

Sharpening our focus on Evangelism and Church Growth:

A preamble to the agenda for the February 2011 Anglican Communion Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative (ECGI) Core Group meeting presented by Bishop Patrick Yu on 15 February 2011 in Kuala Lumpur

Evangelism continues to be the first mark, the “cutting edge” of mission. How can we in the Anglican Communion continue the ground breaking work of the Decade of Evangelism? To be more precise, how can this Initiative and we as the Core Group play a role in the abiding impetus? Only with humility and self awareness, as no more and no less than one part of the body of Christ, grateful for what God has done in and among us yet never too proud to learn from other traditions that are also God’s labourers and fellow workers in His vineyard. We need to learn from the past as well. Most especially we most learn afresh from that oldest and the most privileged of our evangelical past, the early church. Let us have a very quick and admittedly selective tour of the scriptures for guidance.

A bible study

“I am the vine, you are the branches, those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.” (John 15:5) Evangelism is not only obedience to a command; it is also a natural response to God’s action in and among us. When a branch of the church abides in Christ, it bears fruit. It has been pointed out that fruitfulness is not only evidenced by numerical growth, this is true, but fruitfulness surely also includes numbers. God has no grandchildren; the very existence of Anglican Christians and churches today points to the fact that evangelism has taken place and is taking place in our member Provinces. Yet the natural and diligent work of bearing witness to and proclaiming the good news of Jesus does not, the Gospels tell us, meet with equal success. The farmer went out to sow, but the soils are different, some fields produce a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty, and some hardly any at all. (Matt 13:3-9, Mark 4:3-9, Luke 8:5-8) This parable is followed by an explanation. Jesus’ purpose of telling it was to explain why the same faithful effort could be met with unequal results. We are urged to sow faithfully, but only God gives the growth, and the reasons and seasons for harvest is not always clear to us. Who would have guessed that the seeds of faith, which seemed to lie so dormant under active persecution behind the Iron Curtain would spring to live and bear fruit with such vigour? Evidently it continued to be sown, and faithfully, by the babushkas, those faithful grandmothers of Russia and their equivalents in Eastern Europe, only to spring to life when the right conditions emerge.

Allow me to play with the imagery of the farmer in the parable. Farmers all over the world want to increase yields. To this end they study the seeds, the weather, and the soil. Did the farmer in the parable choose his field, casting seeds on the rocky ground and among thorns only unintentionally? If he was aware of the soil condition of his own farm, would he try to improve it by removing the rocks or uprooting the thorns? I think we have here a paradox, the age old paradox between human freedom and divine sovereignty. We stand in sheer wonder of God’s invitation into His enterprise, and we are bound to employ all our wisdom and skills to serve Him in serving others. At the same time, we are asked to be responsive to the winds of the Spirit and persist when they look like disappointing headwinds. Whatever else this parable teaches; it does not excuse the farmer from sowing. We are to proclaim the gospel in season and out of season, whether the conditions are favourable or not (2 Tim 4:2). Yet the very existence of people who study and promote evangelism, including a group such as ourselves, presumes intention, forethought, and the ability to learn from experience. Let us turn to the richest resource for our learning, that wonderful story of evangelism and church growth after Easter, the account of which was mainly given in the Acts of the Apostles.

Scholars have observed that the author of Acts quite intentionally divided the story into sections, marking the transition by a variation of the summary statement “the Word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples increased greatly . . .” (Acts 6:7. 9:31. 12:24, 16:5, 19:20), this literary device surely painted a picture of evangelism and church growth! Each episode of growth has its own drama, its challenges and triumphs.

Jerusalem

The Jerusalem phase of evangelism and church growth began with the Luke’s version of the great commission (Acts 1:8) which Jesus gave prior to the Ascension and exploded on the day of Pentecost. God did not act in a vacuum. Pentecost, also known as the feast of Weeks or First fruits, was a holy convocation around the barley harvest which in inter-testamental times was also associated with the giving of the law at Sinai. The people gathered were devout Jews in Jerusalem and from the surrounding regions as well as those who made the pilgrimage from the Diaspora. Peter’s message could not be more appropriate; he associated the new common spiritual experience with the recent news of Jesus’ execution, perhaps even rumours of the empty tomb. He explained these events with the scriptures familiar to the population, from the psalms and also from the prophet Joel. They were particularly appropriate in a time of great eschatological expectations. His sermon showed the signs of his own reflection, or rather, the reflection of the proto church gathered around the apostles. For we must not ignore the period of gestation between the Ascension and Pentecost, when about 120 people met, prayed and discerned the way forward. This was the period when they pondered on both recent events and began their own discernment and action, among which was the election of Matthias as an apostle. It is in this context of prayerful expectation that God came in power, and the evangelism explosion occurred!

God continued to work mightily through the apostles in the days of rapid church growth in Jerusalem, and the Church also responded with radical discipleship. Their response, however, arose squarely out of their own Jewish context. The Temple served as the central meeting place, they dispersed for daily prayers and common meals which were modified from existing practices with a new content, and they even exploited the existing religious politics and turned persecution into publicity! An analysis of the public speeches, up to and including Stephen’s final words, consisted of the proclamation of Jesus’ death and resurrection, which were interpreted in light of the Scripture familiar to the audience. An objective analysis revealed an implied strategy of evangelism and church growth. At least it showed the reasons, humanly speaking, why they were so successful. The apostles spoke to an audience who shared so much in common with them. They shared the same language, scripture, experience and expectations. God gave the early church low lying fruits to pick for the first days of His church.

Judea and Samaria

Just as the Jerusalem period had a time of preparation before Pentecost, so the Judean and Samaritan period began with the dark clouds of Stephen’s martyrdom, and only came in full force with the severe persecution in Acts 8:1. The flock was forced to scatter, but the new believers carried the Gospel with them. The new context was initially less fertile ground than Jerusalem and so we did not read of the same remarkable growth as in the church’s inception. Luke’s portrayal of Samaria was consistent with the witness of scripture elsewhere. The Samaritans had a more diluted version of the Jewish faith, and we met this in the people’s fascination with Simon the magician, with its implied religious confusion. Outside Jerusalem, the evangelists did not have the institutional underpinning of the Jewish faith, nor did they have as much in common in shared experience. Those they met outside of Jerusalem were not present at the giving of the Spirit, and needed to be taught and initiated into this aspect of the Christian life. However, even though they have to adapt this

to their new audience, the basic message of the evangelists was only a little changed. Their method, if we can call it that, continued to be confrontation with the manifestation of evil with the power of God in the name of Jesus. The important event of this period, from a literary point of view, was the conversion of Saul. Luke has introduced here God's unexpected choice of disciples and apostles. The three main converts in this period were a Samaritan magician, a God-fearing Ethiopian eunuch, and a zealous persecutor of the church!

If bearing witness outside of the heydays of Jerusalem was more difficult and costly, God had also raised up unexpected labourers for the occasion. The leading apostles Peter and John continued to be involved, but the deacons Stephen and Philip, originally chosen to "wait on tables" (Acts 6:2), could not help but be channels of God's word. It is to the credit of the early church and her leaders that they remained flexible in both the target audience of the Gospel as well as who was allowed to bring it. The greatest test of this was the reception of their former enemy, Saul, as a bearer of the good news. We see in this period that God will force his church out of comfortable surroundings into unfamiliar territory so that his life-giving Word will be received by the unlikely people who may at first escape the church's notice. God continues to act powerfully in unfamiliar territory because "the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it!" The difficulty of the task will be met with unexpected and unlikely labourers, who bring their own background and approaches to the task of evangelism.

Ends of the earth

The evangelisation of the known world, then dominated by Rome, was told in three sections, and punctuated by Luke's familiar summary of church growth (Acts 12:24, 16:5, 19:20). The first was an account of the acceptance of Gentiles in the pivotal conversion of Cornelius, which took place in Caesarea Maritima, notably the political centre of Palestine, and concluded with a new Christian centre in Syrian Antioch. The second was an account of the mission in Asia Minor and the third of the mission in Greece, when the Gospel crossed from Asia into Europe. Luke skilfully left the fulfilment of the great commission open-ended with Paul under house arrest in the centre of the known world, Rome. It is the longest and the arguably the most fascinating section of Acts in terms of what we can learn about evangelism.

In the conversion of Saul God has fashioned a wonderful instrument for the task at hand. Not only was he zealous and devout, familiar with the scriptures and open to the Spirit, but Paul showed in his action both a shrewd assessment of his surroundings as well as a willingness to engage new things. Paul's identity as a Roman citizen, his familiarity with Greek philosophy, his profession as a tent maker, was all apparent in his missionary strategy. I do not intend to rehearse in detail the many scholarly contributions on his methods, but only to highlight certain aspects as a pointer to further reflection.¹ Tracing the footsteps of his missionary journeys, it was apparent that Paul chose his itinerary carefully. He was methodical in working province by province. His preference was important centres of culture and commerce, particularly those under direct Roman governance. Paul the Roman citizen chose these centres for their influence as well as protection against unruly conduct by mobs or local officials. Once there, Paul normally began his preaching in a synagogue where both Jews and Gentile God-fearers gathered. This habit most likely began as his personal pattern of worship, but developed into an intentional work among God-fearing Gentiles, his most fruitful target audience. Whenever the local Jewish population turned against him he set up shop nearby.

Paul showed a remarkable sensitivity to local culture and beliefs. This was most evident in his public speech in Athens. After making connection with his audience, however, he always

¹ Allen, Roland, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or ours?* 1927

proclaim of the death and resurrection of Jesus, with a challenge for faith and a warning of judgment. While his primary target were God fearing Gentiles attached to synagogues, he exploited opportunities given to him by the general population when, for example, he and Barnabas were mistaken for Greek gods in Lyconium (Acts 14:11), or when he felt compelled to deliver a possessed slave girl in Philippi (Acts 16:16), and a distraught prison guard later on (16:24-34). He went into unfamiliar territory not only geographically but also theologically as he came face to face with local superstition, social practices and philosophy. Moreover, his evangelism did not end with conversion but also discipleship. Many of his letters were written during the missionary journeys. In the process he encountered new Christians whose entire life was formed in a pagan culture, and this must be a severe challenge for a rabbi to comprehend. Paul had to work constantly to apply the gospel to practical situations of morality, death, marriage, worship and leadership. Reading through the Corinthian correspondence is to read a great mind at work cross-culturally. Yet he was able to discern what was the core of the Gospel and what was Godly counsel – to distinguish between “not I, but the Lord,” and “I, and not the Lord,” (1 Corinthians 7:10,12) in the matter of marriage and meat offered to idols, for example. This practical wisdom was not only confined to Paul, the apostles also showed this in the decision they made at the Jerusalem Council, when they made a clear decision in principle while given practical instructions in how that was to be carried out. Indeed going into unfamiliar territory calls from the church not simply adherence to tradition but a constant process of theological thinking rooted in the heart of the Gospel.

In this period God gave the ever expanding church new workers. The missionary task was no longer limited to the original twelve. They were joined by new apostles, also workers such as Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Timothy, Titus, John Mark, and men and women such as Pricilla and Aquilla, their names were cited as co-workers in Paul’s letters as well as in Acts. By the time Paul embarked on his journey to Jerusalem, God’s church was established in strategic centre in Asia and Europe, across Jewish, Greek and Roman cultures, consisting of, and led by, a variety of gifted people. But the process of church growth and evangelism was neither smooth nor blameless. The New Testament account did not hide the blemishes of rivalry and division in churches, or her failure to live up to its high calling from the very beginning. What it did show was God’s constant presence in power wherever and whenever His name is proclaimed. He brought the church opportunities and raised up leaders to take advantage of them. He guided and protected the church and the gospel entrusted to them. What God has commanded he also provides.

The Acts of the Apostle was written for more than historical information but so that lovers of God of all ages can know that truth about the ways of God, and that our generation also may be instructed, “so that by steadfastness and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4) There are many ways for us to appropriate the great story of Acts. One way is to appropriate the missionary mandate geographically, starting from where we are as our own Jerusalem, to attend to the area closest to where we are situated, whether personally or as a church and to work further a field from that centre. In a post colonial world mission certainly is “from everywhere to everywhere.” The Diocese of Toronto sponsors a project called Route 1:8. The project supports evangelism out of a downtown Church, St. Paul’s, as it strives to reach out to its neighbourhood. The project was named after Acts 1:8, the great commission in Acts and involves an intentional study of the demographics around the church, employing professional research. The leadership of the church then made decisions on how it bears witness and offers services based on the research on the actual lifestyle and values of those around them. That exciting story is an instance of how a church today can appropriate the inspiration to pay close attention to surrounding culture in its strategy of evangelism and church growth. I want to expand that concept further. If Jerusalem is not a fixed location but, metaphorically and spiritually can be anywhere, then can the experience of the early church in Jerusalem, and for that matter in Judea, Samaria

and the end of the earth, not be appropriated and mined for their challenges and their responses as well?

Using Luke's account metaphorically, Jerusalem represents a "place" where the evangelising church and the surrounding culture share much in common. There are common assumptions, shared hopes and fears, even institutions which the church knows how to use for its mission. Christendom would be an example of Jerusalem for Western churches. But this metaphor can be applied to many and different situations, many 'Jerusalems', each different from the other. In Jerusalem, churches have developed a method of passing on the Gospel and church growth consists of following these tried and true methods. In my conversation with Bishops from Nigeria and Tanzania, for example, I was struck by the similarity, and fruitfulness, of their methods of church planting. It will be useful to identified ways of evangelisation and growing churches which has been fruitful in our local contexts, as well as finding out similar situations in which it may, by extension, be fruitful as well, rather than each church re-inventing the wheel. To be able to identify similar cultural contexts, and to share ways of evangelism and church growth which has proven to be effective, would be a great contribution to the member churches of the Communion.

Judea and Samaria, again metaphorically, are those 'places' where the church is beginning to be estranged from the surrounding culture. Like the Samaritans in Acts, however, it still retained some memory, yet the spiritual truth has been diluted and often confused. It may also be the case that, through persecution or other conditions the people and resources are no longer available to engage in evangelism as it was done in the past. New methods, new target groups, and new leaders need to be found. Just as it was useful to identify methods that 'work', it is also useful to give warning of their limits. Not every method works everywhere and knowing this would save much frustration and wasted effort. It might also be that, just as the Jerusalem church adopted, the tried and true ways may prove to be fruitful, albeit to a lesser extent, when certain factors are taken into consideration. Knowing what would NOT work in Judea and Samaria will also be useful, and more so if we can find out what changes might be needed to be fruitful. To achieve this, however, requires a level of honesty and vulnerability across the church.

The Roman world is truly alien territory. To enter it is to relive the mixture of fear, faith and wonder that missionaries have felt and still feels as they venture outside of the familiar. In this rapidly changing world, however, Christians increasingly find themselves in these kinds of situations where they are. Without going to seek new worlds to evangelise, that alien world has come to them. This is not a new situation for the church. Time and time again the church is faced with rapid social change, sometimes brought about by war, sometimes brought about by a total change in world view, and it has to engage in the same discernment as Paul and his companions have to do as they move into the Roman world. Some of these occasions were the collapse of the Roman Empire and the onset of the Dark Ages, the conquest of Africa and Asia Minor by Islam, the rise of modernity with its repudiation of the medieval world view, and the rise of Communism. Many believe that we are currently in the middle of a great cultural change.

To employ the three fold mandate at the beginning of Acts metaphorically, that is, to think of the nearness of the evangelising church to the mission field not geographically but culturally means that we are not dealing with a static situation but one that is always changing. There will never be a final missionary insights or strategy. The church must interpret and apply the Gospel as we received it to every new encounter and in every generation. By God's grace the church will bear witness in ever new situations, yet her success will mean that there will be new centres of Christian influence, new fields where the ways of evangelism will be fruitful. In our metaphor, there will always be new Jerusalems. By the same token, surrounding these new centres will be less familiar contexts analogous to Judea and Samaria. An unknown world stretches just beyond the horizon to the ends of the earth. So

the initiative for evangelism and church growth is ever needed and ever urgent before the great commission of the risen Christ.

As a Communion we are conveniently divided by geography. Even membership in the core group is selected by region. My own region encompasses The Episcopal Church (USA), the Anglican Church of Canada, the Province of the Church of the West Indies, the Church in Mexico, and the Church in Cuba. This region exemplifies how little geographic proximity matters compared with other areas which churches in the region share or differ. This is analogous to the situation in any given Diocese where churches of similar size or churchmanship have more affinity with each other than simply being in the same Deanery. Across the Communion, churches which find themselves in similar contexts have much more to share and learn from one another, wherever they are located. For example, Global metropolises, places such as New York, London, Hong Kong, Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro, have a lot in common and will be able to share experiences and resources. It does not mean yet another arbitrary grouping, only to identify clusters and topics for exchange. Some of these topics are bearing Christian witness in multi-faith contexts, Islam in particular, and reaching out to the least evangelised parts of the world.

In our much interrupted conversation in September, Bishop Godfrey reminded the group that we are not filling a void on evangelism and church growth but we can provide an Anglican perspective on these topics. There are already resources out there in the form of books, websites, and practitioners. As Anglicans make use of them they are already gaining an Anglican perspective. Our task is to assist in the collection and exchange of these experiences and help integrate them into our tradition in the process. I believe the core group can offer the most service to our member churches in providing an overview of trends, and the collection and discernment of resources, rather than creating them ourselves. I continue to believe that a meaningful and achievable goal to set for our term, which ends in 2012, is to have an annotated bibliography of evangelism, in printed and electronic forms that are readily assessable by any church in our Communion. In my mind we must focus our efforts on three issues to this end:

A: What resources are worth recommending?

B: In what form and by what means do we “collect” them?

C: In what form and by what means do we make them available?

With these questions in mind, the early chapters of Acts, with its challenge to evangelise in Jerusalem, Judea-Samaria and the Roman world, may provide us with a useful conceptual tool in the way we discuss resources.

In February, we will be engaged in a reflection on our own context by observing and reflecting on what tried and true ways have been most fruitful for evangelism and church growth over time? By sharing these experiences we may be able to discover our neighbours in Jerusalem and to name those shared contexts which continue to be receptive to proven approaches. Other churches in similar situations will continue to benefit from these resources as long as they remain in those situations.

This will be followed by sharing experiences where the familiar ways are no longer possible or fruitful. Some of our churches will share experiences of radical changes, they are constrained to take evaluate their new context and adapt previous ways in order to fulfil Christ’s mandate. Like the evangelists in Judea and Samaria, we may be able to discover common threads in our adaptation.

However, some churches may be sowing seeds in situations that are so unfamiliar that none of the previous ways have proven useful. Some believe that a new world is emerging, and that the church will have to make a radical shift similar to the shift as the primarily Jewish

Christianity met its Gentile challenge. One way is to look at the transformation of the modern culture.

A more specific application to our 'modern' time

At the Lambeth conference of 2008, the Archbishop of Canterbury invited Brian McLaren, a pastor, evangelist, and researcher of change, to address a plenary session. He described in broad strokes the context within which Christian witness takes place today. He observed that the Christianity that we have inherited from the Reformation both help shape and was shaped by many of the influences which gave rise to the modern age. Not surprisingly, the Church as we know it has been quite successful in the modern enterprise and continues to be successful in those parts of the world that are stepping into modernity. He elaborated on this thesis in his book, *A New Kind of Christian*². The Protestant religion is closely tied to the rise of the current global culture, some of the pillars of which are the scientific world view, the concept of the individual, the nation state, and Capitalism. On a more practical level, many of our churches have their finest hour when they contribute to the enterprise of nation building by providing basic institutions such as schools and hospitals. In exchange, they have earned the respect of the societies which they serve and also a voice in public policy. The Christian faith, in many parts of the world in its recent past, is a curious foreign religion associated with both the West and modernity. Christians have by and large seized opportunities given to them and contributed to building a better world where they are planted. Despite the Colonial trappings of Anglicanism, we have contributed notably to the well being of the places where it has taken root and are responsible, among other things, of cultivating its leaders. This continues to be the case in parts of the Anglican Communion. Anglicans have inherited proven ways for effective evangelism and church growth, often closely linked with social service and education on the one hand, and established methods such as the evangelistic rally on the other. The modern period is familiar territory for the church we know, it is fertile ground yielding a hundred fold. We can always learn more, but we already possess many tried and true methods available in literature, videos and experienced persons at hand. When the church, which is largely steeped in the assumptions and world view of the modern world, finds itself in places which are embracing the benefits and ideas of modernity, they find themselves in a cultural Jerusalem.

Then McLaren made the observation that, if anyone finds themselves in a situation of static growth or even slight decline, they are most likely living in late modernity. In such a context, science and individual human rights have established themselves as the language of discourse; social welfare and education are assumed as duties of the state, which has taken over the role of provider from charitable organisations including the church. Churches find themselves in situations where their contribution to nation building was successful, but now these contributions are neither needed nor particularly welcome. The modern enterprise with its implicit rationalism makes strange bedfellow with faith and tends to drive it out of the public sphere. In country after country, schools that were started by churches were secularised. As living conditions improve, the needs of society which churches once help to meet are less obvious. This very often goes hand in hand with generations of people to whom Christians have become quite familiar, the edge and freshness of both them and their message are dulled. People think they know what the church is about and they are not impressed. Long experience also exposes the mistakes and failure churches and Christians have made. Like Samaritans, the societies to which Churches in late modernity must bear witness know a form of the faith, but have made other choices. They tolerate the church at best but it brings nothing fresh to their minds, their familiarity is tempered with ambivalence. This would be the context where the tried and true ways of evangelism of earlier years are not fruitful. Rather than evangelising the society, what occurs in the name of church growth is often competition between churches based on ever refined difference in theology or taste.

² McLaren, Brian, *A New Kind of Christian, Book 1*, San Francisco, 2001.

These churches are already one step removed from Jerusalem, they are in the Judea and Samaria of our times. However, there are still opportunities to serve society as well as to proclaim the Gospel afresh if the Church can identify the less obvious needs of society and be a part of meeting those needs.

Nobody is doing well in the post modern context, McLaren observed. Postmodernism as a phenomenon was not yet widespread, but the term refers to an emerging culture in parts of the world that grew out of the modern culture by people who are disillusioned by it, has lost faith in it and question some of its basic assumptions. Some of the marks of a post modern mindset is a rejection of the reductionism of science with a corresponding search for spirituality, a rejection of atomistic view of individualism in favour of networks, the rejection of absolute truth in favour of plurality, an assumption that all truths are based on perspectives, the acknowledgement of limits to rationality and openness to mystery. It also has great scepticism to organisations, and organised religion in particular. "I am spiritual but not religious" is the mantra of the post modern seeker. McLaren, together with other researchers such as Phyllis Tickle, have been following the development of a new kind of Christianity, an emergent Christianity, with its distinctive beliefs and practices. How they connect with established churches is a matter of great interest to him, as it may be for us. As an aside, McLaren believes that Anglicanism, insofar as it has not completely bought into the modern enterprise, has a window of opportunity to bear witness to the post modern culture.³ This most unfamiliar territory to our inherited church would require every bit as much faithfulness and innovation from us as from the early apostles as they moved to the largely unfamiliar culture of the Gentile Roman world.

This is but one way to use typology to describe our situation. There are other conceptual tools. Those familiar with "the Mission Shaped Church" would see similarities with its social analysis of the situation in Great Britain, found to be relevant in other countries, as regulars, the fringe and open dechurched, the unchurched and closed dechurched. The typology is only useful if it can adequately describe their situations for many churches and find an echo of recognition among them. But this typology cannot neatly any given situation. Many of us are situated in more than one context, and may experience features of the modern, late modern and postmodern culture at different times. E.g. China is still engaged in nation building, people are yearning for the basic benefits of the modern world, medicine, food, shelter, clothing, electricity, and information. People look for order and basic recognition as individuals. The explosive growth of the church after the Revolution in 1949, and particularly after mass disillusionment in the prevailing ideology after the Cultural Revolution, suggests that elements of Jerusalem are at work, the Christian faith has provided an expression of social morality that has found an echo. But in parts of China, in the big cities along the East and South Coast, let alone Hong Kong and Taipei, modernity is already well established. The church finds itself engaging all three versions of modernity, using different approaches with each situation. What are the opportunities for Anglican churches, which historically has managed to keep together ways of being Church that are in tension, to put it mildly. Can a church which has not only accommodated Anglo Catholics and Evangelicals, social activists and establishment but nurtured them into fruitfulness, find ways to bear fruit in such contexts existing side by side?

I hope much of our agenda can be devoted to actually identifying some key resources that are considered foundational in evangelism and church growth. I am very keen on having a real discussion on communication strategy. I repeat my invitation in September to come up with ten suggestions of resources you found most helpful in evangelism and church growth. This paper was written to assist in fitting these resources into different contexts, to facilitate

³ The Episcopal Moment, an address to the Diocese of Washington, D.C., in the National Cathedral, Jan 31, 2009. http://www.episcopalcafe.com/daily/evangelism/brian_mclaren_the_episcopal_mo.php

their collection, organisation and dissemination. I invite you to prepare for the meeting by studying the implied strategy of evangelism in your own contexts and compare it with the ones the early church found itself: who were the personalities, what were their method, and how did the enduring message of Jesus impact the condition of their listeners as the church moves into different contexts, or did they? I append a table to summarise my argument and to invite your reflection, and look forward to an exciting and fruitful meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes. It begins with a small cross-like mark on the left, followed by several loops and a long, sweeping horizontal line that ends with a small upward flick.

Patrick Yu
Convener

Appendix 1
Reflection on our current context based on Acts 1:8

Context	Target audience	Opportunity	Method	Message
Jerusalem	Devout Jews	Pentecost, population familiar with scriptures	Temple worship, radical sharing, Confrontation with Jewish religion	Jesus, the crucified, is the promised and risen Messiah
The familiar field				
Samaria	Devout Jews and some God fearers	Persecution, scattering	Healing, deliverance, "charismatic"	There is power in Jesus' Name.
The uncomfortable field				
The Roman World	Mainly Gentile God fearers, with sortie into the marketplace	Jewish faith – monotheism and morals	Synagogues, house church, confrontation with Greek religion and philosophy	Jesus is the universal Lord
The unknown field				

**Appendix 2: Evangelism and Church Growth
Presentation and discussion at Synod, Diocese of Toronto, 2009**

Evangelism is not the same as church growth.

Evangelization is an “encounter between the church member and the nonchurch person in which some fresh insight and power is discovered in the Christian message.”

Assumptions:

1. Church member and non-church persons meet as equals on life's way.
2. The evangelizing moment includes some explicit reference to God and God's work among us.
3. There is a mystery about the encounter.
4. Any fresh discovery of meaning and relevance in the Christian story is part of an ongoing process.
5. The evangelizing moment occur in a number of ways. E.g. solitary, in conversation.
6. Proclamation takes a wide variety of forms.
7. Evangelism is integrated with other ministries of God's people.
8. Listening is the best way the church member can contribute to the evangelizing moment.
9. Evangelism is not a triumphant procession of a people with all the answers, but God's truth impacting on all who attend to it.

How do you feel about evangelism, what is evangelism (5 min.)

Individual reflection and writing (10 min.)

Who have been the evangelists in my life?

What did they do?

What was their effect on me?

Share in twos: (10 min.), then share learnings (10 min)

An evangelist is . . . (20 min.)

Personal evangelism

Reflection (8 min.)

What are the urge within me to evangelise?

Write a statement 3 or 4 lines expressing the kind of evangelism that you can now affirm.

Write only positive affirmations.

Leave reservations or qualifications for now. (10 min.)

Now do an action plan. (5 min.)

The group read and share their affirmations and plan.

How do any of that impact my church? (20 min)

What are the points of resistance?

Some resources:

Wayne Schwab & William Yon, Proclamation as offering story and choice, NY. Episcopal

Church Center, 1988.

The Mission shaped church - Download from www.cofe.anglican.org

Anthony Robinson, Transforming congregational culture Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 2003.

John Bowen, Evangelism for Normal People, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.

Back to Church Sunday. www.backtochurch.co.uk

All Doors Open, follow evangelism link in www.ecusa.anglican.org