

GENERAL SYNOD 2017

Church of Ireland Youth Department Report

Proposer: Simon Henry

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The mission of the Church of Ireland Youth Department is to work with our dioceses, parishes and others in partnership to see young people come to faith and be disciplined into the Church. That's our end goal, to see young people become disciples and for them to make disciples.

Now, that's not an easy task. Church is no longer at the centre of many of our communities. Young people inhabit a world that is increasingly pluralistic and morally relative. An aggressive secularism has crept into modern life that has brought real fear into the lives of young Christians. Yet, they are more than ready to hear about Jesus Christ. They are more than ready to give him their life and take those first steps into discipleship.

As the new National Youth Officer at CIYD, these past six months have been a whirlwind like any new job – so busy and enlightening and overwhelming as I have travelled all over Ireland getting to see youth ministry in action and meeting so many key people, workers and volunteers within the Church of Ireland who make it happen.

Having previously worked as a full-time youth worker for 10 years, I know how vital it is to direct young people towards God and to help them develop their faith. What is also vital to that happening is to establish and maintain quality youth ministry with youth workers and volunteers – this doesn't just happen overnight, of course.

The Church of Ireland Youth Department has limited resources – two new full-time workers and a part-time administrator for the whole island. So, our mission has to be strategic. We work closely with dioceses to help fund their youth ministry, advise on staffing and other issues, and help them with diocesan programmes. We organise area-wide training and events to grow leaders. We liaise with government agencies and others to ensure continued funding and policy developments that protect and enhance youth ministry.

We do appreciate the funding that comes in from Allocations and the Irish Government but we are confident that we are using the resources given to us wisely to return much more back into society.

As we have started this new phase this year for CIYD with a new staff team, there is much to be excited about and, I believe, much more to come. We have just released our new *Strategic Plan for 2017-2020* (copies are available at our stand) and hopefully everyone will have a copy of our new vision leaflet on each seat here in the hall too.

Young disciples are being grown, not just by the work of CIYD but by dedicated youth leaders all over Ireland. We need to bring behind us children, young people and young adults who will do greater things than us. Our success, the success of our church before God, will be measured in their success.

I commend this report to you and ask for you to kindly receive it.