

GENERAL SYNOD

GOOD NEWS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Church of England National Youth Strategy incorporating proposals for a Youth Evangelism Fund

It is not possible to generalise about young people without losing the sense of the rich variety of cultures and life-styles that they inhabit and adopt. Nevertheless, two things can be said: many young people today have a stronger sense of spirituality than was the case a generation ago; most young people have either never had contact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as lived in and through the Church or have lost the contact they once had.

On the other hand, over recent years, the Church of England has increased greatly the human and financial resources committed to work with and outreach to young people. It seems to be a justified claim that the Church employs more youth workers than local government. At least part of the background to this development was the Board of Education report *Youth a Part* (1996). Towards the end of the last General Synod quinquennium, a conference organised by the Board of Mission with wide-ranging participation, *ACE '99*, which reviewed the Decade of Evangelism, proposed that a Youth Evangelism Fund would help carry the vision forward.

In the year 2000, the General Synod endorsed the Archbishops' Council's *Themes for the new Quinquennium*. Theme two is *Equipping to evangelise* and theme three *Welcoming and encouraging children and young people*. The introductory paragraph to theme three reads, 'To welcome and encourage children and young people, to be encouraged by them and to engage with them on their spiritual journey wherever they are'.

In September 2001, members of the Archbishops' Council, at their residential meeting in Sheffield, were encouraged by a group of young people who engaged with them on their own journey. At two subsequent meetings the Council developed their Youth Strategy. Meanwhile, they had also considered and supported detailed proposals, backed by a feasibility study, for a Youth Evangelism Fund. It was clear that the National Youth Strategy and the Youth Evangelism Fund needed to be considered together.

In May 2002, the House of Bishops considered the National Youth Strategy incorporating proposals for the Youth Evangelism Fund and, subject to some suggestions for improvement, made to the papers now before General Synod, they gave them their clear support.

General Synod is asked to endorse a demanding strategy for work with and outreach to young people. For each of the four elements (Young People and Worship; Young People as Leaders; Resourcing Youth Workers; Young People and Mission) the strategy identifies its purpose and rationale, with the desired outcomes and timescale. It is a strategy for the next five years but it will have implications far beyond that.

Some of the work will fall on the staff of the Archbishops' Council within the Education Division. To that end, the

Council approved the retention beyond this year of a second National Youth Officer post that would otherwise have been made redundant. Much will also be expected of the network of Diocesan Youth Officers for whom this should be a helpful focussing of some of their work, and of partners in para-church organisations. Where a diocese has no Diocesan Youth Officer, it would be most helpful if a named individual could take responsibility for the strategy in that diocese.

Above all, the strategy will only be effective if adult members of the Church in the parishes, deaneries and dioceses are prepared to adapt and change, to share their skills and knowledge alongside and in relationship with young people and to be prepared to learn from them. This will help ensure that the emerging church will not become a redundant church. But there is much more to the strategy than this. It envisages the transforming energies of young Christians, with and through the Church of England, being applied in influence and impact on every part of society.

The proposals for a Youth Evangelism Fund are an important part of the strategy. The Appendix gives an account of the proposed character of the Fund and its purposes. Its aim is to support initiatives, taken by dioceses, deaneries and parishes or by groups of young Christians, that provide opportunities for young people, many of them for the first time, to encounter the Good News of Jesus Christ and become involved in the life of the Church. The proposal is clear that, without denying anyone the opportunity to give to the Fund, the intention is not to put pressure on the institutional Church but to attract new money from trusts and major donors. The hope would be to offer matched funding for imaginative and innovative ventures.

The Archbishops' Council has decided on a co-ordinated approach to fund-raising for the Youth Evangelism Fund, if it receives General Synod approval, and for the Church Schools Fund, approved by General Synod in November 2001; it believes these can be co-ordinated also with proposals in relation to the Church Urban Fund. Fund-raising costs could not be met from existing budgets but would be recovered as a charge on the funds raised. The Youth Evangelism Fund would be administered by a small staff, probably based in Church House, who would work closely with colleagues at national and diocesan level.

These proposals are for the Church of England. However, those responsible for them and those who will implement them recognise what is to be gained in learning from and working with ecumenical colleagues. There are excellent ecumenical relations in youth work at national level and very often at diocesan and parish level. All efforts and insights need to work together.

We commend this strategy to the General Synod and pray that through its application many young people will come to a lively faith in Jesus Christ and a strong commitment to his Church for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

+Alan Blackburn
Chairman
Board of Education

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GOOD NEWS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

National Youth Strategy

A. Introduction

1. The National Youth Strategy has been developed by the Archbishops' Council in pursuit of two of its four Themes for the current quinquennium: Equipping to Evangelise (theme 2); and Welcoming and encouraging children and young people (theme 3). The process began with an encounter between a group of Anglican young people and the Council itself. The House of Bishops saw an earlier draft of the paper and gave its clear endorsement to the strategy, whilst making some helpful detailed comments which have been incorporated into this final version.
2. The underlying philosophy continues to be that of *Youth A Part* endorsed by General Synod in July 1996. “The vision is for a Church which takes young people seriously. It is a Church where young people fully and actively participate at every level. It is a Church which is built on good relationships, where young people particularly are concerned, not only with each other, but also with those inside and outside the Church. It is a Church where there is a good theological understanding of why and how it goes about its work with young people. It is a Church which recognises that work of this quality needs resources and has the faith and courage to commit significant resources to the young people in the Church.”
3. A subsequent report to General Synod in July 2000 *Youth A Part: the Facts and the Future* (GS 1381) highlighted the initiatives taken and developed in response to the initial

report and their considerable impact on the Church's work with young people.

4. If the proposed National Youth Strategy receives the endorsement of the General Synod, its implementation will be a priority for the Archbishops' Council and should become an important element of the Church's mission and ministry in parishes, deaneries and dioceses.
5. There are four elements to the National Youth Strategy:
 - Young People and Worship;
 - Young People as Leaders;
 - Resourcing Youth Workers;
 - Young People and Mission.

B. Young People and Worship

1. Young people's worship apart from the mainstream services of the Church has sometimes been called experimental or alternative. Much of this worship has been markedly different from the familiar patterns of Anglican worship whilst bearing the hall-marks of genuine worship and drawing on the rich Christian traditions. The time has come to draw lessons from these innovative approaches, to recognise that young people's churches or congregations are not alternative or experimental but fully part of the worshipping community of the Church, to ensure that there are no inappropriate inhibitions to such worship and to help others learn from the experience of the pioneers.

Purpose

- To enable more young people to have a deeper and richer experience of worshipping God within an Anglican context

- To gather and disseminate information and to offer guidance for the Church of England on the variety of worship found in youth churches and congregations
- To identify any aspects of Canon law or liturgical authorisation that might inhibit effective worship for young people and consider suitable changes

Reasons

- There has been substantial growth in the range and variety of worship opportunities for and with young people in local congregations, deaneries and youth churches over the last ten years.
- This growth has resulted from work with and a vision for young people, in terms of reaching out to them and trying to connect their faith and spirituality to today's culture.
- Many young people are very open spiritually and to God but in ways relevant to where they are and not necessarily in the traditional format of the Church of England.
- One of the hallmarks of current developments is recognition of the many facets of worship and the variety of ways of enabling it to happen.
- At present there is no gathered information about the styles and formats of worship in which young people are directly involved whether sponsored by the local church or the result of their own initiative nor any means of ensuring the identification and dissemination of best practice.
- It is important that these groups of worshipping young people are enabled to share and work creatively within the Anglican liturgy and be seen as part of the whole Church, as, for example, All-Age Worship or Mums & Toddlers Church.

Key Tasks

- Work with the Diocesan Youth Officers' Network to identify the most effective examples of worship with and for young people
- With the Liturgical Commission, Praxis, Breaking New Ground 2, etc. identify any obstacles which prevent these worship experiences being developed within the Church of England's liturgical framework and consider how any such obstacles might be removed or circumvented
- Identify good practice which enables worship to be a tool for effective mission and evangelism with and for young people and to be inclusive and adaptable to the spiritual needs of the local congregation
- With para-church organisations audit what is happening across the country with young people and worship
- Work collaboratively with key partners
- Produce and disseminate by various means evidence of best practice

Outcomes

April 2003	Working party in place
April 2004	Collate examples of good worship practices with young people
September 2004	Produce guidelines on accountability and authorisation
Autumn 2005	Series of training days promoting report and content
April 2006	Evaluate and make proposals for next steps

C. Young People as Leaders

1. The gifts, talents and skills of young people should be nurtured in order that they can become fully participating and contributing members of church and community. For some young people this may mean being prepared for and ultimately adopting leadership roles. The youth work setting has been and continues to be a key context in which young people are encouraged and enabled to grow and develop, particularly in terms of their leadership potential and thus to make an effective contribution to church and society.
 - a. **Develop a training framework which equips young people to be leaders and innovators in the church**

Purpose

To encourage young people to become innovative and creative thinkers and leaders by equipping them with leadership skills encompassed within a Christian framework

Reasons

- The Church of England has a responsibility to equip its future leaders at an age when they are open to creative possibilities and when they have a vision for what the Church could or should be in five, ten, and 15 years' time.
- It is important to enable young Anglicans to develop to their full potential, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of the Church and wider community.
- Christian adults will themselves benefit from an opportunity to pass on their skills and knowledge to young people and in turn to receive from them.

Key Tasks

- Explore the possibility of working jointly with the DYO Network, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Young Adult Network and Frontier Youth Trust to develop an appropriate training framework
- Identify ways in which the framework can be validated
- Identify a group of young people to participate in the pilot scheme
- Run and evaluate pilot scheme
- Establish scheme in regions and dioceses

Outcomes

April 2004	Framework for the scheme and possible route for accreditation
Autumn 2004	Deliver pilot scheme to 25 – 30 young people
Autumn 2005	Evaluate and revise pilot scheme
Autumn 2005	Devise appropriate methods for the National Youth Officers to support and monitor the framework
2006 onwards	Evaluate impact of pilot scheme
2006 onwards	Encourage Dioceses and others to run schemes regionally

- b. Continue to develop the Young Adult Observer Group at the July Sessions of General Synod to enhance Diocesan and regional initiatives**

Purpose

To work towards the Young Adult Observer Group including one young person from each Diocese and thus to give them confidence to become more strongly involved in their churches locally and in the Diocese.

Reasons

- The Young Adult Observer Group, an initiative of the Young Adult Network supported by the National Youth Officers and Diocesan Youth Officers, was in response to a shared concern to develop the leadership potential of young people. It visibly demonstrates that the Church takes young people's participation in decision-making seriously.
- The strategy of inviting young adults as observers to the July sessions of General Synod in recent years has resulted in a number of younger adults successfully standing for election as members of General Synod.

Key Tasks

- Liaise with potential partners on numbers, possible funding, etc.
- Work with the Young Adult Network Executive to develop the programme for the preparation and follow-up days
- Liaise with the Central Secretariat to prepare for the group's time at Synod

Outcomes

February	Seek nominations from Dioceses
June annually	Preparation day for young adult observers
July annually	Young Adult observers attend Synod in York
October annually	Follow-up day and evaluation Continue the initiative
December 2004	Evaluation of the previous two observer groups
January 2005	Training days for young adults who are interested in standing for election to General Synod

July 2006

One young person from each diocese to attend General Synod

c. Secure a stronger representative voice for young people through the Synodical Review process

Purpose

To continue to work with the National Church Institutions to secure a stronger representative voice for young people, particularly in light of the proposed development of a National Youth Council

Reasons

- General Synod has benefited in recent years from members of the Young Adult Observer Group being invited to speak on specific agenda items. With the planned development of a National Forum for Young Adults a more formalised process for their representation needs to be established.
- General Synod in July 2002 carried the motion, ‘That this Synod welcome the progress being made towards establishing a Church of England Youth Council and invite the Standing Orders Committee to prepare an appropriate Standing Order, on a similar basis to Standing Order 113, to enable a number of the Council’s members to be afforded formal General Synod observer status, for future approval by this Synod.’

Key Tasks

- Formalise the process for the representation of young adults in Synod and identify support structures
- Provide a formal link between a National Young Adult Forum and General Synod

- Provide young adults with the experience of addressing a formal body and equip them with appropriate presentation, listening, questioning and networking skills

Outcomes

December 2004	Develop training, in association with others, which will help young people to address formal bodies and equip them with appropriate skills
July 2005	Establish a formal process of representation for young adults
2005 onwards	Delivery of training, in association with the DY0 Network and other appropriate bodies

d. Develop the Church of England Youth Council as a national forum for young people

Purpose

To establish an appropriate forum by putting into action the plans of the Church of England Youth Council planning group

Reasons

- Within the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference 1998 was a challenge to Bishops to find new ways of listening to, and talking with, young people.
- In 1999 *Time of Our Lives* provided opportunities for Bishops to do just that before, during and after the event. Many Bishops have sought to sustain contact with young people in their Dioceses and many Dioceses have taken steps to create a forum for their young adults.
- The Young Adult Network has supported and encouraged diocesan participation initiatives and has drawn together a group concerned to provide a similar forum nationally for

young adults. This has the working title of the *Church of England Youth Council*.

Key Tasks

- Encourage and support the planning group in creating an appropriate forum for young adults within the Church
- Encourage, monitor and evaluate diocesan and regional participation initiatives
- Enable the first national forum to take place
- Evaluate the forum
- Develop appropriate links for the forum with the Archbishops' Council and General Synod

Outcomes

2003	Planning group moves the process forward
2003	Diocesan and regional events continue to take place
December 2003	First meeting of the national Forum (two representatives from each Diocese)
2004	Follow up events in dioceses and regions
July 2004	Evaluate the process and recommend future policy
December 2005, 2007	Next national events

D. Resourcing Youth Workers

1. The delivery of the Church's work with young people is dependent, increasingly, upon collaborative working and partnership between the National Youth Officers, the network of Diocesan Youth Officers', Voluntary Youth Work Agencies and Local Authorities which support youth

work practitioners at a local level. These partnerships also provide opportunities for the Church to work innovatively within schools and the wider community through the Connexions Service. There are ever increasing demands on youth workers to be delivering high quality youth work. This in turn requires the Church to nurture and develop its workforce of voluntary and paid youth workers.

2. A number of Church of England Colleges of Higher Education, such as St Martin's College and the College of St Mark and St John, have a strong history of delivering degree-level courses in Youth & Community work that carry a professional qualification. Chester College is now in the second year of its Christian Youth work Course. In recent years the Centre for Youth Ministry has developed a placement-based course with teaching centres at St. John's Nottingham, Ridley Hall Cambridge, Bristol Baptist College and Oxford Youth Works. This is now one of many Christian-based training opportunities available. Consideration needs to be given to the National Occupation Standards for Youth Work.
3. Although there has been a significant growth in the appointment of full-time and part-time paid youth workers, the backbone of the Church of England's work with young people is still through volunteers. These volunteers need to be affirmed at every opportunity.
 - a. **Establish and accredit training for voluntary youth workers at Diocesan and national level**

Purpose

- To establish core competencies and learning outcomes which will enable recognised training for volunteer youth workers across the Church of England
- To find ways of acknowledging and accrediting various levels of training for volunteer youth workers across the Church of England

Reasons

- To affirm, encourage and equip the volunteers who work with young people
- Spectrum, the ecumenical training course, is coming to the end of its natural life in its present format. A number of dioceses are now developing their own courses, many of which lead to a Diocesan or Bishop's certificate in youth work. The standard and content vary greatly.
- Core competencies at appropriate levels would ensure a measure of quality assurance across the Church of England, yet allowing individual Dioceses to tailor training to meet the needs of their volunteer workers.
- This will enable volunteers to identify and develop transferable skills.

Key Tasks

- Conduct an audit of training provided by the dioceses for volunteers
- Work closely with the Spectrum Management group and other appropriate bodies to develop nationally accepted competencies and learning outcomes
- Working with the DY0 network and ecumenically, decide on basic requirements for both a Diocesan or Bishop's Certificate and a National Certificate

Outcomes

October 2003 +	A Church of England and ecumenical data-base of good practice in youth worker training and key trainers
February 2004	Agree with the Dioceses and ecumenically core competencies and learning outcomes for local and national certificates
December 2004	Create a workable model for monitoring the training and giving it credibility
2004/5 onwards	Begin to provide, ecumenically, 'Training the Trainers' courses for those new to training

b. Identify and map the growing number of routes towards training and qualification

Purpose

To map the growing number of Christian-based training initiatives at diocesan, regional and national level, alongside qualifications gained through them

Reasons

- During the last five years or so training has taken off for those, whether volunteers or paid, working within a Christian context.
- This is mainly due to the increase in the number of churches appointing paid youth workers, the majority of whom have no formal training or qualifications.
- The training offered ranges from fairly basic to JNC recognised qualifications, as well as everything in between.
- Standards of delivery vary tremendously.
- It is important for the Church nationally to be aware of what is available and where.

Key Tasks

- Work collaboratively with the DYO Network with other Anglican agencies and ecumenically to develop a database of training and qualification available from a Christian perspective
- Identify gaps and opportunities in provision

Outcomes

December 2004 Database established and made available

c. Undertake an audit of youth work appointments within the Church of England

Purpose

To undertake an audit of paid youth worker posts within the Church and establish a process for keeping the information up to date

Reasons

- There is substantial anecdotal evidence to suggest that there has been a phenomenal growth in the number of paid youth workers being appointed in parishes and deaneries. Estimates range from 800 to 2000 or more. The Church needs to know where they are working and on what terms and conditions in order to respond to their training and support needs and to assess more objectively their impact on the Church's work with young people.

Key Tasks

- Work with Church Pastoral Aid Society, Amaze and the Diocesan Youth Officer network to identify paid youth workers sponsored by parishes, deaneries and dioceses.
- Work collaboratively to create and circulate the audit

- Collate information on training, qualifications, contracts, salaries and location
- Collate good practice on employment for use by parishes, deaneries and dioceses

Outcomes

July 2003	Audit complete
December 2003	Information analysed and report published

d. Establish a process of recognition for youth workers within the Church of England

Purpose

To establish the formal recognition of Youth Work as a ministry

Reasons

- For those youth workers who are appointed full-time to this professional ministry there is a need for the Church to find a way to give recognition to their specific calling and vocation.

Key Tasks

- Identify current practice within each diocese
- Consult with the Baptist and Methodist Churches on how they recognise such workers
- Establish a working party of stakeholders, including youth workers, Ministry Division, legal department of NCIs to make recommendations
- Implement recommendations

Outcomes

July 2004	Initial consultations completed
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February 2006	Working party set up
Autumn 2006 onwards	Report from working party Recognition of youth workers begins

e. Develop a more coherent strategy for the deployment of youth workers

Purpose

To review the deployment of youth workers in each Diocese and negotiate their strategic deployment

Reason

- It is clear that the growth in the employment of youth workers has generally happened in a piecemeal way, with appointments being made in places where funding is available, not necessarily in response to identified need.

Key Tasks

- Identify Dioceses where there has been a strategy for the deployment of youth workers
- Identify good practice and collate strategy models
- Work with individual Dioceses to develop strategy for deployment

Outcomes

July 2004	Review of Diocesan practice completed
December 2004	Collation of good practice and strategies completed
April 2005	Six Dioceses identified to implement a strategy
January 2007	Evaluate process and identify a further six Dioceses

E. Young People and Mission

1. The role that young people can play, alongside others, in mission and evangelism amongst their peers is widely recognised. Equipping young people for this task and enabling them to be effective partners in the Church's mission is paramount if the Church is to continue to reach each new generation with the good news of the Gospel.
 2. The first three aspects of this key area are closely linked to the fourth, the proposed Youth Evangelism Fund. They give the opportunity to highlight and share much of the innovative work which is happening across the country in terms of mission to and with young people. They also give the opportunity for young people to develop their understanding and skills for the outward working of their faith, putting into action the mission of the Church.
 3. The word 'evangelism' is used here with the widest meaning: not just telling the story but living the story. It is about the sharing and giving of self, about being Christ in the local community, nationally and internationally.
- a. Review projects in mission and evangelism with young people and publish a best practice guide**

Purpose

To recognise, collate and publish, from across the country, a range of initiatives and projects which enable effective mission and evangelism to and with young people

Reasons

- There are numerous initiatives which enable effective evangelism across England, but it is only those that appear to be most successful that tend to be highlighted and publicised.
- It is important that the Church has a clear understanding of the breadth and effectiveness of this aspect of its mission.

Key Tasks

- Working with the Diocesan Youth Officer network, diocesan missionaries and evangelism advisers, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Youth for Christ, Frontier Youth Trust and other agencies, identify a wide range of projects and initiatives
- Explore the success criteria used
- Publish a best practice guide

Outcomes

December 2003	Identify a range of initiatives and projects
July 2004	Publication of guide
December 2005	Dissemination of best practice

- b. Identify Diocesan projects which give or could give young people an opportunity for service both in this country and overseas**

Purpose

To enable dioceses to share their experiences of providing opportunities for young people to serve others and be challenged in their faith and life

Reasons

- Many dioceses have links with dioceses in other parts of the Anglican communion or with associated Churches. Some of these links already create opportunities for the involvement of young people.
- The majority of young people through gap years and in other ways actively seek to serve others outside their own environment and thus to learn and grow in their faith. More young people could be encouraged to seek such opportunities through the world-wide Church.
- There should be increased awareness of the possibilities both for dioceses and for young Anglicans.

Key Tasks

- Identify key personnel in each diocese
- Arrange a conference so that diocesan experiences can be shared
- Share good practice
- Encourage dioceses to include young people in diocesan links and to work with them

Outcomes

December 2004	Identify diocesan links and opportunities including involvement with other agencies
July 2005	Share good practice
December 2005	Analyse young people's involvement and the impact on their lives
December 2006	Encourage dioceses to offer more opportunities for service and monitor such developments

c. Train and equip young people as partners in mission and evangelism within their own communities

Purpose

Create opportunities for young people to become effective partners in mission and evangelism to their peers and community

Reasons

- Young people have much to offer the Church through their insights and enthusiasm, including sharing their faith with their peers, with children and indeed with adults.
- Following on from the guide to effective youth evangelism it is vital that this is disseminated to Dioceses, parishes and all working with and for young people to enable the learning to be utilised at local level.

Key Tasks

- Working with appropriate agencies, develop a training programme which incorporates the learning and best practice
- Pilot the programme
- Evaluate and revise programme

Outcomes

December 2004	Training programme developed
December 2005	Deliver two pilot programmes
March 2006	Evaluate and revise programme and general release

d. Actively promote and support a Youth Evangelism Fund

Purpose

To enable more young people to connect with the Christian Gospel and develop their faith within the life of the Church

Reasons

- The proposal for the Fund has been in development since 1999. Vision and enthusiasm for the Fund remain at a high level.
- Although there is significant church-connected youth work taking place nationally, nevertheless only a minority of young people have contact with the Church or with the Gospel. The Fund will help resource local initiatives and evangelistic activity to help young people who are outside the life of the Church connect relevantly with the Gospel, and help build, encourage and nurture faith.
- The Fund will act as a catalyst at grassroots level for new projects and enthusiasm.
- The fund will be a concrete way for the national Church to show that it has a serious commitment to the spiritual needs of young people outside the Church.

Key Tasks

- Joint work by the staff of the Archbishops' Council to establish and manage the Fund
- Collaborative work with Diocesan Youth Officers and Diocesan Missioners and Evangelists
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the Fund

Outcomes

April 2004

Youth Evangelism Fund
established

	Funding criteria clearly identified
	Application, monitoring and evaluation procedures in place
July 2004	Launch of Fund
July 2004 onwards	Distribution and monitoring of fund
January 2006 onwards	Evaluate effectiveness of Fund
January 2008	Decide future policy on mission and evangelism
July 2008	Report to Synod

F. Resourcing the Strategy

1. Most of the costs of the strategy, apart from the establishment of a Youth Evangelism Fund, can be covered in three ways: as part of the on-going work of the Board of Education, through grants from the Department for Education and Skills and through funding from appropriate bodies and agencies with which there is already a partnership. Extra, perhaps external, funding is likely to be needed for some of the work on worship.

G. Conclusion

1. This strategy will enable substantial development in the Church's work with young people, both those currently engaged with the Church and many for whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is currently unknown or unheard.
2. When considering *Youth A Part : the Facts and the Future* (GS 1381) in July 2000 the General Synod agreed that there should be a follow-up report in 2005. This will give an opportunity for General Synod to evaluate the continuing impact of *Youth A Part* and the effect the Archbishops'

Council's Themes and this strategy have had on the Church of England's work with young people. It will also provide the opportunity to look strategically at the succeeding five years.

APPENDIX

Youth Evangelism Fund

Introduction

The purpose of this Appendix is to describe the concept and possibilities for a Youth Evangelism Fund to establish Synod's support for a fund in principle. If it finds support in Synod then detailed outworking would be remitted to the Archbishops' Council and its staff. **Section I** of this Appendix provides the background and outline proposal for a Youth Evangelism Fund. **Section II** is a paper written by the Bishop of Maidstone, the Rt Rev Graham Cray strengthening the rationale and the case for the fund.

Section I

An outline of the proposal

What is the Fund?

1. The Youth Evangelism Fund is a proposal from the Church of England to establish a Fund to promote and resource the work of evangelism among young people in England.
2. The proposal is for a substantial fund to be spent over a limited number of years, of sufficient size to enable evangelism among young people, and create a "climate of possibility" within churches as they consider their ministry to and with young people. The target figure will become clear in the first phase of fundraising, when feasibility testing would take place.

Origins

3. The proposal for and concept of this Fund originated at the Anglican Conference on Evangelism in March 1999 (ACE 99). Staff at the Boards of Mission and of Education have developed this outline, with the assistance of other agencies that are interested and involved with youth evangelism.

4. Part of that development has involved consultation with young people themselves. Young people would be encouraged to take a significant part in the development and implementation of the Fund, both nationally and locally.
5. These proposals fit well with both the specific and general intention of the four Themes of the Archbishops' Council, in particular "Equipping to evangelise" and "Welcoming and encouraging children and young people". For example, at 4.3 "we will... develop practical and imaginative ideas for evangelism among children and young people (especially in deprived areas) and gather resources to support the work".

The case for youth evangelism

6. It is clear that in terms of Church attendance, the Church has a dramatically diminishing involvement with the lives of young people. For example, in the comparatively short period between 1987 and 1994 the Sunday attendance of 14-17 year olds declined by 35%. The attendance of 18-21 year olds declined by 34%.
7. The consistent conclusion from survey and analysis of young people is that church and Christian faith is seen as marginal or irrelevant to their lives. There are exceptions, but such exceptions ought not generate any sense of optimism. Realistically, the overwhelming majority of young people do not see that the church or its message has anything to say to or offer them.
8. However, while there is little formal involvement by young people with church – and many youth cultures are far removed from church culture – there is a significant interest among young people in spiritual issues and values, in the quality of relationships and questions of life

and meaning, and a profound enthusiasm among many young people for issues of justice and society.

Living faith

9. Worshipping groups of young people, youth congregations, Christian service and ministry by young people, and their passion and enthusiasm for the gospel – are signs that Christian faith can be a living and motivating reality for young people. Where the gospel is seen, heard and received in ways that are authentic and make sense to young people, then Christian faith and commitment can grow and mature.
10. The Youth Evangelism Fund should help resource plans, schemes and projects. This resourcing will enable the development of evangelism among young people, and also help create a sense of vision and possibility within the Church. The Fund’s role in this could be crucial, because – as well as helping make things happen – it has the potential to give impetus and create a climate of encouragement and possibility. The Fund will clearly say to both church and nation that young people and their spiritual needs matter.

Young people, evangelism and church

11. A number of insights have helped shape the concept of the Fund:

- **variety and creativity of approach**

The Fund should deliberately not be a “national scheme” that promotes any particular type or style of evangelism. Its aim should be to assist and support local people to do what best fits with their situation and insight.

‘Young people’ are not a homogenous group – they are a wonderful mixture of cultures, ideas, styles

and interests. To engage evangelistically with such varied groups requires a wide range of methods and approaches.

- **local insight and hopes**
The Fund should encourage local churches and Christians to take a ‘next step’ (or ‘first step’) in youth evangelism, rather than making evangelism into some big or complex activity. “What is right for us where we are now” or “what is the next step we might take” will be the sort of question that the Fund should encourage.

Young people are the best evangelists of young people. The Fund should place a strong emphasis on what young people see and think and want to do.

- **Christian community and church**
A crucial element of ministry among (and evangelism among) young people is support for – and the development of – a sense of Christian community. Young people (on the whole) have a strong affinity for peer and other social groupings. It is difficult to envisage a youth evangelism initiative that does not give high value to young people’s ongoing engagement with Christian community and with church.

Involvement with Christian community and with church is the best environment for faith development (including the sacramental life), the working out of Christian lifestyle, and being equipped for Christian service. Authentic response to the gospel and involvement with Christian community are closely inter-linked.

It is likely that associated with (and perhaps supported by) the Fund will be a number of ‘new’ styles and patterns of church that reflect the culture and aspirations of young people.

What sort of Fund?

12. The Fund should support initiatives that provide opportunities for young people to encounter the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is envisaged that the Fund’s primary focus will be young people aged 11 to 20 years, although proposals supporting work among young adults up to 25 years will be considered.

- The Fund’s main intention will be to support local, grassroots projects – projects that are geared towards young people in a local community, area or district¹. Some applications are likely to be for comparatively small sums for a specific initiative within a parish, school or club. Other applications may involve larger funding proposals- but avoiding creating dependency by supplying full salaries - (for example, contributions towards the budget of a worker employed by a Deanery or cluster of churches, or to assist with a major event).
- Financial assistance will be an obvious resource that the Fund should offer. But in many situations money is not the primary issue. An equal (and maybe more important) need is for help and encouragement, and access to expertise, advice and models of good practice, so that appropriate and effective youth evangelism is encouraged and

1 A “community” may not necessarily be based on a geographical locality such as a parish or other church grouping. It will probably include communities and networks such as schools, the club scene, drug addicts or solvent abusers, young people with common interests or concerns, etc.

enlivened, as outlined in other sections of the National Youth Strategy.

- The Fund should be a national fund with local expression. Its proposed structure is biased towards the diocesan/local, with a small central structure existing to maintain consistency of approach and offer overall guidance and accountability. Applications should be assessed (and supported) locally, and selected nationally.
- This is a proposal from the Church of England to promote and resource the work of evangelism among young people in England. Applications would be welcome from non-Anglican groups and churches. But it is envisaged that the primary focus of the Fund's work would be to support initiatives that either originate in an Anglican setting, or have been developed with an Anglican contribution. Many projects are likely to be developed ecumenically or by churches, church groups and agencies in partnership.

The aims of the Fund

13. The Youth Evangelism Fund should offer resources and help so that churches and groups of Christians can enable young people to encounter the Good News of Jesus Christ and become involved in the life of the church.
14. The Fund should affirm projects and proposals that:
 - enable young people to encounter the good news of Jesus;
 - encourage the nurture of young Christians, and their participation in the life of the Church and kingdom;

- have a “local” focus – geared towards young people in a community, area or network community;
- are creative and culturally appropriate for young people, and enable young people to discover Christian faith at their own pace and in their own way;
- do not simply continue what is already being done, but start something new (or build on what already exists in a new way);
- enable young people to have a significant part in planning, creating and fulfilling the plans;
- draw on examples of good practice;
- are based on partnership and co-operation between different churches and organisations, and that form part of a wider strategy for the Church’s mission in an area or community;
- not simply speak the gospel, but demonstrate it.

Structure

15. The Fund is most likely either to be a separate charitable company or to come under the wing of an existing charity, but with clearly defined aims and structure with a grant-making committee which would include a significant proportion of young people.

Feasibility

16. At the request of the Archbishops’ Council, an initial study of the funding feasibility of a Youth Evangelism Fund has been carried out by an independent consultant, but with the changing economic climate, the first preparatory phase of any fundraising initiative would be to

further test possible responses and establish a realistic target figure for the fund.

17. The conclusion of the feasibility assessment was that:
 - the case for a Fund to resource evangelism among young people is self evident to significant donors;
 - there is sufficient good will for fundraising
 - the Fund must attract new sources of money, and cannot be funded from existing church finances;
 - donors are keen to support projects, not infrastructures and church bureaucracy;
 - such a Fund needs to be seen as a significant and strategic initiative of the Church of England, to which the Church and its leadership is wholeheartedly committed.
18. The feasibility report is clear that any Youth Evangelism Fund must attract 'new money'. The financial pressures facing the Church of England mean that in no circumstance can the Fund expect support from general church finances, or from some scheme of diocesan apportionment (as with the Church Urban Fund at its start).
19. However, the report also makes clear that part of the Fund's work will involve offering people inside and outside the church the opportunity to support both the vision and work of the fund, whether financially, through prayer, or in other ways.
20. Engaging the support of church people and others is important to a Youth Evangelism Fund, because what is desired is to give people a sense of ownership and

enthusiasm for what their church is making possible, as well as stimulating support.

Matched funding

21. The Fund should usually operate with a system of matched funding. In that way the Church of England at local and regional level will make its financial contribution.
22. Part-funding of projects will ensure that funds available have a wider spread, encourage local participation and involvement, and create a mechanism for the weighting of grants in the light of local circumstances and needs.
23. The Youth Evangelism Fund will need to hold in mind the recommendation contained in the Church Urban Fund Review 2000², namely that appropriate weighting should be given in the allocation of money to initiatives in Priority Areas, but also paying due attention to rural needs. The Fund will need to ensure a fair distribution of grants across different dioceses, and also establish patterns that enable relatively less affluent churches or groups to maximise their ability to use the Fund.
24. There is significant wealth disparity nationally, and therefore it is likely that the Fund will need to reflect this in its allocation of grants. For example, projects in relatively affluent areas might be expected to contribute a sizeable portion of total costs. Projects in relatively impoverished areas might receive a grant to cover all or most of their cost.
25. Similarly, projects with the full (financial) backing of a church or churches could reasonably be expected to

² Church Urban Fund Review 2000 (7.38)

contribute more than a small group of 13 years olds trying to set up an evangelistic activity at their school.

Church Schools

26. The Church Schools Review Group, under the Chairmanship of Lord Dearing, has recommended an expansion in the provision of Church schools in both the primary and secondary sector³.
27. The Review Report makes clear that Church schools can be “*places where the faith is proclaimed and lived, and which therefore offer opportunities to pupils and their families to explore the truths of Christian faith, to develop spiritually and morally, and to have a basis for choice about Christian commitment.*”⁴
28. The Youth Evangelism Fund should seek to complement this by resourcing ways in which young people who are not part of a Church school might also encounter opportunities to experience the Christian gospel. Even after a developed programme of investment in secondary Church schools, the vast majority of young people will be outside the framework of a Church school-based education. The Youth Evangelism Fund is therefore a crucial strategy to enable the Church to enliven the gospel among the nation’s young people in general.

Fund-raising and co-ordination

29. The view of this paper is that the two youth initiatives – Youth Evangelism Fund and Church Schools – are separate but complementary, and offer a well-rounded vision for the Church’s engagement with young people.

³ Church Schools Review Group Consultation Report, 4.11

⁴ Church Schools Review Group Consultation Report, 3.5

30. With the proposal for fundraising initiatives for Youth Evangelism and for Church Schools Initiative and the likelihood of substantial fundraising for the Church Urban Fund during the period 2004-7, it is important that there be careful co-ordination.
31. The Archbishops' Council has taken advice from an independent fundraising consultancy on what form the fundraising strategy might take, how the initiatives can be co-ordinated and over what timescale.
32. Their recommendation is that the fundraising for Youth Evangelism and Church Schools should take the form of a 'major national gifts appeal' to trusts, grant-making bodies (including government where appropriate) and other potential significant donors and **not** take the form of a national led public appeal across the Church for individual gifts. Contributions from parishes and individuals at local level should be directed to local initiatives for youth evangelism and church schools.
33. The likelihood is that donors will be clear in their minds where their own enthusiasm and interest lies. Indeed, the existence of a joint strategy for engagement with young people – creating opportunism in education and in evangelism – could 'make better sense' to donors than an initiative that concentrates only on a single approach.
34. As is common the costs of the appeal and the administration of the Fund (both of which would be tightly controlled) would be charged against money raised. Any contract for the handling of the appeal would contain break clauses at appropriate points to limit any financial risks to the Archbishops' Council.

How might it work?

35. The Youth Evangelism Fund will exist to support the ideas and energy of local churches and groups of (young) Christians.
36. The intention of the Fund is to balance lightness of touch in grant-making, with the opportunity the Fund brings to get alongside churches and young people, and assist and support them in their youth evangelism.

Local support and assessment

37. Although a diocese will be free to operate its assessment of funding applications in whatever way seems appropriate, it is suggested that dioceses might establish a small funding and support group within each diocese.
38. It is envisaged that this funding and support group will include diocesan expertise and enthusiasm, typically Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Advisers and Youth Officers, and/or persons from organisations with youth evangelism interest and expertise, plus others as appropriate.
39. This group could evaluate projects, and then pass their assessment of each project's merits to the Fund's national office. Their local assessment, plus the project's written application, will form the basis of the Fund's decision to offer support.
40. By giving priority to local people in the development and assessment of projects, the Fund should help ensure that it meets and helps the actual needs of communities it wishes to serve, and is not imposing distant priorities.
41. Bishops may wish to put in place a variety of mechanisms through which they can keep in touch with project applications and developments. Those mechanisms could range from active participation in the

application process through to simple reception of notes from the local funding and support group.

42. Although this structure adds additional responsibilities to diocesan personnel, discussions so far with missionaries and youth officers (for example) have shown considerable enthusiasm for the plans. The Fund not only provides potential resources to support new youth evangelism, but also gives the opportunity for diocesan staff to work with parishes and help support, affirm and guide their youth and evangelism thinking.

Central structure

43. The Fund should have a small national office (probably based in Church House and with a provisional estimate of a staff of 2) which will process grants, handle general inquiries, watch-over progress and effectiveness. It should provide a reference point and guidance so that local decision-making is based on similar national values and expectations. It will also need to feed back to local projects stories of what has worked well or otherwise, and why.
44. In summary, the proposed Youth Evangelism Fund is a national fund with local expression. Applications will be supported, developed and assessed at local level. The Fund's office will help maintain a coherent and unified approach, plus deal with administration. The Fund's primary aim is to help local people's ideas and plans for youth evangelism.

SECTION II

Youth Evangelism in the Church of England

The Rt Revd Graham Cray: Bishop of Maidstone

The Priority of Youth Evangelism

45. I strongly support the proposal for a Youth Evangelism Fund. This paper is an attempt to offer a rationale and some criteria for it.
46. Youth evangelism is an urgent priority for the Church of England at the beginning of the 21st century. This is for a number of reasons.
 - In the introduction to the Declaration of Assent the Church is called upon to proclaim the historic faith ‘afresh in each generation’. Each licensed minister is called to bring ‘the grace and truth of Christ to this generation.’ Proclaiming the gospel to young people is an essential part of this commission.
 - The age profile of many parishes is a matter of concern. We are an ageing Church, most successful at winning the retired! Bluntly, whatever our view of evangelism, if we do not focus on youth evangelism we will end up with few Christians to do anything!
 - We have been ‘bleeding’ young people at a frightening rate. The statistics are well known and do not need repeating here.
 - Studies by Leslie Francis and William Kay, together with the analysis given by Robin Gill, show that church attendance is a vital factor in the development of a recognisably Christian lifestyle. The residue of Christian belief in British culture is not sufficient in itself and is visibly in decline.

Young people need to be converted to Christ and into worshipping communities if they are to live out Christian values.⁵

- The profound changes which we are experiencing in Western culture require us to plant the gospel in a new (some sociologists would claim 'novel') cultural context.⁶ Today's young people and young adults are the first generation entirely at home in this emerging world.

A New Missionary Context

*"Young people today are growing up in a different world to that experienced by previous generations," because they are "subject to uncertainties which were not part of day to day life for previous generations."*⁷

47. Youth ministry today is not primarily a matter of a generation gap. It is a matter of a culture gap. A new world is being born. A new cultural era is emerging and we have to plant the church in it.
48. As an integral element of culture religion has changed its shape in recent decades.⁸
49. Youth evangelism which does not aim at active, lifelong, participation in the Church of Christ, is not adequate as a response to this challenge. Nor is any attempt to win young people to the church as it has been without addressing the culture of the day.

⁵ Francis + Kay 'Teenage Religion and Values' 1995, 'Drift from the Churches' (1996), Robin Gill 'Churchgoing and Christian Ethics'

⁶ See my 'Postmodern Culture and Youth Discipleship', Grove 1998

⁷ Furlong + Cartmel 'Young People and Social Change', p5

⁸ See Grace Davie 'Religion in Modern Europe – A Memory Mutates', Oxford 2000, and David Lyon 'Jesus in Disneyland', Polity 2000

The Theology of Youth Evangelism

50. All youth ministry, including youth evangelism, needs to be understood as a sharing in the mission of God.⁹

*“Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still: there is mission because God loves people.”*¹⁰

*“It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church.”*¹¹

The Church is Missionary

51. Mission lies at the heart of the church's being, it has a missionary ontology.

*“There is church because there is mission, not vice versa.”*¹²

*“As the Church belongs to God, is the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, so mission belongs to the very being of the church.”*¹³

52. This has three consequences:

- The Church must be active in all dimensions of mission, including evangelism, if it is to be true to itself.

⁹ See my 'A Theology For Youth Work' in 'Youth Apart', and 'A Theology of Youth Ministry' in 'Youthwork and the Mission of God', Pete Ward

¹⁰ David Bosch 'Transforming Mission' p392

¹¹ Jurgen Moltmann 'The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit' p64

¹² David Bosch 'Transforming Mission' p390

¹³ John Thompson 'Modern Trinitarian Perspectives' p73

- Evangelism is only authentic if it is understood and practised so as to include incorporation into the Church.
- The Church can never be understood as an object in itself, only as the Spirit's agent in bringing the Kingdom of God.

53. William Abraham has defined evangelism as “that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time.”¹⁴

The Church and Youth Evangelism

54. Conversion is into the church. Incorporation into the Church is essential for the theological integrity of youth evangelism, but the Church, as it is, is often the biggest obstacle to youth evangelism! This is often a dysfunctional relationship marked by clashing expectations. Many churches have not grasped the missiological implications of the death of Christendom. Most teenagers have no experience of the shadow of Christendom, where much of the Church of England is at home. Youth workers are in real danger of being caught in conflict between the two groups and thus diverted from their primary calling.

55. The proposed Youth Evangelism Fund is necessary because all is not well. The money needs to be focused around local initiatives that show their ability to redress this situation.

Good Practice in Youth Evangelism

56. Although there needs to be a clear theoretical distinction between youth evangelism and other aspects of the Church's ministry to young people, in particular its

¹⁴ William Abraham 'The Logic of Evangelism', Eerdmans 1989 p95

educational work through Church schools, the best current practice in youth evangelism is holistic.

57. During the last ten years a number of core values have emerged.

- Youth ministry and youth evangelism should be relational. It involves the establishment of genuine relationships to ensure that the evangelism is not manipulative.
- It is empowering young people to take responsibility for their own ministry rather than merely providing programmes where the ministry is done to or for them. The best evangelists among young people are young people.
- Youth cells led by young people have become an essential part of the strategy.
- Schools work is vital.
- Parish boundaries are mostly irrelevant and often a major block to effective youth ministry. A deanery or even paired deanery approach is necessary. School catchment areas and the places where young people actually meet (including night clubs) are the key factors.
- Good practice is often on a local basis or is headed by an interdenominational youth agency or schools work project.
- It is holistic. The old divisions between evangelism, social action, education and nurture are largely broken down. Young people are met at their point of need. It is simply assumed that part of their need is to come to faith in Christ.

- In areas of social deprivation it involves a commitment to social transformation based on a long term incarnational commitment.¹⁵
- It is a process rather than crisis approach. It assumes that in an age of huge ignorance of the Christian faith belonging to the Christian community will probably precede believing the Christian message, which will precede any necessary changes in lifestyle. Youth Alpha has been an important tool in this respect.
- There is a serious attempt to enable young people to grow in discipleship and Christian lifestyle, based on a genuine understanding of the emerging culture.¹⁶
- The important thing for the Church of England is that current best youth ministry practice fits directly with the insights of the 'On The Way' report and has integration into the Church as an essential element.
- Youth ministry must be incarnational (contextualised or inculturated). It involves entering young people's world(s) in order to plant the gospel and the Church there. It does not intend to draw young people back into a church culture which is alien to them if that culture is dying. That is to say it

¹⁵ e.g. Message to Schools 'Eden Projects' in Greater Manchester

¹⁶ e.g. "Young people appear to consume the Christian scene in roughly the same way they consume other scenes. That is, they move from one to the other fairly easily and construct their identities from whatever takes their fancy. The exclusivity that characterized both youth culture and the Christian youth culture in the last few decades has largely collapsed." Pete Ward 'Mass Culture', BRF 1999 p26

is not a 'bridge' strategy but a genuine commitment to new forms of church for a new cultural era.

- Worship, in particular appropriate music, is critical for any youth evangelism which is serious about integrating young people into the Church. Taizé and 'alternative worship' play an important part, but far greater numbers respond to more obviously contemporary styles. An ecclesial identity is constructed through such worship experiences.
- Because of the emergence of a new cultural era, and the failure of many 'bridge project' approaches (they get on the bridge but refuse to get off it on the other side!) youth congregations have become a growing and unavoidable feature of youth evangelism.

The Need of a Benchmark

58. I propose that a list of 'marks of youth mission' should be established as a bench mark to help identify projects which would qualify for funding. Such projects should be substantially coherent with the bench mark list, rather than having to meet it at every point.

Discovering the Church of Tomorrow Through Young People

59. The church's work among young people combines continuity with change. It *begins* with its responsibility to pass on its faith to the next generation (1 Cor. 15: 1-4; 2 Tim. 2:2). It *continues* with the responsibility to be open to change, as it listens to the Spirit of Christ in the young. Without this openness to listen Christian mission can be trapped in a timewarp and become ineffective.
60. In all probability many of our current forms and ways of being Church will not prove adequate in the emerging society. It is young people whom we help to faith and equip to shape the emerging culture who will also need to

develop new forms of worship and Church structure which will one day be the mainstream.

61. It is unrealistic and inappropriate to expect the majority of congregations to adapt to an emerging culture in which they have not been nurtured. Crucial to the church's mission will be the ability to recognise, release and support young adult leaders who are at ease in the new developments. We need to take the risk of trusting such leaders with responsibility to experiment with new forms of worship and discipleship. The theological foundation of such trust is found in the 'eschatological' Holy Spirit whose role is to bring the foretaste of God's future into the present. When the practices of the past are of limited usefulness it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the next generation of leaders which we must trust. Have we the courage and grace to do so?