

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

REPORT 2001

MEMBERS

Chairman	Rt Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore
General Synod appointed	Venerable Kenneth Good Rev Canon David Moynan Rev Stephen Lowry Mr William Frizell
Co-opted	Rev William Bridcut (Irish Church Missions) Rev David Catterall (Church's Ministry of Healing) Miss Mavis Gibbons (from October 2000) (CPAS) Mrs Audrey Strong (resigned June 2000) (Mothers' Union) Mrs Roslynn Faull (September 2000) (Mothers' Union) Mrs Arlene Kee (CIYD) Capt Charles Harris (Church Army)

Diocesan representatives

Armagh	Rev Canon Dr William Neely
Clogher	vacant
Derry and Raphoe	Rev Canon Brian Johnston
Down and Dromore	Rev David Brown
Connor	Rev Chris Pollock
Kilmore	vacant
Tuam	Mrs Jane Stark
Dublin and Glendalough	Mrs Hazel Hutchinson
Meath and Kildare	Rev Michael Wooderson
Cashel and Ossory	Rev Canon Gary Dowd
Cork	Captain Keith Dyde CA
Limerick and Killaloe	Rev Wayne Carney

Honorary Secretary Rev Stephen Lowry, Dromore Cathedral Rectory,
28 Church Street, Dromore Co Down BT25 1AA

Honorary Treasurer Rev William Bridcut, 28 Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council for Mission in Ireland reviewed its sense of purpose and direction as it welcomed the Bishop of Down and Dromore as its new chairman. This resulted in a heavier involvement of members in preparation for and participation in the three meetings held during the year.

A study of growing and innovative churches of different traditions is under way with a view to presenting material on Patterns for Mission to a future Synod.

Resource Materials, used both to present the Christian Faith and to nurture new believers were discussed at meetings and some guidance on these follows. It is anticipated that the Synod will be invited to consider the value of using these materials in debate.

The ongoing relationship between the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Council for the Church Overseas was to be the subject of a Joint Meeting of Councils in early May 2001.

MEMBERSHIP

Mrs Audrey Strong resigned as the co-opted member representing the Mothers' Union and in her place Mrs Roslyn Faull was nominated.

Captain Deane Stewart (Clogher) retired as Clogher Representative and Honorary Secretary at the General Synod.

Bishop Brian Hannon (Clogher) resigned from the chairmanship at the General Synod.

Mrs Jane Stark was appointed Diocesan Representative for Tuam Diocese.

The Council welcomed the Rev Charles Irwin, Mission Resource Person, to attend its meetings following his arrival in Ireland.

As part of its remit to draw together people concerned for Mission in the Church, the Church Pastoral Aid Society in Ireland was invited to send a representative to meetings and Miss Mavis Gibbons has kindly consented to do so.

The Council appointed the Rev Stephen Lowry as its Honorary Secretary in succession to Captain Deane Stewart.

REACHING OUT

The Council believes that every parish in Ireland should have in place a method of presenting the gospel to, and catechising interested people. While the Services of Word and Sacrament fulfil this in part, many people in our society now have no first hand experience or knowledge of the basics of the Christian Message. With this in mind the Council urges Synod members and the church as a whole to take into consideration suitable resources for presenting the message.

Much good work is being done through various courses presented to people as introductions to the basics of the Christian Faith. Members have looked this year at ALPHA, CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED and EMMAUS courses and their comments are included in Appendices A, B and C. Every outward looking organisation has documents to present their mission to the world. The church, which invented the word Mission, needs to fine tune its programmes to invite people to faith in Jesus Christ.

CHALLENGING CHURCHES

In October the Council began a process of study of churches, both within and outside our own traditions, which present examples of effective mission. Several members were asked to select two churches and to present to the council their opinions as to the source of their effectiveness. This work is ongoing, but it is hoped that material presenting 'Patterns for Mission' will be available for distribution and discussion at a future Synod, ideally in 2003.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL FOR THE CHURCH OVERSEAS

The last three years has seen considerable progress in the developments of relationships between the Councils for Mission in the Church of Ireland. There remains considerable indecision as to how the two bodies should work together in the future, as two separate entities, as one entity or in some special relationship. To further develop the mutual understanding between the two, joint meetings and conferences have been held on several occasions. The Synod Breakfast is now a shared responsibility, managed by the Council for the Church Overseas. A Joint Mission Working Committee is also in place, managed by the Council for Mission in Ireland. Joint Meetings are the responsibility of this Working Committee.

A meeting is scheduled for May 2001 to help discover where the two bodies stand on the relationship. Enabling the proceedings will be Gillian Kingston of the Methodist Church. Speaking to the topic of the way forward in Mission for the Church of Ireland will be the Mission Resource Person, Rev Charles Irwin.

At present no specific proposals have been tabled regarding the relationship as far as General Synod is concerned, but minutes, agendas, reports, discussion papers and joint events are shared on a regular basis.

MISSION RESOURCE PERSON: REV CHARLES IRWIN

The Council noted with appreciation the excellent work of the Council for the Church Overseas in appointing the Rev Charles Irwin as Mission Resource Person. Charles was welcomed to the Council meeting in October where he introduced himself.

In co-operation with the Association of Missionary Societies and the two councils, Charles began his work in September 2000. His remit is to assist the Church of Ireland in moving toward a greater commitment to mission. Such a massive challenge will demand the prayerful support of the whole church. A visit from the Mission Resource Person may be arranged by contacting Mr James Myles, 60a Castlereagh Street, Belfast BT5 4NH (tel 028-90466389).

WE HAVE A GOSPEL

The booklet produced following the Joint Pre-millennium Conference 'We have a Gospel' was supplemented with questions for discussion groups. These were distributed to all parishes and are reprinted here for further consideration by Synod Members.

- 1 The Church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning. Discuss.
- 2 What did the Decade of Evangelism achieve?
- 3 How can our local church discover and activate the ministry of ordinary church members?
- 4 What should be the priorities that demand the attention of the Church?
- 5 How does the Church appeal to the non Churchgoer?
- 6 Before Christ sent the Church into the world, he sent the Spirit into the Church. Comment.
- 7 Do we need a new attitude to Church Finance to show that we give a high priority to Mission?

- 8 Is our worship meaningful in today's world?
- 9 Are we failing in religious education - how can we improve it?

The Council commends these as urgent matters for discussion in the churches.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Armagh

To encourage throughout the Diocese a deeper understanding and experience of the means of grace various courses have been organised in individual parishes and a course of Christian Discipleship has been organised by the Diocese. Around 200 have already been awarded the Archbishop's Certificate and are in continuing association with the Archbishop. A study book on Prayer was widely distributed and has been a practical help to quite a few.

Three final years have concentrated on Commitment, Outreach and at present Celebration with a week of events in the Cathedral and a Diocesan gathering on 16 June. Diocesan projects have been organised for the Sudan, Bishop Alison College and the Ulster Children's Hospice. The decade is not an end in itself but a launch pad for the new century. There is to be a fresh emphasis on the approach to Youth.

Connor

"Building for Generations"

The diocese launched a new strategy in 2000 entitled 'Building for Generations'. This was developed from a Marketing Consultancy commissioned by the Diocesan Council. The strategy seeks to explore mission and ministry within present social culture and Church context. The launch used the language of family, belonging and unity as a focus for Diocesan shape and identity. The event sought create broader unity across Diocese in order to achieve attainable goals of:

1. Imaginative and creative patterns of mission at Parish, Deanery and Diocesan level.
2. Confidence in the process and the change it means for all.
3. Reinforce the Generation experience through further events such as: including Road show, each parish promoting it through a Service at end of January, Clergy Retreat, Communication Material.
4. Finance of the project to be attained to pursue priorities in Mission.

Derry and Raphoe

Mission is the whole work of the whole church. It is the "raison d'être", the essential task of the church. In the Anglican context it should be worked out through Word and Sacrament but often the Sacramental aspect is missing or severely limited. Since the start of the new Millennium the Diocesan strategy has moved to three "Focus points". A diocesan Commission has been set up with a very wide brief to look at

- Ministry in all its aspects
- Faith nurture
- Reconciliation - theological, political, social and personal

Down and Dromore

The Diocese has now appointed a full team to facilitate the “Think-Again” Diocesan Strategy for 2000-2005. A Team Leader, three Development Officers and an Administrator are employed to develop themes within the strategy. The strategy is to pray for spiritual renewal in each parish; to have each parish ‘think again’ about ‘church’, the gospel and today’s people and about the relevance of the church and gospel to those people, especially in the three areas of Reconciliation, Outreach and Youth.

By working with clergy and Think-Again groups established in most parishes, the team is seeking to build up the witness and life of the Church in the Diocese. A diocesan website has been established at www.downanddromore.org where each parish has a page of information available for those interested in finding out more about service times. ‘Think Again News’ is published three times a year and is designed to be delivered to each household with Church of Ireland connections in the diocese.

Dublin and Glendalough

The booklet ‘We have a Gospel’ formed an important part of a discussion at Diocesan Council level. While no formal report or specific action has been decided, the matter is being considered. In particular, following Diocesan Synods in October 2000, the Archbishop, his Archdeacons and Diocesan Councils are currently considering a form of Diocesan Forum, a think tank, which it is envisaged will embrace mission as well as other matters pertinent to the Church.

Cashel and Ossory

In the past year, Cashel and Ossory Board of Mission and Unity have been focusing on two projects, one at home and one overseas. It has provided financial help towards improving the living conditions in a hostel providing accommodation for refugees in Kilkenny. The churches in the area have also undertaken to maintain pressure on the Irish Government to implement changes in the procedure for processing applications for asylum. The Board also hopes to be able to support work with refugees in Waterford in the coming year.

The Board has also undertaken a new missionary project, helping the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church to provide a hostel in Salamanca. This building will provide a child care centre for working mothers and a shelter for the homeless.

Tuam, Killala and Achonry

A diocesan mission statement is currently being developed. This is taking place within the diocesan Board of Mission, and there are likely to be a number of interesting developments during the coming year - one of which is the publication of the papers presented at last year’s Fís Conference. All in all, this seems to be a time for hope and thanksgiving in our diocese - though there is still much room for improvement!

CHURCH ARMY

The Church Army currently has twenty-one Evangelists working in the Church of Ireland. George Newell was appointed “Church Planter” to Blarney, Cork, in July 2000. Tim Hyde to St Patrick’s Cathedral Dublin in July 2000 as Outreach Worker with responsibility for both tourists and homeless people. Our number will rise to twenty-two in July when Richard Beadle takes up post at St Matthew’s, Belfast. He will seek to establish a new “church plant” congregation.

Other developments have been the appointment of Myrtle Deane as “Evangelist in Charge” of St Saviour’s, Craigavon.

Neville Barnes became Diocesan Youth Development Officer, Derry and Raphoe Diocese in March 2000.

The Wheels project is now well established. Keith Dyde has taken the Caravan extensively across County Cork. In May 2000 a “Trek” was held and the vehicle toured Ireland calling at: Kill O’The Grange Dublin, Naas, Lisburn, Portadown, Lurgan, Belfast, Castlederg, Irvinestown, Enniskillen, Drung Nr Cavan, Westport, Adare and Bandon. Keith was also extensively involved in the Cork “Bible Come To Life Exhibition”.

A number of Parish Missions and Mission weekends have been conducted across Ireland. Our Evangelists in training at Sheffield visited Northern Ireland in February 2001 to conduct Mission work in the parishes of: Garvagh, Ballymacash, St Paul’s Lisburn, Craigavon, Belvoir, and St Matthew’s Belfast.

A full list of CA Evangelists working in Ireland can be found in the *Church of Ireland Directory* listed under “Association of Missionary Societies”. We have a growing need for additional finance to develop the work.

Other information is available on the Internet. Web: www.churcharmy.org.uk

Area Co-ordinator, Ireland: Captain Charles Harris, 4 Thornleigh Place, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 2FD (tel 028-9266 3295).

CPAS

CPAS, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, has had a staff worker, Mavis Gibbons, in Ireland since May 1992, and in January 1999 she was joined two days a week by Keith Neill, working as a youth and children’s specialist. CPAS’ aim is “the gospel to everyone’s door” and working through the local church with the two emphases of “evangelism” and “leadership”. This is done through consultancy, training and providing relevant resources for leaders to reach people of all ages. Over the past year work has been done with Select Vestries and Leadership Teams in parishes throughout Ireland helping them to think through their purpose and strategy in their overall ministry and with their youth and children’s work. This has often backed the Diocesan strategy for the church. In some instances this has led to a contact over a period of months where we have been able to provide back-up with relevant training.

Parish Missions have featured in Ballinamallard and Movilla Parish, both joint Anglican/Methodist ventures, and in St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett. The training for the mission has been the CPAS "Lost for Words" Course. In this ministry we aim to work with a church over a period of 18 months. Reaching those on outer estates and inner cities is a priority for our ministry. 50 leaders attended a training day for this last year, and a follow-up resource "On the doorstep" has been produced. "A Heart for Children" has been the main thrust of our children's ministry with training events and a Praise Party. Both Keith and Mavis count it a privilege to share in the life and ministry of many churches and welcome the different opportunities they receive.

CPAS Consultant (Ireland): Mavis Gibbons, 42 Plantation Avenue, Lisburn, Co Antrim BT27 5BL (tel 028-9267 1452).

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2000

	2000 IR£
INCOME	
Current account balance (1 January 2000)	1,440.64
From GSCCO to conference and booklet expenses	874.80
Interest on investments	111.23
Refund Tax	485.16
Refund	6.92
Grant from RCB	0.00
	<hr/> 2,918.75 <hr/>
EXPENDITURE	
Booklet Printing	920.00
Other expenses	433.60
To deposit account	1,000.00
Bank Fees etc	10.36
Book Tokens	131.13
Balance	423.66
	<hr/> 2,918.75 <hr/>

APPENDIX A**ALPHA - QUESTIONS OF LIFE**

Emerging from the stable of Holy Trinity Brompton, this fifteen session course attempts to offer a quick introduction to the Christian experience of God through sharing food and listening to talks and open discussions in groups. It has proved immensely popular in churches of virtually all types, allowing, as it does, for different emphases to be developed along the way. Most churches do the course without any significant amendment. An Alpha Weekend, or at least a day away, is an option which many churches find helpful.

The Course begins with an Alpha Supper, a meal to which former participants are invited to bring their friends. The meal is followed by a short talk and an explanation of the nature of the course.

There is great variety in the possible approaches to Alpha. A complete set of Videos of the talks has been produced, audio tapes may also be used, and, when numbers make the preparation feasible, local leaders can present the material themselves. Course members are invited to follow a Guide which contains the salient points for further study and discussion.

Where Alpha scores highly is in its use of small groups to make the Christian life accessible to inquirers. In a non threatening group people are encouraged to share their questions of life with one or two committed leaders.

Repeated Alpha Courses have been found to display an interesting trend. It is only by the third or fourth time that the people truly at the fringe of the church's life come along. By this stage though, the ordinary church members attending have been refreshed on Christian basics which many have not considered since childhood, if then.

The council recommends the use of this or other courses as a necessary vehicle to present the story of faith to a world which is largely ignorant of the good news.

APPENDIX B**CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED**

Christianity Explored has adopted a model very similar to that of the Alpha Course, however the course content is different. The resources are being developed at present, although some available promotional material states the following: 'Christianity Explored is a new ten week evangelistic course written by Rico Tice, curate at All Souls, Langham Place. It takes a fresh look at the Bible, grace and relationships and wrestles with how best to communicate the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ in a rapidly changing world. Christianity Explored acknowledges the influence of the Australian Michael Bennett on an earlier course run at All Souls called 'Christianity Explained'.

Each 'enquirer' receives a copy of St Mark's Gospel in Week 1, which places the Bible at the centre of the course. The problem of sin is outlined from Weeks 2-7 in order to emphasise the free gift of grace. The third foundation of the course is relationships in recognition that 'we live in a lonely culture and our aim is that people should not just make friends but find themselves genuinely cared for'. Rico Tice will be in Ireland between 17 and 21 May 2001 to promote the newly published course and give basic training. The centres will be Londonderry, Enniskillen, Belfast and Dublin. More details will be sent out in the near future.

APPENDIX C**EMMAUS - THE WAY OF FAITH**

At a time when the Church is faced with many perplexing changes and challenges in society and the world, Emmaus - The Way of Faith offers a biblically based faith programme for churches of any and every shade of Christian tradition to provide the necessary resources both to nurture and deepen the faith of those already on the way, as well as enabling the drawing into Christian faith and discipleship of those who come new and fresh to it.

Emmaus - The Way of Faith speaks directly to our situations paralleling the disciples who walked the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35). They had seen the cross; their hopes were shattered. They sought to make sense of what had happened. Where now could they turn for hope?

These same perplexities face the Church and its members today. Disciples walking the Emmaus road in the year 2000, also post-Easter, are still seeking to find meaning in life and faith; wanting to root their faith in the concrete situations of daily living; learning to be good stewards of God's bountiful creation, of wealth, of the environment and of Christian faith itself.

Emmaus - The Way of Faith offers a model for local mission: a gradual discovery; a lifetime's exploration ... for many people this is the reality of their journey in faith. Most of those who come to know God do so over a period of months, even years, as they grow in understanding, knowledge and love. It is this continuing journey that Emmaus - The Way of Faith recognises and develops.

Emmaus: enabling local churches to ...

- Build relationships with people outside the church
- Welcome people into the Christian faith
- Accompany enquiries on their journey of faith
- Introduce people to the life of the church, and
- Bring new Christians to maturity.

Many parishes have engaged in building and other projects to mark the Millennium. While this is as it should be, I believe one of the most important and challenging projects for the Christian Church at this time is to come to know God through the bible. Then, as we know him and engage in the mission to which he calls his Church, we may make him known to others by our words and actions.

Since September 2000 some eleven or more parishes in Dublin and Glendalough diocese have begun to use Emmaus. The group in Kiltarnan Parish is ecumenical and involves some twenty people at its weekly meetings. This is a higher than usual number. There is much enthusiasm for the course among the group.

The course is interactive and encourages use of the bible, leading to an active living out of the Christian Gospel and a strong sense that we are to be engaged in the Church's

mission, spreading the good news in word and action, building up the sense of community as the body of Christ.

We have found the course to be simply structured and easily led. Each evening's module lasts ninety minutes. This is sub-divided into timed units:

- sharing our own experience of the subject matter;
- bible study on the topic;
- group exercises;
- link work, drawing together different strands of the course's focus, and giving encouragement and direction.

Bible readings are given which enable participants to read and study on their own, or with others, during the week. The Emmaus bible study course is suitable for use in the Church of Ireland. Some minor adaptations may be necessary, but can easily be worked-in in the leader's preparation and as we empathise with participants in the opening section of an evening - "sharing our experiences". This is a useful and stimulating course for use within parishes, or for wider based groups.