

## General Synod

### Archbishops' Task Group on Evangelism

#### General direction

1. The purpose of the Archbishops' task group on evangelism (TGE) is to encourage and provoke the central place of evangelism in the culture of the Church.
2. It is not the place of the TGE to evangelise the nation on behalf of or instead of local Christians or local churches, nor has the TGE chosen to generate initiatives in evangelism to add to the many already in existence. Instead the TGE seeks to share good practice, to equip local church people with confidence to share their faith, and to advocate for evangelism as a central and crucial part of church life.
3. The TGE is an initiative of the Archbishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury is Chair of the group, and the Archbishop of York is represented by his chief of staff. As part of its debate on intentional evangelism the General Synod supported the formation of the group and urged and commended a number of suggestions for its work. In particular the Synod commended the thinking outlined in GS 1917 and suggested that the group base its work on the "seven disciplines of evangelisation". These were developed by the Bishop of Sheffield and are published at Annexe 1 to GS 1895.
4. Conscious of the restrictions of time and resource, and of the good work being done in other parts of the Church, the TGE has focused its activity on certain of these disciplines, and in particular on the "initial proclamation" of faith and the rootedness of evangelism in prayer. Other disciplines are being pursued by other groups, for example the ecclesial work done by the Church Growth research programme and the Fresh Expressions initiative and its embedding group. The TGE liaises with these groups but does not attempt to duplicate their work.
5. The TGE has met four times and has identified and pursued a number of workstreams. In addition the group has commissioned a number of pieces of practical work.
6. An interim report on the progress of the TGE was presented to the House of Bishops in May. There will be a fringe meeting at the July 2015 Synod to share information and to network those with particular commitment to these agendas. The TGE will take to the Business Committee a request to present on its work to the General Synod either in November 2015 or in February 2016.

## Ongoing workstreams

7. Members of the TGE, in partnership with colleagues in the NCIs and in the dioceses, are pursuing the following pieces of work and reporting regularly to the Archbishops on their progress:
  - Engaging young people in the work of evangelism, and learning from them.
  - Resourcing local churches to ground their evangelism in disciplined prayer, especially in prayer for greater confidence in faith-sharing and for the overcoming of barriers of fear and reluctance.
  - Working alongside those who minister in areas of deprivation and in particular those working in estate ministry, to identify resources for evangelism specific to these areas, and to identify and share what those who work there can teach others in the Church.
  - Liaising with those responsible for training the Church's ministers to ensure that confidence in faith-sharing, and a robust and tested theology of evangelism, is a central part of such training.
  - Researching and monitoring the relationship between the attitude of the people of England to the Lord Jesus Christ and people's attitudes to the Christian churches, to the Church of England and to their local Christian community in particular.

## Specific projects

8. In partnership with others the TGE commissioned the following specific pieces of work for the first half of 2015:
  - A piece of practical research, involving in-depth interviews with a number of small groups in different parts of the country, as well as more extensive telephone polling, to explore ways in which the people of England respond to talk of God and of Jesus Christ. This is designed to produce a number of video resources and a consequent narrative on good ways of sharing faith, along the lines of the material produced by the Weddings Project.
  - Developing a subgroup on lay witness. This will link with other priorities of the Archbishops; for example with Archbishop Justin's work on financial institutions and Archbishop Sentamu's symposium on the economy and the work recently published in "On Rock or on Sand".
  - Theological and inspirational material on evangelism, to be written by TGE members from a number of theological perspectives reflecting the diverse theological approaches of the TGE.

+ Paul Liverpool. June 2015