 'Localities', and an exact definition of the working Localities for Durham is still open for discussion and decision. One convenient option would be to start from a church base and ask questions about 'who naturally gets on with whom'? However, with a vision for Growing the Kingdom there can be a recognition that in 'focusing on mission' many of the theological and liturgical traditions and distinctives that have shaped parish identity and structures in the past might actually diminish in significance in the face of a mission mandate in today's post-Christian culture. The initial thinking about 'Localities' can grow from a number of significant factors, including:

- the most natural geographical 'zones' and social neighbourhoods within the city
- 'people groups' as they are sometimes called
- natural lines of communication (including main roads and transport links)
- a growing emphasis on linking the suburban/village fringe communities with the closest city centre areas (reflected within city network structures for transport, shopping, education etc)
- the recognition that many city 'networks' do not reflect or align with the geographic boundaries of traditional parish structures
- the necessity and desire of churches to be grouped for more effective mission and ministry (now with several recognised and legal options for respecting different theological distinctives and emphases)
- a recognition that churches develop and will exist at different levels - and that the traditional 'one size fits all' approach to parish structures is inadequate. There can be different levels of resourcing, emphases and sizes determined in part by the internal character and dynamics of a church, but also by the nature of the surrounding community, with a specific call and tasks in mission
- the resources available to us as the Anglican church in Durham (including both ordained and lay personnel, money, viable and affordable buildings) are shrinking, and must be trained, released and used wisely for mission today.
- as of mid-2010, the County Durham Plan currently being considered by the Local Authority may have significant socio-economic effects within certain areas of the Deanery, with implications for mission or the local church focus and opportunities.

The initial suggestions for Localities have a provisional character, not least in that they are attempting to align existing parish boundaries and structures with social areas and more functional sectors within the Deanery. It is almost to be expected that *wherever* boundaries get drawn for any situation, some areas will simply not 'fit' very neatly.

These Locality proposals are based on the principles that a church increasingly focussed on mission possibilities will be aiming to develop in ways that:

1. so far as possible, the church aligns with social realities and sectors within Durham, both local geographic communities of place, and wider networks expressing communities of interest (*an incarnational principle*).
2. arranges developments guided by the major 'spokes' (or arteries) of transport and communication across Durham, rather than cut across them (*a sociological principle*).
3. respect and develop existing church groupings and initiatives wherever possible, but also are ready to realign and forge new partnerships where appropriate for the sake of future mission (*an attempt to be both pragmatic and prophetic*).
4. incorporate creative and mutual diversity that expresses the reconciling and collaborative nature of the Good News of Jesus Christ, rather than be bounded by internal ecclesiastical divisions and distinctives - both ecumenical and churchmanship convictions (*a gospel principle*).

Accordingly, the following groups are the *initial recommendations* for 3 main Localities as the basis for discussion, prayer and decision. As indicated in the questions, below, (p.14-15) there may be good grounds for considering alternative Locality groupings. A 'constant' factor in any discussions should be the available number of stipendiary clergy for any given period, and the intentions and practicalities for developing additional leadership and resourcing for a group. Obviously, for any Locality to 'work' there will need to be consensus between participating parishes, a graciousness expressed between leaders, and a commitment to meet and work together in particular areas for mission and ministry. As discussions continue, additional factors will come into consideration.

**EAST:** Parishes of: **Belmont / Gilesgate / Sherburn / Shadforth / Pittington**  
+ Schools, Dragonville & Commercial Centres, etc.

**NORTH:** Parishes of: **St Cuthbert's / Framwellgate / Witton Gilbert / Sacriston / Bearpark / Kimblesworth / Newton Hall / Langley Park / Esh / Waterhouses / Hamsteels**  
+ Schools, Local Government & Public Services, Arnison Centre etc.

**SOUTH/WEST:** Parishes of **St John's NX / St Margaret's / St Nics / St Oswalds / Shincliffe Brancepeth / Brandon / Ushaw Moor / New Brancepeth**  
+ Schools, University, Hospice etc.

These recommendations for '**3 Localities**' arise both from the principles outlined above, and practical considerations when looking to the long term (2020) with a reduced number of stipendiary clergy roles. However, other groupings are not to be precluded from consideration where other factors may be important enough to shape realistic alternatives. In some of the discussions to date, the option of a Deanery organized in '**4 Localities**' has been raised, which might take more note of some village groupings, or the influence of particular convictions, traditions and theologies.

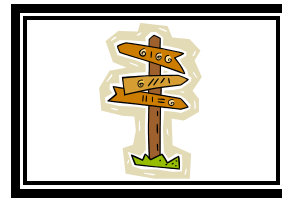
Within these working recommendations, staffing levels of 7 stipendiary clergy are initially allocated to the 3 Localities. This would allow for a basic allocation of 2 stipendiary, full-time clergy per Mission Locality, but with 3 in the South-West recognising the role of St. Nicholas in having a unique city centre location with attendant mission opportunities. Questions remain over the placement for any stipendiary clergy above that number, with a further 2 available until 2016 (when we are to look for a total of 9), and probably reducing thereafter.

Ultimately, how we choose Localities and work them is up to us within the Deanery. The local church should be there, through various expressions, to engage with people and communities in mission, proclamation, worship and service. In looking to BeComing Church for 2020 we are called to recognise that, in contemporary society, communities take shape through networks as well as geographic neighbourhoods. At a time of shrinking membership and resources, a 'Locality' approach to the future opens up a sharper focus on the areas and people we are called to serve in mission and ministry. This process can include the affirming and development of some of our traditional parish centres as well as the possibility of some fresh expressions, whether in the form of 'refreshed' congregational initiatives, or new cells of meeting and activity.

Of course, other various questions will arise that can be included in future discussions and decisions. Some of the key questions are grouped together with the notes, below (p.13-15).

### 3. *HOW* can we help to grow the kingdom?

#### 'Catalysts' to help move along The Way



During the discussions of 2008-2010, numerous possibilities have been identified for helping the Deanery move along the paths for becoming a renewed and re-energised church for 2020. A full listing is in Appendix 8. Those suggestions were not just a compilation of 'good ideas' (of which there are usually plenty within the church!), but a careful selection from a more extensive list of possibilities. We believe they could make a real difference because they address the mindset, ethos and core activities of a church being (more consciously) in mission. Such catalysts address practical possibilities for what might be planted and nurtured as priorities to make a real difference, with the expectation of good fruit in time.

As with much good and balanced mission thinking, these suggestions embrace both the inner life of believers - aspects of discipleship, prayer and worship - with outer witness and service across the localities and communities of Durham. All local Churches seeking to express these realities in a rhythm of 'body life' will draw spiritual breath from worship, prayer and fellowship, and then express that life as signs of the kingdom through other activities of service and witness.

From this list of catalysts, it is also possible to set clear direction by suggesting a clear sequence of activities. In expressing 'direction', and with plans for moving forward, we can be open to diversions and alternative routes where appropriate. (This is different from having specific 'targets', with implications to 'hit' or 'miss' them.) However, clear direction with signposts and staging posts is important.

1. Any vision for 'Growing the Kingdom' will call for a carefully considered sequence of activities and initiatives to anticipate growth. This includes the initial sharing of hopes and vision, preparation (both prayer and practically), planting initiatives, tending and pruning and, in due time, the buds and fruit of new activities and ministries. This necessary sequence will not be achieved overnight, and calls for a clear sense of direction, with carefully phased 'organic' planning and activity.
2. To fully realise possibilities for 'BeComing Church', key initiatives should not attempt to be an 'add-on' to existing patterns, but involve a realignment of priorities, commitments and diaries. This will give fuller expression to the principle of pruning - limiting or cutting back some current activities for the sake of promoting future growth.
3. Because church life involves people, groups, relationships and patterns of behaviour, there is much about church life which is **systemic** - ie, different activities and routines are connected within a 'system'. Changing some details will inevitably have a knock-on effect in other parts of the system. Wise change calls for anticipating and preparing for these dynamics. Within current parish structures there is much that may happen in a fairly routine, even unconscious, manner, simply because it is part of an established and familiar 'system'. But if we are to 're-imagine and re-shape' the church so as better to express the leading of the Spirit for more effective mission in the future, then we must also be prepared to anticipate and work with the realities and dynamics of systemic change.

An effective way to anticipate and plan for many changes can be to make valid distinctions and choices between options and priorities that are seen as 'essential', 'desirable' or 'optional'. This task calls for genuine and corporate discernment, with prayer to tune in with the Spirit of God, and careful and sensible planning to make the best use of the gifts and resources we have (time, gifts, money etc).

From the initial list of catalysts (listed in Appendix 8), we believe that some are more essential and important for the Deanery. Others may be less of an initial priority, while yet others may be still be desirable, or bud and blossom from earlier initiatives. The following table gives a sense of priority to certain proposals, along with suggestions as to why they carry importance.

## Suggested Priorities for Action:

| <b><u>2010-2012</u></b> | <b>Proposed 'Catalysts' for Development and Growth in each Locality</b>  | <b>Comments</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Essential</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work at establishing 'Locality Enabling Groups'</li> <li>- develop fresh, local prayer for BeComing Church</li> <li>- develop healing ministries in local churches</li> <li>- explore locality action for developing joint work on 'Occasional Opportunities'</li> <li>- develop and promote a vision for small groups</li> <li>- 'Burning Issues' on faith-sharing (personal discipleship); and climate change (global issue)</li> </ul> | <p><i>To develop fresh mindsets and possibilities, BeComing Church 2020 will call for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ fresh Leadership for each Locality</li> <li>~ developing more of a mission 'mindset'</li> <li>~ laying fresh foundations in prayer</li> <li>~ effective healing ministries open people up to the presence, grace, love and power of God</li> </ul> |
| <b>Desirable</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- each Locality to draw up a MAP (MAP = Mission Action Plan)</li> <li>- each Locality to run a series of MSi Courses (MSi = Mission Shaped Introduction)</li> <li>- appraise and develop community engagement</li> <li>- every locality to offer regular opportunities &amp; groups for 'enquirers' to explore faith</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ 'Occasional Opportunities' are where people come <u>to</u> us, and a natural opportunity for mission</li> <li>~ small groups embrace qualities and opportunities for growth in discipleship, personal faith and growing confidence</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Optional</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- youth ministries - explore, support and promote, including Xsite and engagement with existing bodies especially LOL and DYFC</li> <li>- Develop integrated student ministry</li> </ul>  |   |

| <b><u>2012-2015</u></b> | <b>Proposed 'Catalysts' for Development and Growth in each Locality</b>   | <b>Comments</b>  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Essential</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to review community engagement</li> <li>- promote and establish small group structures as normal and recommended for developing discipleship among Christians</li> <li>- explore and promote group discussions for encouraging faith and discipleship among outsiders</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ the vision is to encourage growth both 'inwardly' in discipleship, and 'outwardly' in vision and service to God's world</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Desirable</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regular teaching and opportunities to encourage vibrant, expectant prayer</li> <li>- nurture gifts and vocations: teach, discern and select, both for authorised and to share in other ministries eg 'Wings for Worship', or Warden training</li> <li>- special Locality or City events</li> <li>- each church be encouraged to adopt a 'mentor' or 'critical friend'</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ as the body grows, gifts of 'all believers' will be better recognised and released for discipleship, service and mission</li> </ul> |
| <b>Optional</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Durham city-wide Christian celebration and events</li> <li>- develop programmes for nurturing discipleship</li> <li>- etc</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Deanery life is called to reflect the 'both-and' dimensions <u>both</u> of Localities <u>and</u> local identities, with Durham city issues and vision</i></p>          |

The nature of church life implies that anything not planted and being tended or nurtured by 2015 is less likely to bear significant fruit by 2020. The time horizon of 2020 implies that the next 5 years 2010-15 are crucial to re-imagine and re-shape the life of the Deanery for BeComing Church in fresh ways.

| <b><u>2015-2020</u></b> | <b>To be decided</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
|-------------------------|----------------------|

## Notes, Quotes and Questions



### Notes to the main text of recommendations

**n1:** Anglican traditions can be a source of huge strengths, but also of contemporary weaknesses. They may root the established life of the Church in the particular history and culture of the UK; but at a time of rapid change they can also lead to inertia, and in a global culture that embraces and reflects different cultures, with migrations from all continents, they can breed myopia or complacency.

**n2:** these trajectories reflect national trends, but they are more severe in some parts of the country, including the North East.

**n3:** collaboration is one of the building blocks for 'Growing the Kingdom, representing convictions that partnerships offer a better way forward than isolation. This includes collaboration for the sake of the gospel between denominations (ecumenism) and within denominations (bridging some convictions and churchmanships) and, where appropriate, between the Christian community and those of other faiths or none.

**n4:** radical change implies and involves not simply piling on additional or fresh commitments to existing activities, but assessing a balance of activities in the light of shifting priorities.

**n5:** if the church is to be a magnet of God's life and love, the ongoing renewal in faith and maturing in discipleship of existing members is to be a priority for all, not just an option for enthusiasts.

**n6:** the character required and particular tasks for faithful and effective witness are not just to be for a select few, but flow from a natural expression of the life of faith for all Christians.

**n7:** in Durham Diocese, we have a great gift in the vision, language and building blocks for 'Growing the Kingdom'. The promise and potential of this template will be realised, not through it being just a set of glib phrases to roll off the tongue, but a set of well founded spiritual and practical priorities. The themes of each of the Durham 'building blocks' substantially reflect the areas of focus adopted by a range of similar programmes developed for local churches and some other Dioceses. This should give us encouragement to use the measures for 'Growing the Kingdom' with some confidence!

**n8:** the 'mixed-economy' is now almost a technical term, arising from the principle of developing 'traditional church' and 'Fresh Expressions' in partnership. A value is not to affirm one kind of being church as necessarily better than another, but recognition of a 'both/and' approach. In some contexts, traditional models and practices might benefit from being refreshed for the present, while in other contexts fresh approaches and expressions of being church are called for. This principle was recognised and affirmed by General Synod in February 2010 as "the most promising mission strategy" in today's fast changing culture (see quote 3, below).

**n9:** perhaps we regularly need to emphasise and affirm that prayer is kingdom work!

**n10:** Localities offer a basis for fresh collaboration and partnerships in the future  
- see also Appendix 5, which sets out other introductory thinking and ideas.

**n11:** for the thinking and vision behind 'LEGs' as a mechanism (or agents) of change, see Appendix 7.

## Quotes

A few quotes may help point to the current challenges (some type in **bold for emphasis**):

1. “It has been a truism in the field of architecture, at least since le Corbusier, that **form follows function**. It is even more powerfully the case that **the Church and its ministry need to be determined and shaped by God’s mission in the world.**” (Adrian Dorber; essay in ‘Local Ministry’).
2. As is expressed in the declaration of assent made by bishops at their consecration and priests at their licensing to new ministries, “The Church of England - professes the faith - which **faith the church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation**”.
3. At this precise moment in the life of the church (GS sessions in February 2010), General Synod agreed a resolution to “**affirm the mixed economy of traditional church and fresh expressions of church, working in partnership as the most promising mission strategy in a fast-changing culture**”.

## Questions

Some relevant questions are here brought together for convenient reference.

~ on the Localities:

1. Is there a case for a separate West ‘rural’ locality that might include Brandon / Ushaw Moor / New Brancepeth / Brancepeth / Langley Park / Esh / Waterhouses ?
2. Where would this leave other village / suburbs which are part of existing teams or groups eg Witton Gilbert / Sacriston / Kimblesworth - part of the Durham North Team, or Sherburn and Shadforth - already grouped with St. Giles, or Pitlington with Belmont?
3. With whom do the small communities of the Deerness Valley relate socially, and what does this suggest about long term ecclesiastical alignments?
4. For the sake of mission, in the longer term might some realignments be advisable - eg Langley Park and Esh to be in a Locality with the Durham North Team; Bearpark and Esh to align with Brandon and Brancepeth in the South/West along the B6302 and A690?

~ other key questions that will need to be faced over the near future include:

5. Within these working recommendations, seven stipendiary clergy are initially allocated to the 3 Localities; and questions remain over the placement for any above that number - a further 2 available until 2016, but probably reducing thereafter. (The number of stipendiary clergy available is decided by an equitable Diocesan allocation to each Deanery from the total allocated to Durham Diocese. There is an option for a Deanery to request less clergy than the allocation - with an implication for the size of the total Deanery Share - but not to plan for more!). The main opportunity for adjustments to placements on the ground is then provided during a natural vacancy - either after a retirement, or following a move - but how well do such opportunities allow for desired strategic changes in patterns of deployment? Does the Deanery wait until those occasions to discuss alternatives, or can it develop an ideal ‘game plan’ in advance?

6. In developing an ethos of 'mixed-economy', should Durham Deanery consider other tasks to be carried within the spectrum of roles for stipendiary clergy, as in other Deaneries eg % Deanery Missioner (several Deaneries), % Area Dean (one Deanery), sector chaplains? etc
7. What influence should specific churchmanship convictions have in plans for the future? Eg how do we best respect 'Forward in Faith' distinctives? Is there a case in planning for Anglican 'balance' across the city?
8. Can we affirm a distinct vision for the life of the church in village communities, where numbers are often small and resources (not just money) quite limited? Can we identify and nurture different forms of village church life for the future? What can we learn from the principles developed by 'cell' churches in recent years, and from the recent developments thinking around 'Small Missional Communities' (see current work in the UK by CMS)?
9. How will ecumenical cooperation and developments be particularly significant in some areas, and how will it be expressed? (see Appendix 10 for an overview of some issues).
10. What criteria will come into play for deciding what happens to posts occasioned by eg retirement or a move?
11. How soon can we look to developing additional ministries, perhaps to serve a whole Locality where appropriate, and not just a parish? With various possibilities for development, it can take years to discern, select, train and authorise some ministries (eg clergy, readers, APAs etc). Other ministries can be encouraged and released in less time by other means, (eg worship leaders through Wings for Worship, leaders of small groups, for youth, pastoral, administration etc).
12. How might we establish clearer guidelines and criteria for recognising the 'viability' of local churches or cells?

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**Books that offer good insights and reflections on themes connected with 'BeComing Church':**

- Jesus' People by Steve Croft  
*'What the Church Should do Next'* Church House Publishing 2009
- Parochial Vision by Nick Spencer  
*'The Future of the English Parish'* Paternoster 2004
- Mission-shaped Questions edited by Steve Croft  
*'Defining Issues for Today's Church'* Church House Publishing 2008
- Church of the Isles by Ray Simpson  
*'A Prophetic Strategy for Renewal'* Kevin Mayhew 2003
- The Shaping of Things to Come by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch  
*'Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century'* Hendrickson Publishers 2003

## Appendices and Working Papers 2010

A note on the document codings:

- ~ **date**: the year indicating when the document - in this form - was produced, ie 2009 or 2010 (NB some papers been revised or updated since first produced)
- ~ **the number of the paper**: simply a listing in sequence

eg 2009 / 02 = Paper 2 on being 'Mission-Shaped', produced in 2009

**NB:** The 2010 listing contains a different sequence with some amended and additional material that is different from the initial draft circulation in 2009 - **to avoid confusion, please destroy earlier papers.**

1. A Pastoral Letter
2. What does it mean to be 'Mission-Shaped'?
3. Summaries of Deanery discussions and thinking to date:
  - 3a. Mission: dreams and directions
  - 3b. Ministry: vision and development
  - 3c. Buildings: and the future?
  - 3d. Thinking through finances
4. Electoral Roll Statistics 2008
5. 'Mission Localities' - working proposals
6. Statistics - What do the Localities look like?
7. Growing 'LEGs' (Locality Enabling Groups) for the Localities
8. 'Catalysts' to encourage change for Growing the Kingdom
9. The Cathedral
10. Ecumenical Concerns
11. Summaries of the process to date 2008-2010

*NB: other contributions to this collection of papers as an ongoing 'work in progress' may be added from time to time. This will retain maximum value to the Deanery in maintaining a central dossier of core reference information for BeComing Church; other papers suggested but not yet written are:*

12. *University and Hospital Chaplains*
13. *Suggestions for Prayer and Worship on BeComing Church themes*