



CHURCH of IRELAND GENERAL SYNOD
CHURCH in SOCIETY COMMITTEE
Social Justice and Theology (NI) Sub-Committee

Rather than simply responding with words to the many issues that could be considered under this heading the committee would prefer to provide resources and impetus to help local congregations and individuals set a positive mission agenda that has a cutting edge where issues of social justice are concerned.

They are presently working on a booklet which they hope will resource parishes, groups and individuals in connecting more effectively with their local communities. They would like this resource to stimulate social action and mission that will start to bridge the gulf that is often evident between committed church members and the local communities that surround our worship centres. There is the need to recognise that the church doesn't always understand or positively impact society in an incarnational way with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This booklet will provide ideas on how churches can make their communities aware of their presence and of their commitment to their communities. Ideas put forward in the resource will include: -

- Making initial contacts by offering hospitality;
- Building links with local homeless centres, e.g. Christmas meals for homeless families;
- Support schemes for single parents families;
- Running a fund-raising evening on behalf of the local primary school;
- Working with the local community to provide community facilities;
- Setting up a not-for-profit drop-in/community café/No-Name Club;
- Providing imaginative free social events for families e.g. Jubilee Celebrations;
- Getting involved in community events, e.g. supporting charity events;
- Working in areas of social deprivation – how does the church make a start?
- Helping people with removals, decorating a new home, provision of smoke alarms, etc;
- Other practical ideas.

The booklet will also include some examples of projects in Ireland and elsewhere that parishes may visit in order to stimulate them into similar action.

Unless our awareness of areas of social injustice leads individual Christians and congregations into positive social action, the work of this committee will remain only a 'talking shop' and this is something to be avoided at all costs. It aims to be a prophetic voice that will enable, empower and equip the Church into prophetic action that is practical and also offers theological reflection that sends His church out into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and work to His praise and glory.