



# TIME TO TELL

Report by the Commission on Communication  
to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, May 1983

**TIME  
TO  
TELL**

a report  
from the  
Commission  
on  
Communication

1983

# TIME TO TELL

## Contents

Foreword	
Introduction	Page 1
Chapter 1 Worship and Parish life	Page 5
Chapter 2 The Media	Page 12
Chapter 3 The Church of Ireland Gazette	Page 16
Chapter 4 Other Publications	Page 19
Chapter 5 Religious Broadcasting	Page 21
Chapter 6 Education, Training and Resources	Page 26
Chapter 7 Hard Sell	Page 33
Chapter 8 Structures	Page 40
Chapter 9 The Cost	Page 43
Chapter 10 So the Commission is saying ....	Page 45

Copyright:  
The General Synod of the Church of Ireland,  
Church of Ireland House,  
Church Avenue,  
Rathmines,  
Dublin 6.

Price per copy:  
80p. Stg. plus 20p. postage, or, 90p. Irish plus 26p. postage.

# Foreword

**IN PRESENTING OUR REPORT** we have attempted to deliver our messages clearly and cogently.

We have arranged it in a series of chapters beginning with one on worship and parish life, which together form the fundamental basis for the communication of the Christian message. We go on to give our thoughts on other internal and external channels of communication: the media, Church publications and religious broadcasting. We then turn to the management of communication: education, training and resources, and the structures of management in the Church. Next, we make brief comments on the estimated cost of our proposals. In the final chapter we offer our recommendations.

Since the presentation of this report in draft to the Standing Committee in November we have been told that there exists within the Church of Ireland a financial crisis. This does not alter the principles on which our recommendations are based. It is unfortunate, however, that we happen to be presenting our report at a time of financial stringency.

I am confident nevertheless that what we are recommending will be fully evaluated and weighed in the balance against the many other priorities demanding their fair share of Church funds. I know that my colleagues on the Commission will join me in accepting with realism the verdict of the General Synod 1983.

Setting aside the money factor, much of our report will cost nothing more than commitment by interested people throughout the Church of Ireland, combined with the will to face change. It is our hope that the report will inspire the Church.

I wish to take this opportunity of recording the grateful thanks of the Commission to all those who gave us the evidence and advice on which we based our conclusions. The officers of Church of Ireland House were especially helpful and, in particular, the Press Officer, who was also both our Secretary and a vital member of our team. Finally, I record my gratitude to my colleagues on the Commission who gave unstintingly of their time and talents and supported their Chairman to the end.

January 10, 1983

**William D. Linton**  
**Chairman.**

## Introduction

**THE COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATION** was established by the General Synod 1981, *“to examine Church of Ireland communications policy both within the Church of Ireland, and, from it, outwards, with a view to making recommendations aimed at using to the optimum our structures, our ready-made communications network, and the talents of our people, both lay and clerical.”*

The Commission was asked to report to the Standing Committee in November 1982, and to present its Final Report in the General Synod 1983.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The members of the Commission were:—

The Revd. T.R. Williams (Connor), Mr. W.D. Murray (Down), Mr. F. Macmillan (Dublin), all of whom were nominated by the Standing Committee. The Very Revd. J.T.F. Paterson (Kildare), the Revd. M. Byrne (Dublin), and Mr. W.D. Linton (Dromore) were nominated by the Communications Committee. The Press Officer (Mr. A.S. Johnston) was an ex-officio member. Mr. Macmillan resigned in October 1981, and was not replaced.

The members of the Commission elected Mr. W.D. Linton chairman, and Mr. A.S. Johnston secretary.

Up to December 31, 1982, the Commission had twenty-five sessions, meeting alternately in Dublin and Belfast. Attendances averaged 78%. There was one full week-end session, and the drafting group met for a week-end.

## OUR GRATITUDE

We record our thanks to all the individuals and groups who met the Commission by invitation, and those who made written submissions, both solicited and unsolicited. The total number of submissions was eighty.

We are grateful, also, to the Presbyterian Publications and Information Officer, the Director of the Catholic Press and Information Office, the Chief Information Officer of the Church of England and his staff at Westminster, and to our colleagues and many friends in the various areas of the media in Ireland.

Their comments, advice, and concerned and constructive guidance have helped to shape this Report.

## OUR CONVICTION

Our approach is governed by the conviction that the Church, by its very nature, is a communicating body. Our judgment, however, based on the evidence we have received, is that the Church of Ireland has not, for some years, faced its task with any obvious sense of urgency.

- \* There are aspects of our worship which need revitalisation.
- \* We are not making the best use of the communications opportunities the media afford us. And internally we do not make the best use of our own publications.
- \* *The Church of Ireland Gazette*, for all the effort put into it, in its present form and with its current circulation, must sadly be deemed inadequate.
- \* In religious broadcasting, we have still to make the serious and professional contribution it demands.

- \* There is a need to take stock of our education, training and resources as the means to competence in the fields of communication.
- \* Our outreach has tended to be passive. The faith and convictions of the Church of Ireland need to be presented more positively and with greater confidence.
- \* There is a serious lack of co-ordination in our committee structures; unnatural constraints on the debating of issues, and wasted opportunities for communication through our existing structures.
- \* However the press and information organisation might have met the situation when it was set up in 1971, it is no longer adequate to meet today's demands and pressures.

We believe that the Church of Ireland has a unique and valid contribution to make to our country and the Church at large. We accept that this Commission was established because it wants to. This Report is presented with the conviction that it is prepared to make that contribution. Because the Commission considers that the Church of Ireland is prepared to take communications seriously, it, therefore, sees change as being inevitable.

It goes without saying that there is a communications structure within the Church of Ireland. Our conviction, however, is that it is impossible to do what needs to be done within the present system. What the Commission feels is necessary is a reshaping of an existing structure.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATION

Our fundamental recommendation, on which much else in the Report hinges, is the creation of a press and information centre for the Church, serviced by experienced, professional journalists. The centre, based in Belfast, would be controlled by a Director of Information Services, with full-time secretarial assistance, and a full-time Deputy Director, based in Dublin. This will cost money.

The task facing our Church is enormous. It requires competence and commitment, and the planning, organisation and leadership

geared to meet the demands and challenge of an age still coming to terms with the hazards and opportunities of the technological revolution.

We are convinced that the Church of Ireland, by the grace of God, has both the will and the capacity to meet the challenge.

It is in the strength of this conviction that we presume to present this Report.

## Worship and Parish Life

**THE FIRST CONCERN** of communication for the Christian is to worship God. The environment in which both the desire and the facility for communication are developed is the worshipping community.

Worship involves all the senses. Liturgy, the verbal and visual presentation of worship, reaches out to people at prayer by offering them something tangible --- the love of God expressed corporately.

Congregations are encouraged to join together, or alternately, with the priest, not just for participation, but because dialogue encourages a reflective people. The dress of the clergy, and the ornaments in the sanctuary are varied in colour with the seasons of the Christian year because what is seen with the eye teaches more than pages of print.

The practice of the theory of communication does not always seem to be applied in Church of Ireland worship today. We seem to fall between two stools --- fear of Catholic colour and fear of evangelical enthusiasm. This fear can saddle us with the worst of both worlds --- a form of worship that can resemble a bland earnestness.

### **CORPORATE EXPRESSION**

When people join in the liturgical worship of the Church, they are

attempting to express corporately the very basis of their Christian commitment.

The Church's worship for better, for worse, therefore, must ultimately have a greater impact on our understanding of the faith than will Sunday School, parochial hall activities, or any youth or adult organisations. The tenacious way in which Russian Christianity survives is evidence enough. Few amenities. But remarkable worship.

Inherited worship, however, will fall flat, if it is not constantly renewed in its presentation. This is true of the Revised Services as well as the Book of Common Prayer.

Our Sunday worship must take the joys and sorrows and tensions of the day, filter them through the Gospel of the day, and then breathe Christian comment on the events of life that will help people to face the week ahead.

### **CELEBRATE WITH JOY**

Liturgy is our frail corporate attempt to communicate with God. We call it a celebration. Our celebrations, though, seldom ring with joy. We seem to be afraid to show our emotions when we gather as a Christian family. As though the proper solemnity of worship required us to sit rigidly in our pews, keeping a stiff upper-lip.

Liturgy is the means by which we hope to leave ourselves open so that God may communicate with us.

If this is to happen, we will need to allow ourselves unhurried and reflective times of corporate prayer. Unhurried worship need not mean long services. Reflective services are possible within the forty-five minutes the country incumbent is permitted if he has a chain of churches to operate on a Sunday.

### **IN THE BEGINNING**

The beginning of the service is the part, perhaps, that needs the greatest care.

People have come from every walk of life. But until they fuse

together they are not a congregation. It is difficult to make a Christian community out of a collection of individuals with not much more than a hymn and a formal sentence of scripture.

If possible, it is probably better for the incumbent to greet his people before rather than after the service. The whole congregation might then profit greatly by observing a brief silence after the entrance of the clergy, and before the singing of the first hymn.

At this point, whether in the Eucharist or Morning or Evening Prayer, the introductory material really requires some extra special presentation. The liturgical greeting, plus some brief informal introduction, telling the people of the theme of the day, can help gel the congregation, and draw together a community that will be disposed to listen and to respond.

The formal liturgical worship of the Church of Ireland needs an ease of presentation.

### **PREACHER'S TASK**

Preaching still occupies an important place in the liturgy. And rightly. Though the sermon, nowadays, is not so long as it used to be. This, of course, is no bad thing, if the content is there.

The preacher's job is to proclaim the Gospel of God, and to show its bearing on our lives today. Even if the Parish Communion sermon of today is shorter, it should not be forgotten that the whole rite, with the presentation of the theme for the particular Sunday, is a communication of the Gospel to the worshipper.

When the preacher takes his text or theme from the prescribed readings of the day, he is not just leading a meditation on Christian events of two thousand years ago. His aim is to take the original event, and to relate it to the needs and current concerns of the worshipping community.

He needs to know not only his scripture, but his audience also.

### **USE OF SILENCE**

Corporate worship, in some ways, is more like watching television than listening to the radio. It does not require constant descriptive



chatter to explain it. Indeed, a greater use of silence in our worship could be of immense help. We need time for a restful waiting upon God.

Silence, however, does not come easily to Anglicans. Silence, to be effective, is for listening to God, not offering up private prayers in the context of a corporate liturgy.

Silence requires even more careful planning than do the prayers.

The very beginning of the service, before the confession and after the readings or communion is highly appropriate.

## MAKING OF MUSIC

Few adjuncts to worship can make or mar a service so easily as music. Hymns in particular. Badly chosen hymns can make any service mawkish.

The current Church Hymnal, splendidly revised in 1960, is now showing its age. Much of the contents is still of great value. An authorised supplement of new hymns has appeared but further material is needed.

We would commend the many hymn guides which have been prepared for use with the lectionary in current use.

The organ is likely to remain the instrument, par excellence, for use in church. But it is not the only possibility. Groups of other instruments, or the piano can be equally effective.

All music in church ought to be the very best the local community can provide.

Many churches today, especially in rural areas, make extensive use of recorded church music. The idea was excellent in embryo. Where two or three are gathered together, it can be invaluable. But where forty or more gather, there can be no substitute for live music, and little excuse for not having it.

Where an organist cannot cope with Anglican chant, the psalms and canticles might sometimes even gain by being treated as choral speaking. And let the congregation sit down while they recite, as an aid to reflection.

## EXPERIMENTATION

The Commission believes that more liturgical experimentation, particularly within the bounds of Prayer Book and Revised Services, is both necessary and possible. Visual presentation, the occasional use of mime and dance, can present the scriptures and the seasons of the Christian year in new and exciting ways.

Therefore, we would recommend the appointment (or re-appointment) of qualified diocesan liturgical advisers. They should, subject to episcopal approval, make known the wealth of new liturgical publications and aids already available.

After the Reformation, as before it, the Church provided a liturgy in which the priest was the important person. The world, today, though, demands sharing at every level of society.

A sharing in worship, not only in its presentation but in its planning, can bring about a renewal that may have an impact on the whole life of the parish.

Of the clergy it requires two things --- that they will have the courage to be open with their people, and that they will not take fright at the first mistake.

## PASTORAL CARE

Worship, and especially preaching, is nourished by knowing the people of the parish. A house-going parson may not always make a church-going people, but the principle is right.

With the decline in the number of clergy, their task can be made easier if there are lay contacts throughout the parish who will immediately notify them of situations needing their attention.

Pastoral care is a two-way process, and parishioners should be equally watchful for signs of strain in their rector, and should maintain a caring link with retired clergy and widows.

The Commission values the practice of holding residential conferences for the clergy, such as the long-established Refresher Course at Portrush and would commend courses organised by bishops and others. Such in-service training can be invaluable in

providing theological and pastoral support for isolated priests, and will, indirectly bring benefit to the parishioners.

The parishioners, in turn, ought not to refer to such ventures as "holidays".

## TEENAGE CONTACT

No part of the work of the Church seems to have less success than its contact with the post-Confirmation teenager, particularly in the urban areas.

For too long, the pre-teenage population has been treated as the Church of tomorrow. They are not. They are part of the Church today, and ought to be treated as such.

Worship, in particular, nearly always seems to be devised with adults in mind.

Not that all teenagers want guitars at every service. But even the most traditional of services can be enlivened where there is consultation in preparation, and sharing in presentation.

What the youth most want, is to be part of a caring group that exudes confidence in the future.

## FAITHFUL BUILDINGS

Some of our churches date from medieval times. Most, however, are either Victorian, or were remodelled in Victorian times.

It is not unfair, therefore, to say that they reflect both Victorian piety, and the spiritual and architectural revolutions of the Victorian era. And what many of our churches, therefore, present to the worshipper, is not an eternal, unchanging faith, but rather the fag-end of traditions created and set there only three or four generations ago.

Many of our churches are not kept in the state of decoration and repair and adornment which might seem appropriate.

The Commission would recommend that architectural and liturgical advice should be obligatory for any select vestry planning major

restoration of a church. such advice cannot, of course, be mandatory, but it ought to be rejected only after much reflection and discussion.

There is, we believe, a need for a body of qualified advisers along the lines of the Church of England's Council for the Care of Churches.

## "CATHEDRAL SUNDAY"

All churches by their visible presence in the community witness to history as well as to present-day faith. And none more so than our cathedrals. Annually, they attract thousands of visitors, and are a means of presenting the Gospel, sometimes to the uncommitted.

Irish cathedrals, outside the main cities, have few financial resources, and are expensive to maintain. The Commission would recommend a "Cathedral Sunday" for every diocese.

Such services could be an inspiration to scattered rural deaneries by the very numbers attending. They could also give a new vision of the unity of the diocese and the cathedral at its centre.

We pay lip-service to our diocesan system. But not till we revitalise our cathedrals as the mother church of the diocese, will we ever get away from that narrow form of parochialism which regards "my church" as the centre of the Lord's universe, and all others as dangerous competitors.

Vestries, Councils and Synods all have a role to sustain the ongoing work of the Church, but the proclamation of the Gospel within the offering of worship must be given increasing emphasis if the Church is to be the Church of God.

Any parish which fails to recognise this fact will be in danger of becoming a club for like-minded people.

# The Media

**THE EXPRESSION "THE MEDIA"** is a blanket-term used almost exclusively, nowadays, to cover newspapers, radio and television. It will save grammarians recurring discomfort, if it is explained here that "The Media" people --- like ourselves in this Report --- treat the expression as a collective noun, and, more often than not, use a singular verb.

The general intention of The Media is to inform, to educate and to entertain. By the nature of the case, it is, for good or ill, in the image-making business.

Since the image and profile of the Church of Ireland are shaped for the general public by newspapers and broadcasting, it became an early task for the Commission to make an assessment of the broadcasting and newspaper media, and the Church's relationship with them.

The Church of Ireland has reservations about and criticisms of some aspects of The Media, especially in the last fifteen years. The Commission appreciates this attitude, but feels bound to say that it considers that public journalism remains basically sympathetic with the Church in disseminating its news and opinion. During these past years of violence, The Media have had an immensely awkward role.

They have, for the most part, given the Church a fair hearing.

## PRESS OFFICERS

It was during these years that the Churches appointed Press Officers --- full-timers by the Presbyterians in 1966, and the Roman Catholics in 1975. In 1973 the Methodists appointed a part-time Honorary Press Officer. The Church of Ireland appointed its full-time Officer in 1971. How well or badly the others approach their task is not the Commission's immediate concern. Our concern is for the Church of Ireland. And we believe it is the business of the Church of Ireland to be so involved as to gain the best advantages and benefits, and to impress its influence most effectively.

The Commission is aware that The Media have criticisms of the Church of Ireland. Practising journalists across the board confirmed the Commission's own view that the Church of Ireland has not updated its practice and attitudes to communications; is not always seen to present an open front; and has too often failed to take up opportunities which its critics rarely deny themselves.

## COMPETITIVE WORLD

The Media expect a professional Church in a professional and competitive world.

It still stands that speed, timing, accuracy, succinctness, and availability are the criteria essential for ensuring Media co-operation.

While the Church cannot readily accept that it is unnecessarily secretive, it is worth noting that some who observe the Church believe it to be.

One possible reason for the allegation may be that the administrative cycle of the Church's work between General Synods is condensed into virtually a six-month period, followed by what observers identify as silence.

The recommendations elsewhere proposing earlier release of Synod Reports should go a long way towards answering this allegation, and, at the same time, towards allowing the Church a higher profile for a longer period. It would be helpful, too, the Commission believes, if the Church articulated policy ahead of events rather than reacting to them.

## CO-ORDINATED SYSTEM

The Commission wishes to underline that among the reasons for proposing a co-ordinated information service by the Church to the Media is the need for a system, readily understood by all the Committees of the Church, through which appropriate news releases can be made. Committees should not remain silent too long. Even those who, because of the nature of their work, are not in the news-making business, should, at least occasionally, issue a progress report.

We would argue that it is a relatively simple matter for a committee chairman and secretary, at the end of a meeting, to agree what information might or might not be released. Such a procedure would ensure continued confidentiality where necessary.

There is an onus on central committees to communicate.

It goes without saying that all sub-committees need the authorisation of their parent bodies.

And there is an onus on the House of Bishops to communicate. The episcopal leadership does not meet the Media collectively. We believe they should. At least annually, and usually on an informal basis. It is mutually beneficial, and establishes the relationships and understanding that help to make easier the inevitable process of having to work together. Indeed, the suggestion was made to the Commission by the people in the Media for such off and on the record discussions.

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

There are, the Commission is convinced, opportunities in the Media which an alert, practised Church structure can, and should, exploit.

There is every reason why we should build a reputation as a living, vibrant Church with modern ideas to help ordinary people.

To communicate views on matters which affect the real lives of real people will, eventually, prove a more telling commentary on our Christian stance than to remain prostrate beneath the banner accusation that we are a middle-class Church, dominated by elderly males, and awash with moderation.

## FACILITY OR OGRE

Attitudes to the Media are bound to affect our approach.

It may be that the Church of Ireland has been slow to co-operate with the Media because we see it as an ogre that needs to be placated, a master to be feared. The comment, attributed to Archbishop Gregg, that broadcasting is an ordinance of man to be endured for the Lord's sake, is, the Commission feels, the attitude generally held by the Church of Ireland.

There is, however, another view which, if we as a Church were to cultivate, would, the Commission believes, give the Media a whole new meaning for us, and excite the Church of Ireland into taking communications seriously.

The Media is a facility to be used --- as commercial radio and television, newspaper advertisement, and the whole press and public relations industry eloquently, and profitably, illustrate.

A deal has happened in the field of communications since the invention of printing. What is needed in our Church is that we approach our modern facilities with the excitement, urgency and vision with which men like Coverdale and Tyndale accepted the printing press.

Our task is no different from theirs. Our commitment, like theirs, is to extend the Kingdom of God in the kingdoms of men.

Today's facilities are available to us for today's task.

The result of using them expertly and professionally would be that, instead of muttering piously amongst our almost four-hundred thousand selves, we would be communicating to the five million population of Ireland --- which is some kingdom in which to extend the Kingdom of God.

# The Church of Ireland Gazette

**IT BECAME CLEAR** in the course of our deliberations that it would be necessary to devote a chapter to considering *The Church of Ireland Gazette*.

We begin with some facts about the paper.

*The Church of Ireland Gazette* is a weekly newspaper published by Church of Ireland Press, Ltd.

Church of Ireland Press Ltd. is a company Limited by Guarantee, registered in Northern Ireland. Its members are appointed by the Standing Committee. The members appoint up to fifteen directors from amongst their number.

The Board of Directors of Church of Ireland Press Ltd. appoints its own chairman and other officers.

The Board has complete freedom in the appointment of the paper's editor and other members of its staff.

The paper's registered office is in leased premises at 48, Bachelor's Walk, Lisburn.

A Management Committee runs the business side of the paper, and meets about five times a year. The Editor attends these meetings occasionally, by invitation.

A small executive committee meets more often, as required, sometimes with the Editor.

The Editor enjoys complete editorial freedom.

The paper carries the disclaimer -- "Material published in the *Gazette* should not be regarded as official Church of Ireland policy, which can only be formulated by the General Synod."

The Church of Ireland affords the paper an annual subsidy. In 1982, the amount was Stg. £6,000, paid from the Priorities Fund.

The circulation of the paper fluctuates. In 1975 it was just under 4,000 weekly. Following a vigorous promotional campaign it was 7,500 weekly. The present circulation is around 5,500 weekly.

## ENTERPRISE AND ENERGY

The Commission is more than aware of, and grateful for, the enterprise and energy the *Gazette* Board and its Editors, over the years, have expended in trying to make the *Gazette* a useful tool in the Church's task.

The hard, sad judgment, however, has to be made. There is no longer the demand for the *Gazette* in its present form and pattern. There is not, in the present climate, either the news content to fill or the resources to produce a weekly paper of consistently high quality.

Unfortunately, common-sense and good stewardship argue that such a situation ought not to be allowed to go on.

And the Commission considers that it should not go on.

At the same time, the Commission felt there was a need for a journal in which the voice of the Church of Ireland might be heard, and its opinions and teachings aired.

## MONTHLY MAGAZINE

There is a need, and, in the Commission's view, an exciting future for

a monthly news-magazine. It would be a prestigious production, holding its own with the best of current news-magazines, covering the essential news of the Church, its life, gossip, opinions and letters.

At the same time, it would carry well-researched, well-written features and articles by expert contributors, reflecting the comprehensiveness of the Church of Ireland, taking advantage of the longer duration between issues to produce in-depth studies and comment on dominant and important concerns.

The standard is excellence.

The magazine staff, therefore, would be served by professional journalists of calibre and proven ability.

The status, official or otherwise, of the magazine would be determined by the Communications Management Board (see Chapter 8). The Commission recommends that editorial freedom be guaranteed.

The Commission believes that such a journal would be an asset to our people. It would enhance the reputation of the Church of Ireland, and enlarge its influence by taking an honourable place on the magazine stands. It would be of such a quality that it would attract readership and it would pay its way.

## Other Publications

**IT IS OUR BUSINESS** in this chapter to take note of what might best be described as “in house” publications.

There are twelve diocesan magazines, covering virtually the whole of Ireland, except Connor and North Down. The combined circulation is steady at around 20,000 copies monthly. We are impressed by the standards of presentation in some Diocesan Magazines, and the direction in which some are developing.

There are in the region of one hundred and fifty parochial magazines. They have an enormous readership, and range in style from simple, stencilled news-sheets to quite elaborate productions.

Their contents vary from the totally parochial to those that make a determined attempt to broaden the horizon of their readers beyond the diocesan or parochial scene.

Most magazines aim to break even financially. Some are given free. A number subsidise their operation by selling advertising space.

Much voluntary effort and commitment is lavished on the production of magazines, but the end product is often poor, compared with other “trade journals”.

It is clear, however, that they are read from cover to cover for the parish and local news.

There is an obvious need for centralised advice on objectives, layout, production methods and economics. Given this advice, we believe that the editors involved, with their undoubted sense of commitment, would want to improve their publications.

### AN AID TO STUDY

*Search* has appeared twice a year for the past five years, as the successor to *New Divinity*. Its circulation, at around five-hundred, has been increasing.

It carries articles from writers both lay and clerical of all traditions. It also contains a substantial book review section of particular value to teachers and educators.

*Search* proclaims itself "A Church of Ireland Journal", and is produced by an editorial committee under the chairmanship of the Right Reverend G.O. Simms.

We commend this publication to all clergy and laity as an aid to study and thought.

### THE DIRECTORY

*The Church of Ireland Directory* appears annually, with Desk Diary and Lectionary in the same spiral binding.

The *Directory* information is compiled progressively through the year in Church of Ireland House, Dublin, but, because the *Directory* is published "on the authority of the Communications Committee", the Press Officer facilitates some of the work.

It is printed in Belfast under an arrangement by which the Church of Ireland is provided "free" with two hundred copies for distribution, while the printer covers his costs through advertising revenue. No attempt is made to market it.

The *Directory* is an essential piece of communication equipment. To serve its full function as a ready reference, however, it needs sensitive editing. This task needs to be undertaken by an Editor on a voluntary basis.

## Religious Broadcasting

**RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING** is the area in which both Church and Media come together, each, and equally, regarding it as a privilege.

The Broadcasters do not, necessarily, regard it as a system-imposed necessity. The Church, however, in some parishes, appears to view it as an intrusion and disruption of routine.

The people in the Broadcasting media are professionals. They have a right to expect professionalism from the Church in performing the task which it declares to be of prime importance --- the proclamation of the Gospel.

The Broadcasters complain that this professionalism is not obvious, and offered highly critical comments on Church of Ireland attitudes, both in general and particular. We are not sure what kind of consolation it is, to learn that other Churches are not much better.

The Broadcasters considered that the Church does not take seriously the opportunities available, whether for short religious "slots" or for broadcast services. There are, of course, notable exceptions. But "lethargy, lack of enthusiasm, half-baked" were some of the terms used to describe the Church of Ireland approach.

The broadcast service is treated as an interruption of normal Sunday worship, rather than as a privilege, and an opportunity to

reach thousands in their homes instead of just the relative handful who attend church.

It ought to be said that the Broadcasters must face the accusation that they appear to treat religion cheaply. Up to now, they have refused to put into Religious Broadcasting the kind of money they spend in other areas of radio and television.

## **CAPTURE IMAGINATION**

These, the Commission believes, are issues which can be tackled by the Church and Broadcasters together. But the Church must be prepared to engage the Broadcasters, and captivate their imagination.

The challenge to the Church, in this respect, is real. The Church must begin to search for potential contributors to religious programmes.

We believe the Broadcasting organisations will listen, and afford training assistance where necessary.

Religion on radio and television takes a number of forms. These include outside broadcasts, usually services of worship; epilogues; news magazines; discussion of issues of faith and attitudes, involving individuals or groups; music, and documentaries.

## **TWO CATEGORIES**

The programmes clearly fall into two categories --- those which promote and articulate Christian faith, worship and teaching; and those which afford the Church an opportunity to express itself either on issues which concern people, or as a response to secular criticism.

The diversity of outlets is an asset to the Church in its work of evangelism and teaching, and is important to remember when we are planning training.

Religious Broadcasting is an art. It presents the faith to an audience, many of whom may not be in sympathy with a Christian approach to life.

It is a demanding art. It is, nevertheless, an art in which the Church must show competence and professional confidence.

## **WILLING TO TALK?**

Where the Broadcasters regularly find the Church inadequate is in the area which includes news, magazine and discussion. The criticism applies to all denominations. Too often the Churches are reluctant to participate.

The impression can sometimes be created that the Churches are either not up to the task, or cannot agree who will speak on their behalf, or even seek to excuse themselves from contentious comment.

The Church of Ireland must avoid giving this impression.

It would be, as the Commission sees it, the responsibility of the proposed Director of Information Services to ensure the nomination of people competent to speak on the Church's behalf.

The Commission recognises that the Media must show itself responsible, and the Church must be entitled to refuse any offer of broadcasting, if refusal is in the best interests of the Church.

But the Commission warns of the failure to take presented opportunities, and of the consequences of standing on the sidelines. We strongly advise involvement, since we believe that the Church of Ireland has, more often than not, a valid and pertinent contribution to make.

## **BROADCASTING REVOLUTION**

This Report is published on the eve of a revolution in broadcasting in these islands. Already there exists expanding local radio, two television channels in the South, and four in the North.

Only the Broadcasters themselves appear to be aware of just how imminent is the development of satellite and cable television services. Planning by Government and the providers is at a very advanced stage.

The effect on society, while exciting in prospect, may prove



devastating, if we remain unprepared, and fall further behind in our ability to cope with both the opportunity and the consequences of advancing technology.

The greater the output, the more programmes on religion. The easier the access to religious material from around the globe, the greater the comparison with the lack-lustre provision in these islands, with a promised threat to our traditional church life of enormous proportions.

If the Church of Ireland cannot or will not respond to this broadcasting revolution, there are plenty of others who can, and are already planning to do so. If "fringe religion" in America can build a cathedral of glass, costing fourteen million dollars, it is unlikely they will shy at the cost of satellite time to expand their "market".

It is something of an understatement to say that our Church will not like that.

### **INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCE**

The Commission seeks to be realistic. It is our view that religious programme provision from outside these islands is a matter of international consequence. The Church of Ireland cannot be expected to take on the global challenge, as well as the challenge within Ireland.

The Commission, therefore, recommends that the Church of Ireland express its concern within the Anglican Consultative Council.

### **HOME VIDEO EQUIPMENT**

The development and use of home video equipment exercised the Commission.

The Church should note that while traditional public broadcasting is subject to controls in technical standard and content, non-religious output from purely commercial and secular sources is not, necessarily, subject to control by anybody, nor are such providers accountable to anybody.

The moral implications are obvious for the Church, but outside the competence and brief of this Commission.

It was, however, part of the Commission's concern to consider whether or not it is realistic for our Church to become a provider of video material for use by individuals, families or organisations, or for education programmes for Sunday School, and adults.

The Commission had to conclude that the cost of putting such material into "programme" form would be prohibitive for the Church of Ireland, working in isolation.

At the same time, we believe that some such provision will prove necessary. We consider, therefore, that those involved in Church education should actively consider ways in which suitable material may be bought-in from already existing companies who specialise in producing religious material.

### **MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB**

Our examination of the totality of Religious Broadcasting gave an even clearer picture of the size of the communications mountain which our Church should be ready to climb.

Elsewhere in this Report, we encourage the Church of Ireland to make adequate provision for a sound press and information service. The prospect of even more specialised communications commitment more tellingly illustrates the extent to which we are dragging our feet. It emphasises the urgency of agreeing concerted action.

The Gospel we preach encourages us to approach mountains with faith .... and to expect spectacular results.

# Education, Training and Resources

**IT IS CLEAR** from the New Testament that the Christian is expected to work at understanding his religion. Partly as an aid in his growth to maturity, partly that he be able to give to them that ask him a reason for the hope that is in him.

In this atmosphere, it is no surprise that the Commission would stress the need for a realistic, ongoing programme of Christian education.

We are not, of course, the first commission to point-up the need. At the same time, we reflect sadly that, in the four years since its appearance, not sufficient has been done by way of implementing the recommendations made in Chapter Seven of *First of All*.

In our opinion, it borders on the irresponsible to contemplate the daunting and exacting task of communications without the essential undergirding of a Church that is educated and being educated.

## NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The work done by the Theological College, the Board of Education, and the Sunday School Society for Ireland is acknowledged and applauded. And while, in small pockets of the wider Church, good work is being done by dedicated groups and individuals, there is

a need for the task of education to be seen in terms of a national programme, organised and activated with a curriculum that leaves no doubt that the Church of Ireland is aware of its aims and objectives.

It is not enough to talk and hope vaguely about Christian education. There is need for a deliberate and purposeful "forward movement" which will involve all our people at all levels of their attainment. A programme conceived by the Church for the whole Church, tailored to suit our people's needs rather than reflecting pious imaginations about what might be good for them.

A thorough and unprejudiced canvass of the national Church --- laity and clergy --- would make the real content of a positive programme abundantly clear. And an educational programme that made a thoroughgoing attempt at facing and meeting the needs revealed would have not only the support of our people, but would occupy, excite and edify the Church of Ireland for a long time.

## TEST AND REWARD

We would argue for a curriculum that will encourage Sunday Schools to believe that the Church takes them seriously. We would further argue the need for the Church to test and reward progress.

So long as the Church argues a commitment to primary and secondary education, we maintain it has a duty to operate a programme of education which will provide our children with some ability to give to those who ask a reason for the hope that is in them.

There is little sense in the Church of Ireland claiming to have an identity, if children are allowed to grow up unable to recognise it.

And, having set the syllabus, let the Church test and reward their progress in understanding. Adult education is a field still wide open to the Church: from the class-room at parish level, to the gathered group at rural deanery level, to the working week-end at diocesan level. We welcome the appointment of an Adult Education Officer in 1982.

The Church has a great deal to learn from the Open University and the increase in "Distance Learning" and "Home Study" courses and methods.

But we would stress that no course, however advertised or organised will get or deserves to get students, unless it is geared to meet the students' needs and wants in education.

The Church has the personnel to meet the situation. The work-force needs to be organised. There is a task here for our bishops and educators.

### **EDUCATION .... THEN TRAINING**

It is a habit in the Church, when burdened with a sense of failure in some part of its mission, to cry out "training" for all and sundry, clergy and laity, as the remedy.

It is not a good habit. For two reasons. It confuses training with education. Education is the business of providing the basic groundwork. Training, on the other hand, presupposes education. It is the business of shaping, developing and refining facility in a particular art or skill. Education, by all means, for all. Training, by the nature of the case, for some.

In the area of communications, it is a naive doctrine to declare that training doth make experts of us all.

Training, in itself, never made anything. Communication is an art. Training nurtures the desire and ability already there. It affords insights for those who have eyes to see them, and techniques for those with the ability and education to benefit from them.

It stands to reason, therefore, that it is not given to everyone in the Church to be a communicator. Nor, indeed, should it. There is an order about things, an economy, as St. Paul suggested. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" And experience in other fields argues that the Church of Ireland will not become a Church of communicators overnight just because of the introduction of some "training" programme.

### **TALENT SPOTTING**

With these caveats in mind, the Commission is aware that there are people in our Church who are capable of being communicators.

It is not enough, though, to talk of "the talents of our people". The

talents must be spotted, encouraged and cultivated. At the same time, those with the talents must be shown and given the outlets for their talents.

Talent-spotting is everybody's business. The effect, however, is that it becomes nobody's business.

We believe it should be part of the responsibility of those involved with communications in the Church to be in touch with salient people in the dioceses, watching for likely people. Bishops in journeyings often, clergy in pastoral business, head-teachers, Sunday-school teachers .... all are potential talent-spotters, and ought to be recognised as such.

The field is not too vast, but the labourers are many. And the harvest could be incalculably profitable.

What is being looked for is the individual who has the nose to scent something worth communicating, the "nous" to shape it, and the nerve to communicate it.

What training they are given, will, in the long run, be governed by what objectives are set, not only by the Church, but by the individuals themselves.

### **FLING WIDE THE GATES**

Communication begins in excitement. The task for those who train will be to fling wide the gates to the communications field; to educate that excitement, nurturing the urgencies and dynamics that motivated in the first place, spotting and shaping the individual bent and potential.

Training would include helping the communicator to develop his personality; to gain a facility in language; to understand the limitations as well as the possibilities of the media; to cultivate a healthy respect for deadlines and space limits; to have an appreciation for the other professionals in the team; to have an understanding of the techniques involved in radio and television broadcasting, and the subtle differences in approach; to be aware of the different demands made by newspaper and magazine journalism.

And in all things, to know the pain and urgency to "get it right", an urgency born of the conviction that the standard is excellence. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

All this applies to both clergy and laity alike. And, lest any should think that the end product of training is a collection of experts, it ought to be said that all training is no more than an introduction to a lifetime's apprenticeship, in which experience --- and the mistakes --- will improve the performance.

### TALL ORDER

This is a tall order. And the Church of Ireland has neither the finance nor the facilities to meet it.

We would argue, though, that this, in itself, is not a stumbling block.

There already exist institutions and establishments which provide this training at a highly professional level --- universities, colleges of education, the Catholic Communications Centre, the Churches' Television and Radio Centre at Bushey, the Church Information Office in London.

The Commission considers that the Church of Ireland should make full use of these institutions for training those who show talent and aptitude as communicators. The radio and television facility at the Theological College should be seen as only introductory to such training. Given that better facilities exist in these other institutions, we would consider it unnecessary to upgrade, to colour, for example, the facilities in the existing Theological College studio.

It is our experience that the BBC, RTE and IBA are more than generous in the training and encouragement they are willing to give to promising communicators.

It is the Commission's view that a closer liaison between the Church of Ireland and the broadcasting companies would be beneficial for the Church and her trainees.

There is, we believe, a case for developing some kind of secondment scheme.

What is true of the Radio and Television media, is true also of the Press and Journalism.

### RESOURCE MATERIAL

Education, training and communication depend on the easy availability of resource material. The Church of Ireland has resources.

The question is, though, are the resources sufficient and suitable to meet the needs and demands that face the Church operating in today's information-hungry and technologically advancing world where even children are conditioned by television, cassettes and video-tapes.

We have much to learn from other Churches about the responsible use of audio-visual aids in the field of education and communication. In comparison with others, we have not even begun to tap the potential of these media.

That we have the talent to do so, is suggested by one diocese producing a video-tape of its involvement in missionary work. Talent, however, needs to be spotted. And used. Spotted and used by those in the fields who see the need for resources.

There is a need for resource centres.

The R.B. Library, remembering the financial strictures on it, does a magnificent job in serving the Theological College as well as the laity and clergy. It is a major resource. And, in our view, urgent consideration must be given to funding the facilities necessary to meet the curricular needs of the students, and to provide a reading-room there. The provision of an archive store is no less urgent.

The more sales points for educational material the better. We are grateful for the work being done by the Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Religious Education Resource Centre. We believe the efforts of both bodies could be greatly enhanced, and the Church benefitted, by exploring new ways of mutual help and co-operation.

The development of a network of resource centres, using the experience of the prototypes in Belfast, and St. Ann's, Dublin, is a priority. Not simply as storehouses for material, but as active education and information centres. We welcome plans for a resource centre in Londonderry.

## PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

It is, we believe, a matter of urgency that the Church develop a publications programme. The Church at present needs it. The advancing educational programme we visualise for the Church will demand books and pamphlets. We welcome the news of the booklets being prepared by the Bishops.

It is a matter of sadness to us that other Churches make strides in this area while the Church of Ireland so sadly lags behind, leaving our people searching for Church of Ireland answers from other sources.

The "talents of our people", we consider, in this area are abysmally ignored. There is a need for a serious approach to commissioning work from our own writers.

## Hard Sell

**AS PART OF ITS BRIEF**, the Commission was instructed to look at the Church of Ireland's policy on "outward" communications. We understood this to mean the Church of Ireland "selling" itself.

In trying to come at the task, the Commission recognised several basic problems which diminish the possibility of effective communication. It became one of our major concerns to research and deliberate on these obstacles, and, in making a proposal for change, to draw together a number of strands.

The Commission believes the obstacles are well known within the Church. Because they are complex, however, they are regularly ignored. But if the goal is effective communication, these obstacles must not, any longer, be set aside.

We asked ourselves six questions ---

- \* What communication problems derive from the Church of Ireland being a thirty-two county body, with the majority of its people in the North, and its headquarters in the South?
- \* To what extent does the Church of Ireland wish to hard-sell itself as part of the Anglican Communion?

- \* Is the profile of the Church so low key as to be ineffective?
- \* Is the Church geared to communicate guidance to the people of God on social and moral issues?
- \* Is the Church committed to communicating its ministry of reconciliation to as big an audience as possible?
- \* Is there a commitment to leadership in the Church?

The Commission believes the Church has the desire, in theory at any rate, to deal with all these questions positively. But has it the will to put itself out, to galvanise itself into action over a vast range of topics?

### **RAISING THE PROFILE**

There is, as we judge it, a straight line to raising the Church's profile - -- identify the problem; determine the Church's response; communicate the Church's policy. In this we can see a positive task for the Role of the Church Committee and we, therefore, welcome the appointment of a Secretary/Research Officer.

The Church cannot afford, nor has it the right, to wait for opinion to be dragged from it. False modesty does not become the Church. For no less a reason than that human beings are involved. The claim to be a Church of concern requires that we tell people how they might find help. The claim to be a "bridge Church", deeply concerned with reconciliation, requires a centre where people can find practical guidance.

There are too few "shop windows", too few focal points for folks to notice.

Our Church must recognise the goods it has to sell, and set up its stall.

### **CONSIDERABLE TEST**

The Commission gave much time to considering how all these strands, related directly and indirectly to communication, might be pulled together.

A plan emerged which, it is recognised, will prove to be a considerable test of the Church of Ireland's will to succeed.

We would argue that we cannot continue to tack communication on to the workload of the Church by the cheapest possible means.

The Commission, therefore, asks the Church to integrate the practice of communications into its management structure, as happens elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, and in the business world.

We envisage a totally new structure.

### **DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

While the job title is not important, the job function should be controlled by a Director of Information Services (D.I.S.). An integral part of the Church's administration, the Director would run a comprehensive organisation, directed by a board of management, representative of and answerable to the Church through Synod's Standing Committee.

The function, in practice, would provide a centralised unit through which all the communications endeavour of the Church should pass, be that communication internal or external.

The role should also allow for spokesmanship on the Church's behalf on those issues which do not require the time of members of the House of Bishops, and on which the Church already has a published view.

It is the Commission's desire to see our Church demonstrate to its own membership, and to a wider public, its spiritual and its temporal concern for people. For this reason, it is proposed that the Church establish two information centres, one in Dublin and another in Belfast. These centres should be housed and located in such a manner and place that they become shop windows for the Church. They should be accessible to the public, and sell not only the literature of the Church of Ireland, but any material which is of interest and value in religious affairs.

The traditional relationship between the Church and the A.P.C.K. as publishers to the Church of Ireland, should continue to be encouraged, and, indeed, developed.

## **BASED IN BELFAST**

The Director of Information Services should be based in Belfast. We suggest this because all the main Irish media agencies have offices in Belfast, while the Northern media are not adequately represented in Dublin. We believe also that for a senior officer of the Church of Ireland to be based in the North would distribute the administration of the Church more evenly. He would, of course, have proper office facilities and a full-time secretary.

We see the obvious advantages of locating the Director of Information Services in the Talbot Street complex. This would provide our Belfast "shop window". The whole centre, already comprising the Diocesan Office for Connor and Down & Dromore, the Christian Stewardship office, the Church Missionary Society and other Church organisations, with St. Anne's Cathedral and its A.P.C.K. book centre, would together form the focus of the Church of Ireland in the North. We, therefore, recommend that consideration be given to investigating this possibility.

To improve our media servicing in the Republic, we propose that there should be a Deputy Director based in Church of Ireland House, Dublin.

## **CO-ORDINATED EFFORT**

Central to the Commission's thinking is the belief that co-ordination of effort is a key to effective communication. Certain benefits accrue from the appointment of such a key information-director figure. These include continuity of identification, and a positive communications policy administered by an officer with whom the Church can itself constantly communicate.

Perhaps most rewarding of all, the proposal offers an answer to the growing frustration, evident in the existing structure, born of too few people attempting too much, with minimal support and resources.

Information does not always come voluntarily to hand. We need a system which ensures it is collected.

There will be those who will want to argue that the cost (mentioned in Chapter 9) is high. The Commission's view is that quality

communications cannot be achieved without adequate manning levels and salaries.

It will be the prime duty of these professionals to harvest material from many sources, within and without the Church of Ireland, prepare it for publication, and ensure dissemination.

## **INFORMATION CENTRE**

It is fundamental to our proposal that all Church information should pass through the Church of Ireland Information Centre. Obviously, therefore, the Director takes on the present Press Officer's duties, acting as the link between the Church, either individuals or committees, and the media --- radio, television, and the secular and religious press.

The Director is a focal point for queries from the media and the public, assisting in finding and briefing spokesmen, organising press conferences, issuing press releases with information, news or official comment; and making personal contacts.

Besides, these mainly external communications activities, the Director is responsible for helping to improve internal communications within the Church and maintaining close working links with Press and Information Officers of other Churches. The Director's principal concern is with Church facts and opinion, correctly and interestingly presented: not with presenting personal opinions.

To discharge this work effectively requires attendance at central meetings, synods and inter-Church meetings.

An essential part of the work involves monitoring the press and broadcasting; drawing the attention of Church leaders to matters of which they should be aware, and anticipating developments in which the Church of Ireland might make a contribution.

All this is currently attempted from the Press Officer's home in Belfast. That information has flowed at all, is a tribute to him. But it remains, that the present provision gives our Church no reasonable chance of coping with modern demands.

## **DIOCESAN INFORMATION OFFICERS**

One of the prime sources of the information harvested by the Director, of course, will be Diocesan Information Officers (D.I.Os), properly co-ordinated, and whose enthusiasm is regularly primed.

The concept of D.I.Os goes back to 1979. They would now become voluntary support troops, within the new professional structure. Several already operate really effectively. Others have been getting to work more gradually. They need practical support, and the Commission's proposal now puts that on offer.

There are twenty-three D.I.Os, covering virtually the whole of Ireland. Two are laymen, the rest clergy. More laity should be talent-spotted. And that task awaits the professional information team.

The duty of the D.I.O., in essence, is to act as a focal-point for communications at diocesan and parochial level, by developing links with provincial media covering local Church stories.

We consider that, notwithstanding any of our recommendations about future structures, D.I.Os have a vital and continuing role to play at local level. We wish to ensure that henceforth they are officially recognised as part of the Church of Ireland's communications chain.

These Commission recommendations should help that aim ---

- \* Diocesan Information Officers will continue to be appointed by bishops, in consultation with the Director of Information Services, the appointment to be ratified by Diocesan Council. They must have full and active support within the Diocese.
- \* Diocesan Information Officers should be reimbursed by the Diocese for realistic expenses, and not be out of pocket. The possibility of recognition by honorarium is left to local decision.

A higher profile in any area, derived from a better flow of information, will improve the standing of the Church and excite its people.

## **LEADERSHIP QUANDARY**

Repeatedly in submissions and discussions, we were brought face to face with what is best termed "the leadership quandary" in the Church of Ireland. Who speaks for the Church?

It is clear that the General Synod, consistent with its episcopal constitution, is the chief legislative and administrative power in the Church of Ireland. But Synod meets only once a year and its Standing Committee six times a year. The Church and its people live from day to day, and on any day may need leadership.

The prophetic voice of clergy and laity should be heard.

In an episcopal church, it would seem natural to assume that the leadership should come from bishops. The democratic processes of our Church put inhibiting pressures on those who speak for us.

As a result there are times when there is nobody to speak with the voice of the Church.

The kind of leadership we envisage, and which the day demands, needs time for study and reflection. We feel that the workload on our Archbishops and Bishops is so heavy that it may even prevent the kind of leadership required.

We recommend a co-ordinated investigation of the demands made on, and the administrative back-up available to our episcopate.



# Structures

**THE COMMISSION WAS GIVEN** the task of examining the internal communications of the Church of Ireland.

This, we took to mean examining the structures of our Church, and suggesting changes or adaptations of those structures as a means to more effective communication.

In brief, it meant looking at Committees and General and Diocesan Synods.

The Commission felt that, for the most part, membership of committees should be restricted to two three-year periods.

## **STEWARDSHIP ACCOUNT**

A system of periodic "assessment" ought to apply to all committees. The chairman and secretary would present the report to the "parent body" giving an account of the committee's stewardship.

The system has also the effect of assuring the committee that its work and existence matter.

There are four committees concerned directly with communication --- the Publications Committee; the Communications Committee; the Radio and Television Committee; the Board of Church of Ireland Press, Ltd.

For all their common interest in communications, there is no formal link between any of these committees, though there is a small measure of cross membership.

## **COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Commission recommends the establishing under the Standing Committee of a single Communications Management Board.

This would be a working body, taking over the activities of the present Communications, Publications, Radio and Television committees, and Church of Ireland Press, Ltd.

It is to the Communications Management Board that the Director of Information Services would report. His activities, including matters of budget, would be controlled by that Board. We suggest a Board membership of 10/12. The membership should clearly contain the expertise and understanding necessary to support the D.I.S.

## **STREAMLINING ESSENTIAL**

We consider that our structures must be geared for effective communication.

We have advised that committees communicate what they are doing. We would further recommend a fresh study of committee needs and objectives, and, consequently, their size, composition and frequency of meetings.

There is also a need to identify and eliminate areas of overlap and duplication.

Submissions to us have stressed communications blockages between central and related diocesan bodies --- in areas like education, mission and social responsibility.

Streamlining activities in such fields as these, we believe, would benefit the Church. And lead to more effective co-operation with other Churches and voluntary bodies.

In making these comments, we are glad to echo recommendations already made in several chapters of *First of All*.

## GENERAL SYNOD REPORTS

It is not the Commission's intention to comment at length on the structure of the General Synod because a special committee is reporting on "the structure and working arrangements of the General Synod".

We were, however, concerned about the timing of the release of General Synod reports, and its effect on internal communications.

At present, reports are released only three weeks before the General Synod meets. It happens so, largely to avoid having their contents aired in the media before members read them for themselves.

The effect, however, is to stifle valuable pre-Synod discussion.

It is our view that the best interests of the Church would be served if the reports were released to members and the media two months before Synod meets.

## The Cost

**THE COMMISSION** was conscious always that the outcome of its deliberations would cost money. Indeed the General Synod, when it established this Commission in 1981, must have known that one certain outcome would be increased communications expenditure.

Here are the relevant figures in Sterling, and comparisons:

If the proposed new structure had been operating in 1983 the cost to the Church (salaries, national insurance, pension, travel and office expenditure) would have been ..... **£48,500**

The estimate to retain the present position in 1983 is ..... **£18,800**

But this figure is misleadingly low. The present Press Officer will be leaving at the end of this year and a replacement should be costing £22,000 in 1983 including all expenses. But to this should be added £5,500 for full-time secretarial assistance in place of the current part-time arrangement. This would give a total of ..... **£27,500**

Therefore, the net additional cost of the new structure compared with what should have been provided in 1983 is ..... **£21,000**

The Church must accept that future provision should allow remuneration and conditions appropriate to professional journalism.

The Commission believes that given the benefits the Church would derive from the proposed structure, £21,000 should not be considered a daunting cost differential.

Rather it is a small price to pay for a system to co-ordinate our communications effort so that a much greater degree of commitment should emerge. More involvement by motivated people should mean greater financial support, allowing the Commission to hold out the possibility, however tentatively, that a professionalised information service within the Church of Ireland and from it outwards, could be more self-financing than may be immediately apparent.

Indeed the Church would be buying **TIME TO TELL**.

## So the Commission is saying .....

### CHAPTER 1 :: WORSHIP AND PARISH LIFE

- Beware of bland earnestness, failure to renew presentation of worship and allowing liturgy to lack the ring of joyous celebration. Page 5
- Need in services for unhurried and reflective times of corporate worship. Page 6
- New approach to the opening of any service of worship. Page 6
- The sermon is as important an aid as ever. Page 7
- Consider the use of silence in worship. Page 7
- Further material required for use in a revised Church Hymnal. Page 8
- Where Anglican chant is not possible, psalms and canticles can gain from treatment as choral speaking by a seated, reflective congregation. Page 8
- Believe there is a need for more liturgical experimentation, aided by qualified diocesan advisers. Page 9
- Page 45

Lay-clerical sharing in worship can bring about renewal in parish life. Page 9

Establish lay contact to ease clergy burden. Page 9

Pastoral care a two-way process. Page 9

Ensure link with retired clergy and widows. Page 9

Recommends residential conferences as part of in-service training. Page 9

Worship should pay heed to youth attitudes and needs since they are part of the Church of today. Page 10

Recommends that architectural and liturgical advice is obligatory for any select vestry planning major restoration of a church. Therefore a body of qualified advisers should be established. Page 10

To help create a new vision of unity within a diocese a "Cathedral Sunday" is recommended. Page 11

## CHAPTER 2 :: THE MEDIA

The Media expect a professional Church in a professional and competitive world. Page 13

The Church should articulate policy ahead of events rather than react to them. Page 13

Committees of the Church should issue progress reports on work. Page 14

The House of Bishops should, at least annually, meet The Media on an informal basis. Page 14

Page 46

The Church must learn that The Media is a facility to be used to demonstrate the Church as being alive and vibrant. Page 15

## CHAPTER 3 :: THE CHURCH OF IRELAND GAZETTE

The Commission concluded there is no longer a demand for the *Gazette* in its present form and that there is not the news and facility to produce it as a weekly publication. Page 17

New monthly news magazine proposed with guaranteed editorial freedom and designed to pay its way. Page 18

## CHAPTER 4 :: OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Need for centralised advice on the objectives, production methods, layout and economics of diocesan and parish magazines. Page 20

*Search* commended as an aid to study and thought. Page 20

*The Church of Ireland Directory* should be expanded, and edited on a voluntary basis. Page 20

## CHAPTER 5 :: RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

The Church must take seriously the opportunities provided by broadcasting. Page 21

The Church must be prepared to engage the broadcasters and captivate their imagination. Page 22

Page 47

The search for contributors to religious programmes must be constant. Page 22

The Church must show competence and professional confidence. Page 23

The proposed Director of Information Services would ensure the nomination of competent people to speak for the Church. Page 23

The effect on the Church of advanced technology in broadcasting could be devastating if the Church remains unprepared. Page 24

The provision of religious programmes from outside these islands is a matter of international consequence. The Commission recommends that the Church of Ireland expresses its concern within the Anglican Consultative Council. Page 24

Those involved in Church education should actively consider ways in which suitable educational video programme material can be made available. Page 25

## CHAPTER 6 : : EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Need stressed for a realistic programme of Christian education. Page 26

Suggests a thorough canvass of the national Church to make the real content of a positive educational programme abundantly clear. Page 27

Need for a curriculum that encourages Sunday Schools to believe the Church takes them seriously. Having set the syllabus, let the Church test and reward progress in understanding. Page 27

Page 48

Bishops and educators should organise work force. Page 28

Talent in communication must be spotted, encouraged and cultivated through usage. This is everyone's job, from bishops to laity. Page 29

The Church should make use of existing institutions who provide training at a highly professional level. Page 30

Our own TV/Radio studio can be used as an introduction to training but need not be up-graded. Page 30

Suggests closer liaison between the Church and broadcasting companies. Page 30

Urgent consideration should be given to providing the R.B. Library with a reading room and an archive store. Page 31

The provision of a network of Church resource centres is a priority. Page 31

The efforts of A.P.C.K. and the R.E. Resource Centre would be enhanced by mutual co-operation, to the benefit of the Church. Page 31

For the Church to develop a publications programme is an urgent need. Page 32

Commission work from our own writers. Page 32

## CHAPTER 7 : : HARD SELL

The Church can raise its profile by identifying the problem, determining the Church's response and communicating the Church's policy. Page 34

Need to establish focal points which people can identify as centres where practical guidance may be found. Page 34

Our Church must recognise the goods it has to sell and set up its stall. Page 34

Page 49

The Commission asks the Church to integrate the practice of communications into its management structure under the control of a Director of Information Services.

Page 35

The DIS would head a centralised unit through which all the communications endeavour of the Church should pass.

Page 35

It is proposed that the Church establish information centres in Belfast and Dublin with the DIS based in Belfast.

Page 35

The traditional A.P.C.K./Church of Ireland relationship should be encouraged.

Page 35

Examine problems of locating DIS in Talbot Street, Belfast.

Page 36

Deputy Director to be based in Church of Ireland House, Dublin.

Page 36

One of the key DIS tasks would be to develop and co-ordinate the work of Diocesan Information Officers, who would be officially recognised and supported.

Page 38

Besides bishops, the prophetic voice of clergy and laity should be heard.

Page 39

The Commission recommends an examination of the demands made on and the administrative back-up available to our Archbishops and Bishops, aimed at freeing them for study and reflection.

Page 39

## CHAPTER 8 : : STRUCTURES

Membership of committees should be restricted to two three-year periods.

Page 40

Committees ought periodically to give an account of stewardship.

Page 40

Page 50

The Commission recommends establishing a single Communications Management Board to replace four existing bodies concerned with communication. The DIS would report to this Board.

Page 41

There is need for a fresh study of all committee objectives, sizes and relationships at both central and diocesan levels.

Page 41

Concerned about the timing of the release of General Synod reports, the Commission suggests these be available two months before Synod meets, thus providing opportunity for pre-Synod airing.

Page 42

## CHAPTER 9 : : THE COST

Improved and co-ordinated communication, based on the Commission's central proposal, will cost money. We believe the actual additional cost is not only necessary but could also prove more self-financing than may be immediately apparent. We recommend buying TIME TO TELL, not alone with cash, but with commitment.

Page 44

Page 51