

Church of Ireland Youth Department – Report 2006

**CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT
REPORT 2006**

MEMBERSHIP

Executive

<i>President</i>	Rt Rev RCA Henderson, Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry (Chairman of Central Board)
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Rev RS Miller (Chairman of Executive Committee)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mr E Hardy
<i>Secretary</i>	Dr Q Heaney

Rev P Storey
Mr A Brannigan
Mr David Brown (Youth Ministry Coordinator) ex-officio

Central Board – Executive (*above*) and:

Mr TS Hardy	Rev S Giles
Mr F Bailie	Rev P McGlinchey
Mr J Marshall	Rev LEA Peilow
Mr S Brickenden	Rev B Martin
Mrs J Peters	Ven A Forster (resigned November 2005)
Rev PG Heak	Rev D Kerr
Mr A Brannigan	
Mrs M Alexander	

Co-opted Members

Mrs I Hawthorne
Rev RS Miller

Youth Ministry Co-ordinator

Mr D Brown

Part-time Youth Ministry Development Worker Northern Ireland

Mr G Hamilton

Full-time Youth Ministry Development Worker Republic of Ireland

Mr Shane Tucker

Secretary in Holywood Road, Belfast

Mrs B Swann

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SUMMARY

It has been very encouraging in 2005 to witness God's continued guidance and providence across the work of the Youth Department. The work is described below under three main headings: Staff, Programme, and Other Developments. Together, these headings indicate the exciting range and extent of CIYD-related activities. The Report concludes with a discussion of some of the challenges facing young people and those involved with youth ministry. This work would not be possible without generous grant aid from the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science (RI), the RCB and the Priorities Fund; to all of these we extend our sincere gratitude.

STAFF

Mr Geoffrey Hamilton, as our Youth Ministry Development worker (Northern Ireland), has seen unprecedented growth in the numbers of parishes seeking to employ a full-time youth worker. This growth in ministry along with the production of the Church's guidelines on youth work employment issues (*Best Foot Forward*), launched July 2005, has required CIYD to upgrade this post to a full-time position. The CIYD through this role will be offering training and off-line supervision to 30 parish-based youth workers in Northern Ireland.

Similarly, Mr Shane Tucker, as the Republic of Ireland Youth Ministry Development worker, has witnessed strategic growth. Whilst the numbers of full or part-time parish youth staff would be around 15, this role has concentrated on providing accessible youth leadership training and resources. In his first full year Shane has now established a strong regional (diocesan) network of volunteers and young adults active in youth ministry.

It was with great relief that in May 2005 Mrs Barbara Swann returned to the Youth Department following an extensive period of illness. Barbara continues to front CIYD, running the office and overseeing the expanding CIYD ministry programme.

The Youth Department has enjoyed increased resourcing to facilitate the P.O.C.V.A checks (previously P.E.C.s). The Church has acquired the services of Mrs. Claire Geoghegan. This post funded by the Church for nine hours per week, processes Police checks of volunteers across parishes in Northern Ireland

PROGRAMME UPDATE

Reflect

Two "Reflect" residentials targeting young adults aged between 16-25 were successfully completed in January and March 2005. In total, 110 young adults participated in these leadership opportunities, with a deliberate focus on youth ministry and leadership skills. These gatherings were held at Birr, Co. Offaly and Cookstown, Co. Tyrone and drew participants from across the Church.

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Youth Worker Training

An on-going programme of day workshops and residential retreats (April and November), has been developed and implemented by Mr Geoffrey Hamilton. These programmes run under the “Connect” banner, and include CIYD’s work at Summer Madness.

Diocesan Youth Officers’ Residential:

April also saw for the first time a new residential supporting the Church’s Diocesan Youth Councils and Youth Officers occur. The Rev Paul Hoey, Church Pastoral Aid Society, facilitated the 24 hour retreat focusing on youth vocations.

Summer Madness 2005

With over 5,000 young people and adult leaders in attendance, Summer Madness continues to prove its impact across the Irish youth work context. As part of the support towards Summer Madness, CIYD this year ran two venues. The “Connect” venue for leaders provided workshops and training around the theme of “living with difference”, exploring what it means to live in a changing Ireland. 50 leaders at a time attended these workshops, with six seminars occurring over three days. A new venue at Summer Madness saw the “Connection” marquee cater for young people aged 13-18. Through workshops and activities 400+ young people participated. Again the theme focused on “identity” across Ireland. Both venues were run in collaboration with Youth Link (NI).

Diocesan Support

An important part of CIYD’s support of youth work continues to be the support of Church of Ireland Dioceses offered through the devolved funding programme. It is worth noting that substantial growth in young people’s work has occurred where a dedicated Diocesan Youth Officer has been in place. The following Dioceses have a full or part time Youth Officer:

- Cashel and Ossory
- Derry and Raphoe
- Down and Dromore
- Dublin and Glendalough
- Elphin and Ardagh
- Limerick and Killaloe
- Tuam, Killala and Achonry

It is also encouraging to note that other Dioceses are in the process of working through the appointment of a Youth Officer. This is a welcome development and one that CIYD fully supports.

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The nature of the regional/diocesan work varies enormously. Many engage with schools, and open youth work as part of their methodology. All run young adult summer programmes, both in terms of mission and leadership development. CIYD, in the provision of on the ground support through its staff, has become instrumental in this developing youth scene, by way of national youth programmes and networking opportunities.

Anois Youth Festival, 29-31 October

Anois in 2005 proved to be a watershed event for the Youth Department. The level of work being engaged with, the scope of the programme being offered, the excellent volunteer team, and the facilities were significantly better than last year. With 190 teenage participants and approximately 40 young adult volunteers, Anois is becoming CIYD's premier youth event across the Republic of Ireland.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Best Foot Forward

Based on a document released by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in 2004, *Best Foot Forward* was published by CIYD in July 2005. The document (in loose leaf format), attempts to offer guidelines and information on the employment and management of youth workers in a parish context. CIYD also gratefully acknowledges the support also of the Church's Legal Department in the production of this resource. CIYD is currently working on a comprehensive [Youth Ministry Parish Resource Pack](#).

CIYD Website

Following a period of inactivity, CIYD has re-launched its website. The site is jam-packed with information on CIYD's work as well as numerous links to Youth Ministry resources across the globe (to date there are 196 links). Mrs Barbara Swann and Mr Shane Tucker have overseen this process. Please do check out at www.ciyd.org.

CIYD Office Move

At the time of writing, plans are finalised for the CIYD office to vacate 217 Hollywood Road and be based on Elmwood Avenue, Belfast. This will allow us a more central facility with enough space to host training and seminar events, and will further facilitate CIYD in its development of ministry with young adults.

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CIYD Networks

CIYD is currently involved with a number of important networks across the Church and the wider Youth Work sector across Ireland.

- **Youth Link NI:** Youth Officer currently chairperson of Youth Link. Other members include, Mr Peter Hamill, Connor Diocese, Mr Andrew Brannigan, Down Diocese, Mr Gary Magowan, Clogher Diocese.
- **Youth Net:** Peter Hamill is the CIYD nominated representative
- **National Youth Council of Ireland:** Mr Shane Tucker and Rev Sonia Gyles
- **Hard Gospel Committee:** Youth Officer
- **Board of Education (Republic of Ireland):** Mr Thomas Hardy
- **Board of Social Responsibility (NI):** Youth Officer
- **Board of Mission:** Youth Officer
- **Covenant Council:** Youth Officer

- **Summer Madness:** CIYD is a member of Summer Madness Ltd

Challenges facing Youth Ministry, across the Church of Ireland:

1. Professional Concerns

Time has come for those of us involved in the management and delivery of youth ministry across the Church to address a lack of professionalism that hinders many individual and parish youth ministries. This deficit shows its face in a number of ways, both with individual youth ministers and their parish support systems. As a Church, our challenge is to ensure that youth work staff across the Church of Ireland build ministries that are sustainable, increasing in professionalism and ultimately empowered by God's life giving Spirit!

2. Ownership of Youth Ministry

Across the Church of Ireland, mechanisms need to be established that allow youth ministry to be fully owned by the Church. At a "national" level we now need some form of license/authorisation for those in full time youth ministry. Our volunteers (of whom we have many) need to practice their ministry having reached "base line" requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding around youth work. Some form of training and on-going development for these folks, recognised by the Church, is well over due. Our greatest asset is our Faith, and committed volunteers passionate about Christ and young people. These people deserve every bit of support possible from the Church of Ireland.

3. Need to Tackle Some Hard Issues

Finally, CIYD, whilst tackling the needs of young people from the Church of Ireland, needs to be mindful of those outside and around the Church. Like a “kaleidoscope” that changes its view every time turned, we too need to build in methods whereby CIYD has a view of, or a greater awareness around, young people and those issues that confront them. For example, the issues flagged up within the Hard Gospel project have direct bearing on this generation of young people. Concerns around alcohol and substance mis-use similarly cross barriers of class, creed and national identity.

These examples are offered as part of what the kaleidoscope might reveal when turned. Clearly CIYD cannot be “expert” in these issues but we can be more conversant and prepared to share Christ into these and other concerns facing our young people.