

ACC-15 -The Mission Report Auckland 2012

Introduction

The Mission Department continues to hold the big picture of mission and fostering mutual collaboration, learning, sharing and support to enhance the Church's role in local and global mission.

This report covers the activities of the Mission Department for the past three years, since the 14th Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-14) in 2009. The report of the Networks is not included as it will be presented separately by the Networks Coordinator.¹

Developments since 2009

In a resolution, the 14th ACC meeting in Jamaica welcomed "the renaming of the department from 'Mission and Evangelism' to Mission Department".² This change of name was to underscore the Department's emphasis on holistic nature of God's mission, as both proclamation and social action.

The same 14th ACC resolution brought into existence the **Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative** (ECGI) as a strand of the Mission Department to facilitate learning and collaboration around evangelistic work and to ensure the special emphasis on Evangelism was not lost. Initially it was the desire of the Bishops at the 2008 Lambeth Conference to create such a platform in the Anglican Communion.

This initiative was especially important because ACC-14 also endorsed the establishment of "an alliance of Anglican relief and development agencies to improve coordination in development, relief and advocacy work across the Communion, and to share experience and best practice", as well as to encourage and strengthen "relief and development initiatives at local level, in congregations, diocese, provinces and other groups across the Communion."³

It was again the Bishops at 2008 Lambeth Conference that had requested the establishment of an Anglican Communion platform "to coordinate and resource our commitment to the voiceless."⁴ This became another strand of the work of the Mission Department. The process to implement this was facilitated in joint partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury's office for International Development, with two consultations sponsored and hosted at Lambeth Palace. In January 2011, the Director of the Anglican Alliance was appointed, and the Mission Director has since provided a supportive role to the Alliance directly and through the Alliance's Reference Group and the Mission Cluster.

The restructuring of the Mission Department also took into account the mission nature of the official Anglican Communion Networks and the value they add to the Communion, and the work of the Networks Co-ordinator (Revd Terrie Robinson), appointed in 2009, was integrated into the Mission Department.

¹ As explained below under 'Developments since 2009', the work of the Networks Coordinator came under the Mission Department when this position was created in 2009.

² One Love - Report of ACC-14 Kingston, Jamaica 2009 (p.42).

³ See ACC-14 resolution 14.02 and 14.03 in 'One Love - Report of ACC-14 Kingston, Jamaica 2009' (p.42).

⁴ Lambeth Indaba: Capturing conversations and Reflections from the Lambeth Conference 2008. P.15

As mentioned above, all these changes reflected the 'new' emphasis holistic approach to and the nature of mission and the understanding that evangelism, development, advocacy and relief work are all integral parts of God's Mission, and not separate from each other.

I. Young Anglican Leaders and the Book Project

Following the significance the ACC-14 meeting in Jamaica attached to the importance of investing in young leaders in the Communion, a programme that aimed at investing in growing and developing young Anglican/Episcopal leaders was developed; particularly those involved in 'cutting edge' or pioneering mission/ministry around the Communion.

This initiative was to give potential young Anglican leaders an opportunity to experience, contribute to and participate in international mission events. The centenary of the Edinburgh 1910 ecumenical mission conference, celebrated in June 2010, provided such an opportunity.

Of the nine delegates who represented the Anglican Communion at the Edinburgh 2010 conference, six of them were young Anglican leaders between 25 and 35 years. The composition of the nine delegates included four women, five men, three lay, five priests and one Bishop, and they came from seven Provinces of the Anglican Communion: Brazil; Canada; Central Africa; England; Hong Kong; Kenya; Southern Africa.

Besides taking part in the Edinburgh 2010 Conference (2-6 June), the group also participated in a specially designed Anglican pre-and post-conference programmes. The pre-conference programme included a generous hospitality initiative offered by the Scottish Episcopal Church, and this provided an opportunity for the delegates not only to experience the life and ministry in the Scottish Episcopal Church, but also to share with their hosts about the life and ministry of their churches of origin.

The programme also included a meeting with Bishop David Chillingworth, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who shared about the history and ministry of his Province, and concluded with hospitality evening hosted by the then Bishop of Edinburgh, the Rt Revd Brian Smith.

The young Anglicans made a very significant impact at the Edinburgh 2010 Conference, both in their participation in the conference programme and also by their formidable presence as there were very few other young people in the conference. Many delegates commended the Anglican Communion for having sent such a high level delegation of young people who remained prominent and visible in their contribution to the conference sessions and during the closing ceremony at which the Archbishop of York was the keynote speaker.

During the post-conference programme, the young Anglican leaders experienced several mission 'initiatives' in London. These included 'Presence and Engagement', an initiative which promotes and fosters Christian-Muslim relations and equips "Christians for ministry and mission in a multi-faith society"⁵; taking part in an 'Alpha Conference workshop'; and visiting Southwark Cathedral, where the group heard about how cathedrals can position themselves as centres of mission outreach.

⁵ <http://londonpen.org/>
<http://www.presenceandengagement.org.uk/>

At the debriefing session of the entire programme, the Young Anglican Leaders adopted the idea to write a book, as one means of sharing the whole experience with their Church as well as the rest of the Communion.

As most of the young Anglican delegates were exposed to the Five Marks of Mission for the first time during this trip, they lamented how unknown in the Anglican Communion the Five Marks of Mission and the Instruments of Communion were. So, they decided to focus the book on their experience in the context of the Five Marks of Mission.

Subsequently, Andrew Thompson, a young Episcopalian from The Episcopal Church, who also attended the Edinburgh 2010 conference and was embraced by the group while in Edinburgh, also joined the writing group. Although the introduction, comment and reflection were written by three other delegates to the Edinburgh conference, the main content of the book was written by the young Anglicans.

The initiative to publish a book was adopted and fully sponsored by the Edinburgh 2010 Study and Monitoring Group as part of the Edinburgh 2010 series. The project was also supported by the Anglican Church of Canada, which hosted a writers' workshop for the Young Anglican Leaders in June 2011.

The Book, whose title is, 'Life-widening Mission: Global Anglican Perspectives', was printed earlier this year and is due to be launched at the ACC-15 in Auckland in November 2012. The book benefits from the editorial work of an international mission scholar from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Dr Cathy Ross, and from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who not only wrote a foreword but had an opportunity to host the group at Lambeth Palace after the Edinburgh 2010 conference.

It is important to mention that this book does not simply consist of chapters on the Five Marks of Mission but it's rather a valuable resource for churches around the Communion in helping them to reflect on mission from various Communion perspectives and especially from the perspectives of young Anglicans. This book both inspires and challenges current mission thinking and practice in the Communion and the world Church.

It is clear by the comments received from those who participated in the programme that it made a great impact in their lives and their ongoing mission experience as illustrated by the following comment from one of the participants:

.....of all things Anglican I've ever done, this was the only one that had a concrete outcome. And an outcome that valued our capacity of doing theology collectively and which, I hope, will contribute to God's Mission. Frankly, I'm a bit tired of international meetings that end up not producing anything other than vouchers and free trips.⁶

The success of this first Young Anglican Leaders programme has inspired us to consider other ways of 'investing' in young Anglican mission leaders.

II. Mission Cluster

The Mission Cluster brings together and provides a platform for mutual support, collaboration, sharing and exchange of knowledge among mission related offices and departments at the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) and the Lambeth Palace. This includes the Archbishop of

⁶ This comment was recently made to the whole group by a Young Anglican Leader participant from Brazil when he wrote to suggest ways the group could continue.

Canterbury's Office for International Development, Anglican Communion Office at the UN (New York and Geneva), the Anglican Alliance: development, relief and advocacy, and the Mission Department which includes the Networks' Coordinator.

Mission Cluster emerged out of the successful experience to develop the Anglican Alliance in 2009 through the joint partnership of the Mission Department and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Office for International Development with support from other Mission Cluster members. Another notable way the Mission Cluster has expressed collaboration has been through jointly reporting to the Standing Committee meetings in 2009 and 2010.

The Mission Cluster has the potential to enable all involved to have a wider view of Mission and to appreciate the comprehensive and inter-connectedness of the mission work and thus help them be more effective in their service to the Anglican Communion, corporately and individually. The group continues to be an important resource to all involved and others.

III. Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative (ECGI)

The primary role of ECGI is to promote evangelism and church growth in the Communion by facilitating mutual learning and sharing of 'good practice' and experience in order that many may come "to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and become life long disciples within the community of God's people."⁷

After ACC-14, a small Core Group of Animators was appointed from the 'nine regions' of the Communion, along with four from key global and grassroots institutions and networks in the Anglican Communion, to promote evangelism and wholistic church growth.⁸

⁷ Evangelism & Church Growth Initiative (ECGI) Objectives:

'ECGI is committed to holistic mission, as expressed in the Anglican Communion's Marks of Mission, and is intended to enhance collaborative work and mutual support of those involved in evangelism and church growth in parishes, dioceses and provinces of the Anglican Communion, in order to bring people to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and become lifelong disciples within the community of God's people.'

Objectives

- Facilitate prayer and mutual encouragement
- Develop strategies to reach unreached peoples
- Recommend resources & facilitate sharing of good practice
- Encourage training in evangelism and church growth for the whole people of God
- Sharing stories, news and strategies
- 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 the centrality of evangelism and church growth within God's holistic mission to be on people's agenda throughout the Provinces and Instruments of Communion' See ECGI Report Jan 2010 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/ecgi/documents/index.cfm>

⁸ Here is the list of the Nine (9) regions of the Churches of the Anglican Communion:

- (i) Canada, TEC, West Indies, *Bermuda, Cuba*
- (ii) Brazil, Central America, Mexico, Southern Cone
- (iii) England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, *Spain, Portugal*
- (iv) Burundi, Congo, Nigeria, Rwanda, West Africa
- (v) Jerusalem & Middle East, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda
- (vi) Central Africa, Indian Ocean, Southern Africa, Tanzania
- (vii) Bangladesh, North India, South India, Pakistan, *Ceylon*
- (viii) Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, South East Asia
- (ix) Aotearoa NZ, Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea

The Core Group, consisting of Bishops, Provincial and Diocesan Secretaries, mission officers and some from global ministries, brings together a diverse range of knowledge and experience of evangelism and Church growth initiatives.⁹

The Journey so far

There are several initiatives worth mentioning that ECGI has made during this period under review, and they include,

Resource mobilisation: ECGI has put together a web-based resource pack of models of evangelism and church growth work and other valuable material for use in the Communion. Resource mobilisation is ongoing and ECGI will endeavour to do more to identify, gather, categorise, and commend evangelism and church growth resources to the churches of the Communion. Special interest will be focused on identifying resources that cut across different groups and generations.¹⁰

Newsletter: 'Witness6.7', is an electronic newsletter now published every two months and is also distributed by post to those who request. The first edition was produced in March 2010, and since June all editions have been thematic in order to maximise the depth of sharing and learning, provide an ongoing resource on specific topics. The Witness6.7 has 350 recipients; over 90% of them receiving electronically and less than 1% receiving a hard copy.

The newsletter is an important medium of sharing stories, resources and experiences of evangelism and church growth among those involved or interested in this work. The stories often share good practice, highlight the challenges and opportunities that exist, as well as providing a wide range of contextual Communion experiences, with the potential to energise and challenge the readers.¹¹

Facebook: Since July 2011, ECGI has a face book group, known as 'Anglican Witness'. This forum has become a valuable community of Anglicans in mission that had grown to 530 by August 2012. The forum provides space for mutual sharing and learning, and many inspiring stories of what God

⁹ Since the Group was put together, one member has become a Bishop (Irfan Jamil). Here the list of the Core Group of ANIMATORS:

Patrick Yu (Bishop)	(i) Chair (Canada)
Bill Godfrey (Bishop)	(ii) Peru (Southern Cone)
Linda Jones (Mrs – Canon)	(iii) England
Seth Ndayirukiye (Revd Canon)	(iv) Burundi
Rosemary Mbogo (Revd Canon)	(v) Kenya
Trevor Pearce (Revd)	(vi) South Africa (Southern Africa)
Irfan Jamil (Bishop)	(vii) Pakistan
Moon Hing (Bishop)	(viii) Vice Chair (South East Asia)
Alfred Patterson Worek (Revd)	(ix) Solomon Islands (Melanesia)
Mark Oxbrow (Revd Canon)	Faith2Share Network
Judy Douglas (Mrs)	Church Army Australia
Julian Linnel (Dr)	Anglican Frontier Missions
Titus Odatum (Mr)	Church of Nigeria Missionary Society (CNMS)
Stuart Buchanan (Mr)	Project Officer, Mission and Theological Education (Staff)
John K Kafwanka (Revd)	Director for Mission (Staff)

¹⁰ See resources here: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/ecgi/resources/index.cfm>

¹¹ See all published newsletters here:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/ecgi/newsletters/index.cfm>

is doing among Anglicans are shared here, including their struggles, challenges, and hopes and opportunities. Various resources, prayer news and prayer requests are also shared. Subscribers can ask questions on related matters and almost instantly get answers.¹²

Prayer: Prayer being central to Christian life and ministry is promoted both in evangelism and church growth work, through newsletter and on the face book page. Prayer is seen as an important way of participating in and supporting one another's mission experience. ECGI will explore other effective ways to share prayer news and encourage praying communities, and connect with those initiatives that promote prayer and intercession.

Core Group meetings: The Core Group, which has one residential meeting a year and all the other through conference call meetings, has been enriched by the opportunity to participate in the mission context of the host Church. This and ongoing interactions have proved valuable as they enrich mission perspectives of the guests and the host Church as well as deepening their relationship and understanding of Jesus Christ, and their ongoing local-global mission engagements. Thus all residential meetings follow an invitation by a Core Group member and are always linked to a practical mission engagement that allows the Group to participate in local mission at either parish, diocesan or provincial level of the host Church.

So far residential meetings have taken place in UK (2010), Malaysia (2011) and Kenya (2012), along with conference call meetings.

Conferences/consultations: ECGI believes that mutual interactions and collaborations are always vital in enriching one another's mission perspective for effective local and global mission engagements, and therefore encourages continuous mutual exchange of experience and learning through cross-regional participation in mission themed gatherings that enable Anglicans (and others) from one context to contribute to and learn from another local or regional mission event.

ECGI has and will continue to identify opportunities that build upon existing Anglican and non-Anglican evangelism related conferences and 'capture the learning' and experience for the benefit of the Communion.

Unreached people groups: The Core Group has highlighted some of the sensitivities, as well as related challenges, in getting a full picture of what is going on in the Communion in this area and agreed that, while remaining aware of the sensitivities, there is need to create a greater emphasis upon both promoting prayer and on providing support to those dioceses and provinces represented by the Core Group in this area of mission.

Looking to the Future

This past period has given us important lessons, one of which is that many Anglicans/Episcopalians are yearning for opportunities for mutual sharing and learning and exploring models that would be useful and enrich what they are already doing in their context.

ECGI is exploring various other ways of enabling and maximising collaboration, learning and sharing around the Communion among those involved in evangelism and church growth work; and at the same time promoting evangelistic ministry in general.

¹² <http://www.facebook.com/groups/anglicanwitness/>

Local-global: ECGI believes that because our local mission context is often enriched by the perspectives, experience and gifts of others, Anglicans/Episcopalians ought to invite those from other contexts in the Communion to their meetings and mission events. This should certainly be the case with evangelism as with all other aspects of mission.

Regional collaboration: ECGI will put great emphasis on closer regional collaboration and learning around evangelistic ministry. Closer regional collaboration would ensure that people with similar contextual experience are able to share and enrich one another, and in turn the rich experience and resources within regions would encourage others in the wider Communion. The particular emphasis on contextual collaboration will also encourage wider grassroots participation in local and global mission.

In this vein the Core Group intends to intensify the ‘campaign’ to draw more people into this exciting initiative and important forum for mutual sharing, mutual learning and mutual support.

Ambassadors: While the Core Group members will remain pivotal in facilitating collaboration in ‘regions’ ECGI is keen to identify passionate grassroots champions to act as ‘ambassadors’ to enable grassroots interaction, mutual learning and exchange of experience in evangelism and church growth.

Evangelism and discipleship: ECGI acknowledges the perceived tension between evangelism and discipleship and the need for a closer link between these two aspects of mission by promoting ‘holistic’ discipleship and growth which should lead to a Christian spirituality that takes seriously social responsibility and proclamation.

Evangelism and church growth principles: In some parts of the Communion, ‘evangelism’ is a touchy word due to religious sensitivities while in others it is due to ‘political correctness’. ECGI believes that authentic evangelism is that which promotes God’s love, peace and reconciliation, and respect for every human being as made in God’s image and therefore loved by God. That means while Anglicans need to have confidence in their witness to Christ there must be no room for coercion or arrogant attitude but that evangelism and Christian witness in general must be characterised by the spirit of humility and charity.

ECGI will also work on ensuring evangelism becomes better ‘owned’, and understood, while ensuring those parts of Communion where the term is cautiously or not used due religious sensitivities are appropriately supported. ECGI would strive to develop evangelism and church growth principles on models of good practice using existing Anglican and ecumenical resources.

Name Change: Due to religious sensitivities in various parts of the Communion and the difficulties some people face in understanding what ECGI is, the Core Group proposed a name change to *Anglican Witness*. In response, the Standing Committee, while meeting in May/June 2012, endorsed the suggestion to change the name and recommended ‘*Anglican Witness: Evangelism and Church Growth Initiative*’. The Standing Committee emphasised the fact that evangelism was too important a term in the Communion to be dropped completely.

IV. Conclusion

ECGI is harnessing the growing awareness among churches in the Communion to be more *intentional* missional and to re-position mission to be at the heart of the Church’s ministry. This means that many provinces are being strategic and intentional, including putting strong emphasis

upon the Five Marks of Mission, and others formally endorsing the vision of ECGI.¹³ This confirms and affirms the role of ECGI and the need to continue raising the profile of evangelism and church growth within the Communion as an important aspect of God's wholistic mission. ECGI promotes evangelism and church growth because not only does it give life and vitality to the Church but it also leads to renewal and transformation as the Good News is shared both in word and action.

ECGI continues to be a grassroots based initiative and believes in growing and expanding the participation of Anglicans in the sharing and exchange of information and good models of evangelism and church growth around the Communion. Through the facebook community and individual registrations, there are over 800 people who relate to and participate in ECGI.

Bearing in mind that when Anglicans work together in mission they not only bring their various and rich contextual experiences with them but are in return enriched by the perspectives and gifts of others, ECGI will continue to play the role of enabling and encouraging mutual sharing and learning, and highlighting those good and appropriate models and principles while aware that what works in one context would not necessarily be applicable in another but that it is often the underlying principles that many people find valuable regardless of context.

Submitted by,

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On behalf of ECGI Core Group Members
4th September 2012

¹³ In 2011 the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church in Melanesia (ACOM) endorsed and adopted the work and vision of ECGI.