

Bishop's Commission on Mission Strategy
Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota
2007 FOLLOW-UP SURVEY REPORT
January 2008
Prepared by the Rev. Dwight Zscheile, *St. Matthew's, St. Paul*

Executive Summary

During November 2007, 79 key leaders in the Diocese of Minnesota (members of the Bishop's Commission on Mission Strategy, Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Trustees, and diocesan staff) were surveyed on their perceptions and attitudes about mission in the diocese and specifically about the BCMS process. Key findings include:

- Respondents strongly agreed that the BCMS process had helped them better understand the realities and challenges facing the diocese.
- Large majorities of these leaders felt that the BCMS process had built bridges of relationship and partnership across the diocese among congregations, as well as between congregations and the diocese as a whole.
- According to these leaders, the BCMS process fostered new levels of spiritual vitality, trust, and mutual listening across the diocese.
- The identity, purpose, and mission and ministry priority statements generated in the BCMS process resonate strongly with wide majorities of respondents.
- Generally, respondents expressed excitement about the new vision for the diocese developed during the BCMS process and felt that it enriched their imagination for mission.
- Respondents' ranking of the vitality of the diocese, their congregation, and the denomination increased significantly over the course of the BCMS process.
- Likewise, hopefulness among these key leaders about the future of the Diocese of Minnesota grew markedly, when measured against baseline 2006 levels. The percentage of respondents who are "very hopeful" about the diocese nearly doubled.
- The greatest sources of hope for the diocese were spiritual renewal and God's agency and leadership, the truth telling and conversation that took place in the process, uniting around a common vision, and a greater sense of partnership across diocese.
- The greatest potential obstacles to the effective implementation of the BCMS plan identified by respondents were organizational inertia, resistance from clergy, lack of faith and spiritual renewal, and resistance from the current bishop and diocesan staff.
- The top reasons indicated by respondents for the effectiveness of the BCMS process were its collaborative, participatory nature, the hard work and commitment by BCMS leaders, and the consultant's design and leadership skill.
- Respondents suggested that the process could be improved with more specificity in the plan's recommendations and even more extensive grass roots involvement.

Introduction

The protocols of the Bishop's Commission on Mission Strategy process called for a follow-up survey after the Commission delivered its final report to the 2007 Diocesan Convention. The purpose of the survey was to help the diocese to evaluate the process and its results, as well as to provide feedback that would guide next steps in the implementation phase. Unlike the 2006 Mission Survey, which attempted to survey the whole population of leaders in the diocese, the 2007 Follow-Up Survey was aimed only at those leaders within the system who had most directly participated in the process as members of the full BCMS, Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Trustees, and the bishop's staff. While many amidst the wider population of the diocese had been touched over the past year by the process, it was simply too early to gauge a significant change effect within the overall population. However, the members of the BCMS, the diocesan staff, and the elected governing bodies of the diocese were most integrally involved and keenly aware of the process and its content. Their opinions provide an important measure of the process's impact upon the heart of the diocese's leadership and life.

Methodology

This survey¹ was designed by the leader of the BCMS Baseline Assessment Team, in consultation with team members and the consultant. It was pilot tested with a group of lay and ordained leaders before being deployed during the month of November 2007. The survey targeted a list of 104 people provided by the diocesan office, who comprised the membership of the full BCMS, Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Trustees, and diocesan staff. Of the 104, 79 responded, for a robust response rate of 76%. As with the previous survey one year earlier, this survey was conducted primarily through the Internet, using SurveyMonkey.com, with paper copies mailed to the few without email access.

About the Respondents

Characteristics of the respondents were as follows:

- Respondents represented a wide cross section of congregational sizes, with 22% in churches worshipping fewer than 50 on Sunday, 15% in churches with 50-99, 14% in churches with 100-149, 17% in churches with 150-199, 8% in churches with 200-249 and 250-299, and 14% in churches over 300.
- Almost half (46%) of respondents had more than 20 years longevity in the diocese, and nearly 90% had been in the diocese more than five years.
- Regional distribution of respondents was roughly consistent with the overall population of the diocese (63% from the metro and 37% from the non-metro).
- Respondents were fairly evenly divided between clergy and laity, with 41% lay respondents, 8% deacons, 43% priests, and 8% indicating "Other."
- Consistent with the size of their respective bodies, a slight majority of respondents were members of the BCMS (58%), followed by Diocesan Council (23%), Standing

¹ See Appendix I for a copy of the survey.

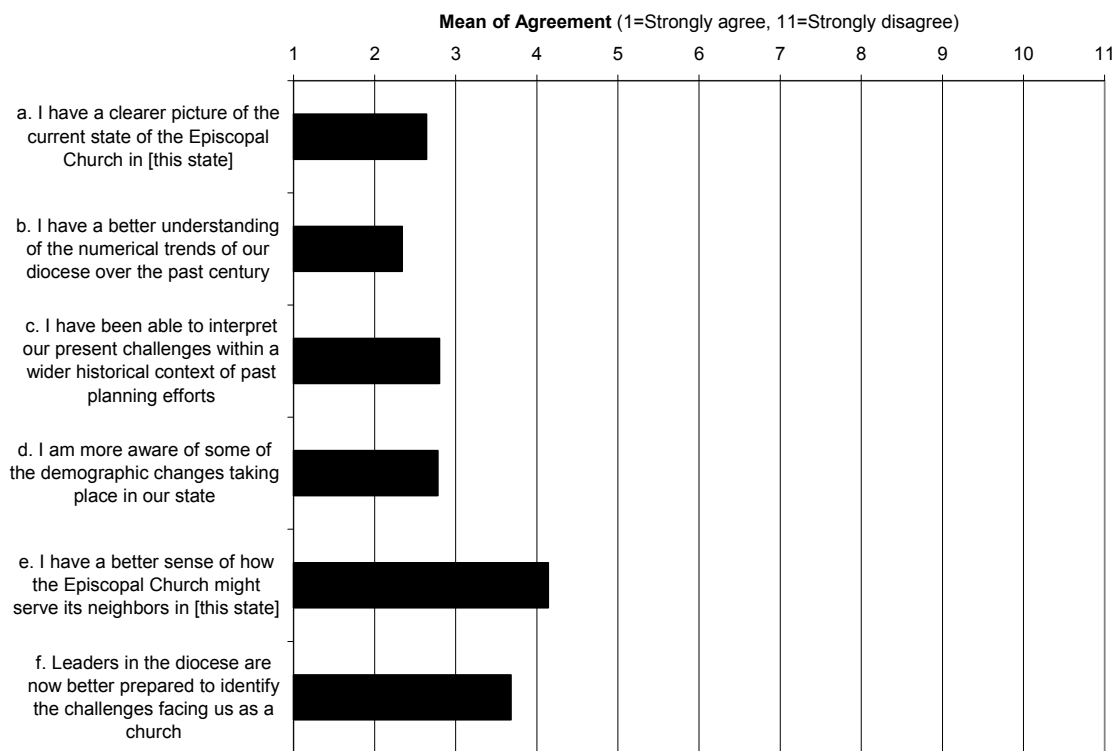
Committee (13%), diocesan staff (13%), and Trustees (8%). Some members served on more than one group.

- As with the previous survey, respondents were mostly middle-aged. There were no respondents under age 30; only 4% were aged 30-39; and 17% were 40-49. Sixty-three percent were in their 50s or 60s.
- Female respondents slightly outnumbered male (52% to 48%).
- Eighty-nine percent of respondents were white, with the largest non-white group being Native American (5%), followed by African-American (4%). There were one Asian and one Hispanic respondent each.

Findings

The survey asked a series of questions about the impact of the BCMS process on respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, using numbered scales of agreement. Overall, respondents indicated strong levels of agreement about the positive effect of the process. Means ranged from 2.34-5.21 on a scale of 1 to 11, with 1 being “strongly agree,” 6 being “neither agree nor disagree,” and 11 being “strongly disagree.”² Means for individual questions are as follows:

Figure 1: Mean of Agreement for Question 1

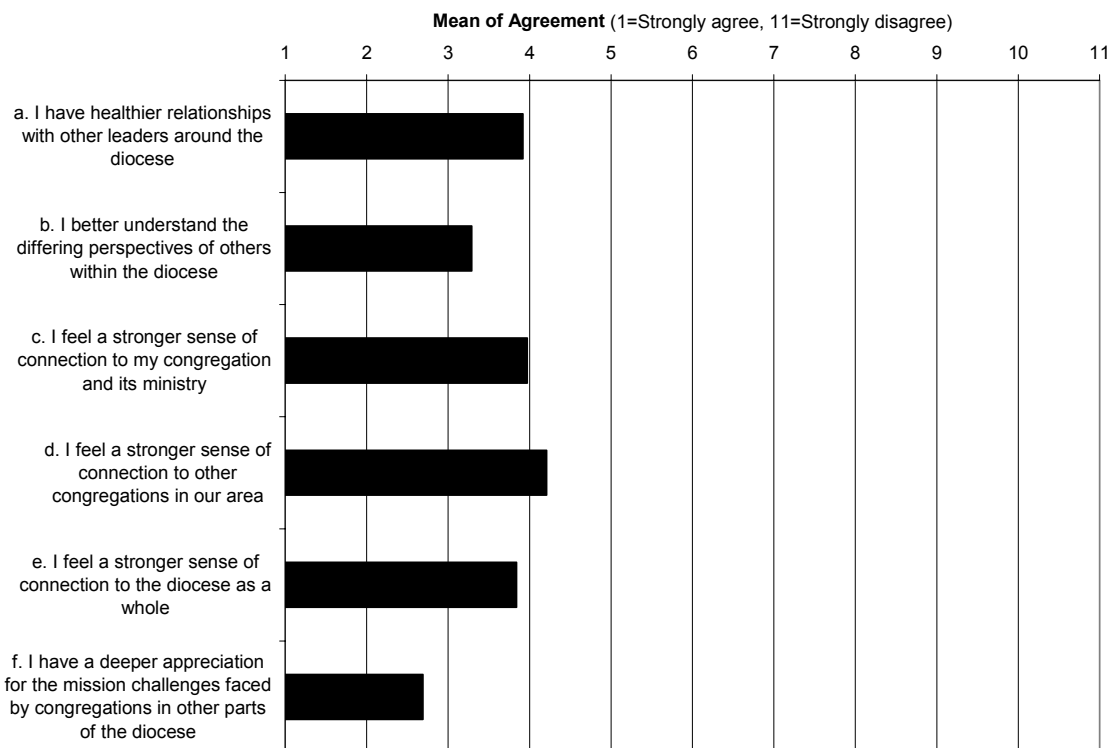


² This corresponds to the listed values on the survey instrument of agreement levels between 9 and 6 on a scale of 10 to 0, with 10 being “strongly agree,” 5 being “neither agree nor disagree,” and 0 being “strongly disagree.”

This first question focused on the naming of realities in the diocese through the process. It garnered the strongest agreement of any of the questions, as respondents indicated overwhelmingly that their understanding of the system’s situation, numerical trends, historical patterns, and changing context improved as a result of the process. Respondents also agreed, though less strongly, that they had a better sense of how to serve their neighbors and that leaders were better prepared to identify challenges facing the church.

The next question concentrated on the process’s effectiveness in building bridges of relationship, mutual understanding, and partnership across the members of the diocese. Respondents agreed overall that the process did contribute to doing so, though somewhat less strongly than they felt that it named the system’s realities.

Figure 2: Mean of Agreement for Question 2



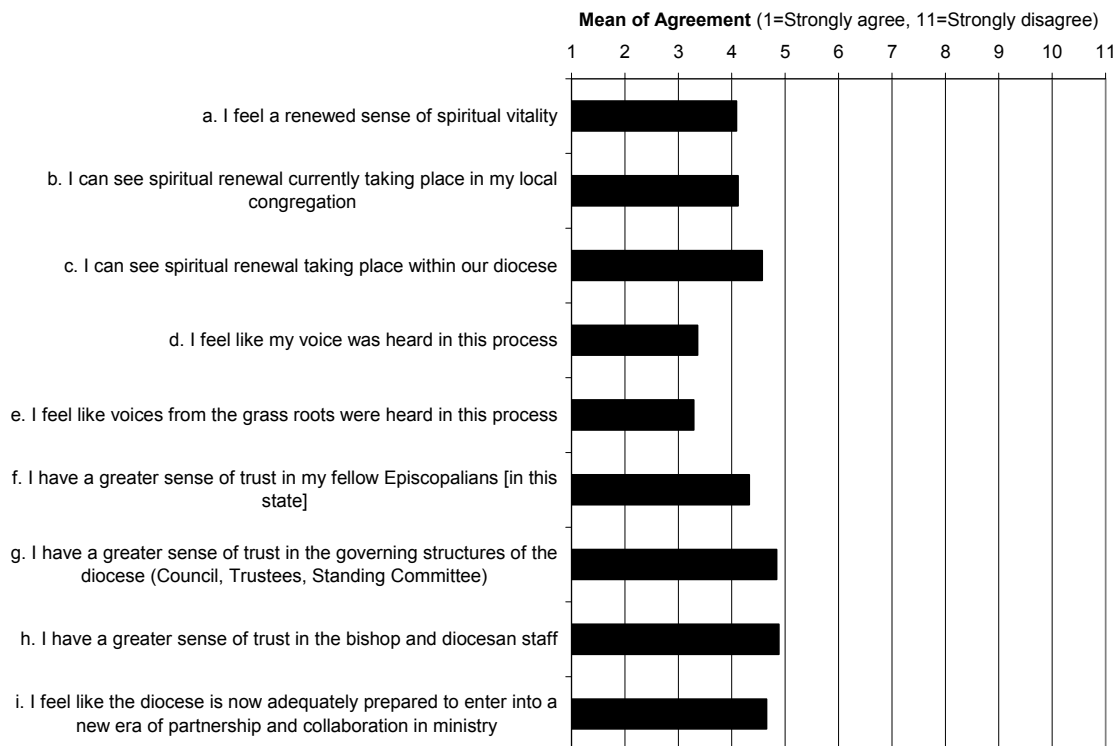
Sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed that the process had led to healthier relationships with others in the diocese, while 88% said that it gave them a better understanding of others’ perspectives. Given the diversities within the diocese and the longstanding patterns of mistrust and estrangement across fault lines of geography, race, ethnicity, congregational size, and economics, the progress made here is notable.

To those who would fear that the final plan’s focus on congregations as the primary unit of mission would foster congregationalism and further isolate congregations from the larger diocese, the survey indicates that the process actually created a stronger sense of connection to other congregations and the diocese. Seventy-two percent indicated that they had a stronger sense of connection both to other congregations in their areas and to the diocese. The fact that

respondents strongly agreed that the process had given them a deeper appreciation for the mission challenges facing by congregations elsewhere in the diocese is not insignificant, as it lays a foundation for future collaboration.

A third question addressed issues of spiritual vitality and renewal, listening, and trust.

Figure 3: Mean of Agreement for Question 3



A large majority of respondents (74%) agreed that they felt a renewed sense of spiritual vitality through their participation in the BCMS process. Since the first goal of the plan was focused on spiritual transformation, this finding indicates progress already realized toward that goal. Spiritual renewal at the congregational level was also attributed to the BCMS process—a secondary, not primary focus. A significant majority of respondents (67%) agreed that they could see spiritual renewal taking place at the diocesan level through the process.

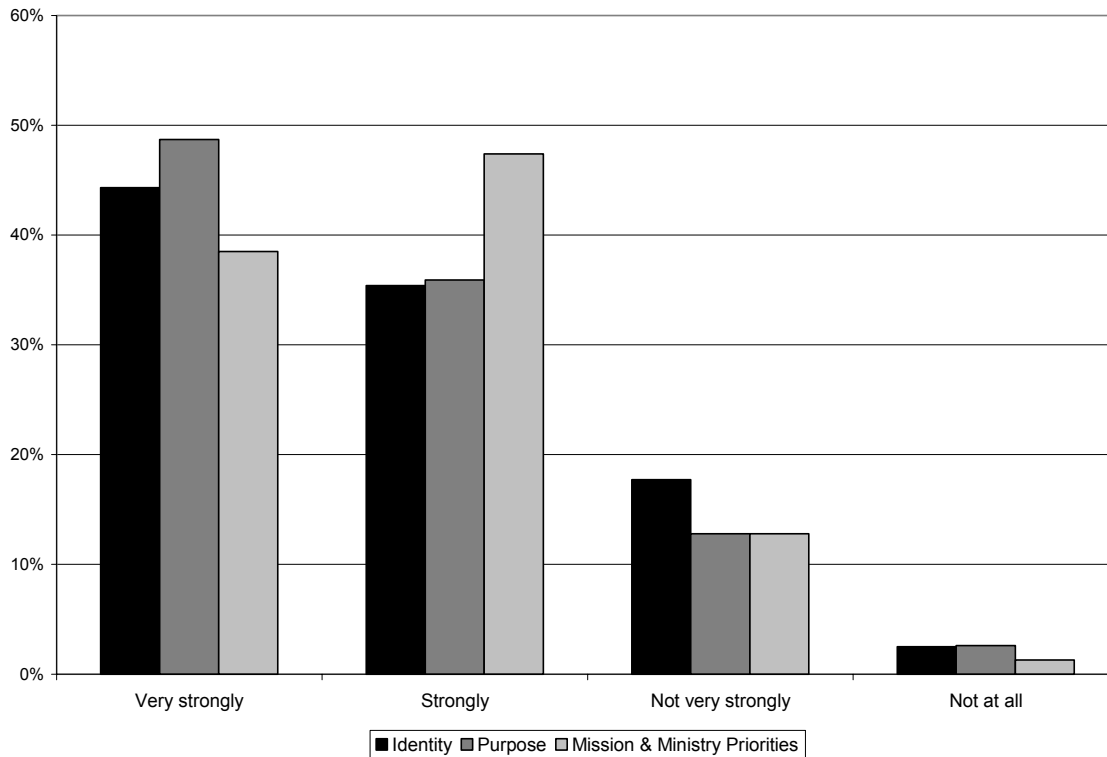
There was very strong agreement that the process allowed for many voices to be heard—both the voices of those responding to the survey and voices at the grass roots. Eighty-two percent felt that grass roots voices were heard. Respondents also indicated a new sense of trust in their fellow diocesan members, in the governing bodies of the diocese, and in the bishop and staff, though less strongly than they felt that voices were heard. Finally, 70% of respondents agreed that the diocese was more adequately prepared to enter a new era of partnership and collaboration through the process.

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about the final BCMS report. The great majority of respondents had read all of it (86%), with the remaining 14% having read some of it.

Most (79%) felt that they had understood it very well, with 20% saying they had understood it “somewhat well” and only 1 respondent claiming not to understand it very well.

The survey then asked how strongly respondents felt that the new identity and purpose statements and mission and ministry priorities in the plan resonated with them.

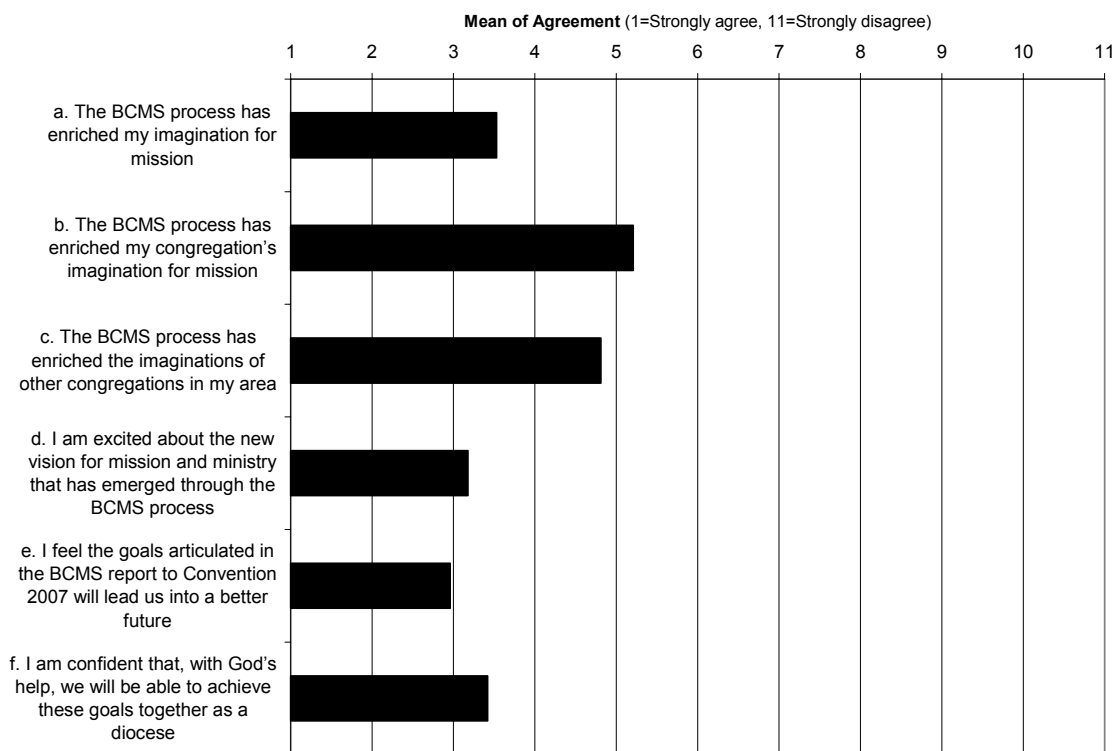
Figure 4: Resonance of Identity, Purpose, and Mission and Ministry Priorities



Overall, the identity and purpose statements and mission and ministry priorities in the final BCMS plan resonated very well with large majorities of the respondents. A full 79% felt that the identity statement resonated very strongly or strongly with them. For the purpose statement, this number was even higher at 84%, with nearly half of respondents claiming it resonated very strongly with them. The mission and ministry priorities had the highest overall resonance, at 85%, though greater numbers of respondents resonated “strongly” than “very strongly” with the priorities.

The survey then asked another question about strength of agreement to a series of statements concerning the process’s effectiveness in enriching imagination for mission, excitement generated by the process, and confidence that the goals can be achieved.

Figure 5: Mean of Agreement for Question 9

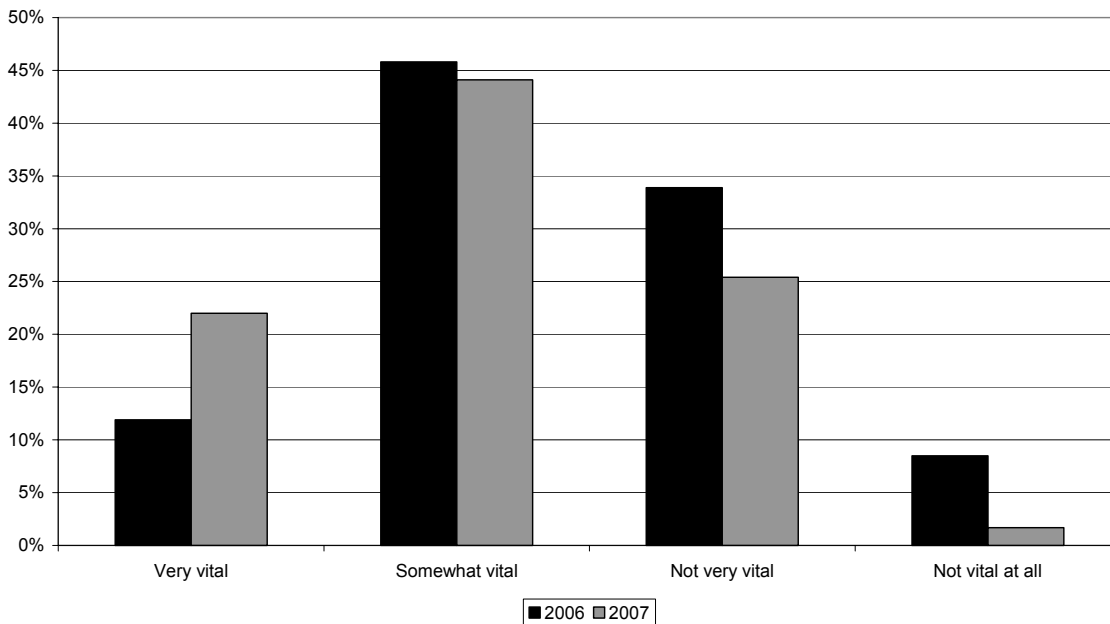


Respondents agreed strongly that their own imagination for mission had been enriched by the BCMS process. However, they were more ambivalent about the BCMS process enriching the imagination for mission of their congregations or other congregations in their area. This is to be expected, since the process was primarily focused on the diocesan, not congregational, level. Large majorities professed excitement about the new vision generated through the BCMS process (84%), felt that the goals articulated in the BCMS plan would lead the diocese into a better future (85%), and were confident that the diocese would be able to achieve the goals with God's help (81%).

The survey next asked two questions that were also asked in the 2006 baseline Mission Survey. The first concerned vitality of the respondents' own personal faith and discipleship, their congregations, the diocese, and the denomination. Of the 79 total respondents to the follow-up survey, 59 had also responded to the baseline survey in 2006. Comparing their responses at the beginning and end of the process reveals a marked shift.

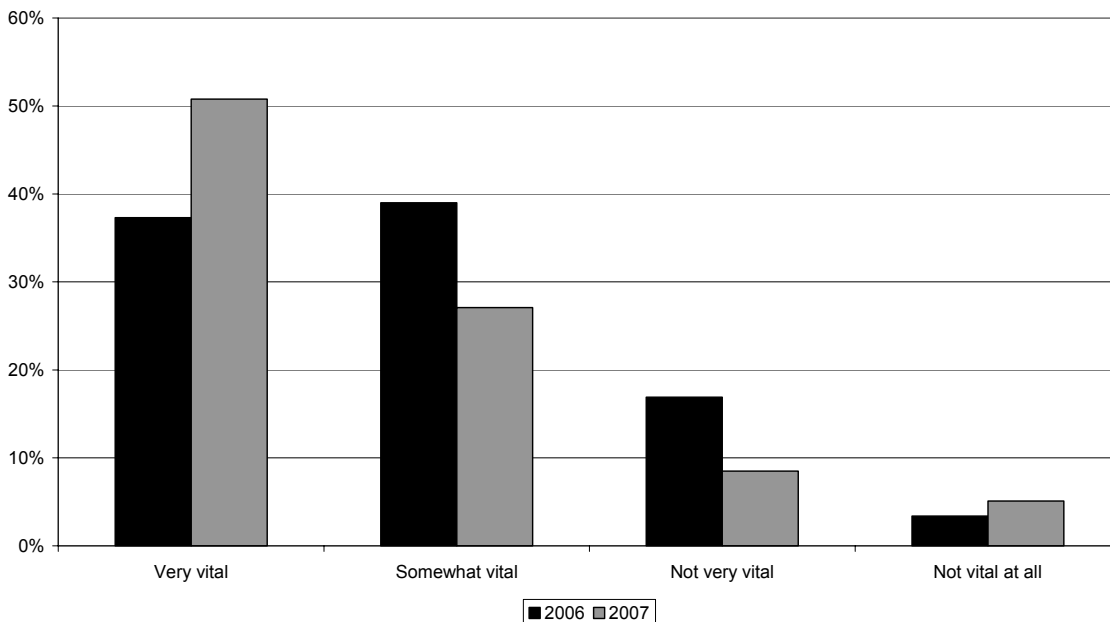
While respondents' ratings of their own personal faith and discipleship were essentially unchanged (75% rated "very vital" both times), vitality ratings for the diocese increased significantly. The percentage of respondents rating the diocese "very vital" nearly doubled, from 12% in 2006 to 22% in 2007, and the percentage rating it "not very vital" and "not vital at all" dropped significantly (from 34% to 25% and 9% to 2%, respectively).

Figure 6: Vitality Comparison for the Diocese, 2006 and 2007



Interestingly, ratings of congregational vitality also improved at the end of the BCMS process, even though congregations were not its primary focus.

Figure 7: Vitality Comparison for Respondents' Congregations, 2006 and 2007

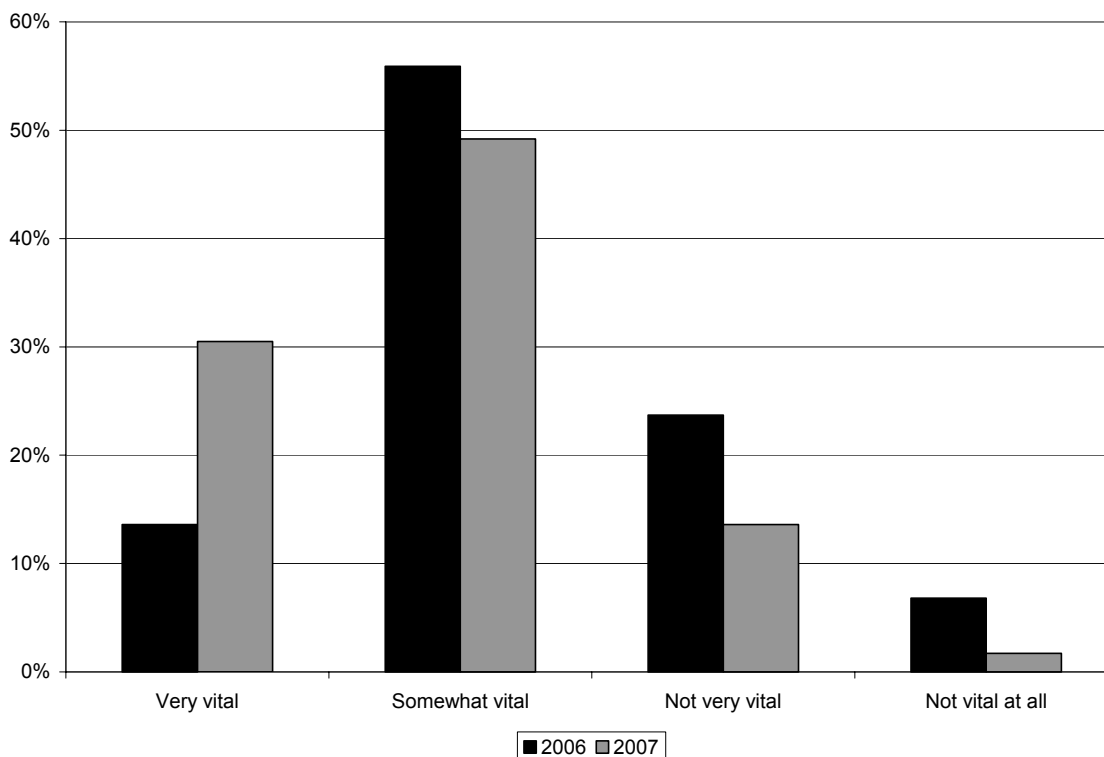


From 2006 to 2007, the percentage of respondents rating their own congregation “very vital” jumped from 37% to 51%, and the percentage rating their congregation “not very vital” dropped by nearly half, from 17% to 9%.

Perceptions of the vitality of the denomination also significantly improved over the course of the process, even though its scope was limited to the diocese. While the greatest number of

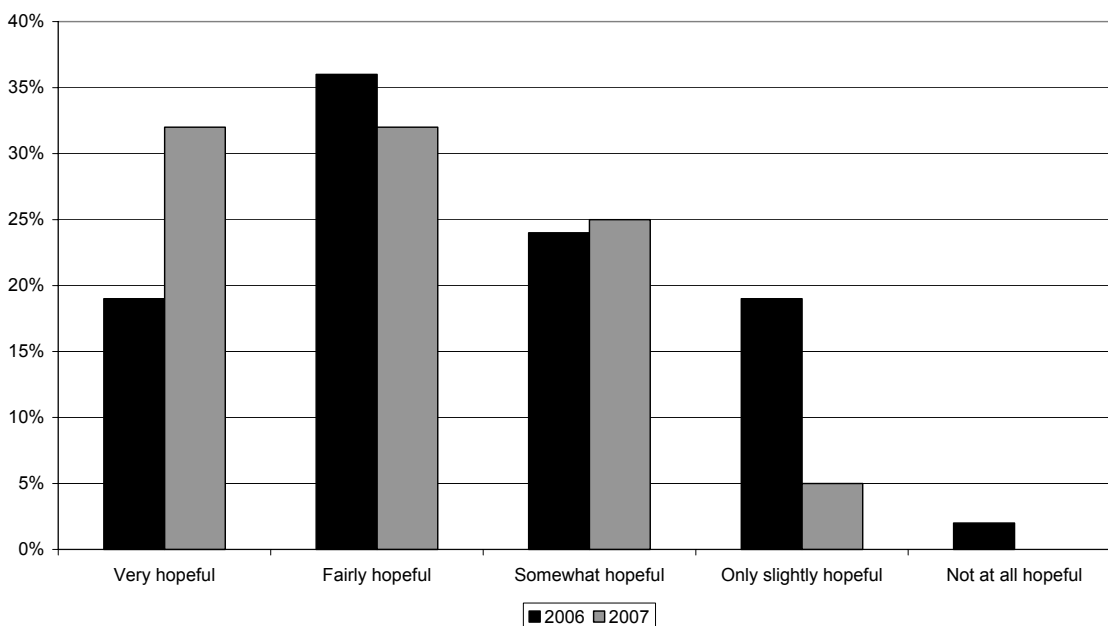
respondents perceived the Episcopal Church nationally as “somewhat vital” in both years, the percentage seeing it as “very vital” more than doubled, from 14% to 31%, and the percentage of those rating it “not very vital” and “not vital at all” dropped precipitously (from 24% to 14%, and 7% to 2%, respectively). While any number of external factors could also influence people’s perceptions of the vitality of the denomination, it is possible that the renewal people saw taking place within this particular diocese was understood to be applicable more widely across the church.

Figure 8: Vitality Comparison for the Denomination, 2006 and 2007



Both the baseline and follow-up surveys asked respondents about their sense of hopefulness about the future of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. Comparing the responses of the same population who answered both questions reveals a marked improvement over the course of the year. Those who marked the strongest level, “very hopeful,” increased from 19% to 32%. The percentage in the “only slightly hopeful” category dropped from 19% to 5%, and no one expressed a complete lack of hope in 2007, compared with 2% in 2006.

Figure 9: Hopefulness Comparison for the Diocese, 2006 and 2007



The survey also asked respondents to indicate in an open-ended comment what gave them the most hope about the future of the diocese.³ The 2006 baseline survey had asked a similar question, but not in open-ended form. The strongest answers to that question had been “The vitality of my local congregation,” “Our mission history of advocacy on behalf of oppressed people,” and “Signs of the active leading of the Holy Spirit in our midst.” This time, respondents offered a wider range of answers, many of which referenced the BCMS process directly. The themes are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Follow-Up Survey Open-Ended Comments on What Gives Hope for Diocese

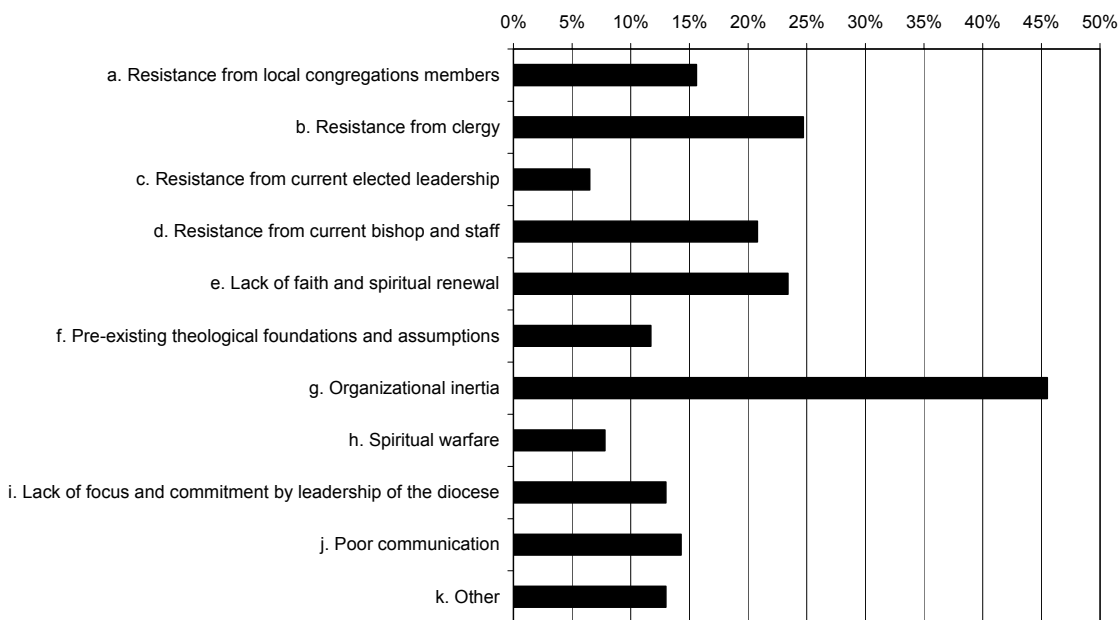
Theme	# References
Ongoing spiritual transformation/God’s agency in our midst	13
Truth telling/honesty/having the conversation together	8
Uniting around common vision	8
Greater partnership/collegiality/relationships across diocese	7
Affirmation of Total Ministry and its alternative paradigm	5
Participation/voices being heard/engagement of grass roots	4
Future planning and implementation	4
Bishop’s transition	4
Youth and young people	3
Fresh leadership that emerged in BCMS process	3
Progressive social/theological stances	2
Other	3

³ See Appendix II for the text of the write-in comments.

The greatest number of responses attributed the respondent’s sense of hope to trust in God’s active agency in the life of the church and a continuing of the spiritual transformation that had taken place over the previous year in the BCMS process. Examples of these comments include, “God is at work in new ways”; “Remaining open to the movement of the Holy Spirit within oneself, as well as the diocese as a whole, and allowing ourselves to be transformed to minister more effectively in an ever-changing world”; and “God is with us.” This was followed by three sets of closely-related comments that cited the truth-telling that had taken place in the process, the fact that the diocese had united around a common vision by approving the final report at convention, and the building of relational bridges and enhanced collaboration across the diocese over the previous year. Other sources of hope included the alternative leadership paradigm of Total Ministry, which was affirmed by the BCMS report; the engagement of grass roots members of the system; the upcoming episcopal transition; the fact that the process would continue into a new phase of planning and implementation; and the new leadership that emerged in the BCMS.

The survey also asked about potential obstacles to successful implementation of the BCMS plan. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale the ten potential obstacles listed and to write in additional ones if they wished. They were then asked to indicate which two they felt were the most important obstacles.

Figure 10: Potential Obstacles to Implementation of the Plan



Organizational inertia was by far the most frequently cited potential obstacle, listed by 46% as one of the two most important. This was followed by resistance from clergy (25%), lack of faith and spiritual renewal (23%), and resistance from the current bishop and staff (21%). The potential obstacles written in by respondents may be summarized as follows:

Table 2: Potential Obstacles to Successful Implementation Write-In Comments

Theme	# References
Old patterns of behavior and conflict, esp. among clergy	9
Financial issues	4
Tendency toward congregationalism	2
Lack of leadership with requisite skills	2
Resistance to change	1
Lack of full attention to non-metro congregations	1
Difficulties of organizational design	1
Need for practical tools	1
Self-centeredness	1
Pre-described roles in canons that conflict with new vision	1

The largest number of comments concerned entrenched patterns of conflict and mistrust, particularly among clergy and between clergy and the bishop. This was followed by financial issues, whether perceived lack of funding for the plan or conflicts around the diocesan budget.

The final three questions in the survey solicited open-ended comments around three foci: keys that made the BCMS process as successful as it was; ways in which the BCMS process could be improved; and any further comments about it. The first of these generated a large number of responses.

Table 3: What Made the BCMS Process as Successful as It Was?

Theme	# References
Collaborative, participatory nature of process, engaging grass roots	44
Hard work and commitment by BCMS leaders	12
Consultant's design and leadership skill	10
Theological and spiritual foundations	6
Honest naming of realities	4
Strong communication and transparency	4
Do not believe it was successful	3

While a very small minority (three respondents) disputed that the BCMS process was successful, by far the greatest number of comments cited the collaborative, participatory nature of the process and its engagement with the grass roots. Examples of the comments include: "It was a true partnership across the diocese. It modeled a new way of being—collaborative, cooperative, honest, transparent"; "I deeply appreciated its efforts in meeting with people where they live and minister"; "All kinds of input from lots and lots of people all over the place"; and "By engaging so many people in the process, it gave ownership to all who were interested."

The next group of comments cited the toil, commitment, and strength of the BCMS leaders and participants. Their persistence and sacrifice were recognized by many as integral to earning credibility within the diocese. When so many previous planning processes had ground to a halt or quietly faded away, the fact that this team worked hard all the way to the end was recognized as vital to its success. Closely related to these comments was another set crediting the consultant

with skill in designing and guiding the process. Theological and spiritual foundations were also recognized as key by some respondents, as were the process's attempts to name truths and foster a transparent atmosphere of open communication.

On the question of how the process could have been improved, there were half as many responses as on the previous question, spread across a wider array of themes.

Table 4: How Could the BCMS Process Have Been Improved?

Theme	# References
More specific plan/recommendations	9
More extensive congregational involvement, esp. non-metro	5
Better communication	5
More inclusion of laity and deacons	5
Involving whole diocese from start	4
Better process for theological position paper	4
Better listening by facilitators	3
Focusing less on negative	3
More involvement of young people	2
More involvement by bishop	1

The largest number of suggestions concerned the level of detail in the final report. These respondents wanted further specificity in the plan's recommendations. This was followed by several sets of comments centered around greater inclusiveness and even higher degrees of participation than those achieved by the process. Some wanted more extensive congregational involvement, especially in the non-metropolitan areas. Others thought that increased levels of communication would have helped more people to participate and contributed to greater effectiveness. More significant and visible roles for laity and deacons were also referenced several times.

A number of respondents felt that including the whole diocese from the very start (i.e., from the inception of the BCMMS process in 2005) would have helped the process. Several respondents also cited the process for the development of the theological position paper as a something that could be improved in order to engage more fully lay contributors, deacons, and those from the non-metro. A few cited instances where BCMS facilitators were perceived as lacking in listening skills, as well as a sense that the BCMS plan overemphasized the negative aspects of the history of the diocese.

The final question invited a range of comments, clustered around two primary themes.

Table 5: Final Open-Ended Comment Themes

Theme	# References
Praise/thanks/celebration for job well done	21
Concern for next phase of implementation	10
Focusing less on negative in history	2
Further inclusion of deacons in future	2
Need to deal with systemic elitisms	2
Doubts about viability of network structure	1
Concern for ongoing spiritual transformation	1
Need for more specific goals	1
BCMS process used against bishop's transition plan	1

The largest number of these comments were basically celebratory, either praising the process and its leaders or thanking God for the fruits borne so far. Examples include: “Hallelujah!”; “Job well done—thank you”; and “Just an incredible amount of gratitude to those on the commission who gave so tirelessly of themselves and their time.”

This was followed by a set of comments that expressed concern about the next phase of implementation, recognizing that the gains won so far would mean little without further work to anchor them more deeply in the life of the system. Given the past problems with inadequate follow-through in the diocese's life, this was a key issue for many respondents. A handful of other themes were referenced, including focusing less on the negative in the diocesan history and dealing with racism and other systemic patterns of exclusion (including the need for more explicit reference to the ministry of deacons).

Summary Observations

Overall, the 2007 Follow-Up Survey offers a remarkably affirmative evaluation of the BCMS process. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the process had helped members define the realities facing the diocese, build relational bridges of connection to one another and to the whole, foster spiritual renewal, tap into grass roots voices, and increase trust. Moreover, respondents strongly affirmed the answers generated by the process to the foundational questions of identity and purpose which the BCMS sought to address. They agreed that the process had enriched their imagination for mission and excited them about a new vision for ministry. They were confident that the goals articulated in the final plan would lead the diocese into a better future.

The significant increase in ratings of diocesan, congregational, and denominational vitality revealed by the follow-up survey also point toward the process's fruitfulness. Respondent comments were generally highly favorable, naming key elements of the process as significant sources of hope. These elements include greater attention to God's active agency in the life of the church, new levels of mutual honesty, greater unity around a common vision, and expanded participation, partnership, and collegiality.

The survey respondents also offered a number of substantive suggestions for improvement. These include attending even more carefully to participation, so that some members on the

system's margins (such as non-Anglo and non-metro congregations) might more fully engage and offer their gifts along the way. The theological position paper process could have been more fully grounded in diverse grass roots voices. The emphasis on the negative aspects of the diocese's history and current predicament could have been better balanced with appreciation for the positive. Many yearned for more detail in the final plan—something that clearly must be attended to in the next phase.

The survey reflects something of a mandate by the leadership core of the diocese for the BCMS work to be taken to the next level. It also points toward potential hazards that could thwart that progress. These must be taken into careful consideration by the leadership of the diocese as it looks to the future. The principles that respondents cited as integral to the success of the BCMS offer a vision for how the transformation of the diocese can proceed with even greater levels of spiritual renewal, partnership, and grass roots involvement in the future.

- c. The BCMS process has enriched the imaginations of other congregations in my area
- d. I am excited about the new vision for mission and ministry that has emerged through the BCMS process
- e. I feel the goals articulated in the BCMS report to Convention 2007 will lead us into a better future
- f. I am confident that, with God's help, we will be able to achieve these goals together as a diocese

10. How would you evaluate the vitality of the following?

Mark one for each item.

	Very vital	Somewhat vital	Not very vital	Not vital at all
a. My personal faith and discipleship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The life and ministry of my congregation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The life and ministry of Diocese of Minnesota ..	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The life and ministry of Episcopal Church (USA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How hopeful are you about the future of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota? (mark one)

- Very hopeful
- Fairly hopeful
- Somewhat hopeful
- Only slightly hopeful
- Not at all hopeful

12. What gives you the most hope about the future of our diocese? [write in]

III. About You

Now we'd like to know a little more about you and the primary congregation in which you worship.

13. What is the size, in average Sunday attendance, of the primary congregation in which you worship? (mark one)

- Less than 50
- 50-99
- 100-149
- 150-199
- 200-249
- 250-299
- 300+
- Not sure

14. How long have you been a member of the Diocese of Minnesota? (mark one)

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 4 years
- 5 to 9 years
- 10 to 14 years
- 15 to 19 years
- 20+ years

15. What region of the Diocese do you live in? (mark one)

- 1 (Northwest Minnesota)
- 2 (Northeast Minnesota)
- 3 (West-central Minnesota)
- 4 (Southwest Minnesota)
- 5 (Southeast Minnesota)
- 6 (Northeast Metro)
- 7 (St. Paul/Southeast Metro)
- 8 (Minneapolis/Richfield)
- 9 (West/Southwest Metro)
- 10 Not sure

16. In what type of community do you live? (mark one)

- Rural
- Small Town
- Suburban
- Urban

17. What is your role in the church? (mark one)

- Lay person, not employed by the church
- Lay person, employed by the church
- Vocational Deacon
- Transitional Deacon
- Priest
- Other

18. To which of the following groups did you belong during 2006-2007? (mark all that apply)

- BCMS
- Diocesan Council
- Standing Committee
- Trustees of the Diocese
- Diocesan Staff
- None of the above

19. What was your age at your last birthday? (mark one)

- Under 20
- 20 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 to 69
- 70 to 79
- 80+

20. What is your gender? (mark one)

- Male
- Female

21. Which of the following describe your racial/ethnic background? (mark all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Pacific Islander
- Asian American
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Chicano/Latino
- White (non-Hispanic)

IV. Next Steps and Final Comments

22. On the scale below, rate how important you see the following potential obstacles to the successful implementation of the BCMS process?

Mark one for each item.

	Not an obstacle	Very minor obstacle	Minor obstacle	Some-what major obstacle	Major obstacle	Very major obstacle	Don't know
a. Resistance from local congregation members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Resistance from clergy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Resistance from the current elected leadership of the diocese (i.e., Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Trustees, Commission on Ministry)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Resistance from the current bishop and diocesan staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Lack of faith and spiritual renewal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Pre-existing theological foundations and assumptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Organizational inertia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Spiritual warfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Lack of focus and commitment by the leadership of the diocese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Poor communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Other (<i>write in below</i>)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Of the potential obstacles listed above, which two do you see as the most important?

(Write in two letters of items from the list above)

24. From your perspective, what were the keys that made the BCMS process as successful as it was? [write in]

25. How could the BCMS process have been improved? [write in]

26. Are there any further comments you would like to share on the BCMS process? [write in]

Thank you very much for your feedback!

APPENDIX II: WRITE-IN COMMENTS

Question 12: What gives you the most hope about the future of our diocese?

BCMS was truth telling time. Whether we have the courage to live out of that truth remains to be seen.
I think a broad group of people in the diocese feel not just heard, but invested and involved in something. This means it is already woven into, not just being handed to, congregations and the greater diocese. It has an organic feel of coming from within the group who will also do the implementation. I believe more people know more people, and believe they can do things beyond their own experience because of this new sense of relationship. I believe the transition in leadership already has the benefit of this close examination of ourselves, no matter how the process is executed. This will give a more accurate picture of the diocese to the next bishop, rather than what would have likely been a glimpse at the relationship with the current bishop, without the rich context of diocesan surroundings, habits, patterns, and institutions.
It's willingness to engage in the BCMS process honestly and eagerly.
That we are even talking about our issues - both present and historical.
That at this time we will be able to discern how to proceed with selecting a new bishop. With the BCMS as a tool, we may be able to pick up the pieces in an environment that is still so distrustful.
The young people and children I see in our church on Sunday mornings.
Goal #1 Spiritual transformation
Hopefully there will be better recognition of the many parishes outside the metro area. I hope there will be less fight about money. I hope there will be more respect and support for our Bishop.
that God has not given up on us the faithfulness of extraordinary Christians in our congregations the process of truth telling we have engaged
Progressiveness
Those persons at Convention seemed to have a desire to move forward with the BCMS recommendations. I hope the BCMS report doesn't get "politicized" and the search for a new Bishop doesn't get caught up in "nit picking" and endless debate over the process and/or the person.
Coming together with common, attainable goals.
youth
Finally, the recognition through written word that small churches do matter; that ministry takes place in a variety of forms, and that we are only as strong as our weakest link. If we really mean this and learn to help each other, we can look forward to a bright future in this diocese.
It is important we renew our mission. The role of the bishop is changing as well as the ministries of the church. We need to new planning for new challenges.
The collaborative approach moving forward together assisting one another and providing each other with support when needed so that no one is left behind or cast off.
That we all seem in agreement of the BMCS report and are willing to begin the process
The creativity followed up with hard work that typifies this next generation of clergy and lay leaders. We have the heart to work on and complete these goals.
That we will be open to things yet unknown, that the Holy Spirit will drop into our laps... nudge/present us with...
I think longstanding log jams are breaking loose and that is the beginning of having a healthy diocese, as well as goal setting and community building.
full exposure of individual viewpoints
Convention was challenging. I feel less hopeful following convention. I am strengthened about the future because I believe in God's power to continue to struggle even when we act in ways that keep us apart from one another.
By entering into this grass-roots effort to LISTEN to one another that we will find our efforts at working effectively together greatly enhanced.
The transformative power of God working through the Holy Spirit in congregations engaging in deep education and formation, including those engaging in Total Ministry and Gospel Based Discipleship. I hope there is wide spread and broad based desire for the transformative faith and spiritual formation goal as articulated in the report. If every Episcopalians, or even a significant number of us, in MN engage in our own spiritual growth as individuals and in faith communities, I truly believe the Spirit will use us, as Paul says, "Glory to God whose power working in us can do more than we can ask or imagine!"
I am most hopeful because of the young people who are stepping up to the challenge. While I expect to be around for a while yet, I have served in many functions and have been disappointed many times. It is time for the next generation of leaders with new energy and ideas to take their place in the councils of the church. Old heads aren't bad, just tired.
It was brought to my attention that there is no specific mention of deacons or their role in the future planning. Are we lumped together with clergy or, overlooked, or have some other place.
When a new iteration of the BCMS is named by bishop and council, and that group can assemble soon and get to

work with the details of the plan, I believe we can move forward. We have to be willing to experience some pain, however. We can not just make a "pastoral response" to areas of ministry and congregations that should not be sustained. We must concentrate on where we can grow. That means using money from the sale of non producing properties for purchase in new areas and for actually starting new congregations.
Ecumenical movement.
The fact that they took time to evaluate their history, presence, and affect on the diocese over the past 100 years. This was an important first step. Acknowledging what works and what did not work. This helped to set the direction in which the diocese needed to move towards to strengthen and improve the diocese's presence in Minnesota.
The orthodoxy and skill and passion I saw in clergy and lay leaders who I met through this process. Also the observation from one of my congregation's delegates - she hadn't been to a convention for a few years (had previously been deeply involved and had been a Trustee) - she said that she already saw a profoundly different attitude of cooperation and collegiality among the clergy and lay leaders of the churches that were involved in BCMS and other networking activities.
Simply the completion of the BCMS report and its focus on the fact that revitalization is not going to come about by glitz/glam productions and becoming the next mega-church, but through the re-energization and revitalization of our spiritual life within the world in which we live. The apostle Paul has said "be in this world but not of this world" and the BCMS report conveys a similar message of transformation through faith. Programs come and go as fads; the diversity of human experience and contextual expressions of true faith are what will help us to further the kingdom.
The way in which the diocesan convention embraced the goals. An opportunity was missed to launch delegates to return home with next steps to take. Having Jim Huber read to us what we all had in writing was a wasted opportunity.
The opportunity to shift our vision and experience a vast cultural change in how we see ourselves as the Church. It is a very exciting time.
The people in the pews are engaged and have expectations of their leaders.
God at work in new ways
Total Ministry Congregations.
The fact that the Commission had the courage to state its convictions and the fact that the Convention endorsed its report.
the retirement of our bishop. The potential for injection of new ideas and true selfless and spiritual leadership of a new bishop. The potential for reduction of the size and wastefulness in the diocesan staff. Networking among congregations. The reality that the work of the diocese is at the parish level not the diocesan level. The potential for support of parishes from a focused diocesan staff. The realization that we are NOT now and have not been for 30 or more years a mission diocese ... we really do not plant new congregations and in fact have killed off existing ones and a significant correction to this tendency.
Lay leadership
our engagement of the mission priorities of the MDG's, our continued relationships with the native community, our full inclusion of GLBT members, our strength to stand apart from the anglican communion if it comes to that, our recommitment to G. B. D. , our understanding that things will change, we will close failing communities and enrich growing congregations.
The youth participation.
Growth of Total Ministry and the resultant empowerment to individuals
That I have seen change in this diocese I have seen us work more and more as a collective and not against each other, we have further to go
that the Spirit will call a new bishop who will want to work with the diocese on the goals of the BCMS; that the Spirit will call those with both the will and the gifts to take the next steps of implementing the BCMS goals
The work surrounding the generation of this report itself. If we can continue to work in that way, and not slip back into "admiring our problem," then I am very hopeful.
Remaining open to the movement of the Holy Spirit within oneself, as well as the Diocese as a whole allowing ourselves to be transformed to minister more effectively in an ever-changing world.
That we are beginning to listen to each other and hopefully we can disregard personal agendas.
That the Author and Finisher of our faith will not abandon us and that the Holy Spirit is indeed leading despite all the jockeying for power positions and complaining that I see amongst metro clergy. We have an empowered laity and I think that they were heard clearly and will grow with this process.
We have been willing to be appropriately self-critical and we have labored admirably to engage one another under the aegis of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's future for us, the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.
The strength and witness of the people of God as they live into their discipleship and ministry within their particular context. The fact that we have begun a process of listening and a hope that this will continue and that people will actually hear with open ears.
Gospel Based Discipleship. If the focus of ALL gatherings from smallest committee in the smallest congregation to the most elite, secretive, powerful committee in the Diocese would gather around the gospel and ask "what is God calling us to do" for 1 year (BCMS Goal 1) before we even attempt BCMS Goals 2-4 we may have a future as a

collaboratively based diocesan structure and institution.
The focus on improving the relationship between congregations and the leadership of the diocese gives me the most hope as well as the attention that will be given to Total Ministry activities across all of MN.
There are three reasons I have hope for the future of our Diocese. 1. The completion of the BCMS. Caring, courageous Episcopalians spoke up and were heard. I pray the Diocese heard, and has the courage to take the steps necessary to begin the process and lead us through the difficult years ahead. 2. The creation of the Lay Leaders Network. Although this group was formed out of desperation by two of the larger Parishes in the Diocese seeking ways to help one another, it has grown into a network of many Parishes large and small seeking ways to assist one another and lead change. 3. The results of the Diocesan Convention. Courageous people, desperate for positive leadership were heard.
The BCMS Process is now a template which to assess every aspect of the life and ministry of our diocese. The changes we face over the next 3 to 7 years are enormous. I am hopeful that the elected leadership of the diocese i.e. Council, Standing Committee and Trustees, can begin to work collegially toward this enormous transformational change which will be our work for the next 25 years.
The connections that lay leaders made and the collective voice they brought to the convention to change direction on key diocesan office recommendations. I think this is a very positive sign for the diocese overall.
A full leadership change and restructure at the Episcopal Center, making way for new imagination of how to be the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of MN, and letting go of road blockers, power mongers and lame ducks in finance, and the Bishops Staff.
We can do more in the United States. This is my best and strongest sense of optimism
If we can hang together with this work and provide continued leadership to help the congregations move into some changes. They are at many different stages. I think most of the folks have no idea how much this could change.
The vision of a shift from "command and control" to systemic balance and "network development" Total Ministry in the diocese provides an successful and model for the development of ministry formation
Goal one, the spiritual transformation of the diocese, congregations etc. We cannot do anything else but this nor should we even try and do anything else first.
The possibility of collaborative work in implementing the BCMS.
new levels of honesty and investment
God is with us and so many people are working toward the BCMS plan.
The energy that the BCMS has generated and with the election of a new Bishop the possibility for systemic change.
The willingness expressed at the 150 Diocesan Convention to re-envision a new missional future through the Holy Spirit that would consider minority congregations as equal players and participants.
Maybe somebody will think of asking the deacons how they fit in to the mission of the church!! they have not done so far, and we deacons have no mention in the report - and therefore no part to play!

Questions 22: Potential Obstacles to Successful Implementation of the BCMS Plan ("Other"):

Lack of funding and reordering the financial priorities of the Diocese
old habits
Human resistance to change
past patterns of behavior by clergy and lay leadership
I feel that some of the BCMS report show very little knowledge about the parishes in greater Minnesota
Ongoing debate on the ACG and negative attitudes among some of the clergy and laity
Communication of process
The lack of confidence vote the Bishop received at convention could be an obstacle - not by the Bishop himself, he will proceed willingly, but by the way the people who cast the negative vote.
Emphasis on denominational doctrine and structure and not on similarities among all religions and how to promote not a single church but belief in God and the teachings of the Bible.
Difficulty of determining and implementing how this flattened organization will work
Desire to move towards Congregationalism and Isolation
we need TOOLS for the journey, not just the pat phrases of change; resistance is not the right word - implies intentional barriers; need way to spark imagination to move forward. i disagree with the questions!
Cardinal rectors speaking against bishop
Lack of personal identification by most lay people
failure to speak out in truth about the issues surrounding money, and the growing congregationalist perspective of many congregations.
lack of leaders with skills to implement BCMS goals
self-centeredness

contentiousness of metro clergy
Two major obstacles: continued distrust of and animus toward bishop and canon; lack of clergy collegiality
The focus on budget driving mission, protecting my stash from those that would "bogart my stuff"
I sincerely do not believe the process of change will begin until the current Bishop and Diocesan staff are replaced.
Willingness to work collaboratively
It seemed to me that much of the progress made in the steering cmte process fell apart in the week before the convention. It seemed to me that it solidified and regenerated old old strong feelings of critique and distrust with frantic emails and meetings and positioning and lobbying and failure to allow delegates to decide for themselves based on the reading and the meetings held regionally. I felt a very deep sense of sadness over all the hours i had put into this process melted away under the anxiety over the vote over the coadjutor. So while I have been involved in a mission start and evangelism with youth for years. I am personally having a very deep night of the soul over the continued regionalism and almost hatred I have witnessed. I am praying and I guess that is spiritual renewal.
Canons prescribe the roles of rector and bishop in ways that pull us in the direction of "command and control"
Metro vs rural, elite vs poorer congregations, seminary trained clergy vs locally ordained clergy
failure to include people like me in the process

Question 24: From your perspective, what were the keys that made the BCMS process as successful as it was?

It was a true partnership across the Diocese. It modeled a new way of being--collaborative, cooperative, honest, transparent. What a fresh breath of air!
Continued commitment to completion, honesty in the face of the pain it might cause, ensuring representation early on, and inclusion of he entire diocese (dropping the metro), theological foundation, convocations allowing large group input and discussion.
1) Climate of honest opinion-seeking enabled by staying external to regular diocesan structure 2) Repeated verification of findings by checking with the people of the diocese in a variety of configurations. 3) Our consultant's design of the project and his deft guidance through all phases.
I deeply appreciated its efforts in meeting with people where they live and minister.
The very dedicated core "worker bees" who met so faithfully for two years.
Many people felt they were heard, and that their voice had an impact on the report.
all kinds of input from lots and lots of people all over the place
Episcopalians border to border participated in discerning the future of our shared Diocese.
skilled consultant persistent commitment of leaders grassroots listening process
It included the "entire" Diocese and the visits made to as many congregations as possible made it successful. Our Convocation in St. Cloud proved our actions matched our words. It was a major gesture to involve all congregations.
A grass roots committee that involved individuals from all levels.
By engaging so many people in the process, it gave ownership to all who were interested. I never felt "brushed aside" and the commission was tireless in their work.
The hard work of the committee.
The Craig, the task master by keeping the group and process working, moving forward even to the point of overload.
Excellent Communication and thoughtful presentations. Complete inclusion offered to everyone in the Diocese!
Broad base - everyone got a chance to weigh in.
the breadth of involvement, and the honesty about prior failings and negative attitudes (naming the demons)/ the fact that the bishop in fact let it happen, supported it, even while it critiqued him
Good honest communication with all parts of the diocese; acknowledging past failings and looking at demographics, consistent hard work on the part of many people.
wide participation and results that have yet to change anything. use of an outside facilorator
Good listening, and inclusion of ALL
The very broad based attempt to involve every congregation in the interviews, and the "Stakeholder" events.
Widespread participation
A wide diversity of ministries and the hard work of meeting with as many congregations as possible to get the grass root feelings fleshed out.
Hearing each congregation's perspective.
Inviting all parties (Lay & Clergy) to the discussion table. The commitment of BCMS membership to complete this very important task.
Astonishing patience and perseverance and insight of the theology work - it formed an objective and biblical basis for everything else. Also, the careful and respectful and extensive interviewing of parishioners across the diocese - it provided the stories and the "life" and the buy-in needed to carry forward the theological foundations.

The transparency and inclusiveness of the process. Our diocese has a culture of distrust that the transparency of the process helped to diminish.
I believe congregations have been waiting for some action from the leadership as to what is happening to our dwindling numbers, our inability to attract new members and how to improve our situation. We have also failed the youth and young adults by not having or encouraging programs that are meaningful to them.
Looking at the spiritual foundations for renewal in the diocese. Putting the focus back on spiritual renewal.
I do not believe it was successful.
Honesty about our past and an intention to make this round work.
Collaborative, diocesan wide experience.
The mix of BCMS members, Craig and a ton of hard work.
honoring the grassroots efforts, Spirit at work in diverse places
1. Participatory surveys and meetings 2. The theo paper really hasn't been used much and I am not sure there will be commitment to engage it in the future. I think we got it out of order.
Energy from the leaders and genuine listening to the grass roots.
Jim Huber
transparent, collaborative, shared participation openness, willingness to listen and to speak, truth telling for the most part.
Leaders
Diocesan-wide participation both in congregational visits and in attendance at meetings.
We talked and listened to a wide swath of the diocese
Craig Van Gelder's leadership; diocesan wide participation; BSMS members willing to commit large amounts of time and energy to the process; a willingness to tell the truth about the state of the diocese; the bishop's support of the process
Theological creativity and engagement, and wide grassroots participation were the two keys I think made the BCMS process successful.
Grass roots solicitation format. Promoting that we begin with a clean slate, that everything is subject to change.
Listening to lay persons, learning where their passion is.
Everyone got a chance to talk.
Broad participation
Good leadership, including Consultant Craig Van Gelder and the willingness to trust and work hard.
I am not sure that BCMS was "successful." There was strong leadership, but that did give a sense of top-down process rather than grass roots. Information was gathered in good fashion, but was not exhaustive in terms of the inclusion of alternative points of view.
This statement is an assumption which is the BCMS process perspective: assumption. I have felt that manipulation, control and exclusion have resulted as a product of BCMS assumptions. This was evident at the Diocesan convention when in the name of BCMS behaviors and statements emerged to control and manipulate actions (Budget and Canons) when the BCMS 4 GOALS had been "affirmed and owned" by Convention, hence the Diocese, for less than 4 hours. Goal number one should be the exclusive affirmation and ownership through practice by the Diocese, which means all parts of local congregations through all Diocesan staff and bodies, for at least 1 year before BCMS goals 2-4 are even considered.
The inclusion of so many congregations in pulling the BCMS together. Everyone has a voice.
The leadership of Craig Van Gelder. The determination and dedication of the participants.
The consultant The parish representation
Prayer and God. Consistent, competent and faith-filled leadership and team. A persistent and patient, brilliant consultant.
Energy, passion for growth, conscience, and concerns of the challenges
The visiting of parishes - I did many- They clearly appreciated time to talk, learn and be encouraged for their successes. There was not a lot of complaint in Region II
grass root participation Vision and methods of consultants willingness of metro clergy to invest and participate
it was fairly a clear well written document though I don't think that it is complete nor will it ever be.
Broad participation. Good communication. Commitment and follow through of leaders.
consistent feedback, invitation, communication
Going out and seeing folks from many congregations and getting input.
The widely touted collaborative process. The work with Craig.
The local congregations felt heard. The BCMS leadership listened well and responded accordingly.
By pointing out and acknowledging the missional failures of the past, re-envisioning and rethinking a new missional vision, and conveying a stronger message of spiritual transformation and theological renewal with emphasis on Bible study and prayer life.
I don't know since nobody included me

Question 25: How could the BCMS process have been improved?

It could have been more specific in recommendations, especially in taking on tough recommendations for change.
It seemed that many times when feedback and information was solicited, the facilitators then countered or, in three cases, argued with the people giving the feedback. It was never clear to me that the skills of deeply listening without inserting the personal opinions of the facilitator was ever discussed with the BCMS group. What also would have been helpful in the final report were some models of how putting the recommendations into practice might look. Something tangible would have been incredibly helpful.
Having the whole diocese involved from the start might have helped come to the close sooner.
I have no comment on the process
I thought it was a good process
You would know that better than I would. But thank you for asking.
much of the congregational engagement process was never completed across the diocese.
I can't think of anything.
I was not involved so I have no comments.
It took me awhile to get over the initial "Metro Mission Strategy" concept. I felt that was yet another, "just wait small town folks, we'll get to you later", even though that was not the intent. Our parish never did have a visit, but those who were interested took it upon themselves to get to a presentation. Again, once the entire diocese was engaged in the process, it fostered more ideas and became something all could relate to.
All people, such as young people should have been better included, but that is very difficult. I think the BCMS did as best they could.
Using more telephone conference calls to enable more engagement of greater Minnesota and less of a burden on those with long drives to participate.
Under the circumstances, I think it was pretty successful, both in product and process.
as long as the process continues quickly we have a chance to create the needed change. the process might have been better if we could have made a report that included more specific change decisions
Spend more time in Greater Minnesota -- things out here are quite different from what is experienced in the metro area.
I believe it would have been more effective to have involved the entire diocese from the beginning. In the beginning it was the BCMMS, and when the rest of the diocese was asked to join, it felt like we were asked get "caught up" which we actually did, but there were comments about this. I also believe the "metro" and "greater MN" gap had not yet been addressed well. Distances that people from "greater MN" are asked to drive (with the attendant time commitment) to attend meetings in the "metro" because there are more people in the "metro" does become an obstacle for full participation.
Only improvement would have been in enlisting people who were knowledgeable in youth and young adult areas to flesh out those portions.
Tough question. The time commitment was large which can lead to loss of steam or ability to continue with other commitments. However, with something as important as this work it is hard to cut it shorter.
By acknowledging the concerns of each of these congregations especially in the rural areas. Many of these congregations depend upon their "summer people" for survival. The collecting of information should have been done during the summer season when memberships are at their peak attendance in our rural areas. A more accurate representation of membership (including young people) would have been represented.
None
My church could have been involved more! We are so seemingly self sufficient that we sometimes fail to help on these kinds of things.
Pre-congregational communication. It would have helped to have better communication with parishes as to what was the purpose of the meetings prior to conducting them.
Better communication to all churches in the diocese.
More laity on the committee. Probably including members of the 3 major leadership bodies so you would have buy-in from them
More inclusive beyond clergy.
More communication during the process back to parishes to keep anticipation high.
More comprehensive and clear about how changes were integrated, how suggestions were taken and where they showed up in the document. The Bishop could have been a bigger part of the process rather than seemingly to meet outside of it entirely.
More consistent attendance by BCMS members at meetings.
less focus on Total Ministry as 'preferred option' and more focus on use of TM programs for ALL congregations; there seemed to be a negative revisionist presentation of the past. Perhaps a more balanced naming would have been more fruitful.

Focusing on the negative/past failures rather than "what ever is good, true" etc. creates even greater fatigue when we need energizing.
Discuss what works
.the theological paper excluded deacons and laity .early on too many buzz words .greater specificity around future steps....
Don't know
Theological Statement was not put together well, not vetted sufficiently and then kind of put aside. That portion needed to be done better and with more clarity.
More time for north and southern minnesota to get involved
by the addition of specific directives: x will do y by z; be evaluated by xx at the end of every year in order to understand what is bearing fruit and what is not in order to improve the work of mission in the diocese; also, training and equipping the diocesan council for the work that has been entrusted to their care
Perhaps more specificity in the goals and operational strategies of the final report. Although I do recognize that achieving such specificity in any honest way would have required more time.
2) Selected a more rounded team of theologians from the diocese at the beginning (not just tack on a bunch at the end to make it look representative). 2) better representation from sdceprdhr rural clergy issues
Focus on the positives and strengths of the diocese more, not just what is wrong and done poorly. Develop more specific strategies and action plans.
Nothing comes to mind.
There was the joke held by some, including me, that this was nothing more than a dissertation project overseen by someone who was looking for something to write a book about. It seemed that there was a forgone conclusion toward which this process was being directed. Dissenting opinions were not welcome and anyone who might have been seen as questioning the process or the results were seen as something less than worthy. The statistics were good and helpful. the theological assumptions were not very well expressed and certainly did not seem very "Episcopalian" to me. Much of the theology seemed vapid and trite. The report could well have stopped at the first Goal of spiritual renewal. If we can do this, the rest will take care of itself. I also had a sense that things were being rushed in order to present something at the 2007 Convention. I fully understand the need to work within a time frame, but sometimes you just have to let go of that and let the process work itself out.
Gospel based theology, theology, theology. Group process: no - group theology: yes. Did I mention theology? To state that a process is open and inclusive does not mean that it is. This ploy has been used by institutions and their consultants for at 15 years by my recollection. "Every one was invited and had a chance to participate" does not mean that it is true when culture and local reality is ignored, manipulated, and used as control mechanisms. The reality of BCMS is that the product was the goal not the process or the participation. This led to what the Bishop stated in his remarks, "as something that if he and his staff would have presented BCMS as it is, BCMS would be considered incomplete with no substance in clear goals, process, and actions." Improved you ask - some did suggest improvements but were discounted as part of the "culture of critique, complaint, and skepticism" that created " a paralyzing cloud of mutual distrust, suspicion and critique" in the diocese.
Better communication to the field of the final report . Convention delegates got information. Clergy got information. Not all shared with their congregations.
Inclusion of more laity as working participants.
Clearer understanding earlier on about what level of recommendation would be in the report.
Better communication team / strategy.
No comment; it was excellent one
It was pretty good. Some of the old psychological group dynamics building exercises might have helped like the " I resent and I appreciate you", trust walks, talk about our power and authority issues. for the steering team. Of course I am from that era and I am a fairly trusting person.
don't know
I don't think all congregations were contacted or met with. My congregation, [X] had never met with the BCMS Comm. Was this my fault or the BCMS process?
I don't know.
Overall, I think a wonderful job has been done by the BCMS leadership.
It could have been improved by making provisions for church planting or evangelism in developing and growth areas, especially areas without episcopal congregations and recommending the merger of declining congregations in the same area.
Include all the clergy and lay, and outline some possible outcomes

Question 26: Are there any further comments you would like to share about the BCMS process?

Work well done. God bless us all!!!
I hope we are able to find a way to ensure the breadth of experience and perspective within the implementation group as was present in the process to this point, and not use it as a permission slip for change which might mask change motivated by some other source (agenda, restlessness, etc.)
Hallelujah!
I am deeply, deeply concerned about the composition of the second "strategy" group -- it seems that the BCMS limited the possibilities for seasoned, effective, out-of-the-box thinking by limiting the group's members to people from the various councils of the church - people by whose very membership on those councils are committed to church as it is, rather than as it can be. Where is the invitation to the people on the "fringe" of our church? the newcomer? the strategist? people who might be able to tell us a great deal about ourselves from more of an outside perspective?
I am on board to do whatever is needed to continue this work. It is very important and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this work.
Not the process - I do have concerns about the idea of moving to a congregational (us just for us) model. I doubt most congregations will commit to sharing with "hub" parishes any more than they want to share with the diocese.
At one point, I was full of feeling - on the one hand, I was an individual in the Diocese with opinions and on the other hand I was an Interim Rector - at a meeting with BCMS reps wherein parish reps expressed opinions completely opposite from my own...and their manner of expression was problematic for me. I called one of the BCMS reps following that meeting to clarify the polar points of view.; It was difficult.
thank you for this survey
I hope the momentum from the BCMS process continues but more importantly the spiritual transformation of all of us making us true disciples of Jesus reaching out to our communities and others rather than just trying to maintain the status quo and remaining insular, negative about our future and critical of anything new or experimental or exploratory.
Just a incredible amount of gratitude to those on the commission who gave so tirelessly of themselves and their time. It just proves how much we all care about our church and this diocese.
Well Done! If we actually do this it will be a major institutional change but the whole Episcopal Church will benefit.
Good process, looking forward to the next phase and the possibilities of greater participation as clusters unfold or form to formulate the vision/action plans.
Job well done - Thank you
Implementation follow through, perseverance and accountability are essential now and for the years ahead to complete our goals. Also, we must go out of our way to communicate and form closer relationships with each other.
So far, so good... personally I have never been part of a more genuinely honest and hopeful, spirit-open process in my 35+ years in ordained ministry
Let's hope and pray the momentum continues and it helps people have faith in their church.
no
Good job!
I also heard comments about the final report being "so negative." In the fall forum I attended, I think it wasn't that people wanted to deny the reality of the negative statistics and the importance of addressing the long term decline, but rather a longing to honor those who have been faithful, have given much and labored diligently. The statistics on decline are sobering, and I think people are interested in engaging in mission and ministry that will be vital and new. But I did hear the desire to remember (and this is a quote) "Those on whose shoulders we stand."
Yes, I found it quite hurtful to have to hear about our "failures" when some of things were fruitful.
Please, for those that will be continuing to work on this project in the future, a well defined inclusion and role for deacons is important for its success. There is still some resistance and mis-understanding by priests and lay alike about our function.
It was a good idea. It appeared to be a plan, typically urban in focus with rural churches and their representation an after thought and coming in late for any of the input as to the idea itself. It is not too late to get off some responses by the diocese to some of the struggling rural churches addressing their concerns even if it is just a note or a phone call. I feel that the goals were very nebulous, idealistic and not very specific.
None
God help us as we move forward! God bless us, every one!
I am hopeful that this will bring us to a new spirit of collaboration.
Many thanks.
I am more concerned about what happens from here on. The steering committee for the BCMS has accumulated lots of context which, I hope, will not be lost to the "Succeeding Group".
Good job, here's to the future.

I loved the way that this process moved from abstract disjointed to articulate and concise - the way the focus came about.
I believe that BCMS was used as a tool to create fear against a co-adjutor process, and mistrust of the current bishop. We have seriously undermined our future success in creating a healthy transition in a time of great change. At the least we have trashed months worth of Standing Committee design and demoralized their leadership.
Need to add section on establishing trust that will encourage wealthy Episcopalians to add large amounts of money to endowments and programs
excellent work overall. exceed most of my expectations. I am concerned after convention that it will become a buzz word for every issue we want to change, or adapt....we need to move forward steadily, and reasonably. I am disappointed that the BCMS was used to disrupt the co-adjutor request which from my experience in this diocese during the last transition was messy. I believe we have made a terrible mistake...we allowed levels of fear surrounding funding to become a rally point, prior to even working with the appropriate groups to manage the process. we shall see. Also, we used the BCMS to defeat the change to canon regarding those congregations who self grant funds to themselves and who do not live in the common good, and yet want to continue to have voice and vote. Far too many communities with a me first attitude surrounding funding, forgetting that we are Episcopalian, not congregationalists.
It was very well organized. Thanks to all members.
I have hope for the future as well as concerns about losing momentum as we go forward.
I do not think its fair in this evaluation process to put "the bishop and his staff all together" in one group. (IVd,lh,23d) There are 15 or so staff members with a variety of ministries. I wish this survey would have, at the minimum, broken the staff into categories such as Program Office (the Canon Missioners) Finance Office, Communications Office, administration Office, Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary
Very well done. If we really pledge ourselves to live in to the next stage of this process, then I think we will re-enliven our ministry in Minnesota in deep and important ways.
To keep educating the Diocese, especially the lay people who are not educated as to what the Diocese does and how important the connection is between parishes and the Diocese. We have so many Episcopalians who are not "cradle" I feel that if we don't teach that our community goes beyond the safe community in their own parish, they will not be passionate about the Diocese as a whole. I would hope that lay people new to the Episcopal church learn they can walk into any Episcopal congregation as their home.
Gratitude for those who participated on all levels.
I shall not apologize for sounding blunt and perhaps unhelpful, but I am not very hopeful that much will come of this unless and until we as a diocese can healthfully discuss the anger and hurt which has so infected major parts of our life together--and to do so in the Spirit of Love and Affection which comes only from God. We need to experience and live into the redemptive actions of confession and forgiveness if we are going to be disciples of Christ. We need to let go of our need to separate ourselves into those who are "right" and those who are "wrong." We need to be honest about the systemic elitisms--racism, privilege of wealth, status, power, etc.--that infects us. I can only engage in this process if am willing to let go of these in my own life and if I am willing to engage with others who seek to do the same. My experience in this diocese does not give me much reason for hope, but I do not despair, for all things are possible through Christ.
It has been an experience that adds to the ongoing cultural critique of institutional behavior and dynamics by one who lives and operates from an hermeneutic of suspicion due to processes and realities of my life of which the BCMS is only a part.
The selection of the group that will now head up implementation will be critical to its success. Remember to include representation from smaller, outlying areas as well as those from the metro area.
I believe the completion of the BCMS was an incredible accomplishment and those who participated in any way should be commended.
I think the next phase is the most important.
Thank you.
This ought to be repeated at each local congregation.
It seems that folks are teaming up for power plays now. I live too far away, and am too old. I will continue much as I have up here. I am fairly relational and will continue to try to explain and support where I can. I fear that some see this as "getting rid of a disliked bishop and his staff. I hope that we can transcend that into actual structural, and systemic changes. I see Total ministry and Gospel based discipleship as some of those ways. However they do take mentoring and some long term commitment. I have been around for a while and there were not a lot of surprises in the data generated. And, ECUSA is generally suffering from having taken some prophetic positions with which I strongly agree. One area we never seemed to probe, was the relationship between clergy and congregation trust and ethical behavior. I certainly know of many folks who have left over those sorts of issues. That was one of the ways in which BCMS seemed to be clergy driven. and aimed more at the failures of "The Bishop" or staff.
The respectful (hand's off) and non anxious posture and behavior of the Bishop (as far as I could see) made space for important clergy leaders from the metro area to invest in the process and assume responsibility for our future.

As a whole it was good to be part of the process now the real work begins.
well done - you all deserve martinis, big ones -
Job well done, but much more to do.
It is the one thing that has given me reason to be inspired about the future of the diocese. It helped me (without assigning blame) better understand my experience with a failed mission.
I would like to see the Steering Committee of BCMS making sure that the process gets off the group; that phase two includes the entire diocese, and that every region takes responsibility in implementing the process.
I am so annoyed that deacons were not mentioned even after twice calling attention to that omission that I find it hard to believe the process didn't omit other "inconvenient" persons.