

ANNEX A



# Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group

**SYNOD REPORT**

February 2019





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## FOREWORD

In Christ we have received the very life of God! It is our utter joy to share God's life with others. The Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group (ETG) was set up in 2014 with the realisation that as a church we were not always living up to this calling. It was as if, like the lepers of Samaria in *2 Kings 7:9*, we have had to acknowledge:

*This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves.*

The city had been under siege for months by the Arameans. Its citizens looked out day after day and saw the tents of the enemy surrounding them. The situation was utterly hopeless.

Four lepers stood at the city gate – starving, hopeless, and helpless. They were between a rock and a hard place. Being lepers they couldn't go into the city, so their only option was to appeal to the enemy to save their lives. So they decided to risk approaching the tents of the Arameans.

What they didn't know was that in the night the Lord had caused the Aramean army to flee, convinced they could hear the sound of another army approaching. So the tents were empty of the enemy; but full of everything these four lepers need – food, drink, riches, clothes – more than they can hold and better than they could have dreamed! Arriving at the tents and finding the situation to be completely different from what they expected or imagined, the lepers began to hide away the riches they

had found. Then one of them declared, ‘What we are doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves.’

In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God has acted to change the situation for every human being. We could fill books with the riches that are ours because of the one who became poor for our sake. Utterly gracious and free, entirely *apart* from us and *in spite* of us, God has acted *for* us and acts *with* us. This unexpected love beyond our imagining has opened up a whole new world – a new creation.

Evangelism is our joyful response to receiving the riches that are ours in Christ. In Jesus, astounded gratitude turns into resolve. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, who goes before us to open hands and hearts, we are compelled and enabled to find a voice to proclaim in word and deed the works and wonders of God. Alleluia!

The ETG has sought to discern fresh priorities with which to inform and energise the Church’s proclamation of and witness to the riches of Christ.

The following booklet sets out some of the work that has been done, the conclusions that we have reached and the work that is for all of us to do if we are to share in all our cities, towns, and villages, the abundant life that is to be found in Christ.

**+ Justin Cantuar and +Sentamu Ebor**



## The global prayer movement for evangelisation, *Thy Kingdom Come*

The mandate given to the ETG was to enable culture change in the Church of England on evangelism. In the debate on Intentional Evangelism at the General Synod meeting of November 2013 the resolution [GS1917], passed unanimously, called upon the Task Group ‘to make its first priority a new call to prayer’. Thy Kingdom Come is this priority.

To begin with prayer is essential in every way; for we hold that God is the initiator, enabler and content of the Good News which we live to proclaim. In prayer we put this belief into practice. It is only by the work of the Holy Spirit that eyes and hearts open and minds and hands receive the gift of God’s transforming love in Christ.

Thy Kingdom Come was conceived as a setting-apart of the days between Ascension and Pentecost to seek the empowering of the Spirit, that we might be effective as witnesses. These days between Ascension and Pentecost give themselves to such as focus, as we read the first disciples obeyed the command of Christ to ‘wait for the promise of the Father’, and so all were’ devoting themselves to prayer’ [Acts 1:4,14]. Our hope is this becomes a regular part of the Church year.

As we wait upon the essential infilling of the Holy Spirit we encourage all to pray for five friends, family members, or colleagues, for whom our greatest hope is that they come to know the transforming love of God in Jesus Christ.

**And in less than three years from its launch!...**

- TKC has reached more than 114 countries
- Christians from nearly 65 denominations across the traditions
- 91% prayed for friends and family members to come to know Jesus (from the impact survey June 2018)
- 75% felt more motivated to pray (from the impact survey June 2018)
- Over 1.5 million physical resources distributed and 3 million video views

*It gladdens and warms my heart to know that many Christians throughout the world are committing themselves to pray for the Coming of our Father in Heaven's Kingdom* ARCHBISHOP SENTAMU

*What's really excited me about this year's Kingdom Come, is the sense of gathering momentum of people knowing that they have met with Jesus Christ and that they have this sense that they want to share what being a Christian means for them – with those whom they love and those whom they know ... I can't remember a time when this desire gripped so many people from every part of the church.* ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN

## Lay Witness

There are 1 million members of our Church, living and working in all our communities across England – they are our biggest resource for evangelism and witness. If each person could be more confident about praying for their family, friends and colleagues, and more able to share their faith, then this would make a difference!

Michael Jinkins says of Christian baptism, ‘we are soaked to the skin in the death of Christ ... We trail wet footprints of the drenching wherever we go’; and we need to prioritise how we help people drip their wet footprints into the people and places of their lives, ‘spreading the aroma of the knowledge of Christ everywhere.’

In Jesus’ parting words he promised and instructed his disciples that they would receive ‘power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses...’. That is, Jesus uses ‘witness’ as a noun, not as a verb. This is something that we are.

Of course we witness not simply by our words but by our deeds, by the messages our lives convey. We are heartened by the steps taken to encourage, enable and release all God’s people. Our deepest conviction is that the report dedicated to Archbishop William Temple called it right in 1945 by stating;

‘We are convinced that England will never be converted until the laity use the opportunities for evangelism daily afforded by their various professions, crafts and occupations.’





## Evangelism in the context of Chaplaincy

Chaplains work across an increasingly broad spectrum of public and community life. Evangelism looks very different across these varied contexts. Evidence from people offering for authorised ministry suggests that a sizeable proportion cite the ministry of a chaplain as significant in their faith journey.

Within some institutional chaplaincy, overt evangelism is rightly forbidden, while in other settings chaplains are able to be very creative in intentional evangelism. Those reflecting on the place of chaplaincy have found that chaplains hold a vital place at the 'intersection between the historic presence of the church in the public square, secularization, contemporary spiritual expression, and direct engagement with the fundamental realities of people's lives' (Swift 2009). Chaplains are amongst the best at acting as interpreters between religious traditions and secular assumptions. A senior RAF chaplain describes it as 'Speaking the language of the institution but with the cutting edge of proclamation'.

Partnerships in various contexts are not unique to, but are a particularly strong characteristic of, chaplaincy. Chaplaincy is rooted in the experience of people's lives where they are. This is in the regular and mundane, but also in the extremities of human experience. It builds deep relationships of trust and enters into the narrative of individual lives and of communities and institutions.

Chaplains are often able to, or prepared to, take risks; and to fail where others can't which promotes creativity, growth, and human flourishing. The experience of chaplains who work like this has an enormous amount to contribute to society and to the life and mission of the gathered Church.

We hope that, increasingly, chaplaincy is recognised more as a particular vocation for both lay and ordained people. For this we believe selection processes and training could significantly help to raise the profile of chaplaincy across the church.

The ETG recognised there are huge opportunities for chaplaincy, in a great variety of different contexts. These are essential for our effective evangelism and witness and we urge dioceses and parishes to help inspire more people to serve effectively in this way.



# Evangelism and Social Housing Estates

The work of the ETG led directly to the formation of a Task Group under the Renewal and Reform banner dedicated to evangelism on the nation's (often forgotten) social housing estates. The aim of the group is simple, which is to have a loving, worshipping, serving Christian community on every significant estate in England.

The Task Group has received capacity funding to enable strategic work to go ahead under the four strands of an agreed Commitment to Action. There are:

- 1 Championing Estates Ministry** – Renewing the Church's vision for urban estates.
- 2 Theology and the Public Voice** – Listening to God in the voices of those on estates.
- 3 Leadership** – fostering and encouraging lay and ordained ministry from and for estates.
- 4 Resources** – estates to be at least as well-resourced as elsewhere – people, finance, buildings, training, evangelism discipleship materials, etc.

Much has been achieved since the formation of the group In September 2016 and amongst other things this includes:

- The formation of a partnership of nearly 30 organisations who are mutually accountable for the implementation of the strategy.
- The launch of the Commitment to Action through a widely released video and communications plan.
- An Estates Theology Project in which pairs of theologians and practitioners are focussing on the question 'What is the good news on the estates?'
- Pioneering ideas and approaches, harvesting examples of good practice in estates evangelism, and then offering ways of sharing these with Dioceses.
- The re-launch of the National Estates Churches Network with a tighter focus on mission and evangelism.

Early signs are that already the narrative is changing. Eleven SDF projects include an estates focus. Ordinands are expressing increased interest in serving on estates. There are a number of vibrant new estates church plants. More imagination and effort is going into raising up and training local leaders. There are remarkable stories of transformation and hope from urban estates. The challenge has been acknowledged. If the Church of England is to be renewed and revived, then it will be from the Urban Estates, from the margins, that this new life and growth will come.



# The witness of BAME Anglicans

The Young Citizens pilot research project emerged out of the ETG's BAME stream, with Archbishop Justin's catalysing power and support. This research action project was run in Church of England secondary schools in the Stepney Area of the Diocese of London. It has shown that BAME young people are open to new or deepening faith when they discover the Jesus of the Gospels in parallel with actively challenging the real injustices they and their communities face. We have seen a remarkable percentage of the BAME young people the pilot worked with indicate that they would seriously consider working in and for a Church of England that was serious about this kind of ministry.

The ETG has learnt that BAME communities fairly consistently choose C of E secondary schools for their young people. This presents a wonderful opportunity to invest, develop and grow these relationships and encourage discipleship, service and witness. Although presently it is not clear where the development, resourcing and delivery of key themes identified in the BAME strand of the ETG will now be housed, this is clearly a priority to be addressed by the Evangelism and Discipleship Team and the wider Church.

It is clearly recognised that this work needs to be capitalised on, to realise the opportunities and build replicable and integrated church structures. It presents a significant opportunity for nurturing disciples and developing vocations.

# Ordained Ministry: Selection and Training in the area of evangelism and witness

The Evangelism Task Group wanted to see that the specific vocation to be witnesses of the gospel be placed at the heart of ordained ministry. We worked to influence changes to selection criteria to reflect this hope. Some of these changes are being embedded into the proposed new selection criteria and we hope they will encourage a shift in our understanding of ordained vocation in the Church of England.

We continue to put to the Church these recommendations.

- That witness is clearly identified as central to the Church's understanding of ordained vocation and not an optional extra for some. That all clergy have a calling to personally engage in evangelism and to enable the Church in this.
- That selection processes assess and identify candidates lacking demonstrable experience and competence in witness and evangelism.

- That IME providers support all ordinands and curates in developing expertise in witness and evangelism, grounded in practice and theological reflection, to ensure all future clergy develop both understanding and practical expertise.
- That existing clergy have the opportunity to develop their competency and sense of calling to be witnesses.
- That the clergy are better resourced to enable the whole people of God in their witness and evangelism.



# Evangelism for, by, and among young people

Evangelism to and with young people has been a key priority of the Evangelism Task Group. A significant part of our work has been to advocate passionately that this should be a higher priority for the Church of England. We have been encouraged that more dioceses are using SDF to do creative and pioneering evangelism with younger people.

The ETG has worked hard to increase national leadership and energy around this, and are thrilled that the Archbishops appointed the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham to be Lead Bishop for evangelism to and with young people. Bishop Paul has now convened a Youth Evangelism Task Group to work with him, to share good practice, and to keep advocacy for this high on our national agenda. The Archbishops' Council also appointed Jimmy Dale as National Youth Evangelism Officer, he is part of the new Evangelism and Discipleship Team.

On the ETGs' watch a number of exciting new initiatives in youth evangelism were launched, including Mission Academy Live, a partnership between the Church of England and other leading organisations such as Urban Saints, YFC, Scripture Union and Church Army. This amazing programme inspires young people to be evangelists to their friends and is having inspirational results already.



There are some inspirational examples of youth evangelism across the Church of England, but Synod needs to know that the situation remains very bleak. Over half our parishes have fewer than five young people in them, and we continue to see many of the young people we do have choose to leave. Reversing this long-term decline will take prayer, time, energy and resource but we believe we CAN turn this around if we are prepared to do something new. Evangelism to and with younger people is not a strategy to save the Church of England from extinction; the vision is much bigger: it is because God yearns that young people across England know his amazing love for them and live their lives following him. Will we own this challenge and rise to it?



## Afterword

With grateful thanks to all those who served the Evangelism Task Group, and recommend with confident urgency that the work that has been done would be taken forward in the wider church.





