

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION (CFM)**

**Report to the General Synod 2024**

**MEMBERSHIP (AS OF JANUARY 2024)**

**ATTENDANCE FIGURE FOR JUNE 2023 – JANUARY 2024**

Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield (1)	House of Bishops / Kilmore
Rev Tim Wright (Hon Chair) (3)	Synod
Rev Colin McConaghie (Hon Secretary) (4)	Synod
Ms Sarah Taylor (Hon Treasurer) (4)	Kilmore and Elphin
Ms Emma Lynch (4)	AMS
Ms Jenny Smyth (2)	AMS
Rev Stephen McElhinney (2)	AMS
Rev Dr Paddy McGlinchey (2)	CITI
Rev Dr Laurence Graham (2)	Methodist Church
Mr Thomas Stevenson (2)	Armagh
Ven Paul Mooney (4)	Cashel
Rev Kingsley Sutton (2)	Cork
Rev Jonathan McFarland (3)	Derry and Raphoe
Rev Andrew Orr (3)	Synod
Rev Isaac Hanna (2)	Synod
Mrs Jill Lester (1)	Connor
Mrs Hazel Speares (1)	Mothers' Union
Mr David Frizelle (2)	Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe
Rev William Jeffrey (3)	Clogher
Rev Henry Blair (0)	AMS (from November 2023)
Mrs Hilary McClay (0)	Bishops' Appeal (from January 2024)

According to the constitution of the Council, each diocese is entitled to nominate a representative and an alternate. Alternates attend when the principal representative is unable to. Some members represent more than one possible constituency.

The Council for Mission met four times from June 2023 to January 2024. These meetings were a combination of in person in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and online via Zoom.

**CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP SINCE GENERAL SYNOD 2023**

After eight years of dedicated service to the Council Mr Derek Neilson stepped down in June 2023. Derek was a wonderful asset to the CFM during his time and served diligently as our treasurer. The Council would like to publicly thank Derek for his service to mission in the Church of Ireland and the CfM over the years.

Ms Lydia Monds stepped down from the Council in March 2023 when she moved from her position in Bishops' Appeal. We have no doubt Lydia will provide a fruitful ministry through her new role in the Church's Ministry of Healing.

Mr Steve Grasham, our CIYD representative, stepped down from the Council in November 2023, having returned to England. We wish Steve and his wife Fran every blessing.

Ms Catherine Hillcox (Little) stepped down from the Council in June 2023 having been an AMS rep. We wish Catherine every blessing for her continued work with the Bible Society Northern Ireland.

Ms Sarah Taylor joined the Council in June 2023 as Kilmore and Elphin rep and Honorary Treasurer.

Rev Henry Blair (SOMA) joined the Council in November 2023 as an AMS rep.

Mrs Hilary McClay (Bishops' Appeal) joined the Council in January 2023.

We are grateful to all of the members who have contributed to the work of the Council for Mission over the years.

We continue to use the Anglican 5 marks of mission to focus our activities, which are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Tell)
  2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers (Teach)
  3. To respond to human need by loving service (Tend)
  4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (Transform)
  5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Treasure)
- (Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)*

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

The aim of the CfM has always been to represent the wide breadth of the Church of Ireland with representation from each Diocese alongside members elected by General Synod and representatives of the Association of Missionary Societies.

There has been a large turn over in membership over the last couple of years with a number of people having served the maximum terms while others have left the diocese or organisation they represented.

We are delighted to have filled a number of the vacancies in 2023 and look forward to new members joining in the coming months. We would encourage those dioceses that aren't currently represented to prayerfully consider nominating someone to represent them on the Council.

### **2023 - A YEAR OF TRANSITION**

In March 2023, thanks to the continued support of the Priorities Fund, we completed the series of videos focusing on the Marks of Mission. These videos highlighted the third and fourth Marks Christian Service (Tend) and Challenging Injustice (Transform). All five videos featured people and projects throughout the Church of Ireland and beyond whose mission, outreach and innovation is making a real difference to their communities and building God's Kingdom.

These videos are available via the Church of Ireland website, and we encourage you to share these videos in your parishes as tools for promoting and encouraging mission.

As one project came to an end it was time for the Council to seek God's guidance as to how we could continue to facilitate and promote mission throughout the Church of Ireland.

Following on from our residential in September 2022 in which we thought and prayed over the future direction of the Council, we began to seek a definitive plan of action in 2023.

As new members were welcomed into the Council new ideas began to emerge and grow. Two primary projects emerged from our discussions, reflections, and prayer:

1. A mission focused podcast
2. A global mission partner project

## **PODCASTS**

In September, Mr Stephen Fletcher the Communications Officer of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe was invited to attend the CfM meeting to discuss Podcasts. Stephen had a background in construction before he trained as a Parish Reader in England and studied for a qualification in media studies. Stephen has worked part time as a freelancer for the BBC in local radio and produces a faith program for Clare FM. He has also produced a number of podcasts both in Ireland and England.

The inspiration behind the project is Matthew 5:16 - “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” The CfM role is to promote mission and inspire mission throughout our church. The podcasts aim to be creative, inspiring and encouraging the listener that they too can be involved.

Following the discussions the CfM appointed Stephen to produce a bi-monthly podcast to focus on why mission matters through telling the stories of individuals or groups connected to the Church of Ireland who are involved in mission both locally and globally.

The Podcast will be called “Mission Matters - A Church of Ireland Council For Mission Podcast.” The name is to reflect both the importance of mission to us as a church and also to make it easily found on a search engine. The podcast will be found via our usual social media as well as being hosted on a podcast platform making it accessible to all.

The Council would like to thank Stephen for all his hard work in helping us get this project up and running. If you have any inspirational missional stories that would make for inspiring listening please let us know.

## **GLOBAL MISSION PARTNER**

As a facilitator of mission, the CfM applied to the Priorities Fund for funding to enable a Global Mission Partner to come to Ireland to work in partnership with local churches and pioneer centres for ministry. The focus of the partnership is to bring a greater understanding of the global mission of the church and to give an insight into how as a church can better engage with those who have come to settle here from a multitude of countries around the globe.

The CfM established up a sub-committee to assess the type of project and a suitable mission partner. We are currently going through the visa process to facilitate a visit of Rev Arsene Mafurebe, Pastor of St Marc’s Parish, Nyabutusti, Gitega Diocese, Burundi.

Rev Arsene was sponsored by Church of Ireland parishes through his theological degree course at Bujumbura Christian University, Burundi. He was ordained in 2021 and has since been serving as priest in charge of St Marc’s parish.

Rev Arsene has been recommended by his bishop as an able, committed parish priest with a desire to learn and share his experiences of evangelism, pastoral work and church leadership. Burundi is a country with a contested and difficult history of ethnic conflict, endemic poverty, low literacy rates and struggles with the impacts of climate change. The Anglican church in Burundi is a vibrant, fast growing church which takes a lead in many practical development programmes. There is a strong Mothers’ Union, TEE programme and lively youth work. There is a need for discipleship courses and leadership training.

The plan is for a six-week visit based in Republic of Ireland with visits to Northern Ireland (all visa permitting). The CfM wishes to thank Ms Jenny Smyth of CMS Ireland who has been a driving force behind this project. It is the hope of the Council that if deemed a success we can look at future partnerships including the possibility of enabling someone from the Church of Ireland to be involved in a global project overseas.

## **BURSARIES**

Throughout the year the CfM were able to support a number of projects:

- CfM supported a Mission Evening held in the newly formed United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe as they sought to establish a new Diocesan Council for Mission and establish a vision for mission across the Dioceses. The Council donated €200 to this initiative.
- CfM contributed €650 to a Global Mission Partner project in Derryvolgie Parish, Connor Diocese in partnership with SAMS. The project which saw Marcos a volunteer from Chile was entitled “Global Made Local” and aimed to is foster cross-cultural connections and promote missional thinking within the context of a changing Ireland. This project was seen as a fore runner of our Global Mission Partner Project.
- A new bursary in partnership AMS to support ordinands from the Theological Institute who chose to go overseas as part of their placements. CfM has committed €250 per year to this bursary.

## **ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES**

Chair Rev Stephen McElhinney gave a reflection at the recent AMS AGM focusing on Revelation 9:7. The passage gives a picture of the great multitude that no one could count, all standing before the throne. He pointed out that either there is an unbelievably massive throne, or perhaps John didn't think people were particularly skilled at counting. All were robed in white and each held a palm branch. While there are many remarkable aspects of this passage, Stephen was struck by the "gathered" nature of the people. He went on to explain that AMS is all about this very idea. We have always been in the business of gathering people. Our agencies bring people together around specific agency-specific themes, be it geographic or issue-based. But at our core, our mission is to prepare people to gather around the throne and the Lamb. This year, AMS has been doing more gathering.

## **CITI**

We have gathered regularly at CITI and want to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunities it provides to build a sense of community within AMS and to collaborate with structures in the Church of Ireland. AMS also committed to offering global church placements for CITI students as part of their training.

## **Council for Mission**

We have also gathered at the Council for Mission, where we currently have four AMS members serving, Rev Stephen McElhinney (SAMS), Ms Jenny Smith (CMSI), Rev Henry Blair (SOMA) and Ms Emma Lynch (Tearfund Ireland). AMS members have been active contributors to the work of the Council including the upcoming Podcast series and the Local Made Global project facilitating global church placements.

Ms Catherine Hillcox (BSNI) stepped down from her role on Council for Mission in 2023 and is replaced by Rev Henry Blair. We are grateful to Catherine for representing AMS members so well on the Council for Mission.

## **General Synod**

Our gatherings extended to the General Synod in Wexford, where AMS members collaborated to host a stand space. We were delighted to meet with General Synod members once again after the pause due to Covid-19 restrictions in the past few years.

## **Bishops Appeal**

Bishops Appeal entered a new chapter this year with the appointment of a new Education Advisor. The former officer, Ms Lydia Monds, provided much invaluable support and guidance to AMS agencies. AMS members are delighted to welcome Mrs Hilary McClay, a familiar face to many of us. We look forward to working closely with Hilary and her guidance to us as we collaborate.

### **AMS Officers and Membership**

Rev Stephen McElhinney stepped down as Chair of AMS in November 2023 having graciously extended his term during Covid-19 and has been replaced by Ms Jenny Smyth. Ms Catherine Hillcox continues as Treasurer and Ms Emma Lynch as Secretary.

Our discussions about AMS membership continue, helping us maintain clarity about our mission and our membership. There are currently 14 AMS member agencies and societies. This year, we welcomed SOMA. Members' details are listed in the Church of Ireland Directory.

### **Continuing Ministerial Education (CME)**

AMS involvement in Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) remains strong, with our input into the program each year in January. In 2023 the sessions entitled 'The Church and Integral Mission' were provided by Christian Aid (Ms Ruth Cooke) and Church Army (Mr Alan Williamson), which were well received by participating curates.

The friendship, solidarity, and fellowship among AMS members strengthen all our collective efforts, as does our engagement with Council for Mission. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and support. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the name of mission.