

JULY
SGM

ACCRA RIDGE CHURCH

Paradigm Shift Review Report To Congregation

BACKGROUND

At the 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Church, the current Council was charged with examining a proposal by the outgoing Council, generally referred to as the “Paradigm Shift” (PS) document.

The PS Document makes recommendations for radical change to the governance structure of the Church based on three key issues identified. Firstly, it found that the Coordinating Minister, who coordinates the activities of the clergy, starts with little knowledge of the Church and its mission. This limits the ability of the Coordinating Minister to make a significant impact on the spiritual life of the Church initially. By the time the minister appreciates the Church, it’s time to leave. Secondly, it argued that the size of Council (over 20 members) makes it extremely difficult for issues to be tackled in depth, leading to significant delays in decision making. Finally, it stated that the existing governance structure of the Church does not put spiritual matters such as discipleship, evangelism, prayer, and church growth at the centre of what the Church does.

In response to these perceived challenges, it proposed the following actions:

1. Introduction of a new governance model for the Church
2. The position of Coordinating Minister be replaced with a Senior Minister
3. The Church Council be reduced in size to about seven members.

Council set up a committee to facilitate the charge given by the AGM and accepted the committee’s recommendation on the PS document. At the 2022 AGM, Council informed the congregation that before the end of May 2022, it would present a document summarising its findings and recommendations on the aspects of the Paradigm Shift document that relate to the spiritual life of the Church. Council further indicated that it would call an SGM of the congregation in July 2022 to discuss the findings presented, for a decision to be taken on the way forward.

Therefore, this document is presented in fulfilment of Council’s undertaking to submit its findings on the PS Document and its recommendations for the growth and development of the spiritual life of the Accra Ridge Church.

REVIEW OF PS DOCUMENT

Relevance of Discipleship Strategy to PS Concerns about Spiritual Growth

Council observed that all the recommendations in the PS document were premised on a desire to improve the spiritual life of the Church. Since the Discipleship Strategy (DS) had been approved for implementation with a similar objective at the 2018 AGM, Council thought it wise to review the PS Document in the light of the Discipleship Strategy.

The Discipleship Strategy was adopted for implementation at the 2018 AGM, following the participation of a nine-member delegation to the 105th and 106th Call to Awaken the Laity (CAL) Seminar in South Korea in 2016 and 2017. The adoption of the DS was preceded by the decision at the 2009 AGM to institute discipleship classes for all prospective members of the Church, and the acceptance at the 2016 AGM of the Church Growth Strategy presented by the clergy.

These decisions of AGM were intended to help all members grow to full stature in Christ, and gave Council the mandate to establish a secretariat to oversee discipleship training at ARC and all related activities. Following from these decisions, the implementation of the DS has so far churned out a total of 36 graduates from the discipleship training sessions, and other cohorts are in session and at various levels of the programme.

Discipleship is at the core of the spiritual life of the Church and ties in very well with the Vision and Mission of ARC, which is to “aspire to be a strong united church impacting families, communities, workplaces and nations for Christ.” We intend to do this by discipling “Christians of all nations, ages and social classes using the Bible as the ultimate manual.”

The central concern expressed in the PS document about the lack of focus on the spiritual growth of the Church is clearly meant to be addressed by the implementation of the

Discipleship Strategy of the Church. Therefore, it is not surprising that some parallels exist between the recommendations of the PS document and the implementation plans under the Discipleship Strategy. Indeed, several aspects of the church group and governance reorganisation proposed in the PS document find a much clearer expression in the proposals under the DS to organise and align all pastoral and spiritual activities of ARC under a framework termed Church Life And Nurture (CLAN).

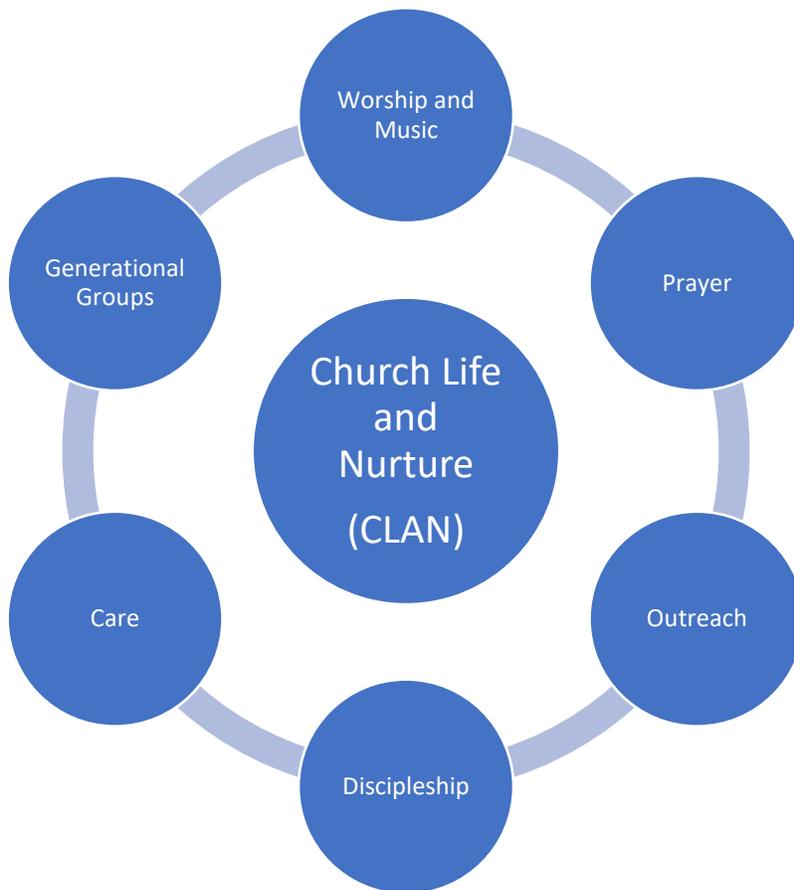
According to the Constitution of the Church (March 2014), the clergy is responsible for all pastoral and spiritual ministries and activities involved with the groups and teams of the Church. CLAN represents the “spiritual life of the church”. It includes discipleship, Christian Education, pastoral care, evangelism, leadership training, worship services, preaching, the ministries of all other groups, and the spiritual growth of the entire membership. Under the ARC Constitution, CLAN falls under the clergy since they are given the mandate to oversee and provide pastoral and spiritual guidance of the groups and the devotional life of the entire membership (Fourth Schedule: Article 46 [2]).

CLAN activities relate directly to the Discipleship Ministry, and these include the Discipleship School and the Discipleship Secretariat, which would oversee key initiatives of the Discipleship Strategy, including;

- Discipleship School
 - Discipleship classes (Discipleship Training (DT)/Leadership Training (LT))
 - New Converts class
 - New Membership class
- Impact Groups
 - Neighbourhood Fellowships
 - Christian Education
- Writers’ Guild (Content developers)
- Welcome/ Follow-up teams

The implementation of the Discipleship Strategy envisages that all groups and ministries of the Church would be organised under a CLAN framework made up of the six broad Ministries of the Church, namely;

- Worship and Music
- Prayer
- Outreach
- Care
- Generational Groups and
- Discipleship



Findings and Observations of Council

In reviewing the PS Document, Council noted three key proposals:

- 1) Restructuring of the Church to better focus on spiritual growth
- 2) Appointment of Senior Minister and
- 3) Reduction in the size of Council

The findings and observations of Council on each of these issues is summarised below.

PS Document Proposal for Restructuring for Spiritual Growth

Council noted that with the growth and expansion of the Church over time, the original church structures are no longer able to fully support the life and work of the Church as it is today with its branches/outreach posts, and our vision for discipleship. Council observed that the vision held at the inception of this Church had structures to help provide spiritual and pastoral oversight and provide and maintain worship and fellowship. Although adequate for the congregation at the time, these structures have been outgrown, and the church now requires relevant and sustainable structures to match its growth effectively.

In comparing the proposals from the PS Document to those proposed under the DS, Council concluded that whilst the broad structure and objectives were similar, those in the DS were better framed.

PS Document Proposal for Appointment of Senior Minister

Council did not find sufficient justification for the proposed creation of the Senior Minister position due to significant challenges in implementing such a proposal. Council concluded that it would be more beneficial to enhance the effectiveness of the Coordinating Minister.

Council, therefore, proposes more detailed handing over and onboarding processes for the Coordinating Minister on his assumption of duty to make the Coordinating Minister more effective in carrying out his responsibilities. The

enhanced onboarding will also be extended to all Ministers on their arrival at the ARC. Council also proposes to support the Coordinating Minister with the necessary organisational tools to ensure effective delivery of his duties.

PS Document Proposal to Reduce the Size of Council

Council agreed with the PS Document that its size contributes to delays in decision making. Council noted that the size of Council could be reduced if the existing committees of Council were strengthened and significant decision-making authority was delegated to the strengthened committees.

Focusing on CLAN Issues

As the implementation of the discipleship strategy is underway, Council believes it would be unwise, at this time, to take any other major initiatives that impact on CLAN. Council however intends to take on board the observations and concerns arising from the PS document to further refine and enrich the DS. Therefore, Council decided to limit its recommendations to the congregation to only those aspects of the PS Document that related to CLAN. Council believes that this approach will address the core concerns expressed in the PS Document and provide a better position to tackle any residual governance issues at a later date.

PROPOSAL OF COUNCIL TO CONGREGATION

As stated in the preceding section, these proposals are limited to issues that impact on CLAN and enhance the spiritual life of the ARC. They arise primarily out of the Discipleship Strategy, observations from the PS Document and contributions submitted by members of the congregation. Although they impact the governance of the Church, they are not directly aimed at resolving the governance issues raised. Though pertinent, the governance and other issues raised in the PS Document relating to the administration of the Church, will be addressed in due course.

These proposals are intended for discussion and adoption as appropriate by the congregation gathered at a Special General Meeting. They involve a measure of restructuring, but no immediate amendments to our Constitution.

Council makes two proposals as follows:

- Institution of an SGM On Church Life and Nurture (CLAN)
- Structuring of church groups within Ministries under a CLAN Framework.

Institution of an SGM On Church Life and Nurture

In the course of its deliberation on the spiritual growth of the Church, Council noted that the Church does not have an appropriate forum that facilitates deliberation on CLAN or the spiritual life of the Church.

Therefore, Council proposes that a new Special General Meeting of the Church be inserted into the church calendar with the sole purpose of dealing with spiritual matters of the Church. This meeting would be in addition to the AGM and SGM on Finance, but would be different in both form and organisation.

Specifically, it is proposed that;

- The meeting be titled as the “SGM on Church Life and Nurture”
- The meeting be held in July every year

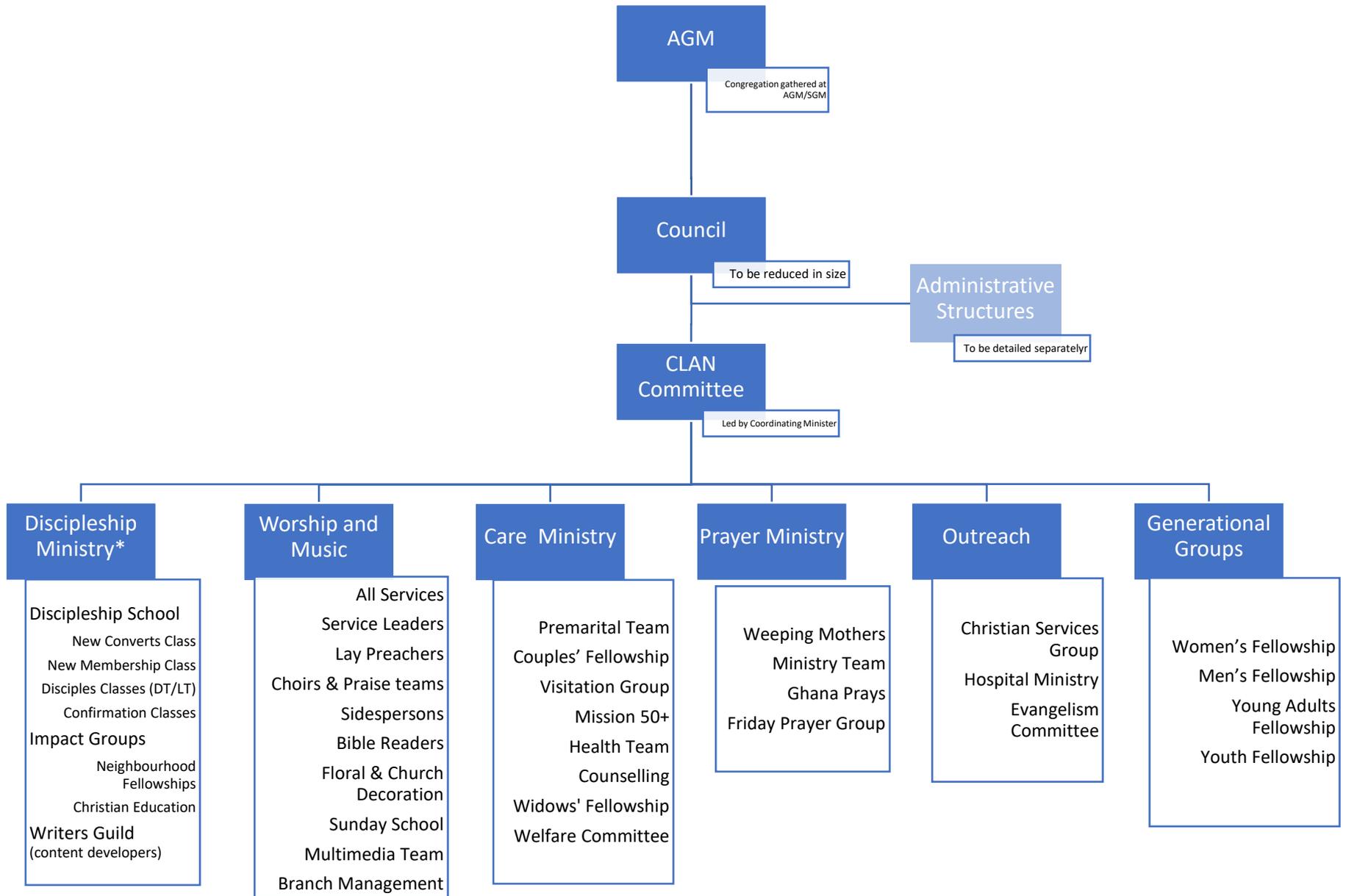
- The SGM be held as a representational meeting with delegates/representatives from all church groups and congregations, to ensure that issues are fully discussed and addressed.
- All church members are invited to attend and participate, as required by the Constitution.
- The SGM be chaired by the Council Chair, in line with the Constitution, but the Coordinating Minister be required to lead the reporting on developments and progress on building the spiritual life of the Church.

Structuring of church groups within Ministries under a CLAN Framework

Council proposes that all existing ARC groups' activities and worship life be restructured to enhance supervision and harness resources for spiritual formation and growth. In order to eliminate duplication and overlapping functions, all activities and ministries at the ARC will thus be reorganised and realigned in line with the following key areas (ministries):

- Worship and Music
- Prayer
- Evangelism
- Care
- Generational Groups
- Discipleship

Figure 1: The Proposed Church Structure



*There will be a discipleship secretariat to support the Discipleship Ministry

Implications for other ARC groups and activities (Restructuring)

1. Structure of CLAN Department at ARC

Each Ministry would be coordinated by a committee led by a chairman in the proposed CLAN structure. The groups and teams would continue to be managed at the local level by the elected executive as currently occurs. Reports from the groups and teams would be presented to the ministry committees and decisions on activities, and other issues would be taken at the committee level (rather than at Council). Council will therefore need to delegate significant decision-making authority to the CLAN Ministries.

Regular reports from the Ministries will be presented to Council to enable it perform its oversight function, and annual activity reports from the Ministries will be presented to SGM through the Council.



2. Composition of Council

The ARC Council currently has representatives from groups and teams which contribute directly to its size and operation. The reorganisation under the CLAN Framework would allow the Ministries to be represented on Council rather than the groups and teams, thus enabling a significant reduction in the size of Council. As a

significant delegation authority is envisaged, the groups and teams would not lose any ability to impact on decision making at the ARC.

3. The Format for SGM

Reports would be received from the six (6) CLAN Ministries and discussed by workshop groups who will identify issues and make recommendations for decisions to be taken by the SGM. When decisions are reached on relevant issues, appropriate ministries will be tasked to implement same under the supervision of Council and reported on at the subsequent SGM.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The congregation is invited to review these proposals from Council, commit them to prayer, and seek the Lord's guidance individually and in their various groups. Council welcomes any written submissions on its proposals even before the SGM scheduled for July 2022.

Assuming the proposals of Council are accepted, a committee will be put in place to write out the operations and functions of the ministry committees, the CLAN committee and the reporting format for groups and teams. The committee will also recommend the composition and meeting times for ministry committees and the CLAN committee.

Finally, there will be a need to sensitise the Church on the Discipleship Programme, particularly, about Discipleship Training and Leadership Training becoming requirements for church leadership, roles on Council, Church groups, etc. There will also be the need to develop an ARC Strategic Plan (10 year) to drive the CLAN department, ministries and committees towards the vision and mission.

Council expects that every member of the ARC will devote time to prayerfully consider these proposals to enhance the spiritual life of the Accra Ridge Church.