

APPENDIX O

Parish Development Working Group

Report 2006

Membership

During the year the Standing Committee appointed the Rev Des Bain, Mrs Helen Groves, Mrs Carolyn O’Laoire and Mr Cyril McElhinney as additional members of the Working Group.

Participant Parishes

Three thousand copies of the promotion leaflet were distributed to parishes throughout the Church. The Members of the Working Group are grateful to the bishops for their assistance in distribution and promotion and in sifting the applications according to guidelines supplied.

The Committee was encouraged by the number and range of parishes that applied to take part. In view of the fact that many more parishes applied than there were places for, the committee has increased the number of places available to thirty-five.

Links with other Church Bodies

The Working Group is conscious that in its work there are areas of overlap with other bodies in the Church of Ireland. We were therefore pleased to be asked to appoint a representative to the Hard Gospel Committee. Cecil Hyland was appointed with Paul Hoey as alternate.

Paul Hoey was asked to attend a meeting of the Commission on Ministry, representing both Parish Development and the Council for Mission. Those who chair these bodies agreed to meet at least annually to review progress and explore ways of working together.

Resource team

A list of facilitators and specialist trainers has been compiled. The facilitators will attend the Seminar and then hold an initial consultancy session with parishes in the immediate aftermath of the seminar, followed by a minimum of three subsequent sessions to:

1. Help clarify the parish’s vision
2. Set aims and objectives
3. Accompany the parish as it takes practical steps to implement its vision, if necessary with the assistance in a particular area of some of the resource team.

Parishes will then be encouraged to continue the process under their own initiative. The committee will have a monitoring role and be available for advice.

Initial training days for the facilitators are planned for May and June.

Standing Committee – Report 2006

Communication

A series of articles about the programme has been published at regular intervals in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*. We are grateful to the editor for his help in this regard and also for the opportunity to speak about the programme afforded at nine diocesan synods as well as at other diocesan meetings.

The CHURCH 21 website (www.church21.info) was launched in November 2005 and will be used as the main conduit for much of the material being provided to parishes. The committee wishes to thank Mr George Briggs and his colleague Mr Joe McCormack for their assistance with this.

Preparation Course

Some preparation material designed to enable the parishes to identify priority areas of ministry and so to assist the Working Group in the planning to the Seminar is being sent to all participating parishes. Its core is of scriptural reflection and creative ways of engaging in prayer. The course is also being offered to the wider church for use as a possible Lent programme.

Budget

Thanks are expressed to the Priorities Fund, the Representative Church Body and the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company for generous assistance with the project. A further application was made to the Priorities Fund for assistance with the costs of training of the facilitators, of producing video material for use during the Seminar and afterwards, and of a follow-up day for all participating parishes in September 2007.

Worship

Rev Canon Alan Abernethy has agreed to co-ordinate worship at the seminar in conjunction with Carolyn O'Laoire.

Video

The Committee is compiling a list of video ministry snapshots of creative ways of ministry in the local parish. Six or seven of these will be used at the Seminar, with a total of twelve being provided on a DVD which could be used afterwards as discussion starters in parishes.

Appreciation

The Working Group wishes to record its appreciation of the work of Pam Stanley, Philip McKinley and other members of the staff at Church House, Dublin, in assisting with the administrative work of the programme.