

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2010
THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION
Report to the General Synod 2010

Membership (January 2009)

Rt Rev Harold C 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 Margaret Crawford	Mothers' Union
Mr Shane Tucker	CIYD
Mr Martin O'Connor	Bishops Appeal
Mr Thomas G Wilson	Methodist Church
Vacant	AMS
Mr John Doherty	AMS
Mr Geoffrey Hamilton	AMS
Ms Linda Chambers	AMS
Captain Colin Taylor	AMS
Vacant	Cashel
Vacant	Cashel alternate
Mr Mark Dunwoody	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
Vacant	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	Derry
Rev Ken McLaughlin	Derry alternate

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Rev Paul McAdam	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

Alternates will attend when the principal representative is unable to.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES for 2010:

1. To enable members of the Church of Ireland, at every level, to be clearer about the urgency and priority of mission in Ireland today. One way we will do this is 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.
3. To encourage, through the provision of simple resources, local churches to think strategically about mission.
4. To enable already existing information to be used for mission purposes.

Membership

The Council wishes to thank Mrs Paddy Wallace, Rev Geoff Wilson and Rev Bobbie Moore who moved on from Council membership after making valuable contributions to its work.

Mrs Margaret Crawford was appointed to represent the Mothers' Union on the Council. Mr Mark Dunwoody became a member of the Council as the Cork representative and Rev Paul McAdam as the Armagh delegate.

Members of the Council were saddened at the death of Mr Ian Smith, formerly Director of Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI). The importance of Ian's contribution to the mission scene in general was not reflected in his short tenure of office.

Joint Mission Group

The Council is convinced of the importance of partnership in mission. One way that it is trying to demonstrate this commitment is through the Joint Mission Group with the Methodist Church in Ireland. Currently, the Council is reviewing the remit of this group to prioritise the following concerns:

- Shared missional leadership training (ordained and lay)
- Forum for shared stories and resources
- Church plants – existing and future
- *Fresh Expressions of Church* and pioneering ministry
- Education for mission together.

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Mission Shaped Ministry Course

The Council commissioned a review following the pilot course held at Edgehill Theological College. Some suggestions were made concerning the length and shape of the course and some adaptations for the Irish contexts. Discussions are under way about running the course in a variety of contexts, for different groups, including in the Republic of Ireland.

The Council heard that the Mission Shaped Introduction had been run over 6 weeks in Bangor (Primacy). Ms Louise Wilson and Mr Geoff Hamilton, members of the Joint Mission Group, facilitated it. There was positive feedback but also a feeling that the material needs further reworking to sharpen it and to take note of local context.

There is some possibility of running it in North Belfast and Longford where discussions have begun with local churches and leaders.

The Council is open to invitations to assist with the running of the course in any part of Ireland. Please contact the Secretary if interested.

Pioneer Ministry Group

The joint working group (with the Commission on Ministry) agreed that there is a need for training and for leadership for a wide diversity of mission situations and to deploy and release pioneer ministers in the Church. The group was tasked to explore ways for this to happen, taking into account the Bishops' Order legislation in England, although it was recognised that the Church of Ireland would also likely find some more informal ways of dealing with permission giving. The report is included in the Commission on Ministry report on Page 446.

Synod Mission Event

Rev Dave Bookless, Director of A Rocha UK, was the speaker at the 2009 Synod Mission Matters event held in the Armagh City Hotel. His talk on mission and conservation provoked much positive response.

Plans are in place, working with a number of partner agencies, to have a follow up meeting with Dave in autumn 2010.

Mission Strategy and the Church of Ireland

The Council made available to every parish copies of its first two leaflets (Appendix 2) designed to encourage parishes to be strategic in their approach to, engagement with, and support of mission agencies. The next two documents in the series are in preparation. The documents will be distributed initially to all stipendiary clergy and synod members and made available on the Church of Ireland website.

The subjects for the series are as follows:

1. Strategy for mission
2. Supporting mission (finance)
3. Parish representatives

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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 Council wishes to encourage each parish in the Church of Ireland to be strategic, prayerful, and generous in support of mission agencies. In a time of financial stringency it would be all too easy to limit giving to support of world crises such as the Haiti tragedy. Although it is important to support such appeals this ought not to be at the cost of support of the vital, ongoing work of the agencies that make a crucial difference all the year round.

Mission Education

The Council notes that the Discovery Course being prepared by CMSI has been delayed due to a change of personnel and hopes the course will soon be ready for publication.

Mission Statistics

The Council's plans to pilot the gathering and analysis of already available statistics for the purposes of mission were strengthened by a proposal being put forward by Mr Andrew McNeile concerning statistics prepared by *Tear Fund* after market research about church attendance and involvement in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

These highlighted that in 2002 both jurisdictions had the highest levels of church attendance anywhere in Europe apart from Ireland. But they also showed that ROI weekly attendance had declined in the two years from 2004 to 2002 from 55% to 45% and there is general expectation that subsequent years could contain information of an even more drastic decline following publication of the Ryan Report.

In a presentation to the Council, Andrew drew out some implications –

- The pastoral model of congregational chaplain has all but gone.
- Rapid disintegration in participation is a challenge to all churches.
- Rapid disintegration in the urban priestly structures of the dominant denomination that is highly sacramentally dependant creates further missiological pressures.
- Connection between national and religious identity continues to be strong.
- New initiatives are likely to be welcomed.
- Further work needs to be done to gather statistics to fill out the picture.

But already it is clear that there is a massive mission opportunity and challenge in all parts of Ireland.

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The Council concurs with a number of recommendations being made concerning:

- The need for further research with cultural analysis of the missiological and sociological context for mission in Ireland.
- The establishing of a balanced cross-denominational group operating under a Church of Ireland banner.
- The production of something akin to the English Mission Shaped Church Report with analysis and pointers towards missional communities in a mixed or blended economy of church.

The Council believes that 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.

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 intention is still that piloting will begin with three dioceses in 2010 and that the process will be reviewed with the Diocesan Secretaries after the first year.

Mission Council Agenda

In order to ensure a healthy balance between local and world mission issues the Council is currently devising a three year theme based plan. It is currently prioritising issues from the following list:

- Rediscovering the Mission of God: a theological reflection on biblical principles relevant to world mission.
- Relief, Development, Evangelism and Church Growth: presenting God's call to holistic mission.
- The value of Short Term Mission Trips for the Church at home and abroad: Mission tourism.
- Educating the local church to help it become mission-minded.
- Persecuted Peoples: developing a Christian response to religious persecution across the world.
- Developing the content of worship in the life of a local church to reflect the world church.
- Church Plants: discovering methods from the world to help growth in Ireland.

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- Effective Mission Agency-Parish Relationships: supporting and being supported by the local church.
- 3 key lessons from how they do local mission *in...* Latin America, Africa, India, The Far East, The States:
- Linking parish organisations to mission: at home and abroad.
- The web-based church: phoney, facile or fruitful.
- Mission or Dialogue: desired outcomes of communicating with other religious groups.
- Evangelism in Ireland Today (in a majority Roman Catholic context).

AMS

The Association of Mission Societies is an informal forum for representatives of those mission agencies which have an ongoing relationship with the Church of Ireland to discuss issues of mutual concern and to inform and be informed by the wider Church on important mission concerns and initiatives. A key part of this is AMS' representation on the Council.

During 2009 members of AMS had a productive meeting with the Primate during which the following key themes emerged:

- The priority need of the Church is for missional leadership and the Council's role in helping to clarify what this is.
- The need for a joined up view of mission in the Church, with the mission agencies, the Theological Institute and the dioceses having a key role in training and communication.
- The need to stimulate prayer for mission perhaps through the Church of Ireland website, or by using some existing resources such as the PWM prayer diary.

AMS is actively forwarding these matters.

Mission Networks

The Council is represented on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) mission forum, formerly the Global Mission Network, now the Churches' Network for Mission. This is a valuable form for the sharing of missional experience and resources. 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.

Back to Church Sunday

Back to Church Sunday is an initiative that started in Manchester diocese and is now a part of the Church scene through Great Britain and in many parts of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

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The Secretary met with Mr Michael Harvey, who co-ordinates *Back to Church Sunday*, to hear how it might be something that serves the Church in Ireland.

The concept behind it is simple; of one person inviting one person to come back to church on a specific Sunday, the last in September. Statistics show that 20% of church members will be willing to do this and that the average church taking part can expect to see 10-15 new people in the pews that Sunday. Research has shown consistently that a large number of people are open to re-engaging with church if only someone will ask them.

The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have already decided to encourage the initiative to take place in Ireland in 2010. Members were positive about what it could offer the Church of Ireland so long as expectations are realistic and commend it to the Bishops and parishes of the Church.

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. That Synod celebrates the giving of parishes to support the mission agencies of the Church and calls upon every parish to demonstrate its commitment to the priority of mission by strategic, prayerful, informed and costly giving in a time of financial stringency.
2. That Synod encourages parishes throughout the Church of Ireland to avail of the *Back to Church* initiative on the last Sunday of 2010 and to work with other local churches to make the most of this opportunity to re-engage with many people.

Appendices

1. Giving in the Church of Ireland
2. Mission leaflets

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APPENDIX A

MISSIONARY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CHURCH OF IRELAND 2010

Society	Donations £ Stg	Donations Euro
Bible Society (NI)	11,144	0
Church Army	28,500	0
CMSI	0	594,737
Church's Ministry among the Jewish People	34,651	0
CPAS	25,411	3,407
Crosslinks	257,000	0
Dublin University Far Eastern Mission	4,119	0
Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur	0	0
Feed the Minds, Ireland	0	0
ICS	8,168	0
ICM	30,058	0
Interserve	15,078	0
Jerusalem and Middle East Church	1,725	0
Leprosy Mission	0	0
Mission to Seafarers	15,985	11,475
Mothers' Union	176,872	0
National Bible Society	0	14,271
Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge	1,875	6,350
Tearfund	96,850	0
SOMA	0	0
South American Missionary Society	238,521	14,000
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	0	0
Total	945,957	644,240



Mission Matters!

1

A Practical Guide from The Council for Mission

1 Developing a local Mission Strategy

One of a series of leaflets to encourage parishes to engage in world mission starting at home

The Council for Mission seeks to encourage each diocese and parish to develop programmes and identify people as they follow Christ as he fulfils his loving purpose to save the world and create the new community of faith.

A First Step

to develop a local Mission Strategy is to identify a

Parish Mission Representative.

God has placed someone into your parish or group of parishes who
wants to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ shared throughout Ireland and the world.
can enthuse others with the excitement of engaging in local and international mission
has potential to communicate mission issues to and from the parish
will permit their details [name, address, phone (email)] to be made available will
become the first contact point for information on Mission agencies.
can access and display materials on a Mission notice board

A Second Step

To further your Mission Strategy is to form a

Parish (or Group) Mission Committee.

Individuals in the parish who are already interested in one mission agency can be formed into a Mission Committee.

Together Parish Mission Representative and Committee can suggest a policy for the Select Vestry to follow regarding the work of home and overseas mission agencies, identifying opportunities to involve more people

A Third Step

to encourage a Mission Strategy is to offer a

Mission Programme.

Offer this sheet to the Representative and encourage them to
Communicate information to the parish by news-sheet and/or magazine.

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Encourage more parishioners to participate in Mission events at diocesan level.
Promote Mission events happening in local churches.

Be aware of particular annual events/milestones for which Mission agencies provide resources.

Plan one (evening) event in the parish calendar with a clear Mission focus.

Invite a speaker to describe mission needs/opportunities/challenges/successes. Serve a welcome supper!

Obtain literature from the guest organisation and, subsequently, complementary agencies.

Encourage regular prayer support within the life of the parish and among parish families.

Encourage families to request information directly from Mission Agencies in which they show interest.

Plan a practical response to chosen projects so that the parish becomes a stakeholder through action.

Remember

Developing a Mission Strategy requires local people to:

Find out about the Mission agencies working in Ireland and abroad.

Visit/study agency websites and literature to learn about their role, vision and activities, and areas of operation.

Give Mission a human face by enabling parishioners to meet with those with experience at home and abroad.

Help the parish to identify with/own some part of the work that Agencies engage with on behalf of the Church.

Bring news of Mission work to parishioners in a way that will educate, encourage and inspire/

Create greater awareness of how the Great Commission is being taken forward in the world

Turn awareness into practical action in support of Mission personnel and activities.

Review regularly how interest in Mission is developing.

The Parish Mission Representative can be assured of support and advice from members of the Association of Missionary Societies



Mission Matters!

A Practical Guide from The Council for Mission

2 Creating a Local Strategy for Mission Giving

One of a series of leaflets to encourage parishes to engage in world mission starting at home

A document for Study by Clergy and Select Vestries:

God has called his Church to reach out to people around them with the good news of God's love. This task may have been the very last instruction that Jesus gave his disciples while on earth (Matthew 28.16-20). For the most part this will include financial commitments to communities beyond our parish boundaries, and to some groups within.

How do we raise such finance?

You have a budget for maintenance, *at least you have a fund to use for that purpose*

You have a budget for salaries, *at least you gather money regularly to keep staff*

You have a budget for mission... no? *At least you ought to consider such funds*

Take a look at your annual church budget: how much you expect to pay out for routine demands and how much you hope to be able to save for exceptional or planned developments. Now consider where MISSION, both in Ireland and in countries overseas, comes into the picture. Is it there at the heart of your planning or is it an extra to be tacked on at the end with whatever is left?

Here's a model based on the experience of some parishes which may help move mission from the fringe of your parish life to the motivating heart where we believe it belongs!

When your fellow parishioners are excited and motivated to give to mission, they may try to find ways of supporting all of parish life more generously and efficiently. For your funds it is not "win lose", but "win win".

First Steps to develop your strategy

1. Identify what needs/activities motivate the hearts of your parishioners to give.
2. Pray for guidance in discerning what God wants you to support in a given year
3. Create/Rename/Identify funds which allow people to channel generous giving to those specific areas. There's no need for separate accounts at the bank for this!

YOU HAVE THESE:

Ministry or General Fund: *to pay salaries, running costs, office and distribution expenses*

Development or Building Fund: *to restore, repair, or replace buildings and interiors*

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NOW ADD (SOME OF) THESE

Mission or Outreach Fund: *to support mission agencies and specific outreach projects locally, elsewhere in Ireland, and Overseas*

Care or Compassion Fund: *to respond discretely to local needs as they arise*

Education or Youth Fund: *to initiate and assist work with children and young people*

Getting Started

Here's a quick guide to get your Mission Team (or Select Vestry) started

Identify a short list of Agencies whose work you want to support generally. Determine a funding level which you will allocate either from special collections or your Mission/Outreach Fund. This is not project based. This list should, perhaps, be allocated a proportion of the funding gathered below.

From the reported work of these agencies and/or through suggestions from them, **identify a small number of varied projects** which are likely to interest your people. They should not all be attention-grabbing exciting projects, as the diocesan diesel supply has a vital role to play if we are to enable a more exciting school building project to be realised.

Inform your parishioners of the means you are providing to gather funds for these projects/funds. A brief outline of each supported project may be all that is required. A monthly envelope, an announced proportion of General Fund giving, special collections, annual - or more frequent - fund raising events or work teams: all provide such means.

Appoint someone to **return the money raised** quickly and regularly: a quarterly return to the agencies involves a little bit of planning but is no harder than paying a utility bill.

Identifying Mission/Outreach Projects

Mission agencies need funds to run mission agencies. It is vital that donor parishes are confident that money spent administering the agency is in proportion with the amount of good they do. Accounts should reveal that a sufficient proportion of the money given has reached the "mission field". Some times an overseas agency has as significant a mission field *in* Ireland as it has overseas, so "administrative cost" may not equate to money spent *here!* Giving to Mission agencies must not therefore be solely project based, as there is an acceptable level of administration to be considered.

Projects excite people: and so does the ability to make a difference to a specific village elsewhere in Ireland, or to a diocese or parish in Africa, or to a project in the Americas, or Asia. A small parish may not be able to build a school, although it has happened, but it certainly can equip a classroom. A group of parishes may not be able to buy a vehicle for a diocese, but they could fund its fuel and ongoing repairs. Commitment to a project for a term of years rather than months assists agencies to plan future expenditure more effectively.

Completion creates contentment: so it is helpful to include within your parish projects things which can be completed.

Build a well: so your parish can watch the water flow. Job done.

Supply Bibles to a school: see the photo of the smiling children. Job done.

Roof a church: see the video of the opening service. Job done.

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Involvement demands action: so include within your schemes the possibility of your group travelling to a local project in Ireland, or a small work team visiting an overseas project. Remember that the most needy projects often cannot host visitors: they are barely able to survive, never mind rent rooms at a local hotel for Irish folk, but they appreciate tangible interest. So letters from children, pictures of your church family, copies of your news letters etc. all combine to link your life with theirs and create a family sharing in prayer.

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