

COUNCIL FOR THE CHURCH OVERSEAS

REPORT 2002

COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

House of Bishops

Rt Rev Michael Mayes (chair)

General Synod

Mr Samuel Harper

Dr Peter Trimble

Co-opted by Council

Very Rev Leslie Forrest

Rev Canon Patrick Harvey

Mrs Mary Armstrong

Association of Missionary Societies

Miss Karin Jonsson

Mrs Bobbie Moore

Mr James Myles

Rev Canon Cecil Wilson

Mothers' Union

Mrs Jessica Clarke

Bishops' Appeal World Development Fund

Diocesan Representatives

Rev Ian Jonas (Cork)

Rev Eric Culbertson (Armagh)

Rev Mark Taylor (Down, Dromore and Connor)

Rev Peter Galbraith (Down, Dromore and Connor)

Very Rev Patrick Towers (Tuam)

Miss Olga Kerr (Cashel and Ossory)

Rev Michael Wooderson (Meath and Kildare)

Rev Canon Mark Lidwill (Kilmore)

Rev Canon Paul Hoey (Clogher)

Mr George Clarke (Dublin)

Very Rev Maurice Sirr (Limerick and Killaloe)

Rev Canon John Mayes (Derry and Raphoe)

Honorary Secretary

The Rev Canon DP Hoey

Magheracross Rectory, Craghan Road, Ballinamallard, Co Fermanagh BT94 2BT

MEMBERSHIP

During the year the Rt Rev Michael Mayes took up the chair of the Council.

At the September meeting a minute's silence was held in memory of Elizabeth Ferrar, who died during the course of the year, and who had been one of the most faithful members of the Council over many years. Tribute was paid to her interest in and commitment to mission.

A resignation was received from Karin Jonsson due to clash of commitments. Appreciation was expressed to her for her support for the work of the Council. AMS appointed Capt Charles Harris, Church Army, in her place.

MISSION RESOURCE PERSON

The Council wishes to express its appreciation of the ongoing work and obvious dedication to the cause of mission that Rev Charles Irwin has brought to the post.

His Commissioning Service held in Armagh Cathedral during January 2001 was an uplifting occasion, appreciated by Mr Irwin and his family, though there was a rather disappointing attendance.

The Management Group, consisting of Canon C Wilson, Mrs B Moore, Mr J Myles, and Rev M Elliott, meets with Mr Irwin on a regular basis, approximately every 6-8 weeks, to deal with diary and practical issues. Copies of the diary are distributed to members of the Council. During his first year Mr Irwin attended 5 synods, conducted Holy Week services in 3 churches, and spent 2 periods of a week or more in Cork and Cashel dioceses. Charles had also shared with clerical associations, conducted a quiet day, and preached in approximately 25 parishes. In addition he had been involved in some major mission society engagements. He was the speaker at the 2001 General Synod Mission Breakfast.

Parishes and groups, which have had opportunity of a visit, have been invited to complete response forms. Those that benefited most were those that had a clear idea what they wanted from a visit from the MRP and which were prepared to spend a period of several days working together with him rather than expecting too much from just a one-off event.

The management group conducted a review of the first year of the working of the project. They agreed that the role of the Mission Resource Person needed some clarification. Nigel Parker, Diocese of Down ROY Outreach Officer, was invited to make comments as an outside observer. He commented that the perception in the wider church is that Charles' task is limited to presenting the challenge of World Mission in relation to the overseas church. However, the group's conception of mission is a much wider one. It includes all aspects of the life and witness of the Church, in Ireland as well as overseas. Many of the issues Charles has been addressing, for example the facilitating of the laity and encouragement of youth ministry, are at the top of the agenda in many parishes. It was felt that if this could be communicated there would be an even greater interest in the work of the Resource Person in parishes. The discussion highlighted the misunderstanding of the term 'mission' in its narrowest sense and the false distinction between home and overseas mission. Comment was made that the Church of Ireland

lacks models of ways to use someone like Charles Irwin and that we need to be more imaginative in giving him a voice – perhaps even in the pulpit at the Synod service? In view of the fact that the project is due to end in the year 2003 that would, of course, be the last opportunity for this to happen.

In light of the review the Council prepared and distributed copies of a promotional brochure to all clergy and to interested groups throughout the church.

We wish to encourage members of the Synod to consider inviting Mr Irwin to share in the life and mission of their parish or group. A programme can be tailored to the specific needs of the host. Bookings can be made through Mr James Myles, Crosslinks, 60a Castlereagh Street, Belfast, BT5 4NH. Ph. 028-90466489.

Email: crosslinks@belfast.region.crosslinks.org.

The Council records, with appreciation to God and to the many groups and individuals concerned, that the necessary finance for the first two years of the project has been received and promised for the third year.

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

The joint meeting held on 2 May to consider the way forward for the two mission councils of the Church had a disappointing attendance of barely 50%. The purpose of the meeting was to explore models of co-operation for the 2 mission councils of the church. Rev C Irwin, MRP, and Mrs Gillian Kingston acted as facilitators.

A proposal was put forward that

at the next meeting of both councils each group should be asked to make a formal commitment “to take whatever steps are necessary to form a Council for Mission for the Church of Ireland replacing the existing GSCCO and GSCMI”

The Council was informed that “the tone of this proposal was rejected by a number of members (of CMI) with the expression of several concerns not widely noted at the Joint Meeting: fears of a take-over; risk of one group’s concerns being dominant over the other; and the representation of 1 delegate per diocese”. Some more favourable reactions were also expressed.

CMI asked that the Joint Councils Mission Working Committee look again at suitable proposals bearing in mind the above issues.

BREAKFAST

Since the Honorary Secretary was off on sabbatical, arrangements this year were made by the Rev Stephen Lowry, Honorary Secretary of The Council for Mission in Ireland. The Breakfast took place in the Conservatory, O’Reilly Hall, UCD. The catering was provided by the College caterers. A devotional opening was conducted by Canon P Harvey. The talk, given by Rev Charles Irwin, on the challenges facing the Church of Ireland in the 21st century, was appreciated. Approximately 50 people attended.

THE CHURCHES' COMMISSION ON MISSION

During the year the Very Rev P Towers took over from Miss Karin Jonsson as Church of Ireland representative at the bi-monthly meetings of CCOM.

The Church of Ireland is represented on The Churches Commission on Mission (CCOM) through the Overseas Council. The CCOM is the official meeting point for the departments and agencies of the British and Irish Churches concerned with World Mission and Evangelisation. The main function of the Commission is co-ordination between the 35 member bodies and affiliates in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. To help illuminate and assist the missionary calling of the whole Church it provides valuable Forums on world regions and mission issues. A key area of the Commission's work is the project "Building Bridges of Hope" a learning process for local churches across Britain, Ireland and beyond. The commission also works on encouraging ecumenical codes of mission conduct, and developing continental partnership in Mission. The Church of Ireland through its representative has contributed fully to the work of the Commission, and in turn encourages the Church of Ireland through the Council of the Church Overseas to partake actively and fully with other churches and agencies in making Jesus Christ more real in the life of the world.

Provost Towers attended a special meeting of CCOM in London during September 2001. During it, he reported, time was made to reflect on the situation of the 2 Islams, one focused on Mecca, the other on Medina, one open and accepting of others, the other more closed.

Concerned was noted over the initial responses to the terrorist atrocity in USA and over attitudes towards the Muslim community. It was resolved, in light of the situation, to highlight the urgent need to engage with people of other faiths in order to overcome the misunderstandings that are propagated in some areas.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

The "All God's Children" project prepared by five mission societies (MAM, USPG, CMSI, SAMS, Crosslinks) was given support throughout the Church. The project focused on children in 5 different areas around the world. Approximately £35,000 was raised. Those involved in the project spoke of the value in working together in mission.

MISSION CO-OPERATION

It was noted that CMSI and MAM have now integrated, the change to be completed by 1 February 2002. This example of unity was commended by the Council.

Plans for AMS societies to cooperate to present a Mission Day in Connor Diocese were also commended.

APPENDIX**MISSIONARY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE
CHURCH OF IRELAND 2002**

Where there are blanks no figure was returned

Society	Donations	
	£Stg	€
Bible Society (NI)	13,901	
Church Army	37,131	
CMSI	168,752	52,134
Church's Ministry among the Jewish People		
Church Pastoral Aid Society	31,098	
Crosslinks	271,885	22,845
Dublin University Far Eastern Mission		
Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur	832	902
Feed the Minds, Ireland		
Intercon		
Interserve		
Jerusalem and Middle East Church		
Leprosy Mission	34,000	52,000
Mid Africa Ministry (CMSI)	61,552	7,256
Mission to Seafarers		
Mothers' Union	105,748	
National Bible Society		10,130
Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge	1,262	9,489
South American Missionary Society	110,022	6,348
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	14,332	17,185
Total	850,515	178,289