

## **What is God calling us to be and do?**

The College of Evangelists was founded on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1999. At the end of the 'Decade of Evangelism', the College was to be a place where evangelists who worked nationally or regionally could be recognised and supported and could, in turn, support the training of local evangelists.

The College now has 65 members and an annual pattern of gatherings which includes a Study Day in the early Summer and a Retreat in the Autumn. Prayer support and a partnership with Church Army are also important elements of the life of the College.

In the summer of 2017, the Council of the College undertook a survey of members. We were genuinely interested to know whether members felt the College was continuing to fulfil its purpose or whether, in the light of other changes in the Church of England, the College had now come to a natural end. We were pleasantly surprised by the results!

Not only did most members feel affirmed and supported by the College, there were some who expressed a keen interest in developing the work of the College. Further informal discussions have now led to the forming of a working group charged to answer the question: 'what is God calling us to be and to do?'

This is a genuine exercise of discernment and we want to ask for your prayers. There are many other individuals and groups in the church also seeking to support evangelists and the last thing we want is to duplicate work others are already doing. But we believe there is real knowledge, skill and experience among College members and it could be, with a little creativity and imagination, we can find ways for this to be shared and, in particular, help raise up a new generation of evangelists.

There are some interesting possibilities for us to explore. Church Army are developing new training resources (some on-line) and there is an open offer to the College to work with them on this. HOPE (an organisation which seeks to bring churches together in mission) is teaming up with other evangelistic organisations to plan a big new initiative for 2020. Again, there is an open invitation to the College to provide mentors for the many young evangelists they support.

The national church has recently made some new appointments – a Youth Evangelism Officer and a Director of Evangelism and Discipleship. We are in discussion to explore how the College could work with them.

These are exciting possibilities and we hope to report on them at our next Study Day (21<sup>st</sup> May – Lambeth Palace). We are also aware that the College currently has little capacity to develop new areas of work, so we are also exploring whether funding could be found for someone to lead on developing this work.

Please pray for those involved in this discernment and let us know if you have thoughts or ideas.

+ Martyn Leicester – Chair of Council of College of Evangelists