



RADIANT FAITH

Living out the Five
Marks of Mission



FOREWARD

BY BISHOP FERRAN GLENFIELD

Churches, like people, grow old. As they age they can lose energy, vision and even become forgetful. By any standards the Church of Ireland is an old church; it has been around for a very long time.

The Council for Mission exists to encourage, help and remind the Church of Ireland of its primary task. There is a church because there is mission and not the other way round.

Our God is a God of mission, calling people to an allegiance with Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. God commissions his church to mission in partnership with him. In that sense, mission is not a bolt-on to church life. It is not an add-on to everyday Christian living. It is part of the culture of the church, the DNA of every Christian. A telling observation notes, 'Start with church and mission will probably get lost. Start with mission and it is likely that the church will be found.'

This booklet is designed to share Good News stories from across the CoI in its task of mission. The stories demonstrate the Anglican Communion's common commitment to an understanding of God's mission as expressed in the Five Marks of Mission. Our hope is that you will be encouraged and inspired with fresh ideas and new possibilities.



TELL - To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom



TEACH - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.



TEND - To respond to human need by loving service.



TRANSFORM - To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.



TREASURE - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This booklet has been produced by the Church of Ireland Council for Mission with contributions from all 12 Dioceses.

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Out and About

At home and abroad, churches across the island are engaged in mission in many different ways. Many simple ideas are being replicated in different parishes as congregations and individuals seek to live out the five marks of mission. Here's just a taste of what is happening.



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVALS

In recent years, churches across Ireland and Northern Ireland have hosted Christmas Tree Festivals - celebrating Christmas, engaging with their local community, attracting visitors and sharing the nativity story. There are dozens of examples.

In 2015, St. James' Church, Crinken, Shankill, Dublin (Dublin and Glendalough) organised a Christmas Tree Festival as a way to celebrate their church's 175th anniversary. The festival, entitled "Journey to Bethlehem," featured more than 40 Christmas Trees, each one decorated by local schools, community groups and businesses. The trees helped to re-tell the Christmas story in new and innovative ways.

Each tree represented a different Bible verse. There were six-foot natural fir trees as well as others that had been sculpted from books, tins of food, balloons, guitars and even vacuum cleaners. Businesses and groups chose materials that were appropriate to their work (e.g. the car repair garage used tyres to create a tree representing a journey).

Festival organiser Glynis Good described how the project had brought the church together and had helped to build relationships in the community. "It was rather wonderful sitting down with different businesses to look at their Bible verse and consider how they could interpret it," she said. Olly Adams another member of the team added, "The festival was a success before anyone even stepped through the doors of the church and even if no one had come!"

But people flocked to visit the festival and Rev. Trevor Stephenson commented, "The crowds were amazing and the community was moved and blessed by experience."

As well as sharing the nativity story, trees also raised awareness of issues such as the refugee crisis and homelessness, collected donations for the church-run food bank and helped to celebrate and promote services within the local community. A prayer tree gave people an opportunity for personal response - writing prayers on tags that were then hung on a tree.

BLESSING THE NATIONS ON OUR DOORSTEP

Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers... in recent years, people have arrived on these shores seeking sanctuary and a new life. While some have rejected the newcomers, churches across the island have sought to show God's love in practical ways from welcome boxes and cultural exchanges to English classes and befriending programmes.

Working with Connor Diocese, Johanne Martin helps a number of churches to provide English classes for women in Belfast including many from Somalia and Sudan.

"In some of the classes we use a programme that teaches English using Bible stories. But for me it is about so much more than teaching English. I didn't realise how many friends I had until my mother died recently. The ladies all wanted to visit me to share their condolences and to grieve with me.

"People in our communities really want to make friends but so often they are isolated. Individuals and churches need to rise to the challenge. They have been through so much loss. You don't need to be an English teacher to be a friend to someone who is new to your neighbourhood and it is an amazing thing to do. Sometimes it is simple as communicating with a smile! The nations are on our doorstep. How are we going to respond?" she asked.

MESSY CHURCH

Churches right across Ireland have found creative ways to engage with all ages by running “Messy Church” services. Attracting people of all ages and ideal for families, the interactive format of crafts, games, food and storytelling is a gentle introduction to church.

Ven. Andrew Forster from Dungannon (Ardagh Diocese) explained, “People who are involved in the life of the church underestimate how difficult it is for outsiders to walk into the building. Messy church is not intimidating. You don’t have to worry about where you are going to sit or what you have to do. There is a sense of community and togetherness as adults and children make crafts or play games. It is an easy doorway into the life of the church.”



PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS

Prayer spaces in schools provide children and young people with the opportunity to talk to God in new ways. Interactive and creative prayer stations help engage hearts and minds. Easter and Lent prayer spaces in schools across Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, helped pupils to journey through the Easter story with prayers on thankfulness, forgiveness, big questions for God, saying sorry, dealing with worries and fears, and thinking about hopes and dreams for ourselves, for Ireland and the world. One youth worker commented, “It was truly incredible to see the reactions of those using the space and how they could feel God’s presence and speak openly to him about all sorts of things. In one school, a girl exclaimed, ‘Wow! Jesus is a really nice guy!’”

THE ZACCHAEUS PROJECT

Launched in 2011 as a partnership between Armagh Diocese and the Church Army, the Zacchaeus Outreach Project (ZOP) has sought to show God’s love to the Loyalist band community in Northern Ireland. Recognising that bands have been marginalised by many parts of society, including the church, ZOP refitted a bus that now visits band parades to serve free tea and coffee to band members. The project is headed up by Church Army Evangelist - Valerie Thom, who herself was a member of a band for many years. She is supported by a group of faithful volunteers. A leaflet of faith stories from members of different bands is also available at the bus.



JARS4JOURNEYS

Across Ireland people committed to saving small coins in a jar every time they made a motorised journey during Lent 2018. This tiny contribution quickly multiplied with match funding from the Bishops’ Appeal and RCB to support three communities worldwide that are coping with the devastating effects of climate change. And it helped to raise awareness locally of how our actions can make an impact on others - for good or ill.

CREATION CARE – WALKING THE WALK

When it comes to the fifth mark of mission, the challenge is to move from the theory of creation care to the practise. Recently, in the Tullow Group of Parishes, a sample of parishioners were asked to consider 12 ways they could praise the Creator by 'safeguarding the integrity of creation'. Each respondent ranked 12 eco-projects in the order of their choice.

Cashel, Ferns and Ossory has a Diocesan Environment Group, which runs a Diocesan Award Scheme to encourage good environmental practices. For the last two years, this group has organised conferences to equip local Christians to make their parishes more sustainable.

In 2016, Professor John Sweeney of the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change addressed the first conference. Scientists now say that to prevent runaway climate chaos requires that only 20% of worldwide fossil fuel reserves can be burned; the remaining oil, gas, turf and coal reserves have to stay in the ground. The requirement of climate change science is that our future needs to be free from fossil fuel!

In 2017, the second conference was called, 'Inside and Out.' It explored how we can improve the interior and exterior environments of church properties. Areas covered included energy insulation, renewable energy, cost effective maintenance of old buildings and improving the environment for pollinators and biodiversity.

The Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Environment group will shortly be considering a programme for a similar environmental conference in 2018. All suggestions for themes, guest speakers and workshops etc. are welcome by email to the Chairperson, the Ven. Andrew Orr at andreworr1234@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY GYM

In April 2018, Willowfield Parish Community Association (WPCA) opened a free Community Gym in the church's recently refurbished hall complex. The vision was to engage more with the local community, build relationships, and give people the benefits of a fitness facility. "The gym is used by all sorts of people and by different groups throughout the week." said David Jardine of WPCA.

Outreach Coordinator John Menagh added, "We're always promoting health and fitness but most of the time the people who are most in need aren't benefitting from it. This facility is focussed mainly for people who don't have the means to join a gym and those who wouldn't have the confidence to join. It is for people who want to change their life around, who want to get fitter and to change their eating habits but they don't know where to start. This gives them somewhere to come."



PARISH MISSIONS

Parishes and groups of churches around Ireland often run special days, weekend or week-long missions to reach out to their local community. Events for men, women and children help to build relationship and provide opportunities for proclamation and discipleship.

In November, the Killeshandra group in Co. Cavan organised *Killeshandra for Christ* with Archbishop Greg Venables as their visiting speaker. A partnership of churches in Sligo from different denominations including Calry and Drumcliffe parishes hold an annual outreach called *Spring to Life*. And this year, a Holy Week mission took place in Stranorlar, Co. Donegal attracting over 50 people to a Healing Service and engaging with a number of men and women from the community for a Jonny Cash evening!

These special weeks of mission can feature visiting speakers or teams from groups such as New Wine Ireland or Through Faith Missions. "I felt that the good news needed to be shared both with those who were connected with the parish and with those who have no connection," explained Rev. Adam Pullen, Rector of Stranorlar. "Visitors from outside the parish can often take more courageous chances than local people. It is an opportunity to invite people to respond and, during our parish mission, a number of people made a commitment to follow Jesus."



WEDDING DRESS FESTIVALS

Wedding Dress Festivals have provided another opportunity to attract visitors into church buildings and engage with the local community. Festivals have taken place across the Ireland with different flavours and emphases but one of the first, hosted by Magheralin Parish Church in the Diocese of Down and Dromore, found an innovative way to teach Biblical truth by using each wedding dress to represent women in the Bible.

A stunning display of art and fashion, seamlessly woven together with stories of faith, provided the inspirational “Beyond the Veil” experience in Magheralin church in 2015. From Eve to Mary Magdalene’s discovery of the empty tomb, each dress represented 24 women from the Bible. The organisers poured an enormous amount of creativity and imagination into sourcing beautiful dresses from fashion designers, well-known public figures and local artists to symbolise the characters and trace the story of Scripture to its climax at the Resurrection. The final destination was a display of dresses in the chancel, pointing forward to the “wedding banquet” awaiting God’s people in heaven.

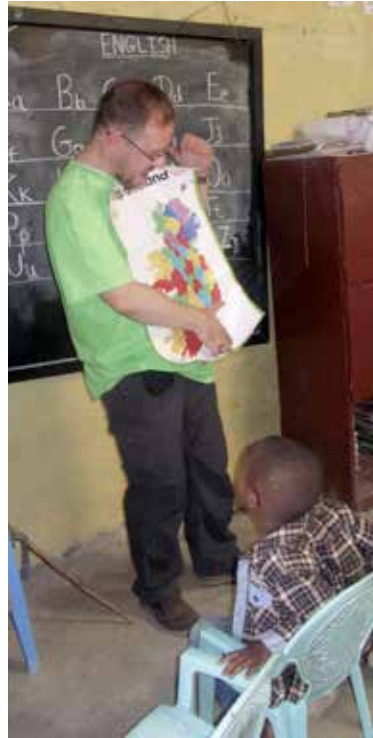
Over the course of a long weekend, thousands visited the exhibition and were treated to guided tours, which helped to bring the stories to life. Funds raised during the weekend went to support a charity working to rescue women who are the victims of human trafficking.



GLOBAL SHAPING LOCAL



When Rev. Adam Pullen became the chair of the Council of Mission, he realised that he had never engaged in Global mission so he jumped at an opportunity to travel to Ethiopia with Tearfund Ireland. Along with a young adult from his parish, Adam embarked on a range of fundraising efforts in his small rural town in Co. Donegal. The wider community in Stranolar and



neighbouring Ballybofey quickly caught the vision and eventually raised €5,000 to support Self Help groups.

Visiting Ethiopia proved life-changing for Adam and had a huge impact on his community back home. Inspired by the stories of those involved in the Self Help Groups, a community Coffee Morning hosted in the Roman Catholic parish centre raised another €1,700 to enable Tearfund partners to set up more groups. And locally, Adam and others have been considering how the example of self-help groups could inspire Irish people to tackle some of their own challenges!



FUEL

During Lent 2018, CIYD produced a new resource to encourage young people to read the Bible every day. Over 4,000 copies of “Fuel” have been distributed with more orders still being placed. The booklets included daily readings from the Gospel of John. In Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, youth workers supported their young people through daily social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. One family did the readings together as a way to support and encourage their teenagers in developing the habit of reading God’s Word.



VIDEO COURSES AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Christianity Explored and Alpha are just two examples of many excellent video resources available to help people explore the Christian faith. Churches across Ireland are hosting these types of courses with significant results.

People within the church often find it helpful to go “back to basics” and think through the central questions of faith. And for those who are unsure, the videos and discussion groups provide a safe space to explore their questions about faith without fear of judgement or condemnation.



“Nua” is a new Irish film series that is ideal for teenagers and helps explore important questions in a fun and non-threatening way. The Nua films are being widely used in schools and youth groups around Ireland.

Follow up courses are also available to help people to go deeper in their faith and to encourage ongoing discipleship and mission. A cross community Growth Group in Blarney, Co. Cork has been meeting for years since being part of an Alpha Course organised by the Carrigrohane group of parishes.

Theresa Cronin explained, “We are nurtured within the group but it is also equipping us to hear God’s call on our life. Because we are in such a wonderful community, we are growing and deepening our relationship with God and we are encouraged to step out.”

OUR EXPERIENCE OF ALPHA

“Alpha has proved a powerful tool in mission for local churches,” shared Rev. Nigel Park, Rector of Bangor Parish Church. “As well as seeing people come to faith in Jesus Christ, we have seen the church gradually being renewed by the Holy Spirit working throughout our ‘Alphas’. That may not be the plural of Alpha, but since Alpha UK has dropped the word ‘course’, it may be the best plural we have. It also illustrates that Alpha is not just an 8-10 week Christian basics course.

“We have run Alpha once or twice a year for the last 14 years. The number of participants has varied from 70 to 10. I write the numbers in that order because often the first Alpha is one of the biggest (attended mainly by church members). Subsequent ones may tend to be smaller until most participants are non-church attenders.

“To maximise the missional potential of Alpha, it needs to become part of the DNA of the church. It is vital to stick to the Alpha recipe, as this evangelism tool has been honed over decades. The life of Christ will spill out from Alpha into your church, so be ready to see your church change. Eating together each week is very important. We have usually served a full meal with tea/coffee each week, either in the church, hall or a local restaurant. The day or weekend away is also very important. For many that is the time when they become open to the love of God and experience him through repentance and faith.

“There is a current trend for running Alpha in small venues best suited to reach certain groups of people, e.g., in homes or coffee shops. All you need is a laptop or tablet to use the excellent online resources.”



LOVE IN ACTION

From small beginnings in 2004, Love in Action Philippines is an Irish charity that works in partnership with churches in the Philippines to empower, train and support Filipino Christians. Based in Roscommon, Steve Frost shared, “It is not a case of us nice people helping those poor people, it is about being a partnership together. They contribute as much (if not more) to us as we do to them. I see myself as being a link between people to help them get involved.”

A woman in Mohill, Co Leitrim came to Steve wanting to do something to help. When Steve suggested collecting second hand glasses, she sprang into action. In the first collection, over 600 pairs of glasses were donated. Pupils from the local Church of Ireland school helped to clean and sort them.

“We send out about 70 to 100 pairs at a time to local churches in the Philippines. Even if the lenses are not right, the frames themselves can be re-used. A single pair of glasses can be life-changing for someone and the stories are so inspirational,” Steve said.

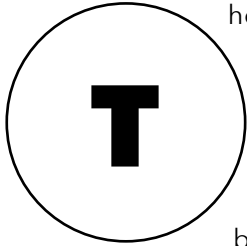
“A Discipleship Training Programme is really the backbone of what we do and we’ve seen over 600 Filipino Christians trained. Projects like the second hand glasses, a feeding programme and other aid distribution have all grown out of that.

“Mission is not an option for the Christian,” Steve added. “Mission is the lifeblood of a church and without it, a church is on the road to no-where. It is about having an outward looking state of heart and as people look outside themselves to the wider world, it is so healthy. Sometimes we can feel small but globally we are part of something dynamic and growing.”

To find out more about Love in Action Philippines check out @linaphilippines on Facebook or email info@linap.ie.

Introducing the Five Marks of Mission

"AS THE FATHER SENT ME, SO I SEND YOU" - JOHN 20:21- 22



The word "mission" means simply "being sent." Christ sends his followers, into the world to share his love and his teaching (Matthew 28:19-20) and to make new disciples whom he will send in their turn. Mission is being sent out, not by any human authority, but by the Lord himself. We are to go in his peace, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yet we do need structure, guidelines and strategies. So the Anglican Communion's 5 Marks of Mission, originally issued by the ACC in 1984, offer this kind of roadmap as we contemplate Jesus' call to "make disciples."

Written by Ginnie Kennerley and William Olhausen of the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland, this brief overview explores the biblical basis for each of the five marks of mission. The material is taken from the more in-depth Lenten Bible Studies developed by BACI to explore the marks of mission. The complete study can be downloaded from bibliahibernica.wordpress.com or hard copies obtained from BACI treasurer Barbara Bergin.

1. TELL - proclaim the kingdom of God



The first mark of mission concerns the announcement of God's revealed purposes for the world in Jesus Christ. Mark's Gospel explains: "Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'" (Mark 1: 14-15) Something new and wonderful was now happening in the world that demanded a decisive response of faith.

St. Mark tells us what the kingdom of God coming near looks like. In his public ministry, Jesus taught people about God, often in parables; he healed people of sickness and demonic oppression; and he gave new dignity to people on the margins of Israel's reli-

gious life: lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors and Samaritans.

Proclaiming the kingdom of God involved words and deeds. Supremely, the kingdom of God also has to do with the death and resurrection of Jesus. According to St. Paul, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has reconciled the world to himself so that the Church, in turn, might carry this message of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor. 5: 19).

We learn from John's Gospel that this proclamation is for everyone, because it originates in the one God who made the world and who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life". (John 3: 16) The other four marks of mission are premised on this imperative to proclaim the kingdom of God.

2. TEACH - teach, baptise and nurture new believers

There is the initial joy of coming to a knowledge and experience of God's salvation as we respond to the proclamation of the kingdom. However, this is only the beginning of a journey that leads initially to baptism, a sharing by faith with Christ in his death and resurrection, and a life-long process of discipleship in which we are re-made into the image of Christ.

The second mark of mission is therefore closely related to the first. In particular, it takes seriously the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28: 19-20). These words of Jesus are echoed in the Book of Acts: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8)

The earliest Christian community, newly



filled with the Holy Spirit, ordered their lives together, devoting “*themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer . . . all who believed were together and had all things in common . . . and day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved*” (Acts 2: 42-47). This has become the ideal for our understanding of what is involved in the second mark of mission: the formation of a new Spirit-breathed humanity.

3. TEND - respond to human need by loving service



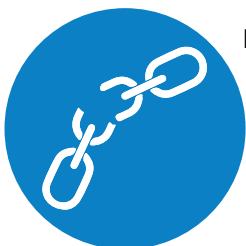
“*As the Father sent me, so I send you . . . receive the Holy Spirit*”, the risen Jesus told the disciples when he first appeared to them (John 20.21) . And why was Jesus sent? “*He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor . . . to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind . . .*” (Luke 4.18)

Proclamation is empty without action. Jesus’ actions to heal and help the hopeless, freeing them from alienation and sin, embodying God’s forgiveness and love, are evident throughout the Gospels.

“Human need”, means the need of any human being, not just those of our own community. “*Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven*” (Matthew 5:44-45). And the parable of the sheep and the goats reminds us that Christ is present in every person in need: “*Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me*” (Matthew: 25:

How are we to live up to this challenge? Perhaps by being “branches on the vine” that is Christ. “*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love.*” (John 15.9.)

4. TRANSFORM - transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence, and pursue peace and reconciliation



It could be that large-scale personal transformation is required before we can effect transformation of communal, national or global structures. We need first to be transformed ourselves (Romans 12:2).

Jesus does not speak of the transformation of society as such, though he mourns its lack of transformation, “*Jerusalem, Jerusa-*

lem . . . that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it” (Matthew 23:37), and “*If you had only recognised on this day the things that make for peace!*” (Luke 19:41). He then goes on to his one act of violence – the cleansing of the temple.

For a specific appeal for social action, we turn to the anger of Israel’s 8th century prophets at greed and injustice and to the universal vision of Isaiah, accepting all nations as God’s children (chs.45 and 66.18 -23) to be cherished for their obedience and punished for their wrongdoing.

The kingdom of God announced by Jesus as the “good news”(Mark 1:15) is seen as the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel and the ensuing transformation as God’s work, which he has begun in Jesus (Luke 4:18-19). God’s rule will continue to expand to the extent that we offer ourselves as channels of his love and his will.

5. TREASURE - strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth



Joyful awareness of the beauty and fruitfulness of God’s creation is found both in the Jewish tradition and in Jesus’ teaching; but the idea of the life of the earth being actually threatened by human greed is less evident. However, it is implicit in Leviticus 25’s command to leave the land fallow every seven years, since the land belongs only to God and must be cherished.

Since Jesus’ time, the misunderstanding of Genesis 1’s instruction “*Let [humankind] have dominion over all living things*”, and “*fill the earth and subdue it*” has resulted in a sense of entitlement, even in conscientious Christians, to harness all creation for our own enrichment. This ignores both Leviticus 25 and Genesis 2’s statement that God “*put the man in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep [i.e. protect] it.*”

Jesus was deeply aware of God’s care for all creation: “*Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*” (Matthew 6:26). We may be “*worth more than many sparrows*” but that only underlines the fact that, as disciples sent by Jesus to do God’s will, we are to care for them, and all creation, as does our Creator.

William Olhausen and Ginnie Kennerley



EXHIBITION BRINGS THE BIBLE TO LIFE (Clogher)



Over 2,000 people flocked to see “The Bible Comes to Life” exhibition in St. Marcartin’s Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen in March. Walking through Enniskillen dressed as Joseph in his coat of many colours, Dean Kenneth Hall helped to promote the exhibition, along with the exhibition staff, all dressed as characters from the Holy Land.

“We had to get into the spirit of the thing. It created an atmosphere in the town and helped to raise the profile of the exhibition,” explained Dean Kenneth, who was delighted with the response. “The exhibition was a huge success. As well as the adult visitors, we had more than 1,000 schoolchildren from 20 different schools. We couldn’t have accommodated any more!”

The exhibition, run by the Church’s Mission to Jewish People, featured a spectacular 3m by 2m model of the Jewish Temple in the time of Jesus along with “Jewish life” artefacts such as Sabbath candlesticks and bread, Jewish prayer shawls, phylacteries, a Passover plate, mezuzah (door post blessings) and a unique Middle Eastern clothing collection.

With its insights into the context of the Bible stories, the exhibition truly “brought the Bible to life,” Dean Kenneth said. “It brought a new per-

spective and gave people an in-depth understanding of the Bible. People came who I had never seen in church before. They were inquisitive.”

On the Sunday morning, Dean Kenneth took his entire congregation into the exhibition to hear interactive talks about different aspects of Biblical life and to explore the various artefacts.

The impetus for the exhibition came from the Clogher Diocese Board of Mission, of which Dean Kenneth is chair. “We had some money to spend and we decided to use it to promote the gospel locally,” he said. “It was very good for the Diocese and I would recommend it to other Dioceses across Ireland.”

WORKING WITH A COMMUNITY IN NEED OF HEALING (Limerick and Killaloe)



Rathkeale was once the largest market town in West Limerick. Today, this is the town with the largest proportion of the population identified as Travellers. The number of Travellers and the communal tensions associated with Rathkeale have drawn extensive media attention, giving rise to headlines that fail to express many positive aspects of life in the town.

Travellers assert that they are often the victims of racism and discrimination, at both an institutional and a

communal level. On the other hand, many residents of Rathkeale mourn the loss of character of the town they knew and still love.

The Rathkeale Pre-Social Cohesion Project is an unusual example of mission in the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe. The project was set up with the support of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church.

Supported by West Limerick Resources and the local authorities, the project seeks to be the voice of faith communities on issues of justice in a place of division that has yet to recognise or accept the need for healing and reconciliation.

Prayer groups, retreats, advocacy and a common witness on Good Friday, as well as being a voice for the voiceless and listening ears for those who fear they are not being heard by others, have all been part of the work.

“We need to listen to all parts of the community and all parts of the community need to listen to each other,” explained Canon Patrick Comerford, the priest-in-charge of the Rathkeale and Kilnaughtin Group of Parishes.

This long-term project meets two of the five marks of mission in the Anglican Communion: to respond to human need by loving service; and to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.

DRUMCLIFFE CENTRE OF MISSION (Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh)



There has been a Christian witness in Drumcliffe for over 1,400 years since St. Columcille (St. Columba) established a monastery on the site. The 9th century high cross and the ruins of a high tower are all that remains from those Celtic times but today thousands of tourists visit St. Columba’s church and its graveyard (the final resting place of Irish poet W.B. Yeats) every year.

Launched in September 2017 in



a dynamic partnership between the Church Army and the local parish, the Drumcliffe Centre of mission seeks to reach out to tourists and locals alike. An important step in this process was the appointment of Malcolm Young as Tourist Chaplain. Here Malcolm shares just one of many experiences he has had connecting with visitors:

“It was a morning like any other. People were wandering around, some chatting, others engaging with me as I told them the amazing story connected to this historic site. A coach party arrived and they sat listening to me.

“Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a man was sitting alone. I felt drawn to him but as I was occupied with my other visitors, I was unable to approach him. As my talk came to an end, the man got up to leave. I interrupted my talk to ask if he would stay for a chat. He was going for tea but said would return. I concluded my talk inwardly praying that this man would come back.

“I was pleasantly surprised when he did return and introduced himself. He wasn’t quite sure why he had ended up in the church but as we talked, he began to tell why he was here alone.

“This poor man had recently lost his beloved wife. He explained that he was from the Mormon tradition but since his wife’s death could find no spiritual comfort. He was wrestling with how God would have left him alone but since he entered Drumcliffe Church he had a feeling that he could not explain but it was comforting to him.

“Over the course of an hour, we sat and talked and prayed. I shared portions of scripture explaining Christ’s love for this man. He said that he was

jealous of those who had the peace of God and we discussed that this peace could be found at the cross of Christ. When he got up to leave I could sense there was a change in him. My new friend had taken positive steps on a spiritual journey.

“Sometimes we can be very busy for God and maybe become weary as we work for the Kingdom, but small incidents can be a real encouragement. I may never see great numbers of people come to faith but perhaps that’s not what God has called me here to do. Perhaps as well as the throngs of people who come through our doors there are also the “ones.”

“Part of the legacy of St. Columba was a community that offered hospitality and drew alongside those who were hurting, lonely or in distress. In the business of all that goes on in this wonderful place perhaps God was reminding me [or all of us] not to forget about the “ones” of this world.”

NORTH BELFAST CENTRE OF MISSION (Connor)



Launched in September 2015, the North Belfast Centre of Mission has since moved into premises (the Connect Base) in Belfast’s Shankill Road. A joint initiative with the Church Army, the centre responds to challenges faced by people in this part of Belfast, including paramilitarism, low levels of employment and educational disadvantage.

The focus of the centre is on building relationships by responding to the needs of the community. In partnership with CAP (Christians Against Poverty), Church Army evangelists befriend and support people who are in debt alongside the CAP Life Skills Training and a Job Club.

The Transforming Lives for Good programme intervenes to support children in danger of early school leaving by providing a mentoring programme. And local churches work with midwives to provide boxes full of Baby Basics for new mums who are struggling to make ends meet.

Demonstrating love in tangible

and practical ways has led very naturally into opportunities to share faith through Messy Church, relational evangelism and special events. One man experienced a real spiritual awakening as a result of attending the Job Club at the base.



Church Army Evangelist Stephen Whitten shared, “I think people in Northern Ireland have an interesting relationship with Christianity and religion. Any mission that is going to be effective will build relationship and work towards making disciples.

“Our service helps to authenticate us. We know and respond to people’s needs. We care about their children’s future. Jesus came to give us life in all its fullness (John 10:10). People know that we are doing this from a place of faith. They know exactly what we are about so that everything we do is a witness. In a place where religion has done a lot of damage and too often the church has been a source of division and tribalism, our hope is that God will use us to demonstrate that Christianity is about love.

“We were planning an outreach for the first weekend of March but the ‘Beast from the East’ scuppered many of our arrangements. Instead, we found different opportunities. We visited one housing estate at the top of a hill. A lot of people were snowed in, so we bought a whole pile of milk and bread and delivered it. I heard the next morning that the talk of the estate was about these ‘crazy Christian’ young people who were giving out bread and milk!”

PREACHING MARATHON IN AID OF WOMEN'S LITERACY PROJECTS OVERSEAS (Cashel, Ferns and Ossary)



In late 2017, Bishop Michael Burrows toured his diocese, visiting every group and union, as well as schools, and preached a series of 66 five-minute sermons based on all 66 books of the Bible. He used the stories of women in the Old and New Testaments to underpin commentary on the present reality of life for women here and abroad. In the process, Bishop Michael raised over €40,000 for women's literacy projects in Africa in partnership with the Bishops' Appeal, Mothers' Union and Feed the Minds.

"This was a journey, through all the books of the Bible, with an emphasis on what is often hidden – the presence and the role of women," the Bishop said. "The tour was about getting out and about in the Diocese, to remind ourselves of how well off we are, highlighting the value of education and the particular importance of educating women.

"Particularly in the developing world, it is women who share the ben-

efits of their education with their families, who work effectively for equality and opportunity and who together hasten the breaking in of the Kingdom of God. In this journey, not only did we consider the gifts and potential of women as humans sharing the image of God, we also explored feminine imagery surrounding the divine."

The series included a range of vital topics including being born equal (Genesis), justice (Exodus), the value of educating women (Joshua), the challenge of welcoming multicultural diversity into one's home (Ruth) and violence against women (2 Samuel – the David and Bathsheba story).

As well as providing a 'refresher' on who wrote what book of the Bible, when and why, the sermons made it clear that there is nothing new under the sun. The challenges we face today might be slightly different from all those years ago but the fundamental problems are the same. True hope for all humanity is there between the covers of God's Word.

FRESH WATER FOR OLTIASIKA IN KENYA (Tuam Killala and Achonry)



On a visit to the Kajiado diocese in Kenya, Bishop Patrick Rooke saw for himself that the water collection and storage facilities in Oltiasika were barely functioning. The water collection system (made up of sheets of corrugated iron) had rusted and was no longer fit for purpose. Three storage tanks were empty and dead animals such as lizards and frogs had fallen into them. At that time many of the people in the outlying villages had to travel 17km to the nearest borehole to draw water.

The Tuam, Killala and Achonry (TKA) Diocese made a commitment to raise money for the "Maji" project (Maji is a Swahili word meaning "water") to completely refurbish and repair the water collection and storage system at Oltiasika in partnership with the Bishops' Appeal and CMS.

The old rusted corrugated iron collection system has now been replaced with a concrete 'apron' funnelling



rainwater off the side of the mountain into the collection tanks. Three collection tanks, each the size of a large swimming pool, have been cleaned out and repaired. One of the tanks now has a cover to keep the water fresh and clear of debris. A standpipe will be fitted to allow for access to the water!

In November 2017, Bishop Patrick and a team from TKA travelled to Kenya for the official opening of the Maji project, which hopes to bring clean water to 3,000 people who live in the area surrounding Oltiasika. Due to drought, the covers for the water tanks were not yet completed and the team could see the immense need for them to protect the water and keep it free from contamination. The Diocesan Link Project has proven a real partnership, with both dioceses learning, growing and being enriched as a result.

GOOD FOR THE SOLE (Meath and Kildare)



A team from Meath and Kildare had the opportunity to travel to India to see for themselves the impact of a Diocesan-wide project to raise money for the Leprosy Mission.

Good for the Sole, ran in two phases and focused on support for people living with leprosy, first by supplying fitted sandals and second by funding reconstructive foot surgery. In April 2017, Emma Rothwell was part of a team of four young people, one university student and four other adults who travelled to India to see the project for themselves.



“While it is good to raise money, it is important for us to meet the people we are supporting,” Emma shared. “We stayed at the centre at Karigiri hospital where there is also a medical training centre, a rubber plant and a sandal plant that produce the sandals we had helped to fund.

“We spent the week touring around and we also visited a vocational training centre for young people whose families have been affected by leprosy. Having young people on the trip was important because when they came into the room, the young people in the training centre relaxed and the atmosphere changed.

“One evening, we went to a prayer meeting at the nursing training school. There was a lovely moment when we finished our time of worship and our young people were just chit chatting with the nurses.

“We were overwhelmed by how all encompassing the work is - it is a whole way of life. The medical staff members live on site. At weekends, they share meals with people. It was amazing to see the Christian ethos in the hospital. Every person we met was massively driven by their Christian faith. It made such a difference to the way they worked. Some of the doctors were award-winning doctors and could easily have found high-paying jobs in western countries. Instead they have chosen to remain in India serving people with leprosy!

“From a faith perspective, this exposure to all-life mission was really moving. Team members experienced a massive sense of gratitude for the privileges we enjoy and we all benefited from being exposed to a different

culture. Many had been nervous about travelling but they had to trust God in an adventurous way. The whole trip made a lasting impact.”

ANOTHER CHANCE (Derry and Raphoe)



Set at the top of a hill in the city of Derry / Londonderry, Glendermott parish church overlooks the Tullyally housing estate, a place of high unemployment and social deprivation. Traditionally, this was also a place of sectarian tension between predominantly Protestant and predominantly Catholic areas.

Attempts to attract locals into the church had failed so during the Diocesan Year of Opportunity (2016) the church decided to go to the community. Joanne Miller had the vision for “Another Chance” - a charity shop and outreach centre in the Glendermott Valley Business Park, right at the heart of the Tullyally estate.

The centre sells second-hand goods including high quality furniture, adults’ and children’s clothes, homeware, toys and games, books, DVDs, and craftwork. Its café offers homemade soup, pancakes, scones, tray-bakes and toasted sandwiches, along with tea and coffee, and the centre also has a prayer room.

More importantly, it has become a place of relationship and connection with the local people. Volunteers from the community have joined the team of volunteers from the

church to provide a much-needed service of befriending and practical support.

Building relationship has been vital, Joanne explained because it has helped members of the community to see that the local Christians are “normal” people. This in turn has opened gentle opportunities for sharing faith and responding to spiritual as well as physical needs. These relationships have also helped in the on-going work of peacemaking in the area.

The floods of August 2017 dev-



astated much of the Tullyally estate, including Another Chance. Three feet of flood water destroyed everything in the charity shop and the clean up operation took six months. As well as coping with their own flood damage, the church sought to respond to the many local people whose homes were flooded.

Another Chance finally re-opened in March and Joanne believes that the floods have been a blessing in disguise - “We’ve been able to revamp and freshen up the premises and to re-organise it in a way that is even more effective,” she explained.

The centre now opens six days a week and is manned by 40 volunteers. Working in partnership with Christians Against Poverty (CAP), there are plans for debt management and life skills workshops that are extremely relevant for the Tullyally community. There are also plans to run monthly praise services in the centre.



MOIRA YOUTH TEAM VISITS UGANDA (Down and Dromore)



Set up to build bridges between the church and the local community, the LOGIC drop in centre and youth programme is an initiative of St John's Parish, Moira. Since 2001, it has offered teenagers a safe and friendly envi-



ronment in which to socialise, make friends and experience new challenges.

"The aim was to show Christ's love in action and our hope was through relationship and consistency, it would inspire young people to ask questions about faith. That is exactly what has happened," explained staff member, Matt Peach. "We work with 250 young people a week from a wide range of backgrounds."

Over recent years, the Diocese has supported a project in Southern Sudan and the LOGIC group got involved in raising money to support a medical team. Plans were developed with CMSI for a team from LOGIC to visit South Sudan in 2017 but the deteriorating security situation made the trip impossible. Instead a team of ten young people and three leaders travelled to visit another CMSI partner in northern Uganda, which has become home to thousands of refugees fleeing from South Sudan.

The team stayed in the Vocational Training College in Arua, joining in with classes and activities and helping with some maintenance. This gave opportunities to get to know some of the Ugandan and South Sudanese students. One of the most memora-

ble days featured a visit to the Rhino Refugee Camp – a swelteringly hot, dry place that is 'home' to over 60,000 people.

"It was an amazing trip for all of us," Matt shared. But for one 20-year-old LOGIC graduate going to Uganda was life changing. "He was an atheist and we have been speaking to him for years about Jesus. As we were setting off, each team member was given

a Bible and during one of the long flights, this young man began to read. He had some questions about prayer and randomly opened the Bible at just the passage where Jesus says, 'This is how to pray.' That was no coincidence. The second night of the trip, he gave his life to Jesus."

The team spent time helping out in a local farm and building a bridge, as well as building relationships with the students and the vocational college. There was a lot of football involved and opportunities to hear, first hand, the harrowing stories of refugees who have fled horrific circumstances in South Sudan. Encountering the vibrant faith of many of the Ugandan and Sudanese people also made a big impact on the team.

LIVING AS A HOPE-FILLED COMMUNITY (Cork, Cloyne and Ross)



A congregation in Carriagline, Co. Cork is finding innovative ways to apply the fifth mark of mission (Creation Care) to every aspect of their church life and witness.

Rev. Elaine Murray explained, "I have always been interested in environmental issues. When I was appointed to Carrigaline Union of Parishes, we decided to become a Fair Trade parish and to work towards becoming an Eco Congregation. I feel the two things go hand in hand.

"It took about 18 months to become an Eco Congregation and it involved making small changes to our parish life. We introduced recycling and stopped using plastic cutlery or cups. For big events, we now buy 100% compostable cups. We have a compost in the rectory and changed the policies of the gardening in the churchyards, eliminating insecticides and making the whole area bee and butterfly friendly.

"We've built an appreciation of creation into our liturgy throughout the year. On Rogation Sunday, I give out seeds to children and we have a competition for the tallest sunflower at harvest time."

Working with Tidy Towns and partnering with other churches to organise joint services and events to celebrate and appreciation the beauty of creation, have all enriched parish life.



"For my Masters thesis I explored 'Living Hopefully in a Time of Climate Change.'" Rev. Murray added. "There is a continuum between despair and denial. Christian communities are 'hope-filled' communities and we are called to be that voice of hope in a time of climate change. It is imperative that we apply our Christian values to our daily lives. We are talking about the legacy we leave for our children's children!"



A CHURCH FOR ALL AGES (Ardagh)



St. Anne’s Church in Dunganon has worked hard to connect and engage with all ages through a range of projects that express their values of love and service. Ven. Andrew Forster explained, “We find normal activities that people enjoy and use that as a way of building community.”

Each May, “Fit for Life” attracts women to a programme of exercise and healthy eating and helps to bring them into the life of the church. The participants enjoy a “crawl, walk or run” (the “crawl” being a gentle stroll) and then return to the church for a healthy supper. At the end of the evening, someone shares a faith story - missionary Maud Kells is speaking at the first event in May this year.

A church football team is attracting young men for regular training sessions and matches against other churches. After the match, the church puts on a meal or a BBQ and someone gives an epilogue. The main aim is building friendships but there are also opportunities to share faith.

Thursday is market day in Dunganon and so on a Thursday morning, the church introduced a “Shoppers Service,” which is now attended by around 60 people. The short service is followed by tea and coffee and has become an important weekly event, predominantly for many of the older folks in the community.

A monthly youth congregation meets together with those who attend the church’s traditional Sunday evening service and now attracts around 150 teenagers.

“Proclamation is at the heart of

all of the things we are doing to reach out. People respect what we are about but, as a church, you have to be very intentional about it,” Ven. Andrew shared. “We have also developed small discipleship groups for our young people led by young adults in the church. These groups help the teenagers to grow in their faith together as they study the Bible together.”

HEALING ROOM (Dublin and Glendalough)



For the last eight years, a rural parish in Co. Wicklow has been opening the church every Thursday evening as a “Healing Room” - providing opportunities for people to receive prayer.

Canon Roland (Roly) Heaney from the Dunganstown Union explained, “People still believe in the power of prayer. Usually, they come because they feel a deep need. We don’t advertise but word of mouth is such that people hear about it and come, sometimes from as far afield as Dublin and Kilkenny. There can be up to eight people with usually around 50% from outside the church.”

People are amazed at the sense of peace they experience when they walk into the church. “They experience the presence of God,” Roly said. “For me, mission must be about connecting people with God and that is what we are trying to achieve. People are not saying, ‘There is no God.’ They are saying, ‘Show me your God.’ They want to know that God cares and can help them.

“We had a person come in feeling suicidal and we prayed God’s peace into her life. She came the following week to give thanks to God because her life had been so much better and she wanted to bring a friend,” Roly shared.

A small team of people has been trained in prayer ministry and there are careful guidelines (e.g. confidentiality, etc.) for the work. “It has to be a ministry that is led by the Holy Spirit and you have to love people. If you do it for any other reason, it cannot work. You cannot be judgemental. We may be dealing with very vulnerable

people and we need to be clear that we are not counsellors. We listen to people and to their story and offer to pray into their situation. People come for physical healing but also for emotional healing or when they are going through a personal crisis.”

Some have received complete healing; others find comfort in receiving prayer and a listening ear. The team is careful to ensure those who need medical attention or profession counselling are referred to the appropriate services. “We tell people if your doctor put you on medication, your doctor must be the one to take you off it,” Roly emphasised.

“We have seen more people come to faith on Thursday evenings than in any other ministry in church,” he added. “People ask about the peace they are experiencing and you can lead them very gently to Jesus. They experience God and they know that he is loving and good. Their pre-conceptions are gone.”

Roly recalls one man who came into the Healing Room with Stage 4 Cancer. As they prayed, Roly sensed that this man had unresolved issues in his life. The man said he could picture Jesus standing in front of him and one by one, he handed the issues over to Jesus. Afterwards, he walked out of the room completely transformed and later emailed that he had experienced such a sense of freedom and release. He died two weeks later but Roly shared, “I believe he was healed that night!”



RESOURCES FOR MISSION



CMSI - Facilitating two-way links between churches throughout Ireland and churches in other parts of the world, making connections to equip God's people and transform lives. Contact: Jenny Smyth on (028) 90775020 (NI). Email: info@cmsireland.org Website: www.cmsireland.org



Crosslinks - making Christ known by teaching God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit through gospel partnerships that cross cultural boundaries. Contact: Rev David Luckman on (028) 90796028 (NI). Email: dluckman@crosslinks.org Website: www.crosslinks.org



The Bible Society NI - reaching everybody with God's word through Bible translation, publication and distribution and literacy programmes. Contact: Catherine Little on (028) 90326577 (NI). Email: info@bsni.co.uk. Website: www.bsni.co.uk



Intercontinental Church Society (ICS) - supporting English speakers living, studying, working or holidaying away from home by planting and growing international churches and by outreach to tourists. Contact: Very Rev John Dinnen on (028) 44811148 (NI) Email: jdinnen@btinternet.com. Website: www.ics-uk.org



Irish Church Missions (ICM) - Contact: Olive Stewart on (01) 8730829 (ROI) Email: info@irishchurchmissions.ie. Website: www.irishchurchmissions.ie



The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland - supporting those affected by leprosy with projects in Nepal, India, Ethiopia and Nigeria. Contact: Joanne Briggs on (028) 92629500 (NI) or Email: info@tln-ni.org. Website: www.tln-ni.org.



Mission to Seafarers - Providing a friendly Christian welcome onboard ships with practical support, emergency assistance, pastoral care and services of prayer or Holy Communion. Contact: Rev Colin Hall-Thompson on (028) 90751131 (NI) Email: colin.hall-thompson@mtsmail.org Website: www.missiontoseafarers.org



SAMS - Working in partnership with churches in the UK, Ireland, Iberia and South America. Resourcing churches and communities through leadership development and training. Contact: Bishop Ken Clarke on (028) 38310144 (NI) Email: info@samsukireland.com. Website: www.samsukireland.com



Tearfund Ireland - working through local churches and Christian partners to unlock people's potential and bring an end to poverty. Contact: Emma Lynch on (01) 8783200 (ROI) Email: enquiries@tearfund.ie. Website: www.tearfund.ie



Wycliffe Bible Translators - working with churches, organisations and individuals to ensure all people have access to God's word in a language that they truly understand. Contact: John Hamilton on (028) 90469905 (NI). Email: jhamilton@wycliffe.org.uk. Website: www.wycliffe.org.uk

PRACTICAL HELP FOR PARISHES

Alpha and Youth Alpha

Visit www.alpha.org.uk (NI) or www.ireland.alpha.org (ROI) for details and resources.

Bishops' Appeal - partnering with mission agencies to provide health, education, rural development and disaster relief where most needed around the globe and raising awareness of global issues among churches in Ireland. www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org

Children's Resource - ideal for Sunday schools and youth groups to help children and teens to explore global mission (currently used by 60 churches each year). www.cmsireland.org/resources/annual-project.

Christians Against Poverty

Visit www.capuk.org to find out more.

Christianity Explored

Visit www.christianityexplored.org

Discover - a discussion series for adults exploring the biblical story of mission. www.cmsireland.org/resources/discover

Exodus - A Christian youth discipleship organisation, working with local churches in Northern Ireland and the North West of Ireland - www.exodusonline.org.uk

Lessons from Rwanda - an excellent resource to help churches explore reconciliation, forgiveness, justice and confession. Contact info@thriveireland.org

Messy Church - church for all ages focusing on creativity, hospitality and celebration - www.messychurch.org.uk

NUA Film Series - a film series exploring questions about the Christian faith produced in Ireland and ideal for youth groups or school settings - www.nuafilmseries.org

THE ASSOCIATION OF MISSION SOCIETIES

AMS brings together ten Mission Agencies to serve and support the Church of Ireland to engage more actively in mission. These agencies share a common desire to help parishes extend their current capacity for local and global mission.