

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2009

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION

Report to the General Synod 2009

Membership (January 2009)

Rt Rev Harold Miller	House of Bishops
Very Rev Stephen Lowry	Synod
Rev Bobbie Moore	Synod
Mrs Felix Blennerhassett	Synod
Vacant	Synod
Rev Paul Hoey	Synod
Vacant	Synod
Mrs Paddy Wallace	Mothers' Union
Mr Shane Tucker	CIYD
Mr Martin O'Connor	Bishops Appeal
Mr Thomas Wilson	Methodist Church
Vacant	AMS
Mr John Doherty	AMS
Mr Geoffrey Hamilton	AMS
Ms Linda Chambers de Bruijn	AMS
Captain Colin Taylor	AMS
Vacant	Cashel
Vacant	Cashel alternate
Rev Ian Jonas	Cork
Rev Eileen Cremin	Cork alternate
Mr Colin Ferguson	Down
Dr Trevor Buchanan	Down alternate
Rev Peter Galbraith	Connor
Miss Diane Rhodes	Connor alternate
Rev Bryan Martin	Clogher
Rev Robert Kingston	Clogher alternate
Rev Geoff Wilson	Kilmore
Vacant	Kilmore alternate
Vacant	Meath
Mrs Daphne Wright	Meath alternate
Very Rev Maurice Sirr	Limerick
Ven Wayne Carney	Limerick alternate
Vacant	Tuam
Vacant	Tuam alternate
Rev Canon Derek Creighton	Derry
Rev Ken McLaughlin	Derry alternate

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Vacant	Armagh
Mr Tom Stephenson	Armagh alternate
Rev Ken Gibson	Dublin
Rev Cliff Jeffers	Dublin alternate
Miss Mavis Gibbons	Co-opted
Rev Canon David Brown	Co-opted
Mr Ian Smith	Co-opted

Alternates will attend when the principal representative is unable to.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES for 2009:

1. To provoke members of the Church of Ireland, at every level, to think what it means to be mission-shaped in Ireland today. We will do this by continuing the Joint Mission Process with the Methodist Church in Ireland;
2. To facilitate the employment of new forms and patterns of ministry conducive to mission. We will do this by building on the pilot Mission Shaped Ministry Course and by clarifying how permission for pioneer ministry and church plants might operate;
3. To encourage local churches to think strategically about mission through the provision of simple resources;
4. To enable already existing information to be used for mission purposes.

Membership

Rev Eileen Cremin has been appointed the Cork alternate.

Mr Ian Smith, Director of CMSI, was co-opted as a member.

Rev Canon David Moynan and Rev Canon Michael Barton have offered their resignations after periods of valued service.

Rev Bryan Martin and Rev Robert Kingston have been appointed for Clogher.

Methodist Ministers' Retreat January 2009

An invitation was received to nominate four representatives to the Methodist Ministers' Retreat in January 2009. Bishop Graham Cray and John Drane spoke on "The Character of Leaders".

It was remarkable how much overlap there was between the conference agenda and issues currently focused on the Council. Rev Paul Hoey and Rev Bobbie Moore attended along with Rev Ruth Jackson and Rev Bryan Martin and were warmly received. Rev Bobbie Moore's report is available from the Secretary on request.

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Joint Mission Process

The process initiated by the Covenant Council to encourage the two partner Churches to work together in mission continues. While the Covenant Council continues to support the process, ownership and responsibility is now shared between the two central mission bodies of the Churches. The Joint Mission Working Group co-ordinates the events.

A focus on Fresh Expressions of Church is intended to enable all sorts of churches to explore what it means to be mission-shaped in Ireland today.

The second event in the process was a Day Conference held on 23 April 2008 and facilitated again by Steve Croft. The key issues addressed were Leadership, Permission and Ecclesiology. A DVD featuring Wells Church, Moneyrea, and the Rivers Project, Carrick-on-Shannon, was used as a discussion starter and distributed to all participants. Most feedback on the whole was very positive with a strong desire that there should be further such events.

The third Day Conference was entitled “A Beginner’s Guide to Church” and led by Mike Moynagh and Tony Hardy. DVD footage of the C3 cell church in Marple gave a practical example to complement the clear teaching about fresh expression churches that was a feature of the day.

The Council spent some time reviewing the process to date and reckoned that it had already achieved a measure of success in the original aim of prompting the two denominations to assess how mission-shaped they are. A by-product is that some individuals and local parishes are now moving more intentionally towards a fresh expression kind of ministry. Although the language creates difficulties for some it has been useful in creating an openness to new ways of being a church shaped for mission.

The Working Group is planning the next stage of the process, a series of regional road shows.

Permission Giving

Participants in the Joint Mission Process requested the Council to examine the issue of permission for pioneer ministry and church planting in the Church of Ireland. Specifically, the Council was asked to look at the Bishops’ Mission Order legislation of the Church of England and to bring forward specific recommendations to enable such pioneer ministry to be deployed in the Church of Ireland. A joint working group was set up with the Commission on Ministry to take this forward. Captain Colin Taylor, Shane Tucker and Ian Smith were appointed to represent the Council and Rev Ted Woods, Roy Totten and Andrew McNeile to represent the Commission on Ministry.

The group agreed that there is a need for training and for leadership for a wide diversity of mission situations and on the need to deploy and release pioneer ministers in the church. It is pursuing ways for this to happen, taking into account the Bishops’ Order legislation in

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England, although it was recognised that the Church of Ireland would probably also find some more informal ways of dealing with permission giving.

Research

Rev Ruth Jackson shared her research on New Church Developments in Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in the Republic of Ireland with the Council.

She noted that attendance at weekly mass in the Roman Catholic Church has halved over 30 years and the proportion of younger people aged 34 and under attending has dropped dramatically. She suggested that of the increasing number of de-churched people around 70% are “closed” to re-involvement.

Each of the three denominations (proportion of) 6.8(y)-6.3(ounger) 6.8(people) 19.6127 0 TD(aged 3-6.3(sd s)5.7oople) k.8(pe(dramat

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however, a suggestion, yet to be tested, that for some prospective participants it may be too wordy and theoretical.

The Council has commissioned a report into the content of the course and its suitability for the Irish context and who might benefit most from participation.

Synod Breakfast

The 2008 Mission Breakfast was held in St Nicholas' School, Galway. This proved to be an excellent venue and the parishioners of St Nicholas, Galway, and the school staff, excelled themselves in the arrangements, meal and welcome.

Ed and Jean Ritchie from Killarney Methodist Church, and Very Rev Patrick Towers, spoke effectively on the subject of welcoming the immigrant. In their sharing of stories of individuals and of the transformation of churches it emerged that in both situations hospitality, welcome and involvement were key.

Considering the new format for the 2009 Synod it was agreed to experiment with an event at 8:30 am on the Saturday morning with coffee and scones from 8:00 am. Rev Dave Bookless (A Rocha UK) will speak about mission and the environment.

Mission Strategy and the Church of Ireland

The Council has prepared the first two in a series of mission strategy leaflets, dealing with mission support and finance (attached)

The subjects for the series are as follows:

1. Strategy for mission
2. Supporting mission (finance)
3. Parish representatives
4. The person in the pew – my involvement in mission
5. Mission in prayer and worship
6. On our own patch - being a mission-shaped church locally
7. Resources for mission - practical ideas

The first two documents will be distributed initially to all stipendiary clergy and synod members and made available on the Church of Ireland website.

Mission Statistics

The Council is pursuing plans to implement the 2008 Synod's endorsement of the Council's effort to gather statistics for the purposes of mission.

It has consulted with the Ven Bob Jackson, a noted expert in this area, concerning methodology, a system for recording information and means of interpretation.

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Compiling accurate figures for key aspects of church life will help to

- Dispel myths
- Provide an accurate picture of where we are at as a church
- Give an opportunity to analyse trends
- Identify challenges and opportunities
- Adopt an agreed national system for gathering information

Other churches and provinces do this exercise and most of the information needed for us to do it in Ireland is already available in the local parishes but not centrally.

Replies from the dioceses to an earlier questionnaire about what figures are already compiled indicated, at best, a patchy picture. A few dioceses are already compiling figures for attendances at services, and numbers of baptisms, confirmations etc, but most are not.

The information that is available in preachers' books would indicate

1. Numbers in congregation and frequency of services
2. The numbers of separate congregations
3. Figures at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and other key times
4. A basis for comparison over set periods, say 5 or 10 years.

The Council invited dioceses to submit samples of the kinds of forms already used to collect statistical information and on the basis of this, and in consultation with the Diocesan Secretaries, has compiled a standard form (attached).

The Council is currently seeking to identify a researcher to shape and analyse the information.

The intention is that piloting will begin with three dioceses at the start of 2010 and that that the process will be reviewed with the Diocesan Secretaries after the first year.

Mission Networks

Rev Paul Hoey represents both the Church of Ireland and the Irish Council of Churches at the Global Mission Network, one of five forums of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. An incredible amount of useful information is shared at these meetings. Over the past year there were days on the themes of "Mission and the environment" and "Mission and Immigration", both very relevant to the Church in Ireland. Much of the information is available on the website www.globalmissionsnetwork.info/.

The current major focus for many of the major global mission networks is the Edinburgh 2010 World Mission Conference, celebrating the centenary of the first ecumenical world mission conference.

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Global Mission

In reviewing the business of the Council there was a recognition of the need to facilitate a balance between global and local mission. The intention is to focus on a particular world mission theme, presented by one of the agencies on a rotation basis, at each meeting. Time is being set aside for exploring how this might work

Mission News and Prayer

An important part of each meeting is the time spent finding out what mission agencies, dioceses and individuals are doing in terms of mission and in praying for these initiatives.

Motions

1. The Synod recognises the importance of the Council for Mission's work to explore forms of church appropriate for a new mission environment and requests the Council, in partnership with the Commission on Ministry,
 - a. to continue to explore the area of pioneer ministry and in particular how such ministry, lay and ordained, can be developed, resourced and facilitated; and
 - b. to bring forward specific recommendations, taking into account the Bishops' Mission Order legislation of the Church of England, to enable such pioneer ministry to be deployed in the Church of Ireland.
2. The Synod affirms the Council for Mission in its efforts to encourage every parish in Ireland to develop a mission strategy, and recommends to parishes the use of the series of leaflets being made available by the Council, as an opportunity to review their approach to mission and to set up mission support groups or appoint parish mission link persons.

Appendices

1. Mission Giving in the Church of Ireland
2. Diocesan statistics form

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APPENDIX A

MISSIONARY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CHURCH OF IRELAND 2009

Society	Donations £ Stg	Donations Euro
Bible Society (NI)	17,916	0
Church Army	73,693	0
CMSI	0	783,030
Church's Ministry among the Jewish People	20,183	869
CPAS	32,874	0
Crosslinks	140,220	0
Dublin University Far Eastern Mission	0	5,075
Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur	2,397	0
Feed the Minds, Ireland	0	0
ICS	8,483	0
ICM	40,000	0
Interserve	0	0
Jerusalem and Middle East Church	0	0
Leprosy Mission	75,860	6,943
Mission to Seafarers	13,168	0
Mothers' Union	209,000	0
National Bible Society	0	16,539
Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge	0	0
Tearfund	0	0
SOMA	3,556	0
South American Missionary Society	189,027	12,220
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	0	0
Total	826,377	817,733

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Church of Ireland
GROWTH | UNITY | SERVICE

Council for Mission
COUNTING ON GROWTH

Diocese: _____
Parish: _____
Church: _____

OCCASIONS:

BAPTISMS¹

to 1 yr 1 to 12 13+

CONFIRMATIONS²

to 12 yr 13 to 18 18+

MARRIAGES³

FUNERALS⁴

FESTIVALS:

EASTER⁵

communicants total attending worship

CHRISTMAS⁶

CHURCH ATTENDANCE 1st Four Sundays in OCTOBER⁷

Sunday:	All:	Adults:	Under 16:	
Four Sundays in October	All at worship on Sunday	Adults attending weekday services & worship events	Number attending worship services and/or children's activities on a Sunday	Additional number attending weekday services and worship activities
Sunday ___ October				
Sunday ___ October				
Sunday ___ October				
Sunday ___ October				

I would describe this individual church as (circle all that apply)
rural | village based | town based | urban | other _____

THIS YEAR'S MISSION QUESTION⁸

Which small group programme or materials (if any) have you used in your parish in the last two years? e.g. Alpha, Church 21, etc _____

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCES⁹

adults young (under 16)

GENERAL VESTRY LIST¹⁰

Signed: _____ Name in block capitals _____ Date: _____

Please return to your local diocesan office by Jan 31st 2009 PLEASE SEE NOTES OVERLEAF:

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NOTES:

A separate form should be completed for each church in a group or union of parishes. This enables analysis of the strengths of different sized worshipping communities

- 1 Baptisms are to be categorised into three age groups.
- 2 Confirmations may only happen once every few years. Please include here people from this church who were confirmed here, or took part in a confirmation service elsewhere. Do not include people from other parishes who were confirmed in this church. Please record those confirmed into the three age groups.
- 3 Number of couples married in this church. This does not include Blessings following Civil Ceremonies.
- 4 Total number of Funeral Services associated with this church community, including Cremations, Burials, whether or not the church building was used.
- 5 Easter Services include any Saturday Vigil and all services on Easter Day. Add also total number of Communicants present
- 6 Christmas Services for this survey include services from 4 pm on Christmas Eve and all Christmas Day
- 7 You were asked to identify numbers of children and adults attending all services during the first four weeks of October. If you have a regular midweek service, or a daily service please count the total number of attendances (the same person may be counted more than once) and include the figure here.
Please indicate with an asterisk and make a note if any of these attendance figures were unusual for any reason (Harvest etc.)
- 8 Each year the survey asks a once-only question, the answer to which is unlikely to change in your parish from year to year. Annual returns will build up a picture of the qualities of life in local churches which aid or hinder mission and growth. This year's question is to do with your locality. Please indicate which term(s) best describe your church's setting.
- 9 Eliminating Harvest Sunday and Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day if it falls on a Sunday, please estimate the numbers of young people (aged under 16) and adults on an average Sunday, by adding the attendances over the year and dividing by 50. This figure may change e.g. if you have two services a month the figure will be 24; or if Christmas Day is on a Sunday and there are otherwise 52 Sundays the figure will be 49.
- 10 Please return the numbers of people on your General Vestry List following its most recent revision.