The folklore goes in the Diocese of Bristol that in March 2006, the Bishop of Bristol sacked all seven Area Deans.

I had the rather dubious pleasure of attending the meeting in which this ruthless act of pastoral insensitivity was accomplished. All I can say that the journalists of the diocese wrote the headline rather than the text of the article.

What had happened was that the Bishop's Staff had made the decision to increase significantly the responsibilities held at deanery level, handing over some of their responsibilities to Area Deans and Lay Chairs. Those responsibilities represented a role and an expectation of a commitment that the existing Area Deans had not signed up for when they put themselves forward (or were put forward) as Area Dean.

So it would have defeated the object to ask that group of Area Deans to just step up to the new job. So the Bishop in fact asked them all to step down – holding out the olive branch that, if they so wanted, they could apply again for the position. I won't pretend that the meeting was all sweetness and light, the reality is that only one of them did apply for the new role (he didn't get re-appointed) and there were a few clergy colleagues understandably licking their wounds for a few months.

But the folklore or that headline does serve a purpose in the cultural history of the Diocese of Bristol. That act was seen as a decisive and defining moment when the senior leadership of the Diocese showed that they intended to take deaneries seriously. And that is the journey we have been on in the last six or so years.

It is that journey that I am going to talk about over the next 30 minutes or so.

The title I have been given is "thinking out of the box: achievements, innovation and capacity building". I hope we have occasionally thought out of the box, bred some innovation, built some capacity and achieved a thing or two. Hopefully we have made some flees jump higher than the lid. I don't think we have done anything that hasn't been done in another diocese somewhere although our combination might have been different.

But what I really want to do through recounting the journey it is to highlight the challenges, issues and tensions we've had to address and talk about some of the lessons we are learning. I want to stress now that this has not been a resounding success and we have made mistakes along the way. But I think we are on a similar journey to that of many other dioceses and their deaneries are on – some are further ahead than us and have some scars we could

have learnt from; some are starting out and I hope some of what I share will help prepare you for the journey you are embarking on. Once I've told the story, we'll have some time for group discussion and then some feedback and Q&A.

Before I go on, just a little background about me. I have worked in the Diocese of Bristol for seven years, first as the Bishop of Bristol's Lay Chaplain and the Diocese's Strategic Development Adviser and for the last three years as the Bishop's Chief of Staff which is a posh way of saying I fulfil three roles: Bishop's Chaplain, head of strategic planning and policy, and Director of Communications. Throughout the seven years I have had the privilege and the daunting taks of being part of the Bishop's Staff. My professional background before that was in book publishing in marketing and business development for a large commercial publishing group as well as a self-supporting ministry role in my parish church in south London.

In the rest of my life, I am married to Sonia and we have three young children, Seth who's 5, Micah who's 3 and Isla who is 5 months old. We love being part of the parish of Bishopston & St Andrews, part of the great Bristol City deanery where we worship in our local church, St Barts. But let me stress that because of my diocesan role I have resolved not to get involved in PCCs or

Deanery Synods (although in a former life I have been a churchwarden). So a health warning that what I say comes very much from the perspective of diocesan leadership – and that is a partial perspective and I hope you will be gracious with me if I err too much in that direction.

Just to give you a picture of the Diocese of Bristol, it basically an M4 corridor or Great western Line diocese. It follows them both from Swindon to Bristol taking in parts of North Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire and ending at the Severn Bridge. The population is about 1m, mostly in greater Bristol (0.5m) and Swindon (0.25m). In the real world, Swindon and Bristol have no particular common ground or relationship (other than a vaguely antagonistic one) and the more rural areas would rather do their shopping in Bath.

In terms of our church make-up, we have 200 churches in 100 or so benefices and 30,000 or so people regularly attend church with an Average Weekly Attendance of 18,000. Looking at clergy licensed to parishes, including training curates and when our vacancies are filled, we would have about 125 stipendiary clergy and 75 non-stipendiary clergy.

In all parishes in the diocese raise about £15m, the diocesan budget is £7.5m, £5m or so of which comes from parishes in Parish Share.

And our deaneries? Well we have seven in all of varying sizes and in varying contexts. One for Swindon, four for greater Bristol, including the rural parts of South Glos, and two rural deaneries in North Wiltshire. The deanery with the most churches is North Wiltshire, but it has the smallest population and church going community. Bristol West has the fewest churches, the most money and the most members. I think about 15 years ago, pastoral reorganisation reduced 14 deaneries to seven. Needless to say, they are all sufficiently different.

So that's the potted summary of where and what we are, but what are we about? Well, like most dioceses these days, we have purpose and mission statements, strategies and programmes. I can be held responsible for a lot of that and there's a fair amount of cynicism about any or all of these. It is important to refer to these and I will when talking about the responsibilities held at deanery level.

But, to be clear, what we are primarily about is supporting our parish churches through:

- setting a direction for the Diocese that focuses on the mission of God and the growth of His Kingdom
- recruiting, developing and deploying godly ministers who can lead their churches into growth
- providing resources, governance and decision-making processes that facilitate mission and growth locally.
- being a wider community of faith where we can work and share together and be interdependent (a key word for us), where we are bigger than the sum of our parts.

These are the filters through which we try to allocate resources, assess our work and make decisions. But this is effectively why the Diocese exists.

Which takes us back to March 2006 and the P45 moment for our Area Deans. What led to that decision?

Well, in Mike Hill the Bishop of Bristol we have a Diocesan Bishop who has been at the vanguard of deaneries taking on extra responsibility. Between 1988 and 1992, as Area Dean of one of the wealthiest deaneries in the Diocese of Oxford, Amersham, he started exploring what could be done together, initially through sharing each other's Parish Share burdens.

As Archdeacon of Berkshire in the mid-1990s, he developed the strategy in the Diocese of Oxford whereby deaneries took on more responsibility in a number of areas. He oversaw that work in the episcopal Area of Buckingham where he was Bishop from 1998 to 2003. By 2006, Lee Rayfield had been appointed the Bishop of Swindon. Bishop Lee had worked through the reality of the deaneries strategy in Oxford where he had been Area Dean of Maidenhead.

So no one should have been surprised that deaneries were going to get a shake up in the Diocese of Bristol. I asked Bishop Mike about it yesterday and he admitted to being a one trick pony when it comes to strategy. I didn't give him the satisfaction of contradicting him but I can assure you he is not.

It was Bishop Mike's conviction that too many decisions were taken in dioceses too far from the coal face. Bishop's Staffs hover at something between light aircraft and helicopter altitude and miss the lie of the land sometimes. It's easy for anecdote and personal judgements to determine some decision-making rather than good working knowledge. We wanted a balcony view rather than an aerial view and, whatever the limitations of deaneries as a perspective, it was the structure we had so let's make use of it.

This was the organising principle of subsidiarity, which states that a matter ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized authority capable of addressing that matter effectively (according to Wikipedia) and he was trying to apply that to the oversight of the Diocese.

The other core factor in making the decision to share responsibility was to increase the level of interdependence in the life of the diocese. The "us and them" attitudes between parishes and their diocese (and vice-versa) does not lead to mission. It breeds on one level dependency, on another level distance and distrust. By bringing the life of the diocese closer to home through deanery relationships, the aim was to play a part in increasing the sense of playing a part in something bigger, experiencing the wider diocese through the life of the deanery as "us" rather than "them". It is in the deanery that you encounter your neighbours, seeking to minister to communities that you know, that sometimes (but not always) have something in common with yours and can be that kind of conversational space that Bishop Alastair talked about last night.

The decision in 2006 led immediately to a couple of changes:

 The leadership quality of the Area Deans increased markedly, if not uniformly. A role description was devised, clergy were invited to apply and the Bishop appointed those best suited. As a result, but again not uniformly, the kind of leadership that Area Deans brought became more strategic, ideas and decision-making oriented than pastoral and representational.

- 2. It also led to increased expectations of Area Deans and Lay Chairs. A budget of, wait for it, £10k was given to each Area Dean to ensure they were sufficiently resources for a role which it was expected they would give 2 days a week to. Their stipend was also enhanced by £1k.
- With increased expectations of deanery leadership came increased expectation of diocesan leadership – to communicate, consult and involve, to walk the talk.

In the first three years, diocesan and deanery leadership were clearly feeling their way in this relationship. The language that was used was that of "sharing *episcope* and responsibilities" not giving or delegating them. Letting go and trust, competence and knowhow were all issues and I will talk about them later.

But in the areas of clergy deployment planning, encouraging mission and being consulted about decisions that deaneries had never before had a look in on, things were changing. It was an important developmental period during which the quality and commitment of Lay Chairs improved and, as some Area Deans changed jobs, other clergy who may not have believed that the diocese was serious about sharing responsibility and the Deanery Synod was worth turning up at, took notice and put themselves forward as Area Deans.

The second shift took place, at least in theory, in 2009 when we put forward and agreed our 2010-15 Diocesan Strategy, "Releasing the energy".

Behind the strategy was the aim to release the energy and potential of the whole people of God, our resources as a diocese and ultimately see that potential burst into the life of the Kingdom of God.

At the forefront of the Strategy was our diocesan Growth Programme, launched in 2005, a framework to encourage parishes to grow in commitment to God, partnership with others, influence in their communities and of course numbers. Like the Bath & Wells Changing Lives initiative, we have stuck with it and will, I suspect, continue to stick with it through to 2020. Along with our purpose statement of "creating communities of wholeness with Christ at the centre", the Growth programme is meant to set the direction of the

diocese, and to be permissive and encouraging. It's meant to show parishes that are committed to God's mission that their diocese is behind them and to help parishes who are struggling to start to focus on what God wants for the world.

The second strand of the strategy and the way that the Diocese would give energy to this growth was by developing its ministers and leaders, the core activity of a diocese. Bishop Peter talked about how they are doing that in Bath & Wells and this is really where we too are putting our resources and starting to see some real change.

As a diocese, we would need sufficient income to do this but the balance of resources across the diocese needed to be corrected with too high a proportion of parish income being redirected through the diocese in Parish SHare. So we have an income generation strand to our strategy.

Finally, the strategy addressed how such work should be supported: what central services should be available, what the governance and leadership structure should be and a key part of that was the formalising of our deanery responsibilities. But let me stress that this strand is dictated by the Growth Programme and is

in support of that. We were trying to become, to use the terrible phrase, fit for purpose to support the Church we wanted to see.

Area Deans and Lay Chairs were encouraged to form Deanery
Leadership Teams which would have delegated responsibility for:

- Encouraging the Growth Programme in their locality
- Making recommendations about where and what kind of clergy deployment (stipendiary and self-supporting) was appropriate in the benefices of their deaneries, within the parameters of their stipendiary allocation.
- Managing our Leadership Development in Vacancies process
- Requesting pledges from parishes in Parish Share under our new, unassessed Parish Share system and raising income to be shared across the diocese.

These were clearly defined, delegated responsibilities and for the last three years we have sought to put them into practice.

So what issues have we faced as we have sought together to make these changes.

A changing relationship

A story: Imagine a daughter who has been routinely ignored by her parent, occasionally ridiculed by them and certainly thought they could never achieve anything in life. Then one day out of the blue, her parents sit down with her and tell her that they want her to step up and start managing part of the family business. How do you think that's going to work out?

The daughter is going to be under-confident, inexperienced and probably not going to know what she's doing; but she is also going to want to test the boundaries and see if her parents are for real. She is likely to make some poor decisions and express some generally adolescent behaviour.

The parents on the other hand are likely to actually forget she's meant to be running that division, frequently ignore her, occasionally overrule her. They are sometimes going to regret the decision because of the messes they end up feeling they need to clear up. They are going to struggle actually to let go.

In short, it's going to be messy. A dysfunctional parent-child relationship must navigate and endure a parent-adolescent phase and aim to end up with an adult-adult relationship. That's never been a straightforward process.

In terms of the family of the Diocese of Bristol, that was the kind of thing we were trying to attempt. Area Deans and Deanery Leadership Teams made some pretty poor decisions (but then so did the Bishop's Staff). Archdeacons and Bishops ignored their Area Dean and Lay Chair colleagues on crucial decisions (sometimes by mistake, sometimes on purpose). Area Deans made power plays. Bishops and Archdeacons got upset. Communication was patchy. Messes were made – and continue to be. But, after six years, we're a lot closer to that relationship of organisational equals, fulfilling different roles and responsibilities, trusting each other – a bit.

If you are considering setting out on this kind of journey, do not underestimate what diocesan leadership will need to let go — emotionally as well as practically — and how the ignored child of the deanery will need to step up and get secure. Acknowledge that it will happen, operate under the umbrella of grace, and be clear...

The de- words

Some jargon: Decentralisation, delegation, devolution, de-anery: words that have been bandied around with great abandon in the diocese since we started this journey probably with very little understanding of what they actually mean.

My view is that the Church of England lives the paradox of being both non-centralised and highly centralised. Parishes operate autonomously but, through a legal framework and the levers of licensing and paying ministers, over the course of the 20th century, dioceses re-centralised the structures of the church massively. And we wonder why we have an "us and them" culture.

Where does the "floppy" deanery fit between the non-centralised parish and the centralising diocese? Well nowhere really. It starts as a humble weak link. It cannot tell any parish what to do (actually, much like a diocese) and any responsibility or decision-making powers it has must come from the diocesan level. Any influence deanery leadership teams have must be earned and be exercised with the permission of those they seek to lead.

So to what extent does giving deaneries responsibility constitute de-centralisation? Well, the obvious answer is "to a certain extent". But, in the Diocese of Bristol we went through a period of it being "to an *un*certain extent". This came largely as a result of a confusion between whether powers had been devolved to deaneries or whether responsibilities had been delegated – the difference between devolution and delegation.

Some people (notably some at deanery level but crucially the Bishop's Staff member managing the Area Deans) thought that powers had been devolved to deaneries. So having been given responsibility for deployment and income generation, this would have meant that there was no accountability framework unless things got so bad those powers were revoked.

Whereas what was clearly outlined and agreed through our strategy was a delegation of responsibilities. Delegation is not necessarily a guarded act of empowerment: it involves trust and letting go but is also an ongoing act of collaboration with accountability and support built in.

In some ways, the challenge we experienced due to this confusion was not deaneries taking on too much responsibility but the exclusion of the diocesan level from a space it could usefully and rightly occupy. The diocesan viewpoint, resources, and know-how were, how should I put it, not invoked. Meanwhile one or two deaneries were building up structures and bureaucracy that duplicated work that was being done to a higher standard and more cost-effectively at a diocesan level.

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What we were not intending on doing (which devolution gets you close to) was creating seven dioceses with seven infrastructures. The Diocesan Strategy was not to make it "all about deaneries", it was to enable deaneries to fulfil their best possible purpose. We were seeking to delegate the responsibilities to deanery leadership that they were better placed to fulfil, but also to bring the resources at diocesan level in to support them.

In some cases, we clearly failed to communicate or manage that well at a diocesan level and, in some cases, we have been seen as rowing back from our commitment to deaneries. We are now combating an even greater suspicion of diocesan structures and, in recent months, we have had to re-state and re-justify what does need to happen at diocesan level where a more strategic overview can take place.

The lesson we are learning is that diocesan leadership need to be crystal clear and consistent about what they are handing over, what it means and how it will be managed.

This leads me to talk just a little bit about which responsibilities we felt were best delegated to deanery level.

Responsibilities

I've outlined the major responsibilities that were given to deanery leadership but there were others that it was decided not to give to them. We may be right, we may be wrong but we have tried to work out the principle of subsidiarity in our context.

So, for example, we do think that deanery leadership teams should effectively make the decision about where a post should be deployed but it is not their job to make an appointment. Yes, Area Deans and Lay Chairs are involved in appointments but they should not be promising jobs to their preferred candidates. The recruitment expertise and process needs to be run at a diocesan level. Equally, PCCs and deanery leadership teams need to be consulted about clergy housing to get that balcony view but the management and decisions relating to a £40m asset base with a £1.3m annual expenditure budget needs to be done at diocesan level.

Another example is that Deanery Chapters are proving a very effective place of peer support and encouragement towards leadership for mission and Area Deans offer excellent pastoral support but Area Deans are not line managers, do not manage professional development, discipline or capability.

And another example is that in my role, I can crunch the data of attendance and finance and mission and finance strength for a diocese as easily as I can for a few parishes and then offer that data to deanery colleagues.

You may want to think about what responsibilities it is right for you to take on.

Up close and personal

So these are the responsibilities but despite the encouraging appetite of our deanery leaders to take on these responsibilities and the balcony view decision-making, there are real challenges. Parishes will frequently criticise the Diocese for "top down" approaches and decision-making. Sometimes that's justified, sometimes that's when they don't like a decision that the diocese is asked to take, balancing available resources against mission need.

But when an unpopular decision is made by someone flying in a helicopter, you can shout and throw stones back at it but you don't have to look in the whites of their eyes for long. When someone makes it from the balcony, you do – and you continue to do so week to week. Making decisions with a deanery hat on from the balcony is one thing, but it is hard when you're the vicar of the neighbouring parish to that affected and you see them on the street.

It is quite useful to be able to deflect the heat to the Bishop or the Archdeacon or Diocesan Secretary sometimes.

And inevitably this has swayed some of our deanery leaders in their decision making. It is really tough and you've got to be really tough. But what can happen is that the deanery can become a robust and challenging space where good decision-making can be exercised — and then lived out. In the long run this is probably much better than using distance as a tactic for diffusing anger.

Capacity building

How have we sought to build capacity in deaneries?

I really think that the key to this has been giving real responsibility. If you want energy to be created at a deanery level give them a real job to do. I talked about this in relation to Area Deans and Lay Chairs but the same applies to members of our Deanery Leadership Teams (which are often the same as Standing or Pastoral Committees).

One of the changes of emphasis we made in our 2010-15 Strategy was focus on Deanery Leadership Teams rather than just Area Deans and Lay Chairs. Of course, direct accountability runs through the appointed Area Dean in relation to their responsibilities and the

Lay Chair is elected but in all deaneries there is now a group of gifted and committed lay and ordained people working collaboratively on the various areas given to the deaneries and they are taking the initiative. And, on the whole, these are not committees but teams focused on encouraging mission, sharing and generating resources and make wise decisions on how those resources can be used.

The budget is now not seen as "Area Dean's expenses" but as a deanery budget. And gradually, some people are standing for Deanery Synod not to get a free pass on to their PCC but to contribute to a lively conversation about mission and how it is resourced – and to get in on meaningful decisions.

Area Deans and their role

Part of the capacity building obviously relates to the role of Area or Rural Dean. It has been hard to get the balance of trying to encourage team leadership with a mix of lay and ordained roles but also recognise that the Area Dean is an appointed leader and manager who is given a job and ultimately held accountable for decisions in the deanery.

By bigging up the role of Area Dean in 2006 and given the particularly clerical culture of the diocese historically we were

always in a place where that balance tipped towards "it's the Area Dean, stupid". There was also a kind of parochialism that led people in the diocese to think that we were somehow blazing a trail by sharing responsibility with deaneries and we were somehow asking more of our Area Deans than any other diocese had ever done. The reality was that we weren't asking them to do more than Area Deans in some other dioceses had done for years - but we were resourcing them better. Many used the budget for administrative help in the parish and deanery and one or two have used their allocation of parochial posts to free them up.

A few Area Deans have made strong arguments to be half-time posts. Some of them do spend up to half their time fulfilling their responsibilities and when the five year term came to an end last year, as a Bishop's Staff and with Area Deans we thought long and hard about whether to change the basis of appointment.

A number of factors came into play and we were considering this in the light of Clergy Terms of Service having just come into effect. Our concern was that Area Deans were able to fulfil the additional role for long enough but also have the opportunity to let go of it at the right time of their ministry without jeopardising their parochial role.

- We saw it as a very good leadership development opportunity for our clergy who may be considered as Archdeacons, Bishops, Deans or as vicars of large churches.
- We wanted there to be an incentive for clergy in a deanery to aspire to the role and be able to put themselves forward in due course.
- And despite the limitations in terms of available clergy in some deaneries we wanted to develop our own clergy who had peer support in their deaneries rather than recruit to the role from outside.

Those limitations are clearly evident in our diocese. At the moment, all seven of our Area Deans are men. That is not what we would want and it certainly doesn't look good. That wasn't always the case and we have an equal balance of male/female Lay Chairs but we would love more of our women clergy to want to fulfil this role.

So our Area Dean role is an additional responsibility for a period of three years with an option to renew for a further two years, Other dioceses have thought and done it differently and some of you here will have been recruited as a half-time rural dean from another diocese but dioceses need to think this through clearly.

The last thing I just one to highlight about capacity building is that it is costly – both in terms of finance and in terms of time. We spend more money in real terms on structures of oversight and support as a result of our deanery strategy than we did in 2006 – and that's including having reduced our senior staffing by one post. We now operate with two Bishops but just one Archdeacon across the whole diocese to account for the extra responsibilities held at deanery level.

The hidden cost is the extra time given by Area Deans, Deanery Lay Chairs and members of Deanery Leadership Teams, which inevitably is lost to parochial ministry; the monthly meetings the Diocesan Bishop now has with the Area Deans, the regular one to ones with them and Lay Chairs. I said we have not created seven mini-dioceses but we have formed another space for leadership, management and conversation and that is time and energy consuming.

It is our experience that handing responsibility to deaneries requires up front and ongoing investment. The benefits you are looking for are not efficiency or increased income – they are better decisions (which will save money) and better supported mission locally.

The Deaneries' task in God's mission

So how is the deanery making a difference in mission? Well, I want to be clear that we do not expect our deaneries necessarily to be a missionary unit. Our deaneries strategy comes under the "Structures of oversight and support" strand of our strategy and let's be clear that structures serve mission. We believe that God's mission takes place where Christian disciples relate to those outside the Church.

We do see deaneries as shapes for management. Occasionally, there are times when the deanery, like the diocese and parish, needs to be a shape for compliance: church business has its place. But as one of my Area Dean colleagues is keen to stress, we are not about "church business" but the "business of the church" – the mission of God and His Kingdom.

And that is the shift we have seen in the life our deaneries. A few examples:

Bristol South Deanery, 100,000 people south of the river Avon, predominantly white working class, pockets of the highest deprivation in the south of England, not many parishes meet their costs of ministry, a high dependency culture.

However, at Bishop's Council earlier in the year, an outgoing incumbent, off to take on a diocesan and Cathedral role in Derby talked about the change he had seen in the six years he had been there.

Six years ago, Chapter was a place where no one would talk about mission or growth for fear of how it would make others feel or seen as showing off; people would shout at the Bishop when he visited to talk about it and there was a general sense that "we're all doomed". Now there are monthly leadership training breakfasts for lay and clergy leaders, mission and growth dictate the agenda for meetings, clergy are open about their success and failures, the deanery combines to offer services for those seeking the Christian faith and for major festivals, there is a really collegial feel, particularly in the Chapter. This is a deanery that now sees its life in the light of mission and they act accordingly.

In Chippenham Deanery, or the Missionary Deanery of Chippenham as they like to be known, which is one of our two smaller and more rural deaneries, this summer they organised a deanery mission to the villages in the deanery called Flame of Hope, tying in with the Olympic torch relay and Jubilee.

Thanks to the leadership of Andy Gubbins, Priest-in-Charge of one of the Chippenham churches and the deanery missioner who is here this weekend, they built really good community links and it brought small churches together in thinking about reaching their villages. Next summer, the deanery will have a mission in the town of Chippenham and this is a very good example of how churches from across a deanery can join in mission together.

Finally, an example from the deanery I live in, City deanery which basically goes from 12 o'clock to 4 o'clock on the map of Bristol. This is deanery with great diversity: 28 churches in 24 benefices ranging from the white highlands of Redland and Cotham to the multi-ethnic inner city of Easton and St Pauls, from the extreme deprivation of outer estates of Southmead and Lockleaze to the relative suburban normality of east Bristol.

We were told it was too big to do anything together. The churchmanships were too different. But that did not put the deanery leadership off. They worked together in a really consultative and engaging way to develop a deanery strategy to break what they called the "cycle of decline" - declining church numbers, leading to declining resources, leading to declining mission and outreach, leading to declining church numbers and so the cycle goes on

Instead the deanery strategy focuses on replacing that cycle of decline, with a cycle of growth:

- Reaching out to the community
- Sharing between churches
- Giving generously
- Deploying licensed resources to support growth

Across geographical, theological and contextual boundaries they have come together for the sake of mission. The giving of this deanery to the diocese was in freefall prior to 2010 – it is the only deanery that has increased its giving year on year. They keep generosity and particularly financial giving within the churches and to the diocese and others on their agenda all the time. They are seeing sharing of ministers across churches and new initiatives for developing ministry indigenously in estates. And they are making tough decisions about how and where ministers – stipendiary and self-supporting – are deployed. Why is this? Because they focused on God's mission.

This is the best approach for them. Would it be that we could all have the vision, the passion, the commitment and the permission to start something like this for our deanery.