



# WITNESS6.7

Acts 6.7a - *The word of God continued to spread*  
**The Evangelism & Church Growth Initiative Newsletter**

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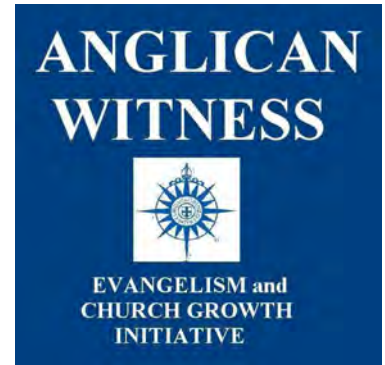
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## ECGI JOINS FACEBOOK

Within three weeks of the launch of Anglican Witness, the ECGI presence on Facebook, over 100 members had signed up, increasing to nearly 200 by mid-September! If social media can be used effectively to support the 'Arab Spring' in North Africa and summer riots in the UK then surely we can put it to much better use encouraging Anglicans around the world to be more active in evangelism and growing churches.

*You can join the group as long as you have a Facebook account. If you have this then simply go to <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/anglicanwitness/> and join us.*

In the first few weeks of sharing through this group members had advised each other on resources that might be available to help with the training of church planters in Thailand and engaged in a stimulating discussion about the causes of the recent riots in Britain and what responsibility the churches must carry. One member posted some challenging material about the causes of the East African famine and another provided a link to a whole series of mission education books produced in India. There are also pictures of course, so far mainly of the ECGI core group enjoying good Malaysian hospitality



earlier this year and surviving the London snow the year before. Members can also upload articles and videos for others to use.

Perhaps the most exciting possibility is that we can quite quickly build a community of witnessing Anglicans around the world who regularly connect, pray for each other, answer each other's questions and share the resources they have found most useful in their ministry. This is a community you must not miss out on.

*Mark Oxbrow*

**CONNECTIVITY** In the world of high tech and speed information, how connected are we? Connectivity is one of the key considerations in all evangelism efforts. There are certainly many levels of connections. The one basic point of connection is 'Has the person whom you are reaching been reached at all?' We have been busy producing many pamphlets, brochures, books, posters, songs, poems, pictures, drawings, sculptures, T-shirts, logos, stickers, etc. These are all good things and are helpful in some sense and on some occasions. One will wonder – how many people actually will take notice of them? Many statisticians have remarked that the response to the distribution of most leaflets, pamphlets and posters on average will have less than 1% effect. There are a few considerations of connectivity for our reflections.

Mass distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, posters, brochures, etc.

Distribution of publicity materials in regular intervals and in more locations.

Distribution through personal touch.

Using variety of methods like newspaper, radio, TV, facebook, tweeter, smses, etc.

Get more people to pass the word/information around.

Using a couple of ways mentioned above at the same time.

Setting up one model for others to follow.

Engage more paid staff to distribute and spread the information in major people-mass area.

Engage more volunteers to spread the information in the locality of their choice and at their own time.

Did we miss anything in all our Evangelism and Church Planting efforts? Did the intended people get the message that we wish to share? Why not?

*Bishop Moon Hing Ng, West Malaysia*

We are part of the Diocese of Recife, in Recife metropolitan area, 40% of the population lives in slums. Fifteen years ago a group of 30 people decided to move from the Cathedral to help me to plant this new church in a rented building. Today we own the building and rent some others to support all ministries for a congregation of over 1600 people; the largest Anglican church in the whole of Latin America. The Anglican Church of the Holy Spirit, desires to provide hope through the purpose driven paradigm working with the five purposes as we develop ministries to meet the needs of the surrounding communities and teach them through discipleship.

The purpose driven paradigm is based in five pillars: Worship, Discipleship, Communion, Service, Evangelism. Everything we develop at the church is based on these five pillars and nothing is started or created if it is not linked with one of them; this makes it easier to see where we are going as a church. We have a strategic 5 year plan to guide us and make sure we don't distract us from our mission focus. Our five pillars include all the five marks of mission established by the Anglican Communion. So we are committed to the holistic mission.

Each pillar has ministries and programs developed to help us to accomplish our mission. We are trying to be a lighthouse for that community, shining the light of Jesus' love on them; we cannot represent Christ without serving the poor, because the country has a huge gap between social classes. Service is one of the purposes in our community. Ten minutes from the church is a large slum area with 10,000 people living under the "standard of misery"; there we developed a Ministries called the House of Hope ([www.casaesperanca.org.br](http://www.casaesperanca.org.br)) bringing hope for these people, supporting and outreaching the poor at the same time as we evangelize the middle and upper class around.

The house of Hope is our P.E.A.C.E. Plan strategy for this area.

- P. Plant church**
- E. Equip Servant Leaders**
- A. Assist the poor**
- C. Care for the sick**
- E. Educate the next generation**

The House of Hope includes daycare, professional classes, a medical and dental clinic, computer courses, help for pregnant women, elderly, and a new church plant. Also cooperative work of women linked to the fair trade marketing producing art crafts to export.



Each of the five purposes is overseen by a leader who is in charge of its development. Lay or ordained they are the team who leads the many actions of this church. The church has 5 ordained priests each one in charge of a given area.

Youth work is divided in young adults, teenagers and children, all with a specific program and leaders based on cell groups with weekend celebrations. In the youth center, in front of the church, we have the special services for ages 9-12 and 13-18. In front there is only one sign that says: "What we do here, is forbidden in many parts of the world" this catches the curiosity of many people who at first do not link it to the church itself.

A purpose driven paradigm can be established in any church open to deal with changes in structure and vision. Contemporary worship, light liturgy, informality, creative services and preaching, cell groups and evangelism as the heart of the church. We transformed the church service into a very welcoming environment: liturgy became very light, worship is mostly contemporary and the preaching is driven to feed the flock and reach those who never would be comfortable to come to regular, traditional church services.

The cell groups and the sermons series are a big part of the evangelistic efforts. The Church encourages discipleship with classes and Sunday school curriculum. They also offer a two-year Institute of Theology to train lay leaders. Last confirmation we had 81 new members all of them adults or young adults and 22 new baptized members adults, young people and children. We are working hard to fulfill God's five purposes of the church.

*Miguel Uchoa*

Without ships, and without the seafarers to man them, one half of the world would freeze for lack of the fuel to heat it, and the other half would starve for lack of the grain that gives its daily bread. Our Pacific Islands will continue to need the work of our seafarers for another millennium because of our geography; 99% of our goods are transported by seafarers. As chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers, I ask our seafarers what are the most important things for them? Firstly, they want to feel that they belong; they want to feel that someone is going to look after them. Because of this, the work of the Seafarers offers the following services: A home for seafarers faraway from home; Counseling; Ship visiting; Help in times of crisis; Providing transport; Providing books etc.

One of my experiences as a Chaplain was during an afternoon visit, on the gangway of *MV Silver Whisper* on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2009. I was met by a Russian Officer. I began our conversation by saying "good afternoon sir", "Yes, good afternoon" (his English was good) then he continued....."Who are you?" "What are you doing here?" and "where are you going?" Instead of answering him, I asked him his name and nationality. He answered his name was Irvin and he was from Russia; he was not a Christian, nor Muslim or of any other faith.

I begin by introducing Irvin to the work and mission of the Seafarers; especially in the area of hospitality, spirituality, counseling and help in times of crisis. Explaining it is a Christian mission done in the name of Love. In the humidity of the afternoon he asks me to bless him – I pray for blessing upon him. Then he asks "can you find me a book or magazine to read?" I gave him a bible, he opened this and, with a bit of mockery, tried to read a few verses. I turned to John 16 and read about the great love of God who sent his only son to die for sinners. He said "Nobody can do this for a person like me." "How can I become his follower?" Then he said, "Let us go up to our mess room" it is there where I personally pray for his conviction and blessing. Then he asks for my contact number and promises to call me when he completes his 3 months contract with the company. I did not hear any news from Irvin but I did pray for consistency in his new faith and his relationship with Jesus.

Amazingly on 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2010, almost a year later, Irvin called me and said "George, praise God and all his goodness to us brothers. I am enjoying my new relationship with Jesus; Jesus has brought new meaning to my life." I cannot wait to praise God for this great wonder even when time, language, distance and color divide us; we are one in the Love of Christ.

It is my fervent prayer that we may be living witnesses of Christ Love in our work places and to the ends of the earth.  
*Rev. George Elo Chaplain to Seafarers, The Province of the Anglican Church of Melanesia*

## 50 issues of *Encounters on the Edge*, and still going strong

The popular *Encounters on the Edge* booklets - a series of quarterly investigations looking at emerging and fresh expressions of church – reached a golden milestone with the latest issue. Produced by Church Army's research unit, The Sheffield Centre, it has now racked up a total of 50 issues and shows no signs of stopping.

Yet George Lings, director of The Sheffield Centre, admits that when he wrote the first issue back in 1999, he had no idea that it would last as long as it did.

"When the *Encounters on the Edge* series started, there was a goodly list of risks," he says. "I had only a handful of stories up my sleeve that might last for the first year. I didn't know whether I could write and I still entertain surprise and doubt at where we now are."

Since then it has amassed a loyal subscriber base of readers from all over the world and has sold more than 35,000 copies. The booklets aim to spot emerging trends, identify good practice and offer strategic thinking for pioneers. Its 50 issues include encounters with café churches, rural projects, innovative community work, messy church, skateboarders, youth and children's churches, new monasticism and traditional church plants.

Issue 50 – called *A Golden Opportunity: Revisiting the story so far* – breaks with the usual format and is a good jumping-on point for people who are new to the series. Rather than an encounter with a specific church on the edge, it is an opportunity for George to look back over the past 49 issues and see what he has learned from the stories reported on so far.

How many of these churches are still with us, and if they died, what did they die of? Why is it that fresh expressions of Church begun by full-time paid clergy seem to have the most longevity? Are we there yet, or is there still a long way to go before fresh expressions become normal and a mixed economy is achieved?

George asks all these questions and more. But one thing he is sure of is this: 'The stories and the series have changed our understanding of good practice in bringing to birth and nurturing fresh expressions of Church.'

*Encounters on the Edge 50, A Golden Opportunity: Revisiting the story so far*, is now available, priced £4.00. To order, contact The Sheffield Centre on 0114 272 7451, email [ask@sheffieldcentre.org.uk](mailto:ask@sheffieldcentre.org.uk), or go to [www.encountersontheedge.org.uk](http://www.encountersontheedge.org.uk)

## The Lord knows those who are His - reflections from Burundi

God knows those who are His, but do we, the children of God, really know our father? If the answer is yes, well and good; but in what way do we know God? Do we know Him as a loving and caring God; a merciful and waiting God; a healing and providing God; an encouraging and trusting God? - The list can be extended. Or do we know a judging and a silent God; an angry and terrible God?

This is very important to think about, especially in Burundi where the country is said to be more than 85 % Christian, but where the issues of tribalism and civil wars have killed thousands and thousands of people, although most have been baptized. Nevertheless, there are many of God's people who still stand firm and are sure that God knows them and they know Him; those standing firm in the promises of God and giving testimonies that they have been with God and nothing will separate them from Him. For example, many people stood firm in the midst of ethnic killings and protected or hid those of the opposite ethnic group; they risked sacrificing their lives and God saved them.

Our Lord is a loving, merciful, peaceful and caring God. He has been so since the Garden of Eden, when He created Adam and put him in the garden to oversee, name and take care of His creation. God, because of His love, said to Adam *"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable to him"* (Gen.2:18) and He did so! Moreover, He created them in His own image; it is very important for Christians to grasp this, we are created in the image of God and have God's image, a mark on us; we are God's children; we are God's first hand creation and fruits; so He knows that we are His!

Paul tells Timothy, and the people of God - Christians, to know who they are. We are God's children; we have to know and keep being reminded of what to say and do and believe in; we are not like any other people who follow the desires of their hearts. God knows those who are His because they are written on His solid foundation and sealed with these words *"the Lord knows those who are His"*.

God promises His people that He has good plans for them; *"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you."* (Jer 29:11-12). This promise is a very encouraging one for all those who know God as their God wherever they are, whether in Burundi, Africa, Asia, England, Europe, Americas or wherever they are; God knows His people and has promised them to listen and hear from them and prosper them. He does not change, He sent His son Jesus Christ as another seal, that is *His blood which was shed for us and all who have believed have been made children of God* (John 1:12). So Jesus is our Lord, He knows His as well, who have the mark of His blood, washed in it and He promised to be with us as He does not change. *Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, Amen!* So Christians should live a life of prayer and assurance to the commitment they made to remain in the promises of God. We are His children and He is our Father!

*Revd Canon Seth Ndayirukiye Diocesan Secretary of Matana Diocese*

## Police station pulpit—a story

This story was recently posted on facebook

A Nigerian colleague told me this story yesterday and I must share it with you. About 18 months ago Titus, my colleague, was stopped by the traffic police who claimed that he should not be driving because his glasses were tinted. Titus knew of no such law and refused to pay the requested 'fine'. After a long 'stand off' Titus suggested that he be taken to the police station to discuss the matter with the superior officer. At the police station he noticed a bible in the chief officer's office and so began to ask what church he attended. After almost an hour of fellowship Titus left the police station not only without a fine but also having been requested by the chief officer to help him 'improve the morals' of his junior staff. Now once a week Titus is invited to the police station at the start of the morning shift and the custody counter becomes a pulpit for 20 minutes while he shares the gospel with all the police on duty that day.

Sometimes its worth being stopped by the police!

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## Get Involved with ECGI

- ◆ **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 the newsletter;
- ◆ **Join Anglican Witness** the facebook group—details on page 1;
- ◆ **Send us** your stories, of how God is working through your church or organisation to grow his church, to include in future issues, (300—800 words). Stories on *Discipleship* are wanted by 1 November for the December 2011 edition.
- ◆ **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 the various helpful resources that are already included;
- ◆ **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.