

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION

Membership

Rt Rev Harold C Miller	House of Bishops
Very Rev Stephen Lowry	Synod
Mrs Bobbie Moore	Synod
Mrs Felix Blennerhassett	Synod
Rev Patrick Comerford	Synod
Rev Paul Hoey	Synod
Rev Canon David Moynan	Synod
Ms Katie McAteer (resigned September 2006)	Mothers' Union
Mr David Brown	CIYD
Mr Martin O'Connor	Bishops' Appeal
Mr Thomas G Wilson	Methodist Church
Mr John Doherty	AMS
Mr Geoffrey Hamilton	AMS
Ms Linda Chambers	AMS
Capt Charles Harris CA (resigned June 2005)	AMS
Rev William Ritchie	Cashel
Vacant	Cashel alternate
Rev Ian Jonas	Cork
Vacant	Cork alternate
Rev William Nixon	Down
Vacant	Down alternate
Rev Peter Galbraith	Connor
Ms Diane Rhodes	Connor alternate
Rev Derek Kerr	Clogher
Rev Robin Wakely	Clogher alternate
Rev Geoff SA Wilson	Kilmore
Vacant	Kilmore alternate
Rev Michael Wooderson	Meath
Ms Daphne Wright	Meath alternate
Very Rev Maurice Sirr	Limerick
Ven Wayne Carney	Limerick alternate
Vacant	Tuam
Vacant	Tuam alternate
Rev Derek Creighton	Derry
Vacant	Derry alternate
Rev Canon Michael Barton	Armagh
Mr Tom Stephenson	Armagh alternate
Rev Ken Gibson	Dublin

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

Vacant	Dublin alternate
Ms Mavis Gibbons	Co-opted
Rev David Brown	Co-opted

Alternates will attend when the principal representative is unable to.

Membership

The following were appointed during the course of the year

Rev Derek Creighton	Derry
Ms Linda Chambers	AMS
Ms Daphne Wright	Meath alternative

Good wishes were sent to Capt Charles Harris following his resignation to become a probationer in ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Appointments

A request was received from the Methodist Church in Ireland for a representative on the Church Development Board. In view of overlap with the Parish Development Working Group it was thought appropriate for the Rev Paul Hoey, being a member of both groups, to represent the Council.

Irish Christian Handbook

Work is ongoing on this project. The process of co-operation between different churches on this project is being managed by Mr Steve Cave (Evangelical Alliance).

A request was received for financial assistance with this project. The Council is convinced of the importance of having accurate information regarding the state of the churches in Ireland and has therefore awarded £2,000 in response to a request for financial assistance. The Council is one of a number of bodies in the Church of Ireland and in others Churches that have offered to support the project.

Mission Prayer

Copies of the St Andrew's Tide mission prayer leaflet compiled by Partners in World Mission were distributed to every parish in the Church in Ireland.

Conferences

Mrs Bobbie Moore represented the Council at the World Mission Conference Nov 28/29 2005 at Swanwick, Derbyshire.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

Canon Kathleen Brown attended the WCC Conference on Healing and Reconciliation - May 2005 in Athens.

Copies of their reports are available from the secretary.

Rev Geoff Wilson attended a Building Bridges of Hope conference in April 2005 on behalf of the Council. In reflection afterwards members agreed that the concept of mission accompaniment at the heart of BBH is a good one but noted that this element is already built into in the Church of Ireland's own programme of Parish Development.

Mission Mapping

The Council was invited to take part in a mapping of links with other parts of the Anglican Communion listing the benefits of these links. A questionnaire was sent to every parish and mission group within the Church of Ireland asking: Where is the link? What kind of link is it? For what time-frame will it run? What area of work does it cover? Which mission organisation, if any, is facilitating it? What level of involvement is there? Respondents were also asked to give some assessment of the benefits as well as identifying the challenges facing each project.

The aims of this task are:

- Sharing good news (a lot of very good work is happening out there. We don't always hear of it.)
- Encouragement
- Getting others involved
- Analysis of benefits
- Focus for prayer

The findings, when available, will be reported back to parishes.

Presence and Prophecy

A small group has been appointed to liaise with members of the Theological College Council on the place of mission in theological education within the life of the Church of Ireland and in particular the Theological College.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

Synod Mission Breakfast

The 2005 Breakfast attracted a good attendance to hear Canon Norman Porteous, Rev Mel Lacy and Mrs Karen Haskins speaking about the value of mission exchange visits to both sending and receiving churches. The good response encouraged the Council to continue its work in this area.

The Hard Gospel and Mission

The Council sends warm good wishes to the new project director Rev Earl Storey and field workers Mr Philip McKinley and Mr Stephen Dallas. Earl has been invited to meet the Council and to assist in the exploration of a way forward on areas of common concern. The Council has identified six key mission areas in the Hard Gospel report:

1. Dealing with ethnic difference and asylum seekers (Chapter 6);
2. Relations with other Churches and inter-Church activity (Chapter 9);
3. World religions (Chapter 10);
4. Welcoming and involving new members and boundaries between believers and non-believers (Chapter 15);
5. Responding to society in general (Chapter 19);
6. Training and resourcing of clergy (Chapter 20).

Mission Shaped Church

The Council met overnight to devote time to the study of the report *Mission Shaped Church*. This report focuses on several of the key areas that the Council identified as significant for the Church of Ireland when it was set up in 2004:

1. Mission-oriented leadership
2. Models of emerging church
3. Naming the outsider – priority areas of mission

The Council agreed its aims in the study of the report to be:

1. To encourage the wider Church to engage with issues raised by the report
2. To produce a study guide for interested groups
3. To raise mission issues with people in parishes
4. To identify Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC) that are or might be happening in Ireland.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

Issues raised by the study of the report:

THEOLOGY

What do FXC teach us about the nature of the Church?

AUTHORITY

Is the Church ready to authorize FXC?

LEADERSHIP

Can the Church find and equip leaders to create FXC?

EDUCATION

How can parishes be made aware of, and encouraged to relate to and learn from FXC?

COMMUNITY

What are the implications for traditional churches of the emergence of FXC?

STRUCTURES

What structures would be needed to allow the Church of Ireland to be comfortable partners with FXC?

IDENTIFYING THOSE AT THE MARGIN

The Council identified groups of people among whom there may be many who are becoming increasingly alienated from traditional ways of doing church and for whom FXC may be more relevant. The list is by no means exhaustive but may include some:

- People living in patterns of relationships outside of the traditional Christian family;
- Professional people living pressurised lives;
- Network communities in their places of work or interest groups;
- Children of de-churched parents;
- Young adults who find inherited styles of worship stifling;
- Refugees;
- People living in economically disadvantaged areas;
- Those whose political allegiance differs from a majority in a particular congregation;
- Very committed young people and adults who find a lack of discipleship in the Church of Ireland;
- Intellectuals;
- The newly affluent for whom Sunday is simply a day of leisure.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

The Council is currently compiling a list of what could be termed Fresh Expressions of Church in Ireland. Among these are examples of:

Alternative worship communities;
Café church;
Cell church;
Community initiatives;
Midweek congregations;
Network based churches;
Traditional church plants and;
Youth congregations.

The Council intends to make available to every parish and to every ordained member of the Church of Ireland a leaflet *Moving on in a mission shaped church* which makes available the thinking of *Mission Shaped Church* in an easily accessible form. It addresses the theological basis of mission along with the practical. It asks searching questions – What is going on in terms of Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC) and how we can apply this to the local church scene – becoming “both and” churches? It’s about building mission values in to church and is therefore relevant for any parish.

Along with this there will be a supplementary leaflet produced by the Council giving:

- a. Examples of FXC in Ireland;
- b. A list of resources;
- c. A list of agencies where people may find further help.

The Council is keen to explore ways to:

1. Engage in ongoing conversation with others active in this field;
2. Provide training at diocesan level;
3. Organise a conference for all interested groups.

Association of Mission Societies (AMS)

Rev Patrick Comerford’s term of office as Chair ended in September 2005. Appreciation was expressed of Patrick’s leadership over the past three years. Rev Paul Hoey was appointed chair and Ms Jan de Bruin, Secretary.

Mission Agency updates

The Council takes time at each meeting to listen to reports of the activities and work of the various mission agencies and to pray for those most involved.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

In the course of these it was noted that Rev Mel Lacey is moving on from her post as Crosslinks co-ordinator. We thank Mel for her work and fellowship and wish her God's blessing in her new post.

Particularly encouraging in 2005 was the Mpower event organised by CMSI and considered to be a significant and unique event for the church in Ireland. Over seventy link partners from other parts of the world took part in the conference in Armagh and were hosted by local parishes. In the addresses and small group sessions many key issues were raised including issues of trust and morality in different cultures. Over five hundred people attended the worship. Could this presage a new mood for mission in the Church of Ireland? Might there be another event across mission agencies?

Mission strategy within Church of Ireland parishes

The Council is currently looking at ways to encourage parishes to be strategic in their support of and links with the mission agencies. Each church could develop its own mission strategy and create a committee to run it. The role of such committees might be to:

- Develop objectives;
- Encourage prayer support;
- Facilitate the dissemination of information, and
- Allocate financial support.

The matter has been referred to the Association of Mission Agencies for its opinions before further action is taken.

Church of Ireland Council for Mission – Report 2006

APPENDIX A

**MISSIONARY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE
CHURCH OF IRELAND 2005**

Where there are blanks no figure was returned.

Society	Donations £ Stg	Donations Euro
Bible Society (NI)	13,932	
Church Army		
CMSI	117,7425	443,443
Church's Ministry among the Jewish People CMJ	26,064	
Church Pastoral Aid Society CPAS	27,965	
Crosslinks	295,815	26,152
Dublin University Far Eastern Mission		
Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur		
Feed the Minds, Ireland		
ICS	20,304	
Interserve		
Jerusalem and Middle East Church		
Leprosy Mission		40,000
Mission to Seafarers		10,722
Mothers' Union	133,500	
National Bible Society		28,676
Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge	8,441	13,405
Tearfund	111,000	
South American Missionary Society	189,951	10,100
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	45,415	
Total	<u>2,049,812</u>	<u>572,498</u>