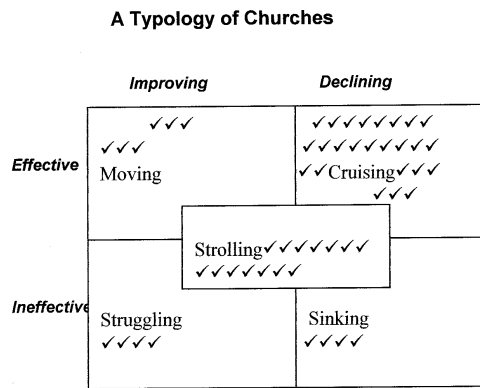


# THE SAINTS ARE READY FOR ACTION!

VISION DAY II – May 30<sup>th</sup> 2006

The long-anticipated follow-up session to Vision 2010 was finally upon us and, on Indian Arrival Day, we assembled at the Chapel of Ease, there to be welcomed and led in prayer by Canon Berkley.

## 1. PART 1 - THE PROCESS



We were invited to consider how we view our Church – are we **moving, cruising, strolling, struggling or sinking?** Perhaps you might consider your own position before we look at the results of this survey?<sup>1</sup> Based on our individual assessment, we each placed a sticker in the appropriate place on a chart, as summarised here, at left. A simple count yielded the data shown below; it was provided by the 53 persons then present.

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Moving	6	11.3%
Cruising	25	47.1%
Strolling	14	26.4%
Struggling	4	7.6%
Sinking	4	7.6%

Expressing the data another way, by counting the columns, 10 persons (18.9%) think we are improving, 29 (54.7%) think we are declining and the remaining 14 (26.4%) took an intermediate position. More hopefully, a count of rows revealed that 31 persons (58.5%) see us as effective, 8 (15.1%) see us as ineffective and the remaining 14 persons (26.4%) took an intermediate position. What are we to make of this survey? Is it a realistic assessment? To what extent does it represent the views of the parish as a whole? Does it matter?

Using a Powerpoint presentation, Canon Berkley treated us to a thought-provoking analysis, most of which is reproduced here for your consideration. He began by stating that 'change is not an option' because 'new knowledge, skills and attitudes are becoming basic requirements, and churches as we know them, will have to undergo significant change' (improvement) if they are to survive as:

1. The environment is competitive and hostile.
2. The competitors are adapting to suit the modern needs of their members.
3. We must not be left behind in fulfilling God's mission.

### DEFINING CHURCH IMPROVEMENT

What, therefore, is Church improvement? Using actual situations from our own parish experience as illustrations, Canon Berkley defined it as 'a series of concurrent and recurring processes' in which a church:

1. Enhances the spiritual competence of its members.
2. Emphasizes teaching and learning.
3. Builds the capacity to take charge of change.
4. Defines its own direction.
5. Assesses its current culture and works to develop positive cultural norms.
6. Strategises to achieve its goals.
7. Addresses the internal conditions that enhance change
8. Maintains momentum during periods of turbulence.
9. Monitors and evaluates its process, progress, achievement and development.
10. Recognises that what the clergy may perceive as important projects may not coincide with the views of parishioners, other stakeholders and the wider public.

<sup>1</sup> This process was adapted from one presented by Stoll and Fink in their text, 'Supporting School Improvement'.

***Change is a difficult and uncomfortable process and we must anticipate, accept and prepare for resistance. Successful Church improvement requires strong supporting mechanisms (including an overarching vision focused on spiritual growth), the commitment and active involvement of a significant proportion of parishioners and a supportive culture.***

Referring to the 'Typology of Churches', Canon Berkley identified significant characteristics of each type:

**1. THE MOVING CHURCH** (effective, improving):

- A) People are actively working together to respond to their changing context and to keep developing.
- B) Support systems are in place to help the church achieve its shared purpose and goals.
- C) Those involved know where they are going and how they will get there.

**2. THE CRUISING CHURCH** (effective, declining) is perceived as effective, or at least more than satisfactory, by clergy and the church community:

- A) It has a carefully constructed camouflage.
- B) It is usually in a relatively affluent area; members grow in spite of the quality of the ministry to them.
- C) Many cruising churches may never be exposed as offering their members an impoverished diet.
- D) It can be described as 'unidentified ineffective church,' hence perhaps the most challenging church'.
- E) It tends to escape intervention, relying on past achievements and generally positive reputation.

**3. THE STROLLING CHURCH** is neither particularly effective nor ineffective. It is moving toward some kind of church improvement but so slowly that the pace of change threatens to overrun its efforts.

- A) It seems to be meandering slowly into the future, to the detriment of its members.
- B) It can certainly benefit from an outside review, new clergy or a Council's eye.

**4. THE SINKING CHURCH** (ineffective, declining) is a failing church.

- A) The leadership, through apathy or ignorance, is either unprepared or unable to change.
- B) It is usually situated in a socially disadvantaged area, where people are undemanding.

**5. THE STRUGGLING CHURCH** (ineffective, improving) is ineffective, based on its current processes and spiritual awareness.

- A) It is aware of its weakness and expends considerable energy to improve.
- B) Considerable unproductive processes occur in an attempt to understand the change process.
- C) There is a willingness to try anything that may make a difference.
- D) It is often viewed as failing or sinking; this is a demotivational force in terms of church improvement.
- E) This church will ultimately succeed because it has the will.

## **CHURCH CULTURE**

Organisational culture consists largely of people's implicit assumptions, beliefs and values; what we see is their outward manifestation – how we operate. We must understand our culture and be prepared to modify it to eliminate any negative aspects which will work against implementing change. The following cultural norms (expressions of culture and community behaviour) will embrace and support church improvement efforts:

1. Shared goals – we know where we are going.
2. Responsibility for success – we all agree that we must succeed.
3. Collegiality – we are working on this together.
4. Continuous improvement – we can get better.
5. Lifelong learning – it is for everyone.
6. Risk taking – we learn by trying something new.
7. Support – there's always someone there to help.
8. Mutual respect – everyone has something to offer
9. Openness – we can discuss our differences.
10. Celebration and humour – we feel good about ourselves.

## CONCLUSION

1. The primary aim of any church should be that church practice be underpinned by all these norms.
2. Those working to support struggling churches would focus initially on developing different norms than those working with strolling or moving churches.
3. Church improvement, if taken seriously, means “no quick fixes.”
4. It involves people working together to bring about fundamental changes.
5. Real improvement involves challenge and accountability, building development capacity, understanding contextual differences, and respecting the human dimension of change – people’s feelings.

However, all of this must be seen in the light of our mission - ‘what is it that God wants us to do?’ The most basic of answers can be found in our Catechism (BCP p. 401) – a reminder might be useful to our readers:

**75. What is the mission of the Church?**

‘To bring all people into unity with God and each other in Christ’.

**76. How does the Church pursue its mission?**

‘The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the gospel and promotes justice, peace and love, and by its own transformation into the likeness of Christ proclaims His transforming presence.’

**77. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?**

‘The Church carries out its mission through the various ministries of all its members’.

To reconcile the world to God we need love, manifested, in part, in fellowship. Canon Berkley noted that those present, by now over 65 persons, had come with the purpose of supporting Church improvement – perhaps in some of the ways we dramatised at our previous session last November. An attempt then to show the videos of the group session was unsuccessful, as a result of poor sound quality. In mitigation, it should be noted that these video recordings will probably be accessible on our soon-to-be-launched website.

## 2. PART TWO – THE WAY FORWARD

The many valuable suggestions emanating from last November’s Vision Day I were listed and presented to parishioners with a previous issue of ***SAINTS ALIVE!*** and parishioners were asked to prioritise them. From the very few responses received, and with the assistance of the ‘Think Tank’ members, five groups of Projects emerged for our consideration. These fall under the headings of Community Outreach, Spiritual Development/Worship, Vocational, Infrastructure and Youth – you can read the details in the May issue.

Justice Paula-Mae Weekes guided the participants through a session aimed at identifying one or more ‘do-able’ projects from each group and one champion to lead a team committed to working on each project. Much discussion followed and what eventually emerged was:

### 1) COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- A) Health Clinic – Champion: Mrs V. Roach
- B) Website – 75% complete
- C) Transportation: Champion: Ms Y. Gooding
- D) Chapel of Ease – Community Facility (in progress; Champion: Mr B. Jones)

### 2) SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT/INNOVATIONS IN WORSHIP

- A) Multi media technology – Champion: Mr E. Drew
- B) Liturgical innovations and variety - Co-Champions: Ms S. & Ms P. Christopher & Mrs K. Wong with Canon Berkley – our services are to be:
  - (i) Highly interactive
  - (ii) Bible-based – texts to be studied in advance
  - (iii) Bible study in regular Sunday services
  - (iv) Varied in use of instruments and songs

### 3) VOCATIONAL

- A) "Inter-generational" – Champion: Dr T. Townsend with Justice P. Weekes & Ms T. King
  - (i) Mentorship programmes
  - (ii) Men/women/boys/girls
  - (iii) Couples peer support: Champion: Dr T. Townsend
  - (iv) Mothers' Union/ACMS
- B) Counsellors – EAP programme: Champion: Mrs G. Talma

### 4) INFRASTRUCTURE

- A) Parking – within compound and Savannah – Champion: Ms Y. Gooding
- B) Air-cooling of church (plans in progress – Champion: Major-General R. Brown)
- C) New church hall (plans in progress: Vestry)

- 5) **YOUTH** – the area of greatest concern, but with varied opinions as to what must be done. Some believe we need a paid full-time Youth Officer; others agreed, but felt that finding a champion, perhaps an older, experienced person, should be the object of this exercise. Meanwhile, Mr Simon Wiltshire and Miss Tonya King volunteered to lead the youth aspect of the programme, which will involve Drama, Dance, Sports, Mentorship, Spiritual development – post confirmation training and a Vibrant Sunday School.

The ***SAINTS ALIVE!*** team promised its support by ensuring that you, the parishioners, are kept informed about the programmes and progress of our change implementation process. ***SAINTS ALIVE!*** would also be very happy to present your comments, constructive criticism and contributions to our collective parish efforts at the spiritual growth which will permit us to pursue our mission more effectively. You can contact us at [allsaintsalive@yahoo.com](mailto:allsaintsalive@yahoo.com) or via the office.

Very clear **Terms of Reference** were provided for implementing the projects:

1. Teams to have 3-6 members.
2. Team members to have relevant expertise.
3. Action Plan to be drafted.
4. Details of time, budgeting, training, accommodation and HR needs to be provided.
5. First Action Plan Progress report to be submitted by 4 pm on July 3 2006 and monthly thereafter, with completion of Action Plan by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.
6. Progress Reports in writing to the Vestry, c/o Church Office.

***Having read and reflected deeply on this important document, you may see a role for yourself in our development process, as a member of a team involved in one or more of the change implementation activities identified above. Should this be the case, please contact the appropriate champion through the Church office or speak with Canon Berkley. It is not necessary that you should have attended our Vision Days for such participation; we need the active involvement of all of the Saints!***

Before closing, Certificates of Appreciation were distributed to all participants and Canon Berkley made a plea for assistance in defining a Mission Statement, to reflect the activities and ideas of the day. Since this was to have been submitted at a later date, we hope that he now has many such statements from which we, as parishioners, can define the essence of what we do, in the name of God, to assist in reconciling all things and all people to Him. ***SAINTS ALIVE!*** suggests that it might be useful to add a clear, crisp Vision Statement and, perhaps, our Core Values. A final prayer and the promised 'appropriate' lunch – it was, you recall, Indian Arrival Day – ended an apparently very productive Vision Day II. The proof will, as always, be found in the action which follows! We have, at length, 'talked the talk' – now we are enjoined to 'walk the talk'.

***May we request that you hold, in your prayers, our initiatives towards a transformed, effective parish of All Saints', our clergy, those parishioners whose leadership as champions of particular issues we applaud and all who have indicated willingness to serve as active team members.*** June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006