

Council for the Church Overseas – Report 2003

**COUNCIL FOR THE CHURCH OVERSEAS  
REPORT 2003**

**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***

Capt. Charles Harris, Church Army

Mrs Bobbie Moore

Mr James Myles (resigned September 2002)

Miss Karin Jonsson (from September 2002)

Rev Canon Cecil Wilson

***Mothers' Union***

Mrs Jessica Clarke

***Bishops' Appeal World Development Fund***

Rt Rev Michael Mayes

***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 Paul Hoey

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

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In view of the new relationship established between the Overseas Council and the Council for Mission in Ireland matters of common concern have been included under the Council for Mission Report.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

During the year Mr James Myles resigned from the Council due to his contract as Crosslinks Co-ordinator having expired. The members of the Council wish to express warm appreciation for all his service of and interest in the work of the Council over the years. The Association of Mission Societies appointed Miss Karin Jonsson as a replacement. We welcome Karin back as a member.

### **MISSION RESOURCE PERSON**

The Council again wishes to express appreciation of his ongoing work and the dedication to the cause of mission that Rev Charles Irwin has brought to the post. We have indeed been fortunate to have someone with Charles's expertise and experience of mission willing to spend three years in this country to assist the Church of Ireland in its mission.

We wish to record, with appreciation to God and to the many groups and individuals concerned, that the necessary finance for this project over its three years has been received in full. The fact that all the dioceses and many groups throughout the Church have contributed generously and willingly to the project was noted as a source of encouragement. The largest single source of finance was the Priorities Fund but we wish to thank also each of the mission agencies, diocesan groups and individual parishes which gave support.

The Management Group, consisting of Canon Cecil Wilson, Mrs Bobbie Moore, Mr James Myles, and Rev Maurice Elliott, met with Mr Charles Irwin on a regular basis throughout the year to give assistance with time-tabling and other practical issues and to encourage and support him in his work.

During the past year the work involved meetings with clerical associations, mission agency gatherings and parish groups. To date, Charles has preached or conducted meetings in over 10% of the parish groupings of the Church of Ireland. Many of these expressed a wish for him to return in order to develop some of the seeds that he had sown.

Those groups that benefited most from the visit were those that had a clear idea of what they wanted out of it and which were prepared to spend some time working with Charles in small group settings.

Two articles written by Charles, one on the Theological Education of the Laity and the other on Vision for Mission, were made available and widely appreciated.

In January 2003 Charles commenced a three-month period with the diocese of Cork. The Council sees this as a welcome and natural development of the Mission Resource

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Person's work. It may well be that this more targeted use of the Resource Person's skills will prove to be the most beneficial and fruitful for him and for the Church.

Some disappointment was expressed that, in spite of approaches having been made, it had not been possible for the Mission Resource Person to be involved in any way in mission training at the Theological College.

We wish to express appreciation to two members of the Management Group who have now moved on; to Mr James Myles for his work in connection with arranging the diary; and to Rev Maurice Elliott whose support and encouragement as rector of the parish where Charles and his family live has been invaluable. We know that Charles and Jessie very much appreciated the support of the church family in Greenisland parish in the times of celebration as well as of hardship that came to them during the year. The Council also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of CMSI in managing Charles's diary in the interim and in dealing with some of the financial aspects of the post.

The period of employment is due to finish in August 2003. There was perhaps an initial misperception that Charles was here only to create enthusiasm for overseas mission. This misconception has only partly been overcome at this stage. We are convinced that the Church of Ireland could have benefited even more than it did from the knowledge, skills and expertise of the Resource Person. It may be that the Church needs time to adjust to being able to receive people from overseas or that sections of the Church find it difficult to hear the challenge Charles has brought.

We thank God for the privilege of having been able to work alongside Rev Charles Irwin over this period and pray that he and Jessie may be guided by God for the future.

#### **COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND**

The following resolution of the Joint Working Group was proposed and adopted by both councils:

That the two Mission Councils (General Synod Council for Church Overseas and General Synod Council for Mission in Ireland) will arrange meetings for an experimental period of two years (from a time to be agreed) so that the two councils' meetings coincide.

The meetings will:

- take place three times per annum outside RB week in Dublin;
- occur during office hours e.g. 11.00 to 3.00;
- be chaired by one of the two chairmen;
- cover as much of the business handled by the two separate councils as possible;
- from time to time involve preparation prior to meetings by interested groups.

In order to preserve the ability of the two councils to operate independently, any member of either council may request a separate meeting of that council's members only to take

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place, and those members of that council present may vote to do so. Where binding votes need to take place, it will be made possible to do this separately.

At the end of the trial period, the two councils independently will determine the value of formalising arrangements or returning to separate council meetings. If suitable a resolution agreed by both councils separately will be placed before General Synod in 2004.

It was agreed that the Joint Working Group should continue in existence to review the new arrangements of the two councils after a suitable period of time and to make suggestions about the way forward.

The first joint meeting took place on Wednesday 16 October 2002 at the Bellinter Conference Centre, Navan.

Following the business part of the meeting Rev George Lings, Director of the Sheffield Centre of the Church Army, spoke on “A Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. There was general agreement that this was a most beneficial meeting.

#### **BREAKFAST**

The General Synod Missionary Breakfast took place on Wednesday 15 May in the Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin. Holy Communion at 7.45 am was conducted by Bishop Michael Mayes and this was followed at 8.20 am by a talk on “Growing Anglican Churches in a new Europe” given by Mr David Healey, Communications Manager with the Intercontinental Church Society.

David Healey, outlined the work of the Society in providing and resourcing chaplaincies, mostly in Europe. New opportunities of ministry are opening up all the time to holidaymakers, expatriate and local people. There are currently 36 chaplaincies, of which ten have been set up since 1995. Mr Martin Eakes-Williams, chaplain at Leipzig, told how he started a chaplaincy from scratch, knowing no-one in the city. Through business and student contacts he has built a regular congregation of around 85 today. Contrary to popular perceptions, a sizeable number of these are local people of very mixed background, the largest group being students. There are also a number of refugees. People joined for various reasons: social, educational or preference for Biblical content and style of the services (described as formal but with freedom). Lay participation and ministry are key factors in the chaplaincy’s growth. Warm appreciation was expressed of the talk.

#### **THE CHURCHES’ COMMISSION ON MISSION (CCOM)**

During the year the Very Rev Patrick Towers represented the Church of Ireland at the meetings of CCOM.

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

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the Commission is coordination between the 35 member bodies and affiliates in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. 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.

Concern of members 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.

Patrick spoke of his encouragement after attending a meeting at which an international group of young people had questioned CCOM members about the direction in which the new Europe is headed and the implications for the churches. Copies of the reports submitted by Provost Towers of the Commission meetings are available from the Honorary Secretary.

#### **MISSION CO-OPERATION**

It was noted with approval that CMSI and MAM integrated on 1 Feb 2002. The Council commends this example of unity.

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**APPENDIX**

**MISSIONARY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE  
CHURCH OF IRELAND 2003**

Where there are blanks no figure was returned.

<b>Society</b>	<b>Donations</b>	
	<b>£Stg</b>	<b>€</b>
Bible Society (NI)	14,898	
Church Army	34,206	
CMSI	307,190	145,985
Church's Ministry among the Jewish People	29,132	
Church Pastoral Aid Society	14,509	
Crosslinks	247,503	
Dublin University Far Eastern Mission		
Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur	1,426	786
Feed the Minds, Ireland		
ICS	14,093	
Interserve		
Jerusalem and Middle East Church	1,080	1,240
Leprosy Mission	73,472	
Mission to Seafarers	49,841	8,615
Mothers' Union	110,526	
National Bible Society		13,706
Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge		
South American Missionary Society	117,012	7,796
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	21,046	299,169
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,035,934</b>	<b>477,297</b>