



Inside this issue:

ECGI— Welcome & purposes	1
Rearing Ducks, Growing Faith - Peru	2
Unreached People	2
Growing the Church— Southern Africa	3
Reflections on Core Group meeting	4
Mission Shaped Church— Lakes and Rivers - England	5
Resources – Books	5
Prayer Board	6
Get Involved	6

Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative—ECGI Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

March 2010

Welcome to ECGI !

If you are reading this newsletter you must be connected in some ways to the Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative (ECGI) of the Anglican Communion; whether you heard about it from a friend, read about it on the website, or are registered as a member, welcome!

This newsletter is a modest beginning; however, like the mustard seed of the Gospel, it has the potential, in God, to grow large. ECGI is the response to the great interest of the Lambeth Conference 2008 in evangelism and church growth throughout the communion, and the need for collaboration. Following the ACC



resolution in May 2009, the Secretary General called together a very small core which had its first meeting in Woking (UK) from 11—15 January 2010.

We are a very small core group. The only way

this initiative can move forward is to work with you, not for you.

This issue is a foretaste of things to come with articles about how evangelism and church growth is taking place in a variety of contexts. Please send your own stories, books and resources for future issues. Also, pray for evangelism and church growth throughout the world, and this Initiative. Pray that, as resources become available, we will be able to grow the website, and expand this quarterly newsletter into a journal for evangelism and church growth.

*Bp Patrick Yu,
Convener*

The purpose of ECGI

Is to promote evangelism and church growth work throughout the Anglican Communion. We will do this by the following actions:

- Facilitating prayer and mutual encouragement;
- Sharing stories, news and strategies
- Recommend resources & sharing good practice;
- Develop strategies to reach unreached peoples;
- Encourage training in evangelism and church growth for the whole people of God;
- Identify key issues for specific consultation;
- Build links with other evangelism and church growth networks within and beyond the Anglican Communion.
- Encourage practical engagements in Evangelism and Church Growth as signs of hope
- Promote centrality of Evangelism and Church Growth within God's holistic mission to be on people's agenda throughout the Provinces and instruments of Communion

"We believe social outreach and the proclamation of the Gospel go hand in hand"

Rearing Ducks, Growing Faith

Holistic Mission In Peru

"Bishop, thirty ladies have given their life to Jesus." Norma, a deacon, calls me in excitement. It wasn't an 'evangelistic campaign', but a duck rearing project in the extreme poverty of Lima's shanty towns. It's a three month course for 90 women. It aims to improve nutrition for their families (protein from meat and eggs, or added income if they're sold), raise self-esteem, and enable learning to work together.

Often one of the first questions to Norma and her helpers is, "Are you nuns?" "No, we're married and have children." Over the weeks the women discover the team are inspired by faith, but the issue's not pushed. By the end of the course, however, there'll be prayers, for their families and the sick, open conversation about faith, and all in the most natural way.

We believe social outreach and the proclamation of the Gospel go hand in hand. This practical project is *good news* for the women and very often changes lives. It could be any project, but in this case it's ducks and faith in Jesus. *Gospel* -good news- was the word chosen by the apostles as the best way of describing Jesus, what he taught and what he did. There is no conflict between the two. Serving others and the proclamation of Christ's name belong together. "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example... (Jn.13:14-15). To him be the glory. **Bp Bill Godfrey, Bishop of Peru**

Unreached People

I have a big theological problem with the term 'unreached people groups', basically because I don't believe any group of people is beyond the reach of God and his saving power, nor do I believe that the *Missio Dei* is in anyway dependent on the instrumentality of Christian missions.

If you flick through the glossy pages of the recently published Atlas of World Christianity you will quickly discover that at least 80% of Christian mission activity, the sending of cross-cultural missionaries, local evangelism, Christian publishing etc. takes place in the most Christian parts of our world. It seems we like doing evangelism and growing churches in Christian countries. Those going into cross-cultural mission work want to go to places like Uganda (87% plus Christian) and Nepal (which has one of the fastest Church growth rates in the world); when did you last meet someone wanting to go to the Czech Republic, Japan or Mali?

There are places in our world where you encounter the name of Jesus painted on every taxi, on every radio station and in every newspaper; you won't get to lunchtime without hearing a hymn of praise being sung.

Uganda is one such place. There are other places where the name of Jesus is never heard, not even as a swear word. When we talk of "unreached people groups" we speak of such places. Not the people who rejected Jesus after a bad experience at Sunday School or because the church is too closely associated with privilege, but those millions of people, yes, there are millions, who don't have a clue who Jesus is or what he did or why he might be important.

We think of the unreached in remote tribal groups in China, the African Sahel, or the Amazonian rain forests, but they are also found in Kabul, Tokyo, Istanbul and increasingly amongst the youth of Durban or Paris, and business communities in Delhi or Frankfurt.

Anglicans, sadly, are no different from most other Christians. When we get round to engaging in evangelism and growing churches we normally do it where people have many other opportunities to meet Jesus. How about Anglicans getting serious about speaking Jesus' name and growing churches where this is most needed? It might be in western China or it might just be in Istanbul or Prague.

Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow
www.faith2share.net/



How about Anglicans getting serious about speaking Jesus' name and growing churches where this is most needed?

Growing the Church — Southern Africa

Our Bishops, meeting in the Provincial Synod in late 2003, were shocked to the core when presented with very reliable data which showed that every mainline denomination in South Africa, where most of our dioceses exist, was shown to be in decline. This was in spite of the many wonderful examples of growing churches across the denominations. They decided that something needed to be done and finally after relevant consultations, I was appointed in 2007 as the Director of "Growing the Church" (GtC) under the leadership of Bishop Martin Breytenbach and a Board.

Our Board decided that GtC should be launched in the majority of the 26 dioceses in 2008. But how could we achieve such a huge goal, given the fact that the Province is spread over 7 coun-

tries and a huge area?

We asked SOMA ("Sharing of Ministries Abroad" – an Anglican short-term missions' movement) to help us and in Sept 2008 about 130 SOMA team members from around the globe gathered in Johannesburg, joining about 170 participants from Southern Africa. The three day Provincial Launch Conference, which most of our Bishops attended, culminated in 24 teams being sent to 19 of our dioceses to assist them with their Diocesan Launches. We estimate, contact time with approximately 40,000 people! The nature of these launches precluded a certain depth of teaching, it kick-started a process, it communicated the vision and mission of GtC on a broad front, it engaged people with the gospel in relevant ways and engaged hundreds of Anglicans in an evangelistic mission endeavour.

Spin offs

Bishop Albert Vun, Bishop of Kota Kinabalu, East Malaysia and one of our plenary speakers, saw this God-given idea take wings and asked if something similar could be replicated in his own diocese and some of the surrounding countries in South East Asia. In August 2009 and after an inspiring missions conference, 23 teams fanned out in mission and evangelism all over Malaysia as well as in about 5 or 6 countries.

This caught the attention of Archbishop Ben Kwashi of Jos, Nigeria, the International Chairperson of SOMA. So, from 5-17 August 2010, beginning with a large missions conference in Jos, we anticipate a few hundred Anglicans fanning out in mission. Jos as seen some challenges but Archbishop Ben tells us that the Christians there need us to come alongside them now more than ever! The big lesson is that there are thousands of Christ-followers in our pews who are eagerly waiting to be engaged in mission and ministry! They are willing to dig into their own resources and to raise the necessary funds that will be required. What a wonderful opportunity to also grow these Disciples of Christ who will in turn inspire many others in mission.

Do you

feel a stirring in your spirit even as you read? If so, visit the following websites www.somang2010jos.org and www.anglicandioceseofjos.org. If you wish to be part of a SOMA mission team, please Google "Sharing of Ministries Abroad" and apply via a SOMA Ministry near you or write directly to the appointed leaders in Jos. Conditions and selection will apply.



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"It is a "kairos" moment for re-affirming what the church is called to do in order to obey The Great Commission"

Reflections on the ECGI Core Group Meeting by Rev Canon Rosemary Mbogo, Kenya



Core group pictured included: *Bishop Ken Okeke from the Church of Nigeria Missionary Society, Revd Trevor Pearce from South Africa, Patrick Yu, Bishop of York Scarborough, Diocese of Toronto, Canada Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow from Faith2Share, Bishop Bill Godfrey of Peru, Revd Canon Rosemary Mbogo from Kenya, Mrs Linda Jones from England, Revd John Kafwanka and Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon ACO, Revd Dr Julian Linnell from Anglican Frontier Mission, and, Stuart Buchanan, ACO. Four other members were unable to attend.*

This gathering brought together bishops, clergy and lay who are actively involved in evangelism and church growth from across the Anglican Communion. Sadly, due to different circumstances, some continents weren't represented.

We began each day with Holy Communion setting the team on a unified mission and purpose and rallying around kingdom values. The Rt Rev Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, made us very welcome in his diocese. It was exciting to receive hospitality for dinner with him and to share with his mission director. Joy was brought to the team, and affirmation from the Communion Office with the presence and participation of the Anglican Communion Secretary General, the Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon, for one day. Our interaction was reflective in building strategies to promote unity in evangelism and church growth. I came away with following points:

- * There is an urgent need to clarify what the good news means for each member of the body of Christ; the community of believers.
- * That it is a "kairos" moment for re-affirming what the church is called to do in order to obey The Great Commission (Math28: 18-20; Acts1: 8).
- * That there are many unreached people especially those in the 10-40 window numbering approximately 1.7 billion and pockets of hidden unreached people in the midst of the reached that call for special initiatives of evangelism.
- * That the Church Leaders have a divine mandate to spearhead unity in the promotion of evangelism and church growth.
- * An appreciation of what is being done across the Communion in evangelism and church growth. We need to spell out new initiatives such as missionary bishops and clergy and laity need to strengthen such work with the authority, blessing and support of the Communion.
- * The importance of affirming the use of what is already in place within different parts of the Communion and what is working, such as "Alpha courses" and special services for different sector groups within the church, and making such resources better known.
- * Encouraging and extending "Signs of Hope" through practical engagement with the people in mission and in prayer whenever possible, so that people are impacted with the ministry extended to them.
- * The need to share resource information that would facilitate learning.

"The importance of affirming the use of what is already in place within different parts of the Communion and what is working"

Mission Shaped Church

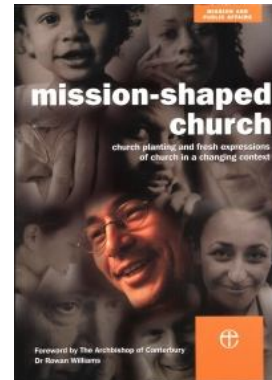
Mission-Shaped Church" was a report that came to the General Synod of the Church of England in 2005. The report identified the huge changes that have happened in the culture of England and that the Church of England needed to be aware of this to enable us to evangelise our country. And to also recognise that in a complex and fast-moving cultural landscape, one size could no longer fit all contexts. The Archbishop of Canterbury used the phrase 'mixed

economy church' to help us "to recognise church where it appears and have the willingness and the skill to work with it".

As a result the "Fresh Expressions" organisation was established to encourage and resource the implications of the report's recommendations. This organisation has encouraged the spread of Mission-shaped church thinking and practice by establishing a web-

site and creating and leading training courses.

www.freshexpressions.org



"in a complex and fast-moving cultural landscape, one size could no longer fit all contexts"

Lakes and Rivers

In the Diocese of Liverpool, we are committed to a strategy that sees both fresh expressions of church with pioneer ministry and inherited models of church working closely together, hand in hand, not only mixed, but merging together in ministry and mission. To enable this to happen, a pioneer ministers' team has emerged from within the Church Growth Team, and a network of 'mixed economy' churches is being built to encourage and learn from each other.

We have adopted the imagery of lake and river. Lakes tend to form in settled places, where they become an oasis to the life around them. In the same way, our parish churches offer an oasis and source of life to the community around. Rivers are often still connected to lakes, but are free to flow wherever the ground gives way into many more and different places. Very often new forms of church flow beyond the neighbourhood and into various networks, from work places to schools and hobby-based groups.

Our aim is to build a 'Lake and River' diocese, that honours and cherishes all that it has inherited from the past, but also wants to embrace and pioneer the new future to proclaim afresh the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ to each generation. **Linda Jones** www.liverpool.anglican.org

Resources - also look our for the resource pages as we update our website

What resources you for evangelism and church growth?

The Anglican Communion Office can take no responsibility for the appropriateness of the content of these resources, but the following have been recommended by Anglicans who are involved in evangelism and church growth:

Bowen, John P., "Evangelism for 'Normal' People: Good News for Those Looking for a Fresh Approach". 2002 Augsburg. Available through Amazon, also in DVD
A practical guide with stories for reticent Christians who do not share their faith because of bad examples or unattainable expectations of evangelism.

Kwashi, B.A. "The mission of evangelism" Pastoral Publications Commission, Diocese of Jos, Bishopscourt, P O Box 6283, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues Among Muslims 2008 Ed. J. Dudley Woodberry --state of the art reports on Muslim evangelism today --William Carey Library ISBN 9780878080007

Prayer Board

DR CONGO

- **March 2010-** *Training Military Chaplains for evangelism;*
- **April 2010—***Easter Convention in all parishes of the Province 50 reasons why Jesus died for you*
- **May 2010** *Evangelism amongst pygmies*
- **June 2010** *-Evangelism amongst street children, taxi men, prisoners and disabled people*
- **Pray for** the necessary finance for these events
For more information contact the Ven Musindo Ilesomo on www.somang2010jos.org

Send your items for the next Prayer Board

JOS, NIGERIA

- August 2010
- SOMA teams, see www.somang2010jos.org for more information

ALPHA INTERNATIONAL

- **Asia Pacific Conference** to be held in Kuching, Malaysia from **16—17 April 2010**
- **Alpha Conference** for delegates from **Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)** will be held in London, UK from **7 - 11 June 2010**.
- **Bishop/Archbishops stream** to be hosted by the Bishop of London Dr Richard Chartres from **Sunday 6th June to Wednesday 9th June 2010**
events@alpha.org



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*Almighty God,
who called your Church to witness
that you were in Christ
reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen*

Common Worship, The Archbishops' Council 2002

Get Involved

- ◆ **Register**, if you have not already done so, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/ecgi> — we will let the core group person responsible for your region know about you;
- ◆ **Tell others** involved in evangelism and church growth about the Initiative and newsletter
- ◆ **Send us** your stories, of how God is working through your church or organisation to grow his church, to include in future issues, (100—300 words) by 1 May for June edition. we are exploring how we can include more sensitive material on secure web pages;
- ◆ **Tell us** about resources: books; websites; courses, good practice; prayers etc that we can include in future newsletters or on the website
- ◆ **Read the website** to explore resources; we don't have space in this issue to include all the material we have;
- ◆ **Translate** this newsletter, and other material, into the languages of those who cannot read in English; at this stage we do not have the resources to do this ourselves.
- ◆ We call on you to **pray** for the ECGI and the work mentioned in this issue.