

General Synod 2022

Council for Mission Report

Proposer: The Revd Tim Wright

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Archbishops, Bishops and colleagues,

Last year I made my maiden speech to the online Synod sitting at my dining room table. I seconded this report which was proposed by my friend and colleague the Revd Adam Pullen as he stepped down from chairing this important committee. Until the end of February I was Dean of Kildare. I now serve as Ministry Director of a UK-based home mission agency working amongst the British military.

This year it is my privilege to propose our report. This is a fantastic committee to be a part of and chair. It is full of some of the most passionate and committed members of our Church. Synod will remember that unlike many committees, membership is drawn from each of our dioceses, the House of Bishops, our Theological Institute, Mission Agencies and ecumenical partners.

I think it was the war-time Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who said that the Church is the only organization that exists solely for the benefit of those who are not yet its members.

And this is my first plea especially to the House of Bishops and others. Some dioceses have not taken up their seats and so are not represented on the committee. This is an opportunity to influence the mission and ministry of the Church in both Provinces, from Mizen to Malin, in urban, rural, suburban and dormitory towns. These are exciting and important times for the Church on this island and here we have the ability for foster best practice, share good ideas and encourage one another.

I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's illustration of the Church as a body in 1 Corinthians 12. If we are to proclaim afresh the good news to this generation and serve the whole island then we all need each other.

Present

Over the year's Synod will have heard that the focus of our work, alongside so much other work done in our Church has focussed on the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission. Simply put these are to Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure. One project has been to produce short videos. This year we launch two. I want to pay tribute to the Revd Johnny McFarland of Derry and Raphoe who is seconding this motion. Johnny has led this project with passion and skill. With Synod's permission I would like to show one of these videos now. We launched the other of this year's videos at this morning's Mission Breakfast on Treasuring creation. All our videos are online and worth watching. I want to thank those who organised the breakfast this morning. If you didn't make it – then there is always next year.

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[Discipleship video to be shown at this point]

Thank you. Other projects that have occupied us over the last year and Synod will recognise that most of these are not the sole preserve of our committee. We have been encouraged by the development of Pioneer Ministry, Youth and Children's work including Messy Church, resourcing the offering of online Church and discipleship. Adam Pullen and I have engaged with the other Anglican Churches on these islands in the Anglican Consultative Council season of Discipleship. Encouraging the people of God to live a Jesus-shaped life must be a priority for each Church in its different context. We have been greatly helped by some of the resources coming from the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough. There are many Christian organisations, in Ireland and overseas, that produce wonderful tools. The committee is happy to be a point of contact for the Church.

Future

This is an exciting time for mission in the Church of God. At home the opportunities are great. Ireland, North and South, is changing as we come out of two difficult years. Women and men have faced death and some of them are asking the important questions. Questions that our Lord Jesus Christ answered.

Through the times since we last met in person there have had new opportunities to tell the greatest story ever told, to teach the faith in new ways and to tend the grieving, the sick and the dying. Things the Church of Ireland does well. The Church has spoken out and sought to transform society. Through the work of Eco Congregation Ireland we as a Church are exploring what it means to treasure God's creation. There is more in the Treasure video.

Several bishops who will have attended the Lambeth Conference in England will be in Belfast in August and the Council is pleased to be able to partner with the Association of Mission Societies in sponsoring this visit. Please look out for more information and be encouraged by what God is doing elsewhere in the world where the Church is growing.

It was another Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, whose picture hangs proudly in Kildare Cathedral who said that 'the Church is just one generation away from extinction.' Across the world the Church is growing. Here in Ireland there are green shoots of growth and the Council exists to help the Church be the Church. Sisters and brothers, God is at work.

An Indian evangelist once said that evangelism (and by which he could mean mission of the Church) is like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

I stand here to propose the motion and to ask Synod to appoint the following people to the Council of Mission. Before I close, I want to pay tribute to the committee for their hard work and especially to the Revd Colin McConaghie whose contribution as secretary is invaluable. I move the motion.