

## 38/11 Review of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

### Introduction

1. The Department of Evangelism (New Churches) Reconstitution Ordinance 2010 requires the Standing Committee to review the Department of Evangelism and New Churches Ordinance 2010 (the Ordinance) and report to the Synod in 2012 about the outcome of its review. At the 2011 Synod, resolution 38/11 requested that certain functions and activities of the Board be included in the review. The text of resolution 38/11 is set out in the annexure to this report. This report has taken into consideration the requests in resolution 38/11.
2. Under the Ordinance, the Board of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches (the Board) has the following purposes –
  - (a) To advance the evangelistic purposes of the Diocese, including through the planting of new congregations and fellowships in the Diocese.
  - (b) The Board may, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, fulfill its purposes by such means as the Board considers expedient including by –
    - (i) resourcing churches and parishes to evangelize including through the planting of new congregations in the Diocese, and
    - (ii) identifying, training, supporting and appointing suitably gifted persons to evangelize, including through the planting and leading of new fellowships in the Diocese.
3. Like most new initiatives in mission work it will have initial difficulties and misunderstanding. This has been the situation in the planting of new fellowships in the diocese over the past 2 years.
4. On the other hand we have seen new fellowships started and continued in the following locations –  
 Berkeley Life Centre, Fellowship Leader Wayne Pickford.  
 New Life Anglican Church (Oran Park), the Rev Stuart Starr  
 ShACC (Nowra), Brendon Gartlett  
 Soma Church (Macquarie), the Rev Peter Hughes  
 Soul Revival Church (Grays Point), the Rev Stuart Crawshaw  
 Vine Church (Surry Hills), the Rev Toby Neal.
5. There are 13 congregations with links to ENC. Some of these were in existence before the Ordinance was changed in 2010.

### Fellowships

6. A new fellowship is established by a group of people gathering together in a suburb independent of the local Anglican Church, who apply to ENC to become a fellowship.
7. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is presented to the fellowship outlining the responsibilities of the Board to the leader of the fellowship and the leader's responsibilities to the Board. The MOU legitimises the church plant providing licensing from the Archbishop and other administrative assistance. Under the MOU, the church fellowship leader is employed by ENC and paid the minimum wage (or more if it can be raised by the fellowship), rather than the minimum Diocesan stipend, as well as superannuation and a Ministry Expense Account.
8. A copy of the ENC Board's MOU is available from the ENC office.
9. The church fellowship leader must be a qualified person, either ordained or lay, who has been appointed by the Board and licensed by the Archbishop on the application of the Director of ENC. Licensing follows the same policies as for other ministries in the Diocese, including a requirement that the leader has completed at least one year at Moore Theological College before being accepted as a candidate for diaconal ordination.
10. It is the Board's intention that a church fellowship will grow and become a Recognised Church in time. If the church fellowship does not want to do this, then the MOU will end and the fellowship will operate independently, possibly as an Affiliated Church.

### Recruiting

11. In co-operation with Moore Theological College and Ministry Training and Development, the Director of ENC, the Rev Bruce Hall, meets regularly with students at the College assessing them as prospective church planters and for cross cultural ministry. Currently there are a small group of students

considering this ministry. The Board also conducts training days for senior ministers and other parish leaders to assist them in planning new church plants.

### **Planting New Fellowships**

12. The Board can plant new fellowships in any parish in the Diocese however the Ordinance states that "Although the permission of the minister and Regional Bishop is not necessary, it is intended that fellowships be planted and operate with the **goodwill and encouragement** of the Regional Bishop and the minister of any parish in which a fellowship would, but for subclause (2), meet or operate." (clause 15(3))

13. It appears that 'goodwill and encouragement' has not worked.

14. The main problem with some of the new fellowships has been the lack of communication between the various identities, the Regional Bishops, ENC, the fellowship leader and the local minister.

15. The committee undertaking this review was informed of a number of cases of a breakdowns in goodwill, such as a fellowship starting without the local minister being informed at all and where reconciliation following a church split has been made much more difficult.

16. It is noted that ENC is not a haven for church splits or those who would work independently of diocesan structures.

17. These cases have caused angst in the Diocese and questions have been raised, not just on the floor of Synod. As a result, the Director and the Board of ENC are committed to working with Regional Bishops, Regional Councils and local parishes. It has not been possible to gauge how this angst has affected the church planting plans of local churches and Mission Areas.

### **Planting new churches**

18. Currently there are three ways of beginning new congregations or fellowships in the Diocese.

19. The Archbishop, through the Parishes Ordinance 1979, has the authority to form a new ecclesiastical district, being a provisional parish.

20. Secondly a local congregation can plant a new congregation in another place within the parish. This is a mother/daughter relationship and has been the procedure for many parishes in the Diocese over many years. The church planter is licensed by the Archbishop on the application of the senior minister of the parish. A parish can start a new congregation in another parish provided it has consulted with the Regional Council and the other parish.

21. Thirdly, through the ENC Ordinance, where a fellowship is a ministry of the Board and is taken to be outside any parish.

### **Consultation and Reporting**

22. It is recognised that fellowships provide an opportunity to experiment with different forms of gatherings – different people groups, networks, or types of outreach – but also that there does need to be a strengthening of the relationship between the various parties involved in the establishment of fellowships.

23. It is therefore recommended that a ministry plan must be presented to the local Bishop and the parish council of the parish where the fellowship is to be planted. The ministry plan will aid in the discussion and understanding of the proposed fellowship. The ministry plan does not have to be agreed to but must be discussed.

24. It is further recommended that the Regional Bishop or Regional Archdeacon must give permission for a new fellowship being planted in a parish. This is because –

- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon has an overview of the region both personally and through the Mission Area leaders.
- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon has regular meetings with all of the interested parties in church planting and the planting of new fellowships.
- The Bishop and Archdeacon have contact with the Mission Property Committee through the Mission Board, and meet regularly with the Director of ENC and with local clergy.
- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon has the opportunity to discuss with various individuals the needs for new congregations of fellowship.
- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon is able to assess the suitability of a candidate for a church plant or fellowship.

- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon is aware of particular deserts or tribes where there is a need for a new ministry.
- The Regional Bishop/Archdeacon has pastoral oversight of the fellowship leader.

#### **Future Plans**

25. ENC will continue to recruit people from Moore College and will assist local churches to church plant in particular areas where there are unreached tribes or deserts.

26. ENC will assist local churches in the ministry of reaching people groups that are currently unreached. This could be recent migrants or second or later generation groups.

27. New cross cultural churches might be established from an existing church or because of the changing demography of an area, a small fellowship could be established initially independent of the local church.

28. The ENC Board has many challenges because by 2050 the population of Sydney will grow to 7 million with 60% of this growth coming from migration. The growth of Sydney in some areas will be the increase of medium and high density accommodation. In other places it will be the establishment of new suburbs in the north western and south western plains of Sydney. Projections for population growth are 30% in 'greenfields' and 70% in 'brownfields' areas.

29. The Board's future plans will also consider raising funds so as to continue to engage in evangelism across the Diocese. It will also seek to establish support mechanisms for pioneering work among small people groups in Sydney.

#### **Recommendation**

30. The committee undertaking the review recommended that clause 15(3) of the Ordinance be amended so that –

- (a) the ENC must present a ministry plan for the proposed church fellowship to the Parish Council of the local parish and the Regional Bishop or Archdeacon, and
- (b) the Regional Bishop or Archdeacon must give permission for the creation of the proposed church fellowship.

31. In response, the Standing Committee requested that a bill for the Department of Evangelism and New Churches Ordinance 2010 Amendment Ordinance 2012 be promoted to the Synod "by request of the Standing Committee".

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

ROBERT WICKS  
*Diocesan Secretary*

21 August 2012

**38/11 Review of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches**

Synod –

- (a) thanks God for the work of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches (ENC) and rejoices in the potential of New Fellowships to reach many in the Diocese;
- (b) requests Standing Committee, in their review of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches (ENC) Reconstituting Ordinance 2010 which is due for report to the Synod in 2012, to include specific analysis of the following –
  - (i) how much ENC's operations reflect the priorities and modes of operation expressed in the Department of Evangelism (New Churches) Reconstitution Ordinance 2010 Explanatory Report, particularly in regard to church planting in new geographic areas where the local parishes have already created plans and have the resources to begin a new work,
  - (ii) what efforts are made to speak to local parishes and mission areas prior to developing plans for planting New Fellowships,
  - (iii) whether the priority in the ordinance of "resourcing churches and parishes to evangelise, including through the planting of new congregations in the Diocese" over "identifying, training, supporting and appointing suitably gifted persons to evangelise, including through the planting and leading of new fellowships in the Diocese" has been maintained (4.2.a and 4.2.b in the ordinance),
  - (iv) what the effect of ENC church in new geographic areas has on the impetus of local churches and Mission Areas considering their own plans for church planting,
  - (v) what theological institutions ENC considers candidates from and what level of theological training is required in their New Fellowship planters,
  - (vi) what effect it would have on a New Fellowship in the case that a church planter is unwilling or unable to be ordained to the ministry of the word in the Sydney Diocese,
  - (vii) what effect it would have on the integration of a New Fellowship into the life of the Diocese in the case that a church planter is unwilling or unable to be ordained to the ministry of the word in the Sydney Diocese,
  - (viii) the relationship between ENC and the Mission Property Committee, and the process by which the use of Mission Property is decided,

and, if necessary, to bring an amended ordinance reflecting any recommended changes to the next session of Synod.