

GENERAL SYNOD 2014

COUNCIL FOR MISSION

Proposed by the Revd Adam Pullen, Diocese of Tuam, Killala & Achonry

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Archbishop

I want to focus on the major part of the work of the council over the past year, the Mission conference, held at Dromatine at the end of March.

We would like to thank the Priorities Fund for their financial support and the bishops for their support, including, insuring that there were representatives from each diocese.

We feel that there has been a history in the church of producing reports that are considered very helpful and perhaps even radical but then fail to have the implementation and impact hoped for. We are focused to do our best to ensure that this will not be the case for this report. Therefore we are pleased that following this session Synod members will have a chance to respond to the “suggestions for working together towards a Deeper Engagement with mission” that form the substance of the report.

I wish to highlight a number of key points of interest from the report.

It is clear that God is working right across Ireland today as we saw in a number of creative and exciting examples seen during the conference.

However it emerged that many of these examples were new to delegates and that the benefit of the good news of such stories of God’s work was not been heard by those who could benefit from such encouragement.

Therefore we recommend that we need to think creatively and imaginatively about our methods and structures of communication.

A good example of mission initiative is the Bishops mission statement Growth-Unity-Service. Yet this appears not to be widely known. In preparations for the conference we asked delegates to look at this statement. The reaction to the statement was ‘this is terrific why have we not heard about it?’ In response to this there was a call from the conference that the Bishops would lead the initiative to transform aspiration into action.

Another key point from the conference is that we should work together in mission. We may use different language to express mission and indeed mission may look very different according to our context and outlook, but no one expression of mission is fully sufficient to respond to God's call. To that end we need each other and it is clear that we want each other.

This is seen in increasing openness to what church looks like today in Ireland both traditional and contemporary, nurturing both forms of church alongside each other. A growing openness to working with each other learning from each other and through our different perspectives and yet, for some, this can be stretching.

Further, the council notes the importance of the call to be intentional in developing leadership both lay and ordained that nurtures and enables the church to become the church we want for mission in today's Ireland. We note that some progress has been made on this front but we still have further to go.

Inspirational in the conference were the inputs from both the bishop of London Rt Rev Richard Chartres and the president of the Methodist church Rev Heather Morris. Arising from their inputs was one key aspect from the bishop of London which is the need for a clear direction of travel, a sense of vision, allied with the freedom to respond to circumstances. In the light of this there may be implications for the church at the central and diocesan level.

There is much more in the report that could be highlighted and I wish to conclude by saying the report paints a hopeful picture of opportunity to be grasped. Yet on the other hand the challenge often is to help many parishes overcome a fear of change. For if mission is to truly be the heartbeat of the Church of Ireland there will need to be an examining of our structures with the lens of mission asking how our structures both central and local aid the mission of the church today.

We are encouraged by the joint statement of intent from the Mission Council and the Commissions on Ministry and Episcopal Structures to work towards this goal and hope that other groups will respond to the encouragement we are being given to think beyond the box.

We look forward to the response from Synod members in the breakout session and to the ongoing discussions which we hope this report will enable.

In proposing that the report and work of the Mission Council be adopted by Synod I also put the following resolutions:

Resolution 1:

That this Synod receives the report of the 2014 Mission Conference and affirms its effort to “articulate the mission of the Church of Ireland in a way that can be embraced and supported by all”. Furthermore, it calls on each diocese and body of the church to note its key findings and to enact an appropriate response.

Resolution 2:

That the General Synod affirms the work of all those agencies advancing Mission at global and local level, and especially commends to the prayers and support of the Church those agencies that work together as The Association of Mission Societies (AMS).

Resolution 3:

That the following be elected as Representatives of the General Synod on the Church of Ireland Council for Mission for the forthcoming triennial period: (and the names differ slightly from those printed in the report):

Julie Currie

Rev. Simon Genoe

Rev. Cliff Jeffers

Johanne Martin

Capt. Colin Taylor

Rev. Jake Worley