

## 6.0 WHY DEANERIES?

### Culture Shift:

The world has changed for everyone:

The culture is increasingly secular humanist at its core.

Religious pluralism is generally accepted even by many Christian groups.

Urbanization is advancing.

International migration has brought the nations to this country.

The post-Millennial generations are living with a high level of threat through:

Natural disasters

International terrorism

Economic collapse

Failed government policy

Ethnic tension and strife

The mission field is no longer filled with the children who grew up with Ozzie and Harriet. Many never lived with the Sanfords either. They were born into a broken home with dual working parents who may not have been married or were upwardly mobile to the exclusion of family time or were home schooled to shelter them from the evils of public education. They learned about sex in school and agreed that homosexuality is how somebody is made. Their friends have names like Nguyen or Garcia or Okoli and they celebrate different family traditions.

### Called to Mission

The Anglican Church in North America is a church-planting movement and these are the people we need to reach. We no longer have a feeder system of people and our seminaries may not have trained our current clergy with a framework for mission to a fast-changing world. Our congregations are still living with the trauma of rapid change in circumstances, including the loss of buildings and the people who desired a stable worship setting for themselves and their families. We have gotten older and aren't sure just how to bridge the gap between seniors and family-aged people.

### Our Leaders:

Our pastors are at risk for isolation, which produces discouragement, especially if they are reluctantly bi-vocational. Discouragement is not easy to live with for long without turning away from the circumstances. So, the body of Christ is being re-structured to cope with this new harvest field so that the lay and clergy leaders have the support required to grow in effectiveness.

### Deaneries:

Deaneries are networks of congregations of lay people and their leaders, both lay and ordained that facilitate healthy and pro-active work in the mission field. They provide:

1. Fellowship gatherings that overcome isolation and build friendships

2. Missional conversations that provide answers for gnarly issues
3. Mentoring relationships that equip and encourage
4. Inspiration and information through intentional training opportunities
5. Coordination of work projects best done with others
6. Pooled resources and assistance, mitigating local church desperation
7. More effective assistance in crisis through many helpers
8. Institutional support that is part of the fabric of life and mission

### A Work in Progress:

It is not that we are doing all of this effectively at this point, but the very fact that Deaneries can facilitate greater mission responsiveness allows us to grow into more effective ways of addressing the issues that are common to us all. In short, **subsidiarity empowers, and empowered people carry the gospel to the nations.** This is apostolic in the sense that we see apostolic life and witness revealed in the lives of Paul and all those who carried the good news of Jesus to the world of his day. Now, it is our turn and this is our time to do for others what has been done for us.

So, why not Deaneries?

