Thank you for enquiring about the possibility of a post in Carlisle Diocese. We like to think of ourselves as friendly and innovative, and should God be calling you to join us, you will certainly receive an extremely warm welcome.

Cumbria is the first so-called ‘Ecumenical County’, which means that we are working closely with our fellow Christians to pursue an overtly missional vision called ‘God for All’. Evangelism and witness are high on our agenda, and we place considerable emphasis on growing disciples who are confident in their faith and able to share it through what they are, do and say. To this end we are creating ecumenical ‘Mission Communities’ across the county, and we have just completed a process of consultation which we hope will ‘refresh’ the vision and help us to see where God may be leading us for the next few years.

Our clergy (both stipendiary and self-supporting) are enthusiastic about working collaboratively and ecumenically. Their role (and this applies especially to Mission Community Leaders) is increasingly one of oversight and enabling the ministry of others. They are all passionate about preaching and teaching the Gospel, and recognise the need for sensitive change-management in a fairly traditional context. They also love the profoundly pastoral nature of their task.

Geographically, Cumbria is enormous and very beautiful – but sparsely populated except in the summer when we gladly receive many millions of visitors. We are realistic about the problems now facing most dioceses (e.g. of increasingly elderly congregations and declining finances) but we are also very hopeful about the future and excited by what God is doing here.

We see this as a time of considerable challenge – but also great opportunity. To that end we have developed a highly committed team of missional ‘God for All’ enablers, and as well as rejoicing in more than 150 ‘Fresh Expressions’ we are creating a ‘Pioneer Training Hub’ in Penrith for the whole of the Northern Province. So we need clergy who are up for the challenge – and able to seize the many opportunities presented by this wonderful part of the country.

To my great surprise, God called me here eighteen years ago – and I love it. Most of my clergy colleagues would say the same. I do hope that may also soon be true for you, and very much look forward to our partnership in the Gospel.

James Newcome

Bishop of Carlisle

(website: <http://carlislediocese.org.uk>)