

GENERAL SYNOD**Report from the Evangelism Task Group
and the Evangelism and Discipleship Team****Summary**

This paper contains the final report of the Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group following their last *Report to General Synod in February 2016 (GS2015)*. It also includes an initial report of the newly formed Archbishops' Council's Evangelism and Discipleship Team outlining its priorities for the initial stages of the Team's work. This is in response to part of the motion of *GS2069 National Support for Local Churches: Report from the Archbishops Council*, which called on the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops to report back to the General Synod on a regular basis on progress in developing national support for local churches in evangelism, outreach and mission.

The motion: That this Synod, welcoming the report from the Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group and commending the work of the new Evangelism and Discipleship Department,

- a) calls on every worshipping community to make evangelism a planned priority for the coming year
- b) affirms the importance of prayer in the work of evangelism and call on every parish to be involved in 'Thy Kingdom Come'
- c) encourages Dioceses to envision, equip and enable lay and ordained people to be more confident in the sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives
- d) asks the Evangelism and Discipleship Team to bring a report to the Synod on the progress made on carrying forward the recommendations made in this report no later than July 2020.

The paper sets out the details of the considerable progress made by the Evangelism Task Group over its four-year mandate and how the areas of its particular brief are being pursued into the future. The work of the Evangelism and Discipleship Team seeks to build on and develop the work of the Evangelism Task Group so momentum is not lost in these crucial areas, ensuring therefore that the Church is a growing church for all people in all places.

The Evangelism Task Group Report

Please see Annex A

Evangelism and Discipleship Team

1. This newly formed team, which began in January 2018, is building on the motion agreed by Synod in *National Support for Local Churches, Report from the Archbishops' Council (GS2069)*. The report centred on how the national Church can best provide ongoing support for local churches in evangelism, outreach and mission so that the Church can be resourced and equipped to share God's great message of hope and

love in Jesus Christ. This will also serve the overall impetus of Renewal and Reform to be 'a growing church for all people in all places.'

2. The team is also seeking to develop some of the areas outlined by the Evangelism Task Group so that as a Church we are not losing the momentum which has been building around evangelism and discipleship. There has been close integration and collaboration with the Evangelism Task Group as four members of the Task Group are also members of the Evangelism and Discipleship team.
3. The team is also developing its strategic purposes so that it is supporting the Archbishops' Council objectives 1 and 2.
 - Evangelism. To bring more of the people of England to the faith of Christ through the Church of England
 - Discipleship. To strengthen the Christian faith and life of all who worship God in the Church of England
4. To support these objectives *The Archbishops' Council's 2017 Annual Report* stated that in 2017 £46.6m was spent on the Evangelism objective, mostly through Strategic Development Funding and £1.1m on the Discipleship objective. The dedicated budget for the Evangelism and Discipleship Team for 2018 is £679,775 which includes £211,000 for Life Event projects.
5. There is a core team of eight people, Rachel Jordan, National Mission and Evangelism Advisor, Jimmy Dale, National Youth Evangelism Officer, Sandra Miller and Cathy Myers from the Life Events team and the Programme Director for Setting God's People Free (SGPF), Nick Shepherd, Catherine Nancekievill, Connected Disciples Project Lead, our Team Administrator Agi Donovan, and the Director of the Team, Dave Male.
6. There is also a wider team of nine people. They are key members of the team and work closely across all areas of the team's work. They greatly enhance our integration and collaboration as although they are important members of the Evangelism and Discipleship Team they are located in Ministry Division, Lambeth Palace, the Digital Team, Mission and Public Affairs, Education and the Strategic Development Unit. This gives great coherence across many Departments within the NCIs and blends together complementary roles in advancing the Council's first two objectives of Evangelism and Discipleship. There has also been close working and collaboration with the Director of Renewal and Reform and the Director of Communications to ensure we are developing collaborative, coherent and focussed solutions.
7. The aim of this newly formed team is to continue this momentum in evangelism and discipleship through enabling a strategic national approach by
 - a) Developing specific interventions and resources to enhance evangelism and discipleship at the local level recognising that we should only do nationally what is done best nationally
 - b) Spreading, enabling and supporting good practice in support of diocesan, parish or networks initiatives
 - c) Directly resourcing people of all ages in their churches and communities.

At this stage in the life of the Church we cannot afford to lose pace in our aim to be a growing church or squander the huge work done by the Evangelism Task Group.

Overall priorities for the new Evangelism and Discipleship team

8. The strategic approach is centred on 'motivating our million' regular worshippers to move from attendees to advocates and apprentices through
 - a) Changing behaviour around evangelism and discipleship with the aim that everyone in 'the million' feels confident to articulate and live out their faith in every aspect of their lives. In the words of the Lambeth Conference Resolutions, a dynamic mission emphasis requires 'a revolution in the attitude to the role of the laity which views every Christian as an agent of mission'. Building on the work of the ETG around 'lay witness' and SGPF our regular million worshippers are the key resource in growing the church. The key to this is encouraging and motivating people in their movement from attenders to advocates for and of the gospel. We know it is unlikely we can influence every one of the million directly but even 150,000 people changing their behaviour around evangelism and discipleship in small ways would provide a tipping point into growth for the Church. (see para 19)
 - b) We also recognise that in doing this we will need to ensure our structures serve our mission. This is not directly within our remit as a department, but it does require the Church to continually renew and reimagine our 'mixed economy' church communities so we are truly present in every community in England. *As Making New Disciples (GS Misc 1054)* comments 'A new direction requires spiritual and cultural change, but it also needs the structures and resources to be deployed in different ways to signal the change in direction and reinforce it.'

Our ambitious approach is encapsulated in our vision **to motivate the million regular worshippers to pray, articulate and live out their faith seven days a week.**

9. We believe this is the most effective way for the Team to support and realise a growing Church by motivating and enabling our greatest resource, our million regular worshippers, for evangelism and discipleship. This is crucial if we are to deliver the vision in every part of the Church and for the whole people of God. It will involve working through Dioceses, specific groups and organisations, local churches and directly through social media.
10. This approach incorporates enabling worshippers to move from attendees, who through the narrative of continual decline can feel disheartened and unconfident, to advocates and apprentices who are outward looking and confident in their faith and church. Throughout the process of identifying our work the issue of confidence has been the topic most mentioned. We endeavour to see through our work the growing of confident disciples equipped for the work of living for Christ in today's world, from our biggest to our smallest churches.
11. Motivating the million, through equipping and liberating them as witnesses and disciples for the whole of life, is complementary to all our other present priorities such as Setting Gods People Free, SDF funding, Growing Faith, growing vocations and our developing social media presence. But it is also essential to the success of these more focussed approaches. For example the success of church plants and resource churches depends partly on a huge increase in people who are enabled to be effective witnesses and confident disciples. A rise in leadership numbers will be ineffective if they are not releasing more people as confident disciples. Our present investment, whilst substantial, will be insufficient on its own to return the Church to a pattern of sustained growth. At best, together with other initiatives they will stem the decline. In order for the Church to grow these focussed efforts will need to multiply and replicate

confident disciples who are equipped and released to live out their faith in the whole of their lives. Therefore motivating the million provides a simple vision which both supports and enables a huge variety of strategies and projects.

12. This approach also recognises the importance and huge potential for growth of the 'middle third' of our churches, about 5000 in total, who have a typical Sunday congregation of between 20 and 60. Around 200,000 people worship in those churches. But those churches are in parishes covering huge areas of the country, with a population we estimate of over 16 million.

Developing our work to change behaviour around evangelism and discipleship.

13. In trying to fulfil our vision of motivating the million we have identified six operational priorities. There are many things good things we could do as a Team, but we have spent the last six months discerning the few things we should be focused on so that our work is most effectively and efficiently concentrated and directed. We have then divided these priorities up around how they impact individual worshippers, local churches and leaders, lay and ordained. Each priority has a team lead who is responsible to the Director for that specific work area. We also appreciate that as a new team undertaking new priorities we will need to experiment and then evaluate and learn to build more effective interventions.
14. We have also recognised in creating our priorities that the work of evangelism and discipleship are inseparable. Therefore, we have sought to integrate priorities rather than create discrete priorities for evangelism and discipleship.
15. But it is essential that our vision to 'motivate the million' is not solely based on effective strategies and efficient organisation. We have therefore sought to respond to this by focusing on God's agency especially through prayer. 'Our natural tendency is to focus on the human aspects of evangelism and not the divine. Yet it is God who takes the initiative to pursue seekers, it is his Spirit who converts, it is his gospel that saves. Evangelism is God's business from start to finish.' (Rebecca Manley Pippert.) This is also just as true for the processes of discipleship. Therefore, we have highlighted the fundamental nature of prayer if we are to be a growing church. It grounds our work as a Team in a reliance on Gods activity in our world and lives. We have deliberately not identified prayer as one of our six priorities but are committed to ensuring it runs through everything we do and are.
16. A key focus on prayer is through our close association with Emma Buchan and the 'Thy Kingdom Come' team. We are working together to ensure resources for local churches are most appropriate for motivating people to share their faith. We also want to help dioceses and churches to follow up their prayer for evangelism with evangelistic opportunities and events. Following discussions with Archbishop Justin and Chris Russell we have started planning for an ordered transition by which Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) will fully be part of the work of the E&D Team by 2021 while retaining its particular charism as an ecumenical prayer initiative for evangelism. This will require working on issues of finance, sustainability and longer-term developments. As one of the first steps Dave Male has now joined the Programme Board of TKC.
17. Our six priorities for action, which emphasise our broad approach of including every person, church and leader are:

So that every person is

Priority 1. Equipped to be a witness in every part of their lives

18. The work of the team has been influenced by two pieces of research and one key fact.
- a) 67% of adults in the UK know a practising Christian and are generally positive about them according to the Talking Jesus Research. So, the problem is not how do we get our people to connect with those outside the church. It is happening!
 - b) 70% of church people said they could think of someone they could invite to a church event according to Michael Harvey's research as part of his work in creating A Culture of Invitation
 - c) But of those 70% who could think of someone to invite 85-95% said they had no intention of doing this.

The problem was not the worshipper's local church but the main issue the research highlighted was a total lack of confidence in talking about faith at all and with anyone. This confirms the importance of renewing confidence, highlighted both by the ETG and SGPF.

19. The good news is that some small behavioural changes for our million regular attenders could make a huge difference. If one additional person in 50 from our regular attenders invited someone to a church event and subsequently they started attending it would totally reverse our present decline. Nationally the church would grow by 16,000 people per year, offsetting the current net loss of 14,000.

20. So, we are

- a). Encouraging and equipping Dioceses and churches to use resources to grow confidence in sharing faith such as the Talking Jesus Course and Faith Pictures. The Talking Jesus Course has benefited from Strategic Development Funding and aims to help people and their churches articulate their faith confidently. This is supported by the encouragement of churches to use a variety of basics courses including Pilgrim, Alpha and Christianity Explored.
- b) Developing a culture of invitation across Dioceses. We are working with Michael Harvey from 'Culture of Invitation', with three pilot dioceses, to energise and equip worshippers to invite their friends to church events. The main objective is to increase the number of regular church attenders of all traditions who are able and have invited someone to a church event. Following evaluation of this initial project in 2019 we hope to work with six more dioceses in the following year
- c) The Big Church Survey. It is important we measure the effectiveness of our work on evangelism and discipleship in numbers, gender, ethnicity and in evangelistic and discipleship health This initiative is in conjunction with the Research and Statistics Team and HOPE. <http://www.bigchurchsurvey.org>
- d) Identify, equip and release 1000 new evangelists of all ages and traditions in the Church of England by 2025. Although these ambitious plans are not immediately related to our broad approach of equipping every person to be a witness we believe having more evangelists in dioceses and local churches encourages more of the million to do their part in witnessing confidently in their lives. This initiative is working in partnership with HOPE through Advance 2020 and Mission Academy, the Archbishops' College of Evangelists, Church Army, and the Oxford Centre for Contemporary Apologetics.

Priority 2. Released, as part of the whole people of God, to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life

21. This will be primarily but not exclusively delivered through Setting God's People Free (SGPF) which itself came from the impetus of the ETG. The project seeks to change the culture of the Church to better enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life Sunday to Saturday. SGPF embraces the opportunity to impact our nation for Christ through the 98% of people in the Church of England who are not ordained living out their discipleship and vocation in homes, communities, schools and workplaces.
22. The aim by the end of 2020 is to have embedded two culture shifts of encouraging seven-day-a-week discipleship, and mutual respect of the vocations of laity and clergy based on baptism; and to contribute to the Renewal & Reform goal of establishing a national portfolio of lay leadership / discipleship activities, involving the participation of 100,000 adults.
23. Discipleship materials are essential for formation, developing faith and confidence building. The Digital Evangelism Team's #LiveLent campaign reached 3.54 million people and spanned print and digital. The Lent and Easter digital materials for 2019 are based on The Pilgrim materials, which Oxford Diocese are using as part of their catechetical work. Several dioceses in the SGPF Learning Communities are using a variety of catechetical materials to help enable deeper spiritual formation.

So that every church

Priority 3. Prioritises children and young people in and for evangelism and discipleship

24. Although this priority could simply run through the other priorities we wanted to highlight its importance for the church. The statistics from the 2016 single church Statistics for Mission Returns on 10,552 churches highlight why this is necessary.
Only 30 (0.28%) of our churches have more than 100 u16's in them on a Sunday
Only 170 (1.61%) of our churches have more than 50 u16's in them on a Sunday.
Only 710 (6.73%) of our churches have more than 25 u16's in them on a Sunday.
36.2% (3820) of our churches have no-one under the age of 16 on a Sunday
65.3% (6890) of our churches have less than 5 children or young people under the age of 16 on a Sunday
25. Much of the future work will be through
 - a) the Growing Faith Initiative in association with the Education Department
 - b) the Youth Evangelism Advisor, whose role was created through the ETG, encouraging and resourcing young people to be confident in sharing their faith through various strategies
 - c) the Youth Evangelism Task group which is also a product of the ETG.

Priority 4. Is a Welcoming Community open to everyone and using Life Events fully

26. Based on research from Life Events and recent research commissioned by the Communications Department we know negative experiences of church push people away from church and faith and positive experiences of church draw people onward and change perceptions. 'Experience of church' is related to two things:
- People - emotional warmth, interest, and consistent connection
 - Space – accessibility, knowledge, permission and warmth
27. The research highlights community and belonging still matter, personal is paramount, experience over product or active over passive and making memories, so that people leave with a positive story to share.
28. The vision is to support and enable a hospitable parish through hospitable people developing hospitable spaces by helping churches develop positive attitudes towards newcomers/visitors. This will lead to every person feeling that they are valued and have a place with God's people through smiling welcome and accessible worship spaces. This will involve developing materials for parishes with ideas for what hospitable worship might mean. Plus, the use of hub and social media to give tips, help and advice to churches.

Priority 5. Has considered developing a new worshipping community

29. The present quinquennial period of the Fresh Expressions Charity, which has been supported by money from Archbishops Council, ends in March 2019. In the next five-year phase, the emphasis of the fresh expressions work is embedding and developing it in the partner denominations. To enable this to happen in the Church of England a project financed by an SDF grant of £800,000 will create and multiply new worshipping communities across ten Dioceses in a focused and structured way to make many more disciples. By the end of Year 5, it is expected that 147 new worshipping communities will be involved with the project. Based on the Church Army research 7350 people will be involved in these communities altogether, and of these 3307 will not have been attending church for the two years prior to first attending the community. The Project Leader will be part of the core Evangelism and Discipleship Team.

So that every leader

Priority 6. Is trained & equipped to be envisioned & competent to lead in evangelism and release disciples

30. Leadership capacity is vital in developing confidence and changing behaviour. Most research suggests that if our leaders, both lay and ordained are not leading in sharing faith then it will not happen in their churches. Both our Archbishops have provided great examples for other leaders to follow. Training of leaders so they can equip, enable and envision their congregations will be key if we are to release the million to confidently share their faith. Initial discussions have begun with Ministry Division and some TEIs around the best way to take this matter forward so that our leaders at every level can do this. This also builds on the ETG's work on selection and training.

Conclusion

31. In November 2013 The General Synod called upon the Archbishops to set up an Evangelism Task Group to generate energy, enthusiasm and confidence in this vocation. The group sought to be provocative, in order that effective evangelism may become a constant feature of ministry and mission across the dioceses and parishes of the Church of England. It has been a wonderful catalyst for the delivery of effective evangelism in many areas of its work and its impact will live on for many years beyond the life of the group.
32. The newly formed Evangelism and Discipleship Team is one of the ways the Church is seeking to build upon this work and to continue to develop and deepen it. *Intentional Evangelism GS1917* reminded us that, 'We need to be intentional about evangelism in this next period of our life as the Church of England, not for a five or ten-year period but for a generation or more in order to reverse the decline we have seen over the last century and to lay a foundation for the growth of the Church in this land in future generations.'
33. This is not a quickly fixed problem and will need the Church to keep this vision for evangelism at the centre of its life for many years. The newly formed Evangelism and Discipleship Team is very aware of the need to take seriously this is a long-term project that requires us to work together collaboratively at every level of the Church as we all seek together to build on the enormous work of the Evangelism Task Group.

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