



29 June 2011

Dear Colleague

### **Developing Church Growth in Deprived Areas**

I am writing as Chairman of the Archbishops' Task Group which has been reviewing spending plans on behalf of the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners.

This letter invites you to consider making an application for a share of some funding which has been made available to develop church growth in deprived areas.

The Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners have earmarked £12m out of the £283m available in 2011-13 from the funds for distribution from the funds managed by the Commissioners for research and development work related to Church growth.

The R&D funding is to help advance the three strategic goals set out in the Archbishop of Canterbury's November statement to the Synod:

- to take forward the spiritual and numerical growth of the Church of England – including the growth of its capacity to serve the whole community of the country;
- to re-shape or re-imagine the Church's ministry for the century coming, so as to make sure that there is a growing and sustainable Christian witness in every local community; and
- to focus resources where there is both greatest need and greatest opportunity.

The Spending Plans Task Group<sup>1</sup>, which was commissioned by the Archbishops to review 2011-13 spending plans, has been working on the detailed expenditure of the R&D funding. It has agreed that the broad allocation of funding should be as follows:

- **£0.7m should be earmarked for research:** to undertake research across the Church (in parishes, dioceses and cathedrals) about effective practice in relation to mission work (and the £1bn or so spent on it per annum) in order to learn and disseminate lessons.
- **£0.3m should be earmarked during the triennium for evaluation:** to help dioceses and cathedrals analyse how effectively the £142m of national funding they will receive during 2011-13, alongside other sources of funding, is being spent, to learn from that and help spread that learning within the Church to help improve its resource allocation.
- **The remainder of the R&D funding should be used for development:** to invest in initiatives around the Church that are proving to be effective in terms of mission and growth, in order to scale their impact across the Church.

The research programme – which will look at various hypotheses around church growth – is now underway. The Task Group's view, supported by the Archbishops' Council and the Commissioners' Board of Governors, is that it should wait to distribute most of the development funding until after the programme has been completed (which is likely to be in 2012) in order that decisions about its use can be informed by evidence of what is providing effective.

But the Task Group recognises that the research programme will not provide all the answers, or at least is not the only way to get at the answers. **It believes, therefore, that £3m of the development funding should be distributed now** in order to tap into the body of existing knowledge among parishes, dioceses, cathedrals and other bodies about what is proving effective in terms of the Church's mission and growth. The funding will thus help to 'celebrate and invest' in achievement. And the investment will provide a different way of testing some of the 'growth hypotheses' which the research programme will investigate empirically.

In line with the goal of targeting resources on areas of need and opportunity, funding will be focused on the most deprived areas of the country. Within those areas, **the key aim of the funding will be to:**

- **learn from and develop existing mission work which is leading to growth in the number of Christian disciples so that such growth can be replicated elsewhere.**

In line with this aim, funding can be used to:

- help expand within its existing context mission work which is leading to growth in the number of Christian disciples;

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop of London (the Group's chair), Christina Baxter, Bishop of Birmingham, Andrew Britton, Mike Eastwood, Dean of Rochester, Andreas Whittam Smith.

- replicate into different contexts an existing model of mission work which has led to growth in the number of Christian disciples; or
- invest in longer-term replication by employing 'mission apprentices' alongside the leaders of existing mission work which is leading to growth in the number of Christian disciples, thus helping to develop the pioneers of the future.

I am now writing on behalf of the Task Group to every diocesan bishop to invite them to put forward a project or projects you believe suitable for funding within the criteria set out below. In doing so, we wish to emphasise that **priority will be given to projects in low income dioceses and/or those with significant numbers of deprived parishes.**

We will also be writing to cathedral deans, Church of England mission agencies and other bodies to ask them to consider making an application for funding, on the basis that any work they wish to be supported is endorsed by the bishop of the relevant area. There will also be more general communication of the existence of the funding scheme within the Church.

It is intended to fund around 30 projects, with an average grants size of around £100,000. We recognise that dioceses will be in different positions in terms of making applications and thus the funding will be distributed in two equal tranches. **The deadline for the first tranche will be 1st October this year and the second, 1st April 2012.**

### **Selection Criteria**

The mission work for which you wish to receive financial support must demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the work has produced sustained growth in the number of Christian disciples.
- A clear strategy for developing the work within its existing context or for replicating the model of work elsewhere.

And the work must be in:

- An area of deprivation (as measured by the Government's indices).

Potential candidates for funding will also be assessed as to whether there is:

- Significant learning potential for the wider Church from the project.
- A financial commitment to the project by existing church members but a demonstrable inability to meet the whole cost.
- A realistic financial plan with a strategy for future sustainability.
- A clear set of outcomes (measurable where appropriate) in relation to what the work will achieve and the added value of the national funding.

A condition of the funding will be that those leading and sponsoring the project must be willing for research to take place (by themselves or in

collaboration with others) into the outcomes from the work, and for learning from that research to be shared within the Church.

The Task Group will prioritise applications for funding against the above characteristics and then decide which projects should receive a share of the funding available. Group members will not participate in decisions relating to projects in their own dioceses and/or any mission agency with which they have any formal relationship.

Those wishing to apply for funding will need to complete the on-form form available at <http://www.c-of-e-applications.org.uk/form4/init.pl>. (It will be ready from 11 July.)

If you have any queries about the application process, please contact Philip James, Head of the Resource Strategy and Development Unit of the National Church Institutions - [philip.james@churchofengland.org](mailto:philip.james@churchofengland.org).

This letter is being copied to your diocesan secretary. Please feel free to circulate it widely.

With all good wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Chartres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO DD FSA