

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION

Report to the General Synod 2013

MEMBERSHIP (JANUARY 2013)

Rt Rev Alan Abernethy	House of Bishops
Very Rev Stephen Lowry	Synod
Rev Ruth West	Synod
Mrs Felix Blennerhassett	Synod
Vacant	Synod
Rev Paul Hoey	Synod
Vacant	Synod
Mrs Margaret Crawford	Mothers' Union (resigned Jan. 2013)
Vacant	CIYD
Vacant	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
Rev Patrick Burke	Cashel (appointed November 2012)
Vacant	Cashel Alternate
Rev Eileen Cremin	Cork
Vacant	Cork Alternate
Mr Colin Ferguson	Down
Dr Trevor Buchanan	Down Alternate
Rev Peter Galbraith	Connor
Vacant	Connor Alternate
Very Rev Kenneth Hall	Clogher (appointed January 2013)
Vacant	Clogher Alternate
Rev Andrew Quill	Kilmore
Vacant	Kilmore Alternate
Mrs Daphne Wright	Meath
Vacant	Meath Alternate
Ven Wayne Carney	Limerick
Vacant	Limerick Alternate
Rev Adam Pullen	Tuam
Vacant	Tuam Alternate
Rev Paul Hoey	Derry
Vacant	Derry Alternate

Rev Paul McAdam	Armagh
Mr Tom Stephenson	Armagh Alternate
Rev Cliff Jeffers	Dublin
Vacant	Dublin Alternate
Miss Mavis Gibbons	Co-opted
Rev Canon David Brown	Co-opted
Rev Rob Jones	Co-opted

According to the Constitution Alternates attend when the principal Representative is unable to do so.

MEMBERSHIP

The Council expresses sincere gratitude to Bishop Harold Miller who stepped down as Chair, for his stimulation and commitment over many years. We also thank Mrs Margaret Crawford for her input as the Mother's Union Representative and await the appointment of a new representative. Rev Eileen Cremin is now the Cork Representative after the resignation of Mr Mark Dunwoody.

Rev Andrew Quill was elected to Chair the Council.

We welcomed the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, the Very Rev Kenneth Hall and the Rev Patrick Burke as new members.

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE COUNCIL:

1. Back to Church Sunday

The Council continued to promote this initiative. Although the number of parishes officially signing up decreased over the previous years it appears that Back to Church Sunday has now become a regular part of the life of many churches.

2. The Persecuted Church

The Council resolved to draw the attention of the Church to the plight of the persecuted Church. According to the Barnabas Fund, at the end of 2012 Christians were being persecuted in 133 counties. One Christian believer was killed every 4 minutes. "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners" (Hebrew 13:3).

3. Synod Mission Event

The speaker at the 2012 event was Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali who focused on the plight of suffering Christians in various parts of the world.

The Rt Rev Kenneth Clarke, Director of SAMS (South American Mission Society) is to address the 2013 event on the urgency of mission in Ireland today.

4. Mission and the structures of the Church

The Council is keen to explore ways that those central Church committees relating to mission can more effectively and imaginatively work together and is encouraged that the matter is under consideration by the Honorary Secretaries.

5. Mission at parish level

The Council discussed the desirability of every parish setting up a group to oversee the development of mission within the life of the parish. Among the tasks allotted to such groups could be the development of a simple summary statement of the parish's mission strategy along with ring-fenced targeted giving.

6. Pioneer mission projects

The Council is encouraged to note the development of a number of pioneer projects in different areas of the Church but wonders how other such projects might be funded at a time when there is much pressure on parish and diocesan finances. The key role of the Priorities Fund in enabling mission projects is noted with appreciation but might more such projects be facilitated if the cost of employing staff could become part of the Fund's remit?

7. Network Conference

Subject to finance being approved, the Council is planning a Conference for the autumn of 2013 gathering together 3 or 4 people from each diocese. The overall aim is to facilitate better communication about mission at every level. One or more speakers will provide stimulus and challenge. An innovative mission project will be showcased. Listening and the sharing of ideas will be at the heart of the event.

8. META (Mission Experience Trips Abroad) TRIP

The Council notes the large and increasing number of people who have been involved in META trips over recent years. It has asked the mission agencies to give some thought as to how this experience can be harnessed for mission in Ireland. Global mission should impact local mission and vice versa.

9. Website

Given the number of encouraging stories emerging from various parts of the Church the Council considers it would be helpful to have a central space for sharing these and also to make available links to helpful missional resources. Accordingly, Ms Charlotte Howard is exploring the possibility of setting up a website.

10. Statistics for Mission

The Council welcomed the unanimous passing of the Bill at last year's Synod authorising the gathering of statistics and encourages the enactment of this work. It hopes that the exercise will retain a strong missional focus.

11. The Great Commission

Jesus said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' Matthew 28: 18-20.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 1:

That the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, recognising this to be a time of critical need and of missional opportunity in Ireland, north and south, calls on every parish, diocese and body within the Church, to make it a priority to fulfil the Great Commission of Christ with urgency, imagination and energy.

Resolution 2:

That the Very Rev Stephen Lowry, the Rev Ruth West, Mrs Felix Blennerhassett, the Rev Paul Hoey and Capt Colin Taylor be elected as Representatives of the General Synod on the Church of Ireland Council for Mission for the forthcoming year.

